

MUSIC AND NOTIONS OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE HUMANITARIAN WORK OF TWO NGOS IN UGANDA

by

ALLAN MUGISHAGWE

Introduction

This article explores the ways in which musical practices have become a site for the enactment of particular notions of ‘productive’ citizenship in the humanitarian work of two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Uganda - Watoto Child Care Ministries and Uganda Heritage Roots (referred to as Watoto and UHR henceforth). It also highlights how the global connections forged by the two NGOs have impacted the music-making practices that are central to the organizations’ aid-provision mandates. Ultimately, as it will be argued here, these global connections inform the conceptions held by the two organizations of how a ‘productive’ citizen of Uganda should carry him/herself.¹

For several years Uganda has experienced plights such as turbulent political regimes, armed rebellion in the Northern district of Gulu, poor economic conditions, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. These events have resulted in the proliferation of numerous NGOs in the country. The organizations engage in aid-provision efforts aimed at improving the living conditions of those individuals affected by the various problems mentioned. The NGOs central to my study conceive their humanitarian work partly through musical practices and feature musical practices as an essential part of the process they employ to enable their aid recipients² to become self-sufficient and ‘productive’ citizens.

Watoto and UHR understand ‘productive’ citizenship as combining a sense of belonging to a community and eventually being able to serve that community as well as the country of Uganda at large. To become this kind of citizen, both NGOs teach their recipients a set of specific behaviors. In what follows I will explore how the behaviors taught by the two NGOs differ from indigenous ways of conduct valued by Ugandan cultural groups such as the Baganda.³ I will then show some moments of tension

¹ There are numerous other organizations in Uganda that use music as part of their humanitarian work. They include Bitone Dance Troupe, Spirit Africa, Tender Talents, etc. The choice of Watoto and UHR as my focus was in order to examine organizations that are different in significant ways: Watoto is Christian-run, UHR is not, Watoto is generously funded, UHR is not, etc.

² Hereafter aid recipients will be referred to simply as recipients.

³ Cultural groups in Uganda value different behavior. For example, among the Baganda women are expected to kneel down when greeting an elder. Also, a child is not meant to “talk back” to an older person when being rebuked.

that have arisen in the lives of Watoto and UHR recipients as a result of conflicting understandings of how a 'productive' citizen of Uganda should behave. Particularly, I will show how the musical practices that the aid recipients learn play a role in creating moments of tension in their lives.

The transnational conceptualization of globalization avails me a framework by which to demonstrate the links that are crucial to understanding the notion of citizenship that is enacted through music in both NGOs. Perspectives on the roles of globalization have been many and contrasting. These include the understanding that it is a process that inscribes a capitalist economic system on national and local political economies, that reduces the power of the nation-state, that acts as a masculinist recuperation of Marxism and attempts to replace local cultures and traditions with a global culture (see Featherstone 1990, Giddens 1990, Robertson 1991, King 1991, Lash and Urry 1994, Kellner 2002). Stuart Hall, on the other hand, defines globalization as a process that began in the age of European exploration of the world and which process today is instantiated through neoliberalism (2003: 193). Looking at the concept of globalization in the context of "... unequal power and hegemonic relations," Hall dates it from the European exploration era in the 15th century to the subsequent conquest and colonization of the non-European world by Europe in ways that "...constitute[d] the rest of the world in a subordinate relationship to Europe and to Western civilization" (*Ibid*).

For the purposes of showing the international linkages in Watoto and UHR, I am interested in the conception of globalization as understood by social theorists who view the concept as involving "both capitalist markets and sets of social relations *and* flows of commodities, capital, technology, ideas, forms of culture, and people across national boundaries via a global networked society" (Kellner 2002: 287). This understanding of globalization, William Fisher has noted, has created the conditions for NGOs to "forge innovative and increasingly complex and wide-ranging formal and informal linkages with one another, with government agencies, with social movements, and with transnational issue networks, *eventually impacting local lives...*" (Fisher 1997: 441, emphasis mine).

I particularly draw on the work of sociologist Leslie Sklair who has written widely on the many conceptualizations of the notion of globalization. In the following excerpt from his essay, "The transnational capitalist class and the discourse of globalization," Sklair differentiates between three approaches to globalization theory saying

It is important at the outset to distinguish between three distinct but often-confused conceptions of globalization. The first is the international or state-centrist conception of globalization where internationalization and globalization are used interchangeably. This usage signals the fact that the basic units of analysis are still nation-states and the pre-existing even if changing system of nation-states. This is the position of most of those who are in globalization denial. The second is the transnational conception of globalization, where the basic units of analysis are transnational practices, forces and institutions. In this conception, states (or, more accurately, state agents and agencies) are just one among several factors to be taken into account and, in some theories of globalization, no longer the most important. The transnational conception of globalization postulates the existence of a global system. Its

basic units of analysis are transnational practices – practices that cross state boundaries but do not originate with state agencies or actors. Analytically, transnational practices operate in three spheres – the economic, the political, and the cultural-ideological. The third is the globalist conception of globalization, in which the state is actually said to be in the process of disappearing (2000: 3).

It is Sklair’s articulation of the transnational conceptualization of globalization that is most helpful to this project because it elucidates how Watoto and UHR have been able to forge international connections without the state being the *only* basic unit of analysis. Although both NGOs have had to register with the Uganda Ministry of Internal Affairs, this is the extent to which the Ugandan state is involved in the work of Watoto and UHR. This makes the transnational conception the most relevant here, as opposed to the international conception that renders the state as the sole player in international linkages, or the globalist conception that renders the role of the state non-existent. Since the Ugandan state is only involved in the registration stage of the NGOs, it plays a minimal role in the types of relationships that Watoto and UHR develop. Yet without a registration license, neither Watoto nor UHR would be able to operate in any capacity in Uganda, let alone cultivate international relationships. The state in this analysis must be taken into account since it plays a crucial, albeit a limited role.

In the past two decades NGOs that have received licenses to operate in Uganda grew from roughly one thousand in the mid-1990s to approximately nine thousand today. One significant reason for this number of registered NGOs is the many international intervention efforts in the country because of the country’s history with wars and the AIDS epidemic. That number, cited to me by a government official whom I will call Sam, points to the fairly easy process of registering a development organization in Uganda.⁴ Sam told me:

Once a group of individuals come to register with the NGO Board, we first find out how well they can be able to fund the projects they say they want to fund. Should they show sufficiently that they have a long term plan and their projects complement the social service provision of the government, their chances of getting a license to operate in Uganda are better (Interview 10 May 2011).

However, not every application is immediately successful. Sam noted, for example, that the Uganda NGO Forum was only registered three years after applying for a license. A neutral organization whose objective is to monitor and facilitate NGOs in Uganda as well as to critique government policies, NGO Forum’s registration was delayed because the state was not sure about its intentions.

The transnational conception of globalization focuses on what Sklair has called “transnational practices,” which are practices that cross state borders. I will focus on such practices – musical in nature – and endeavor to show not only how they enabled Watoto and UHR to link with individuals and institutions internationally, but also how these linkages facilitated the perceptions of different notions of citizenship nurtured

⁴ The pseudonym Sam is used because the research participant here asked to be unnamed.

by each NGO. First I will trace the beginnings of UHR and Watoto, paying particular attention to how their international networks impacted their music-making practices. I do this by focusing on ethnographic interviews conducted with members of each of the two NGOs.

The Watoto Child Care Ministries story

Watoto Child Care Ministries is an NGO under the leadership of the Watoto Church (formerly Kampala Pentecostal Church), a Christian Pentecostal Church established in Kampala in 1984 by Gary and Marilyn Skinner – a Canadian couple formerly working as missionaries in Zambia – who moved to Kampala in 1982 to establish an English-speaking Church. Gary Skinner was born in Zimbabwe in 1952 to missionary parents and comes from a long lineage of preachers.⁵ When he and his wife decided to move to Uganda it was still a country in political turmoil, and there were many instances of state-led arrests of political opponents. In 1994 Watoto Church started looking after some of Uganda's two million children left parentless as a result of war and disease. Thus Watoto Child Care Ministries was born. The ministry is caring for over two thousand children today. Gary Skinner explains:

In 1988, in a town called Rakai [a district in central Uganda], I was confronted by a naked reality I could not ignore. Eight years earlier, my family and I had moved to Uganda – a country famous for violence and poverty. In Kampala, Uganda's battered capital, we planted a church that we believed God would use to restore hope to the city and the nation. Uganda's people had endured so much. Corrupt and oppressive rulers had waged ruthless wars against the people, and when they were done with their slaughter, nearly one million were left dead. I was taken to visit a 79-year old widow. She had mothered seven children. As we walked through the banana groves behind her small hut, she began to point out the graves of her husband and six of her children. AIDS had killed them all. Her last surviving child – a daughter – was dying of the same disease. I was reminded of the verse in James 1:27 that says, "Religion that God the Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after the orphan and the widow in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." My visit with this woman stirred me to the core of my being and became one of the defining moments of my life. Watoto Child Care Ministries was birthed out of our local church, Watoto Church, as a result (Watoto Church, "Gary Skinner," *Watotochurch.com*).

The Watoto Organization has a pronounced international connection not only because the Skinners are Canadian, but more importantly, because Watoto Church is under the guardianship of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), a subsidiary of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. The music-performing children under their care are put into choirs, and these choirs travel around the world bringing awareness to their audiences – through musical presentations – about the orphan problem in Uganda specifically and in Africa more generally.⁶ On these travels sponsors are sought

⁵ The complete account of the beginning of Watoto Church can be accessed at the Church website here: http://www.watotochurch.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=42&Itemid=96

⁶ The Watoto teams have performed in the states California, Virginia, Massachusetts, Washington, and New York in the USA. Some teams have performed in other countries such as the UK, Singapore, South Africa, and Japan, to name a few.

and, using sponsor donations, homes are built for the children. Each Watoto team that tours abroad consists of about twenty children (12-15 years old) and nine adult members (20-30 years old) who include four musicians, one choir director, one person responsible for sound engineering during performances, one responsible for lighting and media presentations during performances, one person responsible for logistics, and one person responsible for the education of the children. The adult members are not aid recipients. They are invited to join the music teams on account of their musical skills and/or experience with technology.

Alex Ssozi, formerly an adult musician for one of the Watoto choirs and now the manager of a Watoto village called Bbira, explains:

These homes are in what has been called ‘villages’ that are built to become self-sustaining, a holistic model providing for the complete needs of the child and the community. In addition to the homes, each village includes a complete school system, a medical clinic, a church/community center, an agricultural project providing food, a clean water source and electrical power. Each home in the village accommodates eight children and a housemother. They consist of three bedrooms, a kitchen, living area and bathroom. Each house also has running water and electricity – an uncommon amenity in Uganda. Through their villages, the ministry has been able to give parentless children the right to life; to develop to the fullest; to [receive] protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life (Interview 12 May 2011).

Before coming to establish Watoto Church in Kampala in 1984, Skinner already had ties to Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG). When he decided to open a church in Kampala, he notified PAG. Although PAG is not the headquarters of the Watoto Church, the organization provides oversight on the operations of the Church. Franco Onaga, now the Chief Executive Officer of the Watoto Church, who has been with the Skinners from the very beginning, explained the role of PAG:

PAG provides the infrastructure and oversight of the church mandates. However, the best thing that PAG has done for the Watoto Church was to release us. To mean, PAG leadership is not controlling. [Instead it is] a leadership which says, “What do you want to do..., go ahead. You have our blessing.” I think that this approach is the best thing that PAG has done for Watoto Church (Interview 8 March 2011).

Onaga further explained why, in his opinion, the Canadian connection is not the only reason why Watoto Church and Child Care Ministries has many transnational networks:

People think that Watoto is known around the world because our founders are North Americans, but this assumption is not entirely accurate. It is important to remember that Gary [Skinner] was born and raised in Zimbabwe. The longest he has stayed in Canada was while attending Bible College. Basically Gary is an African. He holds a Canadian passport, but he basically is African.

I think what has helped us to grow faster is the vision that we are constantly communicating though our Watoto choirs when they stage performances abroad. We do not go and ask for money, money, money. No. We tell people, this is what we are doing [looking after orphans in Uganda]. If they feel they can join us, then we alert them to the process and what it entails (*Ibid*).

The vision that Onaga refers to above is communicated through the Watoto music choirs that perform abroad. It is at one of those performances that Douglas Stride was encouraged to relocate to Uganda to work as worship pastor at Watoto Church. In an interview, Stride explained how this came about:

How did I end up here? Well, for a long time I was interested in overseas missions since I was a teenager. I went to Bible College in the US, where I also met my wife. I studied music and did a minor degree in missions, cross-cultural ministry. And then we went to Canada, Toronto area, where I was a worship pastor for eight years. During these eight years Watoto music choirs had made a number of presentations at our Church and in this way I had gotten to know about the work Watoto Church was doing of looking after orphans. In 2003, I led a team from my Church to come and help build Ssubi, one of the Watoto villages. In the next several months, mainly due to our desire to be involved in ministry overseas, and also because of my experience building Ssubi village, we contacted the Skinners about possibilities of joining them in Uganda. Fortunately, they had been praying for a worship pastor, and seeing that it is what I had been doing for eight years, an arrangement was reached for us to come to Uganda (Interview 3 March 2011).

The majority of venues where Watoto music choirs perform when they travel to North America, the United Kingdom, Japan and Singapore are churches. In each of these regions, the Watoto Child Care Ministries has established offices and is registered as a not-profit organization. Eugene Stutzman, the Executive Director of Watoto USA, who also joined the Watoto Child Care Ministries when a choir gave a music presentation at his church in Ohio, outlined the role of these international offices:

The international office is responsible for scheduling tours, fundraising (church offerings), providing information about sponsoring a child, and making sure that the touring Watoto choir has accommodation when they arrive. These accommodations are usually provided by members belonging to the church where the Watoto teams present performances (Interview 12 Aug 2011).

As a result of these presentations, many individuals from North America have traveled to Uganda to work with the NGO, such as Douglas Stride (first as worship pastor, now as pastor to Watoto Child Care Ministries), his wife Dawn Stride (Watoto Choirs Creative Director), and Eugene Stutzman (first as a Watoto choir adult member, now Executive Director, Watoto USA). Of the three individuals mentioned here, Dawn Stride is the most involved with the day-to-day training of the Watoto teenagers who become members of the touring choirs. She first went to Uganda in 2003 when her husband Douglas Stride led a team from their church in Canada to visit the Watoto organization. She eventually came to live in Uganda when her husband became the worship pastor of Watoto church. Trained musically in the United States, she began conducting vocal classes for the Watoto choirs on a volunteer basis until 2008 when the Watoto Church leadership offered her the position of Creative Director of the Watoto choirs. In an interview, she explained her responsibilities to me as follows:

Anything creative just comes into my lap. For example making sure that all of the testimonies, anything that is spoken is written out. The design of the costumes, working with the dance instructors and choreographers and making sure that all is coordinated. I have been involved

with or written about half the music, and some has been vernacular or traditional. And a few songs we've brought in from other writers or they've been joint projects here. But basically I have my hand in the music part of it and I still help with the training of the singers when I can but I don't have as much time anymore to do that. I also have to make sure that the directors [each Watoto choir has a music director] have an idea of how to direct kids because music training is not in their background. Most of them are coming in having just sung or been a part of a choir in school. So, basically trying to make sure that everyone who goes on the road understands what we are trying to do (Interview 2 May 2011).

The level of involvement that Dawn Stride has in the creation and production of the music that the Watoto choirs present is an indication of the transnational nature of Watoto Organization. She continued to elaborate on her music-creation process:

In my opinion a song is words and melody and an arrangement is everything else that goes along with it. So, you can have a million arrangements of the same song, but the song in essence is the words and melody, and so that's what I write [the words and melody]. As far as the arrangement, I get together with the instrumentalists. There is for example a song I wrote called "Not Alone" which I knew was not conducive to a piano. A piano is not really African so it's much easier to do it with guitar, and I really like the guitar. So, I got together with a really great guitarist from DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] and I told him, "This is the feel I want, these are the chords I want. I want you to come up with a few ideas." So as I was singing it he would try some things and I would say, "Let's go with that." I do most of the vocal arranging, but of course some of it is in vernacular [local language], and I am not a vernacular speaker. So, basically I will come up with what I want to say [in English] and then we draw in a lot of different languages. Amongst all the singers, I will call for a Swahili speaker, a Kinyarwanda speaker, and a Luganda speaker.⁷ Swahili tends to be used a lot more because it flows a little easier [with Western melodies and chord progressions] (*Ibid*).

Dawn's involvement in the music and dance selection process is indicative of how one individual can powerfully influence the representation of a people. Moreover, it speaks to politics of representation and hierarchies of values, which, as I point out later, contributes to the tension that some of the aid recipients experience.

The music creation process that Dawn Stride elaborates upon above happens with her creative team before a Watoto music team prepares for an upcoming tour. When the team has been assembled, it undergoes five months of training before they embark on their tour. During the training, the choir learns the music and dance routines they will be performing while on tour, as well as other aspects that include the basics of Christianity, the importance of good discipline, the importance of making friendships, and how to behave in the countries where they would be touring.⁸ The objective is that the five months of intense training prepare the choir for the six or nine months during which they will be performing fairly frequently abroad. Also important is that

⁷ Luganda is the language of the Baganda people of South Central Uganda, Swahili is the language spoken in the East African region, and Kinyarwanda is a language spoken in Rwanda. Watoto musical productions have a mixture of the mentioned local languages, although English is predominant.

⁸ The Pentecostal aspect is fundamental to everything that the Watoto organization does. Dawn Stride said this faith greatly informs the lyrics that she uses in the songs she writes for the choirs.

this training is meant to enable the choir to communicate to their audiences how God can transform a life. During the performances, there are interlude sections where a few children who are members of the choirs narrate their stories about how being brought to the Watoto Organization saved them from poverty, sicknesses or other poor living conditions. The songs performed and the stories told during these presentations are meant partly to encourage and invite members of the audience to help sponsor children of the Watoto Child Care Organization back in Uganda.

What role, then, does the Watoto organization view music playing towards the larger objective stated in Watoto's vision statement which is quoted below?

Watoto is an holistic programme that was initiated as a response to the overwhelming number of orphaned children... We exist to raise the next generation of African leaders, by pursuing excellence in academic and practical skills, integrity in conduct and moral values, so that each one becomes a responsible Christian and productive citizen. (Watoto Child Care Ministries, "our purpose," *Watoto.com*).

In answer to this question, Dawn Stride explained:

I think music expects more from you. It expects a higher level of excellence. In what we do we really require excellence. Now, some say it's a little too mechanical, but we expect everyone to dance exactly the same, the right foot, the right arm, the exact placement of where the hand is. I mean we practice long hours trying to get to that point of "together." And I think by doing that, even by training yourself to always be measured to a higher degree of excellence is going to help you in life. It helps you to raise your bar in life. It motivates you to do better in other things too. That's what we aim for. But for this to happen, the kids have to learn about getting into a routine. Especially when you are talking about a group of kids who for several months on tour will be staying in homes with people in another culture. Most of these kids come from backgrounds where they are used to a different kind of routine. So, what we hope the music training does for them is [to] get them into a scenario where they can easily adjust. (Interview, 2 May 2011).

By using music to train Watoto choir members on how to get into a routine, the organization is, I suggest, involving music in processes of self-governance. Michel Foucault (1978) has defined governance as being not exclusive to the state, but rather a concept that recognizes management at different scales and from different sites of power. In the case of Watoto, music is that site of power. In the rehearsals, every choir member is trained to make sure he or she adopts the choreography of their dance routines, and to do every aspect of the performance with excellence. In addition, they are encouraged to practice these music and dance elements on their own so that they get them right. The music trainers I interviewed all said that it is important that each choir member practices on his or her own because then it becomes easier to perform with the others in a group setting.

Music presentations by Watoto choirs around the world have enabled the Watoto Child Care organization to forge international links with diverse communities. A major result of these links has been a few North Americans relocating to Uganda to work with the organization and donations. Particularly important to this study is the relocation of Dawn Stride because the position she holds as the creative director of the Watoto

choirs gives her influence over the musical and dance elements in the choirs' repertoire. Through the music she writes and the dance routines that she and her team include in the presentations, a specific kind of citizenship is articulated. All the songs in the presentations have Christian messages, and although they are sung mainly in English, there is usually a mixture of other languages (Luganda, Swahili and Kinyarwanda). An example is the following brief description of a Watoto performance.

In 2007 a Watoto choir toured Canada performing a musical production entitled "Mambo Sawa" (Swahili trans. "Life is Good"). The descriptions of songs from that performance are taken from a DVD that was recorded live during the presentation of "Mambo Sawa" at Springs Church, Winnipeg, Canada. First, details about two of the songs on the DVD are given, before a more detailed description of the performance of the song "Not Forgotten".

Paki Rwoth is performed in the Dhupadhola language and English. Dhupadhola is spoken by the Jopadhola people of Southeast Uganda. Dance routines performed include motifs from the *Ekitaguriro* dance from the Banyankore of Western Uganda, and from the *Amaggunju* dance from the Baganda people of South Central Uganda. *Mambo Sawa* is performed in English, Luganda, Swahili, spoken in the East African region, and Lingala, spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The bodily movements include a clapping style that is akin to the clapping performed as an accompaniment to the *Amaggunju* dance. In addition, there are dance motifs from the Congolese *Soukous* dance.

"Not Forgotten" performance

"Not Forgotten" is a gospel song created and recorded by American gospel artist Israel Houghton in 2005. Houghton is a Grammy-award winning worship leader of Lakewood Church in Houston, Texas. This song, very popular in evangelical circles, was adopted by Watoto and reworked to include various African cultural elements and showcased in the Springs Church performance.⁹ The Watoto version included English and Swahili. The accompanying track to which the choir sings has catchy melodies reminiscent of South African kwaito music, and the guitar playing is in the style of Congolese Soukous music. The English words are being sung with an American accent despite the fact that Ugandans speak British English (For example, the choir sings "forg-a-tten" instead of the British pronunciation of "forg-o-tten"). The significance of this adoption of American English will be further discussed after discussion of the history and music-making practices of UHR.

The Uganda Heritage Roots (UHR) Story

The circumstances leading up to the creation of UHR highlight Stuart Hall's conception of the notion of articulation. Hall defines articulation as the linkage and interaction of

⁹ A video of this performance can be accessed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoR9IDCKp6c>. To see how differently the Watoto version sounds from the original, listen to Israel Houghton's version here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Cw74IObYAo>

different, unplanned events (1986: 141). The linkages of unplanned circumstances locally (in Uganda) and internationally (in Norway) played a significant role in informing UHR founder, Wabyona's decision to start the NGO. In what follows, I trace Wabyona's underprivileged background, his music education at the Music, Dance and Drama Department at Makerere University in Kampala, and his five-month stay at a Norwegian High School and how these circumstances led to the creation of UHR. It is important to note, however, that while from 2003-2011 UHR was an organization that used music to help raise its aid recipients into productive citizens, the NGO underwent a change in 2012 when it began to offer its services predominantly as a professional music/dance group, while occasionally providing free music/dance workshops to underprivileged children in Kampala under the care of other humanitarian organizations. The focus of my analysis spans the years 2003-2011 before that change occurred.

Wabyona was born in Hoima district in North Western Uganda. Because his parents died at an early age, he began working for a living while still very young. Fishing was the major occupation for the men in his extended family and Wabyona learned the trade. One of his uncles, a local church priest, later took him in and paid for his primary school education but could not continue doing so after Wabyona completed primary school. With no tuition to attend secondary school, Wabyona fell back to fishing to make a living. He did not stay in the fishing trade for long because he once almost drowned in Lake Victoria and the experience made him decide to go back to his home village to begin farming. According to Wabyona, on one of his errands in a nearby town, he chanced upon a call for auditions from a cultural performing group (not an NGO, just a performing troupe). He went for the audition and was accepted to join the group because he danced the Runyege dance, the indigenous dance of the Banyoro people of Southwestern Uganda, very well.

The cultural group began paying his tuition and he was able to complete high school. In 1997, he received a Government of Uganda scholarship to pursue undergraduate studies in the Diploma program of Music, Dance and Drama at Makerere University. His prior music and dance experience helped him do well in his studies and in 2000 he was selected to represent his department in a cultural exchange program with Norway.¹⁰ While in Norway Wabyona attended Rumerick Folk High School where he took classes on Norwegian musical and dance culture and in turn gave classes on music and dance traditions of Uganda. It was while he was involved with this high school that Wabyona got the idea to start UHR. He explained:

When I went to Norway, the Norwegians knew exactly what they wanted me to do, I did not know anything. I just knew that I had gone abroad for the first time. So one day, this guy, Verga [Vegar Storsve, Wabyona's coordinator in Norway] organizes for me to meet special needs youth with mental challenges and have a session with them. I asked Verga, "How can I do this? They can hardly move by themselves." Each one of them had a helper. He told me, "play drums with them and see what will happen." I said, "okay." I gave each of them a drum

¹⁰ Cultural exchange program is a practice whereby two or more institutions from different countries send representatives to experience each other's cultures.

and we started playing some funny rhythms, not even coordinated, but eventually we shaped out very simple rhythmic patterns. At the end of the session is when we saw the product of what I had done. These kids were very, very excited, and their mothers were actually crying, shedding tears of joy, and saying, "I have never seen my child smile like this in 10, 15 years." After this, I went to various places to do the same, a drug rehabilitation center, a psychiatric hospital, and the Norwegian Blind Forum. That's when I knew of trauma. I knew that there were so many in Uganda who had been traumatized, either by physical problems or social failures, poverty, and maybe they could get over their problems if we applied the same [approach]. So after I came to Uganda, I began thinking about this project (Interview 7 June 2011).

A few weeks after returning to Uganda, Wabyona was part of the Music, Dance and Drama group that performed for the Royal Norwegian Embassy delegation that had come to visit the University. At this performance, he played the Norwegian national song while accompanying himself on the Ugandan musical instrument called *adungu*.¹¹ The sight of a Ugandan performer singing the Norwegian national song and accompanying himself with a Ugandan musical instrument intrigued the embassy program officer, Gunvor Skancke, who, after speaking with Wabyona, became his drumming student. Skancke explained:

Prior to the events that led us [The Norwegian Embassy] to be interested in Wabyona's project, the Norwegian policy on contributions to Uganda's development was for large sectors and programs like education, health, and forestry. And probably we would not have paid attention to Wabyona's project if we had not seen him perform. Because we were curious during his performance. I remember thinking, "how come this Ugandan man knows Norwegian music?" I spoke to him after the performance and I ended up being his drum student (G. Skancke, Interview 4 Oct 2011).

From the above it is evident that, Wabyona, like Watoto, was able to strategically use the transnational connections that he had developed. During the drumming lessons, Wabyona began telling Skancke of his vision to create an NGO that features music to help disadvantaged youth. Skancke agreed to help him, and along with Nina Skarpsno Heide, the wife of the economist at the Norwegian embassy, began putting together a project proposal for the NGO.¹²

The proposal outlined the objective of UHR as being the use of Ugandan indigenous musical traditions to help rehabilitate youth living on streets. The selected music would include folk songs, dance-accompanying music and instrumental music of different ethnicities. The uniqueness of each ethnicity is evident musically in terms of language used in songs, intonation, playing techniques, rhythmic patterns, tempo, body expressions, and so on. According to Wabyona, the reasons to use indigenous music were twofold. Firstly, Wabyona had several years' experience of learning, performing and teaching many Ugandan indigenous musical traditions Secondly, many of the youth

¹¹ The *adungu* is a stringed harp-type instrument of the Alur people of Northwestern Uganda. It is played by a single performer.

¹² When Wabyona met her, Skarpsno was working with an NGO in Uganda called Cornerstone, which was rehabilitating youth who were living on the street.

he knew lived on the streets because they did not belong anywhere – neither in their immediate or extended families nor in their surrounding communities. He told me that his own troubled upbringing in Hoima district further informed his determination to start the NGO. He decided to use the musical practices from various Ugandan ethnicities to help build the youth's confidence and give them a sense of belonging.

Upon receipt of Wabyona's proposal, the Royal Norwegian embassy asked him to create a board of directors and later agreed to give him funding for one year.¹³ This funding enabled Wabyona to rent space for his office which included a garage. The garage was transformed into lodging for the male recipients.¹⁴ He also rented a hostel for the female recipients, located about twenty minutes from the NGO headquarters.¹⁵ In addition, he bought numerous Ugandan musical instruments, a sound system, and a minibus, enrolled twenty youth under his care into schools, and hired three music trainers to teach the youth various Ugandan indigenous dances.

In the estimation of Amelia Mbooto, one of the trainers hired by Wabyona, the learning of various music and dance practices enabled the youth to begin socializing with one another. She noticed more youth forming friendships a few months into their weekly rehearsals and she concluded that the music rehearsals availed a space for the youth to develop a sense of community and the ability to socialize, which in turn helped their confidence building. Amelia said:

Many of the music[s] and dances in Uganda are group-oriented. You have the males dancing their part, and the females doing theirs too. In addition, the dancers depend on the instrumentalists because the instruments guide the performances. As such, these youth, although they have been in rough situations before coming to UHR, they have to learn to cooperate with each other. Every weekend they go and perform at weddings or other political and social functions. At these performances, they are cheered throughout. These cheers are vital to their confidence levels. Think about it, before they lived on the streets, [where they were] shunned by society. At these performances, individuals that they watch on television cheer them. So because each one wants to be able to perform on the weekend, they put an effort into learning the dance or song during rehearsals (Interview 17 May 2011).

Below is a brief description of a UHR performance of the *Ekizino* dance of the Bakiga people from Kigezi district in the Southwestern region of Uganda¹⁶ [DVD track 1]. Both males and females perform this dance; exhibition of strength in the dance movements is a vital component of its performance. Milton Wabyona, the Director of UHR, is the gentleman furthest to the right in the group of men who dance in the center between 0:17-0:30s in the video clip. The musical instruments that accompany the dance include: *empuunyi* — the large drum with a lower-pitched sound, mainly being

¹³ UHR was financially sponsored by the Norwegian embassy in Uganda from 2003-2006, and then by the Norwegian Forum for Culture and International Cooperation from 2006-2011.

¹⁴ Wabyona could only accept male aid recipients in the garage because the living space was limited.

¹⁵ Wabyona had a male trainer live with the male aid recipients and a female trainer live with the female aid recipients.

¹⁶ To view Uganda Heritage Roots (UHR) performing the *Ekizino* dance during rehearsal at their base in Makerere a neighborhood in Kampala, 2010: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBIMRUiy5kl>

played with mallets; *embuutu* — a higher-pitched drum played exclusively with hands; *namunjoloba* – the smallest drum played exclusively with mallets; and *omurere*, a flute.

As previously mentioned, the UHR repertoire consists of indigenous Ugandan performance practices because Wabyona, has many years of experience performing and teaching these traditions. At the end of each rehearsal such as the one above, Wabyona would talk to the aid recipients about the importance of behaving in society in a way that portrayed responsible citizenship. He emphasized virtues such as patience, respectfulness, obedience of elders, and having a good work ethic. He based his teaching on whichever dance they would have rehearsed during each session. For example, by drawing analogy from the vigorous nature of the dance movements in the *Ekizino* dance, he told the aid recipients that a responsible citizen has to be a hard worker, one who completes his/her duties in time. Wabyona explained:

When we teach our youth how to dance and sing our Ugandan music, we also use it to teach them to succeed [in life]. Remember that most of them were living on the streets and did not feel accepted by society. We try to change that here. When we take them on, they begin going to school and then they find that at school the music people like is that of Bobi Wine [Ugandan popular artist]. And maybe they get laughed at because the music they are good at is the traditional music. But for me I don't mind. I know that they learn more than just the dance because we use it to teach them how to behave so that they can live and work well with people today. Then when they perform in front of dignitaries on weekends, they [the aid recipients] get a sense of what life can become (Interview 7 June 2011).

Cultural tensions

The above data substantiate ethnomusicologist Jocelyne Guilbault's observation that music is not "merely musical" (2005: 41) and that music has the ability to be involved in social, political or cultural processes. As shown, Watoto and UHR conceive music making not only as a site for the international connections, but also as a space where their notions of citizenship are articulated. For both NGOs, citizenship is conceived in terms of the behaviors that are being encouraged through the music that their recipients learn, practice and perform. However, the particularity of each NGO's perception of 'productive' citizenship arises out of the kinds of music that they require recipients to learn.

UHR's choice of Ugandan local musical practices to inscribe local ways of conduct to their recipients is an attempt to create within the musicians an appreciation for the cultural heritage of their nation. However, while I was doing this research, I observed that UHR's focus on promoting local norms through their music repertoire sometimes went against the desires of some of their recipients. This first came to light from conversations I had with some of the UHR musicians. Because they knew that I was a student at a university in the USA, I was asked on numerous occasions and in varying ways the following: "How can I come to the US?" During the conversation that ensued, I would be asked if I had yet seen American Hip hop musicians such as 50 Cent and Eminem. When I asked them why the musicians interested them, I was told that they spent a lot of their time listening to the music of these artists from the US.

Moreover, among their peers at school, knowing about current US cultural trends (in music, movies, fashion styles) made it more possible for them to have “cool” friends. For these UHR recipients with troubled upbringings, having “cool” friends at school is a statement of having a new (“modern”) social status. This social status requires that one project a self that is inscribed with Western ways of being; and to be this kind of self, their behaviors need to be signifiers of Western behaviors.

A projection of what is perceived to be Ugandan indigenous behaviors signifies, in this case, a position that is seen to hold less cultural status and power in the eyes of their schoolmates. In an environment such as a school, being “cool” or not can determine the kind of friends one has. But more importantly, the situation described above by the UHR musicians means that they find themselves having to manifest two different identities: an indigenous one that signifies the cultural heritage of Uganda when they are doing UHR activities, and one that is “cool” so that they fit in and are accepted by their peers at school.

In Watoto’s case, the aid recipients learn predominantly Western contemporary Christian music that is often fused with elements of Ugandan and other African cultural practices. Watoto teams that travel abroad spend several months on a performance tour. When preparing for its destination, each team is also trained on the ways of behavior of the host country. Since many of the Watoto trips have been to North America, the aid recipients who have been on these tours have had considerable training on how to enunciate words in a way that an American audience can understand, and how to speak confidently. The music-making process plays a crucial role in enhancing these behaviors. The example mentioned earlier of an American accent being learned when the musicians are taught to sing words of contemporary American gospel songs with pronunciations familiar for an American ear. Speaking confidently, as opposed to shyly or softly, is cultivated when the musicians sing loudly so that every person in the audience is sure to hear them.

Compared to Ugandan indigenous ways of conduct, the acquisition of North American ways of behavior by members of touring Watoto teams creates moments of tension when they return home. Even in this day of intercultural encounters, certain ways of behavior associated with Western culture contradict those practiced locally in Uganda. A case in point is when Watoto aid recipients return from a North American tour and speak with a hint of American accent. Ugandans speak English in a way that reflects British colonial influence. Therefore, when a Ugandan speaks with an American accent, he/she will immediately stand out. Watoto aid recipients who bring home an American accent are either ridiculed for “forcing” an accent or ostracized by their friends for “showing off” (which in this case means demonstrating a level of power and privilege that is associated with those who have lived abroad, especially in the US).

In addition to the American accents, the Watoto recipients also exhibit a newly acquired self-confidence which is a shock to some of the people they live with. One recipient’s host mother, called Mama Nakibuuka, explained how she found the behavior of her son to be troubling when he returned home from a nine-month tour in the US:

When Tom came back from tour, I realized that he was now answering back to me when I was cautioning him. In the past he always listened and never answered back. But now I thought he felt important and was not as obedient as before (Mama Nakibuuka, Interview 4th May 2011).

When such instances happen, the recipients find themselves with a problem communicating with their relatives and friends. What Tom now considered being confident communication, his mother considered disobedience.

Many of these moments of tension arise after some choose to become Pentecostal believers as a result of being a part of a Watoto music team. From the mid-1990s, the number of Pentecostal churches in Uganda has grown exponentially, and this has come with a lot of resistance and ridicule from members of already established Christian faiths such as the Catholic and Anglican Church. These two churches regularly accuse Pentecostal believers of abandoning the original foundations of Christianity and instead turning the faith into an entertainment and a way of instilling “Americanism” among Ugandan youth.

In 2011 I had a conversation with George, a former Watoto recipient, who was on the very first Watoto music team to travel abroad on a performance tour in 1995. After he received his undergraduate degree, he began working with Watoto Child Care Ministries in the social work department. George spoke to me about how touring with Watoto in 1995 affected him:

Becoming a Watoto was very good for me and my brother. We didn't have much and Watoto brought us in and gave us a home and took us to school. But when I was chosen to be on the first tour, things changed. I was a Catholic when I joined but during the months of rehearsal for tour I became born-again. It was my choice to become born again. But when I told my relatives they became angry. You see, my relatives are Catholics. Some of them began accusing me that I became born again because I wanted to become an American, and behave with disobedience. We are Baganda and obedience is important among the elders. To this day some of my relatives do not speak to me because I became a *mulokole* [popular Ugandan term for a Pentecostal Christian] (Interview 5 February 2011).

George's relatives perceived his conversion to Pentecostalism as leading to an American cultural identification. The reaction of George's relatives is indicative of the still-present suspicion of Western culture among some Ugandans, especially to those that lived in the 1950s-1960s (last decade of colonial rule); Pentecostalism is just another way by which Western countries try to change Ugandans into “Westerners.” By having a strong Western influenced music repertoire and by using the performance of this music as a way to raise a ‘productive’ citizen, Watoto has come in for some criticism by Ugandans.

While I was conducting the fieldwork for this project, I had a conversation with a Ugandan colleague of mine called Kagamba, and the issue of ‘Westernizing’ Ugandans came up. I had told him that I was back home to explore the role of music in Watoto. He said:

I have watched shows of Watoto and I have always wondered why they mostly perform contemporary Western music. Why don't they perform Ugandan music? I understand that

they also spend a lot of time touring abroad. Maybe that's the reason [why they mostly perform contemporary music]. But does this not also make them begin behaving like Americans? If they were performing our [Ugandan] music maybe they would be helped to appreciate our culture instead of preferring a foreign one. Maybe it's because their sponsors are Americans. If this is the reason they make the tours and choose this music then this is part of the problem. Maybe if they were able to get local funding then they would not have to spend so much time and energy learning a foreign culture (Interview 1 June 2011).

Then he added:

And Watoto says that they are raising Uganda's future leaders. So these leaders will be Westerners, so to speak? (*Ibid*).

The question that Kagamba poses points to the fear among some individuals I interviewed that Watoto is doing both a missionizing and neo-colonial project by having its aid recipients adopt Western behavior through the music they perform. That a Ugandan has to acquire particular Western behavior in order to become a citizen brings up memories of Mahmood Mamdani's opinion that the colonial project in Africa necessitated that the rights to citizenship were "a privilege of the civilized" (1996:17). During the colonial era, locals were identified as civilized only when they conducted themselves in ways recognized by the Western elite. Like Mamdani, Peter Kigundu, a businessman who has lived in Kampala since the 1960s, explained that in his opinion there are many similarities between what organizations like Watoto are doing and what took place under colonial rule:

It's striking to me what I see nowadays. In the 1950s and 60s, the *Bazungu* (local term for "white people") put a system in place that required Ugandans to learn English, dress like the white people, in order to get the administrative jobs that had become available. Even when Independence came nearer, Ugandans felt that the new system of governance required one to have the British ways of living in order to succeed in society. Now, I am seeing the exact same thing happening. Groups like Watoto have many people from America and these kids are learning how to behave in an American way. I fear that this generation is being raised to honor the American way of life at the expense of Ugandan culture (Kigundu, Interview 3rd August 2012).

Other individuals I interviewed had a different opinion on this issue. Betty Mukiibi, of the same generation as Kigundu, argued that while she sees that the colonial trend can be traced on what Watoto does, she thinks the current political and economic times make what Watoto does a positive thing. Drawing from her observations as a teacher, she explained:

I can see why groups like Watoto can be a worry for some people. Colonialism did great damage to our people and we are still suffering the effects. But then we are now in 2012 and the times we live in are different. From what I understand, Watoto helps orphans and works to change their lives. Can you imagine a child who was an orphan having the opportunity to travel abroad? It [travelling abroad] is still a big thing for families in our country. It's all about opportunity to do better in life. Our poor economy means that anybody who gets to travel abroad and hope to make it jumps at the chance. Watoto gives these kids that chance (Interview 5 August, 2011).

Mukiibi's observations, contrasted with what my colleague and Kigundu said above, show that the use of music to raise 'productive' citizens by Watoto cannot be seen in only one way. Clearly, the outcome of the aid provision efforts of Watoto Child Care Ministries cannot be viewed as simply right or wrong. From one perspective, it would appear that the organization is neo-colonial. But, in my view, this is too simplistic a deduction. While it is true that the legacy of colonialism in Uganda means that white-led endeavors in the country will be highly scrutinized, it cannot be assumed that every endeavor of Western organizations in Uganda is aimed at 'colonizing' or Westernizing Ugandans. Yet, we cannot turn a blind eye to the colonial legacy.

The "transnational practices" that are central to the transnational conception of globalization have, in different ways, informed Watoto and UHR's understanding of the behaviors and lifestyle that a 'productive' Ugandan citizen should practice. The performance opportunities abroad that are found in the musical transnational practices in Watoto's case have meant that the aid recipients adopt Western behaviors that have created strained relationships for some of them. For UHR, the transnational practices (also musical), provided their executive director with the concept and later the funds to start his NGO. It was when Wabyona held dance/music workshops in Norway that the process that made it possible for him to create his NGO began. However, with UHR he decided to use music to promote Ugandan local ways of behaviors informed by the local (indigenous) view of a 'productive' Ugandan citizen. As shown above, this situation has caused UHR musicians to struggle with their identity.

It is clear that Watoto and UHR's music-centered intervention approach does indeed contribute towards the improvement of the living conditions of their recipients. For example, recipients are provided accommodation, education, food, health services, parental figures, as well as a sense of family and community. It also plays a crucial role – through music – in equipping the recipients with social skills that are important to have in the long-term objective of being able to lead a self-sustaining life. These social skills include being polite, respectful, and considerate toward other people.

Conclusion

Watoto and UHR have used music in their efforts to change the lives of their recipients because of the *potentiality* of music to affect individuals' lifestyles. Musical performance requires the mobilization of many parts of the body simultaneously in coordinated movements. By so doing, musical performance occupies the individual in such a way as to enable aspects of that person to change. During fieldwork, leaders and trainers of UHR and Watoto frequently told me that music can cause transformation. Because music making is an embodied practice, music can be transformative insofar as it can "reiterate identities...that articulate cultural understandings of things" (Guilbault 2010: 17).

Given this performative nature of music, it can be used to change one's social reality since, as Butler asserts, reality is continually re-created "through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign" (1990: 270). The possibilities that music avails

this behavior-acquisition process are found in the repetitiveness involved in musical rehearsals and performances. Having to constantly repeat specific dance motifs, particular pronunciations, and song lyrics with particular messages has a tangible impact. This repetition ultimately results in the manifestation of new behavior by the recipients involved in these music-making processes. In this way, the musical practices featured in both NGOs are used by the recipients as self-governing technologies that play a role in affecting their ways of conduct. In addition, the social nature of music making in both NGOs enhanced the teaching and learning process for the trainers and recipients respectively. For the trainers, having the participants learn together enabled them to emphasize the benefit of cooperating with others even beyond the music space. And for the recipients, learning with their fellow performers meant that they had to work twice as hard so as not to be left behind in learning the songs or dance motifs, but it also enabled them to form relationships that sometimes last beyond the musical space.

The transformative potential of learning, practicing, and performing music is what motivated the leadership of UHR and Watoto to feature it in their efforts to teach new ways of behavior to their recipients and to raise them into 'productive' citizens. However, my data shows that the teaching of specific behaviors by Watoto and UHR through the use of music also led to tensions and that the tensions that aid recipients encountered were due to taking on the ways of conduct that the leaders at the NGOs emphasized. The recipients eventually realized that the self they present to audiences during musical performances exhibits behaviors that are sometimes difficult to understand and appreciate by their relatives and friends. Ironically, this self and the tensions it creates has been at least partially fashioned by the Watoto and UHR team leaders who are striving to create a particular 'productive' citizen.

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