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SIGNIFICANCE OF AFRICAN RITUALS: A CASE OF SANKAYA RITUAL OF TACHONI OF BUNGOMA COUNTY, KENYA

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SIGNIFICANCE OF AFRICAN RITUALS: A CASE OF SANKAYA RITUAL OF THE TACHONI OF BUNGOMA COUNTY, KENYA.

BY

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Abstract

Ritual practices form an integral part of the dynamics that underpin African cultural systems. Rituals differ in nature and are practiced for different social purposes. In African context for instance, rituals may be performed for purposes such as: cleansing, burial, birth of twins, inauguration, cementing of relations, oath taking, healing, and commemoration of the dead and for both religious and secular purposes. This study focused on the Sankaya ritual among the Tachoni community of Bungoma County. The objectives were: a) To establish the content of Sankaya circumcision ritual of the Tachoni b) To interpret the symbolism embedded in Sankaya ritual of the Tachoni and c) to establish the cultural significance of Sankaya circumcision ritual to the Tachoni. This study employed a qualitative research approach. Data collection methods comprised interviews, participant observation. The study population comprised the Sankaya dance practitioners. Purposive and snowball techniques of sampling were employed. Qualitative data obtained was coded and subjected to content analysis methods and results presented in propose. It is hoped that the findings of this study will augment the existing pool of knowledge in the area of ethnomusicology and other related fields.

Key Words: Sankaya, Tachoni, Ritual, Content, Symbolism

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POEME ELECTRONIQUE FUSION CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM IN “FEEL THE SOUNDS OF KENYA”

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POEME ELECTRONIQUE FUSION CONCEPT OF NATIONALISM IN “FEEL THE SOUNDS OF KENYA”

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“...the liberation of sound.... the right to make music with any and all sounds”-Edgar Varese

Abstract:

Twentieth Century is a period of music exploration like no other in western art music. With the development of electronic music, the vocabulary in western art music practice underwent significant growth to include that which was considered unconventional. Edgar Varese, a French composer, has been hailed as the pioneer of electronic music with his signature Poeme Electronique composition which was performed in 1958 in Brussels. Attributes of similitude with Edgar Varese's Poeme Electronique style have come to identify certain African contemporary

music idioms. Using the content analysis method, the researcher analyzes Poeme Electronique concepts in the 'Feel the Sounds of Kenya' piece with the aim of establishing how these concepts have been used to represent Kenyanhood. This is achieved by using Sofia's (2001) model approach to examine CeeRoo's 'Feel the Sounds of Kenya' on both descriptive and conceptual analysis levels. Information and data from this study is aimed at augmenting existing musical parlance and vocabulary for music composers, listeners and performers, by accommodating diversified musical expressions beyond conventional music grammar. Recommendations and the way forward are given at the end of the study.

Keywords: Poeme Electronique, Kenyanhood, Descriptive Analysis, Conceptual Analysis

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Sing a New Song: Theological Reflections on Music Composition

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ABSTRACT: Music composition is a practice that has been integrated within different musical activities. The practice is situated in the Bible and also reflected in the contemporary society. This study discusses music composition as an art that involves creativity in making music. Additionally, it discusses composition as a form of expression for the creator. The study sought to examine how music composition has been discussed in the Bible and how that is reflected in the contemporary society. Additionally, it aimed at discovering diverse ways that the Bible has been used as a resource for creating music in the contemporary society. The general question that guided the study was: How has music composition been conceptualized in the Bible and in the contemporary society? The study was sought to answer the following questions: What inspired composers in the Bible to create music? What are the compositional techniques/styles used in the Bible? How has the Bible been used as a resource to compose music in the contemporary society? How is the concept of music composition in the Bible similar to that of the contemporary society? The study will provide information on how music practitioners can integrate the Bible and their music-making practice. Additionally, the information provided by the study will enable the practitioners to discover different approaches they can use while composing. The study will therefore contribute knowledge in the music industry as well as religious studies especially theological and Biblical studies in various academic fields. Secondary data was used to provide information for the study. Additionally, Bible scriptures were analyzed in order to have a comprehensive understanding on the Bible's conceptualization of music composition practice.

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Musicology through Biblical lenses: As many perspectives as there are Christianity(s)

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ABSTRACT: The Bible is a seminal canon on which entire cultures, institutions, systems of thought and disciplines are based upon. Since musicology entails a study of why and how human beings are musical, this discipline (musicology) is inclined to look into biblical interpretations and perspectives

that guide human musicking. This study seeks to highlight the confluence of the Bible and Musicology and discuss ways in which different perspectives of the Bible have guided human musicking in specified contexts. This study was guided by the following general question: How have the multiple biblical perspectives interacted with the discipline of musicology? The study sought to answer the following questions: What factors that led to the many Biblical interpretations? How has the Bible been used as a source of data for empirical studies linked to musicology? How has the Bible impacted the way people think, theorize and therefore perform music? How is the bible applied in the study of new and emerging issues in musicology that pertain gender, environment, crisis and justice? Information from this study is going to inspire a dialectical approach to musicology related studies that are linked to theology and Biblical studies. The study will highlight how musicological information can be applied positively to societies and more specifically in congregational contexts to enrich the music related aspects of the liturgy. In addition to this, the study is going to provide information on ways in which musicology and biblical perspectives interact to provide solutions to current and emerging issues. Data from this study was sourced from existing academic journals, varied liturgical guidelines, and musicological reports. The Bible was used as a key reference in this study to as it provided contexts for the many perspectives.

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SPIRITUALISM IN KILUMI DANCE: THE ROLE OF KILUMI DANCE IN THE MODERN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Kilumi dance of the Akamba is a functional spiritual dance, that has existed as long as the Akamba have existed. The dance is very important in the lives of the Akamba, for it can be/is used to provide solutions to various challenges within the community. However, due to western education, urbanization, western culture and Christianity, many aspects of the dance have changed. This is due to the fact that cultural processes change slowly in time, as observers mature, age or die. Though Ndanu (2020) stated that the Akamba used the dance to pray for rains, this study found out that the dance is used for many purposes within the lives of the Akamba, and which this study has elaborated. This study encourages more study to be done, so as to discover the diverse functionalism of the dance. This paper examines the changes that have taken place in the performance of Kilumi dance, and also the role of the dance in the modern days, among the Akamba of Kitui county. Content analysis approach was used to come up with the findings. Further, the study participated in several Kilumi dances at Kitui county. The study sampled respondents from five sub-counties in Kitui county, where questionnaire was used to collect data from Kilumi leaders. During the performances data was collected through personal experience. The responses of the questionnaire were Kilumi leaders, who are technically the experts in the dance. The data was audio recorded and later transcribed. Information from publications by other scholars were used to further compliment the field study. The findings indicated that the spiritual Kilumi dance solve spirit related problems among the Akamba, which seems to have undergone changes in the modern

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KENYAN POPULAR MUSIC: THE LUO BENGGA MUSIC FEMALE ARTISTS REPRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

The Luo Benga music is a genre known and played nationwide. Different artists come and go in the genre and their music is still played to the mass at different places from events to clubs and hotels too. Some of the music played is by Female musicians and a good number of people do not know them. This study focused on the Representation of the Luo Female Benga Artists with the assumption that they are few. The research aimed at understanding the reasons so as to why they are few and where are the few in existence, with the objectives as follows; a) Identify the established Luo Benga female artists and their contributions. b) Find out reasons why the Luo Benga female artists are not accorded similar spotlight as the male. c) Establish if there is an emerging community of Luo Benga artists' tradition. The study used a qualitative research method with interviews and recorded videos for data collection, as purposive sampling technique was employed. The research was conducted mainly in the Western region of the country. Nairobi was also of importance since Ketebul Studio is found in Nairobi and it has a number of documentations on the genre as well as recordings and interviewees who were also involved. It is with anticipation that this study will help to bring out the Female artists and their music hence enabling the music consumers to know them with their influence to the Luo Benga tradition.

Key word: Luo Benga, Female representation

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CHORAL MUSIC IN NAIROBI: THE FORMATION AND REPLICATION OF CHORAL GROUPS IN NAIROBI

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Abstract

Choral music provides an opportunity for artistic growth, music education, enjoyment, community and identity formation. In the last 15 years, there has been a rise in the formation of choral groups especially in Nairobi, which has in many ways contributed to the aforesaid parameters. This research focused on the choral groups in Nairobi with the hope of providing information on why choral groups are being formed, why some replicate and also what helps some stay intact. The study sought to: find out the drive behind formation of choral groups; find out reasons why some choral groups replicate/form splinter groups and identify the challenges encountered by choral ensembles in Nairobi. The study was conducted in Nairobi region. The study population included choral directors and choral groups and the members of the choral groups. Purposive sampling, simple random and snowballing sampling technique yielded respondents for the study. Data collection instruments included interviews and focus group discussions. The study urges choral directors to share their vision and mission of the group to members and to also help members understand why they join choral groups. Finally, some of the recommendations that were given to choral groups and the directors for better development of choral groups were: holding choral workshops to nurture more female choral directors, ensuring the group's mission and vision is clear to every member and to also have performances often not for competition, but to enjoy the music together.

Key Words: Formation, Replication, Choral Music

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GLOBALIZATION OF AFRICAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: A CASE OF THE ADEUDEU IN KENYA Nancy A

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There are various insights into the discourse of musical culture from a global context. Some of these insights include the impact of globalization on music industry and African music making at large. African musical instruments continue to be cultural artefacts and productions of immaterial culture which is music. African instruments have not remained static but have responded to inter-cultural reciprocity. This study stems from an ambit that has discussed African traditional musical instruments such as the Mbira, Kora, Djembe, and Endara of West and South Africa but given little attention to those from East Africa and Kenya in particular. This is a case study of the Adeudeu (a chordophone), a principle instrument of the Teso community in Western Kenya and a symbol of their cultural identity. The purpose is to highlight the extent traditional musical performances have been appropriated and retained in the contemporary setting creating their popular music. The discourse is a report of findings of a field study that engaged several musicians drawn from each of Teso district's divisions. The paper analyses music performed on the traditional Adeudeu vis a vis that performed on the contemporary Adeudeu to elucidate similarities and differences in the music making. The argument here is that a change in one element of the musical ensemble has ramifications on the music producing a different 'musical colour'. The paper culminates in highlighting changes that have taken place on the instrument and the overall music rendition of the Teso.

Key words: Globalization, African musical instruments, Adeudeu, Teso music and dance, Contemporary African music

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Music, gesture, and meaning: Appreciating the transcultural intrigues (in)to stage directing of Kenyan choral music.

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Abstract

Whereas choral conducting as gesture in the Western world is clearly defined, it is not the case in Kenya, and by extension Africa. It is the case because choral music is not inherently and African domain. Moreover, Kenya like many African countries exhibits numerous musical cultures with varied practices and unique demands that call for differentiated approaches to visual directing of performance. Importantly, the use of gesture to generate music meaning in African traditions differs from the Western ones. Currently, conductors who practice this style of choral music have been socialized in musical cultures, which substantially differ from Western-oriented presentational mannerisms. Whenever a choir appears on stage, it is always disturbing when questions of whether the conductor directed the choir appropriately, was overt, or lacked certain gesticulations are raised. This paper seeks to respond to this concern by analyzing the nature of choral music that is performed in Kenya. Among other factors, it will also demonstrate how gesture and other music traditions could be possible influences for conducting manifestations. Moreover, the paper will purpose to provide insight into how conducting as visual culture and/or gesture enhances music meaning and, therefore, the need to appreciate its diversified approach as well as practice, in the transculturally negotiated choral space. To answer the foregoing concerns, ethnographic approaches will be employed to interview choral conductors, observe performances as well as reference to published sources on African musical practice.

Key terms: Choral music, gesture, meaning.

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ASSESSMENT OF AFRICAN MUSIC PRACTICALS: A CASE STUDY OF KABARAK UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS

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My interest in this study was ignited during a discussion in the school board regarding assessment of Western and African music practicals. In the process, two thoughts emerged. On one hand, there was an argument that the procedure of assessment of Western music practicals is “clear, systematic, tested and organised.” On the other hand, it was argued that assessment of African music practicals “had no established content standards, no clear system, protocols, or an organised regimen.” This bipolar position regarding assessment of western and African music practicals motivated me to find out more about best practices elsewhere through literature review and interviews. Through interviews and focused group discussions with African music lecturers and scholars in Kabarak University and other universities – in Kenya and beyond, I managed to unearth, document and assess key issues in the assessment of African music practicals. Consequently, this article proposes a way forward on the “what” and the “how” in the assessment of African music on the basis of established findings on African music theory and practice.

Keyword: African music, Western music, assessment, African practical

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CHALLENGES FACING COMPOSERS OF THE CATHOLIC MASS.

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ABSTRACT

Composing music for the Ordinary part of Mass in Kenya, like other aspects of Catholic liturgical music can be traced years after the Vatican II Council, (1962-1965). The Vatican II Council transformation was motivated by the need to incorporate other world cultures for Catholic believers to participate in the liturgy actively, consciously and fully (Paul VI, 1963). The Council focused on incorporation of world cultural practices in liturgy, but it never described the extent to which such ought to be integrated. The Church is also known for guiding the faithful through pastoral documents, yet there exists none that elaborates on how composing Mass ought to be done, as well as how world music cultures should be incorporated. This paper will focus on establishing the challenges facing composers for Catholic Mass after the Vatican II Council deliberations. Other than the Vatican II Council deliberations, the paper will further investigate other possible factors influencing the composers for Mass. The study will further discuss the challenges facing the composers in the attempt to enhance inculturation in composing the Mass

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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 TO THE MUSIC INDUSTRY OF KENYA

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The Impact of COVID-19 on Kenyan Music Industry

Abstract

The music industry, like many other sectors, has been affected by the CoronaVirus otherwise known as COVID-19 pandemic especially in the areas of production, performance and consumption. With the strict World Health Organisation (WHO) measures that were rolled out in the quest t

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ONLINE PERFORMANCE PRACTICAL TUTELAGE: A CASE STUDY OF KABARAK UNIVERSITY AND INDIAN UNIVERSITY PATNER-SHIP

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Performance is a core element of Music as a discipline. For one to be an excellent performer they will require guidance from a tutor who is qualified and well varsity in the field of performance. Outsourcing qualified performance tutors to have a physical class can be a challenging task. However, platforms such as Skype and Zoom have helped overcome this challenge whereby a tutor in America is able to have class with a student in Kenya as long as they have internet connection, a laptop and Skype or Zoom software. I believe that online tutelage is the future of practical performance class. In reference to the partnership between Kabarak University and Indiana University, I believe I will be able to prove that online practical performance class can be done, are effective and should be encourage in other institutions. The information from this study will be collected from interviews and questionnaires. I will use Qualitative research design to get a better understanding of the topic and Quantitative research design to analyse the statistical data.

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The intercourse on sex and alcohol in Gikuyu contemporary music

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As has been established in previous studies, Gikuyu music akin to other music's, projects an expressive persona tackling a variety of issues from a didactic point of view. Among the myriad of issues dealt with, this enquiry premised itself upon the music's discourse on sex and alcohol. To achieve this the researcher set out to find out how the musical text addresses the issues of sex and alcohol and how visual expression in the music videos canvasses issues of sex and alcohol. The study was premised on structuralism theory and was based upon qualitative methodology in design, sampling, data collection and analysis. The discourse raised herein will go a long way in advancing the analytical narratives on indigenous musics of the Kenyan people and their significance in adumbrating the inflections of the everyday dynamics in the society.

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TEACHING AND ASSESSING MUSIC VIRTUALLY DURING COVID 19 PERIOD: LESSONS FROM SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS AT KABARAK UNIVERSITY

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Teaching and assessing music virtually can be a challenge if necessary preparations, resources, and methodologies are not well put in place. Although some virtual teaching had been going on at Kabarak University, School of Music and Performing Arts (SMPA), from 2018, with the emergence of covid – 19 in March 2020, it became more necessary that the mode of teaching had to change significantly in order to address the demands of the virtual teaching of music. Among strategies put in place was relooking at the course contents and re-aligning them to specific learning outcomes in such a way that they synchronise with higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy of assessment. This paper documents the music teaching and learning challenges that the students and academic staff at SMPA went through during the early and later stages of COVID – 19. It further highlights how the challenges were somehow surmounted. Using a narrative design, lecturers' and students' opinions were sought and analysed qualitatively. A review of relevant literature was also carried out before arriving at findings and conclusions of this article. Apart from making recommendations regarding virtual teaching and assessing music in institutions of higher learning, this paper suggests areas of further research.

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Reconceptualising “African Culture” and “African Music”: Some Critical Issues

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Abstract: Culture, generally, is a concept that has pervaded academic discourse in the fields of, inter alia, ethnomusicology and anthropology. One of the persistent questions is what “culture” really means, and whose culture it is. African culture and African music/ology also grapple with these questions and issues. Various authors and scholars have emerged over the years with claims of varying degree of representative agency. Some, whose research is limited to a specific cultural group, purport to be experts in “African music”, while others claim this expertise in “African music” merely by virtue of being citizens of an African country. Others limit both their research and claim of expertise to one culture, and so on. The notion of “African Culture” has been problematised by scholars since the 1980s, yet there are enduring constructions of the concept that remain both unresolved and problematic to date. More specifically the question of “What is Kenyan culture?” regularly forms popular discourse on social media during performances at national events. Additionally, the decolonial conversations that have gained popularity over the last two decades have brought to the fore the growing and urgent need to reconceptualise our understanding of “African music” and “African culture”. This paper explores academic discourse surrounding “African Culture” and “African Music/ology”. It critically engages with scholarly perspectives and challenges certain understandings. These are presented under the broad themes of “culture”, the problem of meaning, and representation/s of African culture and music/ology. The Kenyan context is provided both for illustration and as a reference point.

Keywords: Reconceptualising, Culture, African culture, African music, Kenyan culture.