'Reviving' tradition through digital technologies
Traditional repertoires and neo-traditional songs in Western Uganda.

Linda Cimardi

Università di Bologna – PhD / Alumna
linda.cimardi@gmail.com

L'articolo tratta l'utilizzo delle tecnologie digitali nelle musiche di tradizione e nei brani neo-tradizionali dell'Uganda occidentale. La discussione segue i diversi filoni di impiego delle tecnologie digitali e descrive realtà musicali e mediatiche in rapido mutamento: dalla musica riprodotta che segna il soundscape delle cittadine ugandesi, al ruolo di Internet e di YouTube nel promuovere gli artisti e le loro canzoni, fino al rapporto delle musiche neo-tradizionali con la popular music e alla produzione musicale digitale in studio. Particolare attenzione viene dedicata alla produzione di un musicista *tooro*, esemplificativa delle possibilità creative nel filone della tradizione e tuttavia in dialogo con le tecnologie digitali, in una prospettiva saldamente ancorata al territorio di origine ma pur aperta ad orizzonti più vasti. Questo caso viene messo in rapporto ad un'altra esperienza ugandese, che parte da brani tradizionali per giungere ad una rielaborazione che abbraccia pienamente il modello della world music.

The article deals with the use of digital technologies in traditional musics and in neo-traditional pieces from western Uganda. The discourse follows the various lines of employment of digital technologies and tries to describe musical and media realities which are rapidly changing: from played back music marking the soundscape in Ugandan towns, to the role of the Internet and of YouTube in promoting artists and their songs, up to the relationship of neo-traditional musics with popular music and to in-studio digital musical production. Special attention is devoted to the production of a Tooro musician, which exemplifies the creative possibilities in the track of tradition, though in dialogue with digital technologies, in a perspective strongly anchored to his native territory but also opened to wider horizons. This case is presented in relation to another Ugandan experience which uses traditional pieces to re-elaborate them embracing the model of world music.

Introduction

In contemporary Western Ugandan[1] towns, it is common to hear recorded music on every corner: in bars showing famous music videos on TV screens; along the streets where large commercial companies advertise their products playing jingles and hit tracks through loudspeakers set on trucks; in the shops where music programmes resonate on the radio; and in the environs of music kiosks,[2] the widespread facilities where music is sold to customers on digital supports and which use powerful loudspeakers as audible shop signs.[3] It is no exaggeration to say that when no music can be heard around, it is because the electricity is off in town, as often happens. The soundscape of Ugandan towns is thus impregnated daily with played back music, which crosses several different genres and origins: from gospel to hip-hop, from American country music to Ugandan pop, from South African artists to local singers.

The contact with various music styles is today much ampler than in the past and is multiplied by the consistent presence of different sound reproduction systems. While live music performances appear to be more and more circumscribed to specific and formalized contexts, played back music is the soundtrack of the common activities of daily life, fulfilling practical functions such as advertising or signalling a place, but also used to accompany and mark peculiar social acts. Analog radio remains the leading means of music diffusion in Uganda, both because of its wide coverage and of the omnipresence of transistor radios everywhere in the country.[4] But radio music, as well as other recorded musics, can today be enjoyed in diverse modalities (collective or individual listening using loudspeakers or headphones) and by way of various media (digital files or streaming connections through computers, TVs or mobile phones) thanks to digital technologies. Furthermore, besides affecting music playing and fruition, in Uganda digital technologies are nowadays widely used for music production.

Ugandan popular music[5] has employed recording and playing techniques for a long time and has continuously kept updating its appropriation of sound

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[1] With the term Western Uganda, I primarily refer to the areas of Bunyoro and Tooro, two historical regions of the country where I have been carrying out fieldwork since 2008.

[2] Also called recording studios.

[3] Recorded music played in Ugandan towns is usually at a loud volume, similarly to what Meki Nzewi documented in Nigeria (NZWEI 1992, pp. 125-126). This loud soundscape is not perceived as annoying because of its volume, but rather, as inviting, and for this reason, loud played back music is used to attract customers.

[4] As Peter Cooke and Sam Kasule reported, transistor radios have been diffused everywhere in Uganda since the 1960s, because they run on batteries and can thus be easily used even in the several rural areas not reached by the electric grid. See: COOKE - KASULE 1999, p. 7. Also in Nigeria, radio is «the greatest source of musical contact in any form» (NZWEI 1992, p. 125).

[5] I see Ugandan popular music as the complex of various genres that are widespread in Uganda, which have developed from external influences since the second Post-War and which are diffused through the media. For a discussion about the definition of popular music in Uganda, see: NANNYONGA-TAMUSUZA 2006. For a synthetic description of the Ugandan musical panorama, see: SANDAHL - COOKE 2006, SSEWAKIRYANGA - ISABIRYE 2006.

technologies: from tapes, through CDs, to digital music files and the Internet. Popular music is mainly produced in the capital city, Kampala, where the best studios are located and where its mediatization is more capillary, thanks to the wider access to technologies at the level of recorded production, as well as at the level of fruition of the recorded outcomes and live performances (ISABIRYE 2004, p. 115). Kampala saw the development of genres like *kadongo kamu*[6] – a neo-traditional popular music[7] of the Ganda people – and dance-hall music – sometimes also called 'band music' or *kidandali*, performed for instance by the Afrigo Band and by the Ebonies, which was produced at the end of the 1990s using a synthesizer, as reported by Peter Cooke and Sam Kasule (COOKE - KASULE 1999).[8]

Even if they are still alive, these genres currently have a more limited circulation than in past decades and usually attract middle-aged fans who grew up in the 1970s or 1980s, the era of greatest fortune for these kinds of music. Since the 1990s, new popular music genres have caught on in Uganda, such as reggae and hip-hop[9] but also gospel music, and these are well represented today in the musical production of several artists, who come from different parts of the country but are based in Kampala. These popular music genres, usually grown in a synergy covering the whole of East Africa (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania),[10] show a clear reference to Afro-American music, both in terms of sonic complex and of social background.[11] Moreover, as in other African countries, the model of Afro-American genres was usually absorbed within cultural and musical parameters,[12] as well as mediated by the parallel experience of other African countries in this field. The resulting Ugandan popular music entails peculiarities both in the musical style, sometimes indigenized with traditional rhythmic patterns, and in the modality of adaptation of the genre to the specific African context as regards the content of the songs. As noted by Serena Facci, popular music in Uganda – as in several other societies which had a consistent oral tradition and where vocal repertoires preserved stories and cultural norms – is usually characterized by didactic, educative,

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[6] For further details about *kadongo kamu* see: KASULE 1998 pp. 52-56, NANNYONGA-TAMUSUZA 2002, ISABIRYE 2011.

[7] Neo-traditional popular music is Gerhard Kubik's definition to indicate a genre or music style generated by the fusion of Western instruments or of harmonic elements with African playing techniques and style. See: KUBIK 1981.

[8] Nannyonga-Tamusuza expressed the view that *kadongo kamu* and band music are the two main genres of Ugandan popular music that dominated the past popular music scene, while, in the current one, pop, hip hop and reggae genres prevail (NANNYONGA-TAMUSUZA 2006, p. 46-48).

[9] The most comprehensive analysis of hip-hop music, not limited to the Ugandan context but embracing the whole region, is found in Ntarangwire 2009.

[10] For instance, as regards the specific genre of hip-hop, see: NTARANGWI 2009, pp. 15-16.

[11] NTARANGWI 2009, pp. 21-22 for hip-hop music; CAROSIO 2014 for popular music in general.

[12] For example, Nzewi identified a neo-traditional sub-category of traditional music in Nigeria. This sub-genre is produced mainly by youths «acculturated through informal exposure to Western religious and popular music idioms [...] Acculturation expressions are evident in the melodic, harmonic, textual and instrumental preferences, as well as in the use of amplification» (NZEWI 1992, p. 124).

and propaganda aims (FACCI 2010, p. 100). In particular, Ugandan reggae and hip-hop singers usually deal with sensitive social issues in their songs, such as the popular Bobi Wine with his track Malaria;[13] at the same time, some genres have been adapted to local expressivity: gospel music, while still conserving its religious content, has been conjugated by some Ugandan artists in a popular mood and used to deal with love affairs, such as Juliana Kanyomozi's *Omutina oguluma*.[14]

Lyrics in Ugandan popular music are mainly in the Ganda language, the idiom of the numerous Ganda people which has become a sort of lingua franca in most parts of the country (ISABIRYE 2004, p.116); occasionally, popular songs are in the Nkore language (Runyankore) from South-West Uganda, in Swahili or even have short sentences in English. Over the last decade, in-studio digital production has become increasingly important: the instrumental part of the songs is mainly produced by a synthesizer and by computer software and then played back during the singers' concerts. The use of pre-recorded and then played back music is widely accepted in live performances in Uganda and, along with the appeal of entertaining stage interpretation and the attractive status of famous singers, it has also given rise to a new type of club entertainment, commonly called miming. Some clubs in Kampala dedicate entire nights to this kind of distraction, leaving the stage to customers who can sing along to or lip sync to played back tracks, imitating the style, interpretation, and performing attitude of the original singer of the song.

Ugandan music and the Internet

Some Uganda born musicians, like Geoffrey Oryema or Samite, are very famous abroad: their musical production is fully in the stream of world music, both for the smart combination of Ugandan traditional stylistic and rhythmic patterns with Western electro pop elements and for the international diffusion of their music through global channels, rarely involving Uganda, where they are almost unknown. Nonetheless, popular music produced in Uganda has an international resonance mainly among Ugandan expatriates, who can enjoy it primarily through the web, on YouTube, or on the various sites about Ugandan music, among which the best known are www.musicuganda.com and www.ourmusic.com. These sites offer not only information about the musicians, singers, groups, deejays, and producers, but also their tracks and videos for streaming fruition and the codes to buy famous music ring tones.

It seems that the online fruition of Ugandan popular music consistently comes from abroad because Internet surfing is still limited in Uganda, although the situation is changing very rapidly. In 2014, the Internet penetra-

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[13] Specifically on this issue, see: NTARANGWI 2009, pp. 93-114.

[14] Julyana Kanyomozi is a Tooro singer mainly of RnB music (according to the PAM – Pearl of Africa Awards categorization); she is famous all over Uganda and normally sings in the Ganda language.

tion rate in Uganda was only 18.2%,[15] a percentage slightly lower than the continent average, but which is 6 points higher than in 2012. Most Ugandans mainly access the Internet in Internet cafés, which are principally found in cities and towns, but also in trading centres – the small built - up areas generally located on the country's main roads. The rest of the nation, mostly composed of rural areas, does not have electricity or a fixed line network. This situation has contributed to the large diffusion of mobile telephony over the last decade and to the expansion of the usage possibilities of this medium: Ugandans can send money via their mobile phones, and they increasingly use them to listen to the radio and to the music files saved on their phone's memory card. Nonetheless, only a small part of the population accesses the web via mobile phones,[16] because phone models are mainly old generation and also due to Internet connection costs. However, the availability of smart phones is increasing and Internet costs are being gradually reduced.

While Internet accessibility is changing fast in Uganda, we can see that the possibility of watching videos and listening to music on the web is still limited, and that people prefer to buy pirated music files at music kiosks, which are facilities offering music files at a cheap cost. Nonetheless, Internet sites about Ugandan music are vital and a review of the genres and the music related issues they deal with, as well as the evolution of these websites, allows us to better understand how popular music, on the one hand, and the traditional and neo-traditional one, on the other, relate with digital technologies.

Internet sites dedicated to Ugandan music have been mutating over the last decade, and although download possibilities have diminished, a lively activity of music promotion has emerged on the net. In 2005 Serena Facci monitored the cited website www.musicuganda.com, entirely dedicated to popular Ugandan music, and described how the site offered not only the possibility to consult sections about musicians, but also the chance to download music videos and audio files in Mp3 format (FACCI 2007). Today, this is no longer possible and it is not clear whether this was dictated by copyright laws, insufficient server capacity or by other reasons. The other website she presented was the Centre for Africa's www.c4africa.com created by Joel Isabirye. At that time, this site was open not only to the discussion of Ugandan music, but also hosted contents about other African musics; the site no longer exists and, once again, it is not possible to understand if its closure was the result of the creator's shifting interest or due to limited access to the website or something else.

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[15] Data drawn from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>, accessed on 26 April 2015. According to 2014 statistics, access to Internet facilities on the African continent is restricted to an average of 26.5 % of the population, while in Europe and North America, the percentage is around 70% and 87 %. Indeed, Africa remains the area with the scarcest Internet utilization, but in the last decade Internet usage has increased faster than in any other part of the world. See: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>, accessed on 26 April 2015.

[16] On the other hand, wireless Internet connections are provided by the main mobile telephony companies through flash pen modems, allowing those who can afford it to access the Internet with their personal computers, mainly laptops.

Since 2008 I have sometimes visited both MusicUganda and another website partially dedicated to Uganda, www.ugpulse.com, and I have noticed a general broadening of the issues these sites deal with. MusicUganda[17] now also hosts sections about dance and drama, following the common category of performing arts used in Uganda, 'Music, Dance and Drama' (MDD). It even has a section for radio and television and, compared to the past, also lists various musicians and groups originally from Uganda but who are active abroad, especially in the UK, the USA, and Sweden. On the whole, this site collects a great deal of information and audiovisual products which are available for web surfers, but it also serves artists as a means of self-promotion to the public: in fact, this is one of the website's goals and extremely important within the Ugandan music diffusion system which lacks a well-structured promotion structure.[18] Until March 2014, MusicUganda had a dedicated channel on YouTube which offered a rich selection of music video clips, but this channel no longer exists, even though the website is preparing a specific section where registered members will be able to directly watch the music clips. The website Ugpulse,[19] which I first consulted in 2008, still maintains a focus on Uganda, but has recently been redefined as a platform site connected to other pages, such as the above-mentioned OurMusiq and other ones specifically dedicated to popular themes in Uganda and in Africa in general. All contents about music are now confined to OurMusiq, which offers sections devoted to musical genres such as hip-hop, RnB, jazz and world music. This last category deals with musics linked to traditional Ugandan styles, as shown by the productions of Sarah Ndagire who has re-elaborated several traditional songs from diverse parts of Uganda; finally, this website also hosts 'national' sections for Nigerian and Kenyan music. Overall, the musicians and singers who are presented and talked about on these websites have several of their videos posted on YouTube. In general, a major trend in the development of these sites can be identified in their expansion to music related sectors, such as dance and theatre, and also to musical production from other countries. This situation mirrors the widening of Internet surfers' interests, but it also bears witness to the following that other African musics have in Uganda.[20]

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[17] www.musicuganda.com. Accessed on 26 April 2015.

[18] <http://www.musicuganda.com/musicuganda.html>.

[19] www.ugpulse.com. Accessed on 26 April 2015.

[20] This setting is partly reflected in the quite new website, Uganda Music Industry (<http://www.musicugandan.com/home>, accessed on 26 April 2015), even though the site is still incomplete as proven by the modest number of pages about musicians and music videos of gospel songs. The focus here is on Ugandan popular music and the section dedicated to news about singers and music releases is the richest one and apparently the only one constantly updated. The website also has pages about discos and radio stations (this section is just a list of some of them) in Uganda. Uganda Music Industry is linked to the older Uganda online directory (<http://ugandaonline.net/> accessed on 26 April 2015), which itself hosts a section (denominated 'Mp3', although no Mp3 music files are to be found there) about Ugandan musicians, with information about their song releases, lyrics, their background, and gossip.

The above-cited websites offer little or no information about traditional musics in Uganda: apart from some scattered data concerning Ganda traditional music, other Ugandan repertoires are not considered. If the pre-eminence of the Ganda people, both for their visibility in the country and their geographical centrality (the capital Kampala is the location of the headquarters of the Ganda kingdom), explains the presence of information about Ganda traditional music on popular websites, traditional music is generally little promoted on Ugandan music sites. Instead, information on the latter kind of music can be found on Internet sites dedicated to cultural institutions, such as the traditional kingdoms or chiefdoms: most of these institutional websites host pages about local culture and music, with special attention being paid to royal music instruments as part of the kingdom regalia.[21] Only the biggest folkloric group, the national *Ndere Troupe*, has its own website;[22] other groups have some kind of resonance on the Internet mainly when they participate in festivals and, sometimes, their public performances are filmed and posted on YouTube.

So, while the presence of popular music on the Internet is both well-arranged and open to music from other countries – with organized web sites, richly documented with information on artists, news, music videos – the field of traditional music has a different and minor diffusion on the Internet.[23] On the one hand, traditional court music finds a place on the websites of royal institutions mainly as an object to be preserved, since it represents an essential marker in the definition of local identity; on the other hand, traditional music and dance, revived through the activity of folkloric groups, have an irregular representation on the Internet. Although well present in the Ugandans' imaginary, traditional music remains anchored to local fruition, while popular music has a national and international following, mirrored by its presence on the web. Furthermore, the different role of sound recording

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[21] The official website of Buganda is: <http://www.buganda.or.ug/>; in the section about the kingdom it is possible to find a page about royal drums: <http://www.buganda.or.ug/index.php/our-history/our-present/the-drum-in-buganda>, while in the section concerning culture and heritage, we find a page about Ganda dance: <http://www.buganda.or.ug/index.php/cabinet/ganda-dance>.

For Bunyoro, see: <http://www.bunyoro-kitara.org/index.html>; information about the traditional instruments as part of Nyoro royal regalia: <http://www.bunyoro-kitara.org/56.html>; or the new website: <http://www.bunyorokingdom.org/> on the page>, <http://www.bunyorokingdom.org/index.php/royal-regalia>.

For Tooro, see: <http://www.torokingdom.org/links.htm> on the page: <http://www.torokingdom.org/Troupe.htm#REORGANIZATION OF THE ROYAL DANCE TROUP>. Overall, traditional musicians are featured in several photos of royal ceremonies present on these sites. All the mentioned websites were lastly accessed on 26 April 2015.

[22] <http://ndere.com/troupe/>, accessed on 26 April 2015.

[23] In this survey about the presence of Ugandan music on the Internet, I do not consider the websites of academic organizations – such as the British Library, the International Library for African Music or the Makerere University Klaus Wachsmann Music Archive – which host documentary audio data about Ugandan music, but only (some of) the websites popular amongst non-specialized Internet surfers.

and reproduction technologies in popular and traditional musics determines their national diffusion or local peculiarity, as will be shown later.

Far from being a virtual ethnography, this synthetic survey of Ugandan websites depicts the major traits of resonance in the media of the two principal music sectors in Uganda. As argued by Timothy J. Cooley, Katherine Meizel and Nasir Syed, «The Internet is a socially embedded phenomenon… [and its] virtuality is only as real as any other cultural production.» (COOLEY-MEIZEL - SYED 2008, p. 91). In this sense, it is significant that the fruition system of these musics, as well as their conceptualization (popular music open to foreign productions and linked to theatre, radio, etc. versus traditional music connected to kingdoms and cultural ceremonies) is reflected in their presence on the Internet.

Locating contemporary traditional music

The label 'traditional' has been widely discussed and criticized by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists and is particularly problematic in the Ugandan context where, on the one hand, the abundant court music complex has been revived since 1993 (after 26 years of abolition of the pre-colonial monarchies) while, on the other, the remaining music repertoires have undergone a process of traditionalization and folklorization through the decennial action of the so-called 'cultural groups' (folkloric ensembles) and school music festivals.[24] While aware of the several controversial aspects of the term traditional, I have nonetheless decided to employ it, along with the frequently used synonym cultural because of its common usage in Ugandan society. Traditional or cultural music, like other social institutions, is central in the definition of local identities in the multicultural asset of the country. In actual fact, tradition is an element of paramount importance in the current delicate issues in Ugandan society, shaping the discourse[25] not only in the cultural domain, but also in politics, as proved by the recent and sadly famous law, known as the Anti-Gay Bill, approved in February 2014, and by the national and international debate it provoked on 'Africanness' versus Western modern culture. Tradition is thus the key-word for dealing with (supposed) diversity and (presumed) external influences and for tackling colonial heritage and neo-colonial interferences: it works like a fluid marker to establish legitimacy from local issues up to international matters. Therefore, it is with a stringent reference to the Ugandan context that I make use of the term traditional music here, and

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[24] Ugandan schools' music, dance, and drama festivals are annual events held since the 1960s. They involve all Ugandan schools and host several categories of performance, such as 'traditional folksong', 'traditional dance', but also sight singing, drama performances, poems, Western choral singing, etc. See: CIMARDI 2013.

[25] I use the word discourse here as it emerges from Foucault's numerous considerations on this subject, that is to say, as the verbal articulation of power and knowledge, hence, as a biased practice determined by power structures, actively shaping the common way of looking at things. See: FOUCAULT 1971.

its several implications, as well as the various connotations it assumes (popular neo-traditional, revival, traditional in world music) will appear in the following pages.

In the course of the 20th century, in Uganda as well as in other parts of Africa, traditional music progressively lost its everyday function in social life, being replaced by several popular genres broadcast by the radio, and hence, it came to occupy a more restricted but significant place in people's lives, a space normally marked by the powerful aura of tradition. Furthermore, the dissolution of informal traditional music performances is related to the parallel itinerary of codification and spectacularization of traditional music carried out by school music festivals and cultural groups. Today, traditional music is indeed thought to require specific knowledge and inborn skills, and is thus mainly performed by semi-professional musicians and dancers from cultural groups or by school groups composed of a number of pupils, who perform on stage or in show spaces, after hours of preparation. In fact, a word frequently employed by several of the people (young and old, musicians and common people) with whom I had the chance to talk of music was 'talent': specific natural artistic gifts are considered necessary for performers of traditional music (CIMARDI 2013, p. 335). Hence, traditional music heritage is today put in the hands of specialized people who represent the legacy of local cultural identity through music and dance.

The role that technologies have had and still have in popular music is important to contextualize the adoption of some recording and playback modalities, as well as studio editing, in the sphere of traditional music. Indeed, due to its wide spread throughout the whole country via radio and music digital files and to the pervasive resonance of pop musicians on all the media (including television and newspapers), popular music is nowadays an unavoidable model of reference, both for artists and performance settings in the field of traditional music. Unlike popular music, it is only in the last decade that traditional music in western Uganda has approached recording and playing technologies and also sound editing. This late interest for sound recording and reproduction can be only partly explained by the peripheral location of the region; the strong association of traditional music with live performances and with specific occasions, marked by cultural or ceremonial meanings, has also had an important role in maintaining its live character.

Ngabu za Tooro and Kigambo Araali[26]

Professionalization, external inputs, and local discourses about tradition are essential to the present conceptualization of traditional music production and fruition in Western Uganda. It was indeed in the context of a cultural group

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[26] Some of the considerations discussed here regarding the *Ngabu za Tooro* association and Moses Kigambo's song *Ekirale* were partially mentioned in my paper *Etnomusicologia applicata e cultural groups. Esempi dall'Uganda e dal Camerun* presented at the Symposium *Etnomusicologia e cooperazione internazionale in Africa* held in Ravenna, 31 March 2011.

and association, called *Ngabu za Tooro*, that the leading experience of studio musical production in the field of tradition developed. This association was founded in 1999 in Fort Portal, the main town of the Tooro region, by Stephen Rwagweri, and its main goal was the development of the area.[27] Through the financial support of a Dutch NGO, HIVOS (Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation), the members of the association received training in entrepreneurship development skills.[28] From this initial formation, some of the members came up with the idea of using the expertise they had acquired in the field of youth artistic promotion to educate young people in entertainment areas that could provide them with the basis of future income- generating activities.[29] The Talent Development Program was thus created with several sections, such as performing arts, scouts, brass bands, acrobatics, and boxing. In 2002 Moses Kigambo Araali[30] joined this program in the MDD (Music, Dance and Drama) section and started composing his own songs, as well as training young people in the performing arts. These youngsters went on to join the cultural group *Ngabu za Tooro* – which is today very famous all around Tooro because of the significance its various activities and projects had in the area[31] – and several members of the group have sung choruses in Kigambo's songs.

During my interview with Kigambo Araali,[32] he introduced himself saying that he had started singing at Primary School where he had also learnt to play the drums; in the same period, he became a good soloist even in the church

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[27] The basis for the foundation of this association was laid in 1995 by a group of students, including Rwagweri, at Makerere University in Kampala. Some years later, Rwagweri elaborated their program in Fort Portal, dedicating special attention to cultural promotion, reflecting the general enthusiasm for local identity awakened by the restoration of the pre-colonial Tooro monarchy in 1994. The name *Ngabu za Tooro* directly refers to this, meaning 'shields of Tooro', that is to say, defenders of the Tooro culture.

[28] The collaboration between HIVOS and *Ngabu za Tooro* lasted for 9 years, from 1999 to 2008, and was articulated around three main points: support for local entrepreneurship and agriculture; development of an effective system of passing culture from one generation to another, with special attention to the role of women, and the fight against HIV/AIDS. Youth artistic promotion was not envisaged at the beginning, but it developed inside the association and later became the most important element of its public visibility.

[29] Within the project, the activities seeking to preserve culture and foster its transmission mainly consisted in the training and professionalization of some traditional figures related to the customary marriage ceremonies: such as the so-called master of ceremonies, who is in charge of the meeting between the bride's and the grooms' families, and the maids who have to welcome the visitors and serve them cooked milk. Even in these cases, the recovering of a past activity and its codification into a professional figure aimed to create a new income- generating activity.

[30] Moses Kigambo is the artist's proper name, while Araali is his *mpako*, a traditional name used by Tooro and Nyoro people. Kigambo Araali are the names he commonly employs as musician.

[31] Like other troupes of this kind in Uganda, the *Ngabu za Tooro* cultural group is often hired to perform for public ceremonies as well as for private ones, such as weddings, all over the Tooro region. Furthermore, for a certain period, the group held weekly shows in Fort Portal, which comprised dances, traditional songs, and theatre sketches inspired by tradition, combining educative issues about health or development to humour, similar to what Margaret Macpherson defined as «theatre for development» (MCPHERSON 1999, pp. 23-36).

[32] Interview with Moses Kigambo. Fort Portal, 13 September 2011. The interview was held in English.

choir. He underlined that he did not have a formal music education, but had just developed the talent he was born with.[33] On the other hand, he learnt the 'language of the elders' from his grandparents in the village, especially during storytelling (*nganikyo*) sessions. He concluded by saying: «I am trying to revive those things nowadays in my music. I am trying to have some of the tradition developed and moved into modern times.» This self-presentation is interesting because it brings the polarities of his music production directly into focus: on the one hand, the centrality of the vocal element, both for his leading voice and for the verbal component rich with archaic expressions, and, on the other, the elaboration of tradition in contemporary reality, implying a reference to musical treatment and especially to the content of the pieces.

His songs are indeed characterized by the preeminent role of his voice, usually in dialogue with a chorus – sometimes in an elaborated responsorial form, sometimes in a strophic one where the chorus is present only in the refrain. Musical accompaniment is mainly realized by a sonic synthesizer and by computer sound software. His pieces generally last between 4 to 8 minutes, exceeding the time format usual for popular music and hinting at the duration of songs intended for dancing. Rutooro, the language of the Batooro people of the Tooro region, is the exclusive language of his songs and is used in an elaborated manner, usually adopting old or idiomatic expressions and creating meaningful metaphors. The subject of his songs are normally debated issues in Tooro society today: from the criticism of local political leadership (*Akairima*, Darkness) to the disapproval of emigration in the vain search of fortune (*Itaka kintu kikuru*, The land is a great thing), but some songs have an introspective nature, reflecting on the unexpected fame he has reached (*Kyamanywaga oha?* Who could expect it?) and on his long illness (*Ekiribi*, Body). The resonance of his music also procured him a number of song commissions, such as *Omusisa*, Earthquake, composed at the request of the Ministry of Works to sensitize people to the construction of solid houses against earthquakes, and *WBS*, which advertised the homonymous Ugandan TV station. Kigambo's pieces are available in digital formats in most Tooro music kiosks;[34] only a few of these were uploaded on the net, although the musician intends to take more advantage of the possibilities of the Internet for promoting his music.

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[33] Pamela Mbabazi discussed the issue of musical creativity and the use of digital technology in Uganda (MBABAZI 2012). She noted that several Uganda musicians did not receive a formal education in music, but rather, developed inborn talent through their exposition to different musical experiences, as is certainly the case of Moses Kigambo. She then presents the view of some musicians and producers who state that with digital technologies almost everybody can produce his own music, without having real musical skills and creativity. Although I agree that digital technologies facilitate the creation of new musical pieces and that originality is usually missing in such tracks, I maintain that this is not the case of Moses Kigambo, as the following discussion of his musical production will show.

[34] Unless otherwise indicated, these digital files are the ones I used for the analysis of the pieces.

There is a clear development from his first song, the above-cited *Itaka kintu kikuru*,[35] to his last pieces. *Itaka* presents a call and response refrain and solo strophes, and the vocal style of the soloist and in particular of the chorus are close to the one employed in church hymnodic style: these elements are common in gospel music and in the Western Uganda church singing practice, epitomized by Monsignor Lawrence Kasaija's music production in the Rutooro language.[36] The accompaniment in *Itaka* is entirely realized by the synthesizer both for the melodic part and the rhythmic one, recalling the beat and sound of Ugandan popular music.[37] In general, Kigambo's first songs, while bringing his distinctive mark of a pregnant social message conveyed through significant language, show an influence of church music in the vocal part and reveal the mould of popular music for the accompaniment. These elements spring out of his personal music itinerary: the absorption of 'archaic' language from the village and his militancy in church choirs joined with his first attempts to conjugate them with studio editing which, at the time, had only been used in the field of popular music. Ever since he began, Kigambo's aim has been to bring a message which was simultaneously traditional – recalling the deep bond with his native land – and contemporary – depicting the sorry situation of several Batooro emigrants in Kampala who earned their living by doing humble jobs. The incisive Rutooro language and the attractive mood of the song, as enjoyable as a pop song, sustained his message.

A later song, *Otalyobwa omuka*, Don't forget home,[38] uses another perspective to tackle the necessity for the Batooro to come back to Tooro, their homeland, whose charms are depicted in relation to the beauty of a woman. This attachment to Tooro is an important theme in Kigambo's music and personal experience: when he started his career in 2002 there was almost no music production in Tooro, because all Tooro artists had moved to Kampala and mainly sang popular music in the Ganda language.[39] His choice to remain in Tooro was determined by a sense of active engagement in local culture and life. *Otalyobwa omuka* was a great success for Kigambo and is still played by

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[35] *Ngabu za Tooro* Production.

[36] Since the 1960s, Monsignor Lawrence Kasaija has composed the lyrics and musics of most of the church songs currently performed in Tooro and Nyoro churches, elaborating choral style to suit local specific traits. His songs are in the Tooro language, but follow the general traits of classical hymnody, while preferring minor mode and avoiding intervals like the semitone to assimilate some of the local musical peculiarities; they are normally in strophic form, sometimes with a refrain and rarely in a responsorial form. These songs are usually accompanied by double-skin drums (*ngoma*) and by a rattle box (*kisegenya*).

[37] I am referring here to the very first version of the song which is only available in audio format and lasts almost 9 minutes; another version of the song was later made when the video clip was shot and it lasts 5 minutes. This second version displays a more elaborated instrumental accompaniment, with flute solos as interludes and, towards the end of the song, the accompaniment of a (digital) string instrument recalling Congolese music.

[38] This song was composed by Kigambo for a campaign to collect funds for the travel expenses of the *Ngabu za Tooro*'s tour to the USA. It was produced by *Ngabu za Tooro* with Elite Records.

[39] Interview with Moses Kigambo. Fort Portal, 13 September 2011: «I was born here, I grew up here, I were here and I am here, in my homeland Tooro.»

radio stations and used for dancing at traditional functions such as wedding ceremonies, a usage of recorded music which we will go deeper into later. At this stage of his production, the Tooro artist assimilated some elements of Ugandan traditional music revival and re-elaborated them in studio. The strophic form of the beginning was abandoned in favour of the responsorial one, typical of traditional repertoires. While the rhythmic accompaniment is constant during the whole song, the chorus and melody change: if we consider this, the track reveals a sequence of four diverse pieces. Enchaining different songs in a sort of suite is a creative convention that emerged in the context of school music festivals, where a narrative story is created by joining several sung pieces. Indeed, the singing style in *Otalyobwa omuka* is the one standardized by cultural groups and school festivals, where the vocal grain of the chorus shows some influences of polished Western church singing. Sound effects are applied to Kigambo's voice in the short phrases where he varies the melody of the solo part transposing it an octave higher, such as at the beginning of the song (in the second, fourth, and sixth solo phrases). The percussive rhythmic beat of the song, created by the synthesizer, recalls the basic pattern of *runyege* dance and imitates the timbre of *binyege* leg rattles. Some traditional instruments, like the flute (*nyamulere*) and the tube fiddle (*ndingidi*) – which according to Kigambo were played live in the studio recording – fulfil the melodic part. The *ndingidi* is well audible in the interlude sections, where it has a quite virtuosic style when variations uncommon in traditional style occur. If the musical reference has mutated in this song by abandoning popular and church models in favour of a traditional music revival, progression has also been made in in-studio sound editing, by recreating *binyege* rattle sounds and rhythmic patterns and by remixing the ensemble.

Comparing the video clips[40] of *Itaka kintu kikuru* and *Otalyobwa omuka* gives more insights into Kigambo's musical models, making his sonic references visual. While he wore a suit in his first video, smartly singing in a quiet manner, in the second video he was dressed in wild animal skins and cowry shell necklaces, his interpretation was freer and he was almost dancing in some parts. The chorus/dancing groups of *Itaka*, wearing the colourful outfit of the *Ngabu za Tooro*, danced in a modern way, while in the second piece the dance group performed *runyege* traditional dance dressed in local materials, such as barkcloth and cowry shells. While the first video presented views of Fort Portal, and other elements from the town were cited in the lyrics (such as the Batooro workers in Kampala), his latest video displayed local and Pan-African elements, such as the Tooro kingdom palace and wild animals from the savannah: indeed, at the end of the song, Kigambo, invokes the past

[40] According to the classification of music videos made by Serena Facci (2010, p. 101), both videos are narrative, educative, and performance centered, but while *Itaka kintu kikuru* is realistic, presenting images of the elements cited in the lyrics, *Otalyobwa omuka* is deeply characterized by suggestive symbols, such as the mentioned savannah animals, a woman dancing nicely, etc.

empire of Bunyoro Kitara, the kingdom of Tooro, Uganda, and finally Africa. This video, intended to support *Ngabu za Tooro* performances on their tour to the USA, locates Tooro in a well-known African imagery.

Ekirale: legacy as a trail

In 2007, the song *Ekirale* earned Kigambo the *Pearl of Africa Music* (PAM) award, the Ugandan recording industry's prize for artistic achievement in several musical genres.[41] The video clip of the song, as well as his performance on the PAM stage, is available on YouTube.[42] Kigambo won in the «Best cultural artist/group» category, competing with three well known Kampala based groups: *Ndere Troupe*, *Percussion Discussion* and the *Planets* with Annet Nandujja. This award is significant for our discussion, because it marks both the recorded nature of the song and the acknowledgement it received at national level. However, the award does not fully represent the general resonance of his music among the audience since the selection is mostly determined by a small panel of judges and, to a lesser extent, by public votes. Nonetheless, it shows how Kigambo's declared artistic conception crossed the local area of Western Uganda to reach the capital city and the nation. While maintaining the usual Rutooro language, this song – whose video version has English subtitles – contains a message that touches all Ugandans. On the whole, *Ekirale* acted as an affirmation of Tooro identity and pride especially in the national music arena, where Tooro musicians tended not to explicitly manifest their origin, but it also flirted with popular success among a wide public, whose favour was sought.

 Ekirale goes back to the structure used in Kigambo's first song: it is basically a strophic form with responsorial refrains. This formal structure – even if indigenized with responsorial refrains and well present on the western Uganda music horizon because of its vast usage in church and popular music – appears less traditional than the call-and-response form. Nonetheless, it is functional to a more articulate verbal deployment, since the lyrics and verbal expression in *Ekirale* are more significant than in the responsorial *Otalyobwa omuka*. Furthermore, the centrality of the wording and its consecutive organization in a longer flux connect this song to a traditional Tooro poetic genre, *ngabu*, as will emerge from the analysis of the lyrics.

 Ekirale also has a development of the intermingling of traditional instruments and repeated melodic patterns with studio composition and editing. The xylophone part – a repetitive module which opens the piece and accompanies the whole song only stopping at the beginning of each new strophe – is entirely realized with a synthesizer. The flute was played live in the recording

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[41] About the process of musical genre codification and pieces selection of the PAM Awards, see: Asasiira 2012. The following year, Kigambo was also given the 2008 PAM Best Western Artiste award, in other words, the award for the best artist from Western Uganda.

[42] Respectively at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiILP1_2U4U> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJ3Im0tELbM>, accessed on 26 April 2015.

and has a melodic role based on variations of the main xylophone part: it joins in after the xylophone for the instrumental introduction and then plays again in an interlude between the third and fourth strophe and in the final refrain. The tube fiddle is the third instrument to be heard in the introduction and it plays throughout the piece, albeit at quite a low volume, even when the xylophone is mute at the beginning of each strophe. It was played live in the recording and its part is based on the repetition of a basic module. In some brief segments of the song, the electronic sound of a guitar, which enriches the melodic accompaniment, can also be heard. The rhythmic section is accomplished both by the xylophone and by a repeated brief percussive pattern with a shaker timbre produced by the synthesizer, somehow recalling the sound of traditional *binyege* leg rattles.

On the whole, *Ekirale* joins traditional instruments (some played live, such as the tube fiddle and the flute, others, like the xylophone, produced with the synthesizer) and Western ones (guitar) in a studio mixing to obtain a new effect which generally sounds traditional, but, at the same time, is just as appealing as contemporary Ugandan popular music. Furthermore, at some points in the song (second refrain, third strophe, fourth, and final refrains), studio editing was employed to produce a combination of Kigambo's live singing overlapped by his recorded voice, intonating long notes. Thus, the song elaborates a dynamic and productive dialogue with studio editing and composition to reach a peculiar mixing of heterogeneous ingredients.

As previously mentioned, the lyrics are of paramount importance in the song. Here follows the transcription of the song words in Rutooro and their English translation.[43] In the responsorial refrain, the letter S indicates the solo part, which is usually performed by Kigambo and another voice (masculine or feminine) and C stands for the chorus. The refrain has two verbal forms, which I have indicated as Refrain a and Refrain b, always repeated one after the other between a strophe and the following one.

Table 1 – *Ekirale* lyrics (with English translation)

REFRAIN a

S- *Ekirale ekirale*	Legacy, legacy
C- *Ekira [le]*	Legacy
S- *Ekirale kyawe kiraha?*	Where is your legacy?
C- *Mm*	Mm
S- *Kuburwa ekirale bwinazi bubi,*	It is dangerous to have no legacy,
nikimanyisa obwolifa noherakwo*2	when you die, people will recall nothing about you.

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[43] The transcription and translation of *Ekirale* lyrics were kindly realized by Stephen Mugabo and edited by the author. At some points, this translation differs from the one in the subtitles of the song video on YouTube: while some metaphoric or idiomatic expressions have been translated in a similar way, using simplified words (i.e. legacy is maintained throughout the song, instead of alternating it with track as in the video) for which more explanation is given later, while for other passages we chose to adopt a literal translation.

REFRAIN b

S- *Ekirale ekirale*	Legacy, legacy
C- *Ekira [le]*	Legacy
S- *Eky'omwebembezi wawe?*	Where is your leader's legacy?
C- *Kiri nkaha?*	Where is it?
S- *Ekirale kya Tooro kikabuurra nkaha?*	Where did the legacy of Tooro go?
*Mwehwemu twombeke ekirale.*2*	Let us be serious and build our legacy.

Tooro ekirale kyayo kyali kyamani omu Uganda,	Tooro's legacy was really great in Uganda,
amahanga gagirorrahoga	it was an example to other countries
hati kikahwerekerra kita?	but now where did it end?
Murugeyo mwije twombeke ekirale tugarre Tooro mubyafayo	You all come back, we build the legacy and put Tooro back in history.
Ekirale kyo kusomesa	The legacy of education,
Tooro yali kyokurorraho,	Tooro was a model in that,
Galihuma yali university ya Kitara,	Galihuma was the university of Kitara,
hati mutendekero ga baiguru.	now it is an institute for rich people.
Eby'obulimi n'obutegeki	The grounds of farming and leadership in
munuka gali matwale,	this country were ours,
embuga hazitaganira emihanda yoona nuho yayolekezaaga.	all towns have met there and all roads have directed people there.

REFRAIN a and b

Ekirale ky'okutunga Mwenge egiyona gaali masyo g'ente	For the legacy of wealth, all Mwenge was [disseminated of] farms of cattle,
eby'amaka n'ebibanja,	homesteads and lands,
nyineka n'akagongo koona,	every family head had a whole hill,
baitu hati nohuurra mpigiza ndabeho omu camp n'omu bisenyi	but today you hear quarrelling in plantation camps and urban slums.
Iwe nk'omuntu	You as a human being,
tembura kandi oyombeke enju,	discover land and build a house,
osomese abaana, byara emiti, handiika ebitabu, batere ebizina.	educate your children, plant trees, write books, play songs.
Ekirale ky'obumanzi ekinyakulinda ihanga	The legacy of bravery protects the country
Abanyamwenge kyali njokizibwa na murro ekirale ky'abaisenku rwitwe.	Abanyamwenge are the bees who make fire as their grandfathers used to do.

REFRAIN a and b

Oli mwebembezi, weziringirre ekizibu okimaleho, kyoleke ekirale kyawe, abantu bakimanyirre	As a leader, work against a problem, show your legacy so that people recognizes it
Fokamanzi ocungule ekicweka, baza amazima twoleke ebitulikutenda,	Be brave, save the area, tell facts and show what we will say about you
otasura okwetinirra okahwerekereza ihanga, kwenulisiriza ngu bakuhe ebbahasa kugaba embeho nukwo osemeze abantu.	never fear or misguide the country [for personal interest] praising yourself while [you are] just deceiving people with empty

Yombekesa engudo tinda ekyombeko bakwijukege,
sakira abantu enkurakurana, tema oruhenda bakukurate.

envelops, so that they become happy.
Construct roads, build a house so that people remember you,
open the way for development and they will follow you.

REFRAIN a and b

Flute brief interlude

Bagenzi bange busaho kintu kibi nk'okuba mwebembezi, bakweta owekitinisa, okaruga mu ntebe egi
otaina kirale barakwijukiraho ga mukwebembera kwawe, ekirale kyeka yanyu, ekirale ky'ekika kyanyu.
Ekirale ky'oruganda rwanyu kira? Mugenzi wange kyekaguze,
oruganda orutaine ekirale nkurahiire ruba rucwekirwe.
Ihanga litafireyo kwombeka ekirale bantwinywe ligoromoka.

My fellows, there is nothing bad as being a leader, they call you respected one, because you are in that seat
and they expect you to leave the legacy from your leadership, the legacy for your home.
Where is the legacy of your clan? My friend ask yourself,
a clan without a legacy is not a living one, I tell you.
A country which does care about building a legacy just perishes.

REFRAIN a and b

Ekirale kyawe kira ha?
Otaina yombeka ekirale, abaana bawe n'abaijukuru ekibalisangaho n'ensi ekakimanyirra
Ndayawe Kigambo, kanyenyigire mukira ky'okuzina, ninyijukya abantu munuka okwombeka ekirale.
Nyina okunihira ngu obundiba ntaroho Kigambo balinyijukiraho,
ndi mutabanyi wa Kijuma omu kika ky'Erinaadi Kahwa
Banu abanya Mwenge kaswa, Abasiita ba Mbale.

Where is your legacy?
If you do not have one, start building it so that your children and grandchildren will find it and appreciate it.
For sure me Kigambo, let me develop the legacy of singing, encouraging our people to build a legacy.
I hope when I am not there Kigambo's people will recall me of that,
I am a son of Kijuma in the family of Erinadi Kahwa
We are from Mwenge, the Abasiita of Mbale.

REFRAIN a and b

Ekirale, the title and recurring word in the song, literally means «trail of men or animals» (Davis 1938, p. 75). It refers to the path produced by humans walking and by animals moving (mainly cow herds) following a constant itinerary, leaving a visible mark on the soil or grass with their tracks. It is an old word, no longer common in the current Rutooro language, and its meaning in the song can be understood from the context. The translation 'legacy' is thus downplayed because it mainly indicates the result, while *ekirale* emphasizes the repetitive nature of an act leaving a permanent sign on

the environment: it is a model of behaviour which is still alive after the disappearance of the one(s) who performed it.

Linking the past to the present is indeed at the core of the song and this connection shapes the content of the strophes: the first two describe the past role and prestige of the Tooro kingdom in contrast to the current situation; the central strophes give advice to present Tooro leaders, and the last one introduces the singer and his deeds.

The Tooro kingdom is presented mainly for the importance of the Mwenge area, currently the Kyenjojo district in central Tooro, which was a rich zone for cattle herding. This was the reason why royal princes and the future chiefs of the Tooro and Nyoro kingdoms (both part of the previous legendary empire of Kitara) were educated here in pre-colonial times. The Galihuma School was established in Butiiti, Mwenge, as one of the main educational institutions in Uganda, but gradually declined and became too onerous for many Tooro pupils; this gap is underlined by saying that, in the past, the prosperity in the land, both in the economic (farming) and cultural domains (education to leadership), belonged to the Batooro: for them, it was *mutwale*, 'our own'. The Mwenge area was also central because of its location between the main towns of Bunyoro and Tooro, and because an important road junction connecting Tooro to Bunyoro and to Buganda can be found here: indeed, the word *embuga* used in the lyrics means the ancient capital of the Ganda kingdom.[44]

The wealth of the past is symbolized by the abundance of herding fields for cattle which allowed each family to live well; in contrast to this, several Batooro abandoned their lands to emigrate and find a humble job on planta-tions and in the cities. To stress the value (or better, the bravery, *obumanzi*) of the Mwenge people (the Abanyamwenge), which is renowned in Tooro, a proverb is quoted: *Abanyamwenge kyali njoki izibwa n'omurro*, describing them as «bees which light fire»[45] metaphorically representing their bravery and assertiveness which is still alive today, since they continue the tradition of their ancestors. The example of the Abanyamwenge has to stimulate the Batooro to take action to settle on their land, build a house and a family who should grow up in tradition.

After depicting the unfair state of the once prosperous area, the central strophes of the song move to directly address the Tooro leaders, both the cultural ones symbolized by the ministers of the kingdom and the political ones, who represent the Tooro at the local and national level. Kigambo urges them to mobilize and improve the Tooro and Batooro peoples' situation: he asks them to be assertive in fostering development, and to express this, he says *fokamanzi*, 'be brave', again referring to the traditional word *obumanzi*, bravery. This model of traditional determination and purposefulness is thus

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[44] Instead, *embuga* in the Nyoro-Tooro language literally means courtyard. See DAVIS 1938, p. 93.
[45] An evident mistake was made at this point in the video subtitles, translating *njoki* as termites (*nswa*) and not bees.

transferred to contemporary politics, and the efforts to obtain results are indirectly compared with opening up the fields or the way by cutting back the bushes or trees (*oruhenda*), as the Batooro used to do to pass through the forest or to create a new cultivable field. Kigambo acknowledges the hard status of leadership, because of the heavy task of achieving people's needs. If leaders are given respect, *bakweta owekitinisa*,[46] as is given to elders or to notable persons, they are also required to leave a tangible sign, representing their area and people, referred to with the significant word *ekika*, literally meaning the sub-clan (DAVIS 1938, p. 71), that is to say, a large lineage traditionally settled in a specific territory. Being appointed to power requires a particular responsibility towards one's family of origin and towards the clan (*oruganda*): one needs to become a model and trace the path for the next generations, because without a way that is traced from the past to the future, the lineage is fragile and can easily break (*rucwekire*).[47]

In the last strophe of the song, Kigambo presents himself as a singer who creates his own legacy, acting in the present to leave a durable mark: he employs the word *mukira*, meaning 'tail' (DAVIS 1938, p. 106) to describe his deeds, thereby marking the power of valuable actions to connect the past to the future, as is the case for *ekirale*. At the same time, his self-introduction that brings the song to a close recalls the traditional Tooro poetic genre of *ngabu*, where great emphasis is given to family and territorial origin, and ancestors and epic deeds are described (Cf. CIMARDI 2013, TIBASIIMA 2008, TIBASIIMA 2009).

This comment on the song lyrics has shown the paramount importance of language and wording, as is found in Tooro traditional vocal repertoires and also in other neo-traditional music genres, *kadongo-kamu*, as argued by Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2002, p. 138). As a whole, the song supports social change for development but does not recommend following a model of progress for welfare and modernization in the terms so frequently used by international agencies. It relates the past to the present and recommends development that draws inspiration from the lost indigenous asset, presenting this message for its understanding and acceptance in the local Tooro imaginary, while also inciting Tooro pride as a means for action. The Rutooro idiom, as well as the specific linguistic choices and expressions, is central in strengthening the link to the past tradition and in showing the way – a verbal one, supported by the music fusion of traditional and technological elements – to deal with modernity. Indeed, while talking about *ekirale*, Kigambo said: «in the strategy of development plan, we use an ancient word in today's development aspect [...] I took that old element and packaged it into a development theme: if you want to do something in life you have to be focused, to follow a track, *ekirale*.»[48]

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[46] *Kitinisa* means 'glory, honor, respect, reverence, pomp': see DAVIS 1938, p. 79.

[47] The verb *kucwekera* literally means «to be easily broken, to be fragile», DAVIS 1938, p. 22.

[48] Interview with Moses Kigambo, Fort Portal, 13 September 2011.

Kigambo's experiences are fully inserted in the amalgam of the projects supported by *Ngabu za Tooro* and have indeed been the flagship of the association's activities. Its president, Atwoki Rwagweri, wrote: «We use culture as a catalyst and an instrument of social transformation» (NGABU ZA TOORO, no date). Kigambo's success in integrating development themes within the entertainment industry, especially through *Ekirale*, was acknowledged when he was awarded the Rotary International Vocational Service Leadership Award in 2008.

In parallel with the lyrics and music, the video clip[49] of the song assembles elements drawn from tradition (such as musical instruments) and contemporary life (cars, modern roads, etc.). The development of the video follows the words of the songs quite accurately, presenting several mentioned elements.[50] For example, in the second strophe Kigambo sings *handiika ebitabu* ('write books'), which, despite seeming a general suggestion, is actually a precise reference to a Tooro experience: the video shows the book *Tooro and her people* which presents the Tooro area and some of its traditions and was written by the founder of the *Ngabu za Tooro* association, Stephen Rwagweri (RWAGWERI, no date). What is interesting to note is the multi-layered nature of the tradition portrayed in this video. On the one hand, some elements are deeply rooted in Tooro traditional memory, for example, the attachment to cattle, while others are part of a Pan-Ugandan tradition, such as the several musical instruments shown playing together (but not present in the piece, such as the large bowed harps and the small drums played with sticks which were incorporated into traditional ensembles through school music festivals, but not used in Tooro until the second half of the 20th century). Finally, some elements are Pan-African, such as Kigambo's clothes and cap, made of wild animal skins. On the other hand, tradition is shown at different temporal stages: for example, in some scenes, we can see a woman stretching a goat skin out on the ground to sit on, just as Tooro women did in the past, while the dancers shown in the video perform the *runyege* in the modernized style which has been popularized by present-day cultural groups (the dancers are actually part of the *Ngabu za Tooro* group). The dynamic conception of tradition as presented by the song itself reverberates in the video: some points are clarified by showing the elements referred to in the lyrics, which therefore emphasize and strengthen the message of the song.

Thus, Kigambo has assembled diverse elements in *Ekirale* – content and language, music form and instruments – which are, simultaneously, both a reference to a past tradition and a new shaping of it, especially through studio editing. His aim was «to package the modernity into music, so I decided to use my talent to disseminate that information into community. It worked. I

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[49] The *Ekirale* video clip won the 'Video of the Year – Uganda' at the Kisima Music Award, a Nairobi based competition comprising several music genres from East Africa.

[50] In this sense, the video clip can be described as narrative, in addition to being performance centered, realist and educative (categorization of music videos according to FACCI 2010, p. 101)

packaged the music, trained my choristers and we founded the Development Talent Program».[51]

Since 2002 Kigambo has composed more than twenty songs, but his musical activity has been dramatically reduced in the last few years due to his health problems. Most of his pieces became hits in Tooro and are still frequently played on the radio today, but they are also known in the Nyoro and Nkore regions of Western Uganda where the Rutooro language of the songs is understood. His music was primarily diffused on the radio stations, most of which are local ones, and had an informal but rooted circulation through digital files, in .mp3, .wav and other audio formats. Video clips, like the last two we considered, were shot of his most renowned songs and then partly distributed on television (especially his main success *Ekirale*), as video digital files, and finally uploaded on YouTube.[52] Unfortunately, most of the clips have now been removed from YouTube; the only ones remaining are *Ekirale*[53] and his last songs *Kibiri*[54] and *Emanzi*.[55] These pieces did not have a big Internet audience[56] which cannot merely be attributed to Uganda's low Internet diffusion, seeing that famous popular artists, such as Bobi Wine or Chameleon, vaunt more than one hundred thousand visualizations for some recent songs. Apart from reflecting Kigambo's more restricted and local audience, it is probable that his clips received fewer visitors on YouTube because his music production was not implemented or advertised on the web. In fact, we cannot find information about him on the main websites dealing with Ugandan music, such as MusicUganda and OurMusiq.

Another form of distribution of Kigambo's music, and generally of music in Uganda, is through mobile phones. The main Ugandan telephony companies offer the opportunity to download music files (full tracks), ringtones (true tones) and the widespread ring-back tones (caller tunes) from their websites.[57] Caller tunes – the music that is heard by the caller while the phone called is being rung – are quite diffused among Ugandan mobile network customers: it is a way of personalizing their own phone that is more common than normal ringtones. The biggest mobile operator in Uganda sells 26 Kigambo's songs in the caller tune version, a shortened version of the song in a low quality digital format.[58] Calling someone's mobile phone is thus an

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[51] Interview with Moses Kigambo. Fort Portal, 13 September 2011.

[52] Most of these videos were available through the links on the *Ngabu za Tooro* association's blog: <http://engabuzatooro.blogspot.com/2010_11_01_archive.html>. On my last access on 26 April 2015, all the clips linked on this page had been removed from YouTube.

[53] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiILP1_2U4U>, accessed on 26 April 2015.

[54] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lFDEEMGhei4>, accessed on 26 April 2015.

[55] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQtjua6iRmY>, accessed on 26 April 2015.

[56] Reaching around 10.000 and 2.000 and 500 visualizations respectively.

[57] One of the few reflections about the spread, variety, and musical significance of mobile phones music and acoustic signals can be found in: Facci 2005.

[58] The list of downloadable songs can be accessed at <http://callertunez.mtn.co.ug:10040/user/mainframe.screen> searching by artist: Kigambo. Accessed on 14 March 2014.

occasion to listen to Kigambo's songs. But mobile phones also work as music devices playing the audio files saved on mini SD memory cards, as we shall see later.

Traditional repertoires, world music, and revival

Some traditional songs from Tooro and Bunyoro have been taken up by artists from other parts of Uganda, such as, for example, Sarah Ndagire, a London-based Ugandan singer. Growing up between Bunyoro and Buganda, Sarah Ndagire collaborated with several Ugandan bands including the famous Afrigo band. Her music is a declared fusion of the several musical streams and influences she has been in touch with.[59] She introduces her songs as part of the world music, mixing Ugandan traditional rhythmic and stylistic patterns and repertoires with jazz, South African influences, and Western taste.[60] Ndagire has a quite wide audience in Europe, where she usually gives concerts, and also in Uganda, mainly in the capital Kampala.

Sarah took up a traditional song well known in Western Uganda, called *Katitira* or *Mutitira,* which imitates the tweeting of a bird and expresses happiness: Nyoro and Tooro elders remember it as a story-song played with drums, which could also accompany traditional dance.[61] Ndagire elaborated both the musical style (slowing it down and using a new rhythmic pattern) and the content of the lyrics (originally, a song of delight, her version is a song about female beauty) and mixed it with newly composed parts. She thus created a new song, also named *Katitira*,[62] where the initial traditional inspiration is largely elaborated into something different. Unexpectedly, her song is not diffused in Western Uganda, even if the video was also broadcast on national television, but it is quite well known in Kampala.

A central role in Ndagire's music is assigned to studio composition and editing, in order to manipulate some musical material and partly to create instrumental accompaniment: she has a fruitful collaboration with a musician and studio editor who have an integral part in the composition process behind her pieces.[63] Studio produced accompaniment is usually employed as a backing track in her concerts, where she sings accompanied by musicians playing live, differently from what usually happens in Kigambo's concerts, which are normally performed with played back music.

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[59] Her self-presentation can be found on her Internet website: <http://www.sarahndagire.com/>. Lastly accessed on 26 April 2015.

[60] Interview with Sarah Ndagire, Kampala, 08 February 2012.

[61] Interview with Gerrison Kinyoro held in Kiguma, 07 September 2010. I also recorded this song by Gertrude Bajenja (Fort Portal, 20 September 2010); Joseline Matama (Nyaburara, 22 September 2010); Leo Sebala (Kagadi, 23 June 2010).

[62] Sarah Nagire's *Katitira* video is available on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Hy2j6-hSKU>. Lastly accessed on 26 April 2015.

[63] Interview with Sarah Ndagire, Kampala, 08 February 2012.

A comparison between Ndagire's and Kigambo's music significantly reveals different approaches to traditional music. Ndagire looks for Ugandan traditional songs to use them as a starting point to elaborate her own songs, which intentionally fuse elements mainly drawn from Ugandan band music; her lyrics are in several languages (Luganda, Runyoro-Rutooro and English, among others) and her potential audience is international. In our interview, she underlined the fact that, while she considers the message of her songs to be important, it is not necessary to understand the lyrics: the music is nice and appealing and during concerts she takes care to introduce the content of her pieces to foreign audiences, so that they can just enjoy the music. She does not think of her music as traditional but as world music, mainly to «present Africa to Europeans.»[64] On the contrary, Kigambo's perspective on elaborating traditional music does not aim to revive old songs, but fits the traditional attitude of singing for his own community with an educative purpose, thereby following a neo-traditional bent, and combining local instruments and language with contemporary musical taste through the use of studio editing. In this sense, the great emphasis Kigambo places on verbal expressions clearly emerges compared to the mainly suggestive allure that denotes Ndagire's lyrics.

In Western Uganda, and especially in Tooro, Kigambo's experience and success have been the stimulating model for other singers and musicians, including some members of the *Ngabu za Tooro* group – such as Patrick Mugabo, Makora Kis and Magoba Salongo – and others. Only a few of these, however, have chosen to create new songs. Nonetheless, Kigambo's songs brought a fresh interest for traditional music in a broad sense, and this renewed attention is significant of the deep impact his music has had in Tooro. Several artists have chosen to revive some traditional songs by recording new versions of them, in a way that directly conjugates the practice of cultural groups with the studio editing experimented by Kigambo. While his music production positions itself in the multiform complex of neo-traditional music, recordings of traditional songs are fully in the stream of revival, interacting with technologies of recording and studio editing in a less articulated way than those of Kigambo. In the case of known traditional songs which have recently been recorded, the fact that they were in the repertory of cultural groups and hence returned to public attention has certainly conditioned and limited the creativity of studio manipulation. Traditional songs like *Ngayaya*, *Bwasemera* and *Dodolyo*, recorded by Patrick Mugabo with some members of the *Ngabu za Tooro* association, adopt studio composition to create an instrumental accompaniment on the model of Kigambo's songs. Xylophone, flute, and rattles are the constant trait of these songs, which sometimes also feature guitar, although they were once performed without instrumental accompaniment; moreover, in some pieces, ambient sounds are

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[64] Interview with Sarah Ndagire, Kampala, 08 February 2012.

added, such as the tweeting of birds and the bellows in *Dodolyo*. In these songs, the performance of the vocal part is based on the model popularized by school music festivals: namely, the solo section is dramatized by dividing it among different singers, who interpret diverse characters in the story or in the action recounted by the song. Furthermore, Patrick Mugabo's piece, *Taata wahurra,* fully adopts the performance practice of traditional songs in school festivals, in which a sequence of songs is created following a narrative plot; in this case, a story is constructed starting from a bachelor's desire to get married (*Taata wahurra ninyenda kuswera*, 'Father, you heard, I want to marry', is just the first piece of the suite), then his aunt's advice is presented, the parents-in-law welcome the bride, while, at the end, the new family is described as successfully overcoming a period of famine. In the recording of this piece, the xylophone and rattle accompaniment were added in the studio, while the flute and drum parts were recorded live, in accordance with Kigambo's practice. These recorded songs, and numerous others not presented here, had a huge diffusion in Western Uganda and in several cases these versions imposed themselves as traditional repertories on the common knowledge.

Public use and private circulation of recorded music

Together with Moses Kigambo's production, recorded traditional songs hold a sizeable place in the field of current traditional Western Uganda music, representing the side of recorded/reproduced music, while performances at school music festivals and of cultural groups maintain the usual live renditions.

However, in the Tooro traditional music arena, the impact of recorded music has been of considerable relevance and even touched the space of live performances. As has been said for popular music, the practice of playback singing is a normal feature of Kigambo's concerts, on account of both the lack (and the cost) of musicians to play live and the impossibility of reproducing live the musical parts created digitally by the synthesizer. Furthermore, the diffusion of these pieces on the radio has strengthened the audience's strong reference to recorded songs, so a free performance adapted to live stage requirements would not live up to the public's expectations.

What is more relevant here is to observe that the recorded versions of traditional songs have even been imposed on some cultural groups' performances on customary occasions, such as cultural ceremonies and traditional weddings, where these pieces are sometimes played back while the group is singing and dancing. Several concomitant causes underlie this adoption of recorded music in traditionally live performances. First of all, the disappearance of ritual traditional song performances at public functions: if any traditional spontaneous singing is indeed present, it is normally reserved for private moments. Moreover, today, sound reproduction systems, mixers, and loudspeakers are indispensable devices at all the ceremonies in Western

Uganda which are normally held in the open air: originally needed to amplify speeches, as well as further reinforcing the official character of these events, they were later also used to play recorded music. Until a couple of decades ago, at ceremonies like weddings, the musical moments were entrusted to folkloric groups who would perform traditional dances and songs. Nowadays, some parts of the reception are sonorized by popular love songs (mainly in Luganda or in English) played by the loudspeakers, and moments of pure entertainment for the guests see the performance of cultural groups, comprising music, dance, and drama sketches. Some of the amusement provided also involves dancing to pop music pieces, as in the picture below. Apart from live singing and playing traditional music, these groups often adopt recorded traditional songs, like the ones by Patrick Mugabo described above, as the base for their interpretation. This is particularly frequent in Tooro where some recorded versions of traditional songs had a wider diffusion through the media and where the link between these pieces and the *Ngabu za Tooro* cultural troupe is very strong. Nowadays, these recorded songs are used either as a musical basis for performing traditional dances or for a mimed interpretation of singing and playing, that is to say, performing while the song is played back, faithfully following the recorded voice and instruments.

Figure 1 – *A moment of entertainment during a wedding ceremony (*kweranga n'okubaga*) in Kibale (central Bunyoro), 23 February 2008). On the left, a man is dancing to pop music played by the powerful loudspeaker in front of him.*

It is evident that the performance practice common in Ugandan popular music, marked by played back music, has imposed itself even on contexts that

were strictly marked by live traditional performing. The adoption of the recording and reproduction systems which characterised popular music and the corresponding reification and fixation of a specific version of the musical piece were the moving forces that caused these live interpretations to be replaced by played back ones.

If miming is well accepted in public performances, the recorded pieces frequently used in these cases find a wide circulation not only through radio broadcasting, but also as digital files for private use. As noticed by some scholars (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2006, p. 39; Facci 2007), the official music market in Uganda is quite modest, since most of the recording labels are small recording studios or artist management companies; the *Copyright and Neighbouring Act* emanated in 2006 is indeed scarcely known and not at all enforced.[65] For this reason, musicians normally earn their revenues through concerts and album launches: this is a condition shared by both popular and traditional or neo-traditional music artists. Simultaneously, an informal market for music in the form of digital files is flourishing (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2006, pp. 38-39, Facci 2010, p. 100) through the activity of the so-called music kiosks or recording studios, numerous in every town and in some trading centres. In these facilities it is easy to get a freshly burned CD with the latest hits for a quite small amount of money or have these pieces saved on a USB flash drive or on a memory card. The quality of the files is usually low on account of the compressed format and because of the numerous damaged copies in circulation; likewise, these facilities care little about accuracy in specifying the author and title of the pieces, which are sometimes missing or wrong. Even if CD players and computers for the use of CDs and USB flash pens are not so common, and mainly employed for music videos, memory cards, such as micro SDs, can be used in mobile phones, and most Ugandans nowadays have one of these in their pockets. For their massive diffusion among the population, mobile phones are the cheapest and most prevalent device used for listening to music, through audio files or on the radio, as mentioned before.

Final remarks

The panorama of recorded traditional and neo-traditional music outlined here has touched several points, from recording to mass diffusion, from studio editing to sound reproduction, in an attempt to depict the varied panorama of the creation and reception of these musics. On the whole, the field of traditional music has come to terms with the hefty model of popular music and dealt with numerous extraneous features, such as studio production, recording and reproduction systems, and performance practice. If musicians like Moses Kigambo have elaborated popular elements to make them part of their

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[65] This situation is common to the other West and East African countries, see: Nwezi 1992, p. 137 and Ntangwire 2006, pp. 84-85.

personal neo-traditional music style, the reification of musical pieces produced by recording has generally meant the complete adoption of the diffusion and promotion channels and performance modalities peculiar to popular music. Nonetheless, these musics have maintained a limited circulation in Western Uganda, where they have a consistent social relevance and gained a place in the local imaginary of tradition.

Inasmuch as concerns the impact of the Internet and in particular of You-Tube as a leading means for music diffusion, Uganda is an active ground, as is shown by the increasing use of these media in recent years. YouTube is mostly used by popular music artists and is exploited particularly for its possibilities of showing videos, which are fundamental in constructing the contemporary image of Ugandan popular musicians (CAROSIO 2014). The trend of the use of the Internet in the Ugandan musical arena suggests that web possibilities will also be increasingly exploited by the neo-traditional popular artists focused on in this paper, since in the past they absorbed other developments of digital technologies through the mediation of popular music. As a powerful tool in the hands of both the artists and the audience, YouTube allows the musical and visual references of Ugandan artists to be deeply analysed and, thanks to the possibility of commenting on clips, permits the public's reactions to be directly evaluated. Notwithstanding the instability of contents on the Internet, which was also dealt with in this paper, YouTube makes it possible to examine the spread and the fruition process of music and, in this sense, is a useful tool for the scholar, who now increasingly uses not only broadcasting platforms like YouTube, but also social networks such as Facebook and Twitter to enhance both his/her research and the internal perspective emerging therein.

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Linda Cimardi si è addottorata in Etnomusicologia all'Università di Bologna nel 2013 con una dissertazione sui repertori tradizionali dell'Uganda occidentale. Membro della Missione Etnologica Italiana in Africa equatoriale, è stata ricercatrice Vittore Branca presso la Fondazione Cini di Venezia e nel 2016 presso il Phonogramm-Archiv di Berlino. Dal 2014 conduce ricerche in Croazia.

Linda Cimardi got her PhD in Ethnomusicology at the University of Bologna in 2013 with a dissertation about Western Uganda traditional repertoires. Member of the Italian Ethnological Mission in Equatorial Africa, she was a Vittore Branca fellow at the Cini Foundation in Venice and a researcher at the Berliner Phonogramm-Archiv (2016). Since 2014 she has conducted research in Croatia.