

Music and Dance in Eastern Africa

Current Research in Humanities and Social Sciences

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Published in 2018 by:
Twaweza Communications Ltd.
P.O. Box 66872 - 00800 Westlands
Twaweza House, Parklands Road
Mpesi Lane, Nairobi Kenya
website: www.twawezacommunications.org
Tel: +(254) 020 269 4409

Design and Layout: Catherine Bosire
Cover Design: Steve '64' Kivutia

ISBN: 978-9966-028-75-4

Printed by:
Email:

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Foreword

Of all the cultural forms, music and dance are the most fluid when it comes to cultural expressions. Music and dance find themselves in this paradox that oscillates between their fluidity and the fixity of some of the traditions that they express. In this view, music and dance provide a research minefield to interrogate and engage with varying themes within the Eastern African region.

The chapters of this book provide a template onto where other socio-political and cultural issues in Eastern African could be discussed. This project is a mosaic of research interests including and not limited to urban and gender identities, the colonial imagination of the colonized through music, dance and performance, as well as the representation of the same in literary works. There is an emphasis on performances in the Horn of Africa, a region that has suffered from the vagaries of war but which has not impacted on a people's attachment to the beat and rhythm of their music and dances. Topics that emanate from the parlance of everyday life in the Eastern African region form part of the research too.

Drawing scholars from diverse disciplines and academic backgrounds to collaborate in this project not only underlines the interdisciplinary ethos in which to approach music and dance, but also calls for new and emergent ways of enhancing an intellectual discourse on the same. Research on music and dance is transgressing boundaries set by the rigid disciplines and charting a new trajectory of its own.

IFRA and Twaweza Communications have been important partners in creating synergies between conducting research and archiving knowledge in Eastern Africa. This book comes exactly ten years after *Songs and Politics in East Africa* (2007), an initiative by IFRA. The book pronounced itself well on the issue of music, politics and performance of power.

These peer-reviewed chapters herein formed part of the presentations at the Music and Dance Research in Eastern Africa conference organized by IFRA Nairobi and the Technical University of Kenya (TUK), with the support of Alliance Française in Nairobi and the African Music Development Programme. The publication of the conference proceedings in this book offers a platform for discussions on innovative research topics and new trends in the Eastern African academic community. It is our hope that the book, alongside others will spur further research in music and dance within the region and the continent.

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