

**‘MUSICAL TRAFFIC’: TRANSNATIONALISM AND  
RECONSTRUCTION IN RWANDA AND UGANDA**

**by**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on popular music in the “New Rwanda” (*Rwanda Rushya*). It starts from life on the ground: to examine how young cultural producers in Kigali adopt and adapt genres, styles and languages, activate and block support networks, form “collabos” with Ugandans and other international artists and producers, create songs and music videos, promote and circulate their work, and nurture aspirations while overcoming obstacles in their quest for stardom in the Rwandan context of post-genocide reconstruction. Drawing on 12 months of ethnographic research conducted in Rwanda and Uganda, this thesis addresses how and why musicians travel physically, with specific focus on musical connections between Kigali and Kampala, and additionally how they and their work travel digitally. I address how cultural producers often circumvent state regulation while simultaneously drawing on official government rhetoric and occasionally support, and through all of these activities, reflect upon, shape and articulate the experience of living in 21<sup>st</sup> century Rwanda. Taking a wider view, the thesis focuses on transnationalism and border-crossing *within* Africa through a popular culture perspective. The narratives of the young, urban people in my research illuminate histories of exile and return, split identities and memories of living in both countries.



Brothers Bob and Benjah (left to right) from music group TBB, at Narrow Road Studio in Kigali, Rwanda, January 2015. [My photograph]



## **DEDICATIONS**

To Mum.

And to Kigali's hopeful and hard-working young people.

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A series of four song reviews have been published by the online blog *Africa in Words* as:

- Whatley, C. (18 August 2016) 'Rwandan hip-hop poet Eric 1Key: Entre 2.' Available at: <https://africainwords.com/2016/08/18/rwandan-hip-hop-poet-eric-1key-entre-2-album-review-track-by-track/>
- Whatley, C. (25 August 2016) 'Eric 1Key's Entre 2 – Virtually Yours, an 'online love story'.' Available at: <https://africainwords.com/2016/08/25/eric-1keys-entre-2-virtually-yours-an-online-love-story/>
- Whatley, C. (29 August 2016) 'Eric 1Key's Entre 2: a 'story about a hero and a coward'.' Available at: <https://africainwords.com/2016/08/29/eric-1keys-entre-2-a-story-about-a-hero-and-a-coward/>
- Whatley, C. (1 September 2016) 'Eric 1Key's Entre 2: Gene Aise, 1Key's life story.' Available at: <https://africainwords.com/2016/09/01/eric-1keys-entre-2-gene-aise-1keys-life-story/>

The full series of eleven song reviews are available on Eric 1Key's personal blog: <https://eric1key.blog/category/entre-2-decoded/>

A non-academic article has been published by the online blog *True Africa* as: Whatley, C. (17 October 2016) 'Eric 1Key, an artist who represents a modern but complicated Rwanda.' Available at: <https://trueafrica.co/article/eric-1key-an-artist-who-represents-a-modern-but-complicated-rwanda/>

An original video has been uploaded to YouTube as: Whatley, C. (27 March 2017) 'Rwandan dance circulations ~ Video example by Ceri Whatley & Arnold Mugisha.' Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZVcmd\\_c\\_kE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZVcmd_c_kE)

In 2015, I wrote a poem that attempts to capture my longing for Rwanda after fieldwork and the startling, shocking re-entry into life in the UK (see Appendix I, Poem I).



Saying goodbye ~ with friends at Kigali Airport, September 2015. [My photograph]



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<b>AgDF</b>	<i>Agaciro</i> Development Fund
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>BET Awards</b>	Black Entertainment Television Awards
<b>CIA</b>	Central Intelligence Agency
<b>CYRWA</b>	Celebrating Young Rwandan Achievers Award
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>EAP</b>	East African Promoters
<b>EDPRS</b>	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>ICTR</b>	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>KCC</b>	Kigali City Council
<b>KCT</b>	Kigali City Tower
<b>KIA</b>	Kigali International Airport
<b>MC</b>	Master of Ceremonies
<b>NMG</b>	Kenya's National Media Group
<b>MAMA awards</b>	MTV Africa Music Awards
<b>MINEDUC</b>	Rwanda's Ministry of Education
<b>MINISPOC</b>	Rwanda's Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports
<b>MRND</b>	<i>Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement</i>

**NGO** Non-Governmental Organisation

**NMG** Kenya's National Media Group

**NRA** National Resistance Army

**NRS** Narrow Road Studio

**OLPC** One Laptop per Child

**PARMEHUTU** *Parti du Mouvement et d'Emancipation Hutu*

**PDR** *Parti démocratique pour le renouveau-Ubuyanja*

**PGGSS** Primus Guma Guma Super Star competition

**RBA** Rwanda Broadcasting Agency

**RDB** Rwandan Development Board

**RHRA** Rwanda Hotels and Restaurants Association

**RINA** Rwandan International Network Association

**RMCA** Royal Museum of Central Africa

**RNP** Rwanda National Police Management

**RPA** Rwandan Patriotic Army

**RPF** Rwandan Patriotic Front

**RTLM** *Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*

**TVET** Technical and Vocational Education and Training

**UN** United Nations

**UNAMIR** United Nations peacekeeping mission in Rwanda

**VIP** Very Important Person

**WDA** Workforce Development Authority

## LIST OF KINYARWANDA WORDS USED IN TEXT

**Abadubayi (Umu-)** Rwandans who returned from eastern DRC after the 1994 Rwanda Genocide.

**Abajepe (Umu-)** Rwandans who returned from Burundi after the 1994 Rwanda Genocide.

**Abanyarwanda (Umu-)** Rwandan people, Rwandans, Rwandese.

**Abapasitori (Umu-)** Pastors.

**Abarokore** Revivalists, or Revivalist churches.

**Abasajya (Umu-)** Rwandans who returned from Uganda after the 1994 Rwanda Genocide.

**Abasope (Umu-)** Rwandans who were born and raised in Rwanda, and who survived the 1994 Rwanda Genocide.

**AbaTZ (Umu-)** Rwandans who returned from Tanzania after the 1994 Rwanda Genocide.

**Abazungu (Umu-)** White people.

**Abiru** Secret poems known only by the *mwami*'s powerful hereditary ritual specialists, dating back to Rujugira's reign (late 18<sup>th</sup> century).

**Agaciro** A key cultural concept tied to self-respect, dignity and patriotism.

**Agaseke** A type of woven basket with a lid (marketed to tourists as "peace pots").

**Akabenzi** Kinyarwanda slang for "pork".

**Akabyiniro** Literally, "small places for dancing"; Nyamirambo slang for "night-clubs".

**Akazu** Literally, "small house"; the political elite surrounding the presidency who planned the 1994 Rwanda Genocide.

**Amafaranga** Money.

**Amahamba** Praise poetry composed by specialists for the cattle belonging to the army, dating back to Rujugira's reign (late 18<sup>th</sup> Century).

**Amahoro** Peace.

**Amakondera** An instrumental ensemble of transverse horns, historically played by mostly Twa musicians.

**Amashyi** Clap your hands.

**Amata** Milk.

**Amatumwa** Messages.

**Aritonda** Softly spoken and docile.

**Ari yemera** He/she is arrogant/too proud.

**Banyamulenge** The so-called ‘Tutsi Congolese’.

**Butiki** Local shop or kiosk (derived from the French word *boutique*).

**Ejo hazaza heza** Bright future.

**Gacaca** Localised community courts implemented in Rwanda between 2005 and 2012, in response to the huge number of accused *genocidaires*.

**Gakondo** Traditional, origins, roots.

**Giti** Corruption in the music industry.

**Guma guma** Be strong.

**Gushishura** Literally, “to peel”; a practice in which R&B artists copy foreign songs and translate them into Kinyarwanda; sometimes used to describe the practice of stealing other people’s work more generally.

**Hutu** Ethnic group in Rwanda.

**Ibihozo** Lullabies performed with the *inanga*, dating back to Rujugira’s reign (late 18<sup>th</sup> century).

**Ibisigo** Dynastic poetry of the royal family, dating back to Rujugira’s reign (late 18<sup>th</sup> century).

**Ibisumizi** Literally, “roar” or “knights”. The name of the army belonging to Mwami Ruganzu Ndoli II in the late 1800s. During fieldwork, it was the name of a record label belonging to Riderman.

**Ibitaramo (Igi-)** Concerts, events, parties.

**Ibitekerezo** Historical narratives, myths, legends - dating back to Rujugira's reign (late 18<sup>th</sup> century).

**Ibyino** Dances.

**Ibyivugo (Icy-)** Warriors' praise poetry, dating back to Rujugira's reign (late 18<sup>th</sup> century).

**Icyunamo** Rwanda's annual genocide commemoration period.

**Igisope** Music produced by *Abasope* and influenced by Congolese rumba.

**Ihangane** Be patient.

**Ikembe** Lamellaphone.

**Ikinimba** A Hutu dance comprised of leaps.

**Ikintu** Literally, "thing"; slang for marijuana and vulva.

**Ikinyabapfura** To have the qualities of *imfura*.

**Ikirara** Girls and women who are morally 'lost' or 'spoiled'.

**Imana** God.

**Imbyino nyarwanda** Rwandan dance.

**Imfura** Firstborn; exemplary person.

**Imihamirizo** The male dance of the *intore*.

**Imihigo y'abahungu** The panegyrics of the boys.

**Imikenyerero** 'Traditional' female robes, worn today by women at formal and special occasions, such as weddings.

**Imishagiri** A female dance style characterised by its stylised gracious movements of the arms and the dancers' imitation of long-horned *inyambo* cows.

**Imuto** Youth (14-35).

**Inanga** Trough-zither.

**Indirimbo** Song, hymn.

**Ingabo** Common warriors, army troops (during the Nyiginya Kingdom).

**Ingando** Government re-education camps, later renamed *itorero*.

**Ingoma** Drums.

**Iningidi** Fiddle.

**Insengero** Churches.

**Inshinganzo z’umuryango** Family responsibilities; more broadly, the responsibilities and commitments of an association, community, company or political party.

**Interahamwe** The so-called ‘self-defence’ militias who carried out the 1994 Rwanda Genocide.

**Intore** During the Nyiginya Kingdom: elite warriors and dancers; In today’s Rwanda: *gakondo* dancers and President Kagame’s group of flatterers.

**Inyambo** A type of long-horned cow; royal cows.

**Inyenzi** Cockroaches; a dehumanizing term used to describe Tutsis before and during the genocide.

**Ishyari** Jealousy.

**Itorero** Literally, “the place where you select”; an age cohort that functioned simultaneously as a military and cultural training programme during the Nyiginya Kingdom. In post-genocide Rwanda, *itorero* refers to the re-education camps established by the government.

**Iwacu** Home, homeland.

**Kangura** Literally, “Wake Others Up”; the pro-Hutu Kinyarwanda and French-language newspaper established in 1990.

**Kina** Play.

**Komvayeri** Bus conductor.

**Kubaha** To be honourable, polite and respectful; to obey one’s superiors and to understand one’s position in society.

**Ku kabenzi** Kinyarwanda slang for “pork bars”.



**Kuvamo umuntu** To become somebody; to become an accomplished person.

**Kwihangana** To withstand.

**Mu muji** In town; town.

**Muhabura** A secret radio station set up by the RPF in eastern DRC during the “liberation struggle”.

**Mwami** King.

**Ndaje** I’m coming.

**Ntakibazo** No problem.

**Ruswa** Bribery, corruption.

**Ruswa y’igitina** Sexual corruption.

**Rwanda Rushya** New Rwanda.

**Tugende** Let’s go.

**Tutsi** Ethnic group in Rwanda.

**Twa** Ethnic group in Rwanda.

**Twese turi Abanyarwanda** We are all Rwandans.

**Ubaye umugabo** Now you are a man.

**Ubuhake** Historical client-patron “loyalty contracts” between Tutsi cattle owners and Hutu agriculturalists - established during Rwabugira’s reign (late 18<sup>th</sup> century).

**Ubumuntu** Humanity, being human.

**Ubumwe** Unity.

**Ubupfura** To be brave, honest, obedient, patient, private, reserved, self-disciplined and wise.

**Ubwiyunge** Reconciliation.

**Umuco gakondo** Cultural traditions; ancestral practices.

**Umuco nyarwanda** Rwandan culture; national culture.

**Umudugudu** 'Villages', or a collection of homes; the smallest administrative grouping.

**Umuduri** Musical bow.

**Umuganda** Obligatory communal cleaning and labour activities that take place on the final Saturday of every month.

**Umugore (Aba-)** Woman/wife.

**Umukobwa (Aba-)** Girl/unmarried woman.

**Umntu ukomeye** Big person, powerful person, leader.

**Umuyobozi (Aba-)** Boss.

**Urukiga** A Kinyarwanda dialect from the northwest of Rwanda.

**Yego** Yes.

## LINGUISTIC NOTE: PRONUNCIATION PROBLEMS

The vowel a is pronounced “ah” as in apple.

The vowel e is pronounced “ay” as in hay.

The vowel i is pronounced “ee” as in bee.

The vowel o is pronounced “o” as in obey.

The vowel u is pronounced “oo” as in food.

The consonant b is pronounced very softly.

The consonant c is pronounced “ch” as in chew.

The consonant g corresponds to a hard g in English as in gift.

The consonant h is silent as in ghost.

The consonant j corresponds to a j in French as in Jean-Paul.

The consonant l only exists in foreign words.

The consonant r is pronounced with a slight trill.

The consonant s is pronounced “ss” as in sat.

The consonant y is always followed by a vowel.

The combined consonants bw are pronounced “bg”.

The combined consonants rw are pronounced “RgW” as in Rgwanda

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Pop music is the most ubiquitous art form: it's in our cars, in shopping malls, and in restaurants. So when we analyse pop, we're examining not only the song or artist but also the broader audience, our mainstream culture, and how we live collectively in society. This feels like a critical discussion to be having right now.

- Tariq Hussain (2018).

This thesis will focus on popular music in the “New Rwanda” (*Rwanda Rushya*). Unlike most scholars of music in East Africa, who tend to engage with music after it has been produced, I will start from the lives of the people producing it in Kigali, Rwanda's capital city – examining their ways of operating, their interactions and their movements. The artists and producers with whom the study is concerned were born around the time of the 1994 genocide, and no longer wished to be defined by it. Rwanda is in a process of cultural reconstruction involving great transformations, including the returning to Rwanda of people from Uganda and other neighbouring countries where they had been a diaspora for decades. Many of the people in my research had lived outside of Rwanda, either as children or as adults, were multi-lingual and regularly travelled across national borders in east-central Africa. They were invested in the “New Rwanda”, and in becoming ‘good Rwandans’. Simultaneously, they had international links and cultivated a cosmopolitan outlook and style, as they struggled against the odds to realise aspirations for wealth, fame and influence – in Rwanda, in East Africa and internationally. This was occurring within Rwanda's strictly controlled political and social environment, with government restrictions and propaganda.

This thesis will reveal all kinds of ambiguities and tensions about identity, authenticity and belonging, which were being played out in the everyday practices of music production in Kigali. How did the artists and producers in the study understand their own activities in relation to the “New Rwanda”? What were their strategies of self-representation when producing popular music? Bearing in mind the complexity of social life in Kigali, I will explore the role of personal ties and social networks. Related to this, I will trace connections between Kigali and Kampala, the capital of neighbouring Uganda. Focusing on ‘Musical Traffic’ – both physical and digital – between Kigali-Rwanda and Kampala-Uganda, I will consider the role of culture in post-conflict reconstruction. Hence my title: ‘Musical Traffic’: Transnationalism and Reconstruction in Rwanda and Uganda.

My research has benefited greatly from the recent work of Ananda Breed (2006, 2007, 2009, 2014), Carine Plancke (2014, 2017), and particularly Andrea Grant (2014, 2015a, 2015b, 2017), who have written about theatre, dance and music in post-genocide Rwanda. My work is different to that of Grant (and others) in its focus on cross-border exchanges and transnational communities of music production. Rather than focusing on the importation of global signs *into* Africa as Grant does, I will explore links and contrasts between two neighbouring states and within one region of Africa. Grant’s thesis (2014) is primarily about Kinyarwanda-language hip-hop and the rise of new Pentecostal churches in Rwanda. By comparison, I will prioritise the stories and trajectories of Rwandans who were trying to make sense of multiple identities that had been forged across national borders – and whose success at least partly depended on maintaining transnational links and performing lyrics in numerous languages. Importantly, I

will discuss perceptions of returnees in Kigali, and the prevalence of jealousy (*ishyari*), resentment and mistrust.

Essentially, my research starts from life on the ground: Rwandans adopting and adapting genres, styles and languages; activating and blocking support networks; forming “collabos” with Ugandans and other international artists and producers; nurturing aspirations; encountering obstacles; travelling physically and digitally; circumventing state regulation while drawing on official government rhetoric and occasionally support; producing a song or music video and getting it into circulation; and through all of these activities, reflecting on, articulating and shaping the experience of living in 21<sup>st</sup> century Rwanda.

By paying close attention to popular music in Kigali, I will reveal new insights into the experiences and subjectivities of young, urban Rwandans. Aged between 18 and 35 (with few exceptions), the cultural producers in the study loosely belonged to the Rwandan category of *imuto* (youth)<sup>1</sup>. This is highly relevant in a country that is experiencing one of the highest urban growth rates, and where approximately “three in four Rwandans are under the age of thirty” (Sommers 2012: 10). Unlike other recent developments in Kigali aimed at expatriates and the elite, the contemporary pop music industry was created by and for Rwanda’s young people, and without significant help from the state or NGOs.

By ‘cultural producers’, I include recording artists, oral poets, audio and video producers, radio and television (TV) presenters, DJs, studio owners,

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<sup>1</sup> In Rwanda, the youth (*imuto*) is made up of persons aged between 14 and 35 (Republic of Rwanda 2000).

musicians, dancers, comedians, theatre directors and visual artists. Because of the wide range of genres, styles and forms at their disposal, I use George Marcus's (1997: 8) definition of cultural producers as "those who engage in intellectual work in various genres and who are difficult to pin down by any single speciality, craft, art, expertise, or professional role" (Pype 2012: 11). The socioeconomic status of the cultural producers must be specified. In my interviews with 36 people (32 males and 4 females), and my passing familiarity with many more, I found that all of them were struggling to make a living under serious economic limitations. This was in spite of the fact that their goals were as much about making money as they were about making art forms. They all had at least some secondary education. A few had university degrees, while many more had dropped out due to financial challenges. Others had struggled to keep up with the sudden language shift from French to English in 2008 (see chapter 2). With regard to aspiring recording artists, some of their lives were more desperate than others: those with university degrees tended to have an additional job to supplement their income and fund their artistic projects, while for others a career in music was seen as their one chance for success. Additional challenges for women artists will be addressed in the thesis, as will individual responses to hardship and suffering – particularly concerning religious faith, and the Rwandan philosophy of patience as an important step in life's journey towards the virtues of *agaciro* (a key cultural concept tied to self-respect, dignity and patriotism), self-reliance and self-discipline.

While I focus on the actions of cultural producers, I will also engage with audiences. Taking a cue from Karin Barber's (1997a: 358) work on African

popular culture, I understand production and reception as “moments in a cycle” rather than as two poles at opposite ends of a process (Pype 2012: 17). Audience expectations - both real and imagined - shape the work of artists, thus playing a “vital role in the constitution of texts and performances” (Barber 2007: 137).

My research draws on 12 months of immersive ethnographic fieldwork, primarily in Kigali. I also made trips to Kampala to follow Rwandan artists and producers in their efforts to collaborate with Ugandan stars, access superior studios, and tap new markets and audiences. Recognising the importance of language skills - not only in facilitating everyday social interaction and meaningful participant observation, but also in enabling accurate and sensitive translations of lyrics – I made strenuous efforts to learn Kinyarwanda and to use it in my research. I have included in the thesis a substantial appendix of the lyrics of 68 songs, transcribed in their original languages (primarily Kinyarwanda, but in many cases blending English, French, Jamaican Patois, Kirundi, Lingala, Luganda, Nigerian slang, and/or Swahili), and translated into English. I have also created a hand-written mind map in order to map out connections between people and places, which will give the reader an insight into the necessarily complicated, messy and fast-evolving nature of ethnographic research with mobile people from diverse backgrounds (Appendix VI). When analysing my research data, the mind map was also useful in stimulating reflexivity about how I was perceived, and thus how I could access individuals and their networks. A table of Rwandan cultural producers and a list of Ugandan artists can be found in the appendices IV and V.



## Introducing Rwanda and Uganda: geography and demographics

Rwanda is a small, landlocked country in east-central Africa (see fig. 1.1.). Breathtakingly beautiful, it is situated within the vast territorial expanse of the Great Lakes Region. It shares its borders with Burundi, eastern DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo – formerly Zaire), southwestern Uganda and Tanzania (see fig. 1.2.). Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa (CIA 2017). With a poor and predominantly rural population who engage in mainly subsistence farming, the mountainous landscape is domesticated to an extraordinary degree (De Lame 2005). Competition for land and issues of soil erosion continue to be major problems for the country, as do droughts and deforestation (Beswick 2011). Rwanda's climate is temperate, with two main rainy seasons (from mid-March to the end of May and from October to November). An excellent network of roads has been maintained since the government hired Chinese road builders in the 1980s (Gourevitch 2000: 32).

Rwanda is composed of three ethnic groups, all of whom speak Kinyarwanda, a tonal noun class language of the Bantu family. In the early 1990s, the Hutu majority constituted about 85% of the population, while 14% were Tutsi and 1% were Twa<sup>2</sup> (Corey and Joireman 2004: 74). In Kinyarwanda, adding respectively the prefix *umu-* or *aba-* to the root of *-Hutu*, *-Tutsi* or *-Twa* forms the singular and plural of these nouns. *Umuhutu*, then, refers to a singular member of the Hutu ethnic group, while *Abahutu* refers to several. However, since most Rwandans simply say Hutu, Tutsi or Twa, I have adopted this convention

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<sup>2</sup> For a rare focus on the Twa 'pygmies' of the African Great Lakes Region, see Lewis (2001).

throughout my thesis. An estimated 93.4% of Rwanda's population are Christians, while 1.8% are Muslims and 4.8% belong to the categories of "other", "none" or "unspecified"<sup>3</sup> (ibid). Remarkably, around two-thirds of the population are under 25 years old.

Similarly, Uganda has one of the youngest and most rapidly growing populations in the world. In comparison to Rwanda's total population of almost 13 million, with approximately 1 million living in Kigali, Uganda is home to more than 44 million people, with about 1.5 million living in Kampala (CIA 2017 – see also fig. 1.3.). Uganda is composed of more than nine ethnic groups: Baganda (16.5%), Banyankole (9.6%), Basoga (8.8%), Bakiga (7.1%), Iteso (7%), Langi (6.3%), Bagisu (4.9%), Acholi (4.4%), Lugbara (3.3%), and other (32.1%) (2014 est.) (ibid). The official languages of Uganda are English and Swahili, with an additional 45 vernacular languages being spoken (World Atlas 2017). In Rwanda, the official languages are Kinyarwanda, English and French, with Swahili becoming its fourth language in 2017 (*Africanews* 2017). Compared to other African countries, Rwanda is unusual for having only one indigenous language. According to a 2010 article, approximately 90% of Rwanda's population can only speak Kinyarwanda (Freedman and Samuelson 2010). Moreover, the ability to speak it well is considered a critical element of "Rwandaness". Returnees from other countries are often scolded for speaking "bad Kinyarwanda", despite their fluency in English and/or French (ibid).

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<sup>3</sup> More specifically, Roman Catholic 49.5%; Protestant 39.4% (includes Adventist 12.2% and other Protestant 27.2%); other Christian 4.5%; Muslim 1.8%; animist 0.1%; other 0.6%; none 3.6% (2001); unspecified 0.5% (2002 est.) (CIA 2017).



**Figure 1.1.** Location of Rwanda in Africa. [Sourced: <https://www.mapsland.com/africa/rwanda/detailed-location-map-of-rwanda-in-africa>]



**Figure 1.2.** Rwanda and Burundi. [Sourced: <https://www.infoplease.com/atlas/rwanda>]



Foreign-made films, such as *Hotel Rwanda* (2004), have since attempted to portray the atrocities that took place in Rwanda<sup>4</sup>. Yet, Western media outlets have largely ignored alternative narratives emerging from this fast-changing nation, such as stories of progress, healing and growth<sup>5</sup>.

Since the 1994 genocide, Rwanda has attracted an enormous volume of research, mostly covering topics such as justice and reconciliation, political space, regional patterns of conflict and violence, and rural poverty and land (Clark and Kaufman 2008; Ingelaere 2014; Lemarchand 2009; Pottier 2002; Reyntjens 2013; Straus and Waldorf 2011). While there has been much literature on governmental shortcomings in relation to standards of social equity, liberal democracy and human rights (Booth and Galooba-Mutebi 2012: 379-340), researchers have been less attentive to the everyday lives of 'ordinary' Rwandans, i.e. those who are not members of the political elite (Barber 1987: 3). My research does not focus on the actions of politicians. Nor is it about ethnic negotiations after the genocide, although I recognise the significance of historical events when discussing the reconstruction of the "New Rwanda". Instead, this thesis concerns the everyday lives of young cultural producers in Kigali, and the ways in which they attempted to establish a "bright future" (*ejo hazaza heza*) beyond the traumas and grief of the past.

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<sup>4</sup> Other films include *100 Days* (2001), *Shooting Dogs* (2005) and *Sometimes in April* (2005).

<sup>5</sup> In July 2018, I was invited to the University of St Andrews to participate in an international conference that aimed to address this silence (Rwandan Stories of Change 2018). The conference was organised by Professor Nicki Hitchcott and Dr Hannah Grayson, and brought together scholars, practitioners and artists to share stories of change from the "New Rwanda". It formed part of a larger project that aims to understand the impact of the genocide, with a particular focus on the expression of 'post-traumatic growth', "a concept that refers to the positive psychological changes an individual can experience when coming to terms with a challenging and often traumatic life experience" (Blackie et al. 2017: 64 – see also Grayson 2017; Joseph 2011).

Not everyone living in today's Rwanda directly experienced the genocide. In fact, many of the country's citizens were born after 1994, or returned to Rwanda from neighbouring countries after the killings had stopped. During the Hutu Revolution of 1959, an estimated 10-14,000 Tutsis were massacred, leading to the first exodus of "thousands of Tutsi families and hundreds of Tutsi chiefs" (Carney 2013: 124). Approximately 750,000 former Tutsi refugees returned to Rwanda in the years following the genocide: "nearly a one-to-one replacement of the dead" (Gourevitch 2000: 230). The majority returned from English-speaking Uganda and settled in Kigali, with smaller numbers from French-speaking Burundi and eastern DRC. Others came from Kenya and Tanzania, or from overseas in Europe and North America. It is therefore not uncommon for people in Kigali to ask one another, "Where were *you* in '94?" These developments have contributed to an increasingly diverse and fast-changing society in Kigali. They have also led to the emergence of new social categories, reflecting important hierarchies and linguistic tensions in post-genocide Rwanda (see chapter 2).

Undoubtedly, the years since the genocide have seen dramatic transformations in Rwanda's capital city, with the construction of businesses, homes, hospitals, hotels, restaurants, schools, and "related infrastructure to support an influx of expats and foreigners" (Apol 2015: xx). Kigali is now known for being one of the safest and cleanest cities in Africa. There is only one cinema and no national theatre, but plenty of bars, music studios and nightclubs. The media has been privatised and growing numbers of women and men are resisting the cultural understanding that women belong in the home. The new RPF

government has implemented an ambitious modernisation programme that aims to unite Rwandans with equal rights for all, regardless of ethnicity or gender (Republic of Rwanda 2000). The use of ethnic labels has been stigmatised and strict laws on genocide ideology and “divisionism” are enforced (Reyntjens 2013: 64). Undoubtedly, Rwanda is trying to move on from its difficult past.

This is not to deny the ongoing suffering of many Rwandans. During the civil war and genocide (1990-1994), families were fractured and individuals traumatised beyond comprehension. The wounds to society as a whole remain deep and inescapable. Some of the people I got to know in Kigali lost their entire families in the genocide. Others, more than twenty years later, have only recently found and buried the remains of their loved ones. While some people have only now decided to move home to Rwanda, others are seeking opportunities to study or work abroad. In everyday life, ‘Kigalians’ (i.e. inhabitants of Kigali) do not advertise their ethnicity. Nor do many of them want to talk about the horrors of the past. However, the memory of the genocide is brought back to mind every April when it is memorialised: “medical personnel stand ready, as do pastors, psychiatrists, and others trained to aid individuals whose memories threaten to overwhelm them” (Apol 2015: 86). During this highly organised period of mourning (*icyunamo*), the playing of music in public is banned except for memorial songs, a genre in their own right.

The first time I encountered *icyunamo* was in April 2011. My boyfriend at the time, a Tutsi, returned home one morning shaking after attending an all-night vigil. He shared with me some of his memories that continued to profoundly



disturb him: watching his mother's life being threatened while she carried his baby brother on her back; waking up next to somebody sleeping, only to realise that person was dead; witnessing members of the *Interahamwe* (the militia who carried out the genocide) torturing a disabled man from his community; the bloated dogs and rats that had started to feed on human bodies; the immense suffering of his great-grandmother, who was forced to watch dozens of her family members being attacked with machetes and then thrown into a pit to die (she apparently begged the assailants to kill her as well, but they told her they wanted her to die slowly from grief); and his father - once an engineer, now a driver - being wrongly accused by a jealous neighbour of committing genocide crimes. His mother secretly recorded the neighbour admitting this was a lie, thus saving her husband from prison. For years after the genocide, the mere sight of a machete or the sound of a whistle – which were used by perpetrators of the genocide to communicate that it was time to kill - were both common triggers for survivors, often causing them to scream in terror, run away and hide.

Between 2006 and 2010, an American professor of literature, Laura Apol, conducted a series of writing-for-healing workshops in Kigali. In collaboration with her Rwandan colleagues, she worked with survivors of the genocide, with the purpose of reducing post-traumatic stress and enabling psychological healing. Following this, she wrote a book of poetry herself, based on her relationships with and understanding of people post-genocide. Her poem *Dry Bones* stood out to me as articulating the invasive, chaotic and painful nature of traumatic memories. The following lines, in particular:

For sixteen years

Louise has carried her family  
in her heart. Without warning  
a memory will intrude: a piece of cloth,  
a turn of head, a bit of song (Apol 2015: 35).

Understandably, memories of the genocide continue to haunt the lives of many Rwandans, young and old.

Despite this, the Rwandans in my research did not wish to be defined by the 1994 genocide, an idea expressed in Malaika Umwamahoro's poem *Rwanda is NOT Hotel Rwanda!!!* (See below) Malaika Umwamahoro is a well-known spoken word artist and actress. She was born in Kigali in 1990, the year that the civil war started in Rwanda. For this reason, her mother named her Angel Umwamahoro (literally, "Angel of Peace"). It was only recently that Angel changed her first name to Malaika (a Swahili name that also means Angel), due to her apparently wanting an "authentically African name". Like many of the young cultural producers in my research, Malaika Umwamahoro spent her early years living in Kampala. Following this, she moved to the United States before returning to Rwanda when she was 11 years old. As an aspiring actress, Malaika Umwamahoro toured internationally with Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company (see chapter 3 for a discussion on this theatre company). Later, following a spoken word performance for the First Lady, she became a recipient of the Rwandan Presidential Scholarship for excellence in performing arts. She used her sponsorship to study for a BA in Theatre at Fordham University, New York. The poet has since represented Rwanda at numerous state events, such as the African Union (AU) Summit 2006, which took place in Kigali.

***Rwanda is NOT Hotel Rwanda!!! [2013]***<sup>6</sup>

Malaika Umwamahoro, Rwanda-Uganda-United States; English and Kinyarwanda.

Rwanda- is not *Hotel Rwanda*

No-

Rwanda is the heart beating life of Africa-

The world's example and definition of hope, resilience and ambition

If you haven't yet heard,

listen

Grab a pen and learn-

Because Rwanda is a lesson.

Rwanda is where the great Kivu lake

rests in-

Where the birds of the Nyungwe forest

nest in

And the foreign investors fly all the way to

invest in

What's happening right now in Rwanda

is interestin'

And it's amazing to be a part of and watch...

Watch Rwanda...

Rwanda is

Tens of growing cities

Hundreds of opportunities

The land of a thousand hills

The faces of a million smiles

And just

one people-

We are united back home-

Where I come from...

In Rwanda there is freedom

Where we live in peace

and live as we please

*Yemwe simvuga amahanga* (Hey I'm not talking about other nations)

*Nda vuga iwacu murwanda* (I'm talking about my homeland Rwanda)

*Ahari kubera ibitangaza-* (The place where miracles are made-)

Rwanda is

birds and lakes,

lights and city streets,

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<sup>6</sup> A video of Malaika Umwamahoro performing this poem is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cscCs1oLDAQ>

volcanoes and silver backs,  
restaurants,  
cinemas and coffee beans,  
teas, industries, electricity and honey bees...  
I come from the earth's last piece of paradise

A big hearted land  
where my people  
chose forgiveness  
over the atrocities they witnessed  
A land  
where we are not afraid to speak the truth  
A land  
where there is room for the youth  
A land  
where one people work hard hand in hand  
to demand  
justice and dignity-

We come from a land-  
That has risen from the ashes of sorrow  
to the rose blossom of tomorrow  
A land  
of *agaciro*  
We come from that land

So NO-  
Rwanda is not *Hotel Rwanda*-  
We will not be defined by the genocide  
Rwanda is  
a land of pride-  
The home to  
dreamers, believers and achievers,  
learners and teachers,  
humans and creatures  
The heart beating life of Africa-  
The world's example and definition of hope, resilience and ambition  
If you haven't heard yet  
Yo, I hope you listened-  
Because Rwanda is a lesson! (Appendix I, Poem II)

When Malaika Umwamahoro composed her poem in 2013, she clearly had in mind an international audience: "We are united back home-/Where I come from..." she tells us with conviction. Against the dominant image of Rwanda as a

place where machetes are cut into flesh, she presents the “New Rwanda” as she and others have come to see it. Malaika Umwamahoro’s poem is reminiscent of numerous conversations and song texts that I encountered during fieldwork. Here was a young Rwandan who found it impossible not to look back but was also determined to look forwards. A Rwandan who spoke of “hope, resilience and ambition”; forgiveness, unity and peace; beauty, perseverance and progress; and *agaciro*: a key cultural concept tied to self-respect, dignity and patriotism. These themes are all present throughout my thesis.

Importantly, the image presented by Malaika Umwamahoro in her poem is in line with official government rhetoric. As I discuss throughout my thesis, the Rwandan government exerts strict control over socio-political discourses. Yet, this does not mean that Malaika Umwamahoro does not believe in what she says. In this case, her personal feelings seem to coincide with those of the government. During a conversation over dinner, Malaika Umwamahoro showed me a tattoo on her shoulder of the current political party. “But Ceri”, she told me with passion in her voice when discussing the limitations of the government:

If it wasn’t for the RPF the genocide would still be happening in Rwanda!  
War would still be happening in Rwanda! And still nobody would have  
stopped it. The RPF are the ones to stop all those killings. I owe them my  
life!

During countless other conversations with people in Kigali, they told me how they had experienced “the worst” and were fundamentally grateful to the RPF for providing security and development.

Here, it is important to emphasise that many other viewpoints also exist within and outside of Rwanda. In his work on rural Rwanda, for example, Bert

Ingelaere discusses how a large part of the population does not feel “liberated” by the RPF: “On the contrary, many suggest that they look forward to a liberation *from* the RPF” (2010: 45). Certainly, there is an urban bias in my understanding of the country. I focus on the viewpoints of young Kigalians (who in themselves are no way homogenous), many of whom are Tutsi returnees from Uganda. It is therefore imperative to understand that my thesis is not trying to be representative of the lives of *all* Rwandans. In order to gain a fuller picture, one must consult with research on rural Rwanda and on diaspora populations – for example, Hutus who fled to eastern DRC after the genocide (see chapter 2).

### **Connected, but different: a brief comparison of Kigali and Kampala**

I love Rwanda for being calm. It's a place where you can chill and get peace of mind. And of course no raucous! The best thing is the security we do have in Rwanda. Me I like to stay where there is no chaos.

- A Rwandan artist discussing Rwanda.

Uganda is a place where everyone does what they want. If they pass a rule, nobody obeys. When Museveni came into power, me I believe he made one mistake: he gave people too much freedom of speech. From being good, Ugandans started to abuse it.

- A Rwandan artist discussing Uganda.

Kigali is a silent city. It's not a place where people are free. Everyone is afraid of something. They don't enjoy. They *pretend* to enjoy. Kampala it's a good city. You don't have to be scared that you can't do this or such and such. Everyone does his thing without thinking of everything. You just have to be you. And food is cheap! Kigali is very expensive city in East Africa. Somehow Rwanda is hard, even to find a job.

- A Ugandan artist comparing Kigali and Kampala.

An overall focus on links and contrasts between Kigali and Kampala forms a major part of my thesis. In this section, I offer a brief comparison of the cities, as described by the cultural producers in my study. Despite enduring historical connections between Rwanda and Uganda (see chapter 2), the capital cities of these two nations are strikingly different in character. In many ways, Kigali – with its clean streets, security and social order - defines itself in opposition to Kampala - with its piles of rubbish, street food vendors and “disobedient” citizens. In the words of a Rwandan audio producer:

In Kampala, there is a lot of noise! And a lot of chaos! And the security is not that tight. Anyone can come and grab your phone. That’s why Kigali is best... Kampala is so ugly! Sorry to say that but comparing to Kigali you know? I like Kampala because of the entertainment or whatever, but also I hate it because it just looks so *bad!* The roads! And everyone is cooking food next to the rubbish!

When travelling with cultural producers between Kigali and Kampala, lively debates ensued about which city they prefer: “beautiful Kigali” with its rules and regulations or “chaotic” and “dangerous” Kampala, with its perceived freedoms and opportunities provided by a far less supervised informal economy<sup>7</sup>. Perceptions of Kampala as a dangerous city were not helped by the recent murders of several popular artists, including AK47 Mayanja (*New Vision* 2015) and Radio from the Goodlyfe Crew (*Nairobi News* 2018). In most cases, the Rwandans I spoke to preferred Kigali overall, while Ugandans preferred Kampala. Exceptions to this are revealed throughout my thesis.

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on Kigali’s ‘Master Plan’ and the strict policing of ‘security issues’, such as informal settlements and informal traders, see Goodfellow and Smith (2013).

In their analyses of post-genocide Rwanda, a number of scholars have engaged with notions of “silence” or “quiet insecurity” (Grant 2014, 2015b). On this subject, Tom Goodfellow (2013) has written an article that compares “silence” and “noise” in urban politics in Rwanda and Uganda. He argues that while riots in Uganda are a meaningful form of political participation (rioting has become an important mode of engagement between vendors and state authorities, for example), the absence of overt riots in Rwanda is due to people understanding “the *value* of silence” (ibid: 449). According to Goodfellow, Kigali’s “politics of silence” (meaning an aversion to protest and noise which has become a social norm in Rwanda) is not only a consequence of state intervention. Nor can it be fully explained by Rwanda’s so-called “culture of obedience” (ibid: 446). Instead, Goodfellow states that some people have internalised certain aspects of the government’s agenda for orderly, secure urbanisation. Certainly, the Rwandans in my research valued order and security highly. On this topic, an older musician, teacher and returnee from Canada said the following:

Before '94 it was all possible. Now everything must be in order. Like *order*. Now, everything in Rwanda is done thoughtfully and carefully. The government must build a *country* and *people* at the same time. It's my duty to build people. It's gonna take time (The Mighty Popo 2015, int.).

Interestingly, research conducted in rural Rwanda between 1988 and 1990 suggests that this way of thinking is not unique to the current political climate. In her detailed ethnography, Danielle De Lame notes that status in Rwanda is linked to self-control and measured conduct (2005: 328). More significantly, she claims that the “quest for order reflects the dread of chaos which apparently threatens whenever forms slacken” (ibid: 336). In the decades before the genocide, this



apparently made Rwandan celebrations increasingly grave, formal and rigid (ibid). If De Lame's observations were reflective of the state of mind of Rwandans pre-genocide, then it is hardly surprising that the Rwandans in my research post-genocide felt that way.

Nonetheless, the valuing of "silence", social order and security is encouraged by the current RPF government. According to official government rhetoric, the RPF "liberated" Rwandans in 1994. Moreover, President Kagame regularly implies that he and only he can sustain peace in Rwanda. Just one example of this occurred in April 2015, during his campaign to stay on as president (see chapter 2). *The New Times Rwanda* - a newspaper widely understood as being the mouthpiece of the government - produced several stories with headlines such as the following: "Kagame: Security, freedoms must be guaranteed past 2017".



**Figure 1.4.** *The New Times Rwanda*. [In Print] 03 April 2015. [My photograph]

Whereas many of the people in my study seemed to buy into the idea of Kagame as saviour – and certainly valued social order and security – others (and sometimes the same individuals) engaged in forms of covert resistance (Goodfellow 2013: 446). One example of this was people’s attitudes towards participating in *umuganda*; obligatory communal cleaning and labour activities that take place on the final Saturday morning of every month. During fieldwork, most of Kigali’s cultural producers and other young people I know managed to

avoid community cleaning. Instead, they looked at *umuganda* as a day to enjoy a “lie in” after partying the night before! Other forms of covert resistance included signing petitions to stop the Mayor of Kigali from closing popular nightclubs. Below, I discuss the effects of noise pollution regulations on Kigali’s music scene. I detail various reactions and responses to this by cultural producers, music fans and journalists.

### **Practising self-reliance under noise pollution regulations**

*Umugabo arigira yakwibura agapfa* (A man relies on himself or else he dies).

- A popular Rwandan proverb.

In September 2015, I travelled to Musanze to attend Rwanda’s annual gorilla naming ceremony, *Kwita Izina*. The event is organised by the Rwandan Development Board (RDB) and President Kagame made an appearance. Turning away from the VIP tent and directly addressing the masses, Kagame began his speech by saying, “*Mugire amahoro, ubumwe n’ubwiyunge. Amashyi, nga ‘kachi kachi!’*” (Have peace, unity and reconciliation. Clap your hands, oh ‘kachi kachi!’ [The sound of clapping]). Kagame told the impoverished people in the crowd that Rwanda is not meant to be poor, that Rwandans need to fight to get out of poverty, and that people in Musanze like them are known for being hard-working. Kagame emphasised the concept of *agaciro* (self-respect, dignity and patriotism), and the value of self-reliance and self-discipline (see also chapter 5). Cultural producers in Kigali have internalised the notion of self-reliance as being crucial to their success. “In Africa we have a saying”, one aspiring celebrity told me:

A mother frog is never getting its children from the hole. It's only the kid who has to jump up from the hole. So, that's it for the time being when we have no money. We have to find our own solution to the problem.

Kagame concluded his speech by reminding his citizens to “become job creators, not job takers”. Yet rather than receiving any assistance from the state, such as financial support, cultural producers were facing numerous state-controlled obstacles such as the noise pollution regulations.

When conducting my research, it soon became apparent that Kigali City Council (KCC) want a quiet city. This was contributing to cultural producers being unable to earn a living. The issue of noise pollution first emerged in 2008, when *The New Times Rwanda* published several appeals for noise pollution laws. A news story entitled ‘Can the Mayor please do something about noise pollution!’ contained extracts from a letter apparently sent in by a member of the public: “City Hall has a very good policy on plastic bags...why do they not enforce noise pollution as well?” (Bosco 2009) For environmental reasons, plastic bags were outlawed in Rwanda, in 2006 (Sommers 2012: 12-13). According to Turner, the Rwandan government stages development and progress through performances, such as the banning of plastic bags (to stage environmental conscience), the ordering of people to wear shoes in public spaces (to stage wealth and civilisation), and the ordering of school children to have clean hands (to stage hygiene and progress) (2013: 267)<sup>8</sup>. Two years later, in 2010, KCC imposed a ban on music shows, church concerts, house parties and other social gatherings that go on beyond midnight during Christmas time and New Year. According to

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<sup>8</sup> This reminds me of my time working for OLPC, when appearance seemed to come before substance. Journalists photographed children with XO laptops they rarely used, in order to stage technological and educational progress (see also Whatley 2011).

KCC Director for Communications, the reason for this was to reduce “drink driving, fights, noise pollution and other crimes” associated with the festive period (Kanyesigye 2011 – see also Gatera 2013).

By 2013 public criticism of noise pollution policies was becoming more pronounced, as was discontent with other regulations that were “hastily enforced without adequate preparation” (Kaitesi 2013)<sup>9</sup>. The Rwanda Hotels and Restaurants Association (RHRA) decried the noise pollution guidelines of 2013, which require bars, churches and entertainment spots to fit soundproof equipment in their premises (Babijja 2013). According to Rwanda Environment Management Authority, noise pollution is determined when sound goes beyond 80 decibels (dB) (Tumwebaze 2014a). In 2014, a number of church owners were arrested, and their sound equipment confiscated for “violating laws against noise pollution” (ibid). Also arrested in the same operation were eight bar owners and one DJ, whose “joints were [allegedly] generating unbearable noise” (ibid – see also Tumwebaze 2014b).

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<sup>9</sup> Another example is billboard vetting, whereby all content for billboards in Kigali must be approved by the city authorities prior to being put out for public consumption (Kaitesi 2013). During my period of research, people were complaining about the introduction of full pedestrian, car-free zones (*The East African* 2015), and the time when KCC unsuccessfully tried to “kick motorcycle operators out of town so that it could reduce commotion” (Rugira 2016).



**Figures 1.5., 1.6. and 1.7. (Above and below)** In 2011, Nyamirambo’s “party buses” (nicknamed for their playing of very loud music) were banned when the government introduced newer and bigger buses<sup>10</sup>. [My photographs]

<sup>10</sup> Influenced by Nairobi’s *matatu* culture (Wa Mungai 2009), the privately-owned minibuses were “pimped” with customised images of African and American celebrities, flashing lights, graffiti and vibrating sound systems. They transported passengers cheaply between Nyamirambo and *mu muji* (town). When the buses were banned in 2011, the mostly Muslim owners quickly went out of business. According to one of my informants, many of them moved to Uganda.





The arrests of church and bar owners and DJs prompted *The New Times Rwanda* to release another article entitled, 'Debate: Are we going overboard with noise pollution restrictions' (Bucyana and Karemera 2014). In the article, Patrick Bucyana argues that noise pollution laws are necessary and that other countries can learn from Rwanda's discipline. In contrast, journalist Dean Karemera jokes that since many of the bars affected are not in residential areas it must have been the mosquitoes who complained! He also makes a serious remark that noise pollution regulations are "hurting businesses and ultimately people's source of income". Notable points made by members of the public include, "I think Kigali will be dead by 2015. I'm happy when I spend a weekend in Kampala... We have the safest and cleanest city but the most boring too" (ibid). When discussing this with an audio producer, he said: "I don't think [the government] values music. There's a Ministry of Sports and Culture, but 98% of their work is sports". Other comments made by cultural producers include:

At least we used to make some money playing in local bars. That small amount would help us to pay for our videos. But most of the artists now are just sitting at home coz they can't make noise in the bars. Today is Friday night. Look where we are seated now? We are seated in a bar. The person listening to this interview, can you tell we are in the bar? It's quiet! But Kampala, it's crazy man! It's Friday, we need to party!

And:

What annoys me a lot is when you have the clearance... You show the police you have authorisation, but they don't care. They make life difficult. But you know in Rwanda it's all about your neighbour. They complain! They even shut down some churches. Even mosques when they are praying at 4am. That's bullshit! I don't agree! Everyone has the freedom to pray.

Since 2014 church leaders, cultural producers, music fans and venue owners have been asking for greater clarity and flexibility from KCC on noise



pollution policies. In response to this, an article was published by *The New Times Rwanda* (Tumwebaze 2014d) – and then another in the following year by the Rwanda National Police Management (RNP 2015) – that specifically details the law:

Article 37 gives authority to any competent institution to take a decision aimed at stopping any emission of noise that is harmful to health of biodiversity, disrupts the neighbourhood or damages the property... Article 108 also penalises anyone who ‘makes or facilitates in causing noise that may disturb road users and the neighbourhood’ with a fine ranging from Rwf10,000 to Rwf100,000’ [£10-£100]. Under Article 6000, ‘any person found guilty of making noise and night disturbance in a way that causes trouble among people is liable to a term of imprisonment of eight days to two months and a fine of Rwf50,000 to Rwf1 million [£50-£1,000] or both’... (Tumwebaze 2014d – see also Mwai 2014).

Noise pollution laws were unpopular among all the Kigalians I spoke to. One disgruntled pastor went so far as to be quoted in a newspaper, stating that “the police was ‘provoking God’ by arresting pastors” (Ntayombya 2014a). Demands were made for a designated area where people can party without being disturbed by the authorities (ibid – see also Mutabazi 2014; Ntayomba 2014b; Tumwebaze 2014c). A rather amusing news story describes how “a bunch of journalists were having some noisy lunch-time banter when one of them raised and whispered comically, ‘ssshi! Shut up, the city mayor is thinking!’” (Agutamba 2014). As well as becoming a newsroom joke, the article makes a convincing statement about the negative outcomes of noise pollution policies:

We are at a time when Rwandans are responding to the government call to start businesses, create wealth, create jobs, improve incomes and widen the tax base... But to showbiz entrepreneurs, they’re counting losses. At one popular restaurant with music theme nights, the manager has laid off two in-house deejays as there’s no need for them... (ibid).

I witnessed the police enforcing bans on music shows on many occasions. For instance, the Gakondo Group (see chapter 2) used to perform weekly at the Hôtel des Mille Collines but were forced to stop playing due to noise restrictions (Bizimungu 2016). Likewise, the Mucyo Band (see chapter 5) were forbidden from playing music in the evenings at the same hotel. Previously they had performed between 18:00 and 20:00 nightly, but this was reduced to Saturday and Sunday afternoons only for a pool-side buffet. One band member said the following on the matter:

According to the police who stopped us, the guests were disturbed. But they never talked to the hotel manager. So, we don't have a clue what or why, but the police said it was noisy and we have to stop. So now, we are waiting for that noise pollution instrument. The maximum level permitted is 120, but we never go beyond 70. So now, we are waiting for the confirmation letter from RDB and the police. Maybe afterwards we will continue like it was before (Constantine Muhingabo 2015, int.).

Although a sound meter was installed in the hotel in September 2015, it took until October 2016 for the government to grant permission for the music shows to resume (Tuyi 2016).



**Figure 1.8.** Sound level meter at the Hôtel des Mille Collines, September 2015. [My photograph]

Serge Nsanawe Ndekwe is one of Kigali's well-known entrepreneurs and the owner of several restaurants, nightclubs and bars. A returnee from eastern DRC, his businesses include a popular multi-purpose venue called Papyrus. During an interview, Serge described the difficulties he has faced since the noise pollution laws were implemented. According to Serge, he was not given adequate time to adjust to the regulations and despite his business plan being approved by RDB, who even provided him with a loan of \$1 million, Papyrus nightclub was forcibly closed on more than one occasion. It apparently took outraged members of the public complaining online for the re-opening of Papyrus, and the intervention of the President of Rwanda, for the issue to be resolved (Serge 2015, int.). When trying to avoid criticism, President Kagame employs a clever strategy of blaming those below him. His message is often that a policy is good, while its implementation is flawed (Clark 2018). The Rwandans in my research were

comfortable criticising the Mayor of Kigali and other politicians, but never the President himself.

### **Cultural production in Africa from the 1990s until today: deregulation, globalisation and circulations**

In order to situate Rwanda's music industry within a broader African context, it is important to first consider the effects of economic and political liberalisation on the deregulation of the media across sub-Saharan Africa. Together with the growing availability of new media technologies, I discuss the impacts of these developments on African cultural production from the early 1990s until today. In particular, I focus on the production and consumption of digital music. Following the lead of major theorists of globalisation, such as Arjun Appadurai (1990, 1996, 2010, 2013) – and others who have worked on transnational music production and performance more broadly (e.g. Bender 1991; Chikowero 2015; Kidula 2013; Knowles 2010; Shipley 2009, 2013a, 2013c, 2014; Taylor 1997; Turino 2000) - I take the position that it is no longer meaningful to discuss the nation-state *exclusively*<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, while it is important for researchers to highlight the stark differences that exist between African countries, we must not ignore the similarities, cross-border exchanges and transnational

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<sup>11</sup> See also Bob White's article on Afro-Cuban inspired and yet uniquely Congolese music, in which he explores dynamics between international commercial recording companies and local artists in Kinshasa (2002: 663). White's central argument is that: "Afro-Cuban music became popular in the Congo not only because it retained formal elements of 'traditional' African musical performance, but also because it stood for a form of urban cosmopolitanism that was more accessible – and ultimately more pleasurable – than the various models of European cosmopolitanism which circulated in the Belgian colonies in Africa" (ibid).

communities of practice that also occur between cultural producers and audiences across the continent (Mbaye 2015).

Since the early 1990s, there has been a dramatic transformation in African popular culture, partly brought about by economic and political liberalisation, which led to the deregulation of state-owned media across the continent (Barber 2018: 132-133). The bitter medicine of structural adjustment policies – imposed on African countries by international organisations from the mid-1990s onwards – “combined an emphasis on democratisation with an insistence on privatisation, massive cuts in state provision and the relaxation of import controls” (ibid). While the economic consequences were disastrous – and in most African countries contributed to situations of severe un- and under-employment – the deregulation of the media made possible a wave of new privately-owned newspapers and radio and TV stations, “run by local and international commercial interests, religious groups, politicians and NGOs” (ibid: 137). At the same time, the growing availability of new media technologies resulted in both an increase in the consumption of music genres such as hip-hop, R&B and reggae and a surge of digital music production output, especially following the availability of relatively easy-to-use music making software, such as Fruit Loops and Logic Pro (Mbabazi 2012: 17). In mostly urban spaces across Africa, recording studios equipped with keyboards, computers, music making software and microphones were set up, attracting huge numbers of young, aspiring artists, producers and managers, with a readiness to access and adapt new music from elsewhere (Barber 2018: 130-163).

These developments took place within the general context of globalisation. They have resulted in an outpouring of research on cultural production in Africa, with the effects of globalisation and the role of digital technologies emerging as key concerns (Askew and Wilk 2002; Kerr 2015; Larkin 1997; Merolla et al. 2009; Meyer 2010; Nyairo 2008; Shipley 2009; Weiss 2009). Much of this research has focused on the ways in which transnational goods and images, such as music genres, video production, fashion and slang, are understood, appropriated, recontextualised, or 'localised' by African cultural producers and audiences to generate new meanings specific to local contexts – for example, Matthias Krings and Onookome Okome's edited book *Global Nollywood* (2013) and Krings's *African Appropriations* (2015).

Yet, despite accelerating globalisation, much of the recent scholarship on music in Africa has tended to focus on the relationship between music and the nation (e.g. Ansell 2005; Askew 2002, 2003, 2006). These studies have often focused on a single music genre, such as Congolese rumba (White 2008), *kwaito*<sup>12</sup> in South Africa (Steingo 2005) or Ghanaian hiplife – which Jesse Weaver Shipley describes as “the Ghana-made soundtrack of a generation of urban youth” (2009: 633 - see also Osumare 2012). Similarly, Koen Stroeken presents an analysis of Tanzania's lively hip-hop scene, known as Bongo Flava, which emerged in the early 1990s and “boomed” at the turn of the century (2005: 489). Stroeken examines Bongo Flava and its relationship with nationalism, Tanzanian socialism, post-socialism, neoliberalism and processes of globalisation. In his

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<sup>12</sup> *Kwaito* developed in the 1990s. It incorporates “elements from house, garage and South African ‘bubblegum’ pop music in an electric mix based on a heavy beat” (Martin 2013: 294).

analysis of lyrics, he discusses how Bongo Flava became the “primary informal channel to publicly [and often graphically] ventilate social discontent” against the Tanzanian regime (ibid).

Like Stroeken, Alex Perullo (2011) discusses Tanzanian popular music in relation to the country’s political history. Focusing on Dar es Salaam, he makes connections between a number of music genres, revealing how all performers use similar creative practices to achieve profit, improve their status, and acquire social mobility and power. Perullo recognises that music can provide insights into people’s daily lives, while also understanding that since music exists within an economy of exchange and value, art forms can become consumer goods (ibid: xi). Thus, Perullo presents music in Tanzania as both a cultural and economic resource: “as work that people create, enjoy, and celebrate, and as a commodity that moves through an economy geared towards profiting from its social importance” (ibid).

In today’s market-oriented world, this is also true of the Rwandan and Ugandan music industries. While Uganda’s music industry is dominated by dancehall, *kidandali* (Ugandan dancehall) and ragga (a sub-genre of dancehall reggae), in Kigali, entwined cultural and linguistic influences feed into a particularly diverse but interconnected music scene. Rwandan artists straddle the boundaries between multiple genres and languages. In addition to just having fun, they do this to appeal to multiple music industries and audiences, thus increasing their chances of success and of gaining the kinds of profit highlighted

by Perullo. Music genres popular in Rwanda include Afrobeats<sup>13</sup>, Congolese rumba<sup>14</sup>, dancehall, *gakondo* (traditional), gospel, hip-hop, R&B, ragga, soukous, and (among more highly educated publics with access to the internet in Kigali and the diaspora) spoken word poetry. Languages spoken on the streets of Kigali and used in songs and poetry include English, French, Jamaican Patois (for dancehall and reggae inspired genres), Kinyarwanda (or I Kinyarwanda), Kirundi (from Burundi), Luganda (from Uganda), Lingala (from the DRC), Swahili (or Kiswahili, a *lingua franca* in east-central Africa), and Nigerian slang.

With increased migration and access to communications technologies, it is no longer meaningful to discuss these developments in the context of the nation-state exclusively. This is not a new idea and has been written about by numerous anthropologists and scholars working on transnationalism and migration (Kiwani and Meinhof 2011; Schiller and Faist 2010). From as early as 1990, Appadurai has argued that scholars must draw attention to what he refers to as “scapes” (or “global cultural flows”<sup>15</sup>), such as the movement of people and the circulation of forms, which are occurring at higher speeds and on greater scales than at any time in the past (1990: 306). By ‘forms’, Appadurai means to indicate:

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<sup>13</sup> Afrobeats (or Afropop) is not the same as Afrobeat, the music genre popularised by Nigeria’s Fela Kuti in the 1970s (see Veal 2000).

<sup>14</sup> The young Kigalians in my research described Congolese rumba as “old school”, despite them deeply respecting the Congolese legends who popularised the genre from the late 1950s (Bender 1991: 42; Pye 2006: 311; White 2008: 42).

<sup>15</sup> Appadurai (1990) examines the relationship between five dimensions of “global cultural flow”, which can be termed as follows: (1) Ethnoscapes: the movement of people across cultures and borders; (2) Mediascapes: the use of media that shapes the way we understand our imagined world; (3) Technoscapes: cultural interactions due to the promotion of technology; (4) Financescapes: the flow of capital across borders; (5) Ideoscapes: the global flow of ideologies.



[A] family of phenomena including styles, techniques, genres, vocabularies, and other widely recognised 'containers', which can be filled or inhabited by a specific voice, contents, messages and materials (Appadurai 2010: 2).

In today's digital age, people and music move physically and digitally, and "remain linked to each other through sophisticated capabilities" (Appadurai 1990: 306). For these reasons, scholars such as Janet MacGaffey and Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga have argued that anthropology can no longer be confined to single geographical locations:

[Researchers need to] move from single-site ethnographic observation and participation, to a multi-sited ethnography that crosses boundaries, follows networks and examines [the circulation of cultural forms] (2000: 5).

However, while globalisation and (more recently) transnationalism have been theorised extensively, scholars have tended to focus on the importing of global signs *into* Africa and have consequently overlooked transnationalism *within* Africa, which is arguably reflective of the continued significance of neo-colonial power relations between Africa and the West. Exceptions to this include Mojúbàolú Olúfúnké Okome and Olufemi Vaughan's (2011) edited book, *West African Migrations: Transnational and Global Pathways in a New Century*.

Finally, my own research reveals a tension that existed between fixedness and extraversion. By 'extraversion', I mean to indicate the idea that one's locality is dependent on, or connected to, outside places in some way – whether through cultural appropriation, economics, flow of ideas, migration, etc. According to Jean-Francois Bayart, "extraversion consists in espousing foreign cultural elements and putting them in the service of autochthonous objectives" (2005: 71). The cultural producers in my research were acutely aware of and open to

connections and influences outside of their national borders. At the same time, they wanted to preserve and celebrate 'authentic' Rwandan values and ideas (in themselves, social constructs) - often those imposed by the government. This is not a new idea: since achieving independence, governments and people across Africa have been faced with the difficult challenge of how to unite, 'modernise'<sup>16</sup> and be progressive, while preserving authentic cultural values and identities – a challenge that is especially difficult in Rwanda, due to the country's recent history. Although scholars have long understood that "globalisation is not synonymous with increasing cultural uniformity" (Bayart 2005: 4-5), anxieties about the loss of culture inform the practices of artists in Kigali. Interestingly (and somewhat ironically), these anxieties are related to the need for a new kind of "Rwandaness" (or "Rwandanicity"), in which all Rwandans are united as one people with one culture.

## **Methodology**

My ethnographic research draws on 12 months of immersive fieldwork that mostly took place in Kigali and Kampala, although I also travelled extensively throughout Rwanda, conducting various research trips and attending concerts (*ibitaramo*) and cultural events. Additional time was spent in southwestern Uganda, near the border of Katuna (or Gatuna if you are Rwandan), and among the diaspora in Brussels, Birmingham, London, Paris and Rotterdam. My main period of fieldwork occurred between November 2014 and October 2015. I have

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<sup>16</sup> See Geschiere et al. (2007: 1) for a critique of the simple model of progress from tradition to modernity, which implies that there is only one way to be modern, which comes from the West. Despite academics discrediting modernisation theory from the late 1960s onwards, it remains "a basic feature of the thinking and practice of international donor agencies, African elites and people in the streets" (ibid).

also lived, researched, travelled, volunteered and worked in Africa intermittently for over 12 years.



**Figure 1.9.** Rwandan cultural producers at a home-studio in Brussels, Belgium, May 2016. [My photograph]



**Figure 1.10.** Poster for a Rwandan diaspora event I attended in Birmingham, UK, July 2016. [My photograph]

In order to trace networks and exchanges between cultural producers in Kigali and Kampala, I travelled with artists and producers as they moved between

cities. My focus was on the Rwandan side, and my key informants were primarily male recording artists and audio and video producers. The term 'informants' refers to those people who I studied and learned from, and who also made suggestions for my research. As Julian Murchison points out: "You need not assume that you are the only person who is thinking, critiquing and analysing" (2010: 94). This is in contrast to the term 'participant', which refers to those people who take part in a controlled study.

In *Ethnography Essentials*, Murchison states that:

In order to learn about the complex dimensions of society and culture in action, the ethnographer almost certainly has to become involved on a personal level to one degree or another (ibid: 85).

That is what is meant by participant observation, a fundamental aspect of my fieldwork. Most of my research was carried out at recording studios, music venues (bars, nightclubs, stadiums, etc.), radio and TV stations, music video shoots, and on the buses that transport artists and fans between Kigali and Kampala. According to Murchison, true participant observation "involves doing both participation and observation at the same time and in an integrated fashion", although one of the dimensions may be emphasised at a given time (ibid: 88). After establishing reliable contacts, I was able to participate in Kigali's arts and media world. This greatly facilitated informal conversations with a wide range of individuals.

The ways in which I participated were mostly decided by my informants. As well as attending numerous music festivals, recording sessions and rehearsals, I participated in weekly dance and drama workshops at Mashirika

Performing Arts and Media Company. Due to historical and economic factors, Rwandans who create friendships with *abazungu* (white people) are often looked at by other Rwandans with admiration. It is probably for this reason – as well as artists wanting to perform a kind of “conspicuous cosmopolitanism” (Strong and Oseei-Owusu 2014) – that I was asked to act in a short film and appear in four music videos. In the words of one of my informants:

People like to use white people to make it look a bit sweeter. I am black and you are white. Do you know why it's good? Because the viewers see it's a *mix*. It's more international. Whoever sees that video, they see different cultures. And if you have a *mzungu*, your neighbour will be like 'Where did you get that *umuzungu* from?'... (Tino TBB 2015, int.).

In another instance, at a concert in Kigali, I was asked to MC in Kinyarwanda when the presenter could not make it. Later, I was pulled onto stage to dance with Chameleone of Uganda. Earlier that day, I had joined Chameleone's supporting artists when they went clothes shopping at Kimironko market. The man running the stall was a friend of the artists and they encouraged me to spend money, styling me in a baseball cap and red skinny jeans.





**Figure 1.11.** Attending dance and drama workshops with members of Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company, Kigali, 2015. [Courtesy of Mashirika]



**Figure 1.12.** MC-ing at a concert in Kigali, June 2015. [My photograph]



**Figure 1.13.** Dancing with Chameleone of Uganda at a concert in Kigali, June 2015. [My photograph]



At other concerts and video shoots, I helped to print posters and sell tickets, and was sent off to search for costumes, props and actors<sup>17</sup>. Because I owned a camera, I became a designated photographer and videographer, recording behind the scenes footage on several occasions. I also assisted with professional letter writing – for example, when cultural producers wanted to approach NGOs for support. Once it became known that I have a performance background (I play the piano, oboe and guitar and I am trained in ballet, tap and jazz dancing), I was asked to sing the chorus for several rappers in the studio. For one music group, I volunteered to run their social media activities. During the final five months of fieldwork, I lived with an artist (Benjah TBB) and an audio producer (Pacento) in Kwa Gisimba, Nyamirambo – Rwanda’s so-called “ghetto”. In addition to allowing me to spend all my time with cultural producers, this enabled me to gain a much deeper understanding of the economic hardships being faced by young people in Kigali: we slept on mattresses on a concrete floor, cooked using charcoal, rarely had access to electricity and never had running water. What we did have by the end was a set of shared goals as we worked together on various projects, a meaningful bond, and endless conversations that continue to this day. This also applies to my other key informants, such as the spoken word artist Eric 1Key (real name Eric Ngangare), who proved himself to be an excellent teacher and bridge between two worlds.

In August 2016, Eric 1Key published on his online blog a series of 11 song reviews that I wrote about his album (1key word 2016 – see also songs 6-16,

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<sup>17</sup> On one occasion, I spent an entire afternoon in Entebbe, Uganda trying to convince female shoppers to take part in a music video after the actual “video girl” failed to show up. (See chapter 3 for an explanation of what “video girls” are.)

Appendix II). This was after I had spent the month of March following him around Kigali as he went about his life. In every spare moment he had, Eric 1Key helped me to translate his album and understand the meanings behind it. For eleven consecutive days, he released one review each morning under the hashtag *#entre2decoded*. Four of my reviews were also published by the popular online blog *Africa in Words* (Whatley 2016a; Whatley 2016b; Whatley 2016c; Whatley 2016d), and a separate article was published by *True Africa* (Whatley 2016e). The reviews were described as “going viral” among Kigali’s spoken word artists. Certainly, they generated much discussion and led to my further acceptance within the artistic community. Some notable comments made on Twitter include: “Thank you Ceri Whatley, thank u @eric1key can now go back to my usual life, waking up n not refresh my emails for a new post every mrng”; and “She nailed it, Ceri really did come through... times I wanted more, guess she doesn’t need get her visa revoked hah? Still way to go @eric1key” (@lsumbabyose on Twitter, 26 August 2016). This last comment is yet another reminder of the state’s control over public discourse. It is also an early hint that not all young Kigalians are happy with the status quo. In chapter 7, I discuss the presence of political criticism in Eric 1Key’s lyrics.

During fieldwork, I undertook over 180 hours of Kinyarwanda language training. I also used translators whenever necessary. With the help of my Kinyarwanda teacher and another friend of mine, I transcribed and translated 68 carefully selected songs (Appendix II). When translating the lyrics, I applied as best I could the translation and back translation approach suggested by H Russel Bernard (2006). Whenever possible (with the limited funding provided for PhD

students), I followed these steps: (1) Ask a speaker of Kinyarwanda to listen to the song and transcribe the lyrics in Kinyarwanda; (2) Have the transcription checked by a different speaker of Kinyarwanda (ideally the artists themselves); (3) Have the lyrics translated into English by a bilingual person (I did this with my Kinyarwanda teacher and another friend of mine); (4) Ask a different bilingual person who is a native speaker of English to translate the lyrics back into Kinyarwanda (this wasn't always possible, due to my lack of resources); (5) Have all the translators discuss any inconsistencies together as a group (this involved numerous discussions over Skype). Because the songs also include several other languages (English, French, Jamaican Patois, Kirundi, Lingala, Luganda, and/or Swahili), I often relied on more than one person to complete a single text. During the process of translating the songs, I asked about the significance of certain words in relation to local meanings. This was time consuming, but necessary to improve the quality of my data.

To cross-check the accuracy of data and gather high-quality findings, ethnography tends to incorporate a number of different research methods and techniques (Dillman 2002: 477). Semi-structured interviews are often favoured in qualitative research as they offer an effective balance between structured and unstructured interviews, providing an “easy framework for discussion” without being too rigid (Bauer and Gaskell 2000: 40). In the final months of fieldwork – after building sufficient trust and rapport with my informants, and when I knew what kinds of questions would be most useful – I conducted 35 semi-structured interviews. The interviews were, in most cases, conducted in English. When this was not possible, an interpreter was used. The interviews usually lasted between

45 minutes and two hours and dealt with the life-histories of a wide range of cultural producers and entrepreneurs aged between 24 and 49 (see 'Interviews' in the Bibliography).

My approach is based on the belief that historical structural factors shape individual actions, while also emphasising human agency and individual choice. It was after reading MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga's (2000) insightful book *Congo-Paris: Transnational Traders on the Margins of the Law* that I came to understand the importance of collecting life-histories. In agreement with MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, I do not consider the life-histories I collected to be *exact* accounts of the past. However, I found them extremely useful in gaining a sense of a timeline; to connect my informants to their past, and to consider the significance of broader historical events on their lives 'today' (ibid: 22-24). I also asked questions about their sources of inspiration, hopes and dreams for the future, and reactions to specific music events and challenges they were facing. My final question was always to ask if they wanted to share with me information on anything not discussed. By paying close attention to what my informants chose to talk about, and to what emphasis they put on certain events, I was able to gain access into the ways of thinking of those individuals (ibid).

When analysing my interview transcripts, it became clear that there were many layers involved: layers that involved performing a persona, striking attitudes, or saying what was prudent or government-approved; layers of irony, as well as layers of personal experience and sometimes unusual self-revelation

stimulated by my interest. With this in mind, I treated my interviews as texts in themselves, as social facts according to Barber's definition:

Texts are the means by which people say things (about experience, society, the past, other people) and do things (affirm their existence, build and dismantle reputations, make demands, imagine communities, convene publics). And texts also are things – by which I mean that they are social and historical facts whose forms, transformation and dispersal can be studied empirically (2007: 200).

Interviewees consciously or unconsciously censor, emphasise, deceive, misremember, or provide partial accounts for a variety of reasons. Thus, it is important to consider the validity of the types of responses given. Whereas in some cases interview set-ups produce artificial responses, they can also provide a useful counterpoint to informal conversations (Barber 1987: 4). The comparisons often produce “interesting questions as the ethnographer attempts to account for and explain discrepancies” (Murchison 2010: 104). By closely observing how people choose to project themselves in an interview, we can distinguish between how they want to be seen and what they actually think. In other cases, it is the formality of the interview situation that empowers and authorises the interviewee to develop their thoughts more explicitly (Barber 2000: 16-17; Murchison 2010: 100). I certainly found this to be the case with the cultural producers I got to know best. Casual conversations were useful, but when I sat down with an individual and my dictaphone, they suddenly began to reveal all kinds of personal experiences that I would not have had access to otherwise. Notably, then, it can work both ways.

My multi-methodological approach also includes an analysis of performance styles, song lyrics and online materials, such as websites, blogs and

social media platforms. In order to provide an example of dance circulations within Africa, I created a video with a Rwandan producer, Arnold Mugisha. The video – ‘The World at their Feet: Popular Music Moves in Rwanda’ – features Babou and Titi Brown from a Kigalian dance crew, The Snipers. In their non-stop performance, they display a number of dance moves that were popular in Kigali (and Kampala) during fieldwork – in particular, *shoki* from Nigeria. The moves had been popularised by recording artists from 13 different countries, usually via one of their music videos after which the move was named. (See Appendix III for a link to the video and a table of songs, artists, countries and dance moves included.)

The University of Birmingham’s policy on research ethics has been observed and issues concerning identity have been addressed. If individual public figures expressed politically sensitive viewpoints, or simply told me something in confidence, then I anonymised that part of the interview or conversation under discussion. Otherwise, I have used their real names.

### **Research Challenges**

Ceri, you saw how hard it is to get someone to talk to you, just two hours! If you were not you - friendly, really listening to the people. Also, a girl - that helps. Un-married!

- From a conversation with a male, Rwandan friend.

When I first arrived in Rwanda, in September 2010, I knew nothing. I had recently graduated from the University of Birmingham, where I was awarded a First in African Studies with Cultural Anthropology. I had volunteered and travelled through much of southern Africa. During my studies, I had read a lot

about West Africa. But Rwanda? I had heard of the genocide, but nothing more. During my time working for OLPC – an international, non-profit organisation that provides children in developing countries with affordable, durable laptops (One Laptop per Child 2017) – and then as a primary school teacher at an international school, I was seduced (like so many others) by the country: “Come to Rwanda!”, I said after some time there: “It’s beautiful! It’s clean! It’s safe! The buses leave on time! There’s no corruption, just plenty of development!” Yet, over time I have learned that there are two worlds in Kigali: a world that the RPF government wants visitors to see - the new buildings, tarmac roads, business start-ups, statistics about women in parliament, etc. - and another world in which huge numbers of Rwandans are un- or under-employed, without running water or reliable electricity, living in houses with crumbling walls, hungry, and frankly depressed. In the words of a Rwandan artist:

In Rwanda, when you leave those beautiful main roads there is dust everywhere. [He sighs] People are still bathing themselves with a bucket. There is no water! For how long now has there been this water crisis? Even for rich people. You see them waiting in line to collect water in their Benz! [Laughing] But seriously, Kigali is beautiful but for how long? It’s built for who? The city plan is elitist. All over Kigali, new buildings are being built: offices, housing, coffee shops, restaurants, bars and gyms. But who are they for? Who can go there? You know in Kigali people are depressed. Don’t you hear them saying that thing all the time, “*ntakibazo*”? It means “no problem”. People aren’t excited about life. It’s all “*ntakibazo* this” and “*ntakibazo* that”. [As if to emphasise his point, the artist speaks in a monotone voice and stares vacantly ahead.]

Certainly, the Rwandan government is extremely talented at speaking the language of international aid donors, and creating a façade of democracy, development and peace (Turner 2013). In short, Rwanda is extremely complicated, confusing and controversial.

## RESEARCHING IN A COUNTRY OF DEEP SURVEILLANCE AND MINUTE CONTROL

“What does it feel like to live in a country where you are punished for telling the truth? Where you don’t know who you can trust?” These were the questions asked by a journalist in his (2014) book, *Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship*. In the book, Anjan Sundaram traces what he describes as the destruction of the free press in Rwanda, between April 2009 and December 2013. It includes an appendix listing more than 60 journalists who have been killed, arrested, disappeared, tortured, or forced to flee the country in fear of their lives after criticising the government, or simply contradicting the official narrative. Sundaram writes, “It can feel incredibly lonely living in a dictatorship where everyone describes the silence of fear as peace” (ibid). Was this not peace that I was witnessing? Were people truly scared?

Doing research in Rwanda was incredibly confusing and disorientating, and this took a psychological toll on me. In a country where very few people are prepared to speak openly about anything, how could I have sincere conversations with my informants? How could I learn? (This was not simply a case of needing to establish better rapport: neither my friends of over four years nor my ex-boyfriend were willing to speak their minds completely freely with me, or anyone else.) The President of Rwanda teaches citizens that anyone who criticises the government is in fact insulting Rwandan people, as well as the struggles that they have been forced to overcome following the genocide – an idea that many of my informants had bought into. As a white British citizen in Rwanda, what could I do



with that? How would I begin to engage critically with Rwanda when I ran the risk of losing my Rwandan friends and of being refused a visa in the future? But then again, as an academic researcher, how could I not engage critically? How would I convince my informants that I might criticise certain policies precisely because I care about them and their country? Finally, how might I escape the emotive topic of politics when its tentacles reach into everything, including the music scene?

The participation of the state in the private life of its citizens is not explicitly obvious to newcomers. Yet, it has been documented by recent scholars, such as Andrea Purdeková (2011), De Lame (2005: 451-452) and Ingelaere (2014). The entire country is divided into ‘villages’ of about 150 families called *umudugudu*. Each *umudugudu* has a chief and an informer, and orders are passed to and from the centre with startling efficiency. In this regard there is nowhere to hide in Rwanda: there is no anonymity, everyone knows everyone, people gossip, get jealous, make false accusations against each other, and go to extremes to demonstrate their loyalty to President Kagame – whether genuine or not. (For many it is genuine.) Regarding surveillance, Purdekova has written the following:

[There is] a spy per organisation and perhaps per office, and in fact [all newcomers to an organisation], foreigners and Hutu [and also researchers], are given someone to ‘watch’ them (2011: 488).

While this might sound extreme, it reminds me of the first time I crossed the border into Uganda. I was travelling alone and the Rwandan border official, sitting stiff with formality, took my passport from me. He looked me up and down, his face stern and his eyes fixed into a hard squint, and asked me, “How is Nash?” Nash is a Canadian friend of mine. I had stayed with him for a week or two when I first arrived in Kigali. Neither of us had met the border official before. He seemed

to want to let me know that I was being watched. It felt like a warning. Perhaps I was being paranoid, but I knew a fellow researcher working on a more sensitive topic: his home was broken into in the middle of the night and, while he pretended to sleep, armed guards stole his data. This is just one of many similar stories that I have heard.

Feelings of being under constant surveillance, both online and offline, prevail among the Rwandan population and self-censorship has become a way of life. Understandably, most Rwandans are reluctant to trust one another, and this inevitably had implications on my research. People often warned me that I might be poisoned, lied to or spied on. I was also asked many times if I was a spy. The questions were usually hidden within humour, but they were serious. For this reason, it was very difficult to establish deep and open relationships with my informants. The only solution to this was patience and time: since ethnographers are dependent on the cooperation and input of their research informants, we need to invest time in building trust and rapport with those under study (Murchison 2010: 16). This leads to greater research opportunities and to the collection of more reliable data, since informants are more likely to divulge fuller and more honest responses to those who they can trust (ibid: 89). In my case, it was helpful to think about what people did not say. In Rwanda, where secrecy is emphasised, “circulating and holding back information are cultural facts” (De Lame 2005: 14). I needed to understand why people refused to give information, or why they genuinely did not remember.



**Figures 1.14. and 1.15. (Above and below)** President Kagame attended *Kwita Izina* (Rwanda's annual gorilla naming ceremony), September 2015. [My photographs]



## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Another challenge to building relationships was the issue of sexual harassment. At the beginning of my fieldwork period, it was not easy to make friends with recording artists, most of whom were young, single men. Many of them wanted to become my boyfriend or wanted access to my perceived wealth and contacts<sup>18</sup>. As a young, female, unmarried, foreign researcher, I was not naïve to this. However, I was not fully prepared for the extent to which some people would go, or for my friends' (both Rwandans and internationals) complacency towards such behaviour. One evening, for example, I visited a former colleague and complained to him that a musician had tried to force himself on me. He had blocked my exit from the studio and I had 'love bites' all over my neck. To my horror, my friend laughed and said, "Well what did you expect? You're a young girl working with musicians". When discussing this with another friend, he commented that, "they should have found a more romantic way!" This obviously infuriated me: most of my contacts in Kigali were men who simply did not understand what it feels like to be working within a misogynistic, patriarchal community.

The issue of sexual harassment was also prevalent in Kampala. After meeting a DJ at an event, we arranged to meet the following day to discuss my research. Instead of learning about music, I had to endure comments such as, "We like to eat samosa! In Uganda, we like the triangle!" Moreover, "Don't you think me and Ceri make a nice couple? When I saw you dancing, I told him: 'This

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<sup>18</sup> One video producer refused to cooperate with me, due to him having been refused a visa to the UK.

girl is good at fucking!” After a few exhausting hours, I decided to leave. Reaching my hostel room, I immediately fell asleep, fully clothed and on top of the covers. My point being: “fieldwork ain’t always fun” (Lecoq 2002). For a long time, I felt like I was at the mercy of men for information. And some of the women also made things difficult, trying to set me up with their ‘brothers’. By the time I had been doing research for about six weeks, it was nearly Christmas and I seemed to be getting nowhere. Despite being familiar with Kigali, I still did not know where most of the studios were, who the artists were, or what the song lyrics were about. None of this basic information was easy to find. The music scene was somewhat hidden away: nobody trusted me, nobody wanted to help me (without something I could not give in return), and some artists pretended to know more than they did, consequently wasting my time. Others withheld information because they wanted me to spend time with them and not others, or because they were embarrassed that they were not included in a particular event, yet all the while being charming and friendly. “Perhaps I should just give up?” I thought. I had arrived in Kigali feeling assertive, capable and reasonably experienced, but my confidence started to crumble.

Finally, I met a visual artist at one of Kigali’s newly opened art galleries. He told me that his brother owns a music studio. At Narrow Road Studio, I was introduced to a group of artists and producers who were respectful, kind and welcoming. I started to enjoy my research and my contacts grew from there. Here I want to emphasise that I am not trying to suggest that sexual harassment only exists in ‘the field’. Nor am I trying to overly sexualise the ethnographic ‘other’. Sexual harassment and sexual violence occur everywhere. In fact, it has been

the topic of much attention and debate in recent news stories. However, fieldwork is a gendered experience, and first-time ethnographers must feel comfortable discussing the risks and challenges involved when entering an (often) unfamiliar social, cultural and political environment – where different understandings of reciprocity and exchange may be at play (Clark and Grant 2015). Despite our relative positions of privilege, as newcomers desperate to gather the data we need to complete our theses, we can become particularly vulnerable to unwanted sexual advances, especially if we believe that we must maintain relationships with our informants, as ‘gatekeepers’ to knowledge, no matter what (ibid).

## RESEARCHER AS OUTSIDER

Popular art forms are ambiguous, complex and difficult to interpret, which can be especially challenging for an outsider (Barber 1997: 8). Despite this, cultural distance can be positive, enabling researchers to adopt more objective and critical perspectives (Erlmann 1991: xvi). In their study of Congolese traders living in Paris, MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) found their collaborative approach to be particularly useful. Bazenguissa-Ganga is Congolese, and his language skills, personal contacts and intimate knowledge of the culture proved invaluable to the project. Meanwhile, MacGaffey, who is English, was able to “probe for the extra explanation needed to convey the depth of understanding that the insider takes for granted” (ibid: 21). As an outsider, I was able to maintain a certain amount of distance and independent judgment from the activities that I observed and participated in. I did not have an official research partner from Rwanda or Uganda, but I regularly shared my analysis with

my key informants and asked them for their feedback. This allowed them the opportunity to correct any misunderstandings and to elaborate further. According to Murchison, questions that start with “Why do you think that...?” can be helpful at this point (2010: 123). As I shared my analysis with my informants, I hopefully inspired in some of them a sense of ownership over the project.

## **Chapter outlines**

Without an awareness of history, contemporary Rwanda is incomprehensible. Thus, **chapter 2** offers a history of Rwanda in regional perspective through its music, dance and poetry. I outline the major socio-political developments that have shaped the “New Rwanda”, and the significant role of Tutsi returnees in these processes. In addition to my engagement with Rwanda-focused scholarship from a variety of academic disciplines, including history, political science, social anthropology and cultural studies, I include original research on what I call ‘Tutsi exile songs proclaiming national unity.’ I detail the emergence of new social categories that complicate the term ‘Returnee Tutsis’, which are reflective of important tensions in post-genocide Rwanda.

**Chapter 3** discusses the construction of Rwanda’s contemporary pop music industry, focusing on major technological developments and the influence of Uganda. I explore the role of human agency in enabling or blocking digital circulations, and highlight the precariousness of my informants’ livelihoods, especially for women artists. In **chapters 3 and 4**, I argue that the diversification of Kigali’s music industry has emerged out of a situation in which there is a digital

circulation of music and a physical circulation of people, who draw on the multiple influences that they have been exposed to during their lives.

In **chapter 5**, I discuss the aspirations of my informants, including the major reasons for recording a Rwanda-Uganda “collabo”. In this chapter and the next, I turn my attention to the importance of personal ties and social networks in enabling success for aspiring cultural producers. Whereas in chapter 5, I focus on the role of commercial companies and the state in sponsoring popular artists, in **chapter 6** I trace more informal connections, and disconnections, that existed between artists, producers and studio owners at the time of my research.

In **chapter 7**, I detail the work involved in producing a song. I demonstrate how processes of music making often involve the crossing of physical and/or digital borders to collaborate with other artists and producers. Bearing in mind the numerous obstacles encountered by my informants, I consider their responses to hardship and suffering. In particular, I detail emic notions of patience, self-discipline and destiny.

**Chapter 8** explores the ways in which Rwandan artists adopt and appropriate aspects of national culture, while seeking to appeal to regional, continental and global audiences. I consider the project of transnational music channels in unifying Africa through popular music and creating an ‘all-African brand’ – a project that I show to be limited. Despite debates and criticisms regarding the originality, authenticity and quality of Rwandan music, I demonstrate how accelerated globalisation neither represents nor inevitably leads to a decline in the influence of the nation-state on popular cultural forms.



## CHAPTER 2 - A HISTORY OF RWANDA THROUGH MUSIC, DANCE AND POETRY

In this chapter, I trace Rwanda's complex, controversial and disputed history from the seventeenth century to the present. To place Rwanda's music scene and ideas about the nation into historical context, I explore the interrelationship between Rwanda's cultural forms, politics and ethnicity, as they have developed over time. In pre-colonial Rwanda there was music that gave rise to dance (*imbyino*) and music that was simply for listening to (*indirimbo*<sup>19</sup>) – the latter being associated with poetry and eloquence (RMCA 2016). Throughout this thesis, I maintain that in contemporary Rwanda, music, dance and poetry remain interconnected and are best understood together.

I also argue that Rwanda's past, and indeed its present, should be analysed through a regional lens. There is a significant history of interaction between present-day Rwanda and its neighbouring countries, especially Uganda, Burundi and eastern DRC. Rwanda's internal affairs have been repeatedly impacted by decisions made outside, as well as inside, its political boundaries, including via colonialism and the activities of the Catholic Church. From 1959, numerous political crises in Rwanda and Burundi have resulted in major refugee flows in the region, often due to state-led ethnic discrimination. Moreover, in 1994 the genocide led to a massive migration of Rwandans and to a monumental crisis in today's eastern DRC.

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<sup>19</sup> In today's Kinyarwanda, *indirimbo* means "song" or "hymn".

While the first three sections discuss Rwanda before the 1994 genocide, the final sections detail the reconstruction of the “New Rwanda” (*Rwanda Rushya*), under President Kagame’s leadership. I emphasise three socio-political developments as being fundamental in shaping Rwanda’s post-genocide society. Firstly, the takeover of power by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel group established in Uganda consisting of mainly Tutsi refugees. Secondly, the subsequent returning to Rwanda of approximately 750,000 Tutsi exiles, mostly from English-speaking Uganda. Thirdly, the 2008 replacement of French with English as Rwanda’s official language for business and education, which consolidated the advantage of the English-speaking political elite, resulting in the emergence of new, unofficial social categories, stereotypes and linguistic tensions. In subsequent chapters, I detail how the replacement of French with English has influenced art and music making practices within the cultural industries in Rwanda.

## THE RWANDAN GOVERNMENT NARRATIVE

Since the year 2000, the government of Rwanda has implemented an ambitious modernisation plan, outlined in its Vision 2020 document (Republic of Rwanda 2000). At the heart of this document is the government’s policy of ‘national unity’, which aims to unite Rwandans with equal rights for all regardless of ethnicity. The use of ethnic categories has been stigmatised and strict laws on genocide ideology and “divisionism” have been interpreted with flexibility, increasing the government’s powers to constrain criticism (Reyntes 2013: 64).

In Rwanda's post-genocide era, representations of history have become increasingly politicised. Since 1994, the RPF government has deliberately re-written history, arguably in their efforts to unite the country (Buckley-Zistel 2006). The official government narrative asserts that all Rwandans lived together “in harmony” prior to colonial invasion and must now unite again (Des Forges 1999: 693). This idealised message was articulated in a popular RPF song, which includes the following translated lyrics:

It is the white man who has caused that, children of Rwanda. He did it in order to find a secret way to pillage us. When they arrived, we were living side by side in harmony. They were unhappy that they could not find a way to divide us. They invented different origins for us... Some of us were banished abroad, never to come back. We were separated by this division, children of Rwanda, but we have overcome the Whiteman's trap... So, children of Rwanda, we are all called to unite our strength to build Rwanda (ibid).

The RPF's version of history has been taught to Rwandan citizens at *ingando* re-education camps, later renamed *itorero*. Rwanda's Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports (MINISPOC) established the first *ingando* for Tutsi returnees, with the goal of instilling in citizens a sense of nationalism, and of easing divisions between Anglophone Tutsis (those returning from Uganda) and Francophone Tutsis (from Burundi) (Turner 2014: 425). *Ingando* were also established as an approach to the repatriation of former *genocidaires* and soldiers. The aim was to eradicate genocide ideology, while promoting the RPF's vision for the country (Ingelaere 2010: 53; Sundberg 2016). According to Susan Thomson, the latter was of greater importance:

Instead of promoting a sense of national unity and reconciliation, [*ingando* taught] these men, the majority of whom [were] ethnic Hutu, to remain silent and not question the RPF's vision for creating peace and security for all Rwandans (2011: 332).

This was similarly expressed by a friend of mine, a Tutsi, who shared with me his experience of attending *itorero*: “I was looking around and I was like, ‘That is how you brainwash people!’ They trained us using humiliation”.

In 2015, *itorero* camps were also established for Rwanda’s cultural producers (Byumvuhore 2015). In the words of one of my informants:

Before, young people had to attend *itorero* before to go to university. They give you certificate to prove you went there. You have to know your country: how is the government and the military operating? Your part in developing the country, how to behave, all those things of nation-building but done in a military way. You wake up early for jogging then you attend your classes. But now they understand that music industry is getting bigger. Music has a big role in either nation-building or nation destroying! So they told us what they expect from us. They don’t want us to sing songs of hatred. They asked us, ‘Are we together? Do you think in the same way as us?’ And they treated us well. They even gave us chicken from the restaurant!

As numerous scholars have demonstrated, post-genocide Rwanda is a highly ordered and supervised society<sup>20</sup>. Security is the priority and a “strict discipline permeates all government structures” (Baker 2007: 347).

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<sup>20</sup> Journalists have also written on this topic (e.g. see Tertsakian 2016; Tumwebaze 2016).



**Figure 2.1.** Pop artists attending a seven-day *itorero* camp (*itorero ry'igihugu*), May 2015. [Sourced: anonymous]



**Figure 2.2.** Entertainment news website *inyarwanda.com* reported on singer Jody Phibi attending *itorero*, October 2016. [Sourced: <https://tinyurl.com/ya6tg3s7>]

## **Rwanda before colonialism: the expansion of the Nyiginya Kingdom (17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries)**

Rwanda's ancient settlement history is complex and difficult to trace. Early writers on Rwanda perpetuated John Hanning Speke's 1862 observations<sup>21</sup>, which were based on the Hamitic Hypothesis. According to this theory, present-day Rwanda and Burundi were composed of three ethnic groups that were racially distinct, each with their own physical characteristics, points of origin and 'natural' positions within a hierarchical system of production. In short:

'Tutsi' ethnicity was associated with power, pastoralism, and a distinctive physique – tall, thin, and often light-skinned; 'Hutu' were assumed to be linked to servitude, horticulture, and stockier build; and 'Twa' were seen as hunters or potters, living on the margins of political order, and with their own physical characteristics – short of stature, with stocky legs, round heads, broad noses (Newbury, D. 2001: 258).

Speke's observations, which continue to inform current popular perceptions both within and outside of Rwanda, tell a story of successive immigrations into Rwanda. This narrative usually starts with the Twa foragers who migrated into Rwanda and Burundi, journeying from the forests of today's DRC. Next were the agricultural Hutu, followed by the cattle-herding Tutsi, who are said to have migrated from Ethiopia and to have conquered the previously settled Hutu (Corey and Joireman 2004: 74).

In contrast to previous opinions, the consensus among historians nowadays is that ethnic identities emerged and evolved *within* present-day Rwanda (and Burundi), in response to the growing power of the Nyiginya

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<sup>21</sup> Speke was a British officer and explorer and was one of the earliest European travellers to the region.

Kingdom and its accompanying ideology. Scholars such as David Newbury (2001) and Jan Vansina (2005) have traced the expansion of Rwanda's Nyiginya Kingdom, which was to become "the core institution of colonial rule, and the nemesis of the postcolonial state" (Newbury, D. 2001: 294<sup>22</sup>). They argue that ethnic identities were less about racial distinctions and more about occupational and economic differences between the Tutsi aristocracy and the Hutu majority.

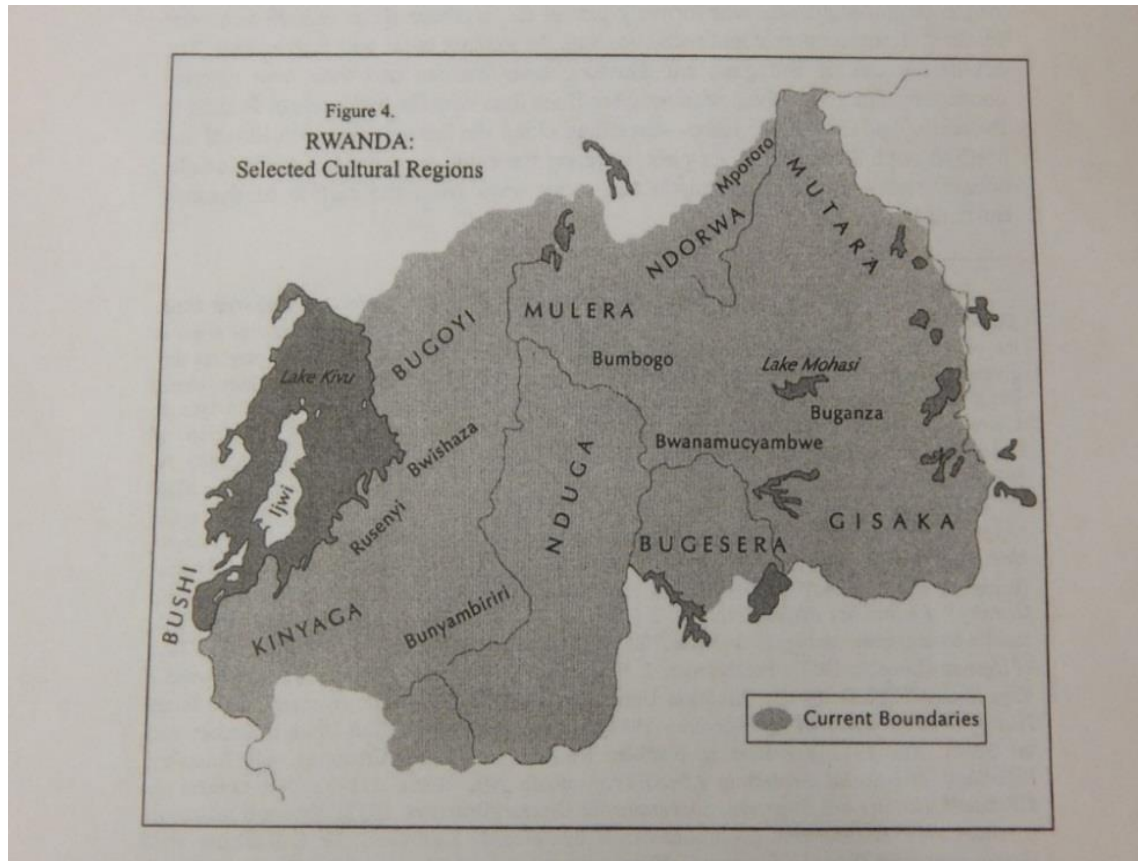
The Nyiginya Kingdom was but one to emerge in Africa's Great Lakes Region in the seventeenth century (Vansina 2005: 198). During this period, Rwanda did not exist as a linguistic or cultural entity and neither the first *mwami* (king) nor his immediate successors conquered all of the present-day country. Rather, the kingdom emerged in the centre of Rwanda and expanded during the eighteenth century, with the process accelerating through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (ibid). In the seventeenth century, Rwanda and Burundi included a "multitude of political units, ranging from centralized polities to small-scale kin-based units" (Newbury, D. 2001: 258). In Rwanda, Newbury has identified at least nine geographical and cultural regions, within which communities "forged individual identities in opposition to each other as well as to the dynastic core" (ibid: 263). In some instances, populations maintained social and religious practices that were distinct from those of other Rwandans. For example, people living in the Ndorwa region generally shared a northward orientation and had close ties to kingdoms in southwestern Uganda (ibid). Thus, mobile populations developed social and economic relationships with various

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<sup>22</sup> See also: Berger (1981); Chrétien (2003); Lemarchand (2009); Newbury, C. (1988); and Newbury, D. (2009).



communities, which often stretched beyond Rwanda's contemporary boundaries (Des Forges 2011: 3-4<sup>23</sup>).



**Figure 2.3.** Cultural regions in pre-colonial Rwanda, as identified by David Newbury [Newbury, D. 2001: 263].

## PRE-COLONIAL ART FORMS AS BEARERS OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

Bearing in mind the complexity of relations between the various communities in Rwanda, it is instructive to explore how art forms have at times

<sup>23</sup> Despite belonging to a region of remarkable ecological diversity – with pastoralism in the open grasslands to the east; agriculture in the fertile highlands of the north, the centre and the west; and hunting and trapping in the forests of the mountainous areas – pre-colonial Rwanda lacked certain key resources, such as iron and salt. Therefore, “a set of well-trafficked trade networks was also part of the economic landscape, connecting various regions of Rwanda with neighbouring societies” (Des Forges 2011: 3-4).



been the bearer of social relations. In later chapters, I discuss how this works in contemporary Rwanda, but to offer a fuller sense of the role of the arts I first trace the ways in which they have functioned for several centuries.

The creation of a definite Nyiginya court culture, “with its customs, its ways of thinking, its language, and its aesthetics”, has been traced back to the late eighteenth century (Vansina 2005: 197). Rujugira’s reign was a time of intense competition between numerous rival dynasties. Thus, the *mwami* revised the military structures upon which he depended to include two new divisions within the army: *intore* (elite warriors) and *ingabo* (common warriors). At the same time, new verbal art forms were cultivated to celebrate and glorify Nyiginya kingship and to reinforce the *mwami*’s moral superiority “as justification for the conquest of other communities” (Newbury, D. 2001: 296). The verbal genres of the court were highly refined and regulated by the state. They were orally transmitted and included:

- *Abiru* (secret poems known only by the *mwami*’s powerful hereditary ritual specialists)
- *Ibisigo* (dynastic poetry of the royal family)
- *Ibitekerezo* (historical narratives, myths, legends)
- *Amahamba* (praise poetry composed by specialists for the cattle belonging to the army)
- *Ibyivugo* (warriors’ praise poetry)
- *Ibihozo* (lullabies performed with the *inanga* [trough-zither])

The ability to master these courtly genres and to express oneself with skill and ingenuity became a defining characteristic of the elite (Grant 2014: 179). Put differently, the verbal arts contributed to the emergence and consolidation of a self-conscious Tutsi identity among sections of the elite in the central core of the state (Chrétien 2003: 77). Certainly, the training of Tutsi boys in oral genres aimed at “making them inaccessible to the vulgar majority” (Barber 2007: 59).

Recent historians have argued that it was in the late nineteenth century, during the reign of the “great warrior-king Rwabugiri”, that a significant power imbalance between the Tutsi political elite and Hutus first became clear (Newbury, C. 1988: 207). According to Catharine Newbury, it was during this period that the socio-political term Hutu was coined (ibid). The centralisation of power was greatly intensified and the *mwami*, who ruled by force and ritual mystique, increased his control over land, cattle and people (ibid<sup>24</sup>). Labour was divided along ethnic lines and a countrywide institution of vassalage, *ubuhake*, was established (Codere 1973: 19). The origins of this system lay in the existing division of labour: while Tutsis were generally cattle owners, granting them considerable power and advantage, Hutus were associated with cultivating and the Twa with hunting and pottery (Chrétien 2003: 77). In this regard, *ubuhake* took the form of client-patron “loyalty contracts”: Tutsi patrons granted Hutus access to cattle and land in exchange for agricultural products, cattle-herding labour, and personal and military service (ibid). According to Helen Codere, for

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<sup>24</sup> See also Chrétien (2003: 172-175) and Des Forges (2011: 10).

Hutus this meant “at least a year of full-time servitude” followed by years of part-time service (1973: 19).

Wealthy Tutsis were therefore dependent on Hutu agriculturalists for food and later cash crops, though they distanced themselves ideologically from agricultural produce – for example, by emphasising milk rather than grain as the basis of their diet. In this way, they sought to maintain the “myth of Tutsi self-dependence [and superiority] and the all-importance of the cow” (ibid: 15). This stratification intensified further during the colonial era when most Hutu were excluded from access to education and higher status jobs (ibid; Newbury, C. 1988: 207).

The heavy labour of the Hutu majority made it possible for members of the elite Tutsi minority to devote significant amounts of time to the verbal arts, dance and leisure (Barber 2007: 59). Almost all young Tutsi (and Twa) boys spent several years in a great lord’s *itorero*, “an age cohort which functioned simultaneously as a military and cultural training programme and as a performing arts team for the entertainment of the lord’s court” (ibid). While very few Hutu attended *itorero* camps, Twa boys were included. Despite their marginalised social status, they were considered “the best in singing and dancing”, although they danced different styles to the Tutsi (Codere 1973: 289).

In the *itorero* camps, boys would receive training in military skills, knowledge of the state, and elegant and proper manners (ibid: 54-56). They spent time learning specialised dances and the poetic genres listed above, including the composition and improvisation of auto-panegyrics. Skilled and obedient poets

were highly respected and treated well by the *mwami*. The court maintained its own resident group of male drummers<sup>25</sup>, musicians and *intore* dancers, the latter receiving much admiration and affection from young women (ibid). *Intore* means “the chosen one” and refers to both the elite warriors and their specialised style of dance, *imihamirizo*. The dance was a kind of simulation of a battle accompanied by *amakondera*, an instrumental ensemble of transverse horns usually played by Twa musicians (Codere 1973: 296).



**Figure 2.4.** A contemporary example of *imihamirizo* at *Kwita Izina* (Rwanda’s annual gorilla naming ceremony), September 2015. [Courtesy of Amy Pritchard]

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<sup>25</sup> While some drums were used in rituals (*ingoma z’imihango*), others were symbols of sacred royalty and the power of kings (*ingoma z’ingabe*). The “drums that speak” (*ingoma z’imivugo*) were played as musical instruments in an ensemble and were used in official royal festivities. Drum ensembles usually consisted of one high-tone drum (*ishakwe*), two low-toned drums (*ibihumurizo*) and two middle-tone drums (*inyahura*) (RMCA 2016).

The most widely distributed verbal genre was arguably the warriors' praise poetry, *ibyivugo* (singular: *icyivugo*). Every Rwandan male, including Hutus, had a unique *icyivugo* that he composed himself. Tutsi and Twa boys usually composed their *ibyivugo* during their years in the *itorero* camp (Barber 2007: 63). According to a contemporary spoken word artist, "*ibyivugo* were about bragging" (Eric 1Key 2016, int.). Performed with impressive speed, they were incorporated into the dance of the *intore*: "A man might drop to one knee or throw his stick to the floor, while boasting to the crowd about who he is and what he has achieved" (ibid). In contrast, Hutu men would "perform praises in honour of other Hutu at wedding celebrations, and in honour of their Tutsi lords or patrons with a view of eliciting some gift" (Barber 2007: 64). Thus, *ibyivugo* demonstrates how verbal genres can be understood as "bearers of social relations" (ibid: 65).

Pre-colonial Rwandan society was not only divided along ethnic lines but was also highly gendered. Women's position in society was subordinate to that of men, and Tutsi girls were mostly taught skills in preparation for marriage (Codere 1973: 148). While boys attended *itorero* camps, girls – both Tutsi and Hutu alike – learned basketry, which was considered a "high art" (ibid). Within the Nyiginya Kingdom and during colonial rule there were two courtly genres of dance, both of which were gendered: the male dance of the *intore* (*imihamirizo*, discussed above) and *imishagiro*, performed by Tutsi girls and women and also some Twa. These women were usually members of either the royal family or the families of high-ranking Tutsi chiefs (Plancke 2014). *Imishagiro* was characterised by its very slow tempo, its stylised gracious movements of the arms and the dancers' imitation of long-horned *inyambo* cows – a symbol of prestige

and economic significance (De Lame 2005: 353-384). The culminating point of the dance was when the women held their arms up high, pushed their chests forward and their shoulders remarkably far back, thereby achieving the various angular shapes of the *inyambo* cows' horns (e.g. figs. 2.5. and 2.6.). Meanwhile, the girls' footwork patterns resembled a cow's lumbering walk within a herd (Breed 2014: 52).



**Figure 2.5.** *Inyambo* cow, June 2018. [Sourced: <https://tinyurl.com/yaa7yxda>]



**Figure 2.6.** Dancer Lilian performing *imishagiro*, August 2015. [My photograph]

Additional styles of music and dance were performed in a community context, including at family gatherings such as name-giving ceremonies and marriages (Grant 2014: 182). The characteristics of the dances (*ibyino*) were often shaped by the activities of the people performing them. While pastoralists



focused on the image of the cow, agriculturalists imitated the action of using a hoe (Plancke 2014). According to Breed (2014: 137), Hutu dances such as *ikinimba* were energetic and comprised of leaps (e.g. fig. 2.7.), while Twa dances were “close to the earth” and were composed of quick footwork patterns and arm movements (e.g. fig. 2.8.). Popular music associated with the Hutu circulated alongside courtly genres. These satirical and humorous songs described everyday life and were accompanied by musical instruments, namely the *ikembe* (lamellaphone), *umuduri* (musical bow), *iningidi* (fiddle) and *inanga* (trough-zither) (Grant 2014: 182).



**Figure 2.7.** A contemporary example of *ikinimba* at *Kwita Izina*, September 2015. [Courtesy of Amy Pritchard]



**Figure 2.8.** Twa dance performance in Uganda's southwestern province, December 2010. [My photograph]

The courtly genres discussed in this section continued to flourish throughout subsequent reigns - both before and during the colonial era - until the Hutu Revolution of 1959, when the Tutsi aristocracy was overthrown and a Hutu government installed (Barber 2007: 58-59). Later in the chapter, I discuss the survival of these genres in the diaspora and their recent revitalisation within Rwanda's national borders. Of particular significance are the arm gestures displayed in the courtly dances, which have become important new symbols of being Rwandan.



Finally, it should be noted that the genres under discussion were not, and are not, static or fixed. As with any form of culture, they have their own conventions while also being open to innovations - often in response to socio-political transformations, the introduction of new technologies, and new sources of influence and inspiration (Barber 1997b; Collins and Richards 1982; White 2002). During the colonial period, for example, royal drums were “infused and enriched by modern rhythms” and were made accessible to a greater proportion of the male population (RMCA 2016). Later, in the post-genocide era, a group of women led by Odile Gakire Katese successfully campaigned for their right to play the drums and established a popular and well-known group, *Ingoma Nshya* (New Drums) (Ingoma Nshya 2016).

### **Colonial rule and the Hutu Revolution (1890-1962)**

In 1890, the Tutsi kingdoms of Urundi (Burundi) and Ruanda (Rwanda) were incorporated into the Ruanda-Urundi district of German East Africa. These developments followed the Berlin conference of 1884-5, which legalised the Scramble for Africa (Falola 2002). While Urundi opposed colonial rule until 1903, Germany ruled Ruanda for 18 years (1897-1915), until it lost its colonial territories following World War I<sup>26</sup>. In 1915, Ruanda-Urundi was placed under Belgian Mandate, until 1962 when the territories were split into the independent nations of Rwanda and Burundi (Newbury, C. 1988).

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<sup>26</sup> For detailed accounts of varying responses to colonial invasion, see Codere (1973) and Newbury, D. (2001).

In 1923, the Belgians introduced a system of divide-and-rule, governing indirectly through the minority Tutsi aristocracy and elevating them above the Hutu majority. In short, the impact of colonial state-building in Rwanda was to elaborate and intensify the kingdom's already established system of political oppression, economic exploitation and Hutu subjugation (ibid: 207). This contradicts the narrative of the current government of Rwanda, which asserts that Rwandans lived together "in harmony" prior to the colonial invasion (Des Forges 1999: 693).

During the 1930s, the Belgian administration (along with the Catholic Church<sup>27</sup>) undertook 'scientific' experiments to racially distinguish between Tutsis and Hutus, proclaiming Tutsis as a superior race (Corey and Joireman 2004: 73). Thereafter, Belgian officials issued ethnic identity cards and registered all Rwandans as either Tutsi, Hutu or Twa, "according to how many cattle they owned, church records, and physical measurements" (Grant 2014: 64). Discrimination against Hutus was actively encouraged, and feelings of resentment increased. Hutus were excluded from civil and political life and their economic resources were limited. Rwanda's high population density and competition for land exacerbated these tensions, as did the introduction of new forms of taxes. For most rural Rwandans, colonialism meant loss of land, forced cultivation and cash crop production (Newbury, C. 1988: 207).

European rule in Rwanda was established during the reign of Yuhi Musinga (1896-1931), who initially collaborated with the German government to

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<sup>27</sup> See Carney (2013) for an exploration of the Catholic Church in Rwanda, and for a detailed analysis of the role of Catholic politics in shaping ethnic discourse during the late colonial period.

strengthen his own kingship (Newbury, D. 2001: 310). However, in 1931, Musinga was deposed by the Belgian administration for refusing to convert to Catholicism and for resisting (albeit subtly) Belgium's vision for the kingdom. Apparently, Musinga accepted the news of his deposition "... 'like someone who had expected it for a long time'...", although he refused to part willingly with the sacred drums that symbolised his power:

The Europeans came to seize them that night at the royal residence. On the morning of 14 November, Musinga, along with [seven of his] wives and their children, left Nyanza for the last time, accompanied by several hundred of their most loyal servants and clients (Des Forges 2011: 238).

When Musinga took up his new residency in Kamembe on Lake Kivu, he was succeeded by his favoured son, Mutara Rudahigwa (ibid). Unlike Musinga, who married 15 women and refused to convert to Catholicism, Mutara III accepted Christianity, European education and monogamy, for which he was rewarded by the Belgians who built him a "European-style palace" (Museum of Rwanda Ancient History 2012). Although greatly relieved that the Belgians had not totally destroyed their monarchy, many notables remained loyal to Musinga and remarked that Mutara III was the "Mwami of the Whites" (Des Forges 2011: 239).

After the outbreak of World War II, rumours spread that Musinga was seeking to establish ties with the Germans to restore his position in Rwanda. The Belgian response was to exile Musinga to today's eastern DRC, where he died four years later in 1944 (ibid: 240). The cause of Mutara's death in 1959 similarly remains unknown<sup>28</sup> (Museum of Rwanda Ancient History 2012). Following the

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<sup>28</sup> Mutara's wife Queen Rosalie Gicyanda was murdered in the 1994 genocide. For a fascinating account of her being selected as queen, see Codere (1973: 167-177).

events of the 1959 Hutu Revolution (see below), Mutara's successor Kigeli – the last king of Rwanda – was deported when Rwanda achieved independence in 1962 (Roberts 2016). For 30 years, Kigeli found refuge in neighbouring countries, before he was granted political asylum in the United States. Following the 1994 genocide, the new RPF government invited Kigeli to return to Rwanda, but only as a private citizen. The former king of Rwanda remained in the United States until his death in 2016, an event that was barely acknowledged by the Rwandan state (ibid).

By the 1950s, Rwandan society had undergone a number of significant changes. Autobiographies collected by Codere, for example, describe the massive conversion of Rwandans to Catholicism, as well as “a very brief period during which old and new beliefs existed side by side” (1973: 361). Colonialism introduced new sources of cash from coffee and salaried jobs, though for most Rwandans ethnic status and class continued to overlap. Here it must be noted that neither the Tutsi nor the Hutu constituted homogenous groups; rather there was a diversity of experiences, opinions and regional differences. Therefore, while a higher proportion of Tutsis were wealthy in comparison to Hutus, there were now Hutus *and* Tutsis who relied on their own labour for sustenance. Likewise, there was now a small proportion of Hutus who no longer relied on subsistence farming and who were educated in mission schools (ibid). Political protest in the centre was organised by this “highly educated Hutu elite who were unable to attain a higher status” (Newbury, C. 1988: 211). They used the printed media to articulate and disseminate “Hutu demands” on the government, and to reject the ideology that Tutsis were their natural leaders (ibid). Meanwhile, among

some Hutus in Rwanda's western regions, protest took the form of escaping to Uganda or Tanzania in search of work and alternative social conditions (ibid: 212).

In 1957, as independence loomed, Belgium, with the support of France, changed their allegiance to the Hutus:

With the assistance of the Catholic Church, Belgian officials helped establish the *Parti du Mouvement et d'Emancipation Hutu* (PARMEHUTU), which was intended to free Hutus from Tutsi oppression (Corey and Joireman 2004: 75).

According to Frederick Cooper, Belgian favouritism towards Tutsis, and especially Tutsi chiefs, was diminished when Belgium began to be challenged by Christian, Western-educated Rwandans who wanted to manage their own affairs:

Because schools had discriminated in favour of Tutsi, the anti-colonial movement began among people so classified. Belgium, and also the Catholic Church, began to favour Hutu who were now alleged to represent an 'authentic Africa' against the pretentious Tutsi (2002: 8).

For this reason, Codere argues that the real Hutu Revolution of 1959 "occurred in systematic changes in the society prior to any violent events" (1973: 388). Moreover, she claims that Hutus "could have gained their share of political power peacefully if [a relatively small group of Tutsi royalists] had not tried to seize exclusive power" (ibid). Violence did erupt, however, and an estimated 10-14,000 Tutsis were massacred (Carney 2013: 124). It was the first outbreak of violence committed by Hutus against Tutsis and involved "the pillaging, arson and forced displacement of thousands of Tutsi families and hundreds of Tutsi chiefs" (ibid). The 1959 Hutu Revolution led to the overthrow of Tutsi hegemony and forced into exile approximately 150-200,000 Tutsis (Newbury, C. 1988: 209).

Most of the refugees went to neighbouring countries: “approximately 70,000 to Uganda, 25,000 to the Congo and 50,000 to Burundi” (Lemarchand 2009: 31). A smaller number fled overseas to France, Belgium, the United States and Canada. This was the first of numerous political crises in the region and would eventually lead to Rwanda’s 1994 genocide.

### **Independent Rwanda: the two republics and the descent to genocide (1962-1990)**

The Hutu Revolution of 1959 signified a change in the ideological basis of power in Rwanda. With the Tutsi monarchists defeated, the Hutu elite took on the role of the ruling class (Jesse and Watkins 2014: 48). Three years later, Ruanda-Urundi was split into the independent nations of Rwanda and Burundi. In Rwanda, a republican system was established, and the Presidency awarded to Grégoire Kayibanda, the leader of the Hutu Power movement who infamously declared that “Rwanda is a country of Hutus and Tutsis are foreigners” (Wilén 2015). This marked the beginning of state-led discrimination against Tutsis. Meanwhile, Burundi became an independent kingdom under the Tutsi King Mwambutsa IV. In this context, state-led violence against Hutus intensified, and in 1972 the Burundian army committed genocidal massacres. Approximately 120,000 Hutu were slaughtered in the wake of a Hutu uprising, resulting in another mass migration in the region (ibid). A further 300,000 Hutus fled to Rwanda and Tanzania, further fuelling anti-Tutsi sentiments (Lemarchand 2009: 37).

In 1973, Kayibanda was ousted in a military coup and his PARMEHUTU party, which had been dominated by Hutus from southern Rwanda, was banned

(Melvern 2008: 21-23). Juvénal Habyarimana, a Hutu from the north, seized power, and in 1975 he formed the political party MRND (*Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement*). Party membership was mandatory, and citizens were “...forced to participate in national programmes such as animation; ‘ritualized expressions of support and loyalty to the regime’ (Longman 2010: 88) ...” (Grant 2014: 68). For several years, aid money flowed into the country and Rwanda became a model for African development (Fujii 2011: 46). However, by the late 1980s, structural adjustment policies imposed on African countries by international organisations, as well as the fall in world prices for coffee (one of Rwanda’s main exports), resulted in severe economic decline. During this period, most Rwandans suffered from the effects of widespread unemployment, famine and the HIV/AIDS pandemic (ibid).

Outside of Rwanda’s borders, the Tutsi refugee population “existed precariously, with few rights or guarantees” (Des Forges 1999: 48). The majority of refugees were living in Uganda, where they suffered discrimination and hostility. Huge numbers occupied border camps and towns in the southwestern region, while others had moved to Kampala. Obote’s violent regime (from 1979) scapegoated Tutsis and categorised them with all the Banyarwanda and with Ankole’s Bahima, the ethnic group of rebel opposition leader Yoweri Museveni<sup>29</sup> (Chrétien 2003: 299). Increasing numbers of Tutsis joined Museveni’s National Resistance Army (NRA), and significantly contributed to him seizing power in

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<sup>29</sup> In both the Ankole Kingdom (located in southwestern Uganda) and Rwanda’s Nyiginya Kingdom, a cattle-herding minority (the Tutsi, the Bahima) were politically and socially dominant and ruled over the majority (the Hutu, the Bairu), who were agriculturalists. Like Rwandans, Banyankole share a single language, Runyankole, which is closely related to Kinyarwanda (Chrétien 2003: 144).

1986. Indeed, when Uganda's civil war came to an end, Rwandans accounted for approximately 20 percent of the NRA's recruits (Chrétien 2003: 299; Goodfellow and Smith 2013: 440).

In 1987, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) was formed in Uganda by Tutsi refugees and led by NRA veterans Fred Rwigyema and Paul Kagame. Major General Kagame, the current President of Rwanda, became the Military Commander of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), the RPF's military wing (Dallaire 2003: 43). The following year, thousands of Hutus were massacred by Tutsis living in Burundi, leading to yet another influx of Hutu refugees into Rwanda. For several years, members of the newly formed RPF had been demanding their right to return to Rwanda. Habyarimana had always refused, allegedly "citing the country's chronic overpopulation" (Gourevitch 2000: 73).

Then, in 1990, Museveni revoked Tutsi citizenship rights in Uganda. Under pressure from the NRA's opponents, Museveni overturned his 1986 law that had granted political rights to "anyone who had lived in Uganda for 10 years" (Cantrell 2007: 338). Instead, he introduced a law granting citizenship "only to those who could prove Ugandan ancestry on the basis of whether a grandparent had been born in Uganda" (Breed 2014: 47). By then the RPF had grown into a powerful military organisation, combining political mobilisation and strict military training, extending its recruitment to Tutsi exile communities in Burundi, eastern DRC, Kenya and Tanzania (Lemarchand 2009: 38-39). After confirming that they would have no land or political power in Uganda, the RPF concluded that they would return to Rwanda by force. Stealing "every piece of equipment they could grab",



in 1990 the RPF abandoned Museveni's army and invaded northern Rwanda (Gourevitch 2000: 216). This marked the beginning of a civil war, referred to by the RPF as the "Liberation Struggle", or "Liberation War" (ibid). Once again, Rwanda's internal affairs were significantly impacted by decisions made outside its political boundaries.

## MUSIC BEFORE THE GENOCIDE: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE RWANDA'S NATIONAL BORDERS

During the pre-genocide independence era, Rwandan artists were inspired by both internal and external sources of influence, and several genres of music existed simultaneously. Choral music introduced by Christian missionaries was particularly popular throughout this period. According to many of the Rwandans in my research, the most well-respected gospel singer was Cyprien Rugamba, a Hutu composer, choreographer, university lecturer and founding member of a choir called *Amasimbi n'Amakombe* (Snow and Valleys<sup>30</sup>). In addition to developing a unique musical style that drew on Gregorian chant (reflecting his Catholic faith), Cyprien Rugamba was predominantly known for songs that promoted peace and social cohesion (Grant 2017: 159).

Meanwhile, secular music was also popular: in urban spaces, *igisope* music was performed with live bands, or *orchestres*, providing a "space where Hutu and Tutsi musicians could perform together" (Grant 2014: 187). *Igisope*

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<sup>30</sup> This was apparently a reference to the snow at the top of Rwanda's Mount Karisimbi. One rapper speculated that the snow-valley (or high-low) dichotomy was a metaphor for Rwanda's class system.

music, a term coined after the genocide, was influenced by Congolese rumba<sup>31</sup>, and song lyrics were centred on themes of romantic love, nature and everyday life (ibid: 186-189). Significantly, *igisope* refers to music that was produced by the *Abasope*; Rwandans both Hutu and Tutsi alike who were born and raised in Rwanda. This contrasts with music that was being produced outside of Rwanda by Tutsi exiles who returned to Kigali after the genocide, such as *Abasajya* (Ugandan-Rwandans), *Abajepe* (Burundian-Rwandans) and *Abadubayi* (Rwandans who returned from eastern DRC). As I discuss below, these terms identify important social categories in post-genocide Rwanda.

When the Tutsi aristocracy was overthrown in 1959, the courtly art forms discussed above were predominantly banned within Rwanda (Grant 2014: 183). However, outside Rwanda's borders cultural producers continued to generate a wide variety of music, dance, poetry and theatre (Breed 2014: 41). In Bujumbura-Burundi Athanase Sentore founded the College de Saint-Albert, to teach courtly genres to members of the Tutsi exile community (Grant 2014: 185). Athanase had received musical training at the royal court in Rwanda. He was taught in part by Twa musicians and was considered an *inanga* master (ibid). Later in the 1980s, art forms were mobilised by Tutsi refugees to help promote and raise funds for the RPF and to lobby for the right to return to Rwanda. Athanase's son, Massamba Intore, was recruited by the RPF and went on to become Head of Fundraising. Together with popular *igisope* musician Jean-Paul Samputu, he travelled through Rwanda's neighbouring countries, as well as to Europe and

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<sup>31</sup> Since the late 1950s, Congolese rumba has been described by scholars and critics of African music as the continent's "most influential pop music" (White 2008: 42 - see also Bender 1991: 42).

North America. The artists performed at concerts to raise money and international awareness about the RPF cause and to encourage young people to join the Liberation Struggle (ibid: 93).

In the 1980s, what I call 'Tutsi exile songs proclaiming national unity' emerged in support of the RPF's Liberation Struggle, and to describe the singers' experiences of living in exile generally. As we shall see, they were vital in reinforcing RPF ideology, promoting national unity, and invoking feelings of national pride and belonging. In addition to Massamba Intore and Jean-Paul Samputu, the most influential and well-known 'Tutsi exile singers' were Kamaliza (deceased), Mariya Yohana and Cécile Kayirebwa – or "Mama Rwanda" as she is often called. Kamaliza and Mariya Yohana were living between Burundi and Uganda and were both RPF soldiers and singers. Their music was highly ideological and reinforced the RPF's vision of national unity, though this was a unity that the RPF was preparing to impose by force.

Meanwhile, Cécile Kayirebwa had fled to Brussels with her husband and their two children after receiving death threats in 1973. Born in the colonial period, in 1949, the singer attended school in Huye (formerly Butare)<sup>32</sup>. Her father came from a long line of singers, dancers and poets and she was actively involved in music from childhood (Grant 2014: 183-184). Yet, unlike Kamaliza and Mariya Yohana, Cécile Kayirebwa did not consider her music to be explicitly political. Rather, she claims to have been interested in preserving *umuco gakondo* (cultural traditions) and in expressing nostalgia for her lost *iwacu* (homeland). In

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<sup>32</sup> Huye is Rwanda's second largest town. Located in the south, it is home to the National University of Rwanda.

Brussels, Cécile Kayirebwa worked with Congolese producer Alain Makaba, who has since returned to Kinshasa. Between 1981 and 2016, she recorded seven albums, earning her reputation as “queen of *gakondo* (traditional) music”. Cécile Kayirebwa’s music is indeed rooted in *umuco gakondo* - for example, by retaining distinct beats that give rise to courtly dance genres - while also incorporating guitars, jazz drums, pianos and electronically generated sounds. Yet, importantly, while her music draws on influences previously associated with the Tutsi aristocracy, she presents it as simply “Rwandan” and as belonging to all Rwandans.

Despite their music being banned within Rwanda (prior to 1994), Tutsi exile songs were circulated outside Rwanda’s national borders via cassette tapes and radio stations. One example is Muhabura; a secret radio station set up by the RPF in eastern DRC aimed at the exiled Tutsi population, as well as Banyamulenge, the so-called ‘Tutsi Congolese’<sup>33</sup> (Ntung 2013: 67%). The songs gained much popularity and were mobilised by the RPF to raise awareness and funds. While the songs have no formal generic categorisation within Rwanda, they were often discussed by my informants as “those important historical songs”. While conducting research in Kigali, I discovered that many of Rwanda’s contemporary musicians were influenced by these singers. In the words of one popular singer and returnee from Kenya, Teta Diana:

So these singers were all encouraging Rwandans who were not in Rwanda because of history to come back to fight for the country; to love

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<sup>33</sup> Banyamulenge are descendants of Tutsi pastoralists who migrated from Rwanda to eastern DRC during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Along with the exiled Tutsi population, they were facing open discrimination and persecution from non-Banyamulenge, including public humiliation and false accusations that led to arrests and torture (Lemarchand 2009: 10-11; Ntung 2013: 40-41%).

their country and not to go and live in Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, everywhere, and forget about where they *actually* come from. So, this is the music I grew up listening to. They were hope songs. They gave us hope (Teta Diana 2015, int.).

Numerous conversations with former refugees revealed the importance of Tutsi exile songs in expressing hope, national pride and belonging. Despite the tense political context, the songs tended to be uplifting. The Kinyarwanda lyrics praised Rwanda's beautiful landscapes and *umuco gakondo*, and articulated hope for a time when the refugees might return and when Rwanda's ethnic groups would be united. As 'outsiders' in their host countries, returnees recalled memories of times when they would come together at private gatherings and share a space of belonging. Tutsi exile songs provided important and emotive soundtracks for these diasporic encounters. Throughout the rest of the chapter, I detail four of the most well-known Tutsi exile songs, relating them to key historical moments between 1986 and 1998. Following this, I offer an example of a contemporary song that similarly proclaims national unity. The song was composed by Teta Diana in 2014, thus demonstrating the continued relevance of Tutsi exile songs for younger artists in Kigali.

In 1986, Cécile Kayirebwa recorded one of her most well-loved songs, *Umunezero (Rwanda)* (Joy [Rwanda]) (Song 5, Appendix II). The track opens to the sound of an electric keyboard; a single note is sustained, over which a melodic phrase is played, emulating the sound of a wooden flute. After 20 seconds, Cécile Kayirebwa's voice is layered in. She slowly sings an evocative phrase, which is repeated throughout the song: "*Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...*" The delicate sounds of various percussion instruments are scattered through the track,

contributing to the uplifting but sorrowful tone. Rhythmic flows of connected Kinyarwanda lyrics articulate the singer's nostalgia for her lost *iwacu*. Cécile Kayirebwa refers to cultural forms previously associated with the royal court, such as drumming, horn ensembles, wooden flutes and *imihigo y'abahungu* (the panegyrics of the boys). As she praises Rwanda's "nature" and "culture", the song's intensity climbs, with the addition of jazz drums and an electric guitar. Cécile Kayirebwa's performances have always been enriched by *imishagiro* dancing, performed by young women dressed in *imikenyero*; single robes that fall from the shoulders, where they are tied by a single knot. *Imikenyero* date back to Rwanda's pre-colonial period and are worn today by women at formal and special occasions, such as weddings.

***Umunezero (Rwanda) (Joy [Rwanda]) [1986]***

Cécile Kayirebwa, Rwanda-Belgium; Kinyarwanda (translated to English).

Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...

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If the symphony is sounding it is joy  
May drums sound at once and the horn ensemble be played

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Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...

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If the symphony is sounding it is joy  
Let flutes and horns mix and become one

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Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...

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If the symphony is sounding it is joy  
Hear the soft voices of girls and the panegyrics of the boys

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Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...

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I hear bells and footsteps  
I see brides walking  
I see children with dreadlocks  
And my talents shoot up  
Well (oh well)

How I rejoice from beauty  
What beauty and elegance  
See God's weapon

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Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...

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What can I say about Rwanda's nature?  
How can I begin to describe its nature?  
Hills and mountains and volcanoes  
And valleys and lands  
And good crops  
And lakes and forests  
What can I say?  
Love and hospitality and motivation  
And bravery and honesty  
That is our culture and those are our values  
That is our heritage from our ancestors

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Ayiii ayiiiiai eee

### **Civil war and the 1994 genocide (1990-1994)**

When the RPF threatened Habyarimana's government in 1990, the so-called *akazu* (small house) - the political elite surrounding the presidency - responded by creating a list of opponents and starting to plan the genocide (Corey and Joireman 2004: 76). Scholars such as Lee Ann Fujii have demonstrated how the government used ethnicity as a political strategy when Habyarimana's one-party rule was threatened, rather than ethnicity being at its foundation (2011: 74-75). A violent and relentless campaign against Tutsis was launched and propaganda was disseminated through radio and print, creating a notorious hate media (Grant 2014: 70; Melvern 2008: 23). By December 1990, rumours began to circulate that the RPF was going to attack and restore the monarchy, an idea emphasised in popular singer Simon Bikindi's song, *Bene Sebahinzi* (Sons of the Cultivators) (Des Forges 1999: 77). The pro-Hutu

Kinyarwanda and French-language newspaper *Kangura* (Wake Others Up) was also established in 1990 and became famous for its publication of the Hutu Ten Commandments (Kabanda 2007: 62). Among the vulgar proclamations was the demonisation and sexualisation of Tutsi women and the declaration that any Hutu who marries, befriends or employs a Tutsi is a traitor (Kangura Archives 1990).

Tutsis were dehumanised and referred to as *inyenzi* (cockroaches) that needed to 'disappear'. For instance, in 1992, the Hutu Power ideologue Leon Mugesera delivered a speech, calling on Hutus to "send the Tutsi back to Ethiopia by way of the Nyabarongo River" (Gourevitch 2000: 53). Later, the *Kangura* published several articles, warning that Tutsis were planning a genocide against the Hutu (Kabanda 2007: 62). The French supported the regime, despite being aware of "genocide rehearsals" against the Tutsi that occurred in 1991, 1992 and 1993, killing an estimated 2,000 citizens (Melvern 2008: 21). According to Bayart, "high-ranking French military officials [justified] the struggle against the [RPF] by arguing that it was necessary to defend the French language" (2005: 20).

The situation in Rwanda intensified in 1993, when, in Burundi, Tutsi soldiers assassinated the newly installed pro-Hutu President, Melchior Ndadaye. Burundi was plunged into a civil war that would persist for over a decade, claiming an estimated 300,000 lives (Kidder 2009; Wilen 2015). Meanwhile, Rwandan President Habyarimana signed a power-sharing agreement with the RPF in Arusha, Tanzania, and a United Nations peacekeeping mission (UNAMIR) was sent to Rwanda to monitor the peace (Wilen 2015). Military officer Colonel Theoneste Bagosora was present at the negotiations of the Arusha Accords, but



he strongly opposed them. He is widely cited as saying that he was “returning to Rwanda to prepare for the apocalypse”. Indeed, in 1993, following the Arusha Accords, Rwanda’s first private radio station began its broadcasts (Des Forges 2007: 44). The notorious radio station RTLM (*Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*) had strong links to the government’s extremist inner circles (Grant 2014: 194). The station initially gained its listenership by employing charismatic radio presenters and by playing popular Congolese and Caribbean music (Vokes 2007: 807). RTLM frequently played Simon Bikindi’s “anti-Tutsi songs”, such as *Twasezereye* (We Said Goodbye to the Feudal Regime) (Grant 2014: 195).

On April 6, 1994, there was an explosion at Kigali airport. An airplane was shot down, killing President Habyarimana, as well as the Hutu President of Burundi and the Chief of Staff of the army (Dallaire 2003: 221-224). To this day, it remains unclear who shot down the plane. However, according to Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire, who served as Force Commander of UNAMIR, the order to commit genocide was instant:

In just a few hours the Presidential Guard had conducted a well-organised and well-executed plan – by noon on April 7 the moderate political leadership of Rwanda was dead or in hiding, the potential for a future moderate government utterly lost (ibid: 232).

Among the first to be killed, when Bagosora took control, was Prime Minister and moderate Hutu Agathe Uwilingiyimana. The genocide had been meticulously planned by the *akazu*, who had been stockpiling machetes and mobilising unemployed youth into “self-defence units” since the early 1990s (Clark and Kaufman 2008: 5-6). For prepared Hutu extremists, the shooting down of the

plane was all the justification necessary for the killings to begin (Corey and Joireman 2004: 76).

In Rwanda's 1994 genocide, approximately 800,000 to 1 million people were slaughtered over the course of 100 days, from April 6 to July 16 (Melvern 2008: 21). The genocide was carried out systematically against Tutsi and moderate Hutu men, women, children and babies. The genocide is often discussed as an exclusively Hutu-Tutsi affair, but the marginalised Twa were also involved as both perpetrators and victims of violence (Beswick 2011: 495<sup>34</sup>). Roadblocks were set up and staffed by large groups of *Interahamwe*, the so-called self-defence militias established by Bagosora. The militias were armed with machetes and clubs studded with nails, while a smaller number had access to guns and grenades (Dallaire 2003: 261). The killings took place in public: in churches, clinics, hospitals and schools - the places where petrified citizens pursued safety in huge numbers (Melvern 2008: 22).

Sexual violence was used as a weapon of the genocide, with around 200-350,000 women and girls subjected to rape, gang rape, sexual mutilation, sexual slavery and forced marriage (Sharlach 1999). Georgina Holmes states that sexual violence against Tutsi women provided a way of challenging former stereotypes that positioned Tutsis as superior to the Hutu and Twa (2014: 105). Furthermore, the act of publicly stripping and raping Tutsi women symbolised both the public humiliation of the Tutsi community and the purifying of the Hutu state (ibid). For those who survived (around 50,000), an estimated 67% were

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<sup>34</sup> Danielle Beswick claims that an estimated 30,000 Twa (or 30% of Rwanda's Twa population) were killed during the 1994 genocide (2011: 495).

infected with HIV/AIDS and approximately 5,000 children were born of genocide-rape (Grant 2014: 12). The United Nations (UN) and the international community effectively abandoned Rwanda during the genocide. There was apparently no political gain from helping a resource-poor country that could justify the risking of UN casualties<sup>35</sup>. The genocide finally ended on July 16, when the RPF gained control of Kigali. The horrors of Rwanda's 1994 genocide have since been the subject of numerous human rights reports, autobiographical accounts (e.g. Ntung 2013; Whitworth 2006), films, and works of English and French language fiction and poetry (e.g. Apol 2015; Gatore 2007; Monénembo 2004; Mukasonga 2014; Okot Bitek 2016; Tadjó 2002<sup>36</sup>).

Throughout Rwanda's 1994 genocide, RTLM was used by its key actors to co-ordinate some of the killings and to incite fear and violence. Witnesses of the genocide have claimed that RTLM taught Hutu citizens that they must "kill them before they kill you" (Straus 2012). While the radio was undoubtedly an important and effective tool, the impact of RTLM's broadcasts has arguably been exaggerated and over-simplified by some scholars (e.g. Power 2001). Such researchers have suggested that Hutus simply "listened to the voice of authority" and obediently went on to kill, almost as if the genocide would not have happened without the hate radio (Straus 2012: 90). As Scott Straus more recently demonstrated, this may not have been the case. While the genocide took place in all 11 prefectures of Rwanda, RTLM's broadcasting range was not national

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<sup>35</sup> Especially after Bosnia and Somalia – see Dallaire (2003) for further information.

<sup>36</sup> See also Hitchcott (2015) for a critical study of fictional responses to the 1994 genocide by authors inside and outside of Rwanda.

(ibid). RTLM's exact range is unknown, but a Rwandan radio technician testified at the ICTR<sup>37</sup>, claiming that the broadcasts reached:

[The] whole of Kigali and a few areas south and east of Kigali, as well as a less-powerful transmitter on Mount Muhe in western Rwanda that could reach some areas in that part of the country (ibid).

This supports additional studies that argue that RTLM had little reach in rural Rwanda, home to 90-95% of the population in the early 1990s (ibid). Straus therefore argues that RTLM reinforced and legitimised pre-existing racist views and contributed to a growing sense of acute uncertainty and fear, which convinced some Hutus to join the killing (ibid: 99). However, most recruitment was done "house to house, at markets or rural commercial centres, at rural bars or at meetings called by local authorities" (ibid: 94 – see also Kimonyo 2016).

#### MUSIC OF THE RPF'S LIBERATION STRUGGLE: SINGING AND RE-SINGING VICTORY

Scholars have paid much attention to Rwanda's hate media (and "hate songs") in relation to the 1994 genocide (Des Forges 1999, 2007; Kabanda 2007; Straus 2012). Yet, until recently, researchers have neglected to consider other forms of music that flourished during this time, such as gospel choirs, *igisope* music and Tutsi exile songs proclaiming national unity. In 1994, the Tutsi exile singer and RPF soldier Mariya Yohana composed her most well-known and glaringly political song, *Intsinzi* (Victory) (Song 33, Appendix II). The lyrics reinforce RPF ideology, proclaiming that Rwanda is a "nation of a united trio".

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<sup>37</sup> The United Nations Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1995, to bring the planners and perpetrators of the genocide to justice.

Despite its unifying message, *Intsinzi* is a partisan military song. In a way similar to the Chimurenga songs of the Zimbabwean war of liberation against colonial rule (Pongweni 1997) – which were also versatile in style – *Intsinzi* was effective in boosting the morale of rebel soldiers. In her song, Mariya foresees the RPF victory and encourages her fellow soldiers to “continue moving forwards”. The melody of the song is simple and catchy, the lines short and repetitive, making it possible to add new lyrics without disturbing the flow of the song. Indeed, if we turn our attention to verses four and five it becomes clear that new lyrics have been added during the post-genocide era.

***Intsinzi (Victory) [1994]***

Mariya Yohana, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda (translated to English)

**[Chorus X 4]**

Victory children of Rwanda victory  
I can see it victory  
From every corner victory

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**[Verse 1]**

I'm predicting victory  
And I can see victory  
Victory children of Rwanda victory  
I foresee a future victory  
I can see victory  
Victory children of Rwanda victory

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**[Chorus X 2]**

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**[Verse 2]**

Get up child soldier  
You veteran, continue moving forwards, the journey isn't over  
You young man, pick up your pace and make it through the night  
Tell people that Rwanda is a nation of a united trio  
Traditional Rwandese society was composed of three tribes

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**[Chorus X 2]**

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**[Verse 3]**

Let us not slow down  
Let us move forwards, the days are few

Even our enemies, I can see that they are frightened  
Let us move and defeat them

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**[Chorus X 2]**

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**[Verse 4]**

Get up and let us vote  
Our goal is to win  
With our chosen candidate, even you people up country  
Believe in the victory of our heroes  
Even you people up country

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**[Chorus X2]**

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**[Verse 5]**

Our President's trophy made me believe in victory  
Children of Rwanda victory  
To all Rwandans, we have full morals  
To all Rwandans, there is no problem

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**[Chorus X 2]**

The lyrics presented above were performed at a privately organised pop music concert that I attended in Kigali, on July 2015 Liberation Day – a national holiday that celebrates RPF heroes where Mariya Yohana was invited to perform. As long as the RPF retains power in Rwanda, *Intsinzi* continues to be mobilised as an important nationalist song, both by the government and in order to demonstrate loyalty to the government. As a former refugee and fan of Mariya Yohana told me:

*Intsinzi* is the song that is played *everywhere!* If Rwanda win against another [sports] team they play that song. If President win in election, they play it. Anything that happens on a government basis and is successful, you know? And to me that song will stay forever and ever.



**Figure 2.9.** Poster for a Rwandan pop music concert starring Radio and Weasel of Uganda and featuring *gakondo* singer Mariya Yohana, July 2015. [My photograph]

## **The birth of the “New Rwanda”: nation-building, unity and authoritarian rule**

When the RPF seized power in 1994, they inherited a country that was completely decimated – physically, psychologically and spiritually – by the genocide. Everything needed attention: the economy, housing, health, infrastructure, trauma, education, crime and security, the issue of ethnicity, and justice. Over the last two decades, criminal trials have been pursued through the ICTR, the Rwandan National Courts and the localised *Gacaca* community courts, which were implemented nationwide between 2005 and 2012<sup>38</sup> (Ingelaere 2015). Under President Kagame’s leadership, since the year 2000, the government of Rwanda has executed an ambitious modernisation programme, as outlined in its Vision 2020 document (Republic of Rwanda 2000). At the heart of this document is the RPF’s policy of ‘national unity’, which is to unite the Rwandan population with equal rights for all regardless of ethnicity and gender. The use of ethnic categories has been stigmatised and strict laws on genocide ideology and “divisionism” have been interpreted with flexibility, increasing the government’s powers to constrain criticism (Reyntes 2013: 64). In this authoritarian context, the message is unequivocal: *Twese turi Abanyarwanda* (We are all Rwandans).

The current regime focuses on transforming Rwanda from a subsistence agricultural economy to a prosperous knowledge-based economy, with education for all. By 2020, Rwanda aspires to become a regional centre of excellence in technology and is committed to improving education in this field (Republic of

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<sup>38</sup> *Gacaca* trials were established in response to the 150,000 accused *genocidaires* who were packed into overcrowded, squalid prisons awaiting trial (McGreal 2013). They have been the subject of much debate and criticism.



Rwanda 2000). These objectives are a response to Rwanda's unsustainable agricultural situation. According to Steven Ellis, Kagame is determined to diversify Rwanda's workforce and "turn his small, resource-poor country into a hub of efficiency and progress" (2011: 36). Certainly, Rwanda's President is extremely effective in appealing to international donors. Since being in power, he has managed to secure a persistent flow of support (sometimes referred to as "genocide credit") from the "friends of the New Rwanda". Indeed, approximately 40% of Rwanda's national budget consists of aid money, primarily from the United States, the United Kingdom, the World Bank and the European Commission (Mann and Berry 2016: 129).

Perceptions of Rwanda are polarised into two opposing camps. Some focus on the government's remarkable achievements, citing the country's steady economic growth (of around 8%), near-universal health insurance, low levels of corruption<sup>39</sup>, reforms in education, and its government composed of 64% women (Clark and Kaufman 2008; Gourevitch 2000). However, others project a highly critical view of President Kagame's authoritarian regime (Ingelaere 2009; Pottier 2002; Reyntjens 2013; Straus and Waldorf 2011). Academics, human rights observers and journalists have denounced the government of Rwanda for its role in the conflict in eastern DRC, human rights violations and "repressive domestic laws limiting free speech" (Mann and Berry 2016: 120). Since being in power,

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<sup>39</sup> The Transparency International Corruption Index indicates that Rwanda is the third least corrupt country in Africa, after Botswana and Cape Verde (Transparency International 2016). However, corruption is extremely difficult to measure accurately (Jerven 2013: 1).

Kagame has eliminated all possible political opposition and the independent press is severely downtrodden:

In 2006, Amnesty International cited a list of about forty journalists who were 'arbitrarily detained, unjustly judged, forced to flee the country, 'disappeared' or assassinated since the RPF came to power (Reyntes 2013: 64 – see also Sundaram 2014).

In her doctoral thesis, Grant discusses the imprisonment of Kizito Mihigo, a gospel singer and peace and reconciliation activist (2014: 316). Kizito Mihigo was arrested in April 2014 and later found guilty of conspiracy to assassinate Kagame. Rwanda's President had sponsored the singer's musical education in Europe and the two of them were apparently close. In many ways, Kizito Mihigo was the public face of *icyunamo*, Rwanda's annual genocide commemoration period, during which time only memorial songs are permitted. According to Grant, many people believed that the real reason for Kizito Mihigo's arrest was his song *Igisobanuro cy'urupfa* (The meaning of death), which he had released just days before. The song includes the following translated lines: "Even though genocide orphaned me/But let it not make me lose empathy for others/Their lives, too, were brutally taken/But not qualified as genocide" (ibid: 318). Significantly, the lyrics undermine government discourse in which Tutsis were the only victims of the genocide, and in which the RPF were the heroes who stopped the killings.

In October 2014, following the release of the BBC documentary *Rwanda's Untold Story*, the Rwandan government accused the BBC of "genocide denial, promoting divisionism and inciting hatred" (Inquiry Committee 2014). The documentary caused significant controversy, due to its suggestion that President Kagame may have been involved in the shooting down of his predecessor's

plane, the crash that triggered the genocide. In the documentary, we also see Professor Reyntjens discussing the notorious Kibeho IDP<sup>40</sup> camp massacre, which took place in eastern DRC in 1996 (see below) and accusing Kagame of being “the most important war criminal in office today” (Rwanda’s Untold Story, 2014: 34 mins). While the Rwandan government claims that 338 people were massacred, Reyntjens reveals that UN medics counted as many as 5,000. Equally significant was a 2010 UN report that accused the RPA (along with Burundian and Ugandan forces) of shooting, torturing and raping as many as 30,000 civilians with total impunity, between March 1993 and June 2002<sup>41</sup> (United Nations 2010). Finally, the documentary quoted US researchers who suggested that many victims of the genocide were Hutus. Following the release of the documentary, peaceful protests were staged outside the British High Commission in Kacyiru, Kigali. Then, in March 2015, an inquiry committee established in Rwanda advised the government that it should “take criminal action against the BBC” and terminate their broadcasting agreements (Baird 2015).

Cases like that of Kizito Mihigo and the BBC have contributed to an environment of prevailing mistrust, suspicion and fear in contemporary Rwanda - a situation defined by Grant as “quiet insecurity” (Grant 2014, 2015b). As discussed in chapter 1, scholars such as Ingelaere (2014, 2015) and Purdeková (2011) have documented the state’s omnipresence (or “over-reach”) in recent years. Feelings of being under constant state surveillance, both offline and online, prevail among the Rwandan population and self-censorship has become a way

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<sup>40</sup> Internally Displaced People.

<sup>41</sup> These so-called revenge killings are sometimes referred to as a “double genocide”.

of life. When asking popular artists, for example, if their music contains a political or social message, they quickly became defensive:

For me, I don't like when people sing about political stuff. I don't think we have anything bad to say right now. It's like everything has been good, coz we experienced the *worst*. So, we don't have too much to criticise about.

Likewise, a well-known audio producer made the following comment:

For me, it is important not to communicate bad messages. Say about discrimination, racism. I don't know. Any negative message. But anything that makes people feel good is OK. If you are talking about peace or love or just having fun. As long as it's positive, I think it's fine.

Having said that, political criticism is present in a relatively small proportion of contemporary song lyrics, poetry and online blog posts, which I explore in later chapters. In the words of a poet and painter: "There is some policing here. You have to censor yourself, you know? But it's good. You have to push yourself to think how you can hide your message inside your work".

In 1994, the genocide led to a massive migration of Rwandans and to a monumental crisis in today's eastern DRC. Due to France's *Operation Turquoise*, almost two million citizens - including much of the leadership and militia of the genocide – escaped Rwanda into neighbouring countries, most notably eastern DRC. The *genocidaires* created environments of terror in the congested camps for IDPs and began to conduct raids back into Rwanda (Caplan 2007: 32-33). In 1996, the RPF responded by joining an anti-Mobutu alliance, headed by the DRC's future president, Laurent Kabila. With the support of Kabila and Uganda, the RPA "launched a vicious attack on the entire complex of Kivu camps", including Kibeho, killing Hutu and Tutsi civilians (ibid). A flood of refugees was

forced back into Rwanda. Then, in 1998, the newly appointed President Kabila ordered Rwandan and Ugandan diplomats to leave the DRC. The RPF's interest in destroying the remaining *Interahamwe*, along with the pursuit of mineral wealth (especially coltan<sup>42</sup>), led to a conflict that would quickly escalate into Africa's first great war; the deadliest war since World War II (Lemarchand 2009).

While nearly two million Rwandans fled the country as a result of the genocide, more than 750,000 Tutsi exiles moved back to Rwanda (Gourevitch 2000: 230). This marks the most fundamental change for Rwanda's post-genocide society. The Francophone Hutu elite was replaced with a new elite consisting of mostly English-speaking returnees from Uganda (Cantrell 2007: 339). According to Goodfellow and Smith, many returnees occupied the empty houses they found in Kigali (2013: 3189). They were well placed to gain employment with the NGOs and international donor agencies that flooded the city (ibid). By the year 2000, social and linguistic tensions were mounting between genocide survivors and Tutsi returnees, "due to feelings of exclusion and a lack of redress by the former" (ibid: 3190). Unlike the survivors, the returnees had not directly suffered the traumas of the genocide, but they were seemingly being favoured by the new political system.

Such dramatic transformations led to the emergence of new social categories, which are reflective of important hierarchies in post-genocide Rwanda, despite these labels having been more-or-less banned by the government on the basis of divisionism. Contravening simplistic Tutsi-Hutu

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<sup>42</sup> Coltan is a vital element in the manufacturing of electronic devices, such as mobile phones.

dichotomies, as well as the sweeping term ‘returnees’, I present the classifications below. Alongside each label, I describe various caricatures and stigmatising comments, which have been applied to these different segments of the population.

- ***Abasope, shortened from Abasopecya (or “local-locals”) -***

Rwandans, both Hutu and Tutsi alike, who were born and raised in Rwanda and who are presumed to be lacking in exposure to the outside world. *Sopecya* comes from a petrol station in Kigali that maintained its services during the genocide, thus *Abasope* are those Rwandans who survived the killings. During fieldwork, *Abasope* were often discussed by returnees as being “dangerous”, “hard-hearted”, “ignorant”, “uncivilised”, or “from the village”. Within this group, there are additional terms that relate to the genocide and perceptions of guilt – for example, “Hutu” has become almost synonymous with “killer”, while “Tutsis” are regarded as “victims”.

- ***Abasajya (Ugandan-Rwandans) -*** Rwandans who were living in Uganda before the genocide, sometimes referred to as simply “Ugandans”. This group mostly consists of former Tutsi exiles, or the children and grandchildren of Tutsi exiles, who fled Rwanda between 1959 and 1973. (This also applies to the categories below.) *Abasajya* derives from a Ugandan word *msaja*, meaning “man”. This is apparently because *Abasajya* would greet each other by saying, “Hey man!” *Abasajya* are often presumed by other groups to be either RPF soldiers or members of the government, or relatives of soldiers and

politicians. They are therefore perceived as being in positions of advantage and are “not to be trusted”. *Abasajya* were often discussed as being “smart” or “arrogant”, especially because they are fluent in English. One friend exclaimed: “*Abasajya* are the most important category because they run the city!”

- ***Abajepe (Burundian-Rwandans)*** - Rwandans who were living in Burundi before the genocide. *Abajepe* were often criticised by other groups for being “even slower than the *Abasope!*” One friend told me: “*Abajepe* have so much racism. They are capable of killing! They have been brutalised!”
- ***Abadubayi*** - Rwandans who were living in eastern DRC before the genocide. *Dubayi* comes from the word “Dubai”, the duty-free capital in the Middle East known for its wealth and luxury shopping. *Abadubayi* are perceived as being relatively wealthy and open. They were often discussed by non-*Abadubayi* as being “crazy”, “loud”, “funny”, “opinionated”, and “good in music and dance”.

Other groups also exist, such as the diaspora (Rwandans who live overseas), Rwandans born after the genocide, and Rwandans who returned, albeit in fewer numbers, from Tanzania (*AbaTZ*) or Kenya.

When the RPF gained control of Rwanda in 1994, Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, became president of Rwanda (Reyntjens 2013: 2). The *de facto* RPF leader, General Kagame, was appointed as vice-president (ibid). Interestingly, Bizimungu had switched sides to the RPF in 1990, after one of his brothers, a

colonel in the MRND government, was “assassinated on the orders of the late Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana” (*The Independent* 2000). However, Bizimungu resigned from office in 2000, due to major disagreements within the RPF (ibid). In 2001, he founded a new political party, the PDR (*Parti démocratique pour le renouveau*)-*Ubuyanja*. The PDR was almost immediately banned by Bizimungu’s successor, Kagame, for allegedly “sowing division among the population” (Reyntjens 2013: 28). Bizimungu (along with former minister Charles Ntakirutinka) was placed under house arrest on charges of embezzlement, inciting ethnic hatred and attempting to form a militia (Muvunyi 2017). In 2007, Bizimungu was pardoned by the government without explanation. He no longer works in politics.

After coming to power in 2000, Kagame established a new national flag, seal and anthem (Reyntjens 2013: xvii). Rwanda’s administrative structure was reorganised and several districts (formerly provinces) were renamed. National holidays were introduced to include the celebration of RPF heroes. Then, in 2008, the government of Rwanda replaced French with English as the country’s official language for education and business, consolidating the advantage of the English-speaking political elite<sup>43</sup>. This abrupt language shift was allegedly part of the government’s integration into the East African Community (EAC); the regional intergovernmental organisation of Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania. It also reflected efforts to break ties with France and Belgium, and to enable more comfortable relations with the United States and the United

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<sup>43</sup> Kagame himself cannot speak French and is known for having “bad Kinyarwanda”.



Kingdom, Rwanda's most important donors (McGreal 2008). The following year, Rwanda was accepted into the Commonwealth.

In October 2015, Rwanda's Parliament adopted a constitutional amendment, with a special clause that will effectively allow President Kagame to stay in power until 2029 (Rosen 2015). Despite claims that this reflects the wishes of the population (Tashobya 2015), neither internal divisions within the government nor opposition groups overseas should be ignored. Meanwhile, in May 2015, a change of constitution in Burundi allowed President Nkurunziza to stand for a third term, leading to political protests and an attempted coup (Wilen 2015). In the July, Nkurunziza allegedly won the national elections, resulting in the worst crisis in Burundi since 2003. Targeted killings on both sides have led to ongoing regional tensions and a flow of refugees into Rwanda and Tanzania (Jones 2015). This included Burundi's most popular artists, Big Fizzo and Sat-B, who both fled Bujumbura and moved to Kigali during the latter half of my fieldwork<sup>44</sup>. While present-day Rwanda appears to be peaceful, critics have expressed deep concerns that if the government does not properly face up to issues of justice, ethnicity and RPF accountability then Rwanda will inevitably suffer future crises.

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<sup>44</sup> During an interview, I asked Sat-B why he decided to move to Kigali. This was his reply: "These days, politicians in Burundi come and ask, 'What side does that musician follow?' And if he follows the other side, they can kill him. Or they make you sing for *them*. So, I say, 'Let's go!' I will return home when it's safe, but for now I have my connections here" (Sat-B 2015, int.). As his comment suggests, Sat-B was well-connected in Kigali, having previously helped Rwandans to organise music shows in Bujumbura. For this reason, he was able to gain relatively easy access to a recording studio and a place to live (with Nizzo from the music group Urban Boys) (see "Burundians" on map, Appendix VI).

## SINGING THE “NEW RWANDA” AND DANCING TO BELONG

After the genocide, Rwanda’s cultural landscape had changed dramatically (Grant 2014: 198). Most of the country’s musicians were either dead, in prison, or had fled the country. At least 14 well-known artists were killed in 1994, including the Hutu gospel singer Cyprien Rugamba. Later, in 2008, the “hate singer” Simon Bikindi was convicted by the ICTR of “direct and public incitement to commit genocide” and sentenced to 15 years in prison (Ntambara 2010). Even more significant was the return to Rwanda of the Tutsi exile singers discussed above. While conducting my research, these singers were referred to collectively as either “the first generation”, “the legends”, or “*gakondo* musicians”. In this section, I argue that Rwanda’s returnees have played an important role in creating the new post-genocide national identity.

Scholars of cultural identity and nationhood have argued that fixed cultural identities do not exist (Bayart 2005). Instead, national identities are constructed through imagined and highly ambiguous aspects of culture – what Bayart calls ‘*imaginaires*’ (ibid). With this in mind, I show how the revival of *gakondo* (traditional) music, along with *imbyino nyarwanda* (Rwandan dance) – an important new symbol of being Rwandan – have been vital in reinforcing RPF ideology, promoting national unity, and invoking feelings of national pride and belonging. This is in line with Kelly Askew’s ethnography on constructing the nation of Tanzania, in which she asserts that:

Singing a national anthem, chanting slogans, and performing in a band at a state-sponsored rally are some of the many ways in which, through their shared performances, the citizens of a state congeal and bring the nation – however variegated – into being (2002: 290-291).

Following the genocide, the RPF government undertook a project of constructing a new and modern Rwanda, divorced from its tragic past but rooted in *umuco gakondo* (cultural traditions) (Plancke 2014). Central to this project were attempts to unite the population and to establish a common sense of belonging. Similar to the Tanzanian context, the Rwandan government mobilised art forms as nation-building tools – for example, singers proclaiming national unity were endorsed by the RPF and used to advertise the “New Rwanda”. In 1995, Kamaliza released her song *Humura Rwanda* (Don’t Worry Rwanda) (Song 23, Appendix II), in which she embodies the idealised persona of the RPF; a benevolent bringer of “unity”, “development” and ironically “democracy”. “Don’t worry beautiful Rwanda”, she sings: “I bring you love/Source of unity and peace/The unity of three”. According to my informants, in the years following the genocide, the song was played “almost on repeat” on Radio Rwanda; the country’s state-owned and (then) only radio station.

***Humura Rwanda (Don’t worry Rwanda) [1995]***

Kamaliza, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda (translated to English).

**[Chorus]**

Don’t worry beautiful Rwanda  
Don’t worry here I come  
Don’t worry beautiful Rwanda  
Don’t worry here I come

---

**[Verse 1]**

Here I come country that I love  
I am here to comfort you  
It is the wall you lean on Rwanda  
It is the wall you lean on

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 2]**

If your heartbeat

Is not steady  
I can help to soothe it my dear  
I can help to soothe it my love

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 3]**

I am coming beautiful country  
So that I can remain by your side  
So that I can see you while I sing for you  
So that I can see you as I sing

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 4]**

I will rejoice  
Sing beyond hills  
I will praise you beautiful Rwanda  
I will praise you our Rwanda

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Instrumental]**

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**[Verse 5]**

I will wash away your imperfections  
I will chase away the enemy  
I will cover you with worthy clothing Rwanda  
I will cover you with worthy clothing

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 6]**

I bring you love  
Source of unity and peace  
The unity of three  
The unity of three

---

**[Chorus]**

Don't worry beautiful Rwanda  
Don't worry here I come

---

**[Verse 7]**

I will enforce democracy on you  
It will bring you development  
For your children Rwanda  
For your children

---

**[Chorus X 3]**

Don't worry beautiful Rwanda  
Don't worry here I come

Among the first generation of musicians was Massamba Intore<sup>45</sup>. After returning to Rwanda, he worked to revitalise music and dance genres previously associated with the Tutsi aristocracy. As the founding member of the Gakondo Group – who perform weekly at Kigali's prestigious Hôtel des Mille Collines – the singer maintains his ties with the RPF and has for several years coordinated the musical component of 'Rwanda Day'. This annual event is organised by the government in collaboration with Rwandan diasporic communities (Turner 2013). At this and other national events, the art forms under discussion have been re-branded as simply *gakondo* music, or more broadly *umuco nyarwanda* (Rwandan culture). Thus, to some extent, Rwanda's post-genocide era has seen a conflation of 'Tutsiness' with 'Rwandanness'. The music of Cécile Kayirebwa has promoted *umuco nyarwanda*. The singer recently founded 'CEKA Rwanda', a non-profit organisation that aims to "safeguard, conserve and pass down traditional Rwandan culture through music, poetry and dance" (Kayirebwa 2016). Many of Rwanda's contemporary artists have been influenced by Cécile Kayirebwa's music. For example, spoken word artist Eric 1Key sampled her 1998 song *Iwacu* (Homeland) in his 2015 album, *Entre 2*<sup>46</sup>. During a conversation, Eric 1Key emphasised the importance of Cécile Kayirebwa's song, especially for Tutsi

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<sup>45</sup> Massamba Intore's nephew, Jules Sentore, also became a well-known singer in the post-genocide era. Meanwhile, Jean-Paul Samputu moved to London and 'converted' to gospel and world music genres. He recently collaborated with a Scottish musician, Iain Stewart, and has performed at several academic conferences.

<sup>46</sup> See Song 4, Appendix II for *Iwacu* (Homeland) by Cécile Kayirebwa and Song 8, Appendix II for *A L'Africaine (Iwacu)* by Eric 1Key.

returnees: “She was announcing her homecoming”, he told me. “She was describing the streets of Kigali you know? It was beautiful”.

***Iwacu (Homeland) [1998]***

Cécile Kayirebwa, Rwanda-Belgium; Kinyarwanda (translated to English).

**[Verse 1]**

Home, home is not so far away  
If you wake up early you will arrive before night  
And when you make up your mind you sleep there  
Home is in Nyarugenge, you turn from Gikondo going towards Remera  
We're going home (X3)

---

**[Chorus]**

Home, home is not so far away  
In fact, I was just there  
Nowadays the roads are unrecognisable  
Home is in Nyarugenge, you turn from Gikondo going towards Remera  
We're going home

---

**[Verse 2]**

My eyes met Nyabugogo  
And my heart skipped a beat  
The whole of Kigali smiled at me  
The sky of thousands of stars  
I recognised your smell  
And I knew that my journey was over  
And that there was no room for sorrow, we're going home

---

**[Chorus – shortened]**

Home, home is not so far  
Home is in Nyarugenge, you turn from Gikondo going towards Remera  
We're going home

---

**[Verse 3]**

I'm standing on top of Muhubura  
Looking down on Uburera and Ibigogwe  
The whole of Urukingo, Umutara and Ubuganza  
And Bwana Mugari and the whole of Mbuga, we're going home

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 4]**

All of Bugoyi and Bushiru  
All of Gisaka and Bwana Cyambwe  
Bumbogo over there and Bugesera  
Also, Ikinyaga and its Nyungwe

Looking at the lake of Kibuye, we're going home

---

**[Verse 1 - repeated]**

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**[Chorus]**

More recently, the young singer-songwriter Teta Diana deliberately modelled her voice and lyrics on that of the late Kamaliza's. Indeed, the artist launched her musical career by singing Kamaliza covers with the Gakondo Group<sup>47</sup>. In addition to *gakondo* music, Teta Diana (born in 1992) told me that she was inspired by artists from Jamaica and the United States (namely, Bob Marley, Céline Dion and Lauryn Hill). As I discuss in future chapters, she has recorded several pop songs with Kigali's singers and rappers. However, it was Teta Diana's song *Ndaje* (Here I come) - sung in the style of Kamaliza - that led to her being effectively employed by the Rwandan government (Song 54, Appendix II). In the words of another artist:

Teta basically works for the government now, and they will tell her what to do, what she can sing, what to wear. It's not easy to say no. You have to find ways around it, but once you're in you can't come back!

Under the guidance of Massamba Intore, Teta Diana composed and performed *Ndaje* at *Kwibuka 20* (the 20<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the 1994 genocide), in 2014. Clearly, the song's message of unity, reconciliation and hope encapsulates the official RPF narrative, and resembles that of the Tutsi exile songs discussed above.

### ***Ndaje* (Here I come) [2014]**

Teta Diana, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda (translated to English).

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<sup>47</sup> See Song 53, Appendix II for a "collabo" between Teta Diana and Jules Sentore (also a member of the Gakondo Group).

**[Verse 1]**

Get together I want to talk to you  
All I need is to make a family  
All Rwandans are one people  
Don't tease each other  
Iye iye eh...  
Give me a little time  
Listen to me as I come for reconciliation  
Ignore the fact that I am young  
What's important is the advice I am giving to you  
Iye...

---

**[Chorus]**

Aaayihe iye don't worry Rwanda, here I come  
Don't worry orphans, here I come  
I brought you love, unity and talent  
This is the time for me to give the advice  
Here I come  
Here I come  
Here I come eh eh

---

**[Verse 2]**

Rwanda you were beautiful  
Your three peoples always understood each other  
They shared everything, and were fed by the same breasts as siblings  
One love, one heritage, and that was enough  
Iye iye eh eh  
Later, the fourth person came  
He was jealous of that unity  
They fooled us, we traded our secrets with their lies  
They knew well how to separate us  
Iye iye

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

My father used to tell me  
That the child who has been fed cannot steal  
Our motherland gives us everything we need  
Can we fight selfishness?  
Iye iye eh eh  
Allow me to give you some advice  
The relation between us is bigger than our conflict  
Be kind as you will be rewarded  
If you are not kind, things will get harder



Following her performance at *Kwibuka 20*, Teta Diana was awarded the Celebrating Young Rwandan Achievers Award (CYRWA) by the First Lady Jeanette Kagame, “for using her talent to inspire fellow youth and promote traditional music throughout the country” (Yeejo 2017). Teta Diana’s music celebrates *umuco nyarwanda*, while also addressing social issues being pushed by the RPF government. This apparent convergence between official government-imposed patriotism and ordinary people’s preference for Rwandan-cultured singers - and Kinyarwanda-language songs - is what arguably led to Teta Diana being favoured by the RPF. Profiting ideologically from Teta Diana’s personal preferences, the government invited her to perform at several prestigious events. In 2015, she accompanied President Kagame to Amsterdam, where she sang at ‘Rwanda Day’. In 2016, she represented her country again when singing *Ndaje* at the UN summit in Kigali. Rwandan artists, such as Teta Diana, clearly understand that there is an expectation to compose songs that will please the government. In a few cases, this earns them a little patronage in return. In chapter 4, I return to the question of state sponsorship as a perceived route to success for cultural producers in Kigali.



**Figure 2.10.** Teta Diana and her dancers performing in the colours of the Rwandan flag at the KigaliUp international music festival, July 2015.  
[Sourced: <https://tinyurl.com/y9sc886s>]



**Figure 2.11.** First Lady Jeanette Kagame embracing Teta Diana at the US Diaspora Women Convention in Washington, D.C., March 2016.  
[Sourced: <https://tinyurl.com/ya3tosy4>]

On March 27, 2016, I had the opportunity to watch Cécile Kayirebwa perform live. The singer continues to travel between Brussels and Kigali and was in Rwanda for the launch of her new album, *Urukumbuzi* (Nostalgia). The concert was privately funded and took place at Kigali's exclusive Serena Hotel. The hall was filled to its maximum capacity of 300 people, despite the relatively expensive ticket price of 15,000 Rwandan francs (roughly £15). The audience largely consisted of middle-aged, affluent, urban returnees who were dressed to impress; men wore smart trousers, shoes and shirts and women wore brightly coloured, full-length dresses with elegant jewellery to match. Rows of plastic chairs covered in soft fabrics had been separated by aisles into three sections and neatly positioned to face the stage. At the back of the room, there was a table for purchasing wine, beer, Fanta or bottled water. At the entrance to the hall, friends of Cécile Kayirebwa sold her CDs. Hotel staff and waiters dressed in black suits and waistcoats staffed the venue wearing serious expressions.

On stage, three young men constituted the band. Between them, they played an electronic piano, acoustic guitar, jazz drums and various percussion instruments. A section of the show was dedicated to an *inanga* master, who treated the audience to a compelling *icyivugo*. Two young women sang and danced with Cécile Kayirebwa, who took centre stage. While the male band members wore dark-coloured 'Western' clothing, the women - who were the real spectacles of the show - wore bright pink and white *imikenyero* and later changed into red and black. In both instances, Cécile Kayirebwa's outfits varied from the others to ensure she stood out.



**Figure 2.12.** Cécile Kayirebwa (seated) performing at her album launch, March 2016. [My photograph]

Cécile Kayirebwa's song *Umunezero (Rwanda)* had maintained such popularity that some of her fans described it to me as "our unofficial national anthem". When she performed the song, the excitement in the hall increased. Audience members stood up to take photographs or record videos on their phones. Friends turned to look at each other, smiling with pride and recognition for the song. While some audience members cheered and whistled, others sang the lyrics and clapped their hands in time with the beat. Cécile Kayirebwa widened her eyes, smiled and performed expressive movements with her hands. As the song continued, women and men began to face each other; they danced the courtly genres discussed, gracefully lifting their arms while swaying from side to side – a style that has been interpreted in the RPF era as simply *imbyino*

*nyarwanda* (Rwandan dance) (see discussion below). Bolder members of the audience jumped up from their seats and dramatically danced their way down the aisles, congregating at the front of the stage to praise their “Rwandan queen”.



**Figure 2.13.** Audience members dancing at Cécile Kayirebwa's album launch, March 2016. [My photograph]

Scholarship on dance in other contexts has shown the importance of the medium in not only representing the nation but also embodying it directly – for example, Felicia Hughes-Freeland's (2008) research on the establishment of classical Javanese dance as the national dance of Indonesia. Yolanda Covington-Ward has shown how a similar process unfolded in the DRC, where feelings of national belonging were embodied through various everyday gestures

(2016: 18). We can also see a similar process in Rwanda, especially by former exiles living in urban areas. This has been illustrated by Plancke's recent work on Kigali's most popular dance troupe, *Inganzo Ngari* (Large Creation). Plancke (2017) demonstrates how *imbyino nyarwanda* has become an obligatory component of official ceremonies in post-genocide Rwanda, and troupes who are seen to embody the image of a new, united nation have been highly promoted by the government.

Inganzo Ngari was founded in 2006 by Tutsi returnees, mostly from Burundi and eastern DRC, and continues to be directed by them. Despite this, the troupe makes efforts to intergrate Tutsi, Hutu and Twa members and has consequently been endorsed by the government (ibid: 3). As with *gakondo* music, Inganzo Ngari's choreography has mostly been inspired by the courtly art forms discussed above, especially the dances *imihamirizo* and *imishagiri*. Once again, this suggests a conflation of 'Tutsiness' with 'Rwandaness'. However, in their desire to break with "old traditions and a difficult history", the dancers have also incorporated various regional styles, as well as innovating new moves (Plancke 2014). For instance, the troupe's choreographers gained inspiration from Chinese folkloric dancers, accessed via the internet. Other innovations include greater uniformity (rather than spontaneity and personal style), faster rhythms, the wearing of brighter clothing and make-up and increasingly spectacular aesthetics (ibid). In this regard, Inganzo Ngari represents a "very Modern Tradition" (Waterman 1990 – see also Hobsbawm 2012).



Nonetheless, despite *imbyino nyarwanda* being innovative and open to new influences, its incorporation of courtly genres is significant for how it reflects and reinforces the RPF vision for the “New Rwanda”. Although the RPF allegedly aims to incorporate Tutsi, Hutu and Twa genres, it has persistently favoured the cultural forms that are associated with the Tutsi with which they are most familiar, therefore actively nationalising music and dance genres that are in line with RPF ideology. Of particular significance are the arm gestures displayed in the dances, which have become important new symbols of being Rwandan, and reinforce and embody a national identity among some young Rwandans that revolve around Tutsi cultural forms.



**Figure 2.14.** The distinctive arm movements displayed in *imbyino nyarwanda* (Rwandan dance), at a diaspora event in Brussels.  
[Photograph courtesy of B Jack and Didier]

Twa participation in troupes such as Inganzo Ngari is currently restricted to the role of singers: “Onstage, they are generally positioned in a corner, leaving all the visibility to the dancers” (Plancke 2017: 11). Plancke goes as far as to suggest that, within the troupe, the Twa “represent the backwards, destitute part of the population in comparison with the rich, modern [and educated] dancers” (ibid). This visually reflects the tension between centre and periphery that characterises the “New Rwanda” (Ingelaere 2010). While urban and mostly Tutsi dancers occupy the central position, Twa performers remain marginalised. Indeed, as critics have observed, the Vision 2020 ideal is an unattainable ideal for the vast majority of rural Rwandans, and especially for the Twa (Ansoms 2011).

In this section, I have demonstrated that Tutsi returnees have largely been responsible for creating Rwanda’s new, post-genocide national identity. Moreover, to some extent this has involved a conflation of ‘Tutsiness’ with ‘Rwandanness’, with the RPF promoting cultural forms that were previously associated with the Tutsi. On this issue, Breed has made the following argument:

Because Tutsi exiles are largely responsible for creating the new Rwandan identity performed on national stages, this identity, rather than being universalised across the different ethnic identifications, is effectively a Tutsi ideal of the new Rwandan subject. This unified national identity, in some cases, may exacerbate tensions along ethnic lines owing to continuing unresolved power imbalances (2014: 41-42).

Consequently, the RPF’s political project – of imposing an ideology of national unity – is inherently paradoxical.

However, when discussing the performances that precede *gacaca* court hearings, Breed also explains how the Rwandan government has consciously



sought to include dance styles that are associated with all three ethnic groups (ibid: 137-138). In other words, while the government has actively promoted Tutsi art forms, it has not necessarily silenced those that are associated with the Hutu and Twa. Instead, it has attempted to bring together the performance genres of all three ethnicities. In addition, if the new Rwandan identity performed on national stages has been 'Tutsi' rather than 'national', it is worth remembering that the Tutsi returnees who helped to forge this new identity have done so with the acknowledgment that ethnicity is taboo. It is important to recognise that researchers must go beyond Tutsi-Hutu dichotomies and understand that ethnicity is but one layer of Rwandans' contemporary identities. Kigali is home to vast numbers of Rwandan returnees, some who grew up in neighbouring countries, others in Europe and North America. Thus, entwined linguistic and cultural influences feed into an increasingly diverse and interesting city. In the following chapters, I explore this in relation to the contemporary pop music industry and reveal how there are multiple ways of being Rwandan beyond discussions of ethnicity.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have offered a history of Rwanda that incorporates music, dance and poetry. I have argued that Rwanda's past, and indeed its present, should be analysed through a regional lens. There is a significant history of interaction and interconnection between present-day Rwanda and its neighbouring countries, especially Uganda, Burundi and eastern DRC. Many of the factors that have shaped Rwanda's history have originated beyond its borders. In this regard, I have detailed the takeover of power, in 1994, by the

English-speaking RPF; a rebel group that was established in Uganda by Tutsi refugees. Amidst the RPF's re-imagining of the nation, the government has endorsed and promoted art forms that advertise its "New Rwanda". I have argued that Tutsi returnees have largely been responsible for the creation of Rwanda's new national identity, within which the acknowledgement of ethnicity is taboo. More specifically Tutsi exile songs proclaiming national unity and the revitalisation of *imbyino nyarwanda* (Rwandan dance) have been vital in reinforcing RPF ideology, promoting national unity, and invoking feelings of national belonging and pride, especially among former Tutsi refugees. Thus, placing these cultural forms in historical perspective allows us to consider the interrelationship between music, dance, politics and ethnicity, as they have developed over time.

Tutsi exile songs and *imbyino nyarwanda* incorporate aspects of courtly genres that were cultivated during the Nyiginya Kingdom. From the late eighteenth century, these highly refined genres were performed at the court to reinforce the *mwami*'s power and to "elaborate the [Tutsi] aristocracy's privileged aura, both among themselves and in their dealings with Hutu clients" (Barber 2007: 59). Thus, in post-genocide Rwanda, we have seen to some extent a conflation of 'Tutsiness' with 'Rwandanness', and a nationalising of art forms that promote RPF ideology. The arm gestures displayed in *imbyino nyarwanda*, historically associated with the Tutsi aristocracy, have become an important new symbol of being Rwandan.

While in this chapter I have focused on the first generation *gakondo* musicians, as well as on young urban dance troupes, the next chapter will map

out Kigali's popular music world as I encountered it at the time of my research. Building on the argument developed here, I will suggest that the former Tutsi diaspora, and especially those from Uganda (*Abasajya*), were also important in shaping Rwanda's contemporary pop music industry. Yet, demonstrating the necessity of analyses of identity that go beyond ethnicity, recent socio-political transformations have led to the emergence of new social categories that complicate the term 'Returnee Tutsis'. These categories – such as *Abasajya* (Ugandan-Rwandans), *Abajepe* (Burundian-Rwandans) and *Abasope* ("local-locals") – are reflective of important hierarchies in post-genocide Rwanda.

### CHAPTER 3 - VIA RADIO, ROADS AND SCREENS:

## CONSTRUCTING RWANDA'S CONTEMPORARY POP MUSIC

### INDUSTRY

In chapter 2 I argued that former Tutsi refugees played a critical role in forging Rwanda's new, post-genocide national identity, within which the acknowledgment of ethnicity is taboo (see also Breed 2014). This speaks to Victoria Bernal's (2014) work on the role of the online diaspora in forming Eritrean citizenship. She argues that, in the current age of digital communications and migration, it is most helpful to think of nations as networks that expand beyond geographical boundaries (ibid: 9). In this way, processes of constructing national identities may be impacted by groups of people who either live or have lived outside of their motherland. Building on this, I argue that Tutsi returnees, and especially those from Uganda (*Abasajya*), have also been important in shaping Rwanda's contemporary pop music industry. This argument is informed by explicit statements from my informants - for example, "But Ceri, most of the people doing arts in Rwanda are from *outside*. Mostly they are from Uganda" (Arnold Mugisha 2015, int.).

In her work on Kinyarwanda-language hip-hop, Grant distinguishes between "Returnee Tutsis" and *Abasope*:

I discovered that rifts continued to exist not so much along ethnic lines as experiential ones: Returnee Tutsis were said to be very different from the so-called *Abasope*, Rwandans, both Hutu and Tutsi alike, who were born and raised in the country (2014: 41).

Yet, additional social categories are also at play, by which I mean *Abasajya* (Ugandan-Rwandans), *Abajepe* (Burundian-Rwandans), *Abadubayi* (Rwandans who returned from the DRC) and Rwandans who returned, albeit in smaller numbers, from Tanzania (*AbaTZ*), Kenya or overseas. As previously discussed, Rwanda's cultural producers differ in ethnicity, language, gender, religion, education and economic status. Despite their attempts to be uniformly Rwandan, many of them grew up in neighbouring countries and others are of multinational heritage. For this reason, the concept of 'Returnee Tutsis' as a homogenous group needs to be deconstructed. There is one exception to this heterogeneity: almost all of my informants, excluding audience members, whose ages spanned more widely, were aged between 18 and 35 at the time of my research. Thus, Rwanda's music industry was created by and for *imuto* (youth), their voices, skills and ideas at the very heart of its sound.

Bearing this heterogeneity of Rwanda's young cultural producers in mind, I demonstrate how the diversification of Kigali's musical scene has emerged from a situation in which there is both a digital circulation of music and a physical circulation of people, who draw upon their exposure to multiple influences. In this chapter on 'musical traffic', I focus on digital circulations. I outline the new availability and privatisation of media technologies in Rwanda, from the mid-2000s to the present. More specifically, I discuss the opening of private radio and later TV stations and the opening of private recording studios, which enabled the relatively speedy growth of the contemporary pop music industry. More recently, greater access to the internet - especially music-sharing websites (e.g. YouTube and Sound Cloud) and social media platforms (e.g. Facebook and WhatsApp) –

have opened up new spaces for alternative kinds of performers to emerge, such as members of 'Spoken Word Rwanda'. Despite the potential openness of these media technologies, it is important to remember that digital music interacts with social networks (Asaasira 2012; Perullo 2011; Pype 2013). To exemplify how this plays out in Kigali, I explore the role of human agency in enabling or blocking music circulations through three generations of musicians. In doing so I highlight the precariousness of my informants' livelihoods and their determination to improvise solutions to the challenges that they face. In the following chapter, I emphasise the mixed identities of Kigali's cultural producers, thus focusing on the physical circulation of people.

As mentioned in chapter 1, I have created as part of my project a detailed, original mind map (Appendix VI). In this chapter, the map is useful in visually representing the names of the major pop artists, audio and video producers, studio owners and managers/sponsors, and radio and TV presenters, who were active at the time of my research. It also includes popular Burundian artists who were living in Kigali as refugees, as well as relevant *gakondo* musicians, gospel singers, spoken word artists, self-proclaimed "live musicians" (as opposed to playback artists), hotel bands, and key members of Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company. By including a wide range of cultural producers, I demonstrate links that exist between various artistic forms. Finally, to highlight the diversity of Rwanda's cultural producers regarding where they grew up, the map is colour coded to indicate the social category of every person. This will help us to understand how an individual's background may be related to their level of success, choice of genre and social networks established.

## **‘To fly like Uganda’: media technology and the rise of Rwanda’s contemporary pop music industry**

As discussed in chapter 1, the new availability and privatisation of media technologies across Africa has resulted in both an increase in the consumption of music genres such as hip-hop, R&B and reggae and a surge of electronic music production output, especially following the obtainability of digital music making software (Mbabazi 2012: 17). Rwanda is no exception to this: when I arrived in Kigali in November 2014 the nation’s pop music industry was starting to pick up speed. Due to the civil war and genocide completely decimating the country’s economy and infrastructure, the beginnings of the industry only began to emerge in the mid-2000s, in contrast to other African countries such as in neighbouring Uganda where it began in the early 1990s. For this reason, Uganda has in many ways served as a model of music production in Kigali, especially as so many of its “pioneers” were *Abasajya* (Ugandan-Rwandans). Acutely aware of Uganda’s thriving popular music world many Rwandans described their industry as a “baby” by comparison – for example:

We are babies! You know babies need to learn to crawl and stand up and run. We are babies and those guys in Uganda are flying! That’s how we compare our industries. If you see how those guys [in Kampala] work, if you see how they *advertise*, if you see how they *promote*, if you see how they get *money*, if you see how they get *concert*, you will see that we are still really, really far [behind] (DJ Pius 2015, int.).

As the quotation suggests, the Rwandans in my research wanted their national music industry to “fly” like that of Uganda. In other words, they had a constant sense of belatedness and clearly perceived their music industry as being less developed than that of their Ugandan ‘big brothers’. Throughout this chapter and

those that follow, I consider the ways in which this sense of being far behind affects the ways that cultural producers do business in Kigali.

Despite its delayed beginning, Rwanda's music industry was established in a relatively short space of time. Following the genocide, the two most significant developments were the opening of private radio and, later, TV stations and the opening of independent recording studios. This inspired a new generation of urban youth, with a spirit of entrepreneurship and a passion for pop music genres, to transform themselves into national stars. In Kigali, to be a 'star' is to be a popular well-known performer, while the term 'superstar' is reserved for those who are most successful. At the turn of the century, there was only one radio station in the country, the state-owned channel Radio Rwanda. Likewise, until 2013, there was just one government-owned TV station, RTV, which was ironically marketed as "the network of your choice". However, between 2003 and 2006, as many as 25 private radio stations were given broadcasting licenses, including City Radio, Contact FM, Isango Star FM, Radio 10, Radio Salus (owned by the national university) and the Voice of Africa (Grant 2014: 203). By the time of my research, additional radio and TV stations were also in operation, namely Radio Umucho and Sana Radio (both gospel channels), Radio 1 (along with TV1), KT Radio, Royal FM, Lemigo TV and Yego TV. The most popular commercial radio stations were Kiss FM Rwanda and KFM Rwanda, the latter owned by Kenya's National Media Group (NMG), the largest multimedia house in East Africa<sup>48</sup>. Other transnational music and entertainment channels, such as

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<sup>48</sup> NMG newspapers include *The East African* and *The Daily Nation*. In July 2016, NMG shut down three of its media outlets, including KFM Rwanda.



MTV Base Africa, Trace TV and NTV Uganda, were also widely available in Kigali during the period of my fieldwork.

Here it is important to note that the democratisation of the media “does not necessarily entail freedom of press or more transparency” (Pype 2011: 621). In fact, Rwanda’s authoritarian context has generated comparable conditions to those seen in Kinshasa, where the media is economically liberalised while maintaining high levels of state control (ibid). In Rwanda all media is monitored and controlled by the government institution the Rwandan Utilities Regulatory Agency. Along with the Media High Council they have the power to suspend or refuse to give licences to any media outlet. In many African countries, such as Kenya, the radio “remains the most effective means of disseminating information, ideas [and] propaganda” (Odhiambo 2012: 38). Since this is also the case in Rwanda, radio content is meticulously controlled by the government, who justify this by reminding its citizens of RTLM’s deadly role in the genocide (see chapter 2). To demonstrate how this plays out, I compare Kiss FM Rwanda with Kiss 100 FM in Kenya, as described by Christopher Odhiambo (2012). Whereas the two radio stations follow a similar structure in terms of programming - both comprise music, advertisements, information on road traffic and general conversations led by witty, multi-lingual presenters - FM stations in Rwanda are restricted from participation in the discussion on air of serious issues of national interest, unless explicitly in support of the government narrative. This contrasts with Kenya’s more dynamic FM stations, which although ‘pretending’ to privilege music and entertainment also include call-in programmes that provide ordinary citizens with a forum to debate political issues. In this way, they nurture a democratic ethos by

“confronting the country’s previous culture of silence” (ibid: 47 – see also Ogola 2011, 2015).

Alongside the opening of private radio stations was the opening of private recording studios. Since 2005 dozens of small independent recording studios have sprung up across Kigali, run by young male entrepreneurs with an interest in digital music production and a desire to be *umuyobozi* (a boss). Most of the studios were set up in Nyamirambo, Kigali’s most vibrant and creative suburb. In this southwestern corner of Kigali, Nyamirambo’s streets are alive with activity. Brightly painted and adorned shops offer a range of products and services - tailors, boutiques, hair salons, internet cafés and affordable late-night restaurants. Home to a multi-cultural population – including many of the city’s West African immigrants, low-income residents and Muslims, as well as numerous *insengero* (churches), *akabyiniro*<sup>49</sup> (nightclubs) and *ku kabenzi*<sup>50</sup> (pork bars) – the area encompasses an interesting mixture of lifestyles. It is certainly a place that divides opinions. For example, when I told a born-again Christian friend of mine that I was moving to Nyamirambo (nicknamed “Nyamijos”, or simply “the ghetto”), she looked at me intensely with fear in her eyes: “But Ceri!” She exclaimed, “Don’t you know it is very dangerous there? Many thieves! Many drugs! Too much chaos!” It is perhaps this relative “chaos”, as well as its comparatively low cost of living, that makes Nyamirambo so appealing to many of the country’s artistic minds.

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<sup>49</sup> Nyamirambo slang: literally, “small place for dancing”.

<sup>50</sup> Pork bars (or restaurants) first emerged in Kigali’s Kicukiro district. The term derives from *akabenzi*, Kinyarwanda slang for “pork”. According to one explanation, *akabenzi* was named after Mercedes Benz cars.

The appeal of this “chaos” is related to the perception that pop singers and rappers operate outside the morality associated with new Pentecostal churches in Rwanda. My born-again friend was a devout member of the new Revivalist (*Abarokore*) churches, which were set up by *Abasajya* pastors in 1994 (Grant 2014: 72<sup>51</sup>). As described in other research on Pentecostalism in Africa (Gifford 2004; Lindhardt 2015; Meyer 2011; Meyer and Moors 2006; Parsitau 2011; Pype 2012), Revivalists - known as *Abarokore* in Rwanda and *Balokole* in Uganda - stress “the importance of one’s personal relationship with Christ and a withdrawal from worldly matters” (Grant 2014: 74). In contrast, the artists and producers I encountered were associated with ‘sinful’ behaviours that, according to *Abarokore* teachings, contradict what it means to be a good Christian; activities such as consuming alcohol, smoking *ikintu* (marijuana), engaging in sex outside of marriage, wearing ‘immodest’ clothing, and styling one’s hair in dreadlocks<sup>52</sup>. In the words of one aspiring artist: “Some people say if you are a superstar you start to use drugs, beer, prostitutes, you leave your education, you go crazy!”

Despite many of the cultural producers in my research being at least partially committed to Pentecostalism - and in some cases having *abapasitori* (pastors) as close family members - they tended to mock the perspective of *Abarokore*, telling me that “they’re just *too much!*” As proud consumers of the latest international fashions and trends, they considered *Abarokore* to be overly

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<sup>51</sup> See also Peterson (2012) for a detailed study on the Protestant East African Revival of the 1930s, another important historical trajectory when considering religion in the region.

<sup>52</sup> See Weiss (2009: 56) for an interesting discussion on how this plays out in Arusha, Tanzania.

conservative and less progressive in their opinions – for example, the aspiring artist mentioned above also said the following:

When I'm on a bus, I hear some people talking: 'Is he a Rasta? Is he *really* Rwandan?!' Some people are not really used to this kind of hair, but they'll get used to it. Coz Kigali is now becoming an international city where you see different people living side by side with different styles.

This supports research done in other African contexts, such as the DRC (White 2008), Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (Ntarangwi 2009), where dreadlocks have also come to be associated with musicians, visual artists and sportsmen. It also reinforces my point about the diversity of young Rwandans living in Kigali's fast-changing and outward-looking society. This simultaneous existence of stark differences in worldviews and lifestyles is not unique to Kigali and has been written about in numerous African contexts, such as Jennifer Cole's (2010) ethnography, *Sex and Salvation*, in which she explores the contrasting life paths of young women in urban Madagascar.

During fieldwork, four leading recording studios were regularly attended by Rwanda's popular artists. These were: Narrow Road Studio (since 2007), Kina<sup>53</sup> Music (since 2009), Super Level (since 2012) and Touch Records (since 2012). Incredible and Infinity were also well-established, while upcoming studios included African Calabash, CB Records, Future Records and Ibisumizi<sup>54</sup>; the record label belonging to Riderman, one of Rwanda's well-loved rappers. (See map, Appendix VI, for the aforementioned studios<sup>55</sup>.) Despite their prominent

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<sup>53</sup> *Kina* means "play" in Kinyarwanda.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibisumizi* means "roar" or "knights". In the late 1800s, it was the name of the army belonging to Mwami Ruganzu Ndori II (Vansina 2005: 60).

<sup>55</sup> Other recording studios included Cyimeza, Eagle Eyes, East Africano, F2K, True Friends Records, Top 5 Sai (formerly Bridge Records) and Unlimited.

positions within Kigali's media world, the recording studios were very basic and sometimes hard to find. Tucked away behind large metal gates and in ordinary buildings there was nothing to observe on the outsides to indicate their presence. Only plant pots painted in the colours of the Rwandan flag, a new government requirement for all businesses, as part of their efforts to promote the flag and nationalism in general. Yet inside, Kigali's studios were places of action; equipped with keyboards, microphones, speakers, computers and digital music making software. (Very occasionally, live instruments were also used to record music.) This reinforces the apparent orderliness of Kigali's public spaces (Bafana 2016; Baker 2007; Goodfellow 2013), and the fact that much of what happens in Rwanda's music scene happens behind closed doors.

To practise music production, Kigali's cultural producers import media technologies from outside of the country. For example, when building the recording studios listed above, most of the equipment was purchased in Kampala. This supports my overall focus on extraversion and strengthens my point that, in post-genocide Rwanda, cultural producers have looked outside to Uganda in particular for a model of music production. Despite being marginalised, my informants told me that they were determined to build a successful music industry, which resembles that of Uganda, where studio owners, artists, producers and presenters can earn a living. During fieldwork, I observed how it took five months for Narrow Road Studio to raise the money required to buy a new sound card from Kampala; a device which is slotted into a computer to allow it to input, process and deliver sound. As sound cards are essential when recording music, this relatively expensive purchase (costing the equivalent of

£150) was crucial if the studio was to remain open for business. This illustrates how, for the majority of my informants, life and work was defined by the hustle for money as they attempted to improvise solutions to their problems within financially precarious situations (see also Braun 2016: 2).

Furthermore, when asking cultural producers about the soundproofing of recording rooms against unwanted noises, such as heavy rain, people or nearby traffic, they revealed a need to creatively establish alternative ways of working. According to one studio owner, Kigali's first recording studios were not soundproofed at all. Laughing, he said the following:

We used to joke, back in 2005, coz most studios didn't have soundproofing or even recording rooms! So, they recorded you there in one room and when it's raining, you cancel. When there's a dog barking, you cancel! It was very bad!

Since most of Kigali's studio owners were unable to afford professional soundproofing, they were forced to improvise using whatever resources they could find. Using strong industrial glue, they layered onto the walls and doors what they called "fake materials", such as foam, mattresses, carpets, wood panels, cardboard egg cartons, blankets, and (for those with higher budgets) long strips of leather. While Uganda now has some professionally built studios, as well as some more improvised ones (e.g. figs. 3.1. and 3.2.), Kigali's studios are currently all built in this way, once again highlighting how Rwanda's music industry is behind that of Uganda. Finally, due to this style of soundproofing, the studios that I visited were rather dark and stifling hot. They were decorated with posters advertising past and future events, with walls of fame showing off the

photographs or signatures of other African stars who had visited from abroad (e.g. fig. 3.3.).



**Figures 3.1. and 3.2.** Rwandan audio producer Pacento outside Salten Records, Kampala, April 2015. [My photograph]



**Figure 3.3.** Inside the recording room at Narrow Road Studio, Kigali, September 2015. [My photograph]

Research conducted elsewhere in Africa has revealed that over the past 30 years education has failed to deliver on its promise to provide open access to jobs, with unemployment growing, especially among young people (Christiansen et al. 2006; Cole 2010; De Boeck and Honwana 2005; Masquelier 2013; O'Brien 1996; Sommers 2012). Some studies have shown that young Africans increasingly neglect education and opt for careers in music and sports (Künzler and Poli 2012). Whereas “old” occupations (the educated civil servant, for example) have not disappeared, especially among people holding university degrees, they have been somewhat devalued by economic and political crisis (ibid: 213). New figures of success now include “the pastor, the development



broker, the migrant, the warlord, [the] football star [and the musician]" (ibid). For young Ivorian citizens, for example, "football is a means of integration and social mobility via migration, and thus a way to success" (ibid: 218). Such figures represent hope and aspirations for the general public in Côte d'Ivoire and generate much admiration and respect from young people across the world (ibid).

Moradewun Adejunmobi's (2014) work on mediated performance similarly shows how, with little money for education, a career in the arts and media sector is perceived as an alternative route to success for youth in Nigeria whose livelihoods are also precarious. However, there is one important difference between the Rwandan and Nigerian contexts: whereas in Nigeria, media-based performances receive much government sponsorship and have, arguably, become a respectable career option, in Rwanda, where the creative industries are severely under-funded, this is not the case. In the words of a Rwandan singer:

Music is not trusted as a viable business or career path. If you have a boyfriend or a girlfriend who is an artist, you may love them, but your family will ask, 'What kind of person are you bringing here?!' (Branakweli Alex 2015, int.).

This was similarly expressed by another popular artist:

If you look at other countries like Nigeria, their government has done *too* much to make it easier for them. In Rwanda, the investors are few. For investors to invest they need to see that artists are making money. It's like the chicken and the egg. And right now, there are few ways to make money in Rwanda (Benjah TBB 2015, int.).

Nonetheless, since my informants were acutely aware of - and sometimes connected to - more prosperous music industries in other African countries, such as Uganda and Nigeria, many of them expressed hope that "one day" music will offer them the opportunity to achieve upward socioeconomic mobility. Throughout

this thesis, I will argue that aspirations for socioeconomic mobility, and optimism that music might eventually provide it, shape the creative and networking strategies of cultural producers.

Despite these economic challenges, perceptions of male artists in particular were gradually starting to improve among Kigali's older generations.

On this issue, the owner of Kina Music said the following:

Before, many people thought musicians were people who had left school. Maybe they were drug addicts. Now it's become more of a profession. People have started to respect it. Before, they were taking musicians as not serious people. Now the mind-set is slowly changing (Clément Ishimwe 2015, int.).

This gradual shift in perception is partly due to the fact that some artists are now able to buy houses, land or cars – important symbols of “becoming a man” in present-day Kigali. In Rwanda's heavily regulated and controlled environment – where finding viable economic activities that the government will condone is “yet another dominant challenge, particularly for urban youth” (Sommers 2012: 7) – the ability of some artists to become financially independent is a significant achievement. By way of illustration, I recall a conversation with one of Rwanda's struggling artists, where the rapper clearly expressed his longing to use music as a route to become a recognisable, accomplished adult (*kuvamo umuntu*<sup>56</sup>):

I want to become a *man* you know? A man with family, house, car, all that stuff. When you make it as a star, you can make it in other business. Like a bar, a lounge, clothing line. Like Chameleone in Uganda, he is building a school. You can give back to the community. Maybe start a charity. Stuff like that.

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<sup>56</sup> In Kinyarwanda, *kuvamo umuntu* means “to become somebody”, i.e. “to become an accomplished person”.

This demonstrates how superstars from Uganda have inspired in some Rwandans ideas about what to aspire for and how to do business in Kigali.

Finally, the popular singer Tom Close (a returnee from Uganda) was often discussed by my informants as playing an important role in improving the reputations of those who work in the music industry. The reason for this was explained to me by one of Rwanda's audio producers:

Before, you can't find a doctor or anyone who has a degree *and* artist. That also made Tom Close hit more than other artist. Coz he was learning medicine to become a doctor. Many people like him coz he is studying well. All the family are like, 'Be like Tom Close!' (Pacento 2015, int.).

As the quotation suggests, in post-genocide Rwanda education is still valued as a route to socioeconomic success, especially by members of the older generations. For this reason, it is unsurprising that an artist who is also a qualified medical doctor, such as Tom Close, is viewed by many Kigalians as neither sinful nor immoral, but as a role model and a "serious person". This supports White's ethnography on the relationship between Congolese music and politics in the 1990s. When discussing perceptions of musicians in Kinshasa, White states that:

Musicians' position in Zairean society has improved somewhat as the industry has become increasingly professionalized and as certain stars have become independently wealthy through their work (2008: 136).

Despite this, it is important to understand that in both Kigali and Kinshasa artists are still talked about by many as "pleasure seekers, morally suspect, impulsive, and abound to spend their final years in a state of abject poverty" (ibid). Later in the chapter, I discuss debates and controversies surrounding young female artists.

## **Frustrated circulations: making music move during three generations**

Let me explain. We have four generations of music in Rwanda. We have those who were here before genocide. Then we have another *after* genocide: the new generation. Those are the first edition musicians [said dramatically]! But when it comes to video production that is another generation who really changed the things in Rwanda, in the music industry. And now we have a fourth generation. We call them social media generation.

- Arnold Mugisha 2015, int.

In this section, I map out Rwanda's pop music industry through its newest technological developments. More specifically, I ask the question: how does music in Rwanda and Uganda get heard and seen? To explore this, I outline three successive music generations in post-genocide Rwanda, as described to me by my informants. I draw on interviews with cultural producers who have been active in the industry since its emergence in the mid-2000s, namely the studio owner and audio producer Clément Ishimwe, DJ Pius from the music duo Two4Real, and one of Kigali's leading video producers, Arnold Mugisha. The generations under discussion were referred to by my informants as "the new generation", "the video generation" and "the social media generation". The term generation "does not correspond cleanly with biological generations" (White 2008: 37 – see also Pype 2015). Instead, Rwandans relate the various generations to specific developments, or phases, that have occurred in their music scene. Whereas in the previous chapter I discussed "the first generation" *gakondo* (traditional) musicians, in this chapter I demonstrate the co-existence of a whole range of pop music genres. It is perhaps due to this overlapping of genres that the three generations – from "the new generation" onwards – have been defined by my informants in terms of technology rather than content.

From 2005, “the new generation” - also known as “the second generation”, or “the pioneers” – signifies the birth of Rwanda’s contemporary pop music industry. This speaks to a particular temporality, i.e. the starting from zero after the genocide and the desire for a clean break from the past. It also highlights the willingness of young Kigalians to access and adapt new music from elsewhere. Gospel music initially dominated Rwanda’s post-genocide music scene, with popular songs about suffering and reconciliation (e.g. *Amahoro* by Gaby Kamanzi). However, Kigali’s new generation of artists were more interested in emulating sounds and symbols popularised by hip-hop icons and ‘Rastas’ from the United States, Jamaica and neighbouring countries (especially Uganda and the DRC). Artists and producers started to create music in genres such as hip-hop, R&B and ragga (a sub-genre of dancehall reggae), which they localised through Kinyarwanda lyrics, thus attracting new Rwandan audiences and sparking the beginnings of the industry (see also Grant 2014: 216). More recently the increased availability of transnational media outlets has contributed to the popularity of Afrobeats (mainly from Nigeria and South Africa), which currently dominates airwaves across sub-Saharan Africa. For “the third generation” of artists (nicknamed “the video generation”), music videos became an important component of popular music production, and by “the fourth generation” (nicknamed “the social media generation”), artists were exploiting the internet as a strategy for success. Here I want to emphasise that, while individual artists may be thought of as having different temporal origins, all the generations that I discuss in this chapter co-existed at the time of my research.

Due to increased migration and access to communication technologies, major theorists of globalisation (e.g. Appadurai 2013) have argued that cultural forms are circulating at higher speeds and on greater scales than at any other time in the past. In today's digital world, electronically produced music is especially transportable: songs can be easily and relatively cheaply shared, both offline – through removable media, such as CDs, USB sticks and external hard drives – and online, via email, social media and music promotion websites (Shipley 2013c: 364). However, I argue against the general utopianism of some writing about digital circulations and make the point that human agency both enables and blocks music from being heard and seen. Put differently, I exemplify how the potential openness of newly available media technologies interacts with social networks and is consequently blocked in various ways. This idea has been written about by recent scholars of African popular culture – for example, Katrien Pype's (2015) article on Kinshasa's urban dance music, in which she emphasises the agency of people who remediate old and new music into different media formats, such as TV shows, USB sticks and mobile phone ring tones<sup>57</sup>.

Despite much excitement about the enormous circulatory potential of new digital technologies, in Rwanda and Uganda the radio remains the most effective medium for disseminating music to the masses. To get their music heard by as many people as possible, artists, producers and studio owners take their songs to radio presenters. In the words of one artist: "Kiss FM is a good radio station. There you submit your music. If they think it's a good song, they put it on a playlist

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<sup>57</sup> Daniel Miller's work is also useful in providing recent examples of how social media has "changed the world" (Miller 2011; Miller et al. 2016).

to promote it". Yet, in both Kigali and Kampala, it takes more than a good song to get one's music played on the radio. Everybody knows that radio (and TV) presenters expect some kind of payment, usually in the form of money, for promoting a given song. This was a source of frustration for many of my informants, who often bitterly complained about *ruswa*<sup>58</sup> (corruption, bribery) and unfairness: how could they possibly compete with wealthy studio owners, for example, who were able to pay out more money than them and thus dominate radio airwaves?

Due to their role as Rwanda's most important promoters of music, radio presenters have found themselves in a significant position of power. Put simply, they are able to exert much influence over which songs become hits. Most of Kigali's popular radio presenters were returnees from Uganda (*Abasajya*) – for example, Arthur Nkusi, Pacson, Tino TBB and Uncle Austin. As relatively well-educated and well-connected English speakers, *Abasajya* were in favourable positions to gain employment with the multinational FM radio stations that opened after the genocide. Other recent research on radio in Ghana found that private commercial FM radio stations are progressively open to code mixing (e.g. English with Akan and other Ghanaian languages mixed in, or Twi with a profusion of English loan words) and code switching (alternating an English sentence with a Twi or other Ghanaian language sentence) (Ahadzie 2007). In other words, radio is being increasingly approximated to the informal everyday speech of the street rather than the 'pure' English or Twi formerly insisted on by the Ghana

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<sup>58</sup> Since returning from Rwanda, cultural producers have coined a new term, *giti*, which specifically means "corruption in the music industry".

Broadcasting Corporation (ibid). In Rwanda, I observe a similar situation, where a mixture of languages (mostly English with Kinyarwanda, but also some French, Lingala, Luganda and Swahili) are spoken on the radio, mirroring the everyday speech of Kigali's young inhabitants. Since almost all Rwandans speak Kinyarwanda, there isn't the same need for a *lingua franca* as we see in other parts of Africa, although English (spoken by a relatively small but growing proportion of Rwanda's total population) is still used by many of Rwanda's media outlets and is privileged over French.

I now discuss the narrative of Uncle Austin, one of Rwanda's leading radio presenters since 2005. His story is useful in bringing to life the role of *Abasajya* radio presenters in promoting the new generation of artists. To enrich our understanding of this generation I draw on the narratives of a theatre director, Hope Azeda, and a visual artist, Collin Sekajugo. Following this, I explore the more recent availability of alternative mediums for disseminating and consuming music (i.e. TV stations and online space).

## UNCLE AUSTIN AND THE NEW GENERATION

Uncle Austin was not easy to track down. It took me several attempts to arrange our interview, which eventually took place at Karibu Restaurant in town (*mu muji*). After eating a huge buffet lunch typical of Kigali – consisting of rice, chips, potatoes, spaghetti, vegetables and some meat - we talked for about an hour, until the radio presenter told me that he was “rushing” and had to go. Uncle Austin was born in Jinja, Uganda. His father was a Doctor and his mother a salon owner. His father died when he was still at school, and his mother was living in



Uganda along with his seven siblings (including his twin). Remarkably, Uncle Austin spent his childhood believing that he was Ugandan:

It sounds crazy, but when I grew up in Kampala I didn't know I was Rwandese! My family had to hide it coz Idi Amin's regime was targeting Rwandans. I used to hear some of them speaking another language and I never knew what it was. After shaking [President] Museveni's hand at school one day, I came home bragging how I was a proud Ugandan. That's when my grandad said, 'Shut up! You're Rwandan!' Then when I told my Mum that I was coming to Rwanda, she was like, 'Don't! You'll die!' She still had that fear. But I was just curious to come and see, and then I got my job (Uncle Austin 2015, int.).

Uncle Austin was decidedly vague about how and why he managed to finance his move to Kigali in 2005, when he was just 19 years old. Yet he boasted that he was offered a job at Kiss FM Rwanda because of his experience working for a Ugandan radio station. He also told me that he went on to complete a degree in Mass Media.

At Kiss FM, Uncle Austin initially gave the most airtime to Ugandan and American music. He especially liked to play songs by the popular Ugandan duo Radio and Weasel (the Goodlyfe Crew), the former being his closest friend from boarding school<sup>59</sup> (ibid). However, the radio presenter soon began to take more seriously his role as a promoter of Rwanda's nascent pop music industry. In his own words:

When I started doing radio in 2005, I decided to 'push' [i.e. promote] *Rwandan* music. I was one of the first presenters to do that. I did a countdown daily. It was one of the biggest countdown shows in the history of radio in Rwanda! I used to even have fights with my boss. You know when people they aren't used to it? They think Rwandan musicians are all bad? 'This music is not good enough', and so on (ibid).

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<sup>59</sup> Radio (real name Moses Ssekibogo) died in February 2018, after being beaten into a coma during a bar-fight in Entebbe (*Nairobi News* 2018).

This was echoed by others from the new generation, such as Arnold Mugisha: “At that time, Ugandan music was played a *lot* in Rwanda. Then, my main target was fighting against that. Making Rwandans love their own music, you know?” (Arnold Mugisha 2015, int.) This illustrates the sense of precarity felt by Rwanda’s cultural producers, as well as constantly comparing themselves to their Ugandan ‘big brothers’. Nonetheless, as Uncle Austin continued to speak, he proudly revealed the names of the Rwandan artists who he claims to have helped promote:

So, Miss Jo Jo<sup>60</sup> was a fan of mine. One day she left me a CD of her song. She called in and said, ‘Uncle Austin, I’ve left you a gift.’ So, I found a song called *Mbwira* [Tell me]. It became the biggest R&B song in Rwanda. We played it at Kiss FM and it became a massive hit. Back then, we were also playing KGB. They came before that. And we used to play those other artists from the new generation: Rafiki, Miss Shanel<sup>61</sup>, Mc Mahoni Boni [Rwanda’s first rapper], Just Family, The Brothers, Diplomat, who else? We used to play Dady Cassanova<sup>62</sup>, but he was singing a lot in English and French. At that time, I wanted people to start loving music in Kinyarwanda. Coz people were saying, ‘You can’t do R&B or hip-hop in Kinyarwanda. You can only use it for *gakondo* stuff.’ So, I played their music and they became big stars in the country (Uncle Austin 2015, int.).

This supports my argument that *Abasajya* have played an important role in shaping Rwanda’s contemporary pop music industry. As radio presenters, they worked hard to promote a new generation of artists, even when apparently facing some resistance. Here it is important to understand that by choosing to discuss

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<sup>60</sup> Miss Jo Jo (real name Josiane Uwineza) converted to Islam in 2008. She subsequently retired from music and changed her name to Iman Uwineza.

<sup>61</sup> At the time of my research, Miss Shanel (real name Ruth Nirere) was studying vocal performance in France.

<sup>62</sup> Dady Cassanova moved to Canada in 2007 (see “living overseas” on map, Appendix VI). There, he continues to produce music and has collaborated with Eric 1Key (see chapter 7).

their “fight” to get Rwandan music heard, Uncle Austin and Arnold Mugisha were representing themselves as patriotic and therefore as ‘good’ Rwandan citizens.

In the years following the genocide, the recruitment of *Abasajya* did not only apply to popular radio presenters. For example, the founding director of Kigali’s theatre company Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company also grew up in Uganda. During an interview, Hope Azeda told me the story of how she was headhunted by the RPF government when she was living in Kampala:

In 1999, I was close to graduating from Makerere University. I wrote a play about Rwanda. At the same time, I was in another theatre performing on stage a play called *Excuse me Mzungu*. So, in the audience there was the Director of Information from Rwanda, talking about connections between Rwanda and Uganda. And so, he was told I was a Rwandese actress and he stayed behind to talk to me. And he said, ‘Hope, whenever you’re done with school, you come and start what you are doing in Rwanda.’ And I was like, ‘How do I start in Rwanda? I don’t know people in Rwanda. All my friends are here.’ You see, my parents left Rwanda in 1959, so I just knew Uganda (Hope Azeda 2015, int.).

Despite her alleged concerns, Hope Azeda moved to Kigali after graduating from university. Two of her brothers were in the RPF and she swiftly gained employment with the drama department at Radio Rwanda, the state-owned radio station. Likewise, Ivuka Arts Studio – the first of several visual arts studios to be opened in recent years - was set up by Collin Sekajugo, who grew up in Kampala<sup>63</sup>. Collin is half-Rwandan and half-Ugandan and has also lived in Kenya. A regionally renowned artist, he was spending his time working between Kigali and Kampala. Importantly, Hope Azeda and Collin Sekajugo’s stories of rapid integration into Kigali’s arts and media scene was not shared by Francophone

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<sup>63</sup> During fieldwork, Kigali’s visual arts studios also included Concept Art Studio, Inema Arts Centre, Tonga Art Gallery, Uburanga Arts Centre and Yego Arts Centre.

Rwandans from Burundi and the DRC (with the exception of *gakondo* musicians and dancers – see chapter 2), again emphasising the diversity of experience encountered by Tutsi returnees.

During a conversation, studio owner Clément Ishimwe talked about other barriers to music circulations:

Here, you spend money promoting your music. It's just how things work. You have to talk nice to presenters, you know? Give them something small. But after, when your artists' songs are played, nobody gets paid for that. *That's* the real problem. We have no copyright in Rwanda.

Questions of copyright and musical piracy were often on the minds of my informants. DJ Pius expressed concern when discussing challenges within the industry: “The downside of our music is we don’t have a platform from where we can sell it. We don’t even sell our own CDs coz people already have them. Most of the music is piracy.” Since most Kigalians were now able to consume music for free - on the radio, TV or internet - there was virtually no trade in original CDs. In other words, digital circulations enable music to be heard by greater numbers of people, but not in the way that artists would like. During fieldwork, the only places for buying pop music in Kigali were a handful of informal street studios. At these tiny outdoor stalls (which also dealt in Nollywood movies imported from Nigeria – yet another form of transnational circulation<sup>64</sup>), customers would choose a selection of songs to be burned from a computer onto a CD or “flash” (USB stick), providing the electricity was working that day. In the words of one music shopper: “Street studios are so cheap man! You give them 500 [about 50p] and

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<sup>64</sup> Nollywood is the Nigerian popular film industry. After emerging in the 1990s, it became the “largest and most influential cultural industry in Africa” (Bryce 2012: 73).

they give you like a whole CD of songs!” In contrast to this, I observed a small selection of original gospel CDs on sale in several upmarket shops (e.g. Nakumatt Supermarket and Kigali’s only book shop, *Ikirezi*). According to my informants, commercial gospel choirs were making more money than secular artists because their audiences included middle-aged, affluent Rwandans who were willing to spend more money attending concerts and buying CDs and DVDs. This was expressed by the video producer Arnold Mugisha:

Gospel gets money a *lot*! I used to produce for gospel artists. At one concert, they get much money! The gospel fans are old. They can pay even 10k [about £10] for a ticket, but even more for a DVD (Arnold Mugisha 2015, int.).



**Figures 3.4. and 3.5.** Sinapisi street studio, Nyamirambo, August 2015. [My photographs]

The absence of copyright laws and the problem of musical piracy, as well as the expense of getting CDs and DVDs manufactured, is not unique to Rwanda

and Uganda. Recent scholars and critics of African popular culture have explored the issue of piracy minimising revenues for musicians and filmmakers in numerous different contexts (Jedlowski 2013: 27; Krings 2015: 248; McNeill 2012a: 102; Pype 2015: 31). Whereas the availability of new distribution channels has boosted the popularity of locally produced music and film, such developments have also stalled the economic growth of these industries due to widespread piracy. Interestingly, in the Ugandan context, popular artists have creatively derived an alternative way to make money from their CDs. The following example was explained to me by Spax, a ragga artist who splits his time between Kigali and Kampala (see chapter 4 for his musical trajectory):

Here in Uganda, when you launch your album you invite rich people. Which we do not do in Rwanda. They have not experienced it. There are so many investors in Kampala. When you launch in Uganda, you invite companies, rich people. You give them VIP seat. Don't think it's the money you collect on the gate that can make you rich. The money you make is from those rich people. Coz nobody will want to be ashamed in front of his fellow rich people. What the artists will do, they will raise the album and they will say, 'We are fundraising! How much are you paying?' Usually the CD costs like 5000 [about £5]. But that rich guy will start buying: 'I am paying 5 million!' The rich men will clap. Then it will become like a competition: 'Me, I will raise it! I will pay you 10!'... (Spax 2015, int.).

This is in sharp contrast to Kigali's smaller music economy where there is more regulation and far less investment and value in the arts. It is therefore not always possible for Rwandans to model their music industry exactly on that of Uganda. Different contexts give way to altered forms and practices (Krings 2015). Further differences between Kigali and Kampala are addressed as we progress through my thesis.

## THE VIDEO GENERATION

When you want to promote your music, you burn one CD and do copy on every computer at radio stations. But not only that. You go to Nyabugogo [bus station] and give your CDs and DVDs to the buses. The ones going to Cyangugu and Butare, or what what. Even to Uganda. Then these days we also take our videos to TV stations and YouTube.

- Pacento 2015, int.

Despite the enduring importance of the radio, music videos are now an essential component of popular music production. As one singer put it, “These days, an audio without a video it’s like nothing!” (Bob TBB 2015, int.) From 2007, the growing demand for music videos led to the emergence of a third generation of artists, nicknamed “the video generation”. This was headed by artists such as Kitoko, Meddy, The Ben, Tom Close and the Urban Boys. Yet the booming growth in popularity of Rwanda’s video generation would not have been possible without the country’s first music video producers, namely Arnold Mugisha, Bernard and Meddy Saleh. By the time of my research the country’s most renowned video producers also included Gilbert (The Benjamins) and Ma River. Meanwhile the most popular artists included hip-hop rappers Jay Polly and Bulldog and mixed genre singers Knowless Butera and Bruce Melody. Later in my thesis, I discuss some of the aforementioned video producers and artists in more detail, all of whom are included in the accompanying mind map (Appendix VI).

Alongside this development, new mediums and spaces for watching music videos became more readily available in Kigali. Since 2014, Lucky (real name Nzeyimana) has hosted the Celebrity Show on Lemigo TV, in which he appeals to young people by focusing on “new fashions, music and movies” (Lucky 2015,

int.). A practising Muslim, the 28-year-old grew up in Nyamirambo where he became the first in his family to complete secondary school, causing his mother to nickname him Lucky. Unlike the *Abasajya* radio presenters discussed above, Lucky was born and raised in Rwanda. Yet interestingly, he still has connections to Uganda; he spent four years in Uganda's Western Province, where he completed a degree in Journalism and Communications. According to Lucky, it was due to him having a degree from "media-superior Uganda" – as well as being fluent in English, French, Kinyarwanda and Swahili – that helped him to gain employment as a TV presenter, hosting international guests of different languages from across the African continent (ibid). While this highlights the advantages of having connections to Uganda, in the following chapter I introduce some of the problems this can cause. On several occasions during fieldwork, I visited Lemigo TV with Rwandan and Ugandan artists who were guests on Lucky's pre-recorded show, aired on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 21:00 until 22:00. The first of its kind, it was extremely popular for promoting Rwandan music videos. It also attracted regional stars, which helped to nurture transnational networks.

During fieldwork, few people owned television sets in Kigali, relying instead on shared TV in private and public spaces. In Kwa Gisimba (my community in Nyamirambo), there was a TV in our local shop (*butiki*), where people regularly gathered to watch music, film and sports. Similarly, it was not uncommon for me to arrive at Narrow Road Studio to find its members watching TV in the studio's waiting room. When I moved to Nyamirambo with Benjah TBB and Pacento, we purchased a small TV of our own, but could not find a signal.



To solve the issue, Pacento tied the ariel to a long piece of wood and attached it to the water tank – another case of ingenuity when responding to everyday challenges.



**Figure 3.6.** *Butiki* and bar to the right of my house, Kwa Gisima, May 2015. [My photograph]



**Figures 3.7. and 3.8.** Pacento's ingenuity, Nyamirambo, May 2015. [My photographs]

In addition to locally produced TV shows, music videos from Rwanda and abroad were aired on large electronic screens occupying central positions at various nightclubs and bars. Whenever possible, artists and sometimes studio owners or managers would organise a video launch party to promote their latest song. One Saturday evening in July 2015, TBB premiered their new music video *Baragukunda*; an up-beat love song performed in English, French, Kinyarwanda and Swahili (Song 50, Appendix II). In the video, we see TBB members Tino, Bob and Benjah lip-syncing along to the track, while “video girls” dance suggestively. “Video girls” are attractive young women who for a small fee or “token of appreciation”, such as their transportation, food and drinks, are enlisted by artists to “spice up” their videos and “make them look a bit sexier” (Tino TBB 2015, int.).

The video for *Baragukunda* flits between two main backdrops: a simple white background recorded at OI Wonders, a newly opened multimedia production agency (the first in the country with a green screen, thus particularly fashionable at the time<sup>65</sup>), and the gardens at Inema Arts Centre. In these frames we see colourful works of art made from recycled materials, which were a trend at the time of my research, including a tree made of glass bottles, an old painted car and a satellite dish displaying the words, “All you need is love”.



**Figure 3.9.** TBB’s video launch party at Kaizen Club, Remera, July 2015. [My photograph]

TBB’s “official video drop party” took place at Kaizen Club in Remera; a relatively lively neighbourhood known for its abundance of eating and drinking establishments, Kigali’s “red light district” and the national Amahoro Stadium. To advertise the event TBB created a poster, which they circulated via social media

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<sup>65</sup> OI Wonders closed later that year, due to an electrical fire.

channels, namely WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Soon it became the profile picture of the cultural producers involved and their closest friends and fans. A smaller number of posters were printed and attached to the walls of Kaizen Club. The owner of the nightclub agreed to make the event free entrance, with the hope that this would attract more customers who would spend their money on beer. Cultural producers also created posters to advertise transnational events in the region, such as the premier for the music video *Ageteko* (2016); a “collabo” by DJ Pius of Rwanda and Chameleone of Uganda. This event took place in Kampala and included performances by the Burundian star Big Fizzo (who was living in Kigali as a refugee), and *Abasajya* singers Jody Phibi and Charley and Nina. It was hosted by Arthur Nkusi, the popular Rwandan radio presenter and stand-up comedian mentioned above<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Arthur Nkusi is the nephew of Hope Azeda, the founding director of Mashirika. He was also working as an actor, dancer and choreographer.



**Figures 3.10. and 3.11.** Video launch posters, July 2015 and April 2016. [Courtesy of TBB and DJ Pius]

Upon entering Kaizen Club TBB began to strut their stuff, making their way to an area reserved exclusively for stars. Tino – the group’s leader and a seasoned radio presenter, stand-up comedian and popular MC – was wearing a flashy suit and dark glasses. Bob and Benjah were obviously brothers; tall and thin, dressed in low-riding trousers and baseball caps with fake gold chains hanging loosely around their necks. This was an opportunity for TBB to embody their celebrity personas and enact their dreams of fame, while only being moderately popular at the time. By publicly asserting themselves as stars, their performance attempted to convince others that they should be treated as such.

The social power of self-representation (Graeber 2001: 104) has been written about in numerous African contexts, most notably concerning the famous



*sapeurs* of Congo<sup>67</sup> (Friedman 1994; Martin 1994). Similarly, in her study of young women in urban Madagascar, Cole makes the point that strategies of self-representation essentially create “an unstable cycle in which young people engage in short-term practices that help them get commodities” (2010: 47% kindle edition). While some women hope to convert these commodities into opportunities that will have a more transformative capacity, such as a well-paid job or a wealthy husband, this is “a risky endeavour, [since their] ability to transform the present into the future depends on transcending the vicious cycle that they are caught in” (ibid). Artists such as TBB were likewise caught in a vicious cycle that began and ended in conspicuous consumption yet generated no steady income. Despite being driven by a fantasy to transform themselves into successful artists (and therefore accomplished adults), the material realisation of the “good life” remained largely unfulfilled. Much like the *sapeurs*, the identity of aspiring stars in Kigali was “arbitrarily constituted and, therefore, never authentic” (Friedman 1994: 121).

As the opening quotation for this section indicated, music videos were also played on long-distance bus journeys, such as the ten-hour route between Kigali and Kampala. In this case, the playing of very loud music was a source of displeasure for many of the passengers on board, especially when travelling at night. On one occasion, a woman sitting near the front of the coach shouted with frustration, “Switch off!” Despite many of the passengers laughing in agreement, the same six songs continued to be played in an unrelenting loop. A middle-aged

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<sup>67</sup> *La Sape* are (largely) unemployed, unmarried and socially marginalised young men who engage in a ritual of dressing elegantly as a means of transforming themselves into “great men” (Friedman 1994: 128-130; Martin 1994: 423-426).

man sitting next to the woman fidgeted with annoyance and suddenly stood up. Tutting nosily, he reached for the laminated photograph of the owner of Jaguar Bus Company. As if to emphasise his disapproval, he turned the photograph over so that we could no longer see the owner's face staring down at us all. The bus driver and his conductor (*komvayeri*) shrugged off the complaints, reassuring (or warning?!) passengers that the music would stop him from falling asleep at the wheel.

Most recently, in addition to radio and TV stations, music is also consumed online, through personal devices such as smart phones, laptops and tablets. With the internet becoming more widespread, artists are starting to create posters to advertise the launch of their music videos online. Whereas the streets of Kigali were becoming increasingly quiet (Sommers 2012: 13), what I encountered behind closed doors was an explosion of noise as young people huddled around electronic screens to sing and dance along to their favourite songs by Rwandan stars.



**Figure 3.12.** Online video launch poster, May 2016. [Courtesy of DJ Pius]

## THE SOCIAL MEDIA GENERATION

In today's era of digital media, popular music is thriving online. It is hard to imagine that YouTube is only 12 years old; its growth has been so phenomenal. Despite the issues of access and digital divide that "continue to plague most developing countries globally" (Ligaga 2016: 112 – see also Fisher et al. 2015), the internet has made it possible for cultural forms to travel faster and further than ever before. For this reason, Rwanda's fourth generation of artists, who became



active most recently, were nicknamed “the social media generation”. To compete for popularity and opportunity, Rwandan artists understand that they must become highly visible online. For example, at the end of her interview the singer Teta Diana insisted on listing her Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts, as well as her personal website and YouTube channel – all important spaces for representing her music and celebrity persona online. As if to explain her reasons for this, Teta Diana said the following:

This is the way now. The more subscribers you have, the more views you have. That’s what it takes to get you to play in international festivals, for example. When you apply, they first check your channel or website to see how many people follow you (Teta Diana 2015, int.).

Alongside the requirement to become highly visible online is a growing obsession with becoming a celebrity, which appears to go together with the desire to become an artist (Ligaga 2016: 114). According to Dina Ligaga, “[to] become a celebrity is to become visible and present in the public space and imagination [and to] attract money and a lifestyle that is otherwise out of reach” (ibid). Here, we are reminded of Adejunmobi’s (2014) work on mediated performance as a perceived route to success for Nigerian youth.

Scholars of African popular culture critically engage with the ways in which aspiring celebrities are manipulating online space to improve their individual agency. For example, Ligaga’s recent work on Kenyan female “socialites”, a reference with negative connotations made to their “adopted over-the-top lifestyles and choices of self-representation in social media” (2016: 111), or Krystal Strong and Shaun Ossei-Owusu’s (2014) article about two Nigerian men

(known as the Naija Boyz), who became YouTube sensations while living in the United States. According to the article, the Naija Boyz:

...re-appropriate black American songs and videos with decidedly 'African' comedic interpretations, offering what can be viewed as parodies, thus critical commentaries of (black) American and African cultural troupes (ibid: 190).

In Kigali, artists now have the option of rejecting older forms of broadcasting. Rather than “paying off” radio and TV presenters, they can disseminate their own music online. While most mainstream artists continue to prioritise the radio – in addition to TV and online space – a smaller number of artists have decided to only promote their music on internet platforms. In the words of one such artist: “I don’t really *do* radio or TV. I focus on social media. It’s better that way coz I have total control over my music” (Eric 1Key 2015, int.). The activities of artists such as Eric 1Key could be read as instances of agency, pushing forward debates about the future of Rwandan music<sup>68</sup>.

As the nation’s music industry evolves, new kinds of performers are starting to appear, many of whom are concerned with the originality, authenticity and quality of Rwandan music. Where alternative forms of music had little space to be heard or seen, the digital revolution means that people can now publically express themselves in new and interesting ways. This has benefited members of Kigali’s fast-growing spoken word scene, who are seeking lyrically sophisticated and socially conscious music. ‘Spoken Word Rwanda’ (since 2011) is a monthly event in Kigali that brings together multi-lingual singers and poets, professionals,

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<sup>68</sup> See also George Ogola’s (2015) work on non-traditional journalistic platforms becoming important sites for ‘alternative’ journalism in Kenya.

students, expatriates and tourists<sup>69</sup>. In this way, it has become a community and network of people. Like Rwanda's pop music industry, it is modelled on other spoken word events that exist all over the world, especially *Kwivuga Kampala*; Uganda's version of Spoken Word, which was incidentally founded by a Rwandan poetry enthusiast called Nunu. As an online blogger, hip-hop poet and active member of 'Spoken Word Rwanda', Eric 1Key recently became an advocate of live music shows. This is in opposition to "playback" performances, when singers or rappers lip-sync along to recorded tracks. Unimpressed by the "copy-cat artists" who currently entertain the masses, Eric 1Key told me that he aspires to create something new.

Unlike the mainstream artists in my research, Eric 1Key explained that his intended audience is the Rwandan diaspora, as well as other Africans and internationals with an interest in spoken word and conscious hip-hop poetry. Growing up in eastern DRC, where he survived poverty and discrimination (his mother is Rwandan, and his father is Congolese), Eric 1Key is extremely media savvy. His work appeals to relatively affluent and well-educated returnees from Canada, Europe and the United States, whom I frequently observed in attendance at his concerts in Kigali. Certainly, 'Spoken Word Rwanda' was not affordable for everyone. At the time of my research, it was hosted by Kigali's fanciest coffee shops and bars, such as Shokola in Kacyiru and K-Club in Gaculiro. In the words of Eric 1Key: "Spoken word requires a budget to get there, buy a drink, to feel *comfortable*, you know?" Again, this reminds us of the

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<sup>69</sup> Other significant members of 'Spoken Word Rwanda' include the rapper and singer Angel Mutoni (a returnee from Quebec, Canada) and the poet and actress Malaika Umwamahoro, who I discussed in chapter 1 (see "spoken word artists" on map, Appendix VI).

heterogeneity of Rwanda's returnee artists, as well as the diversification of Rwandan audiences. Since Eric 1Key is not trying to appeal to the Rwandan masses (many of whom are not online) – but rather a small, diverse public with knowledge of various languages and access to online space – he is able to mobilise the internet as his main strategy for success. In chapter 7, I discuss how Eric 1Key uses email and social media to collaborate with other artists in distant locations. First, I exemplify how social media has become in itself the subject of creative art forms, including songs.

Eric 1Key's song, *Virtually Yours* (2015), begins with the familiar start-up sound of 'Microsoft Windows XO' (2011), followed by a robotic female voice: "Press 1Key. Enter password" and the rat-a-tat-tat of typing (Song 9, Appendix II). The feel-good song narrates an online love story between Eric 1Key and Mhinganzima, a female singer and member of the Rwandan diaspora. When Mhinganzima (featured on the track) was living in Sweden, she started to follow Eric 1Key on Twitter. Despite never having met face-to-face, the two of them allegedly developed a meaningful connection, spending long, restless nights deep in conversation. In his song, Eric 1Key praises Mhinganzima when he says, "I love to read her prose for hours/Her voice sounds like a catchy tune" (translated from French to English). In the second verse, we are treated to Mhinganzima's velvety voice and thoughtful lyrics. She speaks of missing Rwanda, but of feeling a closeness to Eric 1Key through their "words which devour miles" (translated from French to English). Ricky Password sings the hook in English. (See "spoken word artists" on map – connections between Eric 1Key and other artists,

Appendix VI). Playing with words, he refers to various social media platforms (my bold):

You **tweet** like a little sweet birdie  
Your **face**, **book** it for my kisses baby  
You're my **sound cloud**, your voice takes me higher  
I loose **instant-grams** when you go M.I.A.  
**WhatsApp** with you, girl, can't you see?  
I'm so in love with you.

Clearly, the song is a celebration of online space and its capacity for enabling musical collaboration, as well as long-distance relationships (Whatley 2016b – see also Miller 2011: 218). I now turn my attention to specific challenges being faced by women artists in Kigali.

#### **“Morally suspect” women in Rwandan music making**

*Umugore wiyubashye achisa make* (A woman who has self-respect is softly spoken).

- Rwandan proverb.

I would encourage girls on stage, but they should cover up, respect themselves. I don't want to see our ladies getting spoiled. I don't want them to destroy our national pride in our girls.

- Davy Ranks 2015, int.

In present-day Rwanda, the question remains: is it even acceptable for women to be heard and seen? And if so under what circumstances? According to Marc Sommers, employment opportunities deemed appropriate for female youth in Kigali are scarce (2012: 176-178). While some young women work in restaurants or shops, many more work illegally as prostitutes (ibid). Struggling to earn the money required to record and promote new music, the female artists in

my research were vulnerable to encountering *ruswa y'igitina* (sexual corruption), when producers or radio/TV presenters demand sexual favours in exchange for their services (Grant 2014: 255). In the words of a male producer: "If you're a woman it's very hard. If you don't have money you have to get fucked! Sorry!" One afternoon, I asked a female singer and friend of mine how she feels about *ruswa y'igitina*. Sighing, she reached for her phone. "Look at these messages", she said: "They're from that promoter in Uganda. You know some producers will record your song then they refuse to even release it to you if you don't sleep with them. Which I don't do by the way", she hastened to add. The text message read as follows: "Don't act like a kid. What part of I want to tap it don't you understand?" Whereas some artists were able to use their sexuality to their advantage (Archambault 2013), the young women I spoke to were faced with a dilemma: on the one hand they wanted to become famous artists, while on the other hand they were fearful of being labelled *ikirara* (morally lost, spoiled) (Grant 2014: 265).

In Rwanda's patriarchal society, women artists are judged much more harshly than men. This is related to a larger idea that "to keep the value and dignity of a girl is to keep her hidden from the public" (Branakweli Alex 2015, int. – see also Peterson 2012: 17). Gender relations in Rwanda have generally been "conceived in terms of 'complementarity', with men and women fulfilling different roles and responsibilities" (Grant 2014: 123). Prior to 1994, "the rightful place of women was considered to be in the home as daughters and wives and mothers to men" (ibid). Women were therefore confronted by a "double patriarchy" (MacGaffey 1991), with both traditional Rwandan values and newer Christian teachings reinforcing one another (see also Arnfred 2014: 15-23; Braun 2016: 4).

A ‘good’ Rwandan woman was supposed to be maternal, modest, reserved, submissive and *aritonda* (softly spoken and docile). She was not supposed to be loud, overly emotional or prone to gossiping (De Lame 2005: 329). As we shall see, these ideals still hold weight today. In the words of my Kinyarwanda teacher: “To be talkative as a woman is *really* bad!” – A concept reflected in the Rwandan proverb, *nta mugore ugira ijambo* (speech belongs to the man).

Rwanda’s 1994 genocide created a gender imbalance, with an estimated 70% of the population being female in 1995 (Breed 2014: 165). This real-life absence of men – as well as Rwanda’s leaders having grown up in Uganda, where they had been exposed to “gender equality issues” – led to the government challenging women’s exclusion from public life (Grant 2014: 44). Yet, despite the forward-looking policies and practices of the RPF, women artists were still viewed by many Rwandans as morally and sexually “loose”. As one of my informants explained:

OK the *politics* says women should have the rights to express themselves and do all the things that boys do. But the *culture* says women should stay home, cook, clean, and they’re not supposed to be seen on the stage or in the music videos. So, I think this culture is still preventing a lot of girls who even have talent to be seen on the music scene. Coz it’s even difficult for us to find girls to be in our videos. For her she can understand, but she says, ‘Oh my God! What if my Aunt sees me on the video? What will she say?!’

Attempts to morally police and control the behaviour of female artists can be understood as a response to women’s increasing participation in the public sphere. As we have seen in other contexts, when women overstep boundaries “they not only challenge dominant norms of gendered behaviour, but threaten the moral foundation of a society” (Hodgson and McCurdy 2001: 6). This can

generate anxiety, debate and even hostility, with young unmarried women in particular becoming the object of moral discourse, or “moral panics” (Cole 2010: 10% kindle edition; Herdt 2009: 7; Rose 1999; Silberschmidt 2004).

During fieldwork, female artists in Kigali were forced to endure constant speculation about their private and public lives<sup>70</sup>. For example, one entertainment news website published an article displaying an image of Teta Diana wearing a short t-shirt that reveals her stomach, with a finger (perhaps ironically) shutting her mouth. The image was taken from Teta Diana’s Instagram account when she was promoting her new song *VELO* (2015) (an anagram of LOVE). *VELO* is a playful and comical song in which Teta Diana positions herself as a “gold-digger”, singing that “Love nowadays has died because of cash, ha ha ha yeah!” (Translated from Kinyarwanda to English – see Song 57, Appendix II) According to the article, Teta Diana was criticised for “violating the Rwandan cultural code”, with people writing on social media that “she should not post wearing erotically, while others [wrote] that she might be pregnant due to the size of her belly” (Mutiganda wa Nkunda 2015). Here, the “moral panic” centres on the idea that women in public, such as Teta Diana, only want money and are willing to employ cunning tactics to get their hands on it - an idea that is prevalent in research that explores processes of representing and scapegoating “good-time girls” and “wicked” women in urban Africa (Adeleye-Fayemi 1997; Cole 2010: 10% kindle edition; Hodgson and McCurdy 2001; Newell 2002: 1-10; Obiechina 1972; Okome 2012: 167; Ukata 2010).

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<sup>70</sup> See Pype (2012: 87) for a discussion on how this is also the case in Kinshasa.





**Figures 3.13.** Teta Diana’s picture created a buzz on social media.

As Teta Diana became increasingly successful, some cultural producers who may have felt jealous of her opportunities to travel and perform internationally accused the singer-songwriter of being *ari yemera*: “a very big word meaning too proud or arrogant.” Teta Diana’s reputation among those who did not approve of “her kind of woman” was only made worse by the fact that she was unashamed and unwilling to hide herself, be it her stomach or her success. Yet, despite this, Teta Diana’s songs (in both *gakondo* and pop music genres)

were, and still are, extremely popular among many Rwandans of all ages. *VELO* has currently received 655,784 views on YouTube, with over 100 positive comments made by women and men alike<sup>71</sup>. In agreement with Grant, I make the point that by stepping onto national stages – albeit under considerable constraints – female artists such as Teta Diana were refusing to comply with the ideology that women should be quiet and remain at home (2014: 254). Rather, they were using their fame as a platform to raise debates about women's issues and push the boundaries of "acceptable" behaviour in contemporary Rwanda (see also Butler 2004: 154; Haram 2004; Jefremovas 2014).

During an interview Teta Diana told me that, compared to other women in Rwanda, she is fortunate because she was supported by her family to pursue a career in music. An only child, the singer was raised by her father, Frazier Birangwa, following the death of her mother when she was in primary school. Frazier was a playwright, poet and university lecturer, who taught drama and literature at the national university. In the words of Teta Diana herself:

I was so lucky because I was supported by my Dad. Many Rwandan parents don't support their kids when doing music. But my Dad understood. He was so much into theatre and drama, so after he died I felt encouraged to keep going<sup>72</sup> (Teta Diana 2015, int.).

While Teta Diana was deeply aware of the challenges being faced by female artists, she was not deterred from practising music professionally. Confident that her parents would have been proud of her decisions, she composed a song called *Kata* (Hustle) (2014). Teta Diana's lyrics explicitly justify her presence in

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<sup>71</sup> These figures were correct as of the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

<sup>72</sup> In 2016, Teta Diana composed a song in tribute to her father (see Song 58, Appendix II).

Rwanda's music industry (translated from Kinyarwanda to English – see Song 52, Appendix II):

**[Chorus]**

The battle I face is fought by the almighty  
He gave me talent and drew a path for me to walk  
I will reach my goal and people will wonder how  
Hustle, hustle that Teta is on a hustle  
Hustle, hustle that Teta is on a hustle

**[Verse 1]**

It's not easy as a Rwandan woman  
To do music as a profession yeeeah  
I wanna be loved by all  
To socialise without degradation  
To evolve without causing jealousy  
Yelele yelele yelele  
Hey you who loves me  
Raise your hands and sing with me

**[Verse 2]**

Slowly, slowly, I will take a step at a time  
I am not allowed, not allowed to be spoiled  
Teta, even though my name means 'the loved one'  
On social media websites  
They will say Teta, how the hell did she get there?  
God who gives talent knows all...

Interestingly Teta Diana relies on the notion of "God's will" when suggesting that women should be allowed to perform on stage without experiencing social degradation. This is despite the ongoing, central role of the church in consolidating the subordinate status of women in Rwandan society (Grant 2014: 128). Christian patriarchy underpins the specific ideas about gender that Teta Diana opposes. This public compliance with Christianity was, perhaps, an attempt by Teta Diana to manage her off-stage (or "off-screen") reputation (see also Pype 2012: 105).

This contrasts with popular songs that appear to celebrate and honour women as devoted wives and mothers to men, an ideal that many girls and women also buy into. Just one of many examples is *Marry Me* by the Urban Boys (2013), which includes the following lyrics translated from Kinyarwanda to English (Song 63, Appendix II):

I thank God for creating this person  
For creating a spouse, a helper...

And in English:

I wanna marry you – marry you!  
Oh let me put a ring on your finger  
Me gal!  
I wanna take you to my home, introduce you to my father and mother  
I wanna take you to my church, I tell you to my pastor...

Whereas in this case the discourse is more subtle, the lyrics nonetheless reinforce particular gender roles that women are expected to fit. Clearly, there is an ongoing debate about what women should be, which finds both overt and covert expression in popular songs. As Barber so brilliantly put it:

As well as being social facts, however, texts are commentaries upon, and interpretations of, social facts. They are part of social reality but they also take up an attitude to social reality. They may criticise social forms or confirm and consolidate them: in both cases, they are reflexive (Barber 2007: 4 – see also Fabian 1978: 19).

Essentially, what I have described in this section is a precariousness for women that men did not have to deal with. This partly explains why there were far less women than men working in Rwanda's pop music industry, especially in jobs that carry more power. During fieldwork, I encountered no female studio owners, audio producers or video directors working in Kigali (or Kampala). In chapter 7, I discuss the trajectories of two other female artists in Kigali, Knowless

Butera and Jody Phibi. First, I make the point that, despite them being the dominant gender, the Rwandan men in my study do not constitute a homogenous group.

## **Conclusion**

Following the genocide, Kigali's musical landscape underwent massive transformations. The most significant developments were the opening of private radio and TV stations, as well as private recording studios, which enabled a new generation of young people to transform themselves into stars. Rwanda's pop music industry was largely inspired by that of Uganda's, especially as so many of its "pioneers" were returnees from Uganda. This occurred within Rwanda's authoritarian context, where to this day there remains little investment or value placed in the arts. As a consequence of this I have begun to demonstrate the precariousness of my informants' livelihoods, and their determination to improvise solutions to the challenges that they face.

Most recently, the ability to access and disseminate music online for free has significantly changed the situation for artists and audiences in Kigali. For musicians across Africa, the need to stand out and be highly visible online is becoming increasingly important (Ligaga 2016: 114). This has in some cases led to image-based aesthetics and a focus on danceable beats, rather than lyrical content or quality of sound (Mbabazi 2012: 171). However, while in Africa the radio remains the most important medium for disseminating music to the masses (Gunner et al. 2012), the relative freedom of online space has enabled alternative kinds of performers to emerge (Ligaga 2012). Spoken word artists, for example,

have expressed deep concerns about the originality, authenticity and quality of Rwandan music (see chapters 7 and 8). Rather than paying radio and TV presenters to play their music, some artists were choosing to promote their own songs and poetry online, thus increasing their individual agency. At the same time, online audiences also have power: anyone with a smartphone is now a potential broadcaster of music and can publish their judgments for anyone to see. For this and other reasons, the role of human agency in enabling or blocking digital circulations remains highly relevant to discussions on popular music (Asaasira 2012; Perullo 2011; Pype 2013).

## CHAPTER 4 - PHYSICAL CIRCULATIONS AND THE POLITICS OF BELONGING IN KIGALI'S MUSIC WORLD

In Rwanda, our origins are very scattered. Because of the problems we had, we have Rwandese from Congo, from Burundi, from Tanzania, from Uganda. So, Rwandese from Congo love Fally Ipupa, Rwandese from Burundi love Big Fizzo, Rwandese from Tanzania love Diamond Platnumz, Rwandese from Uganda love Chameleone. So, we've created this kind of versatile community that loves different kinds of music. Then outside of Kigali, it depends on where they are bordering. So, if you go to Butare, they love Burundian music. If you go near Tanzania, they love Swahili music. And you saw how at the border to Uganda, at Gatuna, they play Ugandan TV.

- DJ Pius 2015, int.

Whereas in the previous chapter I discussed the ways in which digital music circulates, in this chapter I emphasise the mixed identities of Rwanda's cultural producers, thus focusing on the physical circulation of people. I demonstrate how it is not only the digital circulation of music but also the physical circulation of people that has contributed to Kigali's diverse music scene. By way of example, I follow the musical trajectories of two returnee artists and consider the ways in which they have shaped their music industry. As the opening quotation implies, cultural producers in Kigali have at their disposal a wide range of artistic forms and languages. Recording artists engage with an interconnected field of activities, straddling the boundaries between multiple genres and even inventing new styles. In addition to *gakondo* (traditional) and gospel music, a whole range of overlapping pop music genres – namely, hip-hop, R&B, dancehall and Afrobeats – are especially enjoyed by *imuto* (youth). One of Rwanda's leading studio owners and audio producer Clément Ishimwe further explained this to me:

Uganda is much bigger than Rwanda. The population is much bigger. The space is bigger. So, you might have dancehall dominating the mainstream, but there is still space for other genres to have their own audience. But here in Kigali, one audience and one concert will involve music of different genres. Also, artists here, you can't find one artist doing 100% R&B. They are just looking for nice songs that will hit (Clément Ishimwe 2015, int.).

In line with Clément Ishimwe, I observed during fieldwork how Rwandan artists constantly reinvent themselves and collaborate with one another to respond to changing trends and appeal to different audiences. These collaborations are not limited to performers and producers of music per se, but can also include actors, dancers, poets and visual artists. For example, the video shoot for Mani Martin's song *Baby Gorilla* (2015) involved the recruitment of actors and dancers from Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company (see chapter 8 for a discussion on Mani Martin's song *Baby Gorilla*). Helène Neveu Kringelbach (2014) found a similar dynamic in post-colonial Dakar. She asserts that "the notion of music, dance and drama as distinct elements is Eurocentric, and the outcome of fairly recent disciplinary boundaries" (ibid: 37).

### **The physical circulation of Kigali's cultural producers**

Home is best! My Mum moved back [from Uganda] so I joined her. With my English, I was like, 'I think I can get a job'. Coz that period was when most people in Kigali didn't know English yet.

- Aidan Two4Real 2015, int.

Many of the "pioneers" of Rwanda's pop music industry were returnees from neighbouring countries. For example, Rwanda's first music group, KGB (Kigali Boys), consisted of the following members: Henry Hirwa (aka H-Wow) and Ivan Manzi (aka MYP), who both had Burundian childhoods, and Gaston



Rurangwa (aka Mr Skizzy), who was born in Kenya. (The group split up in 2012, when Henry Hirwa tragically drowned<sup>73</sup>.) The sense of Rwandan returnees being a diverse group circulates widely in Rwandan popular culture and is thus embedded in the ways that people think about returnees. For example, in this extract from a radio play by Hope Azeda, Rwanda is represented as a “melting pot” of difference:

Rwanda is like a melting pot. Many people, different traditions. Stir the pot, stir the pot. To make it tastier, add some Kiswahili and a little bit of Kiganda [Luganda]. And I'll add a little bit of French and of course some Kinyarwanda. Stir the pot, stir the pot. Some Hutu, some Tutsi, some Twa. Sometimes I wonder, 'Will the ingredients make it taste good? Or will the pot boil over?' (Azeda 2000)

In 2015, Hope Azeda was granted permission and financial support from the Rwandan Development Board (RDB) to establish the annual *Ubumuntu* Arts Festival. *Ubumuntu* means “humanity”, reflecting the festival’s goal to “promote peace building and healing from violence” (Ubumuntu Arts Festival 2017). The spirit of the festival is encapsulated in its official song, which was recorded by members and friends of Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company (Song 34, Appendix II). Significantly, the singers composed their lyrics in English, French, Kinyarwanda, Swahili and Lingala – highlighting the diversity of Kigali’s cultural producers. In order to explore this diversity in relation to pop music, I now consider the musical trajectories of two returnee artists from the new generation: Spax and Rafiki. Both artists have drawn explicitly on genres popular in the countries in which they grew up, thus contributing to an increasingly diverse music scene in Kigali.

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<sup>73</sup> See Asiimwe 2012.

## SPAX'S MUSICAL TRAJECTORY

Spax<sup>74</sup> (real name Mselem Said) was born in Uganda in 1982. Born to a Rwandan mother and Omani father, he is of multinational heritage. During his interview, he called himself an “East African shutter”:

It means I belong to each and every country in East Africa. And we are united first of all. In East Africa, we use only IDs. So, I don't have a specific country for this is where I'm from. My nationality, I have to say Oman. They give you nationality from your father, not mother. And my passport says Ugandan. But right now, I'm East African (Spax 2015, int.).

It is unsurprising that Spax self-identified as East African: during fieldwork he was living between Kigali and Kampala, had a brother living in Zanzibar, an Auntie in Kenya, and two sisters (who both married Burundians) in Bujumbura. In Uganda, Spax was sharing his home with his wife and daughter and was immersed in Kampala's lively music industry. At the same time, he was making regular trips to Kigali (where his mother was living), to coordinate music events, perform at bars, and record “collabos” with Rwandan and Ugandan musicians. Spax's transnational lifestyle was arguably made easier by the formation of the EAC. For instance, in January 2014 the leaders of Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya adopted national identity cards as travel documents, to facilitate the freer movement of people in the region<sup>75</sup> (Mbanda and Kabeera 2014).

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<sup>74</sup> Mselem's aka was initially Sparks: “It's about bragging. I'm so 'hot' I'm creating sparks! But people came to know me as Spax, so that's how I write it now” (Spax 2015, int.).

<sup>75</sup> They also agreed to establish a single tourist visa, a joint railway line project, the construction of an oil refinery in Uganda, and an oil pipeline from the region's main sea port of Mombasa to Kigali. The other EAC partner states, Burundi and Tanzania, are yet to join the arrangement. South Sudan joined the EAC in September 2016.



**Figure 4.1.** Spax (right) recording a “collabo” with Pallaso Mayanja of Uganda (standing) and Pacento of Rwanda (left), Kigali, August 2015. [My photograph]<sup>76</sup>.

Spax grew up in Kampala, where he completed his primary and secondary education. He boasts that he is fluent in Arabic, English, Kinyarwanda, Luganda and Swahili. According to Spax, he has been a fan of Jamaican music since his days in secondary school. During fieldwork, he described himself as a “Rasta man” and spent most of his time speaking and singing in Jamaican Patois. Spax is also a practising Muslim, about which he said the following:

<sup>76</sup> Pallaso Mayanja’s older brothers include Ugandan superstars Chameleone and Weasel from the Goodlyfe Crew.

I don't believe in [the Rastafarian] religion, but I like their behaviours. Their behaviour is like Muslims. I do like when people sing positive messages in music, especially those Jamaicans (Spax 2015, int.).

In Kampala, the booming popularity of Jamaican artists such as Red Rat and Mr Vegas prompted Spax and many others to try out dancehall and ragga for himself.

Aged 13 he started to perform music with his friends at their school discos:

And by the way, Jamaicans are the only ones who released their song with an instrumental. They release a song and they release it again *just* instrumental, so you can do your voice over it. So that's what us Ugandans started out doing. Karaoke (ibid).

Four years later, in 1998, Spax started to perform "karaoke" in Kampala's nightclubs and bars: "But it's not that karaoke that *you* know", he laughed:

We used to move with cassette players. Then you take it to the DJ and you make sure it's in the right place. You tell him to play Side A and then he plays Side B! That's the problem we used to have in music. We started like that, going with cassettes to clubs. We were the veterans of music, here in Uganda (ibid).

During an interview, DJ Pius revealed a similar memory:

So, I used to DJ in Uganda with cassettes. It was two decks and then a Walkman. So, what you do, you play a song on this side. The next thing you wanna play, you listen to it on the Walkman. Once it starts, you change to that deck and stop the other deck. Then once it starts, you take out the other cassette and put it in the Walkman and listen to the next song again. And because the Walkman used to consume a lot of batteries, we used to do it with a pen. So, winding on the tape to the right place using a pen (DJ Pius 2015, int.).

By choosing to discuss these older practices in detail, Spax and DJ Pius were arguably performing their longevity. Their comments are also useful in revealing the rapid technological developments that have occurred in Uganda's media world in less than 20 years.

After establishing himself as a “veteran” of Uganda’s music industry, Spax decided to move “home” to Rwanda, in 1999. The following year, he formed the music group Family Squad with several of his family members: Black J, Simchezo, Mosad and Nazil. Drawing on their experiences in Kampala, the group composed dancehall and ragga music, with lyrics initially sung in Jamaican Patois. However, in order to attract Rwandan fans, the group began to incorporate Kinyarwanda lyrics into their songs. At that time in Kigali, there was only one recording studio, TFP in Nyamirambo. Likewise, there was only one radio station, the government-owned channel Radio Rwanda. Compared to Kampala’s competitive music industry, Spax viewed this as an opportunity: “The advantage of having only Radio Rwanda was if they play your song the *whole* country knows you!” (Spax 2015, int.) Paradoxically, limited circulation may be frustrating, but can actually have some advantages.

Since radio play was central to artists’ success, it was vital that Family Squad composed songs that would be approved by Rwanda’s Broadcasting Agency (RBA). Their first song, *Tuve Kumuhanda* (Getting off the streets), was actually commissioned by the government, with lyrics that “sensitise youth on HIV and AIDS”, as well as warning young people about the dangers of illegal drug abuse (ibid). Like so many Rwandan artists, Spax told me that he does not see his music as being political, while actively composing songs that will please the government. Despite Family Squad splitting up in 2007, Spax continues to record music as a solo artist (see “the new generation” on map, Appendix VI).

## RAFIKI'S MUSICAL TRAJECTORY

Rafiki is another big name associated with Rwanda's new generation of artists. The "King of Coga" was born in 1983, in Goma, eastern DRC. Along with hundreds of thousands of other refugees, Rafiki returned to Rwanda in 1994. In Kigali, he invented his own musical style, *coga* (pronounced *choga*) (Grant 2014: 208). Drawing on the influences that he was exposed to in Goma, he fused together Congolese rumba and reggae and composed lyrics in *urukiga*; a Kinyarwanda dialect from the northwest of Rwanda. Rafiki's first two songs were both major hits, elevating the singer to a position of national fame. His comical song *Igipende* was named after a non-alcoholic drink, allegedly made for Christians in Rwanda's Northern Province. His other hit, *Igikosi* (Trophy), remains a well-known football song. In 2009, he remixed it with Professor Jay, a popular Bongo Flava artist from Tanzania. In the Chorus, Rafiki asks the following questions (translated to English – Song 36, Appendix II):

The trophy, whose is it?  
In the competition, it is hard to tell who will win  
Who will take it? Who will take it?

In a way similar to the song by the Family Squad, *Igikosi* has been used by the government:

In all the radio stations, when you are going to listen to sports news, there is this song, *Igikosi*. It is about winning. Which team is going to win? At least once a month that song will be played. Even now. That song will live forever. You go to anything that goes with the government: football team, election, you will hear that song (Simon Rwema 2015, int.).

With this in mind, it is possible to interpret Verse 2 as a metaphor for two political parties competing at a national election (translated to English):

I am a sports journalist, now let us tell you how the teams are doing  
In both teams, the players are ready to play  
They have been lifting weights and bodybuilding to be strong  
It is a critical state, they have been running tracks and practising  
The goal is to win. The goal is to win. What I am telling you is serious  
Everyone wants to take it. It won't be easy, things are serious  
Whose will it be? One team says it is ours, the other team says it is theirs  
Really, whose is it? We are all asking ourselves.

During fieldwork, the song continued to evoke feelings of national pride among many of my Rwandan friends. Because of this and due to his popularity in general, Rafiki was often called upon to perform at government events. While to some extent this reveals an advantage of being 'on-side' with the RPF government, it is important to emphasise that artists were paid little to nothing for their involvement in this kind of national event. Moreover, artists were well aware that their participation was mandatory: "that it was not requested but commanded" (Grant 2014: 252).





**Figure 4.2.** Knowless Butera was allegedly paid “nothing but the honour” for her participation in *Kwita Izina*, at which she was paraded onto the stage alongside humans dressed as gorillas. September 2015. [My photograph]



**Figure 4.3.** Eric 1Key was apparently paid the equivalent of £50 to perform at the opening of the African Nations Championship (CHAN), hosted by Rwanda in January 2016. [Courtesy of Eric 1Key]



Through the examples of Spax and Rafiki, I have begun to highlight the diversity that exists among Rwanda's contemporary artists. Whereas Spax is of multinational heritage and spent his childhood in Kampala, Rafiki grew up in eastern DRC. Despite their attempts to be uniformly Rwandan, they were inspired and influenced by different languages and different genres of music. Along with other *Abasajya* artists, Spax brought dancehall and ragga to Kigali – genres that continue to dominate Uganda's music industry. Yet to appeal to the Rwandan masses, Spax adapted his style to incorporate Kinyarwanda lyrics. Meanwhile, Rafiki was inspired by Congolese rumba and reggae to innovate his own musical style, *coga*. His lyrics are in *urukiga*, a Kinyarwanda dialect from the northwest of Rwanda.

Finally, I want to return to the following quotation from the introduction to the previous chapter (chapter 3): "But Ceri, most of the people doing arts in Rwanda are from *outside*. Mostly they are from Uganda" (Arnold Mugisha 2015, int.). Whereas this quotation is certainly reflective of the perceptions of many of my informants, it is important to consider whether this perception is actually true. To do this, I consider the table included in the appendix, which includes a full list of the major pop artists, audio and video producers, and studio owners and managers/sponsors active at the time of my research (Appendix IV). This table includes three out of four of the radio presenters discussed in chapter 3, since they were also recording artists. However, I have not included *gakondo*, gospel or spoken word artists, members of Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company or the hotel bands, or the popular Burundian singers living in Kigali as

refugees. Instead, these people are discussed in the following chapters, when illustrating interconnections that exist between various artistic forms.

By ‘manager’, I mean to indicate somebody in charge of a studio when the owner is unable or unwilling to be present. For example, in 2011, the owner of Narrow Road Studio, Ezra Kwizera, recruited his younger brother Steve (aka Bob TBB) as manager when he moved to Vancouver with his Canadian wife. Likewise, the owner of Touch Records, Mutessa, moved to the UK and recruited his younger brother Hubert as manager. The recruitment of younger family members also occurred at CB Records: while the studio owner, Philbel, focused on other business endeavours, his sister, Bonne Marie, ran the studio. The rather prestigious term manager was also used by my informants to describe a financial sponsor or investor. For example, Humble-G from Rwanda’s most well-loved music group, the Urban Boys, described how Richard became their manager after financially investing in them:

After creating the studio label [Super Level], we got Richard. So, he invested an amount that we could pay back. Then after we were like, ‘We’re becoming big! We need a manager.’ So, we brought him in to be our manager (Humble-G Urban Boys 2015, int.).

Richard was famous in Kigali for being a wealthy man. In 2014 and 2015, he financed trips to Lagos, Nigeria, so that the Urban Boys could record “collabos” with Nigerian superstars Iyanya and Timaya – projects that inevitably led to the Urban Boys and Richard receiving much media attention (Songs 65 and 68, Appendix II<sup>77</sup>). As a fan of the Urban Boys himself, Richard enjoyed his celebrity

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<sup>77</sup> See also Song 66, Appendix II for an example of an “All-stars collabo” between the Urban Boys and other Rwandan artists in Kigali.

status gained from being associated with the group. Another influential music manager was Alex Muyuboki, a returnee from Uganda. Whereas Alex was not associated with one particular studio, he had managed nearly all of Kigali's most successful artists. In the next two chapters, I will discuss the importance of family ties and personal networks in detail.

Significantly, the table reveals that 29 out of 54 (about 53%) of the artists I encountered were *Abasope*, while 17 (about 32%) were *Abasajya*, four (about 7.5%) were *Abadubayi*, three (about 5.5%) were *Abajepe*, and one (nearly 2%) grew up in Kenya. Meanwhile, out of the 18 producers I encountered, eleven were *Abasope* (about 61%), three were *Abajepe* (about 17%), two were *Abasajya* (about 11%), one was *Umudubayi* (about 5.5%), and one grew up in Tanzania (about 5.5%). Finally, eight out of eleven of the country's studio owners (and managers/sponsors) were *Abasope* (about 73%), while three were *Abasajya* (about 27%). Put simply, the majority of the pop artists, producers and studio owners active at the time of my research were not from outside of Rwanda but were born and raised in the country. Whereas returnees from Uganda were particularly well placed to gain employment in the media, as artists they have struggled to generate support from the masses. Out of the 17 *Abasajya* artists identified, only Humble-G (from the Urban Boys) and Tom Close had managed to achieve extensive popularity across the country. Their popularity was likely due to their deliberate attempts to conceal their Ugandan connections and represent themselves as being unambiguously and proudly Rwandan. When discussing this with the video producer Gilbert (The Benjamins), he offered the following explanation:

The people in the rural areas, the mass population, these people understand Kinyarwanda. They want to first understand what you are singing. If you are not singing good Kinyarwanda, they get confused. And then they think maybe you are not *really* Rwandan. You must be proud to be Rwandan!

Gilbert's comment is supported by the musical trajectory of TBB, who initially composed their lyrics in Luganda, thus revealing their Ugandan backgrounds. While it is not possible to know for sure if this is the reason for TBB's initially diminished success, the members of the group (and other artists I spoke to) felt that this was the case. In the words of Benjah TBB:

When we started, we were doing some lyrics in Luganda. Coz we were just doing music coz we love it. Then one of those songs, the one with Jody, was gaining airplay and people were loving it. But then people started to talk. They asked us how we expect to be stars in Rwanda when we are using Luganda. They said, 'OK you are good, you are totally good, you have your lyrics, your creations, they are good.' Our goal then was to become stars in Rwanda. So, we took our Luganda lyrics and changed to Kinyarwanda. We didn't take out the English tho coz we still wanted to be us (Benjah TBB 2015, int.).

Despite this, *Abasajya* were the second largest group, with smaller numbers from Burundi, the DRC, Kenya and Tanzania.

Before concluding this chapter, I want to share this extract from an interview with a visual artist living in Kigali. The artist was born to a Ugandan mother and a Rwandan father. He grew up in Kampala and only learnt of his Rwandan heritage when he was aged 19. During a particularly poignant discussion, the young man shared with me his struggle to feel accepted by others in both Rwanda and Uganda. While I am reluctant to make his personal misfortune stand as evidence of a larger social process, it does demonstrate how difficult it can be for young men who look and speak like *Abasajya* to find a space of belonging in today's Kigali.

When I was growing up, I used to hear people refer to me as Rwandan. I wasn't happy. Why are they calling me that? It was coz of my height. You can't be a Ugandan and be that tall. I used to play professional soccer for the national youth team. So, people used to call me Rwandan instead of Ugandan. When I'm playing for their team! I gave up soccer... This is my fourth year in Rwanda now. I've just got my Rwandan citizenship. You try to blend in and you find you just can't. People are kind of reserved, I think because of history. In Rwanda, people refer to me as Ugandan and it messes with me. I came here because they referred to me as Rwandan in Uganda. Now they refer to me as Ugandan. So where do I go? [Pauses to think...] So, the experience I had in Nyamirambo was so bad. I decided to play soccer. I went to the soccer pitch just to play. They were like, 'We don't play outsiders. You can't just come and jump in.' I think the problem was my language coz I speak English. They were like, 'This guy is bragging around.' I was trying to blend in, but it was like water with oil (Anonymous 2015, int.).

## Conclusion

Kigali's diverse music scene has been partly shaped by a situation in which there is a physical circulation of people who draw on different influences that they have encountered in their lives. Following the genocide, returnees from neighbouring countries brought home with them a wide range of musical genres, forms and languages and invented new styles. Whereas English-speaking *Abasajya* were particularly well placed to gain employment within Kigali's media world more broadly, as recording artists they have struggled to appeal to the Rwandan masses. Instead, the most popular singers and rappers at the time of my research were those who were born and raised in the country. This is unsurprising: as discussed in chapter 2, the perception that *Abasajya* occupy a privileged position in Rwanda's post-genocide society is a source of resentment and jealousy (*ishyari*) among many of the country's citizens (Goodfellow and Smith 2013: 3189-3190). This was implied by one of my closest informants when he said the following:

In Rwanda, we have a problem of *jealousy*. People are having jealousy of people who have raised easily. That's the problem we have in Rwanda. That's the first, first problem. The problem is we Rwandese don't love each other. Why is it like that? We feel jealousy to our fellow Rwandans. In Rwanda, they feel jealous when you become a star. They will fight you until you go down. They will start talking, 'He doesn't visit us! She is too proud! He's not really Rwandan!' Nonsense!

Even more explicit was the following comment made by a returnee artist from Uganda:

When you rely on the mass audience, there is no advantage of being associated with Uganda. When we started doing music, people took us to be Ugandans, so we didn't easily connect with people. They didn't take us as their own. People started associating us with Uganda, calling us Ugandans. So, they always classify us as being from Uganda. Even when we're on the radio, people say to us, 'So are you Ugandans?' We tell them, 'We're Rwandese, but we grew up in Uganda.' They definitely know we are more informed, studied, more creative and all that. Maybe they're jealous, I don't know. They think we might out-smart them. It's a big, big problem to fit in the system.

With the weight of this perceived attitude towards *Abasajya* artists, some returnees from Uganda have found themselves marginalised in Kigali's music industry. Unlike in politics, ordinary Rwandans have the power to decide which musicians to support and being perceived as truly Rwandan is essential to being accepted. To become popular, artists must demonstrate that they are "good in Kinyarwanda" and should be seen to have worked hard for their success. In the words of one of my informants:

Nowadays people are trying to do this mixing of languages in music. But some only know Kinyarwanda. And some fear that they will lose their fans if they change from Kinyarwanda. Another part of the mentality is that if you don't sing in Kinyarwanda you are kind of showing off, you don't love your country, but that's just some people's mentality (Branakweli Alex 2015, int.).

In chapters 3 and 4, I have introduced some of the major participants in my study. In the following chapters, I will explore the ways in which they are connected.

## **CHAPTER 5 - MAPPING THE MUSIC, PART 1: ASPIRATIONS, COMMERCIAL SPONSORS AND THE STATE**

In previous chapters I began to explore the precariousness of my informants' livelihoods, and reveal their determination to, nonetheless, achieve upward social and economic mobility and a respectable adulthood status. In this chapter and the next, I expand on this by considering the ways in which Kigali's cultural producers attempt to make ends meet and build the "bright future" (*ejo hazaza heza*) they so desire. More specifically, I argue that since there are very few ways of making money in Rwanda's pop music industry, the success, or even survival, of artists, producers and studio owners largely depends on their ability to form and maintain supportive networks. This is in line with Paul Nugent's work on space and borderlands, in which he highlights a shift that has occurred in African studies "away from mapping social stratification towards an analysis of networks and other lateral ties of connection and obligation" (Engel and Nugent 2010: 3 – see also Nugent 2011, 2012).

Throughout this thesis, I trace the musical trajectories of various individuals. I discuss these individuals as being unique and distinctive in their choices, experiences and subjectivities, and as having a strong sense of self and agency, while also recognising that they are "indissolubly meshed into a social, relational world" (Barber 2007: 109). Essentially, the point I wish to stress is that since cultural producers are firmly embedded in Rwanda's music industry, they are best understood in relation to one another. To tear individuals away from their personal networks is to lose our understanding of how they became successful

in the first place. In part one of “mapping the music”, I focus on the role of commercial companies in sponsoring cultural producers and consider the relationship between artists and the state. In part two (chapter 6), I build on this by tracing the more informal connections that I found to exist between cultural producers in Kigali. Bearing in mind the fluidity of social bonds, I explore the dynamics between and within music studios and crews. I also demonstrate the important role of family members, long-standing friends, the church, and online training materials in offering support and therefore advantage to aspiring cultural producers. Finally, I outline divisions based on competition, jealousy (*ishyari*) and resentment that were prevalent among my informants during fieldwork.

#### RWANDA-UGANDA “COLLABOS”

There is too much connection between Rwanda and Uganda, too much connection, toooooo much!<sup>78</sup> Promoters in Rwanda have been made big because of their Ugandan connection. Because of bringing Bebe Cool to Rwanda, or Radio and Weasel to Rwanda, or Chameleone to Rwanda. That has been the link. So, Rwandese music has been groomed from Ugandan music. Coz two years back, every big concert in Rwanda had to have a Ugandan artist. And all the big artists had to do their “collabo” with a Ugandan.

- DJ Pius 2015, int.

As other scholars have demonstrated, networks established between cultural producers are rarely confined to national boundaries (Kiwan and Meinhof 2011; Le Lay 2016), and the music economy between Rwanda and Uganda is particularly salient in this regard. I therefore include examples of transnational connections, tracing links between artists, DJs and producers in Kigali and

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<sup>78</sup> Linguistic note: when Pius says, “too much”, this is not a negative. He is simply saying that there are “many” connections between Rwanda and Uganda. This style of English is common in Uganda, where Pius grew up. It is sometimes referred to as *Uglish* (see *Uglish: A Dictionary of Ugandan English* by Bernard Sabiiti, 2014).



Kampala. During fieldwork, I came to realise that all of Rwanda's most popular artists have recorded at least one "collabo" with a Ugandan star, highlighting the fact that Rwandans have looked up to their Ugandan 'big brothers' for inspiration and validation (chapter 3). This practice dates to at least 2010 when Tom Close (a returnee from Uganda) travelled to Kampala to record a love song, *Mama Wabana* (Mother of Children), with a Ugandan audio producer called Washington. The track was recorded at Washington's home studio, Magic Records, and features the popular Ugandan duo Radio and Weasel (the Goodlyfe Crew). Other Rwanda-Uganda hits include *Byemere* (Accept it) (2011) by Knowless Butera featuring Vampino, *No One Like Me* (2012) by Dream Boys featuring Eddy Kenzo, *Take it off* (2012) by Urban Boys featuring Jackie Chandiru (also produced by Washington – see Song 62, Appendix II), *Hello* (2014) by Bruce Melody featuring Fille, and the aptly named *Zero Distance* (2015) by Tom Close featuring Eddy Kenzo.

Most of the artists I spoke to were motivated by at least one of two reasons for recording a Rwanda-Uganda "collabo". Firstly, some *Abasajya* artists felt that they had no choice but to reach out to Ugandan stars. Shunned by the Rwandan masses for "not being Rwandan enough", they used their connections in Kampala to search for alternative fans. The second reason is more obvious and relates to the idea of graduating from national to international music markets. Having achieved popularity at home, successful artists aspire to reach wider and wealthier audiences beyond their national borders. In the words of a Ugandan R&B singer:

I am targeting the whole of Africa. Tomorrow you'll find me in Zambia.  
Next time you'll find me in South Africa. My music is targeting the whole  
of Africa. I'm not targeting Uganda only (Ray Signature 2015, int.).

In order to target “the whole of Africa”, artists such as Ray Signature align themselves with singers and rappers who are popular in countries beyond their own. The most conspicuous way of doing this is to produce a song with them: through their lyrics, artists overtly reveal (or “name-drop”<sup>79</sup>) the cities, countries, musicians, producers, record labels and studios involved in a given project. Importantly, the more famous of the artists in the collaboration gives a “shout out” to the other(s), thus promoting and endorsing the name and brand of those less successful than them. By way of illustration, I present the opening lyrics for some of the aforementioned songs:

- Bruce Melody from the Super Level  
Fille  
Rwanda-Uganda and the music! (Song 3, Appendix II)
- Hahahahahaha!  
Bad news, bad news, this is bad news! Yo!  
Straight from Kampala to Kigali via Katuna!  
Yo this is Goodlyfe alongside Tom Close  
Yah man! Fire bless them, bless them/Haha! (Song 59, Appendix II)
- Rwanda-Uganda collabo again  
Eddy Kenzo na Tom Close  
Here we come to burn them. Haha! Yes man!  
Kina Music affair  
Renix and power production  
Zimana! (Song 60, Appendix II)

In exchange for the privilege of being endorsed, lesser-known artists are expected to fund these transnational “collabos”. During fieldwork, I saw some

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<sup>79</sup> In Kigali, my informants referred to this practice as “name-dropping”. By contrast, in Kinshasa, *kobwaka libanga* (literally, “to throw a stone”) is the term most commonly used to describe what musicians do when they cite or sing the names of friends or sponsors either on recordings or during live performances (White 2008: 170).

‘underground’ artists (i.e. those unknown to the public) going as far as to kneel submissively in front of regional stars when asking to work with them. Their response was always simple: “Money! Where is the money?!”

To appeal to international audiences, popular artists compose lyrics in languages that are understood in regional or ‘global’ settings - for example, when targeting the east-central African region, songs may include a mixture of English, Kinyarwanda, Lingala, Luganda and Swahili, as well as incorporating aspects of Jamaican Patois and popular Nigerian colloquialisms (e.g. calling your lover “sweet banana”, “sweet potato”, or simply “my baby-ohhh”). During an interview with an aspiring singer and student of computer science, this was further explained to me from a Rwandan point of view:

Rwanda is a small country with only 12 million people and not all of them are listening to our music. When you sing in Kinyarwanda, you are limiting yourself. Your audience is really limited. Someone can be more excited about a song if they understand what you are singing about. So, if you sing in Swahili or other international languages you are expanding your audience. So, when I need to target a local audience with a specific message for my community, I need to use Kinyarwanda. But, if I want to entertain the whole of Africa, I need to use other languages (Branakweli Alex 2015, int.).

Moreover, during a conversation with a popular Rwandan rapper he referred to the experiences of Chameleone from Uganda, demonstrating his awareness that international travel and code switching can improve the likelihood of success for hustling artists in the region:

Chameleone started in Rwanda. He used to sell cassettes and CDs at the parking in Nyabugogo. And he used to make different music in Swahili and Kinyarwanda. He’s Ugandan but Rwandese know him. Through the years he’s been successful coz he’s had a lot of experience across the whole East African region. He was in Tanzania. He broke his leg there! [Laughing] He made shows there and they beat him! So that’s why he doesn’t take any bullshit! He’s not like these artists who come in

like Bebe Cool, who have support from rich parents. Chameleone he came up from shit, like from street. Where he had to really hustle, like so hard.

## **Imagining the future: making and spending money in Rwanda's pop music industry**

I wanna take my music across borders. If you listen to P-Square's story, all that stuff gives you inspiration to keep going. They started as dancers. Then they kept growing their ambition. [The Nigerian music duo P-Square had just been awarded 'Artist of the Decade' at the MTV Africa Music Awards – see chapter 8.]

- Benjah TBB 2015, int.

Like other young people in Kigali, cultural producers want to become financially secure and achieve a respectable adulthood status (Sommers 2012: 193-194). When discussing this, my informants used the term *kuvamo umuntu*, meaning, "to become somebody", i.e. "to become an accomplished person". This usually means getting married, having children and becoming owners of property, land and a car. When a young man gets married in Rwanda, for example, congratulations are formulated as *ubaye umugabo* (now you are a man). For many of the people in my research, the goal was to achieve a lifestyle that included international travel and access to the latest fashions, trends and technologies. As Kringelbach points out:

[The] literature on youth and life aspirations in urban Africa rarely intersects with that on transnational migration, [and] much remains to be said on the ways in which people from the continent aspire to travelling lifestyles rather than 'migration' as an endpoint (2014: 39).

However, most of my informants simply wanted to escape the shame of being poor - for example, "I want to use my talent for business, for survival. It's painful

to be looked down on” (Jody Phibi 2015, int.). As discussed throughout my thesis, artists such as Jody Phibi were especially preoccupied with the idea of being admired by others and leaving a legacy; having their name and reputation remembered and celebrated, thus becoming a “big person” and creating something permanent in a precarious world (Barber 2007: 192).

Though the empirical context differs, the aspirations outlined are comparable to what Cole (2010) observed in her study of young women in urban Madagascar. In her ethnography, Cole describes how “[getting] married, forming a household, and raising children epitomize respectable adulthood in Tamatava” (ibid: 30% kindle edition). Similar to the Malagasy women discussed by Cole, the young people in my research were primarily focused on achieving socioeconomic mobility, hoping to “transform the present into the future” they imagined (ibid: 4% kindle edition - see also Anderson 2006; Meyer 2009). Such aspirations amidst struggle to earn a living have been written about by numerous anthropologists working on youth in urban Africa and are arguably embedded in cultural practices across the continent (e.g. see Kerr 2018; Marcus 1997; Perullo 2011; Peterson 2002; Pype 2011; Shipley 2009, 2013b; Ugor 2016; Weiss 2009). By way of illustration, I discuss a well-loved song by Kenya’s award-winning band Sauti Sol. The band performed at Rwanda’s KigaliUp festival in July 2015, much to the delight of their Rwandan fans.

In 2015, Sauti Sol’s popularity soared across sub-Saharan Africa, after a video clip of them “grooving away” with (then) US President Barack Obama went viral (Opobo 2016). Indeed, the band’s tour of Africa saw the quartet perform to

huge crowds in numerous countries, including Burundi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Uganda. When asked about their song *Live and Die in Afrika*<sup>80</sup> (which was also the name of their tour), Sauti Sol made the following comment:

We realised that as Africans we're not always proud of who we are. It's like what people aspire to do – 'Oh my God I'm going to Europe!' Why don't we make our people love here? Why can't we sensitise our people that Africa can be self-sustainable not only economically but also socially and politically? (Kantengwa 2016)

This sentiment is clearly articulated in the song's catchy and repetitive hook:

**Pre-Hook**

No place I'd rather be – oh na na na, oh na na na  
There's no place I'd rather be – oh na na na

**Hook**

Live and Die in Afrika  
I wanna live and die in Afrika  
Live and die in Afrika  
Live and die in Afrika  
Eh, live and die in Afrika

Even more important are the following lyrics, which unmistakably reflect the aspirations of most of the cultural producers in my study, i.e. to be rich, to be famous, to be loved, to be proud and to leave a legacy:

**Verse 1**

I wanna be rich, I wanna be famous  
I wanna have lots of lots money  
Soar above the clouds  
I wanna be free like Nelson Mandela  
Stand tall like a pyramid, so so courageous

**Verse 2**

I wanna feel love, I wanna be remembered  
I wanna go down in history, make my mama proud...

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<sup>80</sup> *Live and Die in Afrika* (2015) by Sauti Sol is available at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhINy345Jcc>

The popularity of songs such as *Live and Die in Afrika* not only reflect the aspirations of Rwanda's contemporary artists, but also encourage, reinforce and consolidate them (see also Askew 2002: 18-21; Fabian 1978: 23). In a way similar to Chameleone of Uganda and P-Square of Nigeria (see above), regional superstars such as Sauti Sol provide tangible evidence that music success is possible, thus representing a beacon of hope for aspiring stars in Kigali. Individual aspirations are also shaped by interactions with others and by stories in the media that present and celebrate possible upward trajectories (Künzler and Poli 2012).

Despite these aspirations, there are very few ways of making money in Rwanda's pop music industry. For those who do achieve temporary success, the money soon runs out. Classical processes of producing and disseminating music require the investment of significant amounts of financial capital – an issue expressed by one recording artist when he said the following:

There are few, few ways to make money. If the radio is playing your song, they are not paying you for that. Maybe you are even paying them! If the TV is playing your song, nothing! And CD sales are not really. So then, there are just few ways to make money, like to make a show. But even that requires a lot of money to organise. Video shoots are also expensive [costing on average the equivalent of £350]. There's so much stress in it! And there are not too many ways to get sponsored. Only MTN, Bralirwa, Airtel...

For this reason, cultural producers are forced to depend on external support to keep them going, e.g. in the form of handouts from family and friends or supplementing their income with additional work undertaken within or outside of the media world.

At Narrow Road Studio (NRS), I was offered a slightly better sense of how studio owners and producers can survive financially. Like other studios in Kigali

and Kampala, NRS was not just a place to record songs for popular artists but was also a place to negotiate other business deals – in most cases, with commercial companies and NGOs who wanted to advertise their products and services on the radio and TV. I was called upon by Arnold Mugisha to provide a voice over for an educational film on maternal health. The film was commissioned by an international NGO, and the video producer asked for my help in return for him editing the video I was making on dance circulations (Whatley 2017). During that time, Arnold Mugisha had been hired to work on several projects simultaneously – for example, he was also producing a documentary as part of a “responsible consumption” campaign organised by a local beer manufacturer. This mode of working was described by a Ugandan audio producer as follows: “Most of my time in the studio is doing commercials: adverts, documentaries, jingles and all that stuff. That is where the money is” (Washington 2015, int.).

When I met Washington (real name David Ebangit), he was one of Uganda’s most prominent audio producers. As suggested previously, his songs include several of the Rwanda-Uganda “collabos” that were popular at the time of my research. On this matter, Washington emphasised the importance of personal ties, especially concerning his connection to Alex Muyuboki:

I produced most of those Rwanda-Uganda hits. The song for Urban Boys and Jackie, the song for Radio and Weasel and Tom Close. Then I’ve done some for Queen Cha and Alionie, and I’ve also produced for Teta<sup>81</sup>. You know Rwanda is a very small country! You know Alex Muyuboki? He’s been the manager for almost all the artists in Rwanda. He was the chain link to connect me to all those artists. First time it was Urban Boys.

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<sup>81</sup> See Song 51, Appendix II.



Then Kitoko. I made Kitoko very big in his own country<sup>82</sup> (Washington 2015, int.).

I cannot detail Washington's financial situation, but clearly the 32-year-old father-of-two had financial resources that allowed him to organise a rather extravagant birthday party for his youngest daughter. During the celebration, which took place at an outdoor recreation centre near Ntinda in Kampala, Washington told me that he was awarded a diploma in Sound Engineering by a South African university. When I asked Washington how he was able to supplement his income (knowing full well that audio producers were making little money in Kigali or Kampala), he told me that he and his wife were the owners of a restaurant and "some farming and beauty shops".

During fieldwork, it was not uncommon for artists to work in more than one job – for example, Eric 1Key was employed as the Creative Head for one of Kigali's leading advertisement agencies (Scandad), while Aidan from the music-duo Two4Real was working for RwandAir. A few others were working as comedians, DJs, producers and/or radio presenters. This was particularly the case among well-educated returnees from Uganda (*Abasajya*), who were in favourable positions to carve out successful roles within the media, while struggling as artists to appeal to the Rwandan masses (see chapters 3 and 4). In the words of Tino TBB:

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<sup>82</sup> In July 2016, I met Kitoko (real name Patrick Bibarwa) in London. The returnee from eastern DRC was studying Politics at Southbank University. When asked about working with Washington, he said the following: "My friend Kid Gaju took me to Uganda to meet Washington. I'm good in Swahili, so we talked easily about many things. We're friends" (Kitoko 2016, int.).

I'm called multi-purpose! I'm an MC, I'm a radio presenter, I'm a DJ, a part-time comedian, musician. So, what do I give most to? Radio! Radio is my life man! (Tino TBB 2015, int.)

DJ Pius is a university graduate and returnee from Uganda. He apparently only completed his degree to please his family:

I was just doing it for my family. You know in Africa we have this thing called 'respecting family?' You can't just tell your Dad, 'No I don't want to go to school coz I think DJ-ing is good for me.' You have to obey and go to school. So now I have my degree in Law (DJ Pius 2015, int.).

According to Pius (full name Rukabuza Pius), his "real passion" is music. Having worked as a DJ since 2006, he had recently managed to establish his own company of DJs, A Thousand Hills Entertainment. He had also become a parent with his TV presenter wife.



**Figure 5.1.** DJ Pius's wife (right) at a nightclub in Kigali, August 2015. [My photograph]

Jobs such as those of Tino TBB and Pius seemed to provide aspiring stars with just enough money to get by and invest in their creative projects. TBB's music videos, for example, were primarily funded by Tino's salary from working at KFM (that is, when he was paid on time). Whereas some of my informants were becoming increasingly disillusioned by the lack of money circulating in Rwanda's pop music industry, others appeared to have hope for a more financially prosperous future. Either way, *amafaranga* (money), or the lack of it, was a constant worry for the young women and men in my research. Throughout the rest of the chapter, I examine further strategies adopted by Kigali's cultural producers when attempting to make ends meet and build the futures they desire. First, I will consider the role of drinks and mobile telecommunication companies in sponsoring popular artists.

### **PGGSS: a case of corporate sponsorship in Rwanda's music industry**

Since 2011, the annual Primus Guma Guma Super Star (PGGSS) competition has created new opportunities for a small number of artists to earn some money. The competition is sponsored by Bralirwa, Rwanda's largest brewer and soft beverage company. It is run by an events management agency, the East African Promoters (EAP). As noted by Grant, *Guma Guma* (Be Strong) is different to Western reality music competitions that search for talented amateurs, such as 'The X Factor' (2017: 155). Instead, Rwanda's most popular artists are pitted against each other to decide who the ultimate superstar is (ibid). For up to eight months of the year, 10 selected artists or groups - chosen by a panel of judges who are often "paid off" - tour the country and entertain crowds in 16 different

locations. A clever combination of free entrance and reduced-price Primus beer attracts huge, excited crowds of mostly young Rwandan men.



**Figure 5.2.** Audience members at PGGSS, Gikondo Grounds, Kigali, March 2015. [My photograph]



**Figure 5.3.** TBB competing in PGGSS, May 2016. [Courtesy of Benjah TBB]

During the time of my research, each contestant in PGGSS was paid a salary of 1 million Rwandan francs per month (roughly £850), while also benefiting from increased exposure to audiences across the country. In addition to the judges' selection, ordinary Rwandans were given the chance to vote online or via SMS to determine the country's next superstar. The winner was awarded a prize package worth 24 million Rwandan francs (roughly £21,500), an "extraordinary sum in the country's nascent post-genocide music industry" (Grant 2017: 155). Therefore, PGGSS has helped to improve the popularity and lifestyle of some Rwandan stars. It has also been significant in leading to more artists being sponsored by other multinational drinks and telecommunication companies, namely MTN, Tigo, Airtel and Skol. This practice is not exclusive to Rwanda and has been documented in other African countries, such as Uganda (Asaasira 2012) and Ghana (Shiple 2014) – highlighting the fact that Kigali's cultural producers have responded to a locally-available, though internationally widely distributed, opportunity provided by commercial companies. In neighbouring Burundi, the country's equivalent of Bralirwa (Brarudi) has sponsored a similar music competition (Primusic) since 2013. In this case, contestants must be previously unknown to the public. A further example is Tusker Project Fame, a popular East African reality-singing competition sponsored by Tusker Lager. Although this competition takes place in Kenya (and is sponsored by Kenyan beer), it is aired on transnational TV stations across the



East African region, with past winners from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda<sup>83</sup>.



**Figure 5.4.** The face of the PGGSS 2015 winner, Knowless Butera, was displayed on this billboard at the Kisimenti roundabout (far right), Kigali, March 2016. [My photograph]

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<sup>83</sup> Previous winners of Tusker Project Fame include Valerie Kimani of Kenya, Esther Mugizi of Uganda, Alpha Rwirangira of Rwanda, Hilary Davis Ntare of Uganda, Ruth Matete of Kenya, and a Burundian singer who lives in Rwanda called Hope.



**Figure 5.5.** Sat-B performing as a guest star in Burundi's version of PGGSS, Primusic. [Courtesy of Sat-B]

PGGSS has also generated employment opportunities for other young Kigalians, such as entertainment journalists, presenters and dancers. This has included the recruitment of the Sound of Hills Band (known as the Mucyo Band), whose job it was at the time of my research to support the stars on stage. This well-known hotel band was established by Mucyo in 2003 and had 11 members: three male vocalists (including one Ugandan), one female vocalist (Nina from the music duo Charley and Nina), three guitarists, one bass guitarist (from Burundi), two keyboard players and a drummer. On the *guma guma* stage, the Mucyo Band provided the backing music for popular hip-hop, R&B and Afrobeats songs. Yet, outside of the competition, they performed weekly at hotels, where they entertained audiences with a wide variety of music genres and styles, including



“reggae, blues, jazz, Congolese rumba and African love songs” (Constantine Muhingabo 2015, int.).



**Figure 5.6.** The Mucyo Band performing at the Hôtel des Mille Collines, July 2015. [My photograph]

During the final months of my fieldwork, another band gained prominence on Kigali’s music scene. Formed in 2014, the Neptunez band consisted of four vocalists (two of whom were Rwandan), a Congolese guitar player, a Kenyan violinist, a Ugandan keyboard player, and a Ugandan Saxophonist - the leader of the band. In a style reminiscent of the Mucyo Band, Neptunez performed “various genres of music like jazz, zouk, reggae and Afro” (Tumwebaze 2015b). The existence of these multinational bands reinforces my earlier point that musicians



in Rwanda straddle the boundaries between multiple genres and forms. It also strengthens my claim that Kigali's increasingly diverse music scene has been directly impacted by the physical circulation of people, especially within the east-central African region (see also Le Lay 2016).

Most of the people to whom I spoke in Kigali acknowledged that PGGSS had brought both advantages and disadvantages to Rwanda's pop music industry. Yet, it was only after getting to know someone well that they would share with me their grievances. If word got out that an artist had "dissed" the competition, they might not be invited to participate in the future, thus jeopardising one of their few chances to earn a regular salary. By way of illustration, I recall an interview with a popular artist. As we can see, the singer initially appeared to be supportive of the competition:

I would say it's a very good motivation to get into music. Here in Rwanda we need that. I think it's a very good activity that supports artists because you get paid for your performances. And I would say they have lifted the Rwandan artists on another level.

Yet, immediately after I switched off my dictaphone, the singer went on to paint a very different picture: "*Guma guma* is killing the music! Everyone sees me for free. I even saw the pre-made certificates before we'd even competed. It's fixed!" This view that PGGSS is "killing" the music industry was expressed by nearly all the artists, producers and studio owners in my research, including past winners of the competition<sup>84</sup> – for example:

Because the people can see artists for free, they will never pay to see you. It is the mentality of the people now that they can see you for free,

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<sup>84</sup> Past winners: Tom Close (2011), King James (2012), Riderman (2013), Jay Polly (2014), Knowless Butera (2015), Urban Boys (2016), Dream Boys (2017), Bruce Melody (2018).

so who will pay for it? So, it is very, very, very damaging for the whole music industry.

Furthermore, many of my informants bitterly remarked that PGGSS is little more than a marketing campaign for Primus beer. Others criticised the competition for favouring a small number of stars, while failing to support new artists on the scene:

*Guma guma* is killing the Rwandan music industry! They include same few artists every year. You can find those few artists who are still chewing money on it. And with the same song even!

Here, the artist's comment was directed at the Dream Boys, who had competed in PGGSS with one hit song for four successive years, much to the annoyance of many aspiring singers and rappers. Another struggling artist expressed similar frustrations:

It's so hard for artists not in *guma guma* coz all the media is concentrated on that competition. So, if you want to do a concert during that time they're not going to give you a billboard or sponsorship. Even on the radio they have to play the songs of those artists in *guma guma*. So, for eight months of the year it closes everything else.

In this way, PGGSS represents a kind of exclusive club that supports a tiny proportion of artists, while excluding the rest. Furthermore, the prevalence of corruption in the competition means that potential contestants are forced to come up with yet more money in order to take part. This highlights the role of personal networks - in this case, favourable relationships with judges and fans - and the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that determine the success of artists. For most aspiring stars, the hope of being included in the competition remains a fantasy.

In his ethnography on barbershops and global fantasies in Arusha, Tanzania, Brad Weiss (2009) describes a similar situation. Essentially, what he observes is “a gap between the world [that barbers] live in and the plentiful possibilities they aspire to” (ibid: 37). According to Weiss and other scholars (e.g. Comaroff and Comaroff 2004), this reality is characteristic of the sense of incompleteness of so many fantasies in neoliberal Africa today (ibid: 38). It is certainly relevant to the lives of Kigali’s ambitious, but struggling, cultural producers.

### **Performing the future? The power of self-representation**

A close examination of my interview texts reveals a further gap between how artists presented themselves to me and the actuality of their lives. During an interview with Tino TBB (real name Kay Martin), I asked him to tell me his story. As we can see, the radio presenter, comedian, MC (for PGGSS), and member of TBB clearly wanted to emphasise his talents and popularity:

I started as an MC at university. So different artists come from outside the university. They ask you, ‘Who is this MC?’ They just wanted *me*. I’m their friend. I’m so social and so down to earth you know? So, I started as an MC at school. Imagine a Senior 2 kid running a party for Senior 6! Imagine that situation! And I’m in front of them and they’re *big*! But in high school everyone just loved me. And I thank God for that coz I’m favoured. And when God gives you favour you need to fight for it. So, I fight a lot not to mess up with anyone. So, I started as an MC. I was in my Senior 6 vacation. By that time, I was a club MC at Car Wash [a grill and sports bar located in Kimihurura]. Then every Friday I lied to school that I was sick, and I needed to go out. So, I grabbed the microphone. I /love the microphone! The first time I held the microphone I nearly cried! I was like, ‘Oh my God! This is the thing you talk to and people listen?!’ So, the owner of Car Wash was also the owner of Flash FM. He started looking at me as an opportunity. One day he called me, ‘Can you work on radio?’ I lied to him: ‘How old are you?’ ‘I’m like 25!’ But I was young! ‘Please come on Monday and bring your CV.’ I didn’t know how to write a CV. That’s the truth. My friend helped me. My CV was full of lies! Every

weekend I slept at the radio! Then I go back at school. Nobody knew I was sleeping there, but the owner, even up to now, he calls me his son. I love Flash. That's where I come from... (Tino TBB 2015, int.)

Whereas Tino TBB was preoccupied with projecting a narrative in which he is loved and admired by others (he once confessed to me that his dream is to win 'Big Brother Africa'), others seemed to be more concerned with representing Kigali as "the place to be":

Kigali's city is the best! If you don't know you better come and visit Kigali! Yo! This is African Calabash! This is how we're gonna rock until dawn! Bless the city if you don't know! (Elephant and Sintext 2015, int.)

Unsurprisingly, the most common assertions to be exaggerated by artists were related to their level of success, especially about their financial earnings and number of fans and online followers. In May 2015, I accompanied DJ Pius to The Mirror Hotel in Remera, Kigali. His Ugandan friend, Ray Signature, was shooting the video for his new song *Oweyo*<sup>85</sup>. After agreeing to act in the video (the actual "video girls" were apparently held up in a salon), the R&B artist agreed to make time for an interview with me. Since Ray Signature was connected to Jody Phibi (they had released a "collabo" together<sup>86</sup>), I asked if he too was signed under Platnum Entertainment Uganda (see chapter 7). Rather than simply answering "no", Ray Signature made a rather embellished claim to having a "personal manager":

Platnum Entertainment do bookings for me, but they don't manage me fully. But me myself I am having my personal manager who works for me and does all stuff work for me. I'm also a songwriter. I write songs for

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<sup>85</sup> *Oweyo* ("What's up?" in Luganda) by Ray Signature is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcGxi9aeLLk>

<sup>86</sup> See Song 20, Appendix II.

other artists. Many of them! I can't mention them and finish them  
[laughing]!

Following this, the singer-songwriter told me that he sells his songs for the equivalent of £350 each – a figure that Ray Signature later admitted was a gross exaggeration.

A similar situation occurred during an interview with Benjah TBB. As soon as I turned on my dictaphone, he introduced himself as follows:

Yeah! What's up! I go by the names of Benjamin Kagorola, aka Benjah TBB from the mighty TBB! The best group in Rwanda! Tino, Bob na Benjah! *Ni danje* man! [It's dangerous man!] (Benjah TBB 2015, int.).

By then, Benjah TBB and I were good friends and he knew that his act was not fooling me. Laughing, he winked and said, "OK, not now. But one day maybe". This comment is indicative of two things: firstly, Benjah TBB was conscious that he was performing a fantasy; and secondly, the way in which artists, such as Benjah TBB, decided to pitch themselves to me and others – their public narrative - was an important part of their art. The artists I got to know clearly understood that behaving like a celebrity is a precondition to being accepted as one. In fact, during my fieldwork period, Benjah TBB refused as a public figure to be seen on cheap public buses, travelling instead using motorbike taxis with his hood up to hide his identity, as he could not afford private taxis. Crucially, these public displays of celebrity were not only symbolic, but were also instrumental: by publicly asserting themselves as stars, artists such as Benjah TBB were actively trying to convince others to bring their fantasies to life. This is in line with other research on the strategies of self-representation among young people in urban Africa, as discussed in chapter 3 (Cole 2010: 47% kindle edition – see also

Friedman 1994; Linnebuhr 1997; Martin 1994; Parkin 2000). I will now explore some of the ways in which artists engage with the state.



**Figure 5.7.** A scene from Ray Signature's video shoot at The Mirror Hotel, Kigali, May 2015. [My photograph]

## **Ambiguous dynamics between artists and the state**

Popular arts penetrate and are penetrated by political, economic and religious institutions in ways that may not always be predictable.

- Barber 1987: 1.

In post-genocide Rwanda, the boundaries between the public and private sectors are indistinct. This has been demonstrated in an article by David Booth and Frederick Galooba-Mutebi (2012), in which they detail the activities of Tri-Star (now called Crystal Ventures), the “business arm of the RPF”. According to the article, Tri-Star played a critical role in getting capitalism started in post-genocide Rwanda, with early ventures including housing for returnees, private security services, *Inyange* water and dairy products, furniture imports, mobile telephony, road construction, housing estates, building materials, fruit processing, printing, and a chain of Bourbon coffee shops (ibid: 396). Tri-Star were at first a pioneer in activities where there was little interest from the domestic or the diaspora private sector, and in several cases involved the head-hunting of professionals from the East African region and beyond (ibid: 399).

Despite a lack of state sponsorship in Rwanda’s arts, media and entertainment sectors, the RPF government - being acutely aware of the role of musicians as effective carriers of socio-political messages (e.g. see Mda 1994) - is very interested in what recording artists are saying in public. As stated in previous chapters, a limited amount of support is given to cultural producers, and only to those who clearly advertise the ideals of the “New Rwanda” (*Rwanda Rushya*). Therefore, state intervention is not limited to repressive forms of control, but also tries to shape and foster particular kinds of messages (*amatumwa*). In

chapter 3, I introduced Hope Azeda, the founder of Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company. After being headhunted in Kampala, Hope Azeda ‘returned’ to Kigali and composed a play that deliberately reinforced the RPF’s policy of ‘national unity’. The play is called *Amashiyiga ya Sehutsitwa*, meaning “Firestones of Sehutsitwa” – a made-up word that combines Hutu, Tutsi and Twa:

I used three firestones to represent the three ethnicities in Rwanda. So, the whole play was about if you need to cook you need the support of all three. It was about reconciliation. So, when I finished my graduation, I came to that Director of Information and said, ‘Here I am!’ I came with my script, no money, nothing else. And he said, ‘You are here!’ And he put me in the drama section of Radio Rwanda. They helped me to improve my Kinyarwanda and they helped me translate the script, some of it from English. The play was a big hit and an opening to many other doors (Hope Azeda 2015, int.).

Likewise, Rwanda’s popular singers and rappers understand that there is an expectation for them to compose songs in support of the government. In the words of one of my informants: “In Rwanda, if you’re not in line with the system, you’re an enemy of it.” Occasionally artists are even commissioned by the government to support their various programmes, although they usually receive little to no money for this work. Regardless of whether artists want to be included in government projects, they are fully aware that their participation is mandatory (Grant 2014: 252). The lyrics presented below are from a song designed to promote the work of EDPRS, the government’s development programme (Song 25, Appendix II). The all-star “collabo” was produced by Fazzo (at Ibisumizi studio), in 2013, and features three of Rwanda’s most well-loved artists: Knowless Butera, Jay Polly and Riderman. In a way reminiscent of the Tutsi exile songs proclaiming national unity (see chapter 2), the lyrics explicitly reinforce the RPF’s vision for the future. In particular, the artists make reference to *agaciro*; a



key cultural concept (long before the RPF) tied to self-respect, dignity and patriotism. The RPF's vision for the "New Rwanda" has transformed what is expected of its predominantly young population, encouraging self-reliance within the framework of *agaciro* (Zorbas 2009: 143). As Pells et al. explained: "[Youth] are expected to gain personal *agaciro* through self-improvement and national development (e.g. through self-reliance and completing school)" (Pells, Pontalti and Williams 2014: 300-301). This idea is dominant throughout the song, as well as in those produced by others – for example, *I Have a Dream* by Benjah TBB, in which elements of Kagame's speeches on *agaciro* are interwoven into the track<sup>87</sup>.

### **EDPRS [2013]**

Knowless Butera featuring Jay Polly & Riderman, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda (translated to English).

#### **[Intro]**

EDPRS!

Knowless!

Jay Polly! Riderzo!

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#### **[Chorus]**

Rwanda should understand EDPRS as development

Let's work together and build our country so that foreigners can come to see what we do

I am happy to be a Rwandan – with EDPRS

I am happy to be a Rwandan – with *agaciro*

I am happy to be a Rwandan – with EDPRS

I am happy to be a Rwandan

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

Having children who we can care about

Can help us to get developed

The private sector should work hard

Because Rwanda is beautiful

Let's try to make it better

Because Rwanda is beautiful

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<sup>87</sup> *I Have a Dream* by Benjah TBB is available at: <https://benjahjerryb.bandcamp.com/releases>. It features the author's voice in the chorus.

Let's protect it

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 2]**

A Rwandan has *agaciro*  
He should be respected  
Rwanda is growing high  
The big buildings have been built  
As youth we are now educated  
We are creating jobs  
No, there is no longer laziness, no wasting of time  
We are doing different and beautiful arts  
We're working non-stop  
We plan for our future, we save money  
People look young  
Because we have milk in Rwanda  
The citizens thank the policy of one cow per family  
The decoration of street lighting  
Which helps us to connect  
There is no more illiteracy  
As we are studying until the highest level

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 3]**

Let me tell you, there is a secret  
And God comes to those who work together [Rwandan proverb]  
Like a young talented boy  
I wish for a better future, that is why I work hard  
Get motivated and like what you do  
I do it very well as I know that this will help me to become what I want to be  
I complete my difficult task very well  
Now we are awake  
Even you, don't be behind, the floor is open  
I can see that in ICT everything is fine  
Where there's a will there's a way, so let's consider it  
Everything will be possible

---

**[Chorus]**

In the music video for *EDPRS* (produced by Gilbert [The Benjamins]), an assortment of images advertises the work of the extensive, expansive Kigali Master Plan. The image that is projected is one of shiny new buildings, clean

roads, street lighting, hard-working labourers, university graduates, and an abundance of banks and businesses. The stars themselves are positioned wearing hard hats on the roof of the newly built Kigali City Tower (KCT), currently Rwanda's tallest building. Alongside this, we see images that advertise some of the government's development projects, including the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) programme and a housing project funded by the *agaciro* development fund (AgDF); a fund which "encourages Rwandans to 'voluntarily' donate money to the government for unspecified national programmes" (Grant 2014: 157). Also present in the montage are images of *imbyino nyarwanda* (Rwandan dance) and President Kagame – for example, participating in *umuganda*; obligatory communal cleaning and labour activities that take place on the final Saturday of every month. This supports Breed's argument that performing arts associations in Rwanda are "vulnerable to becoming instruments of propaganda and to disseminate political messages" (2014: 151).

Whereas in the case above the national stars were commissioned by the government, more often artists take it upon themselves to compose songs that will please the state. Some of these songs are produced with the hope that they will be picked up by the RPF, highlighting the fact that the government is perceived as a potential patron. As discussed in chapter 1, other songs are best understood as representing a convergence between official state ideology and artists' personal feelings. In most of the cases I encountered, a mixture of the two was at play. During my fieldwork, for example, TBB composed a song that tells the story of a beautiful woman, Muteteri, who gets married after university (Song 49, Appendix II). In front of Muteteri's family and friends, the husband swears to

God that he will “take care of her and treat her like a queen” (lyrics from this song have been translated from Kinyarwanda). Instead, he beats her and treats her like a “house girl” and a “prostitute”. Muteteri’s “bright eyes” fill with “tears and a lot of sorrow”, and the community start to judge the husband for abusing and neglecting his wife. Through their lyrics, TBB directly address the man, making reference to a Rwandan proverb: *Wibwira ko kuba imfizi y’akarere ari ibigwi wakwirata?* (Do you think that being the bull of the district is something to be proud of?) *Ukibeshya ko kuba intare mu rugo bikongerera icyubahiri* (You think that behaving like a lion in the home makes you respected). In Rwanda, to be the “bull of the district” is to have many wives and lovers, while to “act like a lion in the home” is to communicate aggressively. In this way, TBB’s song, *Isubireho* (Change your ways), promotes a new law in Rwanda against gender-based violence (see also Breed 2014: 151). “Change your ways – make a happy family”, TBB sing: “Can you please respect her feelings?/Then she will respect all your feelings”.

*Isubireho* is based on the real-life experiences of a friend of Benjah TBB’s from church, who asked the rapper to write her story so that other women might feel less alone. As Breed (2014) has demonstrated in her work on theatre, the arts in Rwanda are sometimes seen as a vehicle to communicate personal experiences of trauma and to instruct others on how to behave. Again, this is not unique to Rwanda and has been written about regarding Kinshasa’s evangelising television serials (Pype 2012 – see also Kerr 1989). Whereas Benjah TBB seemed to genuinely care about his friend and the issue of violence against women more broadly, he also saw this as an opportunity for TBB to gain some

money and recognition. The group released their song on ‘International Women’s Day’ and distributed it to various government and non-government organisations. To get onto the radar of institutions that fund ‘humanitarian’ arts is a good marketing technique. Yet, despite their best efforts, the song received little attention from such organisations, barring a very short article published by an entertainment news website (Selemani 2015). Another song that reinforces official government rhetoric, while at the same time being reflective of the artists’ personal feelings, is *We Are One* by TBB (2013 – video in 2015<sup>88</sup>). Again, the song was composed by Benjah TBB, and clearly reinforces the RPF’s policy of ‘national unity’ – for example, the English-language Chorus contains the following lyrics:

Rwanda, Rwanda let’s love one another  
East Africa let’s help each other  
Unite our nation  
Turn it to paradise  
We are one people  
We are one people  
We are one, one, one – we are one, we are one  
We are one nation – one one one (Song 44, Appendix II)<sup>89</sup>.

*We Are One* also draws on religious ideology close to the artists’ hearts. All three members of TBB identified as Christian and had pastors in their families. Benjah and Bob’s sisters were both married to Pentecostal pastors (one in the Netherlands, the other in Kinshasa), and their older brother Ezra Kwizera (the owner of Narrow Road Records – whose name in itself was a biblical reference)

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<sup>88</sup> The video also features Elephant and Sintex from African Callabash studio (see “African Callabash” on map, Appendix VI).

<sup>89</sup> Another example is *Xenophobia* (2008, 2015) by No 1 Suspect Badman, featuring Jah Net (Song 35, Appendix II). No. 1 Suspect Badman is an aspiring Rwandan artist living in Cape Town, South Africa. He visited Narrow Road Studio in Kigali during my period of fieldwork.

was a popular gospel singer. The first four lines of the Bridge are from a well-known gospel song, *God will make a way*:

Lord will make our way – he will make our way  
Where there seems to be no way – no way  
He works in ways we cannot see – in ways, you can't see  
He will make a way for you – Dear God...

As an important marker of identity, language choice within the lyrics was also used strategically. Towards the end of the song, the phrase “love one another” is repeated three times, in Kinyarwanda, Luganda and Swahili respectively: *Ndukundane, twagarane, tupendane*. This arguably symbolises Rwandans being united in their diversity.



**Figures 5.8. and 5.9. (Above and below)** Shooting the music video for *We Are One* at Red Rocks Rwanda, Musanze, September 2015. [My photographs]



When considering the motivations of popular artists and their relationships with the state, we must be careful to avoid sweeping generalisations. As White and others have shown, “the various levels of subtext and self-censorship makes reading popular culture in an African setting a very complex undertaking” (2008: 166). In his ethnography on reggae musicians in the Venda-speaking region of South Africa, Fraser McNeill (2012b) engages critically with the ways in which scholars have analysed the relationship between musicians and politicians (see also Gilbert 2008). McNeill takes issue with narratives that present musicians as “working either to support the system, or, more commonly, as striving to resist against it in literal or symbolic terms” (2012b: 85). Against simplistic dichotomies, he depicts a more nuanced account of modes of musicianship in South Africa. According to McNeill, it was in the spaces *between* musical resistance and

collaboration that he discovered a whole range of musicians' motivations (ibid: 86). Whereas some of the musicians in his research were focused on achieving financial security, others wanted to disengage with politics and saw their role as simply entertainers. A number of musicians were convinced by Christian convictions that those in power had been put there by God, while another was primarily driven by the thrill of developing a 'bad-boy' rebellious image (ibid).

With regards to popular artists in Rwanda, a wide range of motivations was similarly revealed. Many of my informants were simultaneously driven by wanting to please the government (due to them seeking a little patronage, as well as them fearing for their safety), and a genuine desire to spread positive messages (*amatumwa*) to society. This is in line with Nanna Schneidermann's research on artists as cultural brokers in Uganda's election campaigns, in which she claims that:

...popular music (and musicians) cannot be understood as either praise or protest, but as more ambiguous forms of political agency concerned with crafting connections by which artists seek to extend their influence and secure their livelihood (2017: 4).

The music of Teta Diana further reveals ambiguous dynamics between artists and the state. In chapter 2, I discussed how Teta Diana was effectively employed by the Rwandan government, with several of her recent songs clearly supporting the RPF's development vision. A further example of this is *Tanga Agatego* (Show Yourself), an Afrobeats song in which Teta Diana promotes formal education, with lyrics such as the following (translated from Kinyarwanda):

My mother used to tell me, be aware child  
Go to school, grab books, education is valuable  
I would complain, skip it, skip school and play instead



I would spend my school fees  
People who I studied with are graduating and applying with their CVs  
And I am just there, eyes wide open, I am Kigali's failure and unemployed  
Ohhh man! (Song 55, Appendix II)

In contrast to this, Teta Diana recorded a “collabo” with Rwanda’s most popular rapper, Jay Polly (see map – Teta Diana to Jay Polly connection, Appendix VI). The song, *Menya Ibyawe* (Mind your own business) (2015), presents Kigali as a place of hypocrites, jealousy (*ishyari*), hardship and inequality, where a “bright future” (*ejo hazaza heza*) seems to only belong to a privileged few – for example (translated from Kinyarwanda to English):

You don't know the streets, hunger or beat  
You don't know the sorrows of the rich in fences<sup>90</sup>  
The tears of the wealthy but barren...  
...  
Life is expensive, they betray others without knowing  
You just leave me with my life...  
...  
The hustle is real, getting money is not easy  
Day and night ask a biker  
You can't mess with his change  
He has been hustling since the day he got his permit  
Don't ask yourself too much about him, the heart hides a lot...  
...  
Their mercy is not genuine my sister  
We meet all kinds of them  
Enemies, friends and frien-emies  
Some of them disguise themselves  
And laugh at you the minute you fall  
Stay strong and keep moving forwards... (Song 56, Appendix II).

This supports Grant's work on Kinyarwanda-language hip-hop, in which she describes how some rappers “self-consciously styled themselves as ‘truth’ tellers and articulated vastly different narratives from the forward-looking [development vision] constructed by the state” (2014: 218). It also reveals how Kinyarwanda-

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<sup>90</sup> In order to avoid thefts, Kigalians who can afford to live in houses with lockable gates or fences.

language texts are often much more complex, subtle and interesting than the English-language ones. The melancholy, thoughtful, wistful and somewhat haunting lyrics clearly contrast with the aggressive, 'masculine' stance and style presented by US rappers. This is also true of other East African hip-hop traditions, such as those of 'underground' rappers living in Dar es Salaam, as described by David Kerr: "[Rappers create a masculinity] based on notions of struggle rather than strength"; on their ability to endure and triumph against the struggles of everyday life (2015: 81). Essentially, artists in Kigali do not necessarily confine themselves to singular narratives or viewpoints, but rather occupy ambiguous, sometimes even contradictory, positions.

## **Conclusion**

The cultural producers I got to know in Kigali were desperate to find relief from the hardships they were enduring. Through their music, they hoped to be able to earn enough money and recognition "to become an accomplished person" (*kuvamo umuntu*). Part of this was an aspiration to travel internationally, especially to Uganda, to record "collabos" with artists who were more successful than they were. Despite these aspirations, the gap between artists' fantasy and reality was vast. With very few ways to make money, cultural producers understood the importance of personal networks. Whereas in this chapter, I have focused on the role of commercial companies and the state in sponsoring popular artists, in the following chapter I explore more informal connections, and disconnections, that existed between the young people in my research.

## CHAPTER 6 - MAPPING THE MUSIC, PART 2: STUDIOS, CREWS AND (DIS)CONNECTIONS

Doing music in Rwanda is not really easy. First, you need money, not talent! Then you have to meet the right people: the right producer, video directors, promoters, audience and so on.

- Arnold Mugisha 2015, int.

In Kigali's close-knit and fluid cultural scene, everyone works with everyone. Musicians, producers, studio owners, dancers, theatre directors, painters and so on collaborate with one another on various projects that draw on a wide range of genres, forms, styles and languages. Despite being a heterogeneous group, cultural producers are united in the experience of hustling for money and recognition. Facing hardships and lacking in financial capital, they are reliant on social networks to make their projects succeed. In the words of Eric Key: "In Rwanda, it's all about who you know, and you need teams to make things happen". Conversely, jealousy (*ishyari*), rivalry and competition can lead to some people actively blocking networks, despite the stigma of divisions in post-genocide Rwanda (see also Pype 2012: 85-86). That is what this chapter will address: the constant, countless (dis)connections that exist between cultural producers in Kigali and Kampala. It contributes to a broader discussion on the importance of social networks and social capital - the notion of 'wealth in people' - for obtaining employment opportunities and other material and social benefits in rural and urban Africa (Braun 2016; De Boeck and Plissart 2004; De Bruijn and Van Dijk 2012; De Lame 2012; Ellis 2000; Goody 1973; Guyer and Belinga 1995).

In chapter 3, I identified four leading recording studios that were regularly attended by Rwanda's popular artists during the period of my fieldwork. These were Kina Music, Narrow Road Studio, Super Level and Touch Records. Building on this, I examine the role of informal crews for those not signed to a studio. Studios and crews both constitute important social networks, usually based on the bonds and obligations of family or long-standing friendships. Sometimes these networks extend to include international connections, such as in the form of Rwanda-Uganda "collabos". Successful cultural producers have also benefited from the church's support and/or online training materials. Here, my findings reveal a tension between fixedness and extraversion, i.e. studios and crews as fixed clusters are also open to connections and influences outside of themselves. Personal ties and social networks essentially cut across different studios and crews, allowing individuals to work with several people at once. Interestingly, in some cases these connections actually reinforce individual and group identities and a sense of uniqueness. To illustrate the interconnectedness of Kigali's cultural scene, I draw attention to the mind map (Appendix VI). In this case, the lines that link together various individuals represent the connections under discussion.

### **The importance of personal networks: family, friends and the church.**

In Rwanda, power is measured by the number of 'arms' one is able to muster, or more accurately, that a man can muster; ... on his ability to secure loyalty among his kin and to conclude alliances.

- De Lame 2005: 36.

With scarce money to be made in Rwanda's pop music industry, the cultural producers in my research were reliant on their personal networks for

support. It was through an examination of their life-histories that I came to understand the importance of personal ties, especially with family, friends and the church. In the Rwandan context of “quiet insecurity” (Grant 2015b) and prevailing mistrust and suspicion (Ingelaere 2014), it is unsurprising that the most significant ties were with family members and long-standing friends. In Rwanda, kinship relations carry strong obligations to render assistance, and demands from older family members cannot easily be refused. This is in spite of “elders [becoming] less capable of fulfilling their reciprocal obligations to [those less senior than them]” (Pontalti 2018: 12). Due to the pernicious effects of the civil war and genocide, children of widowed mothers, for example, are now burdened with the responsibility of providing housing and other basic needs for the remaining parent, who previously may have had money but “lost everything” in 1994. In addition to dealing with increasing rent prices - and for many the looming threat of eviction - a few artists and producers had children outside of marriage and were struggling to pay for their school fees along with those of their younger siblings. In this way, the lives of Kigali’s cultural producers were no different to those of other young people trying to survive in the city, i.e. they were reliant on, and relied upon by, those in their personal networks.

When highlighting the importance of personal ties in this chapter, I draw on James Clyde Mitchell’s (1969, 1974) definition of personal networks, described by MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga as “a set of linkages which exist simultaneously on the basis of specific interests and persist beyond the duration of a particular transaction” (2000: 12). In other words, the aim of network

exchange is to “create indebtedness and reliance over a long period [of time]” (ibid: 13).

Another example of family responsibility (*inshingano z’umuryango*<sup>91</sup>) was outlined in chapter 4, when discussing how some studio owners recruited their younger siblings as managers. As well as being perceived as trustworthy, younger siblings were relatively easy to control, raising their appeal as informal employees. In exchange for their loyalty, they were given the opportunity to work in a studio alongside ‘cool’ and fashionable stars and a chance to achieve financial and social gain. Here, it is vital to recognise that “when discussing the concept of connections, the inherent power relations that all connections represent is ever present” (De Bruijn and Van Dijk 2012: 6). Indeed, a conversation with Benjah TBB, the youngest brother of studio owner Ezra Kwizera, revealed how such family dynamics can lead to feelings of tension and a desire to be free:

I got the opportunity to do music coz of Ezra. But then again it started becoming tension. There’s no steady salary from working in the studio. It’s not really fun working for family. You can’t give up or quit, which has kept me close to Narrow Road. I can’t go and start working with other people and give up on my family’s dream. So, I have to keep running [i.e. working], even if I’m getting paid or not.

Benjah TBB’s comment suggests that *inshingano z’umuryango* has both benefited him – by giving him unlimited access to Narrow Road Studio where he learnt audio production and formed the music group TBB – and held him back –

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<sup>91</sup> *Umuryango* not only means “family” but is also used to refer to a given association, community, company or political party (Purdeková 2011: 481). When the RPF abolished ethnicity after the genocide, they started to refer to themselves as one big family: *Umuryango RPF-Inkotanyi* (Ingelaere 2010: 53). In this case, the term *inshingano z’umuryango* refers to the RPF’s political responsibilities and commitments.

by gluing him to the studio, thus preventing him from exploring other routes to success.

Most of the artists and producers in my research became involved with music in church – for example, a Ugandan singer told me the following:

My father was a pastor and I had been doing music in church, singing in gospel music, training the dancers, playing the drums. I do play piano. So most of the time I had been in church. That's where I had the chance to learn few things about music (Benja Steel 2015, int.).

In addition to learning about music in church, online training materials have provided a significant advantage to aspiring audio and video producers with access to the internet. In present-day Rwanda, this new way of learning skills is mostly associated with urban youth. Electronic devices for accessing the internet, such as computers and smart phones, remain largely inaccessible for those in rural areas due to connectivity and affordability (Fisher et al. 2015 – see also De Lame 2012: 8-9). Language and education barriers also exist: internationally produced training resources require the ability to read English or French, which most inhabitants of rural areas are unable to do (ibid). Finally, over the course of my fieldwork, it became clear that the most successful artists, producers and studio owners were those who had managed to establish international connections.

With this background in mind, I want to examine more closely the narratives of five of my informants: two audio producers, two video producers and the owner of Kina Music. Together, these examples demonstrate how support from a combination of family, friends and the church, as well as access to online

training resources, is what helped Kigali's leading audio and video producers to launch their music careers.

#### PIANO (REAL NAME SHEJA OLIVIER)

Piano was born in Rwanda's eastern province and moved to Kigali in 2001, where he would eventually become one of Rwanda's 'top' audio producers. I was initially introduced to Piano through Pacento, after recognising his jingle ("It's a p-p-p-p-piano production!") on several hit songs being played on the radio. At Super Level – where Piano was working at the time – I asked the 24-year-old to tell me how he became interested in making music. His story encapsulates the importance of personal ties and social networks. It also highlights the passion and determination of Rwanda's "new generation" of cultural producers, who faced numerous obstacles when building their music industry from scratch (see chapter 3):

I started being involved in the music industry in 2005. But before, like in 1999, my Dad bought me a piano just for playing around. But I was not expecting that one day I would be called Piano as I am now! I started as a singer in school choir. That's when they put me where I have to learn about piano. The one who was playing was in Senior 6. He was about to leave, so they were hoping I would be the one to play. So, after finishing school, I was interested in production. I knew piano, vocals, a bit about guitar. But my question was about how to make a CD. I went to the internet searching how. So, one day I had a friend, he had just a computer, but having software for making beats. Then I moved with my friend to a studio. He knew that I could play piano, and in that beats-making software there is piano. He said, 'You know about playing piano, you come and play.' So, I went. He showed me how. You just move a mouse for playing it. So that's how I started to learn. And then people started calling me Piano, coz every day I was moving with the piano to play in church. The piano was belonging to the church, but they let me use it... So, I started like that, making beats. It was hard coz even the guy showing me, he didn't know! But I had that passion of loving production. Most of the time I used to sleep in the studio, just making a beat all night. And I used to do more research on internet. I wrote in



Google, 'How can I mix a lead vocal?' And everything comes. So, I did that for long time, then I got chance to produce for artists, *known* artists. And that's when *my* name started to be known. That was in 2010 (Piano 2015, int.).



**Figure 6.1.** Audio producer Piano at Super Level studio, Kigali, September 2015. [My photograph]

#### PACENTO (REAL NAME AKIMANZI PATIENCE)

During numerous conversations and interviews with audio producer Pacento, he shared with me similar memories – for example:

I started singing in Sunday school for kids. And then after there was some guy he came in the church and said, 'We have equipment, but we don't have anyone to play that equipment.' And he said, 'I can take one month to teach people.' He picked me and one other guy, and he teach us keyboards. After three weeks, we have to continue to learn for

ourselves, just listening what sounds good. Learning the chords just like that (Pacento 2015, int.).

According to Pacento, it was his musical abilities that granted him a scholarship to attend secondary school in Nyanza. He would have otherwise been unable to afford to continue his education beyond primary level. At boarding school, Pacento developed a strong and lasting friendship with Naason, who later became a popular artist (see map – Pacento to Naason connection, Appendix VI). Together, the two friends managed to teach themselves basic skills in audio production:

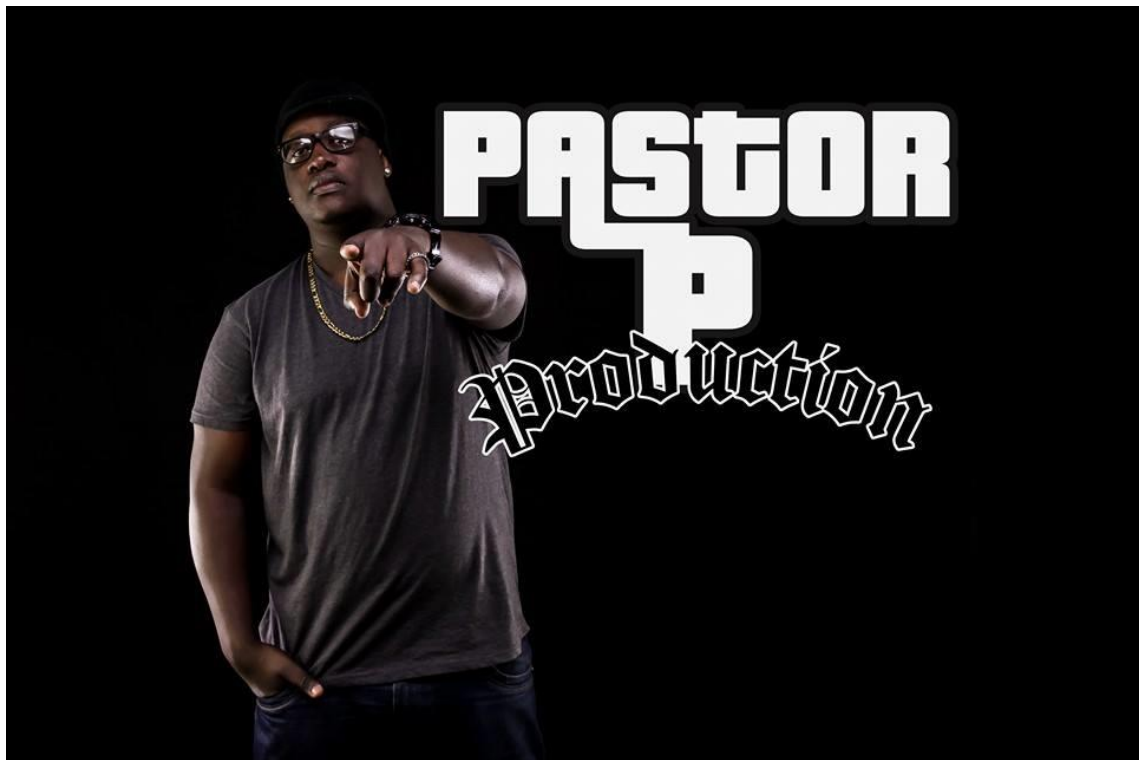
Naason have talent about production. We start to work together, look some software just for fun. We do some music in laptop. Then after to finish secondary school, we move to Kigali (ibid).

In Rwanda's capital city, Pacento was initially sponsored as an artist by his former boss Hassan, "an Arab nightclub owner who [he] met in Butare" (ibid). During that time, he started to spend his days and nights hanging out at Narrow Road Studio, where he discreetly taught himself music production by watching others work:

First of all, I come to Narrow Road as artist. I pay to do those songs. But I don't push Pastor P [real name Bugingo Ndanga] to finish that song coz I want to come back. Then after I meet with Piano. In those days, Piano and Pastor P was working as audio producer at Narrow Road. And I ask Bob [from TBB], 'Can I finish my song?' So Piano find that data. I ask Piano to finish the song but he refuse. I ask Bob, 'Can I finish?' Coz by that time I have some skills in production... I spent much time in the studio, just looking, no talking, seeing what I can do. So, I spent two hours. I finish my song. Then after I start new song without telling Bob (ibid).

In 2012, Rwanda's "number one" audio producer Pastor P was invited by his friend to produce an album for Lokua Kanza (a singer from the DRC), in France. While Pastor P was away, Pacento seized his opportunity to sit in the

producer's chair. He started to produce songs for artists such as TBB and his reputation grew. In 2015, Pacento established himself as one of the country's 'top' audio producers, especially in the genre of Afrobeats. This was largely due to him producing a hit song, *Till I Die* (2012), for Rwanda's most popular group the Urban Boys, featuring Riderman (Song 67, Appendix II). Pacento's narrative illuminates the importance of personal ties and reinforces my point that cultural producers in Kigali are best understood in relation to one another.



**Figure. 6.2.** Pastor P's official logo. [Courtesy of Pastor P]

ARNOLD MUGISHA

When examining the life-histories of Kigali's video producers, a similar picture was revealed – for example:

In 2005, I was in an internet café. I met someone called Windows Movie Maker [laughing]! It's an application that came with Windows XP. Unfortunately, it's no longer in the Windows. I was like, 'Hell no! I create this? It means I can do anything!' From that day, I started to teach myself many things... and I asked others on the forums. And I started to download tutorials and training documents. Then, in 2007 when I was waiting for my school results, I produced my first music video. It wasn't so professional. It was for my friends without any budget, any script, anything. Then I started to make videos for those new generation musicians. That's when they became the video generation (Arnold Mugisha 2015, int.).

Like Pacento, Arnold Mugisha is a returnee from Burundi (*Umujepe*) and grew up with few resources for participating in music or video production. Despite this, Arnold told me that he was supported by his family who bought him his first video camera for the equivalent of £800. Arnold described himself as “self-taught”, although he recently completed a four-month internship at Fenon Records in Kampala. Today, Arnold is the CEO and Founder of ‘Arnold Films’ and works as a consultant at Igihe.TV (an entertainment and news channel), InkStain (a creative multi-media company) and Bralirwa. I initially met Arnold by chance through a rapper when the car we were travelling in broke down, resulting in a group of us camping by a lake for two nights while we waited for it to get fixed! We quickly became good friends, and his vast knowledge of Rwanda's music industry – as well as his efforts to explain things in detail – have been invaluable to the research process. In this way, I have also relied on personal networks to conduct my work effectively.



**Figure. 6.3.** Working with Arnold Mugisha at Bralirwa, March 2016.  
[Courtesy of Arnold Mugisha]



**Figure. 6.4.** Camping at Lake Muhazi, March 2015. [My photograph]



## GILBERT (THE BENJAMINS) (REAL NAME KWISANGA GILBERT BENJAMIN)

Gilbert (The Benjamins) is one of Rwanda's most renowned music video producers. Although currently signed by Touch Records, who take 50% of his earnings in exchange for him using their equipment and resources, he has worked with artists from all of Kigali's well-known studios. When conducting my research, Gilbert always seemed to be busy shooting or editing new footage. In August 2015, I finally met him at a video shoot in Nyamirambo. The video was for an Afrobeats song, *Generation Moto Moto*, by Sat-B of Burundi featuring Nizzo from the Urban Boys<sup>92</sup>. (See map – Sat-B to Nizzo, Pacento and Gilbert connection, Appendix VI). The audio was produced by Pacento, who invited me to join them on 'set'. The shooting of a pop music video in the streets of Nyamirambo generated much excitement among school children, street traders, 'moto' (motorbike taxi) drivers, residents and anyone passing by. Indeed, a large crowd of fascinated observers gathered around the team, becoming 'extras' in the music video themselves. My role was to assist Hubert, the manager of Touch Records. He asked me to photograph the action as part of their 'behind the scenes' promotional film. This was to be the first of numerous days spent together discussing the music industry.

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<sup>92</sup> The music video under discussion is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uC6CyMRygU>



**Figures 6.5. and 6.6. (Above and below) Video shoot scenes in Nyamirambo, August 2015. [My photographs]**







**Figures 6.7. and 6.8. (Above and below)** Video shoot scenes in Nyamirambo (brightened with filters), August 2015. [Courtesy of Hubert]





After spending time with Gilbert and Hubert, I was able to arrange an interview with them both at a Congolese bar called Casket<sup>93</sup>. To facilitate a focused and thorough discussion I invited them to meet me outside of the studio, away from work distractions. Yet, due to Gilbert's busy and unpredictable work patterns, it took a couple of weeks for him to confirm a date and time. Our daily conversations leading up to the interview went something like this:

**Ceri:** Gilbert! How are you?

**Gilbert:** Yes, I'm good. And you?

**Ceri:** I'm also good. Are you still happy to meet for the interview today?

**Gilbert:** Yes, that's fine.

**Ceri:** That's great. So, what about this morning?

**Gilbert:** [Gives a reason why he is unavailable – for example, he is sleeping, eating, has a headache, or is visiting his mother.]

**Ceri:** OK, I understand. What about this afternoon?

**Gilbert:** Yes, maybe it's possible.

**Ceri:** OK. I'll call you after 12 to see. [When calling, I discover that Gilbert has either been asked to work, his phone battery has died, or the network is down.]

And so it went on, until eventually my efforts paid off:

**Ceri:** You're free, but only now and for two hours? OK, where are you? I'm coming. Please don't move! [While running to find a motorbike taxi...]

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<sup>93</sup> Casket is known locally in Nyamirambo by its previous name Makumba.

During his interview, Gilbert (who spent his early years in Goma, DRC) told me that it was his older brother who introduced him to video production:

For me, when I was young, I was with my brother. It was an advantage. We had some small cameras. So, I started learning video stuff when I was young. I learned many things from my brother. Because he studied production in the Netherlands. Then when he moved to Tanzania, he showed me how to learn more from Lynda. It's a big website to teach video production (Gilbert [The Benjamins] 2015, int.).

Again, this demonstrates the importance of family ties and access to online training materials for aspiring video producers. According to Gilbert, he joined his brother in Dar es Salaam for several months, where he began a course in videography. However, like so many of my informants, Gilbert was forced to drop out of university and return to Kigali due to financial problems. In the future, he hopes to travel abroad and gain a formal qualification in media.



**Figure. 6.9.** Gilbert (The Benjamins) at a video shoot in Nyamirambo, August 2015. [My photograph]

## CLÉMENT ISHIMWE

Clément Ishimwe is a “big person” (*umuntu ukomeye*) in Kigali’s cultural scene. By “big person”, I mean to indicate that he has a dominant (or powerful) position in the pop music industry: he is a leading audio producer and the owner of Kina Music, Rwanda’s most successful recording studio. He regularly organises and invests in music concerts (*ibitaramo*) and is highly respected and influential. In 2016, Clément Ishimwe married Knowless Butera, Rwanda’s most popular female singer. Remarkably, the studio owner was only 28 years old at the time of my fieldwork. When approaching the subject of Kigali’s young bosses, he laughed and said the following:

Sometimes we call someone for business meeting. A very old man comes. We meet and they say, ‘We are disappointed! We thought it was an old guy, but it’s just you!’ (Clément Ishimwe 2015, int.)

Clément Ishimwe’s comment suggests that Rwandans themselves similarly find the relatively young age of Kigali’s music leaders surprising.



**Figure 6.10.** The opening image of a Kinyarwanda-language article that compares Knowless Butera and Clément Ishimwe (left) to Beyoncé Knowles and Jay-Z (right), August 2016 (Mpirwa 2016).

Rwanda’s most successful cultural producers have all benefited from establishing international connections – for instance, through friendships and romantic relationships with *abazungu* (white people). In Clément Ishimwe’s case, he was sponsored by an American friend to study audio production in Costa Rica. This was in 2007–2008, after he had learnt to play the piano in church. According to Clément Ishimwe, it was this opportunity to study abroad that enabled him to set up his own music studio and record label in 2009. By the time of my research, most of Rwanda’s most popular stars were signed under Kina Music, namely Christopher, Dream Boys, Knowless Butera and Tom Close (see “Kina Music” on map, Appendix VI). During a different conversation, Pacento told me that he

survived for an entire year on the money that he earned when producing music for his British friend:

Andy from the British Council did a whole album with me, just for fun. I worked with him for one year. We are friends, we were like chilling. He paid me \$300 for one song! (Pacento 2015, int.)

Even if this was an exaggeration, Pacento's comment explains his preference for working with people from overseas. As well as this, a few artists were in romantic relationships with foreign women – for example, Humble-G from the Urban Boys recently married and fathered a child with his white, American girlfriend (Rutayishire 2018a).

The above examples show that when seeking to establish themselves in Rwanda's music industry, a combination of supportive networks and access to online training materials has given some cultural producers a clear advantage over others. In the following sections, I discuss specific benefits of studio membership and the role of informal crews as alternative networks of exchange. Bearing in mind the fluidity of social bonds, I also outline circumstances in which these networks have broken down.

### **Studios, crews and the fluidity of networks**

Most of my informants were in agreement that being signed under a music studio is a crucial step on the road to success for aspiring stars and producers. It is certainly a means of accruing respect and admiration from fans and 'underground' artists. During my fieldwork, I observed how studio membership instilled in cultural producers a sense of confidence, pride, belonging, legitimacy and mutual support. Studios were valued as social spaces, providing a place

where young men could “kill time” playing cards, talking about women and making plans for the future (see also Masquelier 2013). These predominantly male spaces also provided a location where artists could act out their fantasies of stardom: for those willing to buy into the fantasy, studio membership validated their status as stars. Here, we are reminded of Weiss’s work on young male barbers in Tanzania (2009: 14 – see chapter 5). In a way reminiscent of the barbershops described by Weiss, music studios in Kigali and Kampala can be understood as places that “foster exactly the sort of fantasy that suffuse cultural practices across both Tanzania and much of the world” (ibid).



**Figure. 6.11.** “Killing time” at Monster Studio, Kampala, June 2015. [My photograph]



Practical advantages of studio membership include cheaper access to recording technologies and more chance to perform. During my fieldwork, visiting musicians were expected to pay about 50,000 Rwandan francs (roughly £50) per song, while signed artists were able to record their music free-of-charge. Furthermore, studio members were given more time in the recording room, along with help to promote their music (e.g. some studio owners provided “pay-offs” for radio and TV presenters - see chapter 3). Being signed under a studio was also a favourable option for audio and video producers: while ‘in-house’ producers did not receive a regular salary but worked on commission, they were at least guaranteed regular work and access to equipment. When discussing the benefits of studio membership with the owner of Narrow Road Studio, he made the following comment:

At Narrow Road, we try to organise our own events for all our artists. We give the artists free production and then give them opportunity to perform for a crowd. There’s a logo for the studio. They have that label Narrow Road Empire. And we try to record many “collabos” amongst ourselves.

At events such as these, studio owners and other financial investors were entitled to receive a percentage of the total profits made. However, concerts (*ibitaramo*) organised by studios in Kigali were not always profitable, as I will discuss.

In July 2015, Pacento decided to organise an event for the members of Narrow Road Empire. With the studio owner in Canada failing to send the agreed remittances as a contribution to the studio’s activities, Pacento decided to invest his small amount of savings into the concert. During that time in Kigali, it was becoming increasingly difficult to hire out a music venue (see chapter 1 for a discussion on Kigali’s noise pollution regulations). Cultural producers were

therefore searching for alternative venues outside of the city. In this instance, the “Bash Party” was to take place in Nyamata, a town in southeastern Rwanda less than an hour’s drive from the capital. The idea was that Pacento would provide money for transport, posters and tickets and share any profits made with the owner of the bar. Drinks and food would also be provided for the artists. However, the young residents of Nyamata were either unable or unwilling to pay the entrance fee of only 1,000 Rwandan francs (about £1), mainly because most of them had not heard of the artists due to perform. As I stood on the gate attempting to sell tickets, the recurrent power outages inside the bar did nothing to help our sales. Although the show went ahead and was enjoyed by some, overall it was described as a “flop”: Pacento lost his money, a fight broke out in the street, and the artists did not even receive a complimentary drink. The mood among the group travelling home to Kigali was sullen, to say the least. Again, this reveals a significant gap between what cultural producers aspire to and the actuality of their lives.





**Figures 6.12. and 6.13. (Above and below)** Performing for a tiny crowd at the “Nyamata Bash Party”, Rwanda, July 2015. [My photographs]



## CREWS

Most people organise shows out of their own pocket. To invite another artist to support you, you need to have a mutual relationship. You need a friendship. You need them to like you, to put you in their zone. You become crew. You can give a little out of respect, but it's a mutual relationship thing. You always have to accommodate the guy of course. Transport, food and drink is the first thing. Some do it for free, but they know they're building something.

- Aidan Two 4Real 2015, int.

Networks of exchange and reciprocity do not only occur in formal studio set-ups. Indeed, much of my time in Kigali was spent with groups of artists, producers and promoters (e.g. radio presenters and DJs) who were not affiliated to a given studio but described themselves as a "crew" (see also Asaasira 2012: 163). In the words of one such artist: "It's like a family that help and promote each other. It's a crew. We help each other, but we do our own stuff" (Aidan Two4Real 2015, int.). As Aidan's comment implies, the cultural producers I spoke to were reluctant to be solely associated with one crew. They wanted others to see them as being open to working with anyone. During an interview with Jody Phibi, a more explicit example of this occurred. When suggesting that Jody Phibi belongs to a crew (something that she had previously talked about openly), the singer became defensive:

We have these connections because we are *friends*. I haven't said that we're a crew coz I don't wanna create boundaries and make other people in the media feel unwelcome. Unless I'm in a record label, I'm an independent artist. But, as friends we do help each other. We organise events and invite each other to perform (Jody Phibi 2016, int.).

Jody Phibi's response is significant in revealing that to belong to a crew is to be viewed to be unavailable to work with others. Thus, a tension was revealed

between fixedness and extraversion, i.e. crews as fixed clusters must also be open to connections outside of themselves.

The crew that Jody Phibi reluctantly talked about included the following members: Aidan and DJ Pius from the music duo Two4Real, the music duo Charley and Nina, the multi-talented radio presenters Arthur Nkusi and Uncle Austin (see chapter 3), and Jody Phibi herself. Together, these cultural producers are marked on the map as the “Abasajya crew” (Appendix VI). This is because the crew members all grew up in Uganda - a situation that arguably brought them together. Aidan and Pius in particular were close family friends: following the 1959 massacres, both of their grandparents settled in Mbarara, a town in southwestern Uganda where many Tutsis fled (see chapter 2). In the words of Aidan: “DJ Pius and I are so close. Besides family ties, we also went to the same school” (Aidan Two4Real 2015, int.). Although the crew members would never admit it (on the basis of “divisionism”), their shared experience of being *Abasajya* likely provided them with a basis for understanding, trust and sympathy. Such dynamics of mutual trust and understanding were also important to other crews active at the time of my research. The “hip-hop crew”, for example, consisted of mostly *Abasope* artists, including Jay Polly, Bull Dog and Diplomat (see map, Appendix VI). Interestingly, this crew seemed to be far less open to collaborating with artists from other countries. Instead, the popular rappers targeted local audiences and composed lyrics almost exclusively in Kinyarwanda.

## THE FLUIDITY OF PERSONAL NETWORKS

As stated above, most of the cultural producers I got to know in Kigali were prepared to work with anyone, including with individuals from outside of their studio or crew. This was partly due to Rwanda's music industry becoming increasingly specialised. It was not uncommon for artists to travel to different studios to work with particular producers considered "the best" in a genre or style. The Dream Boys, for example, recorded several Afrobeats songs with Junior at Touch Records, while being signed under Kina Music. Likewise, the owner of Kina Music and audio producer Clément Ishimwe produced R&B songs for all of Rwanda's most popular artists, including Jay Polly from Touch Records and Bruce Melody from Super Level. Likewise, TBB collaborated with numerous artists from outside of their studio (e.g. Jay Polly, Jody Phibi and Riderman), and made deals to work with video producers not signed under Narrow Road Records – for example, with Gilbert (The Benjamins) and Arnold Mugisha, the latter of whom refused to align himself with any studio at all (see map, Appendix VI, for above examples):

For me the studio labels was a big separation. You started to hear people saying, 'I can't do this, I can't work with them, I'm with this label.' I was like, 'Hell no!' These people don't know how we struggled back in 2005. Coz we used to fight against those other countries, like Uganda. Now if you create separation locally, inside the country, you're going to destroy our industry. That's why I stopped producing videos for artists (Arnold Mugisha 2015, int.).

Certainly, Arnold Mugisha's observations were reflective of a reality in which divisions based on competition, jealousy (*ishyari*) and resentment existed between different studios and crews. Nonetheless, in Kigali's small, under-funded music industry, artists and producers had little choice but to sometimes work with

their rivals. On several occasions, I observed the Urban Boys recording at Narrow Road Studio, despite them being the owners of Super Level (see map – Urban Boys to Pastor P connection, Appendix VI). According to Humble-G (from the Urban Boys), the group was willing to record at a competing studio if it meant working with Pastor P, Rwanda’s “number one” audio producer. They also wanted access to the studio’s high-quality recording equipment, which had been imported from Vancouver by the studio owner and his Canadian wife. Importantly, networks such as these represented more fluid, temporary, superficial relationships, especially when compared to the bonds that were forged between members of a given studio or crew.

As stated in chapter 4, personal networks are not necessarily confined within national borders (Kiwan and Meinhof 2011), and many of my informants had links to cultural producers in Kampala. To demonstrate some of the ways in which these networks were formed and maintained, I return to the narrative of DJ Pius. Whereas this example is not representative of the experiences of all my informants, it does shed light on the ways in which cultural producers were doing business. Conversations and interviews with Pius revealed that it was his work as a DJ that enabled him to build an extensive network of support, which included artists, producers and DJs who were more successful than him (e.g. DJ Shiru of Uganda). Put simply: “Most of them are my friends coz I am a DJ and I promote their music” (DJ Pius 2015, int.). Having grown up in Uganda, Pius was also in a favourable position to establish connections with artists in Kampala. When forming the music duo Two4Real, the singer benefited from his long-standing friendship with Island Toniks, a well-known Ugandan artist. Together, Two4Real

and Island Toniks recorded several transnational “collabos”, including an all-stars song, *Private Party* (2013), featuring Kid Gaju of Rwanda, Ray Signature of Uganda and Rwanda’s most popular music group, the Urban Boys. When discussing this with Pius, he said the following:

Island Toniks is my friend. We even went to the same school. So, he came to Rwanda and came with Ray Signature. So, we did a song together. So that song became a big song. It was playing in Rwanda *and* Uganda. That’s how I got to know Ray (DJ Pius 2015, int.).

Following the success of *Private Party*, Two4Real recorded another “collabo” with Ray Signature (Song 61, Appendix II). The song also features Roberto of Zambia, an artist known across Africa for his hit song *Amarula* (2015). In this instance, Pius was introduced to Roberto through his crew member Arthur Nkusi. Following his participation in ‘Big Brother Africa’, Arthur Nkusi was sponsored by MTN Rwanda to organise a comedy night in Kigali, to which he successfully invited a number of African celebrities, including Roberto (Tumwebaze 2015a). By publicly aligning himself with popular stars from within and outside of Rwanda, Pius gained prestige for his own name and brand, which afforded him more opportunity to travel, perform and further extend his network.

In 2016, Pius was granted his biggest opportunity to date, when he secured a deal to record a “collabo” with Chameleone of Uganda. For Chameleone, the project would be financially rewarding, while for Pius this was an opportunity for him to be associated with an African superstar, which would raise his status. The song is called *Agatako*, a Kinyarwanda word meaning “a special souvenir and decoration given to Lovers as a symbol to remind them of keeping their Love eternally. You can dedicate it to Your love” (Chameleone on

YouTube, 2016<sup>94</sup>). In the music video, Pius and Chameleone both play up to emblematic symbols of 'Rwandanness'. They sing lyrics in Kinyarwanda and dance *imbyino nyarwanda* (Rwandan dance). In doing so, Pius conforms to the internal narrative about what it means to be a good Rwandan, while simultaneously reinforcing an outward-facing narrative in which Rwanda is unique and interesting. While it is inherent in the idea of Rwandan pop music that one must travel internationally, artists present themselves as resolutely Rwandan, with few exceptions (e.g. see chapter 3 for the musical trajectory of Spax, a self-proclaimed "East African shutter"). Being extraverted to the outside can serve to reinforce an individual's sense of being Rwandan. This speaks to James Clifford's work on "travelling cultures", in which he asks what would happen if we defined a culture through its farthest reaches rather than only by its manifestations at home (1997: 25). In this case, and in light of the increased rate of global cultural exchange since Clifford was writing and the virtual 'travel' enabled by digital platforms, what if we understood representations of Rwandan identity through its diaspora and its 'migrants' – that is, people who 'travel' physically and digitally - as well as through what Rwandans do at home, or for local audiences. Pius clearly understood that his "collabo" with Chameleone would be viewed by audiences across Africa and beyond, and this inevitably informed his decisions regarding language and aesthetics.

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<sup>94</sup> *Agatako* (2016) by DJ Pius and Chameleone is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Tmt1Ngy7-M>



**Figures 6.14. and 6.15. (Above and below)** Screenshots of Chameleone dancing *imbyino nyarwanda* in his music video with DJ Pius, *Agatako* (2016).



In contrast, it is less clear why Chameleone decided to embody this 'Rwandaness' in the video. Perhaps the internationally popular superstar wanted to perform the cosmopolitanism of knowing things that are from outside (Strong



and Ossei-Owusu 2014). Certainly, he was keen to reconnect with his Rwandan fans by demonstrating his respect for and knowledge of Rwandan culture. Of course, it is possible that Chameleone was simply having fun experimenting with different styles and forms. Here, I want to make the point that while *Agatako* is clearly oriented towards a version of Rwandan culture, the two artists, nonetheless, sing in different styles. While Pius's voice is sweet and soft - a style that is typical of Rwandan singers - Chameleone's vocals are characteristically gritty and rough. This was further explained to me during a conversation with Uganda's R&B singer Ray Signature:

One thing I've seen about Rwandan music is their voices are so soft. Their voices are so much of R&B and soft music. And Uganda is dominated by Jamaican music. They love dancehall. To me, I'm not a fan of dancehall so I love their music here in Rwanda. I think I prefer Rwandan music.

Importantly, this feeds into broader, popular ideas about the differences between Rwanda and Uganda, i.e. Rwanda as place of dignity, peace, social order, cleanliness, security, modesty, and obedience, and Uganda as a place of noise, chaos, freedom, opportunity, and raucous, crazy parties.

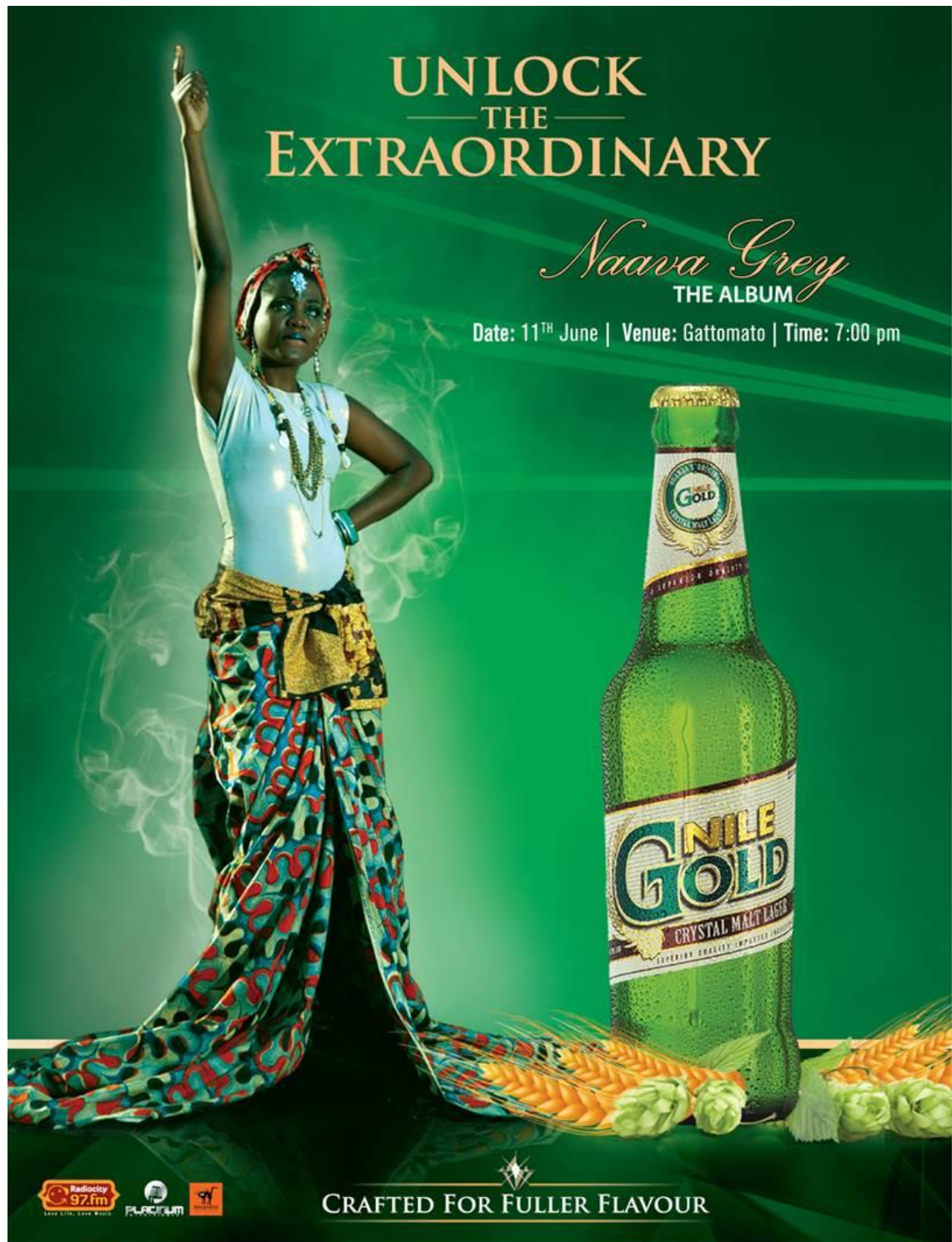
Pius's ability to bring Ugandans to Rwanda further increased his popularity among cultural producers in Kigali. This was demonstrated in August 2015, when Two4Real members Pius and Aidan organised their album launch. During the lead up to the event, it quickly became apparent that Pius was able to draw on support from an unusually large number of people, including the video producer Ma River - to whom Two4Real had always been loyal - and Aidan's brother TrackSlayer, a producer at Touch Records. The album launch included artists in Two4Real's crew such as Jody Phibi, while also showcasing performances by

some of the country's biggest stars, namely Bruce Melody, King James and Teta Diana (see map for above examples, Appendix VI). The event was well attended by the artists' families, friends and fans – some of whom wore Two4Real t-shirts and purchased CDs on the door. Later, I would learn that this was a chance for the music duo to have their moment to shine before splitting up in the following year. Since Pius and Aidan were both reluctant to discuss issues of money with me, it was impossible to know for sure whether they had made a profit. However, according to their mood in the days following the album launch – as well as the show's high attendance and smooth running of events – it seemed to have been one of the rare successes that I witnessed in Kigali.



**Figure 6.16.** Bruce Melody (wearing red) performing at Two4Real's album launch at Kaizen Club, Remera, August 2015. [My photograph]

In addition to the large number of supporting artists, what made Two4Real's album launch different to others that I attended was the fact that the music was live, rather than playback; when singers or rappers lip-sync along to recorded tracks. Before the stars entered the stage, the audience was treated to an hour-long performance by the Neptunez band, who went on to play the backing music for the other artists. This idea was inspired by Pius's involvement in Naava Grey's album launch, a live music event that had taken place two months earlier in Kampala. Pius was invited to perform at Naava Grey's concert by Jody Phibi, who was also signed under Platnum Entertainment Uganda, the organisers of the show. Although Pius was not paid for his efforts, he agreed to join his friend on stage as Naava Grey's supporting act. During the lead up to the event, I accompanied Pius and Jody Phibi to several rehearsals and sound checks. They were clearly impressed by the professionalism of the event, and especially by the presence of so many instruments. This provoked lively discussion among the group about the dominance of playback performances in Kigali - an issue that was often on the minds of my informants and seen as a source of embarrassment. (See Grant 2017 for an analysis of the live versus playback debate that recently took place in Kigali.) Again, this highlights the fact that Kigali's cultural producers closely observe and follow the activities of their equivalents in Kampala.



**18+** FOR PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF 18 ONLY.  
[www.talkingalcohol.com](http://www.talkingalcohol.com)

**Figure 6.17.** Poster for Naava Grey's album launch at Gattomato Bar and Restaurant, Kampala, June 2015. [Courtesy of Naava Grey]

Finally, Pius and Jody Phibi's performance was useful in revealing how some artists exaggerate their 'Rwandanness' when performing outside of the country. Pius made a point of greeting the audience in Kinyarwanda, as if this was his first time in Kampala (his childhood home). He drew attention to the fact that he and Jody Phibi were "obviously Rwandan", Pius being tall and thin and Jody Phibi being beautiful. This supports my earlier point that by going to neighbouring Uganda, artists were able to reinforce their sense of being Rwandan. In this way, ideas about Rwandan identity can be formed and strengthened by going outside of the country. Finally, I will consider some of the circumstances in which networks have broken down.

### **The breaking down of personal networks**

I will never work with [them again]! Why? The boss called [...]! Everyone that I met there was confused if it was a training centre or somewhere to go and put your idea and they steal it! There's an animation. I'm not going to say I made it coz they paid me to make it. Then they took it there to [him]. He sent it to a festival and didn't say who made it. He called himself the one who made it. Tsk!  
[Sneering]

- Anonymous 2015.

The fact that cultural producers are reliant on personal networks does not make groupings or alliances invulnerable to change. One reason cited for leaving a studio or radio station is when artists, producers or presenters are offered a better deal. The audio producer Piano, for example, started his career at Narrow Road Studio (NRS):

My first proper contract was at Narrow Road. That was in 2011. I started producing for TBB. At that time, I had Tino from TBB. He was also a presenter for a 'hot' radio station that came at that time, called KFM. So, I

started producing for many artists and Tino used radio to promote my music. That was my chance to start (Piano 2015, int.).

When offered a higher percentage, Piano moved to Bridge Records and then to Super Level (see map for a visual representation of Piano's movements, Appendix VI):

The management at Super Level came... I told them, 'Everything is business.' I said, 'If you want me to come, I will come, but what is the difference?' Because by that time my name was known. I had produced many hits for many known artists. So, they gave me another contract that is higher than Bridge. I signed a contract that is two years... (ibid).

Piano's ultimate dream was to manage his own recording studio – an idea that coincides with Pype's research on young Pentecostal actors in Kinshasa:

[The] urban models of big men and leadership in voluntary associations correspond to a large extent to cultural aspirations of becoming an elder, according to which only elders can acquire full personhood (Pype 2012: 96).

In some cases, social bonds continue to hold weight after an official contract expires. In 2015, Pacento was offered a higher percentage to produce music at CB Records. He accepted this position, but only on the condition that he could still work at NRS during his spare time. As CB Records mostly deals with gospel singers, and is therefore not in direct competition with NRS, Pacento's terms were accepted. His school friend Naason was signed under CB Records and soon became an unofficial member of the Narrow Road Empire, accompanying Pacento to numerous events organised by NRS (see map to visually trace Pacento's connections, Appendix VI).

Similarly, after working at Flash FM for six years, Tino TBB went to work for KFM:

So, what made me leave Flash to work for KFM is KFM is more professional radio. We are talking about National Media Group. These are guys who have been in business for past 51 years. They have business in Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, apparently Burundi and South Sudan very soon. Every radio DJ, every radio presenter, prays for the opportunity to work for National Media Group. Every time they are success! So, what helped me get there? My friend Fiona Mbabazi. She also worked for Flash FM in those days. She called me to tell me about that opportunity. That was the first interview I ever did. And it was my first professional job: contract, insurance, training, everything. Coz Flash didn't have that. So, I was grown up. And they loved me! (Tino TBB 2015, int.)

Returning to Kina Music, King James left the studio in 2012 to work with his good friend Pastor P. In another case, Tonic was “kicked out” of Touch Records when she failed to become a star. Her friendship with Pacento took the underground artist to NRS instead (see Tonic on map, Appendix VI).

In more extreme cases, issues of jealousy (*ishyari*) and resentment were at play. Christopher allegedly split from Kina Music as a result of Clément Ishimwe's marriage to Knowless Butera:

Word has it that Christopher felt side-lined when Ishimwe started a relationship with Knowless. By the time the relationship became an engagement and recently a marriage, the singer is said to have started feeling like his label was not that dedicated to advancing his career. We are also told that Christopher was also not happy about how a big chunk of the money that he won as a PGGSS prize went to his manager... (*The New Times* 2016).

Here, it is important to make the point that “connections are never a neutral phenomenon but in their appropriations by people, governments and institutions form part of power hierarchies” (De Bruijn and Van Dijk 2012: 6-7). Like other organisations and businesses in Rwanda, recording studios are hierarchical spaces, organised around seniority in relation to age, economic status and reputation – in terms of musical skill and popularity. Studio owners, sponsors,



managers and leading artists are treated with greater importance and privilege than upcoming stars and producers, leading to feelings of jealousy and resentment among those who feel “left behind”.

As the opening quotation of this section indicates, accusations of *gushishura* - the practice of stealing other people’s work<sup>95</sup> - can also lead to the breaking down of social bonds and networks. In different instances, cultural producers are accused of stealing money or lying about their earnings, and are consequently fired and others brought in. In addition to issues of competition, jealousy (*ishyari*) and resentment, disagreements over money can cause previously concrete relationships to crumble and collapse – a popular subject covered by Kigali’s media news (Editor 2015; Mugarura 2014; Rutayishire 2018b). Whereas in Kampala rivalries between cultural producers are explicit and dramatic – with long-running feuds between popular artists, such as Chameleone and Bebe Cool, being written about by entertainment journalists (Asaasira 2012: 163) - divisions in Rwanda are stigmatised and are therefore hidden to a degree.

In both Kigali and Kampala, news stories about feuds are largely based on rumour and speculation, although they differ in their style and use of language. In Kigali, where peace and social order are highly valued (Goodfellow 2013), it is perhaps unsurprising that the language used is polite and pleasant (“he is said to be looking for another manager”, “we are happy to have him back”, “we would like to thank him for all he has done for us”, etc.). In contrast, articles produced in Kampala are built around provocative statements already made by artists on their

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<sup>95</sup> *Gushishura* literally means “to peel”. It is usually used to refer to a practice in which R&B artists copy foreign songs and translate them into Kinyarwanda.



social media sites. The style of language is insulting and aggressive, with headlines such as the following: “I will bury you before your disciples’ Chameleone dares Bebe to battle” (Ssejjombwe 2018), and ““You Are Broke! Bebe Cool Stings Chameleone” (Staff Writer 2013). While most Rwandan artists are unwilling to publicly insult their peers, artists and audiences in Kampala seem to thrive on competition and conflict, using their “beef” with one another as a way of attracting publicity.

Finally, I want to make the point that some artists are actively blocked from accessing networks. An example of this occurred when TBB were stopped from performing at the annual German beer festival in 2015. After being approached by the organisers, TBB recommended that another artist might perform with them. However, that artist accepted the deal on the condition that TBB were ‘cut’. When asked why they think this happened, the TBB members simply shrugged and suggested that this was an issue of *ishyari* (jealousy). Later, somebody suggested in private that I should speak to Uncle Austin, knowing that we had already discussed the exclusion of *Abasajya* artists. They arguably wanted to suggest that TBB had been discriminated against, but without having to say this to me directly.

## **Conclusion**

Cultural producers who want to survive and succeed in Kigali and Kampala must establish lasting networks of reciprocity and exchange. In Kigali’s small, under-funded music industry, it is especially important that cultural producers remain open to working with anyone. Opportunities are scarce, and individuals

must be ready to assemble or join a crew containing a variety of artists and producers for each project. Despite this, rivalries based on jealousy (*ishyari*) and resentment provide scope for blocking other people's opportunities. Those who were most successful seemed to have mastered the necessary interplay of opposing tendencies: cooperation on the one hand and competition on the other.

## CHAPTER 7 - CREATING A SONG

In the previous chapters, I have shown the importance of networks, the overlapping of genres and languages, and the possibilities available to cultural producers in Kigali. In her in-depth account of the production of a mbaqanga album in a South African recording studio, Louise Meintjes (2003) illustrates how the study of music can provide a lens into bigger questions of ego, race, ethnicity, politics, affiliation, historical memory, and so on. With this in mind, I will now demonstrate how cultural producers mobilise the human and musical resources at their disposal to create a song. Studies of popular music emphasise cross-over and cultural flow – for example the fact that Western music has African roots (Kidula 2012: 171), or that West African highlife music was an adaptation of Western (American and European) dance band music fusing a variety of African and Islamic influences (Collins 1989). However, in the past people bought physical records, listened to them and then adapted their musical production, while today music producers have the possibility of transnational collaborations, of transcending national boundaries via geographical travel and through internet-mediated “collabos”.

The chapter is built around three case studies. Firstly, *Ayitilide* (2015), a Rwanda-Uganda “collabo” coordinated by Benjah TBB. Enduring historical connections between Rwanda and Uganda, and Uganda’s high position in regional music markets, makes Kampala a likely destination for aspiring Rwandan stars (chapter 5). This is particularly the case for artists who may now live in Rwanda but grew up in Uganda and therefore have personal ties and local

knowledge to rely on. In comparison, tense relations between Rwanda and Burundi, and Rwanda and eastern DRC, make for less easy exchange at the official borders between these three countries (Le Lay 2016: 44). An *Umusajya* (Rwandan-Ugandan) artist, Benjah TBB was struggling to establish a substantial fan base in Kigali. Therefore, in April 2015 – while Rwanda was in mourning for those killed in the genocide – he decided to board a bus to Kampala in search of “life” (i.e. opportunities for economic advancement). There he managed to negotiate cheap studio access, was able to create an Afrobeats song and music video and begin to work in collaboration with a number of other artists.

While this first example required Benjah TBB’s physical travel to Kampala, my second case study concerns digital movement. Following the work of other scholars (Mahoney 2017; Perullo 2012; Shipley 2009), I demonstrate how the growth of the internet and the spread of smartphones has produced new modes of communication such as internet-mediated “collabos”. Eric 1Key is an avant-garde performer who utilises the internet to function independently of radio and TV (see chapter 3). During fieldwork, he used email and social media to collaborate with artists and producers in widely distant geographical locations, although what he was actually searching for was a space of belonging in Rwanda.

The third case study is *Baramushaka* (2014) by Knowless Butera, Rwanda’s most popular female singer. I question, why were her songs so popular? How had she managed to avoid the stigma of being a woman artist? Here I will compare the success of Knowless Butera with the struggle that Jody

Phibi had faced in attempting to reach her goals of stardom (see chapters 5 and 6).

The songs that Benjah TBB, Eric 1Key and Knowless Butera created were all quite different. In contrast to the pop songs of Benjah TBB and Knowless Butera, Eric 1Key belongs to a group of Rwandan artists with a different approach to music making (see chapter 3). Rather than spending money creating music videos aimed at the Rwandan and Ugandan masses, Eric 1Key invests in his live performances, where his poetic, philosophical lyrics engage with political and social issues, and prompt conversation and debate among his relatively small and highly educated audience. Bearing in mind the numerous cultural, economic, social and political challenges faced by my informants, I finish the chapter by detailing their responses to hardship and suffering. In particular, I detail emic notions of patience, self-discipline and destiny - or God's will.

**Case 1: *Ayitilide* (She's Amazing) by Benjah TBB, featuring Marriana, Pacento and Spax**

We call it 'running an adventure'. It means we will see things that we did not see before on the road. It means we are driving, not flight. To get people in your car and bring them to Uganda, or others they get the bus.

- Spax 2015, int.

I decided to come to Uganda this April. With it being memorial back in Rwanda, I had little to do there...It's high time I open up my links with Uganda.

- Benjah TBB 2015, int.

I begin this section with an extract from my fieldwork diary (7 April 2015):

Last night Benjah, Pacento and I boarded the Trinity Express bus in Kigali and travelled through the night to Kampala. Leaving Rwanda's smooth, winding roads and stern border officials behind us we were welcomed into Uganda by an older, jovial man. A stamp in my passport, a quick Ebola check and we found our way back to the bus. Crossing the border, the concrete road dissolved into dirt. Rwandan gospel music was replaced with Chameleone's rugged voice and ragga beats. The volume increased, as did the speed, and a game of dodging potholes began. Gentle conversations took place between passengers as they drifted in and out of sleep. Every few minutes we woke up with a jerk by the driver's disregard for speed bumps. We briefly stopped in Mbarara: some people stayed in their seats and bought chapattis out of the windows; others made a dash for the toilets. After several more hours, we arrived in Kampala and made our way to the Astoria Hotel, opposite the Old Taxi Park (Main Bus Park).

It was early morning, but the lower levels of the building were already crammed full of women sewing clothes and men polishing shoes. Inside the budget hotel, a multi-faith hall with a stage also functions as a restaurant and bar. We took a seat on the restaurant balcony, staring into our tiredness. A huge flask of weak, milky tea was placed in front of us by a demure but flirty waitress. As I attempted to pour its contents into cups, small and sticky puddles formed and dispersed across the tablecloth. That evening I tried to ignore the rats darting along the corridors. Reaching deep into his pocket, Benjah found some coins for playing pool and drinking beer. Wide-eyed, Pacento looked down from the balcony, observing life on the streets: the lack of helmets worn by motorbike passengers, a fire cooking an assortment of food, and the loud, joking conversations being had between strangers. Somebody called out to me 'babe'. Turning away, I rolled my eyes.



**Figure 7.1.** View of the Old Taxi Park from the Astoria Hotel, Kampala, April 2015. [My photograph]

Discouraged by the limited opportunity to make a living in Rwanda, some cultural producers have moved to other countries. In 2010, Rwanda's most popular singers Meddy and The Ben travelled to the United States on government visas. After participating in an event for the Rwandan International Network Association (RINA), the duo reportedly "disappeared" (Tumwebaze 2010). Their audio producer Lick Lick joined them in America, and while rumoured to be working in a supermarket they continued to release new hits. In 2017, Meddy and

The Ben negotiated their return to Rwanda with the government (Kantenga 2017). Likewise, a number of underground artists and producers decided to seek asylum in Belgium after travelling there to perform (see “living overseas” on map, Appendix VI).

During fieldwork, cultural producers were frustrated with Kigali’s restrictive noise pollution regulations and controlled way of advertising, which reinforced the tidiness of Kigali’s public spaces (see chapter 1). Whereas in Kigali customers were charged the equivalent of £400 to put up a billboard, Kampala’s lack of restrictions allowed for cheap alternatives, increasing the city’s appeal for artists such as Benjah TBB:

It’s expensive to advertise [in Kigali]. In Uganda, it’s easier. Yeah, the big concerts are also advertised on billboards, but if you don’t have a big company supporting you, you can just get your bed sheet and write ‘TBB are going to perform tonight!’ Then you wash off the writing and sleep in your sheets [laughing], and the next time you write again (Benjah TBB 2015, int.).

Although his musical ambitions were tinged with anxiety, Benjah TBB seemed to believe that “one day” things would work out. Unable to travel overseas, he decided to try his luck in neighbouring Uganda. Motivated by a desire for travel and adventure, audio producer Pacento was keen to accompany his friend. It would be Pacento’s first time in Kampala and Benjah TBB was excited to show him his childhood home.





Figures 7.2. and 7.3. (Above and below) Advertising in Kampala, April 2015. [My photographs]



When in Kampala, Benjah TBB and Pacento wanted to produce a Rwanda-Uganda “collabo”, to help them expand their fan base and personal networks. Pacento hoped to increase his skills in audio production, while Benjah TBB was trying to distance himself from the music group TBB and assert himself as a solo artist. During a previous trip to Kampala, Benjah TBB had begun to record two audios that required completion: one with his school-friend Caution, another with Ugandans Benja Steel and Marriana (Song 1, Appendix II). Benja Steel is an audio producer, musician and the owner of Salten Records - a newly opened and very basic recording studio (see figs. 3.1. and 3.2., chapter 3). Marriana is an aspiring dancehall artist signed by Salten Records.

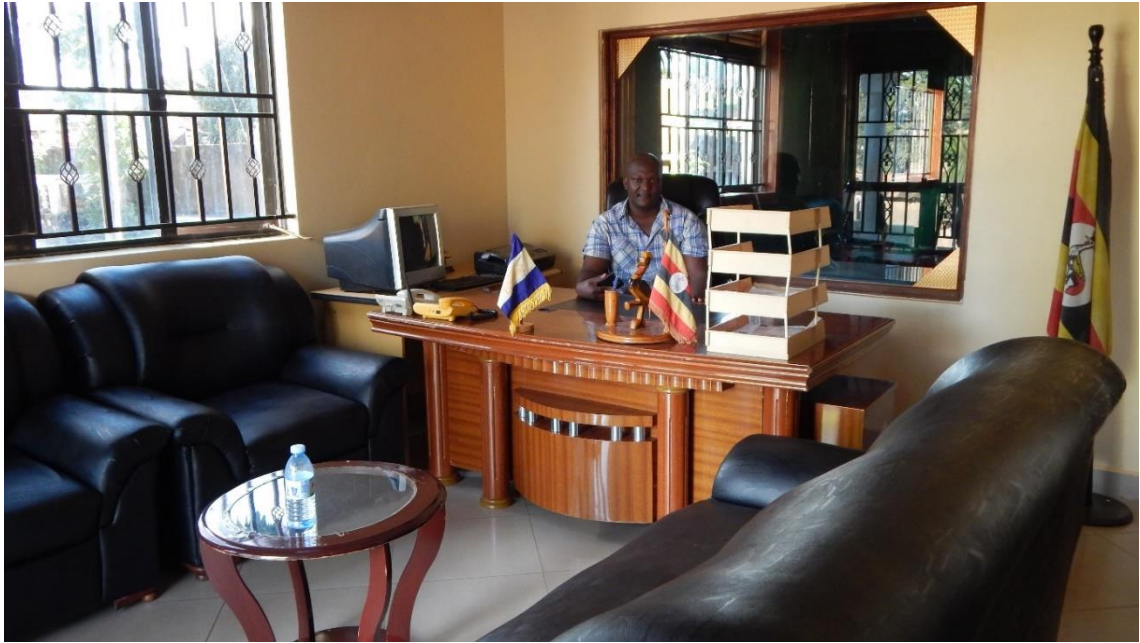
Benja Steel first met Benjah TBB when he travelled to Kigali to play the piano for his church:

When I was in Rwanda, God blessed me. Things happened that I never expected, like meeting people like Benjah. When I met those guys, I was at a certain studio. They heard there was a Ugandan, so they came to see. They asked me to come and work in their studio. They also spoke Luganda. That made us like brothers. I see Benjah as a brother who can help me: he can design websites, do graphics; he can also produce. So, business wise, when we get back to the studio work, I see I need his assistance. Rwanda is not so far. I can send artists to him. I expect Benjah to know whatever programme I am doing. Coz I’m someone who loves touring. When I go to Rwanda I know I can stay with Benjah, share with Benjah until the day I come back. So, it’s about keeping myself connected. And for promotion it’s going to work out for us. I can take our music to promoters here. He can take it to Rwanda (Benja Steel 2015, int.).

Certainly, Benja Steel and Benjah TBB had established a relationship of mutual exchange and reciprocity. During this visit to Kampala, Benjah TBB also needed to research the price of magazine printing for another of his business ideas. Finally, he had promised to visit his cousin Grace, a well-known actress and

comedian. There was clearly a lot to achieve in only two weeks, and much of this relied on soliciting help from others.

With limited funds, Benjah TBB and Pacento's first job was to determine their support networks and find a studio at which to record. On day one, they approached DJ Lil, a Rwandan audio producer who had recently moved to Kampala. Although initially invited to Kampala by Spax, DJ Lil had found work at VIP Africa Studios, a professionally built studio owned by Prince Bamweyana SN. Godfrey. Because Godfrey had only just opened the studio and needed to establish its reputation, Benjah TBB was able to convince him to allow them to use the recording room free-of-charge. In exchange, Benjah TBB promised to include a promotional studio jingle in the song. During these negotiations, Pacento waited quietly, unable to speak Luganda or English with the level of fluency required. I was instructed to stay away: if Benjah TBB and Pacento's first visit to the studio was with *umuzungu* (a white person), Godfrey might assume they had more money than they did. When I joined them at the studio on the following day, Godfrey welcomed me in an English accent reminiscent of the Queen: "Hellooo! I am exceedingly humbled and extraordinarily excited to meet you!" Catching Pacento's eye, I managed to contain my laughter.



**Figure 7.4.** Prince Godfrey on reception at VIP Africa Studios, Kampala, April 2015. [My photograph]

Wasting no time, Pacento started to create a song from scratch. Opening the music making software Logic Pro, he selected some beats designed to help partygoers dance and “shake off their stress”. Improvising, Pacento and Benjah TBB played around with various lyrics, melodies and rhythms until they were satisfied that they had created a catchy, repetitive chorus. The goal was to produce a memorable, uplifting and sexually provocative Afrobeats song that would appeal to young people in Rwanda and Uganda. The first line of the chorus is in Luganda, the second is in Kinyarwanda:

*Ono mwane ayitilide – ummm nga ayitilide*  
 (This girl is amazing – ummm she’s amazing) - (X 2)  
*Uyu mwana, uyu mwana, ameze nka rukuluzi*  
 (This pretty girl, this pretty girl, she’s like a magnet) - (X 2)

Electronically generated sounds, such as snare drums, were available on the software and layered into the track. In the following days Benjah TBB and

Pacento were joined in the studio by some moderately popular artists, including Pacson of Rwanda, (who was in Kampala for a family wedding), Benja Steel, Marriana and Spax (see chapter 4 for Spax's musical trajectory). Benjah TBB and Pacento had hoped that Spax would be able to convince Pallaso and/or Sizzaman to feature on the track. However, they quickly learnt that they could not afford to solicit help from Ugandan stars. While unknown or moderately popular artists are often keen to be involved in such projects, those who have made a name for themselves and have the kind of talent Benjah TBB and Pacento wanted to attract, require financial remuneration to participate, which was beyond the possibility of Benjah TBB and Pacento (see also chapter 5). Days turned into nights and we soon became "vampires", waking up at midday and remaining in the studio until 5:00am. When hungry, we filled our stomachs with street food: *kikomando* (chapatti and beans)<sup>96</sup>, *mandazi* (Swahili-style doughnuts) and *rolex* (eggs, onions and peppers rolled into a chapatti)<sup>97</sup>.

The artists took it in turns to rap or sing their verse, lyrics scribbled on scraps of paper or written on their phones. The song changed shape several times, with new voices added, others taken away, and some accidentally deleted and then re-recorded. When Pacento cut Benja Steel's vocals from the track, an argument between them ensued. Benjah TBB supported Pacento, insisting that Benja Steel was always a reserve for the project. He wanted his "portfolio of songs" to include "collabos" with a wide variety of artists, and since Benja Steel

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<sup>96</sup> *Kikomando* derives from the word 'commando', due to this food being commonly eaten by soldiers.

<sup>97</sup> *Rolex* is word play: at once descriptive, i.e. rolex are made by 'rolling eggs', and ironic in referencing expensive Rolex watches. A regular *rolex* contains 2-3 eggs, while an 'Obama' contains 4-5 and a 'Gaddafi' 8-10!



was already featured on a previous track he could be cut. After some disagreement, Benja Steel accepted this and the three of them resolved their dispute amicably enough to carry on. Finally, the track was “mastered”: the sound on the file was perfected and prepared for distribution. When Spax drove us to the hotel that evening in his car – Islamic prayer beads swinging above a faux fur rug on the dashboard - he played *Ayitilide* loudly on repeat. Hearing their song blast out of the speakers clearly provided the artists with a sense of fulfilment, pride and joy. I refer to the song lyrics presented below later in the chapter.

***Ayitilide (She’s Amazing) ft. Marriana, Pacento and Spax [2015]***

Benjah TBB, Rwanda-Uganda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

**[Intro]**

Ummm Marriana!

*I go make you wanna – yebabawe!* [I will make you want to – oh wow!]

Benjah TBB!

Ummm Spax! We run dis

Pacento! We run dis!

Kigali-Kampala

VIP Africa we ting this

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**[Chorus – see above]**

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**[Verse 1]**

Baby gal give me yayaya!<sup>98</sup>

*Ejo nzakujane kwa Mama* [Tomorrow I will take you to Mama]

*Abandi ubaleke nizanga* [Leave the rest, they are crazy]

Promise I will love you every night and day

*No matter watgwan me go depa no mi pose* [No matter what happens, I will go deeper with no pause]

*Nana lome – louder!* [None of them – louder!]

*Ya go feel it in your bone* [You’re gonna feel it in your bones]

Gal shake your bum bum

*You hafi baka bi bam* [You have a big bum]

Gal shake your bum bum

*You hafi baka bi bam* [You have a big bum]

*Sindabna umukobwa wikoleye wazile nziza nkazo ufite izawe* [I’ve never seen a girl with a waist like yours]

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<sup>98</sup> Sexual innuendo.

*Bikagusaba kwambala rumbiya* [It will need you to put on a *rumbiya*<sup>99</sup>]  
*bikazatuma abakubona bachumura* [which will cause those who see you not to sin]

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 2]**

*Watch me man, yadatera satisfaction – Yeah!* [Watch my man, he gives me satisfaction – Yeah!]

*Mi na gona run kuba yamanyi zi direction – Ummm!* [I'm not going to run away because he knows direction – Ummm!]

*Nabwotampa chakulwa kambe nono ziyina chejoya* [Even if he gives me no food, I will stay with him and I won't be in need]

*Nebwobigura akabina nze kulayirira tayina chalaba* [Even if you shake your bum, I swear to you he sees nothing]

*Kano kekufunye chimanze kwekute kambali kundongo* [Now that I've got you I will hold on to you on the dance floor]

*Katwelage chikoze, nina omulungi silaba agana* [Let's show off, I have my love, nobody can stop it]

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 3]**

Gal how you do it makes me wonder

Your body makes me want you

Sexy clothes and what is under

Makes it beat like thunder

Gal let's make it reality forever

When I see you, do you see me forever?

Gal I truly now believe the way you move I'll never leave ya

You're ma number one, the one in a billion that I want

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Outro]**

*Ameze nka rukuluzi* [She's like a magnet]

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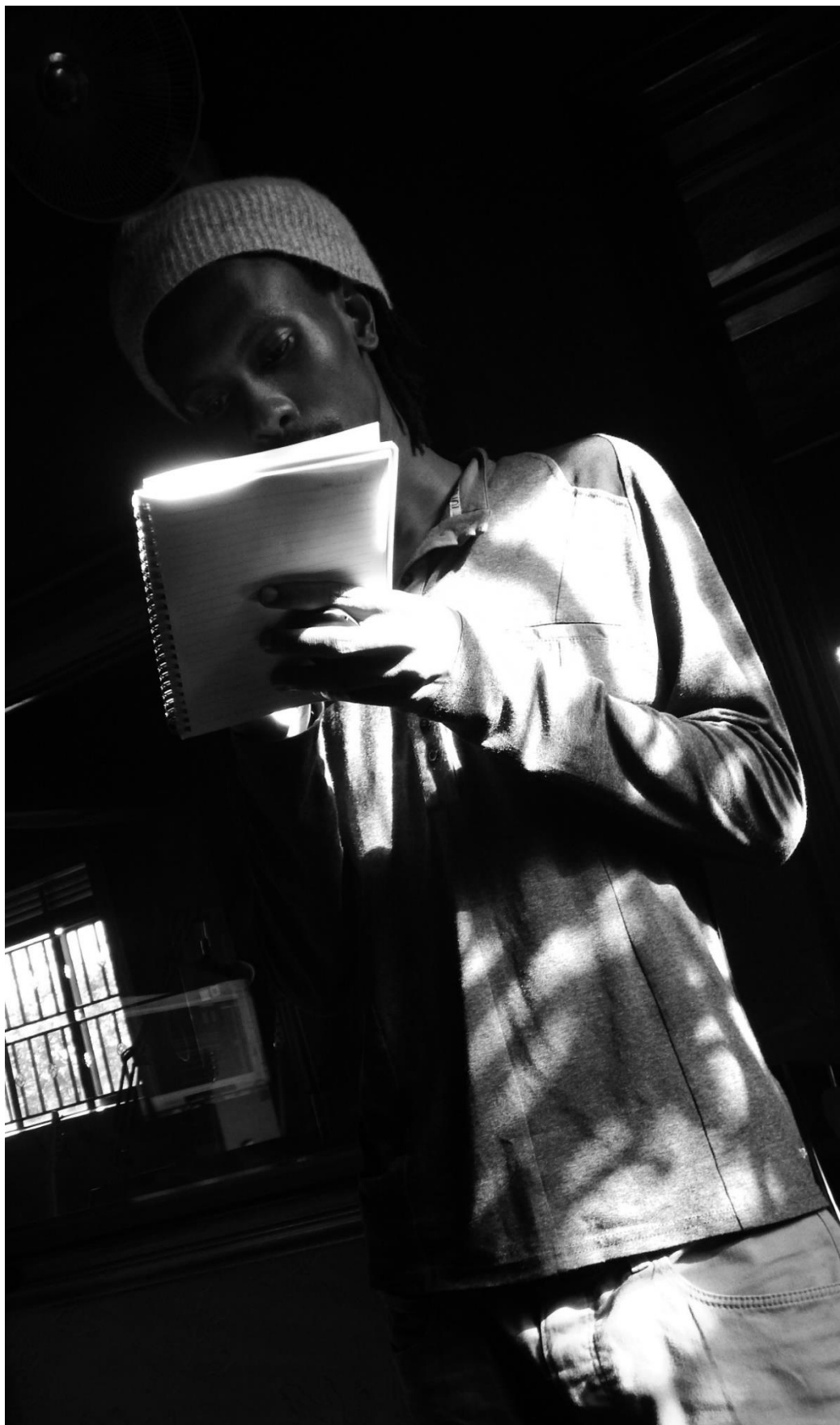
<sup>99</sup> *Rumbiya*: a modest, full-length dress or skirt.



**Figures 7.5., 7.6. and 7.7. (Above and below) Creating *Ayitilide*, April 2015. [My photographs]**







After completing the audio, the next step in the process was to create the music video. Benjah TBB and Pacento were running out of money. I offered to pay for our accommodation so that we could extend our time in Kampala, but if I had not we might have been able to stay with one of Benjah TBB's friends. For several days, Benjah TBB, Pacento, Marriana and Spax made enquiries about the cost of working with various video producers. This involved travelling around the city to meet possible producers face-to-face. Everyone seemed to know "someone" who would offer a deal, only to cancel at the last minute. Prices were negotiable but increased due to the cost of hiring equipment. It is common in the Rwandan and Ugandan music industries that video producers only own their own cameras and laptops. The remaining equipment – such as cranes, dolly and reflectors, jib, lens, pack, lights – and the labour required for each project, has all to be rented. The artists are responsible for providing the team with costumes, props, refreshments, transportation and venue access. For hustling artists such as Benjah TBB, organising a video shoot is a stressful endeavour. The pressure to present a luxurious lifestyle reminiscent of celebrities involves an element of pretence – for instance in some music videos, 'whiskey' shots are actually Coca-Cola.

Desperate to create a video for his new song *Ayitilide*, Benjah TBB told Godfrey that I would be sharing my research with "major European investors", convincing him that it was in his interest to fund the video shoot. I was unaware of this until I returned to Kigali and received an email from Godfrey. I was under the impression that Godfrey was experiencing financial problems. Despite this, he agreed to fund the video shoot on the condition that Benjah TBB would provide

him with a deposit of 300,000 Ugandan shillings (about £60). Benjah TBB transferred the money to Godfrey using mobile money, after which Godfrey recruited the well-known Ugandan video producer Kim XP to join the project. After the video shoot, it became clear that Benjah TBB, Godfrey and Kim XP had all misled each other. Benjah TBB had lied to Godfrey with regard to my intention to promote the video; Godfrey had lied to Benjah TBB, saying that he was funding the project when, in fact, he had used his status as a prince to persuade Kim XP to work free-of-charge; and Kim XP – who was annoyed to be working for no financial gain – was inventing all kinds of excuses to delay finishing the final edit. When I returned to Kampala several months later, Spax solicited help from a police officer – who apparently “works for Ugandan musicians” – to “put pressure” on Kim XP until he agreed to complete the video and deliver it to the artists. When Spax uploaded the video to YouTube, another argument erupted. Spax had named himself as the leader of the project instead of Benjah TBB. It became clear that even when working together, competition between artists can become a source of conflict.

In preparation for the video shoot, Benjah TBB and Pacento went to a salon to have their dreadlocks styled and purchased new clothes and sunglasses – reminding us of their aspiration to project an image of wealth and celebrity. The video shoot took place at Entebbe’s Botanical Gardens, an hour outside of Kampala – although one hour turned into three, due to Kampala’s traffic jams. On arrival, the team of cultural producers immediately sprang into action. While Kim XP’s crew set up the equipment, Marriana applied her make-up. Spax and I drove to the nearest town in search of props. When loosely planning the storyline the

night before, Kim XP had the idea of including a goat that would mysteriously disappear. When he learnt that the artists could not afford to buy a goat, he adapted the narrative to include a young woman instead. The male artists would be “bewitched” by the African woman’s beauty – her ‘Africanness’ emphasised by her wearing *kitenge* cloth and carrying a basket of bananas on her head – before they discovered that she was a “ghost”. A waitress from a nearby restaurant agreed to act as the beautiful woman, while I was asked to play the part of the ghost! In the final scene of the video, the woman vanishes while collecting water from a river. The ghost appears in her place, beckoning the artists to join her (see fig. 7.8.). Laughing in surprise, they run away.



**Figures 7.8., 7.9. and 7.10. (Above and below) Shooting the music video *Ayitilide*, April 2015. [Courtesy of Kim XP]**





Apparently, Kim XP wanted to create a video that was both “cool” and “African enough” to appeal to the “European investors” – and this is what informed his decisions about the aesthetics and narrative. The artists were happy to

comply: they anticipated that viewers in Rwanda and Uganda would enjoy the joke of seeing a white woman suddenly appear. The video is reminiscent of Radio and Weasel's popular song *Take My Breath Away* (2014), in which a woman "blows the duo away with her beauty" and then disappears into thin air – serving as a reminder that Rwandan artists look up to Ugandan stars for ideas about what is popular<sup>100</sup>. I will now compare Benjah TBB's case to that of Eric 1Key.

### **Case 2: *Gene Aise* by Eric 1Key, featuring Cassa and Samy Kamanzi**

Born to a Rwandan mother and Congolese father, Eric 1Key describes himself as a multi-lingual hip-hop poet, spoken word artist and advocate of Kigali's live music scene. Aged 34 at the time of my fieldwork, he has lived in eastern DRC, the Republic of Congo, Uganda and Rwanda. In 2014, he left Kigali and moved to Kampala:

I went there to escape! I was separating from my wife. Also, in Rwanda, there is no space for creative work. No innovation! I was bored. There were no challenges, no learning. So, I decided to try Uganda. Life is cheaper there. The lifestyle is better. I was happier there and more comfortable. People mind their own business in Kampala. I felt at home, unlike in Rwanda where I feel stifled. My phone wasn't being tapped! People understand what literature is. People aren't so obedient (Eric 1Key 2016, int.).

Between November 2014 and February 2015 – and while living in Kampala – Eric 1Key created his debut album, *Entre 2* (Between 2) (Whatley 2016e). Throughout the album, we hear multiple voices singing and rapping in English, French, Kinyarwanda, Lingala and Swahili. Eric 1Key addresses the language question in the opening track, suggesting his awareness of wider conversations that have

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<sup>100</sup> *Take My Breath Away* (2014) by Radio and Weasel is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVsMI40ZBXo>

taken place across Africa since colonial rule (e.g. see Achebe 1997; Barber 1995; Botwe-Asamoah 2001; wa Thiong'o 1986):

May my ancestors forgive me for this performance  
If I express myself better in the coloniser's language  
It is because it has become a culture of survival  
It evolves at the expense of ours and we follow, enslaved  
Today they make fun of us  
When we make mistakes  
And it disgusts me! (Translated from French to English – see Song 6, Appendix II)

In contrast to the impromptu, superficial lyrics of *Ayitilide*, Eric 1Key's work is carefully constructed and politically and socially conscious. Instead of churning out pop songs for the Rwandan and Ugandan masses, he prides himself in composing intricate, meaningful lyrics – and is prepared to spend long periods working on one song.

After completing his album, Eric 1Key returned to Rwanda. He was missing his son and had begun to establish an audience in Kigali: "I'd been connecting with them online, so I decided to give it a go. It was hard. It took me like 10 months to get set up" (Eric 1Key 2016, int.). In addition to this physical movement, Eric 1Key 'travels' online. He uses the internet to connect with artists and fans, and to express his opinions through his lyrics, blog posts and social media sites. For example, in track 2 of the album Eric 1Key takes issue with the education he received in Goma, DRC. He criticises the system of rote learning, through which he claims to have learnt nothing but not to ask questions (Song 7, Appendix II). Track 5 has a menacing tone: we hear a click-and-bang of a gunshot over which Eric 1Key raps in French, his voice deep and punchy. High-pitched

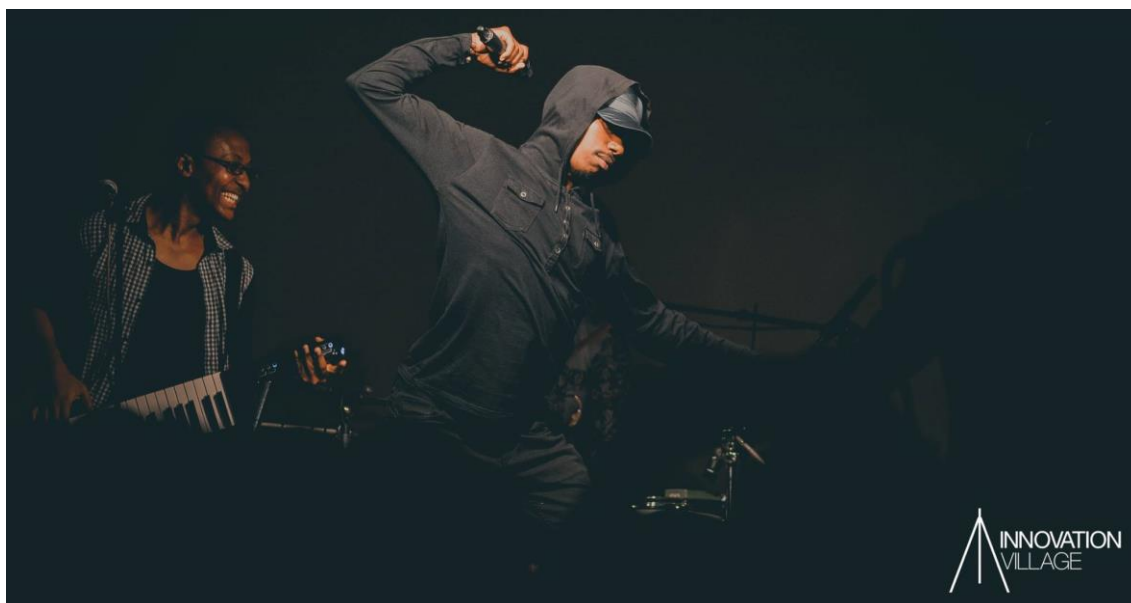
piano notes create a siren effect, followed by a sharp knocking sound. A series of rhythms layer into the track, building a sense of drama as the story unfolds.

The first verse of this song, *Entre 2* - a story about a hero and a coward – includes the following lyrics (translated from French to English):

You're not this butterfly with flamboyant colours  
Sailing between the winds of trends  
You're a chameleon, hooked on your own branch  
You observe the world in every direction  
You do not just stay there and watch these egocentric termites devour  
each other mercilessly  
You sound the alarm but that makes you a target... (Song 11, Appendix II – see also Whatley 2016c).

While Eric 1Key's butterfly is beautiful in appearance, it is fickle and easily manipulated. In contrast, the defiant chameleon has the brave, sacrificial qualities of a hero: independent of thought it takes action but suffers as a result. Through his lyrics, Eric 1Key provokes questions that are sensitive in the Rwandan context of authoritarian rule: should 'butterflies' – a metaphor for Rwandan citizens - behave more like chameleons despite the risks this may involve? And if the butterfly was to symbolise Rwandan development, just how much substance is there beyond a beautiful exterior? As previously discussed, conversations about politics and progress in Rwanda are stigmatised and met with caution. Lyrics such as these are unusual, even when the meaning is ambiguous and/or concealed through metaphor. This way of covertly addressing politics through forms of popular culture has been observed by scholars working on other African contexts where the ruling authority limits free speech (e.g. the Ghanaian popular song 'Ebi te yie' by the African Brothers Band – see Barber 2018: 176).





**Figure 7.11.** Eric 1Key performing *Entre 2* in his live show ‘the #expericment’, March 2016. [Courtesy of Innovation Village]

A more overt example of political criticism is present in track 7: “This is my most dangerous song because it’s not politically correct” (Eric 1Key 2016, int.). In *Politricks* Eric 1Key responds to the expectation to self-censor when talking in, or about, Rwanda: “Today I found its nose in my business, what should I do?/I’m sorry Mum, I will not keep quiet” (translated from French to English – see Song 12, Appendix II). Even more explicit, he raps: “Democracy means ‘you are free to talk’ and dictatorship means ‘shut the fuck up’”. While Eric 1Key usually prefers to rap in French, the language of his “soul”, he delivers the hook in a robotic, English voice – the language of the political elite:

Trick me, trick me, trick me – till I lose control  
 Promise, promise, promise – till I give you my vote (X 2).

As stated in chapter 5, the relationship between Rwandan artists and the ruling authority is ambiguous and complex. “New school” rappers, such as Benjah TBB, avoid political criticism and mainly concern themselves with celebrating

consumer culture (see also Grant 2014: 219). By comparison, some rappers and spoken word artists, such as Eric 1Key, associate themselves with a wider world of “old school” hip-hop, embodying the transnational persona of a rapper as truth teller (Awondo and Manga 2016; Grant 2014: 218; Ntarangwi 2009: 11). Scholars have explored the political and civil engagement of rappers in numerous African contexts, such as Kenya where rap has become the “space for political and social lobbying” (Kidula 2012: 173). Grant states that in post-genocide Rwanda hip-hop is “in no way directly political”:

Rather, the ‘truth’ they told was much more ‘local’ and intimate: they spoke about the hardships, suffering and anxieties of everyday life, and implicitly - and occasionally explicitly – encouraged listeners to contrast this with the ‘progress’ supposedly offered by the RPF (2014: 218).

Eric 1Key’s music provides evidence that there are exceptions to this; that a more direct form of political criticism finds expression in some Rwandan songs.

Furthermore, Eric 1Key engages with Rwandan politics via social media and on his personal blog. When, on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016, Kigali City Council (KCC) abruptly banned billboards along the road leading to Kigali International Airport, Eric 1Key - who works in advertising - posted this Facebook status:

What’s happening in this country? How does a billboard pose a security threat? And just like that, in one day, money flushed. People get in trouble and no damn is given. I’d like someone to do the math and tell us how much this decision’s cost.

1<sup>st</sup> there was the noise pollution, which led to bars, hotels and motels to close.

2<sup>nd</sup> the car-free zone.

And now advertising, which is a multi-business industry.

Then we expect foreigners to invest. Such acts defeat the purpose. But then again, Eric doesn’t see anything positive, right? SMH [Shaking my Head] (see also Kagire 2016).

I will now discuss Eric 1Key's song *Gene Aise* (*Entre 2*: track 9), from its conception to its creation to its performance in Kigali (see also Whatley 2016d).

*Gene Aise* is an internet-mediated "collabo" between Eric 1Key, Cassa (Dady Cassanova) – a Rwandan who lives in Canada – and Samy Kamanzi, who lives in France (see "living overseas" on map, Appendix VI). Like Eric 1Key, Samy Kamanzi is half Rwandan and half Congolese, and has faced ethnic discrimination ("I received the treatment of the cockroach" - see also chapter 1) and a sense of isolation in both countries. While Eric 1Key was travelling internationally – both physically to Uganda and online to connect with Samy Kamanzi, Cassa and his audience – what he was actually searching for was a space of belonging in Rwanda. This quest to feel at home in post-genocide Rwanda is shared by many returnees and people of mixed nationality, but is rarely discussed in public:

Why do people not talk about it? The fear of being perceived as an outsider. '*Aho uri ni iwacu*' [You are in our home]. So eventually everyone shuts up and tries their best to blend in: learn Kinyarwanda, customs, jokes, etc. Till the locals start calling you their own. The need to belong is bigger than anything. But this struggle is not only mine (Eric 1Key 2016, int.).

*Gene Aise* confronts this issue of belonging: "I've been holding on for too long/I'm gonna let it all go through this song", sings Cassa. With poignance, Eric 1Key completes the hook in French (translated from French to English):

If there is silence between my laughter  
An absence of joy in my smile  
That is because my story remains untold... (Song 14, Appendix II)

The systematic interweaving of different languages in the song reinforces a sense of the artists being split between two worlds. Reasons for this are revealed when Eric 1Key explains his family history (translated from French to English):

I was born in exile in my father's country  
A part of me inherited the land of the other from the same master  
When my grandmother's neighbours were slaughtering his brothers  
He found asylum in this land which belonged to his father before  
It is complicated but brief, I was born between the anvil and the hammer  
In this region of the Great Lakes known for the blood that flows  
Between two large countries, one known for genocide and its bravery  
The other for its size, its riches and its endless wars  
The two hate each other, certainly for minor reasons...

And from verse 2 (translated from French to English):

I was born between hate and love  
Behind this small house coated with red plaster  
In '92 before I was 12 years old  
I received the treatment of the cockroach  
At this school of planks near Goma's airport  
Rejected from Kivu, three years in Brazaville  
From Kin [Kinshasa] I landed in the arms of Rwanda  
Its hills welcomed me with milk curd  
Big smiles and *Nkund'amahoro* [I love peace] as notebooks  
I have to say it feels good to be accepted  
But at the same time it's heavy to bear  
The weight of knowing that I can no longer put my feet  
On the land which saw me rise because the volcano has erased it...

Here, Eric 1Key makes reference to the 1997 volcano lava flow disaster in Goma, which destroyed his childhood home. Eric 1Key's personal story is one of loss, poverty, rejection, suffering and violence. Yet it is also a story of resilience, recognition and self discovery: "I landed in the arms of Rwanda... I have to say it feels good to be accepted". The album's theme of *entre 2* (between 2) is present in the title: separately, *Gene Aise* means "discomfort" (*gène*) and "ease" (*aise*), while together it intimates "genesis". I will now turn to a discussion of the work involved in creating the song.

While Eric 1Key and Cassa are long-standing friends, Eric 1Key met Samy Kamanzi in 2014 at the KigaliUp music festival:

Samy had a band called Ikobe. They used to create amazing traditional sounds. I could hear the Congolese and Rwandan influences. It was beautiful to hear. I thought to myself, 'I'd really like to work with those guys.'... I actually snatched Samy at KigaliUp. He had just played with his band, and I begged him to freestyle something on his guitar as I recite my piece. He didn't appreciate the ambush, but he accepted... I knew *Gene Aise* was the perfect project to work with him on, since we shared the same struggle to find our space (Eric 1Key 2016, int.).

After developing the concept for *Gene Aise*, Eric 1Key approached Cassa and Samy Kamanzi and arranged to call them on Skype. Eric 1Key then recorded his verses, and sent the audio to Cassa and Samy Kamanzi via WhatsApp. Samy Kamanzi produced the instrumental – two guitars and a gentle percussion – and emailed it to Eric 1Key, who took it to Dustville Studio in Kampala. There, he added some beats and then emailed the song to Samy Kamanzi, who had access to a studio in France:

He found the time to add more to the melody and laid his vocals. He sent the files via Google Drive. I downloaded with the office internet and booked studio time with Baru Beatz, [an in-house producer at Dustville Studio]<sup>101</sup>.

As previously stated, digital connectivity opens up these kinds of new possibilities for aspiring cultural producers. Dillon Mahoney (2017) has written about the “art of connectivity” among Mombassa’s curio traders, illustrating the transformations of the trade since the democratisation of the internet. While artists can now create international “collabos” without having to travel physically,

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<sup>101</sup> Abaasa, a Ugandan audio producer and gospel singer who lives in the UK, introduced Eric 1Key to Baru Beatz. Abaasa features on the penultimate track of Eric 1Key’s album *Entre 2* (Song 15, Appendix II).

internet-mediated music is not without its challenges. According to Eric 1Key, creating *Gene Aise* was a complicated endeavour due to the artists use of different music making software. In Kampala, Baru Beatz could not open the MP3 file sent by Samy Kamanzi, as Samy Kamanzi had used the latest version of Logic Pro - not compatible with previous versions. “Now the struggle was real”, Eric 1Key told me: “I couldn’t find any studio that had that latest version so I could extract the stems [i.e. separate files on the track]” (Eric 1Key 2016, int.). Eventually, somebody advised Eric 1Key to visit a studio in Kamwocya: “Such beautiful people, Ugandans are. I extracted the files and gave them to Baru” (ibid). Baru Beatz also faced the challenge of lining up the instrumental with the vocals, since they were recorded using different tempos.

Eric 1Key also relies on the internet to get his music into circulation. Rather than “paying off” radio and TV presenters, he uploads his music to SoundCloud (see also chapter 3). In 2016 Eric 1Key performed *Gene Aise* in a series of live shows, the **#expericment** (my bold). Unsurprisingly, the audiences were deeply moved by his performance: when Eric 1Key shares his personal story, there is no way to escape from his pain. Yet this pain is lightened by the pleasure of being a part of a shared experience, which I observed myself when attending one of the **#expericment** performances and witnessing how Eric 1Key brought together an audience of friends and strangers, from Francophone Rwandans to Anglophone Americans, to me - a British researcher (see fig. 7.12.). Eric 1Key’s philosophical text and performance contrasts sharply with the ad-hoc pop song created by Benjah TBB and his friends. While Benjah TBB seems to be motivated by a desire for money and fame, Eric 1Key is primarily driven by his love of words, creativity

and performing, through which he tries to start new conversations and engage with political and social debate.



**Figure 7.12.** Eric 1Key performing *Gene Aise* in his live show ‘the #expericment’, March 2016. [Courtesy of Innovation Village]

### **Case 3: *Baramushaka* (They want him) by Knowless Butera**

Unlike Benjah TBB and Eric 1Key, Knowless Butera (real name Ingabire Butera Jeanne) is a success – by which I mean everyone in Rwanda knows her name. During my period of research, the 25-year-old R&B singer was Rwanda’s most popular female artist. MTN Rwanda was sponsoring her, and in 2015, she won the Primus Guma Guma Super Star (PGGSS) competition (see chapter 5 for a discussion on PGGSS). However, most of the Kigalians to whom I spoke agreed that Knowless Butera is not actually an accomplished singer. They told

me that she enjoys success due to her relatable songs and beautiful looks – especially admiring the gap between her upper two front teeth, a Rwandan symbol of beauty. In the words of one music fan: “If you are a girl, the important thing is to be looking good more than talent”. Knowless Butera’s success was partly achieved by her ability to network with powerful music producers. In 2016, she married audio producer Clément Ishimwe, the owner of Kina Music – raising the issue of relations between Kigali’s female artists and male producers (see chapter 3). According to one producer: “It’s not easy for females to sing in Rwanda without someone who does music to be your boyfriend”. Certainly, there is a perception that Knowless Butera used her relationship with a man to become a star.

Despite this perception, Knowless Butera upholds a public image of being a “true” and “proud” Rwandan. She was born and raised in the country and, until recently, she composed her songs solely in Kinyarwanda. Importantly, Knowless Butera presents herself as being *aritonda* (softly spoken and docile), humble, quiet, modest, reserved and shy – the qualities of a ‘good’ Rwandan girl or woman (chapter 3). Furthermore, Knowless Butera’s recent marriage to Clément Ishimwe – after which she became a mother – raised her social status from *umukobwa* (a girl) to *umugore* (a woman/wife). By comparison, Jody Phibi’s failure to become a success in Kigali was due in part to people viewing her as “not Rwandan enough”. A returnee from Uganda, she was signed by Platnum Entertainment Uganda in Kampala. Some of her early lyrics were composed in Luganda – thus failing expectations in Rwanda to demonstrate national pride through language (Freedman and Samuelson 2010). In a style that is similar to Benjah TBB, several



of Jody Phibi's songs contain dancehall rhythms and sexually provocative lyrics in Jamaican Patois (for example, see *Ayitilide*'s lyrics, case 1). As stated in chapter 4, the popularity of dancehall and ragga music in Uganda was initially inspired by the import from Jamaica of songs in these genres in the 1990s – and this popularity is yet to spread to Rwanda on such a large scale.

Rwandan music videos are more conservative than those produced in neighbouring countries. For some cultural producers this is a source of irritation, for example: "If you want to get a shot of a girl coming out of the swimming pool, I have to give her a t-shirt to cover. Otherwise some national TV refuse to play it". Another video producer made the following comment: "So our leader doesn't like it, it's the reason why we can't see the video where women are wearing little clothes...I think it's a law about the culture". As previously discussed, many Rwandans who are not government officials also disapprove of women behaving 'immodestly' in public. Jody Phibi was criticised for participating in music videos that are sexually explicit, such as *Akayimba* (2015) – a Rwanda-Uganda "collabo" in which women in swimwear 'twerk' on the beach while Jody Phibi sneers at the camera (Song 22, Appendix II – see also fig. 7.13.)<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>102</sup> *Akayimba* (The Song) is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-5U5FhO4U0>



**Figure 7.13.** Jody Phibi in her music video *Akayimba*, filmed in February 2015. [My photograph]

It is well known that Knowless Butera experienced poverty during her childhood, her father died in the genocide and her mother died shortly after. She told me that she longed for fame and celebrity from a young age – a chance to escape financial hardship and to feel loved by many people (Knowless Butera 2016, int.). When she first started to visit recording studios, she had to rely on other people to pay for her transport home. It was Knowless Butera's

determination to survive and to succeed that arguably makes her so relatable and appealing to her fans. She is also adept at composing songs that resonate with many different people. *Baramushaka* (They Want Him) is one of Knowless Butera's most well-loved songs. As the lyrics below demonstrate, the song is about betrayal, jealousy (*ishyari*), interference and mistrust – themes that were often on the minds of my informants. In contrast to the short lines in *Ayitilide*, *Baramushaka* contains long passages of Kinyarwanda words that fill up every beat of the song – a style of singing that is popular in Rwanda. The song is also different to *Ayitilide* for containing a moral message – a warning not to trust your female friends if they try to interfere in your romantic relationship because they may be disloyal, fake, jealous or manipulative and only care about their own needs.

***Baramushaka* (They want him) [2014]**

Knowless Butera, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda (translated to English).

**[Verse 1]**

In this world, it's no longer easy to find someone who you can trust  
Everyone is interested in their own gain  
It's not easy to know who's lying and who's telling the truth  
I recently met a girl who happens to be my good friend and she made me hate  
the man I love  
She talked about him and criticised him, she told me he's ugly and not worthy of  
me  
But every time my lover comes  
She looks at him differently and gets sparkles in her eyes

---

**[Chorus]**

Girls these days shouldn't fool you  
And make you leave your lover  
Always watch your back  
They want him – be careful  
They want him – keep going  
They want him – tell them off  
They want him – don't be fooled – (X 2)

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**[Verse 2]**

They do everything they can to show you how bad he is  
They say you are a mismatch, that he is awkward  
And you think they care about your wellbeing  
But they are just like a wolf in sheep's clothing  
They are always making things up, always looking for ways  
To split our couples up and say things that don't match  
They say his walk is awkward, that he looks awkward  
In fact, even when he dresses he doesn't look good  
What is this really? What should I do with them?  
Yego, aha!  
But every time my lover comes  
She looks at him differently and gets sparkles in her eyes

---

**[Chorus X 2]**

---

**[Bridge]**

Kina Music affair!

Sing!

They say his walk is awkward, that he looks awkward

In fact, even when he dresses he doesn't look good

What is this really? What should I do with them?

Yego, aha!

But every time my lover comes

She looks at him differently and gets sparkles in her eyes

---

**[Chorus X 2]**

When creating *Baramushaka*, Knowless Butera did not face the same barriers to gain studio access and sponsorship that Benjah TBB struggled with in case study 1. Nor did she have any requirement to travel outside of Rwanda – although Knowless Butera does aspire to extend her fan base to the East African region. For this reason, she sings in English, Kinyarwanda and Swahili in her popular song *Tulia* (Calm down) (Song 28, Appendix II). The music video for the song was shot on a beach in Zanzibar, Tanzania, and here the artist presents herself as a sassy but modest star. In Kigali, Knowless Butera performs weekly at the expensive Serena Hotel. According to Clément Ishimwe (who acts as her manager), he would prefer to organise shows for his artists at less elitist venues,

yet he has so far been unable to find an alternative. During a conversation with an event organiser who wants to remain anonymous, the organiser elaborated on this: apparently, the police had stopped him from charging only 1,000 Rwandan francs (about £1) per ticket at a recent concert:

They insisted on 3k, so only the older and brighter people can enter. Coz the younger ones might cause chaos. The youth are too risky: they can smoke, they can fight, they can steal.

Once again, Rwanda's low-income citizens were being excluded from public life by a distrusting political elite, who were arguably trying to create a "silent" city as part of their project of reconstructing a society where there is peace<sup>103</sup>. Even successful artists face blockages when trying to create and promote new music in Kigali. Throughout this thesis, I have detailed obstacles encountered by Rwandan cultural producers. With these obstacles in mind, I will now consider Rwandan responses to hardship and suffering.



**Figure 7.14.** Screenshot of Knowless Butera in her music video *Tulia* (2014)

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<sup>103</sup> One exception to this was Top Chef, a cheap and popular soundproofed club in Nyabugogo. The owner of the nightclub – who is also the owner of the upmarket Kaizen clubs – hosted the 'Urban Nights' every Sunday, starring Rwanda's most popular music group, the Urban Boys.



## The art of patience and self-discipline



**Figure 7.15.** Waiting patiently between scenes at Mani Martin's music video shoot, July 2015. [My photograph]

I begin this section with a vignette, taken from my fieldwork diary (July 2015):

It is four thirty in the morning on a dry July day. I am at home in Nyamirambo, Kigali's so-called "ghetto". It is silent, but for the sound of songbirds. I am preparing to attend Mani Martin's video shoot for his new song, *Baby Gorilla*. I have managed to light some charcoal and a large pan of water is finally beginning to simmer. Using the torch on my phone, I retrieve three mugs and some tea bags from a large, plastic container. I line them up next to each other in routine morning fashion. Our neighbour's *butiki* is not yet open to buy milk, but I spoon in large quantities of sugar and sprinkle in tea masala. Damascene<sup>104</sup> is around, but Benjah is not here. He is visiting his mother and nephew. The

<sup>104</sup> Damascene is a friend of Benjah TBB and Pacento's. He was working as a chef at a restaurant next to Narrow Road Studio. In exchange for him cooking and cleaning, he was living with us rent-free.

youngest of his siblings, Benjah is extremely close to his mum. Pacento (real name Akimana Patience) has woken up. Emerging from his bedroom wearing low-riding jeans, high-waist boxer shorts and a vest, he attempts to turn on the lights. He pushes his lips together in disappointment, sucking in air through his teeth. The power is off again and there is no running water. 'No power, no work', Pacento laments while gently shaking his head. 'I will sleep again when you leave'. Like other audio producers, Pacento is paid exclusively on commission. He requires electricity to earn a living and is unable to rely on noisy generators. For the past two months, he has resorted to recording artists through the night. The disruptive power outages usually persist all morning, and sometimes for the entire day. Yet Pacento remains calm: '*Ariko ntakibazo*' [But no problem], he recites. '*Ihangane*' [Be patient], like my name eh? Patience! Pacento forces a laugh...

Mani's video shoot has been postponed once before and I am accustomed to my appointments running late. Finishing my tea, I text him for confirmation. He swiftly replies: '*Yego, ndaje*' [Yes, I'm coming]. By now, the morning light has swept over Kigali like a warm, breezy blanket. I lock the gate behind me and hurry towards our meeting place, a nearby petrol station. Nyamirambo's dim and dusty backroads are bumpy and scattered with rubbish, unlike the city's major tarmac roads, which are notoriously clean and well lit. It is a short walk and I soon discover that Mani and his crew have arrived. I greet everyone with customary handshakes before clambering into the back of a hired seven-seater car. Mani welcomes me in Swahili ('*Karibu*') and announces our departure in Kinyarwanda: '*OK, tugende!*' (OK, let's go!) His voice is soft and reserved. It would be another hour and a half of pick-ups before we would cross the Nyabarongo Bridge. Leaving Kigali behind us, we journey 60 miles north to Red Rocks hostel and campsite in Musanze - Rwanda's popular gorilla-trekking destination and the location of the video shoot.

While ethnographers have emphasised the importance of politeness and privacy in the everyday lives of Rwandans (Codere 1973: 117), more remains to be said about the significance of practising patience. During fieldwork, many of my informants were living according to the ethos of *kwihangana*, a cultural-linguistic concept meaning "to withstand". Historically, the term is thought to be linked to marriage. As my Kinyarwanda teacher noted, "If a husband behaved badly, an Auntie might tell his wife '*kwihangana*', as if to say, 'bear with it, accept

it; don't challenge him.'" In the post-genocide Rwandan society, *kwihangana* is used liberally "to encourage patience in response to circumstances ranging from irritating annoyances, to painful hardships, to the death of loved ones" (Zrally 2010: 1660).

Similarly, the notion of *ihangane* (be patient) is mostly associated with Rwanda's service industry. For example, when after waiting for two hours for one portion of chips, a waitress sluggishly approaches the table and mumbles 'food is finished' with a nonchalant expression on her face (a common occurrence during fieldwork). Or when after weeks of preparations, the police cut the sound mid-show. During many such instances, I was struck by the number of times that I heard the term *ihangane* being used. Indeed, a friend of mine once commented that "if you don't know what *ihangane* means then you don't understand this country at all." The term's popularity is thought to be linked to the post-genocide era, when President Kagame decided to push the notion of *agaciro* (see chapters 3 and 5). In this way, the cultivating of patience is thought of as an important step in life's journey towards self-discipline and self-reliance.

When patience is cultivated as a response to suffering, it is closely linked to the important notions of *kubaha* and *ubupfura*. The meaning of *kubaha* is multi-layered. It was described to me as "being honourable, polite and respectful", which in the Rwandan context also means "to obey one's superiors and to understand one's position in society". Another of my informants added that "wise people will understand that it is good to respect everyone, regardless of their status within society". After all, positions of power are changeable. Related to



*kubaha* is the practice of *ubupfura*. There is no direct translation for the Rwandan saying *Abanyarwanda bagira ikinyabupfura*. However, it roughly means “Rwandans are polite”. *Ikinyabupfura* comes from the noun *imfura*, meaning “firstborn” and, consequently, “exemplary person”. This is due to the firstborn son becoming the head of the family when the father dies. *Ikinyabapfura* means “to have the qualities of *imfura*” – qualities which were historically taught to Tutsi nobles at *itorero* camps (see chapter 2). *Ubupfura*, then, encompasses all of the most integral qualities and virtues required to be a “good” or “true” Rwandan, i.e. to be brave, honest, obedient, patient, private, reserved, self-disciplined and wise. Thus, losing one’s patience and self-control in public is highly undesirable behaviour.

When unable to attain the success and lifestyle they aspire for, cultural producers in Kigali persevere through patience, faith and hope. For my Christian informants, personal faith in a benevolent, omnipresent God also provided an important source of comfort. On this subject, one artist said the following:

In Rwanda, about destiny, we are taught whatever happens was written and whatever is meant to happen will happen. So, all in all, *ihangane*.

Another important coping strategy involves the belief that nothing is permanent and that suffering always ends: *Ntajora ridacya* (The night always ends). Others, such as Benjah TBB, hold onto the idea that their songs exist online as evidence of their existence, and that “one day” they might be ‘discovered’, and their lives will turn around. The images below provide further evidence of these processes.



**Figure 7.16.** Pacento's photo and caption on WhatsApp during my fieldwork: "God is in control...am blessed".



**Figure 7.17.** TBB's profile picture on Facebook after being voted off PGGSS 2016.

## **Conclusion**

When creating a song, some Rwandan artists transcend national boundaries – through geographical travel (e.g. to Uganda or Tanzania) or through internet-mediated collaborations with artists and producers in different countries. A returnee from Uganda, Benjah TBB was struggling to appeal to the Rwandan masses. With limited funds, he travelled to Kampala with audio producer Pacento. There, he mobilised his networks and relied on his linguistic knowledge to create a Rwanda-Uganda “collabo”. By creating a danceable Afrobeats song, with lyrics in English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda and Luganda, he was attempting to

appeal, simultaneously, to partygoers in Kigali and Kampala. In doing so, Benjah TBB hoped that “one day” he might achieve the money and fame he so desired.

Eric 1Key is less interested in appealing to the masses. His audiences mainly consist of relatively affluent and highly educated Rwandans with access to the internet. As a spoken word artist and hip-hop poet who wants to “speak truth to power”, Eric 1Key is concerned about the limits of free speech in Rwanda. Through his philosophical and personal lyrics, he engages with political and social issues, thus pushing the boundaries of what is acceptable in Rwandan music making. When Eric 1Key composed his song, *Gene Aise*, he was living in Kampala. Yet, in a way similar to other returnees and Rwandans of mixed nationality, what Eric 1Key was actually searching for was a space of belonging in Rwanda – a struggle expressed in his poignant lyrics. When creating *Gene Aise*, Eric 1Key used the internet to collaborate with Rwandans living in Canada and France – although this was complicated due to the artists using different recording software.

While Benjah TBB and Eric 1Key solicited help from their friends to create a song, Knowless Butera relied on the support of her fiancé Clément Ishimwe, a powerful audio producer and the owner of Kina Music. Due to this and her beautiful looks, relatable songs and modest persona, Knowless Butera is Rwanda’s most popular female singer. This is in contrast to Jody Phibi, whose popularity is limited, arguably due to her conspicuous links to Uganda and failure to fulfil expectations in Rwanda about what it means to be a “good” and “true” Rwandan woman. Despite her national success, Knowless Butera feels

discouraged by the limited opportunity to perform and make high sums of money in Rwanda (Knowless Butera 2016, int.). Therefore, she now wants to expand her fan base to the East African region – an aspiration that I explore in the following chapter.

In their quest for stardom, cultural producers in Kigali all encountered blockages. When unable to attain the success and lifestyle they aspired for, many of them persevered through the Rwandan philosophy of patience, as an important step in life's journey towards the virtue of self-reliance. For my Christian informants, ideas about God and destiny also provided an important source of comfort and hope.

## CHAPTER 8 - THE WORLD IN RWANDA AND RWANDA IN THE WORLD

Social and political transformations have always led to the emergence of new forms of creative expression, as people attempt to engage with and make sense of changing circumstances, and as they are inspired by new sources of influence (Barber 1997b). At the same time, cultural producers draw on long-standing historical traditions to feel connected to their past, or “roots” (Coplan 1997). This chapter explores some of the ways in which contemporary Rwandan artists adopt and ‘appropriate’ – that is, interpret, rework and adapt (Krings 2015) - aspects of national culture (*umuco nyarwanda*), while simultaneously seeking to appeal to regional, continental and global audiences. This occurs within the context of the intense social and political change associated with building the “New Rwanda” (*Rwanda Rushya*), and alongside accelerating globalisation.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I situate Rwanda’s national music industry within the context of regional, continental and global music landscapes. I consider the project of unifying Africa through popular music and efforts to create an ‘all-African brand’. More specifically, I focus on what I refer to as the ‘all-African commercial music industry’, in which TV channels such as MTV Base Africa and Trace TV have emerged as important platforms. MTV Base Africa was launched in 2005 with the aim of “uniting Africa through music and taking African music to the world” (MTV Base Africa 2017). However, I argue that this project is limited: there are hierarchies at play that not only limit the people to whom music is disseminated (to include only those audiences with access to certain technologies and, to a lesser extent, languages),

but also the sites from which it is disseminated. In practise, the artists represented by the (mainly Anglophone) all-African commercial brand reflect and reinforce existing economic hierarchies in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

In the second section I discuss how Rwandan artists are, and understand themselves to be, on the margins of the all-African commercial music industry. Their participation is limited partly due to Rwanda's civil war and genocide (1990-1994). The decimation of the economy and infrastructure delayed the beginning of a supranational music industry – by which I mean one that emphasises the transnational circulation of privately and digitally produced global genres (e.g. hip-hop, R&B and dancehall). Because of the particular history of Rwanda, the music industry only began to emerge in the mid-2000s. This is in contrast to other African countries, such as in neighbouring Uganda where it began in the early 1990s (see chapter 3).

However, despite being aware that they are marginalised, most of Rwanda's cultural producers aspire to be included in music landscapes beyond their national borders. Consequently, many of them draw on the strategies of successful all-African superstars, who they cite as major sources of influence. Through an examination of the trajectory of one Rwandan artist, I demonstrate how recording artists may aspire to follow a particular development path than centres on promotion from the national, to the regional and finally the continental level. In order to achieve this, aspiring superstars appropriate aspects of numerous genres, traditions and languages, thus appealing to multiple music industries and audiences to increase their chances of success. While most of the

artists in my research do remain resolutely 'Rwandan', they also adopt various African and global personas and aesthetics, revealing that what it means to be Rwandan is neither singular nor fixed, but is multi-layered, fluid, ambiguous and sometimes invented. As Bayart put it, "the formation of a culture [or national identity] necessarily involves dialogue, and occurs in interaction with its regional and international environment" (2005: 59). Moreover, in the Rwandan case, it is important to remember that the circulation of forms (Appadurai 2010) is emerging out of a situation in which there is an existing circulation of people, drawing on the multiple forms that they have been exposed to during their lives.

In the third section, I highlight existing debates and criticisms regarding the originality, authenticity and quality of digital music production in Rwanda. The ongoing consumption and appropriation of global music genres has led to concerns that the all-Africa platforms will result in 'cultural homogenisation' and 'Americanisation'. Throughout the chapter, I argue that, if we are to fully understand Rwanda's music industry, we must consider in detail the transnational circulation of forms. In the final section, I expand on the literature about 'cultural heterogenization', to make the point that accelerated globalisation neither represents nor inevitably leads to a decline in the influence of the nation-state on popular cultural forms.

### **The limitations of an 'all-African' project: MTV Base Africa and the hierarchies at play**

As I discuss throughout this thesis, significant historical connections between Rwanda and Uganda persist into the present, and the music economy



between Kigali and Kampala is particularly salient in this regard. Rwandan artists frequently collaborate with Ugandan stars, attempting to reach audiences in both countries through online music sharing platforms such as YouTube and SoundCloud, or through social media sites, especially Facebook and WhatsApp. Audiences are on the move too: every weekend people in Rwanda pile onto night buses, leaving behind Kigali's clean streets, social order and "security" for Kampala's vibrant nightlife, "chaos" and "freedom".

In addition to this Kigali-Kampala connection, Rwanda's nascent music industry operates within the regional, continental and global music industry. When African artists started recording global music genres in the early 1990s, many of them initially imitated African American or Jamaican pop music, embodying the personas of transnational hip-hop icons and 'Rastas', such as Tupac and Bob Marley. More recently, events promoters, drinks and mobile telecommunication companies, as well as media outlets across Africa, have been attempting to link consumer tastes into what Shipley (2014) describes as a "pan-African brand".

This is not a new idea: from the 1960s, reggae music was popularised in Africa by Jamaican music icons, especially Bob Marley and The Wailers, who sang songs about freedom from spiritual, psychological and physical slavery and oppression. Much of reggae's initial popularity in Africa was triggered by the film *The Harder They Come*, which was screened in 1973 in cinemas across the continent (Stasik 2013: 16). According to Loretta Collins, the film managed to convey the rebelliousness and soulfulness of the Rastafarian and 'Rude Boy'

cultures, as expressed through reggae music (2003: 49 - see also Lieber 1974: 199). The music itself went on to function as a danceable form of entertainment, but also as a means of expressing “pan-African solidarity” (Savishinsky 1994: 26). Barber discusses how art forms must “plug in at some level to popular consciousness” in order to appeal to the public (1987: 108). In this regard, reggae musicians sang lyrics that spoke directly to their African ‘brothers’; they spread messages of defiance and support at a time when many African countries were fighting for, or in the process of consolidating, political independence. One example of this was Bob Marley’s performance of *Zimbabwe* at the country’s independence celebration in 1980 (McNeill 2012a: 96). The popularity of reggae music went on to influence a number of African music genres, such as Afrobeat, *kwaito* and *majossa*, prompting African musicians to adopt and appropriate reggae - along with ‘Rasta’-inspired fashion - as their genre of choice, with lyrics often sung in Jamaican Patois<sup>105</sup> (Stanley-Niaah 2009: 761).

Today, the ‘pan-African brand’ continues to be promoted by what I refer to as the ‘all-African commercial music industry’, with TV channels such as MTV Base Africa, Trace TV, and Channel O emerging as important platforms. MTV Base Africa is a 24-hour English language music and entertainment channel from Viacom International Media Networks, Europe. Combining an assortment of African and African diasporic aesthetics, it achieves enormous coverage across the continent. The channel claims to celebrate the diversity of music relevant to young Africans, playing a wide range of genres including hip-hop, R&B,

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<sup>105</sup> See also White (2002) for a discussion on the cosmopolitanism of Congolese rumba music.

dancehall, *kwaito*, hiplife, reggae, *soukous*, *m'balax* and Afrobeats – the latter being most popular at the time of my research. MTV Base Africa was launched in 2005, with the aim of “uniting Africa through music and taking African music to the world” (MTV Base Africa 2017). However, it is important to note that the channel does not offer equal exposure to music from every African country.

There are two different feeds of MTV Base Africa. The first is located in Johannesburg and caters for a South African audience, featuring mostly South African artists. The other covers the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, with the Head Office located in Lagos, Nigeria (ibid). Throughout the duration of my fieldwork, the latter was dominated by artists from Nigeria (see Table 1). Nigeria and South Africa certainly exert the greatest power and influence over the ‘all-African’ music industry, followed by other mainly English-speaking cities of secondary importance: Accra (Ghana), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Kampala (Uganda), and Nairobi (Kenya) - as well as Kinshasa (DRC), due to its popular Congolese rumba and *soukous* legends, such as Papa Wemba (deceased), Fally Ipupa and Koffi Olamide (Pype 2006: 311). MTV Base Africa also features international artists and members of the African diaspora living in Europe and the United States. Since the MTV Base brand first launched in the United Kingdom in 1999, London has also emerged as an important centre for the industry, reinforcing the emphasis on Nigeria (and Ghana), owing to the large diasporas in London. This over-representation of English-speaking countries with strong national markets both reflects and reinforces existing economic hierarchies within and beyond sub-Saharan Africa.

AWARD	NAME OF ARTIST	COUNTRY
Best Female	Yemi Alade	Nigeria
Best Male	David O	Nigeria
Best Group	P-Square	Nigeria
Best New Act	Patoranking	Nigeria
Best Hip-Hop	Casper Nyovest	South Africa
Best Collaboration	<i>All Eyes on Me</i> by AKA, Burna Boy, Da LES & JR	South Africa/Nigeria
Song of the Year	<i>Dorobucci</i> by Mavins	Nigeria
Best Live	Diamond Platnumz	Tanzania
Video of the Year	<i>Nafukwa</i> by Riky Rick. Director: Adriaan Louw	South Africa
Best Pop & Alternative	Jeremy Loops	South Africa
Best Francophone	DJ Arafat	Ivory Coast
Best Lusophone	Ary	Angola
Personality of the Year	Trevor Noah	South Africa
MAMA Evolution	D'Banj	Nigeria
Best International	Nicki Minaj	United States
Artist of the Decade	P-Square	Nigeria

**Table 1.** Winners of the 2015 MTV Africa Music Awards (MAMA).

Nonetheless, the explicit aim of the channel is the construction of an all-African community that extends beyond the sites in which it is produced and disseminated from. In 2015, the MTV Africa Music Awards (MAMA), hosted at the International Convention Centre in Durban, South Africa, celebrated the channel's tenth anniversary under the rubric *#WeAreOne*. Other hashtags were used widely on social media, including *#AfricaRising*, *#AfricanFashion* and *#Blacklivesmatter* (borrowed from the United States). These hashtags are suggestive of the channel's project to unify Africa through popular music, as well as showing that viewers are willing to buy into a narrative of African unity.

In his work on music and identity formation, Denis-Constant Martin discusses how people imagine political communities through music: "They develop feelings of belonging to an entity so vast they cannot physically embrace

it; they dream of affective ties, which may be politically mobilised” (2013: 13). This speaks to Birgit Meyer’s notion of ‘aesthetic formations’ (2009), which corrects Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (2006). Like Anderson, Meyer rejects earlier theorisations of communities as being dependent on face-to-face communication. Yet, while Anderson discusses the role of print culture, Meyer demonstrates how the circulation of new media formats, shared symbols, and their related aesthetics have enabled stronger modes of belonging between Pentecostal Christians. We can see how this notion has played out in MTV Africa, i.e. an all-African community is reinforced through the circulation of recognisable hashtags, both online via social media, and at major commercial music events that are aired on transnational TV stations.

Beyond the hashtags used to advertise the event, the 2015 MAMA awards included a performance of the hit song *Africa Rising*, an Afrobeats “collabo” featuring some of the continent’s ‘hottest’ artists: Davido (Nigeria), Tiwa Savage (Nigeria), Sarkodie (Ghana), Diamond Platnumz (Tanzania), Mi Casa (South Africa) and Lola Rae (Nigerian-born British Ghanaian). The song gained popularity among members of Kigali’s youth (*imuto*) for its danceable beats, upbeat message, catchy lyrics and use of Pidgin English. It migrated through Rwandan sound-systems, reinforcing Christian ideology and the government’s policy of ‘national unity’, albeit unintentionally. In the Rwandan context of post-genocide nation-building, lyrics such as “Peace is our strength, division is our weakness” and “Let’s unite and give ourselves another chance” took on new and powerful meanings. As DJ Pius told me: “This song is so inspiring! The message is positive and promotes unity, which Africa needs as a continent”. He continued:

“I really like the parts about patriotism. We in Rwanda can relate to that”. Also relatable to Pius were the lines:

Doing our duty, we're trying to make it a better place for us  
And I believe it's gonna happen, in God we trust  
Straight from the bottom, all the way to the top  
I prophesise it shall come to pass, Amen

These concepts of national duty, self-reliance and faith in God resonated with many of my Christian informants.

As discussed in previous chapters, many of Rwanda's cultural producers have internalised the concept of *agaciro*, a concept tied to self-respect, dignity and patriotism, while also giving value to *umuco nyarwanda* (Rwandan culture) and *gakondo* (tradition). During our conversations, my informants shared with me their sense of national duty, telling me that it is their “job” to contribute to Rwanda's reconstruction by helping to develop their “now rising” music industry. Equally important was their prevailing belief in destiny; the idea that one's future has already been written. This provided them with a source of patience and hope, especially during times of suffering (chapter 7).

The song also resonates beyond the Rwandan context, in African countries where recent socio-political developments have created comparable conditions. To some extent then the project of uniting Africa in all its diversity seems to be working. For those willing to buy into this project, the song *Africa Rising* invokes feelings of African pride and belonging more broadly: it references perceived African “freedom fighters”, such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Kwame Nkrumah, and even Barack Obama. These political figures have also

been 'name-dropped' in recent songs by Rwandan and Kenyan artists<sup>106</sup>.

Furthermore, the chorus contains the lyrics:

I love my Africa naa naa – Rise up, oh Africa rise up  
I love my Africa naa naa – Rise up, my mother Africa rise up  
We are one Africa naa naa – Together lifting Africa rise up  
I love my Africa naa naa – Rise up, beautiful Africa rise up

The *Africa Rising* project was directed by Channel O, a station established by Multichoice Africa in the mid-1990s. Despite being based in South Africa, Channel O shot the music video in Accra, Ghana. As part of a clever marketing strategy, they recruited African superstars who would be representative of the continent's diversity; from Africa's southern, eastern and western regions. They also included a white South African and a member of the African diaspora. In the 'Behind the Scenes' documentary (available on YouTube), the video editor reveals this tactic when making the following comment: "Now we need to make sure we deliver something that represents the *whole* continent. I'm so lucky that I got asked to see out this vision, so I really appreciate that to Channel O Multichoice." Despite the channel's efforts to promote this all-African brand, some Rwandans refused to buy into it. During a conversation with Eric 1Key, for example, he said the following:

It sounds like a political campaign, you know? 'Africa is the future! Invest in Africa!' Pffff! I can just imagine the briefing, the recruiting process, the approval of messages...But it's not *real*! I don't like it.

This was echoed by others, such as this anonymous poster on YouTube speaking of the absence of a Namibian singer: "No Namibian but oh well Africa is one".

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<sup>106</sup> For example, *Yawe* by the Urban Boys (2014) (Song 64, Appendix II), and *Nerea* by Sauti Sol, featuring Amos and Josh (2015).

In his discussions on globalisation and Africa, James Ferguson argues that:

...networks of political and economic connection do indeed 'span the globe' as often claimed, but they do not cover it. Instead, they hop over (rather than flow through) the territories inhabited by the vast majority of the African population (2006: 14).

In other words, so-called 'global flows' and the circulation of forms are patchy, unequal and incomplete (Dávila 2012: 6-15). This is particularly true of the hierarchical all-African commercial music industry, in which a relatively small number of urban 'hotspots' are plugged into circuits of connection, while being "surrounded by deserts of poor infrastructure and slow communications" (Barber 2018: 113 – see fig. 8.1.). In this case the hierarchies at play not only limit the spaces and people *to* which music is disseminated (to include only those spaces and audiences with access to certain technologies and to a lesser extent languages), but also the sites *from* which it is disseminated. Thus, the singers featured in the aforementioned song are from those countries and cities that dominate the primarily Anglophone all-African commercial music industry - those who have access to the project's managers, sponsors and producers - while excluding African 'superstars' from other countries.



\* The red circles indicate the most powerful and influential centres of the mainly English-speaking all-African commercial music industry, while the black circles indicate cities of secondary importance to the industry.



**Figure 8.1.** MTV Base Africa: the 'hot-spots'.

**On the outside looking in: a desired development path shared by many of Rwanda's artists**

I want to see my music video on Trace TV, Citizen TV, MTV Base Africa. Why not? You have to dream! I have contacts for Citizen and Trace. I'm pushing it. It's the right time for Rwanda to be seen internationally.

- Mani Martin 2015, int.

As noted previously, the beginnings of Rwanda's supranational music industry only began in the mid-2000s. For this reason, Rwanda's cultural producers describe their music scene as a "baby industry" that is "still growing". While a small number of all-African superstars were collaborating in their efforts to "take African music to the world", the Rwandan artists in my research understood themselves to be on the margins of the all-African commercial music industry. Indeed, at the time of research, only a handful of artists had managed to perform beyond the east-central region, or even internationally. For the majority, life was defined by the hustle for money and recognition, both within and beyond national borders.

Despite this, it was a time of perceived opportunity in Kigali – and many of my informants articulated hope for the future, telling me that it was simply a matter of "catching up" with other African countries. According to Grant, Rwanda's hip-hop artists mostly rapped for 'local' audiences, with "Kinyarwanda lyrics that addressed the specific experiences and hardships of the country's youth" (2014: 216). However, my research reveals that most of the country's artists hope to reach audiences beyond their capital city of only 1 million. In the words of Clément Ishimwe:

It's good if we do like 70% [of our lyrics] in a language where we can have a very big fan base, like Swahili. You know the problem we have in Rwanda, the population is really small: only 11 million.

Rwanda's cultural producers aspire to fully participate in the all-African commercial music industry and to represent Rwanda internationally. As Mani Martin's opening quotation exemplifies, they dream of having their music videos

played on regional TV stations – such as Citizen TV, a popular station based in Kenya that plays East African music – and all-African TV stations, such as MTV Base Africa and Trace TV. Acutely aware of the all-African commercial music industry, many of them shared with me their dreams of recording an audio with Don Jazzy, a renowned Nigerian producer, manager and recording artist, or of filming a music video in South Africa, which is known for having the “best video directors” (e.g. “the God Father”).

Due to these aspirations to fully participate in the all-African commercial music industry, the artists in my research were deliberately drawing on the strategies of successful all-African superstars, who they regularly cited as being major sources of influence – for example:

I’m really proud that Africans are turning to themselves now. I remember I used to listen to American music. Now I’m proud of African artists in general coz we’re getting back to our roots (Mani Martin 2016, int.).

This emphasis on intra-African circulations reminds me of theorist and philosopher Achille Mbembe’s formulation of ‘Afropolitanism’, in which he talks about the many ways in which Africans, or people of African origin, “understand themselves as being *part* of the world rather than being *apart*” (Mbembe and Balakrishnan 2016: 29 – my emphasis). Mbembe expands on the political ideology of pan-Africanism to make the argument that the African continent has to become its own centre: “It has to become its own force. Not as a way of separating itself from the rest of the world, but as a precondition for it to exercise

its weight among other forces in the world”<sup>107</sup> (ibid: 31). Since Afropolitanism is a “geography of circulation and mobility”, Mbembe emphasises the importance of dependency networks, which in essence determine whether people and products are able to move (ibid: 36-37).

Regarding music in Rwanda, the table below indicates the all-African artists who were cited by my informants as being major sources of influence, and who were most popular in Kigali during my fieldwork. In addition to conversations and interviews with cultural producers, I collected this data by questioning Kigalians as I moved around the city. As my Kinyarwanda-language skills progressed, I was able to speak to an increasingly wide range of individuals, including friends and former colleagues, school and university students, motorbike taxi drivers, fellow passengers on bus journeys, staff at music venues, party-goers, tour guides, soldiers and security guards, market workers and traders, hair dressers and barbers, and tailors. Moreover, more than seven years of working and researching intermittently in Rwanda enabled me to observe and hear for myself the rising popularity of these African superstars: their songs regularly encourage dancing at house parties and private gatherings, and along with Rwandan gospel music provide the soundtracks for most public bus journeys. These artists dominate the airwaves of the nation’s coolest radio and TV stations and are played by DJs in nightclubs and bars. Consequently, several of them have accepted invitations to perform in Rwanda, including P-Square (Nigeria), Wizkid (Nigeria), Mafikizolo (South Africa), Liquideep (South Africa),

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<sup>107</sup> See also Tom Boellstorff’s (2018) article on “Dubbing Culture”, in which he considers how Indonesians in an already globalised world come to think of themselves as *lesbi* or *gay* through encounters with mass media.

Diamond Platnumz (Tanzania), Sauti Sol (Kenya), and all of the Ugandans listed. American and Jamaican recording artists, such as Konshens, Sean Paul and Shaggy, also remain popular and have performed in Kigali under the new regime.

ARTIST/GROUP	GENDER	COUNTRY	REGION
D'Banj	Male	Nigeria	West Africa
Davido	Male		
Don Jazzy	Male		
Iyanya	Male		
Patoranking	Male		
P-Square	Male		
Tiwa Savage	Female		
Wizkid	Male		
Yemi Alade	Female		
2Face	Male		
Fuse ODG	Male	Ghana	
Guru	Male		
Toofan	Male	Togo	
Liquideep	Male	South Africa	Southern Africa
Mafikizolo	Female & Male		
Diamond Platnumz	Male	Tanzania	East Africa
Professor Jay	Male		
Nameless	Male	Kenya	
Sauti Sol	Male		
Chameleone	Male		
Bebe Cool	Male		
Bobi Wine	Male		
Eddy Kenzo	Male		
Radio and Weasel (the Goodlyfe Crew)	Male		

**Table 2.** Popular and influential all-African artists.

Among the list of Ugandans is the popular ragga and Afrobeats artist Eddy Kenzo (real name Edrisa Musuuza). Despite losing his Rwandan mother aged five, and thereafter living on the streets for 13 years, the singer recently achieved substantial international success. Eddy Kenzo's official website identifies the following "three significant breakthroughs" in his musical career: (1) his 2008 song

*Yanimba* (featuring Mikie Wine), which elevated the artist to a position of national fame; (2) his 2010 song *Stamina*, which was a “mega hit across the East African community”, as well as being used by President Museveni in his election campaign; and (3) his 2014 song *Sitya Loss*<sup>108</sup>, which was popularised by the digital circulation of its accompanying music video (Eddy Kenzo 2017). The song implores young people to dance and have fun, rather than to fight or worry about their problems, because “life is too short and the music is good” (translated from Luganda to English). The video features children dancing and became an international viral sensation; the song has currently received a staggering 20,656,075 views on YouTube<sup>109</sup>, and has exposed Eddy Kenzo to all-African and global audiences. The following year he received the Viewer’s Choice Award for Best International Act at the 2015 BET (Black Entertainment Television) Awards in Los Angeles (Daily Monitor 2015).

Despite Eddy Kenzo becoming internationally successful, in Kigali the popularity of Ugandan “ragamuffins” (i.e. performers of ragga music) has recently provoked some debate and controversy. On the one hand, I return to Mbembe’s work on Afropolitan transnational flows within Africa and make the argument that some *Abasajja* (Ugandan-Rwandans) support Ugandan superstars because they see themselves in a ‘world’ that is characterised by mobility between Kigali and Kampala; they grew up listening to Ugandan music, understand the lyrics, and in some cases are friends with the artists. For example, one ragga musician made the following comment:

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<sup>108</sup> *Sitya Loss* means “I don’t fear loss”, or “I’m not afraid of losing” in Luganda.

<sup>109</sup> This figure was correct as of the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

Here [in Kigali] we have some talent. These people when you listen to it, I salute. But me I was inspired by an East African man, Radio. Yeah, I was not inspired by Bob Marley or Lucky Dube. Just a simple boy from *here*. Even tomorrow, I can go and see him, he's my friend, but he inspires me the whole world! The way he tries to do his music, I love his art of singing, and the way he gives himself to music (Elephant and Sintex 2015, int.).

Certainly, it makes sense for some Rwandan artists to align themselves with regional superstars, especially for those who grew up in Uganda, and thus see themselves as sharing their successes.

However, as discussed throughout my thesis, some artists attempt to conceal their Ugandan connections, choosing instead to represent themselves as being unambiguously and proudly 'Rwandan'. As already stated, this is unsurprising: *Abasajya* are often perceived by others as being "un-Rwandan", untrustworthy, arrogant and privileged; in positions of political and economic advantage. This contrasts with *Abasope*, who tend to generate greater support from the population. During a conversation with one cultural producer who grew up in Uganda, we discussed this issue in relation to R&B singer Tom Close, the winner of the first *Guma Guma* competition in 2011. He told me:

Lots of people didn't know he grew up in Uganda. It's the same with The Ben. Lots of people didn't know. His whole family was in Uganda before the war and after the war they moved back. It was the same for Tom Close, coz their fathers were soldiers. So, it's a problem when people find out that background. Some people are not happy for you just because you come from Uganda. But then when you're in Uganda they tell you you're Rwandese. It's not easy.

Yet it was not only *Abasajya* who were distancing themselves from their Ugandan networks. Despite previously organising and funding several Rwanda-Uganda "collabos", Clément Ishimwe (who was born and raised in Rwanda) told me that the popularity of Ugandan music is diminishing:

Here in Rwanda we used to listen to a *lot* of Ugandan music, like 80%, but now it has changed. So even now when Ugandan artists come here their shows are flopping. Ugandans are *too* much into Jamaican music: dancehall, ragga, reggae... but our [Rwandan] music is more singing, you know? *Emotional*. In these days, I'm more interested in connecting with Tanzania. We are producing songs in Swahili. We mostly perform in Bujumbura, Bukavu, Goma and Tanzania. The problem with Uganda is they are so closed. You know for us we accept different genre of music and we listen to *everything*. But Ugandans, they all want to see their own music. They don't want anything from abroad. They want their own thing.

Despite this, Uganda has in many ways served as a model of music production in Kigali and certainly inspired the growth of Rwanda's post-genocide music industry, especially as so many of its "pioneers" were *Abasajya* (chapter 3). Moreover, Eddy Kenzo's personal trajectory exemplifies a desired development path shared by many of Rwanda's artists. Within this schema, artists must first appeal to a Rwandan audience and achieve *national* success. This then provides them with the platform required to 'graduate' to *regional* East African music markets. Finally, they aspire to achieve recognition in the *continental* all-African commercial music industry, or alternatively global music markets. As I illustrate below with regard to Mani Martin's musical trajectory, artists following this development path straddle the boundaries between a number of interconnected genres and languages, in order to align themselves with these multiple music industries and audiences and increase their chance of success. In contrast, the previous chapter exemplified how some Rwandan artists travel to Uganda in search of alternative audiences after struggling to achieve great successes at 'home'. Here, I consider the musical trajectory of one of Rwanda's most popular and well-known singers.





**Figure 8.2.** Screenshot of Jody Phibi's Facebook status. Posted on 17 August 2016.

## MANI MARTIN'S MUSICAL TRAJECTORY

Mani Martin was born in 1988 in a village in Cyangugu, in Rwanda's Western Province. His first song, *Bari he?* (Where are they?), was a direct response to the 1994 genocide. A Hutu, Mani Martin composed the song when he was just nine years old and he can still remember his teacher and his classmates crying after he performed it. With the encouragement of that same teacher, Mani Martin became the leader of his Sunday school choir and continued to compose songs about *Imana* (God), and about suffering and reconciliation. It is perhaps unsurprising that church choirs and gospel music initially dominated

Rwanda's post-genocide music scene (Grant 2014: 201). As Mani Martin explained to me:

That time in Rwanda there were so many testimonies about what [people] went through during the genocide. That horrible journey that people had. So, through the testimonies in the church I could get a song in my mind (Mani Martin 2015, int.).

Supportive of his music, a pastor accompanied Mani Martin to Kilula 9 studio in Kigali. There, aged 17, he recorded his first hit single with audio producer Patrick Buta. The Kinyarwanda-language song, *Urukumbuzi* (Nostalgia), speaks of the longing to escape earthly suffering and to meet God in the eternal afterlife (Song 30, Appendix II). Resonating among many Rwandans, it gained huge popularity and was awarded 'Song of the Year' (2005) by Radio 10. Consequently, Mani Martin's status was elevated to one of national fame.

After conquering the national stage as a gospel singer, Mani Martin 'converted' to secular music in 2010. He told me: "At that time we started to *really* have this pop music, you know? So, I joined, and I was successful" (Mani Martin 2015, int.). Inspired in 2012 by the first edition of Rwanda's KigaliUp international music festival, at which there is an emphasis on live music rather than playback, Mani Martin redefined his musical persona again: this time as a "live musician". In this capacity, the singer used his platform as a national star to break into the regional level. He travelled internationally to perform at regional festivals, including the Bayimba International Festival of the Arts, which takes place annually at the National Theatre in Kampala (Bayimba International Festival of the Arts 2017). In Uganda's capital city, I met with Sylvester Kabombo, one of the festival organisers. He told me that the three-day event, which partners the

KigaliUp festival, aims to “bring together known and upcoming musicians, dancers, actors, film makers and visual artists from across the region and beyond”. In addition to performing in Kampala, Mani Martin has performed at the Doadoa Festival in Jinja, Uganda. *Doadoa* means “movement” in Swahili and the goal of the festival, as an “East African performing arts market”, is to bring together musicians, audiences and other professionals from East Africa, to strengthen and celebrate regional performance styles (Doadoa 2017).

With the acceleration of music circulation and cross-border collaboration, competition between musicians is increasing. At regional performing arts festivals, the ability to stand out is ever more important, as is the ability to represent one’s nation or locality. In this regard, Mani Martin decided to draw on aspects of *umuco nyarwanda* (Rwandan Culture) that were recognisable and appealing to regional audiences. In Kigali, he learnt from, and started to perform with, the Gakondo Group (see map – Mani Martin to Gakondo Group connection, Appendix VI), which consists of mostly Tutsi returnees whose songs are in line with RPF ideology (see chapter 2). More specifically, the group tends to sing songs proclaiming *amahoro* (peace) and national unity. Later that year, in 2012, Mani Martin released another hit song, entitled *Intero y’Amahoro* (The verse of peace) (Song 31, Appendix II). In the song, Mani Martin calls for peace, singing the following translated lyrics:

When I sing this verse of peace sing with me  
Let our voices spread the peace  
Let it spread everywhere

Significantly, *Intero y’Amahoro* draws on ‘traditional’ Rwandan elements, such as the rhythmic Yeeee (Yes!) sounded between the lyrics; also, a distinctive 6/8 time

signature that was previously associated with the Tutsi aristocracy. The accompanying music video includes popular symbols of *umuco nyarwana*, such as long-horned *inyambo* cows, women dressed in *imikenyero* (Rwandan robes) and the drinking of *amata* (milk). We also see Mani Martin dancing *imbyino nyarwanda* (Rwandan dance); this new and important symbol of being Rwandan (see chapter 2).



**Figure 8.3.** Screenshot of Mani Martin dancing *imbyino nyarwanda* in his music video, *Intero y'Amahoro* (2010).

That same year, Mani Martin was crowned 'Traditional Artist of the Year' at the Salax Music Awards (Rwanda's equivalent of the Grammy's) and accompanied President Kagame to perform at 'Rwanda Day' in Boston, USA. Following this, Mani Martin received criticism from his original Christian fans for "abandoning Jesus to seek favour and material rewards from the state" (Grant 2014: 213). Heated debates flourished between Rwanda's most conservative

Christians and its secular musicians (ibid). However, because of his aspiration to achieve recognition beyond the nation, Mani Martin's decisions were not primarily shaped by his Rwandan fans. Although on the surface Mani Martin seemed to be concerned with representing his nation at home, what the singer was actually doing was drawing on emblematic aspects of *umuco nyarwanda*, not only to appeal to audiences *within* Rwanda, but to carry these symbols to members of the Rwandan diaspora and to regional audiences in Uganda.

In addition to Uganda, Mani Martin has performed internationally, both within Africa – in eastern DRC, Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan and South Africa – and overseas, in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the United States. Having achieved national and regional success, he now aspires to achieve recognition in the continental all-African commercial music industry. To this end, Mani Martin has recently recorded some English-language Afrobeats songs, such as *Baby Gorilla* (2015; Song 32, Appendix II<sup>110</sup>). Acutely aware of Rwanda's reputation beyond the region, Mani Martin joked with me that his country is famous for the “three G's”, i.e. the 1994 Genocide, beautiful Girls, and the mountain Gorillas inhabiting the majestic Volcanoes National Park. While being proud of the more flattering stereotypes, Mani Martin – like so many of Rwanda's contemporary artists – refused to be defined by the genocide. During his interview, Mani Martin shared with me his experiences with international journalists:

I'm an artist who has been travelling all around the world. One thing I don't like, when you meet international journalists they immediately ask you about the genocide. They would ask me: 'Are you part of the

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<sup>110</sup> *Baby Gorilla* was produced by Pacento. The accompanying music video was directed by Bernard. On other projects, Mani Martin has worked with the video producer Meddy Saleh (see map – Mani Martin connections, Appendix VI).

criminals or the survivors?’ I mean *really* shocking questions. And I used to ask myself: ‘Why is this history following me wherever I go?’ But then I realised, what I have to do as a communicator, as an artist, is put more effort to show the world the *new* image. That being Rwandan does not mean to be either a killer or a survivor. It means to be a citizen of the world. I sat down and decided I need to share something *positive* about Rwanda (Mani Martin 2015, int.).

The quotation reveals that it was Mani Martin’s desire to represent the “New Rwanda” internationally that inspired his song *Baby Gorilla*. He wanted to project alternative ways of being Rwandan beyond his ethnic identity, ‘Hutu’, which in national and international public discourse had become almost synonymous with ‘killer’. Moreover, while Mani Martin perceived himself as resolutely ‘Rwandan’, he also declared himself a “citizen of the world”, imagining himself as belonging to a global music community. Although in reality Mani Martin has struggled for recognition beyond the region, his song makes reference to familiar, contemporary symbols of global celebrity and an indulgent, luxurious lifestyle - being photographed by the paparazzi, staying at five-star hotels and driving a Ferrari car. This speaks to Bayart’s engagement with ‘extraversion’, in which he argues that identity in Africa has always looked outside (2005: 71). However, while in chapter 2 I discussed a kind of regional extraversion stretching back for several centuries, this use of contemporary global symbolism reflects wider engagement beyond the region, and between Rwandan artists and global music landscapes.





**Figures 8.4., 8.5., 8.6. and 8.7. (Above and below)** Scenes from shooting Mani Martin's music video shoot *Baby Gorilla* at Red Rocks Rwanda, Musanze, July 2015. [My photographs]









To understand this use of global symbolism, it is useful to think about the multiple audiences that Mani Martin is addressing. Here I draw on Katrina Daly Thompson's work on Tanzanian hip-hop, in which she discusses how rappers did not always have a single, 'local' audience. Due to new technologies of production and dissemination, the internationally successful group X-Plastaz marketed a "double-voiced" image". For their Tanzanian audience, they rapped about Tanzanian issues and used Swahili-language promotional materials that highlighted their Dutch sponsor and international networks, while for a European audience they used English-language materials and projected images of Maasai 'traditionalism', encouraging a "touristic western gaze" (Thompson 2008: 33 – see also Kiwan and Meinhof 2011: 11). Likewise, Mani Martin experimented with Maasai imagery in his 2014 music video, *Don't Cry*, even though Maasai clothing is clearly not Rwandan dress. In Mani Martin's case, he created a juxtaposition between a popular, commercialised symbol of 'East African tradition' (represented by Maasai cloth) and global 'modernity' (represented by 'Western' clothing). This allowed him to occupy a space between the regional and the global. In these and other ways, the singer actively sought to appeal to an international audience by playfully drawing on his regional 'roots', as he and others have imagined them.



**Figure 8.8.** Screenshot of Mani Martin dressed in Maasai cloth in his music video, *Don't Cry* (2014).

Mani Martin's musical trajectory exemplifies how Rwandan artists straddle the boundaries between multiple genres and languages to appeal to different audiences and increase their chances of success. While most of the artists in my research remain resolutely 'Rwandan', they also adopt and appropriate various African and global personas and aesthetics, revealing that what it means to be Rwandan is neither singular nor fixed, but is rather multi-layered, fluid, ambiguous and sometimes invented. Through his music, Mani Martin presents himself as a proud (and therefore 'good') Rwandan citizen, an 'East African Maasai', an aspiring all-African pop star, and a 'citizen of the world'. When Mani Martin makes a song, he also makes himself by placing emphasis on emblematic aspects of Rwandan, regional, African and global culture. In occupying these multiple scales, i.e. nation, region, continent, and beyond, Mani Martin's musical trajectory – and that of others like him – undermines simplistic local-global dichotomies.

## Debates and criticisms: originality, authenticity and 'cultural heterogenization'

In these days, everything sounds the same. Most of the songs use the same beats. You can't even identify what you are listening to. There's nothing *unique*.

So, I'm trying to be someone who's creative. I'm trying to create *different* messages, music composition, ways of singing, video. I'm trying to do things differently.

- Branakweli Alex 2015, int.

Kigali is so slow! I really hate the vibe here! Everyone is doing the same thing. There's no innovation, but replication!

- Collin Sekajugo 2015, WhatsApp conversation.

The recent surge of digital music production across Africa has prompted debate and criticism among cultural producers, audiences and scholars. In her article on Uganda's music industry, Pamela Mbabazi describes how audio producers "churn out songs [by simply] cutting and pasting" samples and beats provided by digital music software, such as Logic Pro (2012: 170-171). Similarly, Grant has documented the controversy surrounding *gushishura* (literally, "to peel"); a Rwandan practice in which R&B artists copy foreign songs and translate them into Kinyarwanda (2017: 167). Mbabazi argues that digital devices and systems – which are used to do work that would otherwise be done by people – compromise creativity, dehumanise music and bring into question the issue of ownership (2012: 171 - see also Pype 2013). She is especially critical of the absence of musical instruments, as well as vocalists' use of auto-tune machines and other sound effects provided by computer software. Mbabazi also acknowledges the alternative viewpoint that cheap and relatively easy-to-use

technologies make possible the involvement of increasing numbers of people in the production of popular music (ibid).

More importantly, some of my informants expressed concerns that the all-African commercial music industry is creating and promoting music that is both unoriginal and inauthentic, as well as being low in quality. This viewpoint was particularly prominent among members of Rwanda's spoken word community, who deliberately defined themselves in opposition to "copy-cat artists". While the migration of African electronic music represents the promise that "digital production and circulation will erase geographical limitations", there are anxieties that computer repetitions and "copy-cat artists" will "flatten out" African music's uniqueness (Shipley 2013a: 375). In this regard, the opening quotations reveal how the ongoing consumption and appropriation of African and global music genres has led to concerns that platforms such as MTV Base Africa will result in 'cultural homogenisation'; in other words, the reduction of diversity across Africa through the popularisation and diffusion of particular genres, beats, languages and styles. This has not replaced fears of 'Americanisation'; the process through which America is perceived to influence the popular culture of African countries (Appadurai 1990: 295). Despite 'turning to itself', the all-African commercial music industry remains heavily influenced by American hip-hop and fashion. This continues to evoke concerns about the loss of African cultural practices due to the importation of foreign influences. However, as Appadurai points out:

What these arguments fail to consider is that at least as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one way or another (1990: 295).

The process of adopting elements of 'global' culture to 'local' cultures is sometimes referred to as 'cultural heterogenization' (ibid) and has been explored in a sophisticated manner by scholars of African popular culture (e.g. Barber 1987; Erlmann 1996, 1997; Hannerz 1997; Krings 2015; Larkin 1997). Researchers have demonstrated how the flexibility of hip-hop as a global form has allowed African cultural producers to modify the genre and innovate new sounds, in order to appeal to 'local' or national audiences (see Eric Charry's edited book, *Hip Hop Africa* (2012)).

Following Appaduai (2010) and others who have worked on transnational music production (e.g. Miller et al. 2016; White 2002), I make the point that if we are to fully understand Rwanda's music industry, we must consider, in detail, the transnational circulation of forms. In this final section, I expand on the literature on cultural heterogenization, to demonstrate that accelerated globalisation neither represents nor inevitably leads to a decline in the influence of the nation-state on popular cultural forms. In his book on East African hip-hop, Mwenda Ntarangwi asserts that collaboration between Tanzanian, Kenyan and Ugandan rappers is so integral to their hip-hop culture that national identity is no longer meaningful:

Hip-hop song lyrics are often composed to reflect regional or cosmopolitan identities [...and...] none of the artists whose work is analysed have, for instance, any distinct Kenyan, Ugandan, or Tanzanian identity (2009: 116-117).

Over the past three decades there has been a proliferation of literature addressing globalisation (e.g. Bernal 2014; Hirst et al. 2009; Reeves 1993; Robertson 1992; Schiller and Faist 2010; Wolf 2010), with prominent thinkers

such as Judith Butler claiming that “today, it is the decline of the nation-state that we are witnessing with globalization” (Butler and Spivak 2010: 59). According to theorists such as these, a space for multiple associations has opened up beyond the nation-state, reorganising the world horizontally via overlapping systems of interaction (Cohen 1996: 516). This has reduced the influence exerted by nation-states, including in the realm of popular culture. However, in relation to the Rwandan music industry, this is simply not the case: as I demonstrate below, cultural producers have been grappling with the question of how to develop a united, national musical identity, while simultaneously being open to the influence of global music genres (especially, hip-hop and R&B). More specifically, their active search for new ways to ‘domesticate’ these genres reveals that the power of the nation-state remains relevant and strong. Here, it is important to note that the ‘domestication’ of global genres may also involve adaptation to an ethnic-linguistic culture, which may be both sub-national and cross national borders (e.g. Swahili). In other words, the nation-state is not the only ‘local’ entity that can be counterpoised to the global. Yet, in the Rwandan case, the emphasis on developing a united, national musical identity is particularly strong, precisely because the existence of the nation was recently threatened by civil war and genocide.

One common way of ‘domesticating’ global music is by revitalising and incorporating ‘local traditions’ (Charry 2012 – see also Levine 2009). However, unlike hiplife in Ghana (Shipley 2013b), *kwaito* in South Africa (Steingo 2005) or Bongo Flava in Tanzania (Stroeken 2005), “an identifiable, ‘modern’ post-genocide music genre has yet to emerge in Rwanda” (Grant 2014: 216). Despite

this, Grant (2015a) has documented the recent revival and “re-launching” of Rwandan *gakondo* musicians at the KigaliUp festival, at which there is an emphasis on live music. The annual weekend festival was founded by The Mighty Popo (real name Jacques Murigunde), in 2012. Like so many of Rwanda’s contemporary musicians, Popo was born in exile, in Bujumbura-Burundi, before moving to Ottawa, Canada. In Canada, he established himself as a ‘World Musician’ and became affiliated with Borealis Records, a record label for Canadian folk and roots music artists (Borealis Records 2017). When Popo returned to Rwanda in 2010, he was unimpressed by the playback artists who were dominating Rwanda’s music industry. He decided to utilise his networks in Canada to create a festival that would “incorporate local and international music with African and Canadian connections” (The Mighty Popo 2015, int.).

In addition to founding the KigaliUp festival, Popo opened Rwanda’s first public music school in March 2014, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). The school was incorporated into *Ecole d’Art de Nyundo* (Nyundo’s School of Arts), located in the Rubavu district in Rwanda’s Western Province. *Ecole d’Art de Nyundo* was initially founded by Christian missionaries in 1952. It evolved from a carpentry training centre to a school of Fine Arts. However, in 1994 the school was destroyed during the genocide and was completely re-built six years later. Popo explained to me that, as the Director of the school, he wants to “professionalise Rwanda’s music industry” by promoting what he calls “authentic Rwandan music”:

Modern musicians haven't tapped into our rich traditional music. Instead, the music in Rwanda is an imported breed. These days it's mostly Afrobeats from Nigeria, but that is what needs to change (ibid).

In order to achieve his goals, Popo had secured an initial budget of five million Rwandan francs (roughly £4,350) from the government of Rwanda's initiative, WDA (Workforce Development Authority). At the time of my research, 60 secondary-school graduates were enrolled in the programme (30 per year group), of which almost half were female. Students were undertaking a three-year course, after which they would receive a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) certificate in Music. The course was mostly practical, with training provided in the following skills: vocals, listening, production, repair and management, studio installation, health and safety, business, and performance advice and experience - with students performing annually at the KigaliUp festival. Lessons were also provided in a range of musical instruments, including in *gakondo* instruments such as the *inanga* (trough-zither). During my visit to the school in September 2015, students shared with me their aspirations to become 'all-African superstars'. Yet importantly, they also cited Rwandan *gakondo* and 'world music' artists as sources of inspiration – including Ben Ngabo (a teacher at the school), Daniel Ngarukiye, Liza Kamikazi, Patrick Nyamitali and Sophie Nyzisenga, the daughter of *inanga* master Thomas Kirusu and Rwanda's first female *inanga* player (see “*gakondo* musicians” on map, Appendix VI).

At the same time, established members of Rwanda's music industry have been attempting to insert 'local traditions' into Afrobeats songs. Rwanda's “number one” audio producer Pastor P shared his thoughts on 'domesticating' popular music genres in Rwanda with me:



We need to find our identity. The problem is our cultural music is a bit hard; the traditional is a bit hard, you know? Coz the timing is like one, two, three - it's a kind of blues. So, if you don't really know the music it's hard to dance to it, but there is a way also to make it in 4/4 timing. If you heard the recent song I did for King James called *Ganobwe*? I'm trying to mix our traditions with modern music. I think that should be our Rwandan music. It still has this flavour of our traditions, like *ikinimba*. I want to put our traditions in Afrobeats so we can have our identity for this music. We're doing it in more songs like that, with King James and other people. And Rwandese like it coz they *feel* themselves in the song (Pastor P 2015, int.).

Here, Pastor P refers to the reinterpretation of a *gakondo* song, *Ganobwe* (Drink up), into an Afrobeats hit. According to Pastor P, the song is about a "local beer made from bananas and sorghum". More specifically, it is about social cohesion and celebration: "The message is that at home we are good people. We have no disputes. We share beer and we dance" (ibid). Like Rafiki's *coga* music (chapter 4), the lyrics are in *urukiga* - a Kinyarwanda dialect from the northwest of Rwanda. The music blends Afrobeats with distinctly Rwandan elements, such as the playing of an *iningidi* (fiddle); an instrument historically associated with popular Hutu songs. Likewise, the accompanying music video includes images of young men dancing *ikinimba*, a historically energetic Hutu dance consisting of leaps (Breed 2014: 137).



**Figure 8.9.** Screenshot of a man playing the *iningidi* in King James's music video, *Ganyobwe* (2015).

As well as demonstrating a cultural pride, the image of a young boy proudly waving a Rwandan flag is a reminder of the state's hold over the popular imagination. Interestingly, we also see King James (like Mani Martin) wearing Maasai cloth; a kind of fashionable, floating symbol of 'being East African'. Therefore, even in attempting to nationalise global music genres, Rwandan artists continue to attach significance to symbols of regional belonging.



**Figure 8.10.** Screenshot of King James dressed in Maasai cloth in his music video, *Ganyobwe* (2015).

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that, if we are to fully understand Rwanda's contemporary pop music industry, we must consider the transnational circulation of cultural forms, both within and beyond sub-Saharan Africa. This is partly because of a) the liberalisation and deregulation of new media technologies, which are enabling music to circulate transnationally; and b) the project of unifying Africa through popular music and efforts to create an 'all-African brand'. I also argue that this project is limited: there are hierarchies at play that not only limit the people *to* whom music is disseminated, but also the sites *from* which it is disseminated. Since those limitations reflect existing economic hierarchies between African countries and beyond, the Rwandan music industry finds itself marginalised. Rwandan artists are aware that they are marginalised, but

nonetheless aspire to be fully included in music landscapes beyond their national borders. Consequently, many of them develop a strategy, which is to first conquer the *national* stage; to be promoted to the *regional* stage; and finally, to achieve success at the *continental* level and beyond. To do this, many of Rwanda's popular artists appropriate aspects of numerous genres, 'traditions' and languages, thus appealing to multiple music industries and audiences, and increasing their chances of success.

Despite emphasising the importance of transnational flows, I have also demonstrated that accelerated globalisation neither represents nor inevitably leads to a decline in the influence of the nation-state on popular cultural forms. On the contrary, Rwanda's cultural producers have been grappling with the question of how to develop a united, national musical identity despite being open to the influence of transnational genres, such as hip-hop, R&B, dancehall and Afrobeats. More specifically, they have been attempting to 'domesticate' these genres, revealing that the power of the nation-state remains relevant and strong. I argue that researchers must take seriously discourses on globalisation and transnationalism, while also understanding that the nation-state remains a relevant framework for understanding cultural production in Africa. As Nina Glick Schiller and Thomas Faist assert:

A critique of nationalism does not start from a borderless or boundaryless world. Rather, it focuses on the very constitution of (state) borders and boundaries and their effect on the creation of inequalities between categories of persons within transnational processes of the production of wealth and various forms of power (2010: 5).

This is particularly true in the Rwandan case, where the state's "over-reach" is extensive (Ingelaere 2014).

Finally, it is important to recognise that the circulation of *forms* in Rwanda is emerging out of a situation in which there is an existing circulation of *people*, drawing on the multiple forms that they have been exposed to in order to represent the complexities of their fluid, ambiguous and multi-layered identities. As discussed in chapter 4, it is not a coincidence that Rwanda's *Abasajja* (Ugandan-Rwandan) artists compose mostly dancehall and ragga music, the most popular genres in Uganda since the early 1990s.

## CHAPTER 9 - CONCLUSION

In this thesis on popular music in the “New Rwanda”, I have focused on the everyday lives of young cultural producers in Kigali. I have started from life on the ground: Rwandans adopting and adapting genres, forms and languages, activating and blocking support networks, forming “collabos” with Ugandans and other international artists and producers, nurturing aspirations, encountering obstacles, travelling physically and digitally, circumventing state regulation while drawing on official government rhetoric and occasionally support, creating a song or music video and finding often innovative means of getting it into circulation, engaging in strategies of self-representation; and through all of these activities, reflecting on, expressing and shaping the experience of living in post-genocide Rwanda.

Contemporary Rwanda is a nation reconstructing itself after one of the most traumatic events in Africa’s recent history, a reconstruction along national lines as a new, well-run and forward-looking nation. The government is making strenuous and sustained efforts to inscribe order, so that order can then be socially internalised. Yet this has created a culture of constraint as well as reconstruction, and a number of ambiguities and tensions have emerged. Within this context of post-genocide nation-building, what cultural producers - such as those whose stories and trajectories I highlight in this thesis - are actually doing is mobilising and making sense of multiple identities that have been forged across national borders. Moreover, their success depends on maintaining transnational links. Here I have explored an interesting conundrum. While some artists are

successful because they have connections to Uganda, others are unsuccessful because they are “not Rwandan enough”. Whereas English-speaking returnees from Uganda have been particularly well placed to gain employment within Kigali’s media world more broadly (e.g. as radio presenters), as artists they have struggled to appeal to the Rwandan masses. The perception that *Abasajya* (Rwandan-Ugandans) occupy a privileged position in Rwandan society is a source of jealousy (*ishyari*) and resentment among many of the country’s citizens. Artists who want to survive and flourish in Kigali must publicly demonstrate their pride in being Rwandan, such as through performing Kinyarwanda lyrics or drawing on other emblematic symbols of ‘Rwandaness’.

What is novel about my research project is my focus on transnationalism and border-crossing *within* Africa through a popular culture perspective. In writing this thesis, I add to the growing literature on this topic. Rather than focusing on the importation of global signs *into* Africa, I have traced interactions between two neighbouring states and within one region of Africa, situating this within a global framework. Despite enduring historical connections between Rwanda and Uganda, the capital cities of these two nations are strikingly different in character. In many ways, Kigali – with its clean streets, security, “silence” and social order - defines itself in opposition to Kampala - with its “chaos”, “noise” and perceived freedoms and opportunities.

This thesis has also shown that, by paying attention to popular music, we can gain new insights into the everyday lives of young, urban Rwandans. Unlike other developments in Kigali, the music industry was created by and for young

people - their voices, skills and ideas are at the very heart of its sound. This research is not only about the digital flows of music between the two nations of Rwanda and Uganda, it also traces the physical movement of cultural producers across borders. The individuals in my research were not constrained within their nation states; rather, their stories illuminate histories of exile and return, split identities, and memories of living in both countries.

My ethnographic research draws on 12 months of immersive fieldwork conducted in Kigali and Kampala, between 2014 and 2016. My focus was on the Rwandan side, and my key informants were primarily male recording artists and audio and video producers. The Rwandans in my research had vastly different backgrounds from one another, concerning their education, ethnicity, gender, language, religion and the countries in which they grew up. Despite this, they were united in the hustle for money and recognition, both within and beyond national borders. In my work - with over 36 cultural producers as primary informants (and my passing familiarity with many more) - I found that all of them were struggling to make a living under seriously limiting economic conditions. An added precariousness for female artists was identified: women were expected to conform to the Rwandan ideals of being *aritonda* (softly spoken and docile), quiet and modest, and were confronted with *ruswa y'igitina* (sexual corruption) - when male producers and presenters demanded sexual favours in exchange for their services.

Essentially, my informants wanted to escape the shame of being poor and assert themselves as stars; to be admired by others and have their name and



reputation remembered, thus becoming an accomplished person (*kuvamo umuntu*). They hoped to achieve a lifestyle that included international travel and access to the latest fashions, trends and technologies. In their quest for stardom, I have demonstrated how cultural producers in Kigali encountered various economic, cultural, political and social challenges. Yet many of them adopted the Rwandan philosophy of patience, as an important step in life's journey towards the virtues of *agaciro* (a key cultural concept tied to self-respect, dignity and patriotism), self-reliance and self-discipline. For my Christian informants, ideas about God and destiny also provided an important source of hope and comfort, while others held onto the idea that their songs exist online as evidence of their existence, and that one day they might be discovered, and their lives will turn around.

Although the scope of this thesis has been a focus on Kigali-Kampala connections, the work that I begin here could be extended in the future to an even more multi-sited exploration. Rather than a Kigali based project that looks at how people operate across borders, a study of Rwandans in Kampala would bring additional insights, or another exciting expansion to the project would be to increase the number of cities in the east-central African region, for example to include Bujumbura-Burundi. A study of Rwandan cultural producers and consumers of music in eastern DRC would likely reveal alternative perspectives on what it means to be Rwandan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## APPENDIX I: Poems with translations

### POEM 1.

#### ***Ripe Avocados* [2015]**

Ceri Whatley, UK; English.

My weight shifted from butt to feet  
Legs stretched, I shuffled slowly  
Wedged – but not touching – between them  
Passengers  
Weary, crumpled passengers  
Where had *they* been? What had *they* done?  
I stepped – out this metal bird  
that flew my body from there to here  
Now, I'm walking forwards  
In this pale, plastic corridor  
Falls from my eye a tear

Immigration  
Baggage  
Exit  
Met by smiling faces:  
“How does it feel?” “Does it feel real?”

My mind is far behind-  
Among red dust, motorbikes, hills  
Asking to stay still,  
but swimming through the Med  
Searching for my head...

Outside, the cars are parked  
Neat and clean, even distances between  
We drive-  
Then step into their home, alive

Hot water flows easily  
Tea bags, electricity  
Great big giant TV

Will I ever drink gin and sing in your studio  
again?

I will be positive  
I must be positive  
I'm lucky  
I take a walk...

Blue skies  
English countryside  
I write the names of all the people  
who I love and who I'm grateful

to have in my life and I smile...

It's been a while...

Now...

And I'm still waiting  
My mind is still swimming  
Nearer, I suppose  
but wishing that those  
rectangular memories could be free  
again

They say Rwanda is sterile,  
orderly, quiet  
But I deny it –  
Don't judge it till you try it

I try to settle  
I don't want to settle  
But I try anyway  
to find a rhythm, a routine  
and still remember what I've seen

Wake up  
Sit at desk  
Wander home  
Close door  
Close curtains  
Cook food  
Eat  
Resist defeat  
When will we meet?

When will we meet?

Who knew it was the final supper we would share?  
Ripe avocados over there  
Perched on top  
of a mountain of starch  
Small piece of meat  
I said, "No – you eat"

Was that the final time our forks would collide?  
Shared plate, sat outside?  
It wasn't the only thing we shared  
Yes, we stared into each other  
Yes, we cared

## POEM 2.

### ***Rwanda is NOT Hotel Rwanda!!! [2013]***

Malaika (Angel) Umwamahoro, Rwanda-Uganda-United States; English and Kinyarwanda.

Watch Malaika perform her poem at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cscCs1oLDAQ>

Rwanda- is not *Hotel Rwanda*

No-

Rwanda is the heart beating life of Africa-

The world's example and definition of hope, resilience and ambition

If you haven't yet heard,

listen

Grab a pen and learn-

Because Rwanda is a lesson.

Rwanda is where the great Kivu lake

rests in-

Where the birds of the Nyungwe forest

nest in

And the foreign investors fly all the way to

invest in

What's happening right now in Rwanda

is interestin'

And it's amazing to be a part of and watch...

Watch Rwanda...

Rwanda is

Tens of growing cities

Hundreds of opportunities

The land of a thousand hills

The faces of a million smiles

And just

one people-

We are united back home-

Where I come from...

In Rwanda there is freedom

Where we live in peace

and live as we please

*Yemwe simvuga amahanga* (Hey I'm not talking about other nations)

*Nda vuga iwacu murwanda* (I'm talking about my homeland Rwanda)

*Ahari kubera ibitangaza-* (The place where miracles are made-)

Rwanda is

birds and lakes,

lights and city streets,

volcanoes and silver backs,

restaurants,

cinemas and coffee beans,

teas, industries, electricity and honey bees...  
I come from the earth's last piece of paradise

A big hearted land  
where my people  
chose forgiveness  
over the atrocities they witnessed  
A land  
where we are not afraid to speak the truth  
A land  
where there is room for the youth  
A land  
where one people work hard hand in hand  
to demand  
justice and dignity-

We come from a land-  
That has risen from the ashes of sorrow  
to the rose blossom of tomorrow  
A land  
of *agaciro*  
We come from that land

So NO-  
Rwanda is not *Hotel Rwanda*-  
We will not be defined by the genocide  
Rwanda is  
a land of pride-  
The home to  
dreamers, believers and achievers,  
learners and teachers,  
humans and creatures  
The heart beating life of Africa-  
The world's example and definition of hope, resilience and ambition  
If you haven't heard yet  
Yo, I hope you listened-  
Because Rwanda is a lesson!

## APPENDIX II: Song texts and translations

### SONG 1.

#### ***Nange Bwetyo (I feel the same) ft. Benja Steel and Marriana [2015]***

Benjah TBB (aka Jerry-B), Rwanda-Uganda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

Prod. Benja Steel: Salten Records, Kampala.

#### **[Intro]**

*Salten work we are back – yeah!*

*We badder dan dem*

*Yeah I say! Kampala-Kigali connection!*

*Marriana me a back!*

*Ah! Mmm...*

*EAC! Marriana once again!*

*Mmm we badder dan dem!*

*Jerry-B! Benja Steel! TBB!*

*Mmm we badder dan dem!*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*Urukundo rwawe ruranyemenje*

*Nange bwetyo*

*Uburungi byo walai busukulumye*

*Ubwiza bwawe burahebuje*

*Nanjye nuko*

*Ndakwiyunva mumaraso yanjye*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Laba omwana watambura, iwatalabise  
silubara*

*Newemundetera ibisanyusa ngatanarabika  
ndayira siseka*

*Bagamba we are combine, nange mukubya  
style*

#### **[Intro]**

Salten work we are back – yeah!

We badder dan dem

Yeah I say! Kampala-Kigali connection!

Marriana me a back!

Ah! Mmm...

EAC! Marriana once again!

Mmm we badder dan dem!

Jerry-B! Benja Steel! TBB!

Mmm we badder dan dem!

---

#### **[Chorus]**

Your love is overwhelming

I feel the same

Your beauty is overwhelming

Your beauty is intense

Me too

I feel you in my blood

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

Check how he's walking, when he's not there  
I don't count that day

Even if you bring me every good thing, until I  
see him I won't smile

They say we are a combination, I also hit him  
with style

*Ummm, Marriana waya say, ngenda  
mwagara everyday – Narumasi!*

*Onowange tayina busungu wallet sanyufu ndi  
kukitufu*

*Talabika kuba muyaye, every day naganu  
style - Woe! Woe!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yeah! I believe you and I are meant to be*

*For eternity I know you are my destiny*

*I wanna be next to you, you belong to me*

*Baby you know you're the best of all the rest*

*I can't imagine your body in a jacuzzi*

*Freeze me tease me girl take it easy*

*Your love is incredibly amazing*

*The way you do whatever you do is  
impressing*

*You and I together on a getaway*

*Just the two of us on a land far away*

*Nje ndagukunda kandi suburyarya*

*Ndikumwe nawe mba nuva nta bindi shyaka*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*This is a love dedication*

*Fi all them lover in da building – hold on*

*Nje nawe iyo turikumwe mbafite amahoro*

*Ntabyoba mfite mfite - Wa me say, wa me  
say!*

Marriana I say, I will love him every day –  
*Narumasi!*<sup>111</sup>

Mine doesn't have anger, he has a happy  
wallet, I'm on the truth

He doesn't look like a street guy, every day  
it's a new style – Woe! Woe!

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

Yeah! I believe you and I are meant to be

For eternity I know you are my destiny

I wanna be next to you, you belong to me

Baby you know you're the best of all the rest

I can't imagine your body in a jacuzzi

Freeze me tease me girl take it easy

Your love is incredibly amazing

The way you do whatever you do is  
impressing

You and I together on a getaway

Just the two of us on a land far away

I love you and it's not hypocritical

When I'm with you I feel I don't want anything  
else

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

This is a love dedication

Fi all them lover in da building – hold on

When I'm with you I have peace

I have no fear, I have – What I say, what I  
say!

<sup>111</sup> Ugandan slang: *Narumasi* is a name that has become popular for its rhythmic qualities.

*Inshuti zirambaza nkababwira, nduwawe*

*Kandi uru wanjye – yeah, yeah!*

---

**[Bridge]**

*Baby gal you are my strength when I'm  
feeling down*

*You turn me up baby gal*

*You are the light, light up my life*

*You bring me joy baby gal*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

My friends ask me and I tell them, I'm yours

And you are mine - yeah, yeah!

---

**[Bridge]**

Baby gal you are my strength when I'm  
feeling down

You turn me up baby gal

You are the light, light up my life

You bring me joy baby gal

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

**SONG 2.**

***Ayitilide (She's Amazing) ft. Marriana, Pacento and Spax [2015]***

Benjah TBB (aka Jerry-B), Rwanda-Uganda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

Prod. Pacento: VIP Africa, Kampala.

Watch *Ayitilide* on YouTube [Video prod. Kim XP]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JY1yDRpzBqQ>

**[Intro]**

*Ummm Marriana!*

*A go make you wanna – yebabawe!*

*Benjah TBB!*

*Ummm Spax! We run dis*

*Pacento! We run dis*

*Kigali-Kampala*

*VIP Africa we ting this*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Ono mwane ayitilide - ummm nga ayitilide*

**[Intro]**

Ummm Marriana!

I will make you want to – oh wow!

Benjah TBB!

Ummm Spax! We run dis

Pacento! We run dis

Kigali-Kampala

VIP Africa we ting this

---

**[Chorus]**

This girl is amazing - ummm she's amazing



<i>Ono mwane ayitilide - ummm nga ayitilide</i>	This girl is amazing - ummm she's amazing
<i>Uyu mwana, uyu mwana, ameze nka rukuluzi</i>	This pretty girl, this pretty girl, she's like a magnet
<i>Uyu mwana, uyu mwana, ameze nka rukuluzi</i>	This pretty girl, this pretty girl, she's like a magnet
(X 2)	(X 2)
---	---
<b>[Verse 1]</b> <i>Baby gal give me yayaya</i>	<b>[Verse 1]</b> Baby gal give me yayaya <sup>112</sup>
<i>Ejo nzakujane kwa Mama</i>	Tomorrow I will take you to Mama
<i>Abandi ubaleke nizanga</i>	Leave the rest, they are crazy
<i>Promise I will love you every night and day</i>	Promise I will love you every night and day
<i>No matter watgwan me go depa no mi pose</i>	No matter what happens, I will go deeper with no pause
<i>Nana lome – louder!</i>	None of them – louder!
<i>Ya go feel it in your bone</i>	You're gonna feel it in your bones
<i>Gal shake your bum bum</i>	Gal shake your bum bum
<i>You hafi baka bi bam</i>	You have a big bum
<i>Gal shake your bum bum</i>	Gal shake your bum bum
<i>You hafi baka bi bam</i>	You have a big bum
<i>Sindabna umukobwa wikoleye wazile nziza nkazo ufite izawe</i>	I've never seen a girl with a waist like yours
<i>Bikagusaba kwambala rumbiya bikazatuma abakubona bachumura</i>	It will need you to put on a <i>rumbiya</i> <sup>113</sup> , which will cause those who see you not to sin
---	---
<b>[Chorus]</b>	<b>[Chorus]</b>
---	---
<b>[Verse 2]</b> <i>Watch me man, yadatera satisfaction – Yeah!</i>	<b>[Verse 2]</b> Watch my man, he gives me satisfaction – Yeah!
<i>Mi na gona run kuba yamanyi zi direction – Ummm!</i>	I'm not going to run away because he knows direction – Ummm!

<sup>112</sup> Sexual innuendo.

<sup>113</sup> *Rumbiya*: a modest, full-length dress or skirt.

*Nabwotampa chakulwa kambe nono ziyina chejoya*

Even if he gives me no food, I will stay with him and I won't be in need

*Nebwobigura akabina nze kulayirira tayina chalaba*

Even if you shake your bum, I swear to you he sees nothing

*Kano kekufunye chimanze kwekute kambali kundongo*

Now that I've got you I will hold on to you on the dance floor

*Katwelage chikoze, nina omulungi silaba agana*

Let's show off, I have my love, nobody can stop it

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Gal how you do it makes me wonder*

**[Verse 3]**

Gal how you do it makes me wonder

*Your body makes me want you*

Your body makes me want you

*Sexy clothes and what is under*

Sexy clothes and what is under

*Makes it beat like thunder*

Makes it beat like thunder

*Gal let's make it reality forever*

Gal let's make it reality forever

*When I see you, do you see me forever?*

When I see you, do you see me forever?

*Gal I truly now believe the way you move I'll never leave ya*

Gal I truly now believe the way you move I'll never leave ya

*You're ma number one, the one in a billion that I want*

You're ma number one, the one in a billion that I want

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Outro]**

*Ameze nka rukuluzi*

**[Outro]**

She's like a magnet

**SONG 3.**

***Hello* ft. Fille [2014]**

Bruce Melody, Rwanda-Uganda; English, Kinyarwanda, Lingala, Luganda, Swahili.

Prod. Andy Music, Kampala.

Watch *Hello* on YouTube [Hasz Media]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYCik6AJDO4>

**[Intro]**

*Bruce Melody from the Super Level*

*Fille*

*Rwanda-Uganda and the music!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Hello baby wasuze otya?*

*Hello baby owulira otya?*

*Sichebeka, sichebeka ayayayayayah*

*I swear I've been thinking of you  
ayayayayayah!*

*Hello ese ubundi wiriwe ute?*

*Hello ese urumva umerewe ute?*

*Njyewe naraye ntasinziye, yeah*

*Nukuri naraye nkurindiriye hahahaha*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Now my heart is beating*

*Coz of your love baby*

*Wewe na mimi na wewe*

*Don't you see you drive me crazy?*

*My sweetie, Imana izambabarira ntuzijyere  
uhinduka*

*Cheri uzabane kugeza kumperuka*

*Honey, ntago uzi icyintu ngukundira*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*If only I could get a choice, then true love  
would never be far*

*If I could shine, fly, nezinja eyo njori*

**[Intro]**

*Bruce Melody from the Super Level*

*Fille*

*Rwanda-Uganda and the music!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Hello baby how did you sleep?*

*Hello baby how do you feel?*

*I can't sleep, I can't sleep ayayayayayah*

*I swear I've been thinking of you  
ayayayayayah!*

*Hello how did you spend the day?*

*Hello how do you feel?*

*Me I did not sleep, yeah*

*The truth is I was waiting for you  
hahahaha*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Now my heart is beating*

*Coz of your love baby*

*You and I*

*Don't you see you drive me crazy?*

*My sweetie, God help me that you don't  
change*

*Sweetie we will stay together until the end*

*Honey, you don't know why I love you*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*If only I could get a choice, then true love  
would never be far*

*If I could shine, fly, I would come to where  
you are*

*When I think of the moments we had, think of the love we shared*

When I think of the moments we had, think of the love we shared

*Things are getting harder and harder nga nkumissinga*

Things are getting harder and harder when I miss you

*Otera nokomawo, eh njagara kukwateko eh*

Remember to come back, eh I want to touch you eh

*Nakupendauko utamu baby*

I love you and you are sweet baby

*Nakupenda uko utamu baby – ohhh! Yeah!*

I love you and you are sweet baby – ohhh! Yeah!

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Bridge]**

**[Bridge]**

*Say ah, say ah, say ah - ndagukunda baby*

Say ah, say ah, say ah - I love you baby

*Say ah, say ah, say ah - nkwagara nyo baby*

Say ah, say ah, say ah - I love you baby

*Say ah, say ah, say ah - I love you baby*

Say ah, say ah, say ah - I love you baby

*Say ah, say ah, say ah – naringiyo ohhh!*

Say ah, say ah, say ah - I love you ohhh!

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

**SONG 4.**

***Iwacu (Homeland) [1998]***

Cécile Kayirebwa, Rwanda-Belgium; Kinyarwanda.

Produced in Brussels. From Cécile Kayirebwa's *Amahoro* (Peace) album.

Listen to *Iwacu* on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgcRm1YHQ6Y>

**[Verse 1]**

*Iwacu, iwacu si kure cyane*

**[Verse 1]**

Home, home is not so far away

*Burya iyo uzindutse uraharara*

If you wake up early you will arrive before night

*Kandi wakwiyigaho ukahataha*

And when you make up your mind you sleep there

*Iwacu ni iNyarugenge, manuka iGikondo ugana iRemera we*

Home is in Nyarugenge, you turn from Gikondo going towards Remera

*Natashye (X 3)*

We're going home (X 3)

---

**[Chorus]**

*Iwacu, iwacu si kure cyane*

*N'ikimenyimenyi ndahavuye*

*Noneho shenge inzira ziragendwa*

*Iwacu ni iNyarugenge, manuka iGikondo  
ugana iRemera we*

*Natashye*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Nkubitanye amaso na Nyabugogo*

*Numva umutima urantorotse*

*Kigali yose iransekera*

*Ijuru ry'inyenyeri ibihumbagiza*

*N'impumuro yawe ndayimenya*

*Menya ubwo urugendo ko rushize*

*Na ka gahinda kabura icumbi, twatashye*

---

**[Chorus – shortened]**

*Iwacu, iwacu si kure cyane*

*Iwacu ni iNyarugenge, manuka iGikondo  
ugana iRemera we*

*Natashye*

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Mpagaze hejuru kuri Muhabura*

*Ndora Uburera na Ibigogwe*

*Urukingo rwose, Umutara na Ubuganza*

---

**[Chorus]**

Home, home is not so far away

In fact, I was just there

Nowadays the roads are unrecognisable

Home is in Nyarugenge, you turn from  
Gikondo going towards Remera

We're going home

---

**[Verse 2]**

My eyes met Nyabugogo

And my heart skipped a beat

The whole of Kigali smiled at me

The sky of thousands of stars

I recognised your smell

And I knew that my journey was over

And that there was no room for sorrow,  
we're going home

---

**[Chorus – shortened]**

Home, home is not so far

Home is in Nyarugenge, you turn from  
Gikondo going towards Remera

We're going home

---

**[Verse 3]**

I'm standing on top of Muhabura<sup>114</sup>

Looking down on Uburera and Ibigogwe

The whole of Urukingo, Umutara and  
Ubuganza

---

<sup>114</sup> Mount Muhabura is an extinct volcano in the Virunga Mountains on the border between Rwanda and Uganda.

*Na Bwana Mugari na Mbuga yose, natashye*

And Bwana Mugari and the whole of Mbuga,  
we're going home

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 4]**

*uBugoyi bwose na uBushiru*

**[Verse 4]**

All of Bugoyi and Bushiru

*I Gisaka cyose na Bwana Cyambwe*

All of Gisaka and Bwana Cyambwe

*Bumbogo iriya na uBugesera*

Bumbogo over there and Bugesera

*Ndetse n'ikinyaga na Nyungwe yacyo*

Also, Ikinyaga and its Nyungwe

*Neretse ibiyaga bya Kibuye ayiwe, natashye*

Looking at the lake of Kibuye, we're going  
home

---

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**[Verse 1 - repeated]**

**[Verse 1 - repeated]**

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

## SONG 5.

***Umunezero (Rwanda) (Joy [Rwanda]) [1986]***

Cécile Kayirebwa, Rwanda-Belgium; Kinyarwanda.

Produced in Brussels. From Cécile Kayirebwa's *Intego* (Purpose) album.

Listen to *Umunezero* on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sot6Dn0ZM4>

*Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...*

Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...

*Ubw inganzo yasobetse ni umunezero*

If the symphony is sounding it is joy

*Ingoma nizivugire rimwe amakondera  
atsikimbe*

May drums sound at once and the horn  
ensemble be played

*Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...*

Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...

*Ubw inganzo yasobetse ni umunezero*

If the symphony is sounding it is joy

*Imyirongi n'impanda nibivange bibe urusobe*

Let flutes and horns mix and become one

*Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...*

Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...

<i>Ubw inganzo yasobetse ni umunezero</i>	If the symphony is sounding it is joy
<i>Umva ibihozo by'abakobwa umva imihigo y'abahungu</i>	Hear the soft voices of girls and the panegyrics of the boys
<i>Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...</i>	<i>Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...</i>
<i>Ndumva inzogera n'imirindi</i>	I hear bells and footsteps
<i>Ndora intambwe z'abo bageni</i>	I see brides walking
<i>Ndora abana b'ibisage</i>	I see children with dreadlocks
<i>Za nganzo zigasara</i>	And my talents shoot up
<i>Mbega (mbega)</i>	Well (oh well)
<i>Mbega ibyiza bimpimbaye</i>	How I rejoice from beauty
<i>Mbega ubwiza n'uburanga</i>	What beauty and elegance
<i>Mbega intwari y'Imana</i>	See God's weapon
<i>Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...</i>	<i>Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...</i>
<i>Mvuge ibihe ndeke ibihe mu byiza by'uRwanda?</i>	What can I say about Rwanda's nature?
<i>Mpere hehe ngeze hehe ngo ndurate ndusingize?</i>	How can I begin to describe its nature?
<i>Utununga n'imisozi n'ibirunga</i>	Hills and mountains and volcanoes
<i>N'imirambi n'ibisiza</i>	And valleys and lands
<i>N'amataba ateze neza</i>	And good crops
<i>N'ibiyaga n'amashyamba</i>	And lakes and forests
<i>Mvuge ibihe ndeek ibihe?</i>	What can I say?
<i>Urukundo n'urugwiro n'umurava</i>	Love and hospitality and motivation
<i>N'ubutwari n'ubupfura</i>	And bravery and honesty
<i>Nibyo muco niyo ngiro</i>	That is our culture and those are our values
<i>Niwo murage w'abakuru</i>	That is our heritage from our ancestors
<i>Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...</i>	<i>Ayiii ayiiiiai eee...</i>

## SONG 6.

### ***Apprenti\_Sage (Wise Apprentice/Learning) [2015]***

Eric 1Key, Rwanda-Uganda; French, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Barick: Home studio, Kigali; Vocals: Yego Studio, Kampala. Track 1 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *Apprenti-Sage* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/apprenti-sage>

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Les pouces sur mon phone comme sur une manette*

*Je joue avec des lettres, je griffonne des textes*

*En fait, depuis que je les pose sur des pages net*

*Et que j'expose mon âme entre les lignes de mes rimes*

*On m'appelle poète, mais est-ce que je mérite ce titre?*

*Pour être honnête, je préfère quand on m'appelle artiste*

*Au fond je ne suis qu'un esprit qui cherche sa forme*

*Je suis brut, sans filtre, mes pensées résonnent*

*Dans mes écrits, comme sur du papier carbone*

*Avant la plume, je les calquais à la mine de graphite*

*Qui aurait cru que mes ébauches auraient un bon accueil au public?*

---

*C'est incroyable mais il y a deux décennies*

*On aurait juré que j'étais dyslexique à force de juger mon lexique*

*Sur base des dicos amenés en bateaux*

*L'apprentissage n'a pas été du gâteau*

*Apprenti-sage je suis devenu pour éviter les coups de batons*

#### **[Verse 1]**

I've got thumbs on my phone as a controller

I play with letters, I scribble text

In fact, since I put them on internet pages

And I expose my soul between the lines of my rhymes

They call me a poet, but do I deserve this title?

To be honest, I prefer to call myself an artist

Basically I am a spirit that seeks its form

I'm raw, unfiltered, my thoughts resonate

In my writings, like carbon paper

Before the pen, I would trace my thoughts to graphite mine

Who knew my drafts would be well received by the public?

---

It's unbelievable that two decades ago, without a shadow of a doubt

We could have sworn that I was dyslexic, if judging by my lexicon

Based on dictionaries brought on boats

Learning was not a piece of cake

Wise apprentice I became to avoid the blow of the cane



---

*Que mes aïeux m'excusent pour ma forme sur  
ce fond*

*Si je m'exprime mieux dans la langue du colon*

*C'est parce que c'est devenu une culture de  
survie*

*Elle évolue au dépens de la nôtre et on suit,  
asservis*

*Aujourd'hui on se moque des nôtres*

*Quand ils commettent des fautes*

*Dans ces langues étrangères et ça me révolte!*

---

*Laissez-moi être mélancolique sur ce sample  
de cithara*

*Laissez-moi me noyer dans ce pot de slam,  
cet art*

*Oratoire de mes ancêtres, c'est tout ce qui me  
reste*

*Leurs doigts grattent des cordes, les miens  
gravent des textes*

*Dans leurs notes et les miennes, tu peux lire  
l'envie de transmettre*

---

*C'est l'écho de leurs voix que j'entend quand  
les vallées respirent*

*Et peut-être pourquoi j'adore écrire le soir, leur  
mélodie m'inspire*

*A écrire ma vie, à décrire ma vue, à conter  
mon parcours sans peur*

*Je sais qu'on ne vit pas pour toujours et tout  
comme eux*

*Je veux laisser un message...*

---

*Je suis le message*

---

---

May my ancestors forgive me for this  
performance

If I express myself better in the coloniser's  
language

It is because it has become a culture of  
survival

It evolves at the expense of ours and we  
follow, enslaved

Today they make fun of us

When we make mistakes

And it disgusts me!

---

Let me be sad on this sample zither

Let me drown in this slam pot

This oral art of my ancestors, that's all I  
have left

Their fingers strumming the strings, mine  
engrave texts

In their notes and mine, you can read the  
urge to pass on

---

It is the echo of their voices that I hear  
when valleys breathe

And perhaps why I love writing in the  
evening, their melody inspires me

Writing my life, describing my view, to relate  
my journey fearless

I know we do not live forever and like them

I want to leave a message...

---

I am the message

---

*Qui vivra, entendra cette voix venue de nulle part*

*Portée par le vent d'un écho ancestral*

---

**[Icyivugo]**

*Yeeeeeee ndi ingangare ku rugamba*

*Mwene Rugambwa simpangarwa ndahangara*

*Dore nje mu rukerera nk'igiteroshuma*

*Sinikanga, sinikinga*

*Ikaramu narazwe na data ni yo ngabo  
y'amahina amakuza atagwabizwa*

*Iyo mfoye simpusha ababisha bashahurwa  
n'ubwoba ntaranabegera*

---

*Abaswa banyumva nk'amahamba*

*Ndasiga nkisiga bagasigara basiganuza*

*Uko mbambura imizingo imirongo igahinduka  
amashusho*

*Umushyitsi ukabataha mu nda bagahitamo  
kunyita umunyabufindo*

---

*Ndi urufunguzo rumwe rukumbi rurangaza  
amarembo y'amayobera maze agatahurwa  
n'inyamibwa mu ndatwa.*

Whoever lives will hear that voice coming out of nowhere

Carried by the ancestral echo

---

**[Icyivugo]**

Yes! Here I am, I am the strongest in battle

Son of Rugambwa, none can approach me, I approach them

I attack at dawn as if it's an ambush

I am not intimidated, I am not hiding

The pen I inherited from my father is my unbreakable spear

I'm a sharp shooter, I don't miss and that terrorises my enemies before I even reach them

---

The small-minded don't understand the intricacies of my *amahamba*<sup>115</sup>

When I write I paint stories/When I write I only compete with myself

Because when I write they can't keep up, but they see pictures

They call me a magician<sup>116</sup>

---

I am the only key that opens the door of mystery so that the deserving ones can enter my world.

## SONG 7.

**Mal Appris (Miseducated) [2015]**

Eric 1Key, Rwanda-Uganda; French, Kinyarwanda.

<sup>115</sup> *Amahamba* is a particularly complex and intricate form of praise poetry. It dates back to the Nyiginya Kingdom when it was composed by specialists for the cattle belonging to the army.

<sup>116</sup> There is no direct translation for the Kinyarwanda noun *umunyabufindo*. According to Eric 1Key, it is a derogatory word that roughly translates as "magician".

Prod. Barick: Home studio, Kigali; Vocals: Yego Studio, Kampala. Track 2 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *Mal Appris* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/mal-appris>

**[Verse 1]**

*J'ai des images claires de mon enfance  
comme si c'était hier*

*Petit village, l'électricité était loin de mon  
quartier*

*Lorsqu'il pleuvait, avec mes amis, on courait  
tout nus sous la pluie*

*A la tombée de la nuit, j'adorais contempler les  
lucioles luire*

*En famille, les soirs on jouait au griot à tour de  
role*

*Malgré les ventres vides des fois, nos impros  
restaient tout drôles*

*C'est au grésillement des grillons qu'on fermait  
les paupières*

*Pour une trêve de misère, on rêvassait de  
planer dans les airs*

*Pas comme des papillons mais comme nos  
cerfs-volants en papier*

*Pour ne pas se perdre au premier coup de  
vent et s'éloigner des nôtres*

*Pieds nus, c'est ainsi que souvent on allait à  
l'école*

*Shorts troués à l'arrière, derrières aux traces  
de la chicote*

*Qui aime bien châtie bien, mes fesses!  
C'étaient des sadiques*

*D'esclaves en maîtres, très vite, les victimes  
deviennent des oppresseurs*

*Le colon est parti mais nous a laissé oncle  
Tom comme professeur*

*Heureusement on n'a pas appris de lui autant  
que de nos potes*

*C'est grâce à eux qu'aujourd'hui on sait  
compter les uns sur les autres*

**[Verse 1]**

The memories of my childhood are as vivid  
as if they happened yesterday

Small village, electricity was far from my  
neighbourhood

When it was raining, with my friends, we  
ran naked in the rain

At dusk I loved watching the fireflies shine

At night we would get together as a family  
of storytellers

Despite our empty stomachs, our  
improvisations remained quite funny

It was to the sounds of crickets that we  
closed our eyes

For a truce of misery, we dreamed to hover  
in the air

Not like butterflies but as our paper kites

So we don't lose ourselves in the first gust  
of wind and get separated from our families

Bare foot, that's how we used to go to  
school

Shorts had holes at the rear; prints of the  
whip

It wasn't tough love, they were just sadistic

Of slaves into masters, very quickly the  
victims become the oppressors

The colonisers departed but left us with  
Uncle Tom as teacher

Fortunately we learnt not to learn from him  
but from our friends

It is thanks to them that today we now  
depend on each other

*On s'est même créé des chansons bidon pour  
apprendre un peu de conjugaison*

We even created songs to learn a little  
about how to conjugate

---

---

**[Hook]**

*Ka gakeru ko ku Muhima*

**[Hook]**

That old woman who lives in Muhima

*Katetse inkono irashirira*

Cooked the food and it all got grilled

*Kajya kumena kagira gati*

She went to pour it and she said:

*J'ai, tu as, il a, nous avons, vous avez, ils ont*

I have, you have, he has, we have, you  
have, they have

*Tout mémorisé sans poser de question*

All memorised without asking any questions

*Pour tout oublier au bout de l'éducation*

To forget everything at the end of education

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Innombrables sont les nuits blanches, passées  
sous la lueur des lampes à pétrole*

**[Verse 2]**

Countless sleepless were the nights, spent  
under the glow of oil lamps

*L'avenir était en jeu, il n'était pas question  
qu'on flanche*

The future was at stake, there was no time  
to be complacent

*Alors on mémorisait nos leçons comme si  
c'était des chansons en créole*

So we memorised our lessons as if they  
were songs in créole

*Les pieds dans les cuves d'eau, le corps  
exposé au froid*

The feet soaked into water containers, the  
body exposed to the cold

*On savait bien que nos examens n'étaient des  
tests de mémoire*

We knew well that our examinations were  
just memory tests

*Des récitations aux chansons d'enfance*

From reciting crammed poems to childhood  
songs

*Des cours de croyances aux sciences*

Beliefs to science

*Des situations géographiques aux dates  
historiques*

Geographical situations to historical dates

*Des équations mathématiques aux cycles  
biologiques*

Mathematical equations to biological cycles

*Des notes de musique aux exercices  
linguistiques*

From the music notes to linguistic exercises

*Des expérimentations physiques aux réactions  
chimiques non expérimentées*

Physics demonstrations to un-  
experimented chemistry

*Sans poser de question, on a tout bloqué*

Without asking any questions, we  
memorised everything

<i>Tout était théorique, avec le temps, tout était dicté</i>	Everything was theoretical, with time, everything was transcribed
<i>Horribles sont devenues nos écritures pour rester au rythme</i>	Our handwriting became horrible to keep up with our teacher's pace
<i>De nos profs plus attentifs à nos ratures qu'au contenu de nos écrits</i>	Who paid more attention to our crossed out words than their content
<i>Inventifs, on a dû se fabriquer des gommes pour bic</i>	Innovative, we had to come up with ways to rub ink on paper
<i>Et très souvent on a fait recours à des astuces de tricherie</i>	And very often we resorted to cheating
<i>Après tout ce sont les points qui comptaient</i>	After all, the only thing that mattered were marks
<i>Nos cerveaux étaient des éponges qui ne gardaient</i>	Our brains were sponges that couldn't maintain anything
<i>Rien à la pression des interrogations</i>	During the pressure of examinations
<i>Dans ce système, nous étions des projets de domestication</i>	In this system, we were domestication projects
<i>Sinon, que veux-tu que le perroquet apprenne de Talking Tom?</i>	Otherwise, what do you want the parrot to learn from Talking Tom?
---	---
<b>[Hook]</b>	<b>[Hook]</b>
---	---
<b>[Verse 3]</b>	<b>[Verse 3]</b>
<i>Environ 16 ans à tourner les pages dans les deux sens</i>	About 16 years turning pages both sides
<i>A répondre présent à chaque cours malgré notre absence</i>	Present at every class despite our absence of mind
<i>D'esprit... Déficit d'attention à outrance dès notre enfance</i>	With our high attention deficit in our childhood
<i>C'est triste mais normal qu'on ait finit qu'avec des poussières de connaissances</i>	It is sad but quite normal that we ended with only a pinch of knowledge
<i>A quoi sert un diplôme quand les boulots exigent de l'expérience?</i>	What is a degree when the jobs require experience?
<i>Des compétences alors que l'école nous gonflent de théorie</i>	And skill-sets when school only pumped us with theories
<i>Car en pratique sans les pistons, très peu auraient des jobs</i>	Because in practice, without personal connections, very few people would have jobs

<i>Où est-elle donc cette réussite que ont promis nos profs?</i>	Where is that success that our teachers promised us?
<i>Si "l'école c'est la clé du succès," pourquoi sont-ils restés pauvres?</i>	If school is the key to success, why are they still poor?
<i>Aujourd'hui avec un peu de chance et quelques connexions, on taff</i>	Today, with a little bit of luck and a few connections we work
<i>Enfin, pour un minimum on se pend sous un soleil de plomb en cravate</i>	For a minimum wage, we hang ourselves in ties under a blazing sun
<i>Mais tant qu'on donne l'impression d'être le patron, c'est pas grave</i>	But as long as we look like bosses, it's all good
<i>Esclave de l'uniformisation de la pensée, on pousse la roue de la société</i>	Slave of the thought standardisation, we push the society wheel
<i>Sans poser de question, à notre tour, embrasse la médiocrité</i>	Without questioning, we embrace mediocrity
<i>Mais qu'on se le dise école n'a jamais été synonyme de charité</i>	Yet school has never been synonymous with charity
<i>C'est du biz et vu le produit, je crois qu'on s'est fait arnaqué</i>	It is business and, given the product, we've been scammed
<i>Ils quantifient notre intelligence avec des tests et on les croit</i>	They quantify our intelligence with tests and we believe them
<i>C'est quoi leur quotient à l'examen de nos détreffes qu'ils exploitent?</i>	What is their IQ to the test of our pain that they exploit?
<i>Mes ancetres n'ont-ils pas tout bâti de zero sans leurs écoles?</i>	Didn't my ancestors build everything from scratch without their schools?
<i>C'est cette sagesse incommensurable que je veux pour guide</i>	It is this immeasurable wisdom that I yearn for as a guide
<i>Pour sortir de ce système car c'est une taule</i>	To break out of this system because it's a trap
---	---
<b>[Hook]</b>	<b>[Hook]</b>

## SONG 8.

### ***A L'Africaine (Iwacu) (In the African Style [Homeland]) [2015]***

Eric 1Key, Rwanda-Uganda; English, French, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Junior Kafi: Home studio, Kigali; Vocals: Urban Aksent, Kampala. Track 3 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *A L'Africaine (Iwacu)* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/iwacu>

**[Verse 1]**

*28 degrés à l'ombre, le temps serait lubrique à Monaco*

*Dans mon monde, on reste pudique pourtant il fait toujours beau*

*Mes chansons seraient toutes éro-tiques si je devrais parler amour et météo*

*Car quand c'est pas la pluie qui tombe et parcourt ta peau*

*Les rayons du soleil t'entourent pour te garder au chaud*

*Si tu ne succombes pas pour les pluies ensoleillées*

*Et tous ces phénomènes qui laissent sans mot*

*Tu n'arrêteras pas d'être émerveillée*

*Par la danse de ces innocents mômes qui célèbrent la naissance du nouveau bébé leopard*

*Oui on est un peu superstitieux, y a toujours plus à que la vue donne*

*D'ailleurs j'avais des tics aux yeux avant notre rencontre*

*Comme si l'univers me préparait sans que je m'en rende compte*

*Allez donne moi ta main, enlève ta montre*

*T'en aura pas besoin, monte avec moi sur ma colline*

*Que je te montre où se cache le dernier bout de paradis*

---

**[Hook]**

*Come taste this love*

*Thought it might seem tough*

*It's sweet like sugar cane*

*Viens que je t'aime à l'Africaine*

*Iwacu...*

**[Verse 1]**

*28 degrees in the shade, the time would be lustful in Monaco*

*In my world we remain bashful, yet it is always beautiful*

*All of my songs would be erotic if I should talk about love and weather*

*Because when the rain is not flowing all over your skin*

*The rays of the sun keep you warm*

*If you don't succumb to the sunny rains*

*And all these phenomena which leave you speechless*

*You will be amazed by the*

*Dance of these innocent little children celebrating the birth of the new leopard*

*Yes we are a bit superstitious; there is always more than the eye can see*

*Moreover I had ticks in my eyes before I met you*

*As if the universe was preparing me without me realising*

*Come on, give me your hand and take off your watch*

*You will not need it, climb with me on top of my hill*

*So I can show you the last piece of paradise*

---

**[Hook]**

*Come taste this love*

*Though it might seem tough*

*It's sweet like sugar cane*

*I wanna love you the African way*

*Homeland...*

---

*Come taste this love*

*Thought it might seem tough*

*It's sweet like sugar cane*

*Viens que je t'aime à l'Africaine*

*Iwacu...*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Oublies tes apps, tes gadgets, étrique-toi de la société-écran*

*La réalité est dans l'expérience de l'instant, pas sur l'écran*

*Libère toi de l'esclavage moderne, viens retrouver le sourire*

*Avant qu'on passe à l'autre rive ou que la machine nous colonise*

*Viens vivre le rêve de naturaliste loin des caricatures racistes*

*Craint pas ces bombes, ce sont les future reums de nos enfants*

*N'aie pas peur de la tombée de la nuit, ces BOOM que t'entend*

*C'est du ndombolo, makosa, kwasa kwasa coupé de Kalé*

*Ces cris c'est des byivugo, des mpangara nguhangare, sous un ciel étoilé*

*Si on célèbre autant c'est parce que la nature nous a bénit*

*Reveilles-toi, regarde le soleil se lever derrière les collines*

*Ces merveilles se répètent tous les jours mais restent magiques*

---

*Come taste this love*

*Though it might seem tough*

*It's sweet like sugar cane*

*I wanna love you the African way*

*Homeland...*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Forget your apps, your gadgets, disconnect yourself from the society-screen*

*Reality is in the experience of the moment, not on the screen*

*Come and discover that innocent smile that you lost*

*Before we move to the other side, or before the machine colonises us*

*Just live the dream of naturists, far from racist cartoons*

*Fear not these bomb shells, they are the future mothers of our children*

*Do not be afraid of the dark, these BOOM that you hear*

*In the ndombolo,<sup>117</sup> makossa,<sup>118</sup> kwasa kwasa coupé de Kalé<sup>119</sup>*

*These voices of byivugo<sup>120</sup>, mpangara nguhangare<sup>121</sup>, under a starlit sky*

*If we celebrate this much, it's because we are blessed by nature*

*Wake up, look at the sun rise behind the hills*

*These marvels repeat every day, but remain magical*

---

<sup>117</sup> A Congolese dance style.

<sup>118</sup> An Ivorian dance style.

<sup>119</sup> The kwasa kwasa dance style was invented by Congolese music legend Pepe Kalle.

<sup>120</sup> Plural of *Icyivugo*, "warriors' praise poetry" (see chapter 2).

<sup>121</sup> *Mpangara nguhangare*: an explicit and insulting poetry battle between cattle herders.



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**[Hook]**

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**[Verse 3]**

*Oublie Harlequin, Roméo et Juliette, Cyrano de Bergérac*

*Laisse béton tes bouquins, mon amour est incomparable*

*Ferme les pages de ton roman-photo, regarde moi*

*Nous Deux c'est réel, non tu ne rêves pas*

*Ferme les yeux que j'ôte ton mascara de mes bises*

*Allez viens ma Bwiza que je te dise*

*A quel point tu me rappelle la légende de Mashira?*

*Eternelle Beauté sans maquillage convoitée par les rois*

*Allez viens, pose ta tête sur mon torse*

*Ecoute l'écho de la source de mes forces*

*Te dire à chaque BOOM, ndagukunda mieux que les mots*

---

*Je te dirai rarement "I love you"*

---

*C'est pas une routine lwacu*

---

*Mais je poserai ces mots sur ma langue pour que tu savoures le vrai goût de l'amour*

---

**[Hook]**

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**[Hook]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

Forget Harlequin, Roméo and Juliet, Cyrano de Bergérac

Forget about your manuals, my love is incomparable

Close the pages of your roman-photo, look at me

Two of us, it's real, no you are not dreaming

Close your eyes so I can remove your mascara with my kisses

Come on my *Bwiza*<sup>122</sup> so I can tell you

At what point did you remind me of the legend of Mashira?

Eternal beauty without makeup desired by the kings

Come, put your head on my chest

Listen to the echo of the source of my forces

To tell you on each BOOM, I love you more than words

---

I will rarely tell you "I love you"

---

This is not a routine at home

---

But I will put these words on my tongue so that you can savour the true taste of love

---

**[Hook]**

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<sup>122</sup> *Bwiza* is a female name that means "beautiful".

## SONG 9.

### ***Virtually Yours* ft. Ricky Password & Mhinganzima [2015]**

Eric 1Key, Rwanda; English, French, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Barick: Home studio, Kigali. Track 4 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *Virtually Yours* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/virtuallyyours>

#### **[Intro]**

##### **Eric 1Key:**

*This is for my tweeps, yeah!*

##### **Ricky Password:**

*Alright*

##### **Eric 1Key:**

*Too many crushes on my timeline. I see y'all!*

##### **Ricky Password:**

*I'm "social" in love with you*

*Iyizire bwiza budashira irora n'irongora mama  
we*

*Iyizire nkwijyanire iwacu mu Rwagasabo*

*Social in love with you...*

##### **Eric 1Key:**

*Iyizire ugwe mu gituza cy'ingangare*

---

#### **[Verse 1: Eric 1Key]**

*Elle, c'est pas qu'une douce voix*

*Un parfum suave, une touche de grace*

*Une oreille à l'écoute, un regard de vache*

*Un buste bombé ou une forme de coca*

*De longues jambes ou un ventre plat*

*Comme toutes ces images que tu vénères*

*Elle, elle tourne mes sens à l'envers*

*Elle est donc je me sens mieux*

*J'adore lire sa prose pendant des heures*

#### **[Intro]**

##### **Eric 1Key:**

*This is for my tweeps, yeah!*

##### **Ricky Password:**

*Alright*

##### **Eric 1Key:**

*Too many crushes on my timeline. I see  
y'all!*

##### **Ricky Password:**

*I'm "social" in love with you*

*Come to me Bwiza from the song before*

*Let me take you home to the land of  
Gasabo*

*Social in love with you...*

##### **Eric 1Key:**

*Come to me and fall on the chest of a  
strong man*

---

#### **[Verse 1: Eric 1Key]**

*It's not just a gentle voice*

*A sweet fragrance, a touch of grace*

*An ear to listen, the look of a cow*

*A bust bomb or the shape of a coke bottle*

*Long legs or a flat stomach*

*Like all the images that you praise*

*She turns my world upside down*

*She is therefore I am better*

*I love to read her prose for hours*

*Sa voix résonne comme un son accrocheur*

Her voice sounds like a catchy tune

*Elle ne sera jamais mienne et j'en suis heureux*

She will never be mine and I am happy for that because then

*Car je ne vivrai pas avec la pression de pouvoir la perdre*

I won't live with the pressure that I might lose her

*On ne partage pas la même pression de l'atmosphère*

We do not share the same pressure of the atmosphere

*Et certes nos environnements se different*

And certainly our environments are different, but

*Mais au delà des barrières, on s'est créé des spheres*

Beyond the barriers, we create our own spheres

*Avec notre connexion, on a créé notre propre univers*

With our connection, we created our own universe

---

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**[Hook: Ricky Password]**

*You tweet like a little sweet birdie*

**[Hook: Ricky Password]**

You tweet like a little sweet birdie

*Your face, book it for my kisses baby*

Your face, book it for my kisses baby

*You're my sound cloud, your voice takes me higher*

You're my sound cloud, your voice takes me higher

*I lose instant-grams when you go M.I.A.*

I lose instant-grams when you go M.I.A.

*WhatsApp with you, girl can't you see?*

WhatsApp with you, girl can't you see?

*That I'm in love with you, girl can't you see?*

That I'm in love with you, girl can't you see?

*I'm so in love with you, girl can't you see?*

I'm so in love with you, girl can't you see?

*I'm so in love with you*

I'm so in love with you

---

---

**[Verse 2: Mhinganzima]**

*On ne se connaît pas, on se sait*

**[Verse 2: Mhinganzima]**

We do not just know each other, we're aware of each other

*La nostalgie noir sur blanc*

The nostalgia black and white

*Les mots qui dévorent les kilometers*

The words which devour the miles

*Et les transforment en nuages*

And transform them into clouds

*Je le sais à l'écoute même quand je suis sans voix*

We can hear each other without talking

*Il ne peut être à moi*

He cannot be mine

<i>Alors souvent le soir</i>	So often in the evening
<i>Après avoir tout mis off</i>	After switching everything off
<i>Je me l'offre</i>	I get him
<i>Derrière l'écran tout un océan de paroles</i>	Behind the screen in an ocean of words
<i>À voguer sans amarres il me retient</i>	We sail
<i>Je lui pose les questions qui me hantent</i>	I asked him the questions that haunt me
<i>Crois-tu que Lune et Soleil envient l'amour des étoiles?</i>	Do you believe that the moon and the sun envy the love of the stars?
<i>Crois-tu que rêve et prière sont jumeaux?</i>	Do you believe that dreams and prayers are twins?
<i>Et que chacun veille à son tour?</i>	And that each take a turn to sleep?
<i>Crois-tu que l'on peut faire chanter les mots sans mélodie?</i>	Do you believe that we can make words dance without a melody?
<i>Ou faire danser l'air sans y toucher?</i>	Or dance in the air without touching it?
<i>Aimes-tu la pluie?</i>	Do you love the rain?
<i>Es-tu aussi solaire que je t'imagines?</i>	Are you as stellar as I imagine?
<i>Restes avec moi ce soir, je l'implore</i>	Stay with me tonight, I beg
---	---
<b>[Hook: Ricky Password]</b>	<b>[Hook: Ricky Password]</b>
---	---
<b>[Verse 3: Natacha &amp; Eric 1Key]</b>	<b>[Verse 3: Natacha &amp; Eric 1Key]</b>
<i>Tant que tu seras, je m'accrocherai à ce bout de rêve</i>	As long as you will be, I will hang on to this piece of dream
<i>Peu importe le temps que je serai, tu resteras mon amour secret</i>	No matter the time, you will be my secret lover
<i>Et je m'en voudrai pour toujours d'être cet infidèle indiscret</i>	And I will always be guilty for not being discrete
<i>Incapable de résister aux touches de tes mots doux</i>	Unable to resist the touch of your sweet words
<i>Car toi seul sait où se trouvent les boutons de mes émois d'où</i>	Because only you know where the buttons of my emotions are
<i>Tu es malgré tout le temps et la distance entre nous</i>	Despite all the time and space between us
---	---

**[Hook: Ricky Password] (X 2)**

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**[Outro: Ricky Password]**

*Ah la la la la...*

---

*Reka nkurimbire mama we*

---

*Ndetse ngucurangire inanga henge*

**[Hook: Ricky Password] (X 2)**

---

**[Outro: Ricky Password]**

*Ah la la la la...*

---

Let me praise you

---

And play the trough-zither for you

## SONG 10.

***Carpe Diem (Seize the Moment) [2015]***

Eric 1Key, Rwanda-Uganda; French, Lingala.

Prod. Junior Kafi: Home studio, Kigali; Vocals: Yego Studio, Kampala. Track 5 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *Carpe Diem* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/carpe-diem>

**[Verse 1]**

*Prisonnier lié au fil du temps*

*Produit d'hier vendu au present*

*Livré à la merci de l'instant suivant*

*Entre le désir de rester vivant et la crainte  
ultime de disparaître dans le néant*

*Je ne suis qu'un étranger ici*

*Un passager en transit perdu entre l'arrivée et  
l'exit*

*Inconnu dans ma quête, mon nom aurait dû  
être lx*

*Gausse/Gosse dans ma tête, tout me paraît  
comme un matrix*

*Une équation linéaire à plusieurs degrés*

*Les questions deviennent plus compliquées au  
fur du temps, malgré leur simplicité*

*Comme l'énigme de l'oeuf et de la poule on  
peut pas tout résoudre*

*Ca va paraître paresseux, con même*

*Mais depuis que je traite plus la vie comme un  
problème*

**[Verse 1]**

Prisoner bound by the thread of time

Yesterday's product sold to the present

Left at the mercy of the next moment

Between the desire to remain alive and the  
fear of disappearing into the void

I'm just a stranger here

A passenger in transit lost between arrival  
and exit

Unknown in my quest, my name should  
have been X

Gauss/Child in my mind, everything seems  
to be like a matrix

A linear equation but with lots of levels

Questions become more complex with time,  
despite their simplicity

Just like the riddle of the chicken and the  
egg, we cannot solve everything

It might sound lazy, or even stupid

But ever since I stopped looking at life like a  
problem

*Elle est devenue plus vivable, plus facile*

It has become more liveable

*Je ne me demande plus pourquoi j'existe ni  
pourquoi j'écris depuis que j'ai compris*

I no longer ask why I exist or why I write  
since I understand

*Que je ne vis que pour ces moments qui  
animent mon esprit*

That I live for these moments which make  
my spirit vibrate

*Au fond, romancer l'instant, c'est ça faire de la  
poésie*

Because deep inside romancing time, that  
is poetry

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**[Hook]**

*Entre le passé et l'avenir... Carpe diem*

**[Hook]**

Between the past and the future... Seize  
the moment

*Carpe diem, carpe diem*

Seize the moment, seize the moment

*Carpe diem, carpe diem*

Seize the moment, seize the moment

*Carpe diem, carpe diem*

Seize the moment, seize the moment

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Parce que le passé n'est qu'un collage  
d'images stockées dans nos mémoires*

**[Verse 2]**

Because the past is just a collage of images  
stored in our memories

*Un film qui varie avec l'âge car chaque  
nouveau détail change la version de l'histoire*

A film which varies with time because every  
new detail changes the story

*Parce que l'avenir n'est qu'un mirage fait de  
nos peurs et nos espoirs*

Because the future is just a mirage made of  
our hopes and fears

*Pourquoi s'accrocher à l'imaginaire et laisser  
le présent nous glisser entre les doigts?*

Why do we cling so much to the imaginary  
and let the present slide through our  
fingers?

*Le temps passé ne revient jamais et demain  
ne nous appartient pas*

Yesterday is gone and tomorrow does not  
belong to us

*Entre les regrets d'hier et la crainte de demain  
moi j'ai décidé de saisir le présent à deux  
mains*

Between the regrets of yesterday and the  
fears of tomorrow I decided to seize the  
present in both of my hands

*Sauter sur chaque occas que la vie présente  
et la croquer à pleines dents*

Jump on every opportunity that life presents  
and devour it

*Instinct animal, l'intuition guide mes pas*

Animal instinct, I am guided by my intuition

*J'ai foi en elle c'est pourquoi je crois en moi*

I have faith in it, that's why I believe in me

*Mon destin est un freestyle, ma vie un  
spectacle*

My fate is a freestyle, my life a theatre

<i>Biopic d'un artiste qui ne cesse de se battre et se débattre</i>	Biopic from an artist who doesn't cease to fight
<i>Une pièce dramatique dans laquelle je joue le rôle principal</i>	A dramatic play in which I am the protagonist
<i>Chaque jour commence avec une nouvelle page</i>	Every day begins with a new page
<i>Avant de la tourner, je check le tatoo sur mon bras</i>	Before I turn it, I look at the tattoo on my arm
<i>Il lit carpe diem</i>	And it reads "carpe diem"
---	---
<b>[Hook]</b>	<b>[Hook]</b>
---	---
<b>[Outro]</b>	<b>[Outro]</b>
<i>Eza système ya invasion</i>	It's an invasion
<i>Toye kosimba mokolo</i>	And we came to seize the day
<i>Eza ya yo papa</i>	It's yours papa <sup>123</sup>
<i>Simba, ma, kamata! Kamata!</i>	Seize it, grab it, get it! Get it!
<i>Lobi ezalaka te</i>	Tomorrow doesn't exist
<i>Lelo ya yo lobi soki eye, eza ya yo!</i>	Today is yours, if tomorrow comes make it yours too!
<i>Ma, kamata, ma, kamata!</i>	Grab it, get it, grab it, get it!
<i>Simba mokolo</i>	Seize the day
<i>Simba mokolo</i>	Seize the day
<i>Simba mokolo</i>	Seize the day
<i>Simba mokolo</i>	Seize the day
<i>Hahahahaha...</i>	Hahahahaha...

## SONG 11.

### **Entre 2 (Between 2) [2015]**

Eric 1Key, Rwanda; French.

Prod. Barick: Home studio, Kigali. Track 6 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *Entre 2* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/entre2>

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<sup>123</sup> Kinshasa slang meaning "man", "bro", or "dude".

**[Verse 1]***Hommage à toi brave**Sage soldat armés de cordes vocales**Elles t'étranglent quand tu ne les utilises pas**Elles tuent quand tu les utilises mal**Mais toi t'as trouvé l'équilibre... Chapeau bas!**Ce couplet est une ode pour toi, défenseur de vertu**Toi qui ne t'ai pas tu même avec la bouche cousue**Tu t'es battu malgré les mains liées**Pour un futur où tu seras oublié**Avec ta vie t'as payé le prix R.I.P.**J'admire ton courage dans la défense de tes croyances**T'es pas ce papillon aux couleurs flamboyantes**Qui vogue entre les vents des tendances**T'es un caméléon, tu t'accroches sur ta branche**Et t' observes le monde dans tous les sens**Tu ne restes pas là à regarder ces termites égocentriques se dévorer sans merci**Tu sonnes l'alarme mais cela fait de toi une cible**Ça t'étonne pas, tu connais la musique**Alors tu dances avec un grand sourire**On t'applaudit mais tu sais que quand tu seras parti**Tes écrits seront conservés dans la bibliothèque des amnésiques**Tes traces préservées au musée des oubliettes***[Verse 1]***Homage to you brave**Wise soldier armed with vocal chords**They strangle you when you do not use them**They kill you when you use them wrong**But you found the balance... Hats off!**This verse is an ode to you, defender of virtue**You did not keep quiet despite your sealed lips**You fought with your hands tied**For a future in which you will be forgotten**With your life you paid the price R.I.P.**I admire your courage in defending what you stand for**You're not this butterfly with flamboyant colours**Sailing between the winds of trends**You're a chameleon, hooked on your own branch**You observe the world in every direction**You do not just stay there and watch these egocentric termites devour each other mercilessly**You sound the alarm but that makes you a target**It does not surprise you, you know the tune**So you dance to it with a huge smile**You receive applause but you know that once you are gone**Your writings will be stored in the library of amnesiacs**Your footprints preserved in a museum of the forgetful*



*Et ton nom restera gravé dans le vent... à jamais*

And your name will be engraved in the wind... forever

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**[Hook]**

*J'existe entre*

**[Hook]**

I exist between

*La naissance et la mort*

Birth and death

*Sans filtre entre*

Without filter between

*La pensée et la parole*

Thought and speech

*Je vis entre*

I live between

*La nuit et le jour*

Night and day

*J'hésite entre*

I hesitate between

*Jamais et toujours*

Never and forever

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*J'existe entre*

I exist between

*La naissance et la mort*

Birth and death

*Sans filtre entre*

Without filter between

*La pensée et la parole*

Thought and speech

*Je vis entre*

I live between

*La nuit et le jour*

Night and day

*J'hésite entre*

I hesitate between

*Jamais et toujours*

Never and forever

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Hélas je ne serai jamais toi, j'ai pas ta bravoure dans ma peau*

**[Verse 2]**

Unfortunately I'll never be you, I don't have your bravery within me

*Moi je préfère la fermer, vivre à genou que mourir debout en héros*

I prefer to shut it, live on my knees than die standing

*Je suis le rythme, j'attends que la Terre tourne dans l'autre sens*

I follow the rhythm, I'm waiting for the world to turn the other way

*La vie me surprend tous les jours, me parlez pas de son essence*

Life surprises me every day, don't talk to me of its essence

*C'est une fine meche qui brule a petit feu... et alors?*

It's a fire wick which burns a small fire... so what?

<i>Je suis passif, hypo-sensitif, est-ce ma faute?</i>	What if I'm passive, hypo-sensitive, is it my fault?
<i>Rien ne m'anime à part l'alcool, le sexe et la drogue</i>	Nothing drives me besides alcohol, sex and drugs
<i>La famille? T'as vu leur regards quand t'as pas de job?</i>	Family? Have you seen their look when you don't have a job?
<i>Les amis? C'est eux qui te poignent dans le dos</i>	Friends? Those are the people who stab you in the back
<i>J'ai peur de rien surtout pas des ont-dit</i>	I fear nothing, especially what people say
<i>Je me méfie des non-dits cachés derrière les sourires hypocrites</i>	I'm cautious of unspoken words hidden behind hypocritical smiles
<i>Cette ère c'est notre apocalypse, rien à y faire</i>	This era is our apocalypse, there's nothing we can do about it
<i>Cette terre c'est le paradis et l'enfer</i>	This earth is heaven and hell
<i>Cette vie n'est qu'un sombre tunnel, la mort, c'est en fait elle la lumière</i>	Life is just a dark tunnel, death is in fact the light
<i>Tôt ou tard on finit tous six pieds sous terre, puis on rejoint nos ancêtres à l'état végétatif</i>	Sooner or later we will all end six feet under, then we join our ancestors in their vegetative state
<i>Peut être que c'est leur esprit que j'aspire, quand je tire deux coups de mon spliff</i>	Maybe it's their spirit which I inhale, when I take two puffs from my spliff
HAHAHAHAHAHA	HAHAHAHAHAHA
---	---
<b>[Hook]</b>	<b>[Hook]</b>
---	---
<b>[Verse 3]</b>	<b>[Verse 3]</b>
<i>Je suis pas suicidaire, je kiff trop la life</i>	I'm not suicidal, I love life too much
<i>Surtout pas sédentaire, je suis à la poursuite des fun nights</i>	Especially not sedentary, I'm in pursuit of fun nights
<i>Ce serait un drame si cette vie n'était pas une comédie</i>	It would be a tragedy if life were not a comedy
<i>Tu veux une blague? Parait que ma place est à l'asile</i>	You want a joke? Apparently I belong in an asylum
<i>J'écris des trucs de ouf HAHAHAHA</i>	I write crazy stuff HAHAHAHA
---	---
<b>[Hook]</b>	<b>[Hook]</b>

---

**[Instrumental]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Barick attends un peu... Il y a un truc que j'ai oublié de dire*

*En fait...*

*Je suis pris entre les dents comme la langue*

*En déséquilibre entre le yin et le yang*

---

**[Instrumental]**

---

**[Outro]**

Barick, wait a minute... there's something I forgot to say

In fact...

I'm caught between teeth like a tongue

In imbalance between yin and yang

## SONG 12.

***Politricks* [2015]**

Eric 1Key, Rwanda-Uganda; English, French.

Prod. Barick: Home studio, Kigali; Vocals: Yego Studio, Kampala. Track 7 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *Politricks* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/politricks>

**[Intro]**

*Welcome to Politricks*

*I'm going to teach you everything...*

*... that you already know.  
Mouahahahahahaha!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Dans mon esprit*

*J'ai le charisme de mon grand-père, toujours véridique*

*Dans mes oreilles*

*J'ai les conseils de ma mère: "Te mêle jamais de la politique"*

*Aujourd'hui j'ai trouvé son nez dans mes affaires, que faire?*

*Je suis désolé m'man, j'avais pas m'taire*

*Faire semblant et être complice de ses malices*

**[Intro]**

Welcome to Politricks

I'm going to teach you everything...

... that you already know.  
Mouahahahahahaha!

---

**[Verse 1]**

In my mind

I have the charisma of my Grandfather, always truthful

In my ears

I hear my mother's advice: "Never get into politics"

Today I found its nose in my business, what should I do?

I'm sorry Mum, I will not keep quiet

Turn a blind eye and be an accomplice of its malice

<i>C'est parce que je cours des risques que t'écoutes ce disque</i>	If you can hear this record it's because I take risks
<i>Enfant seul, je veux dire fils unique</i>	Lonely child, I mean only son
<i>Je navigue sans guide depuis que je suis petit</i>	I sail with no guide since I was a child
<i>Comme le messie, je fais partie d'aucun parti politique</i>	Like the Messiah, I am part of no political party
<i>Liberal, je flotte dans ma bulle poétique</i>	Liberal, I float in my poetic bubble
<i>Faudra un dico à certains de mes compatriotes pour qu'ils</i>	My countrymen need a dictionary so that they can
<i>Comprennent la différence entre cosmopolitain et anti-patriotique</i>	Understand the difference between cosmopolitan and anti-patriotic
<i>Je marche la tête haute, bien en l'air comme un astronaute</i>	I walk with my head held high, really high like an astronaut
<i>Je mate les hommes forts de cette terre se rejeter la faute</i>	And I watch powerful men of this world play the blame game
<i>Comme une balle de tennis aux jeux olympiques</i>	As if it's a tennis ball at the Olympic games
<i>Avec les mains sales, ils se félicitent</i>	With their dirty hands, they congratulate each other
<i>Et nous, on les acclame... shit!</i>	And we applaud them... shit!
---	---
<b>[Hook]</b>	<b>[Hook]</b>
<i>Trick me, trick me, trick me – till I lose control</i>	Trick me, trick me, trick me – till I lose control
<i>Promise, promise, promise – till I give you my vote</i>	Promise, promise, promise – till I give you my vote
<i>Trick me, trick me, trick me – till I lose control</i>	Trick me, trick me, trick me – till I lose control
<i>Promise, promise, promise – till I give you my vote</i>	Promise, promise, promise – till I give you my vote
---	---
<b>[Verse 2]</b>	<b>[Verse 2]</b>
<i>Le vieux-jeu reconnaît le jeu des Cartesélectorales</i>	The old school recognises the game of electoral cards
<i>Aux truffes aucune du paquet n'a autant de valeur que l'as</i>	In <i>truffles</i> <sup>124</sup> no card has as much value as the Ace

<sup>124</sup> *Truffles* is a popular Francophone card game played in Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC.

*Condamnés à l'échec, nous sommes les pions  
de nos rois*

Doomed to failure, we are pawns of our  
kings

*Hélas ce qui compte, c'est pas qui vote mais  
qui compte les votes*

Unfortunately what counts is not who votes  
but who counts the votes

*Pour ne pas dire qui vole les votes car on les  
offres*

It's not that I'm saying that they steal the  
votes; we offer them our votes

*Nos politiques, on les adule alors ils nous  
mènent au gouffre*

We worship our leaders so they drive us to  
the pit

*Comment être aussi dupe quand l'histoire se  
répète en boucle?*

How can we be so fooled when history  
repeats itself in a loop?

*La démocratie c'est "cause toujours" la  
dictature c'est "ferme ta gueule"*

Democracy means "you are free to talk"  
and dictatorship means "shut the fuck up"

*Donc c'est par la démocratie que jurent nos  
dictateurs... Fuck le people*

So it's in the name of democracy that our  
dictators swear... Fuck the people

*On a été stupide de croire qu'un black à la  
Maison Blanche*

We were stupid to believe that a black man  
in the White House

*Etait assez pour changer le décor de ce  
sombre continent*

Was enough to change the décor of this  
'Dark Continent'

*On nous convint d'être des agneaux, on les  
crains comme des lions*

They convinced us that we are lambs, so  
we fear them as if they are lions

*On leur donne nos votes, ils nous prennent  
nos opinions*

We give them our votes, they take our  
opinions

*Saches que "dans parlement, il y a parle et  
ment" ~ Léon Campion*

But remember that "in parliament, there is  
talk and lies" ~ Léon Campion

---

---

**[Hook]**

**[Hook]**

---

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Que la voix des hommes sans voix empêchent  
les puissants de dormir*

**[Verse 3]**

May the voices of the voiceless stop the  
mighty ones from sleeping

*Et si jamais ils dorment, que nos cauchemars  
les fassent gémir*

And if they ever fall asleep, may our  
nightmares haunt them

*Nous sommes fatigués de mourir, laissez nos  
enfants vivre*

We are tired of dying, let our children live

*Le mensonge comme l'huile flotte au dessus  
de la vérité*

Lies are like oil on the surface of the truth

*Ils nous poussent vers la mort au nom de la  
liberté*

They push us towards death in the name of  
freedom

<i>On s'entretue sans cause et on s'habitue à R.I.P.</i>	And so we kill each other for no reason; we get used to R.I.P.
<i>Qui veut la guerre prépare la guerre, alors tous aux armes</i>	If you want war prepare for war, let's get armed
<i>Il y a assez de nucléaire pour réchauffer la Guerre Froide</i>	There are enough nuclear weapons to warm up the Cold War
<i>Et fondre la terre entière au nom du pouvoir</i>	And melt the entire world in the name of power
<i>Liberté ou main de fer, on brandit tous le poing en l'air</i>	Freedom or iron hand, we all raise our fists in the air
<i>Ce qui est clair, c'est qu'on a rien appris d'hier</i>	What is clear is we learned nothing from yesterday
<i>Nous ne sommes que des feuilles sur cet arbre qui est la vie</i>	We are nothing but leaves on this big tree which is life
<i>On tombe, d'autres poussent puis donnent des fruits</i>	We fall, others grow and then give fruits
<i>Alors à quoi bon couper l'arbre, pourquoi infecter les racines?</i>	Why try to cut down the tree, why infect the roots?
<i>Pourquoi infecter les racines?</i>	Why infect the roots?

### SONG 13.

#### ***Raison d'Etre/Chasing Ghosts (Reason to be/Chasing Ghosts) ft. Jason Ntaro & Brian Corpus [2015]***

Eric 1Key, Uganda; English, French.

Prod. Lo Rider: Urban Aksent, Kampala. Track 8 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *Raison d'Etre* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/raisondetre-chasingghosts-feat-jason-ntaro-brian-corpus>

#### **[Verse 1: Brian Corpus]**

*Wohhh! I'm losing myself*

*It's like I'm searching for something I don't know*

*Could be the missing piece to my puzzled soul*

*My guts they tell me what I need is somewhere out there*

*I have no clue where to look so I try everywhere*

#### **[Verse 1: Brian Corpus]**

*Wohhh! I'm losing myself*

*It's like I'm searching for something I don't know*

*Could be the missing piece to my puzzled soul*

*My guts they tell me what I need is somewhere out there*

*I have no clue where to look so I try everywhere*

*It's like whisky to an alcoholic, crack to a crackhead*

*Except I'm missing something that I never had*

---

**[Hook]**

**Eric 1Key:**

*Je cours après le vent dans ma quête*

*Chaque jour je cherche ma raison d'être*

*La terre tourne et le cycle se répète*

**Brian Corpus:**

*I traded my soul for a few notes*

*Now that it's gone up in smoke*

*What reason to live and die for?*

*I feel like I'm chasing ghosts*

**Eric 1Key:**

*Je cours après le vent dans ma quête*

*Chaque jour je cherche ma raison d'être*

*La terre tourne et le cycle se répète*

---

**[Verse 2: Eric 1Key]**

*L'argent ne fait pas le bonheur, la pauvreté non plus*

*Certainement parce que le bonheur existe depuis des lustres bien avant les thunes*

*No money, no life mais la maille n'offre pas l'immortalité*

*No pain, no gain, alors on souffre puis on die pour le blé*

*C'est pas l'amour du beurre qui nous motive à gagner le pain*

*Mais surtout la peur de ne pas en avoir au réveil le matin*

*Le pognon est une drogue, impossible de rester lucide*

*On en devient accro et son manque peut résulter en suicide*

*It's like whisky to an alcoholic, crack to a crackhead*

*Except I'm missing something that I never had*

---

**[Hook]**

**Eric 1Key:**

*I'm chasing the wind in my quest*

*Each day I fabricate my reason to be*

*The earth turns and the cycle repeats itself*

**Brian Corpus:**

*I traded my soul for a few notes*

*Now that it's gone up in smoke*

*What reason to live and die for?*

*I feel like I'm chasing ghosts*

**Eric 1Key:**

*I'm chasing the wind in my quest*

*Each day I fabricate my reason to be*

*The earth turns and the cycle repeats itself*

---

**[Verse 2: Eric 1Key]**

*Money does not create happiness, poverty neither*

*Certainly because happiness existed way long before money*

*No money, no life but then money doesn't make you immortal*

*No pain, no gain, so we suffer and die for money*

*It's not the love of butter that pushes us to get bread*

*But the fear of not having butter in the morning when we wake up*

*Money is a drug, it's impossible to be lucid*

*We all get hooked on it and its absence can lead to suicide*

*Société de consommateurs, le rêve est commercial*

In a consumerist society, even the dream is for sale

*Entre la passion et l'emploi, c'est quoi le bon choix?*

What's the right choice between passion and employment?

*L'artiste se dit heureux malgré sa vie de sutures*

So artists convince themselves they are happy, despite their miserable lives

*L'employé est malheureux car s'il bosse dur*

And the employed are unhappy because when they work hard

*C'est juste pour payer ses factures*

It's only so they can pay their bills

*Moi qui n'ai jamais voulu vendre mon art*

I never really wanted to sell my art

*J'ai vendu quelques grammes de mon âme*

But I sold grams of my soul

*En mettant ma plume au service du capitalisme*

When I put my pen at the service of capitalism

*Pour un peu de fric, j'ai perdu l'équilibre*

For little money, I lost balance

*Deux poids deux mesures*

Making the choice will never be fair and balanced

---

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**[Hook]**

**[Hook]**

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**[Verse 3: Jason Ntaro]**

*Chasing gold but no goal, so chasing ghosts*

**[Verse 3: Jason Ntaro]**

Chasing gold but no goal, so chasing ghosts

*Wasting life growing old*

Wasting life growing old

*This is not the story that I was told by those of old*

This is not the story that I was told by those of old

*Now I'm convinced that I'm working hard*

Now I'm convinced that I'm working hard

*But hard enough is not even hard enough*

But hard enough is not even hard enough

*And so I sit, watch my shriveled shadows and laugh*

And so I sit, watch my shriveled shadows and laugh

*And fall willingly into this crack*

And fall willingly into this crack

*So I sell out*

So I sell out

*I sell my soul as I sweat and toil*

I sell my soul as I sweat and toil

*Constantly planting crops in hard barren soil*

Constantly planting crops in hard barren soil



*But I stress and I boil  
In this system I am the clown  
And now...  
Heavy this load, I try to cope  
This tug and war has a slippery rope  
Complacency replaces me  
Ignorance embraces me  
My shadows stare into my periphery  
And I realise that I am empty*

---

**[Hook]**

---

**Brian Corpus:**  
*Mmmm feel like I'm chasing ghosts*

But I stress and I boil  
In this system I am the clown  
And now...  
Heavy this load, I try to cope  
This tug and war has a slippery rope  
Complacency replaces me  
Ignorance embraces me  
My shadows stare into my periphery  
And I realise that I am empty

---

**[Hook]**

---

**Brian Corpus:**  
Mmmm feel like I'm chasing ghosts

## SONG 14.

**Gene Aise ft. Cassa & Samy Kamanzi [2015]**

Eric 1Key, France-Uganda-Canada; English, French, Swahili.

Prod. Samy Kamanzi (France), in collaboration with Dustville Studio, Kampala and Cassa, in Canada. Track 9 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *Gene Aise* on Soundcloud: [https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/gene\\_aise](https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/gene_aise)

**Cassa:** *I've been holding in for too long  
I'm gonna let it all go through this song*

**Eric 1Key:** *S'il y a du silence entre mes fous  
rires*

*De l'absence de joie dans mon sourire  
C'est parce que mon histoire est inédite*

**Samy Kamanzi:** *Usiku na mchana najificha*

*Mambo mengi siwezi sema*

*Ukiona nacheka usizani ni furaha*

**Cassa:** I've been holding in for too long  
I'm gonna let it all go through this song

**Eric 1Key:** If there is silence between my  
laughter

An absence of joy in my smile  
That is because my story remains untold

**Samy Kamanzi:** I hide myself day and  
night

There is so much I cannot say

If you see me laughing don't assume I'm  
happy

**Eric 1Key:** *Ce soir il y aura pas de métaphore dans mes vers*

*Je sors de ma zone de confort vous parler à coeur ouvert*

*Hayaya yoyoooo*

---

**[Verse 1: Eric 1Key]**

*Je suis comme tout artiste, mon art vient d'un vide*

*Mon gouffre de je le remplis de vers de poésie*

*Ivre de mélancolie, comme soprano j'en deviens accro aussi*

*Oui je pratique un art triste, réel comme Kery*

*Tumi m'a dit "Il te tue et à la fois te guérit"*

*Voici donc une session de thérapie pour le meilleur et le pire*

*Je suis né à l'exil au pays de mon père*

*Une partie de moi a hérité la terre de l'autre du même master*

*Quand les voisins de mon grand-père égorgeaient ses frères*

*Il s'est réfugié sur cette terre qui appartenait aux siens plus tôt*

*C'est compliqué mais bref je suis né entre l'enclume et le marteau*

*Dans cette région de grands lacs connus pour le sang qui y coule*

*Entre deux grand pays, un connu pour son génocide et sa bravoure*

*L'autre pour sa taille, ses richesses et ses guerres interminables*

*Les deux se haïssent, certainement pour des raisons minables*

---

**Cassa:** *I've been holding in for too long*

*I'm gonna let it all go through this song*

**Eric 1Key:** *Tonight there will be no metaphors in my verses*

*I'm stepping out of my comfort zone to talk to you with an open heart*

*Hayaya yoyoooo*

---

**[Verse 1: Eric 1Key]**

*I'm just like any artist, my art comes from an empty place*

*I fill my void with verses of poetry*

*Drunk on melancholy, I get addicted to it like Soprano*

*Yes I practise a sad art, real as Kery*

*Tumi said to me, "It kills you and heals you at the same time"*

*Here, therefore, is a therapy session for the best and for the worst*

*I was born in exile in my father's country*

*A part of me inherited the land of the other from the same master*

*When my grandfather's neighbours were slaughtering his brothers*

*He found asylum in this land which belonged to his father before*

*It is complicated but brief, I was born between the anvil and the hammer*

*In this region of the Great Lakes known for the blood that flows*

*Between two large countries, one known for genocide and its bravery*

*The other for its size, its riches and its endless wars*

*The two hate each other, certainly for minor reasons*

---

**Cassa:** *I've been holding in for too long*

*I'm gonna let it all go through this song*

**Eric 1Key:** *S'il y a du silence entre mes fous rires*

*De l'absence de joie dans mon sourire*

*C'est parce que mon histoire est inédite*

**Samy Kamanzi:** *Usiku na mchana najificha*

*Mambo mengi siwezi sema*

*Ukiona nacheka usizani ni furaha*

*Hayaya yoyoooo*

---

**[Verse 2: Eric 1Key]**

*J'ai vu le jour entre la haine et l'amour*

*Derrière cette petite maison enduite de crépi rouge*

*En 92, moins de 12 ans déjà*

*Je subissais le traitement du cafard*

*A cette école de planches près de l'aéroport de Goma*

*Rejeté du Kivu, 3 ans à Brazza*

*De kin, j'ai atterri dans les bras du Rwanda*

*Ses collines m'ont accueilli avec du lait caillé*

*Des sourires jusqu'aux oreilles et Nkundamahoro comme cahier*

*Je dois l'dire, ça soulage de se sentir accepté*

*Mais en même temps c'est lourd de porter*

*Le poids de savoir que je ne peux plus remettre les pieds*

*Sur la terre qui m'a vu naître car le volcan l'a effacé*

---

**[Verse 3: Cassa]**

**Eric 1Key:** If there is silence between my laughter

An absence of joy in my smile

That is because my story remains untold

**Samy Kamanzi:** I hide myself day and night

There is so much I cannot say

If you see me laughing don't assume I'm happy

Hayaya yoyoooo

---

**[Verse 2: Eric 1Key]**

I was born between hate and love

Behind this small house coated with red plaster

In '92, before I was 12 years old

I received the treatment of the cockroach

At this school of planks near Goma's airport

Rejected from Kivu, three years in Brazzaville

From Kin I landed in the arms of Rwanda

Its hills welcomed me with milk curd

Big smiles and *Nkund'amahoro*<sup>125</sup> as notebooks

I have to say it feels good to be accepted

But at the same time it's heavy to bear

The weight of knowing that I can no longer put my feet

On the land which saw me rise because the volcano has erased it

---

**[Verse 3: Cassa]**

---

<sup>125</sup> *Nkunda amahoro* means "I love peace".

*Let go of what you think you know*  
*You got no idea about where I come from*  
*My hometown's been erased by a volcano*  
*I coulda be homeless but I said no, no, no*  
*Wherever I lay my head, that's my home*  
*(home home home)*  
*Strong like a stone, I keep rolling on (on and*  
*on and on)*  
 (X 2)  
**Samy Kamanzi:** *Usiku na mcana najifika*  
  
*Mambo mengi siwezi semaa*  
*Mikiona naceka usizani ni furaha*  
 ---  
*Hayaya yoyooo...*

Let go of what you think you know  
 You got no idea about where I come from  
 My hometown's been erased by a volcano  
 I coulda be homeless but I said no, no, no  
 Wherever I lay my head, that's my home  
 (home home home)  
 Strong like a stone, I keep rolling on (on  
 and on and on)  
 (X 2)  
**Samy Kamanzi:** I hide myself day and  
 night  
 There is so much I cannot say  
 If you see me laughing don't assume I'm  
 happy  
 ---  
 Hayaya yoyooo...

## SONG 15.

### **Universoul ft. Abaasa [2015]**

Eric 1Key, UK-Uganda; English, French.

Prod. Abassa (UK). Mastered by Nelson (Uganda). Vocals: Yego Studio, Kampala. Track 10 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *Universoul* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/universoul>

#### **[Verse 1: Eric 1Key]**

*Je suis brillant de nature*

*C'est pas le talent dans l'écriture*

*Les phares, les voitures*

*Les projecteurs des stades*

*Le bling bling ou le swag, qui font de moi une*  
*star*

*Je suis né à la belle étoile*

*A l'aurore du dernier jour d'Avril*

*A l'aube du premier jour de Mai*

#### **[Verse 1: Eric 1Key]**

I am brilliant by nature

It's not the writing skills

The headlights, the cars

The stadium beams

The bling bling or the swag that make me a  
 star

I was born under the stars

At the aurora of the last day of April

And the dawn of the first day of May

<i>A la fin de la saison de pluies, mais crois pas que je suis né de la dernière</i>	At the end of the rainy season, but don't you think that I was born yesterday
<i>Je suis un delta entre plusieurs rivières lointaines</i>	I am a delta between multiple distant rivers
<i>Plein de cultures cohabitent dans mon système</i>	Lots of cultures coexist in my system
<i>Je viens de nulle part, en même temps de partout</i>	I come from nowhere and everywhere at the same time
<i>Je suis un mélange de tout, ni homogène ni hétérogène</i>	I am a mixture of everything, neither homogenous nor heterogeneous
<i>Humain avant tout, c'est la signature de mes genes</i>	Human. That is the signature of my genes
<i>Des fois j'ai l'impression que mon existence est une conspiration universelle</i>	Sometimes I have a feeling my life was conspired by the universe
<i>Car ma naissance suite à une conception accidentelle</i>	My birth, a result of accidental conception
<i>Est une belle erreur comme la création de la pénicilline</i>	Is a beautiful error just like the creation of penicillin
<i>Reveur, j'aspire à faire une contribution dans cette vie</i>	Such a dreamer, I aspire to make a contribution to this life
<i>Aussi valide que celle de Fleming en médecine</i>	As valid as that of Fleming in medicine
<i>Quand j'étais petit, je voulais devenir docteur</i>	When I was a kid, I wanted to become a doctor
<i>Aujourd'hui ma poésie soigne les coeurs</i>	Today my poetry heals hearts
<i>Si tu veux savoir qui je suis, tu me trouveras</i>	If you want to know who I am, you will find me
<i>Parmi ceux qui croient que le hasard fait bien des miracles</i>	Among those who believe that everything happens for a reason, however random
---	---
<b>[Chorus: Abaasa]</b> <i>I'm more than what you see</i>	<b>[Chorus: Abaasa]</b> I'm more than what you see
<i>I'm free like the air you breathe</i>	I'm free like the air you breathe
<i>Je suis imparable, je suis intouchable, universoul</i>	I'm unstoppable, I'm untouchable, universoul
<i>I'm untouchable like a dream</i>	I'm untouchable like a dream
<i>Unsolvable like a mystery</i>	Unsolvable like a mystery

*I'm untouchable, I'm unstoppable, universoul*

I'm untouchable, I'm unstoppable,  
universoul, universoul, universoul

*Universoul...*

Universoul...

---

---

**[Verse 2: Eric 1Key]**

*J'ai pas le front patriotique, ni le derrière  
merdique des politiques*

**[Verse 2: Eric 1Key]**

I do not push patriotism upfront like dirty  
ass politicians

*Mes organes n'ont votre sens du sacrifice*

My organs do not have your sense of  
sacrifice

*J'ai l'syndrome John Q, je ne donnerai mon  
coeur qu'à mon fils*

I have John Q syndrome, I would only give  
my heart to my son

*J'veux pas d'édifice à mon effigie quand je  
serai parti*

I do not want structures in my effigy when I  
am gone

*Je veux pas qu'on me traite de héros,  
nombreux sont morts pour des faux idéaux*

I do not want to be treated as a hero, many  
died for false ideals

*Je parie qu'ils se retournent au fond de leurs  
tombes quand ils observent ce qu'on a fait de  
ce monde*

I bet they roll over in their graves when they  
see what we have done to this world

*Je suis pas international, je crois pas aux  
frontiers*

I am not international, I think not at the  
borders

*Je suis plutôt libéral et mon monde n'est pas  
un tiers*

I am liberal and my world is not a third party

*Loin de vos limites imaginaires qui créent des  
réels ennemis*

I am far away from your imaginary  
boundaries that create real enemies

*Loin de vos nations unies pour exploiter les  
plus démunis et des divisions raciales de vos  
états unis Je m'évade à travers les couloirs de  
la vie*

Away from your united nations to exploit the  
vulnerable ones and racial divisions of your  
united states I escaped through the  
corridors of your life

*Mon âme slalome vers mon étoile, viens si t'as  
envie, mon univers est infini*

My soul roams towards my star, join if you  
want, my universe is infinite

*Mon hymne est un freestyle au rythme de mon  
coeur*

My anthem is a freestyle on the rhythm of  
my heartbeat

*Mon drapeau tout comme ma peau n'a pas de  
couleur*

My flag, just like my skin, is colourless

*Je suis fait d'eau, de terre, d'air mais aussi de  
lueur*

I am made of water, earth, air, but also light

*C'est pourquoi tout comme ces astres au  
milieu Des ruines et des désastres je brille de  
mille feux*

That is why just like celestial bodies in the  
middle of ruins and disasters, I shine bright

---

---

**[Chorus: Abaasa]**

---

**[Outro: Eric 1Key]**

*Je suis apatride pas métis*

*Mon esprit ski entre les galaxies*

**[Chorus: Abaasa]**

---

**[Outro: Eric 1Key]**

I am stateless not mixed-race

My spirit skis between galaxies

## SONG 16.

***En Root (In Root) [2015]***

Eric 1Key, Kigali-Kampala; English, French.

Prod. Barick: Home studio, Kigali; Vocals: Yego Studio, Kampala. Track 11 on Eric 1Key's *Entre 2* album.

Listen to *En Root* on Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/eric1key/enroot>

**[Intro]**

*Alright! Entre2 has been a beautiful journey*

*Yeah. Lots of discovery*

*So I thought maybe we could take another small trip*

*What do you say? Right? Come with me*

---

**[Hook]**

*Take me to the roots of my family tree*

*Lead me to the truth and set me free*

*Save me from the dark, my world is full of lies*

*My shining star*

---

*Take me to the roots of my family tree*

*Lead me to the truth and set me free*

*Save me from the dark, my world is full of lies*

*My shining star*

---

*Who are you? Who are you?*

**[Intro]**

Alright! *Entre 2* has been a beautiful journey

Yeah. Lots of discovery

So I thought maybe we could take another small trip

What do you say? Right? Come with me

---

**[Hook]**

Take me to the roots of my family tree

Lead me to the truth and set me free

Save me from the dark, my world is full of lies

My shining star

---

Take me to the roots of my family tree

Lead me to the truth and set me free

Save me from the dark, my world is full of lies

My shining star

---

Who are you? Who are you?

Who are you? Who are you?

---

**[Verse1]**

*C'est le retour d'âge d'un adulte prématuré*

*Les boots dans l'asphalte, en route, le  
parcours est inauguré*

*Les yeux dans les étoiles, je cours après mon  
ombre*

*Car retracer mon histoire c'est recoller les  
décombres*

---

*Mes traces ressemblent aux marques des  
pieds sur la plage*

*Aussi belles qu'elles paraissent, elles  
disparaissent avec la vague*

*Racines intraquables, je suis superficiel comme  
une algue*

*C'est haut du gratte-ciel que je cherche la  
base du baobab*

---

*Sur cet arbre généalogique, je ne sais sur  
quelle branche m'accrocher*

*Donc je me livre à la technologie pour me  
rapprocher des étrangers*

*Espérant le monde sera mieux si on acceptait  
tous de se mélanger*

---

*A peine la troisième génération des peuples  
soumis*

*L'histoire de ma nation reste fondée sur un  
mythe*

*Je crois pas qu'on ait apparu comme en un  
jour des champignons*

*C'est pourquoi je cherche mes souches  
comme le noyau de l'oignon*

---

Who are you? Who are you?

---

**[Verse1]**

It's the mid-life crisis of a premature adult

I've got my boots on the road, en route, the  
journey has begun

My eyes are lost in the stars, I'm running  
after my shadow

Because walking on the path of my history,  
the whole of it is putting the pieces together

---

My traces look like footprints in the sand

Although beautiful, they disappear with the  
waves of the ocean

My roots are untraceable, I'm superficial  
like algae

It's from the top of a sky scraper that I'm  
looking for the base of the baobab

---

On this genealogy tree, I don't know which  
branch to hang on

So I emerge myself in technology to get  
closer to strangers

Hoping that the world will be better if we  
just accept to mix

---

It's only the third generation of a subjugated  
people

The foundation of my nation's story is a  
myth

I don't believe we appeared one day like  
mushrooms

This is why I'm looking for my layers, even  
though it seems like peeling an onion

---



*On perd la voie de nos ancêtres, l'occident profite*

We lose the way of our ancestors, and the West benefits from this

*On se vend aux enchères depuis que le dollar est notre devise*

We auctioned ourselves since the dollar became our currency

*Main d'oeuvre bon marché, l'Afrique reste en crise*

Man power is very cheap, so Africa's economy remains in crisis

*Les Etats se multiplient plus on se divise*

Countries multiply the more we divide

---

---

**[Hook]**

**[Hook]**

---

---

**[Appreciations]**

*It's funny how*

**[Appreciations]**

It's funny how

*I've been looking for myself all this time*

I've been looking for myself all this time

*Only to realise that I was here the whole time*

Only to realise that I was here the whole time

*I tried to find myself through religion*

I tried to find myself through religion

*Race, ethnicity, nationality, traditions, even profession*

Race, ethnicity, nationality, traditions, even profession

*But none of these things worked out for me man*

But none of these things worked out for me man

*So I reinvented my personality*

So I reinvented my personality

*I decided to embrace the fact that I'm this mass, or rather this mess that absorbs whatever the world throws at it, you know?*

I decided to embrace the fact that I'm this mass, or rather this mess that absorbs whatever the world throws at it, you know?

*Who or what I am is no longer a big deal*

Who or what I am is no longer a big deal

*I'm here and that's all that matters.*

I'm here and that's all that matters.

*So today I'm here to say thanks*

So today I'm here to say thanks

*Because I don't believe there is such a thing as self-made*

Because I don't believe there is such a thing as self-made

*We all need help from one another man*

We all need help from one another man

*So I'm gonna start with my Grandpa - rest in peace beautiful soul.*

So I'm gonna start with my Grandpa - rest in peace beautiful soul.

*Thank you for teaching me by simply being you.*

Thank you for teaching me by simply being you.

*Thank you mom. I know you don't know much about how I do what I do, but you believe in me. And that means a lot.*

*Thank you Tantine Chantal. You changed my life. Rest In Peace. I wish you were here.*

*Thank you Faustin. You're my childhood everyday hero. Thank you for all the sacrifices.*

*To my son. You're my balance in this crazy world. I love you. I love you. I love you.*

*To all my aunties: Didine, Yvette and Mukaza, and even the other Didine. Thank you for being here and thank for making me feel special. Thank you for not judging me.*

*Yeah. I have a dream that one day we can sit around a table and laugh all together. Coz you know for sure we have so many comedians in the family.*

*I also wanna thank Barick. You played a huge part in Entre2. I mean literally. I'm proud of you bro. I mean hang in there just a little bit, passion pays bro, it pays.*

*Junior Kafi, your touch is divine bro. Keep doing what you do.*

*Dady Cassanova, Samy Kamanzi, Ricky Password, Body of Brian, Jason Ntaro, Nono, Natacha. Thank you so much for pouring your hearts on this project.*

*Tony Mwesigwa, Reniout Dujardin. Thank you guys for the amazing job on the cover. I can never thank you enough.*

*Diana, Betty, Spoken Word Rwanda, Nunu, Kwivuga Kampala, Cécile Kayirebwa, Eric Soul, Nelson, Kigali Up. Thank you for the vote of confidence.*

*Dorene, Colin, Josh, thank you for the support. Keep it real.*

*Kaneza, Fiona, Leah, PK, Dan, Gladys, Sam, Ze Clew... oh Corey, yeah! Shout out to Ze Clew!*

*You're my friends, you're the friends that I've always wanted to have. So stay true. Keep it cool. I love you. Be happy.*

Thank you Mum. I know you don't know much about how I do what I do, but you believe in me. And that means a lot.

Thank you Tantine Chantal. You changed my life. Rest In Peace. I wish you were here.

Thank you Faustin. You're my childhood everyday hero. Thank you for all the sacrifices.

To my son. You're my balance in this crazy world. I love you. I love you. I love you.

To all my aunties: Didine, Yvette and Mukaza, and even the other Didine. Thank you for being here and thank for making me feel special. Thank you for not judging me.

Yeah. I have a dream that one day we can sit around a table and laugh all together. Coz you know for sure we have so many comedians in the family.

I also wanna thank Barick. You played a huge part in *Entre2*. I mean literally. I'm proud of you bro. I mean hang in there just a little bit, passion pays bro, it pays.

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Dorene, Colin, Josh: Thank you for the support. Keep it real.

Kaneza, Fiona, Leah, PK, Dan, Gladys, Sam, Ze Clew... oh Corey, yeah! Shout out to Ze Clew!

You're my friends, you're the friends that I've always wanted to have. So stay true. Keep it cool. I love you. Be happy.

*And to everyone who shares my music on social media, I really appreciate. It means a lot to me.*

*Thanks to all you tweeps, to my friends on Facebook.*

*Ah! I don't know! I don't know where this music is gonna go, but I'm ready. I can let it take me wherever you wanna take me.*

And to everyone who shares my music on social media, I really appreciate. It means a lot to me.

Thanks to all you tweeps, to my friends on Facebook.

Ah! I don't know! I don't know where this music is gonna go, but I'm ready. I can let it take me wherever you wanna take me.

## SONG 17.

### ***Ndacyashidikanya (I still doubt) [2013]***

Jody Phibi, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Xris Cheetah, Kigali.

#### **[Intro]**

*Oh, oh!*

*Oh! Oh! Yeah! Yeah!*

*Tu du! Tu du du du!*

*Tu du! Tu tu du du du!*

*Yeah! Na na na na na nah!*

*Yeah!*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Guhera bwa mberi ukivugana nanjye*

*Aho nari ndi ndaharuzi ndahareba*

*Nta na kimwe nibagiwe o-oya*

*Ndibuka umunsi ndetse n'amasaha*

*Ubwo izuba ryari riri kurenga*

*Nagiye kumva numva telephone*

*Nimero idasanzwe, please pick up the phone*

*Hello hello hello!*

*Yeah, what's up Jody, this is your friend*

*Nanjye nakuvugishije nk'uwo tumenyeranye*

*Kuva ubuto nkabona uhora unyitayeho*

#### **[Intro]**

Oh, oh!

Oh! Oh! Yeah! Yeah!

Tu du! Tu du du du!

Tu du! Tu tu du du du!

Yeah! Na na na na na nah!

Yeah!

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

Since the first time you talked to me

I could see where I was

I couldn't forget anything, n-no

I remember the day and the time

When the sun was going down

And then I heard the telephone ring

The number was unusual, please pick up the phone

Hello hello hello!

Yeah, what's up Jody, this is your friend

I talked to you like we had already met

Since childhood I've seen how you care about me

*Kugeza umunsi wa none*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Ariko ubu sinashobora*

*Kukwerurira ikiri ku mutima*

*Ubwo hari byinshi unkorera*

*Ariko ndacyashidikanya*

*Ndacyashidikanya*

*Ndacyashidikanya*

*Ndacyashidikanya*

*Ndacyashidikanya*

*Yeah yeah...*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Hari impamvu nyinshi*

*Zatumye niyumva uko ndi uku*

*Nubwo ntabasha gusobanukirwa*

*Ariko nzi neza ko hari igihishwe*

*Uko bwije uko bukeye*

*Ndetse nuko iminsi yicuma*

*Naje gusanga ari byinshi duhuriyeho*

*Igituma nkwiyumvamo cyane*

*Wowe uhora unyitayeho*

*Birandenga ariko sindasobanukirwa*

*Uko bwije nuko bukeye*

*Mbona bikomeza gukomera*

---

**[Chorus]**

Until this day

---

**[Chorus]**

But now I can't

Show you what is in my heart

Even if you do many things for me

But I still doubt

I still doubt

I still doubt

I still doubt

I still doubt

Yeah yeah...

---

**[Verse 2]**

There are many reasons

Which have made me feel like this

Even if I can't understand

But I am sure there is something hidden

Day by day, night by night

And as days go by

I realised that we have many things in common

The reason why I feel you so much

You always care about me

It is beyond my expectations but I don't understand yet

Day by day, night by night

I found that things are getting harder

---

**[Chorus]**

Yeah yeah... (Etc.)

---

**[Bridge]**

*Biragora kubyemera*

*Ariko umutima ukabyemeza*

*Ntibirangiriye aha biracyakomeza*

*Akuzuye umutima gasesekara ku munwa<sup>126</sup>*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Lah lah lah...*

Yeah yeah... (Etc.)

---

**[Bridge]**

It is difficult to accept

But my heart confirms it

It is not over now, things will continue

What is in your heart comes out of your mouth

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

Lah lah lah...

## SONG 18.

***Tenderness* [2014]**

Jody Phibi, Rwanda-Uganda; English, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

Prod. Buddies: Buddies Studio, Kampala.

Watch *Tenderness* on YouTube [Video prod. Heights Montage]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhwFKVyW5K4>

**[Intro]**

*The one and only one*

*Like I'm the only one*

*Baby let me give it to you*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Uri impano – uri impano*

*Uri impano – uri impano*

*Nahawe n'Imana – nahawe n'Imana*

*Nahawe n'Imana – nahawe n'Imana*

**[Intro]**

The one and only one

Like I'm the only one

Baby let me give it to you

---

**[Chorus]**

You are a gift – you are a gift

You are a gift – you are a gift

Given to me from God – given to me from God

Given to me from God – given to me from God

---

<sup>126</sup> Rwandan proverb.

*You brought peace to ma heart*

*How you like your tenderness*

*You brought peace to ma heart*

*How you love your tenderness*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*The first time I get this kind of feeling*

*So deep it feels so fine and true*

*Sometimes I won't believe and I know you  
won't believe it*

*How special you make me feel*

*You're such a blessing, answer to my prayer*

*For every night and day*

*For every night and day*

*You're the one, you're the one, the one and  
only one*

*Boy you make me feel like I'm the only one*

*Give it to me, give it to me, baby let me give it  
to you*

*You make me feel like I'm the only one*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Your touch, touch, baby touch my heart*

*I've been craving all my love for you*

*How your love is so magical*

*Adorable and incredible*

*Nobody better, better, better than you*

*Nobody better, better, better than you*

*You're the love of my life – oh!*

*You brought peace to ma heart*

*How you like your tenderness*

*You brought peace to ma heart*

*How you love your tenderness*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*The first time I get this kind of feeling*

*So deep it feels so fine and true*

*Sometimes I won't believe and I know you  
won't believe it*

*How special you make me feel*

*You're such a blessing, answer to my  
prayer*

*For every night and day*

*For every night and day*

*You're the one, you're the one, the one and  
only one*

*Boy you make me feel like I'm the only one*

*Give it to me, give it to me, baby let me give  
it to you*

*You make me feel like I'm the only one*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Your touch, touch, baby touch my heart*

*I've been craving all my love for you*

*How your love is so magical*

*Adorable and incredible*

*Nobody better, better, better than you*

*Nobody better, better, better than you*

*You're the love of my life – oh!*

*You're the love of my life – oh!*

*Ndagukunda*

*Nze kwagara nyo – Nze kwagara nyo*

*Mukunzi wanjye*

*That's why me say...*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Tenderness (X7)*

*You're the love of my life – oh!*

*I love you*

*I love you so much – I love you so much*

*My love*

*That's why me say...*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Tenderness (X7)*

## SONG 19.

### ***Better than them [2014]***

Jody Phibi, Rwanda-Uganda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda, Swahili.

Prod. Buddies: Buddies Studio, Kampala.

Watch *Better than them* on YouTube [Video prod. Heights Montage]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qchj6FwzPdQ>

**[Intro]**

*Hmmm! Everybody ask me!*

*Jody girl, watchu been up to these days?*

*Me a tell dem Jody me a rude gal! – Me a rude gal!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*So me go like...*

*Nah nahhh! Nah nah nah!*

*Nah nah!*

*So me go like...*

*Nah nahhh! Nah nah nah!*

*Nah nahhh! Yah!*

*Better than dem!*

*Urabaruta*

**[Intro]**

*Hmmm! Everybody ask me!*

*Jody girl, watchu been up to these days?*

*Me a tell dem Jody me a rude gal! – Me a rude gal!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*So me go like...*

*Nah nahhh! Nah nah nah!*

*Nah nah!*

*So me go like...*

*Nah nahhh! Nah nah nah!*

*Nah nahhh! Yah!*

*Better than dem!*

*Better than them*

*Better than dem! – Hey!*

*Urabaruta bose*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Better, better, better than dem!*

*Jody girl I'm better than dem!*

*Better than dem! - Coz I make dem...*

*Yah yah yah yah!*

*And they go like yah yah yah yah yah yah!*

*Yah yah yah yah!*

*And they go like yah yah yah yah yah yah!*

*Rude gal, me a chill back a yard*

*Pretty gals you know we go hard*

*We make them feel alright – feel alright*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*It's like a soldier, left to the right*

*Damn this feeling feels so right*

*It feels so right*

*Everybody sing with me*

*Do re mi fa so la ti do do*

*La lati do do*

*La lati do do*

*Let me see the way you wine and go down*

*Cheza, cheza we dance till the morning light –  
Simbuka!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

Better than dem! – Hey!

Better than them all

---

**[Verse 1]**

Better, better, better than dem!

Jody girl I'm better than dem!

Better than dem! - Coz I make dem...

Yah yah yah yah!

And they go like yah yah yah yah yah yah!

Yah yah yah yah!

And they go like yah yah yah yah yah yah!

Rude gal, me I chill back at home

Pretty gals you know we go hard

We make them feel alright – feel alright

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

It's like a soldier, left to the right

Damn this feeling feels so right

It feels so right

Everybody sing with me

Do re mi fa so la ti do do

La lati do do

La lati do do

Let me see the way you wine and go down

Dance, dance, we dance until the morning  
light – Jump!

---

**[Chorus]**

---



**[Verse 3]**

*Banji bagamba Jody nze sikusobora*

*Chemanyi fe tutwara mpora*

*Tobarabura, number one champion*

*Zinamu, baby zinamu*

*Zinamu, ah ah!*

*Zinamu, baby zinamu*

*Zinamu – yeah yeah!*

---

**[Outro]**

*Nah nahhhh! In my heart!*

*Nah nahhhh! Inside my spirit!*

*Nah nahhhh! The music moves me*

*Nah nahhhh! Nah nah nah nah!*

*Better than dem, you're better, better!*

*Urabaruta!*

*I'm better than dem!*

*Better than dem!*

*Urabaruta bose – urabaruta bose!*

*Nah nah nah nah nahhhh!*

*Nah nah nah nah nahhhh!*

*Nah nah nah nah nahhhh!*

*Better, better, better than dem!*

*Buddies!*

**[Verse 3]**

Many say Jody I can't handle you

What I know is that we go slow

Don't warn them, number one champion

Dance, baby dance

Dance, ah ah!

Dance, baby dance

Dance – yeah yeah!

---

**[Outro]**

Nah nahhhh! In my heart!

Nah nahhhh! Inside my spirit!

Nah nahhhh! The music moves me

Nah nahhhh! Nah nah nah nah!

Better than dem, you're better, better!

You're better than them!

I'm better than dem!

Better than dem!

You're better than them all – you're better than them all!

Nah nah nah nah nahhhh!

Nah nah nah nah nahhhh!

Nah nah nah nah nahhhh!

Better, better, better than dem!

Buddies!

**SONG 20.**

**Yegwe Weka (It's only you) ft. Ray Signature [2014]**

Jody Phibi, Rwanda-Uganda; English, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

Prod. D.King: Nitrique Town Studio, Kampala.

Watch Yegwe Weka on YouTube [Huz Media]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsb1KbwFcK0>

**[Intro]**

*Baby it's you, you*

*Ni wowe gusa*

*Baby it's you, you*

*Jody! Oh yeah!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Omutonzi yagamba ti twagalane*

*Nga nage bwekwagara*

*Abatesi bachankalane*

*Gal I got nothing to do, do, do*

*Omutima guyimba tu, tu, tu*

*Ebigere bigamba tujeyo*

*Amaso gagamba nti nalulungi yegwe*

*Katambure nawe kuba nange toswazza gal*

*Sekamu baby barebe ejuba bwemulisa*

*My original baby*

*Original chi boo boo*

*My original sugar*

*Eh! You know I love you*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Yegwe weka baby turakundana –  
turakundana, turakundana*

*Ka nkutware eka turye ebibala - turye ebibara,  
turye ebibara*

*Eh, eh, eh*

*Umm, umm, umm, oh baby*

**[Intro]**

Baby it's you, you

It's only you

Baby it's you, you

Jody! Oh yeah!

---

**[Verse 1]**

The Creator said love each other

Like I love you

Confuse the enemies

Gal I got nothing to do, do, do

The heart sings tu, tu, tu

The legs say come this way

The eyes say you are the queen

Let me walk with you because you don't  
embarrass me gal

Smile baby and they will see how the sun  
shines

My original baby

Original chi boo boo

My original sugar

Eh! You know I love you

---

**[Chorus]**

It's only you baby we are in love – we are in  
love, we are in love

Let me take you home and we eat the fruits  
– eat fruits, eat fruits<sup>127</sup>

Eh, eh, eh

Umm, umm, umm, oh baby

---

<sup>127</sup> Sexual innuendo.

*Eh eh eh*

*Umm, umm, umm*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Nanjye*

*Ndagukunda kurusha uko wabwunva*

*Urwongukunda sinashobora kubaho ntagufite*

*Umutima wanjye urabyemeza*

*Mumaso yanjye harabwerekana*

*Ni wowe, shaka ngwino*

*Mfata unkomeze*

*Mfata unkomeze*

*I like the way that you do, do*

*I like the way that you do, do, do*

*I like the way that you do, do. You do, do. You do do*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Baby, baby*

*You are my lover*

*Sweetie, sweetie*

*Eh! You are my sugar*

*Oh baby, baby*

*You are my lover*

*Sweetie, sweetie*

*You are my sugar*

*Uh ya yah!*

*Uh ya yah!*

*Eh eh eh*

*Umm, umm, umm*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Me too*

*I love you more than you can understand*

*The way I love you, I can't live without you*

*My heart confirms it*

*In my eyes you see it*

*It's you, I want you to come here*

*Hold me tight*

*Hold me tight*

*I like the way that you do, do*

*I like the way that you do, do, do*

*I like the way that you do, do. You do, do. You do do*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Baby, baby*

*You are my lover*

*Sweetie, sweetie*

*Eh! You are my sugar*

*Oh baby, baby*

*You are my lover*

*Sweetie, sweetie*

*You are my sugar*

*Uh ya yah!*

*Uh ya yah!*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Nange bisobera*

*Buri rucha nga twekwana*

*Olumu bitabura*

*Biringa Yesu, bibuzabuza*

*My original baby*

*My original chi boo boo*

*My original sugar*

*Eh! You know I love you*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Outro]**

I'm also confused

Every morning we sweet talk each other

Sometimes it's confusing

It's like Jesus, it's confusing

My original baby

My original chi boo boo

My original sugar

Eh! You know I love you

**SONG 21.**

***Karimo (Something in you) [2014]***

Jody Phibi, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Pastor P: Beyond Records, Kigali.

Watch *Karimo* on YouTube [Video prod. Ma River]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rhph8IM9u6o>

**[Intro]**

*Karimo! – Yeah yeah yeah!*

*Ese Karimo? Jody ma*

*Karimo se – Yeah yeah yeah!*

*Ese karimo? Ma*

*Yeah yeah yeah! Aha!*

*Yeah!*

*Aha!*

*Beyond Records!*

*Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

**[Intro]**

There is something in you – Yeah yeah yeah!

Is there something in you? Joda ma

There is something in you – Yeah yeah yeah!

Is there something in you? Ma

Yeah yeah yeah! Aha!

Yeah!

Aha!

Beyond Records!

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Buri gihe iyo duhujwe amaso*

*Urijijishya ukigira uwejo*

*Ese ni urukunda rubigutera ngo mbimenye?*

*Ese ni isoni zituma unyihisha?*

*Niba hari icyo ufite ku mutima kivuge*

*Aho kunigwa n'ijambo wanigwa n'uwo uribwiye<sup>128</sup>*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Ko mbona buri gihe undeba neza bikankora ku mutima*

*Nkatambuka imbere y'aho mutuye ukankurikiza amaso*

*Bigatuma nibaza – Ese karimo? Karimo*

*Bigatuma nibaza – Ha harimo akantu*

*Bigatuma nibaza – Ese karimo? Karimo*

*Bigatuma nibaza – Ha harimo akantu*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Mbwira niba iyo umbonye usesa urimeza?*

*Ngwino, oya winyishisha*

*Ese kuki utaza ngo ugerageza amahirwe?*

*Ko wenda wasanga nanjye ariko bimeza*

*Cyo ngwino, oya winyishisha*

*Niba hari icyo ufite ku mutima kivuge*

*Aho kunigwa n'ijambo wanigwa n'uwo uribwiye*

---

Every time when we see each other

You pretend not to care

Is it because of love so I should know?

Do you hide yourself because of shyness?

If you have something in your heart say it

Instead of dying with your secret, it's better to be killed by the person you told

---

**[Chorus]**

Every time you look at me it touches my heart

When I pass by your house you follow me with your eyes

And I ask myself – Is there something in you? There is something in you

And I ask myself – There could be something in you

And I ask myself – Is there something in you? Something in you

And I ask myself – There could be something in you

---

**[Verse 2]**

Tell me when you see me do you get goose-bumps?

Come to me, don't hide from me

Why can't you come and try your luck?

Maybe you will discover that I feel the same way

Please come to me, don't hide from me

If you have something in your heart say it

Instead of dying with your secret, it's better to be killed by the person you told

---

---

<sup>128</sup> Rwandan proverb.

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Karimo – Aha!*

*Ese Karimo?*

*Karimo say – Ha!*

*Ese Karimo? Ma*

*Karimo – Ese karimo?*

*Karimo say – Ese Karimo? Ma*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Yeah yeah yeah yeah!*

*Ese Karimo? – Karimo*

*Karimo*

*Yeah!*

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

Something in you – Aha!

Is there something in you?

Something in you – Ha!

Is there something in you? Ma

Something in you – Is there something in you?

Something in you – Is there something in you? Ma

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

Yeah yeah yeah yeah!

Is there something in you? – Something in you

Something in you

Yeah!

**SONG 22.**

***Akayimba* (The Song) by DJ Shiru, ft. Jody Phibi, Markstel, Nutty Nathan and Ray Signature [2015]**

Jody Phibi, Rwanda-Uganda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

Prod. Kron P: Shirumatic Productions, Kampala.

Watch *Akayimba* on YouTube [Video prod. Frank Jah/Jahlive Films]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-5U5FhO4U0>

**[Intro]**

*Jody tell dem*

*Marsh tell*

*Yah Ray Signature*

*Eh!*

*A Kron Production!*

**[Intro]**

Jody tell dem

Marsh tell

Yah Ray Signature

Eh!

A Kron Production!

Yay!

Nutty Nathan

---

**[Pre-chorus]**

*Hey Mr Deejay subizamo kakalilimbo ma*

*Hey Mr Deejay*

*DJ Shiru*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Hey Mr Deejay kubirayo akayimba*

*Tukazinemu nonomwana*

*Saba yo akayimba*

*Hey Mr Deejay kubirayo akayimba*

*Tukazinemu nonomwana*

*Saba yo akayimba*

*Na na na na na na na oh*

*Am in love for the very first time*

*Sing fi dem*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Deejay kuba umuziki non-stop mu kadanke*

*Gudi chi wesibye nga kapade?*

*Kwata demu eyeye mucheze*

*Amazina bwegabura gwe muwalape*

*Selector pul up the gal and dem*

*Pretty little gal you a major problem*

*Lover you are one bubbly bubbly and dem*

*Nonya ekizikiza nga ekiyenje*

*Don't be selfish am no porter*

*Jangu kwale nga umukeka*

Yay!

Nutty Nathan

---

**[Pre-chorus]**

Hey Mr DJ play back the song

Hey Mr DJ

DJ Shiru

---

**[Chorus]**

Hey Mr DJ play for me a song

We dance with this girl

I'm requesting a song

Hey My DJ play for me a song

We dance with this girl

I'm requesting a song

Na na na na na na na oh

I'm in love for the very first time

Sing for them

---

**[Verse 1]**

DJ play the song non-stop on the dance floor

Why are you stood still like a pole?

Get a girl to come dance come

If you find no dance just climb her

DJ pull up the girl and them

Pretty little gal you a major problem

Lover you are one bubbly bubbly and dem

I look for darkness like a cockroach

Don't be selfish I'm no porter

Come I lay you down like a mat

*Onyirila nyo ekimenya amateka*

*Ononzika kuba ozita ah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ray sing fi dem say*

*Tubakuba kamu kamu gwe muganda*

*Pretty gal dem dance reggae and calypso*

*Turn off the lights pull up the bass*

*Mr Deejay are we parting tonight?*

*You're my gal or badina*

*Shake your bum bum they call dem kabina*

*You're my sex-sexy chana*

*Every day jagala bya kukwana*

*Bya kukwana – Eh!*

*Ati twesana*

*Nga twekwana*

*Give it to me baby oh yeah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Deejay laba abayaye bamuswama*

*Leka mukubeko kukama gal*

*Deejay pon da replay yeah*

*Show you what I do when they play my song*

*Now baby gal don't panic*

You're so smart to break the rules

You will bury me because you're killing me!

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

Ray sing for them say

We give them one by one like the order

Pretty girls dance reggae and calypso

Turn off the lights pull up the bass

Mr DJ are we parting tonight?

You're my gal or badina

Shake your bum bum they call them  
buttocks

You're my sexy baby

Every day I want to sweet talk you

Sweet talk you – Eh!

We match

When we sweet talk each other

Give it to me baby oh yeah!

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

DJ check the bad boys await her

Let me whisper to you girl

DJ pon da replay yeah

Show you what I do when they play my  
song

Now baby gal don't panic



<i>Doesn't matter if you're black, white or Spanish</i>	Doesn't matter if you're black, white or Spanish
<i>I love it when you roll like that</i>	I love it when you roll like that
<i>Let's do it one more time oh</i>	Let's do it one more time oh
<i>Kubyina biradenga – yeah!</i>	Dancing is too much – yeah!
<i>Eh! Uburyo witwara bikadwaza</i>	Eh! The way you do your things makes me sick
<i>Ndabona uburyo nakwegera</i>	I want to find a way to get close to you
<i>Ngo nkubaze aho ukomoka mama we</i>	So I ask you where you are from
<i>Ese urabyuva nkuko byumva</i>	Do you feel it like I feel it?
<i>Hmmm! I'm in love with you boy!</i>	Hmmm! I'm in love with you boy!
---	---
<b>[Chorus X2]</b>	<b>[Chorus X2]</b>
---	---
<b>[Pre-chorus]</b>	<b>[Pre-chorus]</b>
---	---
<b>[Outro]</b>	<b>[Outro]</b>
<i>Na na na na na na na oh</i>	Na na na na na na na oh
<i>Am in love for the very first time</i>	I'm in love for the very first time
<i>Ekimyura wekika</i>	Check out the beautiful girl, go down

## SONG 23.

### ***Humura Rwanda (Don't worry Rwanda) [1995]***

Kamaliza, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

<b>[Chorus]</b>	<b>[Chorus]</b>
<i>Humura Rwanda nziza</i>	Don't worry beautiful Rwanda
<i>Humura humura ngaho ndaje</i>	Don't worry here I come
<i>Humura Rwanda nziza</i>	Don't worry beautiful Rwanda
<i>Humura humura ngaho ndaje</i>	Don't worry here I come
---	---
<b>[Verse 1]</b>	<b>[Verse 1]</b>
<i>Ndaje gihugu nkunda</i>	Here I come country that I love

*Dore nkwabariye impoza*  
*Ni inkingi wegamiye Rwanda*  
*Ni inkingi wegamiye*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Niba umutima utera*

*Ntuhame mu gitereko*

*Nawuhoza simbi ryiza*

*Nawuhoza simbi ryanjye*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Ndaje gihugu kiza*

*Maze nkwihorere iruhande*

*Nkuririmbire nkureba Rwanda*

*Nkuririmbire nkureba*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 4]**

*Njye nzajya mvuza impundu*

*Ndirimbe ndenze impinga*

*Nkurate Rwanda nziza*

*Nkurate Rwanda rwacu*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Instrumental]**

I am here to comfort you  
It is the wall you lean on Rwanda  
It is the wall you lean on

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

If your heartbeat

Is not steady

I can help to soothe it my dear

I can help to soothe it my love

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

I am coming beautiful country

So that I can remain by your side

So that I can see you while I sing for you

So that I can see you as I sing

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 4]**

I will rejoice

Sing beyond hills

I will praise you beautiful Rwanda

I will praise you our Rwanda

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Instrumental]**

---

**[Verse 5]**

*Nzakuhagira umwaya*

*Nkwirukaneho umwanzi*

*Nguhe umwambaro ugukwiye Rwanda*

*Nguhe umwambaro ugukwiye*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 6]**

*Njye nkuzaniye urukundo*

*Soko y'ubumwe n'amahoro*

*Rw'imbaga y'inyabutatu*

*Rw imbaga y'inyabutatu*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Humura Rwanda nziza*

*Humura humura ngaho ndaje*

---

**[Verse 7]**

*Nzagutsindagizamo democracy*

*Izakugeza ku majyambere*

*Y'abana bawe Rwanda*

*Y'abana bawe shenge*

---

**[Chorus X3]**

*Humura Rwanda nziza*

*Humura humura ngaho ndaje*

---

**[Verse 5]**

I will wash away your imperfections

I will chase away the enemy

I will cover you with worthy clothing  
Rwanda

I will cover you with worthy clothing

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 6]**

I bring you love

Source of unity and peace

The unity of three

The unity of three

---

**[Chorus]**

Don't worry beautiful Rwanda

Don't worry here I come

---

**[Verse 7]**

I will enforce democracy on you

It will bring you development

For your children Rwanda

For your children

---

**[Chorus X3]**

Don't worry beautiful Rwanda

Don't worry here I come

**SONG 24.**

***Yantumye (Somebody sent me) [2014]***

King James, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Pastor P, Kigali.

Watch *Yantumye* on YouTube [Video prod. Meddy Saleh]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=487H7HT2Is8>

**[Verse 1]**

*Ngo amarangamutima ye ni menshi*  
*Niyo mpamvu yantumye ngo nkubwire*  
*Ngo yari azi ukwezi ntiyari azi izuba*  
*Yarimenye ubwo yakubonye*  
*Yarakubonye agira amazinda*  
*Ngo yewe yibagiwe niyo ajya*  
*Ahubwo atangira kurota*  
*Agatoki mu kandi mwicaranye*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

*Yantumye ngo nkubwire ko agukunda*  
*Aka karirimbo ndirimba ni akawe*  
*Mu bibi no mu byiza azagukunda*  
*Ngo agufite nku mpembero z'umitima*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Wowe w'intege zigena isura*  
*Wamutwaye uruhu n'uruhande*  
*Wuje umunyarwandakazi mu maso*  
*Agukunda atazimiza*  
*Ngo nta mubavu umuhumurira nkawe*  
*Umwamikazi uyoboranye ituze*  
*Iyo akubonye ibibi birahunga*  
*Ngo nta jambo ryasobanura uwo uri we*

---

**[Verse 1]**

His feelings are too much  
That is why he sent me to tell you  
That he knew the moon but not the sun  
Until the day he saw you  
He saw you and became forgetful  
He even forgot where he was going  
Instead he started day dreaming  
Hand in hand, you and him sitting together

---

**[Chorus X2]**

He sent me to tell you that he loves you  
This song I am singing is for you  
He will love you through thick and thin  
He holds you at the deepest end of his heart

---

**[Verse 2]**

You with a walk that defines your beauty  
He is smitten by you  
Your face has features of a Rwandan woman  
He loves you without holding back  
He says that no scents smell better than you  
The queen who rules peacefully  
When he sees you all evil runs away  
When he sees you all evil runs away

---

[Chorus X3]

---

[Instrumental]

---

[Chorus X2]

[Chorus X3]

---

[Instrumental]

---

[Chorus X2]

## SONG 25.

**EDPRS ft. Jay Polly and Riderman [2013]**

Knowless Butera, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Fazzo: Ibisumizi, Kigali.

Watch *EDPRS* on YouTube [Video prod. Gilbert (The Benjamins)]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFfpWwcl5e4>

[Intro]

*EDPRS!*

*Knowless!*

*Jay Polly! Riderzo!*

---

[Chorus]

*Buri umunyarwanda wese niyumva EDPRS  
yumve iterambere*

*Dufatanye turwubake amahanga ahurure ku  
by'ibyiza dukora*

*Nishimiye kuba umunyarwanda – na EDPRS*

*Nishimiye kuba umunyarwanda – ufite agaciro*

*Nishimiye kuba umunyarwanda – na EDPRS*

*Nishimiye kuba umunyarwanda*

---

[Verse 1]

*Kubyara bake dushoboye kurera*

*Byadufasha gutera imbere*

*Abikorera bakarushaho bagashyiramo ingufu*

*Kuko Rwanda ari nziza*

[Intro]

*EDPRS!*

*Knowless!*

*Jay Polly! Riderzo!*

---

[Chorus]

Rwanda should understand EDPRS as  
development

Let's work together and build our country so  
that foreigners come to see what we do

I am happy to be a Rwandan – with EDPRS

I am happy to be a Rwandan – with *agaciro*

I am happy to be a Rwandan – with EDPRS

I am happy to be a Rwandan

---

[Verse 1]

Having children who we can care about

Can help us to get developed

The private sector should work hard

Because Rwanda is beautiful

*Tugerageze tuyigire nziza kurushaho*

*Kuko Rwanda ari nziza*

*Tuyisigasire*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Umunyarwanda afite agaciro*

*Akwiye kubahwa*

*Rwanda irakura ijya ejuru*

*Imiturirwa irubakwa*

*Abajene twarajijutse*

*Turihangira imirimo*

*Ubunembwe no guta umwanya, oya ntitukibirimo*

*Turakora imyuga itandukanya myinshi kandi myiza*

*Turakora ubutitsa*

*Turiteganyiriza, turabitsa*

*Amatama y'abato aratembwa itoto*

*Kubera amata mu Rwanda*

*Abaturage barashima politiki ya gira inka munyarwanda*

*Amatara atatse imihanda*

*Idufasha kuduha*

*Ubujiji buri gucika*

*Turiga tukaminuza*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

Let's try to make it better

Because Rwanda is beautiful

Let's protect it

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

A Rwandan has *agaciro*

He should be respected

Rwanda is growing high

The big buildings have been built

As youth we are now educated

We are creating jobs

No, there is no longer laziness, no wasting of time

We are doing different and beautiful arts

We're working non-stop

We plan for our future, we save money

People look young

Because we have milk in Rwanda

The citizens thank the policy of one cow per family

The decoration of street lighting

Which helps us to connect

There is no more illiteracy

As we are studying until the highest level

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

<i>Nimureke mbabwire burya hariho ibanga</i>	Let me tell you, there is a secret
<i>Kandi abajya inama Imana irabasanga</i> <sup>129</sup>	And God comes to those who work together
<i>Nkanjye nk'umusore muto ufite impano</i>	Like a young talented boy
<i>Ndifuzza ejo heza, niyo mpamvu niyuha akuya</i>	I wish for a better future, that is why I work hard
<i>Nkakora ntikoresheje, umurimo nkora nkawukunda</i>	Get motivated and like what you do
<i>Nkawunozza kuko nziko ariwo uzangira uwo nshaka kuba</i>	I do it very well as I know that this will help me to become what I want to be
<i>Ikivi cyanjye ncyusa neza</i>	I complete my difficult task well
<i>Turi abakangutse</i>	Now we are awake
<i>Nawe ntuhejwe wisigara, amarembo aruguruye</i>	Even you, don't be behind, the floor is open
<i>No mu ikoranabuhanga byose ndabona ari sawa sawa</i>	I can see that in ICT everything is fine
<i>Ubushake ni ubushobozi tubihe agaciro</i>	Where there's a will there's a way, so let's consider it
<i>Byose bizashoboka</i>	Everything will be possible
---	---
<b>[Chorus]</b>	<b>[Chorus]</b>

## SONG 26.

***Baramushaka (They want him) [2014]***  
Knowless Butera, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Clément Ishimwe: Kina Music, Kigali.

Watch *Baramushaka* on YouTube [A Press It Production]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81pf9WWzc0s>

**[Verse 1]**  
*Aho iyi si igeze biragoye kubona uwo wakwizera*  
  
*Buri wese asigaye akurura yishira*  
  
*Kumenya ukubwiza ukuri cyangwa uvuga ibinyoma ni ikibazo cy ingutu*

**[Verse 1]**  
In this world, it's no longer easy to find someone who you can trust  
  
Everyone is interested in their own gain  
  
It's not easy to know who's lying and who's telling the truth

<sup>129</sup> Rwandan proverb.

*Mperutse guhura n'umukobwa w'inshuti yanjye  
magara anyangisha uwo nikundira*

I recently met a girl who happens to be my  
good friend and she made me hate the  
man who I love

*Aramuvugavuga, aramumanuka koko avuga  
ukuntu ari mubi, atankwiye*

She talked about him and criticised him,  
she told me he's ugly and not worthy of me

*Nyamara iyo umukunzi wanjye aje mbona  
amureba bidasanzwe*

But every time my lover comes

*Nkabona ibinezaneza bimuzuye mu amaso*

She looks at him differently and gets  
sparkles in her eyes

---

---

**[Chorus X 2]**  
*Abakobwa biki igihe*

**[Chorus X2]**  
Girls these days shouldn't fool you

*Ntibazagushuke ngo utandukane n'uwo  
ukunda*

And make you leave your lover

*Urarya uri munge*

Always watch your back

*Baramushaka – witonde*

They want him – be careful

*Baramushaka – umukomeze*

They want him – keep on going

*Baramushaka – ubiyame*

They want him – tell them off

*Baramushaka – ntibazagushuke*

They want him – don't be fooled

---

---

**[Verse 2]**  
*Ntako batagira ngo bakwereke ibibi bye*

**[Verse 2]**  
They do everything they can to show you  
how bad he is

*Ngo ntimuberanye, ngo ahora aberamye*

They say you are a mismatch, that he is  
awkward

*Ukagira ngo ni impuhwe baba bagufitiye*

And you think they care about your  
wellbeing

*Zahe zo kajya ko ari nka za zindi za bihehe*

But they are just like a wolf in sheep's  
clothing

*Bahora bahimbahimba, bahora bashakashaka*

They are always making things up, always  
looking for ways

*Icyadutandukanya bakavuga n'ibitajyanye*

To split our couples up and say things that  
don't match

*Ngo agenda nabi, ndetse anasa nabi*

They say his walk is awkward, that he looks  
awkward

*Ngo nikimenyimenyi niyo yambaye ntajya  
aberwa*

In fact, even when he dresses he doesn't  
look good



*Ibi ni ibiki koko? Nzabagenze nte koko?*

What is this really? What should I do with them?

*Yego, aha!*

Yego, aha!

*Nyamara iyo umukunzi wanjye aje nbona  
amureba bidasanze*

But every time my lover comes

*Nkabona ibinezaneza bimuzuye mu amaso*

She looks at him differently and gets  
sparkles in her eyes

---

---

**[Chorus X2]**

**[Chorus X2]**

---

---

**[Bridge]**

*Kina music affair!*

**[Bridge]**

Kina music affair!

*Sing!*

Sing!

*Ngo agenda nabi, ndetse anasa nabi*

They say his walk is awkward, that he looks  
awkward

*Ngo n ikimenyimenyi niyo yambaye ntajya  
aberwa*

In fact, even when he dresses he doesn't  
look good

*Ibi ni ibiki koko? Nzabagenze nte koko?*

What is this really? What should I do with  
them?

*Yego, aha!*

Yego, aha!

*Nyamara iyo umukunzi wanjye aje nbona  
amureba bidasanze*

But every time my lover comes

*Nkabona ibinezaneza bimuzuye mu amaso*

She looks at him differently and gets  
sparkles in her eyes

---

---

**[Chorus X2]**

**[Chorus X2]**

## SONG 27.

### **Sweet Mutima (Sweetheart) [2014]**

Knowless Butera, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Clément Ishimwe: Kina Music, Kigali.

Listen to *Sweet Mutima* on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeDNnTHImHk>

**[Chorus]**

*Ibitekerezo byanjye mbihoza kuri wowe*

**[Chorus]**

My thoughts are always with you

*Sinsiba kugukumbura*

I never stop missing you

*Nubwo uri kure y'amaso nturi kure y'umutima*

Even though you are far from the eyes you  
are near the heart

*Burya nta joro ridacya, nzi ko nzakubona*

Everything has an end, I know I will see you

*My sweetie mutima, mutima*

My sweetheart, heart

*My sweetie mutima*

My sweetheart

*Umusibo n'ejo, ejo bundi nkaza*

I will see you the day after tomorrow

*Nzi ko nzakubona*

I know I will see you

*My sweetie mutima, mutima*

My sweetheart, heart

*My sweetie mutima*

My sweetheart

*Umusibo n'ejo, ejo bundi nkaza*

I will see you the day after tomorrow

*Nzi ko nzakubona*

I know I will see you

---

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Imitima yacu yose itera kimwe*

**[Verse 1]**

Our heartbeats are the same

*Ariko amaso yacu ntareba hamwe*

But our eyes don't see the same things

*Uri kure byo rwose ndabibona*

I see that you are far away

*Gusa kwihagararaho byananiye*

But I can't wait any longer

*Bucya nkanuye mbarira iminsi ku ntoki*

I lay awake all night counting the days

*Izuba rikarenga ntaho ngejeje*

The sun rises before I find a solution

*Sinkishoboye kwihangana*

I can't wait any longer

*Sinkishoboye kwihangana*

These hours are not moving

*Ibyishimo ntabyo*

These hours are not moving

*Agahinda ni kenshi mu mutima*

So much sorrow in my heart

*Mu mutima*

In my heart

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ese nawe bijya bikubaho?*

**[Verse 2]**

Does it happen to you too?

*Kurara ijoro ryose udasinziye?*

Do you have sleepless nights?

*Nukuri mbwira niba bikubaho*  
*Kubura ugufasha kurya ubuzima*  
*Kubura ugufasha kurya ubuzima*  
*Niyo mpamvu niyemeje kuzategereza*  
*Niyo mpamvu niyemeje kuzategereza*  
*Aya masaha ndabona atagenda*  
*Ibyishimo ntabwo*  
*Agahinda ni kenshi mu mutima*  
*Mu mutima*

---

**[Chorus]**

Please tell me if it happens to you too  
Not finding someone to enjoy life with  
We have so much history  
That is why I chose to wait  
But I can't wait any longer  
These hours are not moving  
There is no happiness  
So much sorrow in my heart  
In my heart

---

**[Chorus]**

## SONG 28.

***Tulia (Calm down) [2014]***

Knowless Butera, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda, Swahili.

Prod. Clément Ishimwe: Kina Music, Kigali.

Watch *Tulia* on YouTube [A Tedd Josiah film]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7z3TBcV84k>

**[Intro]**

*Tulia, tulia, sita kusumbua tena*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Tulia, tulia, sita kusumbua tena*

*I've been trying for so long*

*Now it's time to let you go*

*Time to let you go, I won't cry anymore*

*Time to let you go, all my pain is gone*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Kawaida mapenzi ni ya watu wawili*

*Ila ya kwetu yali kuwa ni mimi peke*

**[Intro]**

Calm down, calm down, I will bother you no more

---

**[Chorus]**

Calm down, calm down, I will bother you no more

I've been trying for so long

Now it's time to let you go

Time to let you go, I won't cry anymore

Time to let you go, all my pain is gone

---

**[Verse 1]**

Normally love is for two people

But ours it was mine alone

*Nilifanya iwezekanavyo kuyawezesha*

I tried everything to make it work

*Nathani kosa nililo fanya ni kukupenda sana*

I think my mistake was loving you too much

*Cenye mwanzo kina mwisho, ngoja nikuache uende*

For every beginning there is an end, it's time to let you go

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ahari aho ntiwagize ngo nta mahitamo mfite*

**[Verse 2]**

Maybe you thought that I had no other option

*Umutima ugukunda wanakunda undi*

The heart that loves you can love another

*Nimechoka kulia na kulazimisha mapenzi*

I got tired of crying and waiting for love

*Nimechoka kulia na kulazimisha mapenzi*

You played with my love

---

---

**[Bridge]**

*If you wanna cry, cry*

**[Bridge]**

If you wanna cry, cry

*I made my mind – I made my mind*

I made my mind – I made my mind

*If you wanna beg, beg*

If you wanna beg, beg

*I made my mind*

I made my mind

*I gotta let you go*

I gotta let you go

*Cenye mwanzo kina mwisho, ngoja nikuache uwende*

For every beginning there is an end, it's time to let you go

---

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**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

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**[Bridge]**

**[Bridge]**

---

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**[Chorus X2]**

**[Chorus X2]**

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**[Outro]**

*Time to let you go...*

**[Outro]**

Time to let you go...

*Bye bye bye...*

Bye bye bye...

## SONG 29.

### ***Mwungeri (Shepherd) [2015]***

Knowless Butera, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Clément Ishimwe: Kina Music. Kigali

Watch *Mwungeri* on YouTube [Video prod. Meddy Saleh]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGC8fXhbogk>

#### **[Chorus]**

*Twabyirukanye nk'impanga*

*Twaruhanye uwa kavuna*

*Nta cyari icyange nta kitwaga icyawe*

*None dore uranyigaritse*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Iminsi myiza y'ubuto bwacu*

*Abatuzi batwita utunyoni twiza*

*Ku bw'urukundo twari twuje*

*Rwacaga amarenga y'urudasaza*

*Abatubonye mu mabyiruka*

*Birangora kubumvisha*

*Ko burya namenywe mpinga ijoro rijigije*

*Umunsi urwacu rubaye impamo*

*Rugira akatwambika n'uruyange*

*Tukagira abana ibitsina byombi*

*Tugatera intambwe izira gutsikira*

*Sinari nziko burya wasohoka urwawe*

*Ugukurikira indoro n'ikimero cy'abato*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

---

#### **[Verse 2]**

#### **[Chorus]**

We grew up together like twins

We struggled so hard together

Nothing was under your name or my name

But now you forget me

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

The good days we had in our childhood

People used to call us little birds

Because of our love

Which was presumed to be long lasting

The people who saw us in our childhood

Can't believe me now

That the choice I made was questionable

When our love become official

God blessed us limitlessly

We had children, girls and boys

We were successful together

I couldn't believe that you could leave your family

To run after the beauty of young women

---

#### **[Chorus]**

---

#### **[Verse 2]**

*Twarahiriwe mu butunzi*

*Amata iwacu avuna imitozo*

*Gusa ariko amahoro turayarumbya*

*Nari karabo keza nyuma unyita amazina*

*Ntibiteye kabiri inkoni irarisha*

*Uko imyaka ishize ndetse indi igataha*

*Ntegereza rwego ngo uhinduke umwezi*

*Ikibunda kiranga kiba igitazi*

---

**[Bridge]**

*Naroye hiryo mpabura impamba*

*Nunva induru inyuhura imtimba*

*Impunza kumva amajwi y'impundu ahanitse*

*Kandi nitwa rugori rwera*

---

**[Chorus]**

We were lucky in life

We had enough milk

But we didn't have enough peace

I was "beautiful flower", but you started giving me other names

After some days you started to hit me

That happened for years and years

I waited for what we lost to be found

But it was all in vain

---

**[Bridge]**

I looked all around for refuge

But noise kept overtaking

Stopping me from listening to joyful moments

Besides my name being the most cherished and respectful one

---

**[Chorus]**

**SONG 30.**

***Urukumbuzi (Nostalgia) [2005]***

Mani Martin, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Patrick Buta: Kilulu 9, Kigali.

Watch *Urukumbuzi* on YouTube [Video prod. Cedru]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vaYIULn84>

**[Verse 1]**

*Mfite urukumbuzi rwinshi mu mutima wanjye*

*Nkumbuye Imana, nkumbuye abera,  
nkumbuye wa musozi*

*Wa musozi mwiza aho niho abera  
bantezereje*

*Nkumbuye kuzarebana na Yesu  
tutagitandukana*

**[Verse 1]**

I feel nostalgia deep in my heart

I am longing to see God, the saints and that mountain

That beautiful mountain, which is where the saints are waiting for me

I am longing to look at Jesus for eternity

*Wa musozi mwiza aho niho abera  
bantegeerereje*

That beautiful mountain, which is where the  
saints are waiting for me

*Nkumbuye kuzarebana na Yesu  
tutagitandukana*

I am longing to look at Jesus for eternity

*Nkumbuye kuzarebana na Yesu  
tutagitandukana*

I am longing to look at Jesus for eternity

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Nkumbuye kumva ya indirimbo nshya*

**[Verse 2]**

I am longing to hear the new holy song

*Nkumbuye kuba mu gitaramo*

I am longing to be part of the spectacle

*Nkumbuye kumva indirimbo ya Mose n'iy  
umwana w'intama*

I am longing to hear the song of Moses and  
that of the son of God

*Nkumbuye kumva ya majwi meza y'urufaya  
y'abamalayika*

I am longing to hear the beautiful  
symphonies of the angels

*Umunsi utagira uko usa ku iherezo ry'amarira  
yo muri iyi si*

A day like no others when the cries in this  
world will cease

*Nkumbuye kumva ya majwi meza y'urufaya  
y'abamalayika*

I will strip off this weak body and wear a  
new one

*Umunsi utagira uko usa ku iherezo ry'amarira  
yo muri iyi si*

A day like no others when the cries in this  
world will cease

*Umunsi utagira uko usa ku iherezo ry'amarira  
yo muri iyi si*

A day like no others when the cries in this  
world will cease

---

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Nziyambura uyu mubiri urwara nambare undi  
mubiri*

**[Verse 3]**

I will shed this sick body and have a new  
one

*Muri icyo gihugu nta bimuga bisabiriza bibayo*

There will be no beggars in this country

*Ntabwo tuzongerakubona abasura mu nzu  
z'imbohe*

We will no longer see people visiting loved  
ones in prison cells

*Nzaruhuka izi ngendoose nkorera muri iyi si*

I will take a rest from all the troubles I face  
in this world

*Nzibagirwa agahinda gasaze ndeste  
n'ubwihebe*

I will forget my sorrows and loneliness

*Nzahanagurwa amarira yose naririye muri iyi si*

All the tears that I shed in this world will be  
wiped off my face

*Nzahanagurwa amarira yose naririye muri iyi si*

All the tears that I shed in this world will be  
wiped off my face

<i>Nzahanagurwa amarira yose naririye muri iyi si</i>	All the tears that I shed in this world will be wiped off my face
<i>Nzahanagurwa amarira yose naririye muri iyi si</i>	All the tears that I shed in this world will be wiped off my face
<i>Nzahanagurwa amarira yose naririye muri iyi si</i>	All the tears that I shed in this world will be wiped off my face
<i>Nzahanagurwa amarira yose naririye muri iyi si</i>	All the tears that I shed in this world will be wiped off my face

## SONG 31.

### ***Intero y'Amahoro (The verse of peace) [2012]***

Mani Martin, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Le Click, Kigali.

Watch *Intero y'Amahoro* on YouTube [Video prod. Bernard]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pey-1Kw7GrY>

#### **[Intro]**

Yeee, yeee, yeee

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Mpagaze ahirengye mu misozi igihumbi*

*Ndabona ahou ri mu mataba ateze*

*Ushobora kunyumva?*

*Ndazi yuko wakumva amajwi menshi*

*Aturuka impande n'impande*

*Gusa ndagusabye wemere dusangire iyi ntango*

*Iyi ntero y'amahoro nyitere wikirize*

*Maze ayo majwi akumere amahoro*

*Asakare ahantu hose*

Yeee!

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*Nyikiriza, utege amaboko wakire*

#### **[Intro]**

Yeah, yeah, yeah

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

I am standing far away in the middle of a thousand hills

I see you where you are down in the valley

Can you hear me?

I know you can hear a lot of voices

Coming from different directions

But I ask you to allow me to share with you this beverage

When I sing this verse of peace sing with me

So that our voices can spread peace

All around

Yeah!

---

#### **[Chorus]**

Sing with me, open your arms and receive



*Ijwi rivumera amahoro riguhamagare witabe  
karame*

If the voice that spreads peace calls,  
answer it

*Ijwi rivumera amahoro riguhamagare witabe  
karame*

If the voice that spreads peace calls,  
answer it

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Nyugururira mbwire umuntu w'imbere*

**[Verse 2]**

Open for me so I can tell the person in front

*Yakire amahoro*

To receive peace

*Aya mahoro njye mbabwira si yayandi yo mu  
bitabo*

The peace that I am telling you about is not  
that from books

*Arya bandika bakanayaririmba ntababuze  
kumarana*

The peace they write and sing about but  
does not stop them from killing each other

*Amahoro njye mbabwira ni yayandi*

The peace that I am talking about is that  
peace

*Y'iwanyje n'iwawe mu mutima*

In your heart and my heart

*Tukibera abasangirangendo b'amahoro*

So that we can live peacefully

*Umhhh*

Umhhh

---

---

**[Refrain]**

*Iyi ntero y'amahoro nyitere wikirize*

**[Refrain]**

When I sing this verse of peace sing with  
me

*Maze ayo majwi avumere amahoro*

Let our voices spread the peace

*Ahantu hose*

Let it spread everywhere

*Yeah!*

Yeah!

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Instrumental]**

**[Instrumental]**

---

---

**[Chorus X2]**

**[Chorus X2]**

*Iyi ntero y'amahoro, intero y'amahoro*

This is the verse of peace, the verse of  
peace

*Yeee!*

Yeah!

## SONG 32.

### ***Baby Gorilla [2015]***

Mani Martin, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Pacento: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

Watch *Baby Gorilla* on YouTube [Video prod. Bernard]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hd36feCg6w0>

#### **[Intro]**

*Abayaba!*

*Ummm, yeah! Abayaba!*

*Mani Martin*

*Yeah! Abayaba!*

*Pacento on the beat*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*Baby gorilla you are very, very famous*

*Oh yeah baby gorilla you are very, very famous*

*So many people come to see you from all over the world*

*Mega superstars celebrate you from all around the world*

*Even paparazzi want to take your pictures like a superstar*

*Baby gorilla iyaba wabimenyaga*

*I wish you could know, iyaba wabimenyaga*

*Ehhah iyaba wabimenyaga*

*Ehhah iyaba wabimenyaga*

*Ehhah iyaba wabimenyaga*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Eyo baby gorilla you are the treasure of the nature*

*Eyo baby gorilla a blessing of the world*

*Even beautiful women, when they see you they cry for you*

#### **[Intro]**

*Abayaba!*

*Ummm, yeah! Abayaba!*

*Mani Martin*

*Yeah! Abayaba!*

*Pacento on the beat*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*Baby gorilla you are very, very famous*

*Oh yeah baby gorilla you are very, very famous*

*So many people come to see you from all over the world*

*Mega superstars celebrate you from all around the world*

*Even paparazzi want to take your pictures like a superstar*

*Baby gorilla I wish you knew*

*I wish you could know, I wish you knew*

*Yeah I wish you knew*

*Yeah I wish you knew*

*Yeah I wish you knew*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Eyo baby gorilla you are the treasure of the nature*

*Eyo baby gorilla a blessing of the world*

*Even beautiful women, when they see you they cry for you*

*I love the way you're humble, the way you take it easy*

*I know if you knew how special you are*

*You could say bye bye, bye bye to the forest*

*Walai! Baby gorilla you deserve more than a five star hotel*

*Or drive in a Ferrari eyeah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Eyo baby gorilla your face is more than attractive*

*How you bring together Nollywood and Hollywood movie stars*

*Mmmm yeah! Oh yeah!*

*We spend our money just to see you in harmony*

*Different colours come all together for you baby gorilla*

*Ehhh I can't imagine if you were like me*

*Walai!<sup>130</sup> Baby gorilla you deserve more than a five star hotel*

*Or drive in a Ferrari eyeah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Baby gorilla*

*We give you names of our heroes*

*Baby gorilla*

*I love the way you're humble, the way you take it easy*

*I know if you knew how special you are*

*You could say bye bye, bye bye to the forest*

*Walai! Baby gorilla you deserve more than a five star hotel*

*Or drive in a Ferrari eyeah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Eyo baby gorilla your face is more than attractive*

*How you bring together Nollywood and Hollywood movie stars*

*Mmmm yeah! Oh yeah!*

*We spend our money just to see you in harmony*

*Different colours come all together for you baby gorilla*

*Ehhh I can't imagine if you were like me*

*I swear! Baby gorilla you deserve more than a five star hotel*

*Or drive in a Ferrari eyeah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Baby gorilla*

*We give you names of our heroes*

*Baby gorilla*

---

<sup>130</sup> *Wallai* comes from the Arabic expression *Wallah* meaning "I swear on God's name". It has been adopted as slang by Muslim communities in East Africa.

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**[Chorus]**

---

**[Chorus]**

### SONG 33.

***Intsinzi (Victory) [1994]***

Mariya Yohana, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

**[Chorus X4]**

*Instinzi bana ba uRwanda instanzi*

*Njye ndayireba intsinzi*

*Mu bice byose intsinzi*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Ndatera inzuzi intsinzi*

*Nkabona intsinzi*

*Instinzi bana ba uRwanda instanzi*

*Ndaraguzwa umutwe instanzi*

*Kabona intsinzi*

*Instinzi bana ba uRwanda instanzi*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Amuka kadogo songa*

*Nawe mzee komeza, urugendo n'uwo muheto*

*Nawe musore terura icyo kigano maze*

*Ugitsibura icyo gicuku, mubwire yuko uRwanda*

*Ari imbaga y'inyabutatu ya gihanga*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

**[Chorus X4]**

Victory children of Rwanda victory

I can see it victory

From every corner victory

---

**[Verse 1]**

I'm predicting victory

And I can see victory

Victory children of Rwanda victory

I foresee a future victory

I can see victory

Victory children of Rwanda victory

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

Get up child soldier

You veteran, continue moving forwards, the journey isn't over

You young man, pick up your pace and make it through the night

Tell people that Rwanda is a nation of a united trio

Traditional Rwandese society was composed of three tribes

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Tukaze mwendo songa*

*Cap mguu songa, iminsi ni mikeya*

*Na ba bagabo, ndabona bashya ubwoba*

*Nimuconge maze tubatsinde*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 4]**

*Muhaguruke dutore, twiyemeje intsinzi*

*N'umucandidat wacu*

*N'abo mu ntara zose, mwizere intsinzi*

*Intsinzi y'ayo makombe*

*Mwizere intsinzi*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 5]**

*Igikombe cya President, cyanyemeje intsinzi*

*Abana ba uRwanda instinzi*

*Ku banyarwanda twese, moral ni full*

*Ku banyarwanda twese, hakuna wasi wasi*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

Let us not slow down

Let us move forwards, the days are few

Even our enemies, I can see that they are frightened

Let us move and defeat them

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 4]**

Get up and let us vote

Our goal is to win

With our chosen candidate, even you people up country

Believe in the victory of our heroes

Even you people up country

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 5]**

Our President's trophy made me believe in victory

Children of Rwanda victory

To all Rwandans, we have full morals

To all Rwandans, there is no problem

---

**[Chorus X2]**

**SONG 34.**

***Ubumuntu (Humanity) [2015]***

Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company, Rwanda; English, French, Kinyarwanda, Lingala, Swahili.

Produced at Colour of music studio, Kigali.

Watch *Ubumuntu* on YouTube [Video prod. Jonathan Kawuma]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqXrM0Z4QpU>

**[Intro]**

*Ayaya yeah*

*Ayaya yeah*

*Ayaya yeah*

*Umntu agira ubuntu*

*Ubumuntu bukaganza*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Niba uri kiremwa muntu*

*Reka umutima wawe wuzure ubumuntu*

*Erega nico waremewe, kuba umuntu nyawe*

*Biharanire*

*Je viens vers vous comme l'esprit de  
l'humanité melodique*

*Laisse moi vous le faire découvrir*

*Ubumuntu*

*Ubumuntu kuri twese*

*Niyo nkingi yo kubaho neza*

*Kubuharanira bizatuma iyi si iba paradizo*

*Hata mawimbi yakizaa yakikuwa*

*Nitavuka pande hema mkono kwa mkono*

*Tukitembea sote mahali wimbo za upendo  
zatiwa juu*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Like a shadow, the past walks with me*

*I saw it, I felt it, it made me mighty*

*It lives with me, he lives with you*

**[Intro]**

*Ayaya yeah*

*Ayaya yeah*

*Ayaya yeah*

*A person has mercy*

*Humanity grows and spreads*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*If you are God's creation*

*Let your heart be filled with humanity*

*That's why you were created, to be a real  
human being*

*Fight for it*

*I am coming to you with the melodic spirit of  
humanity*

*Let me help you to discover it*

*Humanity*

*Humanity is in all of us*

*It's the pillar for living*

*Fighting for it will transform this world to  
paradise*

*Even when there will be waves of darkness*

*I will cross to the other side hand to hand*

*We will walk together to the place where  
songs of love are valued*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Like a shadow, the past walks with me*

*I saw it, I felt it, it made me mighty*

*It lives with me, he lives with you*

*It lives with me, he lives with you*

*In this land called home*

*Ubumuntu*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ineza yumuntu ituruka mumutima we*

*Ikaremwe nimpano wampa, ugatuma mbaho*

*Ikiganza mukindi*

*Tukaririmbana, indirimbo y'amahoro*

*Let's love and help each other*

*Coz we all live*

*Give ourselves our humanity*

*As I sit and watch time pass by*

*My soul cross with souls*

*One world, one for all*

*A reason to live, a reason to be - yeah*

*Ubumuntu*

*Ekitonde muntu, mukama yakitonda nga  
chajawuro*

*Yakiwa ubuyiza okusinga ebilala*

*Naye ikisinga ukunuma*

*Obwobuyiza tubuzanyisa*

*Twedeko - oh yeah*

*Bandeko boya totiya makasi ya bolingo elongo*

*Boya namema bino na mboka ya mbosangani*

*Ya bosalisani mpe bopeto*

*Totambola elongo tolakisa baye bakoya  
mwinda*

---

It lives with me, he lives with you

In this land called home

Humanity

---

**[Verse 2]**

The good part of a person comes from his heart

Creation is a gift you give me, and the reason to live

Hold hands

We sing together, a song of peace

Let's love and help each other

Coz we all live

Give ourselves our humanity

As I sit and watch time pass by

My soul cross with souls

One world, one for all

A reason to live, a reason to be - yeah

Humanity

The human creature, it's a creation God created differently

He gave it power over other creations

But what hurts me the most

Is how we abuse that power

Let's change - oh yeah

Brothers and sisters, come and unite the power of our love for one another

Come so that I can take you to the country of unity

Of mutual help and purity

Let's walk together to show the light to those of the future

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Aayeahhh*

*Aayeahhh*

*Gira ubumuntu*

*Aayeahhh*

*Gira ubumuntu*

*Aayeahhh*

*Gira ubumuntu*

*Aayeahhh*

*Gira ubumuntu*

*Gira ubumuntu*

*Aayeahhh*

*Gira ubumuntu*

*Aayeahhh*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Umntu agira ubuntu*

*Ubumuntu bukaganza*

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Aayeahhh*

*Aayeahhh*

Have humanity

*Aayeahhh*

Have humanity

*Aayeahhh*

Have humanity

*Aayeahhh*

Have humanity

Have humanity

*Aayeahhh*

Have humanity

*Aayeahhh*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

A person has mercy

Humanity grows and spreads

## SONG 35.

***Xenophobia* ft. Jah Net [2008, 2015]**

No. 1 Suspect Badman, South Africa; English, Luganda.

Prod. Danro Robert: TD productions, Cape Town.

Watch *Xenophobia* on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdfJNPiS2IU>

**[Intro]<sup>131</sup>**

**[Intro]**

---

<sup>131</sup> This track opens with a genuine news report, in which we hear a man saying, "I'll kill them! If I can see a foreigner here, I'm sure I will kill them!"



Ohhh!

Yeah!

*Nah nah nah nah nah nah nah!*

*Nah nah nah!*

*Nah nah nah nah nah nah nah!*

*Nahhh!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Each and every day people killing one another*

*Mama Africa everywhere is blood shading*

*Look every day, blood on the floor*

*Fighting for nothing and freedom gets far*

*Eno ensi ya bantu tugiiberemu nga abantu*

*Tetuva mubuntu tujuberemu nga abantu*

*Jah Rastafari yagyituwesa dembe*

*Lwaki bino ebwefuna febitumaramu?*

*Rwanda, Uganda, you are African*

*Zimbabwe, Muzansi<sup>132</sup>, you are African*

*Ghana, Botswana, you are African*

*No more racism and xenophobia*

---

**[Chorus]**

*This is for my Ghetto blacks*

*Ghetto brothers and sisters*

*Let's break bread together*

*Terminate hatred and racism*

(X 2)

Ohhh!

Yeah!

*Nah nah nah nah nah nah nah!*

*Nah nah nah!*

*Nah nah nah nah nah nah nah!*

*Nahhh!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Each and every day people killing one another*

*Mama Africa everywhere is blood shading*

*Look every day, blood on the floor*

*Fighting for nothing and freedom gets far*

*This world belongs to the people, let's live in it as humans*

*Let's not leave humanity, let's live like people*

*Jah Rastafari gave it to us in peace and harmony*

*Why should worldly treasures take us?*

*Rwanda, Uganda, you are African*

*Zimbabwe, South Africa, you are African*

*Ghana, Botswana, you are African*

*No more racism and xenophobia*

---

**[Chorus]**

*This is for my Ghetto blacks*

*Ghetto brothers and sisters*

*Let's break bread together*

*Terminate hatred and racism*

(X 2)

---

<sup>132</sup> *Muzansi* means "South Africa" in the Ndebele, Xhosa and Zulu languages.

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yo check this out!*

*It's Jah Net and Suspect*

*We are the Number 1 Suspect*

*From the South to the East*

*Show some respect*

*No more assassination amongst my nation*

*I want no genocide, just be by ma side*

*Check the blood is running like syrup*

*Our own people getting corrupt*

*Human race we are family*

*So do not stress live happily*

*Stop being negative and try to be positive*

*Fire burn funny man*

*Lazy man*

*The Boogie Man*

*African people got a pride*

*We got to live as one in our life*

*Now and forever, now and forever more*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Show some love – show some love*

*Show some love – show some love*

*Show some love my people*

*Show some love*

*Show some love*

*Show some love*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yo check this out!*

*It's Jah Net and Suspect*

*We are the Number 1 Suspect*

*From the South to the East*

*Show some respect*

*No more assassination amongst my nation*

*I want no genocide, just be by ma side*

*Check the blood is running like syrup*

*Our own people getting corrupt*

*Human race we are family*

*So do not stress live happily*

*Stop being negative and try to be positive*

*Fire burn funny man*

*Lazy man*

*The Boogie Man*

*African people got a pride*

*We got to live as one in our life*

*Now and forever, now and forever more*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Show some love – show some love*

*Show some love – show some love*

*Show some love my people*

*Show some love*

*Show some love*

*Show some love*

*Show some love*

*Show some love*

---

**[Chorus]**

(X 2)

---

**[Outro]**

*Why do we mess it because of business  
interests call it money?*

Show some love

Show some love

---

**[Chorus]**

(X 2)

---

**[Outro]**

Why do we mess it because of business  
interests call it money?

## SONG 36.

***Igikosi (Trophy) ft. Prof. Jay [2009]***

Rafiki, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Jay P. Production, Rwanda-Tanzania.

Watch *Igikosi* on YouTube [Video prod. P. : M. Franco/Freedom Studio]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzwx6TmCTol>

**[Chorus]**

*Igikosikosi ni ica ni icande?*

*Mu irushanwa ryaco ko mbona nta nyiraco*

*Ni nde uzakijana, ni nde uzakijana?*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Igikosiosini icande none mu irushanwa ryaco  
ni nde uzakijana?*

*Agakipe kose kaje gashushe gashaka igikosi  
gatera amacenga*

*Gatera amashoti amazamu ntugave gose  
garashushe*

*Agakipe gose gaje gitoje agataritoje gagiye  
guhura na wasi*

*Swata igikosi gaja mu bo hasi gaja mu mu bus  
gatahana wasi*

*Buno ubwo bawukata amashoti meza ganoze*

**[Chorus]**

The trophy, whose is it?

In the competition, it is hard to tell who will  
win

Who will take it? Who will take it?

---

**[Verse 1]**

Whose trophy is it and who will take it after  
the competition?

Both teams came prepared and ready to  
play with their best shots

Do not leave the goal post because it is  
heated

Every team came after training, the ones  
that didn't will have trouble

They will miss the trophy, qualify the lowest  
and get on the bus and leave

Now they are playing with their finest shots

*Buno ubwo nje bari ngaha amashoti meza ganoze*

I am here watching their finest shots

*Umva uko abazamu bafata amaparade meza ganoze*

The goal keepers are the best at catching the finest shots

*Bose barashushe*

They are all on fire

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ndashusha mu makuru g imikino sasa tubabwire uko amakipe gahagaze*

**[Verse 2]**

I am a sports journalist, now let us tell you how the teams are doing

*Mu makipe gose mu bakinyi ni tayari dore uko bimeze*

In both teams, the players are ready to play

*Baterura ibyuma, bajyaga ama puri ngo bashaka ama forme aho ni ho bigeze*

They have been lifting weights and bodybuilding to be strong

*Etat critique banafanya ma cross barakora amashoti baratera uko ni ko bimeze*

It is a critical state, they have been running tracks and practising

*Icyifuzo ni ugutsinda, icyifuzo ni ugutsinda. Ibyo mbabwira birakaze buri wese*

The goal is to win, the goal is to win. What I am telling you is serious

*Abashaka kuzakijana, bizamugora, ni ukubikorera uko ni ko bimeze*

Everyone wants to take it. It won't be easy, things are serious

*Igikosi ni icande? Bamwe bati ni icyacu, abandi nabo ni icyacu*

Whose will it be? One team says it is ours, the other team says it is theirs

*Mbega se ubu ni icande? Turibaza se ni icande*

Really, whose is it? We are all asking ourselves

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Buno ubwo nje bagukata amacenga meza ganoze*

**[Verse 3]**

Now that they are playing with their finest shots

*Buno ubwo nje bari ngaha, amacenga meza ganoze*

As I am here watching their finest shots

*Umva ukoabazamu bafata, amaparade meza ganoze*

The goal keepers are the best at catching the finest shots

*Gose garashushe, guri stade birakaze*

They are all on fire

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

## SONG 37.

### ***Urijijisha (You pretend) [2011]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Piano: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

#### **[Intro]**

*Aka nakandi – Narrow Road Production!*

*TBB, yeah! If you need a true definition*

*Tino Bob and Benjah!*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*Ndagukunda ukabibona*

*Inshuti zawe zikabibona*

*Wowe ukijisha ukiraza I Nyanza – it's a Piano production!*

*Wowe urijijisha – urijijisha, urijijisha*

*Wowe urijijisha – urijijisha, urijijisha*

*Wowe urijijisha – urijijisha, urijijisha*

*Wowe urijijisha – urijijisha, urijijisha*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Ndagerageza kubikwereka*

*Ariko wowe ukabica amazi*

*Nkora iki? Mbwire nde?*

*Nkora iki? Mbwire nde?*

*Ndakwandikira ntunsubiza*

*Nakwiyereka ukanyereka ko utambona*

*Nkora iki? Mbwire nde?*

*Umutima ukunda ni uwanjye*

#### **[Intro]**

This is another one – Narrow Road Production!

TBB, yeah! If you need a true definition

Tino Bob and Benjah!

---

#### **[Chorus]**

I love you and you see it

Your friends see it

You pretend and seem to be not interested – it's a Piano production!

You pretend – pretend, pretend

You pretend – pretend, pretend

You pretend – pretend, pretend

You pretend – pretend, pretend

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

I am trying to show it to you

But you don't take it seriously

What can I do? Who can I tell?

What can I do? What should I do?

I write to you, you don't reply

When I show myself to you, you show me that you don't see me

What can I do? What should I do?

The heart which loves is mine

*Umutima ubyirengangiza nu wawe*

*Nkora iki? Mbwire nde? Mbwira!*

*Nkora iki? Mbwire nde? Mbwira!*

*Nkora iki? Mbwire nde? Mbwira!*

*Nkora iki? Mbwire nde? Mbwira!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yeah, yeah, yeah*

*I remember the very day that I met you*

*You were looking like an angel sent from above*

*You were everything, I was all you ever thought*

*I even wonder why you even never called back*

*Because you're feeling a little bit of a criminal*

*You're feeling what I'm feeling but you hate to admit it*

*I love who you are, not the person you became*

*No matter what you are, gal, I make a full much*

*You can run but you can't hide*

*Don't pretend Jerry-B gonna be ready*

*If it's a race for you, I'm a overlap niggas*

*If it's a fight for you, I'm a beat them and knock out*

*Yeah, uh!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

The heart which ignores, it is yours

What can I do? What should I do? Tell me!

What can I do? What should I do? Tell me!

What can I do? What should I do? Tell me!

What can I do? What should I do? Tell me!

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

Yeah, yeah, yeah

I remember the very day that I met you

You were looking like an angel sent from above

You were everything, I was all you ever thought

I even wonder why you even never called back

Because you're feeling a little bit of a criminal

You're feeling what I'm feeling but you hate to admit it

I love who you are, not the person you became

No matter what you are, gal, I make a full much

You can run but you can't hide

Don't pretend Jerry-B gonna be ready

If it's a race for you, I'm a overlap niggas

If it's a fight for you, I'm a beat them and knock out

Yeah, uh!

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Icyampa ukamenya ikiri mu mutima wanjye –  
wanjye*

*Ko ngukunda bizira uburyarya*

*Ndagukunda kandi nzahora ngukunda*

*Kuko ariwowe niyumvamo – niyumvamo*

*Mbabarira unyiyumvemo – nkwiyumvamo*

*Kuko nanjye nkwiyumvamo*

*Mbabarira unyiyumvemo – nkwiyumvamo*

*When me say...*

*You're ma angel, I can't live without you*

*You're ma everything I ever wanted*

*Umwari mwiza, umwari mwiza*

*Umwari mwiza, nyewe ndagukunda*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Yoooh!*

*Dance TBB dance TBB*

*To the left skibiri<sup>133</sup> dance dance TBB*

*To the right dance TBB dance TBB*

*Go dance skibiri dance dance TBB*

*Yoooh!*

*Aha! TBB! You better know, new definition*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah once again!*

*Aha!*

*TBB!*

*Aha!*

**[Verse 3]**

I wish you could know what is in my heart –  
mine

I really love you without hesitation

I love you and will always love you

Because it's you who I feel

Please feel me – I feel you

Because I feel you

Please feel me – I feel you

When me say...

You're ma angel, I can't live without you

You're ma everything I ever wanted

Beautiful girl, beautiful girl

Beautiful girl, I love you

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Yoooh!*

*Dance TBB dance TBB*

*To the left skibiri dance dance TBB*

*To the right dance TBB dance TBB*

*Go dance skibiri dance dance TBB*

*Yoooh!*

*Aha! TBB! You better know, new definition*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah once again!*

*Aha!*

*TBB!*

*Aha!*

<sup>133</sup> "Skibiri dance" is a popular Jamaican expression that roughly means "start dancing".

## SONG 38.

### ***Mbilaba (I see what you're doing) ft. Jody Phibi [2012]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, Luganda.

Prod. Pastor P: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

#### **[Intro]**

*Pastor P respect man!*

*Yooo! We just giving our songs, love songs!*

*TBB alongside Lady Jody – Narrow Road  
Production!*

*Gal me can't stop loving you! – Yeah man!*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*Mbilaba – mbilaba*

*Byokora mbilaba*

*Ochitingako – ochitingako*

*Olowoza sibiraba naye byewala- byepena*

*Coz I don't wanna lose you*

*Naye byewala – byepena*

*Coz I don't wanna lose you*

*Nange mbilaba*

*And I can see what you're doing, you cheat on  
me*

*Olowoza sibilaba, but I don't care*

*Coz I don't wanna lose you baby*

*I don't care*

*I don't wanna lose you baby*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Yeah! Jerry to the B! Lugaflow<sup>134</sup>*

#### **[Intro]**

Pastor P respect man!

Yooo! We just giving our songs, love songs!

TBB alongside Lady Jody – Narrow Road  
Production!

Gal me can't stop loving you! – Yeah man!

---

#### **[Chorus]**

I see, I see

What you are doing

You're cheating on me – you're cheating on  
me

You think I don't see it but I avoid it – I  
dodge it

Coz I don't wanna lose you

But I avoid it – I dodge it

Coz I don't wanna lose you

I also see it

And I can see what you're doing, you cheat  
on me

You think I don't see it, but I don't care

Coz I don't wanna lose you baby

I don't care

I don't wanna lose you baby

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

Yeah! Jerry to the B! Lugaflow

---

<sup>134</sup> *Lugaflow*: rapping in Luganda.



<i>Waliwo lwemba ngandi busy nolowoza</i>	There are times when I'm busy and you think
<i>Mbu mbela eyo nabalala nga ate ma ngezako nyo</i>	That I'm with other girls yet I'm trying so hard
<i>Ndabe nga tubawo</i>	To see that we live
<i>Ndabe nga teli choyoya ngoli musanyufu</i>	To see that you have everything and that you're happy
<i>Kweyagaze kwesuse</i>	To please you so much
<i>Ombele nalulungi nabazade batuwe omukono mubufumbo</i>	You are my queen and our parents give us their blessings in marriage
<i>Kati laba weturi</i>	Now look where we are
<i>Wandeka noda eyo neweyoreka</i>	You left me and you exposed yourself
<i>Nolowoza mbu Jerry-B ye talikulemba</i>	You thought Jerry-B wouldn't make it to number one
<i>Era talimanya – he's a fool, he's a tool</i>	And he will never know – he's a fool, he's a tool
<i>Era tabilaba, never will he ever know</i>	And he can't see it – never will he ever know
<i>But now I know the kind of person you're sealed in</i>	But now I know the kind of person you're sealed in
<i>The kind of girl, the kind that is materialistic</i>	The kind of girl, the kind that is materialistic
<i>Kati ndaba engeri jewefunde omuntu omulungi</i>	Now I see you're pretending to be a good person
<i>Ndaba engeri jewetonda mbu telenkusonyiwe</i>	I see how you are humbling yourself for me to forgive you
<i>Yeah! Olwomukwano ogwanamadara</i>	Yeah! But because of this true love
<i>Jangu nze nawe tuzimbe amaka ga lubererwa aha</i>	Come, me and you will build a home for forever
<i>Yeah mbilaba</i>	Yeah I see it
---	---
<b>[Chorus]</b>	<b>[Chorus]</b>
---	---
<b>[Verse 2]</b>	<b>[Verse 2]</b>
<i>Without you I feel so lonely</i>	Without you I feel so lonely
<i>When I get to know you're cheating on me</i>	When I get to know you're cheating on me

<i>It's been so long since I got to know your name</i>	It's been so long since I got to know your name
<i>And I feel so strong enough to be by your side</i>	And I feel so strong enough to be by your side
<i>No matter how much I don't give no trust</i>	No matter how much I don't give no trust
<i>You're ma lover lover and you know me love you boy</i>	You're ma lover lover and you know me love you boy
<i>You're the first and the last thing in my mind</i>	You're the first and the last thing in my mind
<i>That's the reason why I don't wanna lose you</i>	That's the reason why I don't wanna lose you
<i>When me heard all you got to tell me gal</i>	When me heard all you got to tell me gal
<i>That's the reason why me settle down</i>	That's the reason why me settle down
<i>Get these keys to my bima then forget about it</i>	Get these keys to my bima <sup>135</sup> then forget about it
<i>Me know that one day we shall be on top – aha!</i>	Me know that one day we shall be on top – aha!
<i>Your mi number one queen and me princess</i>	Your mi number one queen and me princess
<i>Baby gal you got to be always to be by my side gal</i>	Baby gal you got to be always to be by my side gal
<i>Without you I lose my mind</i>	Without you I lose my mind
<i>Without you me lose control</i>	Without you me lose control
---	---
<b>[Chorus]</b>	<b>[Chorus]</b>
---	---
<b>[Bridge]</b>	<b>[Bridge]</b>
<i>Yeah yeah! No no! I don't wanna lose you baby</i>	Yeah yeah! No no! I don't wanna lose you baby
<i>Nage sanzewo – Ahh! Yeah!</i>	I have also decided – Ahh! Yeah!
<i>Oh no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no!</i>	Oh no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no no!
<i>Jagala ojagare nga bweweyagala</i>	I want you to love me the way that you love yourself
<i>Oh no! Oh no! Oh no! I don't care</i>	Oh no! Oh no! Oh no! I don't care

<sup>135</sup> "Bima" is slang for a BMW car.

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**[Chorus]**

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**[Chorus]**

### SONG 39.

#### ***Biramvuna (It's really difficult for me) [2012]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda, Swahili.

Prod. Pastor P: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

Watch *Biramvuna* on YouTube [Video prod. Arnold]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiO8JflxjvQ>

**[Intro]**

*Wah wah*

*Narrow Road Production!*

*TBBBBBBBBB*

*Oh nah nah nah nah nah nah nah nah*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah*

*Wah wah*

*Wah wah, wah wah*

*Pastor P! Respect!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Kubimuhisa biramvuna*

*N'ukuri biranzonga – what do I do now?*

*Ndamubona umutima ugatangira gutera*

*Kubimubwira nkabura aho mbihera*

*Ngatangira kwicuza mbonye arembera*

*Kubimuhisa biramvuna*

*N'ukuri biranzonga – what do I do now?*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Nah nah nah nah nah nah nah nah*

*Gal you know that me love you now*

**[Intro]**

*Wah wah*

*Narrow Road Production!*

*TBBBBBBBBB*

*Oh nah nah nah nah nah nah nah nah*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah*

*Wah wah*

*Wah wah, wah wah*

*Pastor P! Respect!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*To hide it is really difficult for me*

*It really bothers me – what do I do now?*

*When I see her my heart starts to beat*

*I can't find how to start telling her*

*I start regretting as she disappears out of sight*

*To hide it is really difficult for me*

*It really bothers me – what do I do now?*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Nah nah nah nah nah nah nah nah*

*Gal you know that me love you now*

*Gal you know that me need you now*

*You're ma inspiration, ma definition, ma technician when me parts are down!*

*Ndakubura nkumva umutima urahagaze – yoooh!*

*Nakubura nkumva umutima utangiye gutera – yoooh!*

*Never try to leave me gal*

*Never try to diss me gal*

*Njo nakupenda, nakutamani*

*Nataka tuwe pamoja*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yeah! What do I do now?*

*She got a sexy body, she's always acting naughty*

*She's a money making machine, she's dirty dirty*

*I love the way she walkin' every time she goes across*

*A lot of niggas wondering, many men are following her*

*Come on now give it to me, baby gal I'm dying for you*

*You make me wanna wanna wanna wanna put it on you*

*If it's a battle field, I only wanna fight for you*

*I'm a go deeper, make you smile all the way*

*Ni wowe njye nifuza, ni wowe njye ndota*

*I can only rap about it, tell the rest of the world*

*TBB we're taking over, now you come follow me*

*Gal you know that me need you now*

*You're ma inspiration, ma definition, ma technician when me parts are down!*

*When I miss you I feel like my heart stops – yoooh!*

*But when I see you my heart starts beating – yoooh!*

*Never try to leave me gal*

*Never try to diss me gal*

*Me I love you, me I want you*

*I want us to stay together*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yeah! What do I do now?*

*She got a sexy body, she's always acting naughty*

*She's a money making machine, she's dirty dirty*

*I love the way she walkin' every time she goes across*

*A lot of niggas wondering, many men are following her*

*Come on now give it to me, baby gal I'm dying for you*

*You make me wanna wanna wanna wanna put it on you*

*If it's a battle field, I only wanna fight for you*

*I'm a go deeper, make you smile all the way*

*It is you that I desire, it is you that I dream about*

*I can only rap about it, tell the rest of the world*

*TBB we're taking over, now you come follow me*

*Ndakwemera unyemereye, Nakwizirikaha paka life*

I love you if you accept, I will stay with you until the end

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Uyu mukobwa aruta oxygen*

**[Verse 2]**

This girl is better than oxygen

*Kuko atuma umutima utera neza*

Because she makes my heart beat well

*Nta muganga, nta binini, baby gal won't you come by my side?*

No doctor, no medicine, baby gal won't you come by my side?

*Come on now baby gal, let me take you around my castle*

Come on now baby gal, let me take you around my castle

*I'll be your king, you be my queen, together in the palace*

I'll be your king, you be my queen, together in the palace

*I'll make you feel like a queen, take you on top of the world*

I'll make you feel like a queen, take you on top of the world

*Make you wanna be my wife, I'll make you my queen*

Make you wanna be my wife, I'll make you my queen

*Take these keys to to ma bima gal*

Take these keys to to ma bima<sup>136</sup> gal

*Me promise to give you whatever you want gal*

Me promise to give you whatever you want gal

*One day maybe I can take you to Paris*

One day maybe I can take you to Paris

*Oh my God! Do you even have a passport?!*

Oh my God! Do you even have a passport?!

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Outro]**

*TBB we're back with the reggae tone*

**[Outro]**

TBB we're back with the reggae tone

*TBBBBBBBBBB – Pastor P on the mix*

TBBBBBBBBBB – Pastor P on the mix

*Big up to Ezra, promoter there*

Big up to Ezra, promoter there

*Ha ha! – Nje untera ubwoba gal*

Ha ha! – You frighten me gal

*Ha ha! – You scare me girl*

Ha ha! – You scare me girl

---

<sup>136</sup> Bima is slang for a BMW car.

*TBB ni danje man!*

*TBBBBBBBBB*

*Nje urankanga gal*

*TBBBBBBBBB*

TBB is dangerous<sup>137</sup> man!

TBBBBBBBBB

You scare me girl

TBBBBBBBBB

## SONG 40.

### **Nuwanjye (She's mine) ft. Davy Ranks [2012]**

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Piano: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

#### **[Intro]**

*A who dis again? Ya don know!*

*TBB: Tino, Bob and Benjah!*

*Weh me told you who Jah bless no body curse*

*Featuring Davy Ranks in da Narrow Road*

*Fire burn dem, fire burn dem, fire burn dem  
now – yoooh!*

*Piano Records, Piano Records, Piano burn  
dem now – yoooh!*

*It's a dedication – ha ha!*

*To all the sexy, sexy gals! Sexy, sexy mamas!*

*We love you!*

---

#### **[Chorus X2]**

*Nuwanjye, naze ansange*

*Ansize naba uwande?*

*Naze uruhande rwanjye*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Ehh!*

#### **[Intro]**

Who's this again? You don't know!

TBB: Tino, Bob and Benjah!

I told you, who Jah blesses nobody can  
curse

Featuring Davy Ranks in da Narrow Road

Fire burn dem, fire burn dem, fire burn dem  
now – yoooh!

Piano Records, Piano Records, Piano burn  
dem now – yoooh!

It's a dedication – ha ha!

To all the sexy, sexy gals! Sexy, sexy  
mamas!

We love you!

---

#### **[Chorus X2]**

She's mine, come to me

If she leaves me, who will I belong to?

Let her come beside me

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

Ehh!

---

<sup>137</sup> By declaring that they are “dangerous”, TBB are boasting that they are “the best”, thus a threat to other competing music groups and solo artists.

*Cal anytime a see her smile*

*She take me where I never been like a child  
but I*

*Non dem can suit a style a Davy Ranks a  
gwan tu dat you know*

*Mi 'member when she used to move it on me  
just like a spider*

*Wal know gal am in know she dirty wise*

*Can a dem can criticise, everywhere you go mi  
a come follow you*

*She a hot gal, hot gal, hotter than rama*

*She a move a bad dem bad man me lose my  
mind – oh!*

*Namubonye agenda genda kumuhanda*

*Bad man Tino bintera kumubinda*

*She a beautiful princess, black African queen*

*This gal nukri we ararenze*

*When she a talk, when she smile*

*Baby gal won't you be my, my, my, my, mine*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yeah!*

*I will never let you down*

*I promise not to disappoint you*

*I take the vows to be the best that you will ever  
have*

*You are my better half and you are my first  
experience*

Cal anytime a see her smile

She take me where I never been like a child  
but I

None of them can suit your style, only the  
Davy Ranks that you know

I remember when she used to move it on  
me just like a spider

I know that girl is dirty wise<sup>138</sup>

None of them can criticise, everywhere you  
go, me I'll come follow you

She's a hot girl, hot girl, hotter than lava

She moves so bad man, she makes me  
lose my mind – oh!

I saw her walking, walking on the road

It caused me, bad man Tino, to go and chat  
her up

She a beautiful princess, black African  
queen

This girl, the truth is she's so great

When she a talk, when she smile

Baby gal won't you be my, my, my, my,  
mine

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yeah!*

I will never let you down

I promise not to disappoint you

I take the vows to be the best that you will  
ever have

You are my better half and you are my first  
experience

---

<sup>138</sup> "Dirty wise" is a popular Jamaican term that is used to refer to women who are explicitly sexual.

*And without you gal my life is like an empty bottle*

*Me love the way you do it*

*Gal I like how you handle it*

*You're looking like a model, definitely worth a dollar*

*Whatever it takes, say the price ama double it*

*You di mess up my mind*

*All I am thinking about is you*

*You, you make me better*

*You make me wanna nail it*

*You change the mood, you make perfect just come close*

*You, you make me better*

*You make me wanna nail it*

*You change the mood, you make perfect just come close*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Nooo!*

*I reach for your hand baby will you hold it?*

*If I hold out my hands, will you hold me?*

*If I go for your lips baby will you kiss me?*

*If I capture your heart will you love me now?*

*When you smile you take all my attention*

*When you laugh you hold my heart to laugh with you*

*When you cry you hold my heart to hold you*

*And without you gal my life is like an empty bottle*

*Me love the way you do it*

*Gal I like how you handle it*

*You're looking like a model, definitely worth a dollar*

*Whatever it takes, say the price ama double it*

*You di mess up my mind*

*All I am thinking about is you*

*You, you make me better*

*You make me wanna nail it*

*You change the mood, you make perfect just come close*

*You, you make me better*

*You make me wanna nail it*

*You change the mood, you make perfect just come close*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Nooo!*

*I reach for your hand baby will you hold it?*

*If I hold out my hands, will you hold me?*

*If I go for your lips baby will you kiss me?*

*If I capture your heart will you love me now?*

*When you smile you take all my attention*

*When you laugh you hold my heart to laugh with you*

*When you cry you hold my heart to hold you*



*When you said you love me you hold my hand  
forever*

*If I had one wish*

*I would give you a tender kiss*

*And if I had this one chance*

*I definitely take you away*

*Hold on baby*

*You're the one that makes me wanna get up  
and touch up the sky*

*You're the one the makes me wanna get it all  
night long, all night long – yeah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Let dem know, let dem know – haha!*

*You're the princess of the ghetto*

*Gal me love you*

*For real and for real you know*

*TBB once again*

*Presenting Narrow Road family*

*Piano, Gisa, James*

*You don know say!*

*To all them MCs and DJs*

*Much respect and love*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah! Hahaha!*

*TBB ni danje man!*

*You don know say!*

*When you said you love me you hold my  
hand forever*

*If I had one wish*

*I would give you a tender kiss*

*And if I had this one chance*

*I definitely take you away*

*Hold on baby*

*You're the one that makes me wanna get  
up and touch up the sky*

*You're the one the makes me wanna get it  
all night long, all night long – yeah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Let dem know, let dem know – haha!*

*You're the princess of the ghetto*

*Gal me love you*

*For real and for real you know*

*TBB once again*

*Presenting Narrow Road family*

*Piano, Gisa, James*

*You don know say!*

*To all them MCs and DJs*

*Much respect and love*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah! Hahaha!*

*TBB is dangerous man!*

*You don know say!*

## **SONG 41.**

***Unshyira High (You make me high) [2013]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Nic Pro: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

Watch *Unshyira High* on YouTube [Video prod. Arnold]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4JZELpOiug>

**[Intro]**

*Narrow Road Production!*

*Baby iyo nkubonye*

*Yelele Mama!*

*Numva ndi high*

*TBB, TBB, nah nah nah nah!*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

*Baby iyo nkubonye, mu mutwe numva ndi high*

*Amarangamutima akazamuka nkumva ndi high*

*Unshyira high – unshyira high*

*Nkajya high – nkajye high*

*Unshyira high – unshyira high*

*Ubu ndi high – ubu ndi high*

*Baby gal!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Iyo nkubuze numva nasara – nasara*

*Iyo nkubonye ibyishimo bikandenga –  
bikandenga*

*Iyo turi kubyinana numva ari wowe wenyina*

*Ni wowe – kubita!*

*Nzakwijyanira kure – nzakwijyanira kure*

*Nzakwihoreza amarira yawe – amarira,  
amarira yawe*

*Ni wowe nakunze, ni wowe mbona gusa*

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Intro]**

Narrow Road Production!

Baby when I see you

Yelele Mama!

I feel I am high

TBB, TBB, nah nah nah nah!

---

**[Chorus X2]**

Baby when I see you, in my head I feel I am high

My feelings increase and I feel I am high

You make me high – you make me high

I become high – I become high

You make me high – you make me high

Now I am high – now I am high

Baby gal!

---

**[Verse 1]**

When I see you I become crazy – crazy

When I see you I get so overwhelmed – it goes beyond

When we are dancing together I feel you are the only one

It's you – hit it!

I will take you far away – take you far away

I will wipe away your tears – tears, your tears

It's you I loved, it's only you I see

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Higher! – Baby gal!*

*Gal you take me high up I can't deny*

*Gal you make me feel like a Rastafari*

*I can't deny, no, I don't know why*

*You wonder how I do what I'm about to do*

*I'm a ride you on my rollercoaster up and down*

*We can go from coast to coast – yeah!*

*One on one you and I playing hide and seek*

*We can go high, forever live young – Jerry-B!  
Jerry-B!*

*You're the only drug that I'm addicted to*

*Take me higher that I can't even feel the  
ground*

*Unshyira high nkumva merewe nk'umusazi –  
higher, higher!*

*Najya hasi nkumva ndatuje – higher, higher!*

*I need you badly and I know you know it*

*I need you badly and I know you see it*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*TBB once again, yoooh!*

*You make me high, you make me jump in the  
sky like a superman!*

*Iyo nkubonye baby numva ntakintu mbura*

*You make mi love complete, baby without you  
mera nkumusazi – yoooh!*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Higher! – Baby gal!*

*Gal you take me high up I can't deny*

*Gal you make me feel like a Rastafari*

*I can't deny, no, I don't know why*

*You wonder how I do what I'm about to do*

*I'm a ride you on my rollercoaster up and  
down*

*We can go from coast to coast – yeah!*

*One on one you and I playing hide and  
seek*

*We can go high, forever live young – Jerry-  
B! Jerry-B!*

*You're the only drug that I'm addicted to*

*Take me higher that I can't even feel the  
ground*

*You make me high and I feel I have  
become crazy – higher, higher!*

*When I go down I feel I have calmed down  
– higher, higher!*

*I need you badly and I know you know it*

*I need you badly and I know you see it*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*TBB once again, yoooh!*

*You make me high, you make me jump in  
the sky like a superman!*

*When I see you I feel I am missing nothing*

*You make my love complete, baby without  
you I feel I have become crazy – yoooh!*

*You make me touch the sky, when me go so high, every mountain high!*

*Cheri ni wowe wenyine utuma mera uko meze*

*Nabonye abeza benshi ariko ntacyo bashoboye*

*Dore uko babigenza, in da club dem ask for Tequilas – choo!*

*Wamugeza imuhira akakubeshya, Mama aranshaka hahaha!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*It's a big tune more than a ring tone!*

*True definition! Tino, Bob and Benjah! – TBB! TBBBBBBBB!*

*Hahahahaha!*

*TBB ni danje man!*

*Hahaha!*

*You make me touch the sky, when me go so high, every mountain high!*

*Darling it's you that makes me feel the way I feel*

*I have seen so many but they cannot do a thing*

*This is how they do it, in the club they ask for tequilas – choo!*

*When you get her home she lies to you, she says Mama wants me hahaha!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*It's a big tune more than a ring tone!*

*True definition! Tino, Bob and Benjah! – TBB! TBBBBBBBB!*

*Hahahahaha!*

*TBB is dangerous man!*

*Hahaha!*

## SONG 42.

***Mbwiza Ukuri (Tell me the truth) [2013]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

Prod. Pacento: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

Watch *Mbwiza Ukuri* on YouTube [Video prod. Arnold]:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R\\_BO9Ovts](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R_BO9Ovts)

**[Intro]**

*Yeah, you know! This is a TBB! Tino, Bob and Benjah! – Ha ha ha!*

*TBB ni danje man!*

*Pacento! Don whow!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Ese mu rukundo rwawe*

**[Intro]**

*Yeah, you know! This is a TBB! Tino, Bob and Benjah! – Ha ha ha!*

*TBB is dangerous man!*

*Pacento! Don whow!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*When in love*

*Ni iki gituma rwiyongera?*

*Ndashaka kubimenya*

*Ndashaka kubikora*

*Ndashaka kukunezeza birenze*

*Ndashaka kuguha urukundo rutavangiye*

*Mbwira ikikunezeza*

*Mbwira ikigushimisha*

*Nyongorera numve*

*Ndashaka kubimenye*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Ese uburyo ngukunda ubone bihagije?  
Bihagije?*

*Oh me gal, you have to tell me truth*

*Ese uburyo mbigenza ubona bikunyura?  
Bikunyura?*

*Oh me gal, you have to tell me truth*

*Mbwiza ukuri, mbwiza ukuri – wal<sup>139</sup> you know*

*Mbwiza ukuri, mbwiza ukuri – tell me truth*

*Mbwiza ukuri ntaba ngusondeka*

*Oh me gal, you have to tell me truth*

*Mbwiza ukuri, mbwiza ukuri – tell me truth*

*Mbwiza ukuri, mbwiza ukuri – tell me truth*

*Mbwiza ukuri ntaba ngusondeka*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yeah, uh! Tell me!*

What makes your love grow?

I need to know

I want to do that

I want to make you very happy

I want to give you real love

Tell me what makes you happy

Tell me what pleases you

Whisper for me to hear

I want to know

---

**[Chorus]**

The way I love you, it is enough? Enough?

Oh me gal, you have to tell me truth

The way I do it, is it good for you? Good for you?

Oh me gal, you have to tell me truth

Tell me the truth, tell me the truth – girl you know

Tell me the truth, tell me the truth – tell me truth

Tell me the truth so I know I am not doing it badly

Oh me gal, you have to tell me truth

Tell me the truth, tell me the truth – tell me truth

Tell me the truth, tell me the truth – tell me truth

Tell me the truth so I know I am not doing it badly

---

**[Verse 2]**

Yeah, uh! Tell me!

---

<sup>139</sup> Wal means “girl” in Jamaican Patois.

*Baby gal, mbwira uko bishaka*  
*Mboni yanjye mbura uko mbigenza*  
*Let me know if you really, really like it*  
*Tell me that you really, really, really love it*  
*Take me up and then I can bring you down*  
*Hold me tight and never let me go*  
*All day, all night, I'm gonna put it on you*  
*And always baby gal I'll be there for you*  
*Nobody's gonna love you better than I ever will*  
*Nobody's gonna treat you better than I will baby*  
*Take my hand, let me lead you to paradise*  
*Nyongorera umbwire uko ubishaka*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Ndashaka kuzibura umugezi wurukundo*  
*rwanjye<sup>140</sup> - weee*

*Ngusogongeze wenda washir'inyota, mukunzi*  
*we*

*You are ma answered prayer, my fulfilled wish,*  
*my realised dream gal*

*If I say that I love you, baby gal never deny it*

*Ogal, nze ono umuwara atabunde, sibalimba*  
*ogal!<sup>141</sup>*

*I've been searching for this gal, just to make*  
*you feel alright*

---

*Baby girl, tell me the way you want it*  
*My love, tell me how I can do it*  
*Let me know if you really, really like it*  
*Tell me that you really, really, really love it*  
*Take me up and then I can bring you down*  
*Hold me tight and never let me go*  
*All day, all night, I'm gonna put it on you*  
*And always baby gal I'll be there for you*  
*Nobody's gonna love you better than I ever will*  
*Nobody's gonna treat you better than I will baby*  
*Take my hand, let me lead you to paradise*  
*Whisper to me how you like it*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*I want to explore the source of your love –*  
*yeaaah*

*I'll give you a sip so maybe I can satisfy*  
*your thirst for love*

*You are ma answered prayer, my fulfilled*  
*wish, my realised dream gal*

*If I say that I love you, baby gal never deny*  
*it*

*Oh my God! This girl is driving me crazy,*  
*I'm not lying, oh wow!*

*I've been searching for this gal, just to*  
*make you feel alright*

---

<sup>140</sup> This is a Rwandan proverb. It literally means “to bring out the best in a girl”. However, one of my informants told me that “it really means to explore the clitoris, you know? To make her cum”.

<sup>141</sup> This line is in Luganda. According to Benjah TBB, *Ogal* is a surprised interjection in Lagos, Nigeria. (He'd heard it in Nigerian Afrobeats songs.)

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Ahh Ahh, ahh ahh*

*Narrow Road Production – ahh ahh!*

*Oh ma gal you have to tell me truth*

*Ahh ahh, ahh ahh, ahh ahh*

*Oh ma gal you have to tell me truth*

*Wal you know, tell me truth*

*Oh ma gal you have to tell me truth*

*Tell me truth, tell me truth*

*Oh ma gal you have to tell me truth*

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Ahh Ahh, ahh ahh*

*Narrow Road Production – ahh ahh!*

*Oh ma gal you have to tell me truth*

*Ahh ahh, ahh ahh, ahh ahh*

*Oh ma gal you have to tell me truth*

*Girl you know, tell me truth*

*Oh ma gal you have to tell me truth*

*Tell me truth, tell me truth*

*Oh ma gal you have to tell me truth*

**SONG 43.**

***Vuza Ingoma (Play the drum) [2013]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Nic Pro: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

Watch *Vuza Ingoma* on YouTube [Video prod. Gilbert (The Benjamins)]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9tzjA1G888>

**[Intro]**

*Party time on the summer time*

*Ku mucanga ku mazi*

*Party mi say, TBB says, Jay Polly says!*

*Party mi go!*

*Ah, amashyi*

*Ah, TBB! Jay Polly!*

*Nic pro!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Vuza ingoma bamenye*

*Aho ikirori kiri*

**[Intro]**

*Party time on the summer time*

*On the sand on the beach*

*Party mi say, TBB says, Jay Polly says!*

*Party mi go!*

*Ah, clap*

*Ah, TBB! Jay Polly!*

*Nic pro!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Play the drum so people know*

*Where there is a party*

<i>Turabyina tugeze bukeye – vuza ingoma shya</i>	We will dance until morning – keep playing the drums
<i>Vuza ingoma bamenye</i>	Play the drum so people know
<i>Aho ikirori kiri</i>	Where there is a party
<i>Turabyina tugeze bukeye – vuza ingoma shya</i>	We will dance until morning – keep playing the drums
<i>Ni summer time, put your hands in the air</i>	It's summer time, put your hands in the air
<i>Move, shake your body and dance – ni summer time!</i>	Move, shake your body and dance – it's summer time!
<i>Grab somebody to the dance floor</i>	Grab somebody to the dance floor
<i>Party to the end of time – ni summer time!</i>	Party to the end of time – it's summer time!
<i>Put your hands in the air</i>	Put your hands in the air
<i>Move, shake your body and dance – ni summer time!</i>	Move, shake your body and dance – it's summer time!
<i>Grab somebody to the dance floor</i>	Grab somebody to the dance floor
<i>Party to the end of time!</i>	Party to the end of time!
---	---
<b>[Verse 1]</b>	<b>[Verse 1]</b>
<i>Abakoboyi ku ikabutuna</i>	Town boys in shorts
<i>Amabebi muri bikini</i>	Babes in bikinis
<i>Nanjye simbatindira MC, mpa microfone</i>	I will not be late, MC give me microphone
<i>Kuri rya jwi ry'intare ndatontoma mbahamagare</i>	In my voice of a lion I will call everyone
<i>Niyo ku mufuka waba uri down</i>	Even if you are down in your pocket
<i>Ngwino dushyushye town</i>	Come here and we will make the town hot
<i>Down town, sun down</i>	Down town, sun down
<i>Turabyina paka down, yeah</i>	We will dance until we reach down
<i>Ni summer time, ntabyo gucika</i>	It's summer time, nobody will leave
<i>Nta kwita kuri time</i>	Don't worry about time
<i>Buri wese afite agafaranga ke</i>	Everyone has money
<i>Udafite baramukopa</i>	And the person who doesn't have, they can drink on credit
<i>Agashahara nikaza buri wese nziko azapesa</i>	When the salary comes, I know they will all pay the bar



---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Hell yeah!*

*The time is now drop it down*

*Move to the rhythm I'll bring you back*

*Put your hands up to the ceiling - yeah*

*You came to the house all alone*

*Grab somebody yeah hit the floor*

*Just do it like you don't care*

*If you getting money spend it like you get paid*

*All the ladies in the building twist it*

*Wind it and shake off your stress*

*We party hard like we are rock stars*

*Flying so high like we are Rastas*

*We the masters, the party monsters*

*TBB, Jay Polly, we're the superstars*

*We're the EA's finest*

*Right from the land of a thousand hills*

*Let the beat take control over you*

*Drink and party 'till the sun come down*

*No more worries and no more regrets*

*Come to the party and join the rest*

*All around the world it's always summer time*

*It's party, party, party, party time*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Hell yeah!*

*The time is now drop it down*

*Move to the rhythm I'll bring you back*

*Put your hands up to the ceiling - yeah*

*You came to the house all alone*

*Grab somebody yeah hit the floor*

*Just do it like you don't care*

*If you getting money spend it like you get paid*

*All the ladies in the building twist it*

*Wind it and shake off your stress*

*We party hard like we are rock stars*

*Flying so high like we are Rastas*

*We the masters, the party monsters*

*TBB, Jay Polly, we're the superstars*

*We're the EA's finest*

*Right from the land of a thousand hills*

*Let the beat take control over you*

*Drink and party 'till the sun come down*

*No more worries and no more regrets*

*Come to the party and join the rest*

*All around the world it's always summer time*

*It's party, party, party, party time*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Life is like dancing, if you have that beat dance it on*

*Many people will dance, you let them party all night*

*Never grow old, never die*

*Drink all day, party all night gal*

*I'm in Kigali city and life is better in the summer time*

*Late night, bikinis, short skirts*

*Late night, bikinis, short skirts*

*Love music, pool parties, TBB we're ready to run this party*

*Put on your dancing shoes*

*Come along with dancing gals*

*Put on your dancing shoes*

*It's the summer time, it's a party time*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Koma amashyi, amashyi*

*Jay Polly! Ezra umusaza! TBB!*

*Yi mi know this is Narrow Road Empire!*

*TBB ni danje man! Wallai!*

*Mbega twebwe! Aha!*

---

**[Verse 3]**

Life is like dancing, if you have that beat dance it on

Many people will dance, you let them party all night

Never grow old, never die

Drink all day, party all night gal

I'm in Kigali city and life is better in the summer time

Late night, bikinis, short skirts

Late night, bikinis, short skirts

Love music, pool parties, TBB we're ready to run this party

Put on your dancing shoes

Come along with dancing gals

Put on your dancing shoes

It's the summer time, it's a party time

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

Clap your hands, hands

Jay Polly! Ezra umusaza!<sup>142</sup> TBB!

You all know this is Narrow Road Empire!

TBB is dangerous man! I swear!

Look at us! Aha!

**SONG 44.**

***We Are One* [2013 – video in 2015]**

TBB, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda, Luganda, Swahili.

Prod. Pacento: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

---

<sup>142</sup> *Umusaza* is a Kinyarwanda term used to refer to a man who is old, senior and/or important.

Watch *We Are One* on YouTube [Video prod. Method]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6z31s90VSGI>

**[Intro]**

*Narrow Road Production*

*This is a TBB*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah*

*This time we come to spread true reality*

*Listen for this!*

---

*No matter what religion*

*No matter what race*

*No matter what political party*

*We are Rwandan*

*Pacento! Bad is Rasta!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Rwanda, Rwanda ndukundane*

*East Africa tusayidiane*

*Tujenge ichi zetu*

*Ziwe paradise*

*We are one people*

*We are one people*

*We are one, one, one – we are one, we are one*

*We are one nation - one one one*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Dear motherland, this is a song I wrote for you*

*You are paradise, to me you are the Promised Land*

*You're such a wonderful creation, with beautiful nature*

**[Intro]**

Narrow Road Production

This is a TBB

Tino, Bob and Benjah

This time we come to spread true reality

Listen for this!

---

No matter what religion

No matter what race

No matter what political party

We are Rwandan

Pacento! Bad is Rasta!

---

**[Chorus]**

Rwanda, Rwanda let's love one another

East Africa let's help each other

Unite our nation

Turn it to paradise

We are one people

We are one people

We are one, one, one – we are one, we are one

We are one nation - one one one

---

**[Verse 1]**

Dear motherland, this is a song I wrote for you

You are paradise, to me you are the Promised Land

You're such a wonderful creation, with beautiful nature

*A thousand hills, the weather, the valleys, the hills*

*We are one people, one colour, we're one blood*

*No matter what, together we growing, growing stronger*

*We gotta take a step forward and stop the blood shed*

*I proclaim peace among those at war*

*Justice is a custom in the culture we carry on – I carry on*

*All the pain that I survived from*

*Say no to genocide and dictatorship*

*And say no to people dying from hunger and war*

*You have every opportunity to stand up for yourself*

*And now I got the chance to grab the mic and say cheers*

*I dedicate this to you, all of my dear people*

*I carry on the love*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*United we stand and divided we shall fall*

*One by one makes a bundle, yo!*

*Rwanda, ichi yango, Rwanda ma motherland, Rwanda my country yard*

*Me heard a lot of people dem talk bad about you*

*But them can't stop me from loving ma motherland, Rwanda*

*It's gonna take them a long way to drive me away from you – remember that*

A thousand hills, the weather, the valleys, the hills

We are one people, one colour, we're one blood

No matter what, together we growing, growing stronger

We gotta take a step forward and stop the blood shed

I proclaim peace among those at war

Justice is a custom in the culture we carry on – I carry on

All the pain that I survived from

Say no to genocide and dictatorship

And say no to people dying from hunger and war

You have every opportunity to stand up for yourself

And now I got the chance to grab the mic and say cheers

I dedicate this to you, all of my dear people

I carry on the love

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

United we stand and divided we shall fall

One by one makes a bundle, yo!

Rwanda my country, Rwanda ma motherland, Rwanda my country yard

Me heard a lot of people dem talk bad about you

But them can't stop me from loving ma motherland, Rwanda

It's gonna take them a long way to drive me away from you – remember that

*Let's love one another in one harmony*

*Fasha mugenzi wawe uko abigusabye*

*Ahasigaye twese dukudane hamwe*

*Ibisigaye byose birekere Imana*

*Ka united we stand and divided we shall fall*

*Let's love one another*

*Ka united we stand and divided we shall fall*

*Love one another*

---

**[Bridge]**

*Lord will make our way – he will make our way*

*Where there seems to be no way – no way*

*He works in ways we cannot see – in ways, you can't see*

*He will make a way for you<sup>143</sup> - Dear God...*

*We are one colour, one people, and the same blood*

*Together we shall achieve if we believe it – one blood*

*One love in one nation and one God – one God*

*One love, one nation, one God – one love, one nation*

*One, one, one blood...*

---

**[Outro]**

*We are one people – dukundane, one blood*

*We are one people – tusayidiane, ziwe paradise*

*We are one people – we are one people*

Let's love one another in one harmony

Help your friend when they ask you to

Then let's love one another

And leave the rest to God

Because united we stand and divided we shall fall

Let's love one another

Because united we stand and divided we shall fall

Love one another

---

**[Bridge]**

Lord will make our way – he will make our way

Where there seems to be no way – no way

He works in ways we cannot see – in ways, you can't see

He will make a way for you - Dear God...

We are one colour, one people, and the same blood

Together we shall achieve if we believe it – one blood

One love in one nation and one God – one God

One love, one nation, one God – one love, one nation

One, one, one blood...

---

**[Outro]**

We are one people - love one another

We are one people - help one another, turn it to paradise

We are one people – we are one people

---

<sup>143</sup> Here, TBB have remixed a verse from the well-known gospel song *God will make a way*.

*We are one one one, oh! We are one one one,  
one one one! (X 2)*

*Let's love one another – dukundane*

*In whatever situation – tusayidiane*

*Ndukundane<sup>144</sup>, twagarane<sup>145</sup>, tupendane<sup>146</sup> –  
ziwe paradise*

*Together we can, no matter what*

*We are one colour, we are one blood*

*We are one, beautiful Rwanda...*

*Narrow Road Empire*

*We are one one one, oh! We are one one  
one, one one one! (X 2)*

*Let's love one another - love one another*

*In whatever situation - help each other*

*Love one another, love one another, love  
one another – turn it to paradise*

*Together we can, no matter what*

*We are one colour, we are one blood*

*We are one, beautiful Rwanda...*

*Narrow Road Empire*

## SONG 45.

### ***Iyizire (Come to me) [2014]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, French, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda, Swahili.

Prod. Pacento: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

Watch *Iyizire* on YouTube [Video prod. Gilbert (The Benjamins)]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeZbYT1cuB0>

#### **[Intro]**

*Well if love is a crime, let me get arrested!*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah, true love affection this is!*

*Mbega indirimbo we - we, we, we, we!*

*TBB ni danje we!*

*Come closer, I just wanna show you love we!*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*Ndashaka kubwereka abantu ko wowe ur  
uwanjye - Narrow Road Empire*

*Ntamuntu numwe ukumbuza*

*Tucinye akadiho tubyereke abantu*

*Sinshobora kubihisha*

#### **[Intro]**

*Well if love is a crime, let me get arrested!*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah, true love affection  
this is!*

*What a song we!*

*TBB is dangerous!*

*Come closer, I just wanna show you love  
we!*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*I want to show everybody that you are  
mine – Narrow Road Empire*

*Nobody can stop me*

*Let's celebrate and show people*

*I cannot hide it*

---

<sup>144</sup> Kinyarwanda

<sup>145</sup> Luganda

<sup>146</sup> Swahili

*Iyizire ma cheri*

*Iyizire! Mon amour, come closer oooh lah lah!*

*Iyizire, a go take you there*

*Iyizire, a go show you love*

*Iyizire, show you love*

*Show you love*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Bamwe baja bambaza uriya mukobwa avahe?*

*Nkababwira ko yakunzwe kandi yatoranjwe  
mbere – attention!*

*Ntibamenye ko namwikuriyeyo, uwanjye*

*Kandi ntibamenye ko namwimariyemo, uwanjye  
we*

*Uwa, uwanjye*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Viens ma cheri*

*Baby gal, you are very overwhelming*

*Yeah, wallai nakupenda*

*So, so seductive, I can't deny it*

*You're the number one I know*

*Every step that you take, my heart beats faster  
and faster and I wanna wanna catch up*

*No you're not goin' anywhere gal, without me  
and without you gal I'm never gonna give up*

*Never gonna let anything ever hurt you, you're  
the one I will run to*

Come to me my sweetie

Come to me! Come closer my love, come  
closer oooh lah lah!

Come to me, I will take you there

Come to me, I will show you love

Come to me, show you love

Show you love

---

**[Verse 1]**

Some people ask me where is that girl  
from?

I tell them she is loved and she has been  
chosen already – be careful!

They don't know that I got her myself,  
she's mine

And they don't know that I have given all of  
myself to her, she's mine

She's, she's mine

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

Come closer my sweetie

Baby gal, you are very overwhelming

Yeah, I swear I love you

So, so seductive, I can't deny it

You're the number one I know

Every step that you take, my heart beats  
faster and faster and I wanna wanna catch  
up

No you're not goin' anywhere gal, without  
me and without you gal I'm never gonna  
give up

Never gonna let anything ever hurt you,  
you're the one I will run to

*When the world is so cold, you're the one that I  
wanna hold on to*

*I'll do anything you ask me to, take you around  
the world on a love tour*

*Ride you round and round and back again*

*Take you up and down a thousand hills*

*Explore all the love that I got for you*

*Baby gal if I could I'll take you home*

*We can have more, you and I alone tonight*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Let me show you some feelings me gals dem*

*Come, come, come to me room now*

*Come, come, come to me house now*

*Me want to show you love*

*Bad man feeling, bad man touching*

*A de take you to Niger*

*A de move you around the world*

*A de show you to everybody*

*I tell them you me number one*

*Naguhisemo muri benshi*

*Kankwereke urukundo*

*Nkwereke urukundo*

*Nkwereke uru, uru, urukondo*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

When the world is so cold, you're the one  
that I wanna hold on to

I'll do anything you ask me to, take you  
around the world on a love tour

Ride you round and round and back again

Take you up and down a thousand hills

Explore all the love that I got for you

Baby gal if I could I'll take you home

We can have more, you and I alone  
tonight

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

Let me show you some feelings me gals  
dem

Come, come, come to me room now

Come, come, come to me house now

Me want to show you love

Bad man feeling, bad man touching

A de take you to Niger<sup>147</sup>

A de move you around the world

A de show you to everybody

I tell them you me number one

I chose you from many

Let me show you love

Let me show you love

Show you I, I, I love

---

**[Chorus]**

---

---

<sup>147</sup> Niger is short for Nigeria.



**[Outro]**

*Mbega indirimbo we!*

*TBB ni danje we!*

*Come baby!*

*I just wanna show you love we! – Love we, love we!*

*Pacento! Bad is Rasta!*

*Just wanna show you love we – love we, love we, love we!*

**[Outro]**

What a song!

TBB is dangerous!

Come baby!

I just wanna show you love we! – Love we, love we!

Pacento! Bad is Rasta!

Just wanna show you love we – love we, love we, love we!

**SONG 46.*****Mbwira (Tell Me) [2014]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Pacento: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

**[Intro]**

*TBB! Ni danje! Wallai!*

*TBB! Tino, Bob and Benjah!*

*On no! This gal just killed me!*

*TBB is back! You better listen fi dis one!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Nahoraga ntekereza kukubwira ko ngukunda*

*Nahoraga ntekereza ko twabana iteka*

*Nakubonaga nk'umuntu uzambera umutima w'urugo rwanjye*

*Haba mu mvura, haba mu zuba*

*Ntacyo nzigera nkwima wowe*

*Gusa mbwina nawe niba unyemera*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Nahoraga ngutekereza umutima wanjye ukakunyishyura*

**[Intro]**

TBB! It's dangerous! I swear!

TBB! Tino, Bob and Benjah!

On no! This gal just killed me!

TBB is back! You better listen to this one!

---

**[Verse 1]**

I have been always thinking to tell you that I love you

I have always been thinking that we will live together forever

I thought that you would be the heart of my house

In rain, in sun

I will never refuse you anything

But tell me if you accept me

---

**[Chorus]**

I have always been thinking about you and my heart demands you

*Nkabura aho nahera mbikubwira*

*Ayi yo yo, yo yo, yo yo yo – Ese nawe n'uko?*

*Mbwira yo yo, yo yo yo yo*

*Ayi yo yo, yo yo, yo yo yo - Ese nawe n'uko?*

*Mbwira yo yo, yo yo yo yo*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*I don't want her say she love me*

*I don't want her say she need me*

*Just tell me you love me now, gal me and you forever*

*Hari benshi bazana ayo makado*

*Kugirango njye mbaha urukundo*

*But me I had to keep telling them no*

*Keep on telling me, telling me no*

*My friend please don't deny me*

*So I never have to live without you*

*Gal you deserve a diamond ring*

*Gal you deserve a diamond ring*

*Ndashaka kumenya amarangamutima yawe*

*Wenda namenya ibindimo ko nawe aruko*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Aha! Me I want you! Yeah!*

*Sweetie mutima just tell me how*

*Mbikubwire nte? Just show me how*

*How do I get to prove my love to you?*

*How do I get to show you that I care?*

*Only you are the one for me*

But I failed to find a way to tell you

Ayi yo yo, yo yo, yo yo yo - Is it the same for you?

Tell me yo yo, yo yo yo yo

Ayi yo yo, yo yo, yo yo yo - Is it the same for you?

Tell me yo yo, yo yo yo yo

---

**[Verse 2]**

I don't want her say she love me

I don't want her say she need me

Just tell me you love me now, gal me and you forever

There are so many who bring me gifts

So that I give them love

But me I had to keep telling them no

Keep on telling me, telling me no

My friend please don't deny me

So I never have to live without you

Gal you deserve a diamond ring

Gal you deserve a diamond ring

I need to know your feelings

Maybe I could know if you feel what I feel

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

Aha! Me I want you! Yeah!

Sweetheart just tell me how

How do I tell you? Just show me how

How do I get to prove my love to you?

How do I get to show you that I care?

Only you are the one for me

*When I am without you I hate it*

*Gal I love it when you come close*

*Only I am the one for you*

*I need you, I miss you*

*Tell me gal do you feel the same way?*

*I'm a keep, keep, keep calling on you*

*Anywhere that you go I'll be right there*

*Baby tell me why, I be thinking about you*

*Now tell me how, how will I ever get to you?*

*Coz my only wish is to be with you for the rest  
of my life*

*Yeah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Just tell me how*

*Do you want my love?*

*This is Narrow Road Empire!*

*Blessings fi all the ladies in the building*

*TBB we never stop!*

*Ni danje Man!*

*When I am without you I hate it*

*Girl I love it when you come close*

*Only I am the one for you*

*I need you, I miss you*

*Tell me girl do you feel the same way?*

*I'm a keep, keep, keep calling on you*

*Anywhere that you go I'll be right there*

*Baby tell me why, I be thinking about you*

*Now tell me how, how will I ever get to you?*

*Coz my only wish is to be with you for the  
rest of my life*

*Yeah!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Just tell me how*

*Do you want my love?*

*This is Narrow Road Empire!*

*Blessings to all the ladies in the building*

*TBB we never stop!*

*It's dangerous man!*

## SONG 47.

***Yampaye Inka!*<sup>148</sup> [2014]**

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Pacento: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

Watch *Yampaye Inka* on YouTube [Video prod. Gilbert (The Benjamins)]:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g\\_VT4RDzlaE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_VT4RDzlaE)

**[Intro]**

**[Intro]**

<sup>148</sup> *Yampaye Inka* is a surprised interjection. It literally means “he gave me a cow”.

*Ararenze*

*Araceka we*

*Pacento! Bad is Rasta!*

*Azi azi ibintu*

*Yampaye inka uyumwana ni danje! Wallai!*

*Oooh lah lah! It's another explosion!*

*TBB again! Tino, Bob and Benjah!*

*Tell them say!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Yampaye inka! Ararenze*

*Yampaye inka! Araceka we*

*Yampaye inka! Azi azi ibintu*

*Yampaye inka! Agenda neza*

*Yampaye inka! Araceka we*

*Yampaye inka! Azi azi ibintu*

*Yampaye inka! Oh ma God she's beautiful!*

*Yampaye inka! She's a queen!*

*Yampaye inka! So sexy!*

*Yampaye inka! Uh!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*She's got a body shaped like a coke bottle*

*Body so hot and it tastes like chilli*

*Like a role model, look how she getting  
naughty*

*Dirty dancing, dancing while I'm watching her*

*Like an action movie she's rolling over*

*Her body so entertaining, aye!*

*If I want more baby can I get it all?*

It's so good

She's so beautiful

Pacento! Bad is Rasta!

She knows things

Oh wow! This girl is so dangerous! I swear!

Oooh lah lah! It's another explosion!

TBB again! Tino, Bob and Benjah!

Tell them say!

---

**[Chorus]**

Oh wow! It's so good

Oh wow! She's so beautiful

Oh wow! She knows things

Oh wow! She walks well

Oh wow! She's so beautiful

Oh wow! She knows things

Oh wow! Oh my God she's beautiful!

Oh wow! She's a queen!

Oh wow! So sexy!

Oh wow! Uh!

---

**[Verse 1]**

She's got a body shaped like a coke bottle

Body so hot and it tastes like chilli

Like a role model, look how she getting  
naughty

Dirty dancing, dancing while I'm watching  
her

Like an action movie she's rolling over

Her body so entertaining, aye!

If I want more baby can I get it all?

<i>Baby gal can I please get a piece of that?</i>	Baby gal can I please get a piece of that?
<i>Tease me, kiss me, baby please me</i>	Tease me, kiss me, baby please me
<i>Gonna take you to a place just you and me</i>	Gonna take you to a place just you and me
<i>I'm in the right mood, I'm gonna take you to my hood</i>	I'm in the right mood, I'm gonna take you to my hood
<i>Introduce you to my niggas and my crew</i>	Introduce you to my niggas and my crew
<i>We are gonna turn it up and make the ground break</i>	We are gonna turn it up and make the ground break
<i>Benjah ranger causing a lot of danger!</i>	Benjah ranger causing a lot of danger!
<i>For this gal might call me a stranger</i>	For this gal might call me a stranger
<i>Baby gal, I'm just a lover boy, my boo!</i>	Baby gal, I'm just a lover boy, my boo!
---	---
<b>[Chorus]</b>	<b>[Chorus]</b>
---	---
<b>[Verse 2]</b>	<b>[Verse 2]</b>
<i>Nahuye nawe – nawe</i>	I met her – her
<i>Umunsi umwe gusa</i>	Only one day
<i>Mpita mera nkumusazi</i>	I immediately became a crazy person
<i>Wakubiswe na surundiwiri</i>	Who's drunk on surundiwiri <sup>149</sup>
<i>Gal, every time I look at you</i>	Gal, every time I look at you
<i>Every time I dream about you in ma dream</i>	Every time I dream about you in ma dream
<i>Gal, me wanna never let you go</i>	Gal, me wanna never let you go
<i>Me always be by your side all night gal</i>	Me always be by your side all night gal
<i>You're ma princess, let me be your prince gal</i>	You're ma princess, let me be your prince gal
<i>You're my queen gal, let me be your king gal</i>	You're my queen gal, let me be your king gal
<i>It's a dance hall ting! It's Pacento! Bad Rasta!</i>	It's a dance hall ting! It's Pacento! Bad Rasta!
<i>Selecta tell em say!</i>	DJ tell em say!

<sup>149</sup> *Surundiwiri* is Kinyarwanda slang for cheap, locally made alcoholic spirits (usually gin), sold in small plastic bottles or sachets.

*Tino, Bob and Benjah we're rocking da ting*  
*Nikita, Gabiro, dem a'rocking da ting*  
*Davy Ranks and Momo dem a rocking da ting*  
*It's a yampaye inka! It's a true Dancehall ting gal*  
*Every night I see you moving on the street*  
*Gal you're ma Beyonce, I'm your Jay Z, gal dem say!*  
*Come, let's get drunk in love!*  
*Yampaye inka uyu mwana ni danje wallai!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Oh my God, she's so beautiful*  
*Oh my God, she's so natural*  
*She drives me crazy, she drives me crazy*  
*Nzemera ngurishe ibyanje*  
*Nibinanira ntange ingwate*  
*Kuko ararenze, kuko ararenze*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Give it to me, I give it to you*  
*Give it to me, give it to me, give it to me*  
*Give it to me, I give it to you*  
*Give it to me, give it to me, give it to me*  
*Gal never mind, never mind*  
*We bad man TBB!*

*Tino, Bob and Benjah we're rocking da ting*  
*Nikita, Gabiro, dem a'rocking da ting*  
*Davy Ranks and Momo dem a rocking da ting*  
*It's oh wow! It's a true Dancehall ting gal*  
*Every night I see you moving on the street*  
*Gal you're ma Beyonce, I'm your Jay Z, gal dem say!*  
*Come, let's get drunk in love!*  
*Oh my God this girl is dangerous I swear!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Oh my God, she's so beautiful*  
*Oh my God, she's so natural*  
*She drives me crazy, she drives me crazy*  
*I will accept to sell all of my belongings*  
*If I fail, I will get a loan*  
*Because she's the most beautiful, because she's the most beautiful*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Give it to me, I give it to you*  
*Give it to me, give it to me, give it to me*  
*Give it to me, I give it to you*  
*Give it to me, give it to me, give it to me*  
*Gal never mind, never mind*  
*We bad man TBB!*

*We gonna love you until the end - We gonna love you!*

*Pacento!*

*We gonna love you until the end - We gonna love you!*

*Pacento!*

## **SONG 48.**

### ***Ishema (My Blessing) [2015]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Pacento: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

#### **[Intro]**

*CB Records*

*Oooh lah lah!*

*TBB ikabije kuba danje wallai!*

*What a blessing this gal is*

*Watch out for this!*

*Wah yaeh say?*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*Nzasiga byose maze ngusanganire*

*Ni wowe nzosi zanjye*

*Wandutiye amagana n'amagana*

*Ni wowe bwiza bwanjye*

*Uri ishema ryanjye – you're ma blessing,  
you're ma blessing gal*

*Uri ishema ryanjye – you're ma blessing,  
you're ma blessing gal*

*Uri ishema ryanjye – me swear me can never  
let you go*

*Uri ishema ryanjye – me swear me can never  
let you*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Wowe gikundiyo cyanjye*

*Ubwiza bwawe buranyemeza*

*Wowe wantwaye umutima*

#### **[Intro]**

*CB Records*

*Oooh lah lah!*

*TBB is too dangerous now I swear!*

*What a blessing this gal is*

*Watch out for this!*

*What do you say?*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*I will leave everything and follow you*

*You are my dreams*

*You have been the best among thousands*

*You are my beauty*

*You are my blessing – you're my blessing,  
you're my blessing girl*

*You are my blessing – you're my blessing,  
you're my blessing girl*

*You are my blessing – me swear me can  
never let you go*

*You are my blessing – me swear me can  
never let you go*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*You are my love*

*Your beauty convinces me*

*You who took my heart*

*Ugatera neza aruko nkubona*  
*Amarangamutima yanjye*  
*Anyemeza y'uko uri uwanjye*  
*Ntaho najya ngusize chou chou*  
*My boo boo boo boo boo boo*  
*Uwagusimbura yavahe?*  
*Yah yah*  
*Kandi ari wowe naremewe*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Gal me love you for so long*  
  
*That's why me never let you go*  
  
*Every time me miss you*  
  
*Gal me know the place to find you*  
  
*Me know you love me body scent and accent*  
  
*Everything gal about you is a blessing*  
  
*Chill down settle down*  
  
*Me ready to treat you like a princess every day*  
  
*Mu rukundo numva nasaze*  
  
*N'abandi bose babimenya*  
  
*Nzagukunda iteka n'iteka, eih eih eih*  
  
*Baby gal, ntuzigera ubabara*  
  
*Nzagufata nk'amata*  
  
*Icyantsi kuruhimbi – Bob sing again!*

---

**[Chorus]**

It beats well when I see you  
My feelings  
Tell me that you are mine  
I cannot go anywhere without you sweetie  
My boo boo boo boo boo boo  
Who can replace you?  
Yah yah  
Yet I was created for you

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

Gal me love you for so long  
  
That's why me never let you go  
  
Every time me miss you  
  
Gal me know the place to find you  
  
Me know you love me body scent and accent  
  
Everything gal about you is a blessing  
  
Chill down settle down  
  
Me ready to treat you like a princess every day  
  
In love I feel I am crazy  
Everyone has to know  
I will always love you, eih eih eih  
Baby girl, you will never get sad  
I will treat you like milk  
Milk pot on the table – Bob sing again!

---

**[Chorus]**



---

**[Verse 3]**

OK!

*Baby, baby, baby take my hand*

*Let me make you feel like the only gal in the world*

*For your love gal I'm ready to do anything*

*For you to be happy gal am a do everything*

*Everything you love I'm gonna get it ready for you*

*Anywhere you wanna go gal I will take you there*

*You're ma blessing, I'll give you the best of me*

*Every night I get on my knees and thank God*

*Hallelujah! Gal, I'm glad I got you – for real*

*I will never, never forsake you*

*Uko ubishaka niko nzabigenza*

*Nzakugira umwamikazi mbakurutishe*

*Uri ishema, gal, you're ma blessing*

*In a million a dem, you're the best ting, best ting*

*Me love for you is deeper than the ocean*

*Believe me, me need you*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*True that! True that!*

*Every day, every night!*

*Barabizi ko TBB ari danje man!*

---

**[Verse 3]**

OK!

Baby, baby, baby take my hand

Let me make you feel like the only gal in the world

For your love gal I'm ready to do anything

For you to be happy gal am a do everything

Everything you love I'm gonna get it ready for you

Anywhere you wanna go gal I will take you there

You're ma blessing, I'll give you the best of me

Every night I get on my knees and thank God

Hallelujah! Gal, I'm glad I got you – for real

I will never, never forsake you

I will do it the way you want it

I will make you the best queen among queens

You are the blessing, girl, you're my blessing

In a million a dem, you're the best ting, best ting

Me love for you is deeper than the ocean

Believe me, me need you

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

True that! True that!

Every day, every night!

Everyone knows that TBB are dangerous man!

*Everywhere!*

*Big up to yourself, promoter there, TV  
presenter there, radio presenter*

*Pacento!*

*Nawe ndabona yabaye Danje Man!*

*Nibyo se!*

*This one TBB, da best of da best!*

*Narrow Road Empire*

Everywhere!

Big up to yourself, promoter there, TV  
presenter there, radio presenter

Pacento!

He's also dangerous man!

For real!

This one TBB, da best of da best!

Narrow Road Empire

## SONG 49.

### ***Isubireho (Change your ways) [2015]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Track Slayer: Touch Records, Kigali.

#### **[Intro]**

*Na na na na na na – Narrow Road Production*

*Yah yup!*

*Well a dis one TBB di best of di best!*

*Special dedication to all da woman dem in all di  
world – aha!*

*Man better respect your woman every day,  
every night*

*Track Slayer! Mash up! Mash up!*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Muteteri yari inkumi nziza, abasore bose  
barangarira – ayi!*

*Yari yarangije kaminuza, ndetse atangiye  
gukorera aye*

*Umukubise amaso urashiguka, ukava mu  
byawe ugatwarwa*

*Waba umukoreye utuntu n'utundi arakunda*

*Wigarurira umutima we, none amaso  
y'urwererane*

#### **[Intro]**

Na na na na na na – Narrow Road  
Production

Yah yup!

Well a dis one TBB di best of di best!

Special dedication to all da woman dem in  
all di world – aha!

Man better respect your woman every day,  
every night

Track Slayer! Mash up! Mash up!

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

Muteteri was a beautiful girl, all the boys  
looked at her – oh!

She finished university and started to work  
for money

When you look at her you get distracted,  
you start thinking about her

When you do good things she loves you

You win her heart, now her bright eyes

*Ubu yakobo we n'amarira n'agahinda kenshi*

Are filled with tears and a lot of sorrow

---

---

**[Chorus]**

*Wibwira ko kuba imfizi y'akarere ari ibigwi wakwirata?<sup>150</sup>*

**[Chorus]**

Do you think that being the bull of the district is something to be proud of?

*Ukibeshya ko kuba intare mu rugo bikongerera icyubahiro<sup>151</sup>*

You think that behaving like a lion in the home makes you respected

*Isubireho – batazagukwena*

Change your ways – so that people don't gossip about you

*Isubireho – batazaguseka*

Change your ways – so that people don't laugh at you

*Isubireho – batazagucira akarurutega*

Change your ways – so that people will not judge you

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Warahiriye imbere y'imana n'ababyeyi*

**[Verse 2]**

You swore in front of God and your parents

*Inshuti ndetse n'umuryango wose urawizeza*

Friends and you promised the whole family

*Ko uzamutetsha ukamufata nk'umwamikazi*

That you would take care of her and treat her like a queen

*None ubo urabyirengagiza warabyibagiwe*

But now you ignore it and you forgot it

*Wamuhinduye umuyaya*

You treat her like a house girl

*Ya mavuta meza nayo ntakiyakozwa*

She no longer gets good lotion

*You treat her like a prostitute, you make her so insecure*

You treat her like a prostitute, you make her so insecure

*Instead of love you give her pain and that's unfair*

Instead of love you give her pain and that's unfair

*You only know your lover when you let her go*

You only know your lover when you let her go

*Now treat her like a queen and make her happy every day, oh!*

Now treat her like a queen and make her happy every day, oh!

*Isubireho – make a happy family*

Change your ways – make a happy family

---

<sup>150</sup> *Kuba imfizi y'akarere* is a Rwandan proverb. It literally means, "To be the bull of the district" and was historically used to refer to men who had multiple wives and lovers ("many cows").

<sup>151</sup> *Kuba intare mu rugo* is a Rwandan proverb. According to my Kinyarwanda teacher, it literally means, "to act like a lion in the home". It is used to refer to men who are particularly aggressive; "who roar and don't listen to others".

*Isubireho – b'umutware mwiza*<sup>152</sup>

*Sing!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Ukimubona wamwijeje ko – remember that!*

*Nta kibazo na kimwe muzagirana – aha!*

*Ariko uko iminsi igenda yicuma – yicuma!*

*Nawe ni nako ugenda uhinduka – uhinduka!*

*Let me tell you one thing about loving – about loving!*

*You treat her like a princess she will love you more – better know that!*

*Just change your ways – change your ways*

*No fighting, no beating, no abusing – no abusing at all you know?!*

*Can you please respect her feelings?*

*Then she will respect all your feelings*

*Can you please respect her feelings?*

*Then she will respect all your feelings*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

Change your ways – be a good husband

Sing!

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

The first time you saw her you promised her – remember that!

You won't have any problems between us – aha!

But as the days pass by – slowly!

You start changing – changing!

Let me tell you one thing about loving – about loving!

You treat her like a princess she will love you more – better know that!

Just change your ways – change your ways

No fighting, no beating, no abusing – no abusing at all you know?!

Can you please respect her feelings?

Then she will respect all your feelings

Can you please respect her feelings?

Then she will respect all your feelings

---

**[Chorus X2]**

## SONG 50.

***Baragukunda (They love you) [2015]***

TBB, Rwanda; English, French, Kinyarwanda, Swahili.

Prod. Pastor P: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

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<sup>152</sup> *Umutware* means “husband”, but also “chief” and “leader”. Many Rwandans do not consider it polite for a woman to address her husband by his name. Instead, she might say *umutware wanjye* (my chief).

Watch *Baragukunda* on YouTube [Video prod. Gilbert (The Benjamins)]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qnt2iOBCWVk>

**[Intro]**  
Yalla!

*TBB ni danje man!*

*Narrow Road Empire*

*Pastor P respect man!*

---

**[Chorus]**  
*Nibenshi bakwereka urukundo, baragukunda*

*Baragukunda nka mafaranga – baby*

*Lakini minakujari kama maisha*

*Minakependa tu ohhh*

*Girl I want you to be my wife - ngwino nkujane*

*Girl I need you in my life - nkwereke iwacu*

*Girl I want you to be my wife - njye ndagukunda cheri ngwino nkweze*

*Girl I want you to be my wife - ngwino nkujane*

*Girl I need you in my life - nkwereke iwacu*

*Girl I want you to be my wife*

---

**[Verse 1]**  
*I think of you all the time*

*I think of the things you and I can achieve in a lifetime*

*Whether rich or poor, I will make you enjoy the tour until you can't endure*

*In my entire life you are my number one and nothing but the very best*

*Even when the storm is heavy, I will be there to give you the shelter you require*

**[Intro]**  
Yalla!

TBB is dangerous man!

Narrow Road Empire

Pastor P respect man!

---

**[Chorus]**  
Many show you love, they love you

They love you like you are money – baby

But for me I treasure you like life

I love you

Girl I want you to be my wife - come I take you

Girl I need you in my life - I show you my home

Girl I want you to be my wife - me I love you darling come and I prove to you

Girl I want you to be my wife - come I take you

Girl I need you in my life - I show you my home

Girl I want you to be my wife

---

**[Verse 1]**  
I think of you all the time

I think of the things you and I can achieve in a lifetime

Whether rich or poor, I will make you enjoy the tour until you can't endure

In my entire life you are my number one and nothing but the very best

Even when the storm is heavy, I will be there to give you the shelter you require

*Tell what you desire, tell me what you want  
because my heart is on fire*

*Together we go to the altar, we swear to never  
leave each other*

*Baby would you be my wife?*

*Njye nguha ibyishimo nkuri hafi*

*You are my fairy tale, I promise to never, never,  
never tell*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Wowe nanjye, ubuzima bwabari sawa, sawa*

*Ndukundanye, tugumanye, kujeza gupfa*

*Waba wishyimwe, nkishyimana nawe*

*Waba ubabaye, nkababarana nawe*

*Baby would you be my wife? Nguhe ibyishyimo  
nkuri hafi*

*You are my fairy tale, I will never tell*

*Baby would you be my wife? Nguhe ibyishyimo  
nkuri hafi*

*You are my fairy tale, I will never tell*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*You and I make a collabo*

*Promise never treat you like a tornado*

*If you become the woman of my life*

*I will take, I will take you here*

*Nzakurata ta ta, nzagufata ta ta neza za za  
ehhh!*

*Tell what you desire, tell me what you  
want because my heart is on fire*

*Together we go to the altar, we swear to  
never leave each other*

*Baby would you be my wife?*

*I make you happy next to you*

*You are my fairy tale, I promise to never,  
never, never tell*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*You and I, life would be cool, cool*

*We love each other, stay together, until  
death*

*When you are happy, we become happy  
together*

*When you are in pain, I'll be in pain with  
you*

*Baby would you be my wife? I make you  
happy next to you*

*You are my fairy tale, I will never tell*

*Baby would you be my wife? I make you  
happy next to you*

*You are my fairy tale, I will never tell*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*You and I make a collabo*

*Promise never treat you like a tornado*

*If you become the woman of my life*

*I will take, I will take you here*

*I will praise, I will hold you nice za za  
ehhh!*

*Nzakuja ja ja na nzaku muah muah*

I will take you muah muah

*Nzaku muah muah ehheh!*

I will kiss muah muah ehheh!

*Baby don't you let me down, you the one me crying for*

Baby don't you let me down, you the one me crying for

*Me want to spend the rest of my life only you and I*

Me want to spend the rest of my life only you and I

*Ni wowe nshyaka, munzosi zanjye ntawudi mbona gal*

It's you that I want, in my dreams it's only you that I see girl

*Ni wowe nshyaka, munzosi zanjye ntawudi mbona gal*

It's you that I want, in my dreams it's only you that I see girl

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

## SONG 51.

**Call Me [2013]**

Teta Diana, Rwanda; English, French, Swahili.

Prod. Washington: Big town studio, Kigali.

**[Intro]**

*Boy your voice is like a rubber band*

**[Intro]**

Boy your voice is like a rubber band

*Boy your voice is like a rubber band*

Boy your voice is like a rubber band

*Makes me forget all my complaints*

Makes me forget all my complaints

---

---

**[Chorus]**

*You can call me, call me, call me, call me by my name – call me, call me, call me*

**[Chorus]**

You can call me, call me, call me, call me by my name – call me, call me, call me

*You can call me, call me, call me, call me by my name – call me, call me, call me*

You can call me, call me, call me, call me by my name – call me, call me, call me

*You can call me, call me, call me, call me by my name – call me, call me, call me*

You can call me, call me, call me, call me by my name – call me, call me, call me

*You can call me, call me, call me, call me by my name – call me, call me, call me*

You can call me, call me, call me, call me by my name – call me, call me, call me

*You can call me baby, I will call you baby boo – call me, call me, call me*

You can call me baby, I will call you baby boo – call me, call me, call me

---

---

**[Verse 1]**

**[Verse 1]**

*Its only you making me feel so nicer*

*Oh baby boy I will never be a traitor*

*It's only you making me feel so safer – safer,  
safer*

*Your loving is so priceless*

*No one can be compared to you – to you*

*Sometimes I feel I wanna be all over you*

*Every time I look into your eyes*

*Boy you make my night, you make me sleep so  
tight*

*Every pain I felt is washed away – washed  
away, washed away*

*It's only you making me feel so nicer – nicer,  
nicer*

*Oh baby boy I will never be a traitor – traitor,  
traitor*

*It's only you making me feel so safer – safer,  
safer*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Niambie uko wangu milele na milele*

*Mimi niko wako baby, mapenzi hapo tele*

*Usiwone nimetulia, ndani moyoni ni kelele*

*Maisha ni mafupi tukajuta*

*Ni wewe tu machozi unafuta*

*Je vais t'appeller t'appeller baby, tant que tut es  
a moi*

*Je vais t'appeller baby du haut de la scene*

*Je vais t'appeller t'appeller baby, tant que tut es  
a moi*

*Its only you making me feel so nicer*

*Oh baby boy I will never be a traitor*

*It's only you making me feel so safer –  
safer, safer*

*Your loving is so priceless*

*No one can be compared to you – to you*

*Sometimes I feel I wanna be all over you*

*Every time I look into your eyes*

*Boy you make my night, you make me  
sleep so tight*

*Every pain I felt is washed away – washed  
away, washed away*

*It's only you making me feel so nicer –  
nicer, nicer*

*Oh baby boy I will never be a traitor –  
traitor, traitor*

*It's only you making me feel so safer –  
safer, safer*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Tell me you are mine now and for forever*

*Coz I am yours baby, love is here forever*

*You may think I'm quiet, but inside I'm  
shouting*

*Life is too short to waste on regrets*

*Only you can wipe away my tears*

*I will call you call you baby, as long as you  
are mine*

*I will call you baby from up on top of the  
stage*

*I will call you call you baby, as long as you  
are mine*



*Je vais t'appeller baby du haut de la scene*

I will call you baby from up on top of the stage

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Bridge]**

**[Bridge]**

*You take me so high*

You take me so high

*And you treat me so nice*

And you treat me so nice

*I forget the smart ways to lie*

I forget the smart ways to lie

*Your voice is like a rubber band*

Your voice is like a rubber band

*Boy your voice is like a rubber band*

Boy your voice is like a rubber band

*Makes me forget all my complaints –  
Washington!*

Makes me forget all my complaints –  
Washington!

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

## SONG 52.

***Kata (Hustle) [2014]***

Teta Diana, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Piano: Super Level, Kigali.

Watch *Kata* on YouTube [Video prod. Ma River]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcbR0vRaEBU>

**[Intro]**

*Teta, Teta, kata kata*

**[Intro]**

Teta, Teta, hustle hustle

*Kata, kata ngo Teta akina kata*

Hustle, hustle that Teta is on a hustle

*Kata, kata ngo Teta akina kata*

Hustle, hustle that Teta is on a hustle

*Hahaha! Piano production!*

Hahaha! Piano production!

*Ngo Teta akina kata*

That Teta is on a hustle

---

---

**[Chorus]**

*Urugamba ndwana ndwanirwa n isumba byose*

**[Chorus]**

The battle I face is fought by the almighty

*Yampaye impano ingenera n inzira nzanyuramo*

He gave me talent and drew a path for me to walk

*Nzagera ku ntego ab isi banshinja kata*

I will reach my goal and people will wonder how

*Kata kata, ngo Teta akina kata*

Hustle, hustle that Teta is on a hustle

*Kata kata, ngo Teta akina kata*

Hustle, hustle that Teta is on a hustle

---

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Ntibyoroshye nk umunyarwandakazi*

**[Verse 1]**

It is not easy as a Rwandan woman

*Umuziki ari ko kazi yeeeeah*

To do music as a profession yeeeeah

*Ndashaka gukundwa na bosee*

I wanna be loved by all

*Gusabana nta gusabagira*

To socialise without degradation

*Gutera imbere ntawe nteye ishyari*

To evolve without causing jealousy

*Yelele yele le yelele*

Yelele yelele yelele

*Rata wowe unyikundira*

Hey you who loves me

*Zamura ibiganza uririmbane nanjye*

Raise your hands and sing with me

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Buke, buke, intambwe nzazitera*

**[Verse 2]**

Slowly, slowly, I will take a step at a time

*Sinemerewe, sinemerewe kwitetesha*

I am not allowed, I am not allowed to be spoiled

*Teta, nubwo nitwa Teta*

Teta, even though my name means "the loved one"

*Ku mbuga nkoranyambaga*

On social media websites

*Bati Teta uwo aturumbutse he?*

They will say Teta, how the hell did she get there?

*Imana itanga mpano niyo ibizi*

God who gives talent knows it all

*Yelele yelele ye yelele*

Yelele yelele ye yelele

*Rata wowe unyikundira*

Hey you who loves me

*Zamura ibiganza uririmbane nanjye*

Raise your hands and sing with me

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

Yelelelelelele! Hahaha!

*Kata, kata ngo Teta akina kata*

*Kata, kata ngo Teta akina kata*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

Yelelelelelele! Hahaha!

---

**[Bridge]**

Yelelelelelele! Hahaha!

Hustle, hustle that Teta is on a hustle

Hustle, hustle that Teta is on a hustle

---

**[Chorus X2]**

Yelelelelelele! Hahaha!

**SONG 53.**

***Umpe Akanya (Give me time) by Jules Sentore ft. Teta [2014]***

Teta Diana, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Bob pro: Kigali.

Watch *Umpe Akanya* on YouTube [RDay Entertainment]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdAxmOIXR64>

**[Verse 1]**

*Uw ubuto butemba itoto*

*Agatengerana umubiri wose*

*Temba ugana ku itetero*

*Nkwihoreze mukundwa wanjye*

*Nzagukunda bishyire kera*

*Duhuze umugambi abanzi baganye*

*Nkurinde umuruho*

*Utete winywere ayera*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Umpe akanya nkubwire*

*Ururkundo nkukunda*

*Ntirugereranywa ifaranga*

*Nkundira twibanire*

---

**[Verse 2]**

**[Verse 1]**

You are breathtakingly beautiful

And your youthful body

Come close so I can give you comfort

And wipe away your tears my love

I will always love you

Let us plan and haters can hate

I will keep you from misery

You will only drink milk

---

**[Chorus]**

Give me time to express

How deep my love for you is

It can't be compared to money

Allow me to stay forever

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ndabikubwiye nkomeje*  
*Muri abo bose mbona wowe*  
*Ni wowe umyura umutima*  
*Nyemerera twizerane*  
*Nzakujyana mu Rutobwe*  
*Nkwereke nyogokuru*  
*Azagushima ndabizi*  
*Nyamukamirwaga ayiguhe*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Nzakujyana kwa Nkubito y'imanzi*  
*Aho batagisha ntizinateke*  
*Mu mahumbezi ya Nyamagana*  
*Kuko unudutira amagana*  
*Cyura ubuhoro mutarutwa*  
*Wansanze nanjye nkukeneye*  
*Intero y'urukundo bayimparire*  
*Nkundira nkubere icyerekezo*

---

**[Chorus X2]**

I mean what I am telling you  
My eyes only see you  
It's you who touches my heart  
Let us trust each other  
I will take you to Rutobwe  
To meet my grandmother  
I know she will approve of you  
She might even give you her favourite cow

---

**[Chorus X2]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

I will take you to the trusted man  
Where cows always give milk  
In the beautiful breeze of Nyamagana  
Because you mean everything to me  
Don't worry yourself my love  
I need you as much as you need me  
Leave the verse of love to me  
Allow me to be your direction

---

**[Chorus X2]**

**SONG 54.**

***Ndaje (Here I come) [2014]***

Teta Diana, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Bob pro: Kigali.

Listen to *Ndaje*: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGwRJx88w\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGwRJx88w_s)

**[Verse 1]**

*Mwegerane mbabwire*  
*Icyo nsaba njyewe ni umuryango*

**[Verse 1]**

Get together I want to talk to you  
All I need is to make a family

*Bene kanyarwanda turi umwe*

*Hoshi mureke kwitana rubanda*

*Iye iye eh...*

*Mumpe akanya gatoya*

*Mutege amatwi mbahuze naje*

*Mwirengagize ubwo buto bwanjye*

*Igikuru mbaha ni impanuro*

*Iye...*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Aaayihe iye hora Rwanda naje*

...

*Aaayihe iye hora mfubyi naje*

*Nzanye urukundo, ubumwe n'iyi nganzo*

*Igihe ni iki ngo nanjye ntange impanuro*

*Ngaho ndaje*

*Ngaho ndaje*

*Ngaho ndaje eh eh*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Rwanda ko wari nziza*

*Abo bawe batatu bahuza*

*Basangira ibere ntibanga*

*Umurage ari umwe bikabahaza*

*Iye iye eh eh*

*Biratinda uwa kane araza*

*Ntiyabishima biramuhanda*

All Rwandans are one people

Don't tease each other

Iye iye eh...

Give me a little time

Listen to me as I come for reconciliation

Ignore the fact that I am young

What's important is the advice I am giving to you

Iye...

---

**[Chorus]**

Aaayihe iye don't worry Rwanda, here I come

...

Don't worry orphans, here I come

I brought love, unity and talent

This is the time for me to give the advice

Here I come

Here I come

Here I come eh eh

---

**[Verse 2]**

Rwanda you were beautiful

Your three peoples always understood each other

They shared everything, and were fed by the same breasts as siblings

One love, one heritage, and that was enough

Iye iye eh eh

Later, the fourth person came

He was jealous of that unity

*Ni bwo aduhenze tumena ibanga*

They fooled us, we traded our secret with their lies

*Atubera umuhanga wo kudutanya*

They knew well how to separate us

*Iye iye*

Iye iye

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Data yajyaga ambwira*

**[Verse 3]**

My father used to tell me

*Ko umwana wariye atinda kwiba*

That the child who has been fed cannot steal

*Urwatubyaye ntacyo rutwima*

Our motherland gives us everything we need

*Oya umururumba ntukaturange?*

Can we fight selfishness?

*Iye iye eh eh*

Iye iye eh eh

*Munyemerere mbahanure*

Allow me to give you some advice

*Icyo dupfana kiruta icyo dupfa*

The relation between us is bigger than our conflict

*Gira neza uzabaturwa*

Be kind as you will be rewarded

*Kandi nugira nabi bizakugora*

If you are not kind things will get harder

---

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**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

## SONG 55.

***Tanga Agatego (Show Yourself) [2015]***

Teta Diana, Rwanda; Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Prod. Bob pro: Kigali.

Watch *Tanga Agatego* on YouTube [a PRESS IT! film]:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnaMX\\_--pxw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnaMX_--pxw)

**[Intro]**

*Tanga agatego*

**[Intro]**

Show yourself

*Teta Teta*

Teta Teta

*Tanga agatego*

Show yourself

*Sentore titira*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Tanga agatego*

*Tanga agatego*

*Tanga agatego faranga*

*Iby'umugi byanze byanze byananiye*

*Tanga agatego*

*Tanga agatego*

*Tanga agatego money-o!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Mama yajyaga ambwira mwana wanjye jya ubaduka*

*Gana ishuli fata urubaho kwiga byagira akamaro*

*Nkiganyira ubwo narikwepa, nkarikwepa nkajya guceza*

*Minerval iyo nkayipyeta*

*Abo twiganye bararangije badepoje ayo ma CV*

*Nanjye ndi aho nkanuye amaso ninjye chaumeur w'ikigali*

*Yebaba wee!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Gira ibyago aze kugusura inzu akayisangana ama tapis*

*Ubwo ibikweto akabita hanze agasigarana amasogisi*

*Iburyo umweru ibumoso icyatsi boshye umufanawa kiyovu*

Sentore shiver

---

**[Chorus]**

Show yourself

Show yourself

Show yourself money

City life is too hard for me

Show yourself

Show yourself

Show yourself money-o!

---

**[Verse 1]**

My mother used to tell me, be aware child

Go to school, grab books, education is valuable

I would complain, skip it, skip school and play instead

I would spend my school fees

People who I studied with are graduating and applying with their CVs

And I am just there, eyes wide open, I am Kigali's failure and unemployed

Ohhh man!

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

If you are unlucky he will visit you in your home that has a carpet

Then leave his shoes outside, entering only in his socks

White on the right, green on the left, he looks like a Kiyovu fan

*Abana baza bakamuhunga bati dusuwe  
n'umusazi*

When your children see him they avoid  
him, thinking he is a mad man

*Ukabona uwambaye n'agakoti keza yananigirije*

You will also see someone wearing a nice  
well-tailored suit

*Ariko mu nda ntakigenda abitse ibanga  
n'umuyaga*

But there is nothing in his stomach apart  
from his secrets and air

*Yebaba weeee!*

Ohhh man!

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

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**[Bridge]**

*Yee bana mugane ishuri mwese (tanga  
agatego)*

**[Bridge]**

Young people go to school (show yourself)

*Burya icyo uzaba uragitegura (tanga agatego)*

Prepare for your future now (show  
yourself)

*Kandi mama yarabivuze (tanga agatego)*

And my Mum said it (show yourself)

*Ngo fata ikaramu mwana wanjye uzatsinde  
umugayo*

She said grab your pen my child and avoid  
mediocrity

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**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

## SONG 56.

***Menya Ibyawe (Mind your own business) by Jay Polly ft. Teta Diana [2015]***

Teta Diana, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Junior: Touch Records, Kigali.

Listen to *Menya Ibyawe*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3SMvwu9Mo0>

**[Intro]**

*One, two, three! Junior multi-system!*

**[Intro]**

One, two, three! Junior multi-system!

*Here we go!*

Here we go!

*So let me be free!*

So let me be free!

*Jay Polly! Teta!*

Jay Polly! Teta!

*Muri mwese nta n'umwe unzi*

None of you know me

*Touch Records!*

Touch Records!

---

---



**[Chorus]**

*Now I'm breaking out to be free*

*No man owns me so let me be free*

*Njye nzi ibyanjye, njye nzi iyi street*

*Muri mwese nta n'umwe unzi*

*Oh tofi ya kwa, yeah let me be free*

*Reka menye ibyanjye, mind your own business*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Yo yo, ahantu hose rirarema, ni nayo mpamvu  
mfashe akanya nkagaruka*

*Nabonye badasanzwe, baravuga cyane,  
ukubya ni ukubareka*

*Nk umuhanuzimukuru uzwi n'abakuru*

*Ndaragura zikera uzabaze n'ibukuru*

*Nta kururu kururu n abatabyumva nkanjye (ngo  
mere nkamwe)*

*Gute kandi utabikora nkanjye*

*Ntuzi street, ntuzi inzara, ntuzi beat*

*Ntuzi agahinda k'abakire bo mu bipangu*

*Uzi amarira y'abagafashe babura abana*

*Donc ntuzi abantu, umunsi ku munsi ndiga*

*Nawe uzajye ubiga, rwose birarenze*

*Barebe kuva mu gitondo mpaka rirenze*

*Kubaho birahenze, baranahemuka batabipanze*

*Njyewe undekere ubuzima bwanjye*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Chorus]**

*Now I'm breaking out to be free*

*No man owns me so let me be free*

*I know my business, I know these streets*

*None of you know me*

*Oh I swear, yeah let me be free*

*Let me mind my business, mind your own  
business*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Yo yo, life goes on that is why I am taking  
this time to come back*

*I find them special, they talk too much,  
keeping quiet makes it worse*

*As the main prophet, acknowledged by the  
elders*

*My predictions come to life ask around*

*No hanging with the clueless (I don't  
wanna be like you)*

*How, when you don't do it like me*

*You don't know the streets, hunger or beat*

*You don't know the sorrows of the rich in  
fences*

*The tears of the wealthy but barren*

*So you don't know people, I learn more  
each day*

*So should you, it is truly unbelievable*

*Watch them from dawn to dust*

*Life is expensive, they betray others  
without knowing*

*You just leave me with my life*

---

**[Chorus]**

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**[Verse 2]***Shuguri ni shuguri kuyabona ni hatari**Ku zuba no mu gicuku uzabaze motard**We ntacyo wamubwira mu kugaruza ibiceri**Ni mpanganye nabyo kuva yabona categorie**Ntuzibaze ibye burya imitima ihisha byinshi**Nawe ufite ibyawwe, kwanza ba ari byo ureba**Ngo Jay agenda ate? Ngo ese ubundi Jay akora ate**Ngo Jay agenda ate, ngo ese ubundi Jay akora ate**Umuntu n'ubuzima bwe, buri umwe yakamenye ibye**Uwishinze iby undi uzi ibyamubayeho**Reka uzahure na Rukara muri panda gare**Uhure na Celestin w'umukire ari mu mapingu**Umwe ni siriduwile undi ni liqueur**Burya ibibazo si bimwe n'imitima si imwe*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]***Jay, abo bareke, bareke bavuge ubuzima burakomeza**Agateta - Barakavuga bwacya bakakambara**Muri mwese ni nde utayoka?**Bati Teta uragana he? icyo ushaka kigusaba angahe?***[Verse 2]**

The hustle is real, getting money is not easy

Day and night ask a biker

You can't mess with his change

He has been hustling since the day he got his permit

Don't ask yourself too much about him, the heart hides a lot

You have your own secrets, mind that

They ask how does Jay walk? What does Jay do?

I am my own boss, I take care of me

We each have our own lives, we should mind our business

You know what happened to the meddler

Wait until you meet Rukara in a police car

Or you meet Celestin the wealthy in handcuffs

One is ratchet the other is luxury

You know our problems are different, so are our hearts

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

Jay, let them, let them talk. Life goes on

Agateta<sup>153</sup> - They diss what is trending yet wear it the next day

What don't you see?

They say Teta what is your direction? How much do you need?

<sup>153</sup> Teta is known for wearing a cowry shell, which is attached to her hair so that it hangs neatly on her forehead. Some of Teta Diana's fans have copied this style, which has been nicknamed "agateta".

*They see me laughing laughing, jumping  
jumping*

*They don't know what it is... oh my God!*

*Ni nk iza bihehe my sister*

*Muri bo duhura ni benshi*

*Harimo abanzi, abakunzi n'abari aho*

*Harimo abiyoberanya bakakwereka inyinya*

*Gwa gato, ayi nya baguhe amenyo*

*Kaza mwendo tera intambwe ijya imbere*

*Reka ntuzagire ubwoba bw ukurwanya  
sinabugize*

*Ntuzabe ikigwari imbere yabo sinabyigeze*

---

**[Chorus]**

They see me laughing laughing, jumping  
jumping

They don't know what it is....oh my God!

Their mercy is not genuine my sister

We meet all kinds of them

Enemies, friends and frien-emies

Some of them disguise themselves

And laugh at you the minute you fail

Stay strong and keep moving forwards

Never be afraid of your enemy, I never  
was

Never be a coward before them, I never  
was

---

**[Chorus]**

## SONG 57.

**VELO<sup>154</sup> [2015]**

Teta Diana, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Pastor P: Narrow Road Studio, Kigali.

Watch VELO on YouTube [Video prod. Press it]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bmf5zmz3coM>

**[Intro]**

*Action!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Abahungu bakunda abakobwa*

*Abakobwa bakunda abahungu*

*Ngo nanjye nakunze agahungu*

*Agahungu gafite imitoma*

**[Intro]**

*Action!*

---

**[Verse 1]**

Boys like girls

Girls like boys

I once liked a boy

A boy with sweet words

---

<sup>154</sup> "VELO" is "LOVE" mixed up.

*Karaza ngo gafite urukundo*

*Urukundo ntazabona ahandi*

*Ngo kandi gafite umutungo*

*Umutungo uzadutunga twembi*

*Yo yo ndacururuka, ibiciro ndabimanura*

*Dusezerana no kubana, inkwano zirabura  
ndagakatira*

---

**[Chorus]**

*VELO VELO VELO*

*VELO VELO VELO*

*VELO my dear*

*VELO nta rumiya*

*VELO VELO VELO*

*Urambabaje*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ntundebe ngo uncire urubanza*

*Isi dutuye singira ikibanza*

*Dore uranyizeza ibitangaza*

*Kandi urandagaza umhhh*

*VELO – money-o!*

*VELO – sorry-o!*

*Love no goods is love no mood*

*Love no mood is love to loose*

*Love no mood is love to loose*

*Umhhh, umhhh*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

He said he had love

Love that I cannot find elsewhere

And that he had means

The means to take care of us both

Yo yo I calmed down and lowered my  
standards

We agreed to get married, then there was  
no dowry, so I dumped him

---

**[Chorus]**

VELO VELO VELO

VELO VELO VELO

VELO my dear

VELO has no dime

VELO VELO VELO

I feel sorry for you

---

**[Verse 2]**

Don't look at me and judge me

I have no land of my own on this earth

See you are promising me miracles

And you are distracting me umhhh

VELO – money-o!

VELO – sorry-o!

Love no goods is love no mood

Love no mood is love to loose

Love no mood is love to loose

Umhhh, umhhh

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Sakwe sakwe sakwe VELO*

*Sakwe sakwe sakwe VELO*

*Nagutera icyo utazi utabonye*

*Nagutera icyo utazi utabonye*

*Urukundo rw'ubu ruzira cash, ha ha ha yeah!*

*Umhhh, umhhh*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*VELO VELO VELO*

*Urambabaje*

*VELO VELO VELO*

*Urambabaje*

**[Bridge]**

Guess what VELO

Guess what VELO

I could ask you something you never knew

I could ask you something you never knew

Love nowadays has died because of cash,  
ha ha ha yeah!

Umhhh, umhhh

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

VELO VELO VELO

I feel sorry for you

VELO VELO VELO

I feel sorry for you

**SONG 58.*****Birangwa*<sup>155</sup> [2016]**

Teta Diana, Rwanda-Belgium; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Didier Touch: Didier's home-studio, Brussels-Belgium.

Listen to *Birangwa* on bandcamp.com: <https://tetadiana.bandcamp.com/releases>

**[Verse 1]**

*Uri inzozi nkumbura iteka ntazabona*

*Ukaba ikibibi cyansaze umugongo aho  
ntishima*

*Uri kure, kure nk'ijuru ndebesha andi maso  
nkakubona*

*Uri inkuru nzabara iteka itarangira*

---

**[Verse 1]**

You're a dream that means so much to  
me, but one that I can never hold for real

And you're a birthmark on the whole of my  
back, where I cannot touch

You feel so far away, far like heaven,  
where only my heart can see

You're my never-ending story, and a story  
that I will always tell

---

<sup>155</sup> Birangwa is the name of Teta Diana's father, who died when she was a teenager. The song is a tribute to him.

**[Chorus]**

*Biganza birangwamo ubupfura iyo ugarutse  
ukareba uko nakuze*

*Biganza birangwamo umutima Nzakuririmba*

*Biganza birangwamo ubupfura iyo ugarutse  
ukareba uko nakuze*

*Biganza birangwamo umutima Nzakuririmba*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Uri iriba ryamaze inyota ritazakama*

*Ukaba igicu kinkingira izuba kitazahita*

*Uri umurya, umurya w'inanga numvisha  
umutima ntabasha gucuranga*

*Uri irungu nzarwara iteka ritazakira*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Uwo amaso yanyimye*

*Nzakuririmba*

*Uwo ibitekerezo byampaye*

*Nzakuririmba*

*Intore ntabariwe*

*Nzakuririmba*

*Nshuti yanjye ntagumanye*

*Nzakuririmba*

*Nkuririmbire abana banjye*

*Nzakuririmba*

**[Chorus]**

My guiding light, so caring and wise, if you  
could come and see the kind of woman  
I've become

The heart of an angel, I will sing praises of  
you

My guiding light, so caring and wise, if you  
could come and see the kind of woman  
I've become

The heart of an angel, I will sing praises of  
you

---

**[Verse 2]**

You're a river of life that satisfies my thirst,  
and will never dry up

And you're a cloud in the sky that never  
leaves and always protects me from the  
harsh sun

You're a sad note, a trough-zither chord  
that only my heart can hear, but one that I  
can never play

You're a constant longing in my heart, one  
that will never be cured

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

The one my eyes cannot see

I will sing praises of you

The one only my thoughts can reach

I will sing praises of you

Such a brave person I have known

I will sing praises of you

A treasure I couldn't keep

I will sing praises of you

I will praise your name for my children

I will sing praises of you

lyeeeeee eh eh

Hummm

Nzakurimba

lyeeeeee eh eh

Hummm

I will sing praises of you

## SONG 59.

**Mama W'abana (Mother of Children) ft. Radio and Weasel (the Goodlyfe Crew) [2010]**

Tom Close, Rwanda-Uganda; English, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

Prod. Washington: Magic Records, Kampala.

Watch *Mama Wabana* on YouTube [Tank/Hasd Media]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZGYHVAkwPI>

### [Intro]

*Hahahahahaha!*

*Bad news, bad news, this is bad news!*

*Yo! Straight from Kampala to Kigali via Katuna!*

*Yo this is Goodlyfe alongside Tom Close*

*Yah man! Fire bless them, bless them*

*Haha!*

---

### [Chorus]

*Umunyarwandakazi ni mama w'abana banjye!*

*My girl me want you so*

*Naramukunze kuko azibanga ryanjye*

*Every day I miss more*

*Umunyarwandakazi ni mama w'abana banjye!*

*My girl me want you so*

*Naramukunze kuko azibanga ryanjye*

*Every day I miss you more*

---

### [Intro]

*Hahahahahaha!*

*Bad news, bad news, this is bad news!*

*Yo! Straight from Kampala to Kigali via Katuna!<sup>156</sup>*

*Yo this is Goodlyfe alongside Tom Close*

*Yah man! Fire bless them, bless them*

*Haha!*

---

### [Chorus]

*A Rwandan woman is the mother to my children*

*My girl me want you so*

*I love her because she knows my secret*

*Every day I miss more*

*A Rwandan woman is the mother to my children*

*My girl me want you so*

*I love her because she knows my secret*

*Every day I miss you more*

---

<sup>156</sup> Katuna (or Gatuna if you are Rwandan) is a town in the Kabale District of Uganda. When travelling between Kigali and Kampala, people pass through the Katuna Border Post.

**[Verse 1]**

*Benshi bamukunda batamuzi*

*Jyewe mukunda kuko muzi*

*Uwatojwe umuco nababyeyi be*

*Uwabyaye abana banjye*

*Akabaha uburere bukwiye*

*Aranyura nkamurata*

*Izuba rirasa rikarinda rirenga*

*Uwoniwe nzakunda*

*Nkashista mfuye*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*I am missing you buri muni*

*You are an expensive, why not girl be easy*

*I want to ngwaa ngwaa ngwwaa!*

*And ngwaa ngwaa all over your body*

*Every day and night ushyira hansi*

*Escort me to the supermarket woman*

*I wanna buy you a chocolate*

*Escort me to the supermarket woman*

*I'll be your love, your love*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Let me say, let me say*

*She one in a million, one of a kind*

**[Verse 1]**

Many love her even when they don't know her

But me I love her because I know her

She was trained in manners by her parents

The mother to my children

She raised them well

She is amazing, I praise her

From sunrise to sunset

She's the one who I will love

Until I die

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

I am missing you every day

You are an expensive, why not girl be easy

I want to ngwaa ngwaa ngwwaa!

And ngwaa ngwaa all over your body

Every day and night put me down

Escort me to the supermarket woman

I wanna buy you a chocolate

Escort me to the supermarket woman

I'll be your love, your love

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

Let me say, let me say

She one in a million, one of a kind



*She publically-cally meant to be mine*  
*Publically a night time, meant to be mine*  
*Every time I do try to be you mine*  
*Will take you from border to border*  
*Will take you from Kigali to Kampala*  
*From Butare via Nyarutarama*  
*Oh baby gal...*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Ndagukumbuye, ni wowe*  
*Ndagukumbuye, ni wowe - mukunzi wanjye*  
*Ndagukumbuye, ni wowe*  
*Ndagukumbuye, ni wowe - mukunzi wanjye*  
*Ndakumissinga ni wowe*  
*Ndagukumbuye, ni wowe - mukunzi wanjye*  
*Ndakumissinga ni wowe*  
*Ndagukumbuye, ni wowe - mukunzi wanjye*

---

**[Chorus]**

*She publically-cally meant to be mine*  
*Publically a night time, meant to be mine*  
*Every time I do try to be you mine*  
*Will take you from border to border*  
*Will take you from Kigali to Kampala*  
*From Butare via Nyarutarama*  
*Oh baby gal...*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*I'm missing you, it's you*  
*I'm missing you, it's you – my love*  
*I'm missing you, it's you*  
*I'm missing you, it's you – my love*  
*I'm missing you, it's you*  
*I'm missing you, it's you – my love*  
*I'm missing you, it's you*  
*I'm missing you, it's you – my love*

---

**[Chorus]**

**SONG 60.**

**Zero Distance ft. Eddy Kenzo [2015]**

Tom Close, Rwanda-Uganda; English, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

Prod. Renix: Big Talent, Kampala.

Watch *Zero Distance* on YouTube [Video prod. Enos Olik]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwdspR94Wow>

**[Intro]**

*Rwanda Uganda collabo again*

**[Intro]**

*Rwanda Uganda collabo again*

*Eddy Kenzo na Tom Close*

*Here we come to burn them*

*Haha! Yes man!*

*Kina Music affair*

*Renix and power production*

*Zimana!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Ndashaka yuko mbana nawe - zero distance*

*Ndashaka yuko mbana nawe baby – zero distance*

*Sanyuka nyo wemba nawe*

*Nyumirwa nyo wemba nawe*

*Ndashaka yuko mbana nawe*

*Ndashaka yuko mbana nawe baby*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Sininvuza kukureka, tutarikumwe sinagoheka*

*Uko nkubonye ndakuramutsa, buri igihe ubabye nkagushya*

*Njye murukundo nafashwe*

*Ibyonkora oya, ntibigenda tutarikumwe*

*Ibyokukureka, ibyokundeka, ibyokugusiga, ibyokusiga*

*I cry because of you*

*I smile because of you*

*I fight because of you*

*One day I will die for you*

*Nkore byendaba mu film*

*Kuba orumu gwe azijya mumudu*

*Eddy Kenzo and Tom Close*

*Here we come to burn them*

*Haha! Yes man!*

*Kina Music affair*

*Renix and power production*

*Zimana!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*I want to be with you - zero distance*

*I want to be with you - zero distance*

*I'm so happy when I'm with you*

*I enjoy a lot when I'm with you*

*I want to be with you*

*I want to be with you baby*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*I don't want to leave you, when I'm with you I can't wake up*

*When I see you I greet you and every time I greet you*

*I am already in love*

*Everything I do, no, it doesn't work without you*

*You leaving me, me leaving you, you going away, me going away*

*I cry because of you*

*I smile because of you*

*I fight because of you*

*One day I will die for you*

*I will do what I see in movies*

*Because sometimes you get me in the mood*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Wembera nawe mpurira fire netandiuka omelting*

*Netandika okuvibratinga kubanga mbera  
nkumissinga*

*Netandika okureactinga nemuvamu  
okusweatinga*

*Nga network eshakinga ati embela elosinga*

*Why you make me cry baby?*

*Why you make me cry baby?*

*As you know I love so, you're my heart and my  
soul*

*Reka nkubyinire omulungi cheri*

*Uri mwiza cheri – butya!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

*Uku mbana nawe, njyewe nawe*

*Ndifuzo kuba nawe, njewe nawe*

*Zero distance*

*Eh! Zero distance*

*Zero distance*

*Oh yeah! Zero distance*

*Big Talent!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

When I am with you I feel fire and I start  
melting

I start vibrating because I am missing you

I start reacting then I start sweating

And the network is shaking the situation is  
getting loose

Why you make me cry baby?

Why you make me cry baby?

As you know I love so, you're my heart  
and my soul

Let me dance for you beautiful sweetie

You are beautiful sweetie – butya!

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Outro]**

How I live with you, me and you

I wish to be with you, me and you

Zero distance

Eh! Zero distance

Zero distance

Oh yeah! Zero distance

Big Talent!

**SONG 61.**

**Never Let Her Go ft. Roberto and Ray Signature [2015]**

Two4Real, Rwanda-Uganda-Zambia; English, Kinyarwanda, Nyanja<sup>157</sup>.

Prod. Pastor P: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

Watch *Never Let Her Go* on YouTube [Video prod. Ma-River]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUGKx9BFkyY>

**[Intro]**  
*Aha!*

*I will never let her go - oh yeah!*

*My name is Roberto - I will never let her go*

*Two4Real*

*Ray Signature*

*Oh yeah!*

*Pastor P, Africa here we go*

---

**[Verse 1]**  
*Mubera we ese wirwe ute? Ese ubibona ute?*

*Njye nawe tugumanye, tukarambana,  
tukabyarana*

*Tugazazana, tukitana cherie chuchu*

*Nkunda uko uteye, nkunda uku ujjenda ayiwe!*

*Ntibanzi uburyo wasanjije, bakundekere*

*Niwe rukundo rwanjye - I will never let her go*

*Niwe buzima bwanjye - I will never let her go*

*Niwe rukundo rwanjye - I will never let her go*

*Mama! Niwe buzima bwanjye, I will never let her  
go*

*Ehh my baby-o! My sweetie potato!*

*Ah! My baby no! My sweetie banana!*

---

**[Intro]**  
*Aha!*

*I will never let her go - oh yeah!*

*My name is Roberto - I will never let her  
go*

*Two4Real*

*Ray Signature*

*Oh yeah!*

*Pastor P, Africa here we go*

---

**[Verse 1]**  
*Hey beauty how have you been? How do  
you see things?*

*Me and you should live together forever,  
we should make a family*

*We grow old together, calling each other  
cherie chuchu*

*I love your figure, I love how you move  
ayiwe!*

*They don't know how you make me crazy,  
they leave you for me*

*You are my love – I will never let her go*

*You are my life - I will never let her go*

*You are my love - I will never let her go*

*Mama! You are my life - I will never let her  
go*

*Ehh my baby-o! My sweetie potato!*

*Ah! My baby no! My sweetie banana!*

---

<sup>157</sup> Roberto told me: "Nyanja is widely spoken in Zambia. It can also be understood in countries like Malawi and border towns in neighbouring countries" (an email from Roberto, August 2016).

**[Verse 2]**

*The way you touch me Nantongo, the way you  
talk to me Ntongo*

*The way you love me make me feel the way you  
feel for me Ntongo*

*Kwagala Nantongo, my katoto*

*Onsingira tonto, my mutoto*

*Osingira kalia, osingira kalia, osingira kalina  
empavu*

*Onsingira abilina, onsingira abayina, onsingira  
bayina ensimbi*

*Gwe ansinga, gwe asinga - I will never let her go*

*Ntonto, ekimuli kya rosa - I will never let her go*

*Kampala ovuganya ne Zali - I will never let her  
go*

*You're the best, you're the best, you're the best -  
I will never let her go*

*You're the best, you're the best, you're the best*

---

**[Bridge]**

*Baby it's you, I don't want the rest*

*It's only you because I know you're the best*

*Like one and two, it's you and me*

*Zambezi na Manzi, monga Queen na neo  
(Nyanja, Zambian)*

*Manga butter mu cake - I will never let her go*

*Olo ukote olo uleke kuyenda baby - I will never  
let her go*

*Weo na neo, nipaka imfa - I will never let her go*

**[Verse 2]**

The way you touch me Nantongo, the way  
you talk to me Ntongo

The way you love me make me feel the  
way you feel for me Ntongo

I love you Nantongo, my little cutie

You're better than tonto<sup>158</sup>, my baby

Better than sky scrapers, better than sky  
scrapers, better than a tall sky scraper

You're better than those who have, you're  
better than those who have, you're better  
than those who have money

You are better, you are better - I will never  
let her go

Ntonto, a rose flower – I will never let her  
go  
In Kampala you're head to head with Zali  
– I will never let her go

You're the best, you're the best, you're  
the best - I will never let her go

You're the best, you're the best, you're  
the best

---

**[Bridge]**

Baby it's you, I don't want the rest

It's only you because I know you're the  
best

Like one and two, it's you and me

Zambezi and the water, like Queen and  
myself (Nyanja Zambian)

Like butter in a cake - I will never let her  
go

Even if you get old, and stop walking baby  
- I will never let her go

You and me, until death do us part - I will  
never let her go

<sup>158</sup> Tonto is Ugandan slang for cheap, locally made liquor.

*Just you and me, you and me – I will never let her go*

*Ehh...*

---

**[Outro]**

*Umwari<sup>159</sup>warezwe neza we*

*Sinzigera nkureka, umwana wa mama we*

*Pastor P – I will never let her go*

*Roberto – I will never let her go*

*Ray Signature – I will never let her go*

*Abami biyinjanya ni Two4Real*

*Arthur, Luis, Ma-Riva*

*I see the camera rolling*

*Just you and me, you and me – I will never let her go*

*Ehh...*

---

**[Outro]**

*Young woman who was raised well*

*I will never leave you, daughter of my mother we*

*Pastor P – I will never let her go*

*Roberto – I will never let her go*

*Ray Signature – I will never let her go*

*Kings of the song it's Two4Real*

*Arthur, Luis, Ma-Riva*

*I see the camera rolling*

## SONG 62.

***Take it off ft. Jackie Chandiru [2012]***

Urban Boys, Rwanda-Uganda; English, Kinyarwanda, Luganda.

Prod. Washington: Magic Records, Kampala

Watch *Take it Off* on YouTube [Video prod. Ark Menz]:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pV\\_A5VOMAx8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pV_A5VOMAx8)

**[Intro]**

*Baby I will give you – Anything I want*

*Anything and everything you want just*

*Baby! Can't you see this – Baby!*

*Every time I need you*

*Oh oh oh oh oh oh oh! – Urban Boys! Jackie! I wanna take it off!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*I wanna take it off eh buri rwenkulaba ma cheri*

**[Intro]**

*Baby I will give you – Anything I want*

*Anything and everything you want just*

*Baby! Can't you see this – Baby!*

*Every time I need you*

*Oh oh oh oh oh oh oh! – Urban Boys! Jackie! I wanna take it off!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*I wanna take it off every time I see you my sweetie*

---

<sup>159</sup> *Umwari* is a respectful term used to refer to a young woman in Rwanda.

*Nanjye nuko ndakubona nkazura umugara*

Even me it's like that, I see you and I'm turned on

*I wanna take it off, buri rwenkulaba ma cheri*

I wanna take it off, every time I see you my sweetie

*Nanjye nuko ndakubona nkazura umugara, my baby!*

Even me it's like that, I see you and am turned on

---

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Sinshaka guta umwanya, aho bimfira ndahazi*

**[Verse 1]**

I don't want to waste time, I know where it all dies

*Ntampavu yo guhisha ikindi kumutima*

I have no reason to hide what is in my heart

*I love you, I need you, sinazuyaza*

I love you, I need you, I can't rest

*Igimpimo churukundo cyazamutse*

The measure of love is going high

*Nkaryohere nku riye urusenda*

It tastes like I ate chilli

*Nkahumume nkuwabuza umyuka*

I breathe like I have no breath

*Ahh ah! Ahh ah! Nku waliye urusenda*

Ahh aah! Ahh ah! Like it's chilli

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ubwuzu bwo ni bwinshi*

**[Verse 2]**

There is a lot of empathy

*Ndahumera nki byeyi ishyaka iyayo*

Like a parent looking for their offspring

*Jangu nkugwe mugituza cyanyje*

Come and fall on my chest

*Amagambo nje ndayumva*

I know the words

*Ukurukundo ruryoha ndabizi*

I know how love is sweet

*Nyereka aho uribwa, nkuchize uburibwe*

Show me where it hurts, I will take away the pain

---

---

**[Chorus]**

**[Chorus]**

---

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Baby I will give you attention*

**[Verse 3]**

Baby I will give you attention

*Anything and everything you want coz*

Anything and everything you want coz

*Baby can't you see this*

*Every time I need your affection*

*Baby I like the way you move you make my  
ting go ting aling aling*

*Every time you come around you know what I  
feel like doing to you*

*Rukundo don't waste my time, if you know  
what I want just give it to me*

*Ye gwe weka gwejagara, nyewe nukuri  
kwibonamo*

*Tosuzza mubitara, gira tubere nga omwami no  
muchyara*

*Baby I will give you attention*

*Anything and everything you want coz*

*Baby can't you see this*

*Every time I need your affection*

*Baby I will give you affection, injection – Give it  
to me!*

---

**[Chorus X3]**

Baby can't you see this

Every time I need your affection

Baby I like the way you move you make my  
ting go ting aling aling

Every time you come around you know  
what I feel like doing to you

Love don't waste my time, if you know what  
I want just give it to me

You're the only one I love, for real me I feel  
you

Don't leave me hanging, let's be like wife  
and husband

Baby I will give you attention

Anything and everything you want coz

Baby can't you see this

Every time I need your affection

Baby I will give you affection, injection –  
Give it to me!

---

**[Chorus X3]**

## SONG 63.

### **Marry Me [2013]**

Urban Boys, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Junior: Touch Records, Kigali.

Watch *Marry Me* on YouTube [Video prod. Gilbert (The Benjamins)]:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQp0GFp\\_TQU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQp0GFp_TQU)

#### **[Intro]**

*Ahu!*

*Ahu!*

*Junior multi party system!*

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

*Ndashimira Imana ko yaremye umuntu*

#### **[Intro]**

Ahu!

Ahu!

Junior multi party system!

---

#### **[Verse 1]**

I thank God for creating this person



*Ikamuremera umufasha*

*Imyaka ibaye myinshi dukundana*

*Tugendana dusohokana*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Mbitse ibanga mu mutima wanjye*

*Baby I am ready tonight*

*Bibaye ngombwa ngo mbivuge*

*Hashize igihe byaranzonze*

*Ukuri kundimo uyu mwanya ni ukunguku*

*Would you marry me?*

*I wanna marry you*

*Would you marry me? Ahu!*

*Would you marry me? Ahu!*

*I wanna marry you. Ahu!*

*Would you marry me?*

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Amafete yo twarayakoze twizihaza igihe tumaranye*

*Igihe ni iki reka twibanire dushinge imbago y'urukundo*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Me girl I love you – me girl, me girl!*

*I wanna marry you – marry you!*

*Oh let me put a ring on your finger*

*Me girl!*

*I wanna take you to my home, introduce you to my father and mother*

For creating a spouse, a helper

It has been many years since we loved each other

Walking together and going out together

---

**[Chorus]**

I keep a secret in my heart

Baby I am ready tonight

It is necessary that I say it

I have been confused for a long time

The truth in me right now is this

Would you marry me?

I wanna marry you

Would you marry me? Ahu!

Would you marry me? Ahu!

I wanna marry you. Ahu!

Would you marry me?

---

**[Verse 2]**

We partied while celebrating the time we have been together

This is the time to live together and build a pillar of love

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

Me girl I love you – me girl, me girl!

I wanna marry you – marry you!

Oh let me put a ring on your finger

Me girl!

I wanna take you to my home, introduce you to my father and mother

*I wanna take you to my church, I tell you to my pastor*

*You are the only girl I need to be with, yeah*

*You're so fine, you're the woman of my dream*

*Such a girl I been looking for*

*I need a girl with a natural love*

*Hashize igihe byaranzonze*

*Ukuri kundimo uyu mwanya ni ukunguku*

*Would you marry me?*

*I wanna marry you*

*Would you marry me? Ahu!*

*Would you marry me? Ahu!*

*I wanna marry you. Ahu!*

*Would you marry me?*

*Would you marry me?*

---

**[Bridge]**

*Mpfukamye imbere yawe sinitaye ku bambona*

*Kuko burya ushaka inka aryama nkayo<sup>160</sup>*

*Where are you go?*

*Where are you come?*

*Where are you come?*

*Where are you go?*

*Where are you go?*

---

**[Outro]**

*Mbitse ibanga mu mutima wanjye*

*Baby I am ready tonight*

*I wanna take you to my church, I tell you to my pastor*

*You are the only girl I need to be with, yeah*

*You're so fine, you're the woman of my dream*

*Such a girl I been looking for*

*I need a girl with a natural love*

*I have been confused for a long time*

*The truth in me right now is this*

*Would you marry me?*

*I wanna marry you*

*Would you marry me? Ahu!*

*Would you marry me? Ahu!*

*I wanna marry you. Ahu!*

*Would you marry me?*

*Would you marry me?*

---

**[Bridge]**

*I kneel before you, not minding who sees me*

*Because the one who wants the cow has to lay with it*

*Where are you go?*

*Where are you come?*

*Where are you come?*

*Where are you go?*

*Where are you go?*

---

**[Outro]**

*I keep a secret in my heart*

*Baby I am ready tonight*

---

<sup>160</sup> Rwandan proverb: If you want something then you have to do what is required to get it.

*Bibaye ngombwa ngo mbivuge – Bridge Records!*

*I wanna marry you*

*Would you marry me? Ahu!*

*Would you marry me? Ahu!*

*I wanna marry you! Ahu!*

*Would you marry me?*

It is necessary that I say it – Bridge Records!

I wanna marry you

Would you marry me? Ahu!

Would you marry me? Ahu!

I wanna marry you! Ahu!

Would you marry me?

## SONG 64.

**Yawe<sup>161</sup> [2014]**

Urban Boys, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Piano: The Super Level, Kigali.

Watch Yawe on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWfWyVaTAMA>

### **[Chorus]**

*I will give you my mind and my money*

*I will give you my heart and my money*

*I go la la la la la love you*

*I go la la la la la love you*

*I will give you my mind and my money*

*I will give you my heart and my money*

*I go la la la la la love you*

*I go la la la la la love you – yawe!*

*Ushaka iki?*

*Icyo ushaka baguhe – yawe!*

*Designer nawe bamuzane – yawe!*

*Ushaka iki?*

*Champagne baguhe – yawe!*

*Yawe! Yawe! – Yawe!*

---

### **[Chorus]**

I will give you my mind and my money

I will give you my heart and my money

I go la la la la la love you

I go la la la la la love you

I will give you my mind and my money

I will give you my heart and my money

I go la la la la la love you

I go la la la la la love you – yawe!

What do you want?

Get what you want- yawe!

Bring the designer too – yawe!

What do you want?

They give you champagne – yawe!

Yawe! Yawe! – Yawe!

---

---

<sup>161</sup> Yawe is an exclamation.

**[Verse 1]**

*Your body's a good I want it*

*Come on give it to me no delay it*

*I go give you my love and affection*

*Ya yah! Yga!*

*Girl I like your style, come on to me now whine  
oh whine*

*Now stop, now stop, something rising now stop*

*Come closer to me*

*Yalelelelelelelele!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Wintinza vuga icyo ushaka, wintinza*

*Kora list, nanjye nirinda mistake*

*Byina nta stress, oh baby tambuka nka ba  
Miss<sup>162</sup>*

*Like that*

*Like this, like that*

*Girl bounce*

*Like this, like that*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Yeweee! Claudine*

*Wikwigira nyoni nyinshi<sup>163</sup>*

*Icyo ushaka baguhe*

**[Verse 1]**

*Your body's a good I want it*

*Come on give it to me no delay it*

*I go give you my love and affection*

*Ya yah! Yga!*

*Girl I like your style, come on to me now  
whine oh whine*

*Now stop, now stop, something rising now  
stop*

*Come closer to me*

*Yalelelelelelelele!*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Don't delay say what you want, don't delay*

*Make a list, I avoid mistakes*

*Dance with no stress, oh baby walk like a  
Miss*

*Like that*

*Like this, like that*

*Girl bounce*

*Like this, like that*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*You! Claudine*

*Don't pretend to be who you are not*

*Get what you want*

<sup>162</sup> A reference to the annual 'Miss Rwanda' competition.

<sup>163</sup> The literal translation of this is: "Don't make yourself many birds." However, the intended meaning comes from the Rwandan proverb, *Kwigira nyoni nyinshi*, which means "to pretend to be something that you are not".

<i>Manuka wirekure</i>	Get down and relax
<i>Ubwiza bwawe burabimerita</i>	Your beauty portrays it
<i>Njye ndabona uteye neza nku mukobwa wa Mandela</i>	I can see that you look like the daughter of Mandela
<i>Njye ndabona uteye neza nku mukobwa wa Mandela</i>	I can see that you look like the daughter of Mandela
<i>You my princess, my princess</i>	You my princess, my princess
<i>I can never let you go, go, go, go, go, go, go</i>	I can never let you go, go, go, go, go, go, go
---	---
<b>[Chorus]</b>	<b>[Chorus]</b>
---	---
<b>[Outro]</b> Yeeeeeah!	<b>[Outro]</b> Yeeeeeah!
<i>Give me the tune</i>	Give me the tune
<i>The Super Level thing!</i>	The Super Level thing!
<i>Urban Boys thing this!</i>	Urban Boys thing this!
<i>Yay!</i>	Yay!
<i>Now I say – yebah!</i>	Now I say – yebah!
<i>Now I say!</i>	Now I say!

## SONG 65.

### **Tayali (Ready) ft. Iyanya [2014]**

Urban Boys, Rwanda-Nigeria; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. The Super Level, Kigali/Jungle Entertainment Ventures, Lagos.

Watch *Tayali* on YouTube [Video prod. Patrick Ellis]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxWAX2raYAI>

<b>[Intro]</b> <i>It's Urban Boys</i>	<b>[Intro]</b> It's Urban Boys
<i>Super Level forever!</i>	Super Level forever!
<i>Tayali, ni tayali</i>	Ready, it's ready
<i>Tayali, ni tayali</i>	Ready, it's ready

*Tayali, ni tayali*

*Tayali, ni tayali*

*Tayali, tayali, tayali*

*Follow me, follow me, follow me*

*It's a new single, it's a new single*

*A la la la...*

*It's a new single, it's a new single*

*A la la la...*

---

**[Pre-chorus]**

*Lagos, Kigali*

*Uyu we ni uwahe?*

*Lagos, Kigali*

*Uyu we ni uwahe?*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Tayali, ni tayali*

*Tayali, ni tayali*

*Tayali, ni tayali*

*Tayali, ni tayali*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*Dore abantu ko bavuga*

*Ngaho nibavuge*

*Uyu mwari se ni uwahe?*

*Ese ubundi akomoka he?*

---

**[Pre-chorus]**

---

**[Chorus]**

---

Ready, it's ready

Ready, it's ready

Ready, ready, ready

Follow me, follow me, follow me

It's a new single, it's a new single

A la la la...

It's a new single, it's a new single

A la la la...

---

**[Pre-chorus]**

Lagos, Kigali

Where does this one come from?

Lagos, Kigali

Where does this one come from?

---

**[Chorus]**

Ready, it's ready

Ready, it's ready

Ready, it's ready

Ready, it's ready

---

**[Verse 1]**

You know that people talk

Now they can talk

Where does this girl come from?

Where does she originate?

---

**[Pre-chorus]**

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]***Nzemera nirye nimare<sup>164</sup>**Nzakubyinira nka lyanya**Nzarwana intambara nka zimwe za Mandela**Nzitabira amarushanwa**Kandi ni njyewe uzakwegukana**Abariribywi urabasaraza ari na bari bazasara**Urukundo si ikintu...**Oh naah! Oh naah!**Oh naah! Oh naah!**Imirimo ivunanye sinzigera nyitinya**Nzemera inkwano iwanyu bazanca**Nzakora ubibone mu muryango bakubahe**Nzemera bambohe ntuzigera ubabara*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]***What a beautiful baby-o**She's got a beautiful body-o**What a cool cool body-o**She's got a beautiful body-o**Tell me what you like**I go give you what you need**Tell me what you need**I go give you what you want**When I look in your face-o***[Verse 2]***I accept to eat myself**I will dance for you like lyanya**I will fight wars like the wars of Mandela**I will participate in the competition**And it's me who will win the trophy/you**You make musicians lose their voices and the guys will go crazy**Love is challenging...**Oh naah! Oh naah!**Oh naah! Oh naah!**I will not fear hard work**I will accept any dowry that your family will ask me for**I will work hard until you see it and the family will respect you**I will accept to be tied so that you won't be sad*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]***What a beautiful baby-o**She's got a beautiful body-o**What a cool cool body-o**She's got a beautiful body-o**Tell me what you like**I go give you what you need**Tell me what you need**I go give you what you want**When I look in your face-o*

<sup>164</sup> A Kinyarwanda expression meaning, "I accept to spend all of the money I have".

*Girl you look so special*

*As you pull my attention*

*You must a be international*

---

**[Chorus]**

Girl you look so special

As you pull my attention

You must a be international

---

**[Chorus]**

## SONG 66.

***Niko Nabaye (It's how I am) by Zizou Alpacine, ft. All Stars: Urban Boys, Rider Man, King James, Uncle Austin [2014]***

Urban Boys, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Junior: Touch Records, Kigali.

Watch *Niko Nabaye* on YouTube [Video prod. Gilbert (The Benjamins)]:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgB6ihGeN2Q>

**[Intro]**

*Real Monster!*

*Alpacino!*

*Junior multi system!*

---

**[Chorus]**

*Ndateteshya ngatonesha niko nabaye - a de  
want to take off*

*Niko nabaye – a de want to take off*

*Niko nabaye - a yo yo yo!*

*Uzabaze numu “egix” wanjye*

*Niko nabaye – a de wants to take off*

*Niko nabaye – a de want to take off*

*Niko nabaye*

*Umva ndakuguyaguya ndagushushya-  
shushya*

*Nkaguha bisou ra umva niko nabaye*

*Umva ndakuguyaguya ndagushushya-  
shushya*

*Nkaguha bisou ra umva niko nabaye*

**[Intro]**

Real Monster!

Alpacino!

Junior multi system!

---

**[Chorus]**

I vibe and I take it easy, that's how I am – a  
de want to take off

That's how I am - a de want to take off

That's how I am – a yo yo yo!

You can ask my ex, that's how I am

That's how I am - a de want to take off

That's how I am - a de want to take off

That's how I am

Listen I care for you, I make you hot-hot

I give you a kiss, listen that's how I am

Listen I care for you, I make you hot-hot

I give you a kiss, listen that's how I am



---

**[Verse 1]**

*Iyo mbonye nibaripfana bati uyumujama  
ararenze*

*Nibeshya niko nabaye*

*Iyonafashe nago nukuri jya ndekura*

*Iyo mvuze njye mbanvuze niko nabaye*

*Iyizire ngukunde ngufiringe*

*Ngu kissing niko nabaye*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yo!*

*Me love for a woman, it's like food fi your soul*

*When I love a woman, I love her for real*

*Icyo nzicyo iyo nakunze, njye ndakundwakaza  
– remember that this is Real Monster*

*Sit down baby gal you look so fine*

*In a di eyes baby you look so tighter*

*In in na I want you girl to be mine*

*And I like how you to do that whine*

*I go announce and tell everyone*

*Baby girl you're ma number one*

*I go make sure I tell every one*

*You're ma lover, you're ma lover girl*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

---

**[Verse 1]**

When I see my fans they say this guy is too good

I can't lie that's how I am

When I hold the truth I never let go

When I say it, I mean it, that's how I am

Come and I love you, I feel you

I kiss you, that's how I am

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yo!*

Me love for a woman, it's like food fi your soul

When I love a woman, I love her for real

What I know is that when I love, me I care –  
remember that this is Real Monster

Sit down baby gal you look so fine

In a di eyes baby you look so tighter

In in na I want you girl to be mine

And I like how you to do that whine

I go announce and tell everyone

Baby girl you're ma number one

I go make sure I tell every one

You're ma lover, you're ma lover girl

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

<i>Gukundwakaza babinziho, gushaninyuma numuziro</i>	They know me for loving, cheating to me is a curse
<i>Ndindumuntu nkunda akababaro, mugirinama zijyirakamaro</i>	I protect those I love from pain, I advise her with wise words
<i>Niba abanyamujiyi bacaninyuma, Rider Man ndumunyacyaro</i>	If town people cheat, Rider Man I am a villager
<i>Jye uwo nkunda murinda gutsikira iyo turikumwe ndamurapira</i>	I protect the one I love from pain, when I'm with her I rap for her
<i>Ndamusigasira murinda icya mubabaza ngo atarira muganga wimitima yamenetse igacyira</i>	I joke with her, I protect her from whatever can make her cry, the doctor of the heart
<i>Mfite aho nkora nkora nkamenya aho bipfra</i>	I have where I touch and where it fails
<i>Kubera bamwe urukundo bamwe nabahaye, bagenda bavugango niko nabahaye</i>	Because of the love I give to some, they go on saying that's how I am
<i>Kubera bamwe urukundo bamwe nabahaye, bagenda bavugango niko nabahaye</i>	Because of the love I give to some, they go on saying that's how I am
---	---
<b>[Bridge]</b>	<b>[Bridge]</b>
---	---
<b>[Verse 3]</b>	<b>[Verse 3]</b>
<i>Iyo nzambona igifaratsa cya nkamanye</i>	When I come I become speechless
<i>Ngonabuze imitoma ngutera ngutaka</i>	When I see that I have no more French words to praise you
<i>Ibikorwa burya biruta amagambo</i>	Actions are better than words
<i>Ngwino ngukunde ngukundwakaze ubireba</i>	Come I love you and I will cater for you
<i>Jye ndi sure diru diru banyita care care</i>	Me I am sure deal, they call me care care
<i>Ngwino uryame mubituza byumusore wacye ibintu mumudwa</i>	Come and sleep in the chest of the guy that has made records
---	---
<b>[Chorus]</b>	<b>[Chorus]</b>
---	---
<b>[Outro]</b>	<b>[Outro]</b>
<i>Burya nakunze – Mr lover lover</i>	When I love - Mr lover lover
<i>Nta wampinga – Mr lover lover</i>	Nobody doubts - Mr lover lover
<i>I yo naku naba</i>	When I love love
<i>Burya nakunze – Mr lover lover</i>	When I love - Mr lover lover

*Nta wampinga – Mr lover lover*

*I yo naku naba*

*Niko nabaye*

*Alpacino – Real Monster!*

*King James yo!*

*Urban boys yo!*

*Riderzo riderzo!*

*Uncle Austin again!*

*Touch Records!*

*JAC good condition!*

Nobody doubts - Mr lover lover

When I love love

That's how I am

Alpacino – Real Monster!

King James yo!

Urban boys yo!

Riderzo riderzo!

Uncle Austin again!

Touch Records!

JAC good condition!

## SONG 67.

### ***Till I Die ft. Riderman [2015]***

Urban Boys, Rwanda; English, Kinyarwanda.

Prod. Pacento: Narrow Road Records, Kigali.

Watch *Till I Die* on YouTube [Video prod. Ma-River]:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ad6npHLAHCs>

#### **[Intro]**

*Clap your hands, aha!*

*Ok - mmm*

*Till I die lalal*

*Riderzo!*

*Till I die lalal*

*Na Urban Boys*

---

#### **[Chorus]**

*Sintinya urupfu niyonapfana nafana nawe*

*Sintinya urupfu niyonapfana nafana nawe*

*Wagize umugabo nanyje nkujira umugore*

#### **[Intro]**

Clap your hands, aha!

Ok - mmm

Till I die lalal

Riderzo!

Till I die lalal

And Urban Boys

---

#### **[Chorus]**

I don't fear death, if I die I would die with you

I don't fear death, if I die I would die with you

You made me a husband and I made you a wife

*Till I die, till I die ayo*

*Till I die, till I die ayo*

*Till I die my baby-o*

*Till I die my baby-o*

*Till I die my baby-o*

*Till I die my baby-o*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*It's Madiba*

*Till I die ntuzinjera umva kure yanjye*

*Ntakubona imbere yanje nasara*

*I believe that our love is stronger than thunder*

*Uwavuga ibyiza bwawe ntiyabivamo, my sweetie-o*

*I don't care who you are*

*I don't care where you come from*

*Icyonzi neza nuko nkukunda byukuri yeah*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ok! Hahaha!*

*Kabosi!*

*Inzosi za Adam yari Eve*

*Ubu izanjye niwowe wowe*

*Ikizera cyubuzima, nkubuze nakwiyahura*

*Sintinya urupfu niyo napfa napfana nawe*

*Kubaho ntagumfite nabura byose mfite*

*Till I die, till I die ayo*

*Till I die, till I die ayo*

*Till I die my baby-o*

*Till I die my baby-o*

*Till I die my baby-o*

*Till I die my baby-o*

---

**[Verse 1]**

*It's Madiba*

*Till I die you will never leave my side*

*If I don't see you I will go crazy*

*I believe that our love is stronger than thunder*

*If I start saying good things about you, I won't stop, my sweetie-o*

*I don't care who you are*

*I don't care where you come from*

*What I know is that I love you for real yeah*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Ok! Hahaha!*

*Kabosi!<sup>165</sup>*

*The dream of Adam was Eve*

*Now mine is you*

*My hope in life, without you I would commit suicide*

*I don't fear to die, I would rather die with you*

*To live without you, I would rather lose everything*

---

<sup>165</sup> Kabosi means "young boss" and is Nizzo's aka.

*Till the end of the time, I swear to love until I die*

*Yes I call you Malaika, gal a we go to Jamaica*

*We dance to reggae and calypso*

*Me love your touch and I swear to love you*

*It's a Humble Gizzle ting dis yo*

*It's a love song ting dis yo*

*Its Urban Boys ting dis yo*

*It's a Super Level ting dis yo*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

*Damutse mfuye nkagera mwijuru nabaza Imana*

*Ngo arihe? Wamumarayika wampaye kugeza kumpera zibihe*

*Tugiye ikuzimu nasaba shitani ngo akureke abariye atwara*

*Maze ijuru wampaye turi kwi isi nkabona uko ndikwitura*

*Ikirere kizira igihu, ichoga juru chishyira ibirere*

*Mubyeyi wurubyaro rwanjye weho uzarukunda ukanaruha ibere*

*Nzagukunda mpaka pfuye, nzagenda mpaka nguye*

*Murugendo rwurukunda rundahinyuka niweho nacyaguye*

*I don't care who you are*

*I don't care where you come from*

*Baby yooo, baby I love you*

---

Till the end of the time, I swear to love until I die

Yes I call you Malaika, gal a we go to Jamaica

We dance to reggae and calypso

Me love your touch and I swear to love you

It's a Humble Gizzle ting dis yo

It's a love song ting dis yo

Its Urban Boys ting dis yo

It's a Super Level ting dis yo

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 3]**

If I died and I went to heaven I would ask God

Where is she? The angel you gave to me until the end of life

If we went to hell I would ask Satan to take me instead of you

Then the heaven you gave to me while on earth, I would give you back

The sky without the clouds, the space ship in the sky

The mother to my children, you who will love them and breastfeed them

I will love you till I die, I will continue until I fall

In the journey of real love, it is you who I chose

I don't care who you are

I don't care where you come from

Baby yooo, baby I love you

---

**[Outro]***Pacento on the beat**Super Level on the mic**Ibsumizi on the floor**Oh la la la la...***[Outro]***Pacento on the beat**Super Level on the mic**Ibsumizi<sup>166</sup> on the floor**Oh la la la la...***SONG 68.****Show me Love ft. Timaya [2015]**

Urban Boys, Rwanda-Nigeria; English, Jamaican Patois, Kinyarwanda.

Produced in Lagos-Nigeria.

Listen to Show me Love on YouTube:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-\\_ASoeU3MI8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_ASoeU3MI8)**[Intro]***Ooh yaawo – urban!**Ooh yaawo – Urban Boys!**Urban Boys and Timaya**Saayyoo!*

---

**[Chorus]***Baby give it to me, bikore nka last night – aha!**Oh baby show me love, unyibagize last night – oh!**Baby love - ntumbalize umutima**Show me love – nunkomeza umutima**Oyyy I love - ndakomera mu mutima**Give me love - ndakomera mu mutima**Ntusige - ntumbabarize umubiri**Ntudeke - ndakomera mu mutima**Wisaze - ndakomera mu mutima**Unyibagiza - ndakomera mu mutima*

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**[Intro]***Ooh yaawo – urban!**Ooh yaawo – Urban Boys!**Urban Boys and Timaya**Saayyoo!*

---

**[Chorus]***Baby give it to me, do it like last night – aha!**Oh baby show me love, make me forget last night – oh!**Baby love - don't hurt my heart**Show me love - strengthen my heart**Oyyy I love - I'm strong in my heart**Give me love - I'm strong in my heart**Don't leave me - don't hurt my heart**Don't let go – I'm strong in my heart**Don't go crazy – I'm strong in my heart**Make me forget – I'm strong in my heart*

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibsumizi* means “roar”, or “knights”, and is the name of Riderman’s fan group and record label.

**[Verse 1]**

*Show me love niba unyiyunvamo*

*Bikore nawe bikurimo*

*Komezaze maze unyibonemo*

*Show me love niba unyiyunvamo – bad gal!*

*Niba unkunda nyemerera*

*Urukundo nanjye ndwisangamo*

*Irijoro nanjye ndyibagirwe, kwisangemo,  
kwiyunvamo*

*So I forget tonight, I feel you, and want you*

*Tubiranjize right now, tubikore nka last night*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

*Yeah*

*Badder than badder than them*

*Gal you the baddest like you badder than the  
rest eh*

*Gal you murder than murder than dem*

*Each and every day gal you know you are the  
best eh*

*Stinami ni Timaya-maya*

*Every time I come you make me go higher  
higher*

*Gal you are the fillest and the killest, and the  
killest spot ay*

*Gal you are the fillest and the killest, and the  
killest spot ay*

*You are my sweet fung ta you are love, gal you  
are fine like a lollipop*

*You are my sweet fung ta you are love, gal you  
are fine like a lollipop*

**[Verse 1]**

Show me love if you feel me

Do it when you want it

Continue then you will like me

Show me love if you feel me – bad gal!

If you love me then allow me

Love and I will want you too

So I forget tonight, I feel you, and want you

I will treat you nice tonight, we do it like last  
night

We finish it right now, we do it like last night

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Verse 2]**

Yeah

Badder than badder than them

Gal you the baddest like you badder than  
the rest eh

Gal you murder than murder than dem

Each and every day gal you know you are  
the best eh

It's Timaya-maya

Every time I come you make me go higher  
higher

Gal you are the fillest and the killest, and  
the killest spot ay

Gal you are the fillest and the killest, and  
the killest spot ay

You are my sweet fung ta you are love, gal  
you are fine like a lollipop

You are my sweet fung ta you are love, gal  
you are fine like a lollipop

*In mi heart you are number one, you know -  
bad gal*

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

*Reka nkukoreho, nkukudira uko uteye*

*Nyemerera tujane, nkwereke imisozi igihumbi*

*Reka nkukoreho, nkukudira uko uteye*

*Nyemerera tujane, nkwereke imisozi igihumbi*

In mi heart you are number one, you know -  
bad gal

---

**[Chorus]**

---

**[Bridge]**

Let me touch you, I love you for the way  
you are

Allow yourself to come with me, I will show  
you the land of a thousand hills

Let me touch you, I love you for the way  
you are

Allow yourself to come with me, I will show  
you the land of a thousand hills



**APPENDIX III: A table of songs, artists, countries and dance moves included in my original video: ‘The World at their Feet: Popular Music Moves in Rwanda’ (2015).**

\*Please note: information is provided in order of appearance and is also available in the video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZVcmd\\_c\\_kE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZVcmd_c_kE)

SONG	ARTIST	COUNTRY	DANCE MOVE(S)
<i>Collabo</i>	P-Square ft. Don Jazzy	Nigeria	SHOKI (Nigeria) – first popularised by Lil Kesh’s song, <i>Shoki</i> .
<i>Azonto</i>	Fuse ODG	UK-Ghana	AZONTO (Ghana) <sup>167</sup>
<i>Sibyo</i>	Kitoko and Meddy	Rwanda	STAMINA (Uganda) – first popularised by Eddy Kenzo’s song, <i>Stamina</i> .
			SHOKI (Nigeria)
<i>My Woman</i>	Patoranking ft. Wande Coal	Nigeria	AKAYIDA (Ghana) – first popularised by Guru’s song, <i>Akayida (Boys Abre)</i>
<i>Sitya Loss</i>	Eddy Kenzo	Uganda	SITYA LOSS (Uganda)
<i>Uhuru</i>	Uhuru ft. DJ Buckz, Oskido, Professor and Yuri-Da-Cunha	South Africa, Angola	KHONA (South Africa) – first popularised by Mafikizolo’s song, <i>Khona</i>
			SHOKI (Nigeria)
			SEKEM (Nigeria) – first popularised by MC Galaxay’s song, <i>Sekem</i>
<i>Johnny</i>	Yemi Alade	Nigeria	SOLOLA BIEN (DRC) – popularised by Werason (and many other Congolese artists)
<i>Iyizire</i>	TBB	Rwanda	Influenced by the Hollywood film, <i>The Matrix</i>
			Influenced by Michael Jackson
			Influenced by Jamaican twerking
			Inspired by American hip-hop & break dancing
<i>Skelewu</i>	Davidó	Nigeria	SKELEWU (Nigeria)
<i>Watch Me (Whip/nae nae)</i>	Silento	United States	WHIP NAE NAE (USA)

<sup>167</sup> See Shipley for a discussion on *azonto*, a “Ghanaian urban dance craze whose popularity is built through its global circulation” (2013c: 362).

<i>Precious Mother</i> <sup>168</sup>	Black Egypt (Fela Kuti group) & Bucky Leo	Nigeria	SALSA (New York/Latin America)
			BREAK DANCING
			AMARABA and GUHAMIRIZO <sup>169</sup> (Rwanda)
			IKINIMBA <sup>170</sup> (Rwanda)
<i>Nao Faz Iso Bella</i>	Os Detroia	Ivory Coast	BELLA (Ivory Coast) <sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> This section was improvised when Babou and Titi Brown continued to dance to the next song on my playlist.

<sup>169</sup> The male dance of the *intore*, also known as *imihamirizo*.

<sup>170</sup> A Hutu dance comprised of leaps.

<sup>171</sup> Other dance moves recorded separately to this video include *Guetta* (popularised by Toofan of Togo's song, *Guetta*) and Sampolo (popularised by Diamond Platnumz of Tanzania's song, *Sampolo*).

**APPENDIX IV: A table of Rwandan pop artists, audio and video producers, and studio owners and managers/sponsors.**

NAME	GENDER	ROLE(S) IN MUSIC INDUSTRY	SOCIAL CATEGORY
<b>Aidan, Two4Real</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Alex Muyuboke</b>	Male	Major sponsor and manager for many of the country's artists – not affiliated to one particular studio	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Ama-G The Black</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Arnold Mugisha</b>	Male	Video producer	<i>Umujepe</i>
<b>Babou</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre) and dancer, The Snipers	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Benjah TBB</b> (brother of Bob TBB and Ezra Kwizera)	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Bernard</b>	Male	Studio owner, Incredible and video producer	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Bob TBB</b> (brother of Benjah TBB and Ezra Kwizera)	Male	Artist (mixed genre) and studio manager, Narrow Road Records	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Bonne Marie</b> (sister of studio owner Philbel)	Female	Manager, CB Records	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Branakweli Alex</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Bruce Melody</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Bulldog, Tuff Gangz</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Charley, Charley &amp; Nina</b>	Female	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Christopher</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Claude Mujyanama, Dream Boys</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>UmuDubayi</i>
<b>Clément Ishimwe</b>	Male	Audio producer and studio owner, Kina Music	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Dany</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Davy Ranks</b>	Male	Artist (ragga)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Derek, Active</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Diplomat</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>DJ Pius, Two4Real</b>	Male	DJ and artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Djamal</b>	Male	Studio owner, Infinity	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Elephant</b>	Male	Artist (ragga)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Ezra Kwizera</b> (brother of Bob TBB and Benjah TBB)	Male	Artist (gospel) and studio owner, Narrow Road Records.	<i>Umusajya</i> (currently lives between Kigali and Vancouver with his Canadian wife)
<b>Fazzal</b>	Male	Audio producer	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Fireman, Tuff Gangz</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Gabiro</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Gilbert (The Benjamins)</b>	Male	Video producer	<i>UmuDubayi</i>
<b>Gisa</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>

<b>Green Pea, Tuff Gangz</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Hubert</b> (brother of studio owner Mutessa)	Male	Studio manager, Touch Records.	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Humble-G, Urban Boys</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i> (but Hutu, not Tutsi <sup>172</sup> )
<b>Jay Polly, Tuff Gangz</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Jody Phibi</b>	Female	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Jules Sentore</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umujepe</i>
<b>Junior</b>	Male	Audio producer	<i>Umujepe</i>
<b>Khizzy</b>	Male	Audio producer	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>King James</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Kitoko</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umutubayi</i> <sup>173</sup> , (currently studying in London)
<b>Knowless Butera</b>	Female	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Lick Lick</b>	Male	Audio producer	<i>Umusope</i> (currently lives in the US)
<b>Lil G</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Ma River</b>	Male	Video producer	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Mani Martin</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Meddy</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umujepe</i> (currently lives in the US)
<b>Meddy Saleh</b>	Male	Video producer	<i>UmuTZ</i>
<b>Method</b>	Male	Video producer	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Mutessa</b> (brother of studio manager Hubert)	Male	Studio owner, Touch Records	<i>Umusope</i> (currently lives in the UK)
<b>Naason</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Nemeye Platini, Dream Boys</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umutubayi</i>
<b>Nic Pro</b>	Male	Audio producer	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Nina, Charley &amp; Nina</b>	Female	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Nizzo, Urban Boys</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Olivis, Active</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>P Fla</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Pacento</b>	Male	Audio producer and artist	<i>Umujepe</i>
<b>Paccy</b>	Female	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Pacson</b>	Male	Radio presenter and artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Pappi</b>	Male	Audio producer	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Pastor P</b>	Male	Audio producer	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Philbel</b> (brother of studio manager Bonne Marie)	Male	Studio owner, CB Records	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Piano</b>	Male	Audio producer	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Queen Cha</b>	Female	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Rafiki</b>	Male	Artist ( <i>coga</i> )	<i>Umutubayi</i>

<sup>172</sup> Most returnees are Tutsi, but this is not always the case.

<sup>173</sup> Some Kigalians feel that Kitoko is “not really Rwandan”, but is rather a member of *Banyamulenge*, the so-called ‘Tutsi Congolese’.

<b>Richard</b>	Male	Studio manager/sponsor, Super Level	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Riderman</b>	Male	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umujepe</i>
<b>Saffi, Urban Boys</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Sintex</b>	Male	Artist (ragga)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Social Mula</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Spax</b>	Male	Artist (ragga) and event organiser	Mixed heritage: Rwandan mother, Omani father, born and raised in Uganda.
<b>Teta Diana</b>	Female	Artist (mixed genre)	Returnee from Kenya
<b>The Ben</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Tino TBB</b>	Male	Comedian, radio presenter and artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Tizzo, Active</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Tom Close</b>	Male	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Tonic</b>	Female	Artist (mixed genre)	<i>Umusope</i>
<b>Track Slayer</b>	Male	Audio producer	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Uncle Austin</b>	Male	Radio presenter and artist (ragga)	<i>Umusajya</i>
<b>Young Grace</b>	Female	Artist (hip-hop)	<i>Umusope</i>

## **APPENDIX V: A list of Ugandan artists**

- Bebe Cool (male)
- Bobi Wine (male)
- Chameleone (or Dr Jose Chameleone) (male)
- Eddy Kenzo (male)
- Fille (female)
- Jackie Chandiru (female)
- Marriana (female)
- Radio and Weasel (the Goodlyfe Crew) (males)
- Ray Signature (male)
- Vampino (male)
- Washington (male)

## APPENDIX VI: Map

This hand-written mind map is an insert after the last page. It is a visual representation of the interconnectedness of Rwanda's cultural scene, as discussed in the thesis. The map contains the names of the major cultural producers who were active in Kigali's pop music industry during fieldwork (see also Appendix IV to see this in the form of a Table). The role of each individual is indicated as follows:

- Recording artist (A)
- Audio producer (AP)
- Video producer (VP)
- Studio owner (SO)
- Studio manager/sponsor (SM)
- Radio presenter (RP)
- TV presenter (TP)

The map also includes Burundian stars living in Kigali as refugees, key members of Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company, and a number of relevant *gakondo* musicians, gospel singers, spoken word artists (SW), self-proclaimed 'live musicians' (as opposed to playback artists), and hotel bands important to the study. The map is organised so that cultural producers are tied to their given music studio (studio names are presented in rectangles), crew or category. While the black lines represent long-term connections, the red lines represent just some of the many one-off collaborations that have occurred between cultural producers in Kigali's close-knit and fluid cultural scene (see, in particular, chapter 6). Past winners of the Primus Guma Guma Super Star competition (chapter 5) are marked on the map as follows: (PGGSS year of winning). Those who have recorded a hit "collabo" with a Ugandan star have a yellow circle next to their

name. Finally, with the exception of the Burundian artists and *gakondo* musicians, the map is colour coded to indicate the social category of each individual (see chapter 2 for an explanation of these categories). I have underlined the names as follows:

- Green = *Abasajya* (Ugandan-Rwandans)
- Blue = *Abajepe* (Burundian-Rwandans)
- Purple = *Abadubayi* (Returnees from eastern-DRC)
- Pink = *AbaTZ* (Returnees from Tanzania)
- Orange = Returnees from Kenza
- No colour = *Abasope* (Born and raised in Rwanda)



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# PHOTOGRAPH OF MAP (DIGITAL COPY ONLY)

