

# Good example of research paper on music-making in angola

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## **Angola's Musical Background**

The history in the development of different music genre in Algeria can be categorized into two periods namely; the colonial period and the post-colonial period. During the colonial period, the music in the country flourished within its borders with little success in gaining international acclaim especially when compared to music from its neighboring countries such as South Africa. The local language Kimbundu formed the focus of the musical tunes although other artists sang songs in the colonizer's language- Portuguese (Bram 28).

However, favor soon fell on the country with development of local tastes in music grew and bands begun to form. Later in the 1950s to 1970s bands became quite popular in the region where musicians begun championing for fan base support in Angola. The breakthrough for Angola's music however came much earlier in 1956 when the first duo group of musicians had their music accepted in parts of Portugal Switzerland, France, Sweden, Denmark and Spain. They were known as the Duo Ouro Negro and soon opened the door for other bands such as the Orquestra os Jovens do Prenda, who became very popular in the late 1970s (Moorman 94).

Musical Instruments popular used during this colonial period include trumpets, saxophones, guitars and percussion instruments. However, the title of the father of Angolan music is attributable to Carlos Viera Dias, who introduced the dikanza and violas which became quite popular in the 1950s. His music was controversial as it challenged the Portuguese rule over Angola a matter that had Carlos at loggerheads with the Portuguese authorities from time to time eventually landing him in jail for many years. Despite this

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influence in his music, several years leading into the civil war of independence Luanda Rock Music took over the scene in Angola fighting bands against each other for dominance and popularity. Later on in the late 1970s Bonga a musician became popularly known outside of Angola due to the messages in his music that were focused on social issues. One of Bonga's well-known songs "Mona Ki Ngi Xica" of 1972 had the justice system of the Portuguese Government Issue an arrest warrant for him. He fled the country until Angola gained independence in 1975 (Moorman 94 - 98).

The music industry after the independence of the Angola nation suffered as civil war killed many popular musicians while others fled the country for their safety. The genre that became popular after 1975 was greatly influenced by Cuban Music that was particularly popular in neighboring countries such as South Africa. However, a few dictatorships can be attached to the spread of the popularity of the Cuban genre especially in regard to the presence of Cuban troops in the country after the war. This characterized the development of the music genre in Angola leading to present times. The most popular genre of music is sung in the Portuguese language which is widely spoken in Angola by citizens as either a first language or the second tongue. It specifically opened way for music genre known today that include; Kuduro, merengue, Semba, hip hop and Kizomba. These are discussed as below;

## **Angola Music Genre**

Kizomba is one of the most popular dance styles with music sang in the Portuguese creole having a unique romantic tone and rhythm that is

characteristic of a blend of the Portuguese and African tunes. It has been compared to Salsa dance as the Kizomba dance is quite sensual. The origins of the Kizomba genre is home based in Angola, however, the genre has borrowed some of its attributes from the Portuguese and other languages as well. Some have connected the roots of Kizomba to Semba a music genre that precedes Samba while others have associated it with the Zouk dance. It is a slow, smooth dance requiring a partner dancing intimately close although not too tight. It also requires flexibility at the knees such as when dancers bob up and down.

Fanatics of Kizomba are both African and Portuguese who frequent clubs playing the genre in Angola. Popular musicians advancing in their careers through the brand include; Don kikas, irmaos Verdade and Calo Pacoal. The father of Angolan music in general Bonga is accredited to be the most popular Kizomba artist especially since the genre popularized through his contributions to the music industry during the late pre-colonial period and early post-colonial period between 1970 and 1990. The biggest producer engaged in the Kizomba genre music production business is non-other than Nelo Paim, who has helped his elder brother Eduardo Paim release up to ten albums and also making arrangements for concerts all over the world (BICOT).

Hip-hop. This genre did not originate from Angola but was quite popular in the 1970s and continues to be popular to this day. Its roots have been traced to the United States of America and are believed to have been a genre popular among the African American community in the USA. Since the hip hop genre, first emerged in the City of New York in the USA in the 1970s, it

has grown to influence different genre of music around the world. Angolan music has not been spared from the influence of the hip hop genre as other genres such as the Merengue, Kizomba and Samba from time and again incorporate aspects of hip hop in their contents. The hip hop genre touches on various aspects of life which makes it quite adaptable to other forms of music as it easily embraces technology, ethnicity, art and urban life (BICOT). More importantly though is the fact that Angola has a vibrant hip hop scene which can be evidenced by the existence of popular hip hop crews such as Conciencia da Africa, Solo Mc, Mutu Moxy and Attitude Violenta.

Collaborations with these artists and other hip hop artists in the region such as in South Africa has ensured the development of the hip hop music genre in Angola. The influence of American hip-hop on Angolan hip-hop remains rife especially in the development of the beats and rhythm. However, the lyrics remain Portuguese with a mixture of African lyrics that blend uniquely to provide a distinct hip hop sound that is Angola based. Contributions from Angolan well known hip hop artists such as SSP, Mutu Moxy, Nelboy Dastha Burda among others are quite essential as these are the pioneers of the hip hop genre in the 1990s and the late 1980s. Their contributions have made the hip hop scene and the genre at large what it is today in Angola (African Hip Hop ).

Merengue originally developed in the Dominican Republic, it is a genre made of joyful tunes and dance. The literal meaning of Merengue in Spanish is whipped egg whites and sugar. Perhaps the mane of the dance is associated with the movement of the egg when it is beaten in action. The dance style is the creation of Nico Lora, who developed the dance in the early 1920s. Other

contributors to develop the Merengue dance include the president of the republic in the 1930s Sir Rafael Trujillo who made the Merengue the country's national music and dance style. This led to the development of world famous singers such as Juan Luis Guerra, Sergio Vargas, Johnny Ventura, Josie Esteban y la Patrulla 15 and Conjunto Quisqueya among others. Merengue dance and music are popular in Angola although to a lesser extent compared to another genre such as Kizomba. It continues to evoke a following from Angolans and other audiences especially as musicians become popular in the country such as; Aguakate and Amarfis, Julian and Tono Rosario amongst others (BICOT).

Kuduro, also known as Kuduru it originally established its roots in Angola having drawn influence from dance and music such as the Sungura, Afro Zouk, Semba and Ragga music genres. The Kuduro dance is characteristic of high tempo, it also requires a lot of energy and it is a very danceable tune. It has its roots in the local Kimbundu language which is widely spoken by the natives in the northern parts of Angola. Interestingly Kuduro is a word in Portuguese that refers to the phrase “hard ass” which also happens to be the official language in the country. Like in hip hop and raga genres of music, the Kuduro dance involves a female swinging her hips to the beat sensuously. The Kuduro genre has grown to be popular among not only Angola but also in other Portuguese colonies in Africa and beyond such as in Lisbon and Portugal. The large number of Angolan immigrants into other Portuguese speaking regions of the world has also enhanced the popularization of the Kuduro dance and rhythm (BICOT). The immigrants have been instrumental as well in incorporating other forms of contemporary

music into the Kuduro rhythm and tunes that include house music and techno music genres (Moorman 96). The latest of the adoptions of the Kuduro dance styles have seen new and contemporary dances take over the scene with new dance moves generated from the KUduro dance the Kuduro to Komba Lisbon is an example among many other such dances that are increasingly adopting and evolving from the Kuduro genre. The main premise of this adaptation being the combination of new and different dance moves and genres of music to the Kuduro style. The adaptability of the Kuduro is an advantage as it has enabled it to borrow from other contemporary forms of music from the western cultures such as Techno, House, Electronic and Hip Hop genres of music (Moke).

Nonetheless, the Kuduro genre has often been on the limelight where it has been leveled racist. This is because some of its lyrics contain creole that are often offensive to the white race. However, proponents of the genre contend that the lyrics are usually misunderstood due to the creole employed in the lyrics. Despite all this, it remains to be one of the most influential and popular music genres in Angola presently. Some of the most popular KUduro music artists in Angola include Tony Amado, Rei do Kuduro and Se Ben.

Other contributors to the Kuduro genre include DJ Many, DJ Davids, DJ Joca Moreno and DJ Amorim among others. The dating of the origin of the Kuduro genre can be placed in the early 1990s but in a span of just two decades the genre has grown to become quite popular among music lovers in Angola (BICOT).

Semba genre has its roots in Angola, which is believed to have been adopted from three original versions of music genre of the world to enter Angola.

These include Samba from Brazil Kizomba from Angola and Kuduru, which is a mixture of Angola genre and popular culture genre such as Techno and Electronic music. Again Bonga the artist has been a central player in popularizing the music culture in majorly because a lot can be attributed to him in regard to the spread and development of the genre in the country as well as internationally. Bonga has been referred to as the founder of development of Angolans music into the international scene in general (BICOT).

The semba genre comprises of lyrics that tell a tale that can be attributed to day to day activities and social interactions. However, there are usually witty and hidden messages in the form of rhetoric in the lyrics. Many regard the genre as a well-orchestrated display of emotion as Semba artists are well known to convey a broad spectrum of emotion through the music. To this end the Semba genre is widely employed in most social gatherings. Semba artists are invited to perform in occasions such as weddings and funerals to blend the festivities with the right mood through the expression of emotions in their music. Semba continues to be the main genre in the country Angola decades after its founders during the colonial times begun the genre. It influences cultures and social gatherings in the state. New artists continue to emerge who acknowledge the contributions of their predecessors in the development of the music genre. To this day Semba is one of the most popular music genres in Angola with a considerable huge following in terms of its fan base (BICOT).



## Conclusion

The Angola music industry is one that is filled with vibrant talent and variety of tastes in the genre of music that are popular in the country. The historical development of the music industry in the colonial times was one that had a lot in terms of contribution to the development of artists and different genre of music in the country. Particularly, music that focused on activism specifically in regard to the state of affairs under colonization by the Portuguese formed a main topic of focus for artists in Angola at that time. Some artists got detained for their songs that seemingly encouraged the liberation of Angola from the Portuguese colonizers. Moreover, the musicians at the time serve a great purpose in the development of a specific genre such as Kizomba and Semba which borrowed heavily from indigenous African languages and the colonizer's Portuguese language. The blend of the two genre soon developed a base for the development of the other music genre in the country.

Whereas the death of many musicians was a huge setback in the development of the music scene in Angola in events leading up to the independence of the country in 1975, the contributions that they had made into the industry were substantial enough to develop new talent among young musicians. Eventually, the country recovered by developing a new sprout of youthful musicians who borrowed heavily from their predecessors musical directions. The country soon recovered and after the independence and the civil war Angola developed its musical scenery with adaptations from other popular music genre across the world. The 1990s saw the entry of the hip hop genre in Angola drawing its influence majorly from the United States.

Similarly, another genre such as the Kuduru developed from a host of local and international genre which made substantial contributions to the development of the genre.

Today, the music scene in Angola comprises of five major popular music genre namely, Kuduru, kizomba, Semba, Merengue, and Hip hop. These genres have developed and have become favorites for music lovers, fanatics, players and composers in the country. The genre continues to develop interest locally and internationally since most of them have international acclaim. Specifically, hip hop and kuduru have been adopted internationally and continue to evolve drawing from international influence. The music industry in Angola remains vibrant and has a bright foreseeable future as it promises to grow and develop locally, regionally and internationally. This growth is expected to be, as a result, of the collaborations that local artists make with other regional and international artists eventually extending the music genres beyond the boundaries of the country. What is more, the commitment of local artists in the sustainability and the development of the music genre promise to ensure the growth of the music industry in general through this genre. Moreover, the genre commands a huge following from local and international audiences which make the music industry in Angola a viable venture.

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