



**MOI UNIVERSITY
AFRICAN CLUSTER CENTRE**



MUSIC CULTURES SYMPOSIUM, MOI UNIVERSITY

THEME

**Music, Identity, and History: Reading Kalenjin
Popular / Traditional Music**

29th - 30th October 2020

Book of Abstracts



Moi University African Cluster Centre - Profile

This workshop is just one of the many planned research activities of the Moi African Cluster Centre of Excellence in African studies for the year 2020. The Moi University African Cluster Centre (Moi-ACC) is housed in the School of Arts and Social Sciences (SASS) of Moi University. The overriding objectives of the Moi University School of Arts and Social Sciences are to offer interdisciplinary teaching and research in the broad field of African studies and to act as the center where all other Africa-focused scholarship in Moi University coalesce. Within the context of these objectives, and building on the very strong tradition of exploring and interrogating diverse ways of knowing Africa that has developed in the School in the three and a half decades of its existence, the Moi-ACC is envisioned as a hub of outstanding inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary research and conversations that contribute to the greater understanding of Africa in ways that enable the addressing of significant issues affecting the continent. At Moi-ACC research is carried out under the following sections: Affiliations, Arts and Aesthetics, Mobilities, Moralities, Knowledges and Learning. The research projects that are currently on-going in these sections are: Regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa: An appraisal of the frameworks for interactive markets, effective governance and human rights protection; East African Asian Writing and the Emergence of a Diasporic Subjectivity; Framing Identities from Human Agency Mobility on the Kenya-Uganda Highway; Changing Life Projects: African Identities, Moralities and Wellbeing; Pots, Fire and Gourds: A (Re)presentation of African Knowledge Systems; and Mediated and Mediatization of Islamic Knowledge in Kenya: Educational Institutions, Media Technologies and Performative Aesthetics.

Prof. Dr. Peter Simatei
Director,
Moi African Cluster Centre.



PROGRAMME

DAY 1 (29 th October 2020)		
08:00 – 08:30	Registration	
	Session 1 Chair: Tom Michael Mboya	
08:30 – 09:15	Keynote Address/Opening Remarks	Prof I. N. Kimengi (Moi University)
09:15 – 10:00	Introduction: Music, Identity, History.	Tirop Simatei (Moi University)
10:00 – 10:15	Health Break	
	Session 2 Chair: Jane Mwonga	
10:15 – 10:35	Dynamics of African Music: Theory and Practice, A Kenyan Perspective	Mellitus Wanyama (Kabarak University)
10:35 – 10:55	Guitar Playing Styles in Kenya	Malachi Apudo (Maseno University)
10:55 – 11:15	Evolutions, Transformations and the Trends in Kalenjin Traditional Songs	Charles Rono (Moi University)
11:15 – 11:35	Music as Edutainment: The Intersection of Education and Entertainment in Kalenjin Music	Korir J. P. (Bomet University) & Kirui E. K. (Moi University)
11:35 – 11:45	Q & A	
	Session 3 Chair: Mosol Kendakor	
11:45 – 12:05	The Linguistics and Sociological Significance of Kalenjin Music	Kurgatt Kibiwott (Kisii University)
12:15 – 12:25	Code Switching and Code Mixing in Joel Kimetto's Songs	Ann Langat (University of Kabianga)
12:35 – 12:45	Animal Metaphor and Social Messaging in Kipchamba Arap Topotuk's Music	Rotich Alexander (University of Kabianga)
12:45 – 13:00	Q & A	
13:00 – 14:00	Health Break	
	Session 4 Chair: Peter Simatei	
14:00 – 16:00	Roundtable: Kokweet ab Kipchamba	Kipkoech Sambu (Kericho) Olchore Chepkulei Martin Kipchamba (Kipchamba Foundation) Manori Solomon (Artist) Francis Koech Chemirei (Artist, (Bomet) Rotich Alexander (Kabianga)
16:00 – 16:15	Health Break	
DAY 2 (30 th October 2020)		
	Session 5 Chair: Kibiwott Kurgatt	
08:50 – 09:10	This is our Time: <i>Benga</i> and Postcolonial Identity	Tom Michael Mboya (Moi University)
09:10 – 09:30	Nafasi ya Muziki wa Kikalenjin katika Uhifadhi wa Utamaduni	Anthony Biwott (Moi University)
09:30 – 09:50	Lessons on Ethics, Morality and Leadership: Echoes of Kemetic Thought in Kalenjin Music	Kiprotich Sang (Moi University)
09:50 – 10:00	Q & A	
10:00 – 10:15	Health Break	
	Session 6 Chair: Tom Michael Mboya	
10:15 – 10:35	Sexual Metaphor and Gendered Meanings in Kalenjin Popular Music	Peter Simatei (Moi University)
10:35 – 10:55	Social Mobilization and Misogyny: Representation of Women in Kipsigis Popular Music	Joseph Bengat (Embu University)
10:55 – 11:15	Female Artists and the Amplification of Women Voices in Kalenjin Popular Music	Korir J. P. (Bomet University) & Kirui E. K. (Moi University)
11:15 – 11:25	Q & A	
	Session 7 Chair: Peter Simatei	
11:25 – 11:45	Kalenjin Popular Music: A Repertoire of Community's History	Mosol Kendakor (Moi University)
11:45 – 12:05	Textualities of Memory and History in Kalenjin Popular Music: Raphael Kipchamba arap Tapotuk and Kalenjin History	Kiprotich Sang (Moi University)
12:05 – 12:25	Memory, Identity and the Construction of Communities through Music	Carolyn Sambai (Moi University)
12:25 – 12:45	Echoes of Foucauldian 'Discourse and Power' in Contemporary Political Kalenjin Music	Robert Wesonga (University of Kabianga)
12:45 – 13:00	The Semiotic Constituency of Tugen Language of Prediction	Kutol Kiprono (Moi University)
13:00 – 13:20	Pain, Loss and Recovery: Musical Articulation of the Talai Persecution in Colonial and Post-Colonial Kenya	Jane Mwonga (Moi University)
13:45-14:00	Health Break	
14:00 – 16:00	Plenary – Way Forward Closing Remarks	Participants & Conveners Prof. Nathan Ogechi (Moi University)
16:00 – 16:15	Health Break	
17:00 – 20:00	Music Performance	



ABSTRACTS

Code Switching and Code Mixing in Joel Kimetto's Songs

Anne Langat

University of Kabianga

This study examines the use of code switching and code mixing in Joel Kimetto's religious songs. The lyrics of Kimetto's earlier songs were in the Kipsigis language. His recent songs, which are still largely in Kipsigis, are marked by the incorporation of English and Kiswahili words and phrases. These two languages are the official languages in Kenya with Kiswahili also doubling up as the country's national language. The researcher is interested in the reasons behind the code switching and code mixing and in the attitude of the listeners towards their usage. Interviews with Joel Kimetto and 40 carefully selected Kipsigis language speakers complement the analysis of the artist's songs in an exploration of the significance of code switching and code mixing in Joel Kimetto's art.

Key Words: code-switching, code-mixing, Joel Kimetto

Nafasi ya Muziki wa Kikalenjin katika Uhifadhi wa Utamaduni

Anthony Kipkoech Biwott

Moi University

Makala haya yanachunguza namna ambavyo muziki wa Kikalenjin unachangia katika uhifadhi wa utamaduni wa Wakalenjin. Ili kulitimiza lengo hili, nyimbo za wasanii mbalimbali pamoja na zile za kitamaduni zitateuliwa kimakusudi na kuchanganuliwa. Vigezo vitakavyozingatiwa ni utambulisho, lugha na utamaduni, mahusiano ya kijamii, majukumu ya kijinsia, pamoja na elimu ya masuala ya ngono. Nyimbo za kitamaduni zitakazoangaziwa ni kama vile sindala, iruur beek korook miongoni mwa nyinginezo ambazo huimbwa katika hafla mbalimbali za kijamii. Vilevile, nyimbo za wasanii kama vile Kipchamba araap Tabutuk (Iwendi ne Ndonyo), Pst. Joel Kimeto (Rat torosta), Pst. David Chesimet (Bo ng'o long'ini), Paul Sang na Rodgers Ruttoh (sindala), Chemirei Kimaiywa (kametab Cheming'in), Stanley Limo (Tegis nebo chiios) miongoni mwa wengineo. Uchanganuzi wa nyimbo zenyewe utaongozwa na nadharia ya uchanganuzi makinifu wa matini ya Fairclough (1992, 2000).



Evolutions, Transformations and the Trends in Kalenjin Traditional Songs

Charles Kipng'eno Rono

Moi University

Since the production of the earliest Kalenjin traditional albums in 1950s, the community's traditional songs have evolved, transformed and have tremendously grown from the songs considered 'high' to the now popular songs, which are thought to constitute a different type of artistic productivity. This paper traces this historical process by considering songs of canonical verbal artist Kipchamba Arap Tabotuk, a Kipsigis legendary singer who has become a household name in larger Kalenjin community, vis-à-vis songs by a number of contemporary Kalenjin traditional artists though a comparative analysis to determine not only the zones of contact and departure between both canonical and the popular Kalenjin traditional songs but also the salient relationships and overlapping tendencies of their works. Taking 1990s' liberation of airwaves as a point of locus, this essay draws on evolution theories to conceptualize the extraordinary variety and complexity forms of canonical and popular songs on the basis of historical process in an attempting to understand possibilities of thinking about how community's traditional music lost its 'highness' by means of modern artistic production remodeling and functionalizing the canonical works of Kipchamba and his contemporaries in order to make them serve the contemporary societies.

Lessons on Ethics, Morality and Leadership: Echoes of Kemetic Thought in Kalenjin Music

Kiprotich E. Sang

Moi University

Music among the Kalenjin, like any other oral society, was used not only as a means of entertainment, but also as a way of transmitting societal knowledge and a reservoir of axioms of wisdom. There exists a lot of literature which links the Kalenjin culture to ancient Egypt. This paper offers an analysis of Kalenjin Music and more specifically how the artists through their creative outputs communicate aspects of morality, ethics and leadership. The analysis is based on a comparative review of the contributions of the Kemetic axioms and those of the kalenjin on the lessons. The Kalenjin concept of taboo (*kikirei*) is examined to understand how the artist appropriate it in the songs to advance the ethical expectations and to enforce the moral expectations of the society in regard to leadership which promotes social harmony and order. As such, the paper attempts to draw a parallel between the ancient Egyptian teachings and the Kalenjin lessons. The music is considered not only as a medium of transmission of the lessons but also as a means through which the messages are stored. The complexity of Kalenjin music brought about



owing to its intertextual nature gives the paper impetus. In Kalenjin Music, a song can be a summary of a proverb or a proverb can be unfurled through the songs and in the process, lessons are learnt. The artist as such are forced to employ a variety of techniques which make the songs both appealing and popular among the listeners. The appeal enhances the lessons being transmitted. The songs in focus are both secular and for comparative purposes, some Christian religious songs which borrow on the Kalenjin axioms to advance Christian morality are assessed. The paper concludes that there is a close relationship between the Kemetix axioms and the Kalenjin teaching presented artistically in the songs which employs proverbs, straight narration and other literary forms.

Linguistic and Sociological Significance of Traditional Kalenjin Music

Kibiwott Kurgat

Kisii University

Although traditional music is sometimes mistakenly believed to be static, longitudinal analyses can show that the compositions have been the opposite. Using examples of some of the Kalenjin traditional music composed and sang over the past 100 years, the paper will attempt to show that not only is traditional music reflective of the variety of social issues of a society, reflected through themes that cover the 'issues of the day' but also that dynamism can be discerned in this music. One of the exemplifications of dynamism is the theme of linguistic borrowing in various shades just like in the formal language itself. This paper, as part of broader research into the linguistics and sociology of traditional music in Africa, will show that dynamism of traditional music goes hand in hand with the dynamism of a peoples culture itself. Using examples through history, the paper will show that this dynamism is reflected in not just the themes in the traditional music of the Kalenjin peoples but that traditional music can be shown as part of the dynamism of the language and culture of the Kalenjin. The paper argues that it is possible to linguistically analyze music in general and traditional music in particular within the context of the dynamism of language and culture.

Key Words: Traditional music, Kalenjin traditional music, sociology of music, linguistic analysis of music, linguistic dynamism in music

Textualities of Memory and History in Kalenjin Popular Music: Raphael Kipchamba arap Tapotuk and Kalenjin History

*Kiprotich E. Sang
Moi University*

The paper concerns itself with an analysis of Kipchamba's textualization of memory and history in the Kalenjin Psyche which he elucidates in his compositions. The paper takes off from the point that events in society find their way into the popular psyche owing to the desire to remember them because either they are traumatic or they may be worth remembering as a way of inspiring the current generation. Over time, the memorized events form a compact body of information which eventually constitutes the Kalenjin history and find expression through popular musical constructions. By employing the new historicist perspectives and cultural theoretical postulations, the paper attempts to interrogate and explain how Kipchamba in his musical compositions consolidates the disparate experiences and memories of the Kalenjin nation in order to come up with a coherent Kalenjin popular history. The basic assumption made is that, the artist being a member of the society is located at a point which affords him an opportunity to critique and consolidate societal perspectives, which include a keen awareness of the impact of the social, cultural and physical environment which feed the popular imaginations and which are then harnessed by the composer to create his texts. The paper focuses on a few selected texts from the artist in an attempt to identify the link that is established between memory and the desired presentation of Kalenjin history. Kipchamba's creations are diverse and cover a variety of subjects and cuts across generations considering that he was actively in the music scene for more than fifty years. The conclusion reached is that, Kipchamba through his artistic creations succeeds in reducing the Kalenjin history into a text and the historical texts also feed his music.

Benga and Postcolonial Luo Identity, c.1955 to c.1980

*T. Michael Mboya
Moi University*

In this paper I discuss the relationship between popular music and cultural identity through a reading of the story of the early career of the Kenyan guitar-based dance music called benga. Genre theory guides the reading. Bringing into interplay the nitty-gritty of the early story of benga (on which there is a general consensus) and what is written about the historical context in which it emerged, I show that the genre was at the moment of its origination a musical articulation of the cultural identity of a generation of Kenyan Africans of the Luo ethnic group who lived through the late colonial Kenya and into independent Kenya. At the heart of the reading is an exploration of the origins and deployments of the practices and technologies that came together at a particular time and place and in specific social and political conditions to constitute benga.

Key Words: benga, Luo, cultural identity, postcolonial Kenya, genre theory



Pain, Loss and Recovery: Musical Articulation of the Talai Persecution in Colonial and Post-Colonial Kenya

Jane C. S. Mwonga

Moi University

Music has been used as an avenue for self and group expression, and to construct identities thereby boosting the performers' and listeners' self esteem. This paper explores the experiences of members of the Talai clan of the Nandi and Kipsigis communities of Kenya, as expressed through Music. The Talai are believed to be seers or prophets and have always been on the move, getting assimilated into different communities such as the Maasai and Nandi. Leaders from the community who had been entrusted with power to lead by the host communities played a major role in providing military, political and religious leadership. They therefore influenced many decisions such as guiding the people on the best course of action to take in situations such as during wars and famine. The Talai people have faced a myriad of hardships since the pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial times mainly brought about by self-defense mechanisms against European settlers, colonialists and traders who came to forcefully impose sanctions and demands on the community. The clan also exists among other Kalenjin communities in Kenya as well, but from the literature available the suffering has been greatest among the Kipsigis and the Nandi. Data for the paper is drawn from the Talai and Kaptel traditional dancers, Arap Birgen, a centenarian and Kiptang'ach Ilet, a renowned musician in the Talai community. They all live in Nandi County, Kenya, and sing popular music and traditional songs. The paper also samples songs on prophecies attributable to the Talai among the Kipsigis community by the late Kipchamba. The paper will also examine the “silent voices” of the Talai women through their minimum presence in the musical life of the community. In connection with this, the paper will examine the Kalenjin women dance group who live in Uasin Gishu county and whose membership comprises female singers from the Kalenjin community including a few women from the Talai community. These singers are usually invited to perform whenever there is a function in the Talai community. Qualitative techniques were employed to obtain data. The data was purposively sampled, drawn from the selected musicians' songs which address the history, identity, pain, loss and recovery of the Talai people. Data for the paper was collected by accessing, and recording the songs where possible and applicable, transcribing the songs and then analyzing the transcripts in terms of form, content and style. Data analysis involved identifying and discussing the themes addressed in the songs in line with the Talai experiences, past, present and moving forward.

Animal Metaphors and Social Messaging in Kipchamba Arap Topotuk's music

Alexander Rotich

University of Kabianga

This paper examines the use of animal metaphors in selected Kalenjin songs composed and performed by Kipchamba Arap Tapotuk and his Koilong'et Band. Purposive sampling was used to pick four of Kipchamba Arap Tapotuk's songs which employ animal/insect metaphors to deliver social messages in particularly distinctive ways. The selected songs were transcribed in their original Kalenjin language, translated and analyzed using a descriptive approach. The motives behind, and the effects of, the use of animal metaphors in the songs of Kipchamba Arap Tapotuk and his Koilong'et Band are critically explored.

Key Words: Kipchamba Arap Topotuk, Kalenjin music, metaphor, social messaging.

Memory, Identity and the Construction of Communities through Music

Caroline Sambai

Moi University

Music as a cultural artifact that embodies a community's identity serves an important function of transferring a group's cultural identity through generations. The paper is interested in how technological innovations and new media are enabling the transcending of the physical boundaries while also acting as a catalyst for building communities to achieve a sense of cultural and social belonging among people living away from their homelands (Georgiou, 2013). Using Maurice Halbwach's social theory of memory, in which particular past social moments that he regards as 'frameworks' over time become useful instruments for remembering, this article considers ways in which music functions as a cultural ambassador that also links diasporic communities with 'home' through songs that narrate shared experiences of the past. The paper focuses on an online Kass FM radio program, *Kas Taibwati?* that plays classic Kalenjin music from past decades to understand how Kalenjins in the diaspora relive their pasts and build communities away from 'home'.

Key Words: Kalenjin music, identity, memory, diasporic communities



Sexual Metaphor and Gendered Meanings in Kalenjin Popular Music

Peter Simatei

Moi University

By the time he died in February 2015, Kiptesot arap Sang, (popularly known after his band as Junior Kotestes) was, arguably, the most prominent artiste singing in Kalenjin language. In fact, as a testament of his popularity Sang emerged in 2014 as the highest overall earner of royalties of the Music Copyright Society of Kenya (MCSK), beating established artistes like Hubert Nakitare (Nonini) and Dennis Kaggia (DNA). I speculate in this paper that the popularity of Sang's lyrics among his Kalenjin audiences is partly due to his ability to reference sexual themes but subtly camouflage them in innuendo and a powerful figurative language. Although romantic love is a prominent theme in Kalenjin popular music, references to sexual love is scanty if not nonexistent. However, by creatively deploying the linguistic resources of his Kalenjin language, Sang speaks through metonymy, ambiguity, irony and metaphor to sing sexual love while concealing the vulgar and the profane that is often associated with the kind of popular music that apes the American genre. Using six of Junior Kiptesot Sang's top songs, this paper, therefore, interrogates how the artiste metaphorises sex in his lyrics in order to avoid a language that would otherwise offend the sensibilities of his audiences. I argue that the challenge of deciphering the deep and double meanings the artist achieves for his music through constellation of metaphors is what makes the consumption of this kind of music gratifying and leads to the creation of a fan culture that makes this consumption collective through live call-in programs in Kalenjin language FM Radios.

Key Words: Kalenjin, popular music, sexuality, metaphor, fan culture.

The Dynamics of African Music Theory and Practice: A Kenyan Perspective

Mellitus N. Wanyama

Kabarak University

Traditional, neo-traditional and contemporary music of Africa is informed by various theoretical frameworks that implicitly govern its structure, production, content and performance styles. The music is either instrumental, vocal or a combination of the two. More often, rarely is the music of Africa complete or meaningful if it does not motivate the music makers, participants or the audience to respond to it by dancing or moving in tandem with its rhythm. Central to this paper is the fact that the indigenous music of Africa continuously evolves in content and style across the precolonial, colonial, post-colonial

and contemporary gamut along socio-cultural, socio-economic, inter/intra-cultural, socio-political factors. Key among these factors is the global technological advancement that has impacted African music both positively and negatively with regard to dynamism in its making, propagation, production, function, storage and performance. This paper clarifies theoretical underpinnings of African music with reference to various eminent theorists such as Ekuweme (2001), Nketia (1974), Blacking (1976), Nzewi (1997), Agawu (2003) Onyeji (2005) Stone (2008), among others. These theories explain the nature of African music, its functions and performance vis a vis its dynamism as a result of its interaction with other cultures of the world, swift technological communication and the ever-evolving socio-political dictates in the current world. Eventually, the Kenyan perspective is exemplified by two Kalenjin popular music examples. This paper is an additional voice to other researches and debates that have recently brought to fore the need to understand the nature and efficacy of African music not only as an educative and communicative forum but also as a tool for cultural awareness, identity, emancipation and socio-economic empowerment.



The Moi University African Cluster Centre (Moi-ACC) is a node in the Africa Multiple Cluster of Excellence (“Africa Multiple”), a transnational project whose overarching aim is to reconfigure African Studies. “Africa Multiple” – its other nodes are in the University of Bayreuth, Germany, University Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Burkina Faso, University of Lagos, Nigeria, and Rhodes University, South Africa – is a platform for scholars to undertake research and engage in conversations that contribute to the greater understanding of Africa in ways that enable the addressing of significant issues affecting the continent's peoples. The present workshop joins in the general effort with its examination of music even as it deploys it to explore cultural identity from diverse disciplinary perspectives.

MOI UNIVERSITY AFRICAN CLUSTER CENTRE

