

# Example of pop music and non western world-fela kuti research paper

[Art & Culture](#), [Dance](#)



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## Introduction

This document illustrates in detail on Fela who was born in Nigeria and at the age of 20 years, he was sent to London to study medicine. Instead of doing what he was sent to do, he opted to venture into music whereby he formed a band called Koola Lobitos which played a fusion of jazz and high life. The document illustrates in detail on how Fela performed his music and what impact it had on the people (Manuel, 2007, 56). In addition, it entails that he was a multi-instrumental musician and composer, which made him a pioneer of Afrobeat music, and a human right activist. Thus with the inclusion of images that portray his attributes to the society via his music, his impact to the society is clarified in detail.

## Methodology

In order to adequately understand the performance that Fela Kuti did during his time and know more about his performance, I opted to watch one of his

performances on YouTube. The video link is via [http://www. youtube. com/watch? v= HmCnOP8\\_6hQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmCnOP8_6hQ) and it was very interesting as I came to know more of his attributes to music. This was so as the video began whereby Fela Kuti was blowing his trumpet at his very best. He was such in a good mood as he enjoyed every minute that he was entertaining his audience (YouTube, 2007). The video shows that he has a band that understands him, in that they flow with his pace of blowing the trumpet. It is seen that after blowing the trumpet with the intention of getting the audience in the mood for more of his music, he starts talking to them and later even joins in the dance. His dancing skills show that he is true elite when it comes to dancing as well, and hence this makes him a good musician. The way he has painted his face portrays where he is from, i. e. is Africa. In addition, he has got efficient dancers as they dance to his tune with so much passion that eludes any individual to join even if one is in a bad mood. In addition, his dancers also have their faces painted and have worn African ornaments with the intention of appreciating who they are in the society (Manuel, 2007, 23). Basing on this, I can say that he was a good and jovial musician as he always smiled at his fans. An image of him performing is seen below;

Fig. 1

Basing on the above photo of him using his favorite gadget in music, it is clear that he liked music to the fullest. This was so as the research entails that he had real passion in music as he intended to pass his message to his audience via music. Furthermore, his way of performing music was intended to be unique as he did not opt to perform for a mere five minutes but instead went for as long as he could. His main intention is to let the audience be

entertained to the fullest with his Afrobeat kind of music (Nidel, 2011, 31).

The video that I watched showed that he was in a good mood as he sung, blew his trumpet and danced in order to show that he himself was enjoying the show.

Moreover, the positive response that he was getting from the audience also illustrates that he was not the only one who was enjoying his music. This was also contributed by his dancers who responded positively to every change of the tune. Thus, using the video as a research tool was a positive way as it enabled me to know more about Fela Kuti and his band as a whole. It made me realize as to why his legacy still lives on among the African communities and the world as a whole (Veal, 2008, 93). His music is an inspiration to the African community as it entails that one can become anything in the society if there is hard work and determination. His rise to fame was through hard work and he had to earn it in via risks.

He opted to go his way as perceived to what his parents had initially wanted him to be. As a result of his passion in music, he came up with a new type of music which is Afrobeat, and it has become a legendary concept among the African community. It is an attribute that has led him to be remembered for his ability to criticize the Nigerian military and hence contributing to the current Afrobeat in the world. Basically, the video initiates that Fela Kuti as an African; he is a hero among the souls that remember him (Schoonmaker, 2011, 33). This is so as he became what he wanted to be, and went to the extent of perfecting his talent every time he performed. Thus, the use of the video was a positive impact to my research as it enabled me to learn more on Fela Kuti.

## Historical background and Fela Kuti Profile

Fela Kuti was born in Nigeria October 15th 1938 and at the age of about 20 years went to London with the intention of pursuing his career in medicine. Instead of doing what he had been sent to do; he opted to join in music as it was where his passion lay. He went to the extent of forming a band known as Koola Lobitos that played a fusion of Jazz and high life. He later moved back to Nigeria and trained as a radio producer for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (Manuel, 2007, 83). As time went by, he coined a term Afrobeat which was characterized by having a fairly large band with many instruments, vocals and musical structure. He later changed his band name to “The Afrika 70” as the lyrical themes changed from love to social aspects in Nigeria.

He even went to the extent of forming the Kalakuta Republic, which was a commune and later declared it independent from the Nigerian state.

Basically, his life to the lime light was not that smooth as in 1977, he released an album known as ‘Zombie’ that was a metaphor for the government (Wise, 2008, 22-98). The album became a hit but infuriated the government as the government retaliated by attacking the commune, Kuti was severely beaten and his mother thrown from a window causing fatal injuries. His Kalakuta Republic movement was burned and all his belongings were destroyed. As a result of this, he decided to form another band called ‘Egypt 80’, toured the state but this time did not reach where he wanted. In 1997, he passed away from Kaposi’s sarcoma but his legend still lives on up to date.

## Analysis

In order to get more clarification on the way Fela Kuti performed his music in concerts, I opted to look at his performance in Nigeria where he criticized the military government of Nigeria. The video entitled “ Nigeria-African Music Legends in Concert 2”, which I found on YouTube was quite interesting as it portrayed his true character. It began in a way that showed his ability of making music real and original to the listeners. This was so as Fela and his band were in unison mood, and so were the participants listening to his music (Wise, 2008, 77). The video shows that he had three female dancers who made the audience move with the music. The image below shows the way people used to dance to his music;

Fig. 2

Fela Kuti had his trumpet and playing at his very best capacity. Basing on the way the audience was responding to his music, it was clear that they enjoyed every beat of the music they were getting from the band. At the concert, it is seen that he played the trumpet for some few minutes and later started talking with the audience; this was probably a way of getting some of their perception on his music (YouTube, 2007). As they responded, he started to sing and also dance at the same time. In essence, this entails that he was a true musician as he had all the qualities that a musician ought to possess. He danced in manner that showed that he was a pro at what he was doing, hence enumerating that he knew what he was doing. His entity of painting his face and that of his dancer tended to entail that they are of African origin and they respect their culture. Hence, it meant that they are doing things as one, and thus in the position of reaching their desired goal. Him joining in the

dance and at the same time dancing shows that he was in the mood of entertaining his guests as it was his solemn priority (Schoonmaker, 2011, 47). In addition, his music was based on criticizing the military, and he did it with so much passion that one did not realize that he was talking ill of the Nigerian government. The image below shows him performing at the concert;

Fig. 3

The way he controlled his band in order to play the music as needed showed that he is a great leader when it comes to music. The bands ability to reciprocate also illustrated that they are comfortable with what their leader was pursuing them to undertake. The video also shows that after singing for some time, he grabs his trumpet and leads the audience to a jovial perception. This shows that he has the ability to make the audience like him as he did what was called best music (Veal, 2008, 33). Working as a band was a positive impact on his career as they as a team became known in the music industry.

Moreover, the fact that their way of performing music often lasted more than the normal three to five minutes showed that they are in for real music. This was so as during Fela's Concerts, he was able to perform for more than one hour. This shows that he was indeed a man who had real passion in music. This is so as he was always willing to perform as long as he could as long as his message had been passed to the audience (YouTube, 2007). Fela Kuti can therefore be regarded as one of the best Musicians who ventured in Afrobeat and came out prosperous as he is remembered up to this day as he reached many souls.

Basing on my perception, I would say that he did not need to talk to the audience in order to allure them into the music. This was so as performing in a foreign state and at the same speaking with the Nigerian accent might have made it difficult for some individuals to understand. Although it was English, one needed to concentrate properly in order to understand what he was saying (Wise, 2008, 39). The issue of criticizing the military does not need dancing, and so the issue of having dancers was not necessary as what he was singing about was related to the frustrations that they were getting from the government.

## **Conclusion**

This document illustrate that Fela Kuti was a hero in music (Afrobeat) during his lifetime and even after his death. This is so as his dancing ability illustrates that he is a true influential when it comes to dancing, blowing the trumpet, and singing and hence this makes him a good musician (Schoonmaker, 2011, 78). The way he has painted his face portrays where he is from, i. e. is Africa. Presence of efficient dancers as they dance to his tune with so much passion and having their faces painted entails that their intention is to appreciate who they are in the society.

In addition, his music is an encouragement to the African community as it shows that one can become anything in the society if there is hard work and willpower. His rise to fame was through hard work and he hard to earn it in via risks, something that needs to be appreciated by every individual in the society (Nidel, 2011, 65). He had a talent when it came to playing the trumpet in that the way the audience were responding to his music, it was



clear that they enjoyed every beat of the music they were getting from the band. Moreover, the ability to criticize the Nigerian military without any fear is something needs to be appreciated as it showed that he was determined to be a hero in the society.

He intended to pass his message to both the government and the citizens via music and this was received positively. The ability to form a band that is now recognized worldwide, entails that he needs to be respected at all cost. This is so as he set out to be somebody and he made it despite the hard times he underwent with the military. More so, he proved that the issue of abandoning one career is not the end of life, but rather the beginning of prosperity. This is so as he refused to study medicine and instead opted to be a musician, and this made him be better than he had expected (Veal, 2008, 45). Therefore, this shows that it is a positive approach for one to go for what they can do best as with hard work and perseverance, all things are possible and recognizable.

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