THE SENATOR NATIONAL CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA OF UGANDA: A BRANDED AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC COMPETITION

by

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Abstract

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The 2006 Senator National Cultural Extravaganza of Uganda was a traditional music and dance competition sponsored by East Africa Breweries Ltd. (EABL). Participants in the competition were required to praise EABL's Senator Extra Lager brand in songs and dances. Unlike other Ugandan competitions and staid nationalist celebrations of folk culture around the world, the Senator Festival consisted of raucous events designed to draw drinking crowds in rural towns and trading centers. Based on fieldwork conducted at events, rehearsals, and administrative planning sessions, this dissertation explores how rural amateur musicians, women's group leaders, judges, administrators, and beer marketers pursued artistic, educational, and commercial goals in and around the Festival. It focuses particularly on middle-brow producers of culture who tend to be overlooked because they are neither isolated bearers of authentic traditions, nor contributors to an

international avant-garde. This study illuminates a large field of "traditional" culture production in a neoliberal Africa that is characterized by the expansion of capitalism to the "bottom of the pyramid," and by development discourses celebrating entrepreneurialism, democracy, women's empowerment, and cultural diversity. Also discussed are extensions and interferences of pre-colonial, colonial, and independence-era modes of spectacle and audience participation into the contemporary period. Finally, this dissertation includes information about evolving Ugandan musical styles and values.

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Notes on Bantu Language Conventions and Other Usages

Throughout, I follow the Luganda language conventions of using the prefix Bu- to for named regions (Buganda, Busoga) and Lu- for languages (Luganda, Lusoga), Ba- for people, and Mu- for one person. This has become standard practice in scholarly writing. I do not use, as some writers do, the prefix ki- to create an adjective. Depending on the class of a noun, an adjective might have prefixes other than ki-. To indicate an adjective, I prefix a dash to the root. Thus a song from Buganda is written "a -Ganda song."

I consistently leave off the prefixes a-, e-, and o-, which are often added in speech, but do not appear in Luganda dictionaries. Thus I write madinda, though it is often said amadinda. I only include these prefixes when quoting someone's speech or song.

A Ugandan has two or more names, including at least one name that comes from his/her clan, and one name usually of Christian or Muslim origin. s/he may reverse the order of names depending on the social context. For example, the man introduced to me as James Isabirye was more frequently called Isabirye or Isabirye James when Ugandans were speaking to each other in vernacular language. In this text, I order names as they were most often presented to me. This usually, though not always, means putting the non-clan name first.

I use italics to signal not only foreign terms, such as madinda, but also English terms, such as tradition, items, and development, which had noteworthy meanings/histories in the local vocabulary.

Introduction

Overview of the Senator Festival

The Senator National Cultural Extravaganza was a Ugandan *traditional* music and dance competition, which doubled as a rural promotional campaign for a brand of beer. It ran three times, in 2005, 2006, and 2007. In 2006, about 300 amateur groups participated, each composing and performing a song and/or dance about the Senator Extra Lager brand. Groups also performed, in front of judges, a variety of *items* demonstrating the *traditional* music and dance styles, costumes, and customs of their home regions.

"Senator National Cultural Extravaganza" was the official title of an event which went by many names. EABL officials in their memos referred to it sometimes as "Cultural Galas" or "Discover Our Land." The artists and administrators I spent most of my time with called it "the Senator Festival," or simply "Senator." Because "Festival" was the name I became accustomed to, I will use "Festival" from here on.

The slogan of the Festival—"Discover Our Land, Our Cultures"—captured the corporate sponsor's strategy of combining a celebration of local *cultures* with a celebration of the Senator Extra Lager brand. The target audience for the Senator brand—one of a number of beer brands made by East Africa Breweries Limited (EABL)—was poor rural people. Cosmopolitan planners of the Festival assumed that local and traditional songs and dances were the best tools for reaching Uganda's poor rural communities. Songs and dances would be provided by local performance groups at little cost; EABL needed only

to promise impressive cash prizes to the winning groups. Hundreds of groups, excited by the prospects of winning a prize and performing on stage, signed up to perform.

The Senator Festival was not the only large traditional music competition in Uganda. Since the 1960s, the Uganda Schools' Music Festival had drawn school groups from all over the country to perform Ugandan *traditional* music and *Western* choral music. This festival was shown in the Academy Award nominated film *War Dance* (Fine and Nix 2008). The successful traditional performance group Ndere Troupe supervised another ongoing national competition, Kwetu Fest, and there were smaller competitions sponsored by humanitarian organizations such as NAWOU, the National Association of Women Organizations in Uganda [*sic*].

The Senator Festival was, however, unique among Ugandan traditional music competitions in several major respects. First, it was a competition for adult performers. Ugandan liquor laws blocked the energetic and well-organized school groups who ordinarily dominated festivals from participating, and hundreds of older musicians, many of whom had never performed on stage, had to be recruited in their stead. Second, it was a festival that held highly public events all over the countryside, in small trading centers and medium-sized towns. Whereas the Schools' Festival and Kwetu Fest brought groups to compete in the capital city, Kampala, the Senator Festival attempted to hold events everywhere except Kampala. Events were staged in eighty counties, in every major region except the Northeastern Karamoja region (Figure I.1). Third, the Senator Festival, as a brand-promotion campaign, included audience-enticing activities such as discos and prize giveaways, which had no parallels in the more purely educational/civic festivals.

Figure I.1. Distribution of Senator Festival events.

If the Senator Festival was EABL's commercial project, it was also the brainchild of a pair of musician-educators who fervently believed in developing Uganda's traditional cultures and hoped to use the Festival to further their own careers as national and international cultural curators. James Isabirye and Haruna Walusimbi approached EABL

with an idea for a Senator Festival and did most of the work of designing and administering it. I will use the term "administrators" to refer to these two men and their team.

EABL, which had been consistently slow and unpredictable in remitting money to the administrators for Festival expenses, abruptly pulled its sponsorship just before a 2008 Festival was about to commence. As of this writing, it did not seem likely that the Festival would start up again on the same scale, though the administrators were looking for another sponsor to take EABL's place.

The Festival in the Contemporary Ugandan Field of Cultural Production

Ruth Finnegan's *The Hidden Musicians* ([1989] 2007) proffered a broadly sociological approach to writing about music. It did not take as its topic an expert composer's body of work or the musical style of a historical period or ethnic group (typical topics for musicology then and today). Rather, following Howard Becker's seminal sociological study *Art Worlds* (1982), it looked at music as a kind of productive activity done by people of wide-ranging interests, talents, and social statuses within the confines of a single British town. Most of Finnegan's subjects were amateurs, whose music would likely be of little aesthetic interest to a connoisseur. This only served to emphasize the point of Finnegan's project, which was not to interpret masterpieces or define styles, but to broadly illuminate the many ways music was woven into the social fabric of a town—one which was, at first glance, musically unremarkable. The music-making she studied was "hidden" to those arts writers who concerned themselves mainly with exceptional musicians and their works, as well as to those sociologists who overlooked music-making entirely. Without restricting herself to a set of specialized musicians, Finnegan asked

"what, finally, is the significance of local music-making for the ways people manage and make sense of modern urban life or, more widely, for our experience as active and creative human beings?" (Finnegan [1989] 2007, 4)

In this dissertation, I take an approach similar to Finnegan's in examining the contemporary Ugandan "art world"—in particular that part of it involved in traditional music or, as Ugandans are more likely to say: traditional *Music, Dance, and Drama,* sometimes abbreviated as MDD. Music, Dance, and Drama is a term developed in official, educational milieux which has parallels in other parts of Africa: *drumming and dancing* in Ghana for example (Coe 2005). School-educated Ugandans prefer the MDD compound over "music" alone, because "music" is considered to be a term imposed by foreigners that leaves out the dancing frequently integral to performances. *Ngoma* is another frequently used term, encompassing both music and dance, that exists in Uganda's Bantu languages but not in the non-Bantu languages spoken in the north of the country. Throughout this dissertation, I will use the term MDD.

Most of the musicians in this study, as in Finnegan's, had limited commitment to MDD as a career. MDD was, for them, one tool among many for helping themselves and their communities. Though I encountered or heard of musical virtuosi, important musical lineages, and fascinating musical styles, for the purposes of this study I did not seek them out or grant them special attention as another musicologist might naturally have done. Rather, I focused on a single festival, and the performers (experts and non-experts alike) and administrators who were drawn into it.

Like Finnegan, I wanted to explore how people were incorporating MDD into their lives in order to better "make sense" of them. No other region in the world has experienced turbulence and uncertainty as Africa has since its Independence. The first wave of independent governments failed to produce stability, and poverty, violence, and corruption have been rampant. The multinational capitalist interventions that define the present neoliberal period do not seem to be ameliorating these problems much and are even aggravating them, especially in countries whose economies are based largely on mineral extraction. The "casino capitalism" of the present period (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001), which causes a few Africans to get mysteriously, spectacularly rich, along with sudden globalized disasters (the AIDS pandemic and, most recently, global warming) add to feelings of uncertainty and "unintelligibility." As Alisdair MacIntyre has argued (1984), humans have a basic need for "intelligibility" in their lives; there is no possibility for ethics without some minimum amount of it. Music-making, dancing, and theater, are activities Africans (and other people around the world) turn to in order to make their lives more intelligible—to connect the pasts of individuals and communities to their present states and projected futures.

I find Pierre Bourdieu's concept of a "field of cultural production" a somewhat sharper tool than Becker's "art world."[1] The field is "the space of positions and the space of the position-takings [*prises de position*]," which it is the scholar's task to reconstruct.

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1. Bourdieu acknowledges Becker's "art world" as a predecessor concept to his "field," but suggests that the field concept goes beyond "a *population*, i.e. a sum of individual agents, linked by simple relations of *interaction*" (Bourdieu 1983, 316, emphasis in original).

The scholar assesses the different positions available in an artistic field (e.g., novelist, curator, amateur) which provide access to different kinds and amounts of capital (economic, social, cultural),[2] along with the different stances (*prises de position*) that people adopt in order to occupy these positions. Bourdieu advises arts scholars to pay attention to large fields, rather than restricting themselves to the (supposed) "works in themselves" because "the essential explanation of each work lies outside each of them, in the objective relations which constitute this field" (Bourdieu 1983, 312).

"Field," more than "world," suggests a space of struggle (a "battlefield"), subject to rapid transformations (a "magnetic field"). Total realignments of a field can be brought about by the activities of one artist competing within it, or by pressures from a larger "field of power" which envelops it. Thus, the position *professional wedding band musician* may become cramped if *professional wedding deejays* succeed in promoting their activities, or if there is a precipitous fall in the stock market (part of the broader field of power), which dampens people's willingness to spend money on music at weddings.

This study looks at the Ugandan field of cultural production at the beginning of what may turn out to be a period of great upheaval, as radical changes are taking place in the field of power. The 1990s saw a rapid expansion of global capital into the Third

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2. Bourdieu allowed for two different "fundamental guises" of capital ("accumulated labor") in addition to economic capital. "Cultural capital" includes acquired "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body," and signifiers of these (art works, diplomas, etc.). An agent's "social capital" is the network of social connections s/he can mobilize. Different positions in the field give their occupants access to—and/or are only accessible by way of—certain networks and mind-body dispositions (Bourdieu 1986).

World and a corresponding evolution of capitalist strategies. The Senator Festival represents a new kind of marriage of cultural preservation to advertising, which we can expect to see cropping up with increasing frequency globally. This study, while it focuses on one country, one artistic sector (traditional MDD), and one festival, may have something to say about trends in a global field of cultural production.

Situation of this Study in Literature on Ugandan Music

This study of a Ugandan traditional music competition gives a sense of the contemporary state of the field of cultural production in Uganda and the developing world more broadly. What I was interested in, in and around the Festival, were the positions people could occupy and the ways they could go about acquiring or holding those positions. In the Festival, one could be a group leader, a non-leading member of a group, a specialist performer brought in from outside, an audience member, a judge, a recruiter, an administrator, an exhibition dancer, a constructor of stages, a seller of Senator beer, an MC, a cameraman, a visiting ethnomusicologist, etc. All of these positions endowed their holders with certain amounts and kinds of capital (social, economic, etc.). All compelled certain social stances (*prises de position*).

I became acutely aware of the field as a field by entering into and operating in it. "Visiting American ethnomusicologist" was both a position I had to work to carve out and occupy, and one already carved out in advance of my arrival, which I—somewhat unnervingly—found myself slipping into. I had a substantial amount of capital (social and economic) in this position, and, in occupying it, increased the capital of some of my Ugandan colleagues. As a first-time field researcher, I had a heightened, and rather ex-

hausting, sensation of my potential and actual effects on the field, and of its preconditioning of my actions. I will give a more thorough account of my ethnographic methods and experience later in this chapter.

Recent ethnomusicological studies of Uganda have begun to take contemporary fields of cultural production and power into account. Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza's *Baakisimba* (2005) is particularly groundbreaking in the way it examines the restylizations and repurposings of a single named Ugandan dance in a range of social milieux. In separate chapters, she discusses "palace baakisimba," "school baakisimba," "baakisimba in the Catholic church," and secular and sacred varieties of "village baakisimba." She then looks at how important gender positions—woman and man—are constructed by means of this dance in each of these milieux. This book, along with other useful recent studies of traditional MDD's place in contemporary Ugandan society (Cooke and Doornbos 1982; Kubik 1989; Cooke and Dokotum 2000; Cooke and Kasule 1999; Barz 2004, 2006), provides a valuable complement to an exceptionally rich body of research focused on 1) Ugandan musical instruments (Trowell and Wachsmann 1953, Wachsmann 1971, Makubuya 1995), 2) distinctive musical techniques (Kyagambiddwa 1953; Kubik 1960, 1994; Anderson 1968; Wegner 1993, Cooke and Micklem 1999; Gourlay 1999), and 3) one particularly vibrant though tragically interrupted musical institution: the old court of the Ganda *kabaka* (Anderson 1968, Cooke 1996).

Uganda has been the site of some of the most rigorous research by ethnomusicologists in the history of the discipline, and of some of its most prized insights. Gerhard Kubik's studies of "inherent rhythms" in kiganda *madinda* music (1960, 1994), and Klaus

Wachsmann's investigation into the historical congregation in Uganda of musical instruments from various other places (1971) may be singled out as essential readings for students in all areas of musicology. Uganda was also the source of an early and important study of an African musical tradition by a black African: Joseph Kyagambiddwa (1956). Despite these and other works' many humbling strengths, one weakness which might be pointed out has been a tendency to examine musical tradition as something separate from the field of power in which it was studied. In studies from the late colonial era, little reference was made to colonialism, except to deplore it as a threat to tradition. More recent studies, shaped by the present academic intellectual climate, pay more attention to music's complex responses to, and integrations in, broad fields of cultural production and power.

In African music and performance studies generally, there are a number of exemplary works which situate local musical and theatrical productions within broader contemporary and historical fields of power. Especially informative are Coplan [1985] 2008 and 1994; Waterman 1990; Fabian 1990; Erlmann 1996; Turino 2000; Cole 2001; Barber 2003; and Coe 2005. All of these books are concerned with seismic shifts in African cultural production in the wake of colonialism. All discuss the construction, in various performance genres, of narratives which help performers and audiences make sense of difficult, disjunct, and uncertain circumstances.

Situation of this Study in Literature on Festivals and Other Traditional Arts Development Projects

Stephen Blum has written that we live in an "age of cultural confrontation" that has spawned "many cultures of comparison—some of them hegemonic, others subordinate" (Blum 1994, 264). Accelerated cultural contact (much of which has been characterized by the aggressiveness implied by "confrontation"), has brought many more opportunities and pressures to make comparisons, i.e., to define one history/tradition/race/ethnicity/culture with reference to others. The words "culture" and "tradition" have proliferated globally as tools for comparing, contrasting, praising, and disparaging groups of people. In situations characterized by little contact among diverse groups, there is no need for such concepts; cultures and traditions become important "only when people are concerned with contacts, conflict and prospects for change" (Blum 1994, 263).

This dissertation is a study of constructions of *culture* and *tradition* in contemporary Ugandan discourse. I, myself, do not attempt to define what belongs to a particular culture or to tradition; rather, I consider other people's uses of these concepts. That *culture* and *tradition* are problematic concepts, which have been used in the service of hegemony-strengthening projects, has been much discussed (Fabian 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Clifford and Marcus 1986 are among the most cited texts). Because anthropology and ethnomusicology have a history of spearheading projects of distinguishing cultures from one another and the "traditional" from the "modern," it is necessary to make clear that when I use the words *tradition* and *culture* I am not asserting the exis-

tence of these as para-discursive objects. I do not wish to label certain things *traditional*, but to understand how and why particpants in the Senator Festival were using that label.

Ethnomusicologists, folklorists, and social scientists, in recent years, have devoted much attention to constructions of cultures and traditions in festivals and other cultural development projects. This is due, in part, to the increasing prevalence of such projects around the world: no matter where one goes, it seems, one encounters ethnic dance competitions and the like. Scholars in the field are often confronted not with neglected local traditions to be cataloged and preserved, but with local projects of cataloging and preservation already underway.

The proliferation of such projects, is, as Blum has suggested, a predictable outcome of increased contact and confrontation among groups. We also need to consider specific histories of confrontation, especially those associated with colonization and decolonization. Colonization required the development of new modes of discipline, which depended heavily on self-disciplining individuals. Where there were no adequately individualist subjectivities among the colonized, they had to be fabricated (Foucault [1977] 1995). *Modernization*, discursively linked to enlightenment and wealth, was said to require the cultivation of self-aware individuals.

One common practice by which *modern* individual subjects have been fabricated is "metacultural interpretation" (interpreting cultures *qua* cultures) (Keane 2003; Urban 2001). Comparing cultures objectively helps the comparers experience some distance between their individual selves and the societies in which they were raised. This practice is, of course, encouraged in First World schools as well as Third World ones, though with-

out the strong threat that if one does not participate, one has no chance of ascending to modernity.

Collecting, comparing, and constructing cultures has become especially urgent in a post-World War II decolonization period, during which many newly sovereign nation-states have learned that their global legitimacy and ranking are to be based on their "great and little traditions and degree and potential for modernizing" (Kelly and Kaplan 2001, 21). Former imperial territories were called upon to quickly prove themselves to be self-sufficient and stable entities, capable of managing (not cleansing) their internal ethnic pluralities. National cultural festivals have allowed states to demonstrate that they celebrate the pluralism within their borders, and are thus stable, modern, and worth assisting.

There have been many studies of traditional arts festivals which assess them mainly as disciplinary and propagandistic tools wielded by state governments. Wim M. J. van Binsbergen saw in the Kazanga Festival of Zambia a "presentation of structured, standardised, stage-directed activity, which is disconnected in space and time from the habitual local context of material production and reproduction, and which involves a strict separation between controllers, direct producers, or performers and a crowd of symbolic consumers who have been reduced to effective non-participation" (Binsbergen 1994, 116). Many authors see, in glitzy ethnic song-and-dance spectacles, simulacra of difference intended to make audiences forget about real, pressing social and economic inequalities. Andrew Apter has discussed such false multiculturalism spectacles in oil-capitalist Nigeria (A. Apter 1996). Veit Erlmann has discussed how the "domestication" of *ingoma* dancing in schoolrooms and festivals of 1930s South Africa played an impor-

tant part in the implementation of a new colonial disciplinary regimen (Erlmann 1989). David Guss has written about "traditionalization" covering up "real issues of power and domination" in Venezuela (Guss 2000, 14). Gavin Douglas has deconstructed a particularly fallacious ethnic dance festival in Burma/Myanmar, one of the world's most authoritarian states (Douglas 2003).

Some authors have identified differences between state-sponsored and commercially sponsored cultural projects as disciplinary systems. Guss sees the cultural operations of the Bigott tobacco company as more subtle and insidious than those of the diminished leftist government of Venezuela, which used to spearhead nationalist culture-comparison projects. Pointing to the Bigott company's slogan (eerily similar to Senator's), "Bigott's other crop/To project our roots/We plant culture/and we harvest art," Guss posits a "calculated confusion in which viewers are suddenly uncertain as to exactly what it is this corporation produces: tobacco and cigarettes, or culture and community?" (Guss 2000, 126). Arlene Dávila, on the other hand, sees corporate sponsorship of music events in Puerto Rico as providing a net cultural gain for ordinary Puerto Ricans. The cigarette company R. J. Reynolds was willing to support popular genres like *salsa* and *merengue* that the government deemed unworthy of national canonization (Dávila 1997). In the Senator Festival, as I discuss, techniques from the government and techniques from the world of advertising were thoroughly intertwined, along with techniques from precolonial times. In this study, I find the Senator Festival's particular kind of commercial sponsorship salutary for the Ugandan field of cultural production overall, but do not assume that commercial sponsorship of culture is always, or usually, so benign.

Scholars have documented various forms of resistance to appropriations and re-structurings of arts by governments and corporations. Trinidadian steel band musicians complained to Shannon Dudley about "spectacular musical effects, celebrity tuners and arrangers, favoritism and incompetency in judging, eroding neighborhood loyalty, and private sponsorship and commercialization" in recent competitions (Dudley 2003, 12). Jesse Shipley notes that in the Ghanaian Key Soap Concert Party, "performers would sometimes advertise for Key Soap or address the social themes prescribed by Unilever, but the effect would often be ironic and even contradictory to the purposes of Unilever" (Shipley 2003, 166). Christopher Steiner discusses how the state-sponsored Festimask Festival of Côte d'Ivoire, "which [aimed] to bring the ethnic distinctions embedded in styles of art into a single 'folkloric' category," failed because it was viewed by both the producers and the consumers as "too 'modern' in its tactics and too insensitive to the demands of 'custom'" (Steiner 1994, 99). I did not encounter much resistance to the Senator Festival as a corporate hegemonic project or one that was "too modern." Participants complained frequently about unfairness, but not about the commercial appropriation of their songs and dances.

Blum's formulation, "many cultures of comparison—some of them hegemonic, others subordinate" (Blum 1994, 264), reminds us that we are not likely to encounter a single culture of comparison in isolation, but multiple intertwined ones, manifesting in different strata of society. Scholars setting out to describe a single cultural development project sometimes end up investigating the many life and community projects it touches. That is, they end up studying the larger field of cultural production. Some particularly big

and complicated traditional culture development projects give scholars a great deal to write about. Notably, Keith Howard has produced a two-volume field study of South Korea's "Intangible Cultural Properties" preservation project, a giant system for canonizing musical (and other) intangible "properties," and their human "holders" (Howard 2006a, 2006b). One gets the sense that very little traditional culture production goes on in contemporary South Korea that does not make some reference to this system, which has both hegemonic "top-down" and grassroots "bottom-up" aspects. R. Anderson Sutton's study of government-sponsored arts schools in Java provides another broad view on a field of cultural production, with a focus on an official cultural-preservation system (Sutton 1991). This dissertation similarly looks at how a cultural development project (one not so large or sustained as those studied by Howard and Sutton) was taken up by, and cast light on, a larger field of cultural production.

Pertinent Global and Ugandan Trends

In this chapter, I highlight some global trends that were particularly pertinent to the Senator Festival—i.e., that gave the Festival its particular set of positions and *prises de position*. While one could interpret the Festival with reference to many different trends, I think there are four particularly important ones to take into account: 1) a new commercial focus on the rural poor, corresponding to a global crisis of capital; 2) a weakening of the post-Independence African state and a corresponding turn to diffuse and unpredictable international sources of support; 3) a recent surge of grassroots associational politics, driven mainly by women; 4) the intensification of a culture of comparison which

takes as its problematic a Ugandan nation-state tenuously composed out of diverse and historically rivalrous ethnic groups.

All of these trends overlap, might be characterized in other ways, and can hardly be adequately summarized here. My intent is only to give some account of larger trends shaping the field, which is described from a ground-level view in the coming chapters.

Global Capital Turns to "The Bottom of the Pyramid."

David Harvey (2006), interpreting Marx, has argued that capitalism must repeatedly fend off the ever-recurring and intensifying problem of the surplus value it generates. As technological developments, outsourcing solutions to labor shortages, etc., make production more efficient, more consumption is needed to (profitably) get rid of a mounting pile of products. The geographical expansion of capital, opening up new labor pools and consumer markets around the globe, has been one of the major means of deferring a crisis of underconsumption. More global capitalism, however, produces more surplus value, and thus perennially compounds rather than solves capitalism's problem.

After the 1970s, the global expansion of capital accelerated with the "turn to neoliberalization," which "entailed breaking down every possible barrier to the profitable employment of the surplus" (Harvey 2006, xxv). States in Africa and other parts of the Third World were opened up to foreign trade, investment, and resource extraction. While neoliberalism has made the world's wealthiest people much wealthier, it has predictably exacerbated, rather than solved, capitalism's problem of surplus value. At present, a new barrier to expansion looms. The consuming power of the world's middle classes is close

to fully exploited; the last frontier remaining where a market for products might be conjured up is among the world's poor—those making two dollars a day or less.

The popularity of business professor C.K. Prahalad's book *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid* (2006) may be taken as evidence of an excitement in the global business community about the prospects of opening up new markets among the poor. Prahalad contends that about $13 trillion is left unexploited at the global "bottom of the pyramid," comprising some four billion people making less than two dollars a day. Businesses, according to Prahalad, can profit handsomely by targeting the poor with their brands. At the same time, they can feel assured that they are aiding the world's poor by drawing them into capitalism and its supposed privileges of "dignity and choice," till now enjoyed by the upper and middle classes only (Prahalad 2006, 20).[3] The main challenge for corporations, according to Prahalad, is in making contact with and distributing products to poor people, especially those who live in rural areas and have limited access to televisions and radios. The way to make contact, he suggests, is through local go-betweens, connected in pyramid schemes to the corporate center—Avon salespeople and the like—who can meet with their neighbors and connect with them in their own languages and cultural styles.

Anthropologists (Wilson 1999, Cahn 2008) have been conducting field research on Third-World people involved in such sales pyramids, and have been finding, not surprisingly, that those salespeople's lives are not as full of "dignity and choice" as Prahalad

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3. I first learned of Prahalad's book from a lecture by David Harvey. While Prahalad focusses on markets that might be created in Third World countries, the targeting of the poor he espouses is also underway in the First World. This has become especially apparent in the last year, as billions of dollars worth of risky credit schemes aimed at the US poor (but disguised as dependable middle-class loans), have been exposed.

might expect. People with no other cosmopolitan connections or options for making money will sometimes express a fanatic loyalty to their pyramid, even as the promised benefits consistently fail to come through. The world's poor rural spaces removed from television and radio are also removed from public scrutiny, and corporations—especially when they frame their projects as altruistic ones *á la* Prahalad—can be as negligent as their corporate consciences allow.[4]

Under pressure from first-world economic watchdogs such as the World Bank, countries like Uganda have been compelled to deregulate and denationalize their economies, and invite multinational capital in. Sleepy national companies, formerly run by the state, have been bought out by international conglomerates in fierce competition with one another. Uganda Breweries Ltd. (UBL), which used to be a national company closely associated with the Ugandan government, is now owned by the Kenya-based East Africa Breweries Limited (EABL), which is in turn a holding of the colossal multinational, Diageo. Uganda's other brewing company, Nile Breweries, was bought by EABL's rapacious rival, South Africa Breweries (SAB) (Willis 2002). In 2006, both companies had beer brands aimed specifically at Uganda's poor rural drinkers: EABL had Senator Extra Lager; SAB had Eagle. Whichever company could make significant inroads into the countryside would establish market dominance in Uganda.

The Senator Festival was exemplary of the recent bottom-of-the-pyramid marketing approach. Senator Extra Lager was, explicitly, a brand for Uganda's poor rural market

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4. In Africa, a particularly exploitative capitalism and a particularly ardent altruism rhetoric have long been linked. King Leopold II concealed his brutal extraction regime in Congo behind a veneer of charity and development (Hochschild 1999).

(Brian Muwonge, Senator brand manager, p.c.). Senator was not sold at all in the capital city, Kampala, where EABL marketed its higher-end beer brands, Bell, Tusker, and Guiness, but only in rural towns. In keeping with Prahalad's advice, EABL outsourced much of the work of marketing Senator throughout the Ugandan countryside. In 2005, the company hired Haruna Walusimbi, a professional musician with a passion for exploring, preserving, and developing Uganda's musical traditions, to recruit amateur groups and put a festival together. Haruna, together with his longtime friend and business partner James Isabirye, set to work planning events and recruiting and training groups from all over the country. It was Haruna and James who sold the idea of the Senator Festival to EABL—not the other way around.

The groups James and Haruna recruited, like pyramid sellers of Avon cosmetics, were entrusted with the task of promoting the Senator brand. Each group was asked to compose a song and/or dance about Senator, in a local language, which would "attach" the brand to local and Ugandan *culture*. EABL exercised little or no oversight over these locally produced advertisements, which in any case were often in languages the marketers could not understand. They trusted the groups to present appealing images of the brand and backed up the groups' songs with other enticements, including all-night discos, prize giveaways, and discounted bottles of Senator.

Musicians have long been recruited to help sell products in east Africa. Flemming Harrev reports that, in the late 1950s, traveling variety shows embarked from Nairobi in which each musician was charged with promoting a different product: Fundi Konte for Bata shoes, Ester Nicholas for Clipper cigarettes, and so on. There were also soda-com-

pany sponsored amateur talent contests, judged with an "applause meter" (Harrev 1985, 112). Today, Ugandan pop musicians perform in front of banners, and sometimes even in costumes, printed with company logos. On the other side of the continent, Jesse Shipley has documented Ghanaian competitions sponsored by Unilever in the 1990s, in which different *concert party* groups were asked to compose promotions for the Key Soap brand (Shipley 2003).

Though marketing through musicians is nothing new in Africa, the Senator Festival may represent a new, more intense, bottom-of-the-pyramid marketing phase. It was remarkable for its harnessing of thousands of amateurs, who were mostly unpaid and unsupervised, but who could communicate brand messages to local audiences in their local languages and traditional music and dance styles. As an advertising campaign, the Senator Festival both *visited* the countryside, and *rose out of* it, in unprecedented ways.

A Diffuse International Development Formation in Place of a Strong State

Uganda limped out of the political and economic devastation of the Amin and Obote years (1971-1986) with very little remaining in the way of government or economy. David Himbara and Dawood Sultan (1995) suggested that Uganda at that time was even less independent than a colonized state: it was like a South African "Bantustan" under apartheid, in that it was entirely dependent on assistance from foreign donors.[5] Uganda was certainly not alone in Africa in its predicament. Like most African countries then

5. Other Africanists have objected to this use of the term "bantustan" to describe Uganda in that it erodes the historical particularity of the bantustans under South African apartheid.

and at the time of this writing, it was particularly susceptible to outside intervention, altruistic and exploitative. If there ever was a hope that the national government of Uganda might someday be counted upon to provide help for the poor, opportunities for the middle class, and support for the arts, this hope has been severely downgraded since the Independence years. Yoweri Museveni, the president of Uganda since 1986, is known for an active use of military force to achieve his political objectives, combined with a passive approach to Ugandan development generally. He is well-liked by multi-national corporations and international economic watchdogs because he holds Uganda's doors open to global capital and the international donor community, and does not try to accomplish too much with the Ugandan state government (other than his frequent military ventures) (Tripp 2004, Okala-Onyango 2004).

Ugandans now seem more likely to put hope in international development NGOs, of which there are a bewildering variety, than in the government. The image of someone getting unaccountably lucky—hooking up with a foreign patron who can take measures to improve the lives of oneself and one's community—was much on the minds of the Ugandans I met. While older, more predictable paths to success are still valued—eg., a degree from Makerere University, membership in the Anglican church, and a job in the government bureaucracy—these paths are becoming considerably less secure under neoliberalism (Mamdani 2007). The most promising roads to success now seem to appear suddenly and arbitrarily, and may disappear just as suddenly, from hundreds of unfamiliar sources based outside of Uganda.

Lives dependent on relationships with distant strangers are characterized by a high degree of uncertainty. This uncertainty breeds adaptability and risk-taking, as can be seen in the flexible maneuvers of "419" e-mail scammers in Lagos (Smith 2007). Laura Edmondson, visiting an epicenter of international donor activity in the war-torn region of Gulu, northern Uganda, noted a certain anxiety on the part of Ugandan performers and artists to hit the right notes that might appeal to altruistic foreign visitors (Edmondson 2005). Several ambitious group leaders I met stressed their groups' abilities to perform songs on any given exhortatory theme: AIDS, the environment, gender, etc. They understood that this adaptability was necessary if their groups were to be prepared to take advantage of the next internationally financed performance opportunity that might appear without warning. Groups brought this cultivated adaptability to the Senator Festival and its advertising task. They arrived also with a belief in the value of publicity, and a willingness to exert themselves for a chance at a long-shot prize.

Large corporations like EABL have strategically appropriated the image of the powerful and beneficent interventionist. This is an image that both appeals to international investors and may have prestige among EABL's target poor rural performers and audiences. The Senator Festival, with its slogan, "Discover Our Land, Our Cultures," hinted at economic and cultural revival. Participating groups were supposed to stress in their songs how Senator was made from ingredients farmed in Uganda. Senator's rival brand, Eagle, mounted a very similar campaign: a ten-page paper, available for download online, details how Eagle beer is produced from sorghum grown on small farms, and how it "is one of an emerging set of exciting, path-breaking initiatives—initiatives that demon-

strate the power of business to do good, by doing good business" (South Africa Breweries 2006).

The Growth of Grassroots Associations, Especially Women's Groups

The Senator Festival recruited mainly from a large pool of women's development groups already existing in the Ugandan countryside. This set it apart from the Schools' Festival, which relied on the existing network of the schools. Most of the people participating in the Senator Festival occupied positions defined by these small grassroots associations, which counted MDD as only one of their activities. One could be a group leader, an ordinary member, a specialist musician or trainer hired from outside, a group's sponsor, etc. Groups provided various positions for the young and old, the better- and worse-off, and women and men. Groups I met were characterized by a remarkable degree of religious and ethnic heterogeneity. Their membership expanded and contracted fluidly, in line with new projects to be taken up and outbreaks of internal dissent.

Rubongoya (2007, 178) has noted that the Museveni years have seen "a growing culture of associational participation." Women's groups have been a driving force in this grassroots activism (Tripp 2000). The international donor community, in keeping with neoliberal concepts, rewards small local initiatives over centralized state ones, and supports women's empowerment. Corporations, seeking to burnish their "development" images, are likewise interested in visibly supporting small, local initiatives. Finally, there seems to be natural resurgence of local associations in the wake of the acute social disruptions of the Amin, Obote, and early Museveni years. New evangelical churches have

provided local venues in which rural Ugandans can come together regardless of their other kinship, religious, and ethnic loyalties (Jones 2007).

While women's participation in the Senator Festival and Ugandan MDD generally is remarkable. Men's apparent domination of many activities by women's groups complicates what otherwise seems like a total liberation. Men were often brought in from outside by the core female leaders of groups to perform special jobs, such as composing competition pieces and training groups. Though auxilliary participants, these men wielded substantial control over what women did and did not do. Though gendered prohibitions in traditional MDD are changing thanks to policies in schools where many Ugandans learn to sing and dance, a number of activities and positions remain in men's hands only.

Governmentality and the Problematic of an Ethnically Plural Nation

The appeal of the Senator Festival's slogan, "Discover Our Land, Our Cultures," resided partly in its conjoining of the plural "cultures" with the singular "land." In this regard, the Senator brand seemed to be taking up a task that the Ugandan state government had failed to complete since Independence: that of 1) recognizing and equitably developing Uganda's diverse parts; and 2) drawing those parts together into a single multicultural nation. The Senator Festival, by holding events across the entire country (excepting the Karimoja region), had an aura of multicultural/nationalist optimism that some Ugandans found appealing. That the Senator marketers were projecting a multicultural "big tent" was evidenced by two enormous backdrops behind the stage at the national-level event in

Masindi: one showing a dancer dressed in a traditional costume of the south, the other dressed in one of the north.

Certainly, the cosmopolitan administrators of the Festival were excited about their efforts to blanket the countryside with events, crossing, in their journeys, ethnoregional boundaries that a few years ago they would not have dared to cross. Part of a budding entreprenurial class, these men saw a mandate in a capitalist venture, which they did not see coming from the government, to cross boundaries and unify people around a common cause: Uganda's diverse traditional cultures. The Senator Festival would be a big tent under which all ethnic groups could congregate while celebrating, not diluting, their cultural distinctions.

The historical unwieldiness of Uganda as nation-state whose boundaries were set by the British has often been demonstrated with a linguistic map like the one in Figure I.2. In the half of the country north of Lake Kyoga and the Nile River, languages of the "Nilotic" family are mainly spoken, while "Bantu" languages are spoken in the South. I do not wish to overemphasize this particular linguistic split as historically determinative, as there have been frequent historical alliances across this boundary, and, obversely, many outbreaks of violence among polities on the east-west axes (Denoon 1982). Yet, considerable distrust and prejudice between the north and the south has emerged since British colonialism and the destructive aftermath of the Obote and Amin regimes. Britain built businesses and a major university in the south, and built a Ugandan army of northerners, leaving the north economically underdeveloped. In the wake of the northerners Obote and Amin's use of the army to brutally impose their authority all over the country,

and Museveni's failure to quell (or, some would accuse, success in exacerbating) the terrorist activities of the Lord's Resistance Army in the north, bitterness and fear has flared up between the north and the south.

Figure I.2. Map Showing Linguistic Regions of Uganda (produced and released under Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 license by Mark Dingemanse at http://www.vormdicht.nl)

Regional tensions are hardly limited to the north-south axis. There are long-brewing resentments between the Buganda kingdom—which the British heavily favored, and which pursued imperial ambitions with British support—and everywhere else. The western Ugandan, Yoweri Museveni's, presidency, has intensified resentment toward the west

of the country, which he is presumed to favor. There have been insurgencies on both the eastern and western borders of the country, and massive influxes of—and campaigns against—foreign refugees and/or ethnic groups portrayed as foreign or insurgent, eg. the Banyarwanda (Rwandans) in the south, and the Karimojong in the northeast. In general, Uganda since Independence has been wracked by ethnic strife, strategically amplified by those in power (Mamdani 2001).

Despite the difficulties ethnic differences pose, publicly engaging in the problematics of ethnic pluralism and singular nationhood is historically established as a power move in Uganda. Dealing with pluralism was a signifier of power in the kingdoms before Europeans colonials arrived, and Europeans introduced a new power-imbued complex of ways of constructing and managing difference.

Collecting diverse musical resources, and constructing new ones, was a political strategy that existed in Uganda before the Europeans' arrival. In the precolonial interlacustrine Kingdoms, as in today's Uganda, musical practices were prime items to be collected and indexed to particular groups within a sovereignty. In the king of Buganda's court, certain musical practices were considered to be exclusive properties of certain clans, and musician-representatives of the various clans were rotated in and out of the palace at regular periods. The king's soundscape was carefully regulated, with different ensembles allowed to perform only at their appointed times (Anderson 1968). By these measures, the king symbolically balanced rival -Ganda clans against one another, and signaled his ability to manage them all. He also drew neighboring regions into the Buganda valence by recruiting their musicians and instruments.

From first contact, Europeans took an interest in musicians in the region and their supposed origins in different "tribes." The explorer John Hanning Speke noted that the "royal musicians" the king sent to meet him in Karagwe (now northern Tanzania) were "a mixture of Waganda and Wanyambo," and gave an account of their instruments and dance and instrumental styles (Speke 1868, 210). Later, the administrator of West Nile district, Alfred Weatherhead is said to have sorted intermingled "tribes" into their assigned territories according to how they danced: if they danced from side to side, he called them Madi; if they danced up and down, he deemed them Lugbara (Leopold 2005, 105).

Distinguishing and mapping ethnic groups was a primary mode by which colonials exercised and imprinted power in Africa (Worby 1994; Mamdani 1996). On a deeper level, it could be said that Europeans imported what Foucault calls "governmentality": an "ensemble" of "institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections. . . calculations and tactics" focused on "disposing things so as to lead. . . to an end which is 'convenient' for each of the things that are to be governed" (Foucault [1978] 1991, 95, 102). Governmentality preconditioned Europeans to see Africa as a garden made up of so many discrete plots to be researched, each characterized by its own "tribes," flora, and soils, some cultivable, others less so, each to be researched and then disposed according to its own potentialities. This governmental way of seeing—which, as we will see, has some compatibility with pre-colonial African ideas such as -Ganda *kukulakulana* (organic growth/ development)—has been enthusiastically taken up by some postcolonial Ugandans. The notion that distinct *tribes* exist, each with its own knowable geographical territory and

tangible and intangible properties, each capable of developing its properties with the support of beneficent managers, strongly shaped the activities of administrators and other participants in the Senator Festival. The Festival slogan, "Discover Our Land, Our Cultures," may have appealed to a lingering Ugandan resentment about their land being supposedly "discovered" by Europeans, and a desire to appropriate the trope of "discovery" for themselves (Mazrui 1969). The knowledge-producing act of "discovery" has been historically crucial to the global spread of governmentality.

Governmentality is not inherently bad, despite its strong historical associations with European colonialism. It is an adaptable ensemble of concepts and procedures that has a wide variety of applications and possible outcomes, some of which will be considered herein. If, in this study, I suggest that participants in the Senator Festival were borrowing and adapting ideas that arrived with colonialism, I certainly do not mean to accuse them of "aping" (P'Bitek 1973) their former oppressors.

Today, along with local languages and local staple foods, local versions of MDD are powerful indexes of ethnicity. It seems that each and every Ugandan ethnic group is thought to possess at least one iconic music and dance style. How did this come to be? In Uganda, the indexing of musical styles to ethnic groups has been carried out most rigorously in the Schools' Festival, which I discuss in Chapter 1 (see also Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2003; 2005). Each group participating in that festival has been required to perform songs and dances from its home ethnic region, as well as ones from some other region. This has resulted in much research into and development of stage-worthy, ethnically specific styles.

The Senator Festival continued the Schools' festival's ethnic-mapping project, with the notable difference that performances of styles considered to be from outside a group's home region were disallowed. The administrators, independently of EABL, vowed that this rule was necessary for the preservation of Uganda's diverse musical map. Amateur groups, they decided, should encouraged not to seek out the crowd-pleasing styles of other regions, but to improve upon their local styles. The administrators, seeking to draw capital for themselves as expert discoverers/governors, and hoping to preserve valuable positions for musicians in the Ugandan countryside as representatives of local culture, took steps to keep Uganda's musical map as diverse and well-defined as possible.

The musical styles that have been catalogued in the Schools' Festival and by the MDD departments of Ugandan universities were once primarily associated with particular social functions: eg., circumcisions, competing for eligible members of the opposite sex, etc. This is something that Ugandan musicians and cultural curators commonly acknowledge, taking an attitude that is both elegiac and pragmatic. They claim that the old "functions" are no longer part of the traditional music, but that the new stage styles are vital and "authentic" nevertheless. In fact, dancing was still practiced in the countryside in the old functional ways, in some villages and regions more than others. I arrived at one meeting with an ethnic Luo group in Jinja region, unfortunately just after the group had just finished a song-and-dance ritual having to do with a newborn's placenta. The same group, upon my arrival, cheerfully transitioned into their stage traditional-dance show. They said they were sorry I had missed the ritual, but that they had been pressed for time and had decided to finish it without me. Some, though not most, groups dance both ritual-

ly and theatrically, and experience no dissonance between the two. In one case I observed, involving a Baswezi religious group, the ritual and the theatrical were blended together.

In general, the function of MDD stage styles is to signify distinctive *cultures* and *tradition* as a past, stable, consoling chronotope. Stage-style traditional dance has been adapted to this purpose elsewhere in Africa: Cati Coe (2005) discusses how, in Ghana, primarily as a result of projects by the state and the school system, *tradition* has become almost synonymous with *drumming and dancing.* Ghana's traditions, which had been considered "primitive," dangerous, and irreconcilable with one another, were, during the Independence period, made more manageable by a process of aesthetic iconization. A similar project of cataloging has happened in Uganda with MDD.

My Exploration of the Field

I first encountered Ugandan music in a graduate survey of the music of Africa taught by Stephen Blum. Blum copied an (at the time, bewildering) cipher transcription of a -Ganda *madinda* (xylophone) piece along with its four possible *miko* modal transformations (see Anderson 1968) onto the blackboard, then played a recording. The improbably fast pattern, which sounded at first like a blur of notes, soon resolved in my hearing into its two "inherent patterns" (Kubik 1960), one high and one low, both available to my ear but apparently never at the same time. There could be no more elegant introduction to sub-Saharan African music, which so often stays relatively "still" while the listener is free to move among different perceptual possibilities. It was my first appreciation of some-

thing radically different in African music from what I was accustomed to in jazz, a music I perform, yet it captured in concentrated form a listening/performing experience I had had in jazz but thus far had been unable to conceptualize.

When I later decided to do field research in Uganda, I had limited knowledge of what I might encounter there. An encouraging article in *African Music* by Peter Cooke and Sam Kasule (1999) suggested that there was a wealth of musical activity, *traditional* and otherwise, that hadn't been studied in the 70s and 80s because of war and repression of scholarship under the Amin and Obote regimes. I formulated my initial research proposal around *kadongo kamu*, a sociocritical popular music genre mentioned by Kasule, but set this topic aside in order to write about the Senator Festival, which I learned about only after my arrival in Uganda.

It was the Festival administrator James Isabirye who introduced me to the Festival. James, an enthusiastic organizer, had graciously prepared an elaborate "program" full of musical activities for me in advance of my coming, which would naturally include many trips out to Senator Festival events. Eager to explore the country, I had no thoughts of turning his suggestions down. The Festival was appealing as a first Ugandan research topic in that it would require me to get a broad overview of cultural production in many parts of the country. In future, more localized, projects, I will be armed with a better sense of whether phenomena I am observing are unique, or whether they are widely experienced throughout the region.

The fact that James helped guide me to a new topic demonstrates how strong an influence one's hosts can have on one's research agenda and ultimately on the story one

tells. This has always been the case, whether writers have acknowledged it or not. Certainly King Mutesa I of Buganda, who sent musicians hundreds of miles to greet Speke, had a shaping effect (a historically crucial one, as it turned out), on that visitor's perception of the region. I was highly accepting of and dependent on James's plans, advice, and information. Though I did not confine my research to people in his circle, I did spend a great deal of time with them, and considerably less time with potential critics of him and/or the Festival. I did gather some sharp criticisms of the Festival from group leaders whom I visited without James. I had brief contacts with other "scenes" centered around former palace musicians, Makerere University, and Ndere Troupe, which might have yielded very different opinions of the Festival had I pursued relationships with people in them. Ultimately, I decided to spend most of my limited time on the people most directly involved in the Festival: the administrators, performers, judges, and group leaders. I was not invited to and did not attempt to conduct research in the corporate boardrooms of EABL, but I did have brief conversations with the brand manager when he visited events.

My field research, which lasted from July 2006 to June 2007, consisted of attending and recording Senator Festival events, paying visits to participating groups in their home villages, conducting interviews with group leaders and important personages in Ugandan cultural development initiatives, and hanging out for extended periods of time with James Isabirye, his colleagues, friends, and family. I attended a total of 22 Senator events out of the 131 that were scheduled over six months (see Appendix 1 for a list of all scheduled events). Often there were two events scheduled on a given day: one in the east of the country, and one in the west. It would have been impossible, and in any case

unnecessary, for me to attend every event. I attended at least one event in each of the Senator Festival's ten regions (each denoted by its central town): Luweero, Jinja, Busia, Kabale, Fort Portal, Mbale, Soroti, Hoima, Lira, and Arua. Sometimes I took the bus to events and sometimes I rode with James in his car.

At Senator events, I observed and videorecorded performances, and conducted brief interviews. Generally, once the competition started, the atmosphere was too crowded and chaotic to allow for more relaxed and thorough discussions. I was able to gather some good data in the languid afternoon hours before events began, during which groups rehearsed, and group leaders, judges, workers, and visitors were willing to chat. The competition part of the event was always followed by a disco, which would last until dawn. I stayed for two of these, but in other cases left shortly after the competition awards had been announced.

After the Festival was finished in December, I returned to villages in the Jinja, Gulu, and Kasese districts to visit with groups. These visits were somewhat formal and spectacular occasions. I would be welcomed with a song, seated in a privileged place, fed, and entertained with a program of MDD. Afterward, I would stand up, deliver a speech of thanks (usually in Luganda), and offer a monetary thank-you gift in full view of everyone. These visits were informative in that I got to observe how groups routinely interacted with potential patrons. I thus occupied the place that would usually be occupied by a politician. I know this, because I also attended village events in which visiting dignitaries other than myself were feted. James taught me, by subtle suggestions, the appropriate ways to behave at such events. On two separate village visits, after groups had per-

formed, James stepped into the role of master trainer, and I got to observe a teaching and rehearsal process.

Much of this dissertation draws on my constant, informal contact with James Isabirye and his immediate circle of family members, colleagues, and friends, which included members of groups participating in the Festival, judges, administrators, and music educators. On a typical day, I would take a motorcycle taxi ride over to James's apartment on the edge of the Namuwongo neighborhood of Kampala, not knowing what I might do once I got there. Sometimes James would be out, but James's sister Irene, James's wife Victoria, and/or Victoria's sisters, would be hanging out at his house, and I could talk to them about their performance groups Twekembe and Tugezeeko, both of which were competing in the Senator Festival. Sometimes Haruna or other Festival workers would drop by to discuss business matters with James. There was a constant flow of people in and out of the small, five-apartment compound, and I had many opportunities to chat about music and other topics.

I also got a view of typical Ugandan domestic life: especially the ways men and women were conditioned to act in it. I was constantly served food and offered a seat on the couch, while women (when they were not working) sat on the floor or in chairs according to what seemed to be a clearly defined hierarchy. There were men's and women's spaces in the compound, and I was likely to be shooed away from the latter. The compound was a microcosm of Kampala as an intensely multiethnic, multilingual city. The renters were from different ethnolinguistic regions of the north and south, and they hired servants from still others.

On many days, I would cross the street to the Greenhill Academy campus, where James taught music to primary and secondary students, and he would give me a lesson on the xylophone and/or the lamellophone. Sometimes there were students present and I would practice and receive instruction along with them. I attended five of the Greenhill school assemblies in which James's daughter was performing, and performed myself in two of them, on the xylophone, lamellophone, and piano. Hanging out at Greenhill, I learned a good deal about primary and secondary education in Uganda, at least as it manifested in more prestigious Kampala schools like Greenhill. The Senator Festival, it turned out, needed to be understood in its connections to a school complex.

In addition to learning instruments with James, I participated as a neophyte dancer in four rehearsals of the Greater Light Dancers, a born-again Christian group in Kampala. In these rehearsals, I got some sense of how groups, like the ones in the Senator Festival, operated. I also learned how some dances were taught and distinguished from others.

Besides learning from Ugandan informants, I also learned a lot from fellow non-Ugandan researchers I met in the field. Lydia Boyd, a cultural anthropologist and my partner, was a source of information about Uganda, and someone with whom I discussed my field observations constantly. Peter Cooke, one of the important ethnomusicologists of Uganda, visited while I was in the country, and was a deep source of information.

I spent time cultivating both short-term and long-term relationships with people. I could not, of course, construct relationships any way I liked: I had to adopt stances (*prises de position*) already conventional in Ugandan society. I learned much about the field

by temporarily occupying various spaces in it. I have already alluded to one position I frequently occupied: that of a *visiting dignitary* in a village. In the early stages of research, James inserted brief village visits into my itinerary; later I set up my own, by cell phone. During these visits, there was no question of my behaving like a fly-on-the-wall observer. I had to publicly receive the sung praises and gifts that were offered me, and publicly pledge a gift of appropriate value in return. As long as I followed these standard procedures, it was possible to make departures from the protocol, including interviews with group leaders, etc. Mikael Karlström and Carol Summers have given good accounts of Ugandan protocols of patronage and their political functions in village Uganda (Karlström 2003; Summers 2006).

Talking, since my field research, with other ethnomusicologists and anthropologists, I have gotten the sense that some of them would consider it terribly corrupting to pass out money publicly (or at all) as I often did. Certainly, descriptions of ethnographic methods often leave out money transactions, either because they did not happen or because they were deemed inappropriate to write about. Michelle Kisliuk, admirably forthcoming about her own money dealings in her African research, wrote "I argued [to her friend and guide] that maybe I could not buy an understanding of the world of the pygmies without cigarettes, but that I did not want to buy it. I rather wanted to earn it" (Kisliuk 2001, 54). Though I shared Kisliuk's longing to earn my hosts' respect by non-monetary means, I did not see paying and earning as mutually exclusive. Appropriate payment was a way of showing I understood and respected the field and my place in it.

My monetary payments/gifts to Ugandans with whom I had longer relationships were of a different, more surreptitious kind. James, Haruna, and other people who helped me never demanded specific amounts for their substantial services. I had to learn to read very subtle signals that it might be appropriate now to give something. What Parker Shipton has characterized as an African "fiduciary culture" based on "entrustment" (Shipton 2007) was much like what I experienced and observed in my research. Everyone, including me, owed something to multiple other people, and it was usually not clear exactly how much was owed, or when a debt would be paid off (if ever). Relationships were sustained around unresolved debts, and this seemed to be how much business got done. Coming from a culture where debts are to be avoided or at least precisely articulated, I had some emotional difficulty adjusting to such purposeful ambiguity and avoidance of finality when it came to money matters.

Money was certainly not the only way I cultivated short- and long-term relationships with Ugandans. The Luganda language, with which I gained some proficiency (not fluency) within a year and a half of study, served as a tool for demonstrating my dedication to and respect for Ugandan culture, at least in the southern, Bantu-dominant regions of the country. Performing on the xylophone, or attempting a few dance steps, served a similar function. My Luganda studies also enabled me to ask questions and interpret answers in some interviews, read pertinent articles in the *Bukedde* daily newspaper, and (with assistance) comprehend song lyrics.

James found my digital camera and videorecorder very useful. I provided him with copies of footage I took at Festival events, and he sometimes borrowed my camera

to take pictures of instruments, musicians, pages of books from the Uganda Museum, and family events. James was planning to build an archive of materials on Ugandan traditional music, and planned trips for the two of us around things he wanted to capture on video. Together, we produced a promotional video, with subtitles, of James's sisters' group Twekembe's performance at an AIDS development event. We also, at his suggestion, recorded a series of films about the construction and playing technique of the *ndingidi* fiddle, which James sent to his musicologist colleague in Europe, who was planning a web site about Ugandan music.

These photo and video documentary projects helped James, Haruna, and me to imagine an equal, collegial relationship that was comfortable for all of us. James and Haruna allowed me to listen in on their meetings about the Senator Festival, and sometimes even solicited my opinions on some of their plans; they were interested in what an American music scholar would think of various aspects of their project. My opinions, and simply my presence, may have directly affected the Festival in certain respects. For example, a certain group my wife and I liked, Mon Pi Dong Lobo, was invited to perform an "exhibition" at the national competition, though it had been eliminated by the judges at an earlier level of competition. James, knowing that I would be attending certain events, asked that the order of performed *items* (Traditional Folk Dance, Solo item, Senator song, and Traditional Folk Song) be altered, so that the most visually impressive dances could be videorecorded (for my collection, and James's) in the best available light.

I tried to keep James and Haruna informed about my research and writing project. I kept a blog about my Ugandan experiences, which James read and occasionally com-

mented on. He liked the idea that images of the Festival and my experiences in Uganda were being conveyed to the larger world, and I liked the idea of giving him and other Ugandans who were helping me a rough preview of my writing style and stances. I received comments online, both supportive and critical, from other readers, named and anonymous. As I realized that people, other than James and Haruna, my family, and my friends, were reading my diary entries critically, I became more conscious of the dangers of publishing, from the authoritative position of a university scholar, these sometimes naive and undigested "rough drafts" about my Ugandan experience. While some people, including Ugandans I was working with, have expressed appreciation for my making my instantaneous impressions widely available, I doubt that I will have the confidence (or carelessness, depending on one's view) to take up this kind of instantaneous and universally available publication again in future field trips.[6]

If James, Haruna, and I strove for a collegial relationship, I was always aware of the severe economic imbalance between me, as an middle-class, university-affiliated, Fulbright-sponsored American, and them, as Ugandans struggling for money and recognition. The gap between us was demonstrated when the three of us put together a scholarly panel for the International Council for Traditional Music in Vienna, which, in the end, only I could afford to attend. While I have no illusions that my representations of the Senator Festival and the field of cultural production in Uganda will reach very far, my scholarly work on Ugandan music may well end up with more readers than James's, because I (so far) have a better position, and a better knowledge of the *prises de position*, in

6. The blog is no longer available online, though I can provide copies upon request.

the global academic field of cultural production. Then again, James might very well close the gap between African and Western academies, as a number of African scholars, such as Nannyonga-Tamusuza, have.

Summary of Chapters

Four chapters are loosely structured around four important positions in the field of cultural production: judge, audience, administrator, and group leader. Each chapter approaches its topic differently. The chapter on group leaders is thoroughly based on interviews, and includes many passages in group leaders' own words, whereas the chapter on audiences relies very little on interviews with individual audience members, but instead considers event architectures and the kinds of audiences they seemed to generate. The chapter on administrators is informed by my prolonged companionship with two administrators, rather than on recorded interviews with them. The chapter on judges examines competition rules and filled-out score sheets to arrive at an assessment of what judges do.

In discussions of these positions and their histories, a theme of *work* emerges which is addressed in the concluding chapter. Different kinds of work—clerical, artisanal, entreprenurial, and collective—were constantly on display in the Senator Festival. Participants took pains to show that they were capable of different esteemed kinds of labor, whether actual paying jobs existed or not.

Chapter 1, on judging, discusses the *items* groups were required to perform in the Senator Festival, the ways performances were scored, and the relationship of this festival to the long-running Schools' Festival. I discuss how ethnic musical distinctions, and val-

ues drawn from western stage performance traditions, are central concerns in communications from judges to groups. I also analyze a piece in an orchestral style that emerged out of competitions.

In Chapter 2, on audiences, I narrate how Senator events typically unfolded, focusing on the commercialized audience-participation activities that set the Senator Festival apart from the Schools' Festival and other traditional MDD festivals. I explore how Senator Festival event architectures invoked three different historical public formations: a precolonial formation of patron-welcoming ceremonies, a colonial formation of school assemblies, and a neoliberal-era formation of mass-media advertising.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the Festival administrators—James, Haruna, and the people who worked for them—and their views about traditional music, the rural-urban divide, and entreprenurial capitalism. James and Haruna were urban men, who sought to reconnect to the village cultures they had had to leave behind, and also strove to establish themselves as ethnomusicological experts in a global scholarly community.

Finally, Chapter 4, focuses on the group leaders participating in the Senator Festival. I address how group memberships were managed; how they composed and rehearsed items; and how they viewed the Senator Festival as an opportunity for publicity and enrichment. There was a great diversity of kinds of groups (which made the Festival interesting), but the majority of groups were based in women's development groups, who tended to see music as a gateway to more lucrative entrepreneurial activities.

Chapter 1. The Rules of the Senator Festival, and Performers and Judges' Responses to Them.

At a Senator Festival event, each participating group was expected to perform four *items,* which were listed in a *syllabus* written by the chief Festival administrators James Isabirye and Haruna Walusimbi. These items were:

1. Solo Performance *or* Traditional Instrumental Ensemble (group's choice)	5 or 6 minutes
2. Traditional Folk Song	6
3. Creative Item (about Senator Extra Lager)	8
4. Traditional Folk Dance	8
Total	27 or 28

The practice of drawing up a syllabus for a competition or stage event, which lists a number of standard *items* each group must compose and perform, originated in the long-running Uganda Schools' Music Festival. Certain items—Traditional Folk Song, Creative Item, etc.—have become important conventions for stage performance in Ugandan traditional music, in and outside of competitions. Groups build repertoires of Traditional Folk Songs and Traditional Folk Dances, upon which they can draw for various public performance occasions, and are accustomed to composing Creative Items which address assigned social themes. In this chapter, I discuss the history of the items ap-

proach, and its usefulness to workers in various strata of the Ugandan field of traditional culture production: musicians, judges, administrators, and sponsors. I then address each of the four items required in the Senator Festival, focusing on guidelines laid out by administrators, approaches taken by groups, and comments made by judges.

Items, in general, are associated with progress and development. Performance groups develop themselves by building flexible repertoires of items. Music administrators believe they help to advance Ugandan traditional MDD by inventing new items for syllabi and teaching groups the conventions of existing ones. Items are tools for organizing and comparing musical resources. Implicit in the Traditional Folk Song item, as it has historically emerged, is the supposition that all linguistic groups in Uganda have, or might be able to invent, songs that can be placed in this category and compared to one another.

Items are not clearly and rigidly defined as templates for performance. Conventional ways of performing Traditional Folk Songs and Traditional Folk Dances have evolved over the years through interactions among administrators, groups and judges. Knowledge about these evolved conventions is both valuable and unevenly distributed. A group is at some disadvantage, no matter how well it knows its local traditional genres, if it is not able to package them into the standard item formats judges specify. Does a group know that a Traditional Folk Song is supposed to consist mostly of singing, and not much dancing? If it doesn't know this, and dances too exuberantly, it is likely to lose points in a competition. The uneven distribution of knowledge about item conventions was a particularly salient issue in the Senator Festival, which involved many poor adult rural perform-

ers possessing little formal education. School has been the most likely place to learn about items, not only in Schools' Festivals, but also in school assemblies.[7] One of the major things the 2006 Senator Festival did was to introduce school item conventions to these musicians who were unfamiliar with them.

The transmission/withholding of knowledge about item conventions is a theme of this chapter. I show how judges in the Senator Festival were instructed to look for certain qualities in groups' items, and assign them scores and comments based on them. These qualities, drawn largely from an art music discourse adapted from the West, were hardly self-evident to the groups participating in the Festival. A group would not necessarily be attentive to the "dynamics" in its Traditional Folk Song, unless it had been instructed in the meaning and value of "dynamics." Judges' communications to groups, as we will see, were often vague and unedifying. This obscurity, I suggest, served ongoing constructions of expertise that judges needed if they were to retain their positions in the field.

The syllabus, and the items within it, are valuable to judges and administrators as frameworks for knowledges they produce and have first access to. There is a systematicity to the syllabus format that appeals to educated judges and administrators in the present Ugandan social and political climate, in which elections are rigged, money set aside for public works projects vanishes, doors of opportunity held open to college graduates slam shut without warning. At one important regional-level Senator event in Jinja, there was a

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7. A school assembly in March 2007 at Greenhill Academy primary school, where James taught music, featured 34 items performed by schoolchildren of different grades, including "set pieces," poetry readings, eight Creative Dances, six Traditional Folk Dances, poetry and story recitations, two Folk Songs, a fashion show, a drama, and a piano recital.

heated controversy among judges and administrators when the local favorite group, which had impressed everyone with its exuberant Traditional Folk Dance item, lost out in the point totals to a rival group which had performed all four of its items competently, if not extraordinarily well. While some administrators, including James and Haruna, were stung by what they felt was an injustice to the losing group, I sensed that all the administrators and judges felt consoled that at least the system had worked. The group with the solid set of items, not the one with the most exciting dance, had won; the judges had set aside their gut reactions and exercised a scientific calculation, based on their knowledge of the requirements of different items. In a Ugandan political and social environment characterized by a lack of transparent and consistent meritocratic, electoral, and juridical systems, there may have been something consoling about the group with the most points on paper winning, even if it was not the most beloved group.

The syllabus of items format is popular among groups, because it gives them a variety of roles to play at a given event, and a large set of possible areas in which they might outperform other groups. A group of performers that lacks a superb Traditional Folk Dance can hope to catch up in points if it has an excellent Traditional Folk Song or Solo item. Sets of items test all the resources of groups—artistic, financial, and political. For Traditional Folk Dances, groups work out complicated choreography and recruit virtuosic dancers to display their skills upstage. Highly skilled players must be recruited for Solo Performance items. For Traditional Folk Songs, choirs not only polish their singing, but also come up with dramatizations representing local (or other people's) esteemed traditions. Creative Items require groups to come up with songs and dances which exhort on

some theme assigned by a sponsor: "AIDS," "Environmental Awareness," "Youth in the Struggle against Backwardness," or the excellence of Senator Extra Lager. Each item is thought to require its own set of lavish costumes and props. Costumes, above all, show the resources of a group as a political entity, since they are expensive and must be paid for by a rich patron.

The required items of the Senator Festival originated in the Schools' Festival, a national traditional culture competition for schoolchildren, which served as both a template and an object of criticism for the Senator Festival designers. The next section gives a brief history of the Schools' Festival and its items. I then discuss each required item of the Senator Festival, with attention to (1) indications given to groups by administrators and adjudicators on a "syllabus;" (2) performance choices by groups; and (3) comments made by judges on adjudication forms, shaped by administrators' guidelines that were printed on those forms. My aim is to elucidate not just the structures of the Festival, but also conventions which inform the Ugandan field of traditional culture production generally.

History of the Uganda Schools' Music Festival

This brief account of the history of the Uganda Schools' Festival comes mostly from an interview with Dr. Arthur Wilson Musulube, who served as the Music Inspector in Uganda's Ministry of Education in the 1970s and 1980s. I met Dr. Musulube at a school/performance space he was managing in Jinja town. He was pleased to be asked about the Schools' Festival and his work in developing it, and wanted to give me a thor-

ough and precise account. He constructed his chronological narrative around a progression of items*:* first came the Set Piece, then there was the Traditional Folk Song*,* then the Instrumental Composition*,* etc. I took this as evidence of the association of *items* with broader narratives of progress—Uganda's progress, and Musulube's own. I was accompanied by Haruna Walusimbi and Ssengendo Abdu, of Nile Beat Artists, who contributed recollections of Schools' Festivals from their younger days. I also interviewed George Kakoma, who was the first Music Inspector following Ugandan Independence. Some of this account is corroborated by the one given by Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005).

Dr. Musulube's account of the Schools' Festival centered on the inclusion over the years of new items in the syllabus. The Namirembe Church Music Festival, which later became the Schools' Festival, was started by Reverend G. M. Duncan of the Namirembe diocese of the Anglican church in 1929. At that time, the required items included English hymns in sol-fa notation and "canticles in Gregorian style of singing," both translated into Luganda (Musulube p. c.). No Ugandan traditional music was included.

After Duncan died, the Namirembe Festival lapsed for some time and then was revived in 1944 (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005). It came under the direction of Klaus Wachsmann, who was then working for the Office of Protestant Missions in Uganda.[8] Wachsmann added to the syllabus: "Negro spirituals, original compositions in African, and Traditional Folk Songs." No dancing was yet allowed. Original compositions were not

8. Wachsmann later served as a curator and music researcher at the Uganda Museum in Kampala, then moved on to a distinguished academic career in ethnomusicology in the United States and Germany.

yet bound to an exhortatory theme, and could be on any topic. Hymns and canticles were still on the syllabus as Set Pieces, but could be replaced with approved *Anthems* (Musulube, p.c.).

After Ugandan Independence in 1962, the name changed from the Namirembe Festival to the Uganda Schools' Music Festival. At this time, the Festival became truly national in scale, inviting, for the first time, school groups from northern Uganda. It also came under the administration of the Ministry of Education, which began work on a music syllabus. According to Dr. Musulube, after Independence there was a new consideration of "music" as a state-supported, secular subject in schools, as opposed to the "singing"—an activity strongly linked to the Church—that had previously gone on after school. The Traditional Folk Song, Traditional Folk Dance, and Instrumental Composition items were added to the competition at this time. In the new nationalist spirit, these new items were intended to educate students not only about their home musical traditions but also about musical traditions from all parts of Uganda.[9] During Dr. Musulube's tenure

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9. The Ugandan poet Okot P'Bitek, in a 1970 lecture, gave a sense of the nationalist cultural ferment of the time:

> This literary outburst is only a small part of a much more comprehensive cultural revolution that is sweeping post-*uhuru* Africa. Amid the political confusion, coups and bloodshed, there are festivals of African music, dance, poetry and art exhibitions. African sculpture and paintings are found in every home in the cities and towns. Dance troupes have sprouted like mushrooms and have won applause in theatres and open-air arenas at home and abroad. (P'Bitek 1973, 15).

P'Bitek himself ran a National Cultural Centre in Kampala in the 1960s: a lively, Africa-centric alternative to the National Theatre, that served as a performance space for Muyinda's Heartbeat of Africa (see footnote below), a national choir, and other influential performance groups.

in the Ministry of Education, student groups were required to perform one Traditional Folk Song from their home region, and one from some other Ugandan region.

In the mid-1980s, Dr. Musulube was involved in the implementation of the Creative Instrumental Composition item. This item required student groups to form traditional instrument ensembles structured like European orchestras, with instruments grouped in sections. In an Instrumental Composition ensemble, there had to be at least eight different instruments "of all classes," (winds, strings, percussion, etc.) played by a minimum of about fifteen performers.[10] Cultural exchange was, again, a main object of this item: groups who came from regions where few instruments were in use—the Karimoja region for example—were encouraged to borrow instruments from their neighbors to fill out their ensembles in all the required "classes." According to Dr. Musulube, because of the Schools' Festival and the Instrumental Composition item, the large *adungu* harp of the North became popular in the South, Karimojong students started to play xylophones and other instruments, and generally, in Haruna's words, "instruments, instead of being regional, became national." It is more accurate to say that the Schools' Festival may have accelerated a process of exchange that was already underway.

Some kind of form or "organization"—rondo, minuet and trio, theme and variations, etc.—was mandatory in the Creative Instrumental Composition item. At first, the

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10. The Ugandan traditional-instrument "orchestra" concept was pioneered by Evaristo Muyinda, one of the leaders of the Heartbeat of Africa troupe. Efforts to "develop" or "improve" Ugandan instruments with Western values in mind (standard piano-style tunings, etc.) were already underway in mission schools in the 1950s (Kubik 1989). Some of these "improvements" have taken hold, and others have not. I encountered no xylophones that sounded like they had been tuned in standard Western intervals.

choice of form was up to each group, then specific forms were mandated in each year's syllabus. Dr. Musulube and Haruna did not see these forms as impositions from a European tradition; rather, they explained to me that forms such as these already existed in traditional Ugandan compositions—they simply had never been labeled as such.[11] In a 1970 paper given at a UNESCO meeting on African music, the Ugandan composer and former Inspector of Music, George Kakoma, discussed such Ugandan applications of Western musical forms, under the heading "Reducing Monotony":

> It is true that, in traditional songs, the words seem to take precedence over the tune. The good solo singer is the one who does not have to repeat words he has already sung. Instead, he goes on improvising new words, which closely fit the pattern of singing, and also make sense. Because of this practice, the melodic line did not receive the attention it deserves, and very often the same type of short phrases were repeated time after time, without the melody developing any further. In order to avoid this monotony in traditional melodies, two or three songs on the same theme are joined together to form one short contrasting song in A + B + A2 form. The idea is foreign, but has been well received wherever it has been tried. (Kakoma 1970)[12]

According to Musulube, the organization guaranteed by these required forms enabled liberties in other areas. In his words, "anybody was free to play some kind of organized work. And using anything! People used even to bring the wooden mortars on the

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11. See Kubik 1989 for a discussion of ideas colonial-era African intellectuals' shared about African and European musical traditions evolving from a common point and potentially converging to another in the future.

12. Kakoma provides, in this paper, a notated example of "The 'A + B' idea in a typical folk song."

stage. Provided that it was something to sound like a musical instrument. Provided it was proper organized."[13]

In the late 1980s or early 1990s, the Schools' Festival came to have an annual exhortatory *theme*, "Youth in the Struggle Against Backwardness," being one of the earliest. Themes that followed included "Universal Education," "AIDS," and "The Ugandan Constitution." According to Musulube, the idea of a theme first arose out of a desire to replace the assigned Western "set piece," with an "Original Composition, Western style," which would have the goal of stimulating new Ugandan compositions. For this item, school music teachers were required to write out new choral compositions based on the social theme, or have someone else write them out for them. The "Creative Dance"—also based on the theme—and Solo and Duo Instrumental Items were added at this time.

Each year, courses have been offered to train teachers in the requirements of the year's syllabus. If a teacher does not know what a "minuet and trio" is, he or she might learn about it from trainers hired by the Ministry of Education. Trained teachers then disseminate the information they learn to other teachers in their region. The Senator Festival relied on a similar system of field training, with a syllabus serving as the main object of study.

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13. Instruments had to be in some way "African"—a grand piano would not have been allowed.

The 2005 Schools' Festival Syllabus

Musulube provided me with an excerpt the 2005 Schools' Festival syllabus, which I have reproduced in Table 2. The national event for this Schools' Festival was held at the National Theatre in Kampala in 2006.

Table 1.1 Required Performance Items at the 2005 Schools' Festival.

Item #	Title	Time	Indications
1	Original Composition, Western Style	**	"Choirs are required to compose songs in Western style. The songs composed should: a) be based on the theme; b) have appropriate harmony; c) meet the minimum standard for each level, i.e. Primary, Secondary and PTC[14] choir is not expected to present a song of a primary school level." "When composing the following should be followed: 1) use of appropriate key; b) have a song based on a certain form, i. e. strophic, binary, ternary, rondo, etc."
2	Uganda Traditional Folk Song*	8 min.	"free choice; may be accompanied or not according to the tradition."

14. PTC stands for Primary Teacher College.

3	Uganda Traditional Dance*	9 min.	"The performance should not last more than nine minutes. Authentic elements of the dance must be adhered to, i.e. accompaniment, costume, makeup and movements."
4	Instrumental Composition*	9 min.	"Primary school choirs—rondo form Secondary schools and PTCs—minuet and trio form BTVET[15]—theme/air and variations"
5	Sight Singing	**	**
6	Original Composition, African Style*	**	**
7	Creative Dance*	9 min.	"Must be based on the theme [in 2005, "The Resurrection and Benefits of the East African Community"[16]]. Must be presented in nine minutes. Should concentrate on using body movements and sound effect [*sic*] to convey appropriate message."

15. BTVET stands for Business, Technical and Vocational Educational and Training.

16. The "resurrection" of the East African Community, a pet project of President Yoweri Museveni, was far from accomplished in 2006 when the finals for this Schools' Festival were held. Rwanda and Burundi did not join the Community till 18 June 2007. This theme could hardly have been more distant from the experiences of the Ugandan schoolchildren who performed in this Schools' Festival. Nonetheless they acted out, dutifully and with great gravity, signings of treaties, raisings of flags, and the like.

8	Drama	15 min.	"Must be based on theme. Must be not more than fifteen minutes. Should be in English or any Ugandan language."
* Items marked with asterisks served as models for Senator Festival required items. ** These indications were left off the copy of syllabus that was available to me.			

In the Schools' Festival, not all students from a school group perform all the required items. Many more students from a school participate in the "likable" Traditional Dance than in the "resented" Sight Singing (Isabirye p.c.).[17] A teacher must select a minimum number of students from his or her school to perform each item. 60 students from a school might perform the Traditional Dance, whereas only 32 (the minimum number) tend to perform the Sight Singing. The value placed on learning techniques associated with European art music is evident in the syllabus. Besides sight singing, students are expected to sing and play in forms such as "rondo" and "minuet and trio," and in an "appropriate key."[18] There is a stress on educational progress in steps: primary students should

17. James Isabirye wrote to me, "I can tell you sight singing is the most resented item over the years; even during my time in School. At Kiira College Butiki, I was the Choir Secretary and charged with the duty to train our choir in sight singing, a thing that made all the boys in our choir to wake up early every morning to do at least 2 pieces of 4 measures every morning. I used to. . . set [the pieces] myself and guess what, at [the] time I set pieces that I could not sing myself because I wanted to give all possible challenges - wide leaps, syncopated rhythms etc. Due to this effort we put in, at no time was our choir beaten in Busoga region because [of] our scores in sight singing. Dance and Instrument playing are more likable to the students and those attract big crowds."

18. These requirements really test the trainers, who select and compose the pieces, rather than the students.

perform the rondo form, secondary students ought to be ready for minuet and trio; primary school students sight sing from sol-fa notation, secondary students from staff notation.

Students and their teachers are instructed to "adhere to" the "authentic elements" of whatever Uganda Traditional Dance they choose to perform. Significantly, the syllabus asks groups to perform "Uganda" Dances and Folk Songs, not necessarily ones specific to their respective ethnic regions. Thus a school group from the Buganda region could, if it wished, perform a dance from Busoga, or an Acholi dance. This freedom was purposely not given to groups in the Senator Festival.

Also notable in the Schools' Festival syllabus is the indication "African Style" attached to the Original Composition. *African* is commonly used in the Ugandan art world to label creative works that are seen as modern and bound neither to any particular Ugandan ethnic tradition nor to any Western style. *African*, *creative,* and *original* are terms

used interchangeably in Uganda to distinguish artistic efforts from others that are *local/ traditional* or *Western*.[19]

The Senator Festival administrators borrowed from the Schools' Festival: (1) the "Uganda Traditional Folk Song," (2) the "Uganda Traditional Dance," (3) the "Creative Instrumental Composition" (in the Senator Festival, "Traditional Instrumental Ensemble"), and (4) the "Original Composition, African Style" which was combined with the "Creative Dance," to make the Senator Festival's "Creative Item" (Senator participants were allowed to compose either a stationary song or a dance, whereas Schools' Festival participants were required to compose one of each). Left out of the Senator Festival were the two items designed to test students' fluency in European choral styles and technique: "Original Composition, Western Style," and "Sight Singing," as well as the lengthy "Drama."

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19. The English terms *traditional* and *creative* have translations in Ugandan vernacular languages. For example:

English	**Traditional** Folkdance/song	**Creative** Item/Song
Luganda	amazina ag'**obuwangwa** amazina ag'**ekinansi**	oluyimba olu**yiiye**
Rutoro	ekizina eky'**okwecwererra**	eky'**okwehangahanga**
Lukonzo	olhwimbo olhw'**ekibuthiranwa**	olhwimbo olwh'**erihangahanga**
Ateso	ekosio lo **einono**	ekosio lo **pwakuna**

The 2006 Senator Festival Syllabus

Indications for the four required items of the 2006 Senator Festival were given on a syllabus similar in format to the 2005 Schools' Festival syllabus. These indications are reproduced in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2. Indications given on the 2006 Senator Festival syllabus for the four required items.

Item #	Title	Indications (from syllabus)
1	Solo Performance *or*	"Dance accompanied by others as in local context [or] song vocal [or] instrumental/vocal combined."
	Traditional Instrumental Ensemble	"Make the instruments to communicate a message in their traditional context. Any form will be accepted but it should be clear that the traditional local contexts of the various instruments matter. It may not be too formal."
2	Traditional Folksong	"Must be in a local language of the area. Best if it is to do with social life. Avoid sad stories, as they will not be attractive."

3	Creative Item	"Original composition song about Senator [or] creative dance about Senator. Interpret how Senator can substitute local gins and put it in their place. Attach this to the culture of Uganda."
4	Traditional Folkdance	"Must be local."

Most notable in the Senator Festival syllabus is the insistence on "local," a word that did not appear in the 2005 Schools' Festival syllabus. The "traditional local contexts of the various instruments matter" in the Traditional Instrumental Ensemble, and the Folksong "must be in a local language of the area." This reflects the priorities of the main administrators, James Isabirye and Haruna Walusimbi, who were concerned that the Schools' Festival was having a homogenizing effect on Ugandan traditions. According to James, Schools' Festival groups, given the freedom to choose dances from any region they pleased, were consistently choosing the same flashy dances from the same regions and neglecting those of their home regions. If the Schools' Festival administrators placed a high value on national cultural exchange, the Senator Festival administrators placed a high value on local cultural preservation and development. This was aligned with EABL's locality-targeted marketing strategy as encapsulated in the "Cultures" of its slogan "Discover Our Land, Our Cultures."

I now address each of the Senator Festival required items in turn, with attention to performance group approaches I witnessed, rubrics for judging each item printed on adjudication sheets, and judges' comments.

Item 1 (First Option): Solo Performance

Most groups in the 2006 Senator Festival chose to present a Solo Performance rather than a Traditional Instrumental Ensemble orchestral-style item. The latter, which required a large number of group members competent on instruments, and a lengthy composition and rehearsal process, was more difficult for a group to prepare than the former. Those few groups who presented orchestral-style items, such as the Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope (the winners of the 2006 Festival), specialized in orchestral playing.

The Solo item could be an unaccompanied vocal solo, a singer accompanying himself[20] on an instrument, an instrumental solo without singing (Plate 1.1), or a dance. If the soloist only danced, s/he could be accompanied by an ensemble of any size. If s/he sang and/or played an instrument, s/he had to perform alone. At the national competition, there were three solo dances, two vocal solos, one fiddle solo, one lamellophone solo with singing, one flute solo, and one Traditional Instrumental Ensemble piece.

The Solo item brought professional musical virtuosity to what were otherwise amateur-level events. This was James's and Haruna's intention in including the item and making it count as much as it did: they hoped the virtuosos would raise the bar for the

20. As I explain in this section, women solo singers never accompanied themselves on instruments (or played solo instrumentals) at Senator Festivals I attended.

rest of the performers. The selection of a solo performer was no small consideration, as this item counted for a full 25% of a group's total score. The most competitive groups brought virtuosi in from outside the group—sometimes from other groups that had been eliminated in lower levels of competition—to ensure high scores on this item.

Some groups tried out new soloists when they advanced to a new level. The -Soga group Tugezeeko lined up three different performers to choose from: a male fiddler-singer, a male dancer, and a female dancer. The female dancer, Sarah, was a professional who performed for money at weddings and was only tangentially involved with the group. Some groups' prospects in the Festival rested heavily on one star soloist: for example, one group from the Luweero (Buganda) region seemed to be largely a vehicle for its leader, a male specialist at the kiGanda *mbaga* (wedding) dance who called himself Super Dancer.

Solo items varied considerably from region to region. At all events I attended in the eastern Soroti region, all the solos were by lamellophone players who also sang and danced. By contrast, at the Jinja (Busoga) regional event there were solos on a variety of instruments—including fiddle, panpipes, xylophone—as well as solo dances. Each instrument presented its own challenges to be overcome by the virtuoso. The -Soga xylophone player demonstrated how he could play, by himself, at full speed, the two parts of a xylophone pattern, such as usually played by two players interlocking their parts. Other instrumentalists introduced new challenges for themselves that went beyond the usual ones associated with the instrument. A fiddler from Lira bowed the same pattern on his fiddle: behind his back; under his raised leg; with the bow clamped in a gap between his front

teeth; and with it sticking up from between his toes, sawing the fiddle against it. A player of a drum chime (a set of tuned drums played like a xylophone) from the Budaka district played a complicated pattern with one hand while keeping the beat with a rattle in the other and singing in unison with the drums. At the climax of his performance, he rolled on his back and wiggled his feet in the air. Solo items that focused on instrumental playing were often whole-body routines, which showed off the performer's coordination, agility, and emotional engagement with the music. I was told that several of these showy routines were devised specifically for the Senator Festival: the fiddler had not explored acrobatics until his group leader advised him to. In this respect, many groups misapprehended the wishes of judges, who tended to disapprove of excessive showmanship.

Women soloists—of whom there were a good number, though not as many as the men—did not play instruments. They either danced, accompanied by an ensemble, or sang without accompaniment. During my time in Uganda, I never saw a woman singing solo while accompanying herself on a lamellophone, fiddle, or other string instrument—one of the most common and esteemed activities for men in the Ugandan traditional music world. Women's solo dances were more restrained than the men's. In Luweero, in the Buganda region, I saw two solo performances, one by a man (Super Dancer) and one by a woman, of the *mbaga* (wedding) dance, a dance traditionally performed by women, whose movements explicitly model sexual intercourse.[21] The man, dressed in woman's

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21. The kiGanda *mbaga* dance, accompanied by explicit lyrics sung by a lyre player, was traditionally supposed to educate the newlyweds on sexual technique (Mukubuya 1995). At the Senator Festival, the *mbaga* dance was accompanied by fiddle, xylophone, and drums, but no lyres.

clothes, reveled in the sensuality and exhibitionism of the dance, while the woman seemed to maintain a decorous detachment from what she was doing—her serene smile and conservative dress belying the gyrations of her hips, which were subtler than the man's.

Adjudicators wrote their comments and scores on adjudication forms, preprinted with "guidelines" and a scoring system. Groups were supposed to receive copies of the filled-out forms, and at least some did.[22] The standard adjudication form used for the Solo Instrumental Performance item, the Traditional Instrumental Ensemble item, and the Traditional Folk Song item, is reproduced in Table 1.2.[23]

Table 1.2. Guidelines and Scoring on the Solo Performance/Traditional Instrumental Ensemble Adjudication Sheet.

"Guidelines"	"Marks"
Tone: Quantity, Quality, Control (Appropriate)	20

22. One group I talked to complained bitterly that they had not received their forms after the 2005 Senator Festival.

23. Solo dances were judged on a separate adjudication form, with the same guidelines as the Traditional Folk Dance form.

adjudicators' comments five different performances (1, 2, 3, 4): 1. *"Tone a bit original but remember to keep the key throughout"* 2. *"Tone authentic and appropriate"* 3. *"Tone quality not authentic. Might be because of the wire??"* 4. *"Breath not well controlled. Tone a bit authentic"* *5. "Quality not authentic"*	
Diction: Clarity, Naturalness of words (skills in instruments)	20
1. *"Words clearly heard but song should be more varied, unnecessarily long. Text too thin."* 2. *"Skilled player and steady"* 3. *"Skilled player"* 4. *"Skills not well displayed"* *5. "Not quite skilled"*	
Rhythm: Timekeeping, Freedom, Steadiness	10
1. *"Steadily kept rhythm but improve on it"* 2. *"Rhythm steadily kept and controlled"* 3. *"Rhythm distorted by unnecessary changes in playing styles."* 4. *"Rhythm steadily kept, but the play a bit timid. Needs improvement."* *5. "Unnecessary movements distorted the breath and rhythm. No need of lying down."*	
Phrasing: Shaping, Flow and Continuity	10

1. *"Steadily controlled breath. Stage well used. Movements meaningful."* 2. *"Music flowing steadily"* 3. *"Avoid unnecessary movements which distorted the flow of the music."* 4. *"Steadily observed the flow."* *5. "Lacked continuity. Add variations."*	
Expression: Dynamics appropriate	15
1. *"Hand and facial expressions clear but dynamics should be watched"* 2. *"Dynamics observed. Well varied but should be made more distinct"* 3. *"Dynamics not well observed."* 4. *"Dynamics not well clearly exploited. Should be improved"* 5. *"Dynamics should be watched"*	
General Presentation: Authenticity, Belonging as stated	25
1. *"Ending was not well done. Otherwise fair presentation."* 2. *"Stage was well used. ?? kept in one place which helped to keep stable. Good presentation."* 3. *"Avoid exaggerations while playing. Otherwise fair performance."* 4. *"Fairly presented"* 5. *"More improvement needed on playing techniques."*	

Total	100

The guidelines printed on the adjudication forms reminded adjudicators to reward moderation, consistency, and authenticity. Conservative characteristics of performance singled out as desirable included "control," "clarity, "naturalness," "timekeeping," "steadiness," "authenticity," and "belonging." Though there was no reminder to reward groups for exciting and innovative performances on the adjudication form, James and Haruna assumed that judges would naturally be swayed by these and by the crowd's enthusiasm.

The ways different characteristics were isolated and ranked may tell us something about the administrators' musical values and musical values in today's Ugandan traditional music world generally. "Diction" was given a high value, in keeping with James's and Haruna's usual emphasis on lyrics and linguistically informed performance in traditional music.[24] "Diction" and "naturalness of words" were translatable to "skills in instruments." The valuation of "diction" raises one of the major apparent problems of adjudication in the Senator Festival, which was that at many events, only one of the three to five judges employed would understand the regional language the musicians were singing in. This problem of judging language use/diction would seem to be far worse when a Southern (Bantu language-speaking) Ugandan had to judge a Northern (Nilo-Saharan/Sudanic speaking) Ugandan performance, or *vice versa*. James and Haruna tried to ensure

24. In Chapter 3, I discuss the importance of "deep" registers of Luganda and other Ugandan languages in James and Haruna's conception of traditional music.

that every Festival event would be judged by at least one adjudicator fluent in one of the native languages of the region in which the event took place.

"Tone" was as highly valued as "diction." For the adjudicators quoted in Table 1.3, "tone" seemed to encompass both intonation (which is what the adjudicator perhaps means by the "key" that the performer should remember to keep throughout), and timbre generally. "Rhythm" and "phrasing" counted for only half as many marks.

Under the category "expression," all the adjudicators quoted focused, as the guidelines suggested they should, on "dynamics." The idea that a performed piece should have loud sections and soft sections, and that these "dynamics" are part of "expression," is one that has been heavily promoted in the Schools' Festival. Much Ugandan traditional music stays at a relatively constant level of loudness over the long term, though there are subtle shadings within phrases. Ugandan musical intellectuals, like James and Haruna, inspired by Western classical music and by potentials they hear in their own traditions, are actively trying to change this. They assert that "dynamics," like the various forms—rondo, binary, minuet and trio, etc.—have long been latent in the best Ugandan traditional music; they are only helping to tease them out. In all four adjudicators' comments, the "dynamics" are treated as inherent in the performed piece and either "observed"/"exploited" by the performer or not. Some soloists performed pieces characterized by distinct loud and soft sections, others did not. Groups who were aware of the judges' and administrators' interest in dynamics (and knew what "dynamics" meant) had an advantage over those who didn't.

Item 1 (Second Option): Traditional Instrumental Ensemble

The winning group of the 2006 Senator Festival, the Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope, won largely on the strength of its Traditional Instrumental Ensemble, which used a set of distinctive instruments designed and built by the group's leader, Godfrey Yekka. Yekka described this item as requiring a performance by an "orchestra," with instruments organized in "classes," that had to be "academic," as opposed to "entertainment." I saw three other orchestra-style groups, all at the Lira regional event in Northern Uganda, where large informal ensembles of harps and/or lamellophones are popular. All three traditional instrument orchestras I saw had conductors who stood in front of the group like Western orchestra conductors.

Yekka's ensemble was, he explained to me, like a vastly expanded *akogo* lamellophone group. Yekka was born in what is now the Amuria district, in the Ateso ethnic region of eastern Uganda. Lamellophones, I was told, have been the most important instruments the Ateso traditional music world, or at least the male portion of it, for some time. Women are traditionally not supposed to play them, but do play them in Yekka's group. Where Yekka grew up, groups of men and boys used to form lamellophone ensembles and compete in local (non-school) competitions against groups from other villages. These competitions were the main venues where eligible young men and women would find each other for marriage.[25]

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25. Peter Cooke (1999) mentions similar local lamellophone competitions for young Luo-speaking men in Lango district. In both regions, the lamellophone is a relatively recent arrival, having been brought over from the Congo at the end of the 19th century (Wachsmann 1971).

The two main instruments in a typical *akogo* group are (1) lamellophones of various sizes and (2) an end-blown flute—typically a length of plastic pipe with a notch and finger holes cut in it (Yekka, p.c.). Fiddles and drums are optional additions. For the Cultural Fires of Hope, Yekka increased the number of lamellophones to about 30, and added xylophones and harps of various sizes, fiddles, panpipes, and drums. He retained the single flute in its traditional role. All of the instruments were of his own design and manufacture. James and Haruna considered him an excellent instrument builder. Yekka said that the elders of his village built their own instruments, and he acquired some of his skills in instrument making from them. Some of his versions of instruments were extraordinarily large, such as the bass xylophone the group nicknamed "Garang" after the coffin of the late Southern Sudanese leader John Garang (Plate 1.2). Yekka says he got the idea for expanding the *akogo* ensemble from Schools' Festivals:

> That knowledge I picked from the Schools' Festivals. Because the Schools' Festival they encourage a school choir to learn all African instruments in terms of orchestra. You collect all the ennanga [small Ganda harps], the panpipes,[26] the thumb pianos, and the harps—all those sort of instruments, African instruments. So you make sure all those classes you have, then you train. (Yekka, p.c.)

The Schools' Festival Instrumental item inspired Yekka to experiment not only with different instruments, but also with different compositional forms. He believed (echoing Kakoma) that the "academic" techniques explored in Schools' Festivals could help performers of traditional music styles sustain audience interest:

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26. Panpipes are seen as the quintessential -Soga instrument. Yekka went to the same secondary school in Jinja (Busoga) as Haruna Walusimbi (St. James), and learned to play and make instruments in -Soga style.

> Now, with my brothers down in Soroti, they have one problem. They play a single piece, without putting academic part of it. What I mean: variation, various variations. Things like rhythm contrast. Things like dynamics. Thing like repetition, augmentations. Things like ornamentations. Things like rhythm multiplications. For them they play single tune up to the end without putting all those things. That's why the beginning is brighter. Then when you go deep, around two minutes, three minutes it becomes boring, because they're repeating the same thing throughout. (Yekka, p.c.)

Yekka described the Senator Festival piece the Cultural Fires of Hope performed as a "rondo" or "ABACA". Each of the three basic "tunes," A, B, and C—all composed by Yekka— had to have a "contrasting rhythm" but with the same length as the others as measured in beats. Each tune yielded variations, which he called A1, A2, B1, B2, etc. Yekka taught each tune to the group by first singing it to them and having them sing it back to him in solfege, then writing it in solfege notation on a blackboard and having the students learn it on instruments.[27] Once all the students had learned the basic melody, different variations on it were composed and split up among different sections of the orchestra. It was apparent from the performance I heard that the students, to varying degrees depending on which instruments they played, had freedom to compose/improvise variations on their assigned tunes. Elaborating on melodies is conventional in Ugandan traditional music-making, and has not become problematic in styles deemed *academic*.

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27. Even after the notes were written on the blackboard, Yekka continued to teach the song aurally. I did not see an example of Yekka's music notations, though I did see sol-fa notations written by other music teachers. Yekka played me a recording, which he had made on his cell phone, of a rehearsal in which he sang a tune in solfege to his group and they played it back.

Table 1.3 gives an outline of the Cultural Fires of Hope's piece, as they performed it at the Senator Festival National-level event in Masindi.[28] Table 1.4 shows a transcription of the three main tunes, A, B, and C, as well as a D tune which comes at the end.

Table 1.3. Outline of Traditional Ensemble Item by the Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope

Section	Approx. tempo in beats per minute	# of elementary pulses per beat	Timing in minutes from start
Introduction	96	4	00:00 - 00:22
A	76	6	00:22 - 02:20
B	126	4	02:20 - 04:46
A	76	6	04:46 - 05:50
C	88	6 then 4	05:50 - 08:39
A	72	6	08:39 - 09:38
D	152	4	09:38 - 11:03

28. At the regional-level event in Mbale, the Cultural Fires of Hope performed a different, shorter piece for their Traditional Instrumental Item.

Table 1.4. Four Tunes in Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope's Instrumental Ensemble Item.

Each tune was cycled with variations until the end of its section. The ciphers represent scale degrees in a roughly equidistant pentatonic scale. I have assigned ciphers arbitrarily, and my "1" may not match Yekka's "do." Underlined ciphers are an octave down. "x"s are used to mark beats, and "."s are used to mark elementary pulses.

"A" tune

x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . .
1 . 1 3 3 3 3 . 2 1 . . 3 . 3 5 5 5 5 4 . 3 3 2 5 . 5 2 2 2 2 . 1 3 1 2 5 . 1 3 1 2 5 . 1 3 1 2

"B" tune

x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . . x . . .
5 5 . 4 4 . 4 . 1 . 1 . 3 . 4 4 5 5 . 2 2 . 4 . 1 . 1 . 1 1 1 1

"C" tune

x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . .
2 . 2 . 2 . 2 . 1 . 5 . 4 . 4 . 4 . 4 . 4 . 2 . 1 . 1 . 1 . 1 . 5 . 4 . 3 . 3 . 3 . 3 . 5 . 1 .

"D" tune

x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . . x. . .

1. . 11. 1. 1. 4. 3. 5. 1. . 11. 3. . 3. . 3. 5. 5. . 55. 5. 5. 4. 3. 3. 22. 22. 2. 1. 3. 1. 3.

Visible in Table 1.4 is Yekka's strategy of regularly alternating between duple and triple meters (4 and 6 pulses per beat). The sections varied in tempo, with the fastest section, D, coming at the end. The transitions between sections varied and had obviously been practiced: some were seamless, others involved the ensemble coming to a full halt and then proceeding on. The recurring A section always began with the "A" tune played at about half tempo on the xylophone, followed by an acceleration up to normal tempo.

Within each section, each tune underwent variations. For example the eight-beat "A" tune was followed by a sixteen-beat variation (Table 1.5), in which each two-beat phrase was repeated twice. This was perhaps the "rhythmic multiplication" technique Yekka referred to in my discussion with him.

Table 1.5. One Variation on the "A" Tune

"A" tune

x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . .
1 . 1 3 3 3 3 . 2 1 . . 3 . 3 5 5 5 5 4 . 3 3 2 5 . 5 2 2 2 2 . 1 3 1 2 5 . 1 3 1 2 5 . 1 3 1 2

"A" variation, twice as long as "A"

x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . . x . . . .

1 . 1 3 3 3 3 . 2 1 1 . 1 3 3 3 3 . 2 1 3 . 3 5 5 5 5 4 . 3 3 2 3 . 3 5 5 5 5 4 . 3 3 2

x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . . x . . . . .
5 . 5 2 2 2 2 . 1 5 5 5 5 . 5 2 2 2 2 . 1 . 5 . 4 . 5 . 1 1 1 . 4 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 1 1 1 . . . .

Another way variety was achieved in the composition was by means of different ensemble textures (Table 1.6). Generally, there were shifts from one texture to another every eight beats.

Table 1.6. Some Different Ensemble Textures Used

1. xylophones and fiddle play the tune alone
2. xylophones and fiddle play the tune while flute improvises
3. lamellophones and panpipes play the tune (or a variation on it) in unison with the xylophones and fiddle
4. lamellophones and panpipes play the tune (or a variation on it) in unison, while xylophones and fiddle play an accompaniment pattern
5. whole ensemble "trades" with the solo improvising flute in 4-beat segments

The flutist improvised freely and virtuosically much of the time, and took the spotlight, at one point being called to stand and play in front of the group in the manner of a jazz soloist in front of a big band. In Ugandan traditional music ensembles I saw, including *akogo* ensembles, the flute always took an independent, improvisatory role compared to the other instruments. In the Cultural Fires of Hope ensemble, the panpipes and

lamellophones played melodies in unison, with little embellishment, like violins in a string section. This was a departure from these instruments' typical interactions in traditional music ensembles, which entail interlockings of thoroughly embellished parts, rather than strict unison playing.

The adjudicators at the national-level event gave this piece particularly high marks, which contributed to the Cultural Fires of Hope's overall victory. The adjudicators recognized the choice of form: "ABCA rondo form came out clearly. The conductor is in control of his group." Other remarks on the adjudication form were "All sections are catered for"; "All performers quite skilled"; "Tempo is kept steadily"; "Good bridges used" (in reference to transitions between sections); "Dynamics are very well controlled"; and "All performers are quite free and enjoying what they are doing."

Item 2: Traditional Folk Song

Traditional Folk Songs were typically performed by choirs in alternation with solo or duo singers, who stood in front and sang through microphones.[29] Narratives in the songs were acted out by select performers in front of the choir, who might or might not sing. The choirs consisted mostly of women, dressed in matching formal traditional costumes—often *busuti* dresses. This item was an opportunity for the women who made up the political core of a group, and who might be less virtuosic in music and dancing, to

29. Not all Traditional Folk Songs involved choruses. Some were performed by solo singers with accompaniment from an instrumental ensemble, which might also sing instrumental refrains. This was a typical format in the Soroti region where groups were more likely to be men's lamellophone ensembles than outgrowths of women's development groups.

participate and show off the group's hard-won "smart" clothes and tightly rehearsed movements. Men took many of the star singing and acting roles, or accompanied the singers softly on instruments. Choristers did not dance energetically in Traditional Folk Songs, but made coordinated gestures, in the manner of a church or school choir, to emphasize points in a narrative. Groups might dance a little in jubilation at the very end of their Traditional Folk Song items, but the most energetic dancing was saved for the Traditional Folk Dance.

Groups' interpretations of the Traditional Folk Song varied. According to Deborah Kyobula, a member of the Basoga group Tugezeeko, the item might or might not include a song known to be old—one "our grandies used to sing" (Kyobula, p.c.). A particular song was one element which, in combination with others, could establish a Traditional Folk Song item as adequately traditional. As important as song choices were choices in clothing, stagecraft, dance, singing style, and instrumental accompaniment. The challenge before a group was to invoke a local traditional past within norms of authenticity and good taste. She explained to me, "You have to go deep in those old days. You can have new words, but the meaning out of it takes you back traditionally. There could be new words. But what you do, in your actions and in the way you play on stage, takes you back to the old days." By contrast, Gladys Laker, the leader of a group from Gulu district, Mon Pi Dong Lobo (Women's Development Group), expressed the opinion that the Traditional Folk Song should have "an old tune," but could have new words and a modern story line.

Deborah's group, according to her, was capable of composing and performing Folk Songs around five different themes iconic of -Soga tradition: "twins," "marriage,"

"hunting," "digging" (farming), and "Baswezi" (a traditional religious cult). "Twins"—a song celebrating the birth of twins after a woman's infertility—was considered especially emblematic of Soga tradition, and was the song most Soga groups in the Senator Festival performed. According to James Isabirye (who was Deborah's brother in law, as well as a Festival administrator), a "twins" Folk Song should entail (1) "particular tunes[30] like 'Nabirye Yazaala Abalongo' [Nabirye gave birth to twins]"; (2) the use of the small *nduumi* drum from the Soga *tamenha ibuga* set of drums; and (3) a dance to this drum, characterized by "jumping gently." These, according to James, are "key elements of the real twin ritual" which a group "must bring out onstage." In contrast, a "marriage" Folk Song "has traditional elements too, welcoming the in-laws, but the rhythms are not specific here, [and] even the tunes vary much." Groups who choose the "marriage" Folk Song have to depict aspects of the *kwandula* brideprice ceremony authentically, and adhere to traditional singing styles, but they are not required to sing specific melodies, though "this has been changing a little." Regional repertoires of Folk Song items undergo evolution, as different groups try different approaches in competitions.

Different ethnic regions of Uganda had different iconic Folk Songs. For example, among Ganda groups, Folk Song Items about harvesting *nswa*—"white ants"— were popular. Soga groups might sing Folk Songs about *nswa*, but only to demonstrate that they are capable of performing songs from the Buganda region. A group from Busoga could not sing a Folk Song about *nswa* in the Senator Festival, since it was supposed to

30. By *tune*, James meant a basic melodic pattern, usually eight or sixteen beats in duration, to which the long text that constituted a *song* was fitted.

be singing Folk Songs from the canon of the Busoga region. In the Schools' Festival, as I have mentioned, each group was supposed to perform one song from its home region, and one song from elsewhere. One can envision how such a requirement must have stimulated the formation of distinctive regional canons of songs.

Conventional stagings have developed for each Folk Song item. In the "hunting" song, some brush was piled up at the center of the stage. It concealed an invisible wild beast, which was encircled and then speared by male hunters. Following the kill, the hunters divided up the "meat" (skins hidden in the brush). The Ganda "ants" song was staged similarly. In place of the brush, an anthill was constructed at center stage, which was draped with the barkcloth blanket traditionally used to collect edible ants. Women pestered the anthill with sticks, and then collected the make-believe insects. The Soga "twins" song featured a clownish traditional healer character who sat next to a small grass hut for spirits. A "barren" woman came to the healer for a cure. As an assistant shook a rattle in his ear, he bounced wildly, and delivered a happy verdict in a gruff spirit voice: the woman would be blessed with fertility (Plate 1.3). The clowning of this "witch doctor" character, and the titillating subject of witchcraft (still practiced abundantly in the countryside, but frowned upon by Christians and Muslims), no doubt helped make this a popular Folk Song item choice. The witch doctor with his spirit hut appeared not only in Folk Songs of Busoga, but also in Folk Songs of other Ugandan regions. If one purpose of "Traditional" items was, as Deborah put it, to "take you back to those old days," another implicit purpose may have been to put some distance between the reformed present and certain uncomfortable traditional practices consigned to the traditional past. A comi-

cal, stylized witch doctor character perhaps allowed viewers so inclined to see such traditional healers as part of a remote and surreal past, though they were quite active in the present. In Busoga, I visited a traditional healer of the Baswezi cult and saw similar small grass huts, where spirits were supposed to live. The healer, a man named Kabindi, after the small tobacco pipe he constantly smoked for spiritual inspiration, was far more dignified than the witch doctor stage characters in the Senator Festival.[31]

Folk Songs shared an emphasis on the bounties achievable through collective work and submission to traditional authority figures and rituals. In the -Soga "marriage" song, an unhappy girl goes to her aunt, who finds her a husband and arranges a *kwandula* brideprice ceremony, which enriches the girl's family. Some songs involved resolutions of tensions through the sharing of home-brewed beer among elder men. Groups who wished to please judges had to be sure to depict traditional activities in a suitably dignified way, and not allow the crowd-pleasing comedic aspects of the stage show to sully their representations of tradition. Rhythm Troupe, a group from Rakai in the Buganda region, was severely penalized because the judges found its depiction of traditional banana beer brewing to be inaccurate and offensive. At one point, an actor pretended to wipe sweat off his brow, blow his nose, and add the effluvia to the fermenting brew. This was seen as disrespectful to -Ganda tradition. Rose Ndagano, the leader of the group, retorted

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31. Emmindi lead a performance group named after him which participated in the Festival and performed songs specific to Bacwezi possession rituals. When Haruna and I visited Emmindi in his village, Haruna was able to join in the drumming of Bacwezi-specific rhythms.

in an interview that this was "how it really is" and that the city-dwelling judges had no idea what they were talking about.

Some groups knew Traditional Folk Song item conventions better than others; these conventions were taught in schools, and groups whose members were not school-educated were at some disadvantage in the competition. By the time the competition had progressed to the national level, most of the remaining groups had Traditional Folk Song items which centered on drama and tightly coordinated choral singing of songs composed in contrasting sections, with strategic attention to "dynamics." In earlier phases of the Festival, there was a greater variety of approaches to the Folk Song item: groups, especially from more remote regions such as West Nile, were more likely to sing the same tune the whole way through, without acting out a story. James related to me that, for some groups, even the notion of a song that was not also a dance was unfamiliar:

> Now, I remember the Baluli people who came to Luweero one time in 2005, when I tried to adjudicate at the district level.[32] For the folk song item, they sang a few words and hell broke loose—all of them started dancing as if we had told them that the most energetic of them would win a prize. Old men and women they were. Then I asked their leader at the end, whether it was a dance or a song. She assured me it was a song. They had sung less than five sentences and danced to the end. No variation in the music or dance motifs. When time for the folk dance came, they did exactly the same thing. Then again I asked the leader ". . . was that a dance or a song? . . . ." and she assured me it was a Dance. We were amused and amazed. Interesting discoveries. I found out that I did not know much about the Ugandan Music traditions. (Isabirye, email, March 2008)

32. James served as an adjudicator in 2005, but declined to do so in 2006, fearing accusations of nepotism.

One can tell from James's description here that he wasn't much bothered by some groups' ignorance of item conventions. He was, rather, charmed by such groups and curious about them. James and his administrator colleagues were ultimately more interested in giving poor groups opportunities and incentives to play than in moulding them into school-style competition groups. They knew that the younger, lither, better-connected, school-educated groups would probably rise to the top of the competition, but they had a great fondness for eccentric groups of elderly performers. The judges, partly because they had to firmly assert their expert objectivity in the face of protests by groups, took a less tolerant stand.

Some groups, not steeped in Schools' Festivals, were not familiar with the Traditional Folk Song item as a song in traditional style *about* tradition. The instructions for this item on the syllabus were somewhat vague: "Must be in a local language of the area. Best if it is to do with social life. Avoid sad stories, as they will not be attractive" (Senator Festival syllabus). Not receiving clear instructions as to what the theme of the song should be, many groups opted, strategically, to sing a second song (in addition to the Creative Item) about Senator beer. This mistake cost them on the score sheets. James and the other administrators considered this misunderstanding to be one of the major flaws of the 2006 Festival, and vowed, in the interest of fairness, to do a better job of informing groups about the Traditional Folk Song item in the next year.

In commenting on Traditional Folk Songs, judges focused on the same characteristics they focused on in other items: "distinct dynamics," "appropriate tone," and "continuity." As with other items, judges rewarded moderation and deducted points for per-

ceived excesses: "the song lacked control and was noisy"; "try to use less drama." Some groups were admonished for letting the instrumental and solo voice parts drown out the chorus (a problem that may have come from the amplification system, rather than the playing). Some comments were aimed at specific perceived inauthenticities in singing and dress: "the yodeling were off"; "the 'Mugole' [king] should have dressed in a traditional way"; "the tremolos are not natural."

Item 3: Creative Item (Senator Song)

According to the syllabus, the Creative Item could be either an "original composition song" or a "creative dance" about Senator beer. Most groups chose to present a "song" rather than a "dance." Creative Item songs were mostly choral pieces staged very much like Traditional Folk Songs, with a chorus fronted by solo singers and actors. The main difference between the items was in the theme: the Traditional Folk Song's theme was some canonical activity or story from local tradition, whereas the Creative Item's theme was Senator beer. Specifically, groups were supposed to "interpret how Senator can substitute local gins and put it in their place" and "attach this to the culture of Uganda." A "Workshop Programme" carried by Festival employees hired to train groups gave groups further guidance as to how they should sing or dance about Senator: "Senator is a beverage brand of Uganda breweries that is produced using Ugandan local materials; Rice, barley, water and sugar unlike the other Beers."

Many groups arrived independently at the same approaches to the Creative Item. A common thread in Traditional Folk Song items was "communal work/ritual that leads

to a bountiful outcome"—in ants, wild game, home-brewed beer, vegetables, brideprice wealth, or twins. For Creative Items, groups made Senator beer another product of dramatized communal and community-affirming work. Dance moves already in groups' repertories depicting planting and gathering were refitted for Senator ingredient production. The ingredients had the virtue of being readily available as props; nearly every group carried stalks or baskets of rice and sugarcane on stage. The four ingredients provided inspiration for sequential songs: one verse on rice, one on water, and so on.

Mikael Karlström has noted the prominent use in Uganda of metaphors of agricultural growth (rather than metaphors of forward locomotion), to envision modern social progress. The luganda word for "development" is *kulakulanya* ("to make grow and grow") (Karlström 2004). This agricultural metaphor was a constant in groups' Creative Items about Senator beer: collective labor yielded ingredients, which in turn yielded bottles of Senator, which were somehow converted into graduation gowns and diplomas. In staging such productive activities, groups were always alluding to their own economic development. Group always represented themselves, no matter what else they were praising.[33]

The program of "substituting local gins" gave rise to another comical stock character: the staggering drunk man. In Creative Items, an abusive and foolish drunk (who no doubt showed up in other exhortatory dramas for other occasions) was cured of his affliction after the community convinced him to switch from locally distilled spirits to Senator

33. Group ambitions will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 4.

bottled beer.[34] The purported healthfulness of Senator beer relative to local distillates was a popular theme, though not one directly recommended in the syllabus. As Timothy Burke shows in his history of soap advertising in Zimbabwe, hygiene and health have been primary tropes in missionary and subsequently advertising discourse, so it is no surprise that groups touched on them without prompting (Burke 1996).

Table 1.7 gives a translation of a Senator song by Twekembe ("we gird ourselves"), a group led by James's sister, Irene Nabirye. In it, Senator is associated with agricultural productivity, healthfulness, traditional culture, and modern development. It is offered to the traditional elder male authorities, the *bataka*, in the same way that home-brewed beer would be ritually offered them.

Table 1.7. Creative Item Senator Song Lyrics by Twekembe Group, as Sung at the Busoga Regional Competition, Jinja Town

Transcribed and translated with the help of Irene Nabirye and James Isabirye.

Senator abeewo!	Senator stay!
Abataka mwidhe, mwidhe mwangu-weku	Elders come quickly, and enjoy
Abataka mwidhe, mutyame, tuzwire ekyama	Elders come, sit, we've found a secret
Ekyama ky'omuwendo	The precious secret
okuva mwitaka lyaffe	from our soil/land
Lino lyenne	This very land

34. This drunk character was always a man, though in one women's group performance, he was played by a female actor.

Omuceere n'ebikaddo	Rice and sugarcane
Abataka mwidhe, mutyame, tuzwire ekyama	Elders come, sit, we've found a secret
Tuzwire ekyama kya Senator	We've found the secret of Senator
Mwebale abataka, bannange, mwebale okwidda	Thank you elders, my friends, for coming
Mwebale tweyagale tufunye eddembe	Thank you, let's rejoice, we've got freedom
Abantu twenna twenna buti, tutuuse okweyagala	All people now, we shall rejoice.
Omuceere n'ebikaddo, n'ebijja okutuyamba	Rice and sugarcane are the ones that will help us.
Ebiseera by'iffe ni bino bannange okweyagala	Our season is come for us to rejoice
Nekyo, tweyagale, tufunya eddembe	That's it, let us rejoice, we've got freedom.
Senator kyamuwendo eri ffe obulamu bwaiffe	Senator is precious to our lives
Onwa ku wewewezza obulamu bwatereera	You drink, you feel better, your health improves.
Abantu twenna twenna, tutuuse okukulakulana	Every one of us, we are going to develop
Senator webale, kino kinene, tufunye eddembe	Senator thank you, this is great, we've got freedom.
Twenwere Senator, Senator n'eky'obuwangwa bwaiffe	We drink Senator, Senator is our culture
Tututubye obuwangwa twizze emirembe gyaiffe	Let's boost our culture and bring back our peace.

Tweyagale ddindu tweyagale, tweyagale ii maama.	We rejoice with happiness, we rejoice, we rejoice, ii mama.
Abantu twayega okulima, ii maama, tweyagale ddindu	People we learned to farm, *ii* mama, we rejoice with happiness
Omuceere, ii, ggwe twalima, ii maama	The rice, *ii,* we farmed, *ii* mama
n'omuviire Senator eky'omuwendo	is the source of Senator, a precious thing.
Ebikaddo byonna byetwaklima	All the sugarcane we farmed
n'omuviire Senator eky'omuwendo	is the source of Senator, a precious thing
Atanywe Senator atusse okuswala kubanga Senator n'ekyomuwendo	Whoever does not drink Senator will be shamed, because Senator is a precious thing
Imwe abataka mbebaza okulima aye mwidde twenwere tufunye eddembe	You elders, I thank you for farming, but come, we drink, we've got freedom
Muleete Senator twenywere ii ffe	Bring Senator, we drink, *ii*
n'eky'okunywa kye twafuna, maama	It is the only drink we've got, mama

Twekembe's song was sung by two singers in alternation with a chorus. They did not stage a drama, but relied on the quality of the song, singing, and coordinated gestures. Even though I have left out many repetitions of lines, one can get a sense of the use of repetition, and of the way refrains gradually evolved as the song progressed, with words disappearing and returning in different contexts.

Props and elaborate costumes were central to many groups' Creative Item presentations, even more than in Traditional Folk Songs. Besides the ubiquitous stalks of rice and sugarcane, there were elaborate contraptions, made out of paper mache, baskets, and bicycle wheels, meant to resemble the machines in a Senator bottling plant. Two creative dances I saw involved dancers pretending to be factory machines processing other

dancers, who portrayed Senator ingredients and bottles of beer. Groups got into the spirit of advertising, painting the Senator label on tee shirts, and lifting block letters into the air that spelled out "Senator." The winning group's creative dance featured a giant dancing beer bottle made out of paper-mâché and plastered with Senator advertisements. Groups I got to know seemed to enjoy Creative Items best out of all their items. I sensed they felt relief about not having to sound and appear authentically traditional. They may also have enjoyed the rare opportunity to take a role in the affluent and modern sphere of brand advertising.

The adjudication forms for Creative Items repeated the six judging categories specified for the items I have already discussed—tone, diction, rhythm, phrasing, expression, and general presentation—and added the category, "Theme: Art of composition and message." Comments made under this category included: "You mentioned ingredients, but work on the art of creativity"; "On theme, but not well explored. Work on the richness of the text"; "Try to talk about other ingredients. However, you were on theme."

Comments in other categories were in the usual vein, a lack of dynamics being the most frequently cited problem. One group was told "you should have a happy expression." Judges commended groups on their use of props, and recommended props to groups who did not use them.

Item 4: Traditional Folk Dance

Traditional folk dances were the items that seemed to garner the most interest. At the Busoga regional, James and his friends, despite their best efforts to stay dispassionate,

grew incensed when the group they considered to have performed by far the best Traditional Folk Dance—Muwewesi Xylophone Group—failed to win the judges' verdict. The Folk Dance counted for only 25% of a group's total score, but it loomed much larger in peoples' estimations of groups' abilities.

In the sequence of items, Folk Dances were left till last, except in cases when James wanted me to videorecord them in ample sunlight. They usually took place on the ground in front of the stage, where groups had room to spread out. Successful groups made maximum use of the space available to them and danced in various distinct "formations," which judges carefully notated on their adjudication sheets. Physical virtuosity, kept in check in Traditional Folk Songs, was taken to its limits in Traditional Folk Dances: the more energy, the better, as long as groups performed the stylistic details the judges were looking for. Ambitious groups put young men, whom they believed would better impress the judges with their strength and agility, out front, and kept the women—especially the elder ones—in the background or off the field altogether. Dancers of the Traditional Folk Dance were, in the more polished and competitive groups, a select subset. Some were experts hired from outside (in one group, males at 3000 shillings and females at 2000 shillings per performance).

There were usually two different groups of dancers interacting on the field at any given time. This binary division was usually gender-based, though men sometimes performed women's roles and *vice versa*. Men would often don women's clothes and join the women's division. Women, it seemed, only dressed and danced as men if the group was an all or mostly women's group. The "men" wore one traditional costume, the women

another. Men's costumes tended to be more extravagant and distinctive; they wore feather headdresses, face paint, and ethnically iconic pelts, weapons, and shields, while the women wore more generic *busuti* or wraps. One Acholi women's group, Mon Pi Dong Lobo, wore tee shirts and skirts for the women's parts in their Traditional Folk Dance, because, they told me, the authentic traditional women's uniforms for the dance were far too revealing for modern tastes. Some of the more polished groups wore bright uniforms obviously not modelled on authentic traditional garb, but signifying "tradition" and "Uganda" and "Africa" more abstractly—sewn with the colors of the Ugandan flag, or leaf or animal prints.

There is, in Uganda, a prevalent belief that every ethnic group has at least one unique Traditional Folk Dance to call its own. Some regions are known for having larger repertoires of dances: the Acholi of northern Uganda boast that they have eight, more than any other Ugandan ethnicity. Formations of ethnic canons of traditional dances, driven by desires for cultural recognition within a modern Ugandan nation, began long before the Schools' Festival started including traditional dances, with the efforts of societies like the Acholi Association, active in the 1940s (Behrend 1999, 18). Folk Dance canon development continues apace in Uganda, as newly empowered ethnicities assert themselves and established ones add to their cultural holdings. One of James Isabirye's goals with the 2006 Senator Festival was to promote two Soga men's dances he said had been ignored and were in danger of dying out: a leg rattle dance and a trumpet dance. Leg rattle dances are common in the Bunyoro and Ankole regions, and trumpet dances are a specialty of West Nile, but, according to James, the Soga versions of these, which he had

first witnessed as a child growing up in his Busoga village, were little known and deserved a wider audience. At James's urging, two groups from his home village, one of rattle dancers and one of trumpeters, reformed and rehearsed their dances for the Senator Festival. Of all the administrators and judges of the Senator Festival, perhaps only James had a sense of what these rattle and trumpet dances—dances apparently particular not just to Busoga, but to James's sub-county—were supposed to look and sound like. In contrast, every educated judge and administrator probably had a good knowledge of the Ganda *baakisimba* "suite" of dances.[35]

Each Traditional Folk Dance showcased a particular set of physical skills, often manifest in particular regions of the body. The Ganda *baakisimba* and *mbaga* dances and, especially, the Soga *tamenha ibuga* dance, were showcases for independent and agile hips.[36] In contrast, leg-rattle dances—prevalent in the Hoima region—were predictably focused on high-stepping footwork while the hips remained stable. Acholi dances were supposed to involve back and forth movements of the hips and torso, while certain dances from southern and eastern Uganda could not involve too much back-and-forth thrusting without setting off accusations of obscenity. Certain dances required specific stage for-

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35. Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza has discussed how, in Schools' Festivals, the *baakisimba* dance is presented as part of a suite, which also includes *nankasa*, and *muwogola* (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005, 200). This reflects the scholastic inclination, mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, towards performances in contrasting sections.

36. Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza has observed that "in school baakisimba, the waist is no longer the center of the dance; the chest, foot, and arms are moved equally as much as the waist" (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005). The dance still seemed to me to be a waist-intensive dance akin to *tamenha ibuga*, especially in comparison to dances from the north and west of the country.

mations: for example, the Acholi *bwola* was always danced in two tight concentric circles, though other dancers could add other parts outside of the main circle. Among West Nile trumpet groups, it was conventional for the trumpeters (men, or in one group, women assuming the male role) to circle for a while; then line up; then lie down on their backs, between each other's legs, and wave their long trumpets back and forth in the air. This, I was told, was a recent, competition-bred, innovation.

In the same spirit as the Traditional Folk Song, some groups not only danced, but provided—through acting and props—a dramatic context for the dance. In Gisu and Konzo circumcision dances, a boy was pretend-circumcised. Judges complained if, immediately after his circumcision, he stood up and joined in the dancing. For its *myel lyel* funeral dance, the group Mon Pi Dong Lobo brought out an empty coffin for an actor to mourn over.

Most dances were accompanied by instrumental ensembles and singers on stage; some required that the dancers themselves play instruments. Dancers of the Acholi *bwola* played small drums; dancers of the northern Ugandan *larakaraka* played calabash hemispheres with wire brushes. Other dances were designed around sets of single-note trumpets and end-blown flutes. Some dances were accompanied by a characteristic instrument that the dancers themselves did not play. The Acholi *myel lyel* dance, for example, was accompanied by two women in the dancers' midst scraping calabash hemispheres against an metal pipe.

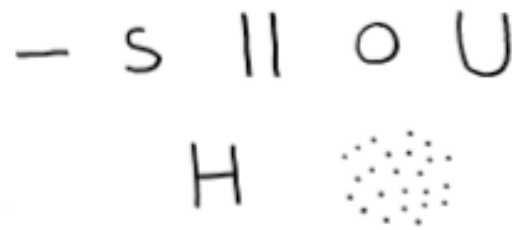
Judges used different adjudication sheets, with different "guidelines," to judge all dances—Traditional Folk Dances, Solo Dances, and Creative Dances. These are listed in Table 1.8.

Table 1.8. Dance Adjudication Sheet Guidelines

Guidelines	Marks
"Accompaniment: Suitable"	15
"Costumes: Designed and appropriate"	15
"Formations: Use of space, Planned authentic"	15
"Dancing techniques: Skills, styles, teamwork, level authentic"	30
"General presentation: Authentic, belonging as stated"	25
Total	100

In the "Formations" box, adjudicators drew symbols to notate the dance formations performed by the group. The different symbols drawn by adjudicators at the National event of the Senator Festival are shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1. Some Symbols Used by Adjudicators to Notate Dance Formations



Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza has discussed the invention of some formations by music educators James Makubuya and Moses Sserwadda. By her account, groups learned to perform "circular, diagonal and serpent-like formations" as well as ones shaped like letters of the alphabet, particularly "V, U, X, Z, S, K, and T." Formations are considered a "creative" aspect of a Traditional Folk Dance, which may earn a group additional points as long as they also meet standards for clean and authentic technique (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005, 201).

The guideline, "level authentic," was one James and his colleagues mentioned often. In this box on the adjudication sheets, judges wrote "all levels attained" or "watch the levels." Nannyonga-Tamusuza has discussed how four different dance movements (*mangodooli*) have developed within School *baakisimba,* each characterized by a specific height of the body off the ground. *Kutuulira* ("to sit on") movement happens on one "level" (sitting), and *kutambuza* ("to dance while walking") happens on another, higher-off-the-ground level (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005, 200). An analogy may be observed between these distinct "levels" judges valued in dance and the "dynamics" they valued in singing and instrument-playing.

Levels were apparent in: (1) the *baakisimba* dance; (2) rattle dances, in which dancers inevitably squatted, or put their hands on the ground, arched their backs, and kicked; and (3) *bwola* dances, in which dancers in a circle would crouch for a few beats, play a motif on their drums, and then stand up. The West Nile trumpeters' lying down on their backs may also have been an expression of the idea of *levels*.

James mused that the *levels* criterion might not apply equally well to all ethnic dances, and questioned whether any standard metric could be devised that would apply equally well to all of Uganda's diverse traditions:

> Some dances do not have vivid levels to talk about. You are either jumping throughout or other. Others you raise yourself and dance on the toys [toes], then you have opportunity to kneel or even go down as if to sleep or so. How do you convince such groups that a tradition, for example that where they only jump throughout [also has] levels? If you say, they can jump high, lightly and very high as the different levels, do the other groups notice this and accept it? We are trying to find ground for all to appreciate where all are coming from. Is that not a fruitless venture? (Isabirye, email, March 2008)

Judges' comments on Traditional Folk Dances, as on other items of the National level event, were characteristically vague. Only one comment—on a *baakisimba* dance by a Ganda group—revealed the judge's familiarity with the requirements of a particular dance style: "Do not raise your legs so much in bakisiimba [*sic*] dance. Bakisiimba is danced gently because it is a state dance."

Conclusion

The four items of the Senator Festival were borrowed with little alteration from the Schools' Festival. Groups whose members had had more experience with Schools'

Festivals thus came armed with reliable conceptions of what would be expected of them, and with flexible repertoires of Folk Dances, Folk Songs, *formations,* and *levels*. Groups whose members lacked Schools' Festival experience, and who did not hire trainers, came to the Festival with less of this knowledge, though they too showed some awareness of festival conventions, and no doubt gained more in the course of their participation in the Festival by watching other groups and, to a lesser extent, by reading the comments of judges on adjudication sheets.

The Senator Festival was thus a non-school-based event that disseminated the public performance conventions of the Schools' Festival, which were encapsulated in "items." At the same time, it was conceived as a counter to the Schools' Festival. The Senator Festival restricted groups to their local languages and local music and dance styles, in contrast to the Schools' Festival, which actively promoted artistic cross-pollination among different ethnic regions. This restriction stemmed from the administrators' high valuation of diversity in music and dance. The Festival did indeed showcase little-known traditions, largely because, unlike the Schools' Festival, it was open to older, less-schooled performers.

Diversity in languages and musical styles in the Senator Festival presented a challenge to judges, though they did not like to admit it. Set up as authority figures, the judges let slip no signs of indecision or puzzlement. The adjudication forms suggested universal attributes that judges might look for in each item—attributes, drawn from western art music theory, that could be perceived without fluency in a vernacular language, or even in the particular musical style. The smartest thing a group could do, if it wanted to

earn good marks, was to introduce clear dynamic contrasts into all its items. Judges consistently deducted points when they couldn't hear them.

The guidelines on adjudication sheets reflected a belief, widely held among school-educated musicians, that Ugandan traditional music needs more sectional variety if it is to succeed in stage performance contexts. It is more engaging, Ugandan musical intellectuals I met agreed, to have distinct loud and soft parts, distinct *levels* and group *formations* in dance, and distinct sections of instruments in orchestras. Some groups who came to understand this improvement project found it stimulating. Deborah Kyobula told me that she had not known there was such a thing as a "climax" in a piece, and that she was looking forward to coming up with pieces for the next Festival that would lead up to climaxes. In 2006, many groups misconstrued judges' expectations. They believed judges, like crowds, would be excited by acrobatics, novelty, and sheer energy, and so they injected these qualities into their items. In fact, judges rewarded (or claimed on adjudication forms to reward) moderation in playing, singing, and dancing. Judges tended to view excesses, especially comical ones, as affronts to tradition.

Whether the judges made their values clear to groups who started out in ignorance of them is open to question. A group that did not start out knowing or caring about "dynamics" was not likely to learn about them from the rather cryptic adjudication sheets. The divide between groups that are thoroughly steeped in school-style festivals and items, and those that aren't, is likely to persist. As I have suggested, it would not be terribly disappointing to administrators like James and Haruna if this divide did in fact persist, as they had a certain fondness for groups outside the system.

The items of the Senator Festival, as they were approached by groups, judges, and administrators, illuminated contemporary Ugandan intellectual views of tradition. Tradition was not seen to reside in a carefully catalogued, authenticated, and preserved set of particular songs, tunes, dances, etc. The songs and dances were expected to change, and there was room for creative composition even in the items not deemed *original* or *creative*. What seemed to matter a great deal were dignified and stylistically authentic depictions of canonical activities from the mythical "old days."

The Senator Festival, like the Schools' Festival, gave performance groups and individuals incentives and guidelines for repertoire-building. Repertoires of items developed for these festivals may be refitted for all sorts of public performance occasions: NGO "development" events, visits by government dignitaries, other corporate promotions. The items approach proliferates beyond the Schools' Festival because it offers musicians a set of diverse public performance templates and roles. The items were designed by musician-intellectuals with an expansive, exploratory bent, and were meant to expand groups' musical potentialities, rather than limit them. One does not get the impression, in either the Schools' Festival or Senator Festival items, of a project to standardize Ugandan traditional music into something pure and inoffensive for global exhibition.

Chapter 2. Senator Festival Events: New Kinds of Crowd

In the past two decades Africa has seen a rapid expansion of competing multinational corporations, freed from state regulation by liberalization policies in the 1990s and equipped with new mass media tools for penetrating "untapped markets" (Bond 2006; Willis 2002, 246-248). To what extent are poor rural Ugandans becoming what Jesse Shipley (2003) has called "consuming subjects"—people who define themselves around what they buy or aspire to buy? In this chapter, I describe the proceedings of a typical 2006 Senator Festival event, focusing on the ways audience participation was stimulated and channeled. A question underlying this chapter is: what new kinds of audiences are being engineered, or are emerging of their own accord, at the heavily commercialized cultural events cropping up around Africa and other parts of the decolonized world? Karin Barber has suggested that "the history of colonial Africa could be understood as the history of the formation, or emergence, of new kinds of crowd, related, but only obliquely, to a new imaginary of the public emanating from industrial Europe" (Barber 1997, 348). What "new kinds of crowd" are being generated in Africa in the 2000s, a half-century after the main wave of decolonization?

There is a growing literature on consumption-based identity constructions in the decolonized world (O'Dougherty 2002; Apley 2000). As William Mazzarella (2003) has discussed, people are increasingly being imagined not in the old colonial way—as vessels to be filled with enlightening education, civilization, and development—but as consumers with various and shifting tastes and loyalties, who must be coaxed toward one brand or

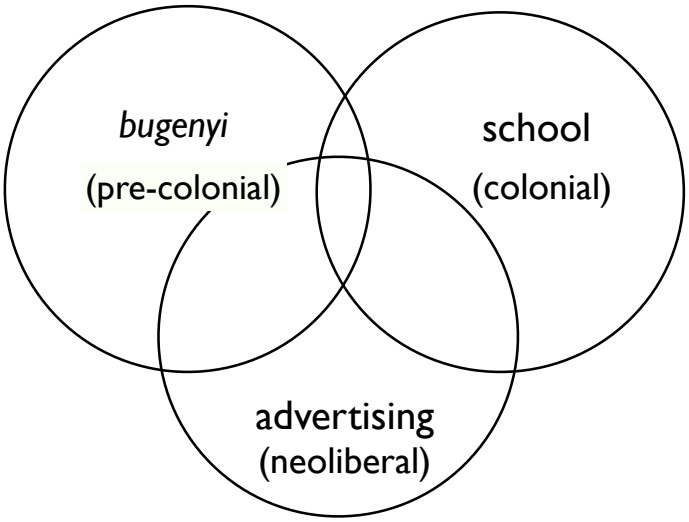
another. Advertisers—and in their wake, educators and governors—are paying new attention to people's capacities for sensual pleasure, their pride in local languages and traditions, and their aspirations to participate in modern global culture. The early years of decolonization were characterized by a discourse of progress achievable through bodily self-discipline. Following the failures of most of these austere socialist projects, a "new aesthetic teleology" of "progress through pleasure" has been ascendant. The "aspirational consumer" has been "exhorted to individual and collective self-fulfillment by means of pleasure rather than sacrifice" (Mazarella 2003, 101). Recent commercial brand campaigns, such as the Senator Extra Lager campaign in Uganda, seek to contact people on their own home turf, speak to them in their home languages, and involve them as bodily participants in sensually pleasurable activities.

Intersecting Precolonial, Colonial, and Neoliberal Formations

If the Senator Festival was strikingly characterized by the neoliberal consumerist formation, it was also structured by two residual formations that predate neoliberalism. Visiting Uganda, I got a strong sense of public event architectures and ideologies of the precolonial past, the colonial past, and the commercial present, often piled up in surprising combinations. In Figure 2.1, I show three formations that were evoked in the Senator Festival. Each of these formations—*bugenyi*, school, and advertising—is representative of a larger complex that emerged at a particular point in history. *Bugenyi*—a Luganda word meaning visiting/welcoming—is a public formation emblematic of precolonial society (Karlström 2003). *School* was a central formation of the disciplinary complex of

British colonialism. I have already introduced the formation of advertising. In this chapter, I will address each of these formations in turn. I am particularly interested in the intersections among the circles.

Figure 2.1. Three Historical Formations Operative in Senator Festival Events



Raymond Williams (1973) proposed that, in any given culture, *residual*, *dominant*, and *emergent* forms overlap and interact.[37] In his scheme, *residual* and *emergent* forms create spaces for alterity and resistance, while the *dominant* sphere constantly threatens to incorporate the *residual* and catch up to the *emergent.* I am here proposing a similar triad of coexistent historical layers shaping the Senator Festival and contemporary Ugandan life generally. I would not assert, however, that any of the three cultural formations—*bugenyi*, *school*, or *advertising*—was unambiguously dominant. Nor would I as-

37. I am indebted to Mark Slobin for alerting me to Williams' schema.

sert that the traditional formation had been relegated to the past to the extent that it could be labelled residual. Indeed, one of the strongest impressions I took from the Senator Festival was of a relative balance, however temporary, among the three formations: the traditional polity of bugenyi seemed as relevant as the disciplinary system of school, and the commercial formation seemed to be increasingly important, even in remote towns. People moved fluidly from one mode to the other as occasions warranted. Williams' schema, gently applied, may capture something about how three chronotopes—a timeless traditional past, a present still lodged in colonial-style praxis, and a dawning consumerist age—were evoked at Senator events, and in contemporary Ugandan life generally. The *school* formation, was, it seemed to me, the one most taken for granted (and thus, perhaps, most dominant) of the three. The *bugenyi* (traditional) and *advertising* formations were exciting to audiences partly in that they threatened to disrupt *school*.

In the following sections, I discuss the happenings at a typical 2006 Senator Festival event, based on my experiences at 22 of them. First I give a brief overview of an event. Then I discuss the elements of the event I associated with *advertising* and the consumerist complex generally. Then I will discuss evocations of *school* and its disciplinary complex. Third, I will discuss evocations of traditional *bugenyi* public interactivity. As opportunities arise, I will examine the ways these three formations clashed and combined. Finally, I will briefly consider how events were represented in a television show produced by EABL, and in an independent video commissioned by Haruna Walusimbi.

Event Procedures: Overview

Senator events were distinctive in the diversity of ways they engaged audience members. Each began with a parade through town, followed by informal mingling and musical jamming in the public square while the stages and tents were set up. The long competition part of the event was a hybrid of a formal school-style competition, with stern judges grading groups on the technicalities of their stage performances; and an amusement show dedicated to Senator Extra Lager, featuring drinking contests, prize giveaways, and commercial sloganeering by announcers. During the competition, audience members were alternately held back from, and invited into, the central performance space, with some tension building as a result. Early in the morning, when the competition and awards ceremony were finished, the DJ and the crowds took over the space, disco-danced to popular radio hits, and finished off the beer supply.

The commercial interests of East Africa Breweries Ltd. (EABL) had to be balanced against the cultural-development interests of the musician-intellectuals the company hired to administer the competition. Events had a populist, variety-show atmosphere that reflected EABL's marketing agenda: those audience members uninspired by traditional dancing and singing might respond to the prize giveaways, drinking contests, and disco. In other respects, Senator events resembled school competitions and other official occasions. The Festival administrators and judges, who were mostly music teachers, wanted to run a fair and serious competition that would display local music traditions—and their own expertise—in the best light. Each qualifying group, no matter how unappealing to the audience, had to be alloted its 28 minutes of performance time.

Events of this traditional music festival inevitably evoked, in addition to school and the world of advertising, traditional ceremonies of welcoming and gift exchange, which are always accompanied by traditional-style singing and dancing. In such ceremonies, visiting dignitaries are celebrated with songs and sometimes gifts, and are expected to reciprocate materially. They are put on the stand and visibly subjected to the community's expectations (Karlström 2003). Senator Festival events drew on this hospitality ceremony framework, but departed from it in important ways. The usual exchanges between groups, dignitaries, and spectators were diverted: rather than performing before dignitaries, groups performed before academic judges. Rather than praising government officials or rich visitors, they praised the Senator brand.

The Commercial Component: Opportunities for Participation and Transgression

To me the most striking expression of the contemporary global commercial complex in the Senator Festival was the thorough involvement of local amateur performance groups in advertising for Senator Extra Lager. One of the four items each competing group was required to compose and perform had to be about the excellence of the beer, and its presumed connections to local traditions. EABL's strategy of recruiting local groups to sing in local languages about the beer, was in keeping with an ascendant "glocal" (locality-sensitive and at the same time global) marketing credo.[38]

38. Barbara Hampton was the first to introduce me to the term "glocal". Mazzarella calls it a "marketing neologism" (2003, 16).

The British marketing guru John Grant has asserted that, in the present "third age of branding," brands are to be "the new traditions." The new brands are "ideas that are quite free-standing," which consumers are to adopt and construct in a comparatively unsupervised fashion (Grant 1999, 11-16). EABL's Senator branding campaign was remarkably participatory and unsupervised. Authority figures didn't tell rural consumers that Senator beer was a healthy drink; they encouraged local musicians, whom they knew nothing about, to make such claims to their neighbors any way they liked. At many events, no EABL representative who spoke the local language(s) was present to check up on groups' Senator propaganda. I have discussed the required Senator beer song and dance item at greater length in Chapter 1. In this section, I focus on other obvious and subtle ways potential consumers were invited to participate at Senator events, often in transgressive or pseudo-transgressive ways. As I will discuss in the next section, Ugandan school competitions, on which the Senator competition was modeled, were known for the restrictions placed on participation. Some of these restrictions carried over to the Senator competition, but the commercial component of the Festival encouraged people to take part in other ways, sometimes in symbolic opposition to this schoolish restrictiveness.

On the day of a Senator event, vinyl Senator banners were posted on the road next to the field or square where the event was to be held. Some motorcycle taxi drivers who took me to events knew a "promotion" was going to take place but were unsure of what it would be, exactly. Radio advertisements in local languages were supposed to be broadcast in the days before the event, but I never talked to anyone who said s/he came to a

Senator event because s/he heard about it on the radio. Most people told me that they showed up out of curiosity. Generally the Senator Festival was the most prominent event in town.

Perhaps the biggest draw was a parade down main street, staged around four or five o'clock in the afternoon. In this parade, a masked stilt dancer, "Mr. Senator," was followed by three trucks, blaring news of the event and pop music advertisements for Senator over a public address system (PA) (Plate 2.1).[39] One or two participating traditional music groups, along with members of Nile Beat Artists, Haruna Walusimbi's group, rode in the beds of trucks and drummed along with the music on the PA. Children swarmed around Mr. Senator, and curious adults followed in their wake. Children comprised the larger part of the audience in the early hours. After dark, more adults wandered in, and the children, who by law weren't allowed to be at alcohol-related events, were shooed away with varying degrees of success.

A lull generally followed the parade, as the setting up of the stage and tents had to be finished and the PA transferred from a truck to the stage. Some of the parade crowd dispersed, to return with friends later in the evening. Nile Beat Artists performers, clad in Senator tee shirts, erected the dignitaries' tent, beer tent, and stage in the middle of a field

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39. Haruna Walusimbi told me that the Mr. Senator character was a *muzungu* (white person). His mask was yellow, with large snaggleteeth, a shaggy beard, and eyeglasses. His clothes were black, with accents in red and yellow: the colors of the Senator brand and the Ugandan flag. Caricatures of white government officials have long been a staple of parades in East Africa (Ranger 1975). The Mr. Senator character, in addition to rousing a festive spirit, may have served to strengthen the Senator brand's associations with powerful *bazungu* foreigners. Kenyans had recently nicknamed Senator beer *Obama*, after the U.S. senator and then presidential candidate Barack Obama.

large enough for soccer, or sometimes in a smaller and muddier bus park hemmed in on all sides by shops. If it was a regional-level competition, a cook stirred a cauldron of fragrant rice and goat meat, to be fed to the groups, judges, workers, and special guests; groups at lower-level events had to provide for themselves. Around the perimeter of the field, groups staked out places for themselves, and started to dance and sing—usually jamming rather than rehearsing. Tight crowds formed around the more exciting jams; usually they did not join in the dancing and singing. The groups did not intermingle, but sometimes seemed to be aware of and competing with one another. These informal performances, which sometimes involved comedic improvisations, were often more exciting than the ones the same groups gave later on stage.[40]

The official beginning of the event—announced with a blast of Senator advertisement over the PA—established a new set of spaces. Performances by groups and soloists took place either on a raised, covered stage or in front of it on the ground in a cordoned off rectangle. Banners on the stage read: "Discover Our Land, Our Cultures"; "Cultural Galas: Bigger, Better, More Exciting"; and "No admission for under 18 years." Opposite the stage and bounding the rectangle on one side was a tent with chairs, where dignitaries were invited to sit. Their tables were heaped with EABL's higher-end bottled sodas and beers. In front of the dignitaries sat the adjudicators, who wore office attire, wrote on preprinted adjudication sheets, and exuded imperturbability (Plate 2.2).

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40. While these kinds of informal jams were common, some groups prepared for their performances in more rigorous ways: rehearsing pieces, and even, in one case, running laps and doing calisthenics.

Perpendicular to the dignitaries' tent was a tent where beer was sold. It opened into the performance rectangle, so that audience members had to pass through the performance space to get to the beer. Audience members crowded around the remaining sides of the rectangle, where they were kept back by hired guards with sticks and rifles. I was grateful to be invited into the cordoned off space, where I could move more freely and take better video footage. Since I was in the performance space, I was occasionally compelled to do small performances with Nile Beat Artists during their act: dance comically between Mr. Senator's stilt legs, etc. I complied, as I wanted to be a good sport and was flattered at the inclusive gesture, but I worried about appearing to lend my approval to the Senator brand. Simply by being present with a video camera, I, as a rich white foreigner, may have helped to legitimize Senator or at least arouse curiosity about it.

Groups performed some of their items on a lighted stage, and some on the ground in front of the stage, surrounded by the audience. Traditional folk dances—which, as the most crowd-pleasing items, were left till the end of the competition after it had grown dark—were usually performed on the ground so that the groups could spread out in formations. Dances on the ground intensified the sense of a central performance space and a tenuous boundary keeping the audience out of it. Dancers sometimes spun so close to audience members as to risk colliding with them, while making no show of seeing them.

There were opportunities, crucial to the commercial formation's participatory spirit, for audience members to transgress the cordon and enter the central performance space. If an audience member bought two bottles of Senator and won a prize, an MC would invite her up, and, in Ugandan talk-radio fashion, ask her to introduce herself and

say something about the pleasures of Senator beer (Plate 2.3). There were also beer drinking contests in the central space. In fact, anyone purchasing Senator beer could, and had to, cross through the space to get to the beer tent. As the evening wore on, progressively drunker men, in groups and singly, lingered in the performance space on their way back from the beer tent, and performed there: doing a few staggering dance moves in disco style, or pouring beer on the ground in the manner of a libation and improvising their own advertisements for Senator.

Senator beer was thus an anonymous individual audience member's ticket for entry into the public spotlight. The talk-radio format of the discussion between the MC and a lucky winner encouraged the Senator drinker to give his or her individualized, subjective testimony. This kind of individuality was not afforded to anyone else at events: groups and even soloists were referred to by their group names, or—even more anonymously—by their regions of origin (with announcements along the lines of "Arua group: are you ready to perform your item?") The production of individual subjectivities, through exercises such as testimonies, has been pointed out as a major element of the modern capitalist/consumerist complex (Foucault 1980; Keane 2002).

Individual performers, as well as audience members, sometimes broke with decorum and made comical spectacles of themselves. On a few occasions, particularly irreverent and inebriated performers responded directly to audience encouragements with bawdy and satirical songs and dances, often about Senator beer. These were big hits with audience members, but frowned upon by judges. James told me that one of the main problems with the 2006 event was that too many groups had sung about Senator when

they were supposed to be singing traditional songs, and that they had been punished on their score sheets for such offenses. The judges and administrators aimed to maintain some division between the commercial and *cultural* components of the Festival, but performers often crossed this line in ways the judges deemed inappropriate.

The MCs and DJ, with their rented public address system, further contributed to the association of the Senator brand with transgression and urban power. As at other Ugandan public events I attended, the single microphone was wielded with relish, and sometimes as a blunt instrument. MCs nagged groups to begin in a timely fashion, and occasionally cut them off in the middle of performances. Groups coveted the single available microphone. Amplification was a competitive advantage that no group wanted to yield to other groups. There was no microphone stand; and so the MC, dressed in a Senator tee shirt and hat, often remained prominently on stage as the microphone holder, moving from instrument to instrument to select different elements of a complex sound pattern to amplify. The amplification system was the EABL's powerful instrument of both control and beneficence. The PA and its noisy gasoline generator, along with the pickup trucks, stage, tents, banners, clean matching tee shirts of the EABL workers, and bottled beer, all signaled money in these rural towns.

At the end of the night, after an long and sometimes pedantic awards ceremony, there was a disco with radio hits played over the PA by a DJ. Through the night, the MC and DJ hinted that the disco was coming, interspersing loud "samplings" of pop music between groups' performances. When the cordons were finally lowered, and the performance space became a free-for-all disco space, there was a great sense of release. The

loud popular music, and the call-in radio and advertising patter of the MC, both evoked radio and television—the signature media of the advertising publicity complex. With the disco, mass participation, familiar, modern pop music, and—it was implied—the Senator brand and the consumerist formation it represented, took over. [41]

It has been remarked in various African contexts that audiences and performers do not feel the same need that many scholars have felt to distinguish traditional formations from modern/commercial/popular ones. Africans (and people of other continents) often consciously insert elements they consider modern into spheres they consider traditional without experiencing any sort of dissonance (Kubik 1991, Reed 2001). At Senator events, however, a kind of separation of modern and traditional formations was enforced by various means. The general public was invited into the disco dancing, but held back from the traditional dancing, which was left to the practiced groups. This protective barrier around/ elevation of tradition owed much to the formation of school, which is the next topic of this chapter.

The School Component: Disciplined Spaces

The onset of the disco might not have been so cathartic had there not operated, in tension with the formation of advertising, two other formations. I move now to the for-

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41. The Ugandan scholar Richard Ssewakiryanga has noted the association in small Ugandan towns of loud amplied music with urban capitalist and also Christian evangelist culture. He compares the "Christian music that would boom throughout the town" of Kiboga during "crusades" to "listening to the loud speakers atop the video shack with the rapid cut 'n' mix between the gunfire by Rambo and Luganda spin from the translator" (Ssewakiryanga 2001).

mation of *school*. Social historians have documented the diligence with which colonial administrators and missionaries imposed the spatial architecture and temporal regimen of the British public school on the African regions under their command (Mangan 1987; Kirk-Greene 1987; Mitchell 1988). As Cati Coe has documented in Ghana, post-Independence period African schools have been sites for innovative and intensive cultural preservation and development projects, some of which may serve chiefly to extend colonial disciplinary mechanisms into the present (Coe 2005). School is both a source of great hope and discomfort for Ugandans—discomfort because school fees are often prohibitive, and because teachers are known for being strict and intolerant of vernacular culture.

Most of the designing of the Senator Festival was done not by EABL marketing department, but by two music scholar-practitioners under temporary contract with the company. Haruna Walusimbi and James Isabirye were both college-educated musicians, who made their livings by piecing together different educational, administrative, and performance opportunities in the local and international fields of traditional music. Both had participated in the Schools' Festival as child performers and as adult judges.

If Haruna and James introduced the conventions of school competitions into the Senator Festival, they also conceived of it as a populist, more participatory counter to the Schools' Festival, which they found too exclusive and inauthentic. James complained that Schools' Festival events took place indoors, and audience members were kept out by a steep entrance fee. The Schools' Festival's failure to reach out to the public, especially the rural public, contributed to an inauthenticity he abhorred. James and Haruna generally approved of audience revelry at Senator events. Before they lost the Senator contract in

2008, they were planning to introduce new populist activities such as bicycle races, wrestling, *kwevuga* insult contests, and *mweso* board game competitions. It would have been interesting to see whether they would have implemented these as open audience participatory activities, or would have restricted them to officially sanctioned performance groups. Having formerly operated primarily as educators and performers in smaller milieus, James and Haruna seemed to take inspiration from their new (and sadly short-lived) rôles as mass marketers. The Senator brand project gave them an incentive to come up with new ways of getting large audiences of strangers excited about traditional music as well as the brand.

The essential architectural feature of school is the classroom or proscenium stage, with the audience seated in neat rows and a clearly delineated front-central performance space for teachers and called-upon students (Barber 1997, 360). As at the Schools' Festival, groups at the Senator Festival performed with this configuration—and especially a "fourth wall"—in mind. Most faced the judges, but avoided all signs of paying direct attention to them or to the audience. They performed self-contained spectacles, dancing in formations, with the most agile (usually male) dancers up front.[42] The judges, meanwhile, affected an air of detachment and imperturbability. They concentrated on writing comments on adjudication sheets, while dancers writhed a few feet away from them.

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42. Karin Barber has associated this proscenium-stage style with British colonialism and its vision of a potential market composed of a "anonymous, undifferentiated 'public' stretched out in all directions" (Barber 1997, 352). As Barber has argued, the intersections of the colonial formation *school* and the present emerging formation *advertising*, go back to the inception of the former.

The most restless period of a Senator event was around midnight, during the awards ceremony, when the judges announced the scores and handed out certificates and wrapped gifts to groups and individual performers.[43] These ceremonies were like those at schools where nearly everyone gets a prize, in keeping with the Festival administrators' valuation of participation as much as competitive excellence. The ceremonies offered provided opportunities for the judges, who had thus far kept quiet, to scold groups for their inauthenticities, their lack of practice, etc. At events I attended, judges always spoke to the groups, never to the general audience. This reinforced the image of a serious transaction between groups (students) and judges (teachers) insulated from the drinking, the disco, and the audience in general. It was this insulated space that audience members were able to push against, with the encouragement of the MCs and beer sellers.

Haruna Walusimbi's "semi-professional" group Nile Beat Artists performed an important intermediary role between the commercial side and the school side of the proceedings. While the judge's assembled their papers in preparation for the awards ceremony, the group, sometimes including Haruna himself, kept the crowds entertained with a virtuosic display of dancing in -Soga ethnic style. Mr. Senator reappeared, and the Nile Beat Artists members danced between his legs. An especially virtuosic member of Nile Beat Artists named Waiswa would perform an act in which he, naked from the waist up, would gyrate his hips violently and continuously while moving his other body parts with astonishing independence. At the climax, he pretended to be a woman sitting in a chair and combing her hair, undulating his hips all the while. This was a novelty act, but at the

43. The gifts included coffee mugs, inspirational plaques, and other small items.

same time demonstrated the most valued attributes of the -Soga *tamenha iboga* dance: agile hips and a rigid upper body. The Nile Beat Artists' performance served as a symbolic bridge between the part of the event that involved the competing groups—which were, to various degrees, shabbier and less skillful versions of Nile Beat Artists—and the glamourous, novelty-show part of the event devoted to the Senator brand. Nile Beat Artists showed audiences the status to which performance groups could ascend with practice and ingenuity. The group not only put on the slickest show, but was also obviously on the EABL payroll, wearing Senator tee shirts and caps, and doing the work of setting up the stage and organizing the groups.

If Nile Beat Artists offered to competing amateur groups a model of professionalism to aspire to, the School formation at Festival events helped set aside questions of fair and prompt payment. Students, in Uganda as elsewhere, do not expect to be paid for their work in school. School is about deferring success: one pays to go there and get good marks, so that one can get a good job later on. Had the Senator Festival been an enterprise purely commercial in its appearances, competitors might have been more insistent in their demands for payment. Most groups received little or no money, and lost money on transport, lodging, and food. They performed, and signed over the rights to their compositions, for nothing in hopes that they might win a grand prize in the National competition. While most groups complained about a lack of payment, the school evaluation atmosphere may have helped make this unpaid labor seem tolerable and natural. James and Haruna, trying to make the best of their inability to pay all the groups, brought up the fact that in other competitions (including the Schools' Festival) even the top groups could not

expect substantial cash prizes such as were offered in the Senator competition—only trophies.

The Clientelistic Component: Traditional Praise Channeled to the Brand

The Senator Festival event may be fruitfully compared to other public events in which traditional music is performed for purposes of welcoming and showing hospitality. Nearly every Ugandan public occasion I attended had some element of what is called *bugenyi* in Luganda: some welcoming of dignitaries with gifts and sung praise.[44] I was routinely treated as a dignitary when I visited village groups. This would entail a greeting song and dance, a privileged seating under the shade, and, sometimes, a meal, which I was to eat by myself or in the company of other dignitaries, while others waited to eat. At the end of the performance and the meal, I was expected to give a short speech of thanks—preferably in Luganda when I was in the South—and also a monetary gift to the group.

As Mikael Karlström has noted in his study of *bugenyi*, welcoming in Uganda is done with expectations of reciprocation, and the public offers different amounts of hospitality as a way of expressing different levels of expectation and approval. Welcoming ceremonies—at least when they are conducted on an intimate scale—are, according to Karlström, manifestations of a kind of public sphere: in them, the relationships of differ-

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44. I use the Luganda word *bugenyi* advisedly, in the knowledge that many of the groups and audiences involved in the Senator Festival were not Luganda or even Bantu-language speakers. I did note that these kind of traditional welcoming ceremonies were common in both southern and northern Uganda, and shared similar architectures.

ent community groups to men and women in power,[45] and to each other, can be examined and negotiated. There may be opportunities for competition among rival groups and visitors: in singing and dancing, assembling and cooking meals, and speechifying (Karlström 2003).

Video footage of this kind of village public forum in the presence of a dignitary can be seen just about any day on Ugandan television news programs. I witnessed such an event when James's sister's group Twekembe hosted an AIDS awareness day in their home district of Busembatya.[46] A crowd formed a circle around the group and the aisles of school benches, where important personages were invited to sit. The most important visitor, a Local Councillor, was given the most prominent seat. The group welcomed the guests with a dance, then performed a long educational drama about AIDS, followed by, in a standing circle, an open discussion on the issues raised in the play. Men (and perhaps women, though none volunteered) who wished to express an opinion could step into the middle of the circle and do so. Some statements were frank and controversial: one young man asked why their community was not being given condoms. Between the play and the discussion, the Local Councillor stood up and gave a speech, in which he promised—to much ululation—to purchase tee shirts for the group. He then made a swift exit. To the group's great disappointment, the promised tee shirts were never delivered.

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45. In recent years, more Ugandan women have achieved political office, and are afforded welcomes similar to those bestowed on visiting big men (Tripp 2000).

46. The use of music in Ugandan public forums on AIDS is discussed extensively in Barz 2006.

Senator events, which featured traditional music performances and *development*-style exhortations (about Senator beer, among other issues), automatically invoked these clientelistic public forums. Welcoming a patron in expectation of a gift is one of the most common occasions for traditional music and dance in village Uganda today. Furthermore, beer, is powerfully associated with such ceremonies and the traditional complex generally. Home-brewed beer is a substance shared among village male elders, that symbolizes their traditional power (Willis 2002). Many groups made the association between Senator beer and traditional home-brewed beer in their songs, and men in the audience sometimes poured Senator beer on the ground in the manner of traditional libations. The beer, along with the music and dancing, set the scene for the essential spectacle of traditional power: a public exchange of praise for patronage.

At Senator festival events, the relationship of performers to dignitaries was notably altered from the typical welcoming ceremony form. Dignitaries (local chiefs, kings, and government councillors) were invited, seated in the shade of a tent, and given customary bottled beverages and small flags representing their station in their district. They were, however, upstaged by the adjudicators, who sat at a table directly in front of their tent. In some ways, the adjudicators took the place of dignitaries. Most of the groups' worries were focused on them. James Isabirye insisted that groups ought to pay no attention to the visiting dignitaries, only to the judges who would be giving them good or bad marks. He deliberately sidelined the dignitaries and minimized their opportunities to make the long speeches they were accustomed to making after musical performances. The judges who took the dignitaries' place in the architecture were not recipients of sung

praise, and did not represent themselves as such but rather as scientific evaluators: mediators between the groups and an objective grading system. Not having been praised, neither they, nor the dignitaries in attendance, were under any obligation to reciprocate with gifts. Prizes were for meritorious performances, not for reciprocation. If prizes were tokens of beneficence, the generosity was projected as the Senator brand's, not the judges' or the dignitaries'. This was fitting, as it was the Senator brand that the groups had to praise in their songs.

Here we see an intersection of all three public formations—bugenyi, school, and advertising. The praise and gifts transaction mode of bugenyi was evoked with the groups' Senator beer praise songs. The customary transaction between clients and patrons was diverted, however, by the school evaluation model, carried over from the Uganda Schools' Festival. The sole recipient of communal praise, and giver of gifts, was the Senator brand. And so, the advertising project ultimately received the fruits of both school and bugenyi public interactivity.

Televising the Senator Festival

As the festival progressed, EABL produced a weekly television show out of footage a hired videographer took of Senator Festival events, entitled "Discover Our Land, Our Cultures." It was shown on WBS, one of Uganda's few television channels. Since it was a television show, and few rural Ugandans had regular access to television, "Discover Our Land, Our Cultures" probably had a negligible impact on the target market

for the Senator brand. It seemed to be developed to boost, in urban viewers' eyes, EABL's image as a benevolent sponsor of cultures.

Watching the shows, without having witnessed events in person, one would get a very different sense of the Festival. Except for a few brief clips in an opening montage sequence, all of the activities besides the staged songs and dances—the giveaways, drinking contests, disco, etc.—were cut out. Likewise elided was any sense that this was a competition. The groups were not portrayed as named entities competing against one another, whom a viewer might root for or against.

In fact, as the urbanely dressed and coiffed narrator who introduced each video-recorded item made clear, what was being shown was not groups, or a certain kind of event, but *tribes* or *cultures* in the abstract. The show borrowed the format and tone of BBC and PBS adventure travelogues like "Global Trekker." The following was a typical introduction to footage of a Traditional Folk Dance on "Discover Our Land, Our Cultures":

> Our first destination is Kapchorwa on Mountain Elgon. The Sabin people are one of the tribes in Africa which have cling on their cultures and customs. We're going to experience a circumcision dance known as kakombeth: the dance which initiates young people into manhood. Mind you, this is a male circumcision!

Such an introduction prepares the viewer to see not a danced representation of a circumcision ritual in a stage competition, but the real thing in some sort of frozen ethnographic past. The strategy seems to be to elide or mask any human intermediaries between the Senator Brand/EABL and the impersonal thing of value, i.e. the tradition. After introductions, complete dances and songs are shown without interruptions.

A video of 2007 Senator Festival events Haruna commissioned from a local production company—for himself, not for EABL—gives a rather different view of Festival events. The video opens with long shots of the audience, the judges (lingering on a visiting white female judge), and hungry members of groups lining up for servings of rice pilaf. This video likewise leaves out the Senator brand-promotion parts of events. It is a depiction of events as I think James and Haruna liked to see them: as communal celebrations of tradition in the present rather than a frozen past, with the corporate sponsor invisible.

Conclusion

In closing this chapter, I return to the question I began with: What new kinds of crowd are being generated in commercial public events like the Senator Festival? It seems to me that some form of mass-mediated consumer subjectivity is being established in rural Uganda today, even though most rural Ugandans hardly have enough money to buy basic life necessities. To some extent, the consumerist mode is insinuating itself by parasitical or symbiotic dependence on older colonial and precolonial public modes, such as school and bugenyi. On the other hand, as the commercial formation establishes itself in new markets, the older formations attach onto and reproduce themselves within it. The interactions between these three historically embedded formations are complex and unpredictable. At Senator Events, the balance among them varied from event to event, with some events seeming more like brand promotion parties, others more like school assemblies, and others more like interactive village festivities. In some ways, crowds seemed

most liberated when no single formation was able to dominate—when it was difficult to determine exactly what kind of event the Senator Festival was. One thing that was consistent among Senator events was a high level of audience participation, not so much in the formal music-making part of the event, but in "sideshow" activities instigated by EABL. This kind of participation on-the-side may prove to be a common factor in commercialized cultural events around the decolonized world. It could also inspire a relaxation of the strict boundaries established around treasured traditional cultures, as artist-administrators working for corporations, like James Isabirye and Haruna Walusimbi, translate the mechanisms of commercial populism into mechanisms for invigorating popular interest in traditional music.

Chapter 3. New African Entrepreneurs: The Senator Festival Administrators

The Senator Festival was the brainchild of two ambitious musicians, Haruna Walusimbi and James Isabirye, whom East Africa Breweries Ltd. (EABL) hired as administrators (Plate 3.1). It was these two men who first sold the idea of a traditional music competition to EABL, holding up their local Festival *Omuvangano* as a model. To EABL marketing department meetings, they brought reports on the Festival's progress and plans for improving it in future years. They proposed bicycle races, wrestling matches, *omweso* (mancala) contests—anything to draw more people to the Senator brand and the celebration of local music traditions. James and Haruna needed to sell Senator beer at Festival events to keep their jobs. Promoting traditional culture was, for them, a higher moral purpose of the Festival, which made its less savory beer-hawking aspects more conscionable.

Despite their efforts on behalf of the corporation, there was no question of their becoming permanent employees of it, and their supervisors treated them with a certain aloofness. Salaries regularly arrived weeks or months late, and when the axe finally fell on the Festival, James and Haruna were dismissed with a brief and perfunctory email.

They spent much of their time shouting over bad cell phone connections at workers scattered across the country: indignant local bureaucrats needed to be appeased, missing and broken equipment replaced, rebellious performance-group leaders mollified. Haruna, a tall, athletic, serene-looking man, claimed he was the calmer diplomat of the

pair. James, a born-again *musumba* or preacher, was all fire and brimstone; he took the phone when no further nonsense was to be tolerated.

One can imagine a proponent of C.K. Prahalad's global "bottom-of-the-pyramid" capitalism (2006) praising James and Haruna as exemplary third-world entrepreneurs—the perfect self-motivated workers for the job of engineering capitalism from the grass-roots up. The two men were hungry for success, and not politically opposed to pursuing it through global-capitalist channels. Unlike some Ugandans who belonged to privileged networks, they weren't secure and comfortable in bureaucratic jobs. Having grown up in poor villages, they knew how to speak to village concerns, and sincerely wanted to improve village conditions. They were educated, proficient with new technologies, and bursting with ideas.

Karin Barber has argued that African cultural producers in an "intermediate zone," who are neither creators of politically radical "modern literature," nor peasants reproducing "traditional heritage," "have tended to slip from view in the polarized purview of many scholarly discussions of African culture" (Barber 2003, 3). In many respects, James and Haruna were of this overlooked intermediate zone. They did not fit well into the categories "middle-class" or "elite." They were men born in villages, who had moved to the city, but maintained remained bound to their rural homes. They had attained access to economic opportunities far beyond those of most of their relatives, but were not of Uganda's economically secure class. They were intellectuals with college educations, who did not move in (indeed, felt shut out of) intellectual circles at Uganda's prestigious

Makerere University. They were cosmopolitans who were more interested in developing local cultural properties than in contributing to a global popular or avant-garde culture.

The same desires, character traits, and social positionalities that marked James and Haruna as potential bottom-of-the-pyramid capitalists also made them vulnerable. During the years of the Senator Festival, their lives were shaped by the vicissitudes of entrepreneurial capitalism: they always seemed to be either on-the-move, with unlimited prospects for upward mobility, or in danger of financial ruin. To counteract the stresses and uncertainties of capitalist striving, they deepened their commitment to traditional music and an ideal of a timeless, leisurely, and morally upright village culture. This chapter is about the specific ways they imagined cosmopolitan, capitalist life on the one hand, and the world of "the village" on the other.

In Africa today, there are many in-between men like James and Haruna. There are also in-between women (some of whom will be discussed in the next chapter) who face a different set of challenges. Understanding different kinds of in-betweenness is key to understanding many aspects of contemporary Africa. Anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have recently devoted much energy to investigating Africans' complex imaginations of rural and urban places (e.g. Lentz 1994; Piot 1999; Gugler 2002). Dichotomies once useful to Africanist social scientists such as rural/urban, townsmen/tribesmen, traditional/modern, have been thoroughly deconstructed. Where and how contemporary Africans live is now acknowledged to be a complex issue, to be considered on a case-by-case basis. There are people who live substantially "village" lives in cities, and village-dwellers who live in connected, capitalist, "urban" ways.

The rural/urban or traditional/modern dichotomy remains pertinent to the extent that it lives on in African discourse. "Straddling tradition and modernity" is, especially for educated Africans like James and Haruna, both a "strategy for self-advancement," and a way of "carving out of a personal sense of a dignified, meaningful existence" (Lentz 1994, 151). In this chapter, I consider the various ways James and Haruna "straddled" the village world of their youth and the mobile, cosmopolitan, entrepreneurial existence of their adult lives. They saw their village connections and musical know-how as something they could sell on a global market to visiting scholars like me as well as multinational corporations like EABL. And, perhaps more importantly, they turned to their village roots for a sense of moral coherence in an unpredictable, "casino capitalist" world (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001).

Mobile Lives

James was a man on the move. He swore he hated driving on Uganda's treacherous and traffic-jammed roads, and yet he was always taking me for rides in his Toyota sedan, known locally as a *kikumi* (*"*one hundred") for its ability to go 100 miles per hour. We took many trips to the site of a house he was building in Seeta, a distant suburb of Kampala. We drove to Senator events, to cultural sites he wanted me to photograph, and repeatedly to his home village in Busoga. Once, when we were careering down the narrow dirt road into his home village, he pointed at a boy pushing a bicycle laden with goods along the side and marveled, "That was me. I was just like any of these boys!"

James seemed grateful to be going *kikumi* in his car past hundreds of boys-pushing-bicycles he might have been.

James's car, which he purchased in 2005 with his Greenhill Academy teacher's salary, had enabled him to do paid field work for the Swedish music-development NGO, SELAM, and to assist visiting ethnomusicologists like me. He had recently travelled by plane as well as by car, attending conferences of the International Council for Traditional Music in the United Kingdom and China, as well as SELAM meetings in Ethiopia. James valued speed, efficiency, and progress, though he suffered from the stress that arose out of these values. He abstained from alcohol, was meticulous about his diet, and fended off sleep, vowing that he would allow himself one full night of blissful oblivion the night he moved into his finished new house.

In January 2007, James, driving his family and me to Jinja, crashed into an oncoming car in order to avoid the rear of a braking truck. The Toyota spun 180 degrees, and my head bounced off the steering wheel. James's leg was trapped in the mangled chassis and broken in several places. The car was totaled. This was a potholed deathtrap on the Jinja road where every month trucks crashed and people died. The road, which would have been immediately fixed in other richer and better-governed countries, was one of the everyday dangers that mobile Ugandans like James had to cope with. In 2009, at the time of this writing, James has not yet saved up enough money to buy a new car, and has only limited flexibility in his leg (which was set badly by an incompetent doctor). He has, however, triumphantly finished and moved into his new house.

To be an ambitious, mobile man of limited means in Uganda, a land of high risks and no government safety nets, requires a burning drive. James always ascribed his drive and persistence to his born-again faith in Jesus. He admired the American prosperity-gospel evangelists like T.D. Jakes and Benny Hinn, who, on Kampala's Christian television station, constantly assure viewers that substantial investment of faith, money, and hard work will bring substantial rewards. Their gospel was, importantly, one of individualistic self-improvement; they fed James's hope that he could, if necessary, overcome any obstacle through the exertion of his individual will alone. It has long been argued (with many criticisms and revisions) that this individualistic way of experiencing the self stands in stark contrast to a communalistic experience of the self autochthonous in many African societies (Tempels [1945] 1959; Mbiti 1961). Foucault, throughout his work, suggested that the intense construction a self is a particular historical development that emerged from Europe—one crucial to a larger phenomenon of "governmentality" (Foucault [1978] 1991; 1980).

James came from a poor family in a poor village in one of the poorest regions of Uganda, Busoga. His father and mother funneled whatever income they had into his school fees, so that he, alone out of his brothers and sisters, could finish secondary school at Kiira College. From there he was accepted into the Music, Dance, and Drama department (MDD) at Makerere University in Kampala. Like most Ugandan students, he would have preferred to have been accepted into another department; MDD has a reputation of being a dead-end field in terms of money. James's musical skills, cultivated as a child in his home village, along, perhaps, with his -Soga ethnicity (Basoga have a long reputation

for being good musicians), bought him an entrance into Uganda's most elite university, but also limited his career prospects.

In 1992, after completing the two-year associate's degree in MDD at Makerere, James got a succession of secondary-school teaching jobs in Busoga. He and Haruna formed their own performance group, Nile Beat Artists. In 1996, they put on their first traditional music and dance Festival, *Omuvangano,* which was sponsored by a cigarette company and highlighted the diverse traditions internal to the Busoga region.[47] After securing an additional degree in education, James landed a position at Kampala's prestigious Greenhill Academy secondary and primary school. He and his wife Victoria had to supplement his initial income from Greenhill with money they made selling popcorn and ice cream on the street. During this time, his brother had two serious motorcycle accidents, and James had to spend much of his money helping his family. In 2005, James was hired by SELAM, which provided him with enough startup money to buy the car.

Haruna knew James from Uganda National Schools traditional music and dance competitions, where his school, St. James Secondary, frequently came up against James's. He, like James, joined the MDD department at Makerere for two years. He was then accepted into a master's program in MDD, but failed to earn a degree. After this, Haruna

47. *Omuvangano* was a legendary feast of reconciliation after fighting among three Basoga chiefs. It entailed "topical speeches from elders, music and dance making and eating. Cows and goats were slaughtered and drummers were brought. After some time of playing their repertoire, the dancers dramatised the fight" (Isabirye n.d.). James and Haruna chose a name for a festival which captured their ideal (also applied to the Senator Festival) of reconciliation through staged competition.

left academics and teaching, and committed himself wholly to cultivating musical opportunities for Nile Beat Artists.

Haruna stayed in the quieter town of Jinja, in a house full of instruments. He liked to walk into a room, pick up an *ndongo* lamellophone from a pile, and lose himself in it. He had the meditative temperament of a dedicated musician. Haruna too commuted often back and forth from Jinja and to other parts of the country, but I sensed he did not revel in the space-time of the road as James did. Like James, he had travelled internationally, and had attracted international attention as a musician. He had recently recorded in his home village with the American jazz banjoist Bela Fleck. Footage of this session can be seen in the documentary film *Throw Down Your Heart* (http://www.throwdownyourheart.com).

Haruna is a Muslim, not a born-again Christian like James. We didn't discuss his faith much, but I sensed he was rather easy-going about it. His father had been a cleric, who had forbidden music (with limited success) in Haruna's home village. Haruna, while we were visiting a community of Baswezi healers, speculated that many Ugandans participated pragmatically in two religions at a time: "traditional" religion and Christianity or Islam.

In 2006, Haruna was thinking about moving into politics, his other apparent passion besides music. He was a charismatic local figure in Busoga, and a distinctive one in that he was a Muganda by birth, with one of the most prestigious -Ganda names: Walusimbi. James, conversely, was a Musoga by birth, living in -Ganda territory (albeit in Kampala, a multiethnic enclave). In a country where ethnic homelands matter, this was another aspect of the two men's in-betweenness.

Most of the men and women who worked for the Festival under James and Haruna were affiliated either with Haruna's Jinja-based performance troupe Nile Beat Artists, or with Kyambogo University, a teacher's college where James was getting a bachelor's degree in music education. Jobs of recruiting and training groups, setting up stages, and the like, went to members of Nile Beat, while judges and recruiters were drawn from Kyambogo.

The Senator Festival as a Voyage of Discovery

The Senator Festival extended the mobility in which James, Haruna, and their workers were already living. The Festival was remarkable for its geographical comprehensiveness. Following the government's recently expanded list of administrative regions, districts, and counties, the administrators came up with a list of places where Senator events would be held.[48] Events were planned for 40 of the 69 districts on the government's 2005 list, with two county-level events per district.

The breadth and penetration of the Festival was a source of pride to the administrators. Many of the county-level events were staged in small towns or trading centers, far from the main roads. Getting to these remote places by bus, motorcycle, and foot, finding groups, and organizing events, required hard work and ingenuity from James and Haruna's crew. Unlike the Schools Festival, which relied on a pre-existing network of schools, the Senator Festival team had to build its own networks from scratch, working

48. The government's administrative geography was especially alive in informed Ugandan's minds, thanks to controversies over the 2005 legislation of 22 new districts.

sometimes under the radar of local bureaucracies. James compiled, from his field workers' reports, a list of groups, their locations and phone numbers, which he was reluctant to share with outsiders. He hoped his exclusive possession of this list would make it difficult for EABL to fire his team and hire another one.

The Senator Festival embraced many regions to which James and his colleagues had never travelled. Ethnic tensions and violence had made Ugandans fearful of visiting many places. Southerners like James were especially leery of the North, the site of atrocities by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In general, exploratory travel is not a deeply ingrained practice among Ugandans, but something typically left to foreign tourists. Ugandans have tended to restrict travel to shuttling to and from their home villages.[49]

Exploring Uganda was something new and exciting for James, Haruna, and their team. One of the first possessions James showed me was a picture of himself visiting Karimojong province in the northeast of Uganda, a region occupied by pastoralists who Southern Ugandans imagine to be exotic and dangerous because of their revealing clothes

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49. A travel agency's advertisement, handed out to Ugandans at an elite Kampala church, revealed something about ingrained travel habits and incipient ones:

> Traditional ways of relaxing or unwinding have been through people going to the *"village."* Unfortunately that tends to generate more stress because of our extended family dependency. . . . Vacationing helps you to attain a balanced lifestyle by periodically stopping routine work, take leave and get refreshed. The refreshment will be achieved through spending quality time with your family or friends or choosing an activity that will as an end result help you to unwind, reduce stress, detoxify, rejuvenate and completely recharge your system. This will enhance your productivity at work by improving your energy levels as well as make you a happier person.

and history of cattle rustling. When he travelled for his first time to Gulu, in the north, for the 2007 Senator national-level event, he sent several enthusiastic cell phone text messages to me in the United States. When James and I would meet one of his acquaintances on the street, he would have me recite my list of places I had been to for Senator events: Paidah, Busembatya, Lira, Busia, and so on. Other workers on the Festival team were even more avid explorers. Ssengendo Abdu, who clocked an impressive number of miles as a Festival worker, enjoyed learning phrases in the many languages he encountered—not only Bantu languages, but also Nilo-Saharan and Sudanic. Their work was energized by curiosity and a sense that post-war Uganda was a disrupted landscape that needed to be surveyed and mended. The Festival slogan "Discover Our Land, Our Cultures," captured something of their exploratory spirit. "Discovery," as Ali Mazrui has pointed out, is a word tied up in Africa with European imperialism, ripe to be reclaimed by Africans for projects of "self-discovery" (Mazrui 1969).

Uganda's new cellular phone networks, which connected even remote parts of the country, were essential to this project. James and Haruna were able to keep in constant contact with their teams and coordinate their actions. The possibility of staying in touch with people at home made travel more comfortable for everyone who had to do it. The biggest downside was the expense of prepaid cell phone minutes. "Air time," sold in tiny amounts on scratch-off cards by representatives of three rival multinational companies, was treated like a commodity for basic living, like food or gasoline.

Preserving an Ethnic Map

Both James and Haruna had participated in the long-running Uganda National Schools competition as performers, trainers, and judges. When they designed the Senator Festival, they sought to clearly distinguish it from both the Schools Festival and the traditional MDD "Kwetu fest" run by Ndere Troupe, a rival group to Nile Beat Artists.

The Schools Festival, discussed in Chapter 2, was designed to promote cross-pollinations of MDD styles among Uganda's different ethnic groups. In principled opposition to a trend he thought had gone too far, James fought successfully to legislate that groups in the Senator Festival be restricted to their local languages and MDD styles. The rules for the 2006 Festival stated that the Traditional Folk Song "must be in the local language of the area"; that the Traditional Folkdance likewise "must be local." These rules made it impossible for groups who lived in a region, but were not of one of that region's canonized ethnicities, to fully compete. For example, the Luo Foundation group, based in Busoga but of mixed Luo-speaking ethnicities, was disqualified from competition past the district level.[50]

James wanted to celebrate diversity in the Senator Festival, but believed that permissiveness would inevitably result in cultural homogeneity, as groups would adopt those regional styles most proven to impress in competitions. He reported to me that, at a recent Schools Festival event, he had been shocked to hear non-Basoga children singing -Soga songs, the lyrics of which they could not possibly have understood. He was in favor

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50. This rule was controversial among the administrators, and even James, its strongest backer, expressed doubts about it. The smaller *Omuvangano* festival Haruna and James had run in Busoga prior to their work on the Senator Festival had allowed groups of ethnicities and musical traditions other than -Soga, who happened to live in Busoga, to fully participate.

of stylistic evolutions and borrowings within limits: he noted with pleasure that Baganda dancers in the 2007 competition were incorporating hand gestures from dances of Banyarwanda (ethnic Rwandans) who lived among them. But he believed it was the Festival's duty to impose some limits on musicians' freedom, in order to counteract the effects of other music competitions.[51]

The "must be local" rule proved difficult to enforce, partly because Ugandan groups take professional pride in being able to perform in diverse ethnic styles. James told me that in the 2007 national-level event, the group representing the Mbale region snuck a -Soga song into its act at the last minute, before the administrators could do anything about it.

The Salvation of Village Techniques of the Body

The Senator Festival was, for its administrators, a means of engaging with a rural Ugandan landscape. They were eager to survey the Ugandan countryside in its entirety, awaken it, and represent it to itself and to the world at large. Through the Festival, they would help heal a battered countryside. Old people, worn down by poverty and neglect, would dust off their forgotten instruments and dance steps; children would be drawn away from television by their elders' dancing; pride would replace despair in the villages.

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51. Haruna explained to me that the "must be local" rule had important political purposes as well: when a Baganda group was allowed to perform -Ganda songs praising the kabaka in the Busoga regional event of the 2005 Senator competition, the king of Busoga, who had been invited as a dignitary, left in a huff.

The administrators were driven in their work not just by the promise of ample payment from EABL, but by these visions.

Ugandans often speak of their specific home villages, and also of *the village* as a generalized place opposed to *town*. If you phone someone, you may be told that s/he is "in the village" or "upcountry," whether or not you know the specific place that is being referred to. When someone is in *the village*, it almost always means s/he is visiting his/her birthplace, so further information is not considered necessary. At the same time, the abstraction *the village* speaks to a sense of shared experience among city-dwelling Ugandans. Everyone is assumed to have a home village, and these villages are assumed to share many common traits.

The attachment James and Haruna felt to the village was powerfully based in specific "techniques of the body" (Mauss [1935] 2006): a set of cultivated artisanal techniques including but not limited to music. Marcel Mauss called an accumulation of such techniques a "habitus." This term was later taken up by Bourdieu (without crediting Mauss (Asad 1993, 75)), who defined it as a "system of lasting, transposable dispositions" imprinted on the body, primarily during childhood (Bourdieu [1972] 1977). James and Haruna, growing up, had been inculcated with two different habituses, one associated with the village, the other with school.

Karin Barber has described the artistic leaders of the Yoruba popular theater in Nigeria as coming from a class of "clerkly producers" in an "intermediate" stratum of the field of cultural production. These people were "formed by a dual experience of school and apprenticeship which prepared them for clerkly occupations associated with literacy

on the one hand and artisanal, manual work on the other" (Barber 2003, 4). This describes James and Haruna rather well. On the one hand, growing up in their villages in Busoga, they learned specific body techniques: how to farm, how to build and mend things, and how to play instruments, sing, and dance. On the other, James and Haruna had had an above-average amount of schooling, in which they had learned the kinds of "clerkly" skills that mission schools doled out: speaking, writing, itemizing, calculating, and comporting themselves "properly." These two sets of body techniques, village and clerkly, which had been established in colonial discourse as stark opposites, were experienced as distinct. James often mused on the differences and parallels between the two styles he had learned. He liked to tell his Greenhill students that his illiterate grandmother was better at math (a clerkly technique) than any of them, because she could weave an intricately patterned banana-fiber mat (a village technique).

When James took me on trips to his home village, he liked to show me the materials and techniques with which things were made (Plate 3.2). He showed me how bananas were planted, roofs thatched, and instruments constructed. One of his first major purchases had been a sewing machine for his father, which he showed me how to use. He hoped someday I would visit for an extended period of time, so that I could experience hoeing the soil and milking cows. James' belief in the morally uplifting power of artisanal labor was shared by many other Ugandans I met. There was an echo of European missionary/colonial discourse in this (the "gospel of the plow") but also a sense of an genuine alternative habitus, based in village labor, arts, and crafts, that was being threatened by urban values and body techniques.

There was a poignancy in the tours James gave me, in that we both knew that, no matter how much he loved the village and praised its healthful properties, he was not going back, at least not anytime soon. If village trips were blissful occasions, they were also stressful, as destitute friends and relatives would crowd around James for money he could ill afford to spare. David William Cohen and E. S. Atieno Odhiambo have discussed the powerful pressures men who have left their villages in Kenya feel to make investments in their homeland, in the form of new houses, etc. In return for these, the emigrants receive respect and a sense of belonging, encapsulated in everyday gestures, such as lengthy greetings and better portions of food (Cohen and Odhiambo 1989). Despite its social prestige, the role of provider is often not an easy or pleasant one. James's village family had recently experienced much infirmity, and his resources had been stretched to the limit. He had to reserve a portion of his income for his own two daughters, so that they could have schooling and clothing. To some extent, his nuclear family had to be protected from the demands of his extended kin.

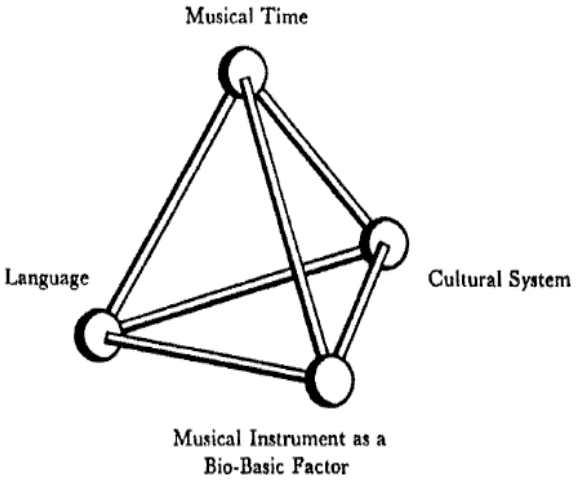
James was building a compound of three houses on a piece of land on the outskirts of Kampala, in a village where he had no kin, where he had to lock his doors and surround his property with a wall. He and his family would live in one house, and rent out the two others. His new house seemed like a way of half-returning to a rural Uganda close to his heart, without returning to the social entanglements, remoteness, and inertia of his home village. Haruna too had built a spacious brick house. His was in his home village deep in Busoga. Like many such all-but-finished village houses built by upwardly mobile men, Haruna's stood locked-up and empty, while his mother and family worked

and lived on the grounds around it. It was too risky to open up such a house to anyone, lest it be put to misuse, its latches and fixtures stolen. Apparently, until Haruna could come to reclaim it, the house would serve merely as a symbol of his largesse. I read Haruna's empty house, and James's walled-in house in a suburban village of strangers, as two efforts to reconnect to a village world left behind. Music was another, perhaps more complete and fulfilling, means of imaginatively reconnecting to the village.

Imagining the Village through Music

There has been a recent surge of interest across the academic disciplines in "musical constructions of place," (Stokes 1994; Leyshon, Matless, and Revill 1995). How did James, Haruna, and other Ugandan musicians, use music to imagine the village?

Figure 4.1. Wachsmann's "molecule" for thinking about music in Africa



Klaus Wachsmann (1970), drawing a four-cornered "molecule" (Figure 4.1), identified what he thought were four essential, interrelated factors in African music (and

perhaps all musics). These are: 1) "cultural system," 2) "musical instrument/bio-basic factor," 3) "musical time," and 4) "language." "Cultural system" can mean (but is not limited to), musicians' "affairs, their masters, their public, their status, and their attitudes" (131). "Musical instrument/Bio-basic factor" includes sound-producing devices, but also ways of playing them, and the whole realm of techniques of the body. "Musical time" includes musical rhythm, but also "clock time, or biological time, or social time." Thus, an African musical experience involves some amalgamation and balancing of bodily experience, temporal experience, social experience, and linguistic experience (all overlapping and mutually dependent). One can imagine how a place, such as one's childhood village, could be holistically invoked by such an amalgamation.

In the next paragraphs, using Wachsmann's categories, I consider specific ways music might transport a player or listener to an imagined village space.

Musical Time and Cultural System

For James, the leisurely temporality of the village was crucial for traditional music. He told me how he and the other boys in his village would pick out, from the evening air, xylophone compositions played by other boys in neighboring villages. They would add these new compositions to their repertoire, and broadcast new ones of their own. Music was learned and composed in the blissful unawareness of the passage of time that all children, but especially rural children, can have. It was, James insisted, "just a game," not an educational or artistic pursuit (Plate 3.3).

James contrasted this leisurely village style of xylophone learning to the xylophone learning of students at Greenhill Academy, where he taught music classes. There,

students, many of whom were discouraged by their parents from wasting too much time with music, confined their work on the xylophones to periods of semi-enforced classroom practice, with each student tuning out the practicing of his/her neighbors. Many of the students learned pieces they had to learn for exams by means of sol-fa notations rather than by ear. I observed that students were learning melodies but mostly failing to learn how to interlock them with their classmates' melodies.

In -Ganda and -Soga xylophone styles, two or more players take opposite sides of the same xylophone, and loop two different short melodies simultaneously, with one player's attacks landing always rhythmically in-between the other player's. In my own efforts to learn this tightly interactive style I acquired rhythmic sense James summed up as "you hit, I hit": My actions had to refer first and foremost to my partner's immediate ones, not to some projected rhythmic framework. At some point after I had established synchronicity with my partner, I had to further dissociate my listening from my own actions, and tune in instead to the "inherent patterns" (Kubik 1994) that emerged out of the composite pattern we looped together. Once I made these two processes habitual, xylophone playing became easier for me.

James said he had developed these interactive processes unconsciously through playing with his childhood village mates. The village had allowed/encouraged a kind of collective leisurely musical play among boys that was less available or desirable for city children. Students at Greenhill Academy, especially older ones, seemed to feel awkward about music as play. For many of them, it seemed, xylophone songs were yet another

thing they had to memorize for always-approaching exams. The clerkly atmosphere of school discouraged a leisurely attitude towards anything, including music.

James's sense of the experiential differences between the village and school was, it must be emphasized, based on his life history as a male. Little girls in villages are not afforded leisurely childhoods as boys are. As soon as they are able, they are put to work helping around the house and caring for younger children. They are prohibited from playing instruments and certain games, and even from eating certain foods such as chicken (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005; Isabirye, p.c.). A school like Greenhill Academy, despite its clerkly atmosphere, must therefore seem to girls to be a considerably more liberated and leisurely place than the village or even the urban home. In sports and music classes, girls can participate as much as boys, though there are still expectations that they will be demure and give way when boys are around.

Upon discovering that I was capable of learning music by ear (he believed non-Africans generally weren't), James gave me xylophone and lamellophone lessons in which very little was said or written: we would play a piece again and again, with James adding more and more variations, until I had become reasonably comfortable with it. He, like other Ugandans versed in traditional music, talked about "deep" musicianship. In the -Ganda/-Soga tradition, as James explained it to me, as a musician grows more competent, he or she moves deeper into the same compositions a neophyte like me was able to play. There is no great emphasis on developing longer or more complicated pieces, but rather, a strong emphasis on learning to play apparently simple compositions with ingenious and appropriate nuances. James would begin with the basic patterns; then, as I

would loop the "starter" melody I had learned, he would play variations in the "mixer," some close to the basic mixer melody, some seemingly far from it.[52] It was up to me to either catch on to what he was doing and move with him deeper into the composition, or stay securely at my comfortable level, while he provided an introduction to the next level. The temporality of musical experience on the xylophone seemed not to be one of forward progression, but one of moving ever deeper, with a partner, into a single cycling fragment of time.

Language

Deep is also commonly used to describe esoteric, intellectual, markedly traditional registers of spoken or sung languages. This valuation of "deep" language is present in many parts of Africa.[53] In Uganda, deep Luganda (*oluganda olw'obuwangwa*) is strongly associated with the villages. Many of its proverbs refer to natural and agricultural phenomena. The Luganda spoken by city folk is supposed to be degraded—mixed up with English and Swahili—and not deep. Deep Luganda, and deep registers of other Southern Ugandan languages, are purposefully used by some traditional musicians, and also by some singers of the popular music genre *kadongo kamu*. James admired the deep musicianship of the Musoga lamellophone player Nathan Nyende Matta, not because he could move on his instrument between different playing variations with ease the way Haruna

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52. The terms "starter" and "mixer" are from Anderson 1968. For further discussion of -Soga variation techniques on the xylophone, see Kubik 1992.

53. For example, Waterman has noted the use in Yoruba, in reference to music, of the term *ijinlee*, which melds the roots for "deep" and "ground," and approximates "traditional" (Waterman 1990, 14).

could, but because the texts he composed were profound and ambiguous, making thorough use of proverbs and other devices of deep Lusoga.

One of the most important components of deep musicianship is the ability to capture the intrinsic linguistic tonal components of phrases in one's singing and instrument playing. Luganda and Lusoga are mildly tonal languages, and the intrinsic melody of a text is not always heeded by or apparent to less sensitive musicians. I witnessed a rehearsal session of a rural performance group, during which James corrected a song phrase by phrase, so that its melody would capture the contours implied by the text. A Luganda term used to describe linguistic-musical nuances is *ggono*, which is translated as "grace." If I understand it correctly, to play with *ggono* is to ornament a melody in a way that demonstrates the musician's profound knowledge of the intrinsic melody of a text. *Ggono* is used, along with *deep*, to describe graceful speech outside of musical contexts.

Musical Instrument/Bio-basic Factor

For James, the connection of music to the countryside was not solely a matter of a conducive village environment, with its intimate social interactions, relaxed pace, and pastoral quiet. It was, crucially, material: a particular soil gave forth certain plants which could be made into particular kinds of instruments. Organology was the musicological

topic he seemed most interested in, and he photographed instruments, their manufacture, and the plants and other raw materials they were made from.[54]

An important narrative for James was that his homeland, Busoga, had particularly rich soil for agriculture and correspondingly had produced an especially rich set of musical instruments and consequently a rich set of song and dance styles. Karimoja, he explained to me, was, by contrast, a desert, yielding few instruments, and the style of music there reflected the musicians' having to make do with very little. The material culture of instruments was alive for James and Haruna, as it has not been for me, a player of the piano, an instrument whose manufacture and maintenance is beyond my ken.

James's enthusiasm for music instruments made of woods and skins was partly a response to recent shifts in Ugandan musical culture. Popular musicians in the capital city are now mostly foregoing instruments in favor of digital playback tracks, singing songs tracks produced entirely in studios by for-hire producers with keyboards and computers—a trend lamented by James and Haruna, which deepened their sense of *traditional* music as a separate sphere.

Music was, for James, connected to the land in non-organological ways as well. When I was about to travel to festival events near the Ruwenzori mountains, James told me to look for hunched-over dances, which expressed the dancers' habits of leaning into

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54. James's interest in organology was buttressed by a tradition of Kampala music and arts scholarship in Uganda, insitutionalized especially at the Uganda Museum. Margaret Trowell and Klaus Wachsmann's *Tribal Arts and Crafts of Uganda* (1953) was a book James consulted regularly at the Uganda Museum.

the hills as they farmed them. Though he never used the term, James talked about music with something reminiscent of the French concept *terroir* in mind: he saw particular traditions emerging from particular soils, topographical formations, and communities' grapplings with their environmental surroundings. Important Luganda terms emphasizing rootedness such as *buwangwa* ("nature/tradition" from the verb *kuwanga*, "to insert" (Karlström 2004)) are similar to *terroir*. It was very important to James, and to other musicians and judges I talked to, that musical performances accurately depict particular locations and manners of rural life. He wrote:

> Some traditions are coming from dirty agricultural/herding communities. The Baganda for example have clean ancestry in basic outlook. Should we award marks for the clean and point out that the dirty should clean up? Remember the Twekembe solist playing the flute in the dirty kanzu [cassock] was marked down [lost points]. But herdsmen are generally dirty people going through swamps wearing their tyre-shoes. Is that a correct reflection of the history of the people? What will the children say about the Gishu circumcision ceremony if they do not see the leaves, the dust, make up, etc. (Isabirye, p.c.)

The notion of distinct localities, each with its own potential for development, is also central to the colonial discourse Foucault describes as "governmentality" (Foucault [1978] 1991). There are compatibilities between colonial discourses and pre-colonial African ones, and James ideas can be understood to emerge from both.

The Traditional and Entrepreneurial Ideals Conjoined: Cultural Inoculations against Laziness

James and others, echoing a dominant narrative of missionaries and colonials in Africa (Beidelman 1982, 133) often opined that rural Ugandans were prone to laziness—especially those who lived in areas with particularly rich soils, since they (supposedly)

had to work hardly at all to feed themselves. James had travelled to China for an International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) meeting, and had admired the industriousness of the farmers there, who, he observed, were forced to spend years breaking and fertilizing the soil before they could cultivate it. He decided, based on his trip, that Ugandan music was much more diverse than Chinese music—a quality he ascribed to the richer variety of soils in Uganda. The unfortunate corollary to Uganda's agricultural and musical fertility, in James's opinion, was laziness. Laziness left people susceptible to an unhealthy modern materialism, for which they would readily trade their own local traditional culture. He wrote to me:

> It is not possible to deliberately hold back a people from the world in which they live but perhaps tell them to copy what they have got a good understanding of. You know how women wear lipstick, lipgloss etc as fashion here. Culture / identity of a people in my view is more valuable to the survival of a people than the luxury of picking on idioms without any prior and good knowledge and understanding of them. (Isabirye, p.c.)

Here James drew his two main ethics together: a capitalist/Protestant work ethic and an ethic built around the habitus of the *village*. If villagers would only embrace their local culture, they would be less prone to the indolence that was seeping in with global popular culture, and would be able to become better entrepreneurs. The Senator Festival, in James's mind, was a way of encouraging villagers to be more industrious in cultivating their diverse musical fruits. He was, however, uneasy about the Festival's promotion of beer, from which both he and Haruna abstained for religious reasons. The immoral alcohol component of the Festival made its program of rural moral uplift more urgent.

The administrators saw rural people as full of potential but stultified by poverty, tropical laziness, and an impinging mass-media popular culture. They took satisfaction in rousing elderly and inactive village musicians. James told me a story of how, prior to the 2005 Festival, he had travelled to the Soroti district in search of groups who might be ready and willing to perform in the Festival event there. Not finding any, he selected some old men at random and plied them with drink, and then asked them to get out the lamellophones he knew they, as Teso men, would have. This hastily assembled group went on to perform at the Senator Festival, and passed the first level of competition. James was also very pleased to see children in his village emulating a group of elderly Basoga trumpeters—supposedly the last trumpeters in the region. The children had made reed "trumpets" out of papaya stems, and were imitating the trumpeter's circular march. James saw the Senator Festival, which had roused the old men trumpeters from their dotage, as having made this generational transmission possible.

Conclusion

The Senator Festival was shaped by, and shed light on, the attitudes of its two main administrators, Haruna Walusimbi and James Isabirye, who were men of an intermediate stratum: no longer of the village, but not yet securely situated in Uganda's middle class. They were explorers and entrepreneurs, excited about the possibilities of capitalism and cultural rebuilding in a country that was recovering from wars and an economic melt-down.

They were men with "clerkly" educations, able to function in school systems, government bureaucracies, and the corporate meetings of companies like EABL. They

were starting to participate in global academic/arts communities: James had delivered papers at international musicological conferences, and Haruna was planning to do so. Both were working with musicologists and artists from around the world. They saw the Senator Festival as a calling card that would help them attract global attention.

Finally, James and Haruna were musicians and artisans, whose bodily training from their village childhoods reminded them constantly of another habitus separate from the urban, capitalist habitus in which they were having to spend much of their time. The Senator Festival cannot be substantially understood apart from this. The administrators designed and fought for the Festival mostly because they believed in another village mode of moving, feeling time, playing with language and natural materials, and relating socially to others. They hoped to coax as many villagers as possible into rediscovering and developing this mode.

Chapter 4. Groups in the Senator Festival

In this chapter, I discuss groups who participated in the 2006 Senator Festival, their various bases for association, ways of operating, and responses to this particular event. As throughout this dissertation, I aim to give a broad picture of the field of cultural production, discussing a number of groups in brief rather than any single one in depth, so that the reader can get a sense of some ideas and habits that were widely shared throughout the field.

While my angle is wide, this picture is not based on a comprehensive survey of the some 300 groups who participated, but on a sample limited by my year's stay in Uganda and language barriers. The level of acquaintance I made with the groups I saw varied considerably. I visited twelve groups in their home villages/camps and enjoyed the performances they put on for me as a guest. I interviewed the leaders of twelve groups—sometimes in English, sometimes in beginner's Luganda and/or with the help of a translator. I had a more extended relationship with two group leaders, both members of James's extended family, and was able to find out more about their groups from James and members of his circle. I observed many (perhaps 70) other groups in performance at Senator events, but did not have a chance to meet with them. A section of this chapter on rehearsals is informed by my participant observation in a group which did not join in the Senator Festival, but was similar to those that did.

In addition to giving a sense of ideas, opportunities, and limitations that were shared widely, I also hope to impart a sense of the wide differences that existed among

groups that competed in the Senator Festival. Compared to the Schools' Festival, with its uniformly organized and motivated groups of school children, the Senator Festival—a competition open to any and all adult groups—involved a wider range of kinds of associations. Some groups were convened solely to succeed in a competition. Many other groups counted music/dance as only one of their activities, often not the most important one. A central topic of this chapter is how music/dance were fitted in with other projects.

Finally, this chapter contains some biographical narratives, each of which gives a sense of how the music/dance activities of a group fit into the project of an individual's life. The Senator Festival was in large part a competition among women's associations, and most of the group leaders I got to know were women. The period of my research saw an explosion of women's organization and grassroots political participation in Uganda, as I discuss further. At the same time, Ugandan women were still a subjugated group, who were regularly expected to kneel before men, serve them without hesitation, and do most of the labor in their fields and homes. The life stories of the women of various social backgrounds briefly sketched in this chapter are of inherent interest, and I have tried to preserve some of their stories and opinions in their own words.

The first and longest section of this chapter discusses groups according to their various incentives or models for organization. Some groups grew out of women's associations, often linked to the government. Other groups associated with and/or modeled themselves on the successful professional Kampala group Ndere Troupe. For other groups, the Senator Festival itself was their main reason for being (thus far). I also discuss some idiosyncratic groups. Many groups fell into more than one category.

Next, I discuss what I know and/or can guess about how groups composed and rehearsed for the Senator Festival. More information on what groups performed is in Chapter 2, which deals with the competition's required items.

Finally, I convey some of the reactions that group leaders I spoke to had to the Senator Festival and to the task of advertising for EABL and Senator Extra Lager beer.

Why and How Groups Organized

In the United States, music groups often form and persist around specific sets of shared musical/spectacular tastes, abilities, and projects. A rock band, orchestra, or world music ensemble will often form with a future stage act or recording production in mind, characterized by certain choices in sound, repertoire, ability, visual presentation, artistic *influences*, etc. Evidence for this kind of band conceptualization is available in the musician-wanted ads of local arts newspapers: eg. "Guitarist wanted with competent lead and solid rhythm abilities. We're an original band with UK '77 Punk influence, some Reggae, and a modern electronic sound. Some of our influences include Sex Pistols, Clash, Stranglers. . ."

I found that in Uganda, groups in the *traditional* part of the music world tended to organize themselves around stylistic matters only secondarily, and were much more likely to see themselves as associations for general economic and moral development, engaged in a broad range of social activities including, but not limited to, music. Often, the most skilled musicians performing with groups in the Senator competition were the most marginal members: ringers brought in from outside to help a group succeed in a competi-

tion, who would drift away from the group after the competition ended. The acknowledged leaders of groups were not necessarily good performers, but skilled and well-connected organizers. A group's success was measured in its ability to stay organized, coax members from other groups and not lose any, garner the attention of sponsors, acquire and produce material goods, and accomplish economic and moral improvements in their communities. Music was often presented to me as a means to these ends, rather than as an end in itself.

Carola Lentz has written that, in northern Ghana, "cultural festivals are not just a means of making the existence of the localities known to the national public; they are also a form of local competition for prestige, influence, and resources" (Lentz 2001, 57). This local competitiveness was similarly at the heart of many Senator Festival groups' preparations and performances. In their stage items, groups displayed their capacities as economic development engines with fancy costumes, elaborate props, and dance-dramas about industry and achievement.

Because groups involved in the Senator Festival were more like open-ended community projects than American rock bands, their rosters were large and fluid. Groups wrote rules as to who could officially be in an association, and who was to be excluded from it, but many people, in addition to the bona fide members of a group, might be unofficially drawn into a given activity.

The Senator Festival posed a particular problem for many groups because it forbid persons under the age of eighteen from performing. Since there was no way for the administrators to accurately check individuals' ages, groups were gauged (somewhat incon-

sistently) by sight: if James Isabirye or another administrator saw too many young faces on stage, he would compel the group leader to get rid of at least some of them, and put some old faces in their place. To my knowledge, one group, the Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope, was disqualified for being too young, but then allowed back into competition once it had acquired a sufficient number of wizened visages.

Groups needing older musicians hired them away from other groups. Virtuoso musicians, who might perform the important Solo item, were also in high demand. When groups were eliminated at lower levels of competition, their better members were soaked up by groups still in contention. Two of the groups discussed below, Twekembe and Tugezeeko, ended up looking very different from the groups they were at the beginning of the Senator Festival. The core, indispensable members of these and many other groups were not the musicians, but the organizers and political representatives, who in some cases did not even appear on stage.

In my conversations with them, group leaders had to think for a few seconds before estimating the number of members in the group on any given occasion. Estimates generally ranged in the 30s, though the core permanent membership of a group tended to be only about a third of this. Larger groups seemed to be considered better for spectacular purposes, and by the national level, all were quite large. Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza has pointed out the multitudinousness of groups in Schools' Festivals (Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005). A more populous group naturally required more money for transport, feeding, etc., so Senator groups as crowded as school groups were rare at the lower levels.

One potential weakness of this sampling of group stories is that it relies heavily on the testimonies of group leaders, and very little on the stories of people lower down in the ranks. This is due to the manner in which I came into contact with groups. I typically met with groups in a "special-guest" situation for relatively brief periods of time. During these encounters, the group leaders—who in any case, tended to speak the best English—generally spoke for the whole group, while other members chimed in with a few reminders now and again. I found it was not possible/polite to direct questions to individual group members in an assembly, as one might be able to do with an American rock band. Those participants who I interviewed one-on-one happened to be group leaders as well. A longer association with/participation in a single group might yield a better sense of the variable opinions about a group's history and function that exist within a group.

Groups Based in Women's Associations

During the war to overthrow Milton Obote in the 1980s, the National Resistance Army, led by future president Yoweri Museveni, set up a system of Resistance Councils (RCs) which substantially took local governance out of the hands of appointed chiefs, and made it more democratic and open to grassroots politics. In 1995, these were ratified in the new constitution and renamed Local Councils (LCs). In 2006, there were five LC levels: from LC1 (village level) to LC5 (district level). Above the LCs in government were Presidential appointees and Members of Parliament.

The democratic "decentralization" which the LC system was implemented to promote has been strongly supported by international donor associations and economic watchdog agencies. While there have been pointed criticisms of failures of the LC system

to live up to its promise of bottom-up democratic government (eg. Ssewakiryanga 2001, Rubongoya 2007), even harsh critics acknowledge that the Museveni years have seen "a growing culture of associational participation" (Rubongoya 2007, 178). Certainly, while following the Senator Festival, I got a strong impression of such a culture thriving. Grass-roots association has been further spurred by microfinance programs set up by foreign organizations, and promised (though spottily carried out) by the Ugandan government under the banners *ntandikwa* (starting-up) and *bonna bagaggwale* (everyone makes money).

The RC/LC system has been particularly enabling for women, who have made exceptional gains in the political sphere (while remaining oppressed in other spheres, (Tamale 1999, 3)) during the Museveni years.[55] From its beginning, the LC/RC system has had a seat reserved for a women's representative in each of its councils. Furthermore, women's associations have proved to be the ones most capable of taking advantage of new political opportunities at the local level: held together by the common cause of women's livelihoods, women's associations may be less likely to fracture along ethnic or religious lines (Tripp 2000). According to a 2008 report, almost 48% of Ugandan local councilors are women (Kasya 2008).[56] President Museveni has benefited immensely from the support of women voters and, in return, has allowed some women in the upper levels of his government. Again, it is important to emphasize that there is much debate about

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55. Ugandan women's indictments of Ugandan male hegemony may be found in works of fiction published by the FEMRITE association (eg. Okurut 1994, Barungi 2003). The work of FEMRITE is evidence that women's associations are targeting the private, as well as the public, spheres.

56. By comparison, only 16% of members of the US Congress are women.

the extent and tangibility of the advances women have actually made in Ugandan political life—especially considering their ongoing plight outside of government—but even skeptics consider Ugandan women's progress since 1986 "trailblazing" (Goetz and Hassim 2003). It should be recalled that political activism by East African women's collectives is not unique to Uganda and the Museveni years (cf. Geiger 1997 on women's activism in Tanganyikan nationalism).

Feelings of grassroots empowerment, particularly as carried out by women's groups, were palpable among group leaders I talked to in 2006. Three group leaders I talked to were female Local Councillors. Others were female leaders who regularly petitioned LCs and donor organizations. Two groups activated their performance groups at least sometimes for political protest. I introduce some of these groups individually in the following paragraphs. A prominent theme that emerged out of the narratives of group leaders was one of "moral improvement through work." The outcomes of work were acknowledged as unpredictable, but work itself was praised as a redeeming process, one that would lift rural communities out of a perceived state of dissolution.

Tugezeeko Women's Group

Tugezeeko Women's Group (lit. "We Should Endeavor") was based in the Kamuli district of Busoga. They advanced as far as the Busoga regional-level competition, where it placed fifth. They stood out for their earnest competitiveness, and the thoroughness with which they revised their stage items for each level of the competition. For their Solo item, they engaged a different virtuoso artist at each level: first a male fiddler, then a female dancer, then a male dancer. For their Traditional Folk Song item, they started out

with a song about twins, considered rejecting it in favor of a less-performed song about marriage and, in the end, went back to the twins song. At their final competitive event, they unveiled a revamped Creative Item about Senator beer, in which they wore clear plastic full-body Senator robes, and held up single-letter signs to spell out "SENATOR." Their *tamenha ibuga* Traditional Folk Dance featured aggressive male dancers, whom they brought in from outside the group.

Kyobula Deborah, the leader of the group, was James Isabirye's wife Vic's youngest sister. The group included another one of Deborah's sisters and Deborah and Vic's elderly mother. They rehearsed at her mother's house, on her "big piece of land" in Kamuli. Deborah considered the mobilization of her mother one of the original purposes of the group. She explained:

> So when I got that idea [for the group]. . . and by then, our mum were. . . could fall sick: she was on and off, on and off. But we discovered she was so bored! Yeah? She was redundant; she was not doing any work. So we thought of something that could keep her busy. Could keep her mind. . . and completely keeping her busy. So we decided if we could take her this. . . we could give her the job of being an accountant to this group—for the group. It could keep her busy because she would concentrate on the money; she would keep on moving to go and mobilize women so that they can pay. So she would be making exercises. And in fact that worked out. Since then, she's stopped falling sick. (Kyobula, p.c.)

Deborah's family was apparently better off than James Isabirye's, though it, like most Ugandan families, had recently been ravaged by AIDS: Deborah lost several sisters to the virus within a few years time. Deborah described her family's educational level as "just in the middle: they're not illiterate; they're not all that educated." Deborah had, however, earned a diploma in Information Technology from Kampala International Universi-

ty, and at least one of her sisters had likewise received a university diploma. Most of Deborah and her sisters' school fees were earned by her mother, as her father was a "polygamist" who could not adequately support their family.

Deborah's relatively high level of education qualified her to serve as the leader of Tugezeeko. As Tripp has pointed out in her study of Ugandan women's associations, literacy is a great asset for a group, as it enables it to solicit donor NGOs in writing and fill out the all-important paperwork. Deborah herself pointed out that one thing her group had that other perhaps more musically extraordinary groups in her region lacked was "brains." Tripp has noted that non-literate members of Ugandan groups sometimes resent the power literate members hold over them (Tripp 2000, 209). I did not personally witness any such resentment, though I heard about many intra-group conflicts, and summary exercises of executive power by leaders.

Deborah had started participating in music in her primary school choir. At primary-five level, she took up the long drum, *ngalabi.* She continued singing and playing in school until she attended University, where Music, Dance, and Drama was (according to Deborah) generally shunned as a dead-end field, and singing was generally limited to the school and national anthems. Deborah, unlike leaders of some other groups, sang with the group up to the highest level, but only as a choir member, not as a star performer. Deborah told me she had been criticized by her educated peers in Jinja town for performing traditional dances on stage like a peasant:

> Me a councillor—you remember—people were not expecting me to be on stage, dancing. They were not expecting me and it was just a surprise. People were asking me, 'How much money are you getting out of that stuff? How can you go on stage? How can you go on stage, a person like you?' I

> was telling them, 'Yeah, I have to encourage my people, where I grew up from, where I was born.' (Kyobula, p.c.)

In 2006, Deborah was elected as an LC3 (local councilor, third level) in the Busoga capital city Jinja, where she lived in an apartment, about a two hour's commute from her village in Kamuli. Since there was only one official party available at the time, she ran as an NRM candidate, though she said she would have preferred to run for another party because the Museveni's NRM had been unpopular in Busoga.

Deborah established Tugezeeko Women's Group in 2005 in hopes of taking advantage of the Ministry of Gender and Social Development's *ntandikwa* (lit. "starting-up") microfinance program. They drafted a constitution and applied for the government loans. When the promised loans did not come through, Tugezeeko became a "circle": a revolving credit association involving mostly women, but also a few men. Every two weeks, each member contributed about 5000 shillings ($2.50), and one member took home the whole pot of 150,000 ($78.00). Deborah told me,

> In 2001, the government brought in an idea of giving, *entandikwa*. . . people who are beginning, yaa. Starting new lives for people. So, in the end the government failed to implement. So when the government failed to implement, people started giving themselves entandikwa—amongst themselves. But the first idea came from the government.

The group started performing music and dance in order to lure politicians and other potential donors:

> So after that, of course, we started getting visitors in our circle because we needed politicians to give us more money—maybe things to use like blades, chairs, mats, what-what. So we could invite politicians. But there is no way to invite a politician and just keep quiet like that. When you invite someone

> you have to sing for him or her a song, so that that person doesn't get bored. So that is when that idea of singing started.[57]

As LC3, Deborah herself was required to visit village women's groups, observe their performances, register their grievances, bestow on them small gifts, and in some cases help them apply for larger cash grants from the the local council's "charity" fund. She said that, while visiting other groups, she gathered ideas for Tugezeeko's own artistic development.

Deborah expressed the opinion that a recent efflorescence of local women's associations along with performance opportunities like the Senator Festival had thoroughly revitalized her region both musically and morally. On music, she told me:

> There was no music before. Before now. . . I'll give you an example of our village. It used to be so dull. You could not go anywhere. The village used to be so quiet. But now there's a least once in a week they play drums now. It started last year generally, last year in January. It changed, it changed completely. People are happy. When they say, like, a week when they have not heard of anything, they come and say "Now, for us, we want music. Let's bring out our drums and start drumming." So it has helped them so much. (Kyobula, p.c.)

On communal moral improvement, generally:

> They are now better off, because before. . . before circles came, there was no unity amongst them. But now there's unity. Circles have made people learn many things like cleanness, sanitation. Because now if they tell you "next week we are coming at your place," you have to clean your place, you have to do the toilet, you have to make your house clean, you have to buy glasses, you have to buy plates. Of which, you have to be clean generally because you don't want to get ashamed when people come to your place. So

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57. Mikael Karlström (2003) has discussed such ceremonial transactions between village groups and donors under the Luganda rubric *bugenyi*. I discuss the importance of this transactional formation further in Chapter 3.

> it has also helped women. Like now if you have a party, if maybe you have got. . . you're in trouble, they have to come to your place. (Kyobula, p.c.)

As Deborah praised the uplifting communal work that was going on in villages, she also mused on the exhaustion and alienation of postcolonial working life:

> When the missionaries came. . . and maybe they gave them work. You know those old-old people, and old-old days, they used to not work—they used to not have some things to do. They could just grow their crops, come back home, sit and eat. And then sing, maybe storytelling. But as time went on, these people got work to do. People started shifted, migrating from rural to urban. Of which the number was depressing in the what? In the rural. So then they became very few. Then these ones who stayed in rural, they started working very hard. Even during those times of maybe when they would gather and sing. They stopped singing because they wanted to look for what? Money. When they come back they come back tired, everybody goes to bed, that is what I think. And that is what I think it is also happening in our generation. We work so hard, like now I am going to move from here, go back to Jinja. When I am in Jinja I will just shower and go to my bed. So I have no time for everyone. (Kyobula, p.c.)

Communal work in villages, organized by women's associations, and mingled with traditional music and merry-making, seemed to be Deborah's idea of a synthesis which resolved the tension between the putative traditional leisurely but lazy way of life, and the new productive but exhausting modern ways.

Mon Pi Dong Lobo

Mon Pi Dong Lobo ("Women's Development Group") was an ethnic Acholi group based in Gulu, the largest town in Northern Uganda (Plate 4.1). According to the leaders, about three quarters of the members were LC3 councillors. My companion Lydia and I were immediately attracted to the group because it consisted almost exclusively of middle-aged, portly women, performing both male and female dramatic roles and—with gus-

to—all the aggressive, war-like dancing parts. The only men in the act were drummers, and they stayed out of the spotlight. In most Senator Festival group productions, older women were consigned to stationary and marginal stage roles, while agile young men were put out front.

The group advanced as far as the regional-level event in Lira, before being defeated by two other northern groups. Exceptionally, Mon Pi Dong Lobo was invited to perform as an *exhibition* act before the main competition at the national-level event in Lira. I am fairly certain that this was because James Isabirye noticed that Lydia and I liked them, and wanted to please us and/or accorded extra weight to our tastes as foreign observers. The group itself believed that it had been invited because of the excellence of its Creative Item as an advertisement for Senator beer. In this *item*, they wore tee shirts they had hand-painted with Senator logos, and finished their performance by uncapping real, frothing bottles of Senator. One member chuckled,

> That is why people are saying, 'Those ladies, they are not having beer! Because they are—they are the councillors! Other groups, they are using empty bottles! But we have to use the real beer. 'Why,' they are saying, 'those women, they have money!' (Mon Pi Dong Lobo, p.c.)

I met with the group in the LC3 office in Gulu. Gladys Laker and Betty Adong were the two group leaders, and spoke for the group. Hilda Laker, a teacher who worked for the Senator Festival in northern towns, and who set up the meeting and accompanied me, answered many of my questions with interjections from other group members in Luo and English. Hilda seemed to be, if not a performer and core member of the group, an

important and welcomed auxilliary member, who was entrusted with representing the whole group's opinions to me in her somewhat more fluent English.

The Gulu district was the site of some of the worst atrocities of Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Because of constant kidnappings, maimings, and killings of civilians, most rural people had abandoned their villages and moved into densely packed Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps (cf., Behrend 1999; Allen 2006; Finnström 2008). As LC3 councillors, the Mon Pi Dong Lobo women travelled to the camps to hear residents' problems and talk to them "about gender." They did not go to the camps to dance but, like Deborah of Tugezeeko Women's Group, often visited other dance groups and bestowed small gifts on them. They said they sometimes "feared" the obligation of visiting groups, because they themselves could not spare the expected gift money. They also voiced some resentment for dance groups in the area who they believed had been lavishly funded by foreign NGOs.[58]

Mon Pi Dong Lobo said that, in Gulu town, they like other women's groups rehearsed out in the open, in hopes that children who had been drawn into Kony's army would hear them and decide to come back home. Most of the women were widows, and consequently felt a special obligation to care for orphans.

> According to the Acholi tradition, when we are. . . we call it Lost and Found: the lost sa [?] or lost children, eh? What to do. Since our children are in the bush. Even if the child is not mine, I feel it is mine, eh? So, it is

58. The north of Uganda, like other emergency zones in Africa, has both some of the direst scenes of deprivation alongside some signs of relatively extravagant spending by foreign donor groups. Some groups from the North performed in the Senator Festival in worn-out clothes, while others, apparently benefiting from foreign sponsorship, were finely decked out.

> through traditional dances, songs, that those children listen to us, because they are in the bush. There is no any other way that we can communicate to them. (Mon Pi Dong Lobo, p.c.)

In 1987, a year when both Kony and Museveni were newcomers, the women danced "half-naked" in the streets to protest both leaders.

> We left the breast open just like that. We just tied a small piece. Rags! But in fact that one is for both of them. For government, and for the rebels. Because we as a mother, we are the one that produced them. (Mon Pi Dong Lobo, p.c.)

This was, according to the group, an Acholi traditional form of women's protest in times of war between clans:

> They used not to kill the women. . . cut the mouth. If you come to kill a woman, when they lift up the breasts, you just leave. Because in the Acholi community, it's a misfortune. (Mon Pi Dong Lobo, p.c.)

The group's current stance on Kony (according to Hilda) was that they hoped he would not "go astray for good," but rather "come back and say 'My people, I did bad, excuse me, what-what: *reconcile*.'"[59] This theme of community reconciliation was also prominent in the group's Traditional Folk Song item. In it, a drunkard husband caused his wife to leave him in desperation and return to her parents' home. The community elders stepped in, however, and alerted the husband to the errors of his ways, after which he gave up drinking and started providing money for children's school fees. The group saw

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59. This reconciliation-based solution is upheld as Luo-traditional and thus more effective by opponents of an International Criminal Court intervention in the conflict. Allen (2006) argues that despite this discursive preference for forgiveness and reconciliation, most Northern Ugandans would be unhappy if Kony were left unpunished.

no contradiction between their advocation of Senator beer in their Creative Item and their exhortations against drunkenness in their Traditional Folk Song. They explained (as many groups did) that what had made the husband a drunkard was locally distilled *waragi*, not beer. As Justin Willis (2002) explains, beer is not considered a dangerous drink in East Africa, as locally distilled spirits are.

Groups Connected to Ndere Troupe / UDTA

Ndere Troupe ("flute troupe"), established by Stephen Rwangyezi in the mid-1980s, was at the time of my visit the most successful traditional traditional music, dance, and drama group in Uganda. They represented Uganda at venues around the world and performed dances in the Hollywood film about Idi Amin, *The Last King of Scotland* (2006). In 2004, with the support of the Austrian government, Ndere Troupe opened Ndere Centre in Kampala, which served as a site for performances and rehearsals by the group and by visiting international dancers.

Ndere Center became the site for a regular music competition—Kwetu Fest—which began at the National Theatre in Kampala under the banner of UDTA (Ugandan Developmental Theatre Association). In the mould of the Schools' Festival, groups from around the country were invited to come and perform a number of items based on a social *theme*. Groups from outside Uganda were also invited—not to compete, but to "simply add their own rich inheritance to the festival" (http://www.ndere.com). The international connections and ambitions of Ndere Troupe were signified in the name of the Festival: *Kwetu*, a Swahili term meaning home/heritage. Swahili is a language many

Ugandans dislike because of its associations with the Amin regime and the army, which nevertheless has positive pan-African/world-market resonances.[60]

In addition to song and dance items similar to those required in the Senator Festival, Kwetu Fest featured dramas and traditional-dress fashion shows. In keeping with an emphasis on *development,* the Festival invited groups to "exhibit their income generating products."

Groups that did well in Kwetu Fest became affiliated to some extent with Ndere Troupe and received training from it, which they were then supposed to impart to other groups in their regions. Three of the groups I learned about that participated in the Senator Festival considered themselves affiliated in this way with Ndere Troupe. Predictably, contentiousness grew between Nile Beat Artists and Ndere Troupe as a result of the Senator Festival. Nile Beat Artists was in some ways a Busoga-centered parallel to Buganda-centered/internationalist Ndere Troupe. Like Ndere, Nile Beat had established its own rehearsal and performance space in the "Source of the Nile" park in Jinja town. Like Ndere, Nile Beat Artists was a "semi-professional" troupe which specialized in performing in multiple ethnic styles, and in recruiting amateur groups from around the countryside.

I did not hear both sides of the argument, but was told that Ndere Troupe was angry that Nile Beat had secured the EABL sponsorship, and was moving around the country recruiting groups associated with Ndere. For their part, James Isabirye and Haruna

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60. Travelling Ugandan Christian children's choirs and gospel groups, for example, will sing songs in Swahili, though none of their members speak the language regularly at home.

Walusimbi seemed to relish the idea that they might coax some groups from Ndere Troupe's sphere of influence. They believed that, whereas Ndere Troupe compelled groups to adopt the Ndere Troupe name and its ethnically mixed Ugandan performance style, Nile Beat was encouraging groups to keep their distinctive local identities and styles (Haruna Walusimbi, p.c.). James and Haruna, and some of the groups, seemed to see a contest of two patron organizations rounding up clients.[61]

Rhythm Troupe

Rhythm Troupe, from the far-south Rakai district of Buganda region, represented Buganda at the Senator National Competition. Like the majority of participating groups from Buganda, they performed the *nankasa-baakisimba-muwogola* dance suite (c.f. Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005) as their Traditional Folk Dance. Their Traditional Folk Song stirred complaints among at least one of the judges, as it depicted the brewing of traditional beer in what was deemed a coarse and derogatory way: with the brewers expectorating and wiping sweat into the mash.

Ndagano Rose, the leader of Rhythm Troupe, though not a performer in the 2006 Senator Festival, was an ex-soldier, with a confident and imposing personality which she acknowledged was outside the norms of Ugandan femininity (norms discussed in Obbo 1992 and Kyomuhendo and McIntosh 2007). She complained that, because she had not

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61. Senator/Nile Beat and Ndere Troupe/UDTA's rivalry resembled those of Tanzania One Theatre and Muungano Cultural Troupe in Tanzania (Askew 2003; Edmondson 2007), Wenge Musica BCBG and Wenge Musica Maison Mere in the DRC (White 2008), or any other of innumerable African rivalries between African performance groups which measure their success by the number of adherents they can claim.

acted in the expected, compliant manner, but had spoken to the Senator recruiter in her district as a man of her position might, he had bypassed her, and dealt instead with other group leaders in the area who might be able to steal her group members away.

> I'm telling you, I have fallen the victim several. It's because you have stayed with men, you have learned some few things from men, eh? But, a first approach to me, somebody finds much difficult in me, for the first approach. So now, the first mobilizer of Senator in Rakai, read the uncovered book: he mistook the book according to its cover. All the time I was parallel to him. Yet he knew I had something nice. And I knew what to do, I was more focussed, so instead, he had to run to the other people, of which he could tell [what to do], and they answer yes to everything he could tell. So that is the major reason that made me hate Senator at first. Yet, I revised. (Ndagano, p.c.)

Rose was born and grew up in the Masaka district of central Buganda. As a child at boarding school, Rose learned to sing in the style of South African star Miriam Makeba and American country-and-western stars Jim Reeves and Skeeter Davis. She formed a group in her school with two boy guitarists. Her mother was vehemently opposed to music-making outside of the church, so Rose had to sing on the sly. Traditional music was considered especially unseemly in her family. She recalled seeing a *mugoma,* a wandering traditional wedding musician, out the vehicle window as she rode to school:

> We used to be driven. We were in a boarding school, eh? But during the holidays, as you pass by. you bypass a mugoma.[62] The drummer. He was not presentable; you. . . nobody would not like the image. You find them putting on cassocks, eh? Hanging the drums. Riding their drums. No shoes. You find them moving with calabashes. Untidy. . . They were not pleasing

62. *mugoma* in Luganda is the root *-goma* (drum), with the personal prefix *mu-* (plural *ba-*)

to look at. And they drink a lot. And when they go there [to the wedding], they demand a lot of food. (Ndagano, p.c.) [63]

Rose credited Stephen Rwangyezi of Ndere Troupe with ridding traditional music of this stigma. She herself felt able to publicly participate in traditional music only in the late 80s, when she joined Youth 2000, a Christian traditional music group lead by a Reverend Father (and thus tolerable to her wary mother). In 1996, in her thirties, she got involved in Masaka Theater Artists (MaThA), a group which aimed to bring into a single group the best musicians and traditional styles belonging to competing groups around Masaka. This project was soon picked up by UDTA and Ndere Troupe. After the group won the trophy at UDTA's Festival, Rose became an auxilliary member of UDTA and Ndere Troupe. Her and her group's task was to go back to Masaka and train other groups and the area "so that they bring out what exactly UDTA wanted." She also helped clear and build the site for the new Ndere Centre in Kampala.

In 2003, Rose quit her job as treasurer of the Masaka group, which was embroiled in squabbles about money, and took up an offer to run a "depot" in Rakai district for the House of Health, an upscale herbal products store based in Kampala. In Rakai, she started three music-dance-and-drama groups in succession, all of which got involved in UDTA and competed in the Kwetu Fest at Ndere Centre. With the addition of a number

63. A description of such a itinerate wedding musician of ill-repute (a fiddler) may be read in Moses Isegawa's novel *Abyssinian Chronicles* (2001). I saw itinerate musicians on the roads and in bars while travelling in Kampala, playing not traditional styles but *kadongo kamu* radio-style music.

of adults from other groups to comply with the adults-only rule, her most recent group,participated in the 2006 Senator Festival as Rhythm Troupe.

Rose emphasized several times in our interview that she was a "volunteer" and a "social worker," who received no support from outside sponsors, but organized groups for altruistic reasons. At the time, she was a girl guide/boy scout leader, living together with her orphaned charges in an abandoned tourist resort, surrounded by a wall to protect them from resentful members of other groups she had started. In the compound, the orphans lived by girl guide/boy scout moral doctrines:

> They follow the girl guiding and the scouting orders. That is the administration. If someone is groomed in that system, you find everything's easy. Easy for her to live. Then you bring in music dance and drama to forget all the nasties within the day.

Like Deborah, Rose emphasized a wide range of morally and economically uplifting works her group was involved in besides music. Music, Dance, and Drama as a project was "finished—they have it. But they need to have another earning projects: a cooker and a bakery, crafts, from types of raw material, whatever."

Birungi Byensi Dramatic Association

Birungi Byensi ("Good Things of the Earth") was the group that advanced to the 2006 Senator Festival national-level competition from the western Fort Portal district. Birungi Byensi distinguished itself with beautiful basket-woven and bark-cloth props and costumes. For their Creative Item, they responded to the syllabus instruction to "attach" Senator to "the culture of Uganda," by crafting Senator bottles, crates, and a factory brewing vat out of plant fibers plaited in the traditional styles (Plate 4.2). These Senator

props were displayed prominently in back of the medical clinic where Lydia and I paid a visit to the group, along with many other woven items—colored, we were told, with natural dyes. We were invited to purchase some of these; others of were ceremoniously bestowed on us as gifts laden with piles of fruit and eggs.[64] While we talked to the group leader Margaret Kunihira, male and female members of the group worked on a variety of crafts.

Margaret identified herself as a nurse, who ran the clinic. At various times during our visit, she had to duck inside to attend to patients. Unlike Rose Ndagano or Deborah Kyobula, she took a starring role in the groups' Senator performances, singing an accompanied long narrative song she herself had composed for the group's Solo item.

Birungi Byensi began, like Tugezeeko, as a women's development association, but later brought in husbands, partly so that the moral education of women might be accelerated. Men could come to the group and learn how to make things out of "local materials" around their homes. They could then share this knowledge with their wives.

Margaret, like the other women leaders of groups I spoke to, saw dance as but one activity of the group, a publicizing activity without which it would be difficult to draw in members. It was, in her opinion, ultimately not music and dancing, but crafts and farming, that promised to make the group "sustainable." Central to Margaret's idea of

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64. This visit was, for us, one of the most intense manifestations of the traditional clientelistic welcoming ceremony (in Luganda, *bugenyi*) I have discussed in Chapter 2. At one point, Lydia and I were ushered into a doctor's examination room, so that we could eat in the absolute solitude befitting dignitaries. At the end, we performed our part of the transaction by giving speeches of thanks in Luganda and English, purchasing items, and donating cash to the group.

progress was her hope that the group could "make our own things from our own land." This is an image of organic growth out of local *terroir* which, as Karlström has pointed out, is encapsulated in a Luganda translation of *development* adopted by the government: *kukulakulana* ("growing and growing") (Karlström 2004). The group's name—"good things of the earth"—and its insistence on relearning how to use "local materials," both reflected this conception.

Margaret, like Rose, had fond thoughts for Ndere Troupe and the Kwetu Fest, and mixed reviews for the Senator Festival. Her group had won trophies for their costumes and crafts at the Kwetu Fest. On the occasion of our visit, they performed a long drama they had composed for the 2004 Kwetu Fest on that year's prescribed theme "Peace and Reconciliation." This long drama showed reconciliation being achieved, after much slap-stick violence and many plot twists, among four different and often belligerent ethnic groups in the Fort Portal region: Batooro, Bakonzo, Bakiga, and Bamba.

Birungi Byensi itself included of mix of these four ethnicities. Tripp has discussed how women's associations are able to successfully live up to Museveni's ideal of "non-sectarianism": women's solidarity may override or at least counterbalance ethnic divisiveness. The precedent of ethnically and religiously mixed primary and secondary school groups may also be important. The Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope was not based in a women's group, but was ethnically mixed. Other groups were ethnically homogeneous but religiously mixed, in a country known for religious fractiousness. Kyobula Deborah's group Tugezeeko included Christians, Muslims, and traditional *Baswezi* adherents.

Margaret told me that, though her group had done well in the Senator Festival, the experience had been a negative one overall compared to that of Kwetu Fest. She said her group had been informed too late about the Senator opportunity, and had had to recycle items from their Kwetu-Fest repertoire. Worse, they had run into bad rainy-season weather on the road to the nationals, and had had a bad accident on a flooded bridge. When they arrived late at the event, they did not find the food they had expected and had to sing hungry. By contrast, she praised the Kwetu Fest: "Ndere, they gave us mattresses, they gave us food. In fact they looked after us very well."

James and Haruna, the administrators of the Senator Festival, later argued to me in response to these accusations that Birungi Byensi, like other groups who had made it to the Regional level, had received cash prizes worth far more than the trophies handed out to the champion groups at Kwetu Fest. Groups I talked to who allied themselves with Ndere and Kwetu Fest did not complain that that festival offered nothing like the large cash prizes offered by EABL, which James and Haruna considered such great incentives. Rather they praised Ndere for the comforts and reliable, respectful treatment they had received from them. I sensed that, for these groups (not all groups), the Senator event was basically a potential money-making opportunity, whereas Ndere events were more validating cultural projects.

Other Groups Inspired By Ndere Troupe

Each region I travelled to seemed to have at least one music and dance group aiming at and sometimes nearing the comprehensive repertoire, slick appearance, and international status of Ndere Troupe. In the western Kasese district, Ngoma Troupe spe-

cialized in -Konzo music, but stressed that they could play any Ugandan traditional style for any occasion. Acholi Heart Beat, a group in Gulu district funded by an expatriate Acholi doctor in Britain, advertised on their web site a coming "Acholi Village. . . envisaged to be a tourist attraction," which would presumably be something like Ndere Centre in Kampala or Nile Beat's Source of the Nile at Jinja (http://ugta.org/acholi_heart_beat.php).

Deborah Kyobula of Tugezeeko said that her group too took inspiration from Ndere Troupe's successes:

> Ndere Troupe started like us. But it has a big share now. So for us, we have a feeling, we have a dream that one day we shall be like Ndere Troupe. We shall be better off, we shall be able to expose ourselves like Ndere Troupe even outside Uganda.

Deborah opined that part of what made Ndere Troupe successful on an international stage was its ability to "do all the Ugandan dances," not just dances particular to one ethnic region. The ability to perform dances from multiple cultures, also encouraged in Schools' Festivals, was central to a commonly held image of group professionalism.

Groups Formed to Compete in the Senator Festival

The six-million shilling prize (approximately 3000 US dollars) promised to the winner of the 2006 Senator Festival was a powerful motivating force for many groups. In James Isabirye's opinion it was the most important incentive, and the one that other festivals could not match. He told me that many groups formed or became truly active only with the Senator Festival, and dissolved immediately after its conclusion. This was in keeping with groups' self-conceptualization as economic-development organizations, and

with their general fluidity. Recruiters working for James and Haruna did their part to round up groups, so that each Festival event would have an adequate number of competitors (three per event was considered a minimum).

The top eight groups in the competition all received cash prizes of at least 500,000 Ugandan shillings (250 US dollars), plus some money for transport and food. Of the some three hundred participating groups, most performed for free and at their own (often considerable) expense. Participating in the Senator Festival was thus something of a gamble. The Festival, with its long-shot incentives, might profitably be considered within a contemporary African (and indeed, global) context where making money seems largely a matter of capricious fortune (Mbembe 1997; Ferguson 2006). Foreign donors inexplicably take notice of a few groups among dozens of candidates and make them rich by local standards; oil or minerals are discovered in a country and propel a few big men into obscene wealth; an e-mail scam artist manages to hook a wealthy Texan, and is soon seen driving a expensive sports car. The Senator Festival similarly offered enormous prizes to a select few rather than paying each and every participating group a reasonable amount for its work on behalf of the Senator brand.

However enthusiastic they were about the Festival's large cash prizes, both the administrators and the group members also noted their destabilizing effects on groups. When the winning group of the 2006 competition, the Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope, broke up immediately after receiving their prize over money disagreements, James pointed out that this was inevitable whenever money was in the picture. Both Deborah Kyobula's and Rose Ndagano's groups were torn apart at several times by squabbles about how

money should be distributed. Group leaders tended to stress sustainability as something they were trying to achieve, which they could not achieve in the Senator Festival alone, or indeed in the field of music and dance. Sustainability, in their accounts, would come from cottage industry and its moral regimens. Singing and dancing and prize moneys were necessary just to draw members and accumulate startup capital.

Twekembe Women's Group

Twekembe (Plate 4.3)went to the Busoga regional and finished fourth, just ahead of its rival, Deborah Kyobula's group Tugezeeko. Nabirye Irene, the leader of the group, was James Isabirye's youngest sister. Like Ndagano Rose, Irene did not perform with the group, but organized and coached from the sidelines. Twekembe was the group closest to James's heart, and the two of us paid it several visits: once at a rehearsal which James coached, once at an AIDS awareness day the group was hosting, and at several levels of the Senator competition.

Twekembe had started practicing music and dance in earnest only when invited by James to the 2006 Senator Festival. The year before, James had been wary about inviting groups that were likely to be seen as being too closely connected to him. In 2006, he was less active as a field operator—conducting most of his business with field workers by cell phone—and felt more at liberty to encourage his sister's group and also his wife's sister's.

Compared to Rose, Margaret, Gladys, and Deborah, Irene had led a hard life, and was poorer and less well-educated. In these respects, she was more like the vast majority of participating group members around the country. My interview with her at my house

in Kampala was conducted in a mix of Luganda and English.[65] At age 14, Irene was removed from primary school and forced into an arranged marriage by her father, who refused to support her at home. Because her mother was an only child, Irene had no aunts to whom she might turn for help, so she got married, and became pregnant a year later. Soon afterward, her husband took another, older, wife, whose seniority allowed her to reign over Irene in household affairs. Unable to take any more abuse, Irene fled back to her mother in her home village. Irene's mother took Irene in, but then she too was cast out by her unyielding husband. Like many women in similarly dire situations, Irene went to Kampala to look for work. When I met her, she was selling women's blouses in Owino market, the largest market in the capital city. She had had to repeatedly fend off male employers, who expected sexual favors along with fees in exchange for letting her work as a merchant. Irene, like her brother James, had become an ardent born-again Christian, and found much-needed consolation in her faith.

Like many Kampala residents, Irene seemed to shuttle constantly back-and-forth from her the city to her home village. Twekembe Women's Development Group was a group Irene formed in her village. The name *Twekembe*, which Irene said God had given to her, meant "we are together" (by the dictionary: "we should gird ourselves"). A higher function of the group, according to her, was "encouraging" women like herself, who had been abused by cruel or negligent men. Simply being together was a kind of encouragement.

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65. Irene's native tongue, like James's, was not Luganda, the standard language of the south, but Lusoga, a closely related language.

Irene described her group members as being very poor, most of them unable to make even 1000 shillings a month. She formed the group in 2001 to take advantage of the visitations of LC5 candidates trolling the villages for votes for the upcoming elections:

> Someone came: 'I'm ogundi [Mr. So-and-So]. I want you to vote me. . . what and what.' Mm-hmm! I told him: what are you going to give us here?!

Irene was very clear about what the Senator Festival meant to her and Twekembe: the six million shilling prize was much on her mind. She, or she and the group, had already decided to spend the prize money on a corn grinder, which would be used to provide food, poultry meal, and employment for male and female members of the community. She saw the six million shillings as start-up capital, an idea which had much currency in a time of "microfinance," *ntandikwa* (the failed "starting up" government initiative) and *bonna bagaggwale* ("everyone makes money"—the government initiative that followed *ntandikwa*).

Like Tugezeeko, Twekembe started out the 2006 competition performing in what Turino would call a more *participatory* style—with every member, regardless of physique, doing the same moves somewhat loosely—and ended up more *presentational,* with the agile and male dancers up front, and a new emphasis on tightly coordinated movements (Turino 2008). One of the group's strongest assets was its solo performer, a virtuoso male flutist who was discovered just in time for the Festival. At one point, the group was penalized on the scoresheets for the raggedness of the flutist's costume. This provoked much indignation, as (I was told) the traditional musician was supposed to look

like a poor, downtrodden peasant. The tension between the requirement of looking "smart" (i.e. well-kempt) and looking *authentic* and *traditional*, was hashed out over and over again throughout the Festival. The flutist's rags, besides being appropriately *authentic*, may also have been iconic of the group's pride in (and despite) its poverty. In other respects, Twekembe did its best to smarten-up, acquiring, after much fruitless effort, new matching tee shirts with a donor NGO logo on them. After this effort, to be told that the flutist's costume was shabby, when this was an intentional choice, was a grave insult.

James told me that, in 2008, following the cancelation of the Senator Festival, Twekembe became considerably less active as a group. Other groups such as Tugezeeko found NGO support, and were able to continue performing for development functions. Deborah Kyobula of Tugezeeko told me that her group had "the brains" necessary to write to NGOs asking for support and jobs. Twekembe, a group with no highly educated members, suffered a greater setback when the Senator opportunity collapsed.

Groups Recruited by Senator Festival Administrators

One of the things James Isabirye liked best about the Senator Festival was that it enabled him to encourage and promote elderly musicians from his home district of Busembatya in Busoga region who specialized in rare and forgotten music and dance styles. A group of Basoga rattle dancers and a group of ancient Basoga trumpeters reformed at James's prodding solely to perform in the Senator Festival.

Other administrators and lower-level workers brought relatives' and friends' groups into the competition, though they had to be subtle in this, lest they be accused of nepotism (they always were, in any case).

Other Kinds of Groups

There were countless other incentives to organize for groups participating in the Senator Festival—far more than I could find out about. As is apparent in the preceding descriptions, each group had a variety of overlapping reasons for associating—not just one. Several other kinds of groups I encountered are worth mentioning in this section, if only to give a sense of the great diversity of participating groups. While women's association-based groups were in the majority, groups built around different kinds of projects were common and made the Festival more interesting. Below I will briefly discuss groups that were brought together by (1) an IDP camp; (2) an ethno-linguistic minority enclave; (3) a community of religious/medicinal practice; (4) a virtuoso musical leader.

Internal Displacement Camp Group: Bong Tiko

As already mentioned, in 2006 the population of Northern Uganda lived predominantly in crowded internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, following the atrocities in the region committed by the Lord's Resistance Army. I visited Bong Tiko group in Pabo camp in Amuru district near Gulu. This group was made up mostly of young boys, dressed in bright blue tee shirts and matching shorts. They specialized in *lukeme* (lamellophone) playing. Lamellophone ensembles, which were common in the Northern Acholi and Lango regions and dominant in the Eastern Teso region, were almost always

made up exclusively of men and boys, though women might dance and sing along. Of the groups I saw, only the overall champion group, the Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope, had women playing lamellophones in an ensemble.[66]

At the time of my visit, this camp-formed group seemed to be fracturing, as members were moving out of the camp and back to their various home villages, which were now deemed safe enough for habitation. Much disappointment was expressed that I had not given the group more advance notice of my coming, so that the best group members could be rounded up.

There were, I was told, many such groups formed in the camps, and a number of them had received funding from international donors. It is likely that such groups will continue to perform together, despite their geographic displacement from the camps, if foreign interest in them continues. Camp groups without donor backing may dissolve, and new groups may form or reform in the reconstituted villages.

During my visit, the available members of Bong Tiko performed *lukeme* songs, several of which were, I was told, complaints about the devastation the LRA had caused, and calls for a return to peace and stability.

Ethnolinguistic Minority Group: Luo Foundation

Busoga, in southeastern Uganda, is home to a population of Luo-speaking immigrants: many from Kenya, some from the northern Ugandan Acholi and Lango ethnic

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66. Godfrey Yekka, the leader of the Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope, told me that in his youth, competitive boys' lamellophone groups were fraternities which helped boys meet eligible girls in the area.

regions. Many came in the 1950s to work on sugarcane and tea plantations, others were refugees from the recent conflict in Northern Uganda. Luo-speakers face considerable racial/ethnic discrimination and resentment in southern Uganda, though perhaps less from the Basoga (a historically embattled group) than from the Baganda (a historically domineering one). There seemed to be some pride among Basoga about the ethnic diversity of their region.

I visited the group Luo Foundation on the outskirts of Jinja town, an area my guide, the Nile Beat employee Ssengendo Abdu, called the "Soweto of Jinja" for its ethnic mixture. The group had performed the *larakaraka* courtship dance at the Jinja regional Festival as an "exhibition" act. They had not qualified for the actual competition at this level, nor could they have, as they did not perform in -Soga language and musical styles. The group had originally come to Haruna Walusimbi's attention when he was running the *Omuvangano* Festival, an event which preceded the Senator Festival that was confined to the Busoga region, and was focused on the region's ethnomusical diversity.

Luo Foundation was conceptualized as a Luo-language transregional project: some members were Acholi, others Langi, others of Kenyan Luo origins. The group formed in 2003 to protest the war in the north, and took in several women who would otherwise have gone to IDP camps. The inclusion of both Acholi and Langi in the same group under the linguistic "Luo" banner flew in the face of rising tensions between those two ethnic groups, stoked by LRA atrocities (Lomo and Hovil 2004, 53). The group leader, Christine Abalo, said that the group had at first excluded Langi when performing at functions, but had later decided to include them. At the Senator Festival, and in their

reception of me, they danced Acholi dances—*larakaraka* and *dingidingi*—and sang songs of protest about the treatment of the Acholi people by both LRA leader Joseph Kony and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. The group did not seem to perform any dances specific to Lango or Western Kenya, only Acholi ones. The name "Luo Foundation," however, bespoke their attempts to find a linguistic identity common to all three ethnic groups, but distinct from the Basoga majority in the region.

The group found some employment playing at Acholi weddings and government events in the region. They also made money distilling powerful *waragi* liquor (I visited them at their still). There was at least one competing Acholi women's group in the region, known as P'Bitek. One of the women, who—exceptionally for her gender—played the calabash for the *larakaraka* dance, and was a member of both groups.

Religious Group: Kabindi Baswezi Group

Haruna Walusimbi took me to a village in Eastern Busoga to visit a group which had participated in the 2006 Festival, led by a traditional healer named Erukaana Waiswa Kabindi. Kabindi means "little pipe" and referred to the long pipe he smoked to commune with spirits. Kabindi and some (not all) members of the group were practitioners of the possession rites of the Baswezi cult. The group, according to the elderly Kabindi, had been in existence since 1952, and eight of the original members remained. Singing and dancing was part of the group's repertoire of religious and healing practices. Kabindi told me (through Haruna) that the group's main purpose was to train/"give birth to" other groups in -Swezi spirit practices (Plate 4.4).

During my visit the group performed a gradually accelerating drum pattern and dance meant to bring dancers into states of possession. Haruna knew some of the drum patterns, and filled in for one of the expert drummers who was absent, while Kabindi himself played. One dancer became possessed and rolled towards me on the ground. Another female singer sang/spoke through a mirliton in an other-worldly voice.

Kabindi's group had first participated in the Senator Festival in 2005, and, like Luo Foundation, had been included in the Busoga regional-level competition as an exhibition act. Kabindi said that certain highly sensitive members became possessed, responding to the kiswezi music, even in the midst of the Senator competition. Haruna mused on the challenges this posed in a competition setting:

> Those are some of the things that affect them with the competition: because time comes when they are supposed to stop, and somebody's still possessed. So we have got to maybe find a unique way of adjudicating them separate from the normal cultural groups. But they are quite unique in the way they do everything. Even when they come to doing their original compositions. They still use the old and put in a few words and they don't have that art of creating what we want. But because of their uniqueness they are a group that we don't really want to miss. (Walusimbi, p.c.)

Group Supporting a Virtuoso Star: Super Dancer Singers

The fate of the Buganda-based group Super Dancer Singers rested heavily on the performances of its star performer, a man who called himself Super Dancer. James Isabirye, sending me off to the Buganda regional-level competition at Luweero, told me to stay on the lookout for Super Dancer, who, in James's opinion, was one of the few male dancers in Uganda who could compete with the star dancer in Haruna Walusimbi's group Nile Beat Artists, Waiswa Shadrach (Sedulaki). Super Dancer's specialty was the -Ganda *mbaga* (wedding) dance, also known as *ngoma y'ebisoko* "drum with many variations"

(Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005, 90).[67] The *mbaga* dance, typically performed by women, is characterized by a tight signaling relationship between the lead drummer and the dancer(s) (analyzed in Nattiez and Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2003), and by symbolic gestures that convey -Ganda ideals of wifehood and marriage: cupping the breasts to demonstrate their fullness, gyrating the hips to demonstrate sexual intercourse, etc. As with the kiGanda *baakisimba* and the --Soga *tamenha ibuga*, great value is placed on the fluid movement of the hips seemingly independent of the legs and torso. It seems to be a demonstration of muscular strength and flexibility in this configuration, developed through long practice of the dance itself.[68] Super Dancer, like Waiswa, showed off his muscular body.

Super Dancer gave me the strong impression of an ambitious American pop musician marketing his or her group. Indeed, it was very difficult to learn much about the group's activities in my brief interview with its leader, as he always and immediately turned the conversation to what I might do to advance his career outside Uganda, or support him at home.

The star-performer-oriented Super Dancer Singers group was obviously a different kind of political project than the more common women's-association based groups. While Super Dancer's solo performances boosted the group's score at the Luweero regional event and earned enthusiastic applause from the crowd, a somewhat disorganized and

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67. *Ebisoko* may also be translated as *phrases*; they are important building blocks in kiGanda and -Soga musical composition (Wachsmann 1980).

68. As I was trying to teach my own body the *mbaga* and other dances, Waiswa suggested that I practice in front of a mirror until my hips started moving.

uninspired performance by the ensemble kept the group from earning enough total points to advance to the nationals. I sensed, and James agreed with me, that this was something of a "pick-up band" which had not adequately rehearsed, counting too much on the skill of its star performer to carry the group.

Groups centered on individual artists were relatively few. There was speculation about whether certain legendary performers, such as the Musoga singer Siraje, would form groups and participate in the Senator competition. Siraje and presumably other stars of the Ugandan traditional music scene kept their distance from this competition full of amateurs. From personal conversations with Damascus Kafumbe, a student of the late Buganda palace musician Albert Ssempeke, I got the sense that adult Ugandan traditional musicians of a certain pedigree would be reluctant to engage in the Senator Festival or anything similar to a Schools' Festival.

Notably, the group that won the Senator Festival in 2006 was heavily dependent on a single talented artist: Godfrey Yekka, who built all the innovative instruments for the group, and composed and conducted pieces. The Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope was successful in large part because Yekka put his individual talent to work in designing and training the whole ensemble.

Symbols of Legitimacy and Success

Any group I visited was usually prepared to show me a *constitution* or set of *by-laws*, often with an official-looking stamp. These, like the competition *syllabi* demon-

strated a certain taste for strict documentation, and probably the imprint of Local Council and microfinance politics. A sampling of Birungi Byensi's by-laws is given below:

> 1. Time savings
>
> a) Absence without apology shall be fined 300=. Apology on a big matter e.g. losing a relative.
>
> b) Coming late, fine is 200=. Time for meetings shall be 3:00pm. . . .
>
> 3. All matters of the association should be kept secret. s/he who is caught backbiting another member shall be warned three times, after suspended indefinitely. . . .
>
> 13. Any member of the Association who spends two to three months without showing commitment and not giving any reasonable excuse shall be dismissed for good.

Besides constitutions, groups would often bring out guest registers, bearing the signatures of important visitors, as well as albums with photos arranged to show the group's progress over time (see Vokes 2008 on the importance of photo albums in contemporary Uganda).

In general, costumes were the items that groups coveted most. Kyobula Deborah told me that success in competitions depended on a group's being able to change costumes for each item: a Creative Item might be performed in tee shirts and skirts, a Traditional Folk Song in *busuti*-s and *kanzu-s*. Looking smart and "uniform" was a reflection of a group's hard work and success in attracting the attention of sponsors. Cloth was, in 2006, one of the most expensive everyday commodities in Uganda. Other indicators of group industry and prosperity were traditionally manufactured goods, instruments, and foodstuffs like the ones Birungi Byensi gave and sold to me.

Composing and Rehearsing Items — Overview

My data on how groups composed and rehearsed pieces for the Senator Festival are somewhat slim. In most cases, when I visited groups, they immediately switched into performance mode with me as the audience. On two occasions, I visited a group with James Isabirye, who conducted something along the lines of a conservatory master class: the group performed its piece from start to finish, then James gave a long and animated speech about it in Lusoga, jumping up from time to time to demonstrate how a particular dance move ought to be done, or to break down a particular melody with singers or instrumentalists phrase by phrase, making sure the pitches matched up appropriately with the speech tones of the text.

Many groups hired college-educated trainers for a small fee, food, and lodging to come stay with them in their villages and help them compose and rehearse pieces for the Senator Festival. This was one means of making a living for those who majored in music, dance, and drama. Trainers knew the conventions of competition items, drawn from the Schools' Festival, and could devise pieces that would be likely to meet the judge's expectations. As they came from the same milieu as James, they likely offered the same kind of training, in various degrees of sophistication. Groups connected with UDTA and Ndere Troupe had received substantial training from that group, and considered themselves qualified to train other groups. Some groups, such as Luo Foundation, who did not hire trainers, misunderstood the requirements of the Traditional Folk Song item, and lost points on their adjudication sheets.

Trainers seemed not only to help groups meet Festival requirements, but to provide some of them with an aura of legitimacy. This seemed to be particularly the case with all-women's groups, who usually had an male trainer who seemed to act almost like a chaperone. I was surprised to be introduced to Mon Pi Dong Lobo's expert male trainer, after having met with the group on several occasions and having thought they were getting along fine without one. After the trainer showed up, I sensed that I was supposed to direct further inquiries to him, rather than to the leaders and performers in the group. An all-women's trumpet group from Alur region similarly had a old male trainer, who danced in front of the group during their Creative Dance item, but did not participate in their vigorous trumpet dance.

Participant Observation in the Greater Light Dancers

I participated as a dancer for four rehearsals in a dance troupe, the Greater Light Dancers, which met in an acting space in Kampala. I came as the guest of Sarah, who danced professionally at weddings, performed with Deborah Kyobula's group Tugezeeko, and was a frequent guest at James's house. While this particular group did not perform in the Senator Festival, I believe its rehearsals were similar to those of many groups that did.

Rehearsals would begin in the afternoon and carry on until well after dark. Members of the group filtered in gradually as the hours advanced, the male drummers showing up last. A woman dance trainer came, and had me and another beginning-level Ugandan woman start practicing basic dance steps in clockwise circles on a concrete platform on one side of the room. The trainer spoke no English, but recited a three-word Luganda

mnemonic to help me remember the step of the *baakisimba* dance. While we beginners practiced, the trainer began going over the more complicated patterns and formations with more advanced members of the group in another part of the room. Once a sufficient number of dancers had arrived, the group began performing whole items, with the trainer sternly barking orders when dancers would make mistakes, but generally not stopping the progress of the piece.

After dark (true dark as the electricity had gone out), a group of male drummers arrived, and quickly assumed control. By this point, I had tired of my beginner's perambulations, but was nowhere near capable of keeping up with the rest of the group, which already knew its pieces fairly well, so I sat and watched. With the arrival of the men, the female trainer instantly became outwardly more submissive, and more of a performer than a trainer. Once the drumming started, the group performed its pieces straight through as at a concert, with few stops or criticisms. At the end of the night, the rehearsal became a jam session, the drummers playing with increasing abandon and the less capable dancers dropping out one by one. Finally, only the trainer woman and the drummers remained, with the woman signaling and receiving with her hips patterns to and from the master drummer with great precision and confidence.

After the dancing, the lead drummer, who turned out to be the pastor of a born-again church with which the group was affiliated, gave a speech of encouragement and benediction, announced me as a visitor, and led prayers. It was evident that he was the leader of the group, and the woman trainer-dancer was somewhere below him and the male drummers in the hierarchy, and superior to all the female dancers.

Composition

My questions about how exactly items were composed rarely elicited detailed answers. Trainers, I was told, often composed song/dance items, though they did not introduce materials that were radically new to the trainees. Trainers were in charge of such important compositional elements as stage dance *formations* and *levels* (see Chapter 2), and these were the innovations group leaders I talked to seemed to consider most notable.

I once witnessed a lively conversation among three members of Tugezeeko over what they should perform as their Folk Song Item for the next Senator event. The problem they faced was that all the groups were doing the same Folk Song they had been doing: "twins." Their interaction at a table at a friend's house involved trying to recollect another Folk Song they had learned during their primary school days.

Songs in Southern Uganda have relatively long texts, and the melodies and rhythms are structured by and recollected along with the texts. Observing the Tugezeeko conversation and also informal duo rehearsals of pieces between James and Haruna, I noticed that the collective recollection of texts is perhaps the most important and time consuming process in the early stages of rehearsal. As texts are recollected, purposeful changes may be made at various points. Deborah said that the only significant change they made to their Twins Traditional Folk Song from the old way the elders used to sing it was the addition of a line about eating raw mangos. The elders would not have eaten them when pregnant, but women of Deborah's generation did, so they updated the song.

One group, Ngoma Troupe of Kasese District, showed me written-out lyrics for its Traditional Folk Song. I was told that in some competitions, groups were required to submit lyrics for their items in writing. Writing-out lyrics was a practice James, and even some street kadongo kamu buskers I met, also engaged in. Writing, besides being useful in aiding memory, has been an activity strongly associated with power and prestige in Africa since colonization (Newell 2002; Peterson 2004).

Opinions about the Senator Festival and the Beer Advertising Task

Groups' impressions of the Senator Festival varied, depending on how Senator events unfolded for them, and the other opportunities that were available to them. Mon Pi Dong Lobo had one of the more positive experiences of the Senator Festival, and indeed had started to consider themselves to be part of a Senator "vertical network" (Chabal and Daloz 1999), just as other groups such as Rhythm Troupe considered themselves to be parts of Ndere Troupe. One of the leaders of Mon Pi Dong Lobo told me:

> There are almost five groups here [in Gulu] now that are supported from outside. But for right now, we said now we are going to get support from Senator. We have joined them now, together. So, we are coming. And Senator has now imposed us out [promoted us]. They have started knowing that , there's a group called Mon Pi Dong Lobo. But they call us Senator! If they call Mon Pi Dong Lobo 'The Senator Group' let them come! So, they call us like that. Then we said, there's no problem. (Mon Pi Dong Lobo, p.c.)

Mon Pi Dong Lobo believed they had earned their place in the Senator network by coming up with a Senator advertisement better than all the other groups' advertisements:

> The song we sing was marvelous. The song for Senator. And it makes more meaning for them. So our song—it we are singing—it means a lot to Sena-

> tor. So they said: those people are selling Senator more than all the groups that are here. (Mon Pi Dong Lobo, p.c.)

I suspect that the group was mostly wrong about this. Marketers from EABL did not seem to pay attention to any particular groups and their Senator songs, only to the bottom-line indicators: how much beer was sold and how many counties were covered. If groups were singled out for special rewards and opportunities, it was only when the judges gave them high marks (usually for attributes other than advertising effectiveness), or because James or Haruna took a special interest in them. As mentioned earlier, Lydia and I took a liking to Mon Pi Dong Lobo, and this may have led to their insertion into the National-level event as an exhibition group.

Kyobula Deborah did not express the same strong sense of affiliation with the Senator brand, but she believed that the Senator Festival had given Tugezeeko substantial "exposure," which might well lead to hirings by other commercial interests and development NGOs. Deborah's primary concern, which she shared with most other group leaders, was in securing a steady income for her group:

> If you have the money, you can buy dancers. If you have the money you can buy costumes. If you have the money you can buy all the types of instruments you need. And if you have the money, all the members are patient. They don't run away: maybe I went to look for money because at times we don't have supper. They don't have what to eat at home. So if at the end of the day you can give 1000 each at evening, maybe finish rehearsals, you can be able to retain them. (Mon Pi Dong Lobo, p.c.)

The money prizes offered by EABL also, in Deborah's opinion, lent respectability to her public participation, as a local dignitary, in traditional music and dance: "It is more respectable, according to Ugandan shillings." Tugezeeko might be seen as a nascent mon-

ey-making group of national/international standing *á la* Ndere Troupe, not as a bunch of peasants merely singing and dancing for tips.

Other groups, including Rhythm Troupe and Birungi Byensi, took a more negative view of the Senator Festival, based on bad experiences they had had dealing with recruiters and travelling to events. A frequent complaint was that news of the competition reached groups too late, giving them inadequate time to prepare performance items, acquire costumes, etc. Another common complaint was that the administrators and judges favored some groups and ethnicities over others. Mon Pi Dong Lobo was irritated that the panel of judges at one event had included all southern Ugandans except for one northerner, who was a Lango, not an Acholi.

No groups I spoke to had misgivings about advertising for a brand of beer, even though many of their songs were about the dangers of drinking alcohol. Beer, as I have mentioned, does not have the dangerous and disreputable reputation of spirits. Even so, at least two of the group leaders claimed to forbid even beer drinking in their groups. I was told again and again that groups were *promoting* Senator but they would not themselves *drink* Senator. The former was not seen as morally problematic, though the latter sometimes was.

Conclusion

Most of the groups in the Senator National Cultural Festival were based in associations that counted music and dance as only one of their pursuits. Some core members did not perform, but organized from the side lines, and many of the star performers were

not core members, but people brought it temporarily from outside, sometimes for pay. The core members and leaders of groups were usually women, though male *trainers* were often hired for their music and dance expertise, and the majority of star performers were male. These groups participated in the Senator Festival in hopes of getting prize money and exposure which might be converted into future opportunities. Music was also seen as an activity which would draw members and keep people busy and thus in good physical and mental health.

Many participating in the Senator Festival were based in women's associations, which were to various degrees tied to or seeking ties to the national Local Council system and international donor organizations. The Kampala-based, internationally known performance group Ndere Troupe provided support to some groups and a model to many others. Groups were aware of and sometimes coveted other groups' vertical networks. In an intensely competitive environment, with highly unpredictable sources of funding and employment, groups tended to be unstable. Performers and trainers, especially those on groups' political margins, moved fluidly from group to group. In certain circumstances, distrust welled up among groups (Ndagano Rose felt forced to find a walled-off shelter to protect her current group against the unwanted attentions of her earlier ones).

While women's-association based groups were the norm, there were enough idiosyncratic groups to keep the Festival interesting, including groups built around star performers, particular musical practices, communities of religious practice, etc.

Conclusion: Images of Work in the Senator Festival

The theme which best ties the preceding chapters together is *work*. The Ugandans I observed and interacted with in and around the Senator Festival put much effort into demonstrating that they were working, or that they could work, in various ways. This conclusion is structured around four *prises de position* (position-takings, or stances), having to do with different kinds of work, that participants in the Senator Festival adopted. Bourdieu helpfully explains how, in a field, *prises de position* can have existences independent from the actual *positions* (spaces endowed with certain amounts and kinds of capital) around which they develop. Real paying jobs might or might not be available—in Uganda they are usually not. But stances associated with those jobs persist, and acquire new social utilities.

Collective Work

Images of collective work were especially visible in performance groups' Creative Items about Senator beer. For their Creative Item, the 2006 national champion Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope performed a dramatic dance in which farmers planted and tended "seeds": dancers curled up on the ground, then gradually stretched and grew, their leaves trembling as in a time-lapse film. The plants were then harvested and run through a complete assembly line process: a "machine" of linked dancers encircled a "beer" dancer and guided him to other processors. Empty bottles (real ones, not dancers) were rolled from hand to hand. Then a giant, dancing, papier-maché bottle of Senator with holes for eyes emerged out of the darkness.

Assembly line dances, as I have mentioned, were performed by several groups. This social-realist dance-type was probably developed in the Schools Festival—an institution carried over from Uganda's brief but heady socialist/nationalist Independence period. It was odd to see assembly line dances in a country with very few assembly lines, and strange to see a style (to me) redolent of socialist nationalism put in the service of a multinational corporation, rather than a state.

If dances and songs about joyful collective labor are stock pieces from an optimistic nationalist era (and from the colonial era as well), they also reflected the real concerns of today's groups. As I argued in Chapter 4, most rural Ugandan groups are not just artistic producers, but competing political/economic associations which take on a variety of projects: farming, making crafts, supplying credit, and reaching out to politicians and other potential sponsors. Groups persist or fall apart based on whether or not they can keep a large number of people employed, or at least convinced that employment is most likely to arrive by way of these groups, not other ones. Thus, Irene Nabirye's six-million-shilling dream was to buy a corn grinder, so that she keep a core of workers permanently employed, and her group Twekembe intact. Groups without opportunities, I gathered, fell apart quickly. Larger, richer, more active looking groups attracted politicians, as well as development NGOs. They also attracted educated people in the community who could help them write the official letters necessary to secure sponsorships. A good group, I deduced, was large, well dressed, and diverse in its skills—able to summon musicians, dancers, farmers, basket weavers, politicians, etc., as various occasions demanded.

Thus I believe groups were strategic in their dance and song demonstrations of collective work, and not just following stage performance conventions. They wanted to show EABL representatives, and whoever else might be present at events, that they were diverse skilled, hard working, and already successful teams.

Village Artisanal Work

When Lydia and I went to visit Birungi Byensi Drama Association outside of Fort Portal, the group had a table of woven items set up for us to look at and purchase, along with costumes of barkcloth and fur. A large wicker basket labeled "Senator" sat in one corner, next to crates of banana-fiber Senator bottles. Around the courtyard, men and women had set up stations where they were conspicuously working on new items.

The "craft village" is a convention in Uganda, as it is no doubt all over the world. There are several in Kampala, including one at Ndere Center's home base. One could easily read such displays cynically, as further outgrowths of a global-tourism complex catering to rich Westerners, and of an aestheticized multiculturalism that trivializes Otherness and helps to naturalize the uneven development on which global capitalism depends.

This pessimistic reading is not wrong, but needs to be complicated. With its baskets and Senator bottles, Birungi Byensi were asserting "techniques of the body" and natural materials indexed to a particular place: the Fort Portal area in particular, and *the village* more broadly. Traditional MDD, James impressed on me, exists conceptually in a continuum with artisanal activities like basket-weaving. The natural materials and em-

bodied techniques of music and dance styles as well as crafts are crucial in constructing meaningful places for Ugandans as well as tourists.

Village places, and the natural materials and bodily techniques that signify them, were of particular value to people like James and Haruna who had already left the village. Besides the administrators, some leaders of groups (such as Deborah Kyobula and Irene Nabirye) were people who spent much of their time shuttling from town to childhood village and back again. In constant motion they idealized what was still and pastoral. Village materials, and the techniques of music and artisanal labor, transported them imaginatively to where they wanted to be.

Music-making and dancing are not merely valuable in that they invoke valuable places. These activities, as well as basket-making and other artisanal pursuits, activate cognitive styles which can be pleasurable and useful in their own right. James addressed this when he claimed his grandmother was a great mathematician because she could weave a mat. The artisanal work proudly on display in the Senator Festival may have been asserted against an encroaching capitalism that refuses value to a whole range of cultivations of body and mind.

Technical virtuosity was ensured a prominent place in the Festival by means of the Solo item. It was not sufficient for groups to merely put on a tidy and enthusiastic collective show: they had to search in their communities for artists who had cultivated their bodies to an advanced degree. While women could be virtuosos, they had fewer options in this kind of work than the men. Women, it seemed, could be standout singers or

dancers, but not virtuoso instrumentalists or singers who accompanied themselves on instruments. Men, on the other hand, could be all of the above.

To say that proud assertions of village artisanship speak to certain needs and wants, is not to say that they add up to a kind of effective "resistance," or that they are good for a people in the long run. Michael Herzfeld may be right in his argument that poor people displaying themselves as village, "traditional," artisans, may in the long run be helping to bring about their "irremediable subordination within. . . the 'global hierarchy of value'" (Herzfeld 2005, see also Herzfeld 2004). Certainly, musicians were treated as anonymous and archaic subordinates by EABL, and mostly worked for no pay.

Clerkly Work

Judges implacably sizing-up groups and filling in boxes on adjudication sheets were doing another kind of work. James's and Haruna's work entailed typing up adjudication sheets, a syllabus of required *items*, schedules of events, and proposals and progress reports for their employers at EABL. Some of these papers sported the official stamp of James's NGO, NACOFU: an elaborate and very British looking icon featuring Uganda's national bird. This was the kind of "clerkly" (Barber 2003) work that could establish the judges and administrators (women as much as men) as members of a literate stratum of Ugandan society.

The Ugandan bureaucratic worker's stance is a good example of a *prise de position* that floats independently from any actual bureaucratic positions. The colonial-era clerkly positions that once might have awaited people of James's and Haruna's education-

al level are no longer there, at least not in decent proportion to the mass of educated people. A Ugandan official reported in 2007 that the unemployment rate of Ugandan University graduates stood at 36 percent in 2007 (http://go.worldbank.org/40RPDUQ7M0). Yet the bureaucratic work-style of forms and official stamps carries on in everyday life. It is how much business, when any exists, gets done.

The bureaucracy/school cultural complex shaped cultural production at the Senator Festival, as it did at other music and dance competitions. Groups performed with the judges and their adjudication sheets in mind. One important outcome of the Senator Festival was that it introduced many musicians who were less familiar with the bureaucratic procedures and values of the Schools' Festival to those procedures and values. Some groups new to competitions learned that the way to win was to get a good score, and that to get a good score, their music and dancing had to have certain aspects: *formations, dynamics, levels, uniformity, keys,* etc.

As I suggest in Chapter 2, this buttoned-up bureaucratic style was also something participants in the Festival could push against. If the Festival was a spectacle of different kinds of work, it was also one of different kinds of *anti-work*. Drinking, especially, is associated in Ugandans' minds with indolence and impropriety. Drinking beer can symbolize rebelliousness against both a colonial work ethic, and village elders, who have proprietary rights to the drink. On the other hand, drinking, from the stance of an elder, signifies propriety and reconciliation.

Entrepreneurial Capitalist Work

James, as mentioned, was a man on the move, always in his car and on his cell phone, though he professed to be tired of both. Once, searching for a topic of conversation, I lamely expressed an interest in pigs. Soon, we were in James's car, speeding toward a pig farm. As we looked at the pigs in their pen, James's entrepreneurial brain went into overdrive. He would buy a small plot of land; pigs didn't need much. A few pigs would quickly breed many more pigs, which James could sell at a good price. The money thus earned could be pumped into school fees, houses, apartments in the city. James would be able to retire in luxury in very little time. This ballooning notion was only set to rest (temporarily) when James's wife Victoria made a sound, *eh!,* the contemptuousness of which cannot be conveyed on paper.

I believe the Senator Festival was valuable to James and Haruna not only as paying work, but as a project that enabled them to adopt the *prises de position* of fast-moving, globally connected entrepreneurs. Shouting over the cell phone to workers across the country, setting up and tearing down tents for events before the local authorities could catch wind of what was going on—this was a style of work more exhilarating and promising than the work of the government bureaucrat behind his desk or the staid schoolmaster at the head of the assembly. James especially, with his prosperity gospel books and boundless energy, struck me as a natural-born capitalist (one with a sense of humor, thankfully) who had had the misfortune to be born in a country without much capital.

Not just the administrators of the Festival, but all the participants to various degrees seemed to get caught up in the fast-moving, glamorous spirit of brand capitalism. Most people hear and see advertisements, but do not get to compose and perform them themselves. Performing a Traditional Folk Dance item was one kind of work: meeting the judges' expectations, coordinating movements precisely, not misrepresenting tradition. The Creative Item, I was told, was experienced as another kind of work altogether: the work of advertising. For some of the groups I talked to, this was the work required by the Festival that they enjoyed the most.

The Effects Global Bottom-of-the-Pyramid Capitalism Might Have on Cultural Production

Throughout this dissertation, I have concentrated on reconstructing the contemporary regional field of cultural production (more-or-less a *Ugandan* field) that included the Senator Festival, considering larger global trends along the way mainly as they shaped, and were refracted by, this field. This task is large, and I have made no claims to comprehensiveness. I have provided sketches of positions and *prises de position* as they appeared to me, in my dealings (of varying length and intensity) with the people I had a chance to meet.

Since the Senator Festival seems to represent a new kind of interface between the capitalist class and the rural poor with their arts, it is appropriate for me to speculate in closing on what commercial events like the Senator Festival might mean for the arts in

other parts of the world, and give my opinion as to whether will they constitute a good or a bad development overall.

The Festival in its broad outlines is likely to summon feelings of indignation. Poor people were cajoled with promises of prizes into selling commercial beer to their neighbors. Their music and dance techniques, so distinctive and compelling as to draw listeners like me from thousands of miles away, were put to use in banal advertising jingles. They signed away their rights for their compositions for no pay, and offered up their services to help a commercial beer brand in its efforts to force locally made beers and spirits—primary economic engines for local women—out of the market. EABL played on people's dreams: James' and Haruna's dreams of entreprenurial advancement and cultural renaissance, Irene Nabirye's dream of winning enough money to buy a corn grinder for her village, other group leaders' dreams of traveling around the world like Ndere Troupe, audience members' dreams of owning trucks and fancy clothes, shared dreams of a unified, multicultural Ugandan nation. Brand marketers are expert molders of dreams, and corporations feel little compulsion to actually deliver what has been promised. In a land with few prospects for all but a handful of people, corporations know that few people will feel disappointed for long, and if they remain disappointed, what harm can they possibly bring to the company?

In spite of all this, I left the Senator Festival with a generally positive impression of it. I would not have relished studying the Schools festival, with its indoor spaces, strictly-enforced regulations, and well-scrubbed child performers with their well-polished acts. Groups in the Senator festival were comprised of often visibly poor, sometimes old

and disabled, adults who embodied their rough personal and collective histories on stage. Virtuoso solo performers got drunk and sang allusive songs they knew only their neighbors would understand. Groups performed dance representations of collective agricultural labor which struck me not as mere spectacles of state-approved development, but as displays of the labor and political power groups had or were trying to forge. There seemed to be a kind of self-possession or freedom on display, perhaps not intended by the dancers, but expressed in the "many sided play of the muscles" (Marx [1867] 1978, 409), which, Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued, "is the excess that capital, for all its disciplinary procedures, always needs but can never quite control or domesticate" (Chakrabarty 2000). The performers, in the act of performing, seemed to retain self and community referentiality that people in other positions—door-to-door salespeople, for example—sometimes lose.

These kinds of expressions might well have been accomplished without any beer-advertising element. My suspicion, however, is that the advertising element of the Festival gave it an energy it would not otherwise have had. People in Ugandan villages are understandably excited about branded consumer goods and advertising. In the 70s and 80s, there was practically nothing to buy in Kampala, much less in the villages. Brands are novelties, and they represent connectivity to a powerful outside world. I saw a fiddle with the logo of a cell phone company, MTN, burnt into it, and other brand names painted on the walls of people's homes. Performers in the Festival brought to their performances not necessarily a taste for the Senator brand in particular, but an excitement about consuming and advertising in general. Advertising is a kind of entrepreneurial work ordinary Ugan-

dans do not ordinarily get to participate in directly. Several group members told me that they liked their Senator-advertisement items the best, and these were the items that usually showed the most ingenuity. Audiences too seemed to appreciate being drawn in as participants in branding activities. Probably there were people I did not speak to in audiences and groups who found the advertising element silly and distasteful. But it is no surprise, given Uganda's very recent entry into consumer capitalism, that a brand promotion should generate some excitement, that would naturally transfer to performances.

The Festival was unique in its energetic impropriety and its eagerness to go to where people lived and reach out to them with the things they liked (traditional MDD, discos, prizes). As Mazzarella (2003) has argued, this eagerness to please is characteristic of the global advertising complex. Advertising's attentiveness to local desires and capabilities is a double-edged sword: it encourages ordinary people to take pride in themselves and their cultural properties, but it does so in order to take advantage of them. The Senator festival showed, hearteningly, that corporate marketers may have a limited capacity or willingness to research and micromanage consumers in a multilingual market like Uganda's. EABL outsourced the research and advertising work to James and Haruna, who in turn outsourced it to hundreds of group leaders. Senator's basic messages—that the beer was made from local ingredients and that the brand was friendly to local ethnic groups—probably survived intact in groups' songs. But these brand marketers could not achieve the kind of minute knowledge of and psychological control over consumers that marketers regularly achieve in American television and internet markets.

In allowing local groups to market Senator beer more or less as they saw fit, EABL opened up a opportunity for these groups to promote themselves, an activity they were accustomed to and eager to do. Uganda, like other African countries, has a strong tradition of vertical patron-client networks. The Senator brand, as I have suggested, became the patron and the recipient of the groups' praise. A kind of relationship among the brand, the advertisers, and the audience, was thus generated such as could never occur in the US. The implications of this patronage-style relationship for African "brand awareness" warrant further exploration. Does a Ugandan or African steeped in patron-client relationships develop a "brand loyalty" anything like an American's brand loyalty, when loyalty is conceived of so differently? What, if anything, did the praisers of the Senator brand expect back from it? In some cases, such as Mon Pi Dong Lobo, which wanted to be called "The Senator Group," a kind of reciprocal allegiance seemed to be what was expected. Other groups expressed total indifference as to whether they were selling Senator, Eagle, batteries, or soap, just as they expressed indifference about certain politicians who came through their village, promised much, and delivered nothing. Brand commercialism, the Senator Festival revealed to me, works very differently according to the place in which it is implanted. No matter how similar radio advertisements sound from country to country, there is not one brand commercialism, but many.

Arguments over whether capitalism tends toward "cultural homogenization" or "heterogenization" (Appadurai 1996) have been swirling for some time. Particularly since 1990, there has been a surge of interest among social scientists in heterogenization: i.e., how the tropes, tools, and products associated with Western/American capitalist culture

are put to unexpected uses and endowed with radically different meanings within local fields of cultural production around the world (eg. Manuel 1984, 1994; Watson 1997; Hansen 2000). These have been, in part, rebuttals against and/or revisions of a "cultural imperialism" paradigm that assumed that diverse global cultures were everywhere being abandoned in favor of an American popular culture that arrived astride capitalism and the mass media (see Mazarella 2003 for a discussion of this literature).

By now, it is a settled matter that the cultural relations between the "West" and the rest, capitalist modernity and traditions, are more complicated than was assumed. If there is a trend of homogenization, there seems to be some kind of countervailing trend of heterogenization. The discussion is still open, however, as to whether the kinds of participation and difference capitalism tolerates and enables are somehow shallow, non-liberating, and unsatisfying—mere simulacra of freedoms the world once knew (Žižek 1997; Klein 2002).

I am, of course, in no position to judge what capitalism is doing to the global field of cultural production overall. I can state that I saw nothing like cultural homogenization going on at the Senator Festival. I am inclined to believe James's assessment that styles, that might otherwise have died out, may gain longevity and new offshoots as a result of their public exposure in the Festival. More importantly, I did not sense a banal homogeneity in the messages that were being conveyed in Senator festival performances. Groups, as I have suggested, were not just performing about Senator beer, but about themselves: they put their hardships and will to survive and grow on stage. This realism, admittedly, was sanitized away as the festival progressed from its lower to its upper lev-

els. The performances of the groups who survived to participate in the national-level event were similar to the virtuosic, choreographed, and rather unengaging displays typical of the Schools' Festival. The riches of the Senator Festival, in my opinion, were in the early phases of competition, when the less polished groups were still in contention.

I do not know why EABL abandoned the Senator Festival. James and Haruna likewise, I suspect, do not really know. I was not invited to the company's board meetings, nor did I seek an invitation. In the end, the profits of the Senator Festival may not have justified its costs to the company, however minimal the latter may have been. Perhaps the real problem was not the cost of advertising but the cost of rural distribution on rutty roads; James often complained that rural bars were constantly running out of Senator beer. EABL may have just decided to let SABL and its Eagle brand have the villages, for what they were worth.

The "fortune at the bottom of the pyramid" on the whole is probably overblown and the idea may soon be abandoned. The potential market of the rural poor may simply not be worth corporations' energies. Strong criticisms of Prahalad's bottom-of-the-pyramid theory are emerging in the business world. Prahalad is said to have vastly overestimated the amount of capital waiting to be freed up among the rural poor. Aneel Karnani claims that there is no $13 trillion in global village piggy banks: the real figure is more like $1.2 trillion (Karnani 2007, 91). If the market is small, it is also "geographically dispersed" and "culturally heterogeneous," and thus prohibitively costly to reach (Karnani 2007, 91). Karnani, who teaches business at the University of Michigan alongside Prahalad, also attacks the altruism side of Prahalad's argument, claiming that rural advertising

campaigns by multi-national corporations mislead poor, uneducated people, and do not speak to their real needs: "A poor person is far more constrained by lack of income than by lack of variety of goods and services offered in the market" (Karnani 2007, 97).

The Senator Festival may turn out to be a historical anomaly—a new mousetrap that two effective salesman, James Isabirye and Haruna Walusimbi, talked EABL into buying. One suspects that EABL could get comparable, if not the same, brand-building results in rural Uganda with just a disco, leaving the more difficult-to-engineer traditional MDD competition out altogether. While the Senator Festival may have been a grand commercial experiment with *tradition* and *culture* that will not be repeated any time soon, one can take heart that around the world there are many innovators like James and Haruna, and the group leaders and performers, who appreciate diversity, energy, and truth in performance, and are capable of manipulating their fields of cultural production in order to bring these values to the fore.

Appendix 1. List of Senator Events in the 2006 Festival

This is based on a list of events James Isabirye used.

1 National event

10 Regional events

40 District events

80 County events

County-level events

Item	Region	Districts	County	
1 Stage B	CENTRAL region with regional center at LUWEERO	Luweero District	Luweero Nakasongola	07/21 07/22
		Kayunga District	Kayunga Galilaya	07/23 07/26
		Mityana District	Mityana Mubende	07/27 07/28
		Masaka District	Kyotera Masaka	07/29 07/30
2 Stage A	EAST Region 1 with regional center at JINJA	Jinja District	Busembatya Jinja	07/29 07/30
		Kamuli District	Bukungu Kamuli	07/26 07/27

		Bugiri District	Kaliro Bugiri	07/28 08/05
		Tororo District	Tororo Nagongera	08/11 08/10
		Butalegya District	Busolwe Butalegya	08/17 08/18
		Palisa District	Budaka Palisa	08/20 08/19
4 Stage B	WEST Region 1 with regional center at KABALE	Mbarara District	Ibanda Mbarara	08/13 08/12
		Ntungamo District	Ntungamo Kitwe	08/03 08/04
		Rukungiri District	Rukungiri Kihihi/Kanungu	08/05 08/06
		Kabale District	Kisoro Kabale	08/10 08/11
	WEST Region 2 with regional center at FORT PORTAL	Kasese District	Bukonzo/Bwera Kasese	08/27 08/26
		Kabarole District	Kibiito Fort Portal	08/20 08/19
		Kamwenge District	Kamwenge Kitagwenda	08/25 08/24

		Bundibugyo District	Bubandi Bundibugyo	08/17 08/18
6 Stage A	EAST Region 3 with regional center at MBALE	Mbale District	Bungokho Mbale	09/03 09/02
		Kapchorwa District	Kween Kapchorwa	08/24 08/25
		Sironko District	Badadiri Sironko	08/27 08/26
		Manafwa District	Bubulo Manjiya	09/01 08/31
7 Stage A	EAST region 4 with regional center at SOROTI	Kumi District	Kumi Ngora	09/10 09/07
		Soroti District	Soroti Serere	09/09 09/08
		Katakwi District	Katakwi Kapelebyong	09/15 09/14
		Kaberamaido District	Kaberamaido Otuboi	09/16 09/17
8 Stage B	WEST region 3 with regional center at HOIMA	Kyenjojo District	Mwenge Kyenjojo	08/31 09/01
		Kibaale District	Byaga/Kagadi Kibaale	09/03 09/02

		Hoima District	Hoima Bugahya	09/08 09/07
		Masindi District	Kibanda Masindi	09/10 09/09
9 Stage A	NORTH region 1 with regional center at LIRA	Lira District	Dokolo Lira	09/21 09/22
		Apac District	Aduku Apac	09/24 09/23
		Gulu District	Aboke Gulu	09/28 09/29
		Kitgum District	Pabbo Kitgum	09/30 10/01
10 Stage B	NORTH region 2 with regional center at ARUA	Arua District	Odramachaku Arua	09/17 09/16
		Yumbe District	Koboko Odravu	09/22 09/21
		Moyo District	Adjumani Moyo	09/24 09/23
		Nebbi District	Okoro/Paidha Nebbi	09/14 09/15

District-level events

Luweero	10/5

Kayunga	10/6
Mityana	10/7
Masaka	10/8
Kamuli	10/5
Jinja	10/7
Bugiri	10/8
Mayuge	10/6
Busia	10/14
Tororo	10/13
Butalegya	10/12
Palisa	10/15
Masindi	10/29
Hoima	10/28
Kibale	10/27
Kyenjojo	10/26
Nebbi	11/5
Yumbe	11/3
Moyo	11/2
Arua	11/4
Mbale	10/21
Sironko	10/20
Manafwa	10/22
Kapchorwa	10/19
Kamwenge	10/20
Kabarole	10/21
Bundibugyo	10/19
Kasese	1022
Kumi	10/26
Soroti	10/28

Katakwi	10/27
Kaberamaido	10/29
Kabale	10/14
Rukungiri	10/13
Ntungamo	10/12
Mbarara	10/15
Apac	11/5
Lira	11/4
Gulu	11/3
Kitgum	11/2

Regional-level events

CENTRAL: Luweero	11/10
EAST 1: Jinja	11/11
EAST 2: Busia	11/12
WEST 3: Hoima	11/19
NORTH 2: Arua	11/26
EAST 3: Mbale	11/24
WEST 2: Fort Portal	11/18
EAST 4: Soroti	11/25
WEST 1: Kabale	11/17
NORTH 1: Lira	11/25

National-level event

Masindi	12/9

Appendix 2. People Mentioned in this Dissertation

Christine Abalo. The leader of Luo Foundation group, from Jinja (Busoga)

James Isabirye. Haruna Walusimbi's main helper in administering the Senator Festival. A musicologist, schoolteacher, and musician. My closest contact and guide in Uganda.

Erukaana Waiswa Kabindi. The leader of Kabindi Baswezi Group, and a traditional healer of renown.

Margaret Kunihira. A leader of Birungi Byensi Dramatic Association, from Fort Portal

Deborah Kyobula. The leader of Tugezeeko Women's Group, from Kamuli (Busoga)

Betty Adong Odongo. A co-leader of Mon Pi Dong Lobo group, from Gulu.

Gladys Laker Otto. A co-leader of Mon Pi Dong Lobo group, from Gulu.

Arthur Wilson Musulube. A former Music Inspector in the Ministry of Education, instrumental in developing the Uganda Schools' Music Festival.

Irene Nabirye. The leader of Twekembe Women's Group, from Iganga (Busoga), and James's younger sister.

Rose Ndagano. The leader of Rhythm Troupe, from Rakai (Buganda).

Stephen Rwangyezi. The leader of the internationally successful group, Ndere Troupe, from Kampala.

Abdu Ssengendo. A member of Nile Beat Artists, and the Senator Festival recruiter and site organizer for the western half of Uganda, working under Haruna.

Super Dancer. The leader of the Super Dancer Singers, from Luweero (Buganda), and a virtuoso dancer.

Sedulaki Waiswa. A member of Nile Beat Artists. A virtuoso dancer and worker at Senator Festival events.

Haruna Walusimbi. The person EABL put in charge of administering the Senator Festival. A professional musician and leader of Nile Beat Artists, a performance group in Jinja.

Godfrey Yekka. A co-leader of the Mbale Cultural Fires of Hope, from Mbale. Also a composer and builder of instruments.

Appendix 3. Plates

Plate 1.1. Solo item, West Nile region

Plate 1.2. Instruments built by Godfrey Yekka, including the large xylophone "Garang"

Plate 1.3. Comical traditional healer in a Traditional Folk Song

Plate 2.1. Mr. Senator stilt dancer

Plate 2.2. Festival adjudicators

Plate 2.3. Prizewinners from audience

Plate 3.1. Haruna Walusimbi and James Isabirye

Plate 3.2. James demonstrates strength of sisal growing in his home village

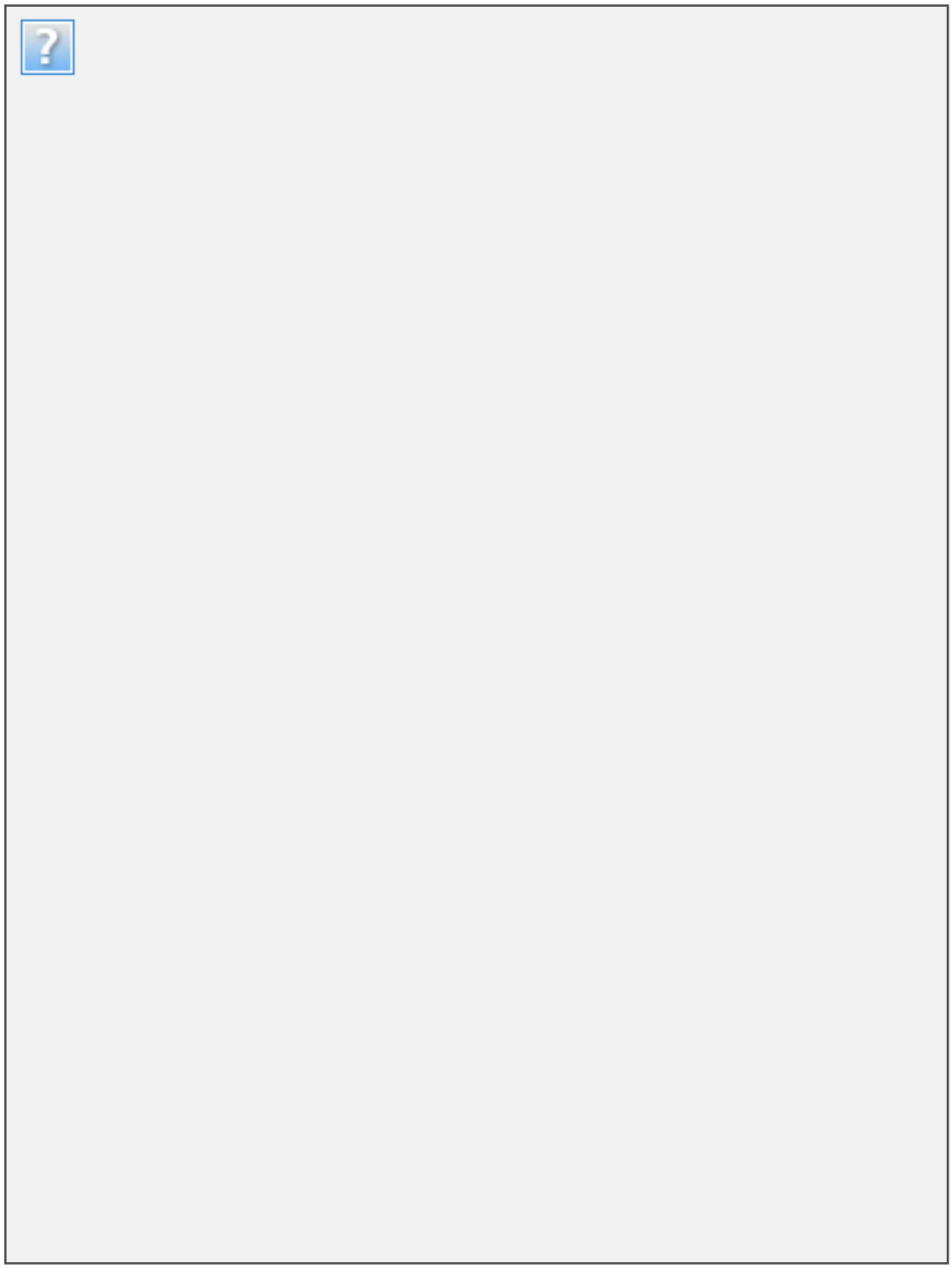
Plate 3.3. Boys with xylophone in James's village

Plate 4.1. Mon Pi Dong Lobo group

Plate 4.2. Member of Birungi By'ensi displays crafts

Plate 4.3. Twekembe Women's Group

Plate 4.4. Healer Kabindi in front of a house visited by spirits.



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