

**Sounds of Muziki wa Injili: Temporal and Spatial Aesthetics of Contemporary Church Music in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.** Imani Sanga. 2010. Saarbrücken, Germany: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing. 231 pp. photos, transcriptions, ISBN 978-3-8383-6325-7.

This book is in the form of an introduction, six chapters, epilogue and references. From its layout and according to the advertisement included in the back of the book, this work appears to be very clearly related to the author's doctoral dissertation, a qualification gained at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2006. Versions of chapters one through five have already appeared (or are due to appear as in the case of chapter one) in scholarly journals such as *Ethnomusicology Forum*, *Journal of Popular Music Studies* and *African Music*.

The introductory chapter defines the genre of *Muziki wa Injili* for the reader. This term is translated as gospel music or contemporary (popular) church choir music. The author explains that "*Muziki wa Injili* started to become a distinctive genre in the late 1960s and 1970s by employing body movements, by incorporating improvisation, and by featuring the use of electric guitars and keyboards all of which are uncommon in the mainstream church music traditions, particularly in the art church choir music and church hymns" (p. 2).<sup>2</sup> This genre can be performed by choirs as well as individuals and musical material is drawn from diverse sources such as "global and local popular music styles, Tanzanian traditional music and western church hymns translated into Kiswahili" (p. 5). In addition to the church context, both "art" church choir music and *Muziki wa Injili* are regularly broadcast on television and radio and various performers (choral groups and individuals) are involved in recording and releasing albums of this genre. An overview of the general literature on choral music in Tanzania and a discussion of how the author conceives his work in the context of this writing would have been a useful addition to the opening chapter. An idea of where the author situates his work within the broader context of African religious/choral music in general would also have been beneficial.

The introduction also contains an explanation of the book's theoretical framework. Imani Sanga states that the book is divided in two parts. The first three chapters draw on the theory of "Rwandese philosopher Alexis Kagame and a Kenyan religious scholar and philosopher John Mbiti and argue... that time, as a human lived phenomenon, is experienced by human beings in relation to events which are referred to as 'stamps'" (p. 17). This theory is then applied to how *Muziki wa Injili* has contributed to the formation of such "stamps" in the history of Tanzania (chapter one) and how "various processes in the making, teaching and learning of *Muziki wa Injili* and various people involved in these processes are considered to serve as stamps that mark the metamorphosis of the music" (Chapters two and three) (ibid.). The second three chapters draw on the

<sup>2</sup> It is unfortunate that the author does not define "art choir music" for the reader as this is obviously a contrasting genre to the one in question and it would have been useful to gain a sense of what kind of repertoire this genre features in comparison to *Muziki wa Injili*.

work of French philosopher, Henri Lefebvre who conceptualises social space in three dimensions, namely physical, mental and lived space. In chapters four, five and six, Sanga applies these ideas to the performance of *Muziki wa Injili* in national, gendered, and religious spaces.

Chapter One offers perceptive insights on the role of historical events in shaping *Muziki wa Injili* and how it is experienced by listeners. Particularly interesting here is the use of this genre in public and national mourning of President Julius Nyerere's death. Chapters Two and Three offer detailed analysis of the way the music is constructed and performed and the way it is transmitted. These provide rich descriptions and a fuller understanding of this musical genre. Chapter Four focuses on the use of traditional musical influences within this genre as way of claiming a national space; Chapter Five analyses the songs of certain women musicians in order to prove that *Muziki wa Injili* offers a space for discussion of gender topics and Chapter Six provides an overview of media reception of this genre in order to examine religious space. The Epilogue summarises the overall argument and approach of the book. In my opinion, chapters one, two and three constitute a good contribution to the scholarly field, with their suitably varied accounts and informative viewpoints of this genre. I believe that the use of Lefebvre's theory in the second half of the book restricted the author somewhat as the theoretical writing became somewhat repetitive and the definitions of the various "spaces" seemed actually to refer instead to discussions of national, gendered, and religious/media discourses. Additionally, the reader never ascertains how the three types of space (physical, mental, lived) in this genre interact and, I presume, combine in a more complex way than what is described.

Despite this shortcoming, Sanga's work should be regarded as a useful contribution as it is written from the perspective of a Tanzanian citizen and therefore an "insider" in many respects. Certainly, the ethnographic material such as interviews and vignettes from participant observation experience and field diaries are very rich in detail and are well analysed and explained for the reader. Additionally, the scholarly attention to a popular choral/church music genre and the analysis of this genre within differing performance contexts is a particularly thought-provoking commentary on the malleability of this music. This work is thus recommended for those interested in the Tanzanian musical landscape, particularly in the area of the choral and church music genres.

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