

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: RWANDA'S VOICE: AN
ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY OF
JEAN-PAUL SAMPUTU

Brent Lee Swanson, Doctor of Philosophy, 2014

Directed By: Prof. J. Lawrence Witzleben, School of Music

Rwandan international recording artist Jean-Paul Samputu is one of few musicians from Rwanda who have gained international acclaim. In this dissertation, I will delineate how his life and works serve as a reflection of and a mediator for Rwandan identity, as well as East/Central African popular music identity. Specifically, I will use elements of his biography to situate him in these contexts, and will analyze his works via timbral analysis, transcription, and studio production techniques to demonstrate how his music reflects the aforementioned identities.

Mr. Samputu's life and music reflect the complicated narrative(s) of Rwandan identity. He was born in Rwanda, but fled to Uganda just before the 1994 genocide; speaks about forgiveness (a central focus of the RPF's—Rwandan Patriotic Front—Commission for Unity and Reconciliation) around the world; sings in Kinyarwanda, French, English, Luganda, Lingala, and Kiswahili; wrote pro-RPF songs in the early 1990s and still supports current

government in various functions within the country and abroad; and performs and records all styles of Rwandan traditional and popular music, as well as many popular and traditional styles found in East/Central Africa. He is one of the key figures in the Rwandan music scene, as he performs regularly there and serves as a mentor for up-and-coming Rwandan popular and traditional musicians.

THE VOICE OF RWANDA: AN ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY OF
JEAN-PAUL SAMPUTU

By

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Dedication

In memory of Anastasia Naimah Swanson.

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Chapter 1: Introduction—Methods, Frames, and Literature Review

Introduction

Rwandan international recording artist Jean-Paul Samputu is one of few musicians from Rwanda who have gained international acclaim. Mr. Samputu's life and music reflect the complicated narrative(s) of Rwandan identity. He was born in Rwanda, but fled to Uganda just before the 1994 genocide; speaks about forgiveness (a central focus of the RPF's—Rwandan Patriotic Front—Commission for Unity and Reconciliation) around the world; sings in Kinyarwanda, French, English, Luganda, Lingala, and Kiswahili; wrote pro-RPF songs in the early 1990s and still supports current government in various functions within the country and abroad; and performs and records all styles of Rwandan traditional and popular music, as well as many popular and traditional styles found in East/Central Africa. He is one of the key figures in the Rwandan music scene, as he performs regularly there and serves as a mentor for up-and-coming Rwandan popular and traditional musicians.

Why Biography? Benefits and Challenges

In his *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts*, Bruno Nettl states that despite the fact that “ethnomusicologists experience a great deal of face-to-face contact with individual informants or teachers in the field and specialize in concentrating on a particular person, the older literature of the field, particularly, provides surprisingly little information about the individual in music” (Nettl

2005:172). Danielson similarly comments, “when individuals appear at the forefront of ethnomusicological or folkloric studies, they are rarely stars” (Danielson 1997:15). Nettl charges that the focus on the individual is a challenge to the ethnomusicologist because musicians tend to be myopic when it comes to broader musical information about their own culture, and studying the “complex whole” can provide more information about a culture's music (song repertory, importance of certain styles over another, etc.). However, he also states, “the range of musical phenomena experienced by one person in a single day or throughout a lifetime is of great interest” (Nettl 2005:174). Further, Ruskin and Rice detail the history of ethnomusicological research in their 2012 article “The Individual in Musical Ethnography,” and note:

In our survey of over one hundred book-length musical ethnographies published by ethnomusicologists (and a few fellow travelers) between 1976 and 2002, we found that the study of individuals is now a norm in the discipline even as ethnomusicologists retain an interest in broadly shared musical, cultural, and social processes within communities. (Ruskin and Rice 2012:316-17)

In this dissertation, I take up this challenge through my study of the musical life of Rwandan artist Jean-Paul Samputu. I believe that studying an exceptional musician such as Samputu provides insights into the complexity of Rwandan identity. After all, to define a person as an exceptional member of a particular culture, one must define what an un-extraordinary member is in that same context. Additionally, by studying an exceptional individual we must answer some key questions: Why is this individual exceptional? What is the social framework that this person exists within that allowed him to be exceptional? Who or what gave him agency to transcend the “norms” of the culture? Or more specifically, as Danielson states, “Why was *this* individual, among many other entertainers, so important?” (Danielson 1997:2; emphasis in original). In

“Life History's History: Subjects Foretold,” William Tierney discusses the benefits of using life histories in ethnographic research:

...we do not undertake life histories with the intent of simply understanding how a person came to be X—whatever X is.... Rather, the search is to understand the powers of a culture to define those particular ways that enable people to act and not act in specific ways. As the researcher, then, my search is not so much about why some acts a particular way but about how it is that he or she has come to act that way. (Tierney 1998:54-55)

Additionally, as Rice and Ruskin note, “The exceptional individual does not necessarily stand outside or against the consensus of culture; rather, 'the personal, the idiosyncratic, and the exceptional... [are] very much part of the collective, the typical, and the ordinary’” (Rice and Ruskin 2012:304, quoting Stock 1996:2). Thus, I will also explain how Samputu serves as a mediator for Rwandan identity. Because of his international acclaim, Samputu dictates Rwandanness abroad, especially to those who are unfamiliar with the country and its people.¹ In Rwanda, that same international success has given Samputu cultural capital among musicians, politicians, and other citizens, and he has a wider audience than “ordinary” Rwandans. And, through his philanthropic endeavors (i.e., Mizero Children of Rwanda, Garden of Forgiveness, etc.), he often gives a voice to the voiceless.² Similarly, I aim to analyze Samputu’s extraordinary life and works within the context of Rwandan culture and demonstrate how those analyses (both musical and non-musical) reflect various narratives of Rwandan identity.

¹ I choose the term Rwandanness as it is analogous to the term *Brasilidade* used in Brazil in the early twentieth century. It is most appropriate given that Rwanda, like Brazil has, is attempting to reconstruct its identity based on mixture. As Kagame has repeatedly stated “Now no one talks about Hutus or Tutsis.... There is Rwanda, there are Rwandans, and the common interest we have for a better future for this country is more important than any other interest” (Kagame in Amanpour 2008).

² I am using the term cultural capital as defined by Bourdieu in “The Forms of Capital” (1986).

Methodology and Fieldwork

My research on Samputu is multi-sited (Marcus 1995) in both space and place (Falzon 2009). The liminality of space and place comprises a dialogue of contrasting cultures. Spatially, Rwanda is situated geographically in between East and Central Africa (bordering Congo, Tanzania, Burundi, and Uganda). Additionally, Samputu has performed outside of Africa in various countries in Europe, Canada, the United States, Japan, and Mexico, to name a few locales. Rwanda was colonized by Germany and later by Belgium after Germany lost all of its territories after WWI, thus making it a French-speaking colony. However it was re-taken after the 1994 genocide by Tutsi refugees who grew up in Uganda (when it was an English colony), and Rwanda is currently a member of the East-African Union, whose lingua-francas are English and Kiswahili, neither of which is a “native” language in Rwanda. Additionally, other diasporic groups in Europe and North America continue to have a significant impact on day-to-day activities in Rwanda. For example, when I visited Rwanda in 2012 for their fiftieth anniversary of independence, I noticed a few familiar faces on the pre-recorded video on the jumbotron in Amahoro stadium (where the official celebration was held). These people were members of the diaspora with whom I had contact in the United States, and their faces and voices were used to broadcast to thousands of Rwandans vignettes about the importance of Rwandan culture and history. One of the speakers, not so much a shock, was Jean-Michelle Habineza—the son of then Rwandan ambassador to Nigeria, Joe Habineza, and current Minister of Culture and Sport—with whom I have performed in Rwanda and Maryland when he was a student at Towson University. The other was an elderly

woman I saw weekly at a Rwandan church in Kensington, MD, but never realized that she could have had such an impact Rwandan culture in Rwanda.³

Regarding the space of this research, the cultures engaged are primarily East/Central African (which inherently contains a mixture of “native” African and post-colonial British/Belgian/French brand of Euro-Africanness), European (mostly from Belgium, France, and the U.K.), and North American (United States and Canada), with many of these cultures expressed linguistically, religiously, and politically. Also, the experience of genocide, in which over 800,000 Rwandans (Tutsis and moderate Hutus) were killed in ninety days, makes, for me, navigating the space of Rwandan popular music difficult, at the very least.

Given these challenges, I was not able to visit each of the aforementioned “sites,” but it is also beyond the scope of this dissertation to detail every aspect of those places and spaces. That being said, my fieldwork comprised traveling to Kigali, Rwanda, for two-weeks in 2012, and spending a great deal of time conversing with and interviewing Samputu in person in New York city and the Delmarva area (Maryland, Washington D.C., and northern Virginia), and via telephone and Internet video chat since late 2011. I have often spent more time on the telephone than interviewing Samputu in person, as he rarely stays in one place for any length of time (e.g. when I visited last summer, I stayed with him in his home with his family for two weeks, and in that time, due to his traveling, I couldn’t even get any “official” interview time with him until the day I was flying out). In addition to my work with Samputu, I have spent time interviewing and performing with several Rwandans in

³ I played bass, sang, and helped run the sound reinforcement system on a worship team for a mostly Rwandan church.

the Delmarva area (mostly at the aforementioned Kensington church), as well as via telephone and Internet video chat since late 2011.

While I never visited one site for any length of time, what facilitated access to Samputu was a relationship I had built with him since 2007. While I was working as a worship leader (church musician) in an Anglican church out of the province of Rwanda (known as Anglican Mission in the Americas), I came into contact with Samputu through some mutual friends, as I was interested in collaborating with Christian musicians who were promoting peace and reconciliation in post-genocide Rwandan culture, with the hope that their music and stories would help others to forgive here in the United States.⁴ A friend contacted Samputu, who coincidentally was visiting the D.C. area, and he called me, essentially saying, “Brent, this is a divine connection, let’s meet and discuss how we can work together.” Samputu and I share the same Christian worldview, and I believed that the connection was divine as well.

Samputu had a vision to create a non-profit organization to help Rwandan orphans raise money for an arts academy by touring the United States (similar to Watoto children’s group from Uganda), and after many conversations, I decided to help him form the group Mizero Children of Rwanda (See Figure 1-1), which brought twelve Rwandan youth (ages 8-17) to perform traditional music and a bring message of forgiveness to the United States and Canada.⁵ After serving as president for one year, I stepped down, but continued my relationship with Samputu as a friend. This

⁴ Anglican Mission in the Americas (AMiA), now The Mission, was at the time a mission organization out the province of Rwanda. More about their history is available at <http://www.theistic-evolution.com/succession.html> and <http://www.theamia.org/>.

⁵ www.watoto.com.

was not official fieldwork, but it certainly helped me gain trust with Samputu in order to navigate the liminal spaces and places of his musical world.

Multi-sited Fieldwork

One of the main challenges of multi-sited fieldwork is that it tends to lack depth, or what anthropologist Clifford Geertz calls “thickness” (Geertz 1973). By moving from site to site, ethnographers may miss out on important details of day-to-day activities. Conversely, as Horst notes in Falzon’s (2009) *Multi-sited*

Ethnography: Theory, Practice, and Locality in Contemporary Research,

it has been argued that single-sited fieldwork is insufficient for capturing the complexities and multiple causalities of contemporary social systems and structures. The move towards multi-sited methods is commonly discussed with reference to models of globalization and “modernity,” in the framework of which individuals lead increasingly segmented lives and the world becomes increasingly connected...

and:

Marcus, for instance, argues that activities and identities are “constructed by multiple agents in varying contexts, or places, and ethnography must be strategically conceived to represent this sort of multiplicity” (1989, 25). Not only has the assumption that a geographical boundedness justifies studying a location in isolation been countered with the idea that sites are not separate but continuously connected, but various authors have stressed the fact that “the local” is shaped by “the global” and vice versa. Marcus and Fisher (1986) point to the fact that research on local and regional worlds tends to underestimate the transnational political, economic and cultural forces that shape the local context. At the same time, as others have indicated, the implications and transformations of global processes are “grounded in cultural constructions associated with particular localities” (Fog Olwig and Hastrup 1997, 12) it is crucial to understand the relevance of local contexts in mediating the scope and depth of migrants’ transnational practices. (Horst 2009:120-21)

Samputu sings for the needy children



BY LINDA MBABAZI

(R-L) Brent and Samputu

Having survived the Genocide, Jean Paul Samputu formed a foundation called Mizero meaning 'hope' which supports needy orphans.

Mizero initially started with 25 children and the number has since swollen to 100, with 25 children in Kigali and 75 in Nyanza. The children are taught different skills which will help them improve in future.

"My mission is to create capacity building for these children, because they are the future leaders of Rwanda. Again, it is our hope to help empower them to build a stronger, self-sustain-

The President of Mizero, Brent Swanson, says that the foundation has encountered a number of challenges and key among them is getting people to fund the organisation.

"It's hard for people to inject money in something which is invisible. And likewise, it's costly to transport these children to our sponsors to see them," says Brent.

However, Brent says that they are planning to select 12 children to tour the US, or Canada, in order to expose their plight.

Accordingly, the tour will bring awareness of the present status

of the children, as well as raise financial support to build an arts-centred academy, where they will learn the necessary skills.

"We teach them cultural resources," Brent says.

Samputu is a cultural ambassador for Rwanda, bringing traditional African singing, dancing, and drumming, and most importantly, a message of peace, hope and reconcilia-

His latest CD, *Testimony from Rwanda*, showcases Samputu's versatility. His recordings are steeped in the many rich traditions of Rwandan music and dance, and include influences from Uganda, Burundi, and the Congo.

Born in Rwanda in 1962, Samputu began singing in 1977 in a church choir, and was influenced by traditional culture.

Samputu has ever won the prestigious Kora Award (the 'African Grammy'), and other numerous international awards, including the Calabash of Peace.

Figure 1-1. 2007 article about our involvement with Mizero Children of Rwanda in the *New Times Rwanda* (Mbabazi 2007).

While my research on Samputu and Rwandan music could in some respects be considered “shallow,” given that I haven’t spent a significant amount of time in physical proximity to him and his home country, I argue that Samputu’s musical life resides in those spaces and places. Thus, as Falzon states, “the shallow itself may be a form of depth” (Falzon 2009:9).

Another layer of depth in this ethnography is the fact that Samputu is a popular music artist, and his recorded music, which is inherently a product for commercial use, is also multi-sited. The performers and audience involved in the production of popular music, given its dissemination via mass media, occupy liminal spaces and places, which are negotiated through the recording process and the buying and selling of records. While certain genres of popular music can be localized, the performance of those genres transcends their locales the moment they are recorded and reproduced. Thus, almost all ethnographies on popular music are inherently multi-sited in place and space: spatially, because the ethnographer must acknowledge that the affective experience of the original musical performance is no longer solely etched in the memories of participants, but is transformed electrically and electronically in order to be reproduced for a larger, detached audience whose members are usually unable to connect, if simply due to their lack of presence, with the original context of that performance; and platially, as those recordings are disseminated to different locations locally, regionally, nationally, transnationally, and, sometimes, globally, and artists will perform versions—sometimes similar, sometimes very different—of the original performance in said places. Samputu’s music resides in what Arjun Appadurai (1990) calls “ethnoscapes,” “technoscapes,”

and “mediascapes.”⁶ The author defines ethnoscapes as “the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree” (ibid.:297). These concepts also apply to Samputu, as he is one of the few Rwandan artists to gain critical international acclaim, and his music helps shape Rwandan identity to those living both in and out of the country. Additionally, the idiosyncrasies of the expression (sound) of Samputu’s musical culture are fluid, not belonging fully to Africa, Europe, North America, or the Caribbean. Technoscapes are defined as “the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology, and of the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries” (ibid.). Samputu’s music is heavily reliant on recording technology, and this has given him agency to promote himself worldwide and make a living as an artist. Appadurai defines mediascapes as

the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, film production studios, etc.)... whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters, plots and textural forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places. These scripts can and do get disaggregated into complex sets of metaphors by which people live (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) as they help to constitute narratives of the ‘other’ and proto-narratives of possible lives, fantasies which could become prolegomena to the desire for acquisition and movement. (Ibid.:299)

⁶ Mark Slobin also applies these concepts to music-cultures in his “Micromusics of the West: A Comparative Approach” (1992).

Samputu's music fits into this category because of the way his music is disseminated (i.e., through television, radio, and digital media including Internet streaming, downloadable files, or physical copies), as well as the visual content related to it (i.e., music videos).

Transcription and Analysis

Representing these “scapes” visually, as with all ethnographies, poses a significant challenge to the ethnographer. Transcription of musical sound, both in and out of context, is at the very heart of what ethnomusicologists do, but debates over *how* to represent and analyze sound are nearly as old as the field itself. Several authors have weighed in regarding representation in African music, but I will list only a few for the purposes of this dissertation. Most of the debates about representation are centered around African traditional music. In the Africa volume of *The Garland Encyclopedia of Music* (Stone 1997), Kay Shelemay notes that:

Nearly all published transcriptions of African music use conventional staff notation (Gray 1991). It often serves by default, and most frequently appears in sources where no rationale for the system of transcription occurs. Scholars often select it because of its ubiquity and easy readability. Occasionally, it “translates” another notational system. Kubik says, though “the graphic notation shows much more clearly than conventional notation what happens in this music, I have nevertheless transferred the graphic scores into staff to help the reader who might not be accustomed to the graphic notation” (Kubik 1965:37).

The drawbacks of using Western symbolic-linear notation for representing music outside the Western cultural orbit (Seeger 1958:169-171) apply to African music. There further exists the chance that the major theoretical issues in African musical studies, in particular the debate over aspects of rhythm, derive in part from the inability of staff notation to represent the complexities of multipart musics, and its tendency to force African music into a rigid, binary time continuum. Staff notation subtly embodies Western musical traits,

and tends to transmit them to the music transcribed (Koetting 1970:125). For these reasons, African musical scholarship has seen an unusual amount of activity in designing new systems of musical representation. (Shelemay 1997:157)

Analysis of African music has also been a point of contention. Whether it be the debates on polymeter vs. polyrhythm or additive rhythm vs. divisive rhythm vs. cross rhythm, or whether or not it is ethical to apply Shenkerian analysis to African music, it seems that virtually every major scholar of African music has (or has had) a strong opinion about how African music should be represented.⁷ I believe that Kofi Agawu's middle ground best sums up how to (or not to) analyze African music:

How not to analyze African music? There is obviously no way not to analyze African music. Any and all ways are acceptable. An analysis that lacks value does not yet exist, which is not to deny that, depending on the reasons for a particular adjudication, some approaches may prove more or less useful. We must therefore reject all ethnomusicological cautions about analysis because their aim is not to empower African scholars and musicians but to reinforce certain metropolitan privileges. Analysis matters because, through it, we observe at close range the workings of African musical minds. Given the relative paucity of analyses, erecting barriers against one or another approach seems premature. This is not to discourage critical discussion but to encourage the development of a compendium of analyses—for now, anyway.

Let us, therefore, get away from simple binary divisions of the world, the cultism that wishes to see a categorical difference between Western knowledge and African knowledge. Let us not wait to undertake fieldwork before starting to practice analysis. Music theorists and musicologists should feel at liberty to reach for any of the existing recordings in their libraries and start making transcriptions. Let us strategically overlook arguments about authenticity and embrace the prospect that any worthwhile analysis of African composition or repertory will, in effect, compromise the authenticity of the artistic object. Finally, let us expose the following secret to our Africa-based colleagues and students: Music analysis, precisely because it rewards the ability to take apart and discover or invent modes of internal

⁷ See Kofi Agawu's chapter "Polymeter, Additive Rhythm, and Other Enduring Myths" in his *Representing African Music* (2003) for a full listing of the debates.

relating, may well be a site at which they can begin to compete favorably with their metropolitan colleagues. Those concerned about leveling academic playing fields could do worse than follow the path of analysis. (Agawu 2003:196-97)

Michael Tenzer has similarly argued, “Assembling musics of the world together and juxtaposing them via transcription in staff notation asserts the present and future value, Eurocentric or not, of notational literacy as a potent means of imagining, knowing, comparing, and emulating sounds and sound-structures. Computers, recordings, books, and scores are a mutually enhancing quartet” (Tenzer 2006:4).

Transcription and analysis of his musical productions is another way of knowing Samputu’s music. Given that Samputu’s music is a “product,” I have decided to treat it as such for the purposes of this dissertation. Thus, I will be relying on several methods of transcription including standard Staff notation, timbral analysis via spectrogram, and acoustic envelope analysis via waveforms. Regarding timbre in African music, Cornelia Fales states in her “Paradox of Timbre”:

In the last fifteen years, the citing of timbre as an important feature of African music has taken on the same aura of banal truth that once characterized the association of rhythm and African music. Both associations are true for a great deal of African music, but unlike rhythm which continues to attract scholarly attention, the role of timbre even now is often no sooner mentioned than forgotten. As scholars, indeed as listeners, we have a difficult time describing timbre. Though we can talk about it in large generalities, as though it were a conceptual abstraction—“timbre is important to African music, community is important to African music”—it is only by deliberate effort that we conceptualize it as a distinctly ongoing, dynamic feature of music with the same clarity as pitch or meter. (Fales 2002:57)

As Fales did with the *inanga chuchotée* of Burundi, I will, through spectrographic analysis, explore the timbre of Samputu’s voice to graphically demonstrate the distinct character of his voice. Additionally, I will employ acoustic envelope analysis

to further help visualize the internal dynamics (i.e., attack, sustain, etc.) of his vocal expressions.

I view my focus on musical analysis in this dissertation as a means de-patronizing African scholarship in ethnomusicology. While “othering” is inevitable in any type of scholarship (given that scholarship is inherently comparative), treating Samputu as I would Beethoven or Brahms is my way of losing my attachment to the stereotype, oft found in ethnomusicological works about Africa, of the context being more important than the product. Jean Kidula nicely summarizes this in her 2006 (Spring) *Africa Today* article entitled “Ethnomusicology, the Music Canon, and African Music: Positions, Tensions, and Resolutions in the African Academy”:

Ethnomusicology has moved from European positioning of other cultures to viewpoints and reportage by indigenous cultures of their own selves from dominance of Euro-American scholars as objective outsiders, to a recognition that all scholars are biased by their backgrounds, exposure, and agenda. It now includes local researchers, performers, and voices. It has moved beyond cultural ethnographies to more musicological analyses. Though still situated in European structural expectations and biases and in the dominant cultural agenda and perception of needs, in its disciplinary and methodological dynamism it embraces diverse voices; in fact, the study of all music is in a sense ethnomusicological, for we center, dislocate, and “other” ourselves in time, in space, and even by audience, when we embody music, orally, in writing, or in performance. (Ibid.:110).

Ethnomusicology and African Music

Scholarly studies on African music comprise subjects and theories as vast as the continent itself, which has often led to sharp debates about what constitutes proper African scholarship.⁸ Additionally, early African music scholars had a contentious

⁸ Rather than using the qualifier “Sub-Saharan” for every mention of the phrase “African music,” the reader should note that when I say “African” music, I mean Sub-Saharan African music.

relationship with the field of ethnomusicology. The journal *African Musicology*, which based its name on the term coined by Wachsmann, sparked much debate in the 1980s. Nketia writes:

Since research in African studies, and particularly in the music of Africa, had been done by Western scholars, a new era, calling for partnership in research and the cross-fertilization of ideas through dialogue, seemed to have dawned. African scholars saw they had much to gain from collaborating with their Western colleagues. Wachsmann believed a conceptual focus on “African musicology” would foster the development of a collective consciousness of goals and commitment.

Though this position resembled that of scholars in African history, linguistics, and archaeology, Wachsmann did not receive support for his proposal. Ethnomusicologists were more concerned with the unity of their discipline and what made it different from historical musicology, with theories and methods applicable to musical materials anywhere, rather than with the development of branches or areal studies.... (Nketia 2014:13).

Since having reconciled their differences (seemingly), both Western and African scholars recognize that “Western musicians and scholars specializing in African musicology had learned that they faced a dual obligation—to Africa, and to the West. A matching obligation equally guided African scholars, for their discipline requires that they also deal with Africa in the context of a wider world” (Nketia 2014:69). This dissertation is indebted to the scholarship of both Africans and non-Africans, and in the following paragraphs I will give the reader an overview of some of the important works, which have greatly influenced my own scholarly views.

I draw on several subcategories of African music: general, East Africa, Rwanda, and other important works about cultures outside of Rwanda and East Africa. In terms of general resources, *The Music of Africa* (1973) by J. H. Kwabena Nketia, which is a general resource for nascent scholars of African music, is a

foundational work in African musical studies. Nketia is one of the first to codify general “African” musical distinctions and material culture (i.e., melody, rhythm, instruments, etc.) within its proper cultural context. As evidenced by the generous quotation earlier in this chapter, I find Kofi Agawu’s *Representing African Music* (2003), a much more recent edition exploring the generalities of African music, to be a significant source regarding ethics of representation in African music. Another notable work is Gerhard Kubik’s *Theory of African Music Vol. I* (1994) and *Vol. II* (2010), which is by far the most impressive account of, and argument for, pan-African musical identity. Kubik draws on over five decades of experience in the continent to illuminate the reader to all of the similarities between contrasting cultures in Africa. This is especially pertinent given Samputu’s own pan-African musical expressions.

Monographs specifically covering East African music are a bit scarce, but a few stand out. Gregory Barz’s *Music in East Africa* (2004) is a thin volume intended for the nascent scholar or potentially for an undergraduate course in African music. Most interesting in this work is the attention paid to the individual (specifically Gideon Mdegella, who was the subject of Barz’s dissertation “The Performance of Religious and Social Identity: An Ethnography of Post-Mission Kwaya Music in Tanzania” [1997]—another resource about East-African music), and the exploration of *benga* music (popular music of Kenya based on Luo traditions), a genre closely related to Congolese *rumba/soukous*.⁹ *Ethnomusicology in East Africa: Perspectives from Uganda and Beyond* (edited by S. Nannyonga-Tamusuza and T. Solomon)

⁹ Congolese *rumba/soukous* is a source for a majority of popular music styles in East/Central Africa and beyond, and has had a tremendous impact on Samputu’s musical style.

(2012)—is a group of (Ugandacentric) essays, which address a variety of subjects pertinent to this dissertation. A few articles that stand out are David Basoga’s “Pentecostal Music in Kampala, Uganda: between the Sacred and the Secular”—given Samputu’s connection to Uganda, his Pentecostal(ish) theology, and his own straddling of the sacred and secular in his musical production—and Anita Desire Asaasira’s “Politics of Competition in the Pearl of Africa Music (PAM) Awards: Construction of Popular Music in Uganda,” as Samputu won a PAM award for “best artist of the year” in 2006.¹⁰ Jean Kidula’s dissertation “*Sing and Shine: Religious Popular Music in Kenya*” (1998) uses the biographies of several gospel musicians/producers to detail how gospel music became a national musical symbol; this is yet another example of emphasis on the individual in East African musical scholarship.

There is a plethora of articles regarding East African music, but I will only list the most notable and applicable to this dissertation. Gerhard Kubik’s 1981 article “Neo-Traditional Music in East Africa since 1945” in *Popular Music* discusses the changing contexts of East African traditional music, and its relationship to economic prosperity, governance, and nation building in the region.

Rwandan music scholarship is a much scarcer commodity than writings on the rest of East Africa. I believe that this is partially due to its size, its lack of political stability and security since independence (through 1998), and the fact that it was not considered part of East Africa until recently. Regardless of why, there is a significant lacuna in the scholarship on both Rwandan traditional and popular music. This is

¹⁰ Samputu lived in Uganda for several years in the late ‘90s and early 2000s, and spent a significant amount of time on the Africa Prayer Mountain outside of Kampala.

most evident in the Cook and Gansemans article on “Rwanda/Burundi” (2001) in *Grove Music Online*, which lists only twenty sources (Uganda has over forty), ten of which come from liner notes, and Rwanda and Burundi are barely mentioned in the *Garland Encyclopedia* at all. Cornelia Fales’s aforementioned *inanga chuchotée* Garland article on whispered *inanga* performance practice in Burundi is a standout, but the style is no longer practiced in Rwanda. Gansemans’s book *Les Instruments de Musique du Rwanda: Etude Ethnomusicologique* (1988) is the only known monograph to date that specifically deals with Rwandan traditional music. It is filled with excellent details of Rwandan organology, performance practice, and cultural context.¹¹ However, it is significantly out of date, and nothing substantive has since been written to supplement it. One of the most recent pieces of scholarship is Jason McCoy’s 2012 dissertation “Mbwirabumva (“i Speak To Those Who Understand”): Three Songs By Simon Bikindi And The War And Genocide In Rwanda,” which delineates details of Bikindi’s music (focusing on lyrical analysis) and the role it played in the 1994 genocide, as well as his legal trial in which he was accused of inciting genocide through his songs and performances. The dissertation is filled with wonderful details about Rwandan history and Bikindi’s life and music, but has no transcription and little sonic analysis. In addition to these larger works, there is an equally paltry amount of smaller articles specifically about Rwandan music. The most salient of these is Craig and Mkhize’s “Vocal Killers, Silent Killers: Popular Media,

¹¹ In this dissertation, I draw on more succinct information provided by the music.africamuseum.be website, which is a joint project of the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Université Libre de Bruxelles, and Ghent University. It is an organologically based website with information about cultural context and history, as well as digitized sound files for each entry. Gansemans is a contributing author and his book is cited in various entries.

Genocide, and the Call for Benevolent Censorship in Rwanda” in Cloonan and Drewett’s 2006 book *Popular Music Censorship in Africa*, which details how Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) has censored the media in Rwanda.¹²

Regarding other important works on African music, several have been paramount in helping me shape this dissertation. First is Michael Veal’s *Fela: The Life and Times of an African Musical Icon* (2000), in which he fleshes out Nigerian history, issues of “blackness,” power and hegemony in African popular music, and religious conflicts by examining Fela Kuti's life and works. Thomas Turino’s *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (2000) traces the history of popular music in Zimbabwe, and is centered theoretically on analyzing local/global intersections and defining cosmopolitanism. Turino successfully demonstrates that cosmopolitanism is both integral and anathema to nationalist narratives. He states, “but because nations are abstract and because they require primary allegiance from a major number of citizens to function, their existence is simultaneously threatened by more concrete local groups. Nationalist discourse holds that distinctive cultural lifeways are the basis of nationhood, and this idea potentially places distinctive local groups on par with the nation-state itself” (Turino 2000:216). This is especially pertinent given that Rwanda is in the process of constructing its own nationalist narrative based on cosmopolitanism, and because Samputu is himself a cosmopolitan African musician.¹³ This book also has a significant amount of biographical material on Thomas Mapfumo, one of Zimbabwe’s most famous artists.

¹² I will detail non-musically centered scholarly works in subsequent chapters.

¹³ As I will demonstrate in Chapter Two, President Paul Kagame has attempted to re-define Rwanda on the basis of eliminating the constructed “ethnicities” of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa rather than basing it on them.

Christopher Waterman's *Jùjú: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (1990) addresses power and hegemony in African popular music, and has some biographical information about King Sunny Adé. And finally, a literature review on African music scholarship would not be complete without a mention of Paul Berliner's *The Soul of the Mbira* (1978), which contains invaluable information regarding trust building in fieldwork, as well as some biographical sketches of artists he worked with.

Chapter Outline

Following on from introduction, Chapter Two comprises a brief history of Rwanda. Beginning in pre-colonial times of the Tutsi kingdom and continuing to the present day, I will detail Rwanda's complicated past and how it relates to Samputu's life. Complementarily, I will detail some of the typical musics of Rwanda (popular and traditional).¹⁴ This will be essential for the reader to gain insight into Samputu's Rwandan identity and what makes him both an exception to and representative of typical Rwandan culture. Additionally, this chapter outlines the role of NGOs and foreign governments in helping to construct post-genocide Rwandan identity.

Chapter Three is a biographical sketch of Samputu from his childhood to his current career in which I flesh out the details about why he is considered an exceptional musician—the determining factors in his success including family, talent, financial support, and other important relationships. The goals of this chapter are to help the reader understand some of the reasons behind Samputu's success—why he

¹⁴ Rwandan art music is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, I will detail some aspects of art music education in relationship to Samputu's experience in Chapter Three.

became an international star when others did not—and also includes some cursory analysis (lyrical and sonic) of his most important works.

Chapter Four provides the analytical framework (i.e. analysis of vocal physiology, spectrograms, and acoustic envelopes) that I will use to delineate the details of Samputu’s different vocal timbres. And Chapters Five and Six comprise analysis of Samputu’s music as it relates to Rwanda, East/Central Africa, and the Caribbean. They include history and analysis of the musics most influential to Samputu’s career (including a literature review for these styles), as well as analysis of Samputu’s music that closely resembles said styles. The aim of these chapters is to detail how Samputu is inextricably linked musically and socially to all of these areas of the world, and how his life resides in “shallow” spaces and places. I will subsequently conclude my work with a recapitulation of the information I have presented in order to tie up any loose ends.

Contribution to the Field

While there have been a few authors who have written biographical monographs from an ethnomusicological perspective, this area of the field is filled with plenty of fertile soil for more research. In terms of Rwanda, I know of only a handful of sources that deal directly with music, and there are only two known scholarly sources that address popular music in Rwanda (Cloonan and Drewett 2006 and McCoy 2012). Additionally, there are only two monographs that are about Rwandan traditional music (Gunther 1964 and Gansemans 1988), and both are in great need of updated and supplemental information. In sum, this dissertation will be another important addition to the small body of ethnomusicological works centered

on biography, as well as to the even smaller body of scholarship on Rwandan music in general.

Chapter 2: Brief History of Rwanda

Introduction

In order to understand the complexities of Samputu's life and music, it is imperative to give a summary of Rwanda's history. This is primarily because Samputu's music is deeply embedded in this history, as he has lived through the most tenuous aspects of the country's life (i.e., the Hutu ousting of Tutsi leadership, the genocide, and reconstruction a country left in shambles after nearly one million people were killed in 1994. By extension, his family lineage has been a part of Rwandan culture for several generations; as far back as Samputu can trace it. And especially because his family is from southern Rwanda, where the kings of the Nyiginya resided and had the most influence culturally, Samputu's family traditions and values are entrenched in that monarchically ordered social structure. Further, because Samputu is a Christian, a historical account of Christianity's impact on Rwanda is essential.

Approaches to Rwandan History and Literature Review

Constructing a summary of Rwandan history requires a scholar to draw on a variety of often-competing sources. As the Rwandan government and its people are currently negotiating a national narrative, all interested parties (especially the government) rely on historians to give them the "poppy" to make their nationalistic "heroin."¹⁵ This is especially true in Rwanda, partly because many documents were

¹⁵ In his 1992 article "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe Today in Anthropology Today" Hobsbawm states: "For historians are to nationalism what poppy-growers in Pakistan are to heroin-addicts: we supply the essential raw material for the market." (Ibid.:3)

destroyed during the 1994 genocide, but also because of the different histories created and/or reinterpreted after the Belgians left in 1958. These histories are objects of tremendous scrutiny and debate among three camps: the Rwandan government (run by the RPF), anyone (usually political dissidents) who strictly opposes the government's official narrative, and scholars/journalists whose opinions lie somewhere in the middle. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have no interest in taking sides, but rather in presenting as much as an unbiased account of Rwandan history as possible. In other words, I have no intention of critiquing the RPF's governing strategies or trying to prove which history is most accurate, but I am interested in providing a background to the reader as it pertains to Samputu's musical life. I will do this by detailing, wherever there may be a conflict, all sides (at least the ones of which I am aware) of the historical event in question. Because of this conflict, and because I would not consider myself one of the Great Experts of Rwandan history, I have chosen to let these experts speak for themselves. Therefore, the reader will find long block quotes from authorities on the subject, so that I, as an amateur historian, do not intrude upon their construction of Rwandan history.

Additionally, so that Samputu does not get lost in this historical account, I have quoted (either from personal or public interviews) him throughout. Further, as this dissertation is centered on musical analysis, I intersperse some transcriptions and analysis of music where I find it essential to illuminating the historical account. This is especially true of the 1990s Civil War and subsequent genocide when Samputu promoted the RPF's campaign musically, and Simon Bikindi's music was used to promote the genocide.

Most histories of Rwanda focus on shortly before and after the 1994 genocide; there are too many of these to name or review for the purpose of this dissertation, but a handful have attempted to create a less-biased account of Rwandan history, from the early Tutsi kingdoms to the present. One of the most thorough early histories is Vansina's *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom* (2004), in which the author delineates the development of the centralized kingdom (including the lineage of all the *mwamis* (Tutsi kings) from RUGANZU Bwimba to YUHI Musinga).¹⁶ He also critically examines the writings of Abbé Alexis Kagame, a Tutsi priest who wrote detailed accounts of the “doings of kings” (ibid.:4) in his *Inganji Kalinga* (The Victory of Kalinga)—according to McCoy, Kalinga is “the dynastic drum of the Abanyiginya kingdom” (McCoy 2012:84-5)—and *Abrégés*, both which have had significant impact on how modern Rwandan histories are told. Vansina notes, “The legacy of Kagame should not be underestimated, for even today it is still rooted in the general historical consciousness of Rwandans and it still dominates the perception of Rwanda’s history, even that of his most virulent critics” (Vansina 2004:4). While it is a very useful text, it is, like many recent histories, possibly written in response to what many believe to be the dominant narrative conceived by the RPF, and its style of governance based on that narrative. This is evident in his concluding chapter:

The Nyiginya kingdom was not the only one in the world where power tended to be concentrated in a few hands and where the bulk of its citizens were alienated. Indeed, practically all of the centralized politics of large-scale societies today fit this description. And in different parts of the world subsequent experience has suggested

¹⁶ In Rwanda, as in many parts of Africa, the surname is written first in full caps, with the given name appearing subsequently in normal (lowercase with capital first letter) typeface.

remedies, even while leaving the management of public affairs in the hands of a very few persons in proportion to the large number of people they administer. Today's Rwandan thinkers might therefore draw on foreign experiences and theories in order to elaborate a system of government that would avoid an excessive concentration of power and the alienation of the people, since there was a time when those foreign experiences were also those of Rwanda, first in the eightieth and ninetieth centuries, and then in the last one. Starting from this set of questions and experiences, further thought about the meaning of this past history for the present may yield fruitful initiatives for a new construction of the country. (Ibid.:203)

Vansina's work is an expansion of another important, yet not as exhaustive, history by Catherine Newbury (1988) entitled *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860-1960*. Newbury focuses on the development of Hutu/Tutsi economic distinctions, which she argues began during the reign of King Rwabugiri (nineteenth century). As this was written before the time of the genocide (and even before the infiltration of the RPF into northern Rwanda in the early 1990s), there is slightly less bias in terms of attempting to critique the RPF's account of history.

An even earlier source is David Newbury's 1980 article "The Clans of Rwanda: An Historical Hypothesis" in *Africa*. Newbury, a former pupil of Vansina, makes a more concise case for the differences between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Newbury has also written two monographs on Ijwi Island (a small island between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): *Kings and Clans: Ijwi Island and the Lake Kivu Rift, 1780-1840* (1992) and the more recent *The Land Beyond the Mists: Essays on Identity and Authority in Precolonial Congo and Rwanda* (2011). Each of these focuses on the relationship between Rwanda and Congo, which is especially relevant today, as the Rwandan army has, on several occasions, invaded

this area of the Eastern DRC.¹⁷ And because Congolese *rumba/soukous* has had a significant impact on Samputu's style, an understanding of the historical relationship between Rwanda and the DRC is essential.¹⁸

Regarding histories about postcolonial Rwanda, there are too many to mention, but a few stand out. One of the first monographs written, Gerard Prunier's *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (1995), focuses on the historical factors that led up to the 1994 genocide. Prunier details the misunderstandings of Rwandan culture by early missionaries and colonists, especially the differentiations between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa which led to a "racialization consciousness" culminating in the creation of national identification cards by the Belgians.¹⁹ Complementary to Prunier's history is Mahmood Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda* (2001), which often critiques Prunier's constructs about the reasons behind the genocide, as well as offering greater insight to the cultural details related to the Rwandan genocide. Timothy Longman's *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (2011) is another useful history, which focuses on the role of the Christian church in the development of ethnic differences and political structures in Rwanda. Given that Rwanda is still very much considered a "Christian" nation (predominantly Catholic), and that Samputu is a Christian, it is very useful in filling in "gaps" left by Prunier and Mamdani regarding the role of the church in Rwandan culture. Even more pertinent to this

¹⁷ There is much controversy as to why Rwanda continues to do this, but the over-arching narrative is that the army is chasing down former Hutu extremists from the genocide. Read more about this conflict at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/30/us-congo-democratic-rwanda-un-idUSBREA0T1NS20140130>.

¹⁸ I will detail the semantic differences between these terms in Chapter Six.

¹⁹ The second edition of this book (1997) includes a chapter that is highly critical of the RPF.

dissertation is Christopher Taylor's *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (1999), in that, in addition to demonstrating how certain killing techniques (i.e., cutting of the Achilles tendon) in the genocide relate to ancient philosophies, he also, as Jason McCoy notes in his dissertation, "illuminates culturally symbolic markers that historically distinguished Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa long before the colonial encounter. These included dietary differences, religiously-encoded differentiation, differences in divisions of labor, and inequalities in political power. Taylor is one of the few authors to note the significance of the longstanding disenfranchisement of Twa, demonstrating that discrimination was entrenched in Rwanda well before the arrival of Europeans" (McCoy 2012:18). Samputu has a strong adoration for Twa singing, and often imitates the style in his own recordings. In addition to his adoration, he uses this vocal timbre with expressed purpose of elevating the status of the Twa in Rwandan culture. Others (i.e., Scott Straus's 2011 *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence* and Jonathan Pottier's 2002 *Re-imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival, and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century*) focus more on the nation building of the RPF.

Rwanda: Historical Overview, Geography, and Origins

Rwandan history is generally broken down into six different periods: origins and pre-Nyiginya dynasty, early monarchical, colonial-monarchical, independent republic, civil war and genocide, and post-genocide reconstruction era.²⁰ The ancient kingdom entails myths and hypotheses about the origins of Rwanda (mostly derived from a mixture of oral tradition, archeology, historical linguistics, ethnographic

²⁰ I have appropriated two of these categories (colonial-monarchical and independent republic) from Jason McCoy's aforementioned dissertation (2012).

descriptions, and comparative semantics), from the development of the Nyiginya kingdom up through the colonization by the Germans.²¹ The colonial-monarchical era covers the period from the late nineteenth century through 1961 when the Belgians officially left Rwanda. The independent republic era lasted from the first establishment of the republic through the invasion of the RPF into northern Rwanda from Uganda in 1990. The war/genocide spans from when Paul Kagame took over as general of the RPF through the ninety days of genocide in 1994. The post-genocide reconstruction era covers the newly established republic through President Paul Kagame's second seven-year term.²²

Rwanda is situated in between East and Central Africa, just east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), south of Uganda, west of Tanzania, and north of Burundi. It is about the size of the state of Maryland, and known as the "Land of a Thousand Hills" due to its rolling topography. However, its terrain also comprises dense forests (near DRC), mountains (near Uganda), and savannas, plains, and marshes (near Tanzania). And with about ten million inhabitants, it is also the most densely populated country in Africa.

With regard to the population groups, there are three: Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, though today the concept of ethnicity in Rwanda is a point of contention given that all three speak the same language and share (mostly) the same cultural expressions. The origins of these groups (mostly Hutu and Tutsi) have been the source of great controversy, as the codification of these as ethnicities was the fuel for a series of mass

²¹ Vansina highlights the use of historical linguistics and comparative semantics, as ethnographic data is "only valid for the end of the nineteenth century" and oral traditions are "tainted by anachronisms" (Vansina 2004:14).

²² Kagame was re-elected in 2010, and is set to retire in 2017.

killings from 1959 (just before the Belgians left in 1962) until the 1994 genocide. While it is not my intention to further any controversy regarding these groups, a concise ethnogenesis is essential to this dissertation, as part of Samputu’s musical ideology is to promote healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation among these groups living in post-genocide Rwanda and abroad.



Figure 2-1. Map of Rwanda.
 (Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/rwanda.pdf>)

Pre-Nyiginya Rwanda

Before the emergence of the Nyiginya kingdom, the three main types of population groups in Rwanda were farmers (vast majority), cattle herders, and forest foragers. The foragers were relatively isolated, while the farmers and the herders had some interaction. Vansina states:

The fact that the agricultural and herding economies were interwoven on the hills, without, however, being integrated with each other, required a certain coordination between herders and farmers— for instance, with regard to the annual burning of the vegetation, and the designation of a certain authority to decide every year how to use the land. Beyond the issue of burning, the daily points of contact between the agricultural and herding economies were as follows. Cow dung was appreciated by the farmers as manure for the fields and the practice of letting the herd graze on the stubble in the fields after the harvest benefited both economies. Certain soils were richer and better adapted to farming while others, often on the same hill slope, were less rich but offered good grazing. (Ibid.:29)

These groups were divided into several groups, the largest being *imiryango*. Each *imiryango* was often divided into smaller lineage groups called *umuryango*, which were also divided into the smallest kinship group called *inzu* (house or household).

Jason McCoy summarizes Vansina's observations:

As the number of *imiryango* increased, they forged alliances in order to protect themselves from enemies and secure their lands and means of producing food and gathering resources. Through these alliances, the population eventually consolidated into about fifteen *ubwoko*, a number that eventually grew to around twenty. *Ubwoko*, in this context, is usually translated as "clan" (this will change under colonial rule), but unlike the conventional understanding of clanship, members of the same *ubwoko* were not necessarily blood-related but rather were united by common geopolitical and economic interests. Individual *imiryango* and *inzu* could, depending on their own interests, break off from one *ubwoko* and join another or, if powerful enough, form a whole new *ubwoko*. (Ibid.:71-2)

Christopher Taylor furthers this in his 2011 article "Molders of Mud: Ethnogenesis and Rwanda's Twa":

Names used for groups of people in early Rwanda were numerous and did not constitute a single semantic domain (Franche 1995). Moreover, for any given individual, the use of a particular term in one context did not necessarily preclude the use of another term in the same context or yet other identity terms in different contexts. Groups could be named by their descent or lineage affiliation. They could be categorized by profession or economic specialization. Regional and place terms were also in use, such as Banyanduga for people coming from the center

and Banyakiga for people coming from the north. Early Rwanda also had clan names, about 20 (Chrétien 2003:89), but it should be noted that in contrast to the classical definition of clans as a kind of descent group (descent from a common putative ancestor), Rwandan clans appear to have been little more than vaguely allied groups with reduced social significance (d'Hertefeldt 1960). Members of a clan shared a common totemic emblem and might afford hospitality and protection to others of the same clan, especially in the event that one was away from one's home area, but there was little notion of common ancestry or shared substance. In some areas of Rwanda, one might avoid marrying someone with the same clan name, but this was far from universal. (Taylor 2011:194-5)

At this time, the cultivators were either known by their clan or group name (*imiryango, umuryango, ubwoko, or inzu*), and the others were known as Twa, Hima, and Tutsi.²³ The Twa are likely the descendants of the foragers of the rain forests (McCoy 2012:71) of the north and west, who inhabited the area before the other groups (Vansina 2004:16). The Twa were also the most marginalized group (as they are still today), and they had a tumultuous relationship with the cultivators. The cultivators often cleared forests for agricultural purposes, thus restricting their land (ibid.:36). Taylor notes:

Twa traded their forest products, wild game, and honey, for agricultural and dairy products, but they resented and at times violently resisted the progressive loss of their subsistence base as cultivators, herders, and iron smelters cleared away the forests for agriculture, pasture land, and wood for charcoal making (Louis 1963:122; Vansina 2001:51). Twa, from a very early point in Rwanda's history, probably well before Ndori's assumption of the throne, were discriminated against by both cultivators and pastoralists who treated them as not fully human (Vansina 2001:51). This distinction was early Rwanda's first instance of ethnic stereotyping: human (belonging to the cultured space of cleared land) vs. less than human (belonging to the forest). Twa were avoided in marriage and in

²³ For the purposes of this dissertation, I drop the prefix *ba-* (meaning the), commonly used in Bantu languages, as *the* Batutsi is redundant.

The term Hutu did not exist until after the emergence of the Nyiginya kingdom.

commensality ('kuneena batwa'). At the same time, Twa were feared for their military prowess as they could conduct raids on sedentary people and then disappear into the forest where they were impossible to find. (Ibid.:196)

In the monarchical era, some Twa, who are likely related to other pygmy groups in the central African rainforest in neighboring Congo, were the kings' entertainers and musicians. The vocal style of the Twa is one of Samputu's greatest influences, and he even attempts to reconstruct their style (called *intwatwa*) in many of his songs.

Tutsi and Hima were the pastoralists, and often kept between thirty and fifty cattle (*imitwe*), which is about "half of the standard herd of one hundred cattle" of their Hima relatives in Uganda (ibid.:25). Vansina notes the distinguishing characteristics between the Hima and Tutsi:

The names "Hima" and "Tutsi" have been recorded in the literature of the Great Lakes region ever since the nineteenth century. Both are ethnonyms accepted by the populations they designate and whose etymology remains unknown. At that time, the label "Hima" was applied to all the herders of southern Uganda and northern Buhaya, to certain herders in Karagwe, and also to certain herders only in Rwanda and Burundi. The label "Tutsi" had the same meaning, and was found in Rwanda, Karagwe, Burundi, Buha, southern Buhaya, and beyond, in northern Tanzania as far as Tabora. Where both terms coexisted (Rwanda, Burundi, Karagwe), "Tutsi" referred to an elite among the herders and "Hima" to the commoners. Thus the 1924 dictionary defines "Hima" as "inferior race of Tutsi." The spatial distribution of the two words suggests that the word "Hima" spread from the north and "Tutsi" from the south. It also suggests that the exact meaning of both ethnonyms evolved from a term used to label certain groups of owners of herds and that it was still changing around 1900. It is evident, moreover, that the meaning of the term "Tutsi" evolved with the growth of those kingdoms in which herders formed part of the political elite. (Ibid.:36)

In the colonial era, Samputu's family members were labeled as Tutsi, and were given identity cards accordingly.

The Monarchial Era

There are several competing histories regarding the hierarchy of authority in Rwanda. Generally, there is the history accepted by most Rwandans, and there are attempts by scholars to subvert that view based on contrary evidence. It is not in the interest of this dissertation to challenge the contrasting histories, but it is imperative to have a basic understanding of these lineages in order to create a context for understanding Samputu's music.

Traditionally, as told by Alexis Kagame based on oral tradition, most Rwandans believe that there are three periods of kings, with the first being purely mythological or faith based. The second period begins with Gihanga (the creator), the first ruler of the great lakes region, who is related to the mythical Kigwa (meaning "fallen" and considered the "ur-ancestor" [Vansina 2004:217] of Rwandans), and extends to the reign of Ruganzu Bwimba (Bwimba the Great), the first *mwami* (king) of Rwanda.²⁴ He is the first "monarch about whom the historical tales are told"

(*ibid.*:10). With regard to subsequent rulers, Vansina notes:

Under Bwimba and his successors the small domain of Gasabo increased in size to ultimately encompass most of central Rwanda. But after the death of YUHI Gahima, a civil war tore the country into two parts. The legitimate King NDAHIRO Cyamatare who ruled over the southern part, Nduga, was then attacked by barbarians from the west and died during the hostilities. His kingdom was invaded and disappeared. (*Ibid.*:11).²⁵

While there is agreement that the first period of kings is purely mythological, there is debate about the second period (from Bwimba to Cyamatare), as Vansina argues that

²⁴ The father of Kigwa, Nkuba Shyerezo (meaning thunder the end, or the beginning and the end), is God in Rwandan traditional beliefs.

²⁵ It is common to capitalize African surnames and place them first. However, I have not chosen to follow Vansina's model in this dissertation with the exception of direct quotations.

the second period is also completely fabricated, and the real founder of the Nyiginya kingdom (the last period of kings) is Ruganzu Ndori.²⁶ Vansina states:

RUGANZU Ndori founded the Nyiginya kingdom. That statement contradicts all of Rwanda's historians and most of the oral traditions about the country's history. And yet, it is so, since the so-called kings of the preceding era are purely imaginary. Their whole history has been cobbled together from a collection of fictitious tales in order to legitimize the Nyiginya dynasty and to exalt its majesty by claiming a past more hoary than any one else's. (Ibid.:63).

Whether or not the second period is pure myth or historical fact (or a combination of the two), there is no doubt that the Nyiginya dynasty has had the most impact on contemporary Rwandan culture, as much of its history is rooted in the development of the three main people groups in Rwanda: Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa.²⁷

As previously mentioned, in the pre-Nyiginya dynastic times the terms Tutsi and Twa referred to two distinct groups of people, while the farmers were associated solely with their clan affiliation. The Tutsi (herders) likely considered themselves an elite sub-group of the Hima, and the Twa were the pygmy foragers of the rainforest. While the term Hutu existed at this time, Vansina argues that it was first applied to menial groups in servitude of the elite Tutsi (even if they were also considered Tutsi), those exhibiting "boorish or loutish behavior," foreigners, and those who were in the military but not allowed to engage in combat (ibid.:134-35).²⁸ The application to non-

²⁶ I have also found Internet bloggers (amateur historians) who have their own classification based on (and making a critique of) Kagame's work. They would also likely critique my own classifications in this dissertation; my point here is that the lineage of kings is a heavy subject of debate among Rwandans. See <http://www.dlblanc.com/Gakondo/en/Lists/index.php> and <http://chronicles.rw/sabizeze-the-ancient/>.

²⁷ Kigeri Ndahindurwa V, the last king (before the kingdom was abolished in 1959 due to a Hutu uprising), now lives in Oakton, VA, outside of Washington, D.C.

²⁸ McCoy notes that foreigners could be translated as "barbarians," and that those who couldn't participate in combat were generally considered low-class or non-elite, as they couldn't enjoy the spoils of war.

combatant military members is not insignificant, as virtually all non-combatants were from the lineage of farmers. However, it is during the Nyiginya dynasty that the term Hutu appears as a distinct category of people, most of which were the aforementioned cultivators. So how did this happen? The answer lies in many years of complex social stratification, first exacerbated by Ruganzu Ndori.

Before Ndori's reign, there was a patron-client relationship between elite Tutsi and others (including other herders and cultivators) called *ubugabire*. Jason McCoy discusses this relationship:

Under *ubugabire*, a patron (*shebuja*) would lend to a client (*umugaragu*) heads of cattle. The client would then offer the firstborn of each calving in exchange. More importantly, the client was then bound to work for the patron until the deal was dissolved, usually at the time when the initial cow or cattle finally died. While *ubugabire* involved an unequal power relation, it could be mutually beneficial and was usually entered into voluntarily. If the client was shrewd with his loan, he could ascend to higher levels of status. (Ibid.:76)

Ndori, who gained control of Rwanda through several military victories over the smaller kings of Rwanda in the early seventeenth century (Vansina 2004:44), changed the dynamics of the patron-client relationship through his invention of *ubuhake*.²⁹ On *ubuhake*, McCoy notes:

Unlike *ubugabire*, *ubuhake* involved a lifelong contract. Furthermore, it was hereditary, meaning that a client's descendants were also subservient to the descendants of the patron. In return, the patron offered protection of the client families and their herds. Military protection was important because raiding and pillaging was common; indeed, Ndori was perhaps the most successful raider of all during his time. The only way out of the deal was for client families to give up their entire herds to the patron, condemning themselves to a life of

²⁹ There is much debate surrounding the origin of *ubuhake*, as Catherine Newbury and Vansina are in disagreement about whether or not it extended to lineages or was just between individuals, and Pottier (2002:13) states that *ubuhake* doesn't emerge until the nineteenth century (McCoy 2012:76-7).

poverty and insecurity. *Ubughake* first mainly involved an arrangement between the king or his officials and lesser rulers or cattle breeders, but other forms of remission on the part of the client that did not involve cattle later developed, often hoes or armlets and other decorative items. Non-cattle breeders could thus also become *ubuhake* clients. (Ibid.:76)

It was this introduction of *ubuhake* that led to a further codification of the terms Hutu and Tutsi. However, because Rwandan culture is organized patrilineally—through which Hutu and Tutsi identities could be transmitted—it took a few hundred years for these categories to be institutionalized, as “a person or family might switch identities due to intermarriage, the acquisition or loss of cattle, and/or by ascending or descending the sociopolitical ladder” (McCoy 2012:80).

The development and breakdown of the importance of the court rituals (*ubiiru*) and ritualists (*abiiru*) also facilitated differences between Hutu and Tutsi. The *abiiru* were the elite “wise-men” who even had power over the king, as they advised him “whether or not to conduct wars and designated the heir apparent and family from which he was to come” (Mamdani 2001:63).³⁰ They also “set the rules for governance, but without themselves ruling” (ibid.:63). These *abiiru* traditionally relied on “Hutu supernatural powers” as their spiritual guide, which, as Mamdani points out, was the “distinctive ideological feature of the Rwandan state” (ibid.:64) at this time. Because of their perceived supernatural authority, they would require the kings to take part in their rituals. Thus, as the Tutsi had military prowess, the Hutu had the supernatural, and the *abiiru* relied on both to retain power. However, as time passed, the kings began to distance themselves from the *abiiru* rituals, which also

³⁰ In my fieldwork experience, some informants even compared these *abiiru* to *illuminati* type characters, who treated the king like a puppet.

subverted the need for Hutu spirituality. This subversion would reach its height in the nineteenth century—a time in which the Hutu and Tutsi identities gained even greater social and political distinctions.

What happens next is a major subject of debate, as most Rwandans espouse a history in which European colonists (the Germans and subsequently Belgians) were solely responsible for codifying the distinguishing characteristics between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa by measuring physiognomical features and handing out identification cards in the colonial-monarchical era (Hilker 2011:320). The Rwandan government's website, under the History section, states: “For centuries, Rwanda existed as a centralized monarchy under a succession of Tutsi kings from one clan, who ruled through cattle chiefs, land chiefs and military chiefs. The king was supreme but the rest of the population, Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa, lived in symbiotic harmony” (Republic of Rwanda 2014). While the colonial powers were the main culprits in exacerbating the differences between the people groups, many scholars argue that in the nineteenth century (1853-95) it was King Kigeri Rwabugiri who gave the final authoritative signature in the monarchical era regarding the social ordering of Hutu and Tutsi through his introduction of *uburetwa*, which is a much harsher version of *ubuhake*.³¹ Vansina describes this development:

during the nineteenth century, and especially toward the end of it, farmers without lands or with insufficient land began to appear. These were genuine proletarian day laborers (*umucancuro*), forced to hire themselves out to whomever would pay them in foodstuffs. The oldest instance, that of a rich Hutu in Bufundu to whom the child Rwabugiri had been entrusted [and] who hired day laborers to till his fields, can

³¹ Vansina argues that the person who was likely to have been responsible for creating *uburetwa* was Seruteganya, who was the Queen Mother's (Rwabugiri's wife) lover and, thus, very influential during Rwabugiri's reign (ibid.:134,168).

be dated to around 1865 or a little earlier. Some were forced to offer their services for hire in order to feed themselves during food shortages. But later on, many of them would be forced to work in this manner because their lands were too small to pay the dues required by *uburetwa*.... (Ibid.:130)

At that time, the word was used to designate the obligations of tenants to their masters on *ubukonde* land. By analogy, the chief of the land who considered himself to be master of the arable land now began to impose such obligations on all the farming families established in his jurisdiction by the pretence that they were all his tenants. In addition to the dues, which included a significant portion of the family's crops, these obligations mainly consisted in the delivery of services. From now on two out of every four days of the Rwandan week had to be set aside for services to the chief. The loss of about half of their available time was a very heavy burden for most taxpayers. (Ibid.:134)

Further, the herders were all exempt from *uburetwa*, which ultimately fostered a caste-like system. And since almost all cultivators were Hutu, this created an “absolute division” between Hutu (poor cultivators) and Tutsi (wealthy herders) that “rapidly displaced the older social consciousness” (ibid.:136). The harsh treatment of the cultivators, now socially known as Hutu, triggered a series of revolts through the end of the nineteenth century, which greatly elevated tensions between them and the Tutsi. And by the end of Rwabugiri's reign, the creation of rigid social differences between Hutu and Tutsi was kindling for the deadly fire the European colonists, through their ignorance and desire for dominance, created during the colonial-monarchical era.

The Colonial-Monarchical Era: Indirect Rule and the Hamitic Hypothesis

Count von Götzen of Germany was the first to “extensively explore” Rwanda in the late nineteenth century and “sign a treaty with the Rwandan king at the time, Kigeri V Rwabugiri” (Taylor 1999:38), which helped Germany claim rights to

Rwanda at the 1884-85 Berlin Conference. At the time, Rwanda and Burundi (known then as Ruanda-Urundi) were considered one location; this was logical as both kingdoms spoke nearly the same language and comprised the same people groups (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa).³² Given that “effective occupation” and “civilizing mission” were the main justifications for the colonization of Africa, the Germans sent Catholic missionaries from Alsace in 1900.³³ At the root of the “civilizing mission” was the belief, according to the “Great Chain of Being” philosophy, that Africans were animal-like savages and Europeans were closer to God (ibid.: 39). Thus, physiognomy was a marker for intelligence, as well as spiritual aptitude.

Another pervasive theory involving race (and impetus for colonization), the Hamitic hypothesis, was rooted in the theology of the Torah (Old Testament). The Europeans (and Jews) believed that all dark-skinned people were descendants of Noah’s son Ham, whom he cursed after mocking him while he was drunk. The hypothesis, first attributed to “Leo Africanus, the great Arab traveller and one-time protege of Pope Leo X” (Sanders 1969:522), was well-accepted by the 1600s, and was used worldwide to describe people of African descent. Edith Sanders summarizes this theory:

In the beginning there was the Bible. The word "Ham" appears there for the first time in Genesis, Chapter Five. Noah cursed Ham, his youngest son, and said:

Cursed be Canaan;
A servant of servants shall he be
unto his brethren.

³² The differences between Kirundi (Burundi) and Kinyarwanda (Rwanda) are analogous to the differences between British and United States English.

³³ The Germans struggled to find missionaries from their own country, and thus had to outsource missionaries from Francophone countries (Taylor 1999:38).

And he said,
Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant.
God enlarge Japhet,
And let him dwell in the tent of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant.

Then follows an enumeration of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, Japhet, and their sons who were born to them after the flood. The Bible makes no mention of racial differences among the ancestors of mankind. It is much later that an idea of race appears with reference to the sons of Noah; it concerns the descendants of Ham. The Babylonian Talmud, a collection of oral traditions of the Jews, appeared in the sixth century A.D.; it states that the descendants of Ham are cursed by being black, and depicts Ham as a sinful man and his progeny as degenerates. Thus, early tradition identified the Hamites with Negroes and endowed them with both certain physiognomical attributes and an undesirable character. (Ibid.:522-3).

The Europeans believed that these Hamites were best suited for slavery since it was their spiritual heritage. However, nineteenth-century theologians, not able to calm the cognitive dissonance regarding the more “civilized” Egyptians and Cushites (people of the Horn of Africa), began to argue that it was Canaan who was cursed, not Ham. Subsequently, all dark-skinned, non-Bantu (Nilotic or Cushite) Africans were regarded as Hamites.

Shaped by the ideologies of their time, missionaries in Rwanda observed the social structure at the time and common phenotypical expressions amongst the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, and concluded the following: 1) that the Tutsi, given the complexities of the Nyiginya kingdom, must be semi-Caucasoid or Hamite, and thus, destined to rule over the other groups; 2) the Hutus’ “stocky physiques naturally predisposed them to hard work”; and 3) the Twa pygmies were an “atavistic throwback to the ape”

who were “destined to disappear” (ibid.:39).³⁴ Jason McCoy notes that the Tutsi “were happy to confirm this belief as it only further validated their superiority in relation to the rest of the population. If they had indeed migrated from the north and were then able to subjugate the native Hutu and Twa, then it was a sign of their intelligence, resourcefulness, and thus their fitness to rule” (McCoy 2012: 83).

As Timothy Longman states in his *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (2011), the “interpretations of Rwandan society offered by the priests had a profound impact, as the few German administrators in Rwanda and Burundi relied heavily on the missionaries to explain the local culture” (Longman 2010:44). The main missionary group, the White Fathers, led by “Monsignor Jean-Joseph Hirth, the apostolic vicar of the Catholic region known as Nyanza Merdional, insisted that land be granted for a mission in the heavily populated south, near the supply stations in Burundi” (ibid.:39). This was largely due to the fact that the Nyiginya kingdom was centered in the south, and conversion of leadership was the modus operandi of the Catholic Church at the time. The founder of this viewpoint, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, “believed that conversion of non-Christian peoples would be most successfully accomplished by focusing evangelistic efforts on political leaders”

³⁴ In my experience, I’ve observed some stereotypical physiognomic differences between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, but they are no more calculable than attempting to codify what constitutes a “Black-American” in the United States based on phenotype. For example, Samputu was known as a Tutsi, but doesn’t share many of the similar stereotypical phenotypical expressions (i.e., height, nose, etc.) as typical Tutsis (or at least how the Europeans codified them). The physical differences are likely hundreds of years old, and nearly impossible to trace back to three distinct origins. That being said, most agree that the Twa have distinct physical differences (usually regarding their smaller stature), as they are related to other forest people of Central Africa. However, that could also be politically constructed, as the Twa are the “the only ethnic group that can be discriminated against with relative impunity” (Beswick 2011:492).

(ibid.:39).³⁵ This strategy was also rooted in the fear that if they weren't able to convert the Tutsi elites, they would lose converts to the German Protestants (mostly Adventists and Anglicans). Thus, the missionaries also became "involved in local politics and using the power of the church to ensnare the ascendance of chiefs who supported the church," and as "missionaries began to gain allies and converts among the Tutsi nobles, they used their influence to help these nobles advance politically and they felt increasingly empowered to challenge those nobles they viewed as the enemies of the church" (ibid.:50).

The missionaries' strategy ultimately helped the Germans to establish rapport with the Tutsi of the Nyiginya kingdom, and subsequently support them in a form of indirect rule. After the death of Rwabugiri in 1895, the Germans consolidated power in the next king Yuhi Musinga V (Herik 2005:17), as Musinga was just a teen when he ascended to the throne after a "violent coup," and his "claim to the throne was tenuous" (McCoy 2012:83). The Germans supported the continuation of *uburetwa* and *ubuhake*, because it "supplied them with cheap labor and a clearly delineated system of labor and production" in order to develop infrastructure (i.e., build roads for the delivery of supplies) and harbor resources for export (ibid.:83).³⁶ Additionally,

³⁵ It should be noted that Lavigerie's strategy of allying with current governing powers was a point of contentious debate within the church at this time. Because of significant resistance from the Tutsi chiefs in the Save (the first established mission post in Rwanda), several missionaries questioned the support of the Tutsi over Hutu, and even enlisted *askari*, a group of warriors from the Uganda kingdom (Baganda) to "humiliate local chiefs who offered resistance" (Longman 2010:47). This support of the Hutu would be of great significance during Belgian rule, and a contributing factor in developing the "Hutu power" movement in the 1960s and beyond.

³⁶ While the Germans served as a cohesive agent for the patron-client relationships during the "tenuous" reign of Musinga, there were many Hutu in the Central Rwandan court who held high positions, and in "areas adjacent of the centre, Hutu also held positions of responsibility even though in most instances they recognized the authority of the Rwanda king" (Taylor 1999:40).

the Germans and missionaries helped solidify the Nyiginya central court's authority in outlying regions, especially in the north and southwest. As Taylor notes:

Although Rwandan kings had often waged military campaigns in these areas, the influence of the king and his court depended largely upon their presence. As soon as the king's soldiers headed back to central Rwanda, life would resume as before. After the arrival of the Germans, however, efforts began to definitively integrate northern Rwanda into the central state and to place Tutsi administrators there. During the early 1900s, the north was the scene of frequent violent confrontations between colonial troops allied to the central Rwandan state and local northern leaders. Many of the latter were inspired by the local traditional religion known as Nyabingi. These confrontations persisted until 1912, when the last Nyabingi leader, Ndungutse (who was a Tutsi), was killed (Lugan, 1997: 254). After his defeat, northern Rwanda became open to the in-migration of central Rwandan Tutsi associated with the Rwandan king. (Taylor: 1999:41).³⁷

The ousting of the Ndungutse is significant because it marginalized any attempt to subvert of the king's spiritual authority.³⁸ Rwandan cosmology at the time of colonization centered around two main types of worship, the first being worship of Imana or the one supreme God, and the second being a type of ancestor worship of the spirits of heroic figures or *imandwa*.³⁹ The two main *imandwa* were Lyangombe (found mostly in the south and central regions), and the aforementioned Nyabingi (found mostly in the North and Southern Uganda; Longman 2010:36-37).⁴⁰ While Imana required no rituals, as he was the supreme giver of life, the *imandwa* require rituals called *kumbandwa* that were usually initiated by a family who "experienced a

³⁷The cult of Nyabingi (also spelled Nyabinghi in Jamaica) is a type of *kumbandwa* worship in which the leading figure is a Queen who led resistance against foreign invaders, and is found throughout East Africa. In Jamaica, Nyabingi, given its association with resistance against white oppressors in Ethiopia, was appropriated by Rastafarians, and is the centerpiece of their theology and musical life (Edmonds 2012:59). I will discuss this further in Chapter Six.

³⁸The ideology of the Nyiginya court was that the king "served as a link between Imana and humans, helping to ensure the flow of rain and milk and other signs of fertility" (Longman 2010:36-7).

³⁹*Imandwa* is the Rwandan expression of *kumbandwa*, which is the general term for East African traditional religious practices, most of which are related to one another.

⁴⁰*Lyangombe* is also often spelled *Ryangombe*.

tragedy or faced some crisis” (ibid.:37).⁴¹ Each of these cults threatened the power of the king, and while the Lyangombe cult was “gradually integrated into the system of state rule,” the cult of Nyabingi “served as a channel for the expression of resistance and dissent” (ibid.:37). The elimination of the religious dissenters, the reinforcement of *uburetwa*, and the use of the pseudo-scientific Hamitic hypothesis to promote Tutsi dominance served as fertilizer for the next stage European interference in the colonial-monarchical era: the Belgian rule.

The Belgians took over Rwanda in 1922, when Germany lost all of its colonies after WWI, and continued in the tradition of indirect rule. However, the interference in the Rwandan social structure by the Belgian authorities and missionaries was much greater than the Germans. While the missionaries (the White Fathers, who were at this point, heavily influenced by one Monsignor Classe’s opposition to giving any support to the Hutu) during German rule entered into the political arena of the Nyiginya kingdom by “helping to eliminate remnants of Hutu political power” (ibid.:52), the missionaries during the Belgian rule went a step further by proselytizing more Tutsi elites, and eventually King Musinga. Longman discusses this development:

In the 1920s, the White Fathers’ strategy of appeasing the chiefs and courting the Tutsi finally began to pay off. The competing factions within the royal court, most of which had previously opposed the expansion of the missions and refused to cooperate with the missionaries, began to appeal to the missionaries for support in their struggles for power. Important Tutsi families began to send their sons to Catholic schools (while strategically sending other sons to the secular Belgian schools in Nyanza, Gatsibo, and elsewhere), and large numbers of young Tutsi signed up as catechumens and began to be

⁴¹ Samputu performs in many of the musical styles of *kumbandwa* (though re-constructed with Christian lyrics) in his *Voices From Rwanda* (2006).

baptized as Catholics. Classe and other missionaries now began to intervene to increase the power of the Catholic Tutsi, for example, by recommending baptized Christians or catechumens for the positions created in the administrative restructuring of 1926.

By the early 1930s, the White Fathers found themselves in a particularly powerful position, with the Catholic Church playing an increasingly significant role in supplying education and other services, many Catholic converts having taken up important political positions, and favorable relations with the Belgian administration. Hence, Mgr. Classe felt sufficiently confident to confront the major remaining obstacle to the dream of establishing a Catholic kingdom: King Musinga himself. (Ibid.:53)

As previously noted, Musinga's ascendancy to the throne after Rwabugiri's death was heavily contested, so he enlisted the help of the White Fathers to quell any opposition in and outside the court. However, Musinga did not trust them, and even courted Protestant converts; he was deemed an enemy of the mission. Subsequently, Mgr. Classe waged a campaign against Musinga, labeling him as an idolater and accusing him of promoting sexual immorality, and promoted his son Rwigemera, who had received a Catholic education from the Belgians as an alternative to Musinga (ibid.:55). Because in 1926 the Belgian authorities labeled any non-converts to be enemies of the state, and even deposed hundreds of chiefs (Mamdani 2001:92), Musinga's power was severely diminished, and "the Tutsi elite began to realize that conversion to Christianity was a requirement for advancement under the new system" (Longman 2010:55). Thus, the "conversion of the Tutsi was a corporate recognition that the source of power within the State had shifted away from the mwami" (ibid., citing Linden and Linden). In 1931, "the Belgian governor, with Mgr. Classe at his side, gathered together the chiefs of the country at Nyanza to announce that Musinga had abdicated in favor of his son Rudahigwa, and two days later, Rudahigwa was

crowned under the dynastic name supplied to him by Classe, Mutara IV [III]” (ibid.).⁴² This event, which occurred “without significant popular protest” (Mamdani 2001:93), symbolically represented the power of the Church and Belgian authorities, and helped usher in the new Rwandan Christian era.

The crowning of Mutara Rudahigwa III in 1931 (he was subsequently known as King Charles Mutara Rudahigwa after his baptism in 1943) set off a wave of Christian conversion in Rwanda.⁴³ The Christianization of Rwanda solidified Belgian rule, and all but eliminated any significant threats to power. It also gave Belgians the social capital to further codify class and race relations, which was predicated by a series of social reforms from the 1920s-1940s. Mamdani notes:

From the very outset, Belgians signaled that the agrarian political economy would be developed mainly along agricultural, and not pastoral, lines. This meant that in any tension between cultivators and herders over use of common resources, the state would come down on the side of cultivators. The message was conveyed in unmistakable terms by decree no. 791/A/53, which levied a fine—twice the amount of damage caused—on every Tutsi taking the harvest of a Hutu or sending his herd to graze in a cultivated field. A later decree compelled the mwami to double the size of arable land at the disposal of Hutu families, thereby emphasizing the tip in resource use in favor of agriculture and away from cattle-rearing.

In spite of reforms favoring agrarian production, the Hutu peasantry experienced Belgian rule as harsher than any previous regime in living memory. For this, there were two reasons. *First*, there was the reorganization of state administration, particularly local administration. We have seen that the reorganization went beyond a simple incorporation of the precolonial state machinery into lower rungs of the new order. By creating a single hierarchy of chiefs, it accentuated the despotic aspect of state administration. *Second*, this

⁴² Most works refer to King Mutara Rudahigwa as III rather than IV. It is possible that Longman or Linden and Linden were misinformed, or that it was a misprint.

⁴³ According to Colin Waugh in his 2004 publication *Paul Kagame and Rwanda: Power, Genocide and the Rwandan Patriotic Front*, current President Paul Kagame is a relative of King Rudahigwa (ibid.:8).

despotic machinery was enabled by a highly administrative version of “customary” law, one which sanctified as “customary” any exercise of force by authorities simply because they too were considered “customary.” As “customary” authorities and “customary” law became central to the Belgian project of colonial development, a combination of market mechanisms and extra/economic compulsions became central to propelling the project forward. The key point for our purposes is that the authority decreeing these compulsions was inevitably the hierarchy of the Tutsi chiefs. (Ibid.:93-4)

The new Tutsi power was even further concentrated when coupled with the new, highly individualized taxation system. The Germans initiated a general taxation system, but the Belgian administration and the Catholic Church (under Mgr. Classe) furthered this by imposing their own individual tax system. The Belgians’ Minimum Personal Contribution, levied on every adult male, and the Catholics’ one franc per person per year were gathered by the king, chiefs, and sub-chiefs. According to Catharine Newbury:

One of Rudahigwa’s first official acts (for which he was lavishly praised by the administration) was to abolish prestations in kind made to the chiefs and the king. These were replaced by money payment (with a portion allocated to an official at each level: subchief, chief, and king) to be collected at the same time as the annual head tax. This change provided additional incentives for Rwandan chiefs and subchiefs to collect taxes, since their own income was determined directly as a proportion of the taxes they collected. (Newbury 1988:156)

Another, even harsher levy was the non-monetary exaction of forced crops, labor, and sales. As anything could be labeled as “customary,” the Belgians exploited labor forces at every whim, and the chiefs followed suit. They used the “customary” term to exact free labor for anything from road upkeep to increased coffee production. This was especially significant during WWII, when the administration forced “Rwandans to provide cheap food and cows for slaughter to assure supplies for the industrial

centers in the Congo, where stepped-up production was seen as crucial to the war effort. Cattle owners were forced to sell their cattle at ridiculously low prices; some men apparently committed suicide seeing their herds decimated in this way” (ibid.:157-58).

Additionally, in 1924, the Belgians codified *uburetwa*, which in contrast to it being loosely enforced and irregular during Rwabugiri’s reign, was now legally “fixed at 42 days a year,” which, for chiefs, “became generalized throughout Rwanda” and “rigidly enforced as a legal compulsion” (Mamdani 2001:97). And because it only applied to Hutu, this increased the Tutsi power over the masses. Refusal to engage in forced labor was punishable by *kiboko*, which was “eight strokes with the hippopotamus cane” (ibid.:94). The Belgians also required Tutsi chiefs to make the Hutu work by force, threatening to whip them if they didn’t whip the Hutu (ibid.:97). These now-legalized differences between Hutu and Tutsi reached their apex with the issuance of national ID cards in 1931. Jason McCoy notes:

Like the Germans, the Belgians also recognized Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa as biologically distinct races. Throughout the 1920s the administration enacted a census, one of the purposes of which was to determine the “racial” demographics of the colony. Priests traveled throughout the realm taking all measure of phenotypical traits, especially height and cranial dimensions. Based on these metrics, they determined each person’s identity. In cases where it could not be determined, they inquired as to the number of cattle a person’s family owned. Ten or more, the person was regarded as Tutsi; less than ten, a Hutu. Upon completing its census in 1931, the colonial administration then issued mandatory identity cards that indicated people’s racial identity. (McCoy 2013:85)

These identification cards would eventually serve as markers for Hutu militants to identify and massacre hundreds of thousands of Tutsi in 1994.

So how did the Hutu gain control of Rwanda? The answer lies in a mixture of church and state interference, in which they played both sides of the “race card” for their own ideological and political gain. After WWII—coinciding with the death of Mgr. Classe—many Catholic priests protested the overt support of Tutsi oppression of the Hutu. As previously mentioned, “[F]rom the beginning of the White Father mission in Rwanda, some priests believed that the Catholic Church should challenge the perceived injustices of the Rwandan socioeconomic system and support the rights of the Hutu against the Tutsi whom they believed to be oppressed and exploited the Hutu, but the order’s leadership intervened to quash such sentiments and reassert the church’s conservative support for the existing structures of power” (Longman 2010:66). However, now that Mgr. Classe no longer stood in the way of these dissenters and the “White Fathers had accomplished their primary goals—making the Catholic Church a powerful presence in Rwandan politics and society, converting the political elite, and attracting large members of the masses” (ibid.:66-67), younger missionaries, who “were influenced by democratic ideas” (ibid.:67), had the freedom to educate more Hutu. According to Longman, these missionaries:

... saw in the Hutu an exploited class whose interests the church should be championing, and they began to create opportunities for Hutu, increasing Hutu enrollment in church schools and cultivating educated Hutu. For example, in 1950 Father Arthur Dejemeppe took Grégoire Kayibanda, a young Hutu school teacher who had attended the junior seminary at Nyakibanda, with him to a young Catholic Worker (Jeunesse Ouvriere Catholique, JOC) conference in Belgium, where he spent two months living with Dejemeppe’s family and made contacts with Christian socialists and trade unionists. (Ibid.:67)

Grégoire Kayibanda eventually became heavily involved in a growing Hutu political movement, and would replace the Tutsi monarchy as the first president of postcolonial Rwanda.

In addition to creating a new Hutu elite, the Catholic Church also influenced the Belgian administration to follow in their footsteps. In the 1950s, the Belgians created a series of reforms with the aim of, publicly at least, giving Hutu more agency in governing affairs. According to Longman:

In 1952, they created representative councils in each subchieftancy, chieftaincy, and province to act as a check on the power of the chiefs, and in 1953, they created a Conseil Supérieur for the country to advise the king. In 1954 the king and the Conseil Supérieur issued a decree to dissolve the *ubuhake* system of cattle clientship progressively and allow the distribution of cows between patrons and clients. (Ibid.:69)

However, these changes had little impact on day-to-day activities, as these so-called representative councils “tended to increase power of the chiefs,” and “the abolition of *ubuhake* did little to open up economic possibilities for the Hutu peasants” (ibid.:69).

Due to this lack of “real” change, the new Hutu elite, led by Kayibanda, began to express their discontent with the existing social inequalities (i.e., Tutsi power via indirect rule, lack of real agency in the government, workers rights) through a Catholic newspaper called *Kinyamateka*, which became a “mouthpiece for Hutu resentments” (ibid.:70). These complaints were codified in a publication entitled the *Bahutu Manifesto*, which also promoted liberation from the Tutsi and white Europeans (Mamdani 2001:116), and Kayibanda subsequently formed the political

party Muhutu Social Movement (MSM) to fight for Hutu social equality.⁴⁴ Simultaneously, Joseph Habyarimana Gitera founded the Association for the Promotion of the Masses (APROSOMA) and promoted his views in his new journal “*Ijwi rya Rubanda Rugufi (Voice of the Little People)* in which he engaged in impassioned, vitriolic attacks on the monarchy and the *kalinga* drum, symbol of royalty” (Newbury 1988:192-93), but also called for equality for all oppressed groups-Hutu and poor Tutsi.⁴⁵ Consequently, the creation of the manifesto, MSM, and APROSOMA coupled with the mysterious death of King Rudahigwa in 1959 (many Tutsi believed that he was murdered), caused the Tutsi to create their own pro-monarchical party called the National Rwandan Union (UNAR) to promote an independent (anti-Belgian) Tutsi monarchy.⁴⁶ This then led Kayibanda, in turn, to convert the MSM into a more outspoken revolutionary (anti-Tutsi and -Belgian) party called Party of the Movement for Hutu Emancipation (PARMEHUTU).⁴⁷

These tensions between the groups led to an outbreak of violence often referred to as the Hutu Uprising or Social Revolution of 1959. This violence began in November when “a gang of Tuutsi [Tutsi] youths attacked the Hutu sub chief Dominique Mobyumutwa” (ibid.:194) and subsequently the Hutu retaliated and killed four Tutsi leaders.

Longman describes this violence:

⁴⁴ The Bahutu Manifesto was originally entitled *Notes on the Social Aspect of the Racial Native Problem in Rwanda*, and “maintained that the heart of the problem in Rwanda was ‘the conflict between Hutu and Hamitic—i.e., foreign—Tutsi’” (Mamdani 2001:116).

⁴⁵ APROSOMA is the acronym for the French title *l’Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse*, and was much more open to the promotion of all oppressed Rwandans (both poor Tutsi and Hutu) than the MSM or PARMEHUTU.

⁴⁶ UNAR is the acronym for the French title *Union Nationale Rwandaise*

⁴⁷ PARMEHUTU is the French acronym for the French title *Parti du Mouvement pour l’Emancipation Hutu*.

Small Groups of Hutu traveled throughout the countryside looting and burning Tutsi homes, in an apparently spontaneous uprising. Attacks drove thousands of Tutsi from their homes, many fleeing Rwanda for refuge in neighboring countries. UNAR responded with targeted attacks against politically active Hutu, sometimes accompanied with improvised trials at the royal court in Nyanza. (Longman 2010:72)⁴⁸

After two weeks, the Belgians flew in paratroopers from Congo to quell the violence and maintain stability in the region. Subsequently, the Belgians replaced all of the Tutsi chiefs and sub chiefs (21 and 332 respectively), who were “killed, arrested, or driven from office during the crisis” (Longman 2010:73) with Hutu. After the violence ended twenty-two months later (with an estimated 20,000 killed; Mamdani 2001:130), the Belgians also devised a “new administrative structure, replacing subchieftancies with communes headed by an elected burgomaster and communion council,” and in the first council elections “PARMEHUTU won 2,390 of 3,125 seats with UNAR winning only 56” (Longman 2010:73).⁴⁹ And in 1961, the PARMEHUTU-controlled council announced the abolishment of the monarchy, and introduced Kayibanda as the new Prime Minister (ibid.:73). The following year, the Belgians exited the country, solidifying Kayibanda’s role as leader, and he was subsequently named president of the First Republic.

Independent Republic

Rwanda declared its independence from Belgium on July 1st, 1962, with a majority Hutu leadership at the helm. Kayibanda moved quickly to solidify his power

⁴⁸ According to McCoy, over 100,000 of these Tutsi fled to Uganda, Congo, Tanzania, and Burundi (McCoy 2012:88). It was the children of these refugees in Uganda who would later return to Rwanda to take back the country in the 1990s.

⁴⁹ According to Prunier, the violence lasted four years, and caused over 50,000 deaths (Prunier 2001:112).

by taking a markedly anti-Tutsi stance, labeling Tutsi in Rwanda and abroad as “resident and non-resident aliens” (Mamdani 2001:135). He also delivered sharp attacks against any political groups who took a moderate stance regarding the Tutsi. APROSOMA, which often reached out to *petit*-Tutsi (poorer Tutsi) to participate in its party, became the subject of attacks, and its “stalwarts were ‘slowly but surely eased out of any political or administrative responsibility.’” (ibid.:135 citing Prunier). The Hutu-led administration also developed laws to restrict Tutsi enrollment in higher education institutions to ten percent, and moved to take power of the education system away from the Catholic Church through a new law passed in 1966.⁵⁰ According to Mamdani, the impetus behind this law was the fact that most of “Church leadership in post revolutionary Rwanda continued to be predominantly Tutsi” (ibid.:136). This law had four main effects on the education system in Rwanda:

First, it declared as state property all school buildings ever constructed with state subsidies. *Second*, it placed the hiring and firing of all personnel, lay and religious, in all state-subsidized private schools under the supervision and control of the state. *Third*, it removed the admission, promotion, and expulsion of students in these schools from exclusive control of school authorities. *Finally*, it also removed the choice of textbooks and curriculum content from the sole jurisdiction of school authorities. The aim was to bring the entire private—i.e., predominantly Catholic—educational system under state control. It was also the effect. For the Church-educated Hutu leadership of the state, the 1966 law provided an instrument for Hutu-izing control over a Tutsi-dominated educational system. (Ibid.:136; emphasis in original)

Having all but eradicated the Catholic Church’s authority from the educational system, Kayibanda subsequently, in 1972, “organized a number of ‘vigilante committees’ to scour the nation’s schools, businesses, and local public administration

⁵⁰ McCoy, basing his argument on Gerhard Prunier, states that the laws were for nine percent, as one percent went to the Twa (McCoy 2012:89).

departments in order to make sure that ethnic quota laws were being enforced”

(McCoy 2012:89).⁵¹ Tutsi were also singled out in schools and ridiculed. Samputu

recalls this time in his interview for RNW Africa:

Before the genocide, I was Rwandan, but I was like a refugee in my home country... I lived in the country with a discrimination, and Tutsis were not allowed to have all of the rights as others Rwandans.... I remember when I was in primary, one day a teacher said “who are Hutus and who are Tutsis?”... and I remember we were seven [Tutsi] in the class. When we stood up, the other children started to laugh at us.... When I went back home, I asked my father “Why we are Tutsi?” ..., and my father didn’t answer me. That was the first time I saw my father cry. I grew up with this shame. (Roosblad 2013)

This persecution caused between 500,000 and 700,000 thousand Tutsi to flee the country; this time mostly to Uganda (McCoy 2012:89). Kayibanda’s focus on ousting Tutsi by preaching Hutu power, along with his frugal nature as president (e.g., he often wore tattered clothing, was driven around in a Volkswagen, and didn’t make many public appearances or travel abroad; Mamdani 2001:134), left the infrastructure of the country in a desolate condition. The government did little to create jobs and economic stability, which, in turn, caused many Hutu to question Kayibanda’s leadership. After the mass exodus of Tutsi in 1972, there was significant political infighting between the Hutu of the northwest and south-central regions over who would take over the jobs formerly held by Tutsi. This turmoil came to a head on July 5th, 1973, when Juvénal Habyarimana, a popular general and Kayibanda’s top military commander, led a bloodless coup and installed himself as President of the Second Republic. Given the political turmoil and poor economic conditions, most Rwandans “greeted it with enthusiasm” (Longman 2012:87).

⁵¹ McCoy argues that this was sparked by the 1972 Hutu genocide in neighboring Burundi, in which 300,000 Hutu lost their lives and another 300,000 fled to Tanzania (McCoy 2012:89).

There were several marked differences between the First and Second Republics. Habyarimana's motto was "peace, unity, and development," and he focused on bringing order to the country through several social and political changes. First, he labeled Tutsi as an ethnicity rather than a race, which recognized them as being "*indigenous* to Rwanda," and thus allowed to participate in the political sphere once again (Mamdani 2001:138). However, this return to the political sphere was limited by the Tutsi's minority status, and regulated by the state. Mamdani states:

As a minority defined statutorily and identified legally, its participation in civil and political life was regulated by state policy. The regulation had two purposes: (1) to redistribute through affirmative state action, and (2) to limit political participation. The Second Republic followed a "national" goal and sought to arrive at a balance between two tension ridden objectives: justice and reconciliation. Reconciliation with the Tutsi was to be in a context of justice for the Hutu. The mode of justice would be through a system of redress within hitherto Tutsi-dominated institutions, particularly the Church, education, and employment. In some instances, as with the Church, this included direct state pressure. . . . In other instances, such as education and employment, it was mainly through state-enforced quotas. The rationale was to redress historical wrongs. As such, this mode of justice was extended not only to the Hutu, but in particular to Hutu from the northern region, who were considered historically the most underprivileged. (Ibid.:138-39)

Thus, the purpose of this regulation was twofold: First, to quell "ethnic" tensions between Hutu and Tutsi, and second, to redistribute wealth as a means of social justice. And, as with any political compromise, most groups were unsatisfied with the outcome. The inclusion of the Tutsi in the political sphere drew the ire of the Hutu and united them, but the redistribution of wealth tended to be based on regions, which drove a "wedge between Hutu from the north and Hutu from the center and the south" (ibid.:139). Also, the Tutsi complained "that government promotion and hiring practices tended to give disproportionate weight to regional and ethnic qualifications

rather than to merit” (ibid.:139). However, Habyarimana refused to relax the quota system (90% Hutu/9% Tutsi/1%Twa), which all but secured Hutu power, given that the Tutsi would never have enough votes to take power. He stated: “It is not a question of bringing the Tutsi back to power, which would be equivalent to re-establishing the pre-1959 situation; but each ethnic group has its place in the national fold. There is a Tutsi minister in my government; there are Tutsi senior civil servants in the administration and Tutsi officers in the army” (Habyarimana in Mamdani 2001:140). Or as McCoy states, “His main message to them seemed to be that as long as they did not interfere in politics, they would be left alone” (McCoy 2012: 90). So while Tutsi were now an ethnicity rather than a race, they were still considered outsiders, and had no real “home” in Rwanda.

The second marked difference between the administrations was the institution of government. The new constitution of 1978 was based on three foreign models: “the French constitution for the structure of the government, the Belgian model for human rights provisions, and the Tanzanian model for the organization of a single-party state” (ibid.:143). This implementation of the Tanzanian model comprised the transforming of the local state by dividing the country into a series of prefectures (ten), which were divided into “143 communes of about 30,000 persons” (ibid.:144). The administration then appointed (in contrast to being elected in the First Republic) two positions to oversee these prefectures and communes that were analogous to colonial chiefs. They were in charge of work distribution (i.e., how many people could work), land distribution (i.e., how many acres of cultivated land would be apportioned to each commune), and public order. According to Mamdani, these

highly organized administrative changes were “key to organizing the series of massacres that constituted the genocide of 1994” (ibid.:144).

The third marked difference was in the area of economic development. In the area of agriculture, Rwanda increased its total food production per capita through the expansion of crop area. The government gentrified the fertile soiled hills by moving peasants down to the savannah areas in the southern part of the country, and they also cultivated swampy areas by draining them. In terms of infrastructure, they built new asphalt roads (with aid from Europe and China) to Tanzania, Congo (then known as Zaire), and Uganda, which helped diversify their foreign relations. They also developed (or reintroduced, depending on your perspective) a system of forced labor known as *umuganda* (highly resembling *uburetwa*), which heavily increased production of “public projects, such as planting forests, constructing terraces to fight erosion, and building bridges” (ibid.:146). And by 1990, “the World Bank estimated that the per capita income of Rwanda was higher than any of that of its neighbors. By 1987, Rwanda had the lowest debt, the lowest inflation rate, and the highest rate of growth of Gross National Product (GNP) of any country in the region” (ibid.:144).

However, in the late 1980s the Second Republic faced significant crises, one of which was when the global price of coffee, Rwanda’s chief export, plummeted, and their “earnings from coffee dropped from 150 million dollars in 1986 to 70 million dollars in 1989” (Longman 2010:120) and even further to \$30 million in 1993 (Mamdani 2001:147). This loss of income was exacerbated by a widespread disease to many coffee trees, and a terrible famine in southern Rwanda due to “inclement weather” and “increasing problems of soil degradation and overpopulation”

(Longman 2010:120).⁵² Another contributing factor to the unraveling of the administration was the devaluation of currency and debt. The coffee crisis left Rwanda with a cash flow problem, as sales of coffee were “one of the few reliable sources of cash for small farmers” (ibid.:120). This was further problematized by the “imposition of an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-designed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1990” (Mamdani 2001:148). Mamdani discusses this development:

When the currency was devalued by 67 percent in 1990, the government was simultaneously able to reduce drastically the *real* price of coffee to the farmer and to disguise this reduction by limiting the decrease in the *nominal* price of coffee. In this context the shielding of the coffee growers put the government in conflict with the IM. The government thus reduced the nominal price from 125 to 100 Rwandan Franc (RWF) per kilo in 1990 and then unilaterally raised it to RWF 115 per kilo in 1991, even though the impact on the budget was adverse. The deficit increased from 12 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1990 to 18 percent in 1992 to 19 percent in 1993, though, the Stabilization Programme had set 5 percent as the target for a reduced budget deficit in 1993. (Ibid.:148)

This price fixing of coffee aggravated the Bretton Woods organizations (IMF and World Bank), and the World Bank subsequently withdrew promised payments because the Rwandan government had failed to live up to their end of the agreement. This subsequently sent Rwanda’s economy into a free fall. However, this is only one of the reasons the Rwandan government continued to run deficits. The other was increased military spending to fend off an invasion of Tutsi refugees from Uganda, known as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), in October of 1990 (I will discuss this further in the following section about the war and the genocide).

⁵² McCoy notes that one of the reasons for overpopulation was an influx of 60,000 Hutu refugees from Burundi, who were fleeing another massacre by Tutsi (McCoy 2012:91).

Because of the economic troubles, many factions within Rwanda were dissatisfied with Habyarimana's leadership, and formed opposition parties, organized along regional and ideological lines, "whose common purpose was to bring down the one-party government" (ibid.:154).⁵³ The parties were known as Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (MDR), which "stressed its affiliation to the central region and its opposition to the northwestern allegiance of the Habyarimana regime" (ibid.); the Parti Social-Démocrate (PSD), which was a ideologically center-left party and "selfconsciously tried to attract educated stratum that was both Hutu and Tutsi" (ibid.); the Parti Libéral (PL), which, like the PSD, "attracted Tutsi and those of 'mixed' parentage who openly scoffed at 'ethnic' politics," but had mostly Tutsi leadership (ibid.); and the Parti Démocratique-Chrétien (PDC), which was a Christian based group which struggled to connect with the other oppositional groups given their past connection with the Roman Catholic Church. While these groups posed a political "threat" to the Habyarimana administration, the real unraveling of the administration came from outside Rwanda in the form of the RPF.

Civil War and Genocide

In order to best explain what happened in the four years after the initial RPF invasion of 1990, is imperative to tell the story of the Tutsi refugees from Uganda who made up the army led by General Paul Kagame. When the Tutsi were ousted from power in 1959, over 100,000 Tutsi fled to Uganda, and were "the sixth largest ethnic group in Uganda according to the 1959 census.... In 1990, the Banyarwanda formed 'slightly over 1.3 million of the country's total population of about 18

⁵³ In 1991, Habyarimana allowed non-PARMEHUTU political parties to register.

million” (Mamdani 2001:161).⁵⁴ Even before these refugees came to Uganda, there were already a large group of Rwandans living there (most of whom comprised migrant workers looking for a better life), and thus it was an easier transition for Rwandans to live in Uganda. In fact, the Kiga and Ankole (a subgroup of the Hima) groups are considered relatives of Rwandans, share some of the same musical expressions (e.g., the *inanga* zither is a prominent instrument of both Rwandans and the Kiga people), and some Rwandans even took on Ugandan (Kiganda) names (Watson 1991:5).⁵⁵ However, Rwandan refugees in Uganda never gained the status of other Rwandans living in the country before 1959, and never had the same opportunities as naturalized citizens. As Catharine Watson notes in her 1991 book *Exile From Rwanda: Background to an Invasion*,

The refugees did not have material resources superior to the local populations. They lost everything they possessed several times. Their only real advantage appears to have been UNHCR scholarships for secondary schools. Some second-generation refugees believe they excelled academically because they knew they had no alternative. “We had no land, so we had to move with our heads,” said Christine Majagari, 25. “Our heads were our only capital.” Other commentators attribute the success to caste or social class: “No matter how poor he is, a Tutsi never regards himself as a lower class person,” said one refugee. “So because they had that background in Rwanda and then had it rough in Uganda, they worked very hard.” (Ibid.:8)

⁵⁴ Today there are still around a million Rwandans living in Uganda, and Samputu still performs there regularly. When I was in Uganda in 2012, two journalist friends invited Samputu and me to perform in a concert there because they knew it would be a lucrative venture for them, given the number of Rwandans who would likely support such a concert. While the concert never happened, there was an article written by Joseph Kiggundu in the Ugandan Monitor about the event (see <http://www.monitor.co.ug/artsculture/Entertainment/Rwandan-star-Samputu-to-launch-latest-album-in-Uganda/-/812796/1447096/-/d6ckx1z/-/index.html>). On a side note, the publishing of an event before the details are worked out seems to be a norm in Ugandan journalism.

⁵⁵ Kiganda refers to the cultural expressions of Baganda, the main ethnic group in Uganda. Their language is known as Luganda.

Many Rwandans attempted to assimilate by changing their names, enlisting in the Ugandan army, and even bribing others to get a Ugandan passport. However,

“Even entering the army could not erase that non belonging, that makeshift existence where they always know one day they’ll have to leave,” observed one sympathetic Ugandan national.

Many Banyarwanda refugees feel that anything they build in Uganda can be taken away from them at any time.... “I cannot develop the area because whenever there is a problem, I get shifted,” said a 30-year-old refugee in Kampala. (Ibid.:9)

Two of these refugees, best friends Fred Rwigema (born Rwigyema) and Paul Kagame, (both part of a newly formed [1979] Rwandan refugee group called the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity [RANU], whose purpose was to discuss a possible return to Rwanda) entered into Yoweri Museveni’s National Resistance Army (NRA), which would later overthrow President Milton Obote. Rwandans were eager to fight against Obote, as he had made life exponentially more difficult for them in Uganda after the ousting of Idi Amin in 1979. In fact, RANU members comprised about 20% of the NRA’s forces (McCoy 2012:5). Rwigema became Museveni’s second-in-command, and Kagame was his intelligence director during the Uganda Bush War (1981-1986), which ended with Museveni being installed as President, a position he still holds today. Because of the key role RANU members played in the victory “RANU received military training, arms, and logistical support,” and while “RANU was initially founded as an intellectual and ideological forum, it had now morphed into a military force. In 1987, members voted to rename the organization the

Rwandan Patriotic Front, its leadership dominated by veterans of the Ugandan Bush War” (ibid.:5).⁵⁶

While the Ugandans first welcomed the Rwandans in their fight to oust Obote, they subsequently rejected them. McCoy describes this development:

Rather than embrace the RPF, Ugandans began to resent this powerful foreign militaristic presence residing within their borders, consuming their resources, and competing with their businesses. This attitude extended beyond the RPF to the entire Rwandan exile community. Though they had dwelled in Uganda for three decades and had become enmeshed in the shaping of Ugandan politics, the exiles remained stuck in an unsustainable liminal state between full citizenship and foreign occupancy. They increasingly found themselves the target of hostilities by their Ugandan neighbors and were barred from enrolling in Ugandan schools or attaining employment. Under pressure to favor his own countrymen, Museveni reneged on his promise to grant citizenship to veterans of the Bush War and their families. He then stripped Rwigema of his title as Deputy Minister of Defense. (Ibid.:5-6)

Thus, given the lack of hope for ever finding stability in Uganda, coupled with the desire to return to their homeland, the RPF attempted to negotiate a peaceful return to the country with the Rwandan government—with the demand to have fair representation in the governing body. However, the Habyarimana regime scoffed at this notion, and thus the RPF felt they had no choice but to take power by force. The first attack, on October 1st, 1990, led by Rwigema (Kagame was still in the United States at Fort Leavenworth) was a failure. French, Belgian, and Zairian troops came to the aid of the Rwandan army known as the Forces Armées Rwandaise (FAR), and Rwigema was killed three days into battle. Distressed about the situation of the RPF,

⁵⁶ After the war, Rwigema was named Deputy Minister of Defense, and Kagame was sent by Museveni to Fort Leavenworth in Kansas to attend a course in military strategy.

Kagame abandoned his studies in the United States and came back to Uganda in order to help the RPF regroup and prepare for another invasion.

Kagame gathered his troupes together in the high altitude of the Virunga mountains near Ruhengeri (in the northwest of the country) to prepare for another attack. Kagame rebuilt the RPF to around 15,000 troops and took control of “a strip of territory along the Uganda border stretching some 32 kilometers into Rwanda” (Mamdani 2001:186). This territorial gain was succeeded by several military victories throughout Rwanda, and could have likely taken the capital (Kigali) in 1993. However, Kagame recalled his troops, partly because they would have likely met French resistance, but also knowing that they even if they won a military battle, they would not win the war because they didn’t have the support of the masses. Mamdani summarizes this:

It is often said that political movements are shaped more by adversity—such as Mao’s Long March—from which they draw their vital lessons, than by the dulling effect of success. The political education of the RPF, however, took place in the context of military victories, not losses. From the end of 1991, the RPF entered a period in which every military victory brought home the same bitter lesson about the political realities of Rwanda. The RPF consistently failed to translate military victory into political gains within the population. The reason was simple. Every time the RPF captured a new area and established military control, the population fled. “Contrary to the expectations of the RPF,” wrote Gérard Prunier in an account otherwise highly sympathetic to the RPF, “local Hutu peasants showed no enthusiasm for being ‘liberated’ by them—they had run away from the area of guerrilla operations.” With every RPF advance, the numbers of the displaced multiplied. . . . At the peak of the war, when the rebels entered Gitarama in June 1994, the town emptied, as if on cue. (Ibid.:186-87)

While the Hutu masses did not celebrate the RPF's return to Rwanda, Samputu, along with many other Tutsi in Rwandan and the diaspora were elated. Samputu celebrated by writing his song "Twararutashye" ("We Returned Home"): "Twararutashye"

Verse One

- (1) *Ni nde uzaza nkaya kumwereka nkajya kumwereka urwagasabo?*
Who is ready to come and I show him our country?
- (2) *Akirebera iyo misozi maze akirebera iyo mirambi we.*
Then he will admire the mountains, he will admire the valleys.
- (3) *Maze akambwira n'abandi ko twararutashye.*
Then he will proclaim to others that we have returned to home.

Chorus

- (4) *Mama shenge iyee.*
Oh how beautiful, yeah.
- (5) *Shenge mama iyee.*
Oh how beautiful, yeah.
- (6) *Twararutashye iyee. (2x)*
We returned home, yeah. (2x)

Verse Two

- (7) *Ufata iya Gatuna ugana Rubaya wagera Rubaya.*
Take the road of Gatuna towards Rubaya until you arrive at Rubaya.
- (8) *Bakawakira neza ejo ukahafata ugana ahitwa Bungwe*
You will be well received tomorrow until you travel again toward Bungwe.
- (9) *Wagera Bungwe bakakuririmbira we maze bakagutaramira.*
When you arrive at Bungwe they will sing for you and they will entertain you.

Repeat Chorus

Verse Three

- (10) *Ejo kare kare ukazinduka cyane ugafata inzira igana Rushaki.*
Tomorrow again, when you wake up early in the morning you will take a road toward Rushaki.
- (11) *Ejo bundi buriya ukajya i Mukarange wagera Mukarange.*

And the next day after you will go on the road toward Mukarange to Mukarange.

- (12) *Uzahabwirwa n'uko uzajya kumva ukumva zirivuze ehe.*
When you arrive there you will recognize the area by the lions' voices/praise.

Repeat Chorus. (Samputu 2004c)⁵⁷

This song was a huge hit amongst the Tutsi, who were so desperate to be liberated from the oppression of the Hutu-led government. It is now a “classic” in Rwanda.⁵⁸ Unfortunately for the RPF this celebration was short lived. Their initial goal was simply to put pressure on the government in order to let them be part of the country, but due to their lack of support of the masses, the plan backfired.

Coinciding with the birth of the RPF invasion was the rise of Hutu Power, or as Mamdani notes “really, Hutu Powa..., which would be an English-language slogan in a francophone milieu—as formal organized tendency signified a sea change” (Mamdani 2001:189). Hutu Power was based on the premise that Tutsi, in contrast to Habyarimana’s declaration of Tutsi as an ethnicity, were an alien race in Rwanda (an homage to the ideology of the Kayibanda administration), and that the Hutu should fear the return of the Tutsi dynasty if the RPF were to succeed. In other words, the Tutsi minority had no right of return, and “the Hutu were not just the majority, *they were the nation*” (ibid.:190; emphasis in original). The mouthpiece for the organization was mainly the *Radio et Télévision Libres des Mille Collines* (One Thousand Hills Radio and Television) or RTLM and the *Kangura* newspaper, which

⁵⁷ The references to the towns Gatuna, Rubaya, Bungwe, Rushaki, and Mukarange allude to the path of the RPF’s military victories (from the far northern Ugandan border moving south towards Kigali). In some performances, Samputu will call out other cities (e.g., Kigali, Butare, etc.).

⁵⁸ When I visited Rwanda in 2012 for Samputu’s 50th birthday celebration, people were visibly moved when he sang this song. According to many friends I’ve spoken with throughout the years, this song evokes great nostalgic feelings among those whom were oppressed during the Hutu-led governments from the 1960s-1990s.

broadcast propaganda regarding the “Hutu Ten Commandments”: “The commandments forbade Hutu from entering into a wide range of relations with Tutsi, whether in sex, business, or state affairs. ‘The Hutu should stop having mercy on the Tutsi,’ went the eighth commandment” (ibid.:190). These media outlets were funded by a close circle of friends of Habyarimana’s wife Agathe called *akazu* (“little house”), who had significant political, social, and monetary capital. Agathe, who fled to France at the beginning of the genocide, would later be arrested in 2010 by the President Nicholas Sarkozy due to her (and her group’s) promotion of the genocide.⁵⁹

The rising of Hutu Power also sparked mass killings of Tutsi who they believed supported the RPF, but also in retaliation for perceived massacres of Hutu during the RPF’s military victories. There is no credible evidence that suggests that the RPF killed Hutu peasants en masse when they invaded Rwanda (though they did certainly displace them!), but the propaganda was stronger than the facts. Thus, there were four massacres that occurred. Mamdani describes this development:

The *first* took place in the weeks immediately following the October 1990 invasion, when an estimated three hundred Tutsi were massacred in cold blood in Kibilira. The *second* massacre started in Bugogwe and was a direct response to the January 1991 RPF raid on the town of Ruhengeri. This time at least a thousand Bugogwe cattle herders and their families were slaughtered. The *third* massacre at Bugesera in March 1992 was of a different type. It was less a retaliation than an offensive.... But this time the killings had been prepared for in advance: the civilian Hutu population was urged and organized to defend itself against an expected massacre by the RPF and its civilian collaborators. The international commission of inquiry that visited

⁵⁹ Agathe was arrested shortly after Sarkozy’s visit to Rwanda in an attempt to repair relations between the two countries. The rift arose when a French judge indicted Paul Kagame in 2006 for the killing of then President Habyarimana and French diplomats when their plane was shot down in 1994. The French government in 1994 airlifted Agathe and her *akazu* out of Rwanda, granted them asylum in France, and even gave them funds to live there. President Kagame was exonerated of any crimes in 2012. See <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/01/10/us-rwanda-genocide-report-idUSTRE80924720120110>.

Rwanda in January 1993 found evidence that these deaths were carried out by death squads directed by the security services in the office of the president. That same month, on 9 January, a key protocol relating to powersharing was signed in Arusha. The visit of the international commission notwithstanding, the *fourth* massacre followed: some three hundred Tutsi were killed in Gisenyi Prefecture the very next month. It was believed to be a response by Hutu Power to those who championed the call to share power. In all, an estimated 3,000 Tutsi were killed in massacres between 1990 and 1993.⁶⁰ (Ibid.:192; emphasis in original)

Of the four massacres, two foreshadow events of the genocide. First was the planning of the third massacre at Bugesera, carried out by Hutu civilians. The government instructed local officials to kill Tutsi as part of *umuganda*, the forced labor practice (similar to *uburetwa*) implemented by Habyarimana to obtain cheap labor for public projects. Thus, killing of Tutsi became “customary” in the same way the Belgians made forced labor “customary.” In other words, they normalized the killing of Tutsi as part of national custom. Second, the fourth massacre was in response to the signing of the power-sharing peace treaty signed in Arusha, Tanzania, which was also intended to be a peace agreement. As I will detail in the following paragraphs, this peace treaty actually fueled the fire that would spread into genocide in 1994.

Before the Arusha talks began in 1992, Habyarimana created a coalition government (comprising the governing party MRND and the MDR, PSD, and PL), and named a prime minister from each party. However, instead of uniting the country, all it seemed to do was create tension. It was heavily criticized by Hutu extremists, who believed that a country should not be divided in a time of war (ibid.:209). Thus, in response, the Hutu extremists left the MRND and created their own political party

⁶⁰ The Bugogwe are a subgroup of Tutsi from the northern part of Rwanda, and many also live in the D.R. Congo and consider themselves Congolese.

called the Coalition for the Defense of the Republic (CDR).⁶¹ The CDR believed in the elimination of Tutsi and preached Hutu power, and it was senior member Colonel Théoneste Bagosora “who would later emerge as the key coordinator of the genocide” (ibid.:210).

In August of 1992, the coalition government and the RPF began negotiations to end the war and develop a power-sharing agreement in Arusha, Tanzania. The agreement was signed in 1993, and gave the RPF representation in government (including an appointment of the Ministry of the Interior) and a blueprint for the merging of the two armies (FAR and RPF). It also excluded the CDR from having any seats in Parliament, and gave all refugees a right to return to the country (ibid.:210). The attempt to marginalize the CDR was a victory on paper for the RPF, but given their strong representation in the existing government, the CDR would not go quietly into the night. In fact, the Arusha talks and ultimate agreement bolstered the CDRs extremist beliefs, and their attacks against the RPF (and Tutsi in general) increased.⁶²

These increased attacks came in two main ways. First, was via mass media in the *Kangura* newspaper and the RTLM. As Mamdani notes:

The newspaper *Kangura*, set up by Hassan Ngeze in 1990, had already broadcast genocide as a political solution in its January 1994 issue. Three months before the mass killings began, *Kangura* reported: “We will begin by getting rid of the enemies inside the country. The Tutsi ‘cockroaches’ should know what will happen, they will disappear. (Mamdani 2001:212)

⁶¹ The French name of the CDR is Coalition pour le Défense de la République.

⁶² This time period, between the signing of the Arusha agreement and the genocide, is known in Rwanda as *Igihirahiro* or “time of hesitation/“uncertainty” (McCoy 2012:94).

The association of Tutsi with cockroaches (*inyenzi*) began just after the end of the monarchy, when many exiled Tutsi unsuccessfully attempted to re-take the country by force. They referred to them as cockroaches, as they were an annoying force that wouldn't go away.

In addition to anti-Tutsi rhetoric, RTLM used popular music to promote the dehumanizing of the Tutsi as well. One of these musicians, Simon Bikindi, is now in prison in Tanzania for his alleged involvement in the genocide. Before I explain how his music was used, I must be clear that Bikindi was never indicted due to his songs, but “for pro-genocide statements he allegedly delivered using a P.A. system while leading a vehicular convoy near his home region of Gisenyi” (McCoy 2012:11)—statements Bikindi still maintains he did not make. Regardless of Bikindi's intentions, his music was significantly broadcast by the RTLM in order to incite anti-Tutsi rhetoric. In his dissertation, Jason McCoy recognizes three of the most prominent songs (all recorded in 1993)—“Intabaza” (The Alert), “Twasazareye” (We Bid Farewell), and, the most famous of the three, “Akabyutso” (The Awakening), which is also known as “Naanga Abahutu” (I Despise Hutu)—and details the results of Bikindi's trial. The lyrics of “Intabaza” focus on the oppressive elements of the Nyiginya dynasty (i.e., *ubuhake* and *uburetwa*), and it is performed in a modernized version (bass, guitar, drum kit) of *ingoma* drumming (traditional drums related to the royal *kalinga* drum), while “Twasazareye” demonizes Ruganzu Ndori as a ruthless dictator and compares his military exploits to the returning of the RPF, and is performed in an additive 2+3 meter (or 5/8—See Figure 2-2—as Samputu categorizes it). Regarding “Akabyutso,” McCoy summarizes its sonic and lyrical content:

The song unfolds as a tirade against “bad Hutu” (*ibihutu*), especially those of the younger generation. The song is commonly known as “Nanga Abahutu”—“I despise Hutu”—as this phrase recurs often. Bikindi adopts the moniker Mutaba, meaning “savior,” and takes on the voice of a fatherly figure complaining to an elderly man, dismayed by the attitudes and behavior of these misguided Hutu. This unnamed elder periodically interjects in order to underscore the various points Bikindi makes throughout his diatribe.... In parallel with the two characters, the accompaniment is comprised of a duet performed by Bikindi on *inanga* and by the other man on *ikembe*, the Kinyarwanda name for a metal-keyed lamellophone (the same instrument is called “ikembe” elsewhere in Central and East Africa). The dialogue between Bikindi and the elderly man is segmented by a refrain performed by Bikindi five times throughout the song.

Bikindi sings that he despises those Hutu who are arrogant, disrespectful, greedy, selfish, corrupt, ignorant, violent, and who in behaving so have somehow renounced their identity as Hutu. (Ibid.:187)⁶³



Figure 2-2. Accents for Rwandan 5/8 rhythm.

According to the witnesses from the trial (ibid.:235-38) and other Rwandans I have spoken to regarding the song, most interpreted Bikindi’s lyrics as depicting him as despising Hutu for refusing to kill Tutsi or disagreeing with other Hutu who want to eliminate the Tutsi (it should be noted that Hutu extremists also killed any Hutu accused of aiding or abetting any Tutsi during the genocide). Whether or not he intended to incite Hutu to fulfill their *umuganda* duties by killing Tutsi, Bikindi’s ability to weave subversive historical narratives with traditional music certainly struck a chord at the heart of the Hutu Power movement, and his songs became anthems for genocide.

⁶³ The *inanga* is a six-eight stringed trough zither used to perform traditional music in Rwanda. I will further detail this instrument in subsequent chapters, as Samputu uses it on several of his records.

In addition to the use of mass media to spew anti-Tutsi rhetoric, the MRND and the CDR (both before and during the Arusha talks) recruited impoverished youth to increase their numbers under the premise that they needed to protect their nation from the RPF invaders. These youth brigades were called *interahamwe* (“those who work as one”) and *impuzamugambi* (“those who have the same goal”) for the MRND and the CDR, respectively, and were essentially a “cheaply organized extension of the FAR,” and many of the recruits “were refugees who had either fled from the massacres of Hutu in Burundi or from the RPF invasions in the north” (ibid.: 93). It was these youth brigades that were responsible for many of the mass killings before and after the Arusha talks, which served simply as a prelude for their main course: the 1994 genocide.

The event that “sparked” the genocide was when President Habyarimana’s plane, which was also carrying Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira and ten other Rwandan and Burundian government officials, was shot down by a surface-to-air missile on April 6th, 1994, at around 8:30 p.m. Kigali time. To this day, no one knows who shot down the plane. There are several theories, the most prevalent being that the Hutu extremists did it to justify the extermination of Tutsi, but speculating on who is responsible, at least for the purposes of this dissertation, is analogous to attempting to reconcile the many conspiracy theories regarding all those who are potentially responsible for JFK’s assassination.⁶⁴ Fueling the conspiracy theories is the fact that the black box still has not been recovered. It was supposed to be shipped to the U.N. for investigation, but the box that was “discovered” ten years later in 2004

⁶⁴ For a nearly full listing of theories, see Chapter Seven of Prunier’s *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (1995), entitled “The Enigma of President Habyarimana’s Death.”

(and had apparently had been sitting in a filing cabinet) was not related to President Habyarimana's plane. Regardless of *who* shot down the plane, it certainly was the tipping point in an already tenuous situation in Rwanda.

Just before this incident, President Habyarimana was being pressured by the U.N. to implement the Arusha agreement (the signed agreement was stillborn because Habyarimana didn't have the political capital to quell the CDR or other conservative members of his cabinet) or they would pull out their troops. Prunier describes this development:

The whole thing looked like a bad comedy of errors, but the general feeling in the country was that President Habyarimana was down to his last few shots. He could conceivably pull off one or two more tricks, and his often greedy and quarrelsome adversaries may provide him with a few more opportunities for delaying, but the end was in sight. After yet another postponement on 28 March foreign pressure became intense. UN special envoy Booh-Booh, the Papal nuncio, all the ambassadors who had attended the signing of the Arusha agreement and the Tanzanian facilitator met to make a solemn appeal to the parties. Even Russia, which had never been much involved in the situation, was called on to assist in the attempt at diplomatic pressure, and it issued a statement on 29 March "regretting the failure of the transitional institutions to assume office" and promising "to support all efforts toward that end." On 2 April Booh-Booh warned that the UNAMIR budget would come up for examination soon in New York and that "severe conditions" might be attached to any renewal of the Mission's mandate, while on 3 April, in the name of the European Union, the German Gatabazi and Bucyana, solely asked the President to implement the provisions of the Arusha agreement, and expressed his concern at the prolonged absence of government. More important, he hinted at a donors' boycott if the officially-sanctioned violence went any further.... (Prunier 2005:208-09)⁶⁵

Knowing that the U.N. and donors had lost faith in Habyarimana (and that he was under-fire from other African leaders to implement the Arusha agreement), the

⁶⁵ Booh-Booh (Jacques-Roger) was the head of the UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda).

extremist groups raised the intensity of their rhetoric “reminding listeners that soon ‘one would have to reach for the top part of the house’ [and proclaim] that the Tutsi were evil and that ‘we have learnt about it at school’” (ibid.:210-11). In other words, the extremists knew that they were going to have to take matters into their own hands, as Habyarimana was at the mercy of foreign powers (meaning he wasn’t going to take care of the Tutsi “problem”), and the shooting down of the plane was merely the “spark” the *génocidaires* needed to unleash their plan for the extermination of the Tutsi.

The genocide lasted over 100 days and claimed the lives of between 800,000 and 1 million Tutsi, moderate Hutu, and Twa.⁶⁶ However, before the mass killings could begin, the extremists began to eliminate any moderate Hutu in power who supported any platform involving co-existing with the Tutsi. One of the most prominent figures to be killed was Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, who was murdered right in front of Belgian UN peacekeeping troops. Other key figures were members of the PSD, as they were seen as Tutsi sympathizers.

Hutu participated in the killings for a variety of reasons. Most (comprising mostly the youth organizations *interahamwe* and *impuzamugambi*) were following orders of their commander Colonel Théoneste Bagosora, a member of Madame Habyarimana’s *akazu*, who is considered one of the masterminds behind the genocide. Others believed they were defending themselves against the RPF based on rhetoric that the Tutsi were going to return to oppress the Hutu once more. Others, as McCoy mentions, “killed because they were coerced into doing so, threatened with

⁶⁶ There are several estimates of the total number of lives lost, but those debates are well beyond the scope of this dissertation.

punishment or death if they refused to participate. Some killed in order to loot property or claim larger homes and more land, others because they did not want to appear weak before their peers. Some killed because their minds were so addled with drugs that they were easily seduced into killing, and some killed because they had already killed and, in a strange way, killing again was a way to bury their guilt” (McCoy 2012:95). Regardless of the reasons, the killings were carried out in a fashion heavily rooted in Rwandan culture.

The extremists killed in a variety of ways, with most of the killings carried out by slashing people with *pangas* (machetes) or beating them clubs with nails fastened to the top, and the victims were usually maimed in a variety of ways. Some male victims were found castrated in the same fashion as RUGANZU Ndori for decoration of his *Kalinga* drum, while some women had breasts cut off or were raped by HIV-infected men. Others gruesome acts included full body impaling, slicing the Achilles tendon (in both humans and cows), cutting children from the mother’s womb, and forced cannibalism and incest.⁶⁷ According to Christopher Taylor, all of these are ways of obstructing mobility—not just physical, but taking away the ability to procreate and survive as a “race.” The flow of fluids in Rwanda is an integral part of traditional medicine in Rwanda, and is related to the king’s role as conduit for life flow (both physical and spiritual), or, in Taylor’s words, “a hollow conduit through which celestial beneficence passed” (Taylor 1999:121). Basing his assumptions on

⁶⁷ Ownership of cows was a type of currency in Nyiginya (and pre-Nyiginya) times, and thus cows and milk are held in high regard in Rwanda. If someone offers you a glass of milk in his or her home, it is a sign of respect.

his analysis of old ritual texts translated by D’Hertfelt and Coupez, Taylor describes this connection:

Careful reading of the ritual texts indicates recurrent preoccupation with maintaining orderly fluid flows and implicitly that of *imaana*. The term, *imaana*, although often translated as “God,” only occasionally referred to a supreme being. More frequently, *imaana* was a generalized creative or transformative force or as d’Hertfelt and Coupez have translated the term, a “diffuse fecundating fluid” of celestial origin. Gaining access to the powers of *imaana* and keeping the fluids of production, consumption, and fertility in movement were arguably the most important ritual functions of the Rwandan king (*mwami*). The *mwami* was the ultimate human guarantor of the fertility of bees (for honey), cattle, women, and land. In times of drought, famine, epidemic, or epizootic, he could be deposed or called upon to offer himself (or a close relative) as a sacrificial victim (*umutabazi*), so that the shedding of his blood would conjure away collective peril. The king mediated between the sky and the earth. He was the most important rainmaker for the kingdom. He received the celestial gift of fertility and passed it downward to his subjects. In some instances this beneficence was conceptualized as milk, as is expressed in this dynastic poem:

The King is not a man,
O men that he has enriched with his cattle...
He is a man before his designation to the throne...
Ah yes! That is certain:
But the one who becomes King ceases to be a man!
The King, it is he Imaana
And he dominates over humans...
I believe that he is the Imaana who hears our pleas!
The other Imaana, it’s the King who knows him,
As for us, we see only this Defender!...
Here is the sovereign who drinks the milk milked by Imaana,
And we drink that which he in turn milks for us! (Ibid.:120-21)

Thus, the killers’ practices were not just means of sadistically torturing victims, but were likely embedded in ancient ritualistic behavior (either conscious or sub-conscious) in order to erase Tutsi from humanity.

Another dimension to the genocide, which is analogous to the intrusion into Rwandan culture during colonial period by Western missionaries and governments,

was the complicity of churches. Some church members (leadership and laity), both Hutu and Tutsi, laid down their lives to protect those they were hiding (Longman 2010:195), but many others participated in the genocide by enticing people to come to church sanctuaries to find safety. Longman states

...leaders of the genocide regarded churches as an excellent resource that could be exploited to support the killing. In many communities, community leaders capitalized on the concept of sanctuary, and the fact that Tutsi had been granted refuge in churches from violence in the 1960s and in 1973, to entice Tutsi to gather in the churches to facilitate their slaughter. As Philip Gourevitch quotes one Rwandan, "This was a tradition in Rwanda. 'When there were problems, people always went to the church at their place.'" In some cases, clergy and other church employees and lay leaders actively participated in the process of gathering Tutsi at the churches with explicit knowledge that Tutsi would not be offered protection. As one woman in Kaduha, Gikongoro, told me, her priest forcibly took her from her home and attempted to turn her over to a mob preparing to attack the nearby church. Clergy, evangelists, and catechists often had excellent knowledge of their local communities, and in many areas they helped identify who was Tutsi (as physical appearance was not a reliable judge) and where Tutsi lived. (Ibid.:193-94)

As the genocide unfolded, the UN troops were reduced to bystanders, as the UN ordered them not to intervene even though it was clear that this was an extermination attempt (Moody 2013). The world leaders sat silent as the United States was likely concerned that this could turn into another Mogadishu, Somalia, incident where three Blackhawk helicopters were shot down and eighteen died in an attempt to quell violence in 1993. President Clinton later would apologize for his lack of intervention, and considered it one of the biggest regrets of his presidency (King 2004).

Ultimately, the genocide ended when the RPF (whose attacks had been dormant during the Arusha talks), with the help of foreign troops, advanced

throughout the country and captured, killed, and/or chased the *génocidaires* out of the country (mostly to Tanzania and eastern D.R. Congo). Their assault began shortly after the genocide commenced in April and “ended” on July 4th.⁶⁸ Subsequently, Rwanda implemented a new coalition government based on the guidelines negotiated in the Arusha accords. Prunier states,

Although its concept was partly derived from the cabinet which had been planned at Arusha (the various opposition political parties kept their Arusha portfolio allocation), there were two big changes. First, the RPF had decided to give itself all of the ministries that should have gone to the MRND(D); and secondly, a new post of Vice-President had been created and given to General Paul Kagame in order to place him in a position of general oversight and control of the government without making him President.

The President was Pasteur Bizimungu, the oldest and most important of the “RPF Hutu.” In ethnic terms, the cabinet had a majority of Hutu (sixteen out of twenty-two ministerial posts, including the President and the Prime Minister). But this was important in terms more of political intentions than of real power.... So whether it connived at the situation or not, the RPF remained for the time being the only source of real power in the country because it had vehicles, fuel, weapons and portable telephones. (Prunier 1995:300)⁶⁹

While Paul Kagame, the victorious RPF general, had the ability to hold absolute power, his support of Bizimungu was likely a political one, as he “knew instinctively... that after decades of relentless propaganda, Rwandan Hutu were not ready to accept a Tutsi, an *inyenzi*, as their leader” (Kinzer 2008:186). However, Bizimungu eventually resigned from his post in 2000 after disagreements with the current government, and was replaced by Kagame, who has been the President ever since.

⁶⁸ Killings still happened after this date, but July 4th is the date the current government observes as the end of the genocide.

⁶⁹ Bizimungu, a Hutu, had close ties to the Habyarimana government, but left and joined the RPF in 1990, and is thus known as an RPF Hutu.

The Post-Genocide/Reconstruction Era

In the immediate years following the genocide, the Rwandan army spent much of their time and resources rounding up *génocidaires* and fighting off insurgents (usually ex-FAR and *interahamwe* attempting to re-take the country) living in Congo (then Zaire). Additionally, there was the burden of how to effectively try (many of Rwanda's judges and lawyers were either killed in the genocide or fled to other countries) and house these prisoners, so Rwanda eventually set up local tribunals called *gacaca*.⁷⁰ These local courts (literally translated, "justice on the grass") are places where people who are accused of committing acts of genocide are given the opportunity to confess and, potentially, be forgiven and given a commuted (time-served) or relaxed sentence.⁷¹ This process is similar to the pre-colonial *gacaca*, which was used to settle civil disputes, but differs in key areas. Allison Corey and Sandra F. Joireman describe this in their 2004 article "Retributive Justice: The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda" in *African Affairs*:

In the pre-colonial era, *gacaca* was a popular indigenous forum for resolving local disputes over family matters, property rights and other local concerns. Village elders and community members would voluntarily gather together on a patch of grass to discuss civil disputes. Elders would present a resolution to the issue in an effort to salvage social peace and cohesion in the village. The current process differs from the traditional process in three key aspects: in the traditional process participation was voluntary; it was primarily used to deal with conflicts within a given community; and the judges or elders were given leeway to decide any punishment they wished within certain

⁷⁰ Rwanda, with the help of the UN, had already set-up the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 1994 to round up those whom had fled to other countries. See <http://www.unictf.org/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx>.

According to Corey and Joireman, "(E)stimates suggest that prior to January 2003 between 100,000 and 125,000 Rwandans awaited trial in overcrowded prison" (Corey and Joireman 2004:82).

⁷¹ However, if they do not confess, they could be given a life sentence.

boundaries. The highly regulated, national and involuntary *gacaca* process currently under way is substantially different from its traditional predecessor. (Corey and Joireman 2004:81-82)

Samputu was a part of the *gacaca* process when he met face to face with his father's killer Vincent Ntakirutimana, a family friend and neighbor. Samputu publicly forgave Ntakirutimana in front of the *gacaca* courts in 2007, and after Ntakirutimana admitted his crime, he was set free. Not all *gacaca* trials end up with the killers being set free, but it does happen if the family or community members are willing to forgive their crimes.

The emphasis on forgiveness stems from both grassroots movements (usually religiously oriented philanthropic groups) and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), which was founded in 1999 to help facilitate reconciliation for Hutu and Tutsi. The goals of the commission (as detailed in NURC 2012) can be summarized as follows:

1. To prepare and coordinate the national programs aimed at promoting national unity and reconciliation.
2. To establish and promote mechanisms for restoring and strengthening the Unity and Reconciliation of Rwandans.
3. To educate, sensitize and mobilize the population in areas of national unity and reconciliation.
4. To carry out research, organize debates, disseminate ideas and make publications on the promotion of peace, and the unity and reconciliation of Rwandans.
5. To propose measures and actions that can contribute to the eradication of divisionism among Rwandans and reinforce unity and reconciliation.
6. To denounce and fight actions, publications, and utterances that promote any kind of division and discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia.
7. To make an annual report and other reports that may be deemed necessary, on the level of attainment of national unity and reconciliation.

8. To monitor how public institutions, leaders and the population in general comply with the National Unity and reconciliation policy and principle. (NURC 2012)⁷²

This “top-down” approach has a twofold purpose. First, to maintain order in a society where hatred for one another has been ingrained for over seventy years, and second, to help facilitate the government’s creation of a new national identity.

During Kagame’s two terms as President (he was re-elected in 2010 with 93% of the vote), he has attempted (with much success) to redefine Rwanda’s identity as based not on ethnicity (as European nationalists would often define the nation, by looking to its “pure” or “unadulterated” folk) but rather on its erasure. All of this can be summarized in Kagame’s statements to Christiane Amanpour in 2008:

“We were in danger of having another genocide,” he said. . . . “People were so badly aggrieved they could easily have turned on those they thought were responsible for this and actually killed them in another wave of killings. But that did not happen,” he said. “We said building a nation is the most important thing.” Now no one talks about Hutus or Tutsis, he explained. “There is Rwanda, there are Rwandans, and the common interest we have for a better future for this country is more important than any other interest.” (Amanpour 2008)

Given his knowledge of German, Belgian, and French meddling in “ethnic” affairs in Rwanda, one might think Kagame would want to subvert the European narrative by creating a nation of difference (as in South Africa’s “Rainbow Nation”). However, as Thomas Turino points out in his *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans, and Popular Music in Zimbabwe* (2000), building upon the European construct of nationalism as a means of resistance is a common theme among post-colonial African nations. He states,

The nationalist leadership was not simply imitating a foreign political model; they were acting from the basis of their own cultural position, which included ideas about the genuine legitimacy of national

⁷² <http://www.nurc.gov.rw/index.php?id=83>.

sovereignty and their place in the “modern” world. They could not discard nationalist ideas (the “modern,” “present” system) without discarding themselves.... As a key symbol in this ideology, the term modern is used unreflexively to assert an all-pervasive “present,” whereas the “traditional” is relegated to an inferior historical past. In truth, to be a player in the contemporary world scene nation-state status is practically requisite for recognition: “legitimate” political units join the United Nations, not “United Tribes,” “United Bands,” “United Neighborhoods,” or “United Villages.” International relations, trade agreements, loans, and artistic exchanges take place, by definition; among nations. Hence, in terms of both internalized cosmopolitan ideas and objective conditions, the drive toward nation-state status was the logical path for the middle-class African leadership in Zimbabwe. (Turino 2000:163)

Thus, the desire to become part of the broader global congress of nations became a norm. The devastating effects of the genocide, which was based on an obfuscated European construction of ethnicity, also played a significant role in this new nationalist narrative. This narrative also allowed Kagame to maintain a security force to ensure Rwanda’s safety from dissident threats, both ideological and physical.⁷³ The ideological threats are from in and out of the country and take shape through anti-RPF smearing and promoting revenge for the RPFs takeover of the country from the Hutu

⁷³ Rwanda is easily the most secure country I’ve ever visited in the world, and is likely the most secure in Africa. Military checkpoints abound, and motorcycle taxis (*piki pikis*) even have identification numbers on the back of the drivers’ helmets and vests in case someone drives recklessly or attempts to kidnap someone. In contrast to Uganda or Kenya, I felt comfortable walking and talking on a cell phone at midnight in Kigali. To give some perspective, when I visited Kampala in 2012, I was warned not to use my cell phone while riding as a passenger in a car near the window, as someone might come by on a motorcycle and grab it from my hand. I was also discouraged from walking in certain parts of Kampala—main roads near businesses, not just back alleys—by myself in broad daylight, even though there was a heavy amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

majority. The physical threats are usually from former Hutu *génocidaires* from Congo, and Kagame has even sent troops into Congo to hunt them down.⁷⁴

While Kagame's vision for Rwanda is for unity and reconciliation (one that is shared by Samputu and reflected in much of his musical content), its implementation by the RPF-led government has been a point of contention among scholars. At this point, I wish to reiterate that I have no intention of personally critiquing the Rwandan government's policies (in other words, I'm not taking sides) as it is beyond the scope of this dissertation, however, as a scholar I must present as many points of view as possible. And as Samputu is very much involved in the support of the Rwandan government's reconciliation movement, it is imperative that I flesh out the details of their implementation of Kagame's vision for the country.

One way the government has attempted to maintain peace in the country (beyond military and intelligence) has been to forbid any public divisive speech regarding Hutu and Tutsi. Any speech that pits Hutu against Tutsi is considered a promotion of "divisionism" and "genocide ideology." Most of the violators of these laws (created officially in 2008) are by those who publicly promote hatred towards one group or the other. However, other violations are less blatant. An example of this occurred when 2010 Presidential candidate Victoire Ingabire made two controversial statements at the Genocide Memorial in Kigali. The first:

⁷⁴ The intrusion into Congo has been a source of great controversy, as Rwanda was involved in the First and Second Congo wars (the details of which are beyond the scope of this dissertation), and has been accused of attempting to annex parts of Eastern Congo as the government believes it is truly Rwandan territory (not to mention full of rich minerals). For further information see Filip Reyntjens's and Jason Stearns and Federico Borello's chapters in Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf's *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence* (2011).

If we look at this memorial, it only refers to the people who died during the genocide against the Tutsis. There is another untold story with regard to the crimes against humanity committed against the Hutus. The Hutus who lost their loved ones are also suffering; they think about the loved ones who perished and are wondering, When will our dead ones also be remembered? (Ingabire in McGreal 2013)

This statement could be viewed in two ways: in one way she could be referring to all of the moderate Hutu who were killed protecting Tutsi, but to many this statement espouses the “Double Genocide” theory, which is the belief that the RPF killing of Hutu civilians when taking over the country during the genocide, as well as revenge killings carried out after the creation of the new government, constituted an act of genocide.⁷⁵ Her second statement seems more threatening: “Do not worry; I have come to put an end to your miseries. Your problems will end soon” (*New Times* 2010). These statements, along with her association with the political party FDU-Inkingi (which, according to a 2010 *New Times* article, is known for its association with “Double-Genocide” theory) landed her a fifteen-year jail sentence (ibid.:2010).

Many scholars and journalists have critiqued these laws as being a way of limiting opposing points of view in order for the RPF to maintain power.⁷⁶ However, the Rwandan government maintains that these laws are essential for maintaining peace in the country. Kagame’s response is usually to criticize Western critics, for whom he has much contempt:

⁷⁵ According to Steven Kinzer, the RPF leadership acknowledges some of these claims, while “it was never RPF policy... there was a certain tolerance” for revenge killings. Kagame also acknowledged this, but noted that “all offending soldiers had been arrested, tried, and punished” (Kinzer 2008:190).

⁷⁶ See Lars Waldorf’s “Instrumentalizing Genocide: The RPFs Campaign Against ‘Genocide Ideology’” in Straus’s aforementioned *Remaking Rwanda...* (2011), as well as Christine Amanpour’s interview with President Paul Kagame <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1003/15/ampr.01.html> to name a few.

The outside, you search from the point that the government is wrong.... When you start from there... the government is a culprit, even when what the government is doing actually is different that what they are being accused of. Some of the issues you are debating outside there are not the issues as you debate them in Rwanda.

There have been... surveys carried out in this country... about transparency, about democratic governance... by different international groups.... They came here, they went into the population... interviewing people, 1000s of them, from different parts.... Now, they come up with interesting findings.

In one report, it is written, although undemocratic,... when we asked Rwandans, eighty-four percent talk about how they are free in expressing themselves, in electoral processes....

You see the details of the findings actually point to this place being democratically free. But if the finding is this, why would you start by prejudicing the reader by saying “although undemocratic?” Now undemocratic based on what? How do you want me to address that? Now, you either believe what you see, or you have something else you want to believe on your own, I don't know where you get it from, and I cannot be responsible for that. How do I convince you? This is where the problem is. (Kagame’s speech in Davis and Wilson 2011)

Ultimately, Kagame believes that Western outsiders don’t have a right to criticize Rwandans, as they don’t understand the dynamics of the culture, and they are partially at fault for creating the mess he is charged with cleaning up.

When I asked Samputu about his views of the RPF, he states,

Many people criticize our leaders, and sometimes we forget that they are humans like us. They also make mistakes like any human being. But it's not easy to reconstruct a country like Rwanda that has been affected by genocide. There is no university that can teach how to rule a country that has been affected by such a terrible genocide. Rwandans must find creative and constructive ways to rebuild ourselves.

I can say that RPF has tried their best. Even for me personally, I can testify. I went to Rwanda and forgave the man who killed my parents, and it’s because the country gave me the space to do that. If they had not developed this space, I would have had many problems. It was

because of RPFs willingness that I was able to do what I did. It was God's will, and they respected my vision and it worked.
and further about leaders:

The bible says to respect our leaders whether they are right or not. The bible tells me in 1 Peter 2:18 to “be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good.” For me, I do what God tells me. I do whatever I can to help my leaders to be successful.

Who gave Kagame the presidency? For me I know it's God. If God doesn't want him to be the president, he will not be the president. He is the president because God accepted it. Now, my job is to respect him... to pray for him... that he will do the will of God. If my leaders fail, they will have to answer to God, but my job is to respect them. That is what God asks me to do. If they do what is not right it is not for me to judge them, but it is God who judges them. 1 Peter 2:18 says respect leaders, even the cruel ones..., so I do what God tells me. (Samputu 2014g).

Regardless of your view of Kagame and the RPF, no one can argue with the fact that Rwanda is one of the greatest success stories in Africa today. The country currently has the highest access rate to primary education in Africa at 96.5% (UNICEF 2014); increased accessible and affordable health care with 90.6% enrolled in the national health program (including access to HIV medications at 108,113 in 2012 vs. 870 in 2002); significantly reduced poverty (44.9% in 2010 as opposed to 77.8% in 1994); fewer child deaths at 6% vs. 18% in 2000; greater life expectancy at 56 years in 2012 vs. 28 years in 1994 (Partners in Health 2013); and one of the best records in environmental care (UNEP 2014). There are still significant problems (e.g., it still relies heavily on foreign assistance, which has been cut down due to a U.N. report's accusations of fostering a rebellion in Congo in 2013) (Kulich 2014), but Kagame's policies certainly have the country pointed in the right direction in terms of economic growth, public health, and education.

Conclusion

Rwanda's rich history is filled with contrasts of devastating tragedies and monumental achievements, and its complexities are greater than I can flesh out in this dissertation. However, the purpose of this chapter has been to give an overview of the aspects of Rwandan history most related to Samputu's life. Thus, I would like to conclude that due to its strong historical ties to other East and Central-African countries and ethnic groups (particularly Uganda, Congo, Burundi, and Tanzania) and the number of people in the Rwandan diaspora who have returned to the country after the genocide, Rwanda is indeed a transcultural and multi-national nation-state.⁷⁷ In the following chapters I turn to how Samputu's life and works reflect Rwanda's rich history and culture, as well as the cosmopolitan nature of an artist living in East and Central Africa.

⁷⁷ I view Rwanda as a nation-state as it has distinct geo-political borders and official languages (Kinyarwanda, French, and, now likely due to its entrance into the East African Community, English) and ethnic policies (i.e., officially suppressing public references to ethnicity via its genocide ideology laws). Its "official" government policies are much looser than, for example, China and Turkey, but certainly has a strong enough nationalist narrative to be outside the pale of orthodoxy of a country (i.e., the United States) of which I define as a place with geo-political borders, but with very few (if any) official government policies regarding language, religion, ethnicity, etc.

Chapter 3: Biographical Sketch of Jean-Paul Samputu

Introduction and Methodology

Writing biography on a contemporary subject presents several challenges.

What should be included or excluded? What type of sensitive personal information should the writer disclose? Or as Robert Schanke states,

A biographer must avoid the sensational; and yet, in order to speak for our times, he/she must grapple with the non-hegemonic margins of acceptable behavior. Armed with volumes of information, the biographer must condense. "Selection is everything," writes Tuchman, "it is the test of the historian" (73-74). The final manuscript consists of what the author has chosen to include—or to reject. (Schanke 1994:128)

Beyond issues of selection, the writer must ask, "What is the purpose of biography?"

While I have addressed the merits of biographical writing in the introductory chapter,

I would like to elaborate on the importance of biography in its relation to historical analysis. Lloyd Ambrosious recalls the conclusions of six scholars in a symposium regarding the genre of biography:

All six scholars, notwithstanding their diversity, agreed on one central point: Biography and historical analysis are inextricably intertwined. For them, biographical studies offer a way to analyze important historical questions. Moreover, they affirmed, biographers must use the best historical methodologies, utilizing all available primary sources and interpreting them in creative ways, to reveal the life stories of subaltern as well as prominent and powerful men and women. (Ambrosious 2004:viii)

In this sketch of Samputu's life, I give the reader an opportunity to experience history as noted in Chapter Two—at least the parts that apply to his lifetime—vicariously through Samputu's lens. Thus, his biography is not merely a supplement to the historical narrative in the previous chapter, but one way of interpreting that narrative in a more intimate way, and simultaneously illuminating the details about

outstanding Rwandan individuals and the subaltern through Samputu's story. This installment equally serves as a building block to help the reader understand the analysis of his work in subsequent chapters. And because I will not be analyzing all of Samputu's musical output in these chapters, here I have included an abbreviated analysis of each major recording to which I have access (Samputu himself doesn't even have access to his earlier albums, or even some of the later RPF recordings in 2012 and 2013). I believe it is imperative to intersperse analysis within the context of history because Samputu's social environment, as with most artists, significantly influenced his musical choices. For example, early in his career, Samputu more or less copied the styles of other famous acts (i.e. Impala), but later incorporated more traditional music and, after converting to Christianity in 2003, Christian themes into his performances, compositions, and recordings. This was especially true when he moved to the U.S. for the first time, and there was a greater market for traditional music; his message of forgiveness and philanthropic philosophy of helping children also resonated with Christians in this country. However, rather than providing a consistent analytical framework, I will focus on the most pertinent musical, lyrical, and (where applicable) visual details of each production. I have reserved more in-depth musical analysis for subsequent chapters.

I employ several sources to navigate the narrative of Samputu's life story, most of which are personal interviews I conducted with Samputu between 2011 and 2014 in person and via telephone and internet chat (both textual and visual). As I have known Samputu for many years, many of our interviews were conversational in nature, which caused many of his statements to seem incomplete when listening back.

Thus, I will often, with his permission, fill in the “gaps” in his statements (indicated with square brackets) in order to make them clearer for the reader to understand, as Samputu would say things differently if he were speaking in a formal setting.

However, I avoid changing the language completely (English is his third language), so that I can give the reader a sense of how Samputu speaks.

Other interviews, conducted in person or via phone/internet chat/email during the same time frame, were with select individuals who have interacted with Samputu on a personal and/or professional level (i.e., performing, recording, workshops, etc.). Most of these interviews were conducted in one sitting. Finally, secondary sources comprise online magazines, news, and other websites (i.e., Wikipedia, blogs, and video sites). In contrast to my personal interviews, most quotes from these sources remain unedited, with the exception of email conversations where I have corrected some spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors.

Additionally, my interview *process* with Samputu is dialectical and has several layers. First is the initial interview in which I ask several questions to get basic information about his life. Secondly, I write a narrative based on those interviews with notes about missing or unclear information, including any elaborations on events that seem essential to his story, and send that narrative to Samputu for his review. For the third layer, I re-interview Samputu based on his reading of the narrative and notes, and for the fourth layer, I rewrite the narrative based on those interviews. I try to limit the interviews to under an hour to make the time more manageable for both of us, but a few of these, mostly due to small talk, were longer (the longest being two and a half hours, after which we were both

exhausted). Finally, I send the narrative to Samputu for review, and subsequently make any amendments needed based on further correspondence. The reasoning for this process is fourfold: 1) to clear up any factual inconsistencies, as Samputu and others are very busy traveling musicians, and their memories are often blurred by all of their experiences; 2) to ensure that Samputu is fairly represented. Because of the friendly nature of our relationship, Samputu will often speak colloquially and potentially say things that he would not want to make accessible to the public; 3) to trigger other memories (i.e., things he has forgotten or an elaboration on an existing statement) in order to get a richer explanation of an event; 4) to soften, as much as possible, my own narrative voice, so that Samputu's story can be told more by himself and the people involved in his life. This is not to discount my own involvement, but our relationship is certainly much younger than those with some of the fellow musicians he has been working with for over twenty years.

As Appadurai aptly notes, issues surrounding narrative voice are “ultimately problems of power” which will likely not be resolved “until anthropology becomes a healthy and thriving national tradition in many places outside of the West,” as the “Euro-American panopticon will remain unchallenged.” Further, “(h)owever globally diverse the centers of anthropological theorizing become, there will remain the fact that anthropology survives by its claim to capture... other voices... through its special brand of ventriloquism” (Appadurai 1988:20). Despite the fact that since the publishing of this article twenty-six years ago anthropology in Africa has grown considerably, the issues of power between the “West” and the “rest” still remain. I do not intend to solve any of those issues in this dissertation (I am the person who

conceived of doing this in the first place, and I am certainly the one writing it); however, by engaging in a dialectical interview process with Samputu, as well as his colleagues and friends, I am able to at least slightly curb my own narrative voice in order to balance out the power structure.

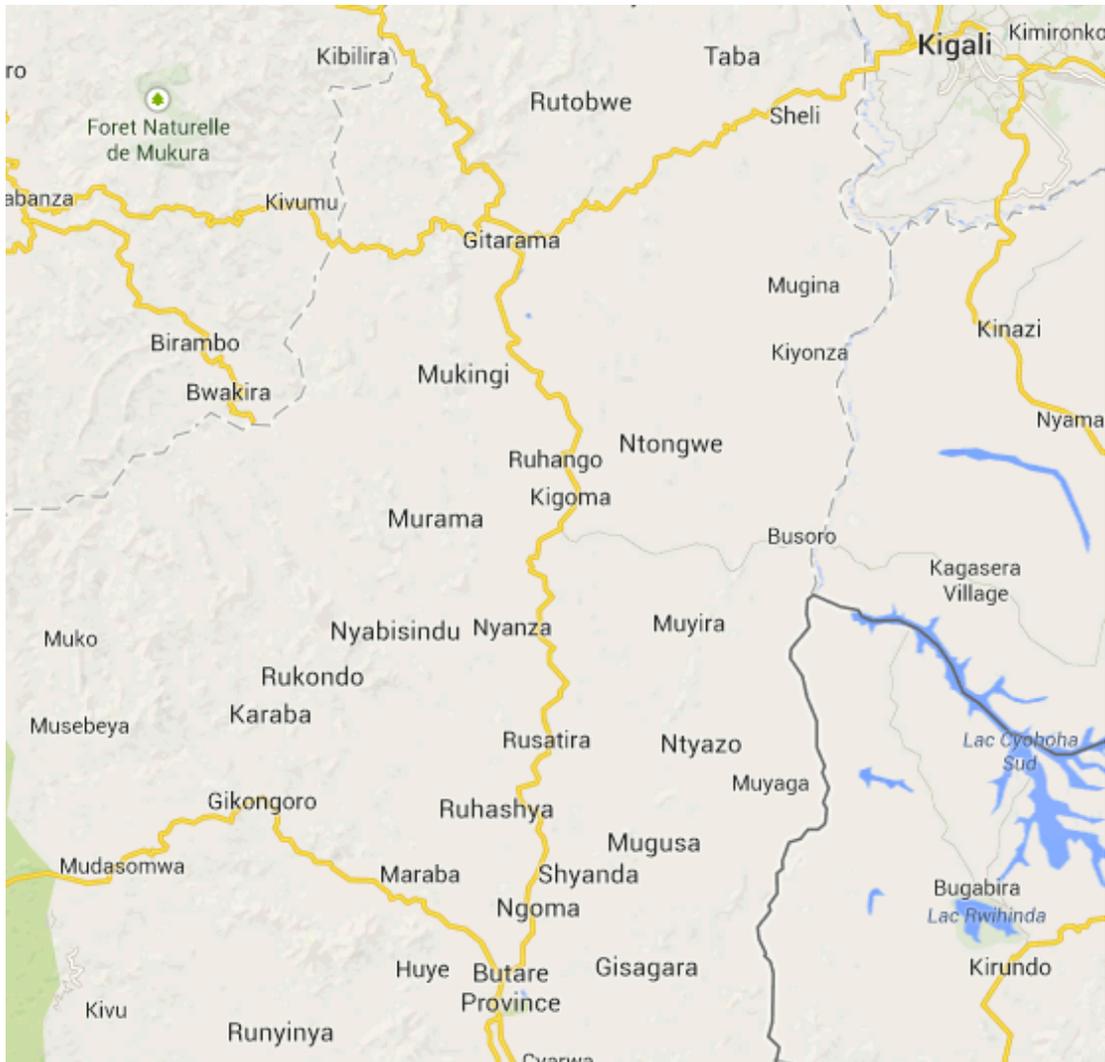


Figure 3-1. *Google Maps* screen capture of Ngoma, Butare Province (former Prefecture) in Southern Rwanda.

Adolescence and Beginnings of Samputu's Career

Jean-Paul Samputu was born to Wenceslas Samputu and his wife Christiane on March 15th, 1962 in Ngoma, Butare Prefecture, now known as Huye (see Figure 3-1), which is about 73 miles from Kigali. He has eight living siblings (three of his siblings were killed in the genocide): Emmanuel and Didas (half-brothers), Beatrice (half-sister), Agnes, Chantal, Rose, Jean Pierre, and Patrick. Samputu grew up in a fairly privileged household as his father worked in an administrative position (mostly accounting) for the Belgian rulers.⁷⁸ His connections with the Europeans helped him obtain a scholarship for Samputu's half-brother Emmanuel Gatete to study piano at the Academy of Music in Dinant, BE (L'Académie de Musique de Dinant), and then musicology at the Catholic University of Louvain (Université Catholique de Louvain) where he wrote his thesis on the famous *inanga* artist Sebatunzi in 1972.⁷⁹ Gatete subsequently was appointed to a position at the Académie de Beaux Arts de Kinshasa in Congo, and would become one of Samputu's greatest influences and mentors.⁸⁰ According to Gatete, Samputu's father was not a musician and didn't have a good sense of pitch, or as he describes it "a good musical ear" (Gatete 2014), but he very much appreciated and was sensitive to the relationship between text and music. He states,

⁷⁸ According to Gatete, administrative positions included overseeing various public sectors including transportation, government facilities, post office, etc. (Gatete 2014).

⁷⁹ Two of Gatete's works "Apotheose de Sebatunzi: Analyse Synchronique d'un Chant Épique Rwanda" (1972) and "Introduction à la Musique Traditionnelle Rwandaise" (1981) are listed as sources in Gansemans's 1998 monograph about Rwandan instruments.

⁸⁰ Samputu also told me his brother heavily influenced him to incorporate traditional styles into his musical productions. He recalls "My brother kept telling me 'Don't use the synthesizer, take *inanga*'" (Samputu 2012).

I remember nights where friends visiting us, whom we hadn't seen for a long time, began to discuss with him the past and the lifestyle of times gone by... these moments always lead to reciting poetry, most poems were sung; and our father, who was usually very reserved—but despite this had a really warm personality—became elated, joining in and connecting to what was being sung, happily singing... out of tune! So this sensitivity to the noble sentiments of the text, the words and their musicality, was an important element of his personality.

Another memory: I remember, it must have been in 1951 or 1952, a pageant recounting an episode in Rwandan history, or an epic. My father played a page, the King's favorite; he was congratulated by the King who (in the pageant) told him to sit nearby because he had recited, with elegance and harmonious rhythm, a never ending poem. (I was about eight or nine). We can see that prosodic rhythm, music's twin, was in his «blood».

Around this time in Usumbura, Burundi where many Rwandans were living, my father with some Rwandan friends founded what we could call today a Rwandan cultural center; and it was in our home that they, at a moment in time, rehearsed "Intore" dances. These are naturally closely linked to traditional music.

These different examples illustrate my father's intimacy with regard to music. (Ibid.)⁸¹

Samputu's love for singing began at age nine when he, like most young Catholic children his age, joined a local Roman Catholic Church choir. "That's just what you did," states Samputu (Samputu 2014a). They sang Catholic hymns in Kinyarwanda in SATB format, and rehearsed twice a week. While his primary singing repertoire comprised music of the church, other media, including live performances by local traditional drumming and dancing troupes and popular music broadcast by Radio Rwanda, had an impact on his music making; the most prominent of these were *Congolese rumba*, French popular music (i.e., Johnny Halladay and

⁸¹ Samputu's grandfather Bujuri was also a very talented dancer.

Mike Brant), and popular Rwandan groups (i.e., Orchestre Impala—see Figure 3-2 who combined Rwandan rhythms (mostly triple meter with accents on one in the first measure and one and two of the second measure) found in throughout Rwanda (see Figure 3-3) with *Congolese rumba*.⁸² According to Aron Nitunga, with whom Samputu developed a strong friendship and partnership and who would go on to produce and perform (guitar, synthesizer, and bass) on many of Samputu’s albums, recalls the influence of North American rock. He states, “The generation before us loved to play Jimi Hendrix and Jeff Beck. Even now, those guys who are in their sixties play Jimi Hendrix” (Nitunga 2012).⁸³

⁸² The consensus among most musicians I have spoken with is that Orchestre Impala was one of the first bands to mix traditional rhythms with popular music.

⁸³ Referring to his own influences as he developed as a guitarist in the 1970s and 80s, Nitunga states: “We would play... Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, Peter Tosh, Michael Jackson, Marvin Gaye and a lot of jazz... Chic Corea, Herbie Hancock, Spyro Gyra, and Carlos Santana” (Nitunga 2012).



Figure 3-2. Cover of Orchestre Imapala's *Une Sélection de l'Orchestre IMPALA*. (Source: [http://ricorodriguez.wikia.com/wiki/File:Orchestre_Impala_\(UJ\)_C_1000.jpg](http://ricorodriguez.wikia.com/wiki/File:Orchestre_Impala_(UJ)_C_1000.jpg))

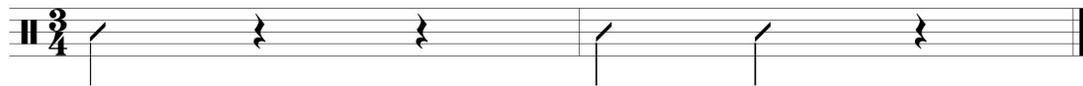


Figure 3-3. Accents for triple meter rhythm found in traditional music found throughout Rwanda.⁸⁴

He was discovered in 1977, at the age of fifteen, by Silas Udahimuka, a seminary-educated musician who had a professional choir. He recruited Samputu for

⁸⁴ The rhythm of the south generally has the following accents. While I think 6/4 makes more sense in terms of phrasing, most Rwandan musicians I have met count it in three rather than six.

his choir, and after some convincing, his father allowed him to join. Subsequently, Silas's choir took second place a choir competition in Kigali, and Samputu received remuneration for the first time as a performer.⁸⁵ This competition was part of Habyarimana's government (MRND) propaganda program known as *animation*.

According to a Human Rights Watch:

Once the MRND was firmly established, mobilization took on an added aspect: glorifying the party and its head. In addition to the work days, people were obliged to participate in weekly sessions of animation, propaganda meetings leavened with poetry, music, and dance created to honor Habyarimana and the MRND. Propaganda teams of singers and dancers vied for honors in regular competitions, often dressed in fine costumes bought by contributions from the party faithful. Rwandans often proclaimed their loyalty to Habyarimana, wore his image on portrait pins, and posted his picture in their houses or places of business. (Human Rights Watch 2009)

Samputu recalls the importance of this event:

At 15 years old and I got my first paycheck for 1000 RWF. It's equivalent to about \$80 now. It was like big money because I gave it to my father, and he bought me clothes, you know, many things, and the money was still there. (Samputu 2012; 2014c)⁸⁶

Samputu recalls that his parents were proud of him but worried about their son becoming a musician (as musicians tended to be irresponsible and forget the importance of their studies), and also that he would never had had a career if it weren't for the encouragement of Silas, who told his father "your son will be a singer." He states, "if Silas had not discovered me, I don't know if I would been a

⁸⁵ The music they sang was a type of neo-traditional art music in Rwanda developed by Cyprien Rugamba (1935-1994), on which he, like Impala, based his multi-part choral compositions with traditional rhythms (i.e., the triple-meter rhythm found in Figure 3-3, as well as the pygmy 5/8 rhythm found in Figure 2-2. Rugamba's troupe Amasimbi N'Amakombe was the most widely respected choral groups in Rwanda at the time. In his *Representing African Music* (2009:16), Kofi Agawu mentions him as one of the few African art music composers. Some of Rugamba's recordings are available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5AvUMSCXeo> and here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMP14qM_3XM.

⁸⁶ Samputu meant that there was still money left over.

singer now because at that time, singing and doing high-school, it was very difficult” (ibid.). His brother Emmanuel also encouraged him:

When I was 11 or 12 years old, he told my father “let the guy sing,” and he encouraged me and my father to do music. If I didn’t have my brother, my father would not allow me to do music. (Ibid.)

Samputu originally began his secondary-school education at a Butare-based Catholic school (Petite Seminaire de Karubanda), but later switched to a Pentecostal school (Centre de Formation Biblique Jeunesse) to pursue a teaching career.⁸⁷ At this time he also became involved with the Centre de Formation Scout (CFS) in Rwanda (an organization similar to the boy scouts in the United States) where he learned to play guitar. He states:

That time we had scouts, who had access to band instruments (guitars, bass, drums, etc.) and I joined them so I could learn to play guitar. Jean-De-Dieu Rigeli was with me at that time and we composed many songs. Boniface “Ntage” played guitar. But at that age, because I was in secondary school, we (students) danced on the weekends, so I would play guitar in the bands. I was playing and singing songs by Bob Marley and Lionel Ritchie even though I didn’t know English. I just copied how he sung and interpreted it and I became known as a person who could sing and play Bob Marley very well. (Ibid.)

After spending a few years performing in the cover bands, Samputu and his friends started a professional band called Nyampinga, which, in Kinyarwanda, refers to the most beautiful, well-educated, and culturally informed girl. The band comprised the aforementioned Boniface (who was the leader), Rigeli, Callixte Uyiranga (singer), and Claude Kagabo (Keyboards), Odas (bass) and Andrew Bikorimana (drums), and along with a series of other rotating musicians including Matthieu (bass); Tchido

⁸⁷ The term seminary is a broad term that encompasses various types of education (including the path to ordination). His attendance at these schools is representative of his privilege due to the implementation of the quota system in educational institutions (90% Hutu, 9% Tutsi, and 1% Twa) in 1972 (see Chapter 2).

(guitar—joined in 1983), who would perform on many tracks of Samputu’s solo work in Uganda; Mihigo François “Chouchou” (guitar—joined in 1983); Mattias (synthesizer/organ—joined in 1984), whose organ playing, according to Samputu, changed the sound of the band because he was a trained musician; Benoit Kipeti (drums—joined in 1984), and Aron Nitunga (guitar—joined in 1984), who recalls having a significant impact because “many of the arrangements were my ideas” (Nitunga 2012). Samputu did not compose many songs for the band, but was one of the main singers (Rigeli sang most of the lead parts). He recalls:

We became famous because we were the only professional group there in Butare, and we recorded songs in the Rwanda Radio studio with a guy named Jean Uwimana, who was given a scholarship to learn music in Paris by the government. He was working at the radio station, but eventually started his own studio. He recorded several bands in Kigali. There were several main bands: Impala, Malaika, Les Fellows, Unkumburwa, Amabamararungu, Pakita, Les Copains, and Salus Populi, and we all had songs on the Rwanda Radio. We recorded on two tracks live. One track for instruments and the other for vocals. We had to practice a lot. This was a big deal because everyone listened to the radio at this time. “Kiberinka” was a big hit.⁸⁸ The song is about a girl who goes home, and prepares for visitors. She has to do everything in the home, and everything’s clean. (Ibid.)⁸⁹

The name of the album is *Ingendo Y’abeza* (Beautiful Walk/Gait—a reference to a title given to a woman who has a beautiful walk (specifically like a cow), and includes several styles (I will analyze the details of all of these styles in subsequent chapters). The aforementioned “Kiberinka” is a slow rock ballad with a call-and-response like chorus (i.e., in Congolese *rumba* style), while “Mwamikazi” (Queen

⁸⁸ In Rwandan culture at that time, and still today (even as Rwanda has one of the highest concentration in the world of female positions in government), it was/is an important gender norm for a woman to take care of the home, whether or not she had help from the outside. The home is the domain of the women, and they hold this position with great pride.

⁸⁹ When I visited in 2012 for Samputu’s 50th birthday celebration, the Minister of Youth, Sport, and Culture Protais Mitali mentioned his love for “Kiberinka” in his speech honoring Samputu’s life.

Mother) has a faster tempo rock beat and refers to sightings of the Virgin Mary in the Southern Rwandan town of Kabehe in the early 1980s.⁹⁰ “Umwaka Mushya,” (Happy New Year) and “Dawe wa Twese” (The Lord’s Prayer) are Congolese *rumba-rock/soukous* each of which begin with a 4/4 rock beat and later transform into *soukous*,⁹¹ while “Ishimwe Ry’Umubyeyi,” which was Samputu’s first composition (and features his voice), is slowed-down *rumba-rock* that remains in the same tempo throughout. The title track, “Ingendo Y’abeza,” is Congolese *rumba/soukous* mixed with Rwandan traditional sounds (i.e., *amayugi* ankle bells and an *ikondera*).⁹² The reggae tune, “Rambaafrica” (Africa, Be Strong), is another of Samputu’s compositions in which Samputu conjures his best Bob Marley impression, and “Ngwino Unsange” (Come Next to Me) and “Umutonia” feature modernized versions of a traditional Rwandan triple meter beat (see Figure 3-3) usually performed on *ingoma* (the royal drums of Rwanda). Almost all of the songs’ lyrics are in Kinyarwanda (the lone “Madeline” being in French), and feature drum kit, electric guitar (with both clean and distorted sounds and use of wah-wah, flange, and chorus effects), electric organ/synthesizer (which sounds more like a Vox Continental than a Hammond B-3, though neither Samputu or Aron remembers the exact model), and

⁹⁰ According to the translation of the French text in EWTN’s (Eternal Word Television Network) e-library, “the Holy See released the declaration of Bishop Augustin Misago of Gikongoro, on the apparitions that took place in 1982-83 in Kibeho, Rwanda,” and the sightings were officially sanctioned by the Roman Catholic Church. The original sighting was at the college of Kibeho in November of 1981, and became a national talking point in the 1980s (Mboneyabo 2001).

⁹¹ The Lord’s Prayer is a slight variation of Matthew 6:9-13 (with an added “For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen”).

⁹² *Ikondera* is the term for a single royal trumpet, which is part of the *Amakondera* ensemble. I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter Five.

bass guitar.⁹³ While successful, Samputu recalls the difficulty of balancing his studies and social life with his newfound professional career in Nyampinga:

I was touring all the weekend, every weekend, Friday we were traveling. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and I came back Sunday and I was tired, then going to school Monday. When I got my diploma, we had a party, but I wasn't in the party because I was performing. (Ibid.)

Nyampinga's success turned out to be a curse, as infighting due to inflated egos caused the band to break up in 1984, and in 1985 Samputu recorded his first solo album with Aron and Michelle Bernay (a mathematics professor at the University of Butare). According to Samputu, this was the first time Aron Nitunga was in charge of producing and engineering a record. They recorded in Bernay's Butare studio on a Tascam 4-track recorder, where they were able to multi-track for the first time. This enabled them to record four tracks and then bounce those to two tracks in order to record more tracks. They could continue the process until they recorded all of the desired parts. Samputu recalls, "for us it was like a miracle to have four tracks" (ibid.: 2012). They used electric (Samputu recalls Bernay owned a Fender Stratocaster) and acoustic guitars, a small synthesizer (likely a Roland Juno-6), and a Roland TR-606 Drumatix drum machine.⁹⁴ Regarding the drum machine Nitunga recalls having to learn to program it in the studio under the tutelage of Bernay. The album was entitled *Tegeka Isi* (Govern The Word), and its biggest hit was "Ni Kuki?" (Why?).

According to Samputu, the title is begging the spiritual question "God created the world for men to rule. Why are you letting the world lead you?" (Samputu 2012).

This is based on the Genesis 2:15 passage "Then the Lord God took the man and put

⁹³ While Samputu could not remember the name of the organ, he remembered that Mattias used a Roland Juno (either 6 or 60) synthesizer.

⁹⁴ A demonstration of the TR-606 may be heard at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHbckGWz-fo>.

him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.” In other words, why are you allowing circumstances of this world to guide you when God has given you the world to govern?

The Gisenyi Years

In the midst of a successful solo career, Samputu received an invitation that would change his career path permanently. In 1986, a wealthy businessman from Gisenyi named Valens Kajeguhakwa decided to start a band. Kajeguhakwa owned Enterprise Rwandaise de Petrole (ERP), one of the major petrol companies in Rwanda, was a significant shareholder in the African National Bank of Rwanda (BACAR), and had a great interest in all things musical in Rwanda. He had a musical venue built in Gisenyi with his own funds, and had a desire to build the “best band in Rwanda” (ibid.). Samputu was first introduced to Valens through his former bandmate Emmanuel Iyarwema, who along with “Chouchou” was living in Gisenyi at the time with the support of Kajeguhakwa. Samputu remembers that they had great musicians, but no singer. Because Samputu was known as one of the best singers in Rwanda at that time through his work with Nyampinga, “Chouchou” and others asked him to come join the band, specifically mentioning that Valens Kajeguhakwa was asking for him. But he was reluctant because, as he states, “I had my own album, and I had problems with Nyampinga” (ibid.). However, he decided to visit Gisenyi, and subsequently saw how the others were living in their own house with rehearsal space and plenty of cash.

Even though the majority of the group wanted him to join, he was still unsure whether or not he wanted to accept their invitation. However, he changed his mind

when he met and spoke with Valens and found that he had a genuine desire to support Rwandan music. He subsequently gave him \$150,000 RWF to cover the cost of the album. He states, “That time it was like 10,000 dollars. It was too much. I had to go and show my father how I can make money playing music because I wanted him to be proud of me. I also gave Aron and Michelle Bernay money to pay off the album I recorded with them” (Samputu 2014a).

Thus, a debt-free Samputu entered into a new phase of his career as the leader of his new group, Ingeli, which means “the most beautiful of all cows.”⁹⁵ Samputu had used the name Ingeli during his solo career, but chose to appropriate it for this new group as well. Ingeli comprised eight members: Samputu, Chouchou (guitar), DeGaulle (vocals, keyboards), Theirry Mukasa (bass), Eugene (vocals), Heri Mukasa (drums), and Mattieu (bass). They spent a significant amount of their time touring Rwanda rather than recording. In fact, they only recorded one album, *Mgr. Bigirumwami* (see Figure 3-4)—referring to a famous bishop, Aloys Bigirumwami, who was heavily involved in Rwandan politics and had close ties to President Habyarimana (Habyarimana even came to his funeral)—which was recorded live in their home in 1986. Samputu remembers,

We were always planning to do an album... in the big studio...; we had a lot of songs, but we were always busy touring. That time in Rwanda touring was big, because everywhere in the village money was in the country. People loved the concerts. It’s not like that today,

⁹⁵ As discussed in Chapter Two, cows are a means of currency and a way to measure in Rwanda. Thus, Ingeli is a reference to “greatness,” and is essentially a boastful name.

Samputu recalls that the famous choral music composer Cyprien Rugamba gave him the idea for the name. Samputu went to Cyprien for advice because he was a well-respected musician, and the composer gave him ten suggestions, and Samputu selected “Ingeli” because he wanted to be the best singer in Rwanda.

you cannot go to the villages to do concerts. But at that time everywhere, we had many bands here and they were all touring. (Ibid.)

The album—from which I only have access to three songs, “Mgr. Bigirumwami,” “Uwariboye” (“Beautiful Girl”), and “Umugabo Nyakuri” (Genuine Husband)—is a great improvement from the Nyampinga years in terms of technical skill, vocal intonation, and arrangement sophistication, but stylistically most of the songs, like those on *Ingendo Y’abeza*, are *rumba-rock/soukous*, triple-meter Rwandan rhythms, reggae, slow Euro-American pop ballads, or some combination thereof. However, there are two marked differences in that Samputu’s voice is now most prominent, and the keyboard parts are lower in the mix and less frequently present. Additionally, the album contains the first recording of Samputu’s composition “Migabo” (Courageous Warrior), which is one of his most celebrated songs, and he would later re-record it on his 2004 *Testimony from Rwanda*.

Samputu also recalls his relatively posh life due to the Kajeguhakwa’s support (“He bought us instruments, he bought us a big bus... it had Ingeli written on it. He gave us money each month. He supported the entire band... even the traditional dancers”) (Samputu 2012) and his influence (“This man for me is like my father. And he taught me also how to sing traditional... he taught us to sing like pygmies and brought pygmies to us.”⁹⁶ He even brought the famous Rujindiri”) (Samputu 2014a).⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Samputu also told me that at first he refused to sing traditional songs, but eventually adopted this style, which is one of the most marked characteristics of his vocal timbre.

⁹⁷ Rujindiri was an *inanga* player who served as a court musician under King Rudahigwa (Demolin 1993). Jos Gansemans produced an album of Rujindiri entitled *Rujindiri, Maître de L’inanga: Musique de L’ancienne Cour du Rwanda* (Rujindiri, Master of the Inanga: the Ancient Court Music of Rwanda) based on his 1973 field recordings.



Figure 3-4. Album cover of *Mgr. Bigirumwami*.
 (Source: [http://ricorodriguez.wikia.com/wiki/File:Ingele_-_Mgr_Bigirumwami_\(K7\)_C.jpg](http://ricorodriguez.wikia.com/wiki/File:Ingele_-_Mgr_Bigirumwami_(K7)_C.jpg))

The Civil War, Genocide, and Alcoholism

Samputu continued touring and performing with Ingeli—and even performed a series of concerts with Rwandan great Cecile Kayirebwa (living in Belgium)—for the next four years until October of 1990, when the RPF invaded Rwanda.

Kajeguhakwa had a lot of connections with the RPF, and, along with other wealthy Rwandans, contributed to RPF’s campaign into Rwanda.⁹⁸ Thus, after the invasion, Kajeguhakwa fled, along with future first President of Rwanda, Pasteur Bizimungu, to Uganda to escape persecution from the Habyarimana government. Because of his

⁹⁸ Samputu remembers he encountered series of problems in Uganda because he brought Kayirebwa to Rwanda, as at that time she was a Tutsi, and President Habyarimana wanted to have her in order to show, as part of his “reconciliation” campaign discussed in Chapter Two, that there was solidarity between the two groups. Because the RPF was about to invade Rwanda, they didn’t like that Samputu and Kayirebwa, as Tutsis, were helping the Rwandan government’s narrative when there was still official discrimination (via the educational quota system and limited government representation) against Tutsis. Thus, many people boycotted the Uganda portion of the tour.

association with Kajeguhakwa, as well as an overall anti-Tutsi campaign in response to this invasion, Samputu, Aron Nitunga, Kipeti, and Abede were put into prison for six months. After being released from prison and at the urging of his father (Jones 2013), Samputu fled to Burundi with some of his other bandmates. He subsequently found his half-sister Beatrice who was living there at the time, and stayed with her. While there DeGaulle and Samputu recorded the 1991 album *Bahizi Beza* (Strong Warrior) in Burundi on a 4-track recorder.⁹⁹ It was at this time he also met his current wife Henriette (originally from Lubumbashi, D.R. Congo, then Zaire) who was visiting Burundi.

Samputu and his fellow Ingeli musicians continued to travel around East Africa to raise money to support the RPF war. He remembers,

There were many things, conferences, events organized for supporting RPF, and always when they do meetings or conferences or fundraising, they need music. So we were doing that. Me, DeGaulle and other musicians like Massamba. All pro-RPF Rwandans were dedicated to do that. We wanted to have our country back. (Ibid.:2012; 2014b)

Samputu also recalls going to the RPF camp with DeGaulle and Abede in Bungwe, Rwanda to perform for future president, but then Army Commander and Vice-Chairman of RPF, Alexis Kagame, and Chairman of RPF, Alexis Kanyarengwe.

Samputu recalls:

In late December of 1991, we went through Uganda into very dangerous territory, but were assured by RPF when we met at the border that everything was fine. They said “You guys, you are now in Rwanda.” At that time we were calling it Urundi/Rwanda, which means another Rwanda. It was unbelievable. I met people I hadn’t

⁹⁹ I do not have access to this album, but a 1991 live performance in Bujumbura, Burundi with DeGaulle (keyboard), Chouchou, and other Ingeli members is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8T6Tz7rqc8&feature=youtu.be>.

seen in a long time. I spoke with DeGaulle “We are now in Rwanda and we are not going back.” Then they organized a party to receive us because everyone knew the songs they were playing on *Umhabura* radio [the radio for the RPF], the ones we recorded in Burundi [on the album *Bahizi Beza*]. And many of the soldiers wanted to see artists that sang the songs who encourage RPF. Then we got to sing for the chairman of the RPF, Alexis Kanyarengwe, which was good because he was very busy at that time, and he received us and gave us encouraging words, telling us that he was happy we were supporting the RPF. Then another day we were received by, then Vice-Chairman of the RPF, Kagame. It was a party in Bungwe where we sung in front of him with some of his escorts. Oh my God, I will never forget that time because I remember DeGaulle was waiting a long time just to sing this courageous warrior [Kagame]. DeGaulle told me “Jean-Paul, I’m dreaming. I’m gonna see Kagame now? I’m going to sing for him?” I said, “yes, my brother. We are gonna sing for him, we are gonna encourage him, we are gonna tell him we are ready to support RPF through music.” Then we sung three or four songs, and the Vice-Chairman [Kagame] was moved by two songs “Ingangare” and “Izagishe Zitashye,” and he asked us to repeat those two songs because he loved them. The words of those songs were very powerful. The words of those songs were the words every soldier needed to reclaim their country. Kagame said, “I want you to repeat these songs because they have the meaning.” Then Kagame asked the soldiers to dance for us, and we were surprised that they were dancing Kinyarwanda [Rwandan style dancing]. We said “these guys, how do they know the culture? [because they grew up in Uganda].” It was so great. Then I remember DeGaulle asked Kagame if he could stay and join the army. But Kagame told us, “What you are doing is good. What you are doing is needed. You should continue that because this is a way to fight. We need those songs. We need these words.” Kagame was happy because having musicians supporting them showed that RPF was strong, that they had these quality of musicians to sing for us. One soldier was so envious that we got to meet Kagame in person. He said “You are lucky. If I could shake his hand today I can die happy.” (Samputu 2014d).

Performing for the RPF left an indelible impression on Samputu, and he composed new songs to support the RPF. In 1993, he travelled to Belgium at the invitation of the Rwandan community there to record the aforementioned “Twararutashye” (part of the album of the same title), which would become one of his biggest hits among the RPF. Samputu recalls “I was prophesying. It happened. That’s why everyone loved

that song. It said, we are home now. That's why this song is so popular. It tells them that they are no longer refugees, and that they have their own country" (Samputu 2012).¹⁰⁰ He also wrote and recorded "Ndabyanze" (I Refuse) on the same album which is about refusing to be a refugee and that, as Samputu states, "I have to go back to fight for my country to help the RPF liberate Rwanda" (Samputu 2014d). He also toured several cities in Germany at this time at the invitation of Ute Koecher.

This was Samputu's life until 1994, when he returned to Rwanda after the terror of the genocide, only to discover his own personal tragedy: the death of his parents and several siblings.

When Samputu returned, he discovered that his own neighbor, the aforementioned Ntakirutimana—a man whom assured Samputu he would look after his family when his father refused to leave Rwanda before the genocide—had murdered his father. Being completely distraught after finding out about the slaughter of his family members, Samputu turned to alcohol to quell his pain. He recalls:

I learned that my father was killed by this neighbor who is a very good friend, and I asked "why?" I was still seeing cadavers from the genocide in Butare. Then I began to drink. That is how my life began to be destroyed. And then the whole nine years dealing with that pain and anger. (Ibid.)

And further, "and especially the desire of revenge... I became a killer too because I wanted to kill him" (Pearson 2014).

Regardless of his indulgence in alcohol, Samputu was able to make a living, as he owned his own studio in Kigali at that time. He states:

¹⁰⁰ Samputu and Ingeli performing "Twararutashye" may be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp7OzDOym40>.

In 1994 I had a recording studio in Kigali. It was eight-tracks. I was the only person in Rwanda that had a studio for those two years, 1994-1996. Abede was working in that studio. I was recording jingles... for breweries and NGOs. We had many NGOs after the war and I made a lot of money from that.¹⁰¹ (Ibid.)

Samputu recorded several songs and albums in his studio: "Kenyera Inkindi Y'Ubuzima" (Take Care of Yourself) (1995), a song for the Red Cross (specifically emphasizing the fight against AIDS). The albums Mutima W'Urugo (A Woman is the Heart of a Home) (1996) and Ubaha Ikiremwa Muntu (Respect Human Rights) (1997) are compilation albums, recorded for NGOs (Samputu doesn't remember the specific organizations), which he lost during the genocide (Samputu mentions that "you know, they didn't just do genocide for people, they also did it for music"). While his studio was a lucrative business, Samputu jokingly states, "but because of all of the pain of the genocide, I was drinking all of the money" (ibid.).

Despite his heavy drinking, Samputu married Henriette in 1995 after a few years of courting. He knew that he was in love with her in 1993 when he visited her home for the second time in Congo. Then after the war, Henriette's father, who was living in Lubumbashi, Zaire (along with many Tutsi refugees), returned home to Rwanda, and the family approved the courtship. The new couple gave birth to a son, Willy, on August 16th, 1995, and, aside from Samputu's drinking problem, his life was moving along nicely. But in 1996, Samputu and Henriette faced another significant challenge: their second child Claudia was born with a severe birth defect (intellectual deficiency). She was unable to speak or move on her own, and Samputu remembers being completely distraught:

¹⁰¹ Samputu sold the jingles to breweries and NGOs.

In 1996, I had this big problem of having my daughter, she was born with disabilities. I even paid a lot of money to hospitals in Kenya and Rwanda to make sure she was healed, but it didn't work. In 1998, my wife and I decided to take her to Canada where they had social medicine, and she went.¹⁰² I paid her ticket and everything. I had money [at that time]. My sister Agnes was in Montreal and she helped us to find a hospital. They found out that my daughter would not live a normal life and would be handicapped. What happened destroyed our life again. My wife had psychological problems. And me too. (Ibid.)

After finding an appropriate hospital for his daughter, Samputu sold some of his instruments and he took Willy, then two years old, to Montreal.

Samputu originally intended to drop Willie off with Henriette and return to Rwanda, but he found it too difficult to return; "I was stuck there," he recalls (ibid.). So, after meeting up with his former bandmate and producer Aron Nitunga who had already been living in Toronto for five years, he decided to record another album entitled *Igihe Kirageza* (The Time Has Come) in 1999.¹⁰³ The album features a plethora of styles: 1) East African gospel with the title track 2) slower Euro-American pop ballads such as "Ampora Ku Mutima" (You Are Always In My Heart) and "Wari Uri He Mana" (God Where Were You?), which is a song—both the song and the instrumental version appear on this album—regarding the "absence" of God during the genocide); 3) reggae with "Bimaze Iki Kubaho," ("What Is The Point Of Living?"), a song directed at the actions of others during the genocide (about the latter, Samputu states "I was angry and I was asking why do I live? What is the

¹⁰² First Henriette received a Visa to the United States and then travelled to Canada.

¹⁰³ Canada, Australia, Germany, Luxembourg, and Sweden, "significantly loosened their entry laws beginning around 1990" (Czaika and Haas 2011:9). Like the Samputus, many Rwandans chose Canada due to its loosened immigration policy and its generosity to refugees.

Nitunga went to Burundi in 1990 when the war started, and then to Belgium where he performed with the famous Burundian singer Khadja Nin (guitar) and hip-hop group Benny-B (keyboard/guitar).

importance... when people kill others?"; Samputu 2014c); 4) United States R&B and hip-hop in the love song 5) "Turengere Umwana" (Protect the Youth) and "Disi Garuka" (Please Come Back); 5) Congolese soukous/pop with "Urarunyambitse," (You Shamed Me), in which the lyrical content portrays a girl telling a story about her boyfriend who impregnated her and subsequently abandoned her, thus ruining her reputation; 6) Rwandan *indirimbo z'ingabo* (warrior song) in "Gisa" (Fred Rwigema's nickname); 7) *intwatwa* (traditional songs and styles attributed to Twa) in "Nyaruguru" (a song regarding the importance of a mountain in southern Rwanda) in triple meter and "Ngarambe (No. 1)" in 5/8 meter (see Figure 2-2).¹⁰⁴ Samputu mentioned that he called it "No. 1" because "the text was too long, and I was supposed to record a second "Ngarambe," but I never did that" (ibid.:2014).¹⁰⁵ Aron Nitunga produced, engineered, and played all of the instruments—(guitar, synthesizer (including drums), and *amayugi* (ankle bells)—on the album. Despite being produced in Canada, Samputu recalls the importance of this album in Rwanda:

That album was the best in Rwanda because it was a hit. We only had one radio station, and that was my first time to have an album mastered. I sent it to Rwanda and they put it on the radio, and they said "Nyaruguru" was very good, and "Nimuze Tubyine" was a hit. This was also my first time doing a CD with a good sound. Before, I had just been doing tapes. (Ibid.:2012, 2014c)

And regarding the funding of the album:

I did a fundraising for the album. Really good friends in Canada wanted me to do an album. There were many Rwandans there, and they paid for the studio. Also Kajeguhakwa supported me. He was like my father and always there for me. (Ibid.:2014c)

¹⁰⁴ I will analyze some of these songs fully in subsequent chapters.

¹⁰⁵ Ngarambe is a fictional man who is seemingly unhappy, so people keep asking what he wants. After not replying to several of the questions, people saw that Ngarambe noticed a beautiful woman passing by, and then they realized that he wanted to have female companionship.

Aside from Cecile Kayirebwa, Samputu was the only Rwandan popular music artist at the time producing high-fidelity recordings.

Drummer and dancer Jacques Nyungura, a performer with the Rwandan National Ballet (known as Urukerereza) and one of Samputu's long-time bandmates and friends, toured with Samputu during this phase (and would continue touring with him until 2007), and recalls his time with Samputu. He states,

We toured in Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and then Burundi. It was traditional and modern, we were mixing. We had a band with guitar, keyboard and everything modern, and dancers... four men and women. In Uganda, Ronie Kavuma recorded Samputu's song "Nimuze Tubyine" in the Ugandan language [Luganda], and that song was a hit. So when we went there, they [the media] said, the person who sings the *real* song is coming. That's how we got famous. Then all of the companies, Pepsi, Coca-Cola, MTN, all of the companies signed a contract with us. (Nyungura 2014)

After the success of his album, Samputu's ego, combined with his increasing drinking habits and frustration with living in Canada, prompted him to leave Canada and move to Kampala, Uganda, at which time he started, as Samputu states, "a bad life" (ibid.: 2012). It was here that Samputu began a promiscuous lifestyle and started drinking more heavily. He would often stop into a bar and offer drinks to everyone in the bar, and then leave the bar (sometimes "out the window" without paying—"I'm still paying the debts" he said; ibid.). He also began consulting with people who Samputu refers to as "witch-doctors" (traditional healers/diviners similar to those associated with the *imandwa*—Nyabinghi and Ryangombe—cults who practice magic). Samputu explains, "there were many, not just Nyabinghi.... They give you some stuff to carry, some you put in your pocket, and this will help you. They tell you to call on the names of your ancestors..." (ibid.:2014). Further, he recalls:

In Kampala, I was known, and it was good. I played many concerts, and in bars. But I had... spiritual problems. I don't know, I think God wanted to take me back, but I had to pass through troubles. That's why I went to witch-doctors. That's why I had many women. I was very far from my wife and my children. Now I did [pause] *drugs, alcohol*. This was the bad life, and then *stop*, no music. (Samputu 2012; emphasis added)

Nyungura recalls Samputu's behavior:

I remember one time, we went to perform, and it was a wedding. We went there and Samputu was *drunk*, really drunk, until he just go lay down in the middle of the stage. People were surprised that he couldn't even play. He was supposed to play a song for the bride and groom, but he couldn't even walk, just crawling like a baby. He even tried taking off all of his clothes, but we took him to the side and told him not to do that, but he got really mad. So we started performing [traditional], but the bride and groom said "Where is our song?," so I got my wife and other performers and the guitar and made up a song with their names in it and then we were done. Now they had already gave Samputu money, so after he came to me and said "I don't deserve this money, just take the money." (Nyungura 2014; emphasis added)

However, Nyungura, a devout Christian, also believes that Samputu was a victim of spiritual warfare. Jacques believes that jealous musicians went to diviners (the same type Samputu was visiting himself) and put curses on him to make him fail. He states, "Musicians they got jealous when we got there. He was a drunk, but later on we found out they said 'this guy, we need to do something so he can go down.' You know those witch-doctors' power" (ibid.:2014).

Regardless of whether or not magic was a part of his failings, eventually, his "rock-star" lifestyle caught up with him and he found himself in jail for failure to pay his debts. "I was always in prison for not paying. I went to jail twice a week. Sometimes I went to jail drunk, and woke up and I said 'How do I get here?'" he states (ibid.). However, "there is something I learnt in the jail... some people were praying, and it touched me. They were saying 'we pray that you go from here and

don't come again because you aren't supposed to be here.' I can say I learned about God in prison" (ibid.: 2012; 2014c).

Spiritual Awakening and International Acclaim

In 2002, his brother Jean-Pierre, 1997 who found out about Samputu's troubles in Uganda, brought him to his home in Kenya). Here, Samputu had his first intimate encounter as an adult with Evangelical (Pentecostal) Christianity through a man named Pastor Moses, an independent Pentecostal preacher who came to visit Jean-Pierre's home because he believed he was led by the Holy Spirit. Although Samputu was still a drunkard, Moses proselytized and prophesied over him.¹⁰⁶

Samputu recalls:

My brother was tired of me being put into prison, and he paid a lot of money to debtors in Uganda, and brought me to his home in Kenya. This is where I found Moses. He started praying, we were two in the house, and he said "let me do this job... you're gonna change... You agree with what I'm telling you to do... Repeat these words..." He was telling me to say that "now I am fed up to live in this sin. I will stop this bad life I have. I receive Jesus in my heart. I want Jesus to control my life. I will not sin anymore. Now Jesus will control my life. It will not be me, it will be Jesus who controls my life." I was just repeating his words. You know how they [evangelicals and Pentecostals] tell people how to receive Jesus.

Then (Moses said) "now we have to go to the church." We went to the church on Sunday. It was a Pentecostal church. A woman called Margaret Wanjiru, she is well known there.¹⁰⁷ And when they asked people to get saved... it was me, but it was like an angel took my hand to do like this [gesturing raising his arm up]. Because I was like this (arms down), and then I saw my arm doing that. I was looking at my arm [expression of shock, but laughing as well].... Then I

¹⁰⁶ Prophesying over someone is a phrase often used by those who subscribe Pentecostal theology, and refers to saying specific things that will happen regarding that person's life. Pentecostalism's use Old and New Testament references (i.e., Ezekiel 37:4, 1 Corinthians 14:1-25) to support their beliefs.

¹⁰⁷ Hon. Bishop Dr. Margaret Wanjiru is the head pastor of Jesus Is Alive Ministries, part of the Redeemed Gospel Churches of Kenya. She is also a member of the National Assembly (one of the branches of Parliament) (KEWOPA 2014).

prayed... my life changed. I was drinking, but I stopped... Moses prophesied about everything. He said “you will return with your wife again,” but I said “no, not my wife I can’t” [laughing]. He said “you are going to win awards,” but I said “uh huh,” but I didn’t know. (Ibid.)

He then returned to Uganda, but didn’t feel changed (he still had the desire to drink), so in February 2004 he went to the Africa Prayer Mountain, which is a small mountain in the Segeku area, situated between Kampala and Entebbe and made popular by the World Trumpet Mission for those seeking a spiritual experience. According to the sign (see Figure 3-5) it was “established for the purposes of unceasing prayer.”¹⁰⁸ His time at the Prayer Mountain was a fruitful one, as Samputu states:

When I went to the Prayer Mountain I stopped everything. Women. Drinking. That’s when everything came. Everything was just miracles. I got many contracts when I was on the mountain. I got a contract to sing at the Entebbe zoo every weekend a month for \$1500. It was too much money. On top of that they were giving me money for transport. I was singing traditional Rwandan and Ugandan together. And I was always on the Prayer Mountain, and that contract I got from dreaming. No one gave me that contract, it was only God. I went to the director and I told him “a voice told me to come to see you to get a contract.” He (looking surprised) said “what do you do?” And I said “I sing Ugandan and Rwandan traditional (music)” and he didn’t know what to do, but he accepted.

Also, President Museveni gave me a contract to sing in his state house for like two million [Ugandan Shillings], and a wealthy man named Silas Majyambere gave me a loan for three million, and I paid many many debts.¹⁰⁹ From the point I went to the Prayer

¹⁰⁸ The Africa Prayer Mountain established in 1999 p by John Mulinde, founder of World Trumpet Mission—an interdenominational evangelical organization— and is a popular spiritual destination. The mountain contains several places to camp and even has cabins for rent. It also has an ongoing, rotating group of musicians and singers (worship leaders) and preachers. Many will come on Friday and spend the weekend praying and seeking a spiritual experience. When I visited in July of 2012 on a Friday afternoon, it was relatively calm, but had an influx of people around 5 p.m. when I was leaving.

¹⁰⁹ In 2002, two million Ugandan Shillings was about \$2200 United States.

Mountain, and, from February until December, my life was filled with miracles.¹¹⁰ (Ibid.)



Figure 3-5. Sign from Africa Prayer Mountain.

Nyungura confirms the complete turnaround in Samputu’s life:

When Samputu was drunk he would never pay musicians. When people finished to perform, no money. A lot of people [musicians] went back home to Rwanda [left the band], but I stayed with him. After he got saved, it was a big, big difference. He started paying the musicians first. He could even stay with no money, but he paid musicians.... He paid back the people who he owed money to. He said “I did that when I was drunk, when I wasn’t even saved. But now I’m saved, and I want to pay.” He also got organized. Before he got saved, he didn’t know the beginning and the end. But since he got saved, everything was on the line [in order]. (Nyungura 2014)

¹¹⁰ Silas Majyambere developed one of the first “independent” political parties with his Union Démocratique du Peuple Rwandaise (UPR), while living in Belgium, when Habyarimana opened up the government to multi-partyism in the 1990s. According to Prunier, he accused the Habyarimana administration of “corruption, press intimidation, and arbitrary arrests,” but later “lost all his urge for political reform (some say after obtaining some personal reassurance from Kigali) and moved to Kampala” (Prunier 1995:121).

After gaining some momentum in his performing career, Samputu experienced his most life-changing spiritual moment on the prayer mountain. He had a vision that he would win the Kora award, which is often referred to as the African Grammy, in South Africa. Samputu states: “I got a dream how I was receiving the Kora award. And the voice was telling me how God has given me an award. It was spiritual because I thought Kora was for Koffi Olomide, Youssou N’Dour, and other big stars, but not for me” (Samputu 2012). In order to enter he had to send two videos to the Kora Awards to enter into the competition, so he contracted someone to create a video clip for “Nyaruguru” for about \$1000.¹¹¹ Nyungura, who helped organize the dancers do the editing of the video, recalls that it was filmed in “the bush” and mountainous areas to reflect the original location (a region in southern Rwanda near Butare). “We got people to go dance on the mountains. We did mixed dance [men and women]. We did *intore*. It was a beautiful video.” he recalls (ibid.:2014).¹¹²

While Samputu had already recorded “Nyaruguru” in Canada with Aron Nitunga, Jacques Nyungura recalls that they were looking for another video to submit to the Kora Awards, but couldn’t decide which song to use. Concurrently, Charlie Lubega, the owner of the Ange Noir (Black Angel) nightclub in Kampala, asked Samputu to write a song about his club, as no Ugandan musicians would do so.¹¹³ Samputu subsequently went into the bathroom quickly and wrote the lyrics. When he

¹¹¹ Samputu recalls that “Nyaruguru” was a big hit in Uganda at that time, and that it was often used at weddings of the Rwandan diaspora.

The video of “Nyaruguru” may be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cx-lbgxp92s>.

¹¹² *Intore* means “chosen” and is a male dance depicting the king’s finest warriors. The men wear lion’s hair and use spears and *amayugi* ankle bells.

¹¹³ <http://www.angenoir.net>.

came out Samputu showed the owner the lyrics and told him “I like to do things quick. I want to go to the studio tomorrow and record this” (ibid.:2014b). The owner liked the lyrics agreed and to pay to record the song in the studio. Samputu recalls, “normally you have to show them the song before they pay for the studio, but, he did this because I was famous. I was even on Ugandan TV; I was that big there that he didn’t even need to hear the song.... I didn’t even have the melody until the next day. I composed the song in the studio” (Samputu 2014e). The video was for “Ange Noir” (a mix of *soukous* and *zouk*) and was filmed on the beach of Lake Victoria with women in bathing suits, as well is in the club itself.¹¹⁴ The club owner apparently requested the format, and while he helped organize the shooting of the video, Nyungura refused to be a part of it. “I am saved, and I am married. I can’t be in this video” he recalls telling Samputu (Nyungura 2014). Jacques wasn’t the only person offended by the video. After reading Jacques’s quote when I sent him a draft of this chapter, Samputu remembers almost losing a performance opportunity at a church because of this video:

Can I tell you a story? [laughing hysterically throughout]. I think you will write it. In 2004, I was in America, and I was supposed to go to a Baptist church, maybe it was in Houston, because they wanted my story about how I got saved, you know. Then I spoke on the phone with someone, they said OK. They agreed to invite me.... Then after I confirmed and they paid the [plane] ticket and everything, they said “let us go and google this man to see more about him.” And when they googled, they found women in “Ange Noir.” They said “Oh my God, what are we doing? We cannot invite him to come into the church.” Then this man called me and said “unfortunately, we just found something [the video], and we cannot have you in the church. This is horrible Christianity [witness].” And I said “why?” And they said “you are doing a song on the beach with girls/women naked.” And then I said, “Yes, that’s good. Because that’s my testimony. I want to show

¹¹⁴ The video for “Ange Noir” may be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14YiJtIhGHo>.

you how I was before, and now I got Jesus and I'm saved. I can tell you how I went to witch-doctors and how Jesus saved me. And then they agreed. I convinced them. (Samputu 2014c)

In addition to making the videos to send, Samputu sent his album *Abaana* (Children), which he had been in and out of the studio recording in early 2003. The recording process was financed by a long-time supporter of Samputu's, General Kale Kayihura, the Inspector General of the Police of Uganda. Samputu recalls "he was a big man [important] and a good friend, and he supported me" (Samputu 2014b). Samputu composed all of the songs for the album while he was living on the Prayer Mountain, and recalls "at the Prayer Mountain, I composed a lot of songs. I even have songs I composed that I haven't recorded" (ibid.). Like his other albums, it comprises a variety of styles, but also includes a wider variety of languages and instruments. The title track comprises a triple-meter rhythm (like those found on Nkombo island in Cyangugu province in Western Rwanda—see Figure 3-6), which is performed through a mix of synthesized tuned idiophones (either *ikembe*, a lamellophone, or *amadinda* or *akadidnda*, Ugandan marimbas), various membranophones (congas/*djembe* and snare drum) and untuned idiophones (chimes, ratchet/cog wheel, castanets, hand claps), *iningidi* (a one- to two-stringed bowed chordophone), and layered voices (Sara Ndagire).¹¹⁵ It is also sung in both Kinyarwanda and Runyankole, a Bantu language, similar to Rukiga and Kinyarwanda, of the Ankole

¹¹⁵ According to Gansemans "The *iningidi* originates from Uganda and was only introduced to Rwanda at the beginning of the twentieth century. Some sources mention 1910, while others claim it appeared later, after 1940. One thing is certain: the *iningidi* is not part of the traditional organological patrimony of Rwanda" (DEKKMMA 2003b).

I will delve more into the lyrical content of *Abaana* in chapter Six.

pastoralists of Southwest Uganda.¹¹⁶ Also in the triple meter Nkombo rhythm are “Rehema” (the name of a Muslim girl the singer attempts to court) and its instrumental counterpart on the album “Urusobe” (meaning all instruments together). Instrumentally, it also features similar synthesized percussion sounds (i.e., drum kit—bass drum, snare, toms, hi-hat, and cymbals—bongos, shakers, snare drum, and *ikembe*) in addition to synthesized strings, a traditional whistle called *ifirimbi* (like a police or referee’s whistle), distorted and clean electric guitar, and bass guitar. Linguistically, Samputu and Mickie Wine (brother of the famous Bobi Wine) sing in Luganda, Lingala, Kinyarwanda, and Kiswahili. The reggae songs “Sanyuka” (Be Happy) and “Viens Damser” (Come Dance) share the same background tracks, with the former sung in Luganda and the latter in French. It is performed on acoustic guitar with synthesized drums (drum kit and congas/bongos), electric piano (Fender Rhodes and Roland Jupiter Nu EP sounds), Wurlitzer organ sound, flute, and strings. “Kunda Inka” (literally translated as “I Love Cows,” but referring to beautiful women who walk gracefully like cows) uses the traditional triple-meter Rwandan rhythm, but begins with Samputu whistling in the style of *igikobwakobwa*, of which traditionally is used to call out to cows in the pasture.¹¹⁷



Figure 3-6. Accents for triple-meter rhythm based on traditional music from Nkombo.

¹¹⁶ The Ankole (people of the Ankole region in Western Uganda) comprise two groups: the agricultural Iru and the Hima pastoralists, the latter of whom are thought to be relatives of the early Tutsi settlers in Rwanda.

¹¹⁷ A performance of a young man singing and whistling to a cow in Nyanza, Rwanda (the former home of the Rwandan king) may be heard here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWAjkiUBO-I>.

He also includes American R&B tracks in “Disi Garuka” (a repeat from *Igihe Kirageza*, but this version includes Nitunga rapping and singing in French throughout) and “Tamara,” which is sung in French and Kinyarwanda. The instrumentation of the latter consists almost entirely of synthesized sounds (except electric and acoustic guitar), and includes hip-hop drum sounds (particularly the Roland TR-808 hi-hat and triangle sounds), electric piano (Fender Rhodes), strings, and bass guitar. Finally, “Karibu Mungu” (Close To God) is an East African Gospel song sung in Kiswahili with a *zouk* drum beat, and was a big hit throughout East Africa, especially in Uganda and Kenya, the latter of which has the largest gospel market in the region and is part of the country’s national identity (Kidula 1998).¹¹⁸ The instrumentation is all synthesized sounds or “patches” (as is the norm in East African Gospel music) including brass, nylon-stringed guitar, bass (with envelope filter), and drum kit (standard MIDI).¹¹⁹

After making the videos and submitting them to the Kora Awards for review, Samputu and Nyungura went back to the Prayer Mountain to fast and pray and await the results. In mid-2003 Samputu received an email stating he was nominated for both Most Promising African Artist for “Ange Noir” and Best African Traditional Artist for “Nyaruguru.” While they were ecstatic about being nominated, they lacked funding to travel to South Africa to receive the award. However, after more praying and fasting, as well as informing their friends of their dilemma, Kayihura decided to finance their trip.

¹¹⁸ Gospel music, as I will discuss in Chapter Six, is an essential element of Kenyan national identity.

¹¹⁹ Samputu later remixed this song and recorded the video for this in Washington D.C. in 2006.

After receiving financing, Samputu sent Nyungura (whom had received his visa to while Samputu was still waiting for his) to South Africa to find and prepare Rwandan dancers for their stage performance at the Kora Awards in December. Additionally, since “God had shown him” he was going to win, Samputu asked Jacques to prepare a party at the Rwandan embassy in South Africa.¹²⁰ Samputu eventually got his visa, and on December 4th, two days before the performance, he travelled to South Africa.¹²¹ However, according to Nyungura, Samputu became very ill with incontinence, and was doubtful he would be able to perform. But after spending time in prayer for two hours, Samputu was healed and was able to perform. Nyungura laughingly recalls,

It was terrible. Samputu couldn't stop going to the bathroom. I even went out to get a diaper for him because I knew he wasn't going to be able to perform. But we prayed and prayed, and eventually he was OK. (Nyungura 2014)

And as prophesied, on December 6th Samputu won for Most Promising African Artist (“Ange Noir”), and, after celebrating in South Africa, he returned to the Prayer Mountain in Uganda on December 8th.

America!

After spending about a month on the Prayer Mountain, Samputu and Nyungura decided to take the Kora award (in a limousine) back to Rwanda (Kampala to Kigali is about an eight-hour drive) to celebrate at the French Cultural Center,

¹²⁰ Nyungura also recalls a Pastor Philemon, whom was amazed at their faith in winning, bought his own ticket to South Africa to witness whether or not they would win. As Nyungura states “He said ‘I want to see your God’” (Nyungura 2014).

¹²¹ Samputu and Nyungura both recall being starstruck as artists such as Alicia Keys and Beyoncé were sitting at adjacent tables.

which sponsored the celebration.¹²² As Nyungura remembers saying, “It [the award] is not for us. We represent Rwanda. We need to take the award back to Rwanda” (ibid.:2014). While in Kigali, Samputu began working with another transformative connection in Dr. Glen Hawkes from the United States, whom they had met in Uganda just before winning the Kora award. Hawkes remembers his introduction to Samputu:

My son, Jesse, and I were in Kampala awaiting the arrival of a small group of high school youth from Vermont—youth who would be taking part in a conference we were organizing for students and teachers based in the (then) largest province of Rwanda, Kigali’ngali; the conference would be held in Kabuga, in part sponsored by Kabuga High School. The Ward Brook Center was sponsoring the conference for two youth and two teachers from each of about thirty secondary schools in the (above) province. The purpose of the conference was to discuss ways of combatting HIV-AIDs in Rwanda, and especially dealing with issues of “silence” and “stigmatization” regarding this plague. The conference would be taking place about one week after the arrival of the Vermont high school contingent. Since Jesse and I had been in Rwanda a couple of times before, and we were already in touch with many youth there, we were aware of J.P. Samputu’s work, his popularity, and some of his specific songs, like “Wari Uri He Mana? (“God Where Were You?”), and had seen Samputu’s pictures on his CD, etc. So, at a small restaurant in Kampala, when Jesse spotted J.P. with a small group of other Africans, we took the opportunity to introduce ourselves; and we also then extended an invitation for J.P. to come and perform for and with the conference scheduled for Kabuga. (G. Hawkes 2014)

Samputu performed in the concert a few days after he made his triumphant return to Rwanda after winning the Kora award in, as Jesse Hawkes remembers, “a big and bold white limo” (Hawkes J. 2014). Jesse also recalls Samputu’s ability to connect

¹²² It is important to note that, as of the writing of this dissertation, the Rwandan government, despite all that he has done for the RPF and Rwanda in general, still has not officially recognized all of his international awards and achievements. However, when I ask him how he feels about this, Samputu brushes it off by saying “It’s good that they don’t do that because that means I get a double blessing from God. The first blessing is that God has given me the awards, and the second is that God blesses in other ways because I have not boasted about it. So I’m glad they don’t acknowledge me.” (Samputu 2014g).

with his audience at the concert, even though it was for a small event for high school kids:

I think that he really looks at his audience and he connects with them very powerfully. He is expressive the way that high school students are expressive in Rwanda. Not the way older people are (usually) reserved. He's in the middle of this parking lot in at the conference in the middle of this village and he's just blasting away. He just gave it his all. (J. Hawkes 2014)

After working with Samputu at the concert and developing a relationship with him, Glenn Hawkes invited him to come to the United States to stay at his home in Vermont to develop a career there:

As we learned more about J.P. and his work, we also learned about his wife and three children living in Montreal, CA... and how JP had spent quite a bit of time in Montreal, and had cut some cd's there, etc. And since we were just across the border, we thought it would be very good to invite J.P. to come an visit, perform, etc. in Vermont, and beyond—eventually in many parts of the USA (over two to three years). (G. Hawkes 2014)

Samputu subsequently received a diplomatic visa to the United States, and moved to Vermont to live at Hawkes's home. When Samputu first arrived, Hawkes arranged some performances for him at local schools and throughout the Northeast (as far as Washington, D.C., to visit the Rwandan embassy there). He also spent some time coming up with ideas for new songs with Samputu. Two songs in particular that Hawkes had input on, "Karame Mwana" (Cherish the Children) and "Ten Years Remembering" (written for the tenth-year anniversary of the genocide) would make it on to Samputu's subsequent album, *Testimony from Rwanda*.

In fall of 2004, Samputu (after Hawkes's introduction) began recording with Stephen McArthur, an independent "world music" producer from Vermont, who had been recording artists from almost every region of the world (North and South

America, The Arab World, Africa, East and South Asia, Eastern and Central Europe, and Oceania) since 1990 (AllMusic 2014). The recording was done in pieces and on a “shoestring” budget (Hawkes G. 2014), but McArthur was firmly in charge. Hawkes also recalls Samputu having a lot of disagreements with McArthur over the direction of the album, as he wanted it to be more religiously themed, while McArthur was concerned with marketing to a mass audience. Samputu’s longtime producer, Aron Nitunga, whom Samputu insisted on flying in to record from Toronto (and unfortunately was not credited on the liner notes of the album despite playing all of the guitar parts), recalls the process:

We recorded everything in Montpelier on Cubase [Digital Audio Software] and a Mackie [mixing] board. I played most everything except for the percussion. I didn’t have full-control over the production. Steve McArthur was the producer and he was the one with the recording deal, and he was engineering, and I wasn’t comfortable with that. I was trying to be kind and distant and let him do his thing, and what he thought he knew, let him do it.... That album, production wise, is not really what it should be compared to the rest of the albums we’ve done in Jean-Paul’s career. So that robbed me from giving what I have in me, and to make it more rich. (Nitunga 2012)

And after asking him what he would have done differently, he replied:

I would have done more acoustic guitars. I would have made the guitars sound more traditional with the melodies and the sound... more like *ikembe*. I would have produced voices... to make it rich and more perfect—doubling the backing vocals... worked on panning the instruments and the voices. (Ibid.:2012)

Nitunga also had some creative differences with Glenn Hawkes during some of the performances in Vermont, regarding expectations of Western audiences. Hawkes recalls:

Samputu was performing at the Barre Opera House, and there was a big crowd there. Beautiful place. (could probably google the exact date he performed there). On both the CD and also in some of the

performances at that time, Aron Nitunga was assisting Samputu. By the time they were performing there, Nitunga was wanting to have more of the stage; and one of the songs featured there at the Opera House was his singing a love song about himself. Generally I think the reaction was very positive, and Samputu was happy at the time, but I was back stage, and when Aron was taking center stage (he might have been starting another one of his songs) I protested with Samputu, saying, pretty much exact words: “JP, people come to hear YOU, your story, not Aron’s—you should get out there; you are the center with the stories coming out of Rwanda, not Aron's love songs.” (G. Hawkes 2014).

It seems to me that these differences of opinion are tied to a Western need to promote the exotic in “World Music” markets. John Connell and Chris Gibson summarize this in their article “World Music: Deterritorializing Place and Identity”:

World music acts as both a metaphor for, and agent of, global cultural-economic change. ‘World music’ defines both a subject category and branding exercise, intended to increase the appeal of certain commodities: consequently, through world music, discourses of the ‘global’ and ‘local’ are produced and disseminated. World music relies on its being perceived as both global and ‘distant’, with connections to specific places. (Connell and Gibson 2004:344)

Hawkes's and McArthur’s infatuation with Rwandan “authenticity” stems from their desire to market Samputu as both global (i.e., his association with the genocide being a fixture of the global media, as well as use of *djembe* rather than *ingoma*, and guitar mimicking the *inanga* rather than using the sound of the instrument itself) and distant (i.e., Rwanda as a marketing tool to generate fetishistic interest, stripped-down “acoustic” instrumentation to create a sense of the authentic exotic, and Hawkes’s

insistence that Samputu's stories should trump Nitunga's, albeit well-performed, love song).¹²³

In addition to creative musical differences, Samputu feels he was slighted regarding remuneration, as he currently makes no money off of current album sales, and the only money he made was to sell the CDs at his shows for fifteen dollars (of which he had to pay McArthur five). Additionally, Samputu states that he gets no mechanical royalties from radio play.¹²⁴ Every time I speak to Samputu about this, he seems very bitter and angry over what transpired on the business end of the album, even though he was very happy to "have an album recorded in America" (Samputu 2012).¹²⁵

As opposed to Samputu's other records, "Testimony" is more "acoustic" in that there are no synthesized sounds, and, as Nitunga mentioned, it has a much "thinner" sound than his other albums. Nitunga played all of the guitar parts, while Samputu (with some input from Hawkes) composed all of the songs and performed the vocal parts. They were accompanied on *djembe* by Ghanaian artist Koffi Mensa, who also performed with Samputu for many concerts in the Northeast at that time.

¹²³ To be clear, I'm not insinuating that Hawkes, in contrast to McArthur, was upset based on issues of mass marketing. However, I believe he was reacting, in part, based on a typical Western need to feature the "real" or "authentic other." He was also likely upset because he cares so much for Samputu, and viewed Nitunga's antics as a type of self-promotion in direct competition with the singer.

¹²⁴ Mechanical royalties are monies paid by a producer, radio/TV stations, or any other media outlet to the artists and authors of a copyrighted recording.

¹²⁵ I want to note that Steven McArthur has not responded to any correspondence I have sent to him, and, thus, I haven't been able to speak to him about his contract with Samputu. However, given the fact that there are numerous examples of African artists being taken advantage of financially in the "World Music" market (i.e., Solomon Linda and Manu Dibangu, to name a few), Samputu's situation is not unique. It's also possible that McArthur may have thought the arrangement was completely fair, given his potential for loss and need for recoupment before Samputu received additional royalties. Unfortunately, further investigation into this matter is well beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Many of the songs are acoustic versions of previously recorded pieces (e.g., “Tamara,” “Rehema,” Ngarambe,” “Twararutashye,” and “Mana Wari Uri He”) with only acoustic and electric guitars, bass guitar, shaker, *djembe* and voice(s). The rest of the album consists of popular and traditional Rwandan sounds mixed with Congolese *soukous* and North American-style acoustic popular music (it mostly reminds me of what would have resulted if Samputu had performed on MTV Unplugged—a concert series which began in 1989, when the television station produced performances of popular music artists playing solely on acoustic instruments).¹²⁶ “Aliokoka” (He Is Saved), a piece which praises Samputu’s conversion to Christianity (the singer boasts about this and calls out the names of friends who are “saved”) and “Tuzagera” (When We Go To Heaven), which is about how people will dance and sing in heaven, are the only songs on the album to be performed in true Congolese style (in duple meter with guitar, *djembe*, and voice). In contrast, “Singizwa” (Praise Be To God), performed in 5/8 (see Figure 2-2) meter and including only *amayugi* and voices (singing in Kinyarwanda), is by far the most traditional Rwandan piece. “Migabo” (Courageous Warrior) in quadruple meter is another example of an *indirimbo z'ingabo*, but with much more emphasis on Twa style singing coupled with blues inflected distorted electric guitar. “Rwanda Rwiza” (Beautiful Rwanda) is in triple meter with the vocals mimicking the *ibyvugo* (boasting) style of singing found in various styles of Rwandan traditional music. Additionally in both “Migabo” and “Rwanda Rwiza,” Nitunga (on both electric and acoustic guitars) mimics the traditional *inanga* trough

¹²⁶ See <http://www.mtv.com/music/unplugged/main.jhtml#fbid=18dRTHs0lx6>.

zither by employing a palm muting technique on the strings.¹²⁷ Other instruments include *djembe* and Hammond organ with Leslie speaker, of which the latter adds another blues-like quality to the sound.¹²⁸ “Ten Years Remembering,” a solemn piece remembering the suffering of the genocide survivors, appears twice on the album, once in an a cappella version sung almost solely in Kinyarwanda, and the other sung with guitars (also mimicking the *inanga*), tambourine, and bass guitar with an additional “rap” in English by Nitunga. Both versions alternate between free (pulsed and unpulsed) and duple meter. Finally, “Karame Mwana” (Cherish the Children) is a duple meter acoustic pop ballad (guitar, *djembe*, and voice) inspired by Samputu’s belief that empowering the children was the only way to pave a positive future for Rwanda, as many in the country then (and now for that matter) were filled with hatred and the desire for revenge. An additional inspiration for the lyrical content came from Samputu’s stay at Hawke’s home. Hawkes recalls,

The motto of our center (Ward Brook) is “All children are the children of all,” a quote from W. E. B. DuBois (1906). And this fit very well with Samputu’s work—he emphasized doing good things for children, and with children. Quite naturally seeing Rwanda’s future in them—so many adults gone and messed up.... “*Karame*” being a traditional word/response that children would give to adults when the adults asked them to do something.... So, this is kind of a reversal in the psychology here.... adults listening and responding to children. G. Hawkes 2014).

Samputu adds to the DuBois quote in the latter part of the song, repeating it as a chorus: “All the children, are the children of all. Hold them so high. Don’t let them

¹²⁷ Interestingly, Samputu often refers to *ibyvugo* as “Rwandan rap,” which is appropriate given that rapping in the United States likely descends from “toasting” in Jamaica (made popular in the United States by DJ Kool Herc), which, in turn, is related to boasting found throughout Africa in oral traditions, literature, and music.

¹²⁸ Samputu has also commented on the blues like quality of the song. As we will discuss in Chapter Five, his inspiration for much of this blues like sound comes from the traditional singer Bwanakweli.

fall.” The album garnered several favorable reviews, most notably from Banning Eyre of Afro-Pop Worldwide, which gave Samputu momentum to establish a career in the broader United States.

After the release of the album, Samputu continued performing in various venues (mostly public and private elementary, middle, and high schools) in the northeastern United States to support himself (though he recalls that they didn’t pay that much). Samputu also established a strong friendship with another famous Rwandan pastor, Apostle Paul Gitwaza of Zion Temple, in the United States.¹²⁹ Gitwaza was aware that Samputu was in the U.S and was “saved” (which was rather exciting for the evangelical community, given that he was a big star) and sought him out. Samputu met with him at a worship conference in South Bend, Indiana (Samputu remembers singing “Karibu Mungu,” which was still a big gospel hit in the East African Christian community), and convinced him to return to Rwanda (and paid his ticket there) to be part of the music team of his church and to witness (share his testimony about being “saved”) to the Rwandan community in Kigali. Samputu subsequently returned to Rwanda and stayed in Gitwaza’s home, where he advised and mentored him spiritually.

Concurrently, Samputu was one of only two African artists (Yossou N’Dour) to perform in July of 2004 at the World Culture Open, a non-profit organization

¹²⁹ Zion Temple International, an independent Pentecostal church founded by the Apostle Paul Gitwaza (also a gospel singer) and based out of Kigali, has several branches worldwide, including other African countries (Burundi, DR Congo, and Tanzania), Europe (Belgium, Denmark, and the UK), and North America (Edmonton, Montreal, and Atlanta). Apostle Gitwaza’s wife, Pastor Angelique Nyinawingeli Gitwaza, currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia (with their three children) and serves the congregation there while Apostle Gitwaza tours around the world. I have been to Zion Temple in Kigali, and I would consider it a “mega-church” due to the fact that it averages over 2000 congregants each Sunday.

whose members describe themselves as “a global cooperative of private and public sectors dedicated to facilitating creative intercultural platforms for people to engage, enjoy, embrace, and be enriched together through interactive cultural exchange and collaboration” (World Culture Open 2014). Because this would be a highly publicized event, Samputu wanted to have an entire troupe for the performance to show off Rwanda’s little-known (at that point) traditions. However, he had a conflict as to which type of musicians to bring. Samputu recalls,

You know, I cannot explain it. I think it was spiritual. It was God. Remember when I came back with Gitwaza [to Rwanda]? I had a [spiritual] war. I had eight musicians [live band with drum kit and synthesizers] to go to the World Cultural Open, but I had that dream again: “You have to go with *inanga* and *umuduri*.” God wanted me to use those traditional instruments. (Samputu 2012)

After resigning himself to what he believed was God’s will, he called his good friend and colleague Jacques Nyungura to put together a troupe of three people who could play all of Rwanda’s main traditional instruments (i.e., *inanga*, *umuduri*—musical bow—*ingoma*, and *amakondera*) as well as dance. He initially invited Nyungura to come to the United States with him in early 2004, but Nyungura was just getting over a three-week bout of malaria, and declined. However, after he had spent some months recovering, along with the prospect of performing at Lincoln Center in New York City, Nyungura decided to help Samputu. Nyungura happened to have two very good musicians (along with his wife and daughter) staying in his home in Uganda: Donat Nnyabenda (who had previously toured with Samputu in Uganda) and Vincent Nsengiyumva. Nyabenda and Nsengiyumva fit Samputu’s needs, but because they were both Twa many of his friends were critical of the choice. Samputu remembers some of them making derogatory statements such as “You can’t take pygmies to the

U.S. They will bring you problems” (Samputu 2014c).¹³⁰ While Samputu was also unsure about Nsengiyumva because he had never worked with him before, he shrugged off the racist remarks and invited them anyway. Knowing that the Twa were always looked down upon, he was even encouraged to help them raise their class status. Also, Nyungura convinced Samputu by agreeing to take responsibility for Nsengiyumva, as well as telling him “You need *inanga*, *umuduri*, and *ingoma*. You can work out the rest later” (Nyungura 2014).

After securing visas for the three musicians (along with Nyungura’s wife and child), and receiving a loan for the airplane tickets from Pastor Paul Gitwaza of Zion Temple church in Kigali (Gitwaza would subsequently be repaid by the WCO), the musicians arrived in Vermont to begin rehearsing (along with Aron Nitunga and Koffi Mensa) for their seven-minute performance spot in the WCO in September.¹³¹ In New York, they were starstruck as they were able to meet and share the stage with several famous musicians. Samputu recalls, “performing in Lincoln Center the first time to come to America with Wycliffe Jean and Yossou N’Dour and all of those stars. It was too big for me” (Samputu 2012).

Excited about their success at the WCO, the group returned to Vermont, created a press-kit, and began playing at several schools, libraries, and churches. Samputu recalls, “In Vermont, people loved me. We performed in every middle and high school in Vermont. Every school told another school ‘ahh, you know this group, they are amazing’ because it was their first time to see [Rwandan] drumming”

¹³⁰ As I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, the Twa are the only “ethnic” group in Rwanda for whom it is acceptable to discriminate against publicly. And because many of them are poor and lack access to education, they are often stereotyped as stupid beggars and thieves.

¹³¹ Clips of the show may be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaoLL-IZpZA>.

(Samputu 2012). It was also at this time that they began developing their standard show set. Rwandan *ingoma* performances can be very exciting, as the sheer sound is powerful. However, because there were only three players (Nsengiyumva, Nyungura, and Nyabenda), they created new styles of choreography (i.e., jumping, smiling, dancing, and running around the drums), many of which Nyungura learned when he grew up in Burundi, to make it more exciting for Western audiences. According to Nyungura, it was a combination of rehearsing and improvisation:

When we came to the U.S. we didn't have many *ingoma*, so we had to make it exciting. In Rwanda, they don't jump or make moves like we did here. Some of it we made-up here, but some I learned when I was in Burundi. They don't jump over the drums in Rwanda.... We would rehearse, but we all knew how to drum, so sometimes we would follow Jean-Paul (his energy) and make things up. When we saw the audience get excited then we knew what we were doing was good.

An example of one of these scaled-down performances (along with a live version of “Tuzagera”) may be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv0r9YyldPE> (recorded by Robin Parrish at the World Vision-sponsored area at the 2007 Gospel Music Association Awards Week). At 1:44, Nyungura begins performing Burundian-style choreography. An example of feeding off of Samputu's energy begins at 5:08, when he will jump and say “Hallelujah” (among other words) and interact with the drummers. Both the jumping choreography and the Congolese rhythm adapted to *ingoma* are almost non-existent in a traditional Rwandan setting. Samputu recalls the difficulties of blending the traditional instruments and the importance of rehearsal time. He states,

It was my first time to play with *inanga* on the stage with acoustic guitar with Aron (Nitunga). It is only in minor, and when I play with *umuduri* it has to be in major.... We had always to practice. That is

what we always did in Vermont. It was winter, and we had to stay inside a lot. It helped us to build a show and a team.¹³²

Despite benefitting from the extended rehearsal time, given their lack of experience in cold weather surviving winter was very challenging for them. Glenn Hawkes was spending a lot of time in Boston with his elderly mother, so Samputu and the group (calling themselves Ingeli) were on their own in a difficult living situation, even for people used to such conditions. Hawkes remembers,

As I was on a shoestring (budget)... there were things that needed fixing at the place like the water pump, for example. And [there] also was the need for heat. I had always heated my place there with 2 wood stoves and about eight cords of wood per winter. So, you've got four to five Africans there in a house, hard winter setting in, no water and little heat (there was a stream and a pond where the water was available, and there was a gas stove for heating the water). Also the place is several miles from "civilization," so nobody can just go to the corner store. (G. Hawkes 2014)

Nyungura also recalls the living conditions:

I kept thinking "This is America?" We had to chop wood to make heat in the house [for the gas stove]. We didn't know how to chop the wood, but Vincent was good at that, so he showed us. We had to go to the stream to wash our dishes. Can you imagine? It was very hard for us. (Nyungura 2014).

While life in Vermont in 2004 was rough, due to all of the press they received and the connections they made as a result of their success at the WCO 2005 was much more lucrative for the group. They began traveling more outside of Vermont and the Northeast, and began making more money for their performances (including the aforementioned Houston church). Nyungura remembers one of the best performances they played in the United States at that time:

¹³² Additionally, Nitunga was in and out of the United States touring with different groups, so Samputu had to improve his guitar playing. And when he was unable to play and sing certain songs (i.e., "Aliokoka"), Nyungura, who also plays guitar, filled in for him.

I remember we played at this church in Tennessee. They paid for the tickets and everything, and when we got there they met us at the airport with a limousine and, when we started to take the drums, they said “no, let us take care of this,” and they luggage and drums for us. Then we went to the hotel to rest, but after they came with another car to take us to the concert and took our drums for us. This time we said “no we will stay with the drums because we have to prepare them.”¹³³ Then they took us to the church where they had a separate room for us with things to eat. This was the first time I thought “Ah, now we are in America. (Nyungura 2014)

In addition to more lucrative performances in the United States, they also received contracts for shows in Europe, most notably the World Folk Dance Festival in Mallorca, Spain, and the Agrigento Almond Festival in Sicily (though booked in 2005, technically the performance was in early 2006).¹³⁴ Samputu recalls that this all happened because of his performance at the WCO:

They invited us to Italy because they saw us in New York, and whenever they see drumming and dancing, they always invite us. They invited us to Italy because they saw us in Spain. We spent all of 2005 touring all of the U.S., Canada, and Europe. (Samputu 2014b)

One facilitator of these performances was his good friend Susan Gremeaux, who played an active role in selecting the group for the WCO, as she became essentially a de facto agent (though Samputu still booked many of the performances himself) and even helped the group move into their own apartment in New Hampshire.

Because the group was in a good fiscal situation, Samputu decided to record what he calls his “first” album, as he considers his other albums just a collection of songs. The album entitled *Voices From Rwanda* is played solely on traditional

¹³³ They often use hair dryers to make sure the drums are tuned to the correct pitch, as *ingoma* aren't like *djembes* in that they may be tuned by tightening the heads through a type of cord.

¹³⁴ Press release for Spain may be found here: <http://noticias.interbusca.com/cultura/el-musico-africano-samputu-actua-manana-en-el-auditorium-de-palma-a-beneficio-de-aspanob-20050331163343.html>, and for Agrigento here: <http://www.provincia.agrigento.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/1118>.

instruments (*inanga, umuduri, ingoma, and inigiri*) with vocals and guitar, and is by his standards, his greatest work. He financed the album himself (the cost was approximately eight- to ten-thousand dollars), and, according to Samputu, he is the only popular music artist to have recorded *inanga, umuduri, ingoma, and inigiri* together in one album.¹³⁵ Samputu's vision for the album is the ultimate fulfillment of the command he believed God gave him on the Africa Prayer Mountain in 2003. He states,

I had this dream where I heard this voice telling me that "you need to praise God with what God gave Rwandans," which is *inanga, umuduri, ingoma*.... When white people/colonialists came they brought piano and other things, but we had our own instruments, but when they came we started to praise God with pianos and organs, and after we forgot about ours. But I always tell people that, if God wanted to hear piano he would go to America or Canada, but when he comes to Rwanda, he doesn't expect you to give him (piano). He's already got them. It's like when God is in America, Canada, or France he takes hamburger or pizza, and when he comes to Rwanda, we give him the same thing he just got in America. But when he comes to Rwanda, he needs beans, potatoes, fufu... because God's food is our praise and worship.¹³⁶ (Samputu 2012)

Voices From Rwanda contains twelve tracks (eleven new, with "Abaana" the only repeat), and is solely a neo-traditional gospel album, in that all of the lyrical content is religious (Christian) in nature, and is performed almost solely on traditional instruments.¹³⁷ All of the new tracks are sung in Kinyarwanda and English and recorded in New Hampshire (with the exception of "He Made Us One," which was recorded in Washington D.C.). "Yesu Wange" (My Jesus), a call-and-response style

¹³⁵ Other archivists/ethnomusicologists (e.g., Jos Gansemans) have recorded compilations of live performances, but, in concordance with Samputu's statement, I have never heard of a Rwandan artist who has combined all of these instruments together.

¹³⁶ Fufu is a type of carbohydrate substance made from manioc flour, and is analogous to ugali (found in Kenya and other parts of East Africa) but less firm and doughy, and used as a utensil similarly to how Ethiopians eat with *injera* (sourdough pancake).

¹³⁷ I will discuss the theoretical issues surrounding neo-traditional music in chapter four.

song in minor mode with the Nkombo rhythm, sets the tone for the rest of the album with its Christian themes mixed with traditional rhythms and instruments. The instrumentation consists of *ingoma* and shaker (performed by Nyungura, Nyabenda, and Nsengiyumva), *inanga* (performed by Nsengiyumva), and acoustic guitar (performed by Nitunga).¹³⁸ Samputu begins with an *ibyvugo* (boast) about the majesty and works of Jesus, and the others (Nsengiyumva, Nyabenda, and Nyungura) respond with both “Yesu Wange” and “Alleluia.”

“Amakondera,” named after the traditional trumpets (made from cow’s horns), is in simple triple meter (see Figure 3-7) in which the vocals (performed by Nsengiyumva) are accompanied by an *amakondera* ensemble (a total of three instruments played by Nsengiyumva, Nyabenda, and Nyungura) and *ingoma*. Traditionally, this is performed on the *ingaraba* (hand-struck conical-shaped membranophone), which accompanies the *amakondera* ensemble, but the group didn’t have access to that instrument in the United States, so they played *ingoma* with their hands along with the traditional with sticks called *imirishyo*.¹³⁹

“Umukiza Araje” (The Savior is Coming), is a duple-meter song featuring the *umuduri* one-stringed musical bow and acoustic guitar. The vocalists perform in call and response fashion with Nsengiyumva taking the role as caller and Nyungura and Samputu responding with “araje, Yesu araje” (coming, Jesus is coming). Samputu also imports some South African *isicathamiya* style (à la Ladysmith Black Mambazo) in his “Mwami” (King), an a cappella call-and-response vocal piece with European

¹³⁸ Nsengiyumva plays the *inanga* on all tracks.

¹³⁹ I will further detail these rhythms and timbral changes in Chapter Five.

functional (major) harmony (I-IV-V).¹⁴⁰ “Iraganje” (Victorious) and “Mu Ijuru” (Into Heaven) are both intimate vocal pieces accompanied by *inanga*, with the former being solely in a minor key, and the latter containing a mixture of major and minor.

There are also two instrumental drumming tracks labeled “Ingoma” and “Ingoma 2,” with Nsengiyumva, Nyabenda, and Nyungura displaying the routines on four *ingoma* (one *ishakwe*—the highest pitched—one mid-pitched *inyahura*, and two *igihumurizo*—the deepest pitched (DEKKMMA 2003a) they developed for the performances in the United States Nyungura recalls the difficulty of recording these pieces, and how it likely altered their performance style:

We had to do it four or five times because they couldn’t get it right (the levels). Sometimes it was too loud and sometimes too soft. We couldn’t just play how we usually do. (Nyungura 2014).

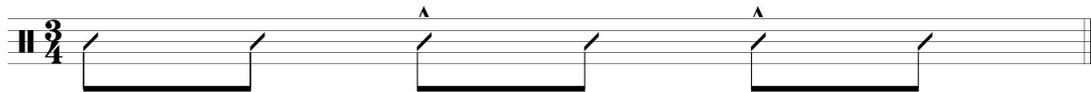


Figure 3-7. Simple triple accents found in “Amakondera.”

Perhaps the most innovative piece on the album is “Psalm 150,” for which he would later win first place in the “World Music” category in the International Songwriting Competition. It is, like “Gisa,” an a cappella *indirimbo z'ingabo* song in the Twa pygmy *intwatwa* style. Samputu overlays over fifteen different vocal tracks to capture the polyphonic texture of the style, but instead of being a praise song to an individual or ancestor (i.e., Lyangombe or Nyabingi), the lyrics are focused on the Judeo-Christian God, referred to as *Imana* in Rwanda. The ultimate track, “He Made Us One” (the only song with English lyrics), is a song in Rwandan triple meter based on

¹⁴⁰ Samputu did not purposely attempt to copy the *isicathamiya* sound, but merely re-created what he was hearing. This is likely because, like Congolese *soukous*, South African (Zulu) a cappella vocal music has proliferated various markets in Africa and abroad.

the Rwandan version of the call-and-response song “Ya Tugiz Umwe” (author unknown). Samputu remembers hearing the song in Rwandan churches (both Catholic and Protestant) in the 1980s. The lyrics of the response are:

- (1) *Ndashimimana 'ya tugiz umwe.*
I thank God that he made us one.
- (2) *Nyamara ku bwacu ntitwari kumenyana*
Because without him we wouldn't know each other. (Samputu 2006b)

Samputu, however, re-wrote an introduction with English lyrics (sung by D.C.-based singer Amikaeyla Gaston) rooted in the words of Ecclesiastes 4:12:

- (1) A three stranded cord of the ones once forsaken.
- (2) A three stranded cord for the lives once taken.
- (3) A cord of three is not easily broken.
- (4) A cord of three shall live. (Ibid.)¹⁴¹

The three-stranded cord is best interpreted as the three groups in Rwanda and their need to band together in order for Rwanda to be strong and avoid another genocide. Samputu is careful to emphasize the interconnectedness of the three groups through a metaphor rather than detailing each by name, as this could contribute to “ethnic division” amongst Rwandans in both the country and the diaspora.

The album, which still hasn't been technically “released” as it was an independent recording, met, interestingly, with mixed reviews. On one hand, Samputu says he sold more copies of this album than any other album thus far, and that Americans very much appreciate the album. But on the other hand, many Rwandans, from both Christian and traditional religious perspectives, have seen this

¹⁴¹ Ecclesiastes 4:12 states: “Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (NIV).

re-contextualization of traditional music as sacrilege. Samputu recalls being criticized by some members of several churches because music used in ancestor worship is considered music of the “devil” or demonic worship (Samputu finds this ridiculous), and also by traditionalists who believe he is desecrating the style used to venerate their ancestors. Additionally, because of its untamed sound it was a little too “distant” for the world music community at the time. This is reflected in Banning Eyre’s review of the album on Afro-Pop Worldwide. Eyre first acknowledges the tension Samputu endured to make *Testimony from Rwanda*:

Samputu poured much of that knowledge into the Afro-folk songs—many of them in English—on his debut international CD, *Testimony from Rwanda*. The reception for that album taught him much about a more arcane subject, the fickle tastes of the world music marketplace. While many, including this reviewer, praised *Testimony*, there was a call for a more distinctive Rwandan flavor in the music, for the earthy roots quality that came across in Samputu’s exhilarating [*sic*] live performances with his four-piece group. (Eyre 2014)

However, he then simultaneously praises the work of the album, but also longs for Samputu’s return to the “tamer” style recorded on his previous album:

This is a beautiful set of songs rendered with depth and elegance. Should Samputu return to the crossover direction of his earlier release—and I hope and expect he will—let no one say this is a man who has abandoned his roots. (Ibid. 2014)

In many ways, *Voices From Rwanda* represents the liminal spaces in which Samputu resides, settled in neither the “traditional” culture nor the cosmopolitan “West.”

Another challenge Samputu faced in this album was the unhappiness among the members of the group over credit. Nyungura recalls the issues during the recording process:

We were always in battles during this record. It was spiritual. Nyabenda and Nsengiyumva didn’t want to go to the studio. They

wanted to just stay at home. Samputu would get mad and yell, but I told him, “Let me deal with them, because they don’t want to listen to you.” So I would have to convince them to go to the studio. (Nyungura 2014)

Both Nyungura and Samputu believe the problems in the group stemmed from Nsengiyumva and Nyabenda wanting to share the stage and the royalties from the album. “They wanted to be stars themselves,” Samputu recalls (Samputu 2014a), and they also wanted a percentage of the album sales. However, Samputu refused to acquiesce to their demands, and this eventually led to Nsengiyumva’s and Nyabenda’s departure from the group in 2006 to pursue their own solo careers. The two would still return for performances as needed, but Samputu would rely on Nyungura, as well as other musicians in the North American diaspora (e.g., Jean-Claude Shambusho from Montreal and even his wife Henriette from time to time) for full-time touring duties.

The period from 2006 through most of 2007 was essentially an extension of 2005, in that Samputu and Nyungura et al. continued to perform throughout North America and Europe. However, there were several marked differences in Samputu’s professional direction. First, he added an agent, Margie T. Farmer, to help with the booking duties, though he still booked larger engagements based on his own connections (e.g. Montreal Jazz Festival and Saddleback Church). She helped him book a week as a “World Rhythms Fellow” at the University of Dayton and a concert at the University of Arizona, and he was featured at WOMEX (the premiere world music showcase in Madrid) as well as a series of smaller venues including schools and public libraries (Samputu recalls that he even made the initial contacts himself for these performances, but Farmer followed up). However, Samputu had a tenuous

relationship with her because she took twenty percent of the income from his performances. He recalls, “Normally agents are only supposed to take ten or fifteen percent, but she took advantage of me.” (Samputu 2012). This tension would ultimately result in the dissolution of their relationship in late 2007. Being taken advantage of seemed to be a theme with Samputu in the United States, as even his booking with Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church (a mega-church in Southern California) was a result of Samputu finding out that the church had used his music without his permission in one of their videos about their mission work in Rwanda. Additionally, when Samputu arrived to perform, he was not a featured act, but a sideshow during a conference, and his “reward” was that he was able to sell CDs without paying a percentage of the sales to Saddleback. However, Samputu, understanding that connections are often more important than finances, as well as to show them “how Christians should behave” (Samputu 2014d), took this whole process in stride, hoping something good would come from it in the future.

He also developed a relationship with Yiping Zhou of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which was one of the sponsors of FESPAD (Festival of Pan-African Dance) in Rwanda in 2006. Samputu had connected Zhou, who was interested in economic development through the arts (creative economics), with Minister of Culture, Youth, and Sport, Joe Habineza in order to help create the event. He then commissioned Samputu to write a theme song for the conference to reflect Zhou’s vision for the future. The UN Chronicle describes the purpose of the event:

Only recently has creativity been so widely recognized as a source of wealth and as a way of realizing the Millennium Development Goals

of promoting gender equality and developing a global partnership for development. “Creative economy is the effective use of creativity as a source of wealth, the means of generating employment and as a significant factor in poverty reduction,” said Yiping Zhou.... (Witcher 2006:70)

Samputu, who performed several songs at the festival, further describes his interest in taking part in the conference:

“My vision as an artist—since 1994 after the genocide changed my life forever—I started to use my music to reconcile Rwanda, to heal Rwandans, to educate children, because I believe that children are the future. I used my music to empower and encourage, because I believe that music speaks directly to the heart. With all of the events and meetings, I feel encouraged, because my music is also used to promote peace, love and reconciliation.” (Ibid:71).

The song “We Are Beautiful,” which Samputu performed along with a children’s choir during FESPAD, is reminiscent of philanthropic pop ballads such as “We Are The World” (1984) by USA for Africa and “Do They Know It’s Christmas Time” (1984) by Band Aid, as well as Michael Jackson’s uplifting “Heal The World” (1991) and “Will You Be There” (1993), and it is sung mostly in English with Samputu improvising some words in Kinyarwanda during the ultimate chorus. The song was produced by Zhou’s son Joe, and features vocalist Frances (unable to obtain her last name) The lyrical content reflects Samputu’s notion that the children are the future:

“We Are Beautiful”

Verse One

- (1) Some say, the world is lost today.
- (2) Some say, the future is dark and grey.
- (3) Not us, not here.
- (4) We do not fear, we are beautiful.
- (5) See us beautiful.

Chorus

- (6) We will live, We will love.
- (7) We will learn, We will grow.
- (8) We will sing, We will dance
- (9) Until all people know.
- (10) We are the future of humanity.
- (11) We are the world in our community,
- (12) We are beautiful.
- (13) See how beautiful,
- (14) We are one. (Samputu and Frances 2006)¹⁴²

Following this theme, another marked change was that Samputu began focusing his attention on philanthropic works. He had always been a generous person when it came to those in need. Nyungura jestfully recalls that even when Samputu was drunk, “he was a good person. If he saw someone that needed something, he would just give him money or buy him something to eat. The problem was always to pay musicians...” (Nyungura 2014). In December of 2006, Samputu, along with Christian singer/songwriter Meme Stephens from New Hampshire and Washington D.C. based gospel artist David Griffiths, raised money (through performances at churches) to bring Christmas presents to impoverished Children throughout East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda), and they went on to perform a series of

¹⁴² Samputu cannot remember the name of the woman who helped him write the English lyrics to and sing on the song. I have taken the name Frances from <http://www.igihe.com/imyidagaduro/muzika/abahanzi/samputu/indirimbo-208/we-are-beautiful>, which credits her as a vocalist. However, the reliability of the information on this site is questionable.

concerts. Samputu summed up his desire to help orphaned and vulnerable children (OVCs) in his statement to *The Connection* (a local news source for the Northern Virginia area): "This is the first time for these orphans to celebrate Christmas.... That's when families get together, but orphans, who do they see?" And further, "This tour is also to educate others about caring for the orphans,"... who is their father and mother? It is us" (The Connection 2006).

It was at this time that I met Samputu, and invited him to perform at my local church (Emmaus Anglican Church) in Catonsville, MD, to raise money for his cause. We also discussed his desire to bring Rwandan orphans to the United States to perform and raise money to create a music school in Rwanda. At first, I was merely interested in advising him about this type of project, but after subsequent discussions, I agreed to help him form the organization Mizero Children of Rwanda in March of 2007.¹⁴³ Eight months later, twelve Rwandan youth from ages eight to sixteen were set to arrive to tour the United States.

To accomplish this goal, the organization was indebted to Samputu's connection with North Carolina-based non-profit organization Lake Eden Arts Festival (LEAF), which worked with Samputu to supply drums to a group of OVCs (living on the streets) in Kigali whom Samputu had been mentoring. Samputu had originally been a guest performer at the LEAF world-music festival in Black Mountain, North Carolina, and convinced LEAF head Jennifer Pickering to help Rwanda preserve its traditions, as many of the specialists had been killed in the

¹⁴³ Mizero means hope in Kinyarwanda.

genocide. Sarah Hipp, a LEAF intern at the time (and eventual tour manager for Mizero) remembers this process:

“Jennifer... after one of the festivals, had an idea to start an international music program. She went to Bequia on vacation... and started a music program there with steel pan drums. And I think she thought that was going to be a one-time thing, but after meeting Jean-Paul, and realizing that Rwandan (traditional) music at that time was not being well-preserved, and she felt compelled to make a difference. (Hipp 2014).

LEAF subsequently raised funds to go to Rwanda with Samputu, where they met the OVCs Samputu had been working with and decided to purchase *ingoma*, provide rehearsal space (at St. Cecile’s Cathedral), and hire an instructor (Leonard Mutwarasibo of the Rwandan National Ballet) for weekly rehearsals.¹⁴⁴ After finding out that the OVCs were homeless, LEAF was hesitant to simply provide them drums, as they didn’t consider it part of “basic needs.” However, after meeting with the OVCs, and seeing how excited they were to learn drumming and how much it meant to them, they decided to proceed. Hipp recalls,

The kids were so excited about the program, and really saw it as an opportunity to help them get out of where they were. Street children there are considered... scavengers. They are basically sub-human and they are treated like rats. And part of that reason is because they have no land, no inheritance, and don’t know the culture. So their excitement of learning this music and knowing their culture better, was really a sense of belonging for them. (Hipp 2014)

The decision to purchase drums led them to Denis Kagaba, who was living in Nkomero, a mostly uninhabited mountainous just west of Nyanza. According to Jon Rosen, a member of the LEAF troupe that visited Rwanda with Hipp, “Kagaba is

¹⁴⁴ This group is still performing together today, and one of its members, Daniel Ngarukiye, who eventually took up the *inanga*, is now considered one of the finest performers in Rwanda. He is currently a member of the prestigious Gakondo group, formed by Intore Massamba, son of Sentore, a legendary musician and *inanga* virtuoso of the Nyiginya court.

descended from *Abiru*,” the *mwami*’s “most trusted advisors” (see Chapter One), and learned to make drums from his father, whom was the luthier for the *mwami* (Rosen 2011). LEAF initially planned to merely contract Kagaba to make drums for the street-kids, but made another important discovery: the *umuvumu* trees Kagaba uses to make the drums were rapidly going extinct due to deforestation. Thus, as a subsequent philanthropic act, Hipp and the rest of the LEAF troupe decided to plant *umuvumu* trees, and have done so annually since their initial visit.

They received Kagaba’s information from Francoise Uwimbabazi, a former member of the National Ballet, with whom Samputu had worked in Spain, and who had a dance troupe (twenty to thirty children) in the historical city. They had originally went to Nyanza to discuss “how to start a troupe: how to learn dances and how to teach children,” as well as “to see their drums and costumes in order to help advance our program” (ibid 2014). However, after being amazed by their performance, Samputu had a much bigger goal in mind. As Hipp states, “This is where we first got the idea for the tour. Jean-Paul said ‘we have to bring these kids to the United States’” (ibid. 2014).

The first tour began in North Carolina (just in time to perform at the LEAF festival), and continued through mid-December, culminating in Manhattan for a performance at the U.N. for human rights day.¹⁴⁵ While LEAF did not have an official role in the Mizero organization, they continued to support the tour by providing housing, transportation, and medical needs for the children on tour (including offering Hipp to serve as tour manager). The children performed mostly on

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.unmultimedia.org/s/photo/detail/165/0165332.html>.

the eastern seaboard, including New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maryland, Washington D.C., Virginia, and North and South Carolina, but they also travelled to California (to perform at Saddleback Church) and Montreal, Quebec (for the Montreal Millennium Festival where they shared the stage with Angelique Kidjo for her song “Afrika” 2002).¹⁴⁶ The children performed mostly traditional music and dance, both accompanied (*ingoma*) and unaccompanied (*amayugi*) for the *intore* dance, and stayed at the homes of the host families in the area where they performed.

While Samputu did not train the children to sing or dance, he did, as with Nsengiyumva and Nyabenda, teach them how to engage an audience. At the end of each show Samputu taught them how to drum and dance in a Congolese style (usually they would play “Tuzagera” if Samputu was performing with them) and go out into the audience and gather people to dance with them. I witnessed their first performance in New Bern, North Carolina in October, as well as their November performance in Charleston, SC, and there were several contrasts between the two. First, as happens with most groups near the end of a tour, the performance was more polished regarding rhythmic and vocal articulation and stage changes. But the engagement with the audience was increased tenfold compared to the beginning of the tour. The children learned to smile and get more excited during their performances. Their dynamic contrasts increased, and some of the singers began singing and dancing like Samputu even if he wasn’t there. Hipp recalls that Samputu

¹⁴⁶ <http://worldmusiccentral.org/2007/10/12/mizero-children%E2%80%99s-troupe-visit-u-s-to-raise-awareness-about-rwanda%E2%80%99s-orphaned-youth/>.

taught them how to be better performers, and to help them with that cross-cultural boundary of what people might expect in America. That was extremely important for the success of the tour by having our kids interact with the audience here—to do things like jump off stage to dance with people. I don't think that is something they would normally do. I think that really helped communities get connected with one another. It really changed the experience for the audience and for our home stays. It's not everyday you get to dance with a Rwandan child. (Hipp 2014)

The first tour ended at the U.N., with one of the children, Sandrine, cutting the ribbon for the beginning of the Human Rights Day exhibit. This event, as Samputu recalls, was a profound metaphor of forgiveness. A child, whose relatives were killed or injured due to the U.N.s inaction during the genocide—a tremendous failure to protect human rights—supported the U.N.s recognition of the need for human rights in the world. It is the theme of forgiveness that would perpetuate Samputu's career in subsequent years.

Forgiveness and the Future

“Forgiveness is the most powerful unpopular weapon against violence that exists. This weapon does not only fight against community injustice; it also works on one's own heart” (Opobo 2013) has been Samputu's mantra since shortly after he became a Christian. His views about forgiveness both a reflection of his Christian beliefs, but also Rwanda's effort to promote reconciliation. As previously noted, it is common for *génocidaires* to have their prison sentences commuted if they are willing to admit their wrongs and are forgiven by community members. And in 2007, Samputu did just that by going to Butare province and forgiving Ntakirutimana, the man who murdered his father, mother, and siblings during the genocide. Marilyn Jones of the *Christian Science Monitor* chronicles this event:

First, Samputu visited a jail and discovered that Vincent had been incarcerated for his crimes. Then Samputu visited Vincent's wife to tell her that he had forgiven her husband. Astonished, she said that she, herself, had not forgiven her husband, so how could Samputu?

Later, when Samputu went to participate in the *gacaca*, he announced that he had forgiven Vincent (although he didn't know that Vincent was there).

His former friend stepped forward, stunned, asking, "Am I dreaming?" Vincent could not understand how Samputu could forgive him, because he couldn't forgive himself. Samputu says that in time, however, "through God," Vincent did learn to forgive himself. But Samputu wanted to know, why did Vincent murder Samputu's father? How could Vincent murder a neighbor, the father of his childhood friend?

Vincent said that the "law of the genocide" dictated that the one closest to the victim had to do the killing. (Jones 2013)

After being set free, he and Samputu did a short tour promoting forgiveness in Rwandan, but Samputu subsequently helped Ntakirutimana escape to a neighboring country (to remain unnamed in order to protect him from those seeking revenge) in order to get a fresh start.

While this was a powerful experience for Samputu, the event had its detractors. One particular antagonist was Theodore Simburudari, the president of IBUKA, "an umbrella organization for survivor associations in Rwanda, representing them at national and international levels" (IBUKA 2010).¹⁴⁷ Simburudari took exception to the fact that Samputu forgave Ntakirutimana despite the fact Ntakirutimana blamed "the law of the genocide" (the pressure from militants to force people to kill or be killed) as the reason he killed Samputu's family. In 2009 "during a night vigil held at Nyanza Memorial Site," Simburudari stated, "He goes to Gacaca

¹⁴⁷ "Ibuka means 'remember'. It was created in 1995 in order to address issues of justice, memory, social and economic problems faced by survivors" (IBUKA 2010).

courts testifying that he forgave the man who killed his parents. But apparently, the killer doesn't genuinely confess for the unlawful act but instead insists that he was forced to kill" (Mbabazi 2009). Samputu handled the situation by stating that "He must have misinterpreted the message. I have never forced anyone to forgive, or repent whatsoever. The message was totally out of my own experience....

Forgiveness and repentance is done voluntarily. I'm under no obligation to force anyone to repent or forgive," and "I need to remind Simburudari that my career is in line with the country's policy of unity and reconciliation" (ibid:2009). This situation is representative of the dissonance between the government's policies and the people putting them into action. What drives Samputu to promote his message of forgiveness is that he believes there is still a strong desire for revenge (between both Hutu and Tutsi). Samputu states this in his interview with Mike Wooldridge for BBC Africa:

JP : In Rwanda we need to heal the wounds of the past. It's now 15 years but when you look at what happened in the genocide people are still affected.

MW : Do you think 15 years is long enough?

JP : It's like one year. People still have bitterness, anger and the spirit of revenge.... It's a cycle of violence. A cycle of hatred. It's generations. The world, where we live, carries the wounds of not forgiving and future peace depends on what we do with that. (Wooldridge 2009)

Thus, Samputu believes this "unpopular weapon" is the only way for Rwandans to have a future, as he further states,

For me, there is no reconciliation without repentance from the perpetrators and forgiveness from the survivors of genocide. You cannot have a love in your heart if you are bitter; if you are angry; if you have resentments. You need to be liberated from those problems in order to have space in your heart to love. Forgiveness is for you, not for the offender. (Samputu 2014e)

Samputu's promotion of forgiveness led him to work with Jean-Michel Habineza, the son of Rwandan ambassador to Nigeria, with his non-profit Peace and Love Proclaimers in 2008. The mission of the group "was to create a platform for the young generation of Rwanda to discuss the issues that affect them and to find solutions to them" such as "Unity and Reconciliation, AIDS and children right to education," (Habineza 2014) and they invited Samputu to do a tour of four Kigali schools. Habineza recalls how Samputu was able to deal with the dissonance of those who had an aversion to the concept of forgiveness through his charisma:

So usually the way it was; I would first introduce JP [Samputu] to the crowd a lot of students knew him as a musician and then I would tell them that he's here to talk about reconciliation and they would all first become very silent. Then JP would do his introduction he would first thank everyone and then he will start sharing his story and most crowds were quiet the whole time he was speaking and then u could feel the pressure going up. BUT JP was BRILLIANT. Whenever he would feel like the students were getting pissed he would use his guitar, he would most times just sing a sad song that would make people cry.

After that he would take questions and most of the questions were just HARD and most people would say "nahhh what you are saying is just politics, its not possible," and on a few occasions some of the people would decide to share their stories and how they lost their grand parents family members. etc.

JP would listen to them and then from there share more of his story about how forgiveness is not an easy process. And then after all the questions JP would tell the kids that we need to build a world of peace and then he would sing for the kids. And most times it ended up being like a party they would love the singing and they would dance, and most times when we were done some students would come and talk to him. (Ibid:2014)

Habineza, who also took part of the second Mizero tour in 2008 (which focused mostly on the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic sections of the United States) remembers

how Samputu's story and performances touched members of the audience here in the United States:

I remember that many times when he would share his story and the kids would play the drums and dance. There were always tears from people in the crowd. One memorable experience was this woman, I think she was around 90 years old; the whole time while JP was sharing... the lady was quiet but VERY VERY attentive and was watching in a rather uncomfortable manner then at some point she comes in front to JP and the kids and she SOBS and sobs and sobs; she says that her husband had done something to her and then she hadn't forgiven him for 50 years. And then that she heard the story of JP and saw the kids and she was so moved because they experienced worse than her, but they were joyful and living. (Ibid.:2014)

From 2007 through the present, Samputu has gained international acclaim for his focus on forgiveness, unity, and reconciliation. In 2007, he was awarded the Ambassador of Peace award by the Inter Religious and International Federation for World Peace.¹⁴⁸ And in addition to the second (in which Samputu and the children performed for the U.N.s International Day of Peace) and third Mizero tours, Samputu organized a conference entitled Gathering of Forgiveness: A Step To Reconciliation in Kigali in 2009 along with Rev. Lyndon Harris (an Episcopal priest formerly of St. Paul's Cathedral, which was across the street from the World Trade Center), who witnessed the 9/11 attacks and has his own ministry of forgiveness to 9/11 victims). According to Samputu, the conference was groundbreaking in several ways. He states,

I brought thirty foreigners from America, Australia, and Europe; the first conference about forgiveness since fifteen years after the genocide. In front of people we gave the testimony of forgiveness. Vincent talked about why he killed my parents, and I spoke about how I forgave him. (Samputu 2012)

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.irfwp.org/wp/>.

Samputu was inspired to coordinate the conference because when he went to forgive Ntakirutimana in 2007, he was shunned by many people in his village. Samputu remembers “that it was very hard for some people to hear that. They thought it was too soon” (Samputu 2014e). Thus, Samputu understood the need to create a platform for people to understand the importance of forgiveness and the freedom it has brought him in his own life. The conference was a success and left an indelible mark on several important figures in Rwanda. According to the Rwanda Focus,

Tom Rimbui, the head of the Department of Communication Skills in Kigali Institute of Education (KIE) where one of the lectures was given, said afterwards that there is hope for a better future when people can forgive. “If not, it’s a cycle of violence and hatred, which takes generations to stop. This world in which we live carries the wounds of not forgiving, and future peace depends on how we deal with that.” (*Rwanda Focus* 2009)

Also in 2009, Samputu (along with Nitunga and Rwandan producer R’Kay) was commissioned by The National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide to compose “Never Again,” a philanthropic pop ballad (essentially a somber “We Are The World”), in Rwanda, which featured several East African popular music artists from Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya.¹⁴⁹ Samputu humorously recalls the process of composition:

I was in London when they asked me to compose a song for remembering fifteen years after the genocide. I did the same thing I did in Uganda [with Ange Noir]. Then I was on a plane to Kigali—they bought me a ticket—and I wrote some words. Everyone, all of the artists from Uganda and Kenya, were in Kigali waiting for me to bring the song. So I told them “I have it,” but I only had the words. Aaron knew I didn’t have the song yet, and I bet he was thinking “I know

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.cnl.gov.rw/>.

The video with English subtitles may be viewed here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HifwUVDTPw.

Samputu, he says he has the song, but he is going to compose it now, I know him.” But I kept telling them it was finished, and I was going to bring it. So I took a guitar and I went to my hotel room, and they said “why are you bringing a guitar to your room?” And I said, “I’m coming, just hold on.” Then I went to my room and I prayed “Holy Spirit give me a melody. Please, we are going to the studio now and I just have words. Holy Spirit bring it to me, in Jesus’s name Amen.” Then I composed the melody for first line and chorus. And then I called Aaron “Please, come I don’t want to forget this.” And he came and put new chords to it. Then I finished writing the words to the verses and then we went to the studio and Aaron and R’Kay produced and arranged the song... For the rest of the song, everyone translated my words from Kinyarwanda into their own languages and just sang their part as they felt. (Samputu 2014a; 2014e)

Samputu begins with his first line, and a different artist sings on each subsequent strophe in a combination of Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Luganda, Kiswahili, and English (a total of eighteen solo singers whom improvised their lines). While most of the song is in Kinyarwanda, it is truly an East African collaboration, and a pledge, echoing the call of the survivors of the holocaust and other genocides, to never allow an atrocity like this to happen again. The chorus, sung in English, features all artists combined singing:

“Never Again”

Chorus

- (1) Never, never, never again.
- (2) Let us keep alive the memory of genocide.
- (3) Never, never, Genocide against humanity, never, never
- (4) Never, never, never again. (Samputu 2009)

However, Samputu puts his stamp on the song by singing the ultimate line by himself.

In addition to “Never Again,” which was a big hit in Rwanda and East Africa, Samputu was also commissioned by the National Unity and Reconciliation

Commission to record “Ubwiyunge” (Reconciliation)—a song he had composed back in 2000, but hadn’t yet recorded—which is the same type of philanthropic pop as “Never Again,” but with a smaller group of soloists (eight) who were all Rwandan. The lyrics of the song line up with the Commission’s aforementioned values of needing to establish unity and reconciliation for all Rwandans. As Samputu states, “the song emphasizes that we are all one, and that while we were once Hutu and Tutsi, we need to band together” (Samputu 2014a). In addition to these aforementioned projects, Samputu has continued his focus on musical philanthropy for the past ten years by performing and speaking about forgiveness in a variety of places around the world, most notably performing for the first screening of *Rwanda: Hope Rises* in Toronto (2009); The Ara Pacis Council for Dignity, Forgiveness, Justice, and Reconciliation in Rome, Italy (2010); The Brave Festival (with the Mizero children) in Poland (2010); Healing the Wounds of History Conference in Kigali, Rwanda (2012); a benefit concert for the victims of the tsunami in Fukushima, Japan (2012); a speaking engagement for the Museum of Tolerance in Mexico; a UNAMID concert for peacekeepers in Darfur, Sudan (2012); a TEDx speech in The Hague, Netherlands (2013); and Playing For Change (2014) and The Forgiveness Project in London, U.K. (2014).¹⁵⁰ Additionally, in 2013 filmmaker Yves Montand Niyongabo began writing a script for a short documentary on Samputu’s and Ntakirutimana’s story of forgiveness and reconciliation. The script subsequently won one-million RF (approximately \$1500 US) at The Film Script and Film Competition

¹⁵⁰ Samputu’s TEDx speech may be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRVjfRXt1Mc>, and his Playing For Change interview here: <http://vimeo.com/91981103>.

in 2014, and the film called *The Invincible*, was screened for the first time in July of 2014.¹⁵¹

However, he simultaneously has also worked on several non-philanthropic ventures. In 2008, Samputu formed a partnership with Ted Mason of Mi5 records (former manager of '80s Brit pop act Modern English) with the intent of Samputu performing on comedian/singer Sandra Bernhard's latest album and tour. Samputu had met Mason while working with Mason's wife Jennifer Brunetti at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York in 2007. President Kagame was in attendance, and thus they honored him by finding Rwandan entertainment. Mason was very impressed with Samputu, and, being a record producer and social activist, he immediately began thinking of ways to help Samputu further his career in congruence with his own ambitions.

Having worked with artists such as pop raï singer Cheb Khaled and Congolese artist Papa Wemba, Mason is in favor of a fusion of "other" sounds and Western pop (which he believes is the "new rock n' roll"), as opposed to what he calls the "purist" sounds of labels such as Putumayo and Ross Records that generally produce albums that are more "acoustic" in nature, but maintain a level of distance or otherness to qualify as "world music." However, he likens his desire for mixing to be more like The Beatles' use of sitar, rather than the globally "homogenized" sound of Shakira's World Cup song "Sha-La-La" (2014), which, other than the introduction by Carlinhos

¹⁵¹ According to Andrew Israel Kazibwe's article in *The East African*, "The Film Script and Film Competition 2013/2014 is a contribution to the 20th commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide and is a joint project of the Goethe-Institut, GIZ, Plan Rwanda, Partnership Rhineland-Palatinate/Rwanda, KfW Development Bank, and International Alert" (Kazibwe 2014).

Brown, is essentially an Electronic Dance Music (ED/M) track with lyrics and music video reflecting the desire for global unity. Mason explains:

The problem with Shakira is that it is a manipulation of our desires. Look at what Walt Disney did. We have a major misunderstanding of what relationships are because women are so dumb that they need to have a white picket fence and a guy has to be a knight in shining armor, and men are so dumb that they believe women have to be perfect. And it's the Walt Disney bullshit manipulation. All they cared about was making sure these dumb fucks went out to buy a movie. And that is all they care about with Shakira. What are their fantasies? It's not about what is going to stir the mind of the people. Where can we take them? What can we do with this music to shock them, yet soothe them.... You hear Brazilian music, and it's beautiful stuff. It doesn't need to be trashed out. And yet the suffering and racism, and the dance—the samba—that is wiped out in an instant because the video just shows happy people and we're all in this together.... It's mildly amusing, the song, but its a product of the manipulation of our desires. There is the cult of the myth of the buxom blonde because that is the ultimate sex symbol. We'll take a Hispanic girl (who had already dyed her hair a long time ago) and put her right up front. We'll water down the music... make sure the music sounds like Black Eyed Peas. But we'll add a little bit of drums that are programed so that it's perfect. Not any room for mistakes. And that makes it homogenized.

That's not what we were doing with the Sandra Bernhard record. It was a great endeavor, it was fun. (Mason 2014)¹⁵²

Mason is a fan of how the Beatles used sitar in “Within Without You” and “Norwegian Wood.” That they were able to mix non-Western sounds with rock n’ roll to create a new sound without “losing anything” or becoming “homogenized.”

However, due to lack of funds, as well as the limitations of Bernhard’s voice, Mason wasn’t able to pull off the masterpiece he had envisioned. Thus the product, as Mason states, “wasn’t Sgt. Pepper’s (due to) the lack of money” (ibid.:2014) However,

Mason also argues that it was not homogenous like Shakira recordings:

¹⁵² These generalizations and use of profanity are typical to the way Mason speaks, and while Samputu doesn’t necessarily espouse his views, it is another example of the diverse people Samputu has worked with in his career.

How we were recording was almost garage-like. We had a nice studio, but it was like “let’s throw this shit on the wall and see what it looks like.” It wasn’t this controlled environment. (Ibid:2014)

Samputu performs on two tracks of the 2009 album *Whatever It Takes* (he is listed on a third song, “Don’t Cry In Bed,” but only is audible on two), “All Around” (featuring Chrissy Hynde) and “Why So Blue.” Samputu is most present on “Why So Blue,” which is a funk blues-style song in 4/4 and features him singing in Kinyarwanda and in English (on the chorus along with Bernhard) throughout. “All Around” is riff-driven medium-tempo rock song that begins and ends with a sample of Samputu’s “Psalm 150,” from *Voices From Rwanda*. The song is sung almost solely in English (though Samputu also improvises lyrics in Kinyarwanda in the last quarter of the song), and is clearly about conservative religious hegemony (specifically the George W. Bush administration of the 2000s) and repression of freedom of expression. The English lyrics are as follows:

“All Around”

Verse One

- (1) What do you want, then that’s what you’ll get.
- (2) Without a thought your mind is at rest.
- (3) All work is done, no questions to ask.
- (4) A beautiful thing, no one to protest.

Chorus

- (5) Obsession, depression, just blue skies forever.
- (6) Repression, depression, just blue skies forever.
- (7) All around we just want to be free again.
- (8) Let down the old chains that will lead you bound.

(9) Look around we might be able to see again.

Verse Two

(10) Hide in your box saved by a great loss.

(11) Drown in your tears, then socialize fear.

(12) Sell to the bank for charity and fame.

(13) Bridge to nowhere, discretion's not clear.

Verse Three

(14) Who can you tell when pleasure is king.

(15) Out of the cold the church bells are still.

(16) Liberty speaks, she's fallen in vain.

(17) Shock of the new, you'll swallow the pill. (Mason and Bernhard 2009)

Mason wanted to connect Bernhard's experience as a lesbian and comedian (i.e., dealing with male-dominated oppressive regimes and repression of sexuality and freedom of speech) with Samputu's experience with the genocide (i.e., oppressive killers, discrimination based on "ethnicity," which was a by-product of European hegemony, and the spirit of revenge Samputu often talks about in Rwanda); however, due to Samputu's conservative Christian faith, there is a disconnect between Bernhard's and Samputu's ideals, and thus a disconnect in the lyrical content between the English and improvised Kinyarwanda lyrics sung by Samputu. Mason recalls his vision as well as the process of recording:

I wanted to infuse repression on all levels without being depressing, so I tried to make the music little more upbeat. But at the same time challenge certain ideas of what the world was about, and it was a perfect vehicle because I could think about what he [Samputu] dealing with [pain of the genocide] and where she [Bernhard] was at because she's struggling to find an identity within the gay community [or whichever aspect of the world she associates with].

In terms of the recording process, it was easy. I put together everything. I can play most of the instruments... I scored the strings. But I needed Samputu because that is one thing I can't do. I can't sing like that. I don't have the talent. I shared songwriting with her [Bernhard], but when he [Samputu] sang, a lot of times he wasn't singing English, he came up with the lyrics. And he would sing it in Kinyarwanda, and I have no fucking idea what they meant [laughing]. I don't care if he was saying "I hate you Ted, I hate this recording," but it sounded good. I just said "here is sort of the melody line, and go for it. Go in to the live room"... then he'd do it. We took a couple of takes, but he could do it in one take if he really wanted to. He's the kind of guy who just bangs it out and that's all you need. (Mason 2014)

However, Samputu had recently become aware of Bernhard's worldview and how many of her beliefs were in direct opposition to his Christian theology. Thus, as Samputu jokingly recalls:

I went to the studio and sung my part... you know what I sung? I sung just gospel things. I sang "I love you Jesus. You are my savior" just like that [laughing]. Because it was very strange to be singing on a record with a lesbian. It was too much for me. So I wanted to sing about Jesus because I felt that I would be protected spiritually. It was like a prayer. I wasn't sure I was doing the right thing, but I didn't have time to think about that. I wanted to be loving and accepting of all people, but it was difficult. (Samputu 2014a; 2014d)

While Mason had altruistic intentions in terms of his philosophy for the album, unfortunately the execution fell short. Samputu's performance, both lyrically and sonically, sounds like a cut-and-paste job rather than a fusion of the two ideals. This likely is a reflection of the fact that Samputu never met Bernhard before or after singing on the record. Additionally, Mason could not sell Bernhard on the idea of taking Samputu on the road with her to tour, and thus their working relationship ended.

In 2010, Samputu toured Japan after being invited by Marie Louise Kambenga, who is the vice-president of a Japanese non-profit organization Think

About Education in Rwanda, established to help Rwandan OVCs gain access to education with a specific focus on the arts. He toured with Shambusho and Nyabenda as well as two dancers, and performed his blend of popular traditional music throughout the country (eleven cities total). Additionally, Samputu added Nyabenda's original songs composed for his Canada based solo project.

Samputu furthered his Japanese connection when he co-wrote, and recorded the song "Turi Abavandimwe" ("We Are Brothers") and a video with Japanese amateur performer Hiroki Kaihatsu, a volunteer at a Nyagatare-based Youth Centre, in 2011. Kaihatsu, who speaks Kinyarwanda and Japanese fluently, had previously recorded "Ni Wowe," a song that "urges people to go for the HIV test before having unprotected sex and the use of condoms" (Mbabazi 2011), with Rwandan recording artist (and former Primus Guma Guma Superstar contestant) Fayçal Ngeruka.¹⁵³

Linda Mbabazi's 2011 article in the *New Times Rwanda* explains the story behind the song:

Hiroki told The New Times that his latest track promotes Rwandan and Japan bilateral relations, as well as culture through music. "I love Rwanda so much and I have made many friends here—so that is the reason I decided to compose a song in Kinyarwanda, with some lyrics in Japanese," Hiroki said.

"I met Samputu when I attended a ceremony on the earthquake that hit Japan last year at Lemigo Hotel, and we became good friends. He told me that he had performed in Japan before and I was glad to hear that," he recalled. (Mbabazi 2012)

¹⁵³ Primus Guma Guma is essentially the Rwandan *American Idol*, sponsored by Primus beer (a subsidiary of Heineken), where singers compete for audience votes. I accepted an invitation to a live Guma Guma event in 2012 by Patrick Samputu (Samputu's younger brother), who is an executive at Primus breweries in Kigali.

The playful song is set to a *zouk*-style beat (with all electronic instrumentation—brass, bamboo flute, electronic, bass, drum kit, shaker, and other effects), and the lyrical content humorously contrasts the similarities and differences between Rwanda and Japanese culture. However, phrases such as “We are brothers,” “We are one,” and “We are the hope for the future” are clearly double entendres that reflect many of the adages of the reconciliation movement (both by the government and Samputu) in Rwanda. Kaihatsu and Samputu alternate singing in Kinyarwanda and Japanese, and the lyrics with English translation are as follows:¹⁵⁴

“Turi Abavandimwe”

Verse One (Kaihatsu in Kinyarwanda)

- (1) *Rwanda Igihugu cy'imisozi igihumbi.*
Rwanda, land of a thousand hills.
- (2) *Igitangaza muri Africa.*
A wonder in Africa.
- (3) *Umutima W' Afurika.*
The heart of Africa.
- (4) *Mushikaki, ibishyimbo, ibitoki, ifiriti nibyo, biryo nikundira.*
Brochettes, beans, Green Banana and French fries are my favorite foods.

Chorus One (together in Kinyarwanda and Japanese)

- (5) *Turi abavandimwe, dore turi kumwe.* (Kinyarwanda)
We are Brothers, see we are together.
- (6) *So, bokutachi wa kyodai.* (Japanese)
Yes, we are brothers.
- (7) *Urukundo rwacu Ni urwa Japan, n'uRwanda.* (Kinyarwanda)
Our love is for Japan and Rwanda.
- (8) *Doko Ni Itemo Bokoutachi Wa Tsunagatteru.* (Japanese)
We are partners anywhere we are.

¹⁵⁴ The video for “Turi Abavandimwe” may be viewed here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_z79MEXWM4A.

- (9) *Nitwe mizero y'ejo hazaza.* (Kinyarwanda)
We are a hope for the future.

Verse Two (Samputu in Japanese)

- (10) *Hinomaru no kuni.*
A country of sunshine.
- (11) *Yamato nadeshiko.*
The ideal Japanese woman.
- (12) *Keizai taikoku.*
Strengthened economy.
- (13) *Asia no shimaguni, Nippon.*
Island nation of Asia, Japan.
- (14) *Sushi, misoshiru, tempura, okonomiyaki.*
Sushi, miso soup, tempura, okonomiyaki (savory pancake).
- (15) *Watashi no daikoubutsu.*
Those are my favorite foods.

Chorus Two (both in Japanese and Kinyarwanda)

- (16) *Boku wa Rwanda jin.* (Together in Japanese)
I'm Rwandan.
- (17) *Boku wa Nihon jin.* (Kaihatsu in Japanese)
I'm Japanese.
- (18) *Twese turi umwe.* (Samputu in Kinyarwanda)
We are one.
- (19) *Sonnakoto kankeinai.* (Together in Japanese)
There is no problem.
- (20) *Bokutachi wa kyodai* (Kaihatsu in Japanese)
We are brothers.
- (21) *Turi amaraso amwe.* (Samputu in Kinyarwanda)
We have the same blood.
- (22) *Kono uta ga kimi no moto e.* (Kaihatsu in Japanese)
This song confirms that.

Bridge

- (23) *Samurai, bushido, Yamato damashii* (Samputu in Japanese)
Samurai, honor and valor, Japanese spirit.
- (24) *Haru, natsu, aki, fuyu.*
Spring, summer, fall, winter.
- (25) *Shiki oriori, watashi wa natsu daisuki.*
Of all of those seasons, I prefer summer.
- (26) *Yego, ibihugu biratandukanye.* (Kaihatsu in Kinyarwanda)
Of course countries are different.
- (27) *Ariko iyo urebye hejuru, ubona ubona ijuru.*
But when you look up in the sky, we are under the same sky.
- (29) *Ariko ibyo aribyo turi umwe, turi igihugu kimwe.*
All of these things mean that we are one.

Chorus One

Chorus Two

Coda

- (30) *Turi abavandimwe.* (Together in Kinyarwanda)
We are brothers. (Samputu and Kaihatsu 2011)

For the video, which was shot *gratis* by Kaihatsu's friends (Ryoto, Masanobu, and Mami), Samputu and Kaihatsu dress in the clothing of the other's respective countries (Samputu in a kimono, and Kaihatsu in clothing worn by male traditional dancers), and full of cute visual references to each others' culture (i.e., showing pictures of food they are singing about, Samputu wielding a wooden "samurai sword," Kaihatsu holding a child-like picture of Africa painted in green (watercolor) with Rwanda as a heart-shaped red figure, etc.). While the song is trite, it was well-received in Rwanda, and, I believe, primarily due to its humor, could serve as a vehicle for people to be more open to reconciliation, as Rwandans tend to be cynical regarding the government's narrative about the subject (as Samputu experienced while working

with Habineza in his tour of public schools). Additionally, it represents Japan's strong presence in Rwanda (and Africa in general) in helping to rebuild the country economically. According to the Embassy of Japan in the Republic of Rwanda:

Japan delivers assistance to Rwanda by way of technical cooperation and grant assistance with the focus on three areas of development as follows. (1) Human Resource Development, (2) Rural Development, and (3) Economic Infrastructure and Industrial Development. (Embassy of Japan in the Republic of Rwanda 2014).

Further, according to Voice of America, in June of 2013 "Japan made a five-year commitment of \$32 billion dollars in public and private funding to Africa" (Eagle 2013).

In 2012, Samputu once again worked with the government on several occasions. He played an important part in the official celebration of fifty years of independence (Samputu 2014a). For the independence celebration, Samputu recorded and performed "Rwanda Yigenga" ("Independent/Free Rwanda") with famous singers Christopher, Miss Shanel, Mani Martin, and Rwanda's most famous and beloved rapper, Jay Polly. Samputu performed the song at the 50th celebration with the aforementioned artists at Amahoro stadium on July 1st of 2012 in Kigali. The song is a mixture of R&B and hip-hop (mostly from Jay Polly's rapping), and while Samputu is only one of the artists on the recording, it symbolizes his continued importance in working with current Rwandan artists. Additionally, two days before the celebration, Samputu organized a workshop for Rwandan musicians (sponsored by the Ministry of Sports and Culture) to discuss Rwanda's music scene and how they can utilize traditional music in their own recordings and performances. Samputu was joined by another international Rwandan artist, "Mighty" Popo Murigande, and

myself (I found out the night before that I was to be the keynote speaker). Samputu and Murigande mostly focused on the importance of maintaining traditions in Rwanda, whereas I discussed how using traditional music would help them broaden their market value internationally. The event sparked much debate among the musicians (mostly popular music artists) about the difficulty of pleasing their audiences (who they complained did not want anything to do with traditional music) and trying to support traditions. One particular highlight was a performance by two *iningidi* players/singers (Twa) from the northwest region to demonstrate the beauty of their work; after his live performance, one of them essentially said (paraphrasing based on an interpreter at the time) “you can’t replicate something like this on a recording.”

Later in 2012, Samputu composed and recorded two songs for the 25th anniversary of the RPF: “FPR Ganza” (RPF Reigns) as a solo artist and “Imigabo Nimigambi ya FPR” (RPF’s Plan) with singers Intore Massamba, Mani Martin, and Patrick Nyamitari.¹⁵⁵ Regarding “FPR Ganza” and “Imigabo Nimigambi ya FPR”

Susan Babijja quotes Samputu:

“The songs are in recognition of what government has achieved in the development of the country especially in fighting poverty,” Samputu said.

The songs call for unity, love and peace amongst Rwandans to work together as one people.

“These songs are gifts to RPF, but it comes at a time when the world is seeing the transformations that we are undergoing,” he said. He added that since anniversary celebrations are due, the songs will be an inspiration to the population. (Babijja 2012).

¹⁵⁵ FPR stands for Front Patriotique Rwandaise, the French version of RPF.

Both songs are in a *zouk* style beat and have all electronic instrumentation with electric guitar similar to “Karibu Mungu.” The video of “RPF Ganza” features Samputu in several places in Kigali (i.e., markets, downtown Kigali, and on rooftops with the landscape of Kigali in the background) wearing (alternating, depending on the shot) a T-shirt or a long-sleeved shirt with FPR 25 printed in various places, thus promoting the twenty-fifth anniversary of the RPF. This imagery is juxtaposed against photos of RPF during the war and prominent postwar politicians (most notably President Kagame).¹⁵⁶

While mostly touring the world for speaking engagements (highlighted by the TEDx talk in The Hague) in 2013, he was selected to join the panel of judges (Rwanda region) for the sixth season of Tusker Project Fame (TPF). TPF is an East African multi-national (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi) talent show (similar to *American Idol* in the United States). with the regional winners competing in Nairobi for five million Kenyan Schillings (KSH) (roughly \$57,000US). Regarding his selection, Linda Kagire in *The New Times* quotes Samputu:

“I was informed that they had actually been looking for me in vain. So before I knew it, arrangements were made to include me on the panel,” Samputu said. Samputu said that he had previously been contacted to be part of Tusker Project Fame but his busy schedule would not allow him.

“I guess my presence will encourage them [Rwandan contestants] and give them that psychological motivation they need just like any other East African” (Kagire 2013).

¹⁵⁶ The video for “FPR Ganza” may be viewed here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pwDmG_JirNw.

While Samputu was not included in the final panel of judges in Nairobi (because he had other performing and speaking engagements), his selection highlights his continued significance in the broader East African music industry.

Also in 2013, Samputu made news after linking up with Scottish former high-school Biology teacher, charity worker (Edinburgh's *Interfaith Association*), and amateur singer Iain Stewart to record two new singles, "Window of Peace" (written by Stewart and fellow Scottish musician Keith White) and "Rwandan Dream" (co-written by Stewart and Samputu), the former of which reached number one on the song charts in Rwanda.¹⁵⁷ The chart-topping song "Window of Peace" is about, according to Stewart, "creating a better tomorrow for children caught up in conflict" (Peebleshire News 2014). The *Edinburgh Evening News* chronicles the meeting:

Mr., Stewart, 39, met Jean-Paul when he came to speak at a Holocaust memorial event in Edinburgh's Broughton High School. He said: "I had only just started at Edinburgh Interfaith, which organises the Holocaust memorial event each year. We found out Jean-Paul was coming to speak elsewhere in the UK and we managed to hijack him. His story was just incredible." When Jean-Paul was in Edinburgh, Mr. Stewart showed him a peace song he had written two years earlier. "I was reluctant to show it to him but he was very moved by it. He said "You must come to Rwanda and record this." (*Edinburgh Evening News* 2014).

And further in the *Peebleshire News*, Stewart states,

"I thought he was only being polite, but only a few weeks later Jean Paul flew to Scotland from Rwanda to jam the song in my small flat in Peebles." (*Peebleshire News* 2014)

and

¹⁵⁷ I am solely relying on journalistic sources regarding the "number one" status of the song in Rwanda, as there is no analog to the objective measurements in the United States and the United Kingdom. (i.e., Billboard, Nielson SoundScan, or iTunes downloads).

In September Jean Paul convinced Iain to travel to Rwanda to record the song with African musicians and orphan children from the Afghozo Shalom school, a youth village for children whose families were killed in the genocide. (Ibid.:2014)

As with many of Samputu's collaborator's (including myself), Stewart was treated with great admiration and respect. He states,

“In Rwanda, because I was accompanying Jean Paul, I was treated as a pop star in all the national papers, squeezing Shakira out to a small picture! “I performed to big audiences only hours from arriving in the country. In Rwanda the song was recorded like a Band Aid single and the producer Pastor P was fresh from producing with Lionel Ritchie. I was mesmerized.” (Ibid.:2014)

And regarding “Rwandan Dream,” in Susan Babijja's interview of the pair in *The New Times*, Stewart states,

It is a song that talks about one's woman's experience losing a son in the Genocide and a cry to create a better tomorrow for our children. At the Holocaust memorial event I showed him the lyrics. After speaking out at Holocaust memorial event, I showed Samputu a song I had written and he shed tears. That is when he asked me to record a song with him and we did that in last year.

The verses summarise the Rwandan Dream. Rwanda has come so far since the Genocide in such a relatively short time. I was struck by the optimism and warmth of the people when I visited Rwanda for the first time in September last year.

It's our prayer that Rwanda will learn from lessons of its past and continue to work hard to create a peaceful and harmonious society where everyone lives happily together, where difference of colour or belief are disregarded and we learn to respect and love one another as fellow human beings. (Babijja 2014)

“Window of Peace” begins with a slow gospel beat in quadruple meter but intersperses a double-time rock beat, which is most prominent near the end of the song. It is sung mostly in English by Stewart, Honoray (popular gospel singer), Pastor P, Queen Cha, and Afghozo Shalom children's choir (with Samputu improvising

some words in Kinyarwanda near the end). The instrumentation is primarily electronic (electric piano, hip-hop style synth leads, brass, drums and percussion—chimes and congas) with acoustic guitar. In contrast, “Rwandan Dream,” which was recorded in Scotland, is much barer in instrumentation with only one “electronic sounding” string pad. The rest of the instruments include acoustic guitar, piano, drum set, bass, distorted electric guitar, and a Hammond-style organ with Leslie speaker. Another contrast is the equal mix of Kinyarwanda in English, with the song beginning with Samputu singing in Kinyarwanda. However, the repeated chorus is solely in English (with the exception of the ultimate set of choruses which feature Samputu improvising in Kinyarwanda. The video for the song, produced in Scotland by Matthew Bunting, reflects the pensive nature of the song, and begins with the statement:

In 1994, Rwanda was torn apart by genocide, in which over 1,000,000 people lost their lives. Twenty years after this genocide, Iain Stewart and Jean-Paul Samputu teamed up to declare their hopes for the continuation of peace in Rwanda. (Bunting 2014)

It then moves to Samputu playing alone at the piano and singing in Kinyarwanda at St. Marks Unitarian Church in Edinburgh, Scotland (where all of the live footage was recorded), Stewart joins shortly thereafter and the two perform together in various shots throughout. The rest of the video is montage of the church setting, a concert

they performed together in Edinburgh, and some gratuitous imagery from Rwanda borrowed from other documentaries.¹⁵⁸

The contrast between the two songs is likely continental and cultural. Because “Window of Peace” was produced in Africa, it has more electronic sounds and features more English vocals, whereas “Rwandan Dream,” produced in the U.K., has a greater focus on Kinyarwanda and stripped-down instrumentation to create a more distinct, pensive-sounding recording. When I spoke to Samputu about the surprising popularity of “Rwandan Dream,” he seemed to think it was possibly because the listeners in the U.K. liked him singing in Kinyarwanda, whereas the Rwandan listeners potentially appreciated more of the English approach in “Window of Peace” (no news sources made any mention of it hitting the charts in Scotland, but according to Babijja, “Rwandan Dream” is gaining momentum in Rwanda) (Babijja 2014). While this analysis is mostly speculative and subjective, there is certainly evidence that Samputu’s African productions tend to be more electronic in nature, whereas his popular albums recorded in the United States have a much more stripped down instrumentation, and the differences are likely reflective of each culture’s tastes.

Conclusion

Studying Samputu’s life and works is a window into several intersecting worlds. While the doors of many of the worlds are smaller than others, with details that are more anecdotal than substantive, this is reflective of Samputu’s breadth of

158 According to the YouTube credits for the video, the gratuitous footage is from: “The Spirit of Rwanda” by Paul Pryor, Jonathan Reisinger and Jamie Pent (<https://vimeo.com/48093230>); “Rwanda” by Five One Films (<https://vimeo.com/10727890>); “Rwanda - Ruhengeri” by Tinefis: (<https://vimeo.com/10916469>); “Rwanda” by Malcolm Cunningham (<https://vimeo.com/55183008>).

experience and, in many ways, the shallowness of that experience. Samputu is nomadic, going from place to place with no real place to call “home,” but it is in the multitude of these ephemeral spaces and places that we find thickness or depth. Some of these spaces and places include the impact of early Rwandan history (e.g. Samputu’s “Gisa” as a neo-traditional praise song about a leader analogous to a legendary hero or king), the importance of patronage and relationships in Rwanda (e.g. Samputu would not likely have a career without the encouragement of his brother Emmanuel Gatete, Cyprien Rugamba, and Silas Udahimuka, and the financial support of Valens Kajeguhakwa, Silas Majyambere, General Kale Kayihura, and Glenn Hawkes), gender relations (i.e., gender scripts noted in “Kiberinka”), the details of pre- and post-genocide politics (including current negotiation of national identity through the elimination of ethnicity as well as peace and reconciliation initiatives), Japanese presence in Rwanda, popular and traditional musical styles, history of the Rwandan music industry in the country, the world music industry and the marketing of difference, the difference in popular music production values in Africa and the “West,” and Pentecostalism and evangelical Christianity in Rwanda and East Africa in general.

As I have fleshed out some of the details of Samputu’s biography, I recognize several major themes.

First, Samputu rarely stays in one place for any length of time, and thus is constantly experiencing new worlds which influence his musical choices.

Second, based on these experiences, Samputu is more of a collaborator than a rigid bandleader. While he may have a vision for a song or an album, he consistently

finds people (sometimes those whom he has only met once) to collaborate with to achieve this vision. From Aaron Nitunga's production techniques and re-harmonizations of Samputu's chord progressions to his use of "guest" artists in almost all of his major productions (i.e., Sarah Ndagire singing in Runyankole in "Abaana," the dancehall reggae singer in "Karibu Mungu," Mickie Wine singing in Luganda in "Rehema," Nitunga's rapping in "No More Genocide," and Nsengiyumva's voice and *inanga* playing on several songs and pieces on *Voices From Rwanda*, to name just a few) and working with other artists on the same "billing" (i.e., the East African all-star lineup on "Never Again," the famous Rwandan artists in "Rwanda Yigenga," and his most recent partnership with Iain Stewart on "Rwandan Dream" and "Window of Peace").

Third, in line with his collaborative efforts, Samputu also serves as a connector to several worlds. While he wasn't in charge of the LEAF program to help street kids, his connection with the organization has led to the career of Daniel Ngarukiye, now considered one of the best *inanga* performers in the country. In fact, Sara Hipp mentioned that Ngarukiye took up the *inanga* because he struggled with drumming (Hipp 2014). Additionally, Donat Nyabenda, Vincent Nsengiyumva, and Maréchal DeGaulle all have promising solo careers in Canada due to their work with Samputu (also, Nyungura, who currently lives in Atlanta, GA, performs traditional music and dance occasionally for the Rwandan diaspora in the United States).¹⁵⁹ Samputu also serves as a cultural ambassador to those "outside" of Rwandan culture

¹⁵⁹ It is also worth mentioning that you would not be reading this dissertation had I not linked up with Samputu due to our shared vision to help promote healing and reconciliation through traditional music.

by spreading his message of forgiveness and reconciliation and performing a blend of popular and traditional music. And he also serves as a mediator of Rwandan culture in Rwanda, as his genuine ideas about forgiveness are quite contrary to many of those in leadership in Rwanda (i.e., his public spat with IBUKA president Theodore Simburudari).

Fourth, Samputu is a consummate performer and is able to connect with a broader audience than his fellow Rwandan colleagues (e.g. his work with Jean-Michel Habineza in Rwandan schools, concert in Kigali with Glenn and Jesse Hawkes, and success as a musician here in the United States, Europe, and Japan) and has taught others to do the same (i.e., Mizero troupe, Vincent Nsengiyumva, and Donat Nyabenda). Fifth, Samputu is a prolific composer and has an immensely gifted voice which allows him to compose and sing at a high level with little effort (e.g. his swiftly composed songs “Ange Noir” and “Never Again,” as well as his work on Bernhard’s “All Around” and “Why So Blue,” where Ted Mason commented that he could probably have done those tracks in his first take; Nitunga also commented to me that Samputu has one of the “purest” voices he has ever heard (Nitunga 2012). Finally, Samputu has a heart for helping others, as evidenced in his willingness to forgive his family’s killer and even help finance his move to another country, and the philanthropic efforts such as *Mizero* and the Samputu Forgiveness Campaign.

In subsequent chapters, I will further investigate the details of Samputu’s “sound” to demonstrate how his music is a reflection of all of these “shallow” spaces, places, and themes, as well as to codify Samputu’s sonic uniqueness through transcription and analysis. Samputu’s originality is certainly a reflection of his

biography, and I demonstrate how he blends his life experiences to create his own style. I will do this regionally, beginning with Rwanda and then branching out to East/Central Africa and the Caribbean. Further, examining these details will better help us understand the fact that Rwandan music culture is transnational, a reality that Samputu adequately reflects in his performances, compositions, and recordings. However, before delving into cultural details, in the next chapter I will provide the reader with an analytical framework through which to interpret those details.

Chapter 4: Methods of Analyzing Samputu's Music

This chapter is devoted to the methods I will use to analyze Samputu's music in subsequent chapters. I employ several methods beyond linguistic description to analyze and transcribe Samputu's musical details. First, as I have done in previous chapters, I will transcribe rhythmic and melodic material using standard staff notation, as it is, for better or worse, the lingua franca in musicological analysis. Second, I will use visual images of instruments to supplement the written descriptions. Some of these images will be from my own collection of photographs, but the vast majority will be from Internet resources, most of which are found in Jos Gansemans's contributions to the DEKKMMA website.¹⁶⁰ Third, I will focus on analysis of timbre (both instrumental and vocal) through digital spectral (spectrogram) and acoustic envelope (waveform) analysis. I use Audacity (mostly for waveform analysis and normalization), Garage Band (with the Blue Cat Frequency Analyst Pro plugin), and Spear (for more detailed spectrographic analysis) as digital audio workstations. Additionally, as body of mechanics is just as important as the production of musical sound, I will explain how Samputu creates different vocal timbres through the physiological analysis of the voice through images (both still and medical video footage) and descriptive language.

Despite the importance of timbre in African music, timbral analysis is one of the methods least employed by scholars. Cornelia Fales attempts to close this gap in her "Paradox of Timbre" (2003) by using spectrographic analysis of Burundian

¹⁶⁰ DEKKMMA stands for Digitalisatie van het Ethnomusicologisch Klankarchief van het Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika/Digitization of the Ethnomusicological Sound Archive of the Royal Museum for Central Africa (<http://music.africamuseum.be/english/index.html>).

inanga performance styles to detail the differences between the performance of the voiced *inanga* (vocalist sings in “full” voice), the “whispered” *inanga* (*inanga chuchotée*), which introduces broad spectrum noise by the vocalist by whispering, and *inanga ya kumbandwa*, a ritualistic style (in ancestor worship—in this case, Kinanga of Burundi, who is the analog of Ryangombe in Rwanda) in which the singer uses a high falsetto voice to create a different combination of timbres. Fales concludes by delineating the importance of timbre in music (and thus, the need to properly analyze it):

First, timbre constitutes a *link* to the external world in containing the descriptive clues important for source identification and for deciphering aspects of the terrain between the source and the listener. Second, it functions as *perceptualization's primary instrument* in accomplishing its various objectives. And third, it is a parameter of music that we experience phenomenally, but *without informational consciousness*. The first two of these characteristics are responsible for what I have called the paradox of timbre: that timbre is the parameter of sound most implicated in source identification but also most implicated in the discrepancy between an acoustic signal and the percept it provokes. The third characteristic of timbre is the one that allows it the malleability and elusiveness to wield its power in music. As an informationally unconscious phenomenon, timbre is restricted to indirect measure and its effects are likely to be misattributed to some other outstandingly conscious aspect of the experience. Thus, timbre is free to operate with little direct scrutiny by a listener, creating effects that are intense but also hazy in definition, difficult to articulate, and freely attributable to other features of the musical context. (Fales 2003:91; emphasis in original).

Therefore it is not sufficient enough to simply describe Samputu’s vocal timbre by using amorphous adjectives (e.g. dark, bright, or brash), as timbre is essential to his sound. It requires further codification, and one of the best ways to achieve this is through spectrographic analysis.

However, as Fales mentions, timbre is a “paradox” because perception can

override the spectrographic imagery. That is, just because timbre can be clearly visualized in spectrographic form, it does not always mean a person will perceive those differences. However, a detailed psychoacoustic analysis of each timbre I discuss is well beyond the scope of this dissertation. Thus, I will only analyze the psychoacoustic aspects of timbre I believe are pertinent to this work, and merely use spectrographic analysis to delineate all of the different types of vocal timbres (as well as certain instruments) Samputu employs in order to visualize timbre in the same way I would transcribe a melody or rhythm into some type of visual medium (i.e., staff notation or other visual imagery). Thus, my treatment of timbre is simply a further detail I include in my visualized descriptive transcriptions (most of which are in staff notation), one that I will use as a tool to define the uniqueness of Samputu's voice and Rwandan traditional instrument performance practice. I do this not just to categorize the timbres in a way that could be considered "extended" organological techniques, but also to link them to various identities pertinent to this study. This is also my reasoning for conducting physiological analysis of the voice.

Samputu's Voice

In the following paragraphs I will detail the physiological and timbral details of Samputu's different "voices" through imagery (still and video) and descriptive language, and these will serve as a foundation for further analysis of his compositions. For the physiological aspects, I solely rely on previous scholarship, but for the timbral characteristics, I use my own field recordings of Samputu singing the same melody (a G major scale descending from D4 to G3—See Figure 4-4) from the

same source (in this case from his landline telephone in London to my Digidesign Mbox 2 into Garage Band via my iPhone 5). While the sound is not of the highest quality, it was essential to get the recording from the same source and room, as any variance in room ambience (i.e., reverberation) will obfuscate the spectrographic analysis.¹⁶¹ And because of the limitations of time and travel, this was the best option available. Additionally, it is not essential to have “studio quality” sound as a source for the spectrogram, as I am using the spectrographic analysis as a means of comparison rather than to present a true detail of Samputu’s vocal timbre. As Fales noted, because timbre is such a paradox, it would be impossible to get a comprehensive measurement of Samputu’s vocal uniqueness solely via spectrogram.

Physiology of Samputu’s voice

Samputu generally produces four distinct vocal timbres (though each should be considered part of a continuum rather than completely distinct from one another) which I label: *normal* (flow phonation with combined some pressed phonation), *soft* (a combination of flow and breathy voice phonation), *pygmy style*—emulating Twa style—(flow and/or falsetto—yodel—register combined with slight pressed phonation and nasal and/or mouth resonance), and *growl* (pressed voice phonation with

¹⁶¹ Most landline telephones are not designed to pick up any frequencies below 300Hz and below, however, there is still enough frequency response in the telephone’s microphone to conduct a comparative analysis of Samputu’s different vocal timbres.

significant tension in the aryepiglottic folds).¹⁶² He produces his *normal* voice through a combination of flow phonation, in which the true vocal chords (see Figure 4-1) are relaxed and vibrate at a specific frequency, and pressed phonation, where the vocal chords are constricted through “partial covering and damping of the adducted glottal vocal fold vibration by the ventricular folds...” and “... sphincteric compression of the arytenoids and aryepiglottic folds forwards and upwards by means of the thyroarytenoid muscle complex (Edmonson and Esling 2006:159;162).- Samputu’s normal vocal timbre tends to have a slight bit of tension, but not fully as one would find in full pressed voice phonation. Samputu’s soft voice combines the modal and breathy register, of which the latter is best defined as “breath + voice,’ ‘sigh-like’ so that the glottal folds simply ‘flap in the breeze’ of the high-velocity air-flow” (Catburg in Edmonson and Esling 2006:169). Samputu’s pygmy style comprises two parts: the first is a combination of flow and pressed phonation, but with the resonance mostly in the nasal cavity rather than the pharynx, while the second resonates mostly in the nasal cavity and mouth. Also part of the pygmy style is his use of a yodel, in which he moves quickly from falsetto to flow voice. Finally, his growl voice is the most complicated to explain physiologically. In their 2004 article entitled “Growl Voice in Ethnic and Pop Styles,” Ken-Ichi Sakakibara, Leonardo Fuks, Hiroshi Imagawa, and Niro Tayama describe this phenomenon:

¹⁶² I hesitate to use the term pygmy as it is a loaded term rooted in measurement of phenotype (i.e., height), and David Locke, in his chapter on Africa in Titon’s *Worlds of Music* text, refers to them as “forest people” (Locke 2009:135). However, the Twa are different from their relatives in the Congo and beyond who live in the forest in that they were appointed as entertainers in the Nyiginya kingdom and thus speak Kinyarwanda. Further, they also don’t solely live isolated in the forests of Rwanda, but are incorporated as full members of Rwandan society. And because Samputu refers to this voice himself as pygmy voice, I believe pygmy, regardless of the pejorative associations, is an appropriate term to use.

The larynx position is higher than in the modal case, and the aryepiglottic region is strongly approximated. The aryepiglottic folds vibrate, as well as vocal folds, and contribute to the subharmonic oscillation. The resonance frequency of the cavity induced by the aryepiglottic constriction is lower than that of the laryngeal ventricle, and this characterizes the growl voice. (Sakakibara, Fuks, Imagawa, and Tayama 2004:4)

Ultimately, Samputu utilizes this growl technique along with his normal voice to create a more distinct pitch. It is most analogous to the growl sound you would find in Louis Armstrong's singing voice.

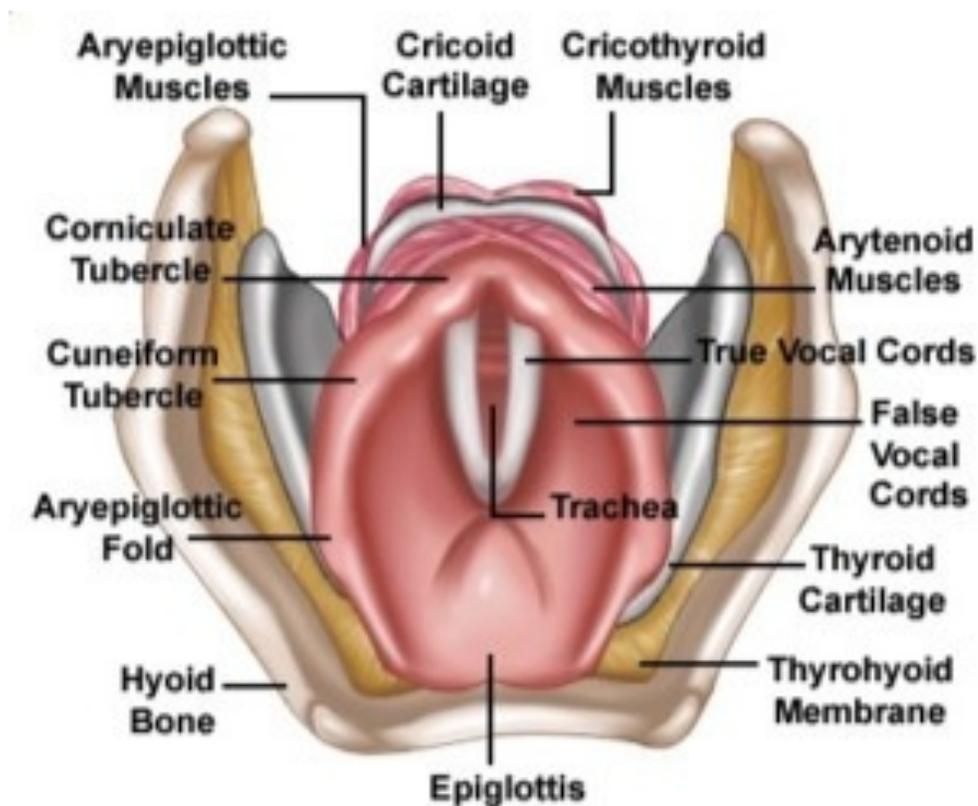


Figure 4-1. Diagram of vocal anatomy.
(Source: <http://www.gbmc.org/anatomyandphysiology>)

Spectral analysis of Samputu's voice

Spectrographic analysis of Samputu's different vocal timbres reveals different frequency profiles. His normal voice (see Figures 4-2, 4-3, and 4-4) has much more

emphasis on the second overtone (sliding from around G3 to D4 or 784 Hz to 1.74 kHz) series than on the fundamental (sliding from around 196 Hz to 293 Hz) until he sings in the lower register (A3 B3 G3). There is also significant density in the third (beginning around D4 or 1.17 kHz), fourth (also at D4), and fifth (beginning around C4 or 1.3 kHz) overtones.¹⁶³ Additionally, the both the fundamental and the overtones become obfuscated at the end because of his strong vibrato. It should be noted that the density of frequencies in the first part of the first overtone is his sliding up to the note, a feature that is not always present in his normal singing style.¹⁶⁴

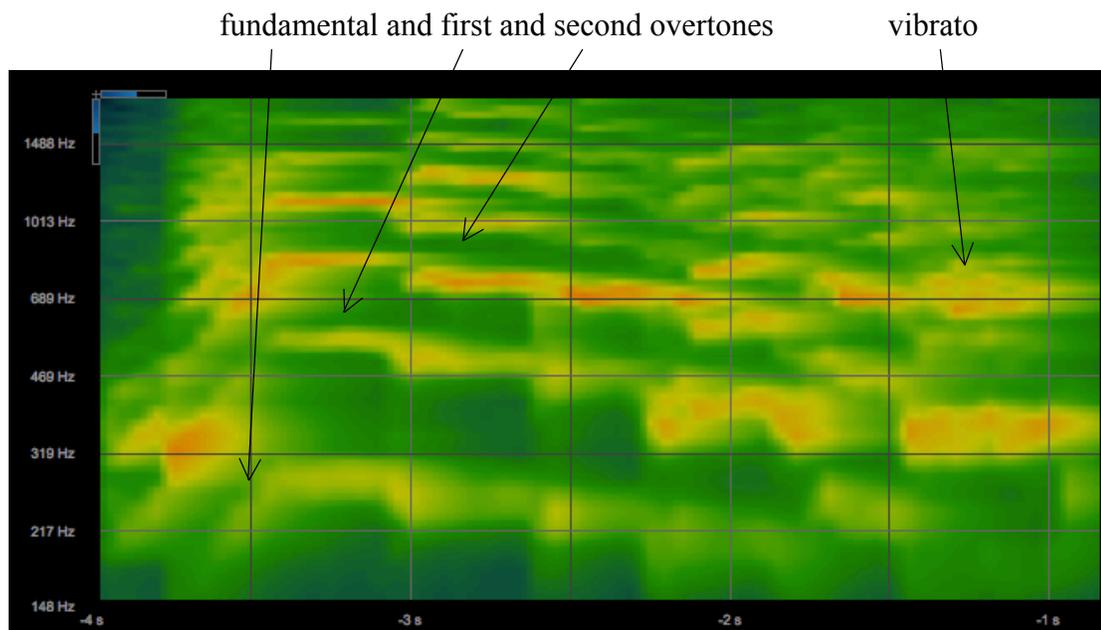


Figure 4-2. Spectrogram of Samputu's *normal* voice.

¹⁶³ I have included different spectrographic Blue Cat images of each voice (2-D and 3-D), as each image shows different detail regarding the density of frequencies. However, the frequency markers on the 3-D version are not accurate.

¹⁶⁴ Density of frequencies can be interpreted in two ways: first is the fundamental and overtone profile regarding pitch, and, second, is that the denser the area (yellow and red) the louder the pitch. Thus instead of notating dynamics in the score, they may be seen in spectrographic profile.

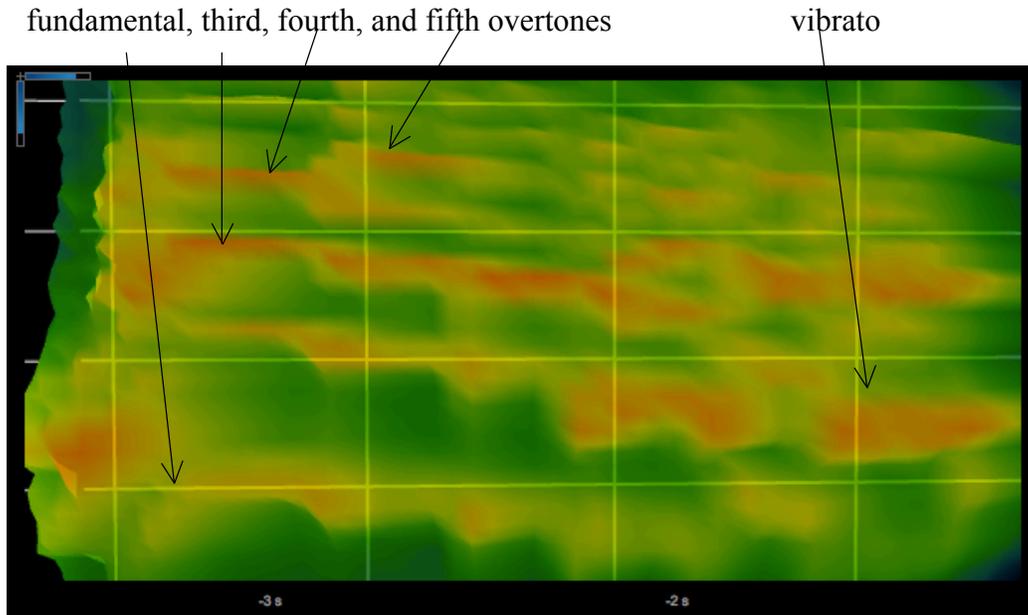


Figure 4-3. 3-D spectrogram of Samputu's *normal* voice.



Figure 4-4. Transcription of Samputu's *normal* voice melody in staff notation.

Contrastingly, the fundamental in Samputu's *soft* voice (see Figures 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7) is more clearly defined, as he uses flow phonation mixed with slight breathy phonation, little variation in resonance (mostly pharyngeal with no pressed phonation), and little to no vibrato. While the second and third overtones are equally as present in his *soft* voice, the fourth overtone is much less so than in his *normal* voice.

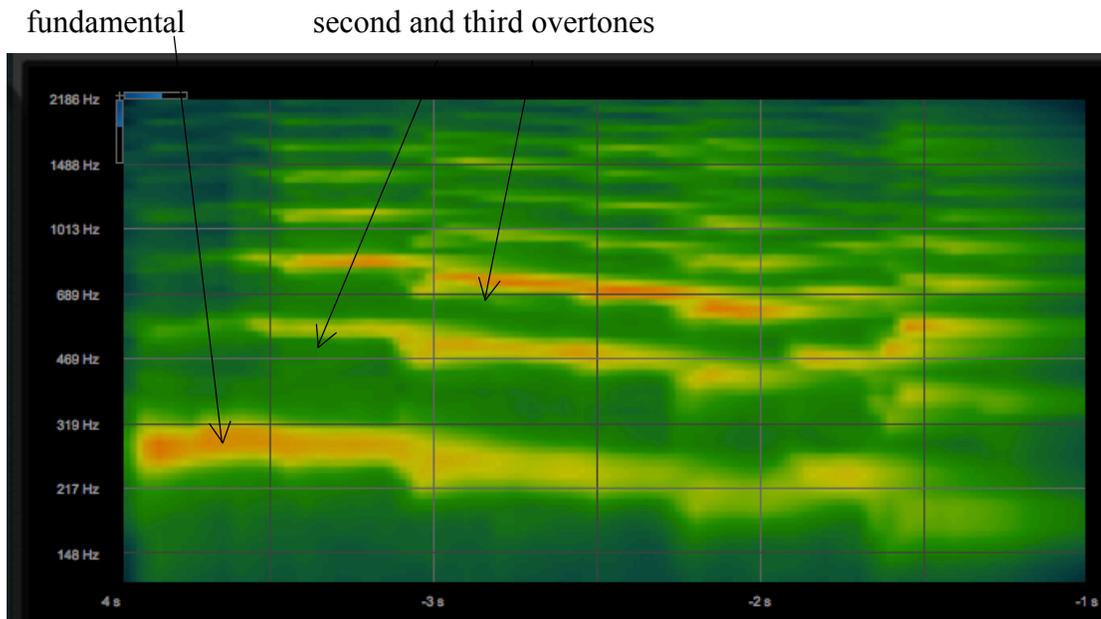


Figure 4-5. 2-D spectrogram of Samputu's *soft* voice.

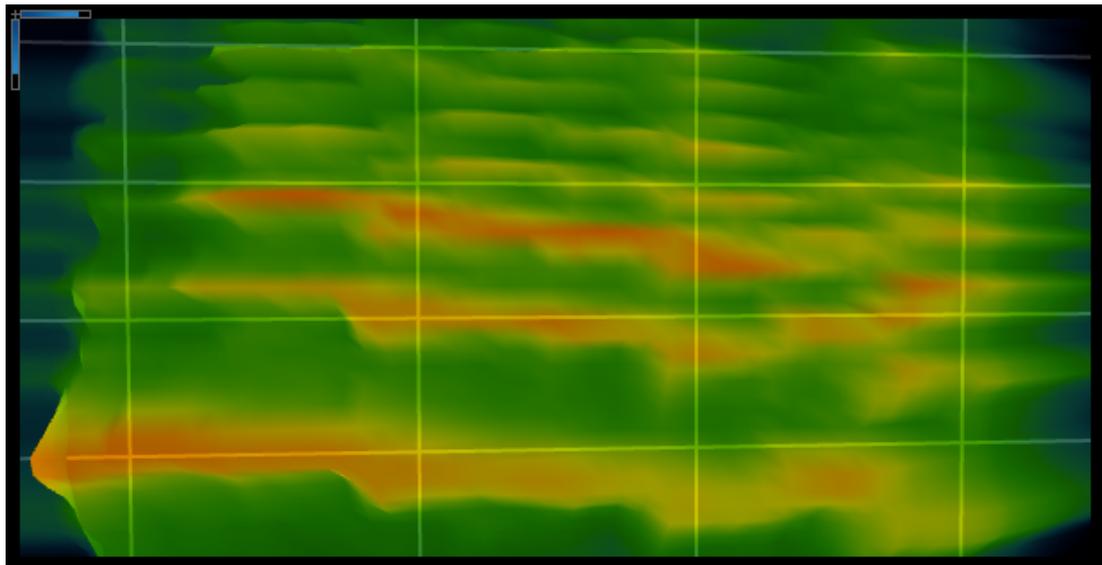


Figure 4-6. 3-D spectrogram of Samputu's *soft* voice.

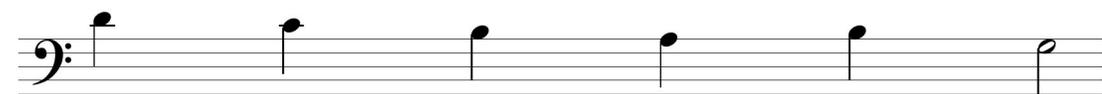


Figure 4-7. Transcription of Samputu's *soft* voice melody in staff notation.

Samputu's *pygmy* voice comprises two different styles: with nasal resonance (see Figures 4-8, 4-9, 4-10, 4-11, 4-12, and 4-13) and a mixture of nasal and mouth resonance (Figures 4-14, 4-15, 4-16, 4-17, and 4-18). The nasal resonance (sung on an eh and yeh syllables) has emphasis on the first overtone rather than the fundamental, as the sound is primarily exiting through the nasal passages. However, there are several subtle yodels that yield slightly denser frequencies. Unfortunately, other than the breaks in the first overtone and fundamental, these yodels are too subtle to detect on the Blue Cat spectrogram, but are detectible using the scrub method on Spear to isolate the frequencies (see Figure 4-11). Spear is not as visually aesthetically pleasing, but is easily able to detect these yodels in two ways. First is a darkening (in black and grey) of specific frequencies to denote density (the first yodel around C5 or 523Hz, the second slides from C5 to A#4 or 466Hz, the third slides from around A4 or 440Hz back to C5, the fourth around C5 (though it is barely discernable even at slow speeds as it is very close to the sound of the first overtone of the voiced fundamental of D4), and the fifth, sixth and seventh are all around A#4). Second, is that it also shows breaks in the fundamental (Figure 4-11 and 4-12). While some yodel fundamentals are clear, many, like the fourth fundamental, are so close to the overtones of the vocal line fundamental that it is difficult to see them on Spear, even zoomed in closely. Some of these yodels are also visible by observing the decrease in amplitude in the waveform through Garage Band (see Figure 4-13). Additionally, Samputu sings a slightly different melody (raising his pitch to E4 briefly before descending) in this example (see Figure 4-10).

breaks in first overtone

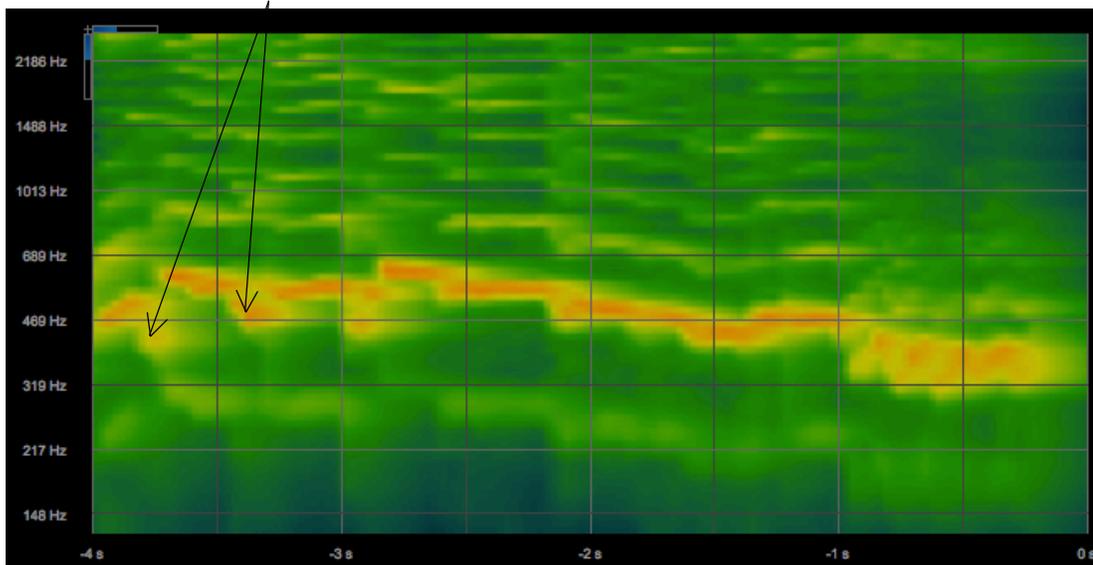


Figure 4-8. Spectrogram of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal resonance and yodel.

breaks in fundamental

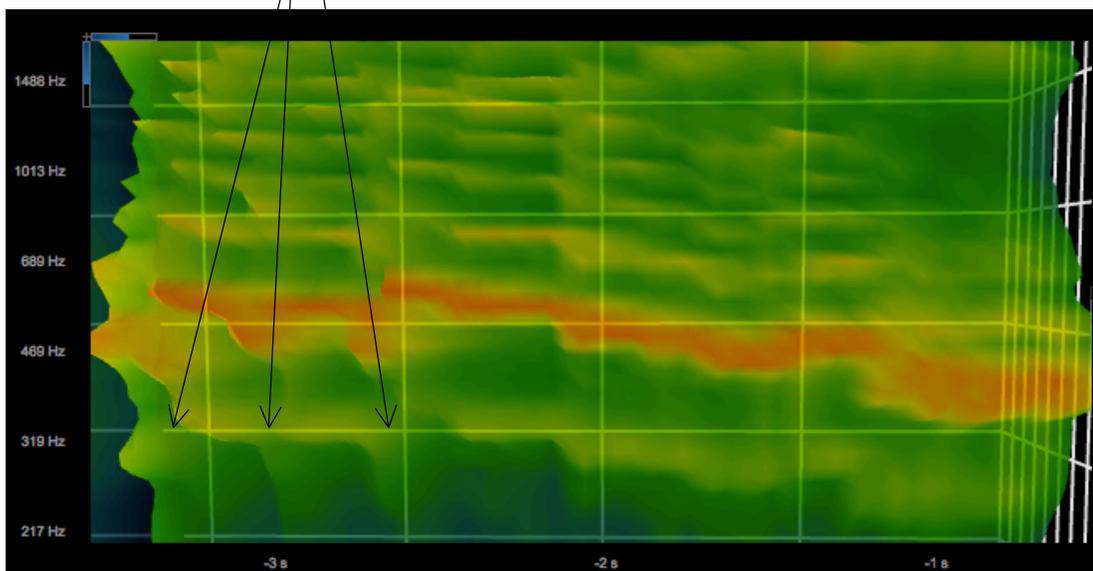
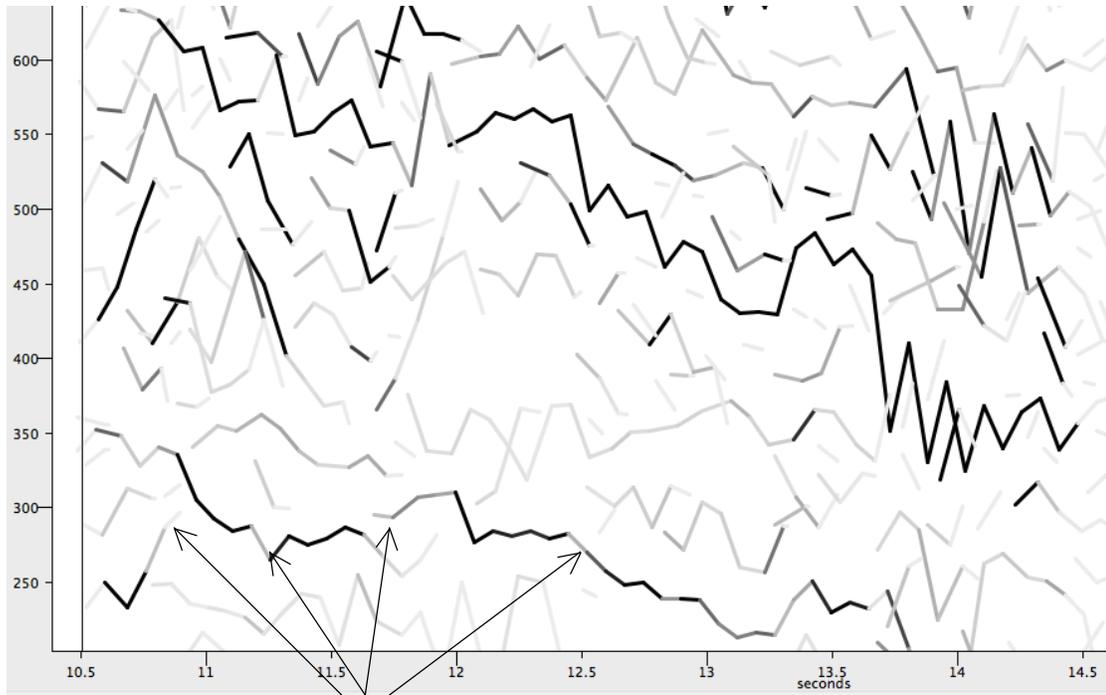


Figure 4-9. 3-D spectrogram of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal resonance and yodel.



*barely discernable

Figure 4-10. Transcription of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal resonance and yodel in staff notation.



breaks in fundamental

Figure 4-11. Spear spectrogram of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal resonance with breaks in fundamental marked.

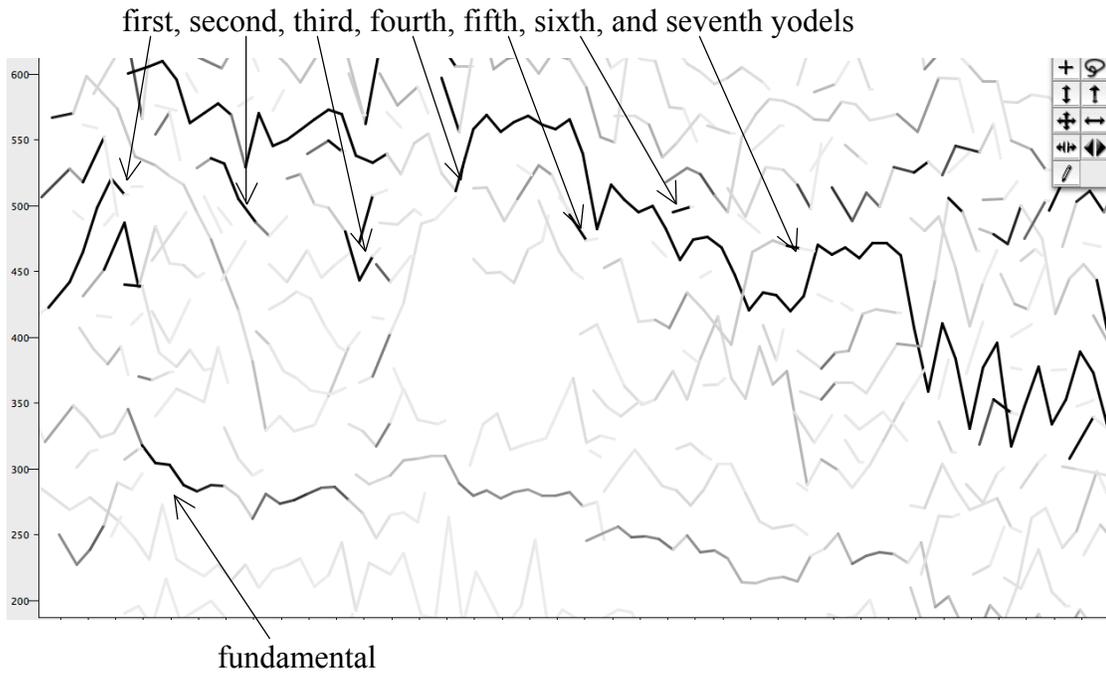


Figure 4-12. Spear spectrogram of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal resonance with yodels and fundamental marked.

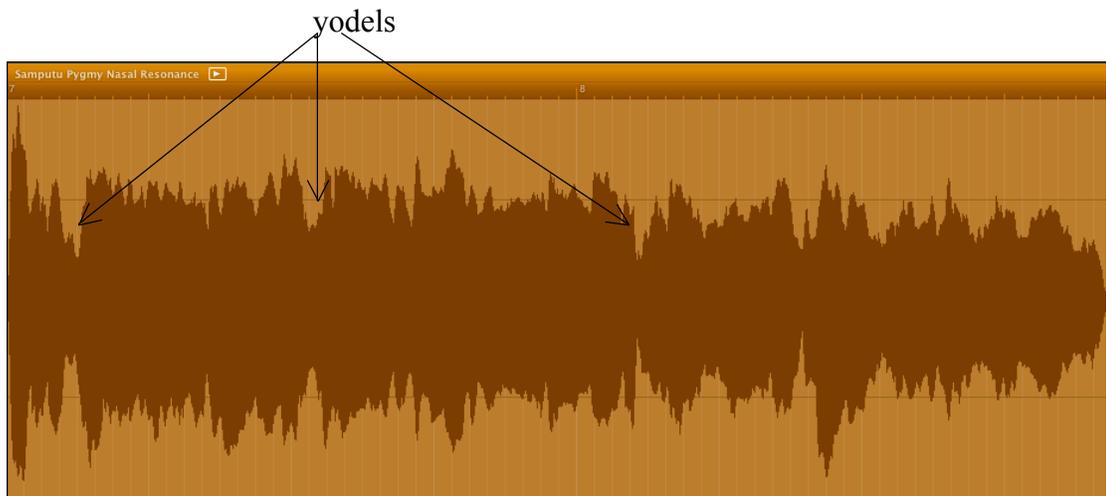


Figure 4-13. Garage Band waveform of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal resonance with some yodels marked.

The *pygmy* style with nasal and mouth resonance is much more complex than the nasal resonance in that fundamental is clearer for the first half of the melody and that there is significant density in the third, fourth, and fifth overtones (aside from the

first two notes). The yodels in this example are much clearer in sound and can be easily seen in the Blue Cat spectrogram, Spear spectrogram, and Garage Band waveform. Regarding the Blue Cat spectrogram (Figures 4-14 and 4-15), the breaks in the fundamental are only clear for the first yodel (D5 or 587Hz), but then clearer in the first and second overtones for subsequent yodels (second also at D5, third at B4 or 484Hz, fourth at G#4 or 415Hz, and the fifth at E4 or 330 Hz). The Spear spectrogram (Figure 4-16) shows clear breaks in the fundamental, but because the first three yodels are at the same frequency of the first overtone, it is impossible to see them as separate tones. However, the fourth and fifth yodels are fairly distinct. The Garage Band waveform (Figure 4-17) shows a decrease in amplitude only for the first, second, fourth, and fifth yodels.

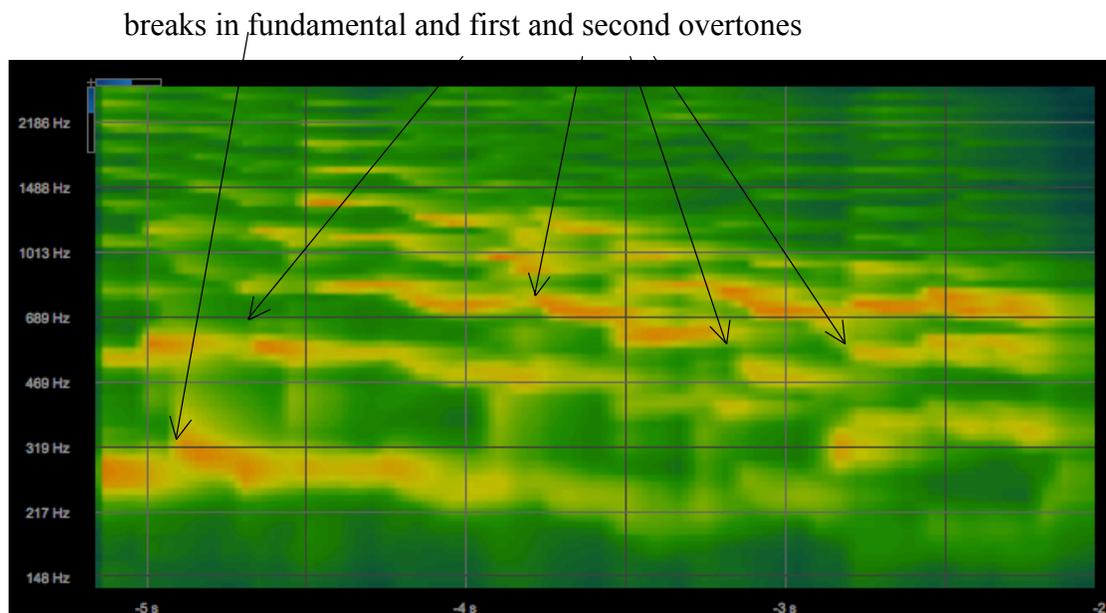


Figure 4-14. Blue Cat spectrogram of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal and mouth resonance with breaks in fundamental and overtones to denote yodels.

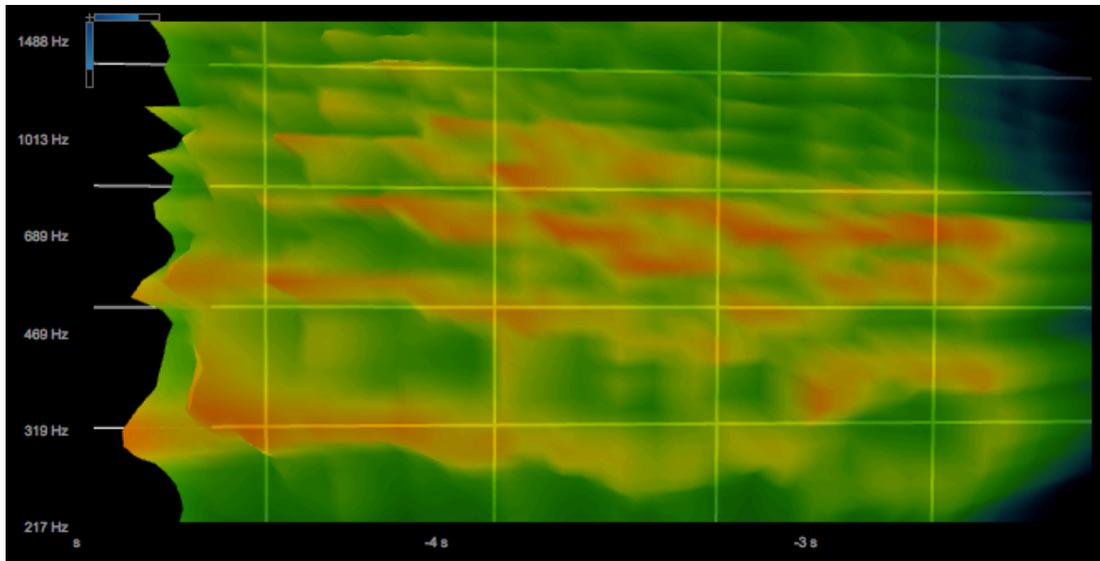


Figure 4-15. 3-D Blue Cat spectrogram of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal and mouth resonance.

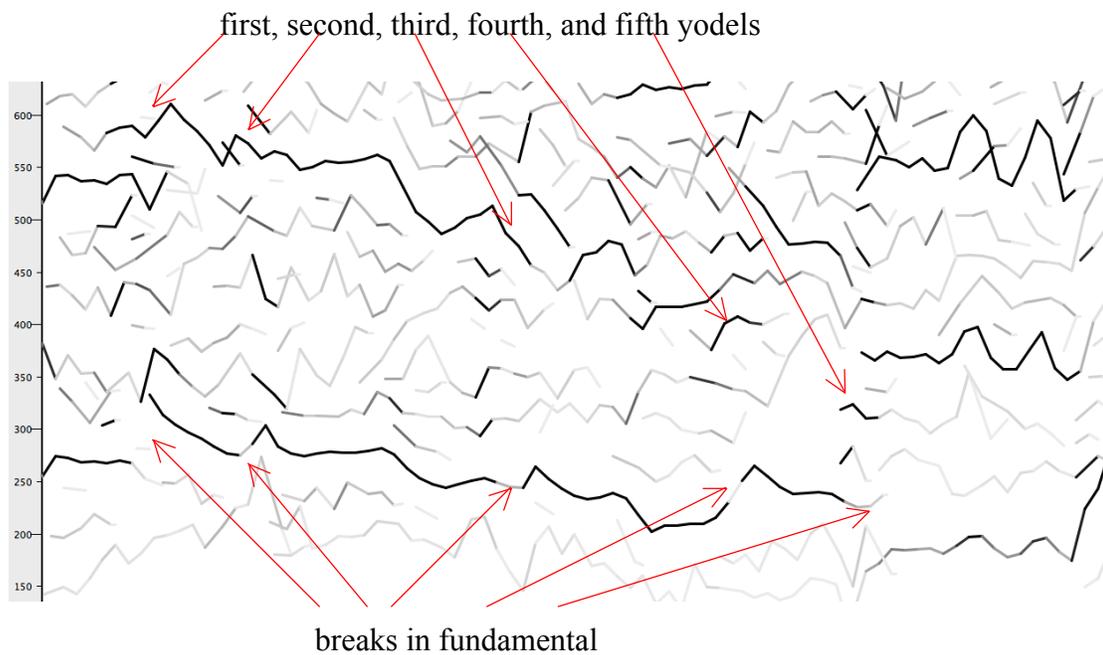


Figure 4-16. Spear spectrogram of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal resonance with yodels and breaks in fundamental.

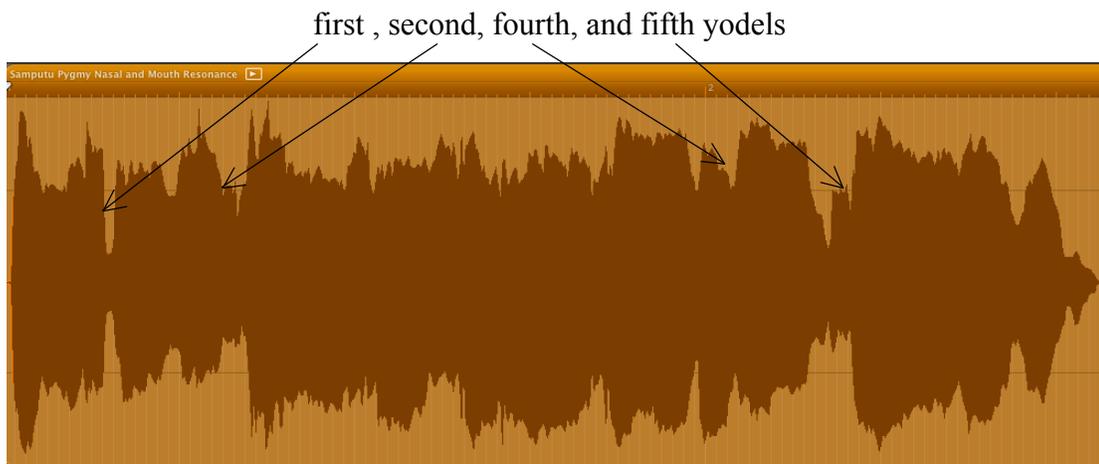


Figure 4-17. Garage Band waveform of Samputu's *pygmy* voice with nasal resonance and yodel.



Figure 4-18. Samputu melody for *pygmy* voice with nasal resonance.

Finally, the *growl* voice, which shares the melody with Samputu's *normal* voice (see Figure 4-4), has a strong fundamental, but because of the added noise from the tension in the aryepiglottic folds, the upper overtones (in some places the eleventh and twelfth) have significant density. These upper overtones are visible in the 2-D (Figures 4-19 and 4-20) and 3-D (Figure 4-21) Blue Cat audio spectrograms, but are clearer in the Spear spectrogram (Figure 4-22) in comparison to his *normal* (Figure 4-23). In the example, Samputu sings mostly in his *growl* voice, but at certain times, when the *growl* is less present and sounds more like his *normal* voice, these overtones are mostly absent.

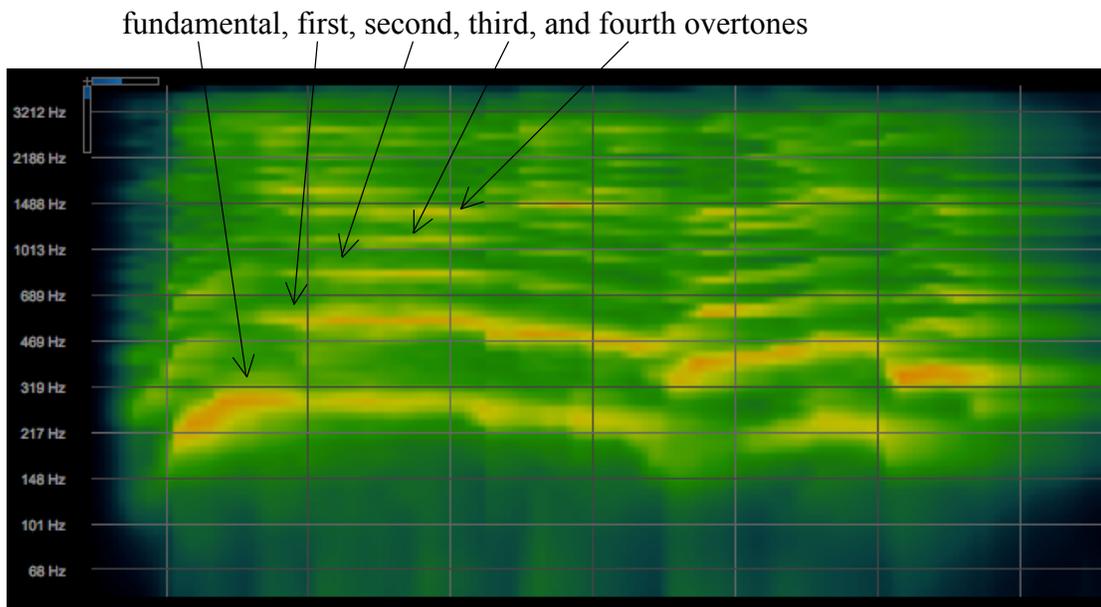


Figure 4-19. 2-D Blue Cat spectrogram of Samputu's *growl* voice.

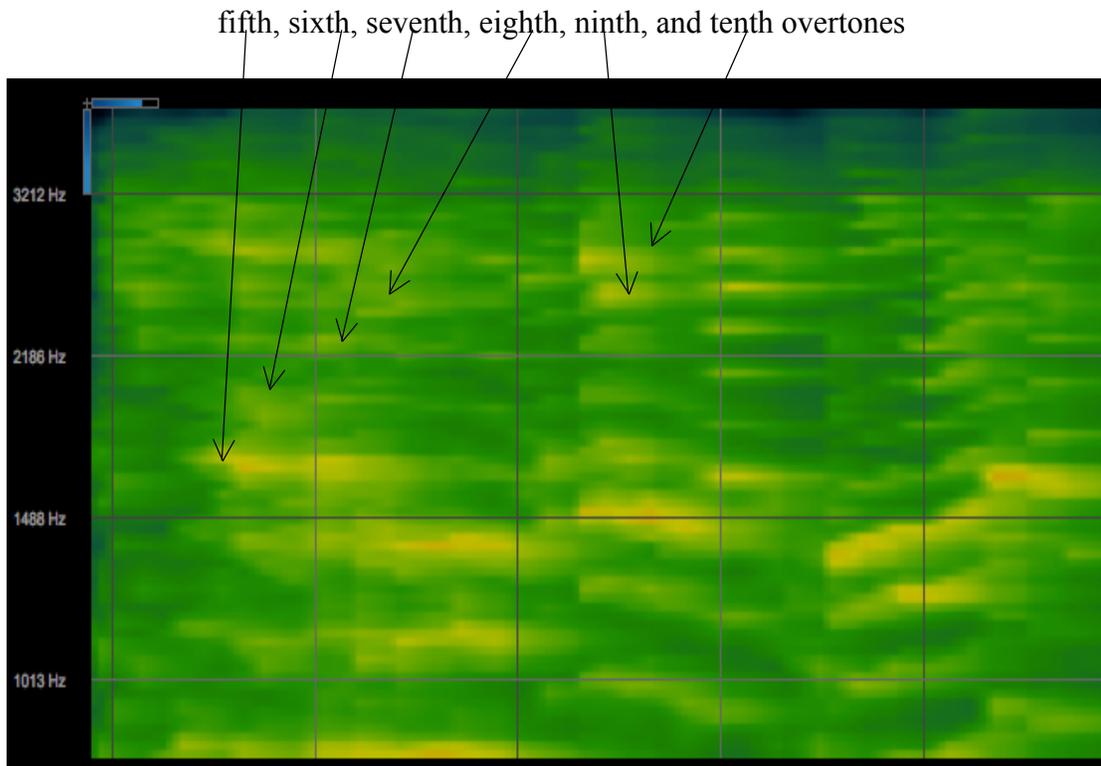


Figure 4-20. Zoomed in 2-D Blue Cat spectrogram of Samputu's *growl* voice.

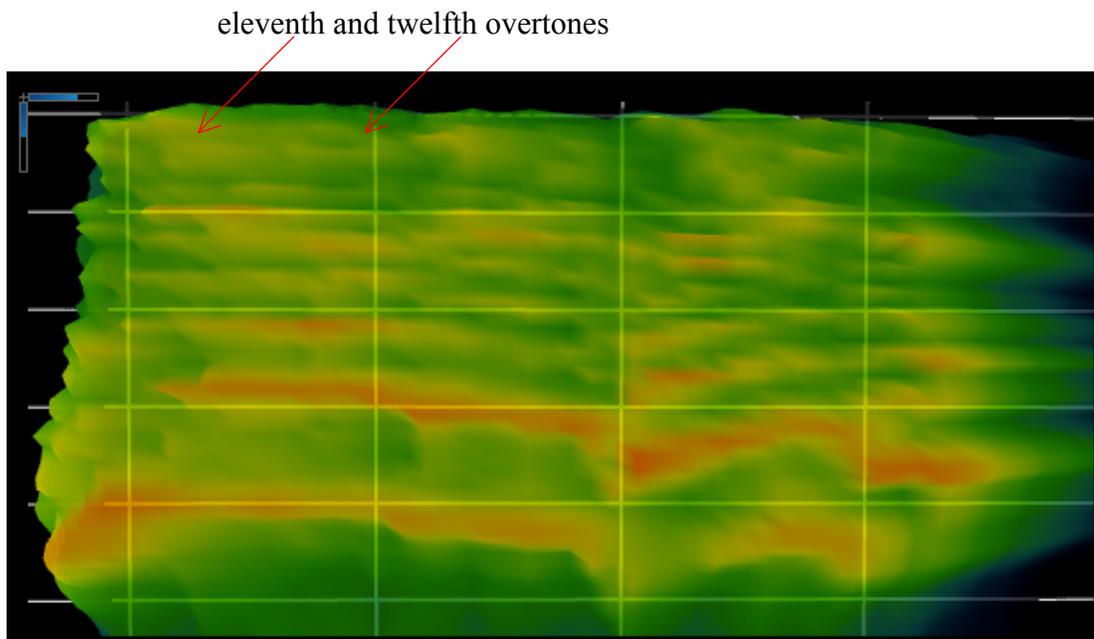


Figure 4-21. 3-D Blue Cat spectrogram of Samputu's *growl* voice.

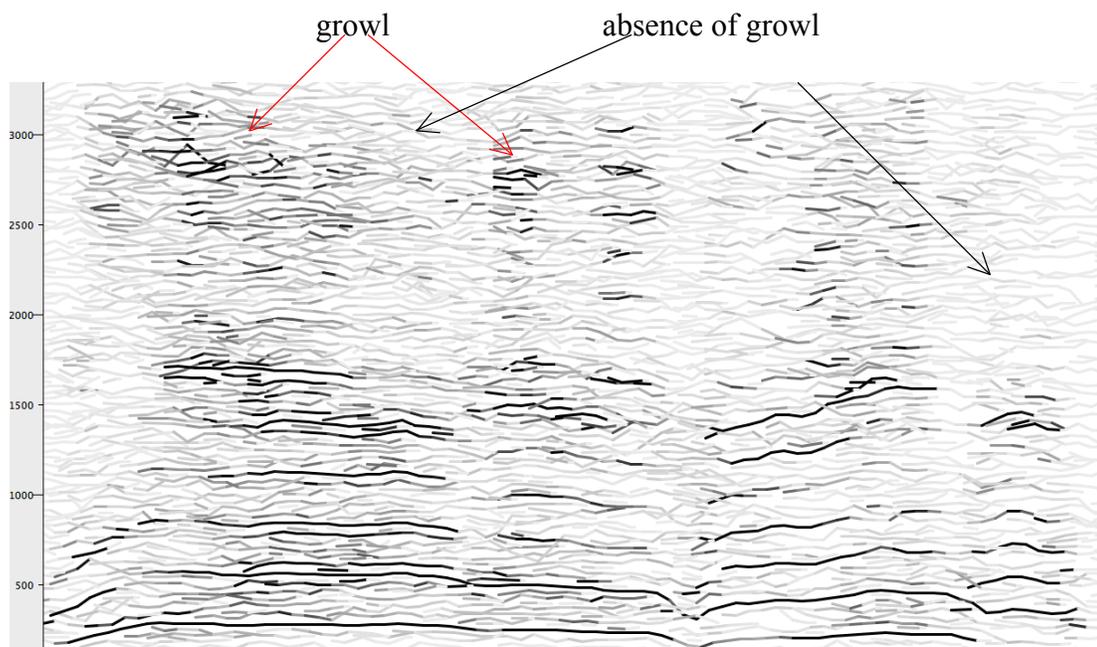


Figure 4-22. Spear spectrogram of Samputu's *growl* voice.

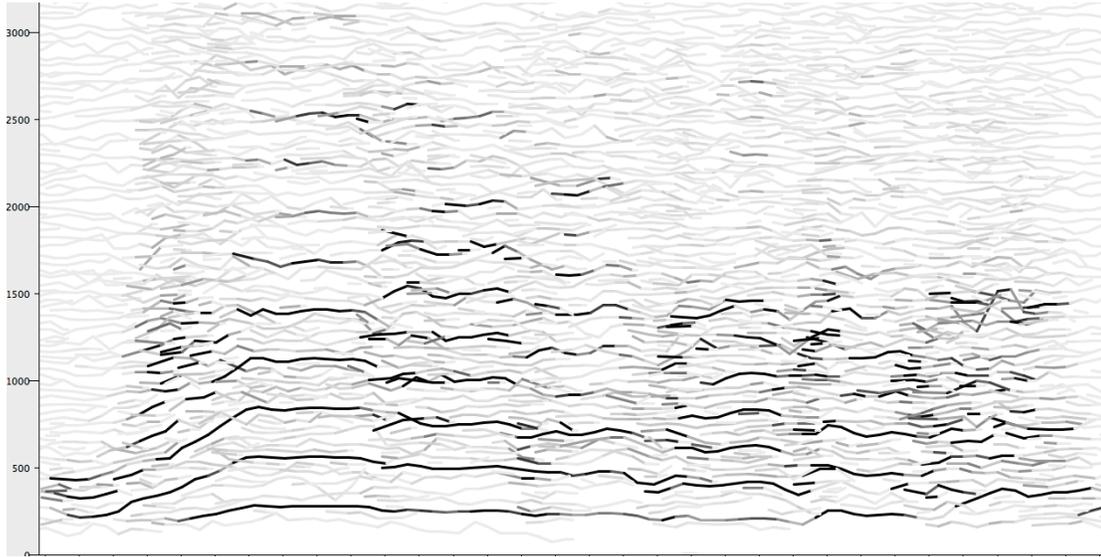


Figure 4-23. Spear Blue Cat spectrogram of Samputu's *normal* voice.

In conclusion, as demonstrated via analysis of transcriptions of spectrograms, waveforms, and staff notation, there are obvious visual differences in Samputu's vocal timbre. However, these vocal timbres should be seen as a continuum rather than as always being distinct. As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, Samputu fluidly switches vocal timbres from phrase to phrase (and sometimes from pitch to pitch), and thus these visualizations merely serve as "stereotypical" differences in his vocal timbre.

Having explored the physiology of Samputu's voice and visualized his vocal timbre, we will now turn to transcription and analysis of select compositions that most reflect Rwandan secular and sacred traditions and that are sonically and/or lyrically distinct in Rwandan musical culture. Finally, in the following sections, I will continue along the same framework of transcribing in staff notation, waveform, and spectrogram, but will also use images of instruments and instrument performance as needed. However, I will not transcribe each piece (lyrically or sonically) fully, as I

would like to focus on distinctions that reflect his musical link with Rwandan culture rather than analyzing all possible parameters.

Chapter 5: Samputu and Rwanda

In this chapter I will analyze select songs from Samputu's repertoire that best represent his experience with Rwandan culture. Ultimately, all of Samputu's work could be considered "Rwandan," as many of the musical styles Samputu uses are also employed by other Rwandan artists; however, I believe it is important to delineate the distinctions between Rwanda, Burundi, East (Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya) and Central (Congo) Africa, Europe and the Americas, and, finally, the Caribbean, as each region has its own musical history that—whether or not Rwandans recognize and/or embrace it—is part of their own musical culture. And because postcolonial Rwandan musical culture is built on transnationalism and/or transregionalism, describing the distinctions between these styles is a way of fleshing out all of the "nations" or "regions" that it comprises, in order to define the elusive construct of Rwandan musical identity. Additionally, given the importance of the role of music in the Nyiginya dynasty, as well as how the conflicts that originated in in the dynastic era (despite being confounded by the European colonial powers) are firmly entrenched in Rwandan culture today, it is imperative to flesh out those musical details, as they serve as the bedrock of Samputu's musical compositional and performance practices.

I have divided this chapter in two sections: secular traditional music, and sacred music. Regarding secular traditional music, I use the term "traditional," not in the sense that what Samputu does would be considered traditional in Rwandan culture (meaning performed in a traditional setting), but that it is rooted in its traditional music-culture. Additionally, Samputu refers to anything that hints at being part of

traditional Rwandan music-culture as “traditional.” Thus, for him, it is all “traditional” whether or not it would be part of typical traditional performance contexts. In terms of sacred traditional music, all of the pieces I analyze are Christian re-contextualizations of some type of sacred or secular traditional music. Thus, not all of the pieces are sacred in nature, but some secular pieces have been appropriated to include Christian themed lyrics or contexts. For example, “Ingoma” is based on the traditional *ingoma* (royal drums) performance context of playing for the *mwami*. And while the king was considered a spiritual authority figure, the drumming would have been more to reverently signal his coming into the village than to initiate a particular rite or ritual. However, Samputu performs *ingoma* for Jesus Christ, the King of Kings. Therefore, all of these pieces are sacred in the sense that they are now religiously themed.

In terms of musical analysis, I analyze each piece based on what I find to be the most interesting characteristics. For some, I focus on the timbral qualities of the voice and instrument(s) and how they relate to various identities, while with others I focus on how re-contextualizing has changed the performance practice. I also briefly touch on audio perception when dealing with implied rhythms in the *amayugi* ankle bells in “Singizwa,” the presence of three distinct pitches on a one-string musical-bow (*umuduri*), and the presence of “unintended” pitches based on performance practice of “Amakondera.” However, while analysis of each piece is tailored, I make use of spectrographic analysis and staff notation on almost all of the pieces, and adding acoustic waveform analysis on a select few. I also use photos and video stills to demonstrate movement (from instrumental performance practice to dance), as this is

also imperative in understanding Rwandan music-culture.

Secular traditional music

Samputu's secular traditional music is best defined as either pieces he has composed or performed in a traditional style or rooted in a traditional style sonically and/or lyrically and includes the following songs. They include "Ngarambe," "Kunda Inka," "Migabo," and "Nyaruguru." Of all of these, "Nyaruguru" and "Kunda Inka" stand out as the most distinctive: "Nyaruguru" because it is a famous traditional song rooted in Rwandan popular literature and was one of his biggest hits among Rwandans in and out of the country, and "Kunda Inka" because the whistling timbre used and is also an important traditional song which helps us understand the importance of cows in Rwandan culture.

"Nyaruguru"

The sonic traditional elements in "Nyaruguru" are found in the triple-meter Rwandan rhythm, melodic and harmonic content, and vocal timbre, but Samputu injects his own musical idiosyncrasies into the performance. To analyze these musical details, I draw on two different performances of "Nyaruguru": the original 1999 recording from *Igihe Kirageza* and the version from the live concert for the WCO in 2004, which can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaoLL-IZpZA>. However, before proceeding, a description of the textual complexities of "Nyaruguru" is in order.

Because much of Samputu's music is a mixture of all of his experiences, analysis of "Nyaruguru" is embedded in different traditions. "Nyaruguru" is best

described as a mixture of popular literature (*ibisigo byo muri rubanda*)—the text—and *imbyino* (dance music)—the sound, which could accompany a variety of different dances. Regarding the lyrical content, Rwandan literature is divided into two categories: the official literature or dynastic poetry (*ibisigo byo muri nyabami*), which is highly regulated, and the popular literature (*ibisigo byo muri rubanda*). The *rubanda* popular literature often contains lyrical content that is metaphorical and refers to historically important places and events related to the dynastic rule of the Nyiginya kingdom. However, the references are often very obscure, and often only historians and scholars of Rwandan poetry know how to best interpret the poems. In fact, Samputu himself did not know how to translate and interpret the song (as he did not compose it), and asked for help from the Rwandan scholar and photojournalist Rafiki Ubaldo.¹⁶⁵ I was introduced to Mr. Ubaldo through Samputu, and, because he was interested in my work on Samputu, he offered to share his insights. Ubaldo considers the lyrical content of “Nyaruguru” to be part of the *intwatwa* genre (a general term for all things Twa), as the lyrics are, in places, obscure; his analysis (including his own translation of the text) of “Nyaruguru” he sent me via email is as follows:¹⁶⁶

[Verse One]
Nyaruguru iriya yari iy’Abarinda
Nyaruguru belonged to Abarinda
Yari Iy’Abarinda n’Abarindangwe
To Abarinda and Abarindangwe
N’abo Basheshi basheshe ingoma

¹⁶⁵ Mr. Ubaldo is best known for his editorial work on *We Cannot Forget: Interviews with Survivors of the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda* (Rutgers, 2011) and is also a member of the executive board (2011-2015) of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (<http://www.genocidescholars.org>).

¹⁶⁶ The term *intwatwa* is a bit nebulous, as it can be applied to textual, musical, and choreographical content, or any other form of Twa cultural expression.

And the Basheshi who defeated kingdoms

Rafiki's Note: Here the stanza serves as source of history. These different names refer to the royal military units composed of Batwa during the reign of King Rwabugiri known for his victorious military expeditions in neighboring kingdoms. One of these units, Abasheshi, is praised here for having defeated rival kingdoms. The Unit of Abasheshi was stationed in the South of Rwanda, arguably in the region of Nyaruguru. This also raises another interesting discussion about the place and role of the Batwa in the rise and fall of the Nyiginya dynasty. Contrary to the colonial and post-colonial periods, The Batwa played different functions during the pre-colonial Rwanda.

[Verse Two]
Umwanzi ukwanga arakagwa ishyanga
May he who hates you perish in exile
Arakagwa ishyanga inyuma y'ishyamba
In exile across the forest

Rafiki's Note: Here the song sheds light on the understanding of geography in pre-colonial Rwanda. The exile that is talked about here is "across the forest". In my interviews for research that is not directly related to this topic, I have noticed that not so long ago as in the 1960s people in the south referred to "across the forest," i.e. the forest of Nyungwe in ways to mean another part of the world. Not necessarily a foreign land but certainly a region with a different culture. Some others seem to suggest that "across the forest" means The Congo, i.e., another country in both in cultural and geographical terms

[Verse Three]
Arakarya ibamba ridakanuye
May he eat ibamba that has not yet bloomed
Ejo mu gitondo rizamurye mu nda
And get stomach pains tomorrow morning
Rizamurye munda nta kayogero
Without akayogero to ease his pain

Rafiki's Note: This part of the song informs us about the indigenous knowledge of traditional medicine. The Ibamba, a plant in the family of sunflower, is reputed to be very sower and causes acute stomach pains especially if eaten before it has bloomed. Akayogero or umuyogera, in the family of rattlepods, is said to cure stomach pains.

[Verse Four]
Can itara we
Light up the lamp
Cana itara ryake

Light up the lamp so it gets bright
Cana itara, Cana Itara
Light up the lamp, light up the lamp
Cana itara ryake
Light up the lamp so it gets bright
Nyaruguru we
You Nyaruguru

Rafiki's Note: This is where the genre of *intwatwa* reveals itself. While it is a common knowledge that the *intwatwa* text is metaphorically multilayered, and almost banal in its imagery. However, there is very little exploration of the context in which Rwandan audiences receive(d) and interpret(ed) the messages. The post-colonial era's reception of *intwatwa* resulted in a cultural erosion that produced *dissonant textuality* (metaphoric and non-linear narratives produce internal disparate meanings and this results in multiple significance), which can explain the diminutive status the genre has been given. Meaning, Rwandans have kept alive and still like the genre of *intwatwa*. But they pain to grasp the multilayered character of its narratives, which can be misleadingly viewed as producing disparate meanings and multiple significances. Thus *intwatwa* audiences still respond to the genre's textual content with banal, often diminutive and pejorative views and comments. This can explain the diminutive status the genre has been given. (Ubaldo 2014).¹⁶⁷

This “dissonant textuality” Ubaldo mentions regarding the last section of the song is the fact that the last stanza (telling the Nyaruguru to light up the lamp) is seemingly unrelated to the first part of the text, which is about the importance of Nyaruguru in relation to the Nyiginya dynasty and how the author wishes ill on the enemies of the kingdom. In our conversations, Ubaldo states that lighting up the lamp really means “shine, Nyaruguru, shine” (ibid.). In other words, as Nyaruguru is a metaphor for the strength (based on military victories) of the Rwabugiri-led kingdom, telling Nyaruguru to shine is a way of venerating the king and, by extension, the entire kingdom. This is, as Ubaldo also mentioned, the difference between *ibisigo nyabami*

¹⁶⁷ I have added the verse numbers for future reference.

and *ibisigo byo muri rubanda*, because the former is usually quite literal and logical, given its official and regulated status, whereas the latter is often disjointed and metaphorical. It is because of this metaphorical nature of *ibisigo byo muri rubanda*, coupled with the fact that the Twa usually composed and performed it, that it is often, as Ubaldo states, given a diminutive status in post-colonial Rwandan culture.

As previously mentioned (briefly) in Chapter One, the Twa are, as Beswick notes, “the only ethnic group that can be discriminated against with relative impunity” (Beswick 2011:492). Further, Christopher Taylor states that the Twa were the first to encounter negative stereotypes and racial discrimination. He recalls an instance where he gave a poor Twa man a small amount of money (twenty Rwandan Francs), and he “jumped about, showing it to everyone nearby as if it were the king’s ransom, which it obviously was not” (Taylor 2011:184), and sensed he was mocking him. But, a man in authority (sector counselor), noticing his distress about the situation, muttered to him “Mutwa mupunyu” (Twa pygmy), which the counselor deemed to be a sufficient explanation for the man’s odd behavior” (ibid.). In other words, the Twa are considered stupid buffoon beggars as they are often poor and uneducated due to their marginalization, some of which is a result of the educational quota system during the Kayibanda administration, in which the Twa were only 1% of the population, but also because they are forest people and, further, the kings’ entertainers, whose performances were often comedic. Thus, *ibisigo byo muri rubanda* is often regarded as a genre that does not have as high a status as the official literature. Even the term *intwatwa* can be considered a pejorative in Rwandan culture. Ubaldo explains,

The text in *intwatwa* is intriguingly misleading... and that really has impacted the way the way people have viewed the Twa people. Because their singing doesn't convey any coherent message, [people will say] "ah yeah, it's *intwatwa*... they are happy." (Ibid.)

Thus, what makes Samputu's recorded and live performance of "Nyaruguru" interesting (aside from its popularity in Rwanda) is that it is not just a nice interpretation of a traditional song, but a way of elevating the status of the Twa in Rwandan culture.

Samputu raises the status of the Twa in two ways in his performance of "Nyaruguru." First, based on analysis of the recorded version, is the simple fact that he has taken a song that is part of the *intwatwa* genre and modernized it to reach a broader audience. And because it was, and still is, a big hit among Rwandans in and out of the country, as well as a song that garnering him a nomination for a Kora award for "Best Traditional Artist," the Twa poetry and singing style, one considered banal by many Rwandans, has been lauded internationally.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ To his credit, Gansemans's recordings of and writings about Rujindiri and other Twa artists are notable contributions to the field of ethnomusicology and bring awareness to the beauty of *intwatwa*, but because he is not Rwandan, he does not have the same type of cultural capital as Samputu does in terms of venerating the Twa within Rwandan culture.

Nyaruguru

Traditional
arr. by Samputu and Nitunga

The musical score for "Nyaruguru" is arranged for a band. It features the following instruments and parts:

- Vocals:** Four staves, all of which are empty, indicating no vocal lines are present in this section.
- Marimba/Likembe:** One staff, which is empty.
- Electric Guitar:** One staff with a treble clef. It contains a melodic line starting in the fourth measure. The notation includes palm mutes (indicated by 'x' marks over the strings) and a wah-wah pedal effect. Annotations include "palm muted strings" and "wah-wah throughout".
- Electric Piano:** Two staves (treble and bass clefs), both of which are empty.
- Electric Bass:** One staff with a bass clef, which is empty.
- Tambourine:** One staff with a double bar line and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and rests.
- Drum Set:** One staff with a double bar line and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests, with the annotation "mid-tom" below it.

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The musical score for "Nyaruguru" is arranged for a multi-instrument ensemble. It begins with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature. The score is divided into two systems of staves. The first system includes five staves, all of which are currently empty, suggesting they are for vocalists or instruments that enter later. The second system includes six staves: Mrb. (Maracas), E.Gtr. (Electric Guitar), E. Pno. (Electric Piano), E.B. (Electric Bass), Tamb. (Tambourine), and D. S. (Drum Set). The Mrb. part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The E.Gtr. part uses a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some chords. The E. Pno. part has a melodic line with some chords. The E.B. part has a simple bass line. The Tamb. part uses a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The D. S. part includes a kick drum pattern and a splash cymbal. Dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *sfz* (sforzando) are used throughout the score.

4 Nyaruguru

20

20

20

g pnm y

mmm

Mrb.

E.Gtr.

E. Pno.

E.B.

Tamb.

D. S.

Nyaruguru

26

26

26

s/n throughout

Nya ru — gu ru Nya ru — gu ru Nya ru — gu ru

26

Mrb.

26

E.Gtr.

3 3 3

26

E. Pno.

Aadd9 Bm7/A

improvising similarly throughout over chord changes

26

E.B.

26

Tamb.

26

D.S.

we -

yeh. Nya ru — gu ru Nya ru — gu ru Nya ru — gu ru we. Nya ru — gu ru

Mrb.

E.Gtr.

Aadd9/E Aadd9 Bm7/A Aadd9/E Aadd9 Bm7/A

E. Pno.

E.B.

Tamb.

D. S.

8 Nyaruguru

we. Yeh - Nya ru gu ru we, yeh.

Mrb.

E.Gtr.

Aadd9/B Aadd9 Aadd9/C# Aadd9/F# Aadd9/B Aadd9 Aadd9/C# Aadd9/F#

E. Pno.

E.B.

Tamb.

D.S.

Figure 5-1. Transcription of “Nyaruguru” introduction and chorus section in staff notation.

Regarding the sonic details of this “modernizing” of this traditional material, as previously mentioned in Chapter 3 the instrumentation is all electronic with the exception of electric guitar with wah-wah pedal. The beginning of the piece (see Figure 5-1) begins with a mid-tom combined with a tambourine in the Rwandan triple-meter rhythm, which is meant to mimic the traditional *ingoma* and *amayugi* ankle bells worn by the dancers. However, in a traditional setting, especially in the

evening when the Twa gather to sing, the *ingoma* would be absent, with the accompaniment solely performed by hand clapping and *amayugi*. The pattern remains static until measure ten when there is a “fill” involving a splash cymbal (very low in the mix) and a kick drum. The ostinato pattern continues with added kick drum until measure thirty-seven, when a snare played with brushes is introduced.

The electric guitar ostinato pattern (played with plectrum) enters in measure three with both fully sounded and muted (with palm) sounds and continues through measure twenty-six, when Nitunga plays a eighth-note triplet “fill” using hammer-ons and pull-offs in each phrase to create a legato effect. The marimba, beginning in measure twelve, emulates an *ikembe* by playing an eighth-note ostinato pattern (though the melodic aspects of the ostinato are much less regular than the rhythmic aspect) by outlining the Aadd9 harmony. This is echoed by the electric piano, beginning in measure twenty-eight—the piano does enter playing sparse “fills” in measure eleven, but doesn’t begin its ostinato part until later—though it seems at times to have more space between the notes than the marimba does. However, it is too difficult to truly hear the details of the ostinato pattern due to its level in the mix, which is why I have not transcribed it. The electric bass enters briefly at measures eleven and twenty, but doesn’t begin its full accompaniment until measure twenty-eight (preceded by a two-bar fill at measure twenty-six). The bass part consists mostly of dominant pedal tones (E) until measure forty, when it goes through a harmonic progression that resembles a I-I⁶-vi-V pattern, though the leading tone is generally

absent throughout most of the song.¹⁶⁹ Therefore the best way to describe this is a series of Aadd9 chords with an occasional change in the bass note, thus emulating traditional *ikembe* performance, which has no intended harmonic progressions—at least in the classic European sense of the term—as it performs similar melodies to those of the singer (DEKKMMA 2003c). Additionally, according to Gansemans, the *ikembe* is primarily an instrument played by the Twa (ibid.).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ In the WCO video on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaoLL-IZpzA>), Nitunga plays through a I-vi-ii-V progression throughout, thus the bass could also merely be emphasizing the fifth of each chord. Thus instead of analyzing the progression in the studio recording as a I-I⁶-vi-V, it could be viewed as a I-vi^{6/4}-ii^{6/4}-V.

¹⁷⁰ An example of *ikembe* performance may be heard here:
<http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/sound/rwanda/ikembe.mp3>.



Figure 5-2. Photo of *ingoma*.

(Source:

<http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/pic/rwanda/ingoma.jpg>)

While the electric and electronic instrumentation is an obvious difference between “traditional” and “modern” performance practice, there are several similarities in the way Samputu and Nitunga use said instruments to emulate the *ingoma* and *amayugi* in the same way they emulate the *ikembe*. As mentioned in Chapter Three, typical *ingoma* performance includes three different types of drums (see Figure 5-2): *ishakwe* (smallest and the lead drum which calls out to the others), *inyahura* (medium tone), and *igihumurizo* (deepest), though in more intimate

performances, especially when the *ingoma* are only used for accompaniment, only the *inyahura* and *igihumurizo* are used. There are several basic ostinato patterns, almost all of which are emulated in the arrangement of “Nyaruguru.” The first is found in the first few measures of the percussion section of Figure 5-1 (though the pattern begins on measure two rather than one, with measure one being the second half of the pattern). However, the accented portions would be performed on the *igihumurizo* (this is emphasized beginning in measure eleven with the kick drum), while the unaccented portions would be performed on the *inyahura*. The second pattern begins in measure thirty-eight, when there is an added eighth note at the end of measure thirty-nine. Also, the light snare drum played with brushes can be interpreted as light hand clapping, which is commonly added by singers and audience members in a traditional performance. A third common pattern, not performed in “Nyaruguru,” is an added triplet figure on the *inyahura*, beginning on the second beat of the first half of the pattern, as well as two added consecutive eighth notes on the last beat of the second half of the pattern (see Figure 5-3).

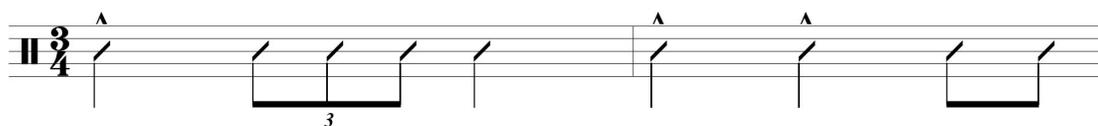


Figure 5-3. Third rhythmic pattern traditionally performed on the *inyahura* and *igihumurizo*.

In addition to these rhythms, there is also a variant rhythm, found in the second and third verses (see Figure 5-5), which would normally be performed by the dancers wearing *amayugi* (See Figure 5-4). This is emulated by adding an eighth-note hi-hat pattern, as well as syncopation in the kick drum, tambourine, and mid-tom (measures four through thirteen). This can best be seen on Samputu’s aforementioned

live WCO performance on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaoLL-IzpzA>). Beginning at 0:38, the dancers, wearing traditional *intore* (with hairpieces, worn meant to represent a lion's strength, and warriors' spears), begin accenting offbeat rhythms with their legs (made audible via the *amayugi*). Additionally, as the dancers are moving around the stage, the *amayugi* create a mixture of quarter- and eighth-note patterns as played on the hi-hat in the studio recording.



Figure 5-4. Photo of *amayugi*.

(Source: <http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/pic/rwanda/context-amayugi.jpg>)

In terms of the vocal melodic content, the melodies usually descend, as is the norm in most Rwandan songs including *imbyino* (DEKKMMA 2003c).¹⁷¹ However, texturally and timbrally, Samputu injects a Twa style of singing that is usually absent in *imbyino* songs. Most of the song is homophonic, but Samputu adds sections of

¹⁷¹ Cornelia Fales refers to descending melodic content in Burundian singing as “The Rule of Melodic Dwindrift,” which “refers to a basic melodic movement from high to low” and “is thought to mimic linguistic dwindrift, a naturally occurring phenomenon, in which a vocal utterance gradually descends in pitch as the subglottal pressure in the speaker's vocal tract decreases – that is, as the speaker runs out of air before taking another breath” (Fales 1998:166).

polyphony, a common texture in the *intwatwa* genre.¹⁷² The polyphonic voices enter in measure thirty-four in the top two lines (the two just above Samputu's lead melodic line) and continue through measure forty-five. However, the vocal harmonies are very different than traditional harmonies, as they form an Aadd9 chord. In traditional music, harmonic content is usually in fourths (see "Singizwa," "Psalm 150," "Umukiza Araje," and "Yesu Wange" later in this chapter), which I call "Rwandan quartal harmony."

Regarding the vocal timbre, Samputu utilizes all of his vocal timbres in both the studio recording and WCO performance, but he utilizes many more timbral changes in the WCO performance. To notate these changes, I have marked the score with *n* for normal voice, *s* for soft voice, *pn* for pygmy voice with nasal resonance, *pnm* for pygmy voice with nasal and mouth resonance, *g* for growl voice, and *y* for any yodels that occur.¹⁷³ I have chosen not to notate specific yodel notes, as it is too difficult to pick out specific frequencies when there are so many other instruments being performed.

In the studio recording (see Figures 5-5), Samputu uses all four vocal timbres; however, he primarily sings in a combination of his *s* and *n* voice throughout. He begins the piece with *s* voice (measure sixteen), but immediately switches to a combination of his *s* and *pn* voice two measures later on the vocable "yeh." The following phrase he sings in his *pnm* voice and includes a yodel on E4 (beat 3). He

¹⁷² Twa polyphonic singing in Fonti Musicali's 2009 release *Polyphonie des Twa du Rwanda*, "Bagore Beza" is available on the DEKKMMA site here: <http://music.africamuseum.be/english/detailrec.php?id=MR.1996.19.3-3> or on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sVHP-wDQts>.

¹⁷³ From this point forward, I will use the shorthand letters rather than spelling out each vocal timbre in describing each one used.

subsequently resumes the *s* and *n* combination until verses two and three. In the portions where Samputu sings a solo line (Figure 5-5, measures one through five and thirteen through seventeen), Samputu changes his vocal timbre several times. He begins with a solo line with his *s* voice, but ends the phrase (measure five) with a combination of his *g* and *n* voice on the last note of the phrase (G3). The choral “response” in the next two phrases is in his *n* voice, while in the next solo line he continues in the *n* voice for the antecedent phrase, but changes to a combination of *n* and *g* for the consequent phrase. Regarding the WCO performance (See Figure 5-6), Samputu, who lacks vocal accompaniment in this version, changes timbres even more frequently, moves from *g* (measure one) to *n* (measure three), adds a sharp vibrato (measure five), goes to *s* (measure ten), back to *n* (measure twelve), to *g* (measure seventeen), back to *n* (measure eighteen), and finally concludes with his *pnm* voice while simultaneously adding a pygmy-style melisma in the ultimate measure.

Vocals

Um - wan - zi uk - wan - ga ara - ka-gwa ish - yanga. A-

Marimba/Likembe

Electric Bass

Tambourine

Drum Set

2

Nyaruguru

ra - ka-gwa ishyan ga in - yuma y'-ish - am - ba. A - rak - ar ya imbam-ba ri da - ka-n -

Mrb.

E.B.

Tamb.

D. S.

Nyaruguru

13

13

13

u - ye. E - jo mu gi - ton - do ri - za - mur-ye mu - nda. Ri - za - mur-ye

13

13

b.

13

B.

13

b.

13

S.

4 Nyaruguru

The musical score is arranged in a grand staff format. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked 'Allegro' (19). The score consists of the following parts:

- Vocal Line 1:** Treble clef, containing the melody with lyrics: "mun - da n - ta - kay - ro - ge - ro."
- Vocal Line 2:** Bass clef, providing a harmonic accompaniment to the first vocal line.
- Vocal Line 3:** Bass clef, providing a harmonic accompaniment to the second vocal line.
- Mrb. (Maracas):** Treble clef, showing rests for the first two measures and a rhythmic pattern in the third measure.
- E.B. (Ewe Drum):** Bass clef, showing a rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes.
- Tamb. (Tambourine):** Percussion clef, showing a rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes.
- D.S. (Djembe):** Percussion clef, showing a rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes.

Figure 5-5. Transcription of the second and third verses of “Nyaruguru” in staff notation.

Figure 5-6. Transcription of Samputu singing of the second and third verses of “Nyaruguru” for the WCO performance in staff notation.

These timbral changes are not arbitrary, but link up with the lyrics. As the narrator is wishing ill (i.e., to be forced into exile or have stomach pains) upon anyone who is in opposition to the kingdom, Samputu utilizes his *g* voice, as well as a grunt-like figure (to the point of obfuscating the fundamental) at the end of each phrase on “yanga” (measure five) and “nda” (measure seventeen). Regarding this connection between the lyrics and timbral and melodic shift, Samputu told me that when he sings a song, he likes to interpret it based on the lyrical content (e.g., if the lyrical content reflects someone crying, he will sing in a manner that sounds like he is crying; Samputu 2014e). This, as Rafiki Ubaldo has pointed out in our conversations (and Samputu concurs), is not typical in the *imbyino* genre. Traditionally, most Rwandans sing this song without changing dynamics or vocal timbre to fit the lyrics. Although there have been some outstanding Twa singers (e.g., Bwanakweri, who is one of Samputu’s influences) who have utilized the growl timbre, they do not utilize this timbre to dramatize the lyrical content.¹⁷⁴ This is what I, as well as Ubaldo, argue

¹⁷⁴ I will discuss Bwanakweli’s influence on Samputu’s singing style later in this chapter.

is Samputu's unique contribution to the *imbyino* and *intwatwa* genres. Also of note is the fact that Samputu did not always perform the verses in this manner. In his performance of this song for a 1991 concert in Bujumbura (which may be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8T6Tz7rqc8&feature=youtu.be>—beginning at 8:45), Samputu sings solely in a combination of his *s* and *n* voices throughout, without a *pn* or *pnm* inflection. However, as Samputu's voice matured, both vocally in the Twa style and in his understanding of the text, he began utilizing the pygmy-style vocal timbres to emphasize the lyrical content.¹⁷⁵

To demonstrate this difference, I recorded Samputu singing the second solo phrase “*Ejo mu gitondo rizamurye mu nda*” (measures thirteen through seventeen) in both his *s* and *g* voice (Figures 5-7, 5-8, 5-9, 5-10, 5-11, and 5-12). A spectrogram of these recorded performances, which came from Samputu's cellular phone—one that likely has a better microphone frequency response than a landline (though I don't know the specs on his phone to be sure), reveals several distinctions. First, as was evident in the previous spectrograms of *g* and *s* voice, the fundamental and overtones in the *s* voice (Figures 5-7 and 5-8) are more clearly formed than in the *g* voice (Figures 5-9 and 5-10). The *s* voice only features density in the second, third, and the fourth overtones, while the growl timbre contains additional density in the fifth overtone and beyond.¹⁷⁶ Second, due to the higher frequency response of the cellular phone, unlike the previous recordings, it is clear that the sub-harmonic frequencies

¹⁷⁵ Samputu mentioned that he was able to sing in the Twa style at that time, but hadn't quite mastered it.

¹⁷⁶ While there is density up through the eleventh and twelfth overtones, for brevity's sake, I have chosen not to give a zoomed in spectrogram of the overtones for the growl voice as I did in Chapter Four.

are much less dense in the *s* voice than they are in the *g* voice. This activity is likely due to the sub-harmonic frequencies produced by the oscillation in aryepiglottic folds (Sakakibara, Fuks, Imagawa, and Tayama 2004:4).

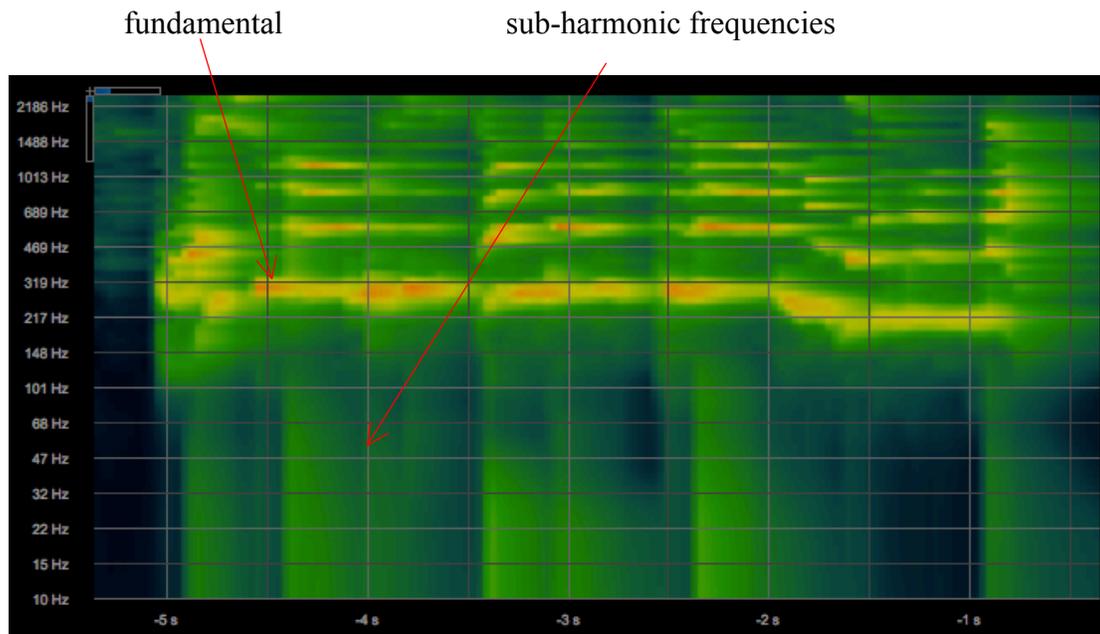


Figure 5-7. Spectrogram of Samputu singing the third verse from “Nyaruguru” in *s* voice.

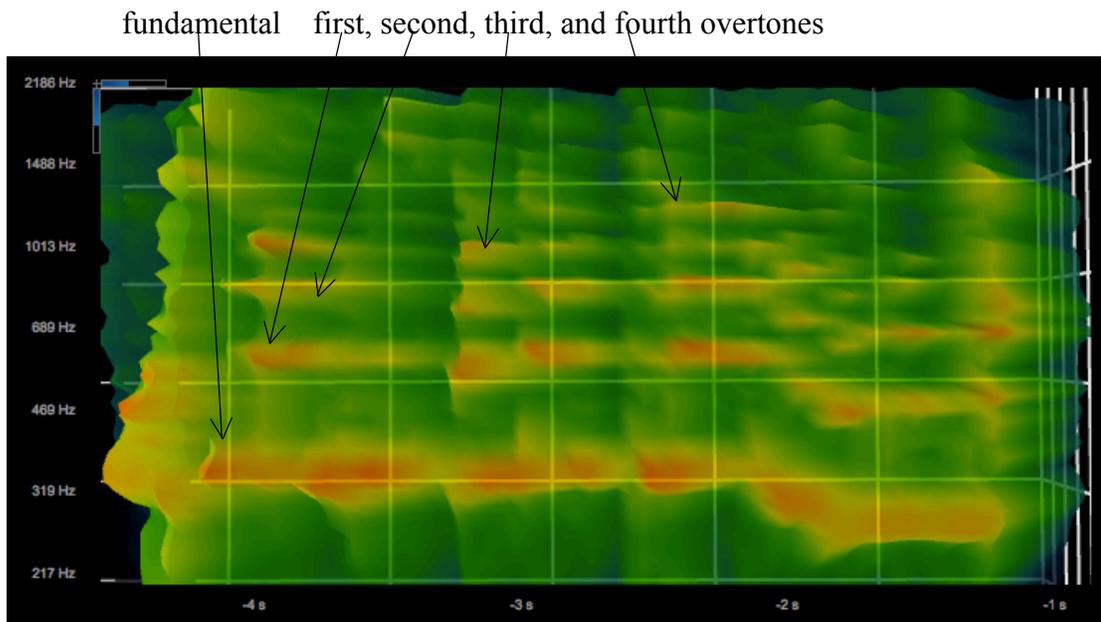


Figure 5-8. 3-D spectrogram of Samputu singing the third verse from “Nyaruguru” in *s* voice.

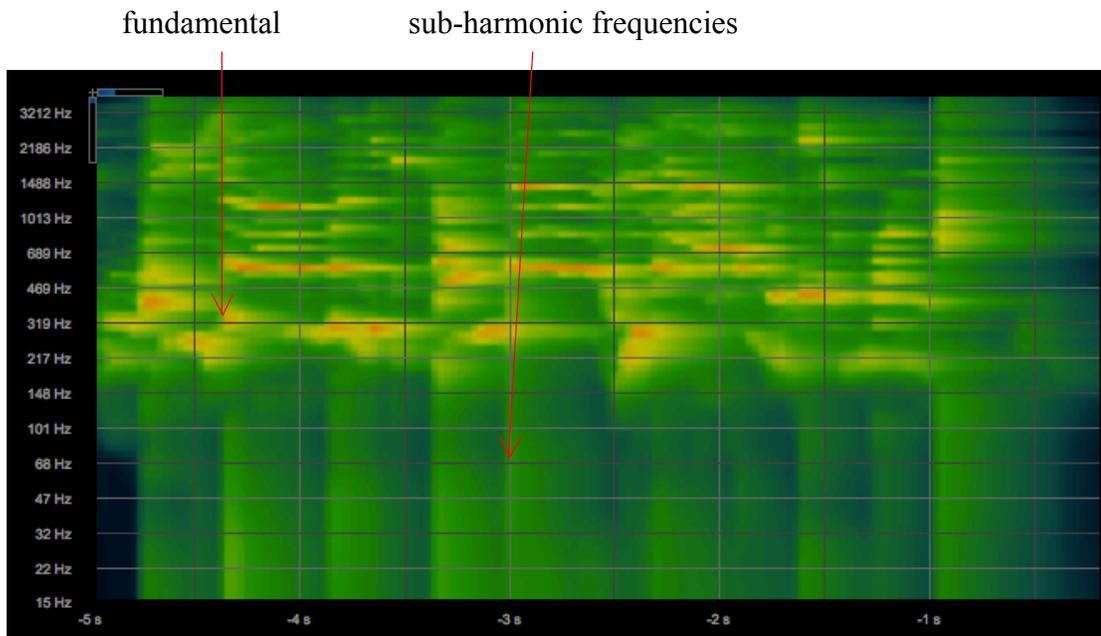


Figure 5-9. Spectrogram of Samputu singing the third verse from “Nyaruguru” in *g* voice.

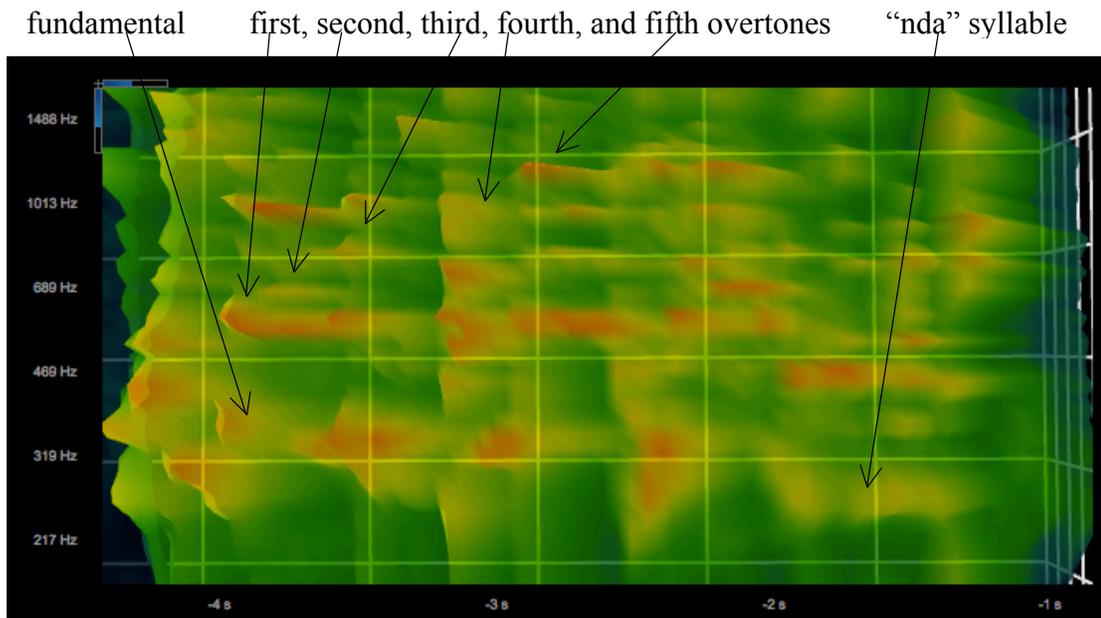


Figure 5-10. 3-D spectrogram of Samputu singing the third verse from “Nyaruguru” in *g* voice.

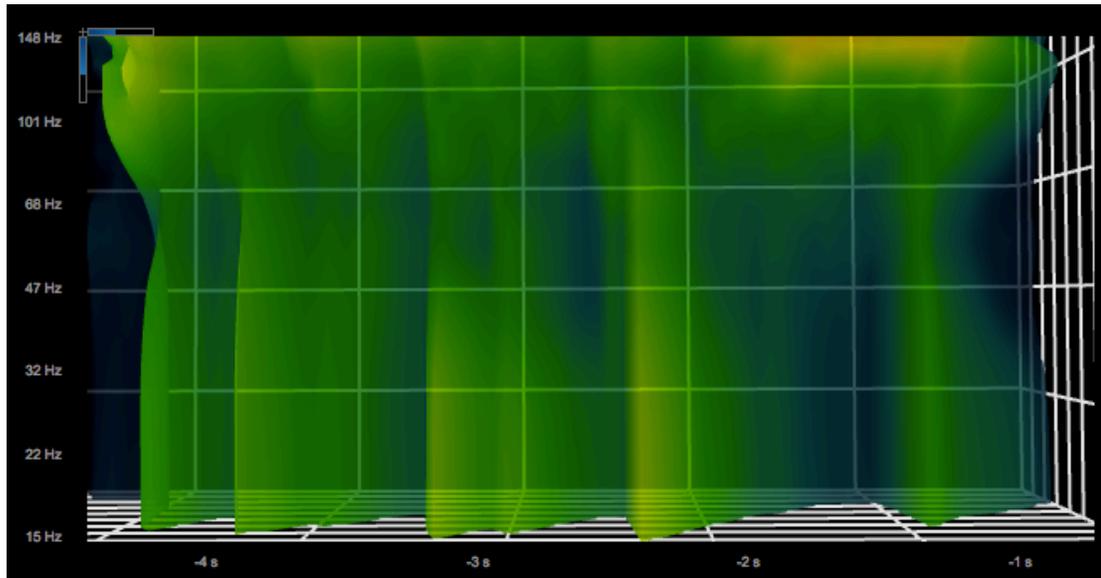


Figure 5-11. 3-D spectrogram of the sub-harmonic content of Samputu singing the third verse from “Nyaruguru” in *s* voice.

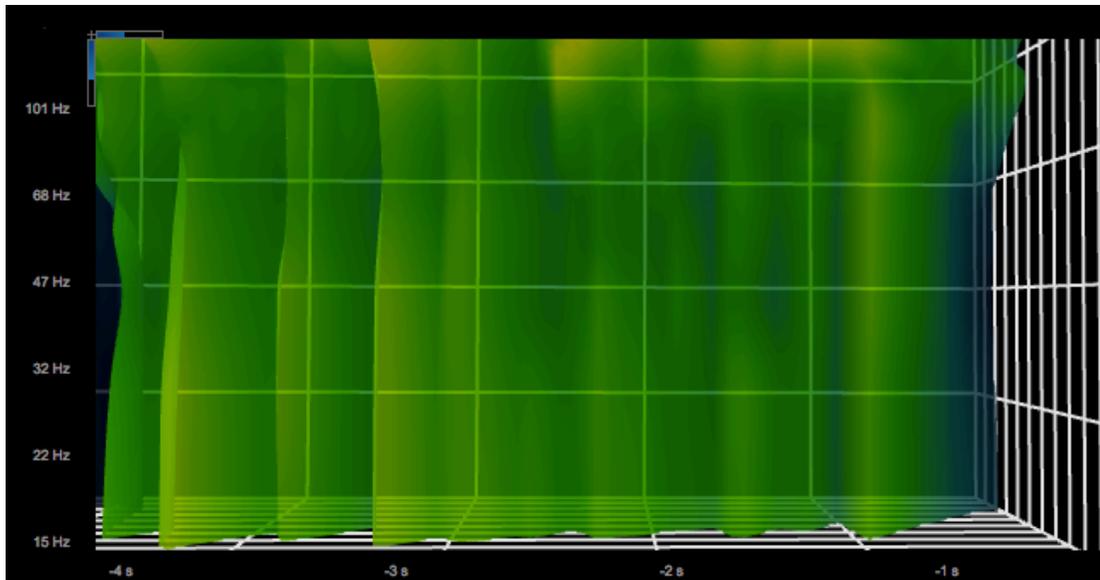


Figure 5-12. 3-D spectrogram of the sub-harmonic content of Samputu singing the third verse from “Nyaruguru” in *g* voice.

Analysis of Samputu’s performances of “Nyaruguru” reveals several aspects of Rwandan music culture (including Twa singing and compositional styles, traditional triple-meter rhythms, the complexities of Rwandan popular literature, and traditional drumming styles as well as their connection with the choreography), but also how Samputu adds his own uniqueness (by using electronic instruments, linking the text and the music, and utilizing several different vocal timbres in one piece) to the mix to create something new. Additionally, as we will discover in subsequent songs, he attempts to raise the status of the Twa through his popularization of their singing styles.

“Kunda Inka”

“Kunda Inka” (I Love Cows) is a modern adaptation of a traditional pastoral song (*amahamba*) with the subject transformed from a cow to a woman who is graceful like a cow. The praising of cows is an essential part of Rwandan culture, as cows were a type of capital/currency during the Nyiginya dynasty, and milk is still

highly valued in the country.¹⁷⁷ The royal cow, known as *inyambo*, is a longhorn strain of Ankole-Watusi cattle (see Figure 5-13), and is highly venerated in the country.

There are several different types of songs used to praise cows. Alan Merriam, in his 1962 article “The Idiom in African Music,” in *The Journal of American Folklore*, states that there are songs

sung in praise of cows, others to indicate the importance of having cows; there are songs for taking cattle home in the evening, for the herder when he is getting ready to take the cattle home, when he is drawing water for the cattle, when he is with other herders in the evening. Praises for the royal cattle, *inyambo*, are sung; children sing special cow songs, and other songs are sung when cattle are being shown to visitors. Special flute songs circumvent cattle thieves at night, and other songs recount historical events in which cattle have played a part. (Merriam 1962:123)

Further, Gansemans states,

They glorify the cow with several songs, all of which, together, can be considered as a sub-group of recited pastoral poetry, which was very sophisticated and formed part of what Alexis Kagame (1969) calls the ‘three great lyric genres of Ancient Rwanda’: pastoral poetry dedicated to the royal cow *Inyambo*, war poetry and dynastic poetry, since the three were encouraged by or were even attached to certain royal institutions. (DEKKMMA 2003d)

¹⁷⁷ It is considered a great sign of respect if Rwandans offer you milk when you visit their home.



Figure 5-13. *Inyambo* cows.

(Source: <http://www.gakondo.com/2012/03/rwanda-amazina-y-inka-nuko-yageze-mu-rwanda/>)

Amahamba are usually in the minor mode and use descending non-metrical chant-like melodies, known as *amahamba n'amazina y'inika*, that are similar to *ibyvugo* “boasts” found in warrior’s songs (ibid.), but venerate cows (like heroes) by calling out their names. The beginning of “Kunda Inka” contains a performance of *amahamba n'amazina y'inika*, and also whistling, known *igikobwakobwa*, which the farmer uses to call out to the cows.¹⁷⁸ Regarding the melodic content, there are four types of melodies performed in the beginning. The first (Figure 5-14) is an unpulsed descending chant-like melody which uses relaxed flow phonation and is more like

¹⁷⁸ An example of *n'amazina y'inika* may be heard here:
<http://music.africamuseum.be/english/detailrec.php?id=MR.1961.4.15-1>.

Samputu’s brother Gatete recalled that his father would often sing songs to his cows when he was bringing them back to his grandfather’s pen (Gatete 2014).

speech than singing, though it is clearly centered around A minor (with a range of E3 to E4). It is performed by Ugandan artist Kazoora (sung in Runyankole), so I cannot do a true sonic analysis of his voice, but I do have one sample of Samputu performing a *ibyivugo*, and the profile is similar to his *s* voice at a slightly greater volume.¹⁷⁹ The second (Figure 5-15), which begins around 0:32, is sung by Samputu in a combination of his *n* and *pn* voices in a higher range (G4 to D4). There is also a distinct pulse in the first five notes in that they are evenly spaced (shown as triplets below). The third type is a moan (mimicking a cow) on an “mmm” syllable, which usually has a rising and descending profile, and the fourth is a chant-like melody that stays mostly on one or two pitches and does not descend (see Figure 5-16).¹⁸⁰ I have chosen to only show the latter via spectrogram, as staff notation would not be any more illuminating visually.

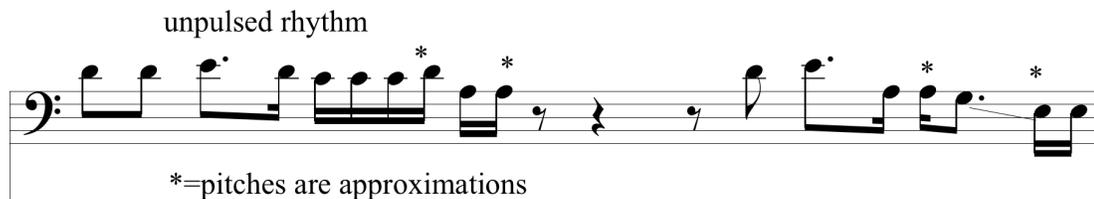


Figure 5-14. Transcription of the first few phrases of the unpulsed melodic content in the beginning of “Kunda Inka.”

¹⁷⁹ Samputu recalls being criticized by several prominent Rwandans for having someone sing about their beloved cows in Runyankole. While the two groups are related, they were still separate kingdoms, and each has their own traditions regarding cow veneration.

¹⁸⁰ The source of the spectrographic images in Figures 5-16 and 17 is the audio recording of “Kunda Inka” from *Abaana*.

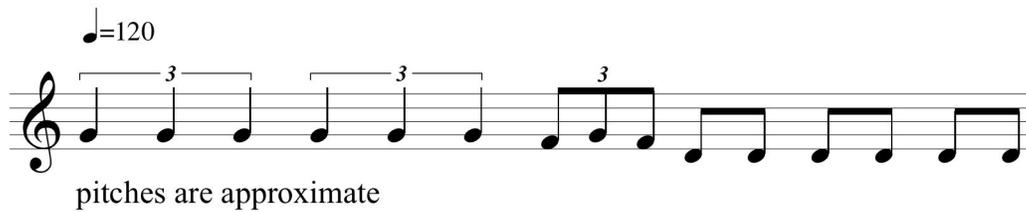


Figure 5-15. Transcription of one of the higher ranged melodies the beginning of “Kunda Inka.”

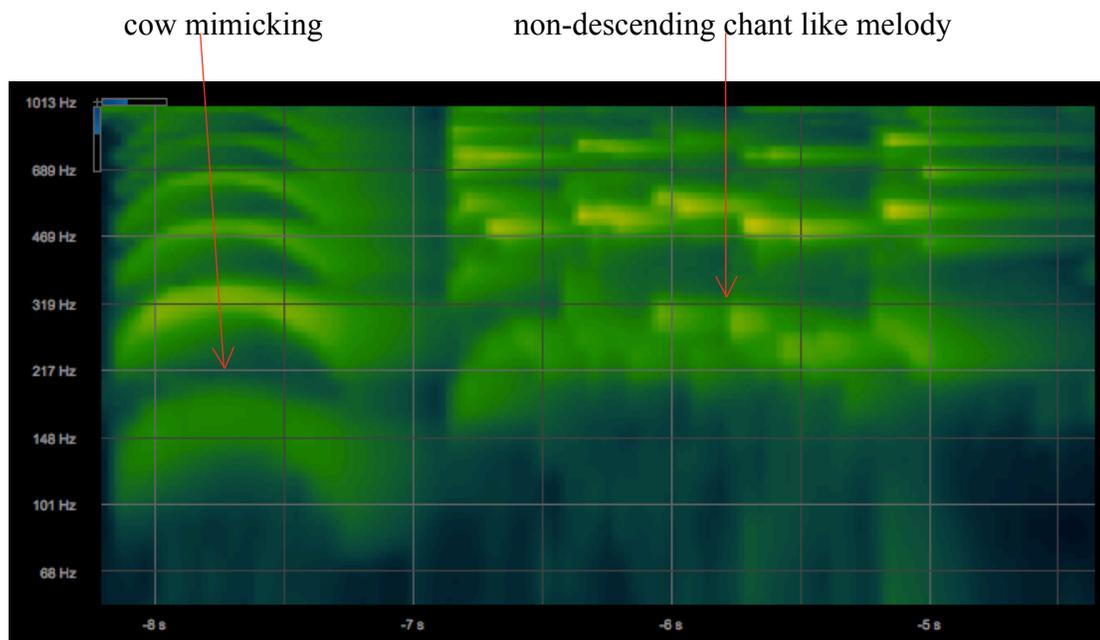


Figure 5-16. 2-D spectrogram of cow mimicking and non-descending chant like melody in “Kunda Inka.”

The *igikobwakobwa* performed by Samputu (see Figures 5-17, 5-18, 5-19, 5-20, 5-21, and 5-22) has a range from around 672 Hz (between E5 and F5) to 2.8 kHz (just sharp of F7). The pitch sets aren’t confined to a specific tonal center; thus, I do not feel the need to transcribe the entire melody in staff notation, but there are several melodic motives Samputu employs in this style. First is a sharply upward motion, (see Figures 5-17, 5-18, and 5-21), the second a slowly rising contour (see Figure 5-17, 5-19, and 5-21), and the third is a trilling of the voice (see Figure 5-17 and 5-20). In transcribing the melodic content of the whistle, I use a spectrogram in addition to

staff notation of approximate pitches. The spectrogram best shows the pitch contour, but is not exact due to the various bird sounds in the background of the recording. Therefore, I have manipulated the spectrogram in Photoshop to highlight the melody of the whistle and have labeled each pattern according to the description above: *su* for sharply upward motion, *sr* for slowly rising contour, and *t* for vocal trilling.

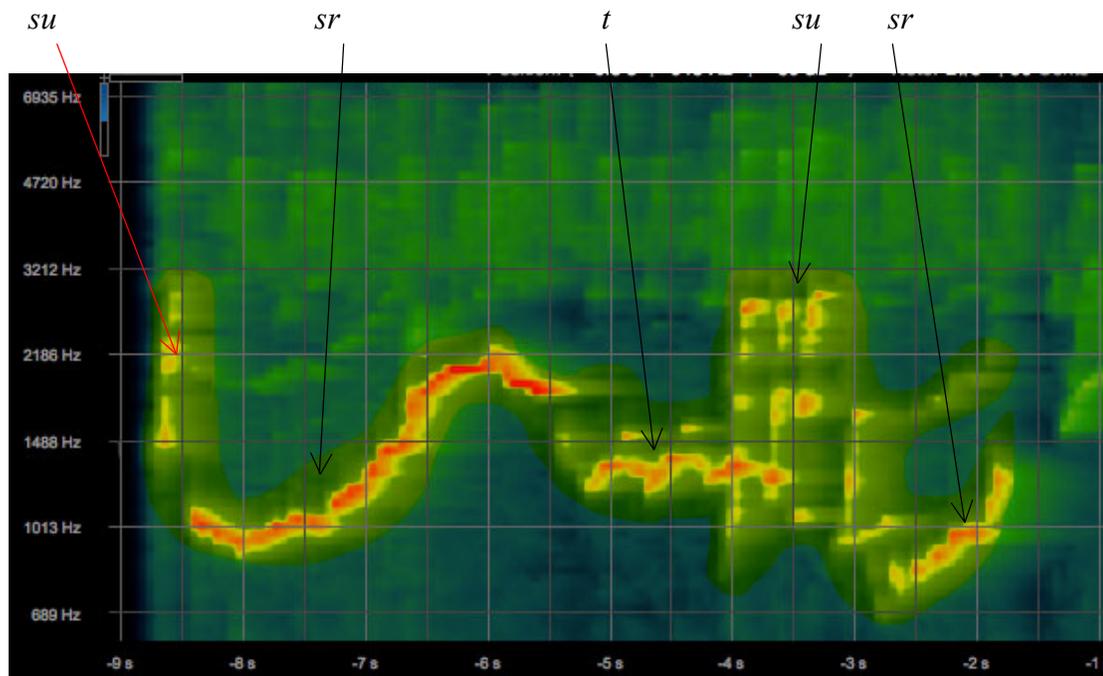


Figure 5-17. 2-D spectrogram of the different whistling melodies in the beginning of “Kunda Inka.”

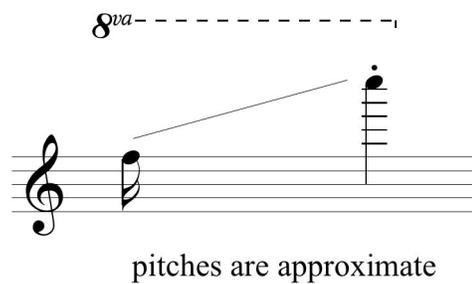


Figure 5-18. Transcription of sharply upward whistle melody in staff notation.



pitches are approximate

Figure 5-19. Transcription of slowly rising whistle melody in staff notation.



pitches are approximate

Figure 5-20. Transcription of trilled whistle melody in staff notation.

Regarding the timbre of the whistle, there is only density in the first and second overtones. In order to demonstrate this, I have included a spectrogram of Samputu whistling the first sharply upward motion as well as the slowly rising contour that he performed for me in 2012 in Kigali (recorded through the internal microphone on my Canon Vixia HF R10 solid-state HD camera). The pitch is slightly different from that on the recording (slightly higher on the sharply upward motion, and slightly lower on the slowly rising contour), but the overall style is the same.

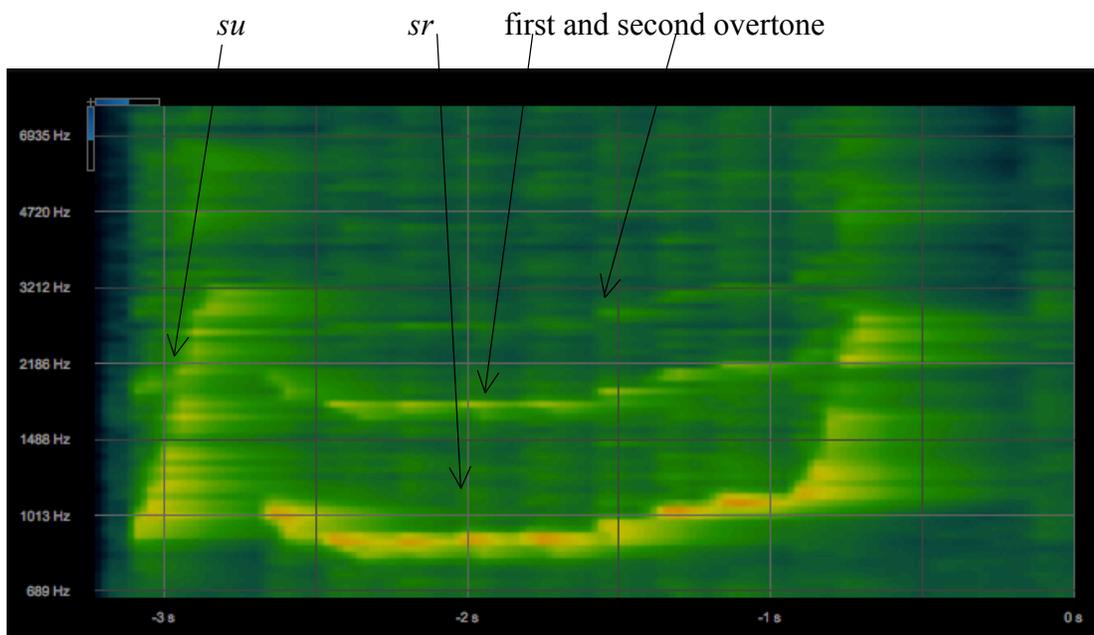


Figure 5-21. 2-D spectrogram of Samputu whistling the first two melodies of “Kunda Inka.”

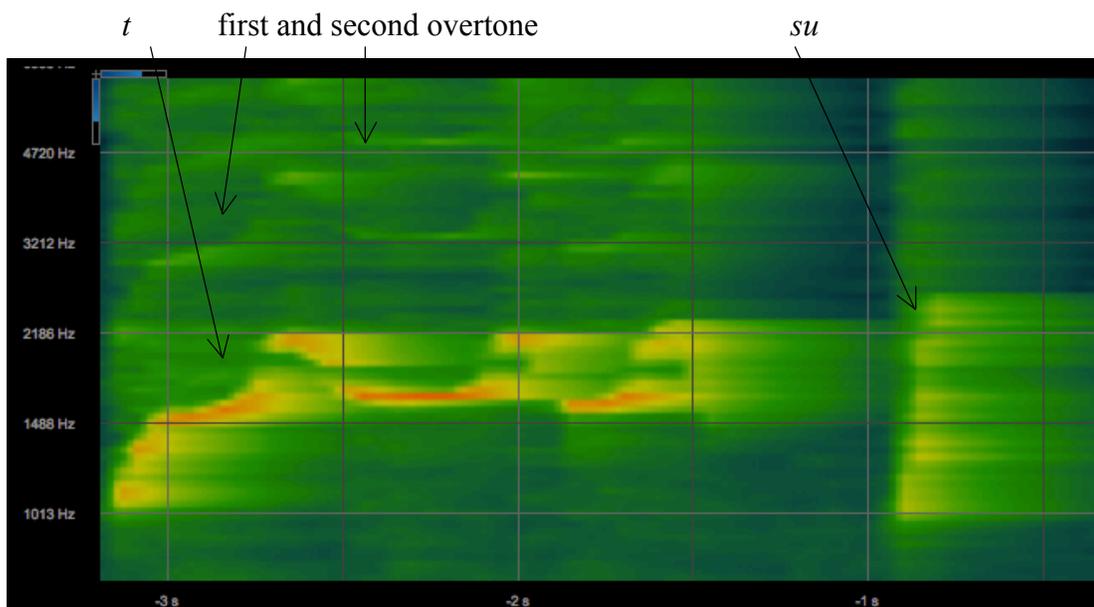


Figure 5-22. 3-D spectrogram of Samputu whistling the first two melodies of “Kunda Inka.”

The main part of the song is metered (in the triple-meter Rwandan rhythm), and the harmonic and melodic content is centered around A minor. This section is part of the *imbyino* genre, and the musical sound would likely accompany the

umushagiriro dance, which, according to Gansemans, “has a slow tempo and is danced with sliding steps. It is usually performed by women, with an emphasis on the elegance of gestures and movements and showing off the body” (DEKKMMA 2003d). Often, the arm movements in slower Rwandan dances are intended to imitate the beauty of a cow (see Figures 5-23 and 5-24).



Figure 5-23. Video still of the Rwandan National Ballet rehearsing at Amahoro Stadium in Kigali for the Twentieth Anniversary Celebration of Rwanda’s independence in July 2012.



Figure 5-24. Another video still of the Rwandan National Ballet rehearsing at Amahoro Stadium in Kigali for the Twentieth Anniversary Celebration of Rwanda's independence in July 2012.

The melody of the chorus, as shown in Figure 5-25, is less chant-like and contains clear and easily repeatable descending phrases. The instrumentation is, like "Nyaruguru," mostly electric and electronic, and the parts are unusually simplistic. In fact, instrumentally speaking, this is the least complicated of all of Samputu's arrangements. The electric piano (electronic) and electric bass alternate between full-measure chords and follow the double-quarter note rhythm of the drums in the second half of the pattern (i.e., starting at measure three). The electric guitar, performed by Tchido (one of the guitarists from Nyampinga), is the lone non-electronic instrument, and it plays a muted quarter- and eighth-note pattern that fluctuates from measure to measure. Finally the drums have no variation whatsoever in playing the accents of the triple-meter Rwandan rhythm, with the open hi-hat emulating the *amayugi*.

Regarding the lyrical content for this particular song, the cow is a metaphor for a beautiful woman, and the context for this particular song is usually at weddings,

especially when the cow is brought forth to the bride's family as a dowry known as *gukwa*. The singer sings about how beautiful cows are and how everyone loves them, and says that we couldn't live without them. The lyrics of this particular chorus are:

“Kunda Inka”

- (1) *Aye kunda inka we, kunda inka we.*
Oh, how I love cows, yeah, I love cows.
- (2) *Shira intimba n'irungu, kunda inka we.*
No more worries or loneliness because of my love for cows. (Samputu 2003c)¹⁸¹

Samputu states that he wishes he could re-record this song, as he was not happy with the performance. He also mentioned that when he hears this recording at a wedding he feels embarrassed, and wants to close his eyes to escape the moment. However, regardless of the fact that the performance on this recording is not one of Samputu's finest, it is worthy of note, as it helps us further understand the richness of Rwandan culture, especially regarding the veneration of cows.

¹⁸¹ It is also implied that the loneliness or sadness will disappear because of the cow (woman) in his life.

Score

Kunda Inka

Samputu
Samputu and Nitunga

Lead vocal

Ay ya kunda_inka we kun da_inka_we Shi-ra

Am Dm

Electric guitar

Electric piano

Electric Bass

Drum Set

open hi-hat

low-pitched drum

L.V.

intim - ba - n'i-run - gu kun da_inka we Ay ya

Dm

Gtr.

F

E.P.

G Am

E.B.

D. S.

©2003 Samputu

Kunda Inka

The image shows a musical score for the chorus of "Kunda Inka". It consists of five staves. The top staff is for the vocal line (L.V.), with lyrics "kun - da inka we kun da inka we". The second staff is for guitar (Gtr.), showing chords G and Am. The third staff is for electric piano (E.P.), the fourth for electric bass (E.B.), and the fifth for drum set (D.S.). The score is in 2/12 time and features a melodic line with a descending contour in the vocal part.

Figure 5-25. Transcription of the chorus of “Kunda Inka” in staff notation.

Sacred Traditional Music

This category includes all of Samputu’s sacred music that is rooted in Rwandan musical styles, and includes “Singizwa” and all of the material on *Voices From Rwanda* as listed in Chapter Three. Most of Samputu’s output in this category is actually a Christian re-contextualization of traditional genres, including those that are part of *kumbandwa* ancestor worship. The pieces of most significance are “Psalm 150,” “Ingoma,” “Singizwa,” “Yesu Wange,” “Umukiza Araje,” and “Amakondera.” Each of these has a distinct character, either instrumentally or stylistically, that reflects traditional Rwandan sounds. For the sake of brevity, I will avoid transcribing *ibyvugo* boasts in this section, as they all tend to be short descending melodic phrases, with the only variance being in the starting pitch.

“Psalm 150”

Samputu’s “Psalm 150” is best described as an *intwatwa*-style *igitaramo* song. *Igitaramo* are traditional evening gatherings at the end of the day, and are a space where families will talk about their day, celebrate a hard day's work, recite proverbs, and drink sorghum or banana beer. In the past, this was a time the king would spend with his people. The subject matter can be secular or sacred and include lullabies, praising of the King, cows, or ancestors, and recitation of *ibisigo* (official or popular) to name a few themes. However, instead of boasting about the Rwandan king, Samputu re-contextualizes the Psalm 150 text in the Judeo-Christian Bible to fit the musical genre (and vice-versa). Like many traditional *igitaramo* songs, it is sung completely a cappella (polyphonically, with several overdubbed voices). The lyrics are as follows:

“Psalm 150”

- 1) *Mushimire Imana ahera hayo; muyishimire mu isanzure ry'imbaraga zayo,*
Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens,
- 2) *Muyishimire ibyo imbaraga yakoze; muyishime nk'uko bikwiriye gukomera*
kwayo kwinshi,
Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness,
- 3) *Muyishimishe n'inanga; muyishimishen'amakondera,*
Praise him with the harp and lyre, him with the sounding of the trumpet,¹⁸²
- 4) *Muyishimishe ishako n'imbyino, muyishimishe ibifite imirya n'imyironge.*
Praise him with timbrel and dancing, praise him with the strings and pipe,
- 5) *Muyishimishe ibyuma bivuzamajwi mato; muyishimishe ibyuma birenga,*
Praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals,

¹⁸² Samputu reverses these phrases. In the original text it states: “Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre.”

- 6) *Ibihumeka byose bishime Uwiteka.*
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. (Samputu 2006d)

The translations of the names of the instruments (i.e., *inanga* for harp, *amakondera* for horns) reflect the Second Vatican Council's stance on missions (1962), known as *Ad Gentes*. According to Article Three, Section Sixteen, the council decreed that the:

... common requirements of priestly training, including the pastoral and practical ones prescribed by the council(19) should be combined with an attempt to make contact with their own particular national way of thinking and acting. Therefore, let the minds of the students be kept open and attuned to an acquaintance and an appreciation of their own nation's culture. In their philosophical and theological studies, let them consider the points of contact which mediate between the traditions and religion of their homeland on the one hand and the Christian religion on the other. (Ad Gentes 1965).

Before the council, the Bible would be translated using Colonial terms for instruments. For example, the word for trumpet in Kinyarwanda is *akarumbeti*, from the French *trompette*, but in this version it is translated to *amakondera*, which are the traditional trumpets in Rwanda (see the analysis of “Amakondera” below).

Each verse is sung in an unmetered *ibyivugo* style (see Figure 5-27), but has a distinct sustained descending melodic contour rather than short chant-like phrases. Samputu alternates these verses with a refrain (see Figure 5-26) of vocables on “yeh” and “ah” in a slow 5/8 meter (unaccented).¹⁸³ While the refrain is very traditional, the way Samputu performs it is very unique, mostly in terms of timbre and harmony.

Regarding timbre, Samputu uses all of his vocal timbres in the first verse and refrain, but he particularly emphasizes his pygmy styles throughout. In the refrain, Samputu begins with a mixture of his *n* and *pnm* voices, but then switches to *n*

¹⁸³ I wasn't able to detect any meter until Samputu pointed it out to me, as Samputu uses rubato throughout.

(measure five), then *s* (last half of measure five), then back to *n* and *pn* (measure eight), and finally *pnm* (measure eleven). For the verse, he also includes his *g* voice (interspersed throughout, but beginning at measure three) and a significant amount of yodeling (six in total). According to Samputu, when he sings in the *g* voice he is emulating the famous Twa singer Bwanakweli, who was a member of the Rwandan National Ballet.¹⁸⁴ However, Samputu also interjects his own style in measure four, when he sings a purposeful flat third with a subsequent slow bend up to the major third. Traditionally, most Twa songs are in a minor mode, but according to Samputu, there are some Twa in Butare who sing in major, and he is attempting to mimic their style. Samputu also recalls that the Twa songs in major, which he believes were sung in this tonality because they used the *ikembe* for accompaniment, serve as the main inspiration for this song. Thus, Samputu combines these two styles by singing what most would call a “blue” note. When I asked Samputu about his intention in that particular passage, he said that it was a cocktail based on all of his experiences. Because of this Twa inspiration, Samputu often refers to this song as a type of *intwatwa*, even though any group of Rwandans may sing in this style.

In terms of harmony, while it is normal for Twa to sing polyphonically, the refrains in this style are mostly sung in unison with little purposeful harmony in the cadences. However, Samputu, in addition to singing in unison, intersperses polyphonic voices that form Rwandan quartal harmony (in the cadences of measures

¹⁸⁴ Bwanakweli’s growl timbre can be heard at 0:22 here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMA8UdWr1M4>.

Samputu also states that Memphis Slim was fascinated by Bwanakweli’s voice when he visited the country in 1986.

eight, nine, and ten) and major chords (some with 4-3 suspensions) in measures three and four and seven and eight.¹⁸⁵

As this piece contains twelve overdubbed vocals, I have only transcribed the distinct voices that are noticeable to me. However, I have, for this piece, transcribed the dynamics of the refrain, as they are important to the performance of the song. Ultimately, the transcription serves as a guide rather than a representation of all of the voices, as unless I had Samputu sing it over and over again for me (and he may not even sing it in the same way he did on the record), it is too difficult to distinguish every doubled voice. However, it is still a valuable tool to demonstrate how Samputu interjects his own cosmopolitan style into a very traditional medium. Due to his use of Twa styles and timbres, this song, like “Nyaruguru,” is a way of venerating the Twa, and it won an International Songwriting Competition award in 2006.

¹⁸⁵ The term quartal harmony is not related to the stacked fourth harmony used in European art music and jazz.

Psalm 150

Jean-Paul Samputu

$\text{♩} = 120$ n/pn

Yeh . . . Yeh . . .

Yeh . . .

4

Yeh . . . Yeh . . . ah - ha

Yeh . . . Yeh . . .

Yeh . . . Yeh . . . eh

ch Yeh

f *p* *pn* *s* *pnm* *ff* *mf*

Figure 5-26 shows the musical score for the refrain of Samputu's "Psalm 150." It consists of five staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a time signature of 8/8. The second and third staves are vocal lines with lyrics: "Ah - ha ah yeh." and "Ah - ha ah yeh." respectively. The fourth staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps and a time signature of 7/8, with lyrics: "Ah _____". The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of two sharps and a time signature of 8/8, with lyrics: "ah yeh.".

Figure 5-26. Refrain of Samputu's "Psalm 150."

Figure 5-27 shows the musical score for the first verse of Samputu's "Psalm 150." It consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps and a time signature of 8/8, with lyrics: "Mhm Mushimire i - ma - na aher - a ha - yo". The middle staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps and a time signature of 8/8, with lyrics: "mu - shi - mi - re i - san - zu - re ry' - im - bar - ga za - yo". The bottom staff is a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps and a time signature of 8/8, with lyrics: "Mu - yi - shi - mi - re ib - yoim .ba ra ga - ya - ko - ze Yeh".

Figure 5-27. First verse of Samputu's "Psalm 150."

"Ingoma"

Samputu's "Ingoma" is a re-contextualized performance of music for the royal drums, but instead of performing for members of royalty, Samputu's group is performing the *ingoma* for the Judeo-Christian God. Since the ending of the Nyiginya dynasty in the 1960s, *ingoma* have been used in place of the original set of royal drums known as *ingabe*. The *ingabe*, which are now extinct, consisted of four different drums: the *karinga* (also spelled *kalinga*), which, as previously discussed,

was the king's drum, decorated with the testicles of his enemies. It served as the symbol of power for the dynasty, and even "acquired several forenames in an attempt to personify it" (DEKKMMA 2003a). Gansemans summarizes the significance of the other drums:

The *cyimumugizi* is the oldest of the four and tradition has it that it was brought into use by Gihanga. During a battle it was saved while the *karinga* of the time (Rwoga) was destroyed. The *cyimumugizi* symbolises the female sex and the queen, while the *karinga* represents the male sex and the king.

The *mpatsibihugu* and the *kiragutse* are much younger and were incorporated into the king's cult by Kigeri IV Rwabugiri (1860-1896) to commemorate his father and his father's victories respectively. One example of the latter is the legendary battle of Butembo. (Ibid.)

Nyungura stated to me that he was told that if the musicians were to play these drums for anyone but the king, they would be become ill and die.



Figure 5-28. King Yuhi Musinga and his Queen sitting on the *karinga* drum.

(Source: <http://ikirenga.com/rucunshuuko-umwami-musinga-yimye-ingoma-karinga/>)



Figure 5-29. King Musinga playing one of the *ingabe*.

(Source: <http://www.scholastiquemukasonga.net/home/quelques-photos-pour-illustrer-notre-dame-du-nil/>)

While the *ingabe* no longer exist, the *ingoma* are used to greet the President, and, thus, still have royal status. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the *ingoma* are fashioned from the *umuvumu* tree, a word that is short for *umuvugangoma*:

... which literally means “the wood that makes the drum resonate,” although other types of trees are also suitable. The drum maker chooses a tree from which he can make four or five *ingoma*. Once the tree has been felled and sawn up, the trunk is left in situ to allow it to dry out for a while before being roughly hollowed out. Further work on the trunk is carried out at the drum maker’s home. (Ibid.)

They are also performed specifically with the *imirishyo* sticks (see Figure 5-30), as other sticks do not create the correct tone. When I visited Nyungura in 2014, he played the *igihumurizo* (recorded by my Canon HD cam) with two different types of sticks: regular thick drumsticks with oval tips, found in the U.S., and the *imirishyo*; the difference was quite noticeable, both in perception and in sonic profile. In Figure

5-31 and 5-32 (the *igihumurizo* played with the non-traditional sticks) and 5-33 and 5-34 (the *igihumurizo* played with the *imirishyo*) we can see the difference between the two. The performance with the non-traditional sticks produces a stronger fundamental and first overtone, but has a narrower range of frequencies. The *imirishyo* are heavier, and the flat head helps the drum have more sustain, thus creating a broader range of frequencies. Contrastingly, the performance with the non-traditional sticks produces a stronger fundamental and first overtone, but has a narrower range of frequencies. This is visualized in the spectrogram by looking at the length of the fundamental (5-31 has less sustain and thus is shorter in length than 5-33) and in the density of frequencies between the fundamental and first overtone in the initial attack (5-33 has a greater amount of density—seen in yellow). This is visible in the waveform by looking at the sustain of the initial attack (it is slightly longer in 5-34 than in 5-32) and the sustain in the decibel level throughout from the initial decay through the end of the decay (5-32 has a greater fluctuation in internal dynamics, but begins to decay quicker between the 00:00:200 and 00:00:600 mark than 5-34).



Figure 5-30. Video still of Nyungura using the *imirishyo* sticks.

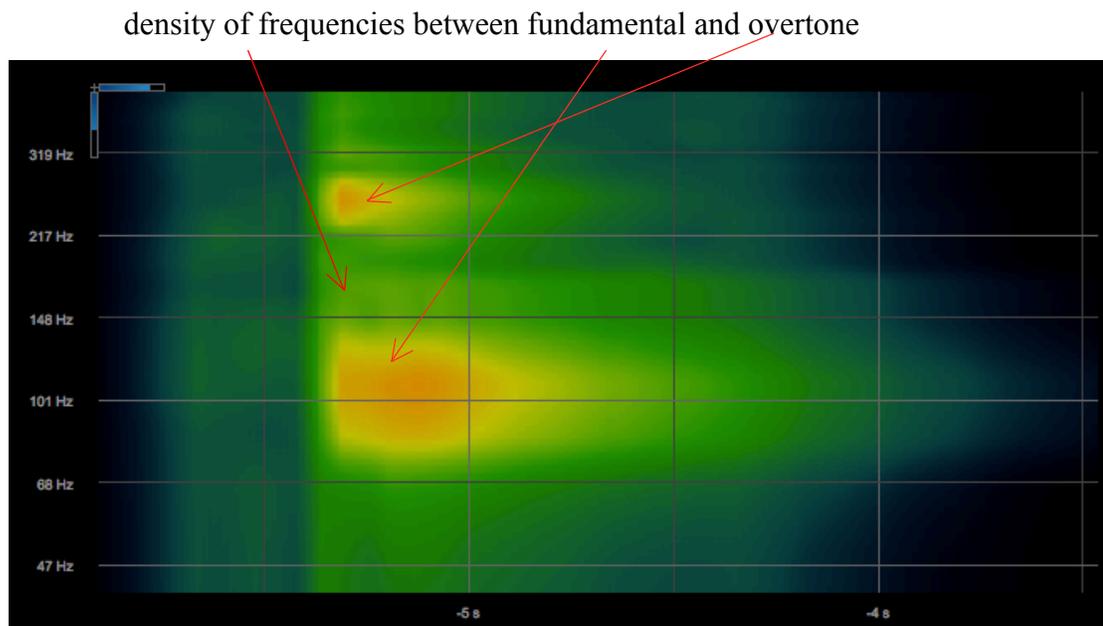


Figure 5-31. 2-D spectrogram of *igihumurizo* struck by non-traditional sticks

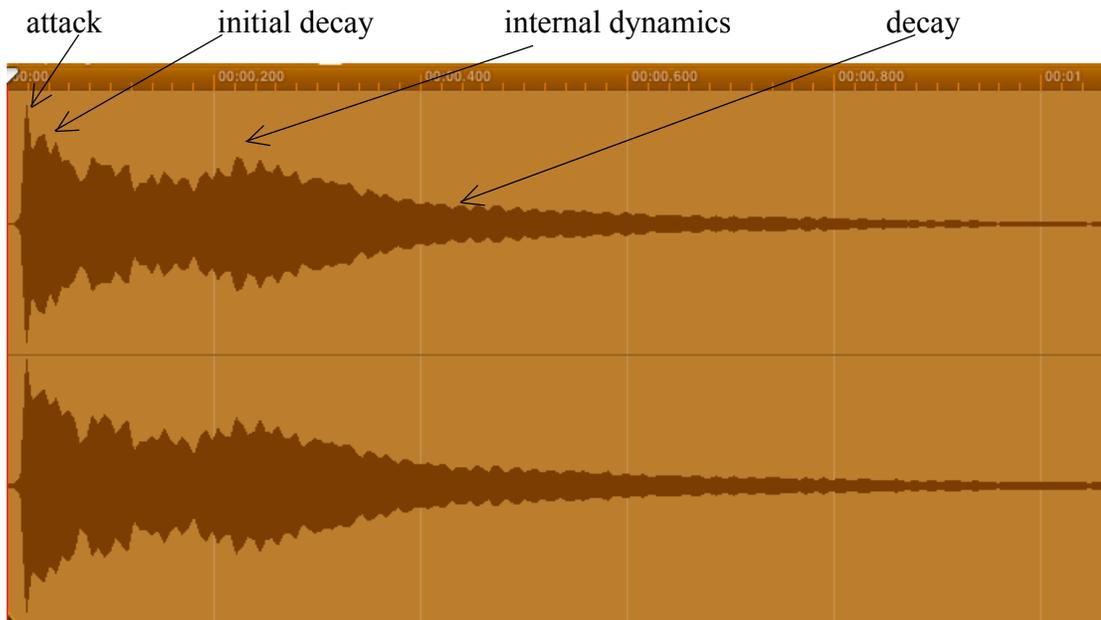


Figure 5-32. Garage Band waveform of *igihumurizo* struck by non-traditional sticks.

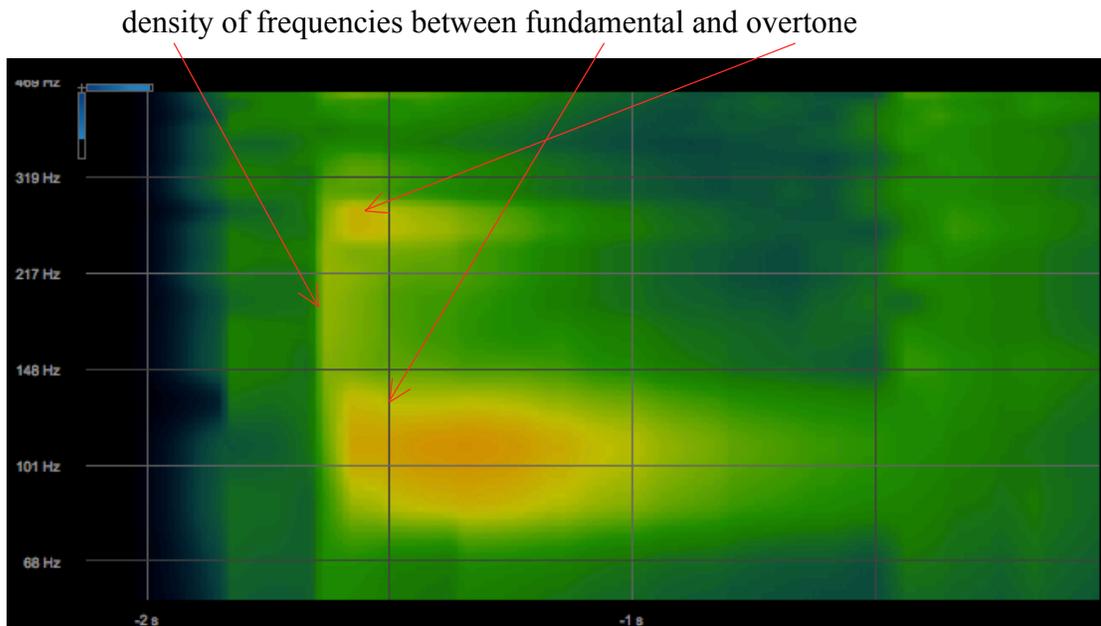


Figure 5-33. 2-D spectrogram of *igihumurizo* struck by *imirishyo*.

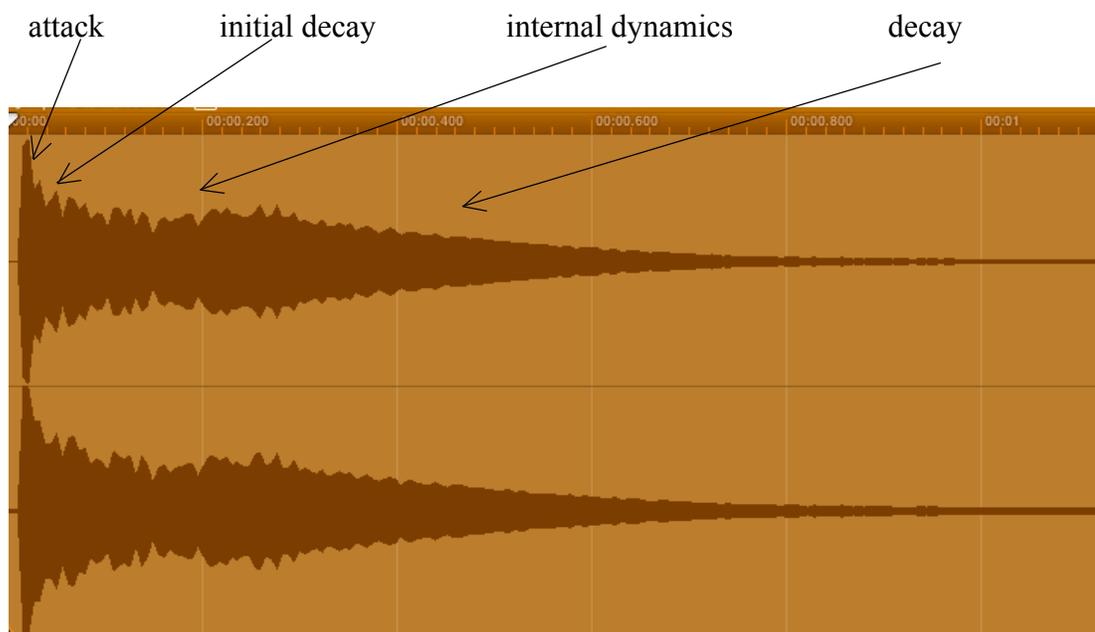


Figure 5-34. Garage Band waveform of *igihumurizo* struck by *imirishyo*.

Samputu’s “Ingoma” is mostly instrumental (the drums are performed by Nyabenda, Nyungura, and Nsengiyumva), but Samputu interjects (around 4:40) with a version of his call-and-response piece, “Mwami,” which is also a separate track on the album. It is typical of the performance practice by drummers commissioned to perform for formal greetings (e.g., the arrival of the Rwandan President). However, most *ingoma* performances include greater numbers (between six and twelve) of performers. Much like other African drum ensembles, the music is polyrhythmic, and each of the drummers (mostly those playing the *ishakwe* and *igihumurizo*) performs a specific part. The performance, aside from some improvisation on the *inyahura*, is completely choreographed and rehearsed. Both the meter and tempo change throughout the different sections, and, in the case of “Ingoma,” there are twelve distinct parts:

0:00 (1) in 5/4 meter at 130bpm.

0:22 non-metrical interlude at 200bpm, but at 0:38 it slows down to 150bpm.

- 0:54 (2) in triple-meter at 150bpm.
- 1:24 non-metrical interlude at 150bpm.
- 1:32 (3) in triple meter at 250bpm.
- 2:00 (4) in duple meter at 250bpm.
- 2:29 triple meter interlude at 250bpm.
- 2:35 (6) in an alternation between duple and triple meter at 250bpm with terraced dynamics.
- 3:00 interlude in duple meter at 250bpm.
- 3:08 (7) duple meter at 125bpm (half-time of section six with different accents).
- 3:25 (8) duple meter which speeds up abruptly from 125 to 165bpm.
- 3:35 (9) duple meter at 107bpm that with a gradual crescendo.
- 4:00 (10) in 11/8 meter at 225bpm.
- 4:40 (11) in compound duple meter (12/8) at 134bpm. Samputu begins singing “Mwami.”
- 6:10 (12) in compound duple (12/8) and begins at 134, but speeds up to 165bpm by the end.

Transcribing the sections of “Ingoma” (see Figure 5-35) presented several challenges. First, while the *ishakwe* and the *igihumurizo* are fairly clear, it is difficult to hear all of the distinct rhythms of the improvised *inyahura*, as it will often be struck simultaneously with the other drums. Second, there are several different stroke techniques that are obfuscated, mostly due to the volume of the other drums, throughout the performance (see measure one). Thus, I have only chosen to transcribe the first section, which was replicated by Nyungura, when I visited him in May of 2014. Because it was impossible for him to play all of the parts together, we recreated

the performance through multi-track recording in Garage Band. This enabled him to play the *ishakwe* and the *igihumurizo* together while improvising the *inyahura* part (and also the *igihumurizo* at times, as that is part his normal performance practice). He played several different variations so that I could get an overall picture of how they performed on the original recording. Thus, this transcription solely demonstrates how the parts interact together, as well as the different stick techniques used on the *ishakwe*.

Traditional
Samputu, Nyungura, Nsengiyumva, and Nyabenda

The musical score is written for three instruments: Ishakwe, Inyahura, and Igihumurizo. The time signature is 5/4. The score is divided into sections: Intro, A, B, C, D, and E. Section A is marked 'rim-shot'. The score shows rhythmic notation for three instruments: Ishakwe, Inyahura, and Igihumurizo. Section B includes parts for Iwe, Iya, and Ihzo. Section D and E include parts for Iwe, Iya, and Ihzo.

Figure 5-35. Transcription of the first section of “Ingoma” as played by Nyungura.

In the replicated recording, Nyungura plays five different improvised patterns on the *inyahura* labeled A-E on the score. The first four patterns are played solely on the *inyahura*, while for the last two (D and E), he plays both the *inyahura* and *igihumurizo*. The latter of these would likely only be played if there were a smaller

number of drummers (i.e., two or three), as was the case in the recording of “Ingoma.” The rhythmic patterns for A through D are essentially variations related to one another, with the most prominent rhythm being the double sixteenth, sixteenth eighth pattern, whereas E is significant departure from the others as the aforementioned rhythm is absent.

In terms of the different *ishakwe* hits, Nyungura, on both the original and replicated recording, plays the *ishakwe* in the center of the drum, as well as using a “rim-shot.” He produces the rim-shot sound by striking the membrane and the rim simultaneously with one stick (see Figure 5-36). Regarding the timbral differences, the spectral profile of the *ishakwe* with the rim-shot (see Figure 5-37) features more density in the higher frequencies (approximately 600 Hz and above) in the initial attack (due to the higher pitches created by hitting the rim of the drum), with more clearly developed overtones than those produced using the technique shown in the center-struck image seen in Figure 5-38. Additionally, the density of frequencies below 600 Hz is much greater with the center-struck drum.



Figure 5-36. Video still of Nyungura playing a rim-shot on the *ishakwe*.

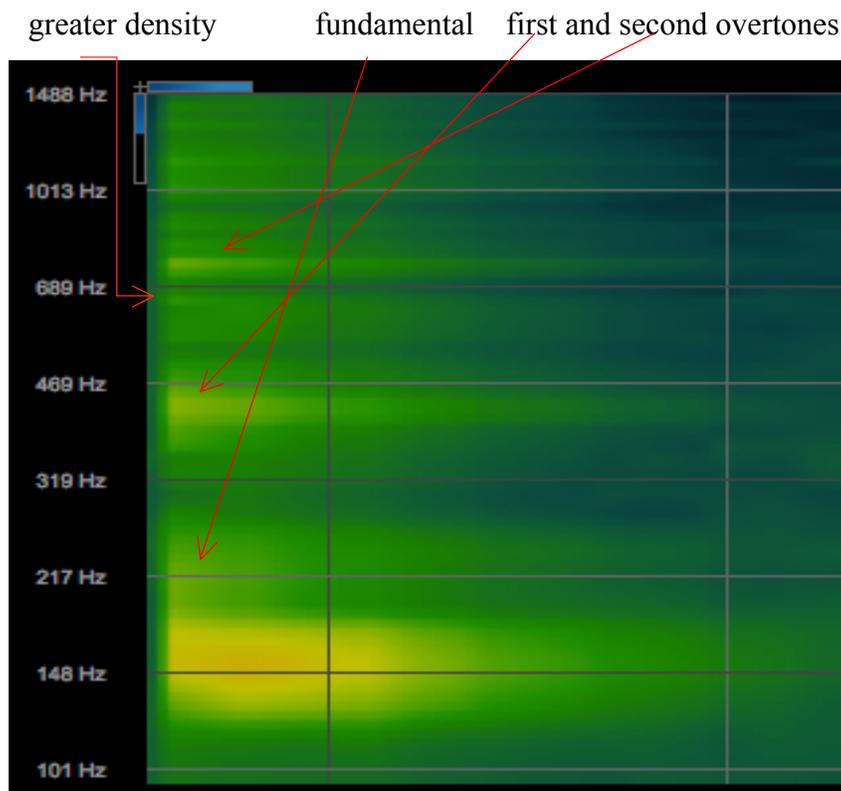


Figure 5-37. 2-D spectrogram of *ishakwe* rim-shot.

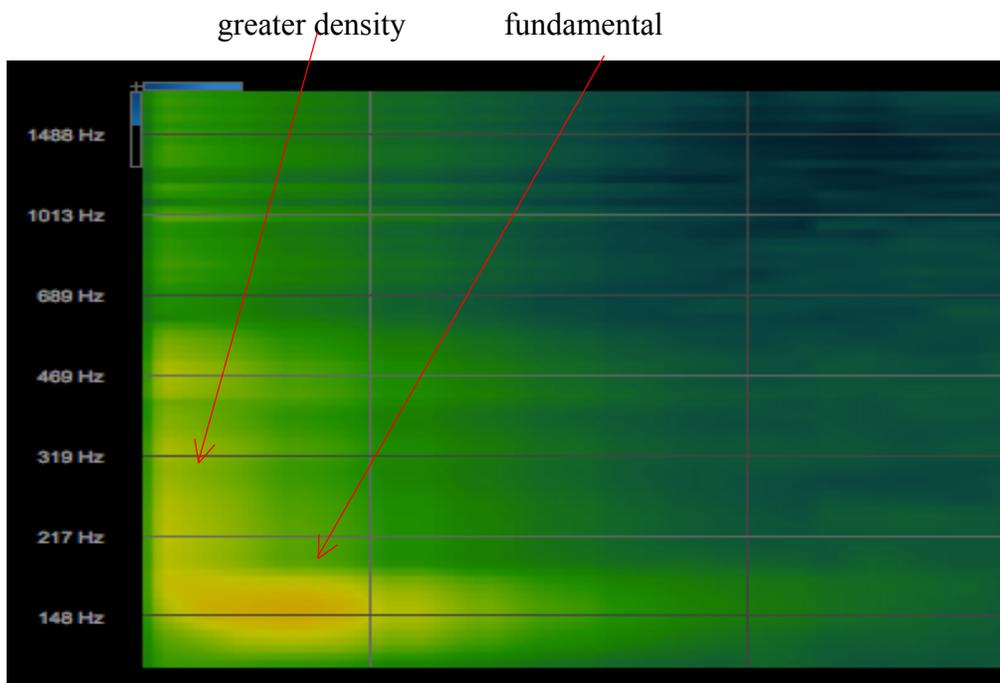


Figure 5-38. 2-D spectrogram of center struck *ishakwe*.

Samputu’s “Ingoma” is the most traditional of his tracks on *Voices of Rwanda*, as the performance, apart from the juxtaposed “Mwami” track in section eleven, varies very little from the traditional setting. And while the interpretation changes from a modernized neo-traditional secular performance context (i.e., playing for the President), given the importance of the *ingabe* in the Nyiginya dynasty and the fact that the king was often seen as the spiritual head of his people, I argue that Samputu’s performance is a reclamation of that spirituality, in essence more of a Christian re-contextualized performance of the *ingabe*, rather than a Christianized *ingoma* replication.

“Yesu Wange” and “Singizwa”

“Yesu Wange” and “Singizwa” are both songs that are Christianized re-contextualizations of songs resembling those used in *kumbandwa* rituals, specifically

the cult of Lyangombe. Before delving into the details of these songs, I want to be clear that Samputu had no intention of copying this material from *kumbandwa* practices, but was attempting to emulate the style of *intwatwa* in order to “give God something unique to Rwanda” (Samputu 2014f). However, Ubaldo and I are in agreement that the styles of these songs are very reflective of the musical styles found in the Lyangombe cult, and can serve as a medium through which to explore the basics of its musical practices.

Like other types of *kumbandwa*, the cult is widespread throughout East Africa, and each one has their own narrative about the origins of Lyangombe. According To Malachie Munyaneza in her “Genocide in the Name of ‘Salvation’: The Combined Contribution of Biblical Translation/Interpretation and Indigenous Myth to the 1994 Genocide” in Jonneke Bekkenkamp and Yvonne Sherwood’s *Sanctified Aggression: Legacies of Biblical and Post-Biblical Vocabularies of Violence*, Lyangombe in Rwanda:

... was a great hunter; his mother opposed one of his hunting adventures because of bad omens revealed to her in dreams. He disregarded the warning, went hunting, and was killed by a buffalo. As the buffalo tossed him into the air, he begged every kind of tree to receive him; most refused but the *umoko* tree received him and he died in its branches. Before he expired, he sent a message to his mother that her premonition had come true, and that “a child who does not listen to his father and his mother listens to the cicada”. Lyangombe promised her that they would meet again and he instituted his mystery cult in which all ethnic groups would take part. Lyangombe became king of the spirits and reigned on the volcano Karisimbi, which became paradise for his followers. Those who were not dedicated to his cult were considered Lyangombe’s enemies and their spirits were banished to the volcano Nyiragongo. (Munyaneza 2003:69).

In *kumbandwa* rituals, like many other African ancestor worship rituals, an individual or group goes to a particular ritual site (often a house) to see a diviner or spirit

medium. The people will gather in a particular room and sing songs until someone becomes “possessed” by a particular spirit. Members then interact with the spirit in several ways until the ritual ends (Hoelsing 2006:28-29).

In the ritual, singing is often accompanied by the *ikinyuguri* (Figure-5-39) gourd rattle in the right hand and the *ingozera* bell (Figure 5-40—similar in construction to the *amayugi*, but a single bell attached to a bracelet) in the left (DEKKMMA 2003g), though some may also be accompanied by the *iningidi* (Hoelsing 2006:47).¹⁸⁶ The rhythms and styles vary, but a consistent aesthetic is descending melodic content in a call-and-response style. Peter Hoelsing, in his master’s thesis “Kubandwa: Theory and Historiography of Shared Expressive Culture in Interlacustrine East Africa” (2006), cites several examples of *kubandwa* practices that utilize this technique, and the DEKKMMA and International Library of African Music (ILAM) websites also house multiple audio recordings of Lyangombe worship songs which confirm my assertion.¹⁸⁷ To solidify my point, I have transcribed the song “Aho Rero (Culte Lyangombo)” (It’s Good This Way) (see Figure 5-41) from Gansemans’s 1995 release *Musiques Du Rwanda*.

¹⁸⁶ According to Gansemans, “Texts of the Abiru about the ritual inauguration of a king mention the symbolic significance of the *ingozera*, with a distinction made between the ‘mute’ and the ‘resounding’ *ingozera*. These are basically the same instrument, except that the ‘mute’ *ingozera* has no ball in it. This silent version symbolises death, mourning and sexual abstinence, while the resounding version represents life and the resumption of sexual activity.” (DEKKMMA 2003f)

Kubandwa is another spelling for *kubandwa*, and I have chosen to use the latter throughout. The exception being the title of Hoelsing’s thesis.

¹⁸⁷The ILAM sound library may be browsed here: <http://greenstone.ilam.ru.ac.za/cgi-bin/library?site=localhost&a=p&p=about&c=ilam&l=en&w=utf-8>.



Figure 5-39. Image of the *ikinyuguri* rattle.
 (Source: <http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/pic/rwanda/ikinyuguri-1.jpg>)



Figure 5-40. Image of the *ingozera* bell.
 (Source: <http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/pic/rwanda/inzogera-1.jpg>)

Call

Response

Hand clapping/
ingozera

hand clapping

ingozera

a - ho - re - ro

Figure 5-41. Transcription of “Aho Rero (Culte Lyangombe).”

In Gansemans's recording of "Aho Rero," the meter is 5/8, marked by the hand clapping and *ingozera* bell. I have purposely extended the length of the notation through the end of the measure, as the bell, while distinctly marking the first beat, rattles throughout the piece intermittently. I have not translated the call, as the lyrical content is unclear at times, but I do hear Lyangombe frequently throughout the performance.

Another sonic marker of *kumbandwa* is the use of changes in vocal timbre, which are signifiers of events. According to Hoelsing:

Vocal techniques used in ritual song constitute an integral part of the ritual experience, often functioning as promoters or signifiers of mediumship (see for example the séance described above on pp. 35-36). Roscoe's encounter with these sounds yielded his description of a "growling chant," whereas Beattie later referred to humming and yodeling (Roscoe 1923:140; Beattie 1961:22). Beattie's later full account of a mediumship séance reveals that the medium's falsetto voice let the people present know that the spirit had entered his head (Beattie 1967:224, see also p. 35). Van Thiel cites Roscoe in reference to vocal styles in Ankole, again mentioning "groaning, grunting and growling," and later noting animal sounds, ululations and cries of ecstasy" (van Thiel 1974:60-61). He also adds that his informants denied the possibility of an authentic Cwezi music in the absence of these sounds (60). Others further south actually referred to their technique as "the voice of the Bacwezi," commenting that unless they used these low, guttural tones, "the spirits would not listen to them and would refuse 'to come on the head' (kwiza aha mutwe)" (Bjerke 1981:145). (Ibid. 45)

In "Yesu Wange" and "Singizwa," Samputu incorporates several vocal timbral changes as well as the call-and-response technique found in Lyangombe songs. However, he expresses them uniquely in each piece, and, as usual, inserts his own idiosyncratic elements into the style.

"Yesu Wange" is divided into two parts, though they are mostly separated by melodic content. The melody in the first part is in the typical call-and-response style

found in Lyangombe cult songs, whereas in the second (though it is more of an interlude than a true “section”) Samputu sings a solo, fluid, melody with no response. The song also adds shaker and drums, which I will discuss in detail below. Both sections are in a compound-quadruple meter, and while Samputu might label it as the Nkombo rhythm, the typical accents of that rhythm are absent. However, variations on compound-duple or quadruple meter are found in various *kumbandwa* songs. Additionally, the *inanga* part is in cycles of four beats, which confirms that it is a compound-quadruple rather than the compound-duple meter of the Nkombo rhythm. The rhythm is performed on the *igihumurizo*, but, in addition to the center-struck technique, Nyungura plays a closed stroke (damping the tone by touching skin with the head of the stick and not releasing it), as well as striking the side of the drum.

In order to get an overall view of the timbral differences of each of these hits, I recorded Nyungura playing each one. The sonic profiles of the open (center-struck and released) and closed (dampened) (see Figure 5-42) are similar in fundamental and overtone (aside from the length), but the dampened stroke has a slightly greater density of frequencies at the attack point:

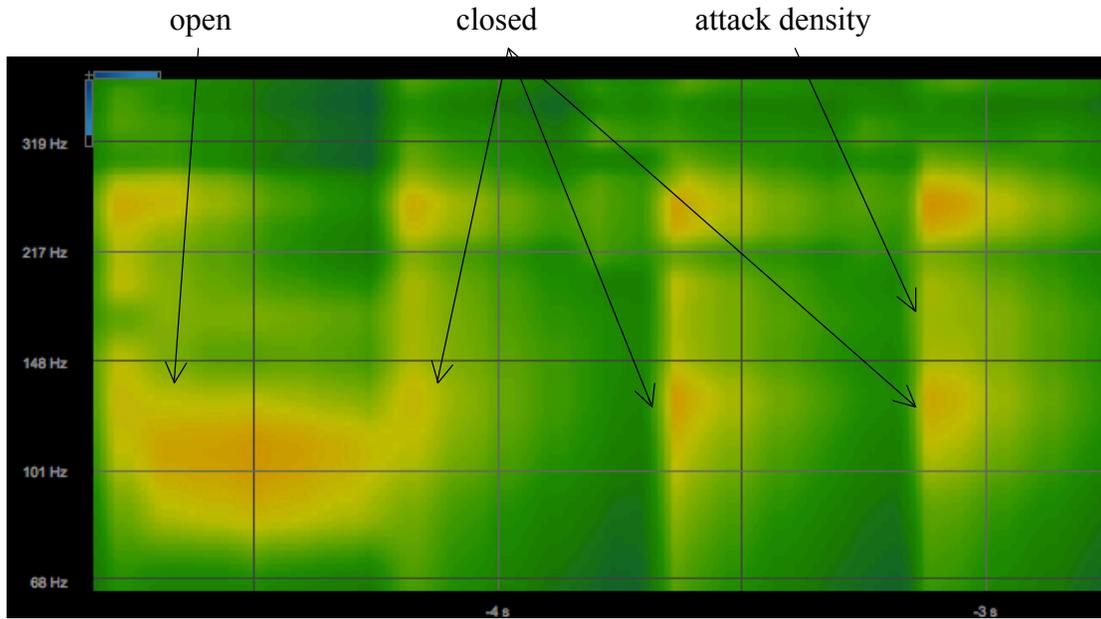


Figure 5-42. 2-D spectrogram of open and closed strokes (in the same pattern found in “Yesu Wange”) of the *igihumurizo*, as performed by Nyungura.

The side hit, in contrast, has an inconsistent profile (see Figure 5-43), likely due to the variations in the places struck (e.g., the density of wood will be greater in places, and thus will produce a higher frequency than the less dense wood). Nyungura strikes the drum in several ways and each stroke has a slightly different fundamental.

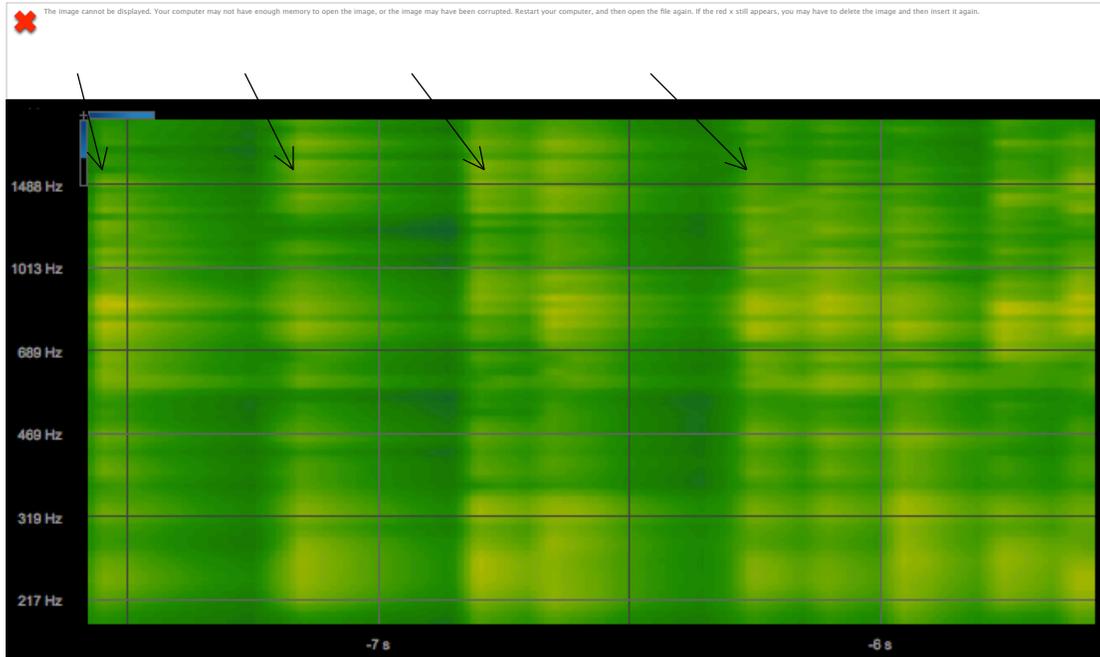


Figure 5-43. 2-D spectrogram of Nyungura playing the side hit of the *igihumurizo* along with transcription of the rhythm he plays in Staff notation.

The first section' instrumentation consists of *ingoma* (mostly *igihumurizo* with added accents by the *ishakwe* and *inyahura*), acoustic guitar, and the aforementioned *inanga* trough zither (see Figure 5-44). While the *inanga* (ranging from six to nine strings) is not unique to Rwanda, it is certainly central to Rwandan identity. Aside from the *ingoma*, the *inanga* is viewed as the most important traditional instrument, as it is the main instrument of accompaniment for the singing and/or recitation of *ibisigo* (both official and popular). Additionally, two of Rwanda's national treasures, the late Rujindiri and Sentore, who both played in the royal court, were *inanga* virtuosos. Although I do not present the uniqueness of the *inanga*'s timbre here, Cornelia Fales provides an excellent analysis in comparison to guitar timbre in her Garland article "Issues of Timbre: The Inanga Chuchotée" (Fales 1998:172-77).



Figure 5-44. Photo of *inanga* trough zither.

(Source: <http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/pic/rwanda/inanga.jpg>)

In terms of performance practice, the *inanga* is tuned to a pentatonic scale, usually emphasizing the minor aspects of the scale, but as Gansemans notes, not all of the strings are used in each performance (DEKKMMA 2003h). The performer alternates between ostinato patterns (usually during vocal accompaniment) and improvised solo passages. In the case of “Yesu Wange” (see Figure 5-45), Nsengiyumva, aside from his solo introduction, plays an ostinato pattern throughout. The pattern is syncopated and mostly outlines the notes of a Dm7 chord, with an alternation between harmonic and melodic intervals. The harmonic intervals performed are a m7, M6, and P8, while the melodic intervals are minor and major thirds. The alternation between harmonic and melodic intervals is part of standard *inanga* performance practice.

The acoustic guitar parts are mostly improvised, solo pentatonic/blues scale patterns that either double the lead vocalist (Samputu) heterophonically, or comprise independent (polyphonic) melodic material. I have only notated the latter in my transcription. There is no chordal accompaniment in the acoustic guitar part.

Yesu Wange

Samputu

Samputu, Nitunga, Nsengiyumva, Nyabenda, and Nyungura

The musical score is arranged in six staves. The top staff is for Lead Vocals in bass clef, with lyrics 'n - da - ri - rim - ba' and 'ye n - da - ri - rim - ba'. The second staff is Tenor harmony in treble clef with lyrics 'Ye - su wan ge. ___' and 'Ye - su wan - ge. ___'. The third staff is Baritone harmony in bass clef. The fourth staff is Acoustic Guitar in treble clef. The fifth staff is Inanga in bass clef. The sixth staff is Igihumurizo in treble clef, with annotations 'open', 'closed', and 'side hit' pointing to specific notes.

Figure 5-45. Transcription of a few measures of the first section of “Yesu Wange.”

In terms of vocal content, aside from the call-and-response style found in many of the songs of the Lyangombe cult (descending melodies in the call and not much melodic movement in the response), the response also contains typical Rwandan quartal harmony, which is common in various genres of popular and traditional music. In his call, Samputu sings a variety of different melodic phrases (alternating between his *n* and *pn* timbres throughout), though there are some common patterns. The main two styles are notated in Figure 5-45, and comprise similar descending melodies with the one in the second measure being more

syncopated than the first.¹⁸⁸ The other melodies (see Figure 5-46—labeled A, B, C, and D) have slightly different melodic contours. Melody A has no melodic movement, while B and C have quicker melismas at the end of the phrase. However, at the beginning of D, Samputu uses his *g* voice, which only happens once in the entire song. While Samputu had no intent of imitating a Lyangombe cult song, it is interesting, though purely coincidental, that his use of the *g* voice here links up with Bjerke’s statement above (as quoted in Hoelsing) regarding the spirits’ refusal to come unless the vocalists used “low, guttural tones” (Hoelsing 2006:45). Thus, instead of calling on the *kumbandwa* spirits, it is as if Samputu is using these guttural tones to call upon the Holy Spirit.

Yesu Wange

Samputu
Samputu, Nitunga, Nsengiyumva, Nyabenda, and Nyungura

The figure shows a musical transcription of four call melodies, labeled A, B, C, and D, in bass clef, 12/8 time, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). Melody A is a simple descending line. Melody B is a melisma with a rising contour. Melody C is a melisma with a rising contour and a triplet of eighth notes. Melody D starts with a low note marked 'g' and has a rising contour.

Figure 5-46. Transcription of Samputu’s “call” melodies in “Yesu Wange.”

The second section (or interlude) contains changes in instrumentational, melodic, dynamic, and timbral content (see Figure 5-47). The melismatic melody (sung over the word “shimwa,” which means “praise”) significantly contrasts with the first section in that it is not a short descending or static phrase, but fluid legato melody that spans over several measures, and has both an ascending and descending

¹⁸⁸ The lyrical content of the first two melodies and responses comprise the phrases “ndaririmba” (call) “Yesu wange” (response), which translates best as “I sing to my Jesus” (Samputu 2006f).

melodic contour. There is also significant amount of bending of notes and an accentuation on the diminished fifth/augmented fourth, which sounds like a “blue note.” While he contends that the Twa sing in this style, Samputu also admits that he cannot deny the influence of blues in popular music, especially among some of his favorite artists such as Lionel Ritchie, Stevie Wonder, and Bob Marley.

The melody is also sung a high register in his *s* voice, which sounds almost like a falsetto (though the false vocal chords are clearly not employed), and is similar to when a spirit medium in *kumbandwa* sings in the “falsetto voice let the people present know that the spirit had entered his head” (ibid.). The softer dynamics also lend to the aesthetics of, at least to my foreign ears, a type of “invocation,” which is a norm in several Christian traditions, though most overt in Pentecostal theology. Further, another association with *kumbandwa* is the use of the shaker, which plays on every beat, similar to the way the medium will play the *ikinyuguri*. The *ishakwe* and *inyahura* enter in this section for contrast (playing accents), but they don’t have any association with *kumbandwa* practices.

Contrastingly, when discussing this with Ubaldo, he did not draw any connection between this part and *kumbandwa* practices. However, even though the similarity could be completely coincidental, it is worth noting the connection between the two styles. Many of the styles sung in Lyangombe cult rituals can also be found in secular venues. Thus, while the connection may be secondary, there is still a connection between Samputu’s performance of “Yesu Wange” and songs of the Lyangombe cult.

The image displays a musical score for the second section of "Yesu Wange." The score is arranged in two systems, each with six staves. The top system includes:

- Lead Vocals:** Bass clef, 12/8 time signature. Lyrics: "Shi - m - wa."
- Inanga:** Bass clef, 12/8 time signature. Lyrics: "Shi - m - wa."
- Shakers:** Percussion clef, 12/8 time signature.
- Ishakwe/Inyahura:** Treble clef, 12/8 time signature.
- Ighumurizo:** Treble clef, 12/8 time signature.

 The bottom system includes:

- L.V.:** Bass clef, 12/8 time signature. Lyrics: "Shi - oh ah"
- Iga:** Bass clef, 12/8 time signature. Lyrics: "Shi - oh ah"
- Shk.:** Percussion clef, 12/8 time signature.
- Iwe/Iyhra:** Treble clef, 12/8 time signature.
- Ighzo:** Treble clef, 12/8 time signature.

 The score features complex polyphonic textures with multiple vocal lines and instrumental accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 12/8.

Figure 5-47. Transcription of the second section of “Yesu Wange.”

“Singizwa” shares similar call-and-response vocal characteristics of “Yesu Wange,” but is distinctly more Twa sounding in its opening polyphonic refrain (which is equally as complex and brilliant as “Psalm 150”) and Samputu’s consistent use of his *pn* and *pnm* timbres (not transcribed here). However, for the purposes of this study the most interesting features are: (1) the timbre of the *amayugi*, which is the sole accompanying instrument, (2) the 5/8 meter, and (3) a distinct vocal timbral

change not yet analyzed, which is unique to this piece—meaning that I don't know of another recording in which Samputu uses this vocal timbre.

The *amayugi* rattles, like other idiophones that contain multiple layers of pitches (e.g., chimes), have an obfuscated sonic profile in that they lack a true fundamental (see Figures 5-48 and 5-49).¹⁸⁹

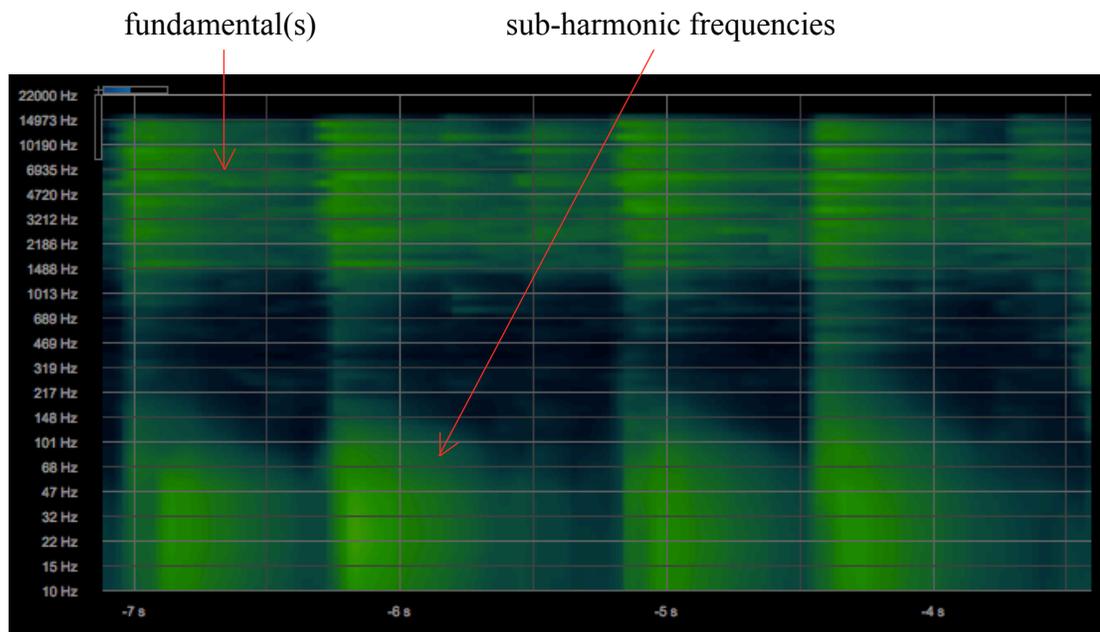


Figure 5-48. 2-D spectrogram of the *amayugi* in the beginning of “Singizwa.”

¹⁸⁹ The audio source of these spectrograms is the original audio file from *Testimony From Rwanda*.

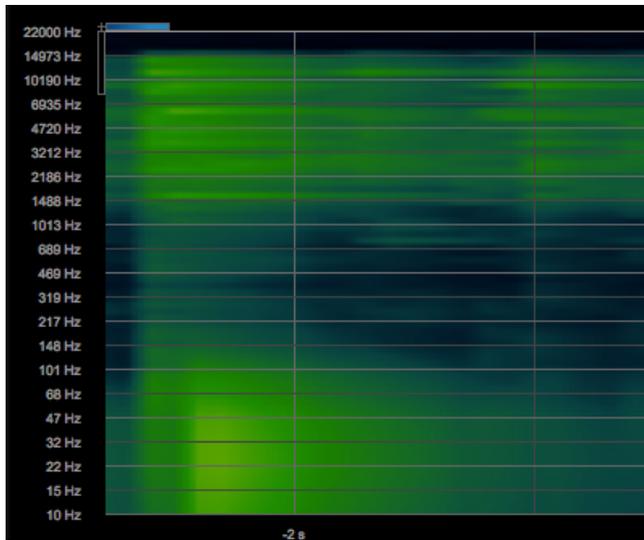


Figure 5-49. Zoomed in 2-D spectrogram of the *amayugi* in the beginning of “Singizwa.”

In Figure 5-48, we see the *amayugi* performed in the 5/8 rhythm (as notated in Figure 2-2), and while the “fundamentals” begin around 1.5 kHz, there is no one true pitch (this is confirmed in the zoomed image in Figure 5-49). Thus, the *amayugi* produce high frequencies, but we do not know which ones are the fundamentals, and further, I cannot perceive one distinct pitch. In addition to the fundamentals, there is a significant amount of sub-harmonic frequencies due to the foot stamping. And while this may be dismissed as external noise, it would distinctly be heard (or felt at least) when the dancers perform using *amayugi*, and thus is an important aspect of the sonic profile.



Figure 5-50. Intore dancers wearing *amayugi* during a performance.
(Source: <http://szkolawkibeho.blogspot.com/2013/02/tanczaca-rwanda-czesc-1.html>)

When the *amayugi* is played, like the *ingozera* bell the tones ring out throughout the measure and give a perception, at least to my ears, of marking individual eighth notes. While not completely analogous, this perception is similar to Cornelia Fales's observation of how a listener can perceive the whisperer singing a melody in *inanga chuchotée*. Fales uses the example of Rubin's Vase (see Figure 5-51), a visual image in which you can either see a goblet figure or two human profiles. There is no one right way to view it, which creates perceptual dissonance. In the case of the whispered *inanga*, the listener hears both the whisper and the *inanga* melody simultaneously and essentially fuses the two distinct sounds (the whisper being broadband noise, and the *inanga* containing a distinct fundamental and overtones) to hear the whisperer singing the melody. Fales explains that one of the reasons for this is that in Burundian music:

the voice is primary—not for the melody, but because in most cases it carries a text. The importance of discourse for the Barundi in an immense number of situations has been well established (Ntahombaye 1983). Thus, even in situations where the accompanying instrument mimics the melody of the voice, and more so when the instrument plays a different part, the voice is primary. It is significant that in a less commonly performed type of inanga music that includes voiced singing alternating with whispered verses, the instrumental part during the voiced sections dwindles from full melody to a repetition of one pitch, or at the most, several pitches. (Fales 1998:183)

And the same could be said about the rhythm of the *amayugi*, as in a typical performance the performers or the audience will clap on every beat of the 5/8 figure, with accents on beats one and four. Thus, for those familiar with performances that include *amayugi*, the ambiguity of the rhythm could be interpreted as distinct eighth notes. Therefore, in my transcription in Figure 5-52, I have notated it as such.



Figure 5-51. Image of Rubin's Vase.
(Source: <http://figures.boundless.com/20021/full/rubin-vase.jpe>)

The image shows a musical score for a call-and-response section of "Singizwa." It consists of five vocal staves (Voice 1 to Voice 5) and an Amayugi staff. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/8. Voice 1 has lyrics "y y y" above it. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). The Amayugi staff is labeled with "perceived fundamentals" and "sub-harmonic frequencies" and includes the notation "n/pn/pnm".

Figure 5-52. Transcription of the first few phrases of the call-and-response section of “Singizwa.”

In terms of timbral differences, Samputu sings in a combination of his *n*, *pn*, and *pnm* voices in the first melody (measures two, three, and four) to create a very unique timbre that almost sounds like a completely different singer (see Figures 5-53 and 5-54). While the two figures resemble each other for the first part of the phrase,

there is a clear difference in the sustained ultimate note. In Figure 5-53, which is Samputu singing in his *pn* voice, the fundamental, second, and third overtone are clearly formed and almost have equal amplitude. But in Figure 5-54, when he uses the mixture of his *pn*, *n*, and *pnm* voices (the latter of which is mostly mouth resonance at this point, creating a “darker” sound), the first overtone is much more prominent than the fundamental and second overtone. According to Samputu, he wanted to sound like a “real” pygmy, so he darkened his voice by almost closing his mouth.

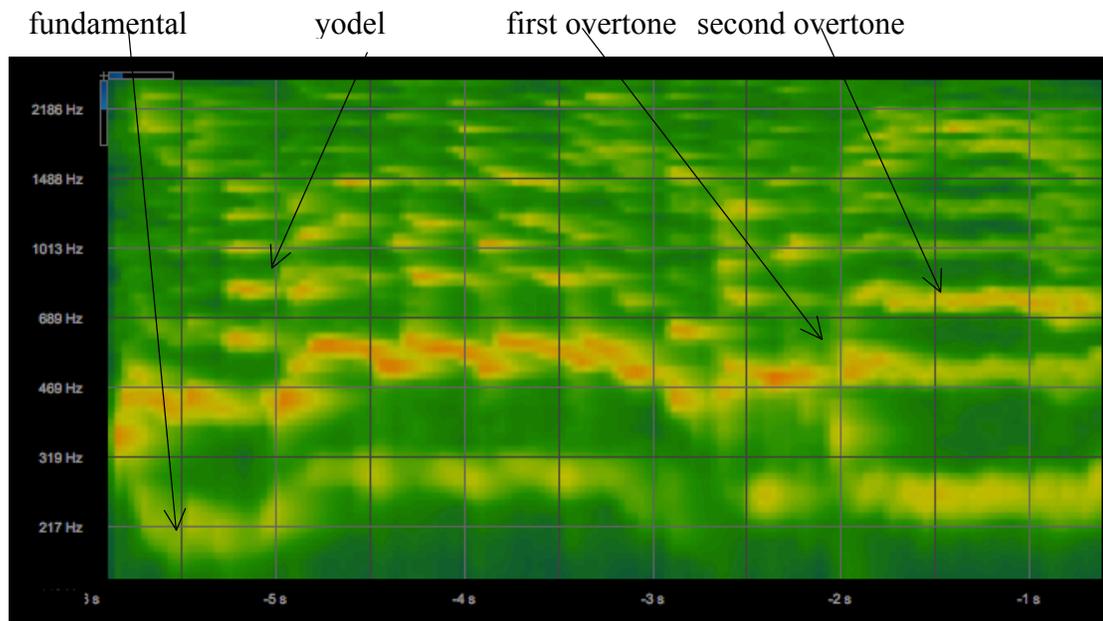


Figure 5-53. Samputu singing measures two through four in *pn* voice.

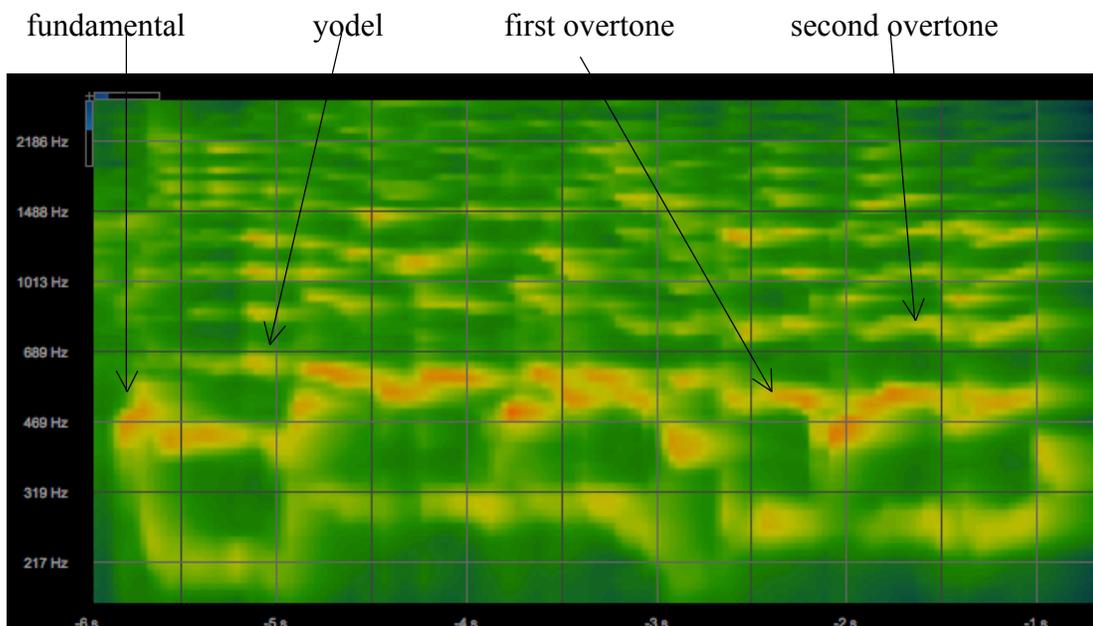


Figure 5-54. Samputu singing measures two through four in *pn*, *n*, and *pnm* voice.

Melodically, this same passage is interesting because the melody ascends rather than descends, and harmonically, tertiary harmony is present, but the third of the chord in the response is much lower in the mix. Thus, it is perceivably Rwandan quartal harmony, but upon close listening, the ending of the response phrase (measures three and six) is an Ab minor triad.

Using Samputu's music to reveal aspects of Rwandan traditional religious music is analogous to treading on thin ice, as I make assumptions about Samputu's intent while knowing that he consciously did not make any of those choices. However, I believe, knowing that he is aware of my assumptions and that I have clearly stated his conscious intent, it is a worthy venture as it is an opportunity to explore traditional religious aspects of Rwandan music-culture. Even though Samputu does not consciously emulate songs of the cult of Lyangombe (nor has he ever participated in such a ritual), I argue that his musical expressions are embedded in his

cultural memory. Cultural memory, according to Assmann in his “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity”:

is characterized by its distance from the everyday. Distance from the everyday (transcendence) marks its temporal horizon. Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance). We call these "figures of memory.”

and, further,

cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose "cultivation" serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity.

The content of such knowledge varies from culture to culture as well as from epoch to epoch. The manner of its organization, its media, and its institutions, are also highly variable. The binding and reflexive character of a heritage can display varying intensities and appear in various aggregations. One society bases its self-image on a canon of sacred scripture, the next on a basic set of ritual activities, and the third on a fixed and hieratic language of forms in a canon of architectural and artistic types. (Assmann 1995:132-33)

Thus, because Samputu’s experience with Rwandan culture is entrenched in historical patterns and norms he is not often consciously aware of, it is plausible to state that through his subconscious cultural memory “Yesu Wange” and “Singizwa” are indeed Christian re-contextualizations of Rwandan traditional *kumbandwa*, specifically related to Lyangombe. Further evidence of this is the fact that Samputu recalls some Christians (to remain unnamed) who were very critical of his use of the styles on *Voices From Rwanda*, because they would be associated with what they consider

“demonic” worship of traditional music.¹⁹⁰ And conversely, several other Rwandans criticized him for using traditional music in a Christian context, as this is considered sacrilegious to them and the many others their criticism likely represents.

“Umukiza Araje”

“Umukiza Araje” is an original composition rooted in the styles from the Ruhengeri area in Northwest Rwanda, close to the border of D.R. Congo and Uganda (see Figure 5-55) and approximately fifty-eight km from Gisenyi, where Samputu spent much of his time with Kajeguhakwa.¹⁹¹ Samputu composed the song because he wanted to write a song with the musical bow with a gourd resonator, found throughout Africa and known in Rwanda as an *umuduri*. The piece is written in duple meter, and is a mixture of a variety of different styles. When asked to explain what he calls it, Samputu stated that “it’s like Congolese, but it’s not Congolese, it’s Rwandan, but not Rwandan. You could say it’s *Afro*” (with *Afro* being his term for pan-African) (Samputu 2014f).

¹⁹⁰ Samputu did want me to point out that Apostle Paul Gitwaza was very supportive of him recording this album, and spent much time mentoring him and praying for him regarding his vision to use Rwandan traditional instruments in Christian worship.

¹⁹¹ Ruhengeri is a tourist destination, as it is the closest city to Volcan National Park, which is home to a large population of mountain gorillas. Dian Fossey’s work with these gorillas was the basis for her book (and subsequent film) *Gorillas In The Mist*.

spectral analysis (see Figures 5-56, 5-57, and 5-58), as there are two distinct fundamentals that are two octaves apart (G2 and G4), and there is significant density in first and second overtones (G3 and D4—the fundamental is G2). I argue that there are two fundamentals, as the density of frequencies around G4 is not part of the harmonic series of the perceived G2 fundamental. Thus, while they could be considered an inharmonic partial, the densities of the frequencies are actually stronger than the fundamental, I believe the bow creates two distinct fundamental pitches.¹⁹² Regarding the P5 interval, in addition to the second harmonics of the two fundamentals (D4 and D6, respectively), there are also two inharmonic partials (D3 and D5) that have significant density. This is fairly clear in the 2-D spectrogram, but is much clearer in the Spear spectrogram. There is also significant density in the upper frequencies (3.5 kHz to 5kHz), which I believe is due to pitch being created when striking the bow. And another point of interest is how the small breaks in the overtones and fundamentals represent the movement of the gourd resonator toward and away from the body, which creates an oscillation between the lower (away from the body) and higher frequencies (close to the body).

¹⁹² Thus far I have been using the term overtone to denote tones above the fundamental (when there is a distinct one), but harmonics refer to the overtones in the harmonic series, whereas overtones are defined as densely formed frequencies above the fundamental. Therefore, while all harmonics are overtones, not all overtones are harmonics. And an inharmonic partial is an overtone that is not part of the harmonic series.

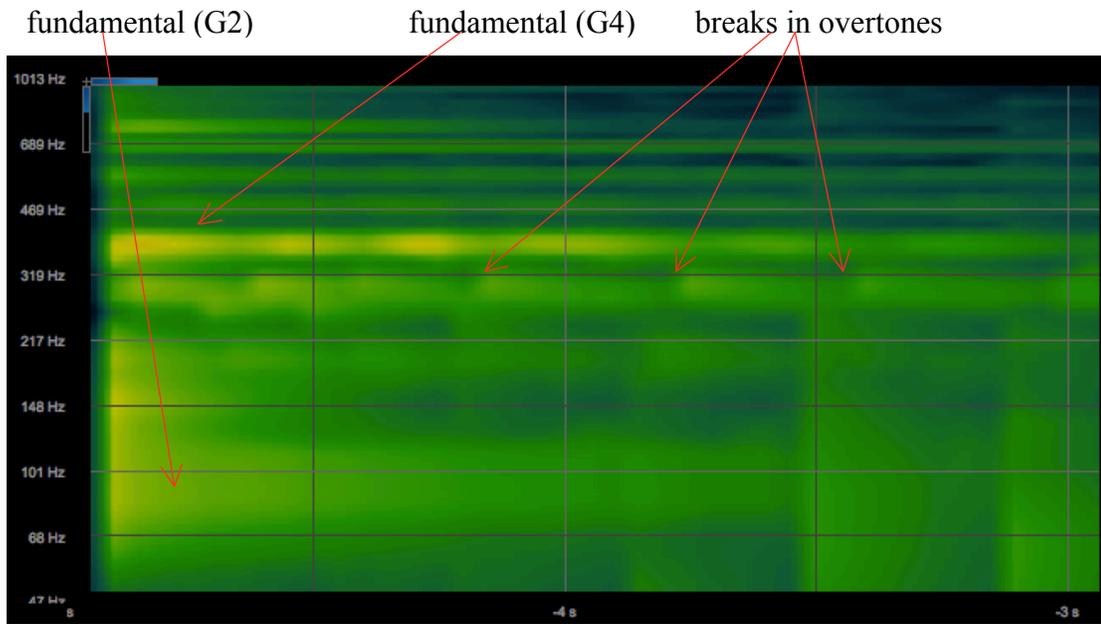


Figure 5-56. 2-D spectrogram of *umuduri* as played in “Umukiza Araje.”

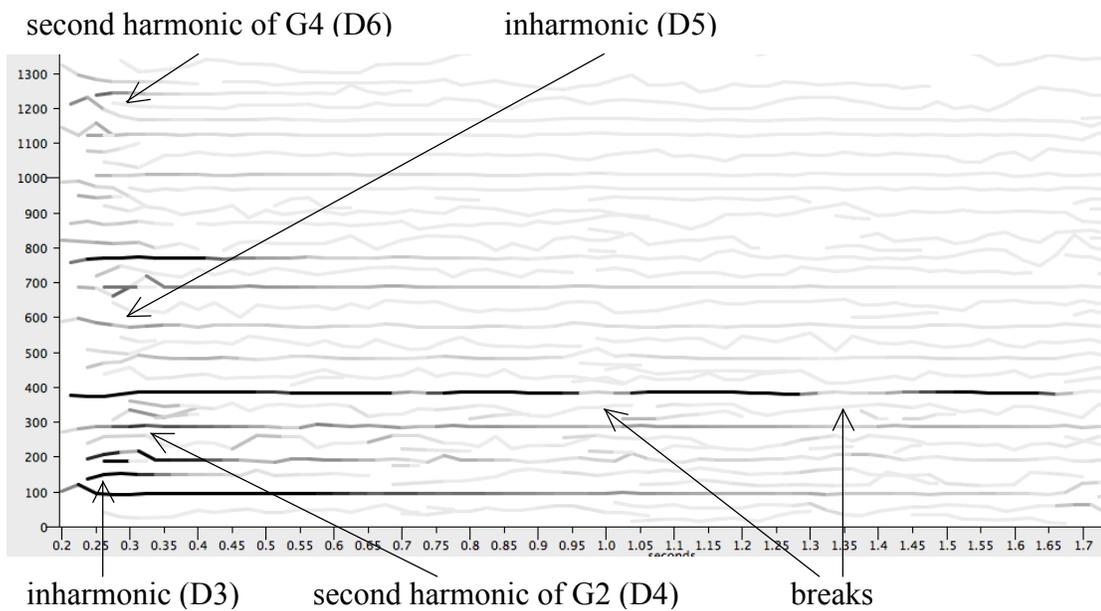


Figure 5-57. Spear spectrogram of *umuduri* as played in “Umukiza Araje.”

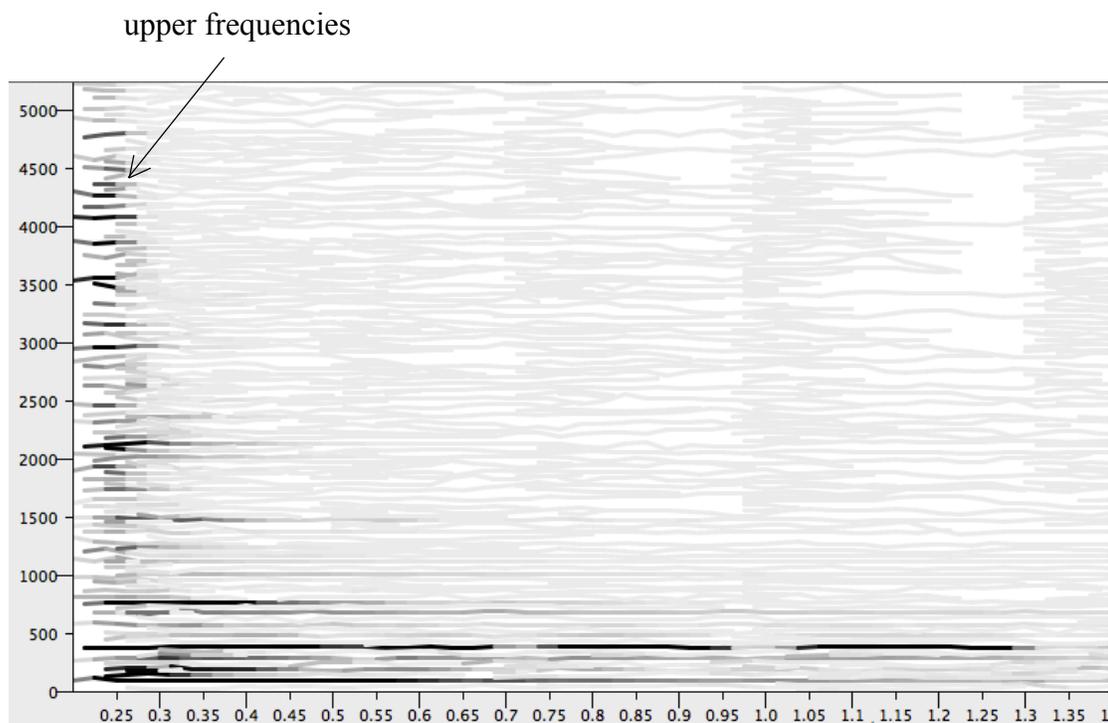


Figure 5-58. Zoomed out Spear spectrogram of *umuduri* as played in “Umukiza Araje.”

Because of the complexity of the sonic profile of the *umuduri*, I have chosen to notate it with regular noteheads for octaves and *x* noteheads for the P5 (see Figure 5-59).

That being said, depending on the resonance of the notes, the P5 interval may or may not be audible for shorter notes (the note analyzed above lasts for over one second), but I unfortunately do not have a quality recording of the solo performance of Nsengiyumva playing the *umuduri*, so I cannot appropriately analyze it.

The “rhythmic cadence” of the *umuduri* (in this case, eighth-sixteenth-sixteenth followed by five eighths), which Gansemans refers to, is the driving force behind the quadruple meter song. Samputu calls it the “*umuduri* rhythm,” and composed the song with that rhythm in mind.¹⁹³ He also recalls that people will dance

¹⁹³ While Samputu calls this the “*umuduri*” rhythm, the quadruple meter is only one of the many meters found in *umuduri* performance practice.

whatever they feel like whenever they hear it, meaning that there is no formal dance set to accompany the rhythm.

Score

Umukiza Araje

Samputu

Samputu, Nitunga, Nsengiyumva, Nyabenda, and Nyungura

Lead Vocals

Harmony

Acoustic Guitar 1

Acoustic Guitar 2

Umuduli

L.V.

H.

Ac.Gtr. 1

Ac.Gtr. 2

Umdi.

Umukiza Araje

The musical score is titled "Umukiza Araje" and is arranged for voice and instruments. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system covers measures 2 through 5. The vocal line (L.V.) has a melody with lyrics "a - ra - je a - ra -". The harmony line (H.) provides accompaniment. The instrumental parts include Acoustic Guitar 1 (Ac.Gtr. 1), Acoustic Guitar 2 (Ac.Gtr. 2), and Umduri. The second system covers measures 7 through 10. The vocal line (L.V.) has a melody with lyrics "je Yesu - a - ra - je.". The instrumental parts continue with the same accompaniment. The Umduri part is written in bass clef with 'x' marks indicating fretted notes.

Figure 5-59. Transcription of the first verse melody and refrain of “Umukiza Araje.”

In addition to the *umuduri*, the piece features two accompanying acoustic guitars that are performed in quasi-Congolese style. The “rhythm” guitar (Acoustic Guitar 2) outlines chords in a syncopated way, like the Congolese *soukous* players do, but the harmonic progression follows the two-note melody of the *umuduri* (G to A5—even though I could not hear the guitar play a full A minor chord, a I-ii progression is implied), which is outside of the norm of Congolese styles (see Chapter Six for a more detailed analysis of *soukous* styles). However, the other acoustic guitar features

a countermelody that is very similar style to *soukous*, but the typical harmonic intervals of thirds and sixths found in that style are absent. And like the “rhythm” guitar part, it follows the *umuduri* rhythmically.

The vocal melody, sung by Nsengiyumva, is a typical descending Rwandan melody (though the rhythm is sung to conform to the *umuduri* rhythm), and the refrain of “Yesu Araje” is sung in Rwandan quartal harmony. And the different timbre of Nsengiyumva’s voice is another example of how Samputu utilizes different vocal timbres in his performances.

“Amakondera”

The title of this song is taken from the royal trumpets (mentioned in “Psalm 150”) of the same name, and is a Christian re-contextualization of a traditional trumpet performance. The Christian aspect of this performance is simply that these are royal trumpets, and therefore Samputu is appropriating the performance to praise the King of Kings. According to Gansemans, *amakondera* (see Figure 5-60) were brought to Rwanda when King Yuhi Musinga invited some of their Abazinja neighbors from modern-day Tanzania to teach the Twa how to play them (DEKKMMA 2003j). However, there is no way of truly knowing the specific origin other than that they were definitely a significant part of the Buzinza and Kitara (predecessors of the Nyiginya kingdom) kingdom which included various parts of modern East Africa and D.R. Congo. According to Mbabi-Katana, *amakondera* were used in several secular (coronation) and sacred (*kumbandwa*) rituals as mandated by the Cwezi (Kitara) kings (Mbabi-Katana 1982:28-29).



Figure 5-60. *Amakondera* ensemble in *intore* regalia.

(Source: <http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/pic/rwanda/context-amakondera-ensemble.jpg>)

In Rwanda, *amakondera* accompany the *intore* dancers and perform for people of importance (DEKKMMA 2003i). The ensemble includes five different types of transverse trumpets made of bamboo:

1. The *umurangi* is played by the leader of the ensemble, who introduces the music (the name of the instrument can be translated as "he who introduces") and has a role as soloist.
2. The *incuragane* means "instrument with the quick notes."
3. The *urugunda* is the "regular voice" and is the third most important component in the ensemble. Musically it has a bass function.
4. The *inkanka* is the true bass of the ensemble.
5. The *insengo* owes its name to the flute of the same name because the sound produced – a high, sharp note – is said to be similar. (Ibid.)¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Each individual trumpet is known as *ikondera*, while the ensemble is known as *amakondera*.

In “Amakondera,” the group had to deviate from the normal performance practice, as Nsengiyumva, Nyabenda, and Nyungura were the only ones who could play the instruments (Samputu does not perform on the song), and thus only use the *umurangi*, *incuragane*, and *urugunda* in their performance. Additionally, they had to replace the accompanying drums (normally the *ingaraba*—see Figure 5-61 and *ruharge*—see Figure 5-62) with the *ingoma* ensemble. This substitution presented several challenges, as the *ingaraba* is played by hand and is much smaller than the *inyahura* (the closest drum to its size) and *igihumurizo*, but much longer and resonant than the *ishakwe*. Thus, in addition to playing the standard pattern on the *igihumurizo* they added accents with the sticks (center-struck) to give the sound more “depth.”



Figure 5-61. *Ingaraba* drum.

(Source: <http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/pic/rwanda/context-ingaraba.jpg>)



Figure 5-62. Man playing *ruharage* drum (lower right).
(Source: <http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/pic/rwanda/context-ruharage.jpg>)

Transcribing “Amakondera” is challenging in that the performers of *amakondera* produce two distinct notes, one that sounds like the horn, and another that stems from exhaling the breath into the instrument, meaning that the sound comes more from the voice than from the “instrument” (much like a kazoo). In the beginning of the piece, as it would be in the traditional setting, the *umurangi* plays a solo line to “call” to the other horns, and in the spectrograms of this call (see Figures 5-64, 5-65, and 5-66), there are breaks in the fundamental where the voice is most prominent. Also, in 5-65 the player uses his tongue and introduces broadband noise that blurs the first and second overtones (these are prominent in 5-64). I have also notated these details in the transcribed melody in Figure 5-63.



Figure 5-63. Transcription of the opening *umurangi* solo in “Amakondera.”

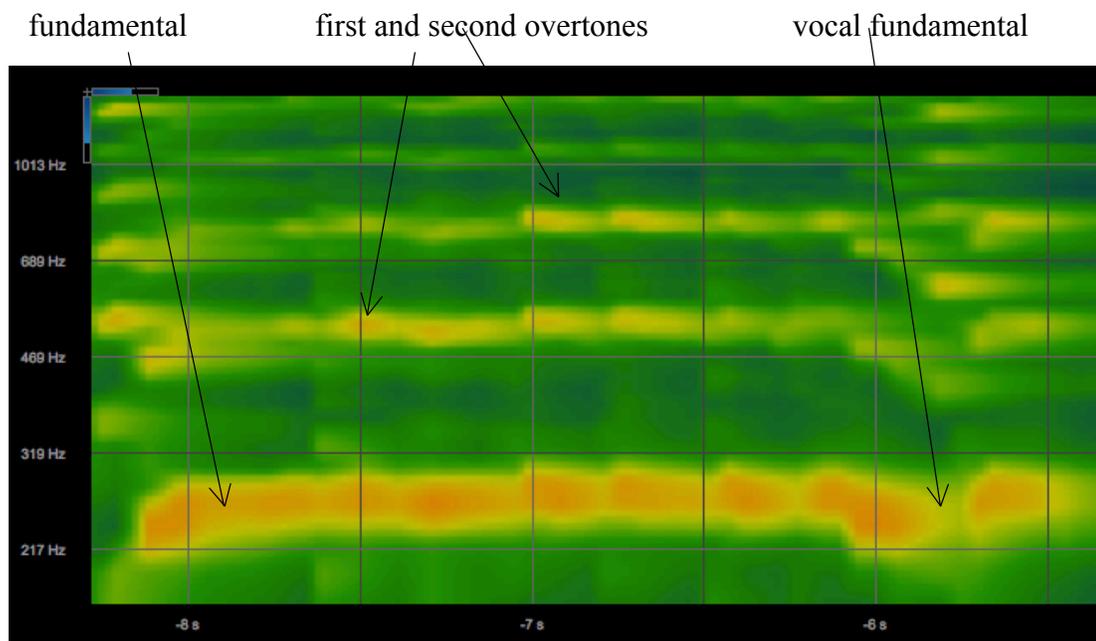


Figure 5-64. 2-D spectrogram of measure one of “Amakondera.”

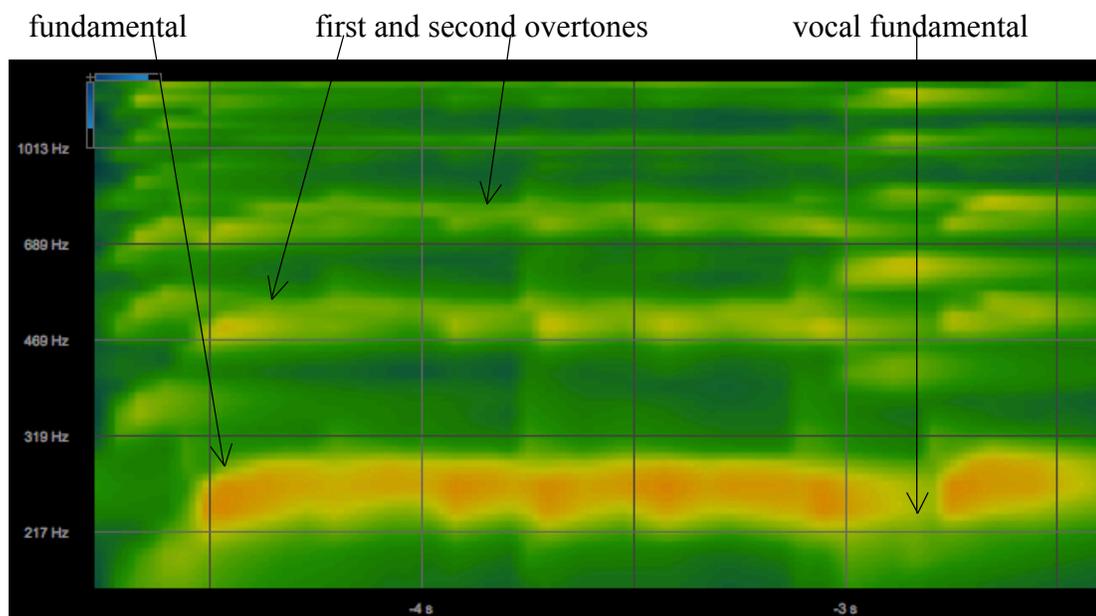


Figure 5-65. 2-D spectrogram of measure two of “Amakondera.”

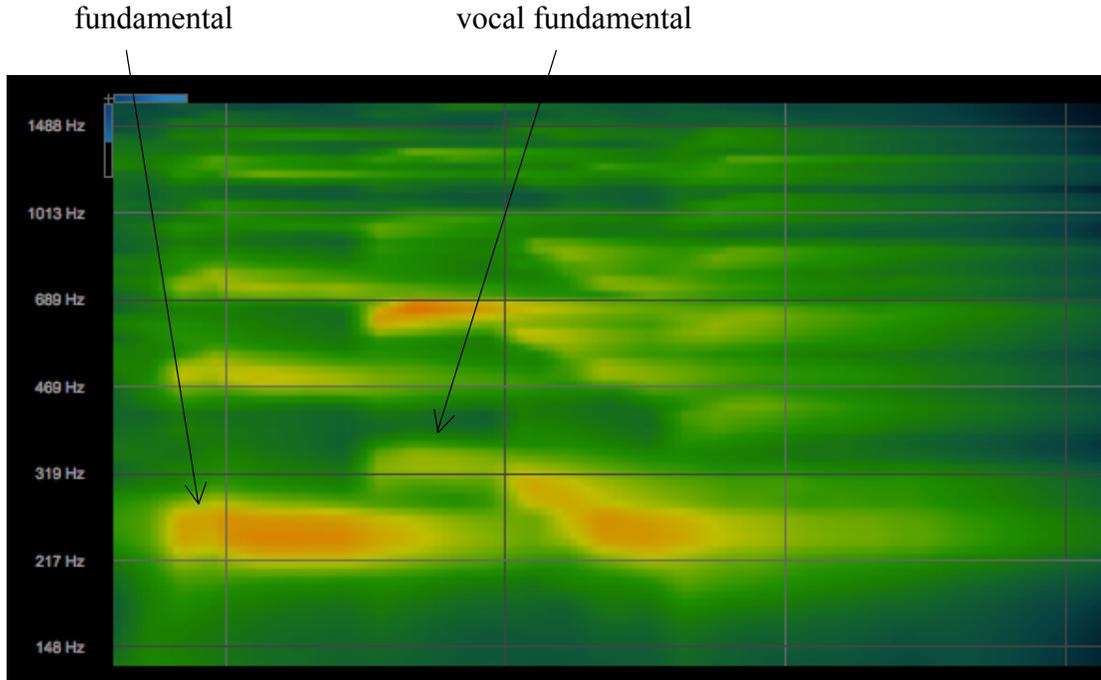


Figure 5-66. 2-D spectrogram of the first phrase in measure three of “Amakondera.”

The “voiced” performance practice of the *amakondera* also confused me when attempting to transcribe the ensemble (see Figure 5-67), as the voiced part (likely a combination of all the instruments at different times) sounds like a fourth *ikondera*, even though I know there are only three being performed.¹⁹⁵ In order to transcribe this, I have given a staff line solely marked “voice,” as it is an integral part of the harmonic structure of the song.

The image shows a musical score for an ensemble. It consists of five staves. The top staff is for 'incuragane' in treble clef. The second staff is for 'voice' in bass clef. The third staff is for 'urugunda' in bass clef. The fourth staff is for 'umurangi' in treble clef. The bottom staff is for 'drums' in a drum set notation. The time signature is 6/4. The score shows the first few measures of the ensemble playing together. The drums part includes labels for 'hand stroke', 'igihurimizo', and 'ishakwe'.

Figure 5-67. Transcription of the first few measures of the ensemble playing together.

In terms of melodic content, the *umurangi* or the *incuragane* have a narrow range, and are the only two instruments that play more than one note (M3 and M2 respectively). And in the case of performing *amakondera*, the starting pitch is not very much an issue, as Nsengiyumva begins with a tonal center of Ab/F (major and minor modes, respectively), but in the second half of measure four (Figure 5-63) he moves up an entire half step to be centered around A/F#. And as the tuning of the melody is probably unimportant, the harmony created has no function either. However, it is interesting that the voiced section adds a third to the harmony in order to create a “minor” chord. Regarding the rhythm, there is very little variation in the melodic rhythm or the drumming, and other than the aforementioned issue about the use of the *igihumurizo* and the *ishakwe* to replicate the sounds of the *ingaraba* and the *ruharge*, there is little that deviates from the traditional performance practice. I have labeled it as a 6/4 meter, as the drumming ostinato is six beats in length, but the *amakondera*'s melodic rhythm points to a simple duple meter. Vocally, Nsengiyumva

does not sing any particular melodies, but merely shouts out improvised phrases, which according to Samputu are just him telling everyone essentially “Hey guys, let’s go play *amakondera*. Yes, let’s go!” (Samputu 2014d).

Conclusion

By analyzing the lyrics, rhythms, melodies, harmonies, dynamics, and timbres of Samputu’s music related to Rwanda, we are able to flesh out many of the details of Rwandan music-culture. These details are essential to understanding the distinctiveness of Rwandan music, and because I am making the case that Rwanda is a transnational culture, it is imperative to explain what the “norms” of Rwandan music-culture are. Through text, spectrographs, waveforms, and transcriptions in staff notation, I have detailed several unique qualities of Rwandan music. First is the important relationship to the Nyiginya kingdom. All of the pieces I analyzed in this chapter are tied, at least in part to the historical dynasty. For example, in “Nyaruguru” I demonstrated that the multi-layered lyrics contain references to specific works of kings and places important to the kingdom. Further, the lyrics of “Kunda Inka,” contain metaphors that equate beautiful women with royal *inyambo* cows, while “Ingoma” is a performance intended to be a contemporary analog of the king’s royal drums. And finally, the *intore* dancers are part of the king’s chosen performers, and resemble warriors of an ancient past.

Second is the recurring use of triple meter with accents on beat one of the first measure, and beats one and two of the second (see Figure 3-3) and the irregular 5/8 meter. Third is the use of what I term Rwandan quartal harmony, as this occurs frequently throughout both contemporary and traditional music. Fourth is how

Samputu's different vocal timbres are embedded in different Rwandan identities. For example, his *g* voice is an emulation of the great Bwanakweli, while his *pn* and *pnm* voice are emulations of Twa singing styles. Fifth, how certain styles are regionally based (i.e. the style of "Umukiza Araje" is based in Northwest Rwanda, whereas the *ingoma* and *amahamba/imbyino* genres used in "Kunda Inka" are from the southern areas of the country. And finally, the use of falsetto, *ikinyuguri* rattle, and call-and-response in Lyangombe rituals. While Samputu had never taken part (at least to his knowledge) in a Lyangombe ceremony, there were several musical similarities in his performance of "Yesu Wange," that we used Assmann's theory of cultural memory to justify its analysis as being a Christian re-contextualization of music found in Lyangombe worship.

This chapter is far from exhaustive in demonstrating all of the nuances of Rwandan music, but it certainly is a window into a majority of the country's styles and genres and their contexts. Samputu is exceptional in this way, as few, if any, individuals have recorded such a breadth of Rwandan music styles in their careers. His music contains all of the richness of Rwandan musical culture, but also has enough uniqueness for Samputu to stand out. We discovered this uniqueness in his many Christian re-contextualizations of Rwandan traditional music, but also his use of *g* voice in "Nyaruguru" to exemplify the "stomach pains." He is also one of the few popular music artists to frequently use Twa style vocal timbres (*pn* and *pnm* voices) and polyphonic textures in his performances, compositions, and recordings.

While Samputu is certainly a special Rwandan artist, what he does is actually very reflective of East African culture in general. As T. O. Ranger pointed out in his

study of the *Beni ngoma* drumming and dance traditions in Tanzania (which on the surface seemed like copies of European military marches, even though the rhythms were more like traditional *ngoma* styles), East Africans maintain traditions by incorporating new ideas and expressions that ensure the survival of the culture.

Greg Barz, in his article “Politics of Remembering: Performing History(-ies) in Youth Kwaya Competitions in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania” (from his book co-edited with Frank Gunderson, *Mashindano! Competitive Music Performance in East Africa*), argues that modern *kwaya* (an adaptation of the English word “choir”) competitions are similar to *Beni ngoma* in that by mixing “European hymnody, Central dance musics, Southern African dances, and East African melodic and rhythmic elements...” they “subvert neo-colonial systems and challenge inherited repertoires and issues of style, while simultaneously preserving older, often foreign traditions” (Barz 2000:402). Further Barz states that *kwaya* is a:

... singing tradition which seems on the surface to be so “obviously derivative and parasitical”... proves to be deeply rooted, creative, and versatile. Change, adaptation, and transformation are expected in competitive Kwaya performance, as is the preservation and maintenance of older traditions. However, it would be wrong to conclude that the innovation taking place in contemporary Kwaya competitions [which now include electronic instruments as accompaniment] is merely a mapping of “African” aesthetics onto “Western” aesthetics. This is clearly not the case. My field research demonstrates that Kwayas comfortably exist within multiple referents, multiple histories, and that this awareness is, in fact, anticipated, expected, and integral to the reinterpretation that occurs in competitive performance. (Ibid.)

In the same volume, in his article “Kizungu Rhythms: Luguru Christianity as Ngoma,” Peter Pels argues that Christianity was seen by the Luguru in Tanzania as another *ngoma*, a multifaceted term which means “embodied—danced, drummed, or

otherwise performed—change in the rhythm of life that metonymically connects difference being within Luguru society and beyond it” (Pels 2000:101-02). Further, he argues:

The importance of treating Christianity, for Waluguru, as a *kizungu* rhythm (or a “white” *ngoma*) lies in the way in which it shows how the adoption of a European institution was mediated by an African one. John Chernoff has argued that many African communities are “not held together by ideas, by cognitive symbols or by emotional conformity” but by a musical performance that establishes community “through the interaction of individual rhythms and the people who embody them” (1991:1095). The relevance of this participatory potential of the rhythmic medium to the way Africans related to colonialism is brought out by A.M. Jones’ analysis of a rhythm called *mganda*. Each drum, taking its cue from a beat of the preceding one, beats its own sequence and time (to which the rhythm of the song adds another)... This is why we should take the “rhythm” element of the *ngoma* metaphor seriously, for it attunes us to a mediation of European forms that goes far beyond direct imitation. (Ibid. 103-04).

Samputu’s music is not merely a mash-up of the great traditions of Rwandan culture, but a continuation of them and a way of maintaining them for future generations in Rwanda. In other words, Samputu does not merely reflect the culture, but adds to it through negotiation of performance practice and lyrical content. As we have seen in this chapter, he does this in several ways. I delineated this first in his interpretation of Twa singing styles, specifically in “Nyaruguru.” Unlike other Rwandan artists who mostly sing the melody lines without changing vocal timbre, Samputu incorporates “Western” practices of word-music relationships in his performance by adding a growl to emphasize the “stomach pains.” By doing this, Samputu is “competing” with the greats who came before him (e.g., Bwanakweli) and surpassing them, much as a Jeli’s son would compete and surpass his father in Mandinka culture in a process known as *fadenya* (Charry 2000:57). Second, this new

ngoma can also be heard in the various ways Samputu and his band members incorporate “Western” styles and instruments (i.e., electric and acoustic guitars, synthesizers, tertial harmony, and new ways of performing *ingoma* best suited for the studio, to name a few). Third, his Christian re-contextualization of Rwandan traditional music is a way of expressing a new *ngoma*. As a majority of Rwandans affiliate themselves with Christianity (of various denominations), and even though not all might be “practicing” Christians (i.e., participating in public rites and rituals, reading scripture, praying, etc.), Christianity is, for better or worse, a hegemonic force in Rwandan culture.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, Samputu is not merely grafting Christian texts onto non-Christian musical styles, but maintaining those traditions through his performance. Much like the performers of *ingoma* carried on the traditions of the *ingabe* royal drums, Samputu maintains Rwandan traditional music through his Christian re-contextualizations, as they are reaching audiences outside of Rwanda and consequently garnering interest from those completely unaware of those traditions. In fact, this dissertation is proof of the success of Samputu’s work. And finally, Samputu’s mixture of all the different styles of Rwandan traditional music, as well as his messages of forgiveness, can be seen as a healing *ngoma* (which, while unrelated to Rwandan music, is a practice of the Taita people—as demonstrated by D.O. Akombo in his *Music and Healing across Cultures*—who use music to heal the sick). Also, through his continued use of Twa styles and genres, he attempts to bring awareness to the plight of the Twa, and to raise their social status. In a place where

¹⁹⁶ It is important to note that, despite the overwhelming majority of Rwandans associating with Christianity, there is a significant minority Muslim population in Rwanda, which would fall outside the hegemony of Christianity.

conflict is still capable of erupting at any moment, Samputu's life and music function as agents of healing and reconciliation.

In the following chapter, I will analyze not only how Samputu's *ngoma* applies to sounds and contexts found mostly in Rwanda, but also how he incorporates music from around the world, including East African gospel, Congolese *rumba/soukous*, and Caribbean *zouk* and *reggae*, as well as the languages associated with those cultures, regions, and nations.

Chapter 6: Samputu and East/Central Africa and the Caribbean

As Samputu has created a new *ngoma* through his Rwandan musical syncretism, part of that *ngoma* is how he connects with broader music cultures in East and Central Africa. In this chapter, I delineate the various ways Samputu's music relates sonically, lyrically, and contextually to East and Central Africa and the Caribbean. While there are significant geographical boundaries between Africa and the Caribbean, there is significant interplay between Caribbean musics (i.e., Afro-Cuban music—*son* and *rumba*, Jamaican music—*reggae* and *dancehall reggae*, and *zouk* from the West Indies) and East and Central Africa. This is not coincidental, and my assertion is not based on generalizations about African music and Trans-Atlantic slavery. It is the product of the retention of African aesthetics in the new world, the mediation of the record industry, and East and Central Africans' re-construction of various identities based on cosmopolitanism.

Rather than preface this chapter with a larger literature review and history of each genre, I will disperse them throughout the chapter as appropriate. Categorically, I will begin with Congolese and Afro-Cuban musics, as *rumba/soukous* is the most widespread and influential genre in the continent. I will then correlate *zouk* with East-African gospel music, as its rhythm is the basis for much of Samputu's gospel music output. And finally, reggae stands alone as one of the most influential genres to be accepted into the pan-African musical canon with little sonic change.

Afro-Cuban and Congolese Musics

The connection between Congolese and Afro-Cuban musics comprises three main facets: the slave trade, the record industry, and a desire for a new cosmopolitan identity by the Congolese that was not too “European.” Much has been discussed about the African elements of Cuban music (i.e., Alejo Carpintier’s 1946 monograph *Music in Cuba*, and a more music analytical approach in Larry Crook’s 1982 article “Musical Analysis of the Cuban Rumba” in *Latin American Music Review* to name a few early examples and Rob Maya’s more recent (2002) *Cuban music: From Son and Rumba to the Buena Vista Social Club and Timba Cubana*), as well as the transatlantic flows between Africa and black music in the Americas and the Caribbean by Paul Gilroy in his 1993 book *The Black Atlantic*. However, I will, for the purposes of this dissertation, focus on how Afro-Cuban music became so widespread in the then Belgian Congo, as well as why it likely became so popular there and throughout Africa.

Gary Stewart presents the most exhaustive monograph to date regarding Congolese music history in his *Rumba on the River: A History of Popular Music of the Two Congos* (2000), while Bob White’s *Rumba Rules: The Politics of Dance Music in Mobutu’s Zaire* (2008) focuses on the socio-political context of Congolese popular music and his wonderfully succinct (yet dense) article “Congolese Rumba and Other Cosmopolitanisms” (2002) in *Cahiers d’Études Africaines* synchronizes the two aforementioned volumes while focusing on the impact of Afro-Cuban music on Congolese music, which is most pertinent to this dissertation.

According to Stewart and White, the beginnings of Congolese Rumba began with the import of Afro-Cuban music known as *son* often mislabeled *rumba*. *Son*,

according to Stewart, “married African call-and-response singing, percussion, and thumb piano—the latter called *maribula* in Cuba—with an indigenous, guitar-like instrument of Spanish descent called the *tres*” (Stewart 2000:21). And by the time the first recordings of Sexteto Habenero made their way to Kinshasa in the 1930s on the G.V. record series (produced by His Masters Voice) “the band’s lineup featured string bass in place of the *maribula*, a guitar in tandem with the *tres*, hand drums, maracas, and *claves*,” and “this style, which the Congolese began to incorporate, also came to be known as ‘rumba’” (ibid.).¹⁹⁷ Further, Stewart notes that one of the most famous of these recordings “El Manicero” (The Peanut Vendor) by Don Azpiazu’s Orchestra “bore the description ‘Rumba Fox trot’ on its label...” (ibid.), but that even though many other releases were correctly labeled *son*, Stewart theorizes that the term *rumba* was preferred because *rumba* was more onomatopoeic “whose utterance seemed to command the hips to move” and the *son*, “to the French-speaking Congolese... simply mean the bland, generic word *sound*” (ibid., emphasis in original). However, it is likely due to a combination of Stewart’s notes on language and the sheer popularity of Azpiazu’s record.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ G.V. likely stood for Gramophone Victor, as His Master’s Voice gathered recordings from the English Gramophone Company and the American Victor Company (Stewart 2000:13).

G.V. records were popular throughout the African continent. Gary White quotes Christopher Waterman’s *Juju: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (1992) in explaining how G.V. records were equally as popular in West Africa: “If you have a G.V. record, and I’m living very near you, I’ll be expecting you to play that record in the morning, and I can because of that become your friend. I’ll be visiting you... I like your record, and we’ll drink beer and palmwine” (Waterman in White 2002:671).

¹⁹⁸ In the 1970s, “El Manicero” (spelled El Manisero) was a big hit for guitarist Fantastic Tchico Tchicaya. And while the link may well be invalid at some point after the publishing of this dissertation, the Congolese band O.K. Jazz playing “El Manicero” (date unknown) may be heard here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvW8nK8eixc>.

Regardless of *why* the term *rumba* became the norm, the genre became widely popular throughout the country and groups began to record their own versions in Lingala and French. The reason for this is likely because the Congolese at the time had a major distrust for the Belgians, but found themselves in the midst of modernity.

White argues:

Although Congolese found something strangely familiar in the imported Afro-Cuban music that was being played in the colonial cities of the Belgian Congo, and though this potentially liberating moment of self-identification represented a very real source of pleasure, I also think that Afro-Cuban music stood (and stands) for a particular brand of cosmopolitanism, one that was initially more accessible by virtue of the way it sounded. Despite its multiple influences and mediations, Afro-Cuban music was cosmopolitan without being European-or more accurately without being Belgian (White 2002:682).

It is likely that Rwandans, who were also colonized by the Belgians, connected with the Congolese recordings (which were disseminated via mass media—physical sales and radio—the latter of which being how most Rwandans encountered the music) and therefore would be the source for much early Rwandan popular music. This early style of Congolese *rumba* was the main source of inspiration for groups like Impala and Samputu's Nyampinga. In the late 1960s, groups began associating with a dance craze called *soukous*, which stems from the French verb *secouer* (to shake), which by the 1980s featured more virtuosic guitar parts and faster rhythms. It is likely this style that had the greatest impact on Samputu's later recordings.

Samputu's connection with Congolese music is mostly expressed in his "Rehema," "Aliokoka," and "Tuzagera," though much of the guitar work throughout all of his recordings reflect Congolese styles in one form or another. In this section, I have chosen to include two contrasting pieces that most demonstrate Samputu's

mixture of Rwandan and Congolese sounds: “Rehema,” because of its mixture of the Nkombo rhythm and Congolese guitar styles, and “Tuzagera” because it sounds much more like standard *soukous* than “Rehema.”

“Rehema”

“Rehema” is a song based on a true story of Samputu falling in love with a Muslim girl, in which he tells her that he will do anything, including convert to her religion, in order to gain her love. In the song, his Christian friends criticize his choice to pursue her because she is a Muslim. However, Samputu’s response is that he doesn’t care because, as he states, “love is more important than religion” (Samputu 2014f). There are several aspects of the song that are of great interest for the purpose of this study. First is the use of a variant of the rhythm found in the island of Nkombo (and surrounding areas) in the Cyangugu province of Northwest Rwanda, less than 1000 meters from the border of D.R. Congo (see Figure 6-1) on Lake Kivu. Nkombo Island is inhabited by a people whose culture is a mixture of Rwandan and Congolese and who speak mostly Amashi (likely a variant of the language spoken by the Shi of D.R. Congo), but also its related language, Amaavu. They have a unique culture situated in the middle between two distinct linguistic groups and geographical areas. Thus, the people of Nkombo reside in a liminal space and place, in which they have, for all intents and purposes, been marginalized in both countries. According to Nkombo resident Zeke Kwitonda, in an article in the *New Times Rwanda*, “Whenever we went to Kamembe for errands, we were referred to as Bashi, a tribe from Congo. Even Congolese referred to us as Rwandans” (Kamembe in Nakayima 2010).

Samputu was introduced to the Nkombo rhythm by his longtime bandmate “Chouchou,” who is from Cyangugu province. According Samputu, the dance, which he also incorporated into his live performances of “Rehema,” was extremely difficult for his future bandmates (Nyabenda and Nsengiyumva) to master (Samputu 2014d).¹⁹⁹ Samputu has travelled to the island on several occasions, once in 1983 with Nyampinga, and in 1986 with Ingeli.

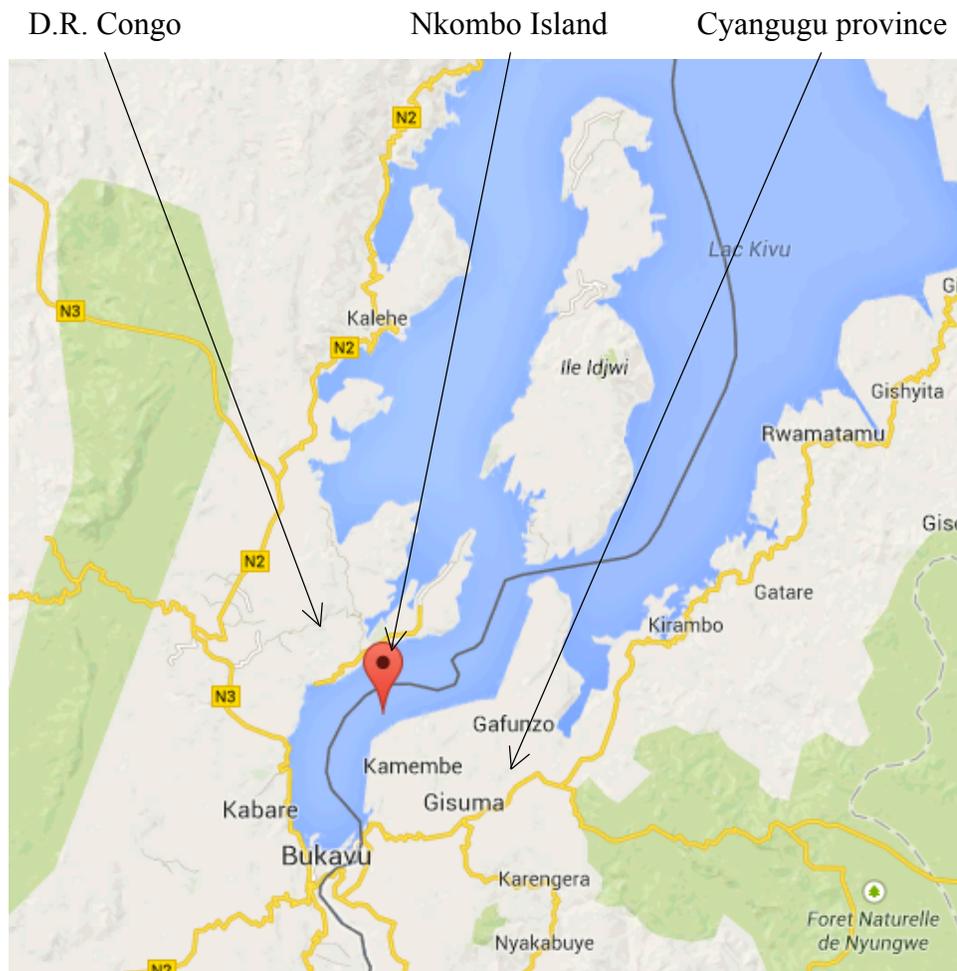


Figure 6-1. *Google Maps* screen capture of Nkombo Island in relation to Rwanda and D.R. Congo.

¹⁹⁹ A video of Samputu and Ingeli performing (singing, playing instruments, and dancing) “Rehema” live—with “Chouchou” on guitar and vocals—(beginning at 0:40) may be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8T6Tz7rqc8&feature=youtu.be>.

The Nkombo rhythm, according to Gansemans, is traditionally performed on a rattle known as *akanyuguri*, though it is known as *ikinyuguri* (the rattle used in *kumbandwa* rituals) in the rest of Rwanda. Gansemans states that, unlike the rest of Rwandans,

... ce sont les femmes qui jouent de leurs hochets *akanyuguri* pur rythmer leurs danses et chants. Pluôt que d'agiter le hochet de manière habituelle, elles le tiennent de la main droite par le manche naturel et le frappent contre la paume de la main gauche.

... the women play the *akanyuguri* rattles to accompany their dances and songs. [However], rather than shake the rattle the usual way, they take the right hand by the neck and hit it against the palm of the left hand. (Gansemans 1988:47: translation by author)²⁰⁰

which they likely learned to play from their Congolese relatives, the Havu and Shi (ibid.).²⁰¹ The traditional rhythm (see Figure 6-2) notated by Gansemans is much less syncopated than the rhythm Samputu uses in “Rehema” (see Figure 3-5), but there are also likely variants Gansemans was not exposed to.

Ile Nkombo (Inv. Enr. EM - MRAC 73.9.1/3)

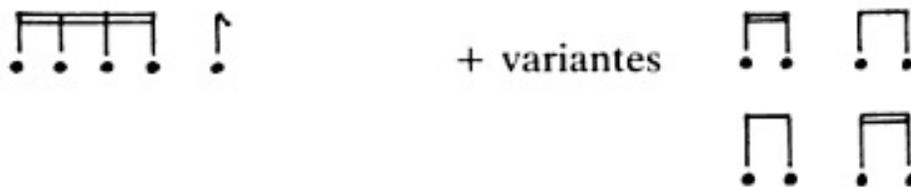


Figure 6-2. Scan of Gansemans’s transcription of Nkombo rhythm (ibid.:48).²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Also according to Gansemans, the *ikinyuguri* is one of the primary instruments used in the *kumbandwa* cults of Nyabingi and Lyangombe (DEKKMMA 2003e).

²⁰¹ In his book, Gansemans refers to the Shi and Haavu as Zaireans rather than D.R. Congo, as that is what the country was called at that time.

²⁰² A performance featuring this rhythm may be heard here: <http://music.africamuseum.be/recordings/MR.1973.9.1-1.mp3>.

Second is Samputu's use of ululation and whistle timbres. Samputu ululates by moving his tongue side to side in his mouth while simultaneously using his false vocal chords (falsetto) to produce a high frequency (usually higher than the normal male flow voice singing range of C5 or 523 Hz and higher). Visualizing ululation is challenging in that the tongue movement produces several frequencies simultaneously in proximity, which causes a psychoacoustic phenomenon known as beating, in which we are unable to perceive two close frequencies as separate pitches, and so perceive ("hear") the two frequencies as going in and out of phase with one another. In Samputu's ululation (which I recorded in person on my aforementioned Canon HD camera), he produces three close frequencies: the falsetto fundamental around 650 Hz or just flat of E5, and two other pitches created by the moving of his tongue around 622 Hz and 550 Hz. Due to this proximity of frequencies, the Blue Cat spectrogram (see Figure 6-3) is not detailed enough to give a proper visualization of the timbre, and thus I must use a Spear spectrogram (see Figure 6-4) with falsetto fundamental in red). In addition to the beating frequencies, another aspect of the timbre is that the overtones produced are not very dense, and only the first and second (barely) overtones are visible. And finally, there are breaks in the lowest frequency (see Figure 6-5), which occur as Samputu's tongue creates the lower frequency, but interrupts said frequency as it moves back and forth in the same way Samputu creates a yodel in his pygmy voice.

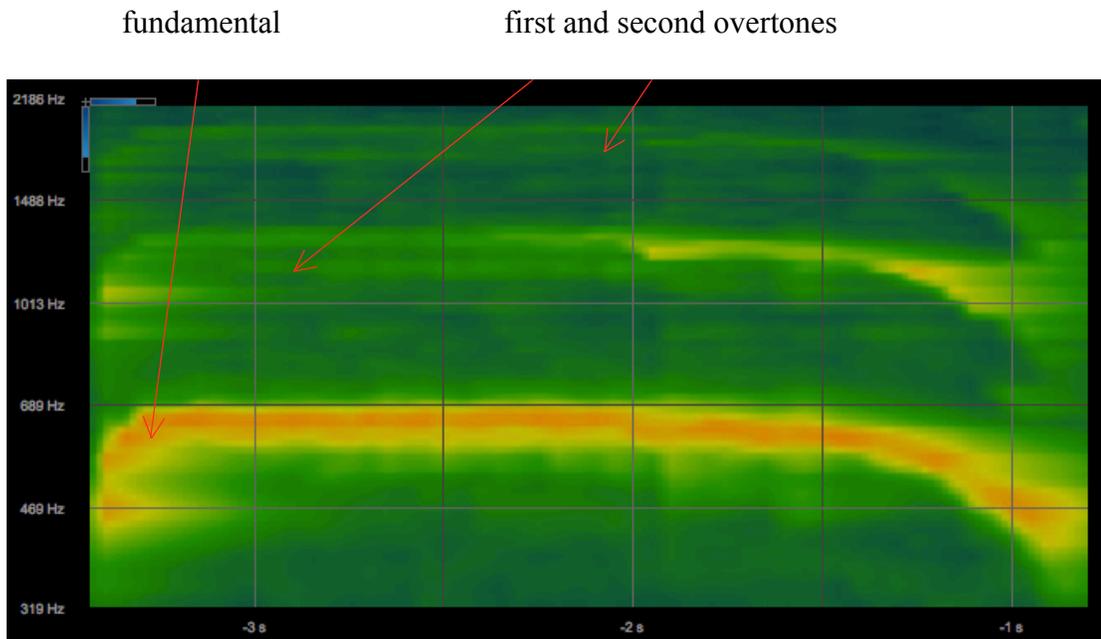


Figure 6-3. 2-D spectrogram of Samputu's ululation.

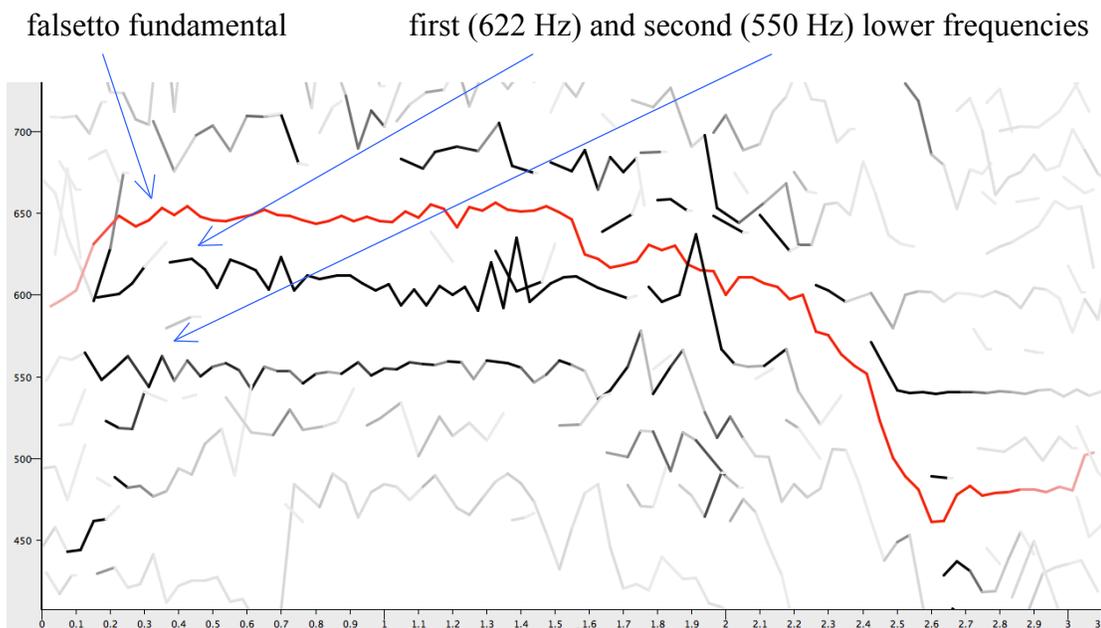


Figure 6-4. Spear spectrogram of the three main frequencies produced in Samputu's ululation.

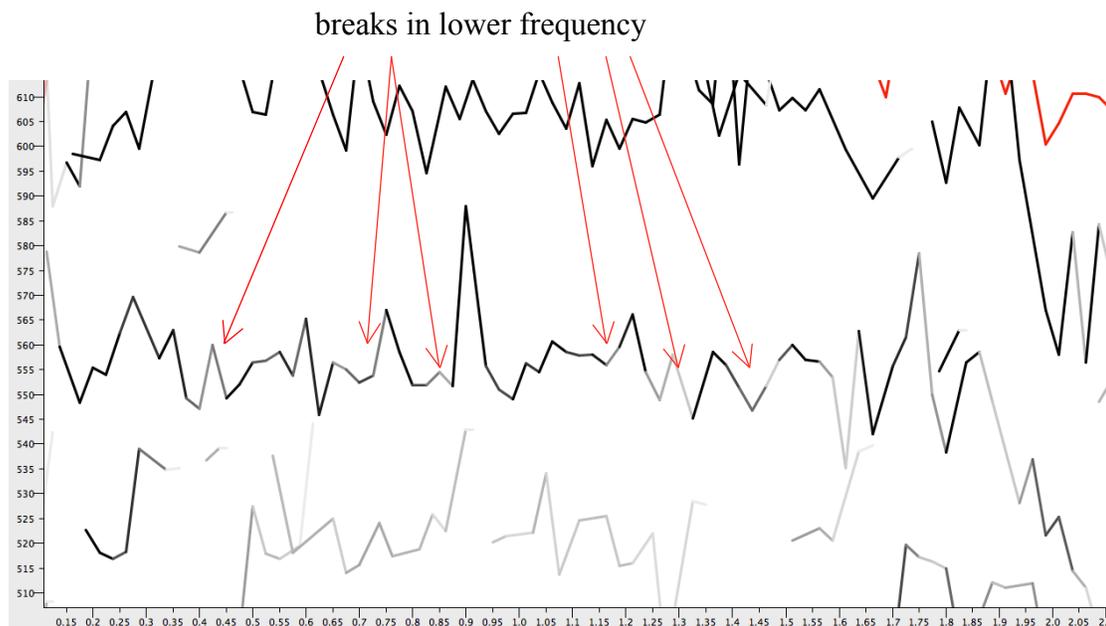


Figure 6-5. Zoomed in Spear spectrogram of Samputu's ululation marking the breaks in the lowest frequency.

The timbre of the whistle (in this case a typical referee type whistle with a small ball in the middle that serves as an oscillator), which according to Samputu is part of the traditional performance practice, has similar beating characteristics.²⁰³ Because I do not have access to the exact whistle Samputu used in the recording, I have used a sampled whistle from my Ensoniq KT-76 keyboard as a source. I am confident this is sufficient, as, other than the “fundamental,” nearly all whistles with balls serving as oscillators will give off the same type of timbral profile. Thus, likely the only thing that would change between my sampled whistle and the one used on the recording would be the fundamental pitch (in this case the whistle from the original recording (*Abaana*) alternates between C#7 or 2.21 kHz and F#7 or 2.96

²⁰³ The DEKKMMA website concurs with Samputu's statement and gives an example of someone playing a type of Western whistle, but there is no further information given about the recording. However, the audio file is available here: <http://music.africamuseum.be/instruments/sound/rwanda/73.9.9-3.mp3>.

kHz, whereas my sampled whistle is at B6 or 1.97 kHz).²⁰⁴ Having prefaced this, the beating effect produced by the whistle is similar to the ululation, but has four distinct (and seemingly equal) frequencies. Perceptually, I hear B6 most prominently, but both the Blue Cat (Figure 6-6) and Spear (Figure 6-7) spectrograms show equal density of “fundamentals” (two and six respectively). Thus, the three possible notes are Bb6 (1.82 and 1.87 kHz), B6 (1.94 and 2.0 kHz), B6/C7 (2.07 kHz) and C7 (2.1 kHz), though the Blue Cat spectrogram shows mostly Bb6 and B6 as having the greatest density. However, because the range is from Bb6 to C7, the perceived sound is a major second.

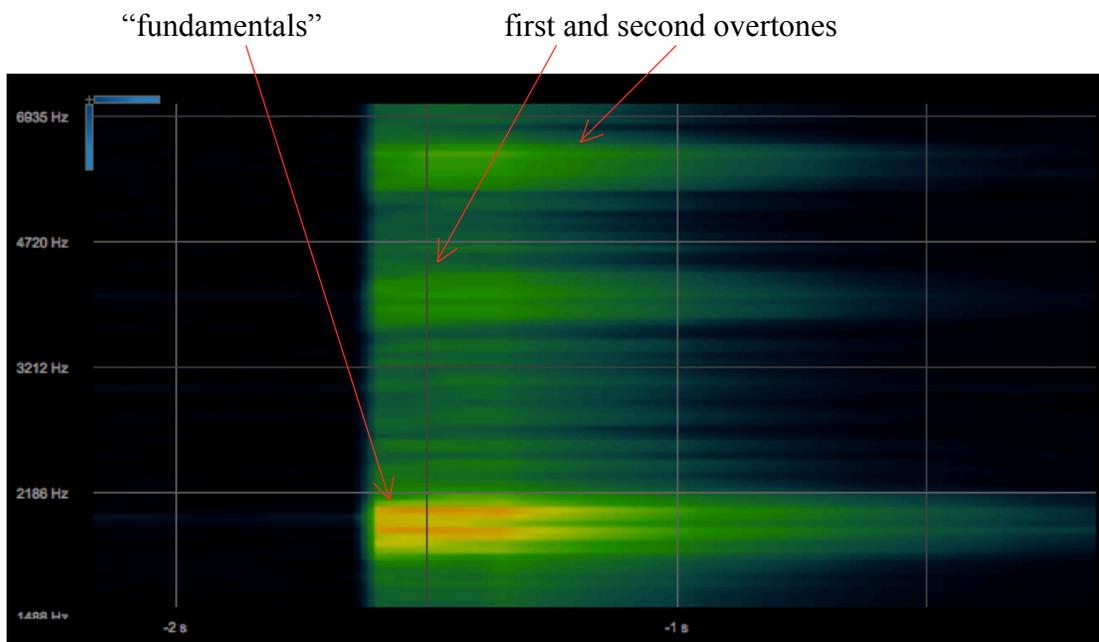


Figure 6-6. 2-D spectrogram of the whistle sound from the Ensoniq KT-76.

²⁰⁴ The whistle on the 2004 *Testimony From Rwanda* recording is around D7 or 2.35 kHz, though I also may merely perceive that because, as previously mentioned, whistles give off several “fundamentals.”

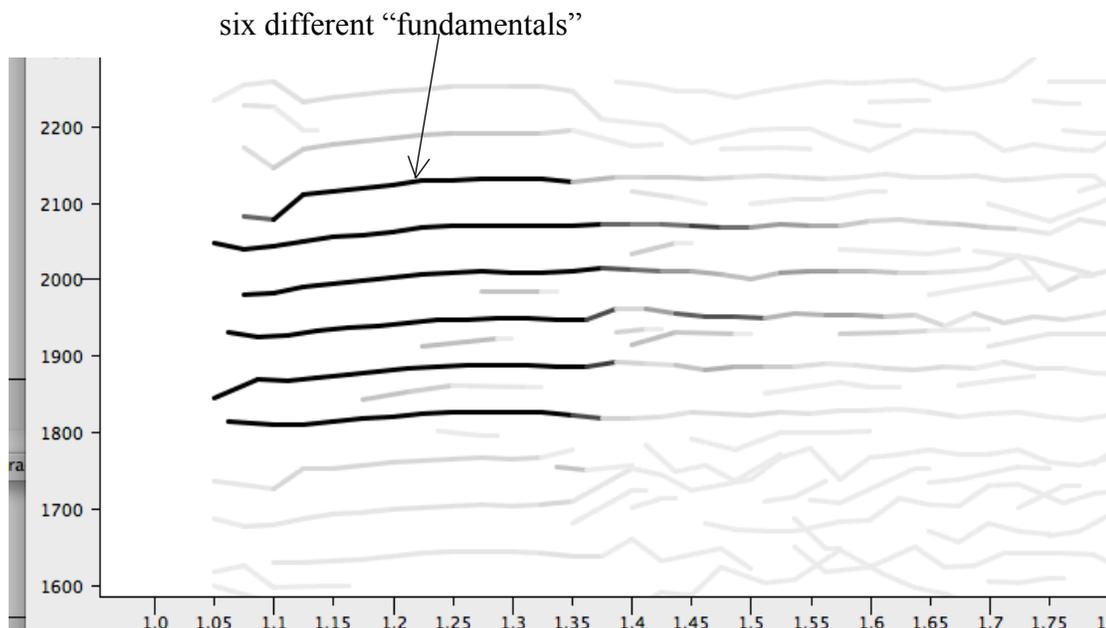


Figure 6-7. Spear spectrogram of the whistle sound from the Ensoniq KT-76.

A third point of interest is a comparison the *Abaana* and *Testimony from Rwanda* versions, as it will give the reader a sense of the “acoustic” nature of the recording (as discussed in Chapter Three) from the latter of the two. The most obvious contrast is in the instrumentation, as the *Abaana* recording has a significant number of electronic instruments (drum kit, percussion—bell, conga, and shaker—, electric piano, strings, and marimba) in addition to electric bass, electric guitar (distorted and clean), whistle, and voice, whereas *Testimony From Rwanda* has no electronic instruments at all, and only uses percussion (*djembe*, congas, shakers), acoustic and electric guitar (clean), whistle, and voice. Other differences are that the Nkombo rhythm is much more clearly defined, Nitunga plays more of a Congolese style guitar pattern, and Samputu employs ululation in the *Testimony from Rwanda* version. Similarities include the vocal timbre (though in the first recording Mickie Wine—brother of the famous Ugandan artist, Bobby Wine—sings the first verse, while in the second Samputu sings all of the parts in his *s* and *n* voices) and the form.

To reflect these differences, I have transcribed the introduction, first and third verses, and chorus of the *Abaana* recording into Staff notation (see Figure 6-8), while I have only included the introduction (which contains all of the contrasting instruments and styles) for the *Testimony* recording (see Figure 6-10). Transcribing these versions presents several challenges. First, because the whistle (used in both recordings) is perceived as a major second, I have chosen to write it as such (C#/B and F#/E in the *Abaana* version and E/D in the other). Second, I have chosen to use a trill symbol to represent the ululation in the *Testimony from Rwanda* (he actually employs three “fundamentals”—D, E, and G). Third, the electric piano part and strings are barely audible in most of the recording, so I have only transcribed the chords (with the exception of the string part in the third verse, which was clear). Fourth, similarly, the marimba and guitar parts of the chorus are not very distinct, so the notated parts may or not be “exact,” but they are certainly reflective of the style. Fifth, in the repeated sections, there are often variations in the bass and drum part (mostly fills) which I have chosen not to notate as they are performed in the same style as the rest of the piece. Finally, in the *Testimony* recording, I have not notated the doubling of the *djembe* part, as well as the sparse use of the bass tone (which happens later in the recording) on the first and second beats of the measure and on each dotted-eighth-note of the chorus similar to the kick drum in in the *Abaana* version.

Rehema

Samputu

Harmony

Lead

1. ye ye ye ye ye ye ye yi yi yi yooo.

Electric Guitar

distorted

Marimba

Strings

Electric Piano

Electric Bass

Whistle

Percussion

Drum Kit

crash cymbal

hi-hat

kick drum

snare

©1991 Samputu

The musical score for 'Rehema' is arranged for a band. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- H (Horn):** Three measures of whole rests.
- L (Lid):** Three measures of whole rests.
- E.Gtr. (Electric Guitar):** A melodic line starting with a 4-measure phrase, followed by a 4-measure phrase with a 'full' dynamic marking.
- Mrb. (Maracas):** Three measures of whole rests.
- Str. (Strings):** Three measures of whole rests.
- E. Pno. (Electric Piano):** Three measures of whole rests.
- E.B. (Electric Bass):** A bass line starting with a 4-measure phrase, followed by a 4-measure phrase.
- W. (Winds):** Three measures of whole rests.
- Perc. (Percussion):** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and rests.
- D.K. (Drum Kit):** A drum pattern with 'x' marks indicating cymbal hits.

The guitar chords for the Electric Guitar part are: D, A, Bm, A, D, A.

Verse 1

H

L

1. Ba - gam - ba sis - o - bo - ra kua - ssa Re - he - ma, ry -

E.Gtr.

Mrb.

Str.

G D A Bm A

E. Pno.

E.B.

W.

Perc

D.K.

10

H

L

o ku-ba si-ri Mus-il - a - mo. Na - ye ur - wo mu-kwa-no ng-we-

10

E.Gtr.

10

Mrb.

10

Str.

D A G D A

10

E. Pno.

10

E.B.

10

W.

10

Perc

10

D.K.

13

H

L

ne-ne-ri - Re-he-ma, ng-ya kucyu-sa e - di-ni mut-w - le. _____

E.Gtr.

Mrb.

Str.

B m A D A G

E. Pno.

E.B.

W.

Perc

D.K.

16

H

L

Ngai pe na ndi-mi po - na bo-lin-go na - ko - ta mos - que ___ mpon-a ___

E.Gtr.

Mrb.

Str.

D A Bm A D A

E. Pno.

E.B.

W.

Perc

D.K.

Chorus

19
H
L
— ye. — Ye - we Re - he - ma. ku - jya Re - he - ma ka -

19
E.Gtr.
19
Mrb.
19
Str.
G D A D A
19
E. Pno.
19
E.B.
19
W.
19
Perc
19
D.K.

22

H

L

ri - bu - ya - n - gu ni kew - li zee ma - nen - o ya — ma - pen - zi.

E.Gtr.

Mrb.

Str.

D A D A G A G

E. Pno.

E.B.

W.

Perc

D.K.

Verse 3

The musical score for Verse 3 of 'Rehema' is arranged for a full band. It features ten staves: H (Horn), L (Lid), E.Gtr. (Electric Guitar), Mrb. (Maracas), Str. (Strings), E. Pno. (Electric Piano), E.B. (Electric Bass), W. (Winds), Perc. (Percussion), and D.K. (Drum Kit). The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins at measure 25. The vocal line (H and L) has lyrics: 'Ngwi - no Re - hema u - san - ge - Rehe - ma'. The electric guitar (E.Gtr.) plays a simple chordal accompaniment. The strings (Str.) play a rhythmic pattern with chords A, D, A, Bm, and A. The electric piano (E. Pno.) and electric bass (E.B.) provide harmonic support. The percussion (Perc.) and drum kit (D.K.) play a steady, rhythmic accompaniment.

H

L

E.Gtr.

Mrb.

Str.

E. Pno.

E.B.

W.

Perc

D.K.

Ngwi - no Re - hema u - san - ge - Rehe - ma

A D A Bm A

10 Rehema

H
L
E.Gtr.
Mrb.
Str.
E. Pno.
E.B.
W.
Perc
D.K.

ngwi-no se ru - go - li - rwe-ra. ngwi-no-se bwi - za bwange.

D A G D A G

Figure 6-8. Transcription of “Rehema” as heard on *Abaana*.

In the *Abaana* version, the percussion parts consist of three distinct sections: the introduction, verse, and chorus. In the introduction (measures one through eight), the percussion, after the opening measure one “fill,” performs (including the whistle and parts of the drum kit—snare, toms, and crash cymbal) a polyphonic ostinato (with the exception of the the whistle, which does not perform a consistent, repeatable pattern). The accents of the Nkombo rhythm, as notated in Figure 3-5, are not present

in any one voice, but are interspersed throughout the instruments. With the exception of the shaker and bell, most of the instruments play syncopated parts. In the verses (measures nine through thirteen and twenty-five through twenty-seven), the drum kit takes on most of the duties where the Nkombo rhythm is slightly more present, but the rhythm is still distributed between the drum kit and hi-hat. In the chorus (measures fourteen through twenty-four), the rhythm changes to a heimiola with the bass drum distinctly playing a quadruple pattern (notated in dotted-eighth notes), but the Nkombo rhythm accents are interspersed between the kick and snare. Additionally, the first set of sixteenth notes, as notated in Figure 3-5, is absent. Of note is the rhythm in the last two measures of the chorus (twenty and twenty-one), in which the accents distinctly link up with the choreography as seen in the aforementioned 1991 performance in Burundi.

Regarding the electric guitar, there are three distinct parts: the legato solo with distortion effect in the beginning and the distorted muted pattern (performed simultaneously with the *marimba*), and a musical interlude with two guitarists playing in parallel thirds. He reprises the distorted guitar for a solo later in the song (not notated). The guitar and marimba parts on the chorus resemble an interlocking *ikembe* and/or Congolese guitar style used in *soukous*. However, the Congolese (and Iberian by extension) style is most evident in the interlude when the guitars play melodies in parallel thirds (see Figure 6-9). The bass player alternates between contrapuntal parts (evident by distinct melodic material—both outlining the harmony and connecting melodies—in the introduction and verses and landing on the third and fifth on the strong beats throughout) and rhythmic support for the chorus (doubling the

percussion rhythms). And as previously mentioned, the electric piano plays mostly block chords through the I-V-vi-I-V-IV progression in the verses and the I-V-I-V-I-V-I-V-IV-V-IV pattern in the chorus.

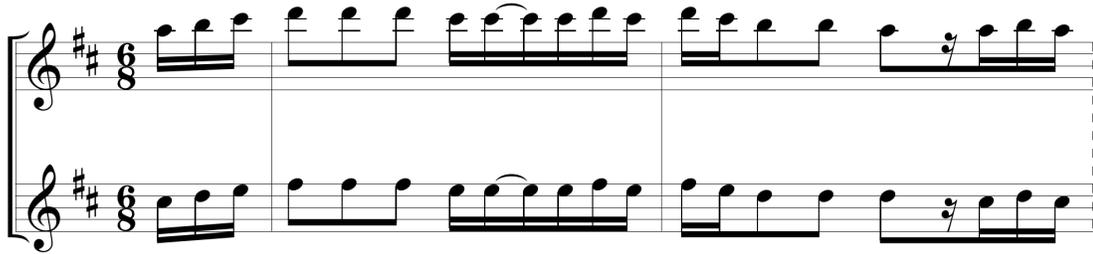


Figure 6-9. Transcription of Congolese style guitar solo in “Rehema” as heard on *Abanna*.

The vocals, which are composed of mostly short, descending phrases (resembling Rwandan styles), are sung in mostly tertiary harmony (resembling the Congolese style of singing) with only one aspect of Rwandan quartal harmony in measures thirty-one and thirty-two. In terms of range, the first verse is sung in a low baritone (by Micky Wine), whereas the second part of verse one, and the second and third verses are sung by Samputu in the tenor range. The harmony for the first verse is higher than the melody, which is reversed for the second half of that verse. The second verse contains no vocal harmony, while the third verse features the aforementioned quartal harmony in the last two measures. Because the melodies of the third and fourth verses are similar, I have only included the fourth verse in the transcription.

The lyrics are in Luganda (first verse), Lingala (end of first verse), Kinyarwanda (second and third verses), and KiSwahili (chorus), a combination which represents much of what Samputu has attempted to do throughout his career: bring

together several musical elements from different cultures that are related to one another. The lyrics are as follows:

“Rehema”

Verse One (Luganda)

- (1) *Bagamba sisobora kuassa Rehema ryo kuba siri Musilamu,*
Some say that I cannot marry Rehema because I am not a Muslim,
- (2) *Naye urwo mukwano ngweneneri Rehema ngya kucyusa edini.*
But I will change my religion so we can be together.

(Lingala)

- (3) *Ngai pe ndimi pona bolingo nakota mosque mopona ye.*
I will enter the mosque to be with her.

Chorus (KiSwahili)

- (4) *Yewe Rehema, kuiya Rehema, karibu yangu ni kweli zee maneno ya mapenzi.*
Oh Rehema, come to me Rehema, come close to me so I may speak to you words of love.

Verse Two (Kinyarwanda)

- (5) *Rehema rwose ko twuzuye kera ngwino se rugoli rwera.*
Rehema I've loved you for such a long time, please come close to me.
- (6) *Nzemera rwose iye mpindure idini ariko mbane nawe.*
I will even change my religion so we can be together.

Chorus

Verse Three (Kinyarwanda)

- (6) *Ngwino Rehema, usange Rehema, ngwino se rugoli rwera.*
Come Rehema, join with me Rehema, come let us be together.
- (7) *Ngwino Rehema, usange Rehema, ngwino se bwiza bwange.*
Come Rehema, join with me Rehema, come quickly my beauty. (Samputu 1990)

Samputu mentioned that part of the reason he sang in so many languages is that he wanted to impress Rehema by professing his love to her in many languages.

Additionally, the lyrics reflect the interconnectedness of Uganda, Rwanda, and Congo, as well as Samputu's belief that love transcends all boundaries.

As previously mentioned, the Nkombo rhythm is much clearer (except the fourth accent found in beat four) in the *Testimony from Rwanda* version, as it is accented by conga slaps and tones as well as dynamics on the *djembe* (which mostly plays slaps in the beginning, but then tone and bass tones) in the first part of the measure. The syncopated octave guitar patterns beginning in measure five, as well as the tremelo picking (measures two and three) and sliding at the end of melodies (measures three and six), are prototypical *soukous* guitar licks.²⁰⁵ The acoustic guitar (as notated in measure nine) is an emulation of the syncopated *soukous* interlocking electric guitar styles. Also present in this recording is his use of ululation beginning in measure one, which I have addressed by notating all three of the notes perceived.

²⁰⁵ It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to name the likely hundreds of recordings in which those licks are present, but Kanda Bongo Man's "Liza" from his *Soukous in Central Park* (1993) is one.

Samputu
Samputu and Nitunga

ululation

Harmony

Electric Guitar

Acoustic Guitar

Whistle

Shaker

Percussion

djembe slap

conga slap

conga high

conga low

H

E.Gtr.

Ac.Gtr.

Whte.

Shkr.

Perc.

djembe tone

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Detailed description: This musical score is for the piece 'Samputu' by Samputu and Nitunga. It is written in 6/8 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes staves for Harmony, Electric Guitar, Acoustic Guitar, Whistle, Shaker, and Percussion. The Harmony part features a melodic line with a 'ululation' annotation. The Percussion part includes 'djembe slap', 'conga slap', 'conga high', and 'conga low' patterns. The second system includes staves for Horn (H), Electric Guitar (E.Gtr.), Acoustic Guitar (Ac.Gtr.), Whistle (Whte.), Shaker (Shkr.), and Percussion (Perc.). The Horn part has a melodic line with a '5' fingering. The Electric Guitar part has a rhythmic pattern. The Percussion part includes a 'djembe tone' annotation. The copyright notice '©2004 Samputu' is located at the bottom of the second system.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Rehema" in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score is divided into five staves: E.Gtr., Ac.Gtr., Whte., Shkr., and Perc. Each staff begins with a measure number '8'. The E.Gtr. part has a melodic line with eighth notes. The Ac.Gtr. part provides harmonic support with chords and eighth notes. The Whte. part features a melodic line with eighth notes and rests. The Shkr. part consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents. The Perc. part includes a djembe bass line with eighth notes and rests, indicated by an arrow and the label "djembe bass".

Figure 6-10. Transcription of “Rehema” as heard on *Testimony from Rwanda*.

The melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and lyrical content of “Rehema” resides in the liminal space between Congolese and Rwandan (and, linguistically speaking, Ugandan) cultures. It is a lens through which we can view the in-between reality of living in Western Rwanda, and Eastern Congo. As artificial geo-political boundaries in Africa have obfuscated which culture belongs to which country or nation, “Rehema” breaks down those boundaries in order that we understand how closely linked the cultures are. Yet, it simultaneously celebrates their differences without losing the distinctiveness of each.

“Tuzagera”

While “Rehema” certainly shares several musical characteristics with *soukous*, the compound-quadruple meter found in Nkombo rhythm is an exception rather than the norm in Congolese popular music. The vast majority of *soukous* songs are distinctly perceived in simple-quadruple meter (or simple-duple), even though

there is a significant use of hemiola in a way similar to Afro-Cuban music (or African music in general). These songs are usually rooted in one of the two clave patterns found in Afro-Cuban music: the *son* and *rumba* claves (see Figure 6-11). However, unlike its Caribbean counterpart (in which *son* is distinctly more Iberian, and *rumba* more African instrumentally and structurally), *soukous* composers and performers do not seem to make any distinction between the two. Thus, this adaptation of Cuban music is a reflection of the “sound” being more important than the context (other than both cultures connect via the Africanness of the musical styles). However, because there is no use of the *claves* (instrument) in the introduction of the piece as you would find in Afro-Cuban music, the clave part is embedded in either the percussion or the guitar (see Figure 6-12). In the case of “Tuzagera,” the guitar is the marker of the clave, which is distinctly in the *rumba* style.



Figure 6-11. Transcription of the *son* and *rumba* claves.

*not in recording

*Clave

Guitar

Bass

Perc.

side click

djembe bass djembe slap djembe tone

Figure 6-12. Transcription of “Tuzagera” instrumental section as heard in *Testimony from Rwanda*.

“Tuzagera” is an “acoustic” version of a *soukous* song with Christian lyrics. While using Christian lyrics with Congolese music is a norm throughout East Africa, the stripped-down instrumentation (*djembe*, side-clicks, acoustic guitar, bass guitar, electric guitar, and voice) is a departure from the three to four electric guitars, drum set, congas, maracas, electric bass, and keyboards (not to mention dancers) found on stage for a *soukous* concert. The *djembe* bears a responsibility for the majority of the rhythmic foundation through bass, slap, and tone strokes, and is different than typical *soukous* rhythms, as it is more syncopated—as is found in traditional Cuban *rumba* drumming. The most regular (one eighth followed by two sixteenths) is performed with sticks on the side of a drum (I’m not entirely sure which drum, though I believe it is a conga, as they are used in other parts of the album, and due to the laces—used for tuning—on the *djembe*, it is difficult to get that same type of sound). The bass and electric guitar patterns are typical of those found in *soukous*, though the guitar uses Rwandan quartal harmony at times, whereas in *soukous* the guitar parts are mostly in

thirds. And the acoustic guitar (not notated), like the *djembe*, attempts to cover the rhythmic foundation usually played by at least more than one electric guitar in *soukous*. The chord progression (I-IV-V-IV) is also typical of soukous styles.

The structure of “Tuzagera” (see Figure 6-13) is also different from “Rehema” in that it follows the typical short call-and-response sections found in *rumba*, often referred to as the *montuno* sections. This section is characterized by a solo line followed by a response in tertiary harmony. However, in this case it is a lining out rather than a call-and-response, as the “harmony” lines are the exact melody as the lead voice. Additionally, the harmonic content contains both tertiary and Rwandan quartal harmony (which is also present in the electric guitar part in Figure 6-12). Lyrically, Samputu calls out several lines (one, as notated is “*Aiye aiye mana, tuzagera iwawe ryare,*” which means “Oh Lord, when are we going to your place [heaven] to praise you?”; Samputu 2004b), all of which are about asking God when we will get to worship him through singing and dancing in heaven for all eternity.

Lead

Ai-ye ai-ye ma - na — tu - za - ge - ra i - wa - we rya - re. —

H. 1

Ai-ye ai-ye ma - na

H. 2

4

tu - za - ge - ra i - wa - we rya - re. —

Figure 6-13. Transcription of the vocal lines in “Tuzagera” as heard in *Testimony from Rwanda*.

Through the study of “Rehema” and “Tuzagera” I have fleshed out the interconnectedness of Rwandan and Congolese cultures, and the impact of Caribbean music on those music cultures. In “Rehema,” Samputu’s use of the Nkombo rhythm reflects the liminal space in which the Shi and Haavu reside, and also shows how, while they have their own languages more related to those found in the D.R. Congo, these two groups are still distinctly Rwandan. And both “Rehema” and “Tuzagera” contain Congolese *rumba/soukous* guitar styles, which are rooted in Cuban rhythms (clave) and tertiary harmony. Further, Samputu performs “Tuzagera” in a Congolese quadruple meter rhythm with vocal call and response that also has its base in Cuban *son* and *rumba*.

As we move forward to other parts of East Africa, Samputu’s incorporation of Congolese styles into his musical repertoire is an archetype for how East Africans

have also blended their own musics with Congolese and other Caribbean-based styles. I also describe how Kenyan culture constructed gospel as their national music, in part as a reaction against the Congolese musical hegemony in the region.

East Africa and the West Indies

In this section, the East African countries I focus on are Kenya and Uganda, though Tanzania and Burundi are also implied. The connection with the West Indies is through the proliferation of *zouk*, which has, like Congolese music, entered into the pan-African popular music canon. The Samputu pieces that most fit this category are: the gospel hits “Karibu Mungu” and “Nimuze Tubyine”; the *zouk*-style song “Ange Noir”; and “Abaana,” which is a mixture of Ugandan and Rwandan styles. “Karibu Mungu” best represents the essence of Samputu’s connection with East Africa and the West Indies as it is gospel song with a *zouk* beat, and “Abaana” is a very interesting mixture which features the little-used instrument from Uganda and Rwanda known as the *iningidi*.

East African Gospel and Zouk

As Jean Kidula states in several publications (i.e., her dissertation “‘Sing and Shine’: Religious Popular Music in Kenya,” and her 2000 article in *Ethnomusicology* “Polishing the Luster of the Stars: Music Professionalism Made Workable in Kenya”), gospel music is the national music of Kenya. And because Kenya has a strong economic presence in East Africa, as well as one of the most structured and thriving music industries in the region, Kenyan gospel has become a pan-East African music. The selection of gospel as a national music stems from a variety of factors.

The primary impetus was a governmental push towards creating a national music that

would compete with Congolese and Tanzanian popular musics: especially, a genre that would link up with the Swahilization of the country after independence in the 1960s. However, the traditional music of the Kikuyu ethnic majority was “too difficult to adapt to modern urban popular formats for national consumption” (Kidula 2000:411). And while the Luya and Luo traditional musics were more “easily accommodated” (ibid.) to European styles, there were still linguistic barriers to cross as they were (and still are) minorities in the country. Kidula describes this development:

Ultimately, Kenyan ethnic and indigenous music articulated specific Cultural and folk identity as well as portraying national diversity rather than unity. Radio stations and boosters around the country designated hours of popular music from their respective regions. No music was seen as representing the national unit called Kenya. There was a need for a genre, preferably in Swahili language, disassociated from the Congolese expression, and with a neutral regional, social, and political position. Multi-nationals were looking for a secular product. The Kenyan public decided on a Christian religious product. (Ibid.)

Kidula further states that gospel caught on because the *makwaya* (or *kwaya* for short—as mentioned in the previous chapter) was seen as part of European hegemony, and lacked “indigenous idioms, proverbs, and metaphors” (ibid.:412). And what likely solidified the genre was the popularity of the television show dedicated to gospel music called *Sing and Shine*. This show promoted gospel acts who, in various ways, were able to connect with Kenya’s diverse audience. It is precisely this adoption of gospel as a national music, along with Samputu's own newfound Christian faith, that inspired him to compose “Karibu Mungu” in KiSwahili. However, before we delve into the sonic and lyrical details of this song, it is imperative to view its transnational rhythmic basis: *zouk* from the West Indies.

According to Jocelyn Guilbault (with contributions from Gage Averil, Edouard Benoit, and Gregory Rabess) in her 1993 book *Zouk: World Music in the West Indies*, *zouk* (stemming from the Creole term for “party”) is dance music which originated in Martinique, but also developed in other Caribbean nations such as Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, and Dominica (Gilbault et al. 1993:xv) and was made popular internationally by the group Kassav. Musically, it is a mixture of Guadelupean *biguine*, Haitian *compas*, and Dominican *cadence-lypso* popular musics and other indigenous traditional music. Guilbault states that:

Zouk features in the foreground the skeleton of Antillean music: a rhythm played on the snare drum, normally with a rim shot, producing a sound similar to that of the traditional instrument, the *tibwa*. Played alone, however, as accomplished musicians have pointed out, this rhythm can be connected to several musical genres such as biguine, merengue, compas direct (cadence-rampa, cadence-lypso, guagancó, and danzon.... zouk, in the manner of Kassav, files off differences, that is, features elements that are common to many musics, instead of focusing on what distinguishes them. In the words of Martinican communication specials Yv-Mari Séraline, “Zouk makes itself universal thanks to its rhythm configuration” (Ibid.:132).

Thus, because of its chameleonesque rhythmic pattern, *zouk* became adaptable to a variety of musical contexts. As we can see in Figure 6-14, Guilbault demonstrates all of the different rhythms associated with *zouk*. And in Figure 6-15, we can see how many of these rhythms are part of a typical *zouk* beat.

Ex. 12 Different Caribbean dance rhythms to which zouk connects
(basic patterns only).

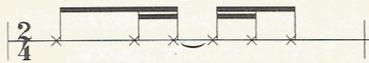
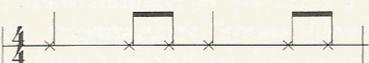
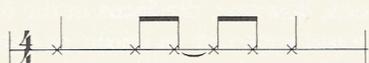
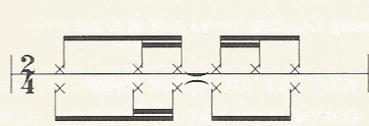
Biguine		Maracas
Merengue		Guira
Compas direct		Cymbal and kata
Cadence-lypso		High hat
Guaguancó		Tumbador
Danzon		Tom medium
Zouk		Calabash High hat

Figure 6-14. Transcription of rhythms related to *zouk* (ibid.).

Ex. 13 The rhythmic foundation of zouk.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of eight staves. The parts are as follows:

- Claps (optional):** A simple pattern of two eighth notes followed by a quarter rest, repeated in the first and third measures.
- Calabash:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.
- Conga*:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.
- Snare drum*:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.
- High hat:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.
- Tombas:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.
- Rim shot:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.
- Bass drum:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.

Below the main score, there are alternative patterns for the Conga and Snare drum:

- Conga:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.
- Conga 1:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.
- Conga 2:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.
- Snare drum:** A rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents, repeated in the first and third measures.

Figure 6-15. “The rhythmic foundation for *zouk*” (ibid.:133).

The genre has been accepted in different ways depending on the location. Gilbault states “According to Rabess ...zouk is welcome because it is said to have saved the country from being ‘taken over’ by reggae and calypso and to have reinforced the use of Creole and Creoleness of the people in Dominica” (ibid.:111). In East Africa, *zouk*, unlike reggae, is primarily associated with the rhythm rather than any socio-political baggage it may carry. As far as I know, there is no thorough

research regarding *zouk*'s popularity in East Africa, but, at the risk of sounding essentialist, its popularity likely stems from it being different enough from African popular musics (i.e., *soukous*, *highlife*, *palmwine*, etc.) but also similar enough to said musics to become accepted as "African." Therefore, it is not surprising that there are a plethora of artists in East Africa who use *zouk* as the fundamental basis for their songs. However, many of the songs East Africans label as *zouk* have relatively few sonic characteristics in common with the Kassav style, but more of a mixture of (more electronic) *zouk* that developed in the 1990s (i.e., Zouk Machine) and other variants of *zouk* (i.e., *zouk love* and *ragga zouk*) with Congolese styles. This is especially true of Samputu's "Karibu Mungu."

"Karibu Mungu"

"Karibu Mungu" is an East African gospel song (sung in Swahili) with a *zouk*-style beat, but also incorporates elements of *ragga-zouk*, which is a genre of Jamaican-influenced *zouk* (essentially a mixture of dancehall reggae and electronic *zouk*). The vocals are accompanied by electronic instrumentation including drums, percussion (tambourine and claves), rez bass (which is created by sending a sawtooth wave through a voltage-controlled filter—VCF), nylon-stringed guitar, brass, and strings. Most of the song is sung solely by Samputu (with doubled voice), but it also contains a female vocal harmony part (in the second chorus) and a dancehall reggae-like bridge.²⁰⁶

The rhythm in the first few measures (see Figure 6-16) is a typical *zouk* rhythm in the (cross-stick) snare (though it is also the same as *cadence-lypso* as in

²⁰⁶ Unfortunately, Samputu cannot recall the singer's name.

Figure 6-14) and kick drum (as in Figure 6-15), but the tambourine beating on two and four is completely different from anything “typically” *zouk*. After the V chord pedal introduction, the drums (measure five) change to a different beat with the kick and hi-hat carrying the the typical *zouk* rhythm (though the sixteenths at the beginning of the measure are more typical of post-1990s *zouk*), but the (rim-shot) snare more resembles a dancehall reggae (close to the Shabba Ranks’s *dembow riddim*) rhythm by not playing beats one or three, as does the hi-hat by playing sixteenths at the beginning of the first part of the measure (though it quickly returns to the typical *zouk* pattern found in Figure 6-15) (Marshall 2008:141). And in addition to the non-*zouk* tambourine part, there is a sixteenth note figure in the claves at the beginning of each measure, which is very atypical of *zouk*, and even other East African gospel songs.

The bass part in the introduction is not typical of *zouk*, because it accentuates the downbeats. But the syncopated aspects of the bass are very similar to the way the bass is used in *soukous*. The brass and strings solo in the beginning is very typical of East African gospel in the use of electronic timbres, along with the tertial harmony beginning in measure five. In contrast, the choice of parallel fifths in measure four is reflective of Rwandan quartal (quintal in this case) harmony; however, as we will discuss with “Abaana,” in the next section, this is also a typical Ugandan *amadinda* performance practice. Finally, after the V chord pedal figure in the first four measures, the consonant I-ii-IV-V progression (played mostly on the synth pad, but also outlined in the melodies of bass and brass and strings) is stereotypical East African gospel.

Score

Karibu Mungu

Samputu

Musical score for Karibu Mungu, measures 1-2. The score is in 4/4 time and G major. The instruments are Synth Pad, Synth Brass/Strings, Electric Bass, Percussion, and Drum Set. The Synth Pad part is silent. The Synth Brass/Strings part plays a melodic line. The Electric Bass part plays a bass line. The Percussion part plays a rhythmic pattern. The Drum Set part plays a steady beat.

Musical score for Karibu Mungu, measures 3-4. The score is in 4/4 time and G major. The instruments are Pad, Synth, E.B., Perc., and D. S. The Pad part is silent. The Synth part plays a melodic line. The E.B. part plays a bass line. The Perc. part plays a rhythmic pattern. The D. S. part plays a steady beat.

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2 Karibu Mungu

G Am C D G Am

The musical score for 'Karibu Mungu' is presented in a multi-staff format. The top staff is a treble clef staff labeled 'Pad' with a key signature of one sharp (F#). Above this staff, the chords G, Am, C, D, G, and Am are indicated. The second staff is a treble clef staff labeled 'Synth' with a key signature of one sharp, featuring a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff is a bass clef staff labeled 'E.B.' with a key signature of one sharp, providing a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The fourth staff is a percussion staff labeled 'Perc.' with a key signature of one sharp, showing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The fifth staff is a double bass clef staff labeled 'D. S.' with a key signature of one sharp, showing a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 6, with chords G, Am, C, D, G, and Am. The second system covers measures 7 through 8, with chords C and D. The 'Pad' staff in the second system is mostly empty, while the other staves continue their respective parts.

Figure 6-16. Transcription of “Karibu Mungu” as heard on *Abaana*.

Lyrically, the song is based on the KiSwahili hymn “Karibu Na Wewe,” which is a translation of the nineteenth-century hymn “Nearer, My God To Thee,” by Sarah F. Adams (though the KiSwahili lyrics are very different from the original).²⁰⁷

Samputu was inspired to write this song on the Africa Prayer Mountain in Uganda,

²⁰⁷ The original lyrics may be viewed here: <http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/n/m/nmgthee.htm>.

where he had been reading a hymnal in KiSwahili. While “Karibu Mungu” is very different from the original hymn sonically, it shares many of the same words (depending on the source) as the translated hymn in Swahili (I don’t have access to a KiSwahili hymnal, so my statement is reliant on websites and audio recordings). In at least one case, it is exactly the same.²⁰⁸ However, the aforementioned bridge in Luganda in Samputu’s song is completely original. The lyrics to Samputu’s version are as follows:

“Karibu Mungu”

Chorus

- (1) *Karibu mungu wangu karibu na wewe, karibu zaidi Baba yangu*
Come nearer My God, I want to be near you, very close to you my Father.
- (2) *Siku zote niwe karibu na wewe, karibu zaidi mungu wangu.*
Closer to you always, very close to you my Father.

Verse One

- (3) *Mimi nasafiri apa duniani, pa kupumzika sipaoni.*
I’ve traveled this world, but I haven’t found rest.
- (4) *Nilalapo niew karibu na wewe, karibu zaidi Baba yangu.*
When I sleep, be closer to me, very close to you my Father.

Chorus

Bridge

- (5) *Katonda wange jyangu ubere na nge buri runaku buri kiro*
My God, come and be with me every day and every night.
- (6) *Mu kitagara ckange mu kubu ryange kabere na nge buri kasera*
Around me and everywhere, be with me.

Verse Two

- (7) *Yote unipayo yanivuta pa kukalibiya*
All you provide me with draws me near you
- (8) *Nitapata na nielekezwe pamoja na wewe karibu zaidi mungu wangu.*

²⁰⁸ <http://kinet.org/tenzi-za-rohoni-129/>.

I will find you and will be guided by you, very close to you my Father.

Chorus

Verse Three

(9) *Na kwa nguvu zangu nikusifu mwamba uwe maji wa wokovu*
For you are my rock, the strength of my salvation.

(9) *Mashakani niwe karibu na wewe karibu, karibu zaidi mungu wangu*
Even in trouble let me be near you, very close to you my Father.

Verse Four

(10) *Na nyumbani mwa juu, Baba yangu, zikukoma hapa siku zangu.*
My home is in heaven, my Father, I will not be stuck here all of my days.

(11) *Kwa furaha niwe pamoja na wewe. karibu kabisa, Mungu wangu.*
I will be happier when I am with you, very close to you my father. (Samputu 2003b)

Vocally, the song begins with the chorus (see Figure 6-17), which in the original is the first verse, which sets the tone melodically for the rest of the piece. All of the verses follow the melodic rhythm set forth in the chorus (some variation of a dotted-eighth rest followed by mostly eighth notes with some syncopation and vocal melismas). The drums, percussion, bass, and synth pad maintain the same ostinato pattern found in the introduction, but aside from the first measure, the brass and strings are absent. However, the nylon-stringed acoustic guitar, a staple of East African gospel, enters for the first time with a responding pentatonic “fill.” In terms, of Samputu’s vocal timbre, he mostly uses his soft voice throughout, but in measure five he briefly introduces his *g* timbre for the first syllable of “siku,” and then immediately returns to his soft voice.

3

Voice

Synth Brass/
Strings

Classical Guitar

Synth Pad

Electric Bass

Percussion

Drum Set

Ka - ri - bu Mun - gu wan - gu, Ka - ri - bu na we - we,

G Am C D

3

ka - ri - bu za - i - di — Mun - gu — wan - gu.

3 G Am C D

The image shows a musical score for the first chorus of the song "Karibu Mungu." The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves. The top staff is the bass line, starting with a measure rest and then playing a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics "ka - ri - bu za - i - di ___ Mun - gu ___ wan - gu. Mi - mi nas - a - fi - ri" are written below the bass line. The second staff is the vocal line, which is mostly rests with some melodic fragments. The third staff is a piano accompaniment line with eighth notes. The fourth staff is a piano accompaniment line with eighth notes. The fifth staff is a piano accompaniment line with eighth notes. The sixth staff is a piano accompaniment line with eighth notes. The score is marked with a '7' at the beginning of each staff, indicating a specific measure or section. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and articulation marks.

Figure 6-17. Transcription of the first chorus of “Karibu Mungu.”

While Samputu only alters his timbre once (technically twice) in the first chorus from *s* to *g* (and back), the verses contain a plethora of timbral changes (see Figure 6-18). He begins with a combination of his *pn* (mostly in the vocal melisma of measure one) and *n* voices and then proceeds to change his vocal timbre *thirty-two* different times in four verses (thirty-three different vocal timbres in total when you include the bridge). Because the accompaniment is mostly a static ostinato pattern in all instruments, and the melodic rhythm varies only slightly, these timbral changes are what make the song exciting and successful. Additionally, it is outside the pale for most gospel artists to change timbre so greatly in one song, let alone to include the very distinct Twa sounds Samputu has at his disposal. This is particularly evident in

the melisma at the end of verse four (only partially notated in measure thirty-nine) on the “yeh” syllable, which, as we discovered in “Psalm 150,” is very common in Rwandan traditional music, but not used at all in typical East African gospel. And, by using these Twa style timbres, he is furthering his new *ngoma* by expanding the contexts for Rwandan traditional music-culture.

In addition to the sheer amount different timbres, Samputu does not use different timbral combinations as often as in his Rwandan styles. Most notable is the aforementioned quick use of the *g* moving into the *s* voice. This demonstrates the maturity of Samputu’s voice, as it is technically difficult to perform. In order to make such a quick change, one must move from the tightened vocal chords used in pressed phonation to nearly the opposite technique of letting the vocal chords relax. Another timbral change not yet analyzed is his shouting timbre. I do not have an example of him using this timbre, but it is distinctly pitched, yet does not have as much of a clearly defined fundamental as a normal flow phonation. This was the case when I analyzed my own voice (not shown here), so I can only assume it would be the same with Samputu’s. There is also use of echo effects at the end of the phrase (measures twelve and thirteen). Finally, there is the relaxed dancehall reggae vocal timbre in the bridge, along with the use of the vocoder timbre, which is likely attained by overcorrecting in Antare’s *Auto-Tune* software (in which the computer corrects the note too quickly, and thus creates computerized sounding artifacts similar to the way a vocoder functions).²⁰⁹ While I cannot be sure, I make this assumption because vocoders are not as readily available in East African studios, and this has become a

²⁰⁹ Samputu could not remember the name of the singer that performed the bridge.

common (and overused) practice in popular music all over the world ever since Mark Taylor and Brian Rowling first employed the technique in Cher's "Believe."²¹⁰

Verse 1

Mi - mi na - sa - fi - ri a - pa du - ni - a - ni, pa - ku - pum - m - zi - ka

4 si - pa - o - ni. Ni - la - la - po ni - we ka - ri - bu - na we - we.

7 Verse 2 ka - ri - bu za - i - di Mun gu wan - gu. Yo - te un - i - pay - o

10 ya - ni - vu - ta pa - ku - ka li - bi - ya Ni - pa - ta - ta. (ni - pa -

13 ta - ta) na - ni - e - le - kez - we ka - ri - bu na we - we ka - ri - bu za - i - di

16 Bridge Mun - gu wan - gu Mun - gu wan - gu Ka - ton - da wan - ge jyan - gu ub - ere na nge

²¹⁰ While not a scholarly journal, the respectable audio engineering periodical *Sound On Sound* published a feature article on the production techniques used in the Cher record. The online article may be viewed here: <http://www.soundonsound.com/sos/feb99/articles/tracks661.htm>.

18
 bu-ri ru-na-ku bu-ri-ki-ro _____ mu ki-ta-ga-ra ckan-ge mu-ku-bu ryan-ge
 echo efx

20
 Verse 3
 ge ka-be-re na nge bu-ri ka-se-ra _____ i-ye-eh _____
 vocoder efx (i-ye-eh)

23
 g n pn
 Na kwa ngu-vu zan-gu ni-ku-si-fu _____ mwam-ba u-we ma-ji
 3

26
 pn pnm n
 wa wo-ko-vu _____ Mash-a-ka-ni ni-we ka-ri-bu na-we-we _____
 3 3

29
 ka-ri-bu ka-ri-bu za-i-di. mu-gu-wan-gu _____ !
 3 3 3 3

Verse 4
 31
 n s n
 Na nyum-ba-ni mwa-juu Ba-ba yan-gu _____ zi-ku-ko-ma ha-pa

34
 g s n
 si-ku zan-gu. _____ Kwa fur-ah-a ni-we pa-mo-ja na-we-we.
 3

37
 pn
 ka-ri-bu ka-bi sa - Mun-gu wan-gu Mun-gu wan-gu yeh _____
 3 3

Figure 6-18. Transcription of verses and bridge in “Karibu Mungu,” as heard on *Abaana*.

In addition to the timbral variations, the changes in melodic rhythm also add an element of excitement amidst the, almost banal, accompanying tracks. Samputu

generally follows the same melodic rhythm at the beginning of each phrase, but often varies the end of the phrase with melismas (i.e., in measures seven, ten, eleven, fourteen, fifteen, twenty-five, twenty-eight, and thirty-six). Other contrasting rhythmic content is the use of eighth-note triplets in measures sixteen, twenty-nine, and thirty-eight, which create instability in the melodic rhythm, yet maintain a pulse, while the melismas in measures thirty and thirty-nine are much less distinctly pulsed. The rapid sixteenth-note passages in the bridge are very characteristic of the rapping/singing style used in dancehall reggae. In terms of vocal harmony, it is always tertiary and present in subsequent choruses (not notated), as well as in the first part of verse four (measures thirty-one and thirty-three).

“Karibu Mungu” is an excellent example of Samputu’s new *ngoma*, as he incorporates Rwandan traditional singing timbres into a pan-East African genre. And by fusing these timbres with Kiswahili and Luganda languages, as well as Caribbean rhythms, Samputu was foreshadowing Rwanda’s incorporation into the East African community. When Samputu recorded this song, Rwanda was still considered a Francophone country, with more in common with D.R. Congo than with Kenya. However, because of the influx of Rwandans who grew up in Uganda (including President Kagame and the RPF), Rwanda has now become an official member of the primarily English- and Kiswahili-speaking East African Community (since 2007). This is further reflected in Samputu’s Ugandacentric recording “Abaana.”

“Abaana”

When Samputu recorded “Abaana” in 2003 in Uganda, it was part of a tour of the country, which was billed as “marriage of all the cultures.” And when he launched

the album in Uganda, Samputu invited all Ugandans to bring their traditional instruments (including *ikembe*, *iningidi*—spelled *ennengidi* in Uganda—and Kiganda *amadinda/akadinda* xylophones) on stage to perform with him. In fact, that was his intention when he conceived of the album, which is reflected in all of the different tracks (which as mentioned in Chapter Three are a combination of gospel, reggae, traditional Rwandan *amazina y'inka* and *imbyino*, r&b/hip-hop, and the mixture of Congolese, Ugandan, and Rwandan sounds and languages in “Rehema” and “Abaana”). Like “Rehema” does with D.R. Congo and Rwanda, “Abaana” resides in the liminal space between Rwanda and Uganda, a space that is blurred by kinship ties (Bahima and Banyarwanda), customs (importance of cattle and musical instruments—i.e., *amakondera*, *iningidi*, *ikembe*, and *umuduri*), and language (Kinyarwanda and Runyankole). In this section, I will focus on instrumentation (the use of *inigiri* and emulation of *amadinda* xylophone) and related styles, as well as language (the use of Runyankole).

Like the *amakondera*, the *iningidi* is not native to Rwanda. In fact, Gerhard Kubik quotes his personal communication with Klaus Wachsmann, who boldly states that the *iningidi* (*ennengidi*) “one-stringed bowed lute was ‘invented in Buganda in 1907’” (Wachsmann in Kubik 1994:252). According to Gansemans, the *iningidi* was brought to Rwanda somewhere between 1910 and 1940 (DEKKMMA 2003b), and further, regarding its performance practice:

A singer accompanies himself on the *iningidi* and usually plays solo. The *iningidi* is not commonly played by older men or by women. The musician has his own repertoire, which may, however, be based on—or contain elements of—that of other performers. The lyrics concern everyday life in the hills and sometimes also political events. (Ibid.)

While a majority of *iningidi* are single-stringed instruments, there are some who play a two-stringed *iningidi* (see Figure 6-19).²¹¹



Figure 6-19. Photo of a man playing a two-stringed *iningidi* at the Kigali workshop in July 2012.

Samputu states that the *iningidi* melodic content and rhythm served as a fundamental basis for the entire production of “Abaana.” He recalls, “the *iningidi* was one string and played [hums *iningidi* melody in compound meter] like that, so I didn’t want to go far from that [hums melody from ‘Abaana’ that is similar to the *iningidi* melody]” (Samputu 2014d). The *iningidi* melody (see Figure 6-20), which is played by Albert Bisaso Ssempeke, begins in measure three and consists of four pitches (B3,

²¹¹ I had the pleasure of hearing a two-stringed *iningidi* performed by the man featured in Figure 6-19 (unfortunately Samputu or I couldn’t remember his name), when I was the keynote speaker at the aforementioned (Chapter Three) event sponsored by the Minister of Culture in July of 2012. The video of his performance may be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0D3SY6NHZv0>.

G4, D4 and E4—in that order) played in a syncopated compound quadruple meter. It is present in the entire piece. For the purposes of this study, I have only transcribed part of the melody, as the performers' improvised variations are too subtle and too low in the mix to hear. The rest of the introduction instrumentation includes an electronic drum set, percussion (congas, hand claps, and shaker), and a marimba that is emulating either the *ikembe* or *amadinda* or *akadidnda* xylophone found in Kiganda traditions. They all play interlocking rhythms in a compound quadruple meter, which is rooted in Samputu's experience with the Nkombo rhythm (though it is much slower), but can also be found throughout the Kiganda musical repertoire.

Abaana

Samputu

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system includes Marimba, Inigidi, Percussion, and Drum Set. The Marimba part has a treble clef and a bass clef, both in 12/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Inigidi part is in the treble clef. The Percussion part includes labels for 'hand clap', 'low conga', 'high conga', and 'conga slap'. The Drum Set part is in the bass clef. The second system includes Mrb., Igi., Perc., and D. S. The Mrb. part is in the treble clef. The Igi. part is in the treble clef and includes a 'shaker' label. The Perc. part includes labels for 'hi-hat', 'high-tom', and 'low-tom'. The D. S. part is in the bass clef and includes labels for 'mid-tom' and 'snare'. The score uses various rhythmic notations including eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests.

Figure 6-20. Transcription of the introduction of “Abaana.”

Regarding the marimba part, Samputu did not specify which instrument he was attempting to emulate, but because he was in Uganda at the time of the recording (which means the producer was Ugandan), and because he wanted to have a

“marriage of cultures,” it is plausible to state that he, at least in part, had the *amadinda* (twelve-key) and/or *akadinda* (seventeen-key) xylophones in mind during this recording. And while there are some significant differences in tempo and performance practice between traditional xylophone playing and the “Abaana” recording, as in the previous excursion into *kumbandwa* the theory of cultural memory can be applied here.

The *amadinda* and *akadinda* are log xylophones performed by two or more players, adjacent to one another, in hocket (See Figure 6-21). Both are a significant part of Kiganda music, with the *amadinda* being part of the royal court ensemble. The tuning system for these idiophones is based on a pentatonic scale, though as Kubik states “all intervals are treated as if in an equidistant pentatonic system” (Kubik 1994:261). However, the scales can be perceived as C, D, E, G, A or C, D, F, G, Bb, with the latter likely closer to the performance practice due to the Ugandan fourth being close to the Western P4 interval (ibid.). Thus, in listening to the marimba part in “Abaana,” one can hear distinct perfect-fourth intervals, as well as get a sense of independent melodic lines like the aforementioned xylophones. While in traditional *amadinda* and *akadinda* music there is much greater note density throughout, the parts are much less dense when accompanying a voice, as is the case in the marimba part in “Abaana.” An excellent example of this is “Abe Bugerere,” housed in the Peter Cooke Uganda Collection of the British Library. The recording features several “harmonic” intervals (though there is no purposeful harmony in Ugandan xylophone music), mostly notably the P4 and P8, and can be heard at: <http://sounds.bl.uk/world-and-traditional-music/Peter-Cooke-Uganda/025M-C0023X0059XX-0300V0>.



Figure 6-21. Image of an *akadinda* log xylophone.
 (Source: <http://sounds.bl.uk/related-content/IMAGES/025I-C0004X0036XX-ADZZA0.jpg>).

For the first section of the two-part piece (see Figure 6-22), Samputu sings a rather simple descending melody that follows the *iningidi* in both range and melodic rhythm (though the *iningidi* rhythm is much more syncopated than the melody line). Thus, as mentioned above, it does not stray too far from the *iningidi*'s sonic limits. The melody is harmonized in distinct Rwandan quartal harmony (and I label it as such because he is singing in Kinyarwanda). The only additions instrumentally are the wind chimes (measure three) and detuned (via MIDI modification) tubular bell (measure five), neither of which has much connection with Ugandan or Rwandan music, and likely are cosmetic choices. The lyrical content represents Samputu's desire for philanthropy, especially regarding children, and foreshadows his eventual NGO Mizeru Children of Rwanda, as *mizero* means hope. The lyrics to the first section are as follows:

“Abaana”

(1) *Abaana ndirimbe abaana kuko aribo bwami bwi juru, nibo mizero y'isi yejo.*

Children, let me sing about the children, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,
and they are the hope for the future. (Samputu 2003a)

The musical score is arranged in a vertical stack of staves. The top three staves are for vocal parts: Female Voice (treble clef), Harmony vocal (bass clef), and Lead Vocal (bass clef). The lyrics 'A - baa - na' are written below the Harmony vocal staff. The next two staves are for Marimba (treble and bass clefs). Below that is the Iningidi staff (treble clef). The Chimes/Tubular bells staff (treble clef) is mostly empty. The Percussion and Drum Set staves (both with a double bar line) are at the bottom. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The score consists of two measures of music.

3

ndir - im - be - abaa - na kuko a - ri - bo bwa - mi bwi ju - ru.

3

chimes

3

3

3

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of several systems of staves. The first system has a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The second system is a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The third system is a vocal line in treble clef. The fourth system is a chimes part, indicated by a wavy line and the word 'chimes'. The fifth system is a guitar part in treble clef with 'x' marks for fretted notes. The sixth system is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The seventh system is a guitar part in bass clef with 'x' marks for fretted notes. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

The image shows a musical score for the first section of "Abaana." It consists of several systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics: "ni - bo mi - ze - ro y'i - si ye - jo". Below the vocal line are two piano accompaniment staves. The second system features a piano accompaniment with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, with the instruction "on repeat" above the treble staff. The third system shows a piano accompaniment with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The fourth system is labeled "tubular bell" and shows a single treble clef staff with a dotted rhythm. The fifth system shows a piano accompaniment with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with many notes and rests.

Figure 6-22. Transcription of the first section of “Abaana.”

In contrast, the second section, sung in Runyankole by Sarah Ndagire, contains great density of notes in the phrases, as well as much greater range. An additional contrast is the harmonization in thirds rather than Rwandan quartal harmony (see Figure 6-24), which reflects the Congolese influence. I first described the association Ankole culture with Rwandan culture in “Kunda Inka,” but will further detail its use in “Abaana,” as it is not merely an introduction to the song, but an integral part of the melodic content. Runyankole is spoken by the Ankole people

of Southwestern Uganda, and is very close to Rukiga (spoken by the Kiga people). Rwandans have greater cultural ties with the Kiga and Ankole people than with the Baganda, and share several musical characteristics (e.g. the Kiga play the *inanga*, and the Ankole dance *ikinimba* as they do in the northwest of Rwanda).

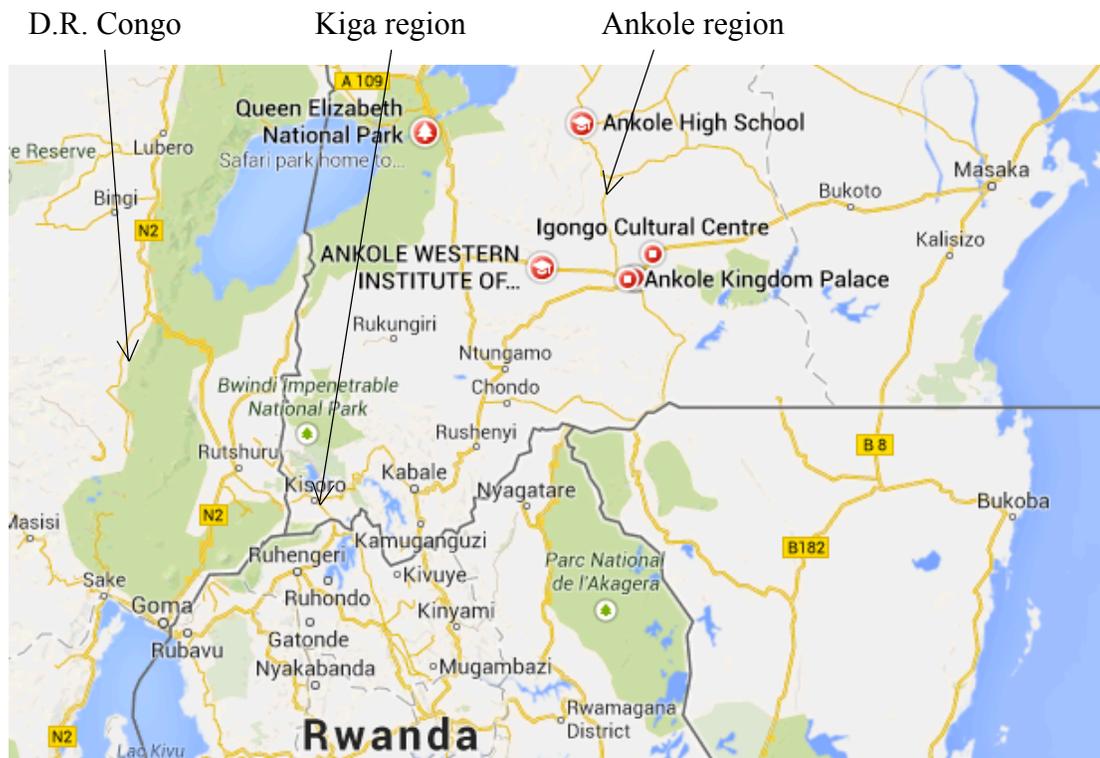


Figure 6-23. Map of Rwanda, Eastern D.R. Congo, and Ankole and Kiga regions in Western Uganda.

The lyrics, which carry the same meaning as the first section, are “*Iwe mwana wangye ohuure okwate ebyabazire turikukugambira haza ogire na nemichwe murungi*” (Ndagire 2014). While there are some words in common with Kinyarwanda (i.e., *iwe*, and *mwana*), they don’t always carry the same meaning.

The image shows a musical score for the second section of the song "Abaana." It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 12/8. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines.

System 1:
 I - we mwa-na wan - gye — o - huu - re — ok

System 2:
 wa - te e-bya-ba - zi - re — tu - ri - kuku-gam - bi - ra ha za — og-i-re na ne-

System 3:
 mi - chwe mur - un - gi. —

Figure 6-24. Transcription of the second section of “Abaana.”

While the form of the song is simple binary, Samputu adds several pygmy-style melismas and melodic and lyrical fragments throughout the piece. The lyrics of the phrases are:

- (1) *Kirazira guhohotera umwana.*
It is bad to hurt them.
- (2) *Uwana akenewe kwiga.*
They need to go to school.
- (3) *Akeneye krerwa neza.*
A child deserves a good education.
- (4). *Akeneye kwitabwaho.*
A child needs to be protected. (Samputu 2003a)

While I have not chosen to focus on them in this dissertation, these Twa-style phrases are, like his timbral changes in “Karibu Mungu,” what likely keeps the listener engaged, due to the static accompaniment. They are also another example of Samputu creating his new *ngoma* by infusing Twa styles with those of people from

neighboring historical kingdoms. Further, this song reflects the connection between Rwanda and other historical kingdoms: Ankole, Baganda, and Kiga.

Jamaica

In this chapter we have mostly dealt with how Samputu has linked up with several East and Central African musics that had already been infused with Caribbean sounds. In other words, the East and Central African connection with Caribbean music is syncretic in nature. In contrast, “Bimaze Iki Kubaho,” a reggae song, represents the acceptance of Jamaican music, both in sound and socio-cultural context, throughout the African continent. Reggae is one of the only truly global musics. As with hip-hop and rock/pop music, it is difficult to find a country, region, or nation that has access to popular music but has not adopted reggae in some form. However, Africans, much like Afro-Brazilians, Afro-Caribbeans, African-Americans, and African diaspora and offspring around the world, have adopted the Rastafarian message of black empowerment and civil rights along with its distinct sonic qualities.²¹²

The process was not a smooth transition, as reggae for many years was considered to be reflective of colonialism in the new world. However, in his chapter “Roots, Diaspora, and Possible Africas” in *Global Reggae* (2012), Louis Chude-Sokei reveals how the success of one of South Africa’s most famous reggae stars, Lucky Dube, represents a shift in the continent regarding reggae. Dube essentially

²¹² Many historians look to Bob Marley’s 1980 concert in Harare, Zimbabwe as the beginnings of reggae in Africa. And while there is no exhaustive account of the spread of reggae in Africa, it certainly was a key moment in African musical history.

switched from playing *mbaqanga* (a Congolese-influenced popular music in the country fostered by Zulu culture) to reggae, which was, as Chude-Sokei states,

...the acknowledgment that reggae was not simply a Caribbean or specifically Jamaican music. It had attained the status of a global or world cultural form and had carved out a trans-cultural and international space of popular dialogue, something that seemed to *invite* pan-African participation and continental echoing precisely due to its relentless references and imaginings of Africa. These were things that, say, *mbaqanga* could not do, so rooted as it was in Zulu culture, history and language and in a society that, despite the clear-cut binaries of black and white during apartheid, it never managed to supplant earlier and older, and possibly stronger, inter-ethnic divisions and differences. What must be understood is that for Lucky Dube and the myriad musicians and fans on the continent, despite its fundamentalism and deep essentialism, reggae offered not an authentic or true Africa but a series of possible Africas that could stand above and beyond the ethnic particularities of the continent and could enable the intrusion of merely literal Africans into the black diaspora's conversations and into its creation of foundational assumptions.... In short, the Africa of roots is one that could only have emerged from *outside*, where black identities and meanings had to be carefully borrowed and invented and could never be taken for granted since they were relentlessly embattled. (Chude-Sokei 2012:231-232; emphasis in original)

This is especially true in East Africa, as Bob Marley and the Rastafarians believed that their roots were in Ethiopia, which, while not officially part of East Africa, was the source of the Hamitic myth that greatly influenced East African philosophy, especially in Rwanda. Additionally, as I mentioned briefly in Chapter Two, there is the relationship with the Nyabingi cult, which is a term Rastafarians adopted due to its metaphor of resistance against colonial powers. According to Michael Barnett in his "The Many Faces of Rasta: Doctrinal Diversity Within the Rastafari Movement" in *Caribbean Quarterly* (2005):

The term Nyahbinghi according to Campbell (1987:72) came from the anti-colonialist movement of Kigezi in Uganda which called for death to Black and white oppressors. The University of the West Indies

Report, (Smith et al 1960) details that on the 7th December 1935 the Jamaica Times published an account of the Nyahbinghi Order in Ethiopia and the Congo. According to this account in the Times, the Ethiopian Emperor was head of the Nyahbinghi Order, the purpose of which was to overthrow the white (Italian) domination of Ethiopia, by racial war. According to the University Report (Smith et al., 1960) the term Nyahbinghi came to mean in Jamaica, for many Rastafari, death to Black and white oppressors. (Barnett 2005:70)

Further, members of the Nyabinghi sect in Jamaica (Nyabinghi Mansion) were the first to wear dreadlocks in Jamaica and were likely inspired by the Mau-Mau revolt in Kenya (ibid.).²¹³ And it was Count Ossie's Nyabinghi drumming that was the centerpiece of "Oh Carolina," which is often referred to as the first *ska* record.

"Bimaze Iki Kubaho"

As I discussed in Chapter Three, Samputu began singing like Bob Marley early on in his career. Even his composition "Ramba Africa," in which he recites "Africa yigenga" or "free Africa," is reminiscent in sound and ideology to Bob Marley's "Africa Unite." And while the song is not necessarily politically charged, it is in the angry Marley voice, often heard in songs like "Survivor," that Samputu resurrects in his "Bimaze Iki Kubaho," which translates roughly to "Why do I live? or, further, "What is the point of living?" or, even further, "What is the meaning of life?" In fact, when I asked Samputu why he chose reggae, he stated that it was because of reggae's association with revolution. Regarding the story behind the song, he writes:

I WAS angry AT GOD that time. I composed it on the 20th July in 1994 after visiting my home village and found what happened to my to

²¹³ I use the spelling Nyabingi when referring to the East African cult, while I spell its Jamaican analog Nyabinghi. Barnett uses yet another alternate spelling Nyahbinghi when referring to the Jamaican Nyabinghi cult.

family in the genocide. And I was very angry, and I asked God “where were you?” which became a song [“Mana Wari Uri He”] and then “Bimaze Iki Kubaho” both those songs were composed in that tone with anger, bitterness.... (Samputu 2014g; emphasis in original).

“Bimaze Iki Kubaho” (see Figure 6-25) is performed at a slow tempo in a minor mode, and essentially uses all the conventional reggae instrumentation (drums, bass, guitar, organ with Leslie speaker, three female backup vocalists—i.e., Marley’s “Three Little Birds” Rita Marley, Judy Mowatt and Marcia Griffiths) and style (triplet rhythms in quadruple meter, emphasis of the guitar on beats two and four, and the bass playing syncopated independent melodic lines), while, as previously mentioned, the lyrical content channels Marley’s pathos more than his ethos. The lyrics for the first verse and chorus are as follows:

“Bimaze Iki Kubaho”

Verse One

- (1) *Iyo wibutse abantu bagiye,*
When you reflect upon all the people who passed away [were killed],
- (2) *Iyo wibutse abacu badusize,*
When you reflect upon how they left us behind [when you think about how lonely and sad we are without them]
- (3) *Iyo urebye n’unkuntu bagiye,*
And when you reflect upon how they passed away [the way they were slaughtered.]
- (3) *Ukareba n’ibibera hano ku isi,*
And when you reflect upon happens in this world,

Chorus

- (4) *Bituma nibaza, bimaze iki kubaho?*
I wonder then, what’s the point of living? [what’s the meaning of life]
- (5) *Jye mpora nibaza, bimaze iki kubaho?*
I always wonder, what’s the point of living?
- (6) *Ngahora nibaza, bimaze iki kubaho?*

I always wonder, what is the point of living?

- (7) *Bituma nibaza, bimaze iki?*
I wonder, what is the point?

Verse Two

- (9) *Bimaze iki se igihe mugenzi wange ababazwa ni uko jye ndiho.*
What's the point when/if my neighbor is sad that I am alive?
- (10) *Bimaze iki se igihe jyewe numva numva navutsa abadi ubuzimabituma nibaza?*
What's the point when/if I feel like taking someone else's life?

Chorus

- (11) *Bamwira ngo ngo jye nararemwe, singeze nsaba kubaho.*
They say that I was created, but I never asked for it.
- (12) *Singeze nsaba ngo mvuke.*
I never asked to be born.
- (13) *Kuki nazira ko ndiho?*
Why would I be punished for just being?

Chorus

Coda

- (14) *Byaba bimaze iki kubaho niba ndashoboye kubahesha ishema?*
What's the point of life if I [We/They] cannot be respected? (Samputu 1999)

Bimaze Iki Kubaho

Samputu
Arr. Samputu and Nitunga

The musical score is arranged in a multi-stem format with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Fem. Voice 1**: Treble clef, 4/4 time, rests in all three measures.
- Fem. Voice 2**: Treble clef, 4/4 time, rests in all three measures.
- Fem. Voice 3**: Treble clef, 4/4 time, rests in all three measures.
- Lead Vocals**: Treble clef, 4/4 time, rests in all three measures.
- Brass**: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: Chord, eighth notes, triplet eighth notes. Measure 2: Chord, quarter note. Measure 3: Triplet eighth notes, eighth notes, triplet eighth notes.
- Electric Piano**: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: Chord, quarter note. Measure 2: Chord, quarter note. Measure 3: Chord, quarter note.
- Electric Guitar 1**: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: Rest. Measure 2: Rest. Measure 3: Triplet eighth notes.
- Electric Guitar 2**: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: Chord, quarter note. Measure 2: Chord, quarter note. Measure 3: Chord, quarter note.
- Electric Guitar 3**: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: Rest. Measure 2: Quarter note, eighth notes, quarter note, eighth notes, quarter note, eighth notes. Measure 3: Rest.
- Electric Bass**: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: Quarter note, quarter note. Measure 2: Rest. Measure 3: Triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note.
- Drum Set**: Drum clef, 4/4 time. Measure 1: Triplet eighth notes, eighth notes, quarter note. Measure 2: Triplet eighth notes, quarter note, quarter note. Measure 3: Triplet eighth notes, eighth notes, quarter note.

© 1999 Samputu

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bi - maze i - ki ku - ba - ho

za. Jye mi - po - ra ni - ba -

s/pnm

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Bimaze Iki Kubaho." The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It consists of several staves:

- Vocal Line:** The top three staves contain the vocal melody. The lyrics are "bi - maze i - ki" and "za". The melody features triplet rhythms, indicated by a '3' above groups of three notes.
- Instrumental Line:** The bottom three staves contain instrumental accompaniment. The bass line features a steady rhythm with triplet patterns. The guitar line includes chords and melodic fragments, some marked with 'x' and a circled 'x'.

Figure 6-25. Transcription of “Bimaze Iki Kubaho.”

While most of the piece conforms to reggae musical aesthetics, the one major deviation from traditional roots reggae is the use of synthesized brass, which carries the melody beginning in measure one; it is accompanied by synthesized drums and

bass, and three guitars (one lead and two rhythm guitars, of which the latter are panned hard left and right in the mix).²¹⁴ The lead guitar mostly plays small pentatonic fills throughout, but it does have a longer solo later in the song (not notated). One of the rhythm guitars plays solely on beats two and four following the i-VII(v) chord progression (as does the electric piano), and the other plays a triplet pattern in the first part of every other measure.²¹⁵ They both are performed with muted strokes (strummed quickly and then muted by either the left or right hand, or a combination of the two). The bass and the drums link up in a typical reggae triplet/quadruple meter hemiola, with the bass maintaining a significant amount of space between notes (also typical). The organ with Leslie speaker (not notated) is only played (sustained chords) at the end of the piece.

The melodic line is very simple and follows the triplet reggae rhythm. The only variance is in the rate at which Samputu performs his melismas at the end of phrases. Sometimes the melisma is a rapid sixteenth-note triplet figure (i.e., measures eleven, thirteen, fifteen, and seventeen), while another is a slightly slower sixteenth-note pattern (measure ten). In terms of the “Three Little Birds” vocal harmony, it is typical tertiary harmony, but there is an emphasis on parallel fifths motion in moving from the i-v (not all uncommon in reggae going from ii-I, but not i-v), which I would attribute to the Rwandanness of the recording.

However, the most Rwandan aspect of this recording, aside from language, is Samputu’s timbral changes. Samputu sings the verses in his *s* voice, which is typical

²¹⁴ Using a synthesizer was quite common in pop-reggae in the 1990s, but not in what many people label as “roots” reggae, which usually contains much more serious lyrical content.

²¹⁵ The chord progression is clearly i-VII, but the brass section (measure two) and the vocalists (measures fourteen, sixteen, eighteen, nineteen, and twenty) outline a v chord)

of many popular Rwandan artists (i.e., Massamba Intore, Mighty Popo, Cecile Kayirebwa), but not as common in roots reggae. When asked, Samputu said he wanted to sing it softly because it was a sad song, and he wanted to sound pensive. However, I interpret this as a way Samputu is connecting with all of the Tutsi and moderate Hutu who were slain in the genocide. And he furthers this in the chorus, when he mixes his *pnm* and *pn* with the *s* voice, in which the mixture of these carries a distinct Twa quality. I interpret Samputu's intent in two ways: first, to develop sonic contrast in each of the essentially static (at least in meaning—with “*bituma nibaza*,” “*Jye mpora nibaza*” “*ngahora nibaza*” being slightly different ways of saying the same thing) lyrical lines. Second, to include the oft-forgotten Twa, as they were not spared by the *génocidaires*, in his asking God “What is the point of living?” Subsequently, Samputu raises his voice dynamically by singing boldly (marked *f* in the penultimate measure of Figure 6-22), in his *n* voice, on “*bituma nibaza?!*,” just before returning to his *s* voice in the melisma at the end of the phrase, which reflects a sense of resignation after stating “What is the point?!” And even if my assumptions are far from his conscious intention, the assertion is valid given the context of the song.

Samputu's choice of reggae is interesting in that it is possibly one of the best mediums for him to explore his frustration and anger. It is African without being too African (ethnically), and thus he is able to express anger without it being too close to home. Meaning, Samputu, like many Africans who have adopted reggae and hip-hop into their musical canon, discovered a way to truly critique his own culture without inciting interethnic strife. And while Rwanda certainly doesn't suffer from any

interethnic problems in the purest sense of the term, there is a reason why so many poor Rwandans link up with reggae and hip-hop in the country. In fact, reggae and hip-hop are much more popular in the poverty stricken regions of Rwanda than other types of “Rwandan” popular music.²¹⁶ And while Samputu does not necessarily identify with the poorest Rwandans (though he is certainly aware of them, and has helped them through his philanthropic ventures), he is connecting with a deep anger that perhaps only singing in reggae could convey. In short, reggae has become part of the nebulous space known as Rwandan identity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the cultural interconnectedness of Rwanda, East/Central Africa, and the Caribbean as expressed in Samputu’s music. By studying “Rehema” I detailed the liminal space of Nkombo Island, and showed how the Shi and Havu speak languages closer to their Congolese neighbors but geographically belong to Rwanda. And in “Tuzagera,” I demonstrated how Cuban rhythms and harmonies mixed with Congolese guitar styles have infiltrated the Rwandan musical landscape. I then delineated the infiltration of East African gospel and *zouk* from the West Indies into Rwandan music through “Karibu Mungu,” and, in my discussion of “Abaana,” the close connections the Kiga, the Ankole, and the Ganda have with the historic Nyiginya dynasty. Finally, I showed that Jamaican reggae, with its association with pan-African identity, colonial resistance, and the Nyabingi cult, was an excellent medium for Samputu to sing about the pains of the 1994 genocide.

²¹⁶ When I visited the street kids Samputu was supporting in 2007, I remember one teenager came up to me and flashed a Westside gang symbol and said “Yo Brent, what’s up.”

Samputu not only reflects these national and regional identities in his music, but also successfully synthesizes all of these cultures to create a new Rwandan *ngoma*.²¹⁷ I believe that this is in part due to Samputu's travels and extended stays in Kenya and Uganda, as well as with his experience with "Chouchou," who was from Nkombo, close to D.R. Congo, and Congolese-Rwandan guitarist "Tchido." But it is also partly because Samputu is innovative in ways most Rwandan artists are not. This is not to say most Rwandan artists aren't innovative, but simply that Samputu purposefully seeks innovation. That is, he doesn't merely compose new material as a reflection of his experiences, but actually seeks a deeper understanding of those experiences on an intellectual level in order to create new material. For example, Samputu consistently refers to his incorporation of all of these styles as *ubushakashatsi* or "research." However, when he says "*nkora ubushakashatsi*" or "I do research," it isn't as simple as hopping in a car and travelling to the nearest countryside to listen to Batwa. When Samputu says "*nkora ubushakashatsi*," especially concerning his visit to Nkombo, it means that he had to hire a driver to go to a remote area of Rwanda on fairly undeveloped roads (Rwanda's roads are much better today, but were not that great in the 1980s), to hire a boat and an interpreter who speaks Amaavu or Amashi, and to worry about getting malaria. And he did this not just to experience the beauty of the island and its traditions, as Chouchou had already taught him to dance Nkombo, but because he wants to hear it from the source. And for a musician, not a funded scholar, to do this in 1980s Rwanda (even though he

²¹⁷ To be fair, Popo Murigande, as mentioned previously, is also innovative like Samputu, but in different ways. Unfortunately, there is not enough space in this dissertation to satisfactorily accommodate his unique contributions.

was well-funded by Kajeguhakwa for the second part of his trip), it reflects both his privilege and his exceptional nature.

It is for this purpose that Samputu creates a new *ngoma*, as he recognizes the various worlds around him. Instead of retreating into Rwandan traditions, he embraces the present with hope for a new way forward for himself and Rwanda in general. In other words, Samputu musically acknowledges the various worlds that Rwandans live in; worlds that are understood by Rwandans but not often publically verbalized. And by doing so, he demonstrates that the synthesis of all of these worlds is something uniquely Rwandan.

Rwanda resides in a liminal space of being both a Francophone and Anglophone former colony; of being equally close to D.R. Congo (especially musically) in culture as they are to Uganda and the rest of the East African Community; of having a ruling party in the country who did not grow up in Rwanda; of having strong historical connections with great kingdoms of the past (Baganda, Ankole, Kiga), but no longer having an official king of their own; and of having survived a genocide in which no other countries immediately came to their aid, and yet have to maintain diplomatic ties to those countries. Therefore, Samputu, in his recognition of all that is to be Rwandan (or, more simply put, in his recognition of the elephant in the room), displays this publicly through his music, not only in order to reflect his own reality, but also to inform the culture of its own. Samputu, through his life and work, is a gateway for Rwandans to see themselves in a different way. He is a lens through which Rwandans can see how truly international and transcultural they

are. And for us “outsiders,” Samputu is a navigator into a culture that few outside Rwanda (even other East Africans) have the privilege of understanding.

Chapter 7: Epilogue

Rwanda means the universe. This is both a literal statement and a reference to the nebulous concept of Rwandan identity. In their book of the same title, Louise Mushikiwabo and Jack Kramer state:

In Kinyarwanda, the literal meaning of the word “Rwanda” is “the universe” or “the big world,” or simply “the world.” The usage dates from days when Rwanda was the only world the Rwandese knew, and there was no distinction between the country and the universe. A man from one hill might ask a man from another, “How are things in your Rwanda,” meaning “in your world.” Or he might say of a cow, “She’s as big as Rwanda,” meaning as big as the universe. Rwanda was the universe, the universe was Rwanda, and the Rwandese have never forgotten that original meaning. In fact, they may still call truly big things “as big as Rwanda,” meaning the universe, not the tiny country that even the most benighted now know their state to be.
(Mushikiwabo and Kramer 2006: xvi)

It is this universe that informs Samputu that he has no musical boundaries. Rwanda means the universe. And thus, Samputu reflects this meaning in his music, but also reminds Rwanda of its meaning. Samputu believes in the very core of his being that music transcends all boundaries. I say this, not because I am not interested in delving into an academic discussion about some romanticized notion of music, but because to him, Rwandan music means the universe. He expresses it through his mixing of various related cultures, through his philanthropic efforts, and through his message of forgiveness. For Samputu does not mix musics because he has some fetishistic interest in understanding his “roots,” nor does he seek to help others through his musical endeavors merely because of pity he might feel for those less fortunate than him. Rwandan music to Samputu *is* the universe, and helping the less fortunate through music is the key to a better future, one that also includes reconciliation of constructed ethnicities in his culture.

In this dissertation, I have reflected on Samputu's musical universe and how it resides in liminal spaces, in and outside colonially constructed geo-political boundaries. After introducing the reader to Samputu and the rationale for this study, I delineated Rwanda's complicated history to illuminate details that are pertinent to understanding Rwanda as the universe. From the early, more egalitarian, social structure that included herders, cultivators, and the foragers to the formation of the Nyiginya kingdom and the creation of designations of Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa; to the European colonization and the subsequent Christianization of the people; to the racializing of social identities and the codification of those designations through identification cards, and to the horror of the genocide, reconstruction, and subsequent creation of a new Rwandan nation-state, which includes official negation of colonial racializations of Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa, attempts at reconciliation, and significant economic development, Samputu's music is deeply embedded in this history.

In Chapter Three I constructed Samputu's biography in order to demonstrate, through his life story and musical analysis, how his life and music both reflect and played a significant role in developing the history discussed in Chapter Two. When he was born in the 1960s, he was labeled a Tutsi and endured discrimination embedded in both the colonial era racialization and the Hutu response to the long-time rule of the Nyiginya dynasty. Thus, from an early age, Samputu was keenly aware of his place in Rwanda's history. He has also lived through three different presidential administrations (Habyarimana, Bizimungu, and Kagame) and has taken part in several official functions of at least two of those administrations (i.e., his involvement in Silas Udahimuka's choir entry in Habyarimana's *animation*, his work

promoting the RPF in the 1990s civil war, and his subsequent work with the RPF governing body several times throughout his career). He is a Christian, thus linking up with Rwanda's Christian majority, and, as a part of that Christian experience, has actively promoted forgiveness and reconciliation in Rwanda. Additionally, the musical analysis supplied in this chapter broadly demonstrates Samputu's musical diversity by describing all of the different styles he composes and performs, which reflect Rwanda's monarchical history as well as ties with other countries in East and Central Africa, Europe, the U.S., and the Caribbean.

In Chapter Four, I laid a theoretical foundation for spectrographic analysis in order to illuminate the important timbral qualities of Samputu's voice, and show how these different timbres reflect various Rwandan identities. Most salient was the codification of his *pygmy* timbres (both *pn* and *pnm*), as Samputu's veneration of the disenfranchised Twa is an essential aspect of his musical career.

The analysis of vocal timbre was also essential to Chapters Five and Six, in which I demonstrated that by mixing several music-cultural elements together, Samputu reflects the Rwandan universe based on the sum of his experiences. Unlike many other Rwandan performers, Samputu changes vocal timbre throughout many of his songs, sometimes from measure to measure. And those vocal timbres are embedded in Rwandan musical identity. Whether it is his use of *g* voice to emphasize "stomach pains" in "Nyaruguru" or use of all of his other timbres (*n*, *s*, *pn*, and *pnm*) to infuse Rwandan styles into the very Jamaican "Bimaze Iki Kubaho," Samputu uses his different vocal timbres to inform us of his universe.

Further, I show that, through this mixing, he creates a new *ngoma* that can help Rwandans accept their international and transcultural reality. Samputu does this both through the breadth of styles he performs and his Christian re-contextualizations of traditional sacred and secular musics. As we discovered with “Rehema,” Samputu performs rhythms rooted in the style of the Shi and Havu of Nkombo Island, which is located between Rwanda and Congo. While this island is distinctly Rwandan, its inhabitants speak different languages from those in the mainland of Rwanda. And while Rwandans are aware that Nkombo island belongs to Rwanda, most do not engage with the residents of the area on a daily basis. But Samputu musically reminds them that these people are part of Rwanda as well. With “Karibu Mungu,” and “Abaana,” Samputu embraces the impact of other East Africans by singing in Luganda, Kiswahili, and Runyankole, which are all languages many Rwandans, especially those who grew up in Uganda, have encountered. And by infusing Rwandan vocal timbres into East African gospel, Samputu demonstrates musically to Rwandans that their musical universe has expanded.

Samputu’s Christian re-contextualizations of Rwandan secular (i.e. “Ingoma”) and sacred (i.e., “Yesu Wange”) songs are another aspect of his *ngoma*. Instead of attempting to maintain clear boundaries for “traditional” styles, Samputu embraces the fact that Christianity is part of the Rwandan universe, and incorporates it into his compositions and performances. For, like the Luguru of Tanzania, Samputu sees that for Rwandan music culture to thrive, he must mix these cultural expressions.

Because of these mixtures, his “Rwandan” music belongs to Banyarwanda, Banyankole, Bakiga, Bashi, Bahavu, and Baganda; to Congolese, Kenyan, Canadian,

United States, European, Japanese, Cuban, and Jamaican citizens and all who live in the West Indies; and to anyone in the world with whom Samputu has come in contact. And I can say with confidence that there is no other Rwandan musician who has ever reflected the Rwandan universe better than Jean-Paul Samputu. He truly is Rwanda's voice. I do not make this bold statement solely as a means of veneration, but because in addition to Samputu informing Rwanda of their musical reality, he also informs non-Rwandans of the Rwandan universe. There are many artists who easily claim to be Rwanda's voice, however, only a few (i.e. Cecile Kayirebwa and "Mighty" Popo) have had success outside the country. Thus, Samputu is Rwanda's voice because of both his reflection of Rwandan musical identity and his ability to help navigate "outsiders" through the complexities of Rwandan music culture.

However, because I have chosen to look at the breadth of Samputu's musical canon, this dissertation is shallow. Not shallow in the sense that there is little detail, but shallow in the fact that I, like Samputu in his life and career, rarely focus on one region, genre, or style for an extended period of time. This is also reflected in my multi-sited fieldwork approach. Whether it is travelling to Rwanda, Uganda, Atlanta, or navigating the amorphous global network comprising fiber-optic cables, servers, and satellites, I, like Samputu, have been nomadic. But in all of the anecdotes, transcription fragments, spectrographic images, and quotations from various people who have shared a connection with Samputu, there is depth. And I believe, at least I hope, that the readers of this dissertation will have learned that through studying an exceptional individual such as Samputu, we may discover a universe we might not

have access to when we conduct traditional fieldwork (not that this is a judgment about that fieldwork, but simply that it is only *one* method).

There is a colloquial saying in Kinyarwanda, spoken when someone has exhausted the conversation and wishes to politely exit: *ibyoyi ni ibyoyi*. It essentially means, though not taken as an insult, “I have said what I have said, and now it is your problem. Go deal with it.” It is a saying that the Twa would likely use if they were pressed by someone who didn’t understand the multi-layered messages of *intwawira*. It is a statement that I believe Samputu, given our many conversations that included my consistent pressing for more information, would likely, perhaps somewhere buried deep in his subconscious mind, have wished to say to me, but his kind, generous personality would not allow it to come to the fore. And while this dissertation is far from exhaustive, it has reached its end. And so I say “*ibyoyi ni ibyoyi*.”

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