

Pioneering Role of Kabaa Catholic Mission School in Kenyan Music Education

Every existence has its pioneering pillars that give it the foundation on which it stands. This is no exception to Kenyan Music Education. Kenyan Music Education as we know it today started as part of the first educational institutions started by the Christian missionaries who came to the country either from Europe or America as members of the two main Christian denominations: the Roman Catholic and the Protestants. Kabaa Mission School has the privilege of being one of such first educational institutions, started in 1924 just four years after Kenya became a colony in 1920. Kabaa mission school was started by Father Michael J. Witte a Dutch Catholic Holy Ghost Father. The school was set up for children of African Roman Catholic Church converts to get their Western education which was seen as the way to bring change to African natives. This was seen by the missionaries as the key to success; not only for learners but also for their country. At the Mission school, like in other mission schools of the time, learners generally passed through a deeply religious programme in which some became altar boys and members of the school and church choirs. Students of Kabaa Mission School came from all over the country. These students were exposed to, not only theory of Western music, but also to different types of Western musical instruments. The students were encouraged to join and actively take part in the school band and also learn from one another musical skills they needed. As a result, Kabaa produced some of the key persons who influenced the development of different types of music in the country. The paper looks into the Pioneering Role of Kabaa Mission School in Kenyan Music education with a view to document and avail information to scholars and other stakeholders.

Primary author: ORAWO , Charles Nyakiti

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