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Canvassing Past Memories through *Təzətā*

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Songs that evoke memories and nostalgia hold a significant place in the music culture of the *Amhara* of central and northern Ethiopia. Their styles, forms and lyrics, vary greatly. This paper will exclusively deal with a song entitled *təzətā* meaning 'nostalgia', a song known for strongly moving listener's feelings. Even though the root of *təzətā* is the *Amhara* music culture and region, a large group of Ethiopians identify themselves with this song¹. Named after and set in one of the widely used *Amhara* traditional *qəñatoč* (modes/scales), *təzətā* is a highly popular folk song. Ever since *təzətā*'s creation, it has been sung by a number of Ethiopian artists in different versions and musical arrangements.

My examination attempts to draw a particular attention to the *təzətā* song, to introduce and discuss it from various perspectives, in a bid to create a deeper understanding. The study is, primarily based on personal or "lived" experiences. My observations on the *Amhara* musical culture were made in my capacity as an ethnomusicologist, as well as a native of this society. The fact that I was born and raised in the country and society, undoubtedly, has enabled me to share similar mentality towards the topic in discussion. Therefore, like many of my fellow Ethiopians, *təzətā* (both vocal and instrumental) is among my favourite songs. I possess a large collection of this song in order to be able to listen to the different versions and new arrangements in both traditional and modern renditions².

My investigation is also based on ethnomusicological data I collected during my several fieldworks made over the years (1997 – present³) in central and northern Ethiopia as well as in the city of my residence, Berlin/Germany (2011-2014⁴). This includes audio-visual recordings, interviews and personal conversations with informants, friends, relatives, acquaintances and musicians. Although my extensive data collection comprises various events in the life of the *Amhara*, only a small portion concerns the point of reference of the present study. These are, among others, *azmari* (the itinerant musician, entertainer, social commentator and political agitator) music performances I have been able to watch and/or listen to in traditional pubs (*azmari-betoč*) and on diverse family/private events such as wedding ceremonies and social gatherings. Supplementary recordings I made involve *təzətā* instrumentals played on *krar*, *masinqō* and *wašənt* (six-string lyre, single-string fiddle and end-blown flute). Apart from the recorded data, observations were made in various night establishments of Addis Ababa, where live music is performed. Useful audio-visual data available on the internet as well as literatures have been reviewed. In the latter case, however, lack of written sources directly referring to the main subject of discussion was something that I should mention as a hurdle to my research paper and a problem that would affect similar investigations in the future.

At first, the multiple connotations of the word *təzətā* will be observed in relation with music, art, language and literature. Subsequently, the possible origin of the *təzətā*, its evolution over the years and its socio-cultural context will be highlighted. The lyrical contents and melodic-rhythmic arrangements of selected songs will be examined followed by a brief concluding remark.

In the appendix, efforts have been made to list available and accessible *təzətā* songs, mainly those recorded for commercial purpose from the 1970 up to the present day. This includes both analogue (vinyl 45s, LPs, audio cassettes) and digital sound carriers (audio CDs). For those tracks with no reference of the label, internet links, e.g. YouTube, have been provided. The lists are divided into three parts. The first comprises *təzətā* songs in traditional versions; i.e. accompanied by a *krar* or *masinqō*; e.g. see Asnaketch Worku or Ketema Mekonnen. The second list entails *təzətā* songs in 'modern' renditions; i.e. accompanied by Western music instruments, a 'modern' music band, e.g. see Mahmoud Ahmed and Getachew Kassa. The third list contains instrumental pieces of the *təzətā*.

Definition of *Təzətā* (Notalgia)

Prior to proceeding to an in-depth examination on the various connotations of *təzətā*, let us first assess the word 'nostalgia' that derives "... from the words 'nostos' meaning to return, and 'algos' meaning pain. Nostalgia, a term primarily used to express one's pain or heartache caused by constant longing one may feel when he/she lives away from home and cannot return, a feeling we call 'homesickness' today" (Koenke 2010: 5). Any person experiences nostalgia irrespective of place of origin, cultural background, age, gender or lifestyle. It is obvious that our present is the result of our past experiences and activities, or in other words our past is the foundation of our present. Assessing the term's treatment from 1688 (by a Swiss physician) until today, Koenke notes that nostalgia was once considered as an illness, caused by brain dysfunction. But as time went by, its meaning gradually changed: For instance, during the 1970s nostalgia was defined as yearning for a past time that can never be lived again rather than a yearning for a place (ibid 6). In her book *Nostalgia: A Sanctuary of Meaning*, Wilson (2005: 36) describes the term from its present-day understanding⁵ contrary to its original meaning "... nostalgia is an emotion of longing for the past – admittedly, the longing may be for a past that did not necessarily exist.... Nostalgia may be experienced collectively, in the sense that it occurs when we are with others who shared the event(s) being recalled."

Təzətā: As a Song: From musical viewpoint, the word *təzətā* is, first and foremost, understood as a song by many Ethiopians, a song performed in various settings by a male or a female singer. The vocal part may or may not be accompanied by instrument/s. Woubshet (2008: 5) elucidates *təzətā* as "a signature ballad in the Amharic songbook" always taking "the form of an expression of loss.... *təzətā* is a ballad about the memory of love loss. The lovelorn singer takes up as the subject the departed lover and, simultaneously, the unrelieved memory of loss that the lover's departure has prompted." *Təzətā* is a "... memory and the act of memory, or the memory of loss, longing and nostalgia which certainly evokes the word's attendant mood, its melancholy, which is discernible in the way Amharic speakers use it even in the most quotidian exchanges". The Ethiopian playwright, Abate Mekuria (1989), explains *təzətā* as "a recollection of the past, as nostalgia of the experiences of the past", while Shelemay (2006) describes it as an "all-time Ethiopian favourite song... When someone sings *təzətā* they are singing a song of longing for country, or for a lover". In the ethnographic film entitled *Under African Skies* (1989), World Laureate Maître Afework Tekle († 1932–2012) highlights that "..... *təzətā* expresses the real musical soul of Ethiopians.... full of symbolism and allegory. It is a recollection and nostalgia of the past. It is a love song, a song of sorrow and happiness. It is a song performed from the bottom of the heart." Afework Tekle dedicated a painting to *təzətā* entitled *Remembrances*. He explains that "the painting is symbolic and allegorical as the song itself showing "a sad looking beautiful girl in the typical classical style..... as the most beautiful woman, she should have a glimpse of sadness....." Hence, the artist portrays

the sadness on the girl's face as beauty in his own way. In conjunction with the effects of Blues music on humans, Drake (2012: 66, 69) similarly reflects: "... the bizarre equation of sadness with beauty, a remarkable idea that draws out the listener's deepest emotional responses. By beautifying his sorrow, the musician beautifies his life story and, in so doing, beautifies himself. By relating to the musician's sorrow, the listener can also partake of that beauty, attaching it to her own sorrows, her own life story, her own self. Even in the absence of lyrics, Blues music still has the remarkable ability to communicate emotions and ideas. As for catharsis, it seems clear that emotional purging is a major part of what draws people to blues music, and it is precisely the experience of sadness as beauty that facilitates this purging. Sadness without beauty is just depressing, but when coupled with beauty it becomes healthy, even therapeutic".

Although the idea of relating beauty and sadness depends on subjective interpretation, sensation and emotion, I believe that Drake's clarification of the Blues music has striking similarities in my understanding of *tazatā* tune and its messages (with or without lyric) can be expressed through the inseparable components, sadness and beauty.

It might be worth discussing the effect nostalgic songs have on humans and which feelings particularly *tazatā* evokes on Ethiopians. In this regard, I allude to those residing in the diaspora including those living within Ethiopia, but outside their traditional, cultural and societal boundaries.

Exiled life is not a recent phenomenon for Ethiopians. At different periods of the country's history several circumstances have caused its peoples to leave their homeland either voluntarily or forcibly (Shelemay 2011: 195-199). In his paper "*Migration and Refugeism in Ethiopian Song Lyrics*", Getahun (2011: 343-346) mentions the service of Ethiopian soldiers in Libya and Korea (during the early and mid-20th century). Between 1945 and 1974 (p. 347), Ethiopians left their homeland mainly for the purpose of education. Contrary to the mentioned two periods and reasons of migrations, the recent history of the country 1974 to 1991, was a period marked by severe political disruption under the leadership of the dictatorial military junta, *Derg*. Above all, the 1980s were known for constant political instability and insecurity. Consequently, the *Derg* faced strong opposition and societal distractions. Following this situation, a mass exodus of Ethiopians was witnessed that continued for several decades.

Autobiographical accounts, personal memories, and academic works based on empirical data have been published in the post-*Derg* era. Ethiopian film makers have contributed their part in remembering that dark period through their respective film productions, among which we can mention the films *Gara'gar* (Tumult 1996)⁶ and *Yāwānz Ma'abel* (Deluge 1995)⁷ (see in Pfaff 2004). The same applies to music, stage plays, poetry and other artistic products. With large Ethiopian Diaspora communities established in the past three to four decades, mainly in Europe and North America, songs have served as one of the means to express one's origin/identity to the diaspora and vice versa. Ethiopia, its landscapes, customs, traditions, holidays, family reunions, love and many other issues were echoed in numerous nostalgic songs as well as in *tazatā* hence, inducing sentimental feelings (Wilson 2005: 88-108; Trigg 2006:55; Shelemay 2009: 1161).

One of the major problems diaspora Ethiopians commonly encounter is the longing for their homeland as a result of being uprooted from their place of origin, their culture and their societies (Getahun 2011: 351-352). In a previous article⁸ considering music, nostalgia and homesickness, I attempted to address life of Ethiopians in the Diaspora, along with the effect, impact and role of nostalgic songs and their content, e.g. Tewodros Kassahun's (Teddy Afro) tune called *Hagere*⁹ 'My Homeland'. In doing so, I analysed a number of songs performed by various artists residing in Ethiopia and abroad. How are songs messages evoking the feeling

of homesickness experienced that diaspora Ethiopians have been experiencing? What is the effect of such songs including the *təzətā*, when listened far away from home?

No doubt that musical taste is subjective. This does not only depend on learned and adapted behaviour of the individual, but also on situational aspects that can influence the general mood and make-up. Fact is however, that music has the power of influencing the listener to visualize, fantasize, feel, think, dream, become sad, angry or excited. Taking this notion into consideration, I took the liberty of asking a number of individuals (residing in Ethiopia and abroad) to share their personal opinions about the *təzətā* tune. What is *təzətā* to you? What do you feel when you listen to *təzətā*? Whose *təzətā* version is your favourite and why?

During my recent fieldwork in Ethiopia that took place in early 2014, I had the opportunity to meet renowned Ethiopian veteran artists such as Getachew Debalke¹⁰, Alemayehu Eshete¹¹ and Merawi Sitot with whom I was able to discuss Ethiopian music in general including the *təzətā* song. For instance, Merawi Sitot¹² describes *təzətā* as follows: *“təzətā is a powerful song with powerful lyrics of love, beauty, loss, nostalgia and similar issues. It refreshes and enriches the mind and soul. In my opinion, whether vocal or instrumental, traditional or modern, təzətā is undoubtedly one of the timeless tunes inscribed in the annals of Amharic music. Its melody makes me visualize the beautiful landscapes and peoples of my country. Apart from my favourite tunes that I play on my instrument, for instance ambassel, when I play the sweet təzətā melody I feel an excitement that deeply touches my soul. Words can never explain enough one’s feeling about this meaningful ballad. It is one of our musical identities, our cultural asset. No other song has been performed in such a variety and by generations of artists, still being re-arranged by young and talented musicians, like Mikael Belayneh, Bezuayehu Demissie and Tewodros Kassahun”*.

Journalist, art and culture promoter, writer and poet, Helina Teferra¹³ articulates that *təzətā* has an exceptional place in her heart. *“...It is the only way of re-living our yesteryears. Təzətā is more than a song to most of us, Ethiopians. Whenever I listen to any təzətā tune, I plunge into the deep sea of nostalgia. The beauty of its melody fascinates me especially when I listen to it flowing from those mesmerizing voices of təzətā giants such as Mahmoud Ahmed, Asnaketch Worku and Bezawork Asfaw. Təzətā is one great piece of art and a treasure that has been handed over by our forefathers from one generation to the other. It is like good wine; the older it gets, the sweeter it becomes. I love təzətā, I live təzətā. I am short of words to explain everything I feel about this ballad. It is simply magnificent! Even though it is quite difficult to choose among the uncountable təzətā versions sung by different vocalists in different tones and voices, my favourite təzətā is Mahmoud Ahmed’s”*.

“Listening to songs such as the təzətā gives me great pleasure. Təzətā, in my opinion, is generally related with life’s ups and downs. It makes me emotional. I listen to the melody and feel as if each and every verse line reflects my own life and my own past. I recall long forgotten places, my childhood, the laughter and sorrow I shared with loved ones. Sometimes təzətā brings tears to my eyes or it makes me smile filling my heart with joy. The memories are bittersweet. Although this ballad has been interpreted in so many different ways, I prefer the traditional rendition performed by the azmari (solo) or by a male-female azmari-couple singing alternately in different voice ranges with varied melodic ornamentations” (Tirunesh Getachew¹⁴).

“Təzətā is a song with a special essence. Listening to this song gives me a rush adrenaline. I envisage a beautiful painting of a landscape, an endless and unreachable horizon. This song creates nostalgia and melancholy, simultaneously relaxing my mind. When I perform təzətā, I sing it from the bottom of my heart; I feel the song, the pain that wistfulness creates. Təzətā always reminds me of my musician father who was a great admirer of Kassa Tessema’s songs accompanied with krar. I recall how Kassa’s majestic voice used to grace our home and my father appreciating Kassa’s authentic talent and his

singing style with his baritone voice, the voice which is exceptionally his to date. Exclusive is also how he brings the vocal and instrumental lines to a harmonious whole, how he interprets the poetic lyrics by prolonging or stretching certain phrases, words or syllables. Until this day, Kassa's songs always remind me of my childhood. My *təzətā* queen is the traditional artist Asnaketch Worku (my great idol, my role model), who interprets the *təzətā* with her beautiful vocals harmoniously blending it with the *krar* lines played by herself. From the modern renditions, Kuku Sebsebe's *təzətā* is my favourite (Martha Teferra, *krar* player and vocalist¹⁵).

Təzətā: As a *Qəñät*, Scale: One of the four popular *qəñətoč* (pl. of *qəñät*) widely used in the *Amhara* music culture, is known as *təzətā*, with the other three being *batī*, *ančī hoyē länē* and *ambassäl*. Although the scope of this paper will not allow discussing the *qəñətoč* in detail, I would like to give a short overview about their origin and their controversial theory that needs to be given due attention in future investigations, since the state of research is still in its infancy. Furthermore, I am aware that the *Amhara* secular music is indeed not limited to a determined theoretical framework and to these four *qəñətoč*, but, let us, for the time being, set out from this point. So, what is the origin of the *qəñətoč*: *təzətā*, *batī*, *ančī hoyē länē* and *ambassäl*? What is the basis of their theory?

Only a few scholarly accounts are at our disposal about the *qəñətoč*¹⁶ discussing them from various perspectives. But there is still a lot to explore in order to provide a satisfactory picture of the *qəñətoč*. As to their origin, for instance, the notion that the *qəñətoč* hold a close link with the liturgical music of the Ethiopian Church and with St. Yared (who - according to legends, beliefs and at times even to exaggerated mythologies - is considered as the father of the liturgical music), has been repeatedly echoed in previous studies. Contrary to this, the recent article of Weisser & Falceto (2013) provides a comprehensive historical study of the *qəñät* based on lexicographical, bibliographical and phonographic evaluations, literature reviews as well as extensive examination of a huge corpus of music material spanning a period of 70 years (1939-2005). This outcome may be considered as an impulse for future investigations on the *qəñətoč*, since the authors, among others, justifiably argue that the *qəñät* history and historiography should not just be limited to and based on "...beliefs, hearsays and legends only" (302).

In order to examine the *qəñətoč* theory along with their practical use in the *Amhara* music culture, I had conducted several fieldworks in central and northern Ethiopia: *Gondär*, *Bahär Dar*, *Mäqällē*, *Adigrat*, and Addis Ababa between 1997 and 2006. The outcome of my investigation revealed that - probably with very few exceptions - musicians including the general public are not familiar with the term *qəñät* (linked with music), its system or its theory¹⁷ (Tefferä 1999, 2001). Therefore, as an established scale system and as song's title, for example, *təzətā*, the *qəñät* theory is probably a recent invention (1950s/1960s) that was most likely triggered by the need to develop pedagogical techniques for music training (both modern and folk/traditional) in various music institutions then established (Weisser & Falceto 2013: 314-315). "Each *qəñät* appellation appeared very recently as song's titles, and not even related to a tuning system: *bati* and *ančī hoyē* in 1939 on recordings made in Ethiopia by Italians, *təzətā* among a series of recordings made in November 1946, and *ambasäl* in the mid-1950's on recordings released on the occasion of the emperor's [Haile Silassie] Jubilee" (ibid 304).

From its present 'understanding' and in its broadest sense, the term *qəñät* refers to a scale consisting of five pitches (occurring within an octave range) with approximate interval relationships. It is important to note that the *Amhara* music tradition is not based on fixed, but on non-tempered pitches, i.e. pitch deviations or pitch instability may appear in both

instrumental and vocal performances, however, within a limited tolerance margin that would still allow the given *qəñat* to be recognized as such.

The *qəñatoč*, their invention, development and change through time, their perception and visualization from emic and etic viewpoints and their theoretical and practical understanding, requires continued researches that should be directed to local and regional music cultures, given the fact that even within the *Amhara* region an absolute musical homogeneity cannot be expected. Consequently, we may assume that different *Amhara* localities may have small or large scale deviations, like the variances existing e.g. in dance and song styles or in the *Amarīña* dialects. Particularly, still unexplored *Amhara* regions (e.g. *Tägulät*, *Məñjar* and *Mänz*, even more importantly the towns of *Ambassäl* and *Bati* that are not only one of the *azmari* strongholds, but two of the *qəñatoč* are named after them) could be of great interest to study scales and their function in traditional music performances.

Təzətā has two *qəñat* types: *abəy* = 'foremost/main/major/leading' and *nə'us* = 'small /minor'. The first version is made up of M2-M2-m3-M2 (M = major; m = minor); e.g. *c'-d'-e'-g'-a'*. The departure pitch or the lowest degree (here *c'*) varies depending on the vocal range of a singer or on the desired pitch of an instrument¹⁸ player. Type 1b, which is most probably a more recent version developed from type 1a, differs through the lowered 3rd and 5th notes by an approximate semitone resulting in *c'-d'-e^b'-g'-a^b'*. This version is frequently applied in the *təzətā* song. Based on my so far made observations and as far as I am not mistaken, I have never heard this *təzətā qəñat* version in any other song.

Figures 1a-b: approximate pitches of *abəy* and *nə'us* *təzətā qəñatoč* (left = *abəy*; right = *nə'us*)



Təzətā: As an Artistic and Aesthetic Expression: *Təzətā* is a word that adds spice to Ethiopian literature and poetry. Songwriters, lyricists, playwrights, poets, painters and authors have always expressed the feeling of nostalgia, *təzətā*, in their creative works of art. The lyrics often contain narrative elements, i.e. mainly about longing for a loved one, family, homeland or any positive or negative recollections of a person's past life. They also comprise messages about social values and criticisms, hardship and relief, happiness and sorrow, as well as memories dealing with cultural and political past times Ethiopians have gone through. Referring to the *Derg* regime mentioned earlier, Shelemay (2006) notes that "*təzətā surely had a very lively existence in the years during and since the revolution, when everyone has been nostalgic for what came before, and those Ethiopians in the diaspora are certainly nostalgic for homeland*".

Let us take a look at one of the frequently used *təzətā* lyrics narrating about the burden of love:

ትዝታዬ አንተ ነህ ትዝታም የለብኝ
ትዝታዬ አንተ ነህ ትዝታም የለብኝ
እመጣሁ እያልክ እየቀረሁብኝ

You are the only reason for my nostalgia (for my *təzətā*)
You are the only reason for my nostalgia
... who always promises to come, but fails to show up

Woubshet (2008: 6) explains these two verse lines as follows: “Here the possessive *təzətā’ye*, ‘my *təzətā*’, refers to the singer’s own melancholic memory but also to the absent lover, since in Amharic the possessive is an ornament placed around certain nouns — ‘my’ love, beauty, life, memory—to show affection in addressing a beloved. The second clause in the first two lines contains another generic trope—the singer’s disavowal of all memory but that of love loss—which positions lack and longing as the song’s spatial and temporal coordinates (lack is “here” longing is “then”). The third line—the absent lover’s empty promise of a return—reprises and affirms the longing stated ambiguously at first. The longing in *təzətā* is without resolution, since the possibility of restoration or return is always thwarted. Unlike other acts of nostalgia that try to repair longing with belonging, *təzətā* is akin to what is termed... reflective nostalgia, which thrives in algia, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming - wistfully, ironically, desperately”.

The next verses highlight the constant pain of missing a loved one in a beautifully expressed language:

ባጌጠ ባማረ በትዝታ ፈረሰ	Riding a beautifully decorated horse of <i>təzətā</i>
ይኸው ደግመህ መጣህ ዛሬም እዚህ ድረስ	Here you came again today

This lyric explains the situation of a lovelorn person that goes to the extent of painting a picture of the missed one, riding a horse on a beautifully-decorated saddle. Therefore, the evocative narratives reflect a notion or an inspiration of a past time. Hence they leave room to the listener’s own interpretation.

Here is another lyric reflecting pain and agony for a lost relationship or a missing lover:

እሱ ርቆ ሄዶ ፍቅሩ ከኔ ቀርቶ	He is long gone, but his love lives in me
ነፍሴን ሊያወጣት ነው ትዝታው ጎትቶ	I am almost dying, constantly remembering
በትዝታታ ሮሮ እዩኝ እንደከላሁ	Look how I am suffering and even lost weight due to nostalgia
እድን ነበር እኮ ፍቅርህን ብረላው	I would be healed, had I been able to forget you

In 2010 the music album bearing the title *Yätəzətāwoch Təzətā* [Memories of *Təzətā*] was released. The majority of the tracks on this very album contain different versions of *təzətā* songs (tracks 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10), performed by various artists.

Several lyricists have contributed their works for the album. For instance, Michael Belayneh’s *təzətā* track (no. 10), which is written by the Ethiopian poet, playwright and actor, Getinet Eniyew, *təzətā* is portrayed in a positive manner, namely as beauty, art, life and melody; something that one adorns themselves with, enables one to turn the hands of time and re-live the past in times of solitude, missing “the good old days” (table 1).

Extract of Mikael Belayneh’s *təzətā* lyric; lyricist: Getinet Eniyew

ቅኔ ነው ትዝታ ዜማ ነው ትዝታ	<i>Təzətā</i> is poetry; <i>təzətā</i> is melody
ጥበብ ነው ትዝታ ሕይወት ነው ትዝታ	<i>Təzətā</i> is art; <i>təzətā</i> is life
ዞረው የሚኖሩት የናፈቁ ለታ	Something to live on during times of nostalgia
ሕይወትና ተስፋ ምኞት እና ዕውነታ	Life and hope, dreams and reality
ስራና አጋጣሚ ኑሮና ዕጣ ፈንታ	Work and incident, living and destiny
መንፈስና ስጋ የተዋጉ ለታ	At times of conflict between the body and soul
አልፎ የሚያጌጡበት ጥበብ ነው ትዝታ	<i>Təzətā</i> is a treasure one adorns himself with while thinking about the past.

An impressive music video of this track was also produced¹⁹. The production contains color and black & white footages, depicting different periods, locations, sceneries and settings. In doing so, the producer attempts to epitomize the past through black & white footage, while the present is represented by the colour footage. In a bid to create an effect of nostalgic feelings by merging image and music, a constant change of shots and image mixing/super imposing has been applied. Thus, the video begins with a shot showing the singer, along with a painter and a guitarist (Michael Hailu a.k.a. Micky), all of them engaged in interpreting *təzətā* through their respective talent/ skills. Right after that, a short black & white footage follows showing a young man visualizing his romantic past with his lover (while a young lady's image is shown in this same footage). A variety of footages take turn consecutively, in accordance with the content of the lyric. Then a wonderful improvisation by the guitarist follows, while the artist with his pallet and brush in his hands continues to paint his version of *təzətā* on his canvass. In general, this production is carried out in a professional manner, an example of perfect correlation of lyric, melody and film, efficiently showing the feeling of *təzətā* in a broader context. It emphasizes that *təzətā*, apart from being a song title or a word used to express nostalgia, is part and parcel of human life, soul and mind. Therefore, it is my conviction that the professionals involved in the production of this music video, have exerted maximum effort to interpret the deep poetic content of the lyric effectively. As a scholar and a native of that country, I consider this felicitous video is a perfect demonstration of the impact *təzətā* has on Ethiopians individually, and on the Ethiopian society, at large. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning Getinet Eniyew's anthology, entitled *ዕውቀትን ፍለጋ* *əwəqätən Fäläga* [In search of Wisdom 2001], that includes a poem about *təzətā* with the title *ለካስ ምስጥ ኖራል* *Läkas Məsst Mor^ual!!* [What a termite it is!]. Through this poem, Getinet looks at *təzətā* from a totally different perspective. He describes it as a termite, eating one's soul by robbing the happiness, smile, hope and away (table 2).

Table 2: Poem: *Läkas məsst nor^ual* [What a termite it is!] by Getinet Eniyew (Getinet 2001: 64-65)

በዘመን ቁለቁለት፣ የሁዋሊት ተስቤ	On a steep road of time; pulling myself backwards
ጊዜን ያለቀስቱ፣ የሁዋሊት ጋልቤ	Galloping on time towards the wrong track
በዘንድሮ እንቅልፌ፣ አምናዬን አልጫ	Dreaming of my yesteryears in my present slumber
ከዘመን ሰፊድ ላይ፣ ትዝታ ቆርጥጫ	Feeding myself with past memories from the tray of time
ከዘመን ማሳ ላይ፣ ትዝታ ጠርጥሬ	Consuming memory from the time's meadow
ለካስ ወደሁዋላ፣ ቆሜ ኖራል ዞሬ።	Just realized that I was standing here, with my face turned around to the past
የጥንት ስእሌን፣ አቡዋራ አራግፌ	Having dusted off my past image
የዛገ አሻራዬን፣ ዳግመኛ ነድፌ	Having re-printed my rusted past
ያለፈኝን ዕጣ፣ እንደገና ፅፌ	Re-writing my missed chances anew
ዘመንን በዘመን የሁዋሊት አጥፌ	Folding time backwards
የአሁን ጊዜ እንባዬን፣ በዚያን ጊዜ ሳቄ	Wrapping my present tears with my past laughter
ፈሰሱን አብሼ ውሃውን አድርቄ	Wiping out the stream [of tears] drying out the wetness
ከአሁኔ ሸፍኜ ከዘንድሮ ርቄ	Fleeing from the present, running away from “now”
በዛሬ ምድጃ ትናንትናን ሞቄ	Warming my past with today's heater
ኖራል ለካ እምኖር በነበር ደምቄ	Just realized that I was living with twinkles of the past
እንዲህ የአሁን ቁስሌን በትዝታ እያከምኩ	Treating my wounds with past memories
የዘመን እባጩን በዘመን እያከምኩ	Healing my tumour; my burdens of the past with time
የድሮ ጋቢዬን ዘንድሮ እያጣፋሁ	Wearing the shawl of my yesteryears today
የዚያኔ ጥጋቤን አሁን እያገሳሁ	Burping from my past satisfaction
በሃች አምና አረቄ ዘንድሮ እየሰከርሁ	Getting drunk with the liquor of the past

በትናንት ቅላጼ ዛሬ እያንጎራጎርሁ	Lamenting with yesterday's melody
ትዝታ እንደደረብሁ ትዝታ እንዳላመጥሁ	Wearing memory; dining memory
ትዝታ እንደጠጣሁ ትዝታ እየዘፈንሁ	Drinking memory; chanting memory
የኖርሁኝ ሲመስለኝ	Assuming to lead a decent life
ለካስ ከዘመን ጋር አብሬ ሞቻለሁ	But fact is that I am gone with the past
ትዝታ በልቼ፣ ትዝታ ጠጥቼ	Consuming memory; drinking memory
ሲመስለኝ የነበር የፋፋ አከላቴ	Believing my body would recover
የዛሬው ገላዬ፣ የአሁኑ ውበቴ	My current body and good looks
አቅሜ፣ ቀለሜ፣ መንፈሴ፣ ጉልበቴ	My physical condition; complexion; emotion; energy
ተብስክስከው አልቀው ቀርተው	Weakened, deteriorated; left with skin and bones
በአጥንታቸው	
በፊቴ መስታወት በዛሬ ተራቁተው	I stared in my naked self into the mirror
አፈጠጡ በኔ አፈጠጥሁባቸው	They stared back at me, I stared again
ነገሩኝ አንድ እውነት እኔም ሰማሁአቸው	They revealed on truth to me, while I listened
ለካንስ ትዝታ.....	Ah... now I know that reminiscence
ቢጣዱት አይሞቁም፣ ቢበሉት አይጠግቡም	Doesn't give warmth; doesn't fill the stomach
ቢጠጡት አይረከም፣ ጉርሻው ገላ አይሆንም	Doesn't slake thirst; feeding from it doesn't relieve
ህልም የሚጎትተው የሃሳብ ሰረገላ፣	A carriage of thought [sentiment] pulled by dream
ለካስ ምስጥ ኖራል...!	What a termite it [<i>təzətā</i>] is!!
ሰውን ቅርጥፍ አርጎ፣ አኝኮ የሚበላ!!	That utterly eats up humans.

Here, one may perceive how the carefully chosen words link memory with nostalgia, since there is no nostalgia without a certain memory (Trigg 2006: 37). It reflects the fact that one has only been concentrated on the past, while ignoring the present and the future. Getinet (2013) suggests that one should accept changes in life as a positive force that provides the chance to look into the future, instead of becoming a victim of present conditions. Even if the past persistently exists in the present (Trigg 2006: 56) and should also be recognised as such, it would be useless to stick to it. Lowenthal (1985: XV) argues: “... *the past is everywhere. All around us there are features which, like ourselves and our thoughts, have more or less recognizable antecedents. Relics, histories, memories suffuse human experience. Each particular trace of the past ultimately perishes, but collectively they are immortal. Whether it is celebrated, rejected, attended to or ignored, the past is omnipresent.*” Thus, the past should always serve as a stepping stone in order to deal with the present and to challenge the unspecified future (Trigg ebd: 58). It is a tangible component of the present enriching it positively or negatively. It maintains a sense of continuity and stability over time. Similarly, “...*placing oneself – in the past, present, and projecting into the future – is vital to each of us. The experience and expression of nostalgia need not be merely an escape, nor does the past need to be viewed as static. Individuals decide – in the present – how to recall the past and, in this process, imbue the past with meaning, which has evolved over time and is relevant in the present*” (Wilson 2005: 7).

The message of the next lyric stems from *təzətā* version of the female diaspora vocalist, Bezawork Asfaw, whose endearing voice is in my opinion, quite suitable for this song. It would probably not be an exaggeration to state that Bezawork's popularity was particularly prompted by her *təzətā* song. It is not without a reason why she is dubbed as ‘The Queen of *Təzətā*’ የትዝታ ንግስት²⁰. In an interview, Bezawork (2010) explains that it is only this particular song through which she can perfectly express her innermost feelings related with her love life, her homesickness, her sorrow, happiness, generally her past memories and which she performs from the bottom of her heart. Falceto (2007) notes about Amha Eshete, the first Ethiopian music producer who “.... *recalls an unforgettable evening in late 1984 in his*

Washington DC club – The Nègarit – where the Ethiopian diaspora gathered, and during which Bezawork outdid herself with a memorable and heartrending version. Visibly smarting from her recent romantic breakup, Bezawork improvised for 45 minutes on the torments of lost love, never repeating a single verse, as if pain heightened her inspiration. The audience was transfixed, somewhere between enchantment and fear, and wondered if all this wasn't going to end in suicide. No recording was made of this intense performance." Vocalists such as Bezawork, who possess the most appropriate voice perfectly fitting for *təzətā* are capable of beautifying the song and add a unique colour and soul to it. The lyric of this song, included in the CD album mentioned above, is written by Nigussie Te'amwork. Unlike many *təzətā* songs that usually narrate about romantic love, the substance of Bezawork's new *təzətā* rather deals with an overall comparison of life in the past, versus the present, emphasizing changes observed in human relations and characters, the shift of peoples' outlook towards money, friendship, honesty and integrity. The lyricist praises the past where honesty and genuine friendship were more valuable than money or any personal benefit. He portrays *təzətā* as everyone's faithful friend, a way of looking back to yesteryears in which more wisdom and maturity had prevailed. According to Bezawork, all these facts are related to her personal life and to her decades-long experience in exile. The verse lines reflecting the core messages are given below (table 3):

Table 3: Extract from Bezawork Asfaw's *təzətā* lyric; *Yetəzətāwoch Təzətā*, Nahom Records, vol. 23, track 5, New York, 2010

ትናንትናን ያየ ስለነገ ያውቃል	One who witnessed the past, can deal with the future
ታሪክ ያስተዋለ ከጠቢብ ይልቃል	One who is aware of history is talented than a mastermind
ዘመን የማይሸረው ታሪክ ነው ትዝታ	<i>Təzətā</i> is a timeless history
ደጉን ፊት ደቅኖ ሁሉን የሚረታ	Putting the good parts ahead; overcoming every barrier
ትዝታ ታማኝ ነው ወረትን አያውቅም	<i>Təzətā</i> is faithful and not temporary
እንደ ሰው ለገንዘብ ቦታውን አይለቅም	It does not lose its dignity like humans for money
ገንዘብ ስርገኛ ነው ሰው ሲያቀርብ ሰብስቦ	Money is ephemeral; one can buy friends with money
ድህነት ግን ሲያርቅ ይመስላል ተስቦ	But poverty segregates one like an epidemic disease
ከጊዜ ጋር አብሮ ሰው ብዙ ቢመኝም	Even if humans have lots of desires in the course of time
ደህናን ጥሎ ማለፍ ብልህ አያሰኝም	To put away the good doesn't make one clever
የትናንቱ ነገር ይሀው ሆነ ዛሬ	That of yesterday is taking place today
ዕድሜ ለትዝታ ኑሮን አየሁ ኖራ	Thanks to <i>təzətā</i> here I am, still alive witnessing today's life

Another *təzətā* version worth mentioning is that of Madingo Afework, whom nature has gifted with a magnificent vocal and musical soul²¹. Madingo joined the Ethiopian music scene around the 1990s. In his music album (2006) the lyric of his *təzətā* track (table 4), written by Habtamu Bogale, bears a different message. Commenting on this lyric (table 4), Madingo, clarifies that he and the lyricist agreed to come up with a core message, that portrays *tezeta* from a different perspective, which is clearly demonstrated in the lyric, emphasizing the importance of looking forward to a brighter future with 'hope', instead of looking back into the past and always languishing in melancholy, to move on and get inspired to live a better today and tomorrow with relief (see also Trigg 2006: 58).

Table 4: Madingo Afework's *tazatā* song lyric; CD Album: *Ayädärägām*, see track 4, Electra Music Shop, Addis Ababa, 2006

አግኝቶ ላያገኝ ወይ ጠቅሞ ላይጠቅመው	For no benefit....
ሰው ለምን ይኖራል ትዝታ ሲያደክመው	...why suffer from nostalgia?
ምንድን ነው ትርጉሙ ምንድነው ትዝታ?	What is the meaning of <i>tazatā</i> ?
ባክህ ተው የማይሉት የሁሉም ሰው ጌታ	Something that no one can get rid of; everyone's superior
ይህው ሰው ይኖራል በትዝታ ሰበብ	Here we see humans, living with memories
የሀዋሊት ሲጋልብ ያለፈን በማሰብ	Galloping backwards visualizing the past
ሰው እንዴት ባለፈው በትናንት ይኖራል?	How can one exist with memories of yesterday?
ዛሬን በእጁ ይዞ ለነገው መሰላል	Holding today is in their hands and hoping for the future
ገለል በል ትዝታ ልርሳ በሽታዬን	Leave me alone 'memory', let me forget my pain
አትጋርደኝ ልይበት የነገ ተስፋዬን	Make way for me to look into my tomorrow's hope
ባይጠፋ አሻራው ትዝታው ቢነፍስም	Though its trace persists and flashes back on and off
ባለፈ ዓመት ዝናብ ዛሬ አይታረስም	It is unfair to allow the past to dominate our present
በትዝታ ሰበብ ላለፈው ሲጨነቅ	Many leave this world before shrugging off the burden of past memories
ስንት ሰው አለፈ ከዓምናው ሳይታረቅ	How many perished without having settled with the past?
ገነባለሁ እንጂ ድካሙ ቢያመኝም	I will shape my life even if it is hard
ለፈረሰው ቤቴ ሳለቅስ አልገኝም	I won't cry for my past, I will build my future
ያለፈን ላይቀይር በከንቱ ይለፋል	People torment themselves in vain though it is impossible to change that, which has already happened
መቼም ሰው ደፋር ነው ፈጣሪን ይጋፋል	Humans are ungrateful to the Lord
ትንሽ እልፍ ሲሉ እልፍ እየተገኘ	Instead of striving to make a better future
ደሃ ነው በልቡ ሞቱን የተመኘ	To give up is simply poor-mindedness

In terms of arrangement, what makes Madingo's *tazatā* unique is the fact that it is divided into four different sections; each section representing well-known *tazatā* versions of veteran singers Kassa Tessema, Mesfin Haile, Getamesay Abebe and Tesfaye Kassa²². The song begins with Tesfaye Kassa's version, followed by that of Kassa Tessema, Mesfin Haile and Getamesay Abebe consecutively. While listening to the track one may perceive how Madingo applied his personal flair to each version, perfectly imitating the voice of each singer in a manner that amazes all those, who know the original versions.

The next, quite interesting *tazatā* song lyric is that of Tewodros Kassahun (a.k.a Teddy Afro), given in table 5. Teddy's *tazatā* is dubbed with that of the late female vocalist Shishig Chekol which she performed some three decades ago. Apart from Shishig's song part, the lyric in Teddy's part expresses compassion, honour and sympathy to Shishig, whose artistic debut started at the *Hagär Fəqər* Theatre, the pioneer theatre hall in Ethiopia established in 1935. Shishig unfortunately passed away at the age of ca. 48 without having enjoyed her personal and professional life²³. For those who are not familiar with the background story, this duet may sound as if both singers have performed together, but this is just the result of today's technology, the art of audio dubbing/recording. Teddy wrote the touching lyrics (see Teddy's part) for someone he never knew in person, but whose passion for the profession and exceptional talent he admired. The song begins with a short introduction he performs. After the bridge music, Shishig's vocal part follows.

Table 5: Excerpt of Teddy Afro’s *tazatā* lyric entitled *Arat Meto Fikir* [400 Love]; Nahom Records Inc. Vol. 19, track no. 4, 2008

Shishig

ትዝታህ እረቂቅ ያለጊዜው ደራሽ እስከመጨረሻው ሰው አስጠላኝ ጭራሽ ተወኝ አላልኩም ወይ ተጎኩሎ ሜዳ?	Your nostalgia is so exclusive that arrives suddenly I hate to see anyone else Didn’t I warn you not to groom yourself when leaving the house?
ዓይን ወረተኛ ነው ያመጣል ዕንግዳ አራት መቶ ፍቅር ሶስት መቶ ትዝታ	Eyes invite strangers (invite unfaithfulness) 400 love; 300 nostalgia; e.g. too much heavy burden of nostalgia
የምቸለው ስጦኝ አቤት የኔ ጌታ	Oh Lord, please grant me the tenacity to stand all this!

Teddy Afro

አማክራው ነበር ልቤን በሚሰጥር መርቃት በሎኛል ይቅለልሽ አፈር አራት መቶ ፍቅር መሸከም ከብድሽ ይኸው ለዘላለም አፈር ተጫነሽ ዓለም የከበዳት ኑሮ ያልደላት አንጎራጉራ ትኑር እባክህ ተዋት ሽሽግን አትንካት የእግዜር ድሃ ናት አባት ሐገር ፍቅር የጥበብ መቅደሷ አስጠርተህ ግብር ከዜማ ድገሷ የንጋቷን እድሜ ከለከልካት ለሷ	I secretly conferred with my heart ...it told me to bless you; may your soul rest in heaven! Unable to sustain the heavy burden of love You've now been relegated into an eternal slumber The world has not been fair to her Lord, please let her sing and make a living with it For <i>Shishig</i> is a poor creature of Yours? Hager Fikir Theatre the mansion of ART Where she shared her bounty of songs with her audience Lord, you deprived her from enjoying a long life like <i>Nigatwa</i> ²⁴
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The message expressed in this lyric deserves special attention from poetic viewpoint. Particularly, verses 5 and 6 may be cited in which the “burden of love” is phrased in numerical figures “400 love and 300 nostalgia”, which designates how painful it is to sustain too much love. Simultaneously, this song is a reminder of all the unpleasant circumstances veteran Ethiopian musicians have been going through, simply because they chose this profession. Despite having entertained millions through their performances for years, none of those artists were given the recognition, admiration and support they were supposed to be accorded with, but rather led a life void of happiness, with meagre income, very little moral support etc. Teddy, therefore, deserves credit for being far sighted enough to realize this fact and take the initiation to pay homage to such legends in such a manner. He expresses reverence and sympathy to Shishig; hence this work indicates Teddy’s multiple talents as a vocalist, melody composer, song writer and lyricist.

The melodic structures of many *Amhara* songs, together with the *tazatā*, are commonly arranged in a cyclic form hence, recurring over and over again. As a result, it is possible that their melodic structures may sound monotonous for someone outside the culture, particularly if one does not understand the lyric and its message. In the case of the knowledgeable listener, the focus of the song largely targets the lyric, which continuously adds more excitement to the listening process. “*The Ethiopian emphasis on the study of poetry and versification becomes particularly noticeable when we realize that tradition attaches precedence to the meaning of the lyrics rather than to the melodies. It is the meaning that generally forms the basis of the Ethiopian aesthetic conception. Most traditional songs for example consist of relatively repetitive melodies, while the texts contain varied stanzas, artfully interwoven with subtlety and ambiguity, which only the knowledgeable attentive listener can translate meaningfully. It is important to*

understand that the aesthetic element.... is traditionally governed by textual considerations” (Kebede 1975: 60).

Concerning aesthetic components of lyrics, DeWitt Parker (2008) writes: *“This is true of all music that has a peculiar lyrical and human quality,the music that readily becomes popular because it seems to speak direct to the heart..... The lyric poem is appreciated by us as an expression of our own inner life; music as an expression of our own slumberous or subconscious moods. Yet even the more objective types of art, like the novel or the drama, become forms of self-expression, for we have to build up the worlds which they contain in our own imagination and emotion. We have to live ourselves out in them; we can understand them only in terms of our own life”.*

Təzətā: Possible Origin and Anthology

The scarcity of written source materials makes it difficult to trace back the possible origin and the age of the *təzətā* song. Given the history of the *Amhara* secular music tradition, I assume that it must have a close link with the *azmari* tradition. But what is the origin and history of the *azmari* tradition itself? Although some scholars assume that the *azmari* origin may date back as far as the pre-Christian period, there is no evidence to agree with this notion. According to Weisser & Falceto (2013: 304), the oldest written account, mentioning the *azmari* (published in 1907) dates back to the late 16th century. Betreyohannes (2012) mentions three theories with regard to the origin of the *azmari* tradition: *“Based on various evidences of circumstantial nature the origin of the tradition has been attributed to external influence, the Ethiopian Church and local socio-cultural practices. Scholars advocating any of the three theories did not come up with convincing evidence or a conclusive proof. Thus their theories so far remain hypothetical assumptions”.*

Secular music practiced in the Ethiopian highland regions has a long history likewise the sacred music of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Due to the strong influence of the church, secular music remained in the background until around the middle of the 17th century. Written sources confirm that Ethiopian nobilities used to hire *azmariwoč* to perform music on private and official events usually taking place within the respective royal courts. The Scottish explorer, James Bruce who visited the country during the reign of Ras Michael Sehul and undertook researches on traditional music instruments, must have been witness of the massacre of *azmariwoč* who were punished for their “naughtiness” in 1770 (Betreyohannes 2010: 20). Particularly, it was during the long period of isolation from ca. 1769 until Emperor Tewodros II overtook power in 1855²⁵ (until 1869). *“We witness in this period the birth of virile music, full of patriotic sentiments and exuberating heroism and fire. The secular music, always of folk origin, flourished side by side the church music. The azmariwoč carried out the message of freedom and joy to every nook and corner of the country, ... and roused the youth to action and war against the unscrupulous invaders”* (ibid: 10). There are hypothesis that during the Era of the Princes worldly music gradually liberated itself from the direct influence of the sacred music (Kimberlin 1976: 176; Kebede 1979: 78-79).

Under the reign of Emperor Tewodros II, worldly music must have been given more attention and continued to play an important role in royal courts. It is supposed that particularly war and heroic songs (*šäläla*, *qärärto* and *fukära*) derive from this period. Therefore, I believe that entertainment and love songs such as the *təzətā* might have already belonged to the song repertoire of the *azmariwoč*. Nevertheless, neither written nor oral source materials can prove this assumption. As to the earliest sound recordings (on wax cylinders) made in Ethiopia, the years 1905 and 1906 may be mentioned. The first delegation

was led by the German diplomat Friedrich Rosen among others accompanied by his brother Felix Rosen (a natural scientist), who made sound recordings in eastern and south-eastern regions of the country. The second expedition led by the German linguist Enno Littman that took place in 1906, mainly in *Axum* (*Tigray* region). It was the German physician, Erich Kaschke who accompanied this delegation and concurrently made sound recordings. The major part of these historical recordings contains 37 songs in *Tigrīña* and *Amariña* languages. I had the opportunity to examine this collection on behalf of the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv. A song entitled *təzətā* is not included in this collection²⁶. Another set of old sound recordings from a later period “in particular the remarkable body of music recorded by the Italian occupiers in 1939, 248 pieces on 124 78-rpm records” were examined by Falceto (2007) who – as a result – writes the following: “... we have found nothing remotely resembling what is today known and recognized as *təzətā*. On the other hand, the collection contains a considerable number of *bati* [songs] of which there is also no mention prior to 1939”. As to Falceto²⁷ the earliest recordings mentioning *təzətā* in their titles could probably refer to those made in the 1940s. On most of these samples the date *Hedar 3, 1939* is specified in handwritten notes. This date resembles the Ethiopian Calendar. Converted into the European Calendar, November 12, 1946 would be the result. The records are most probably test pressings (advanced copies), which were supposed to be released, however, there is no evidence that they were eventually released on records (*shekla*). Figure 2a shows a record from this period with the song entitled *Gänzäbe Tezeta* [nostalgia, my asset/my friend] written on it. The artist’s name is indicated as *Etagägn Hayle*, a female artist who was famous for her song *Zärafewa*. On another record (figure 2b) the song title is specified as ‘*təzətā*’ and the name of two female artists, *Asäläfätch Mulat* and *Negatwa Kälkay*, is indicated. On the label (figure 2c) the song title is ‘*təzətā*’ (on both sides), while the artists are *Asäläfätch Mulat* and *Mängistu*.... (no family name given). In this case, the date of recording is unspecified (see Weisser & Falceto 2013: 304, 307-309).



Figure 2a



Figure 2b

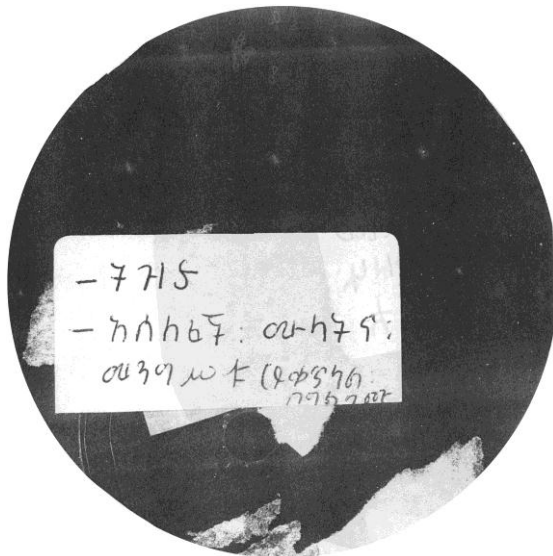


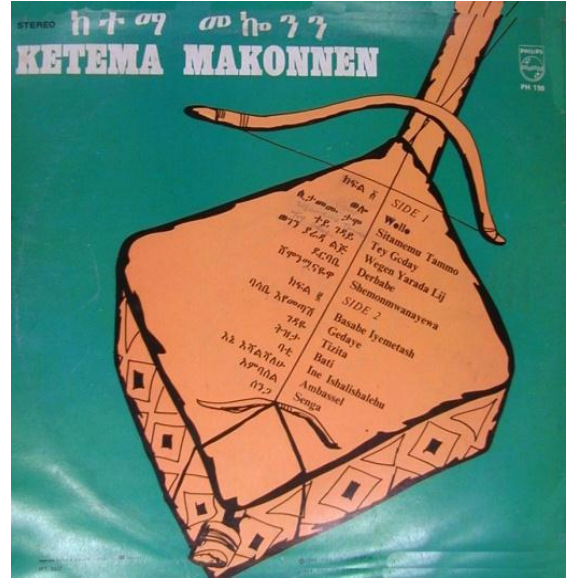
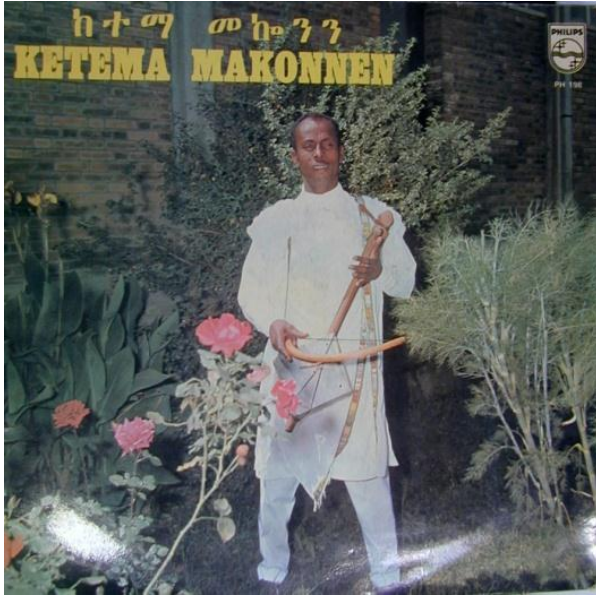
Figure 2a: Record no. 107, song: *Gänzäbe Təzətā* [My asset, nostalgia], artist: Etagegne Haile; 12.11.1946²⁸

Figure 2b: Record no. 209, song: *Təzətā* [Nostalgia], artists: Asäläfätch Mulat and Negatwa Kälkay; 12.11.1946²⁹

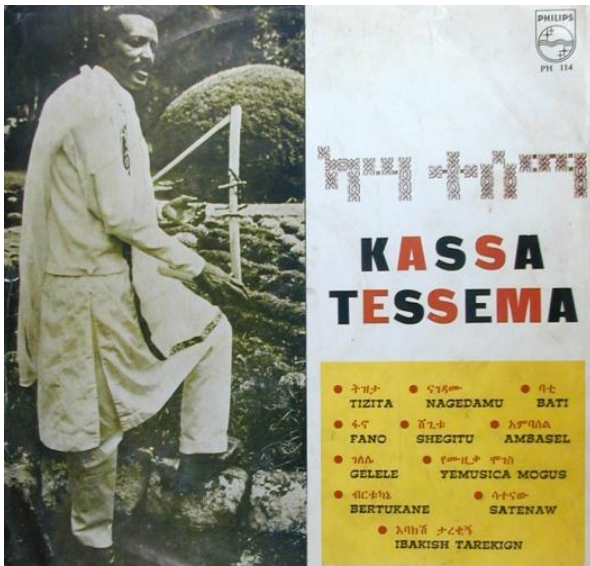
Figure 2c: Record with unknown date, song title: *Təzətā* [Nostalgia]; Artists: Asäläfätch Mulat and Mengistu X; no indication of date (1940?)

Figure 2c

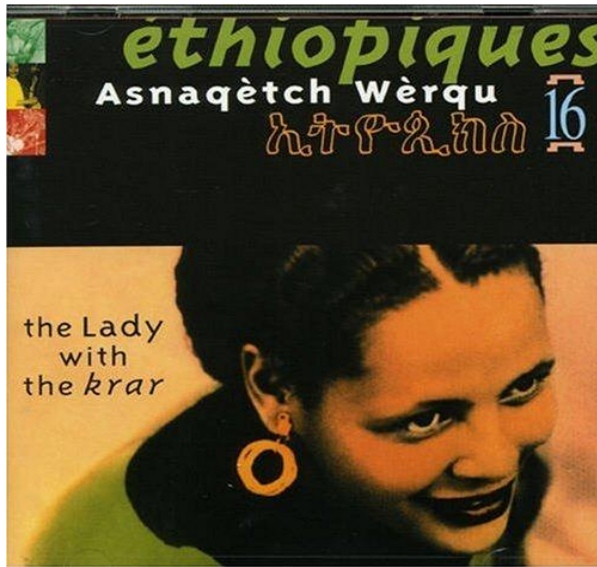
After the recordings were made in mid-1940s, commercial songs bearing the title *təzətā* could have probably been offered on the local music market during the 1970s, after local record labels, Amha, Kaifa-Records and Philips-Ethiopia came to the scene. Hence, *təzətā* songs of artists like Ketema Mekonnen, Kassa Tessema, Asnaketch Worku, Mahmoud Ahmed, Menelik Wossinachew and Getachew Mekuria were recorded by these private record labels. Besides, Ethiopian TV and radio broadcasting archives preserve numerous *təzətā* songs in their archives from much earlier periods (at least starting from the 1960s). Nowadays, internet portals such as YouTube offer old and latest uploaded videos with *təzətā* songs in traditional and modern versions. Several Ethiopian websites also offer *təzətā* songs. Hence, veteran artists as Ketema Mekonnen (†, figures 3a-b), Kassa Tessema († 1927-1974, figures 4a-b), Asnaketch Worku (†; figures 5a-b), Bahiru Kegne (†), Kebede Ali, Getamesay Abebe, Shishig Chekol (†), Nigatwa Kelkay (†), Yirga Dubale (†), Etagegnehu Haile (†), Derbabaw Abunu (†), Assefa Abate (†), Maritu Legesse, Weretaw Woubet rank at the top of the list of pioneer *azmariwoč*. Numerous *təzətā* versions are attributed to well-known veteran and young vocalists from the popular music panorama such as Mahmoud Ahmed, Getachew Kassa, Menelik Wossinachew (†, figures 6a-b), Seifu Yohannes³⁰ (†), Bezawork Asfaw, Kuku Sebsebe, Muluken Melesse, Bezuyayehu Demissie, Aster Aweke, Rahel Yohannes, Tewodros Kassahun (*Teddy Afro*), Teshome Asegid, Tsegaye Eshetu, Hanna Shenkute, Nati Haile, Wubishet Fisseha (†), Mikael Belayneh, Madingo Afework have respectively given the *təzətā* an individual touch. Additionally, *təzətā* has been arranged by many artists as an instrumental piece. Among them the legends such as Mulatu Astatke, Hailu Mergia and Getachew Mekuria (see figure 7a-b) are worth mentioning. A number of these artists have gained exceptional admiration for their individual *təzətā* versions.



Figures 3a-b: Ketema Mekonnen, LP Philips Ethiopia, PH 198, 1974
see track 3, side 2, *təzətā* solo accompanied by *masinqō*



Figures 4 a-b: Kassa Tessema, vinyl LP Philips, PH 114, 1972
see track 1, side 1, *təzətā* solo accompanied by *krar*



Figures 5a-b: Asnaketch Worku *Ethiopiennes: The lady with the krar*, Buda Series, vol. 16, 2003 France, see track 1, *təzatā* solo accompanied by *krar*



Figures 6a-b: Menelik Wossinachew, [vinyl] 45, Amha Records AE 350, Harambe Music Shop 1971, see *təzatā* track, arranged by Mulatu Astatke, accompanied by All Star Band



Figures 7a-b: *Getachew Mekuria and His Saxophone*, vinyl LP, Philips Records, PH 130, 1972 see track 5, side 2








Təzatā: Song Analysis

In this section, selected *təzatā* tunes will be analyzed from their melodic and rhythmic structures as well as their style, form, melody-text interrelation and the application of ornaments. But let us first try to answer the question why the *təzatā* song is so special and attractive. My first hypothesis refers to its melody through which a singer can express his/her innermost feelings and in so doing, communicates with other people. In his highly recommended book, singer and songwriter, Michael Lydon (2004: 52) defines melody as: „..... a pretty girl, capricious and captivating. Like moonlight sparkling on rippled water or colts frolicking in a field, melodies come to our ears as gifts of natural beauty: the merry plash of a brook, pine trees sighing in the wind, a whippoorwill calling mournfully into the summer dust. Melodies come as gifts of human innocence: the lullabies your mother sang you in the crib, the ballad that became “our song” for you and your mate, a folk song from your native land that always brings a tear to your eye”. Although the every person reacts to and interprets melody including its lyric (cognitive process of music and language) may take place interactively, independently or concurrently, the *təzatā* melody generally influences listeners’ attention producing strong sensations. Referring to the ballad ‘Someone Like You’ of the British Grammy-winning singer and songwriter, Adele Laurie Blue Adkins, Michael Doucleff (2012)³¹ attempts to get behind the reason why this song is so special to have gained world-wide fame. Doucleff notes that psychologists have made various experiments on the influence of music on the human brain and its power to instigate physical reactions such as tears or goose bumps. One of the major reasons for such reactions may be the *appoggiaturas* “... a type of ornamental note that clashes with the melody just enough to create a dissonant sound” that “generates tension in the listener. When the notes return to the anticipated melody, the tension resolves, and it feels good. Chills often descend on listeners at these moments of resolution. When several *appoggiaturas* occurin a melody, it generates a cycle of tension and release. This provokes an even stronger reaction, and that is when the tears start to flow” (ibid). So, like Adele’s ‘Someone Like You’ that is sprinkled with













ornaments and appoggiaturas, *təzətā's* melody as well sends signals to the listener's mind. However, as already noted earlier, in the *Amhara* aesthetic conception, priority is mainly given to the message of the text over the melody, mainly because of the cyclic nature of songs (Kebede 1975: 60). My second hypothesis therefore, refers to the lyric, an additional aspect that makes this song extraordinary. I firmly believe that it is the perfect hybridization of melody and word (often authentic and true) that produces an intense mixture of cognition and emotion.

Excerpts of some selected *təzətā* tunes have been transcribed and analyzed. The musical notations are written down in linear form, with each line comprising one melodic phrase. Likewise many *Amhara* secular songs, *təzətā* is a strophic tune with every strophe often comprising two rhyming verses with two self-contained melody lines (binary form, AB; figure 8a) that may be considered as the basic theme. Ornaments that give the song a certain essence, beauty and individual touch, can be applied in variously, but the close relation with the basic theme should always be maintained. In the transcriptions, ornamented melody lines are indicated with A¹A² or B¹B² etc. accordingly.

Notes applied for melody ornamentation neither represent the core melody nor always belong to the five main *qəñət* pitches. Focusing on aspects of style in *Təgrəñña* songs from Eritrea, Kimberlin (2006: 455-56) correspondingly argues that “ornaments are pitches that do not constitute the core of the main melody, but are tangential to it and vital to its stylistic interpretation. Embellishments do not occur with any regularity are terse melodic patterns that are not integral to the core melody but function as extra flourishes and fillips.” In many *Amhara* songs, such extra embellishments and fillips (I would also call them ‘connecting notes’) which may appear between the five main pitches of the *qəñət* are also used for melody ornamentation.

Regarding the text, a verse line consisting of 12 syllables is often used in a great number of *Amhara* songs. The table shown below demonstrates an example of one such verse line. The text with its syllables–pitch–relationship is subordinated to the melodic-rhythmic structure of a given song. Syllable/s under a note or under several notes characterize the phonetic syllables (consonant-vowel; e.g. *yā*, *nū*, *fō* and *dē* =    and  or consonant-consonant-vowel pattern e.g. *f^wā*, *q^wā* and *m^wā* =   and ). However, isolated consonants or so-called half vowels (ə) also occur when syllables are fused or shortened to fit the corresponding melodic and rhythmic course.

12-syllabic verse line (A):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
												
<i>tə</i>	<i>zə</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>ye</i>	<i>an</i>	<i>tä</i>	<i>näh</i>	<i>tə</i>	<i>zə</i>	<i>tam</i>	<i>yä</i>	<i>lä</i>	<i>bəñə</i>

The basic *qəñət* pitches given in figure 8a are c¹-d¹-e¹-g¹ and a¹, although some of them may additionally appear in the upper or lower octave. Each pitch has a particular function in the melodic-rhythmic arrangement both as an individual pitch and in connection with other pitches. Melody line A contains an opening theme with the tonal range stretching from pitch d¹ up to c² that is also applied as a half cadence. Likewise, line B begins like line A, but after a while the melody is dominated by the three lowest *qəñət* notes c¹-d¹-e¹. This line represents a closing phrase ending on the departure pitch c¹, one octave lower than line A. The two-line melody in figure 8a is extended to four lines in figure 9 resulting in AA¹BB form. So, each melody line being repeated twice with a melody variation shown in line A¹.

Figure 9a-b represents an excerpt of Bezawork Asfaw's *tazatā* track. Unlike the preceding example, here line A begins with pitch c^1 which is an octave lower than the fifth note of the *qāñat*. From there the tones gradually rise. In the lines that follow, the tonal range extends to more than one octave. Each repetition, A^1 and B^1 , is ornamented. Lines A and the variation A^1 consist of phrases ending with a semi-cadence on b^{b1} while lines B and B^1 reflect a closing cadence ending on the keynote e^{b1} .

In the subsequent strophe (figure 10a), Bezawork elaborates the melody structures by repeating lines A and B three times instead of only twice. Each repetition A^1A^2 and B^1B^2 is variously embellished. Particular focus should be given to the lines A^1 and A^2 where the melody lines are extended by repeating the second half of the verse, i.e., *tarik nāw tazatā* (see 10a and underlined text in figure 10b). While melody line A starts with pitch e' that is followed by gradually ascending pitches, in lines A^1 and A^2 the singer abruptly leaps to the upper octave and embellishes the melody moving between the pitches c^1 and b^{b2} . All pitches used in A^1 and A^2 as well as B remain within the higher octave. This is probably one of the reasons why *tazatā*'s melody becomes sensitive and attractive as in the case of Adele's 'Someone, like you'. The tonal range of Bezawork's *tazatā* extends to almost two octaves.

The next example refers to Ketema Mekonnen's³² *tazatā* (figure 11a-b) arranged in AA^1BB^1 scheme. Except for slight melody ornamentations, the AABB scheme remains unchanged throughout the song that is accompanied by Ketema playing *krar*.

Another *tazatā* example worth mentioning is the version of the legendary veteran vocalist Mahmoud Ahmed. Unlike the preceding *tazatā* songs of Bezawork and Ketema, here, the melody is arranged in the *na'us tazatā qāñat*. The strophes consist of the usual two verse lines that are repeated twice making four melody lines. Three variously arranged melodic sections are perceived that are, however, related to one another. Two of them are transcribed and represented in figures 12a and 12b. The metrical and musical structure of the first strophe shows the AA^1BB^1 form. Lines A and A^1 reflect opening cadences ending on the notes f' and $b^{b'}$ while the two last lines B and B^1 have closing cadences ending on the keynote d' (figure 12a). The second strophe comprises the scheme $CCDB^2$ (figure 13a). Here the vocalist moves to the higher octave starting from tone a' in the first line and moving to the higher pitches. Lines CCD end on the pitch d'' (octave higher than the departure pitch), while the fourth line moves back to the closing cadence B^1 . Like Bezawork's *tazatā*, the tonal range of Mahmoud's *tazatā* extends to two octaves.

Taking a single melody line, e.g. A, I have attempted to demonstrate just a few of the possible melodic variations in the last example given in figure 14. Lines 1-4 use the pitches of the *abay tazatā qāñat* with c' being the departure pitch, while the last line applies the pitches of the *na'us tazatā qāñat*. In all six melody lines, the same lyrical line has been applied in order to be able to observe possible differences or similarities of syllable-note and/or text-note relations.

Figure 8a: Basic theme of the *tazatā* song in binary form (AB)



A

ta-----zə-----ta - yean - te nāh ta - -zə----- ta---m yä ---- lä----- bə--ñə

B

ə-----mä----- ta-----le-hu ə---yalk ə-----yä-----qä-----rä-----hə--bəñə

Figure 8b

verse line 1 | ትዝታዬ አንተ ነህ ትዝታም የለብኝ *təzətāye ante nāh təzətām yälübəñə* (A)
 verse line 2 | እመጣለሁ እያልክ እየቀረህብኝ *əmätalehu əyalk əyäqärähəbəñə* (B)

translation

verse line 1 | You are my nostalgia; I have nothing else to think about
 verse line 2 | You always promise to visit me, but don't keep your promise

Figure 9: Standard *təzətā* melody with repeat lines and variations (A¹ and B)

A

ta-----zə-----ta - yean - te nāh ta - -zə----- ta---m yä ---- lä----- bə--ñə

A1

ta-----zə--ta--yeantē nāh ta-----zə-----ta---m yä-----lä-----bəñə

B

ə-----mä----- ta-----le-hu ə---yalk ə-----yä-----qä-----rä-----hə--bəñə

B

ə-----mä----- ta-----le-hu ə-yalk ə-----yä-----qä-----rä-----hə--bəñə

Figure 9a: Excerpt of Bezawork Asfaw's *təzətā* melody, Album *Yetəzətāwoch Təzətā*, vol. 23, track 3, Nahom Records, New York, 2010

(ሀ) (ሁ) (ሂ) (ሃ)

abəy təzətā qāñət

(ሄ)

A ♩ = 165
 hay - wä - t zo - ra zo - ra tæ - r - - gu - - mw - a tæ - - - zæ - - ta
A1
 hay - - wat zo - ra zo - - - ra tæ - r - - gu - - mw - a tæ - zæ - ta
B
 dæ - - ro - næ ay - to^s mad - näk yä - - - sä - - - - kä - nu lä - ta
B1
 dæ - - - - ro - - - n ay - to madnä - - - - - q yä - - sä - - - - - kä - - - - nu lä - ta

Figure 9b

verse line 1	አይወት ዞራ ዞራ ትርጉሟ ትዝታ <i>haywät zora zora tærgum^wa tæzätä</i> (A)
repetition	<i>haywät zora zora tærgumwa tæzätä</i> (A ¹)
verse line 2	ድሮን አይቶ ማድነቅ የሰከኑ ለታ <i>dæron ayæto madnäq yäsäkänu lätä</i> (B)
repetition	<i>dæron ayæto madnäq yäsäkänu läta</i> (B ¹)

translation

verse line 1	Life goes round and round leaving memories behind
verse line 2	Cherishing the past is respectable when one becomes wiser

Figure 10a: Excerpt from Bezawork Asfaw's *tæzätä*

A ♩ = 165
 æ zä - män yä - - - - may - šæ - räwu ta - ri - k nä - - - - wu tæ - - - zæ - ta
A1
 zä - mä - n yä - ma - y - šæ - rä - - - - wu ta - rik nä - wu tæ - zæ - ta ta - ri - k nä - - - w tæ - zæ - ta
A2
 zä - män yä - may - šæ - rä - - - - - wu ta - rik nä - - - wu tæ - zæ - - - ta ta - - rik nä - - wu tæ - zæ - ta

B
de - -gu-n fit de-qə-no hu - - - lu - - -nə yä-mi-rä-ta - - - - a - - - -

B1
de - - gu - - n fit de - - - qə - - - no hu - - - lu - - - nə yä - - mi - rä - ta

B2
de - - gu-n fi-t de - qə - - no hu - - lu - - - -nə yä-mi-rä-ta

Figure 10b

verse line 1	ዘመን የማይሸረው ታሪክ ነው ትዝታ zāmān yāmayšəräwu tarik näw təzətā (A)
repeat line	zāmān yāmayšəräwu tarik näw təzətā, tarik näw təzətā (A ¹)
repeat line	zāmān yāmayshəräwu tarik näw təzətā, <u>tarik näw təzətā</u> (A ²)
verse line 2	ደጉን ፊት ደቅኖ ሁሉን የሚረታ degun fit deqəno hulun yāmirätā (B)
repeat line	degun fit deqəno hulun yāmirätā (B ¹)
repeat line	degun fit deqəno hulun yāmirätā (B ²)

translation

verse line 1	Life is all about memories
verse line 2	A process of looking back to yester-years

Figure 11a: Excerpt of Ketema Mekonnen’s *təzətā* song; Year of release (unknown)

abəy təzətā qəñət

♩ = 120

A
bā-----qār---b a--yā--gā-ñēm yā--fā-----qā-r a--ma-na

A1
bā--qārb a--yā--gā--ñā---m yā--fā-----qā-r a---ma-na

B
čā--gā--r nā--wu yā--ne ho-d sa---səb tə-----zə--ta-na

B1
čā--gā--r nā--wu yā--ne ho-d sa---səb tə-----zə--ta-na

Figure 11b

verse line 1 በቅርብ አይገኝም የፍቅር አማን *bäqarəbä ayəgäñəm yäfəqər amanə* (A)
 repeat line *bäqarəbä ayəgäñəm yäfəqər amanə* (A¹)

verse line 2 ችግር ነው የኔ ሆድ ላሰብ ትዝታን *čəgər nəw yäne hod sasəb təzatānə* (B)
 repeat line *čəgər nəw yäne hod sasəb təzatānə* (B¹)

translation

verse line 1 Falling in love deprives one of peace

verse line 2 I feel butterflies in my stomach whenever nostalgia

Figure 12a: Excerpt of Mahmoud Ahmed's *təzätä*; Ethiopiques 26, Track 6 (AA¹BB¹)

nə'us təzätä qəñat (Song Section I)

A
8^w tə-----zə-----ta-š zā-wā---te-r wā-dā-----ne iyä---mä-ta

A1
tə--zə-ta--š zā-wā---te--r wā-dā-----ne iyä-----mä--ta

♩ = 170

Figure 12b

verse line 1 ትዝታሽ ዘወትር ወደኔ እየመጣ *təzətāš zewetər wädāne ayemeta* (A)
repeat line *təzətāš zewetər wädāne ayemeta* (A¹)

verse line 2 እፎሃ የምልበት ሕይወቴ ጊዜ አጣ *əfoya yämäläbet haywote gize ata* (B)
repeat line *degun fit deqəno hulun yämiräta* (B¹)

translation

verse line 1 Your nostalgia (*təzətā*) always gives me hard time
verse line 2 I have no time to rest my mind (my life has become miserable)

Figure 13a: Song Section II (CCDD¹)

Figure 13b

verse line 1 እሃሳ በማለት ዕድሜዬን ልጫርሰው *əhəhə bämälät ədmeyen ləchärəsäw* (C)
repeat line *əhəhə bämälät ədmeyen ləchärəsäw* (C)

verse line 2 በአይነ እየሃሁሽ ነው ሆኔን የሚጠሰው *bayne əyayähuš näw hoden yämibəsäw* (D)
repeat line *bayne əyayähuš näw hoden yämibəsäw* (B²)

translation

verse line 1 | I will keep on lamenting for the rest of my life
 verse line 2 | For whenever I look into your eyes, I am filled with pain

Figure 14: Melody line A with melodic-rhythmic variations

abay tazata qəñat *na'us tazata qəñat*

A *te ----zə-----ta-yeañ-tä* *näh te--zə-----ta--m yä ----lä-----bə-ña*

A1 *te ---- zə-----ta---yeañ-tä* *näh te-- zə----- ta--m yä -lä-----bə--ña*

A2 *te ---- zə -----ta--yeañ- tä* *näh te--zə----- ta-m yä -lä--bə-ña*

A3 *te ---- zə -----ta-----yeañ- tä* *näh te----zə----- ta-m yä -lä--bə-ña*

A4 *te ---zə-ta----- yeañ- tä* *nä ----- h te---zə----- tam yä -lä-bə-ña*

A5 *ta ---- zə -----ta----- yeañ----tä* *näh te-zə----- ta-m yä -lä-bəña*

Conclusion

As has been elaborately discussed so far, the *təzətā* tune is deeply rooted and highly favoured in the *Amhara* music culture. This particular song has numerous traditional and modern renditions. The *təzətā* inevitably nurtures past memories and nostalgia to so many Ethiopians as highlighted in the paper. The main points of discussion considered the clarification of the term from different perspectives of its meaning and usage in general and its sonic features in particular. A song like *təzətā* with its long existence and frequent use in the *Amhara* music has always narrated historical, social and political contexts based on specific time and space. Although its effect on the listener has remained the same, its melody has been re-arranged and re-interpreted in diverse styles (fashions) by various generations of musicians. This includes the song's lyrics reflecting the transformation of personal and social life, the rearrangement of social relationships, through which we may understand how strong their communicative character is and how this practice goes beyond the vocals.

Some *təzətā* tunes have been thoroughly analysed in their musical aspects, their styles, forms as well as their messages. Despite different interpretations and/or versions, the *təzətā* tune is recognized by the knowledgeable listener be it a vocal or an instrumental versions. "... *the genre obeys fairly codified rules. It usually takes less than one measure to tell when a singer is launching into a təzətā because today this song has become a veritable musical icon in Ethiopia*" (Falceto 2007).

It is beyond the scope of this study, to analyse all *təzətā* songs that are at our disposal. Therefore, this paper seeks to encourage further investigations which should not only be limited to standard text analysis, song and performance styles, but also give special attention to the narrative contents that derives from the rich Amharic oral poetry (oral poems and folk poetry) handed down orally from generation to generation. In order to answer broad queries, future studies should give attention to various aspects of artistic expressions related with the term *təzətā*.

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Informants

Alemayehu Eshete (2014): veteran musician, vocalist, lyricist and songwriter whose artistic career started in the early 1960s. Personal communications, interviews and recordings are private collection of T. Teffera; date/place of recordings: February/March 2014, Addis Ababa

Berhanu Tedla (2006): professional *azmari* musician (then 68 years old) from the town of Adigrat; born in Tenben, resident in Adigrat; songs performed in Amharic accompanied on the fiddle *masinqō*; interviews on various aspects e.g. Tigray and *Amhara* traditional music, music repertoires, the *masinqō*, *qəñät* system; the role of the *azmari* in society in former times and today; date/place of recordings: July 2006, Adigrat, Tigray.

Bitew Amare (1997): semi-professional *wašənt* player; born and resident in Gondär; interviews on the *qəñät* system; recording of instrumental pieces played on the *wašənt*; original audio-visual recordings are preserved at the Berlin Phonogram Archives under [Teffera-Ethiopia/1997](#): see Ä97 D-05; 0345.005/11; date/place of recording: 23.05.97 in Gondär

Gebremariam Adane (1997): semi-professional *wašənt* player, born and resident in Gondär, recording of instrumental pieces played on the *wašənt*. The pieces derive from well-known traditional songs, e.g. the *təzətā* song; original audio-visual recordings preserved at the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv under Teffera-Ethiopia/97: see Ä97 DAT-04; 0345.004/0+1 and DAT-05 0345.005 / ID 1-10 ; Ä97 SV-07 ca. 17 min. and Ä97 SV-08, min. 12:57 - 30:18); date/place of recording: 21 - 23 May, 1997, Gondär

Franci Falceto (2013-2014): Creator and executive producer of the Ethiopiques CD series. Personal communication, Addis Ababa, February 2014 and e-mail correspondences 2013-2014

Getachew Debalke (2014): playwright, artist, theatre director and musician, often nicknamed as the encyclopaedia of Ethiopian theatre; personal communications, interviews and recordings are private collection of T. Teffera; date/place of recordings February 2014, Addis Ababa.

Helina Teferra (2012-2014): journalist, promoter of art and culture, writer and poet; personal communications, Maryland, July 2012; several e-mail correspondences 2012-2014

Martha Teffera (1997; 2011-2014): audio-visual recordings of traditional songs (solo) with and without instrumental (*krar*) accompaniment and interviews

Original recordings of 1997 are preserved in the Berlin Phonogram Archives under Teffera-Ethiopia/1997: see Ä97 D-01, 0345.002/7 and D-06 0345.006/1-8, Ä97 V8-02 from 0:42:00 to 0:54:09 minutes; date/place of recording: May 1997, Addis Ababa

Personal communications, interviews and audio recordings of 2011-2014 are private collection of T. Teffera

Mekwannent Adane (1997): semi-professional *masinqō* player and singer (then 13 years old), born and resident in Bahər Dār; *qəñət* system; original audio-visual recordings are preserved at the Berlin Phonogram Archives under Teffera-Ethiopia/1997: see Ä97 D-02; 0345.002/11) date/place of recording: 09.05.97 in Bahər Dār

Merawi Sitot (2014): lyricist, songwriter and instrumentalist (saxophone/clarinet); personal communications: Addis Ababa February 2014

Mizanu Shambel (1997): semi-professional *masinqō* player and singer (then 14 years old); born and resident in Bahər Dār; interviews and audio-visual recordings of solo entertainment songs including the *təzətā* song; original recordings are preserved at the Berlin Phonogram Archives under Teffera-Ethiopia/1997: see Ä97 D-02; 0345.002/10, 12, 13, 14, 15); date/place of recording: May 1997, Bahər Dār

Tirunesh Getachew (2013): born in Gondär; currently resident of Addis Ababa, housewife; personal communications: Addis Ababa, March 2013

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Appendix

List of *Təzətā* Ballads and Instrumentals

In the following vocal and instrumental recordings of *təzətā* are listed. The first columns indicate the artist's first names in alphabetical order. In the second column the source of the track is given as far as available, whereas in the last the respected track numbers are indicated as reference.

Təzətā Song List: Traditional Rendition

artist's name	Source	track
Asnaketch Worku	<i>The Lady with the Krar: Asnaketch Worku</i> , Éthiopiennes vol. 16, executive producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique: 82265-2, 2004	1
Bahiru Kegne	<i>The Legendary Bahiru Kegne: In Memory of Ethiopia's greatest Azmari</i> , Terp: Cargo Records, AS-23, B00F5F31DI, 2013	4
Chalachew Ashenafi	<i>Fano: The Legendary Gondar Azmari 1966-2012</i> , Terp: Cargo Records, AS-24, B00F5F2ZR6, 2013	7
Etenesh Wassie	<i>Nahom Favorites: Traditional Songs</i> , Nahom Records Inc. vol. 23., BOO5ME7GBA, New York, 2005 see also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zcgyx2p_geA	4
Getamesay Abebe	<i>Orchestra Ethiopia</i> . Éthiopiennes vol. 23, executive producer: F. Falceto, Buda Musique, 2007; see also http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwwwPuz04b4	1
Habtemichael Demissie	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6w2rxAgNsw (??)	
Kassa Tessema	<i>Kassa Tessema</i> vinyl LP, Philips Ethiopia, PH 114, 1972	???
	<i>Fano</i> . CD Baby.Com/Indys, B009XTXP7Y, 2012; see also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZyFRrhKVb8	11
Ketema Mekonnen	<i>Greatest Hits: Ketema Mekonnen</i> , Ethio Sound, B0044MTB96 ??? <i>Ketema Mekonnen</i> , vinyl LP. Philips Ethiopia, PH 198, 1974 see also http://www.addiszefen.com/artists/Oldies.php ; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=celBAHc6xGw ; and http://www.hubsha.com/audio.php?arid=128&abid=166&aid=2021	???
Maritu Legesse	<i>Yebati Nigist [The Queen of Bati]</i> . CD Baby.Com/Indys, B005K15QFI, 2011	3
Mesrak Kebede	<i>Denbisho</i> , CD album, executive producer: A. Bezuneh. AFR REC Production, 2004	6
Weretaw Wubet	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVUjr3sikV0&list=PL18BA77226C03FC5F&index=35	

Təzətā Song List: Modern Rendition

artist's name	Source	track
Alemayehu Eshete	<i>Addis Ababa: New Beat Music from Ethiopia</i> , Shanachie, B000000E33, 1993 see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpON0SpRxlM	10
Aster Aweke	<i>Aster Aweke: Aster Rogue</i> (Lotus Records), B0000271YY, 1997 see also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbykV83_hgw ; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVvlwhxEIZ0	3
Bezawork Asfaw	<i>Yetəzətāwoch Təzətā</i> , Nahom Records Inc. vol. 23, Executive Producer: E. Fikru, New York, 2010 see also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnwWOxrUpII	5
Bezuayehu Demissie	<i>The Best Oldies Collection: Bezuayehu Demissie</i> , Nahom Records Inc., New York, 2007	5
	<i>Nahom Favorites: 400 Fikir</i> vol. 19, Nahom Records Inc., New York, 2008	2
	<i>Yetəzətāwoch Təzətā</i> , Nahom Records Inc. vol. 23, Executive Producer: E. Fikru, New York, 2010	3
Getachew Kassa	<i>Yetəzətāwoch Təzətā</i> , Nahom Records Inc. vol. 23, Executive Producer: E. Fikru, New York, 2010	7
	<i>Golden Years of Ethiopian Music. Éthiopiennes</i> vol. 1, executive producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique: B000001N74, 1998	16-17
	<i>Tezeta, Ethiopian Blues & Ballads. Éthiopiennes</i> vol.10, executive producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique, Paris: 82222-2, 2002	12-13
	<i>The Best of Getachew Kassa</i> . Nahom Records Inc. New York; 2012	3
	<i>Ethiopian Hit Parade</i> Vol. 1, Amha Records vinyl LP, AE 20, Addis Ababa, 1972	A4
Hana Shenkute	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cho1jX7LNQU	
Kuku Sebsebe	<i>Kuku Sebsebe: Təzətā</i> , Electra Music Shop, Addis Ababa, 2005; see also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sdiivn64vgY	3, 6
Madingo Afework	<i>Ayədärägəm</i> . Electra Music Shop, Addis Ababa, 2008	??
	<i>Nahom Favorites: 400 Fikir</i> vol. 19, Nahom Records Inc. B005ZS7T8I, New York, 2008	6
Mahmoud Ahmed	<i>Mahmoud Ahmed</i> . Amha Records AE 100 (vinyl LP), Harambe Music Shop, Addis Ababa 1974	B1
	<i>Yetəzətāwoch Təzətā</i> , Nahom Records Inc. vol. 23, executive producer: E. Fikru, New York, 2010	1
	<i>Mahmoud Ahmed: Erè Mèla Mèla. Éthiopiennes</i> vol. 7, executive producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique, Paris: B00001QGTO, 1999	15
	<i>Tezeta, Ethiopian Blues & Ballads. Éthiopiennes</i> vol.10, executive producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique, Paris: 82222-2, 2002	8
	<i>Mahmoud Ahmed 1974. Éthiopiennes</i> vol. 19, executive producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique, Paris, B0006HB7YA, 2005	9
	<i>Mahmoud Ahmed & Imperial Bodyguard Band 1972-74. Éthiopiennes</i> vol. 26, executive producer: F. Falceto, Buda Musique, Paris, B003WL7DZO, 2010	6
Menelik Wossinachew	<i>Tezeta, Ethiopian Blues & Ballads. Éthiopiennes</i> vol.10, executive producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique, Paris: 82222-2, 2002	11
Mikael Belayneh	<i>Yetəzətāwoch Təzətā</i> . Nahom Records Inc. vol. 23, executive producer: E. Fikru, New York, 2010; see also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqiGnxPktFs	10
Muluken Melesse	<i>Muluken Melesse</i> with the Dahlak Band, Kaifa Records KF 39 (vinyl LP), Tango Music Shop, Addis Ababa, 1976	B5
Nati Haile	<i>Nahom Favorites: 400 Fikir</i> vol. 19, Nahom Records Inc. B005ZS7T8I, New	9

	York, 2008	
Rahel Yohannes	<i>Rahel Yohannes: Menelik</i> . CD Baby. Com/Indys B000VDDMZG, 2008	??
Seifu Yohannes	Amha Records, AE 270, vinyl LP, 1971 (reissued on <i>éthiopiennes vol. 10, see below</i>) Éthiopiennes vol. 1, CD album. <i>Golden Years of Ethiopian Music</i> . Executive Producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique: B000001N74; 1998 Éthiopiennes, Vol. 10 (2002). <i>Tezeta, Ethiopian Blues & Ballads</i> , Executive Producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique: 82222-2	B 8 5
Teshome Asegid	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiYSX2Yo5Ug	
Tewodros Kassahun	<i>Nahom Favorites: 400 Fikir</i> vol. 19, Nahom Records Inc. B005ZS7T8I, New York, 2008; see also http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtQYIz9lBdk&list=PL5904543F4E2185F0	4
Tilahun Gessesse/ Teferra Kassa	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLN0VqB0AGo&list=PL18BA77226C03FC5E , probably the 1960s (??)	
Tsegaye Eshetu	Nahom Records Vol. 23 (2010). CD album <i>Yetəzətāwoch Təzətā</i> , executive Producer: E. Fikru, Nahom Records Inc. New York	4
Woubishet Fisseha	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WJDFTHF4nk	
Yeshi Demelash	<i>Qene</i> , executive Producer: E. Fikru, Nahom Records Inc. USA, Addis Ababa, 2011	6
Yirdaw Tenaw	Yirdaw Tenaw: <i>Nahom Favorite Collections</i> vol. 2, executive producer: E. Fikru, Nahom Records Inc. New York, 2003	7

Təzətā Instrumentals

artist's name	Source	track
Animut Kinde	<i>Təzətāye</i> [My Memories]: Wašənt (flute) instrumental vol. 3, CD album, Biniyam Music Shop, Addis Ababa, 1994	??
Daniel Woldegabriel	<i>Slow Tracks: Daniel W/Gabriel</i> Nahom Records Vol. 27. Saxophone instrumentals, Nahom Records Inc., New York, 2011	6, 9
Getachew Mekuria	<i>Ethio Jazz & Musique Instrumentale 1969-1974, Negus of Ethiopian Sax</i> , Éthiopiennes, vol. 14; executive producer: F. Falceto, Buda Musique, Paris B00000DDMB, 2003 (saxophone instrumental)	4
	<i>Y'anbessaw Təzətā</i> . Mekuria, Getachew & The Ex & Friends, Terp (Cargo Records), 2012 (saxophone instrumental)	2
Hailu Mergia	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJgwiSahuCk instrumental	
Mulatu Astatke	Éthiopiennes vol. 4. <i>Ethio Jazz & Musique Instrumentale 1969-1974</i> , Executive Producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique, Paris, 1998; see also see also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Co4kTTu6U0	12
Tesfamariam Kidane	<i>Tezeta, Ethiopian Blues & Ballads</i> . Éthiopiennes vol.10, executive producer: F. Falceto. Buda Musique, Paris, 2004 (saxophone instrumental)	10

Notes

- ¹ A great variety of songs are generically classified to *yä tazatā zäfänoč* [nostalgic songs or songs of nostalgia] or *yä ängurguro zäfänoč* [personal laments] however, they do not refer to the *tazatā* song discussed in this study. The latter is primarily sung at times of solitude (solo). It neither requires a special talent or a musical background nor a specific vocal range. Besides, it is sung without a music instrument for self-entertainment, where no audience is involved (Bekele 1987: 24, Kebede 1971: 64).
- ² Commercial music started in Ethiopia particularly after local music labels such as Amha Records (1969-1975) and Philips (1970-1977) became operational.
- ³ The fieldworks of 1997, 2000, 2006, 2010, 2013 and 2014 were primarily carried out in the *Amhara* and *Tigray* regions (Bahər Dār, Gondär, Mäqälle, Adigrat, and Addis Ababa). Apart from the *Amhara* region, the data collected in *Tigray* particularly concerns recordings made of Berhanu Tedla, a professional *azmari* musician from the town of Adigrat, in 2006 including interviews. He performed songs in Amharic, accompanying himself with the single-string fiddle *masinqō*. The original recordings of 1997 and 2000 are preserved/archived at the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv [*Berlin Phonogram Archives*] of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, accessible under the codes [Teffera-Ethiopia/97](#) and [Teffera-Ethiopia/2000](#), whereas all other recordings are my private collection.
- ⁴ In Berlin, I interviewed Martha Teffera, *krar* player and vocalist, and recorded her solo songs accompanied by the *krar*.
- ⁵ Nostalgia engages several disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, and philosophy, but it is not classified in one specific field (Wilson 2005: 8-9).
- ⁶ Yemane Demissie's film, *Gərə'gər* (Tumult) refers to the aborted struggle against the aristocratic regime of Haile Selassie that was led by leftist students and teachers in the 1960s. "*Deploying a class analysis, Demissie chronicles the psychological fallout of this moment for individuals, and the competing narratives of history that the film eloquently presents provide a solid foundation for better understandings of the continuing struggles in contemporary Ethiopia*" (Pfaff 2004: 54).
- ⁷ Seble Mekuria's *Yäwänz Ma'äbel* (Deluge) deals with a moving personal journey back to the period of the dictatorial military regime with particular attention on the years 1978-79, which marked the brutal campaign known under the title Red Terror led by the *Derg* against all political opponents (Pfaff 2004: 54-55).
- ⁸ *The Dilemma of the Uprooted: A Case Study of the Impact of Music on the Ethiopian Diaspora* (2011) see details in cited works.
- ⁹ Track 7, Music album: '*Teddy*', vocal/lyric/melody = *Tewodros Kassahun*; AIT Records, Inc. AIT019, 2002
- ¹⁰ Getachew Debalqe is a playwright, artist, theatre director and musician. He is often nicknamed as the encyclopedia of Ethiopian theatre. Personal Communication: Addis Ababa, February 2014.
- ¹¹ Veteran artist: vocalist, lyricist and songwriter whose artistic career started in the 1960s.
- ¹² Personal communications: Addis Ababa February 2014. The *International Gold Mercury Award* recipient, Merawi Sitot served the Ethiopian popular music scene as a lyricist, songwriter and instrumentalist (saxophone/clarinet) for more than four decades until his retirement ca. 18 years ago.
- ¹³ Personal communications, Maryland, July, 2012 and e-mail correspondences 2012-2014
- ¹⁴ Personal communications, Addis Ababa, March 2013; place of birth Gondär, current resident of Addis Ababa
- ¹⁵ Personal communications, Berlin, April 2014
- ¹⁶ Powne 1968, Kebede 1971, Kimberlin 1976/2006, Bekele 1987, Abate 2009, Teffera 2001/2011 and Weisser et al 2013
- ¹⁷ It was among others in Bahər Dar (1997) where I had the opportunity to interview Mekwanent Adane a young traditional musician, vocalist and *masinqō* player whom I asked to demonstrate each note of the respective *qəñətoč* on his instrument. But every time he started, he tended to play short motifs of a song suiting the respected *qəñət*. So I attempted to find out whether he is aware of the existence of the *qəñətoč*. He said 'yes', but again played melody fragments of respected songs.

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- ¹⁸ For example the lyre *kərār* or the one-string fiddle *masinqō*
- ¹⁹ Music video; director: Dawit Tesfaye; assistant directors: Michael Tamre and Aklilu Gebre Medhin; camera: Kibralem Fanta; camera assistant: Mozart Tigistu; editor: Bily Mekonnen, watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqiGnxPktFs> (last retrieved 15.12.2013).
- ²⁰ Born (1963) and grown up in Addis Ababa, Bezawork, in her early childhood, was inspired by the liturgical music of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. This particular experience might have been a stepping stone for her musical profession. At the age of 14 Bezawork joined the youth music group in her residential area. This was a period when Ethiopia was under socialist rule. Bezawork started off with her career performing revolutionary songs broadcasted on television and radio. It was among others this opportunity which brought her fame and recognition. Later on, during the 1980s, she joined the Ethiopian National Theatre as a dancer before she started off with her carrier as a vocalist.
- ²¹ Madingo's love for music was influenced by his musician family since early childhood His father, a priest, played an important role in his career. Hence, unlike the majority of the Ethiopian society both past and present, the father encouraged his children's talents so that Madingo's siblings are all become musician todas.
- ²² *Kassa Tessema* and *Mesfin Haile* (both deceased) as well as *Getamessay Abebe*, were/are *azmari* musicians (vocalists, *krar* and *masinqō* player) who entertained their listeners for decades starting from the 1960s, while *Tesfaye Kassa* (deceased), was a multitalented artist and above all a renowned comedian of the 1990s.
- ²³ Francis Falceto (2013) informed me that "according to some written sources available in the *Hagär Fəqər Mahber archives*, *Shishig* was born in 1925 (EC = Ethiopian Calendar) and passed away on *Megabit 13, 1973* (March 22, 1981). In another document (dated 1956 EC) provided by the late *Besha Tekle-Maryam*, head of *Hager Feqer 1942-1964*, (Western calendar), Francis was able to find out that *Shishig* was then 33 (meaning born two years earlier, in 1923 EC) and had been working at the *Hagär Fəqər Theatre* since 1942 EC – meaning she used to perform much more than thirty years ago..." (E-mail January 9, 2013).
- ²⁴ *Nigatwa Kelkay* was another female artist. She recently passed away at the age of ca. 110 years.
- ²⁵ This period of isolation, one of the worst periods in the history of Ethiopia, is designated as *Zāmānā Mäsafənt* meaning 'Era of the Princes', an era influenced by severe political predicaments, provincialism and war between local war lords and traditional nobility who struggled for power (Henze 2000: 119-124).
- ²⁶ These and other historical recordings are preserved in the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv under the codes 'Rosen' and 'Littmann' Expedition.
- ²⁷ E-mail correspondence 31 August, 2013
- ²⁸ This date is most probably is either related to the day of recording or day of receipt of the press test.
- ²⁹ See Footnote 29
- ³⁰ See CD album *Éthiopiennes* vol. 10 *Təzətā* tracks of Seifu Yohannes (no. 5), Mahmoud Ahmed (no. 8), Tesfa-Mariam Kidane (no. 10) Menelik Wossinachew (no. 11) and Getachew Kassa (no. 12/13).
- ³¹ The Wall Street Journal: Europe Edition, posted on 11th February, 2012; see <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203646004577213010291701378.html> (last retrieved 03.12.2013)
- ³² This song is one of several *təzətā* versions of *Ketema*. I listened to four of his tracks (Philips Ethiopia, LP PH 198 [1974], see also these links: <http://www.addiszefen.com/artists/Oldies.php>; <http://www.hubsha.com/audio.php?arid=128&abid=166&aid=2021>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=celBAHc6xGw>; (last retrieved 11.12.2013). Three of the songs use the pitches of the *abəy təzətā qənət*, while the forth track is performed in the *nə'us təzətā qənət*. The common AA¹BB¹ form is apparent in all the tracks.