CHALLENGES FACED BY UPCOMING ARTISTS IN RECORDING AND MARKETING THEIR MUSIC

BY

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OCTOBER, 2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this dissertation is original and has never been submitted for any award of a degree in any University or institution of higher learning.

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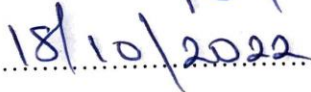
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SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

This is to certify that this work has been under my supervision and is now ready for submission for partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music of Makerere University.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved mother Mrs. Nabukyalo Berna who has always supported me in my studies and to all emerging musicians.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the Almighty God for the gift of life, knowledge and grace which have enabled me to complete this project successfully. I am grateful to all the informants who provided information that guided this research. Thank you for the time and the effort you put in to see that this research is well informed. I'm truly very grateful.

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ABSTRACT

The study addressed the challenges faced by emerging musicians in recording and marketing their music. The study examined possible ways of solving the challenges faced and suggested advice on upcoming musicians would succeed in the music industry. The researcher used a qualitative study as a research methodology for collecting information and used tools including interviews, documentary analysis and observation. Findings show that many musicians face many challenges especially in the process of recording their music and many of them have resorted to setting up home studios where they do the basic part of recording to limit on production expenses. Findings are discussed in terms of ways how upcoming musicians can succeed in their music career through collaboration and partnerships with other musicians and by leveraging the power of internet/social media in marketing and promoting their music.

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the study

Recording is the process of documentation of sound or performance for subsequent reproduction or broadcast by the use of gadgets such as microphones, studio monitors and so on. Before 1877, people in the world had no idea about sound recording and could compose and do live performances accompanied with musical instruments for example the voice, the piano and many others. In 1877 the story of sound production began by Thomas Edison who invented the phonograph. So, the idea went on spreading throughout the whole world and at around 1940 and 1970 Ugandans also started travelling to Kenya to have their music recorded due to lack of gadgets in the country.

Song production is a process of overseeing the whole process of creating a song from recording vocals or instruments to creating instrumental arrangements, coaching the singer and instrumentalists on how to perform the piece of melody. Today audio production studios are almost everywhere in Uganda but not all of them have what is required to produce a song that can compete on the market. In this study I intend to investigate the challenges faced by upcoming artists in recording and marketing their music.

1.2 Background of the study

Sound recording and reproduction began in 1877 by Thomas Edison who invented the phonograph. The early discs showed that music recording and producing could be a successful business though the processes of gramophones to play them were still to crude to make sweet and serious music.

The birth of Uganda's recording music industry is a process that cannot be tagged to a given point in time, but it is undisputed that it started around 1950s through the 1960s. The first music to rise in Uganda was kadongo kamu style of music which arose out of kiganda traditional music. And from 1980s and 1990s it was at its peak. Some of the musicians who contributed a lot to the development of kadongo kamu include Peterson Mutebi, Dan Mugula, Ssebadduka Toffa, Matiya Luyima, Herman Basudde, Paulo Kafeero and many others. In the early 1990s a new genre called afro ragga locally known as *kidandali* formed by Rasta Rob, Kid Fox, Chameleon, Bobiwine, ragga Dee also rose and these musicians later would produce their music. In 1998 also Red Banton rose to fame with his "*Noonya money"* and he was the first artist to travel to UK on an artist visa. Due to globalization Uganda has been influenced by modern audio production and this has actually led to adoption of western music (Baldonado, 2022).

1.3 Statement of the problem

Many upcoming musicians have failed to record and market their music because of the obstacles they encounter. Many of these musicians have good unrecorded songs but find it challenging to access recording studios due to a number of factors. Although several studies have been conducted on the role of recording songs, there are limited (if any) studies that address the challenges faced by upcoming musicians in recording their music. The purpose of this study therefore was to examine specific challenges faced by upcoming musicians in recording and marketing their music.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 Main objective

To examine the challenges faced by upcoming artists in recording and marketing their music

1.4.2 Specific objectives

a. To examine the process of recording and marketing music in Uganda.

b. To find out the challenges faced by upcoming artists.

c. To establish how upcoming artists overcome these challenges.

1.5 Research questions

1.5.1 Main research question

What are the challenges faced by upcoming artists in recording and marketing their music?

1.5.2 Specific questions

a. What is the process of recording and marketing of music in Uganda?

b. What are the challenges faced by upcoming musicians?

c. How do upcoming artists solve the challenges they face in the process of recording and marketing their music?

1.6 Scope of study

1.6.1 Geographical scope

The study was conducted in Kampala District at Makerere University, Department of performing Arts and Films. The venue was easy to access since it was managed by the people who know me very well. The place of study was near my place of residence which helped me to reach my study respondents in time.

1.6.2 Content scope

The study focused on the process of recording and marketing music by examining the steps taken and also looks for the challenges faced by the upcoming musicians as well as finding out ways through which these obstacles are solved.

1.6.3 Time scope

In this study I intended to examine the process of recording and marketing music between 2019 up to 2022. This period was chosen because it's when I engaged with the upcoming artists during their recording of their music.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study is relevant to the upcoming musician and music students in regards to understanding how to manage obstacles faced by the upcoming musicians. In addition to creating awareness of the challenges, the study contributes to building confidence and creativity in writing and recording songs using alternative means that are less costly. The study also sensitizes the community to help in nurturing the upcoming musicians so that they can improve on their talents.

1.8 Ethical consideration

As a researcher, I had to do my research in the right procedures by getting an introductory letter from the Head of Department of Performing Arts and Film. This letter enabled me to carry out formal interviews. I intended not to have intimate relationship with the people I recorded because this could result into collection of wrong information. While carrying out research, I avoided plagiarism in my research such as copying people's work in the articles, books, and others without citing them. Also, I asked for permission from the people I interviewed before recording audios, videos, taking pictures in the process of interview. This was because some informants were not fine with recording them or capturing them on cameras.

I also intended to listen to my informants more than talking since I was doing research to discover and to know more about the problems encountered by upcoming artists in recording and

marketing their music. I ensured that the people I was to record had consented and open, through telling them the intentions, significance of the research, and finally my expectations. By this, the informants were sure of the information given to me. Additionally, I was patient with the people I recorded for example if they failed to come in time I found ways of post ponding and this protected the confidential information given to me. During the transcribing time, I referred to the audios and videos for any information that I had forgotten.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a contextual understanding of the study by making an in-depth analysis of key study variables. The related articles give a broader understanding of the current study and aim at aiding the current research with more information. In this chapter, I analyze the challenges faced by all musicians in the industry of recording and producing their music. The chapter also gives context about the process of recording in a studio, the equipment used while recording and how musicians benefit in their music.

2.1 The process of recording in the studio

According to Hines (2018), the creative process has no absolute hard and fast procedure that must be followed stringently, but a logical development for all recordings, include composition, arrangement, recording, editing, mixing and mastering. To Hines, composition consists of a forming melody that flows chronologically from a start to a finish.

According to E-Home Recording studio the world of music production, the recording process is explained involves creating a track to follow, recording the rhythm section, harmonies, melodies and finally add color." James Edel a recording engineer in his dissertation reported that "the recording process can be thought of similarly to a live performance, but it's a different experience that is more forgiving because a performer can start over and the audience is imaginary" page 8.

The current study puts emphasis on the recording process in the studio while the current research looks at how the emerging musicians go about recording and marketing their music more so it puts the emphasis on the challenges encountered.

2.2 The equipment used in recording music

E-home recording studio lists and explains the equipment used to record music in a studio he says the perfect recording studio should at least have the following; a computer this is used to control most aspects of the mixing process, it is used to create and alter sounds in conjunction with instruments. Its memory is also invaluable for multi-tracks recording, Digital audio workstation (DAW)/ audio interface combo this allows the users to record audio on a personal computer, Studio monitors these are loud speakers designed for professional audio production applications, Microphones translates sound vibration in the air into electronic signals and scribes them to a recording medium or over a loudspeaker, cables which allow to interconnect any audio source to the audio interface, amp or the monitors, microphone stand this helps to position the recording microphone, pop filter helps to control or to filter dust, Ear training software this helps the producers to quickly identify the problems in audio, Amplifiers they help the speakers to produce clear sound. Ugandan upcoming musicians too have interfaced with the different instruments found in a recording studio.

2.3 Challenges faced by musicians

In an article, "*The 7 biggest problems with the music industry?",* Clerk, (2022), explains the problems in the music industry and contends that the vast musicians make no money and wonders why the musicians do not benefit much from the internet. Indeed, Citi group report (2017) indicated that musicians only gained 12% of $43 billion generated in the industry. This alarming statistic proves that while the industry is still a profitable enterprise, its protagonists, the musician who actively produce the richness are left as starving artists (Clerk, 2022).

In addition, Clerk (2022) reveals that in the past, high-potential had far time to grow, experiment, and even fail before coming up with something great. To him "a record label would sign an act for three or four releases and during the amount of time needed to produce and publish those

records, an artist had the opportunity to mature" page 4. Today the industry demands a finished product. Also, upcoming artists too offering the perfect melodies cost them thousands of monies in order to get something great and there is no one to help them in the process of maturing which has resulted into their failure and at the end of it all the industry will never like the losers.

According to Clerk (2022) music has become all about the visuals. More so, Vallena (2021) in his article of the "*unknown struggles of being a musician*" reported that choosing the right platform can be one of the most tedious things musicians can face. Accordingly, this is one of the reasons why most music isn't heard well because it is on a wrong platform.

According to Vallena (2021) having tight competition in the industry is common, but some only see the cherry on top. Vallena stresses that "this struggle can drown out your hard work and kill your ambitions if you're not eager to compete." This current study therefore seeks to examine the ways how upcoming Ugandan musicians can progress amidst the tight competition.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research approach, sampling technique and the research tools that were used in the data collection and analysis process. It is through using this qualitative approach that the research acquired most of the information concerning the topic of this research which assisted the researcher to meet the objectives of the study. This chapter explains why the researcher used the methods of data collection and how they were effective during the research study as explained below.

3.2 Methodological approach

This study employed a qualitative methodology for data collection where analysis of people's ideas, views and experiences are considered so as to produce descriptive data (Creswell & Clark, 2007). To thoroughly examine the challenges faced by emerging musicians in recording and marketing their music, the researcher had to collect primary data directly from the field through observations and interviews. This qualitative approach was the most suitable because it did not limit the informants to provide additional information necessary for the study (Kothari, 2005).

3.2 Sampling technique

3.2.1 Purposive sampling

This is a sampling technique that was adopted to get informants where the researcher chose people who were directly involved in the recording and the marketing of their music (Orodho & Kombo, 2002; Sekaran, 2005). These were able to give the challenges faced by emerging musicians since they were also going through the same challenges and due to their little experience, they went ahead and explained how they overcome the challenges they encounter.

This enabled the researcher to get first-hand information for example about the challenges in recording and marketing, the solutions to the challenges and also to the advice which was given to other emerging artists who would like to succeed in the industry of music.

3.3 Research tools

3.3.1 Interviews

Interviews, as a research tool are conversational and allow the respondents to express themselves freely on matters related to the challenges faced by emerging musicians in recording and marketing their music. This research adopted semi structured interviews with specific questions that were asked but with follow up questions to help the interviewees stay within the limits of the topic and for addition information respectively. The interviews had both close and open-ended questions where close-ended which needed specific answers with little or no explanation while open-ended allowed the informants to provided expounded information on the challenges faced by emerging musicians in recording and marketing their music. The first interview lasted for 57 minutes and the second interview lasted for only 12minutes so in total they add up to 69 minutes and they were recorded via telephone sound/ voice recorder as well as writing or noting the major information in the notebook. The key respondents were two however I decided to add up one just to be satisfied with the content to be presented. Because of that the respondents added up to three.

3.3.2 Audio recording

During the field work, I used a telephone audio recorder to record my interviews as a way of archiving sound. It was appropriate because it gave a wide range of obtaining data through archiving of sounds that saved time since noting or writing down all which was spoken was not easy at all. It was suitable to me due to the fact that I used two telephones to record sound I was very sure that all my interviews were kept safe.

3.3.3 Media observation

As a researcher, I was able to observe the challenges faced by emerging musicians in recording and marketing their music since I am also one of them. Other observations were made from social media platforms of different groups of people such as YouTube, Instagram and Facebook. I was able to analyze and relate some of the challenges to mine.

3.3.4 Note taking

The researcher took notes during interviews and brain stormed with the informants while asking them questions that were triggered by the answers given by the informants and the research used note taking in situation where the informant didn't want to be recorded.

3.3.5 Data analysis

Data collected from the field and other sources were compiled, transcribed and documented. The interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was conducted. This involved coding all the data before identifying and reviewing key themes. Each theme was examined to gain an understanding of participants' perception and motivations. At a later stage, data collected were analyzed and put under different themes in their respective order for easier understanding of the information. The language that was used while carrying out field work was "Luganda" and "English".

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

Chapter four presents the research data, data interpretation and data analysis of the study of the challenges faced by upcoming musicians in recording and marketing their music. Data analysis focused on aspects such as how emerging musicians record their music, how they market their music, the challenges faced both in recording and marketing their music and the advice they can give to other emerging musicians who want to succeed in the music industry.

4.1 Process of recording music

According to Mukisa a guitarist, song writer, a singer and also a music student at Makerere University.

> "The cost of recording isn't getting cheaper it's hard to record, mix and master the album. And in fact it doesn't include distribution cost and promotion or marketing which is also another operation. Recording is just the first step."

Mukisa reported that the process of having the content to record is very crucial. He reveals how he arranges his content in form of lyrics and then he records. He does most of the things at his home because he bought some of the equipment's for example microphone, audio interface, computer and the speakers and the computer which is crucial to him because it's where he stores his backups and data recorded. Luckily, Mukisa has a friend who is a studio producer who helps him in recording because it is not easy to stand and record then go back and sing then come back and record again because it is kind tiresome thing. About writing, Mukisa reported that he writes his own lyrics according to what he feels. He gets different topics and as an artist he believes it's good to meditate, think and write about your feelings.

Mukisa gets his inspiration from the daily stories and the things he goes through. According to him composition is driven by inspiration and having that drive is critical to avoid creating

"bubble gum music" the kind of music which people may like because of its public appeal in a moment but never lasts. According to Mukisa self-recording is helpful because it allows a musician to express freely, choose the best tracks, the beats and the instruments he or she wants to use in their music.

For Baguma a guitarist, song writer and a performer of world and popular music, recording music with other people helps in production. Also, Kiiza (personal interview, July, 2022) reported that recording is not really simple because it is expensive and that it's better if someone buys equipment like the computer, microphones, the sound card, pop filter and the amplifier to decrease on the costs of recording in a studio. Kiiza revealed that he records his demos because he has a simple home recording studio which helps him to organize his equipment.

He also reported that he records his acoustic guitar first and then records the harmonies combining the beat making and finally records his voice and melodies and thereafter takes the demo to his producer to add in the sound effects and to do all the polishing stage. Reportedly, this has helped him not to spend a lot on the recording process since he cannot afford all that money.

4.2 Challenges faced by upcoming musicians in recording their music

Findings revealed that recording music requires buying equipment such as computer, MIDI controller, microphones, installment of DAWS. This equipment is really expensive and many upcoming musicians can't acquire it. According to Walter Mukisa and Kiiza Reagan, a lot of capital is needed to support themselves and to pay producers. All respondents reported that they face financial challenges to support their production. Other reported challenges were to do with power cuts which affects the recording session. Mukisa also revealed that, he sometimes faces a challenge of working with different people who perceive music career as a competition. Such issues, according to Mukisa affect the working relationships and the quality of production.

It was also reported that some producers dictate on every aspect of the recording of the song and don't allow artistes to contribute on the decisions regarding the style, beat, groove, and other accompaniment aspects in the song. According to Mukisa, this practice affects the creative process and general morale and interest of many upcoming artistes.

4.3 Overcoming the challenges faced in recording

According to Mukisa, having a good relationship with the people you are working with is really vital. He says he makes sure that he knows the people he works with at least to a certain level of becoming friends though with some limits and once you have that close relationship all moves on smoothly like you cannot find dictatorship in your project and all the weird staff.

About the power cuts he says if one is financially stable, getting a good solar can help to avoid that problem of power cuts which can lead to the loss of vibe. On the problem of finance he said as a person he decided that all the times he goes to a studio he does not spend a lot of money since he knows to do some of these things and he does most of them at his home, so if he gets some money he buys some simple equipment such as the computer where he gets the software, sound card, microphone and others which can help in writing. Mukisa says this is a good way of controlling the high costs and expenditures and in actual sense it would be better if one does the basics or foundations on his or her own because it you who can bring out the emotional expression by adding the required effects.

According to Anderea Baguma he solves the challenge of finance by doing the personal savings but more so he seeks for funding where possible but to someone who cannot get funds still has to look for other possible ways in order to record the work. He also reported that one can use the available resources like the friends for example if you have a friend who is a producer it is better to sit on a table and agree that is to say you explain how they will benefit in recording your

music for free. So, for him finance cannot stop him from getting his music recorded since he has many friends who are producers.

4.4 Marketing music

According to Walter Mukisa marketing is a very tough structure and not an easy task. He said the concept of marketing is persuasive where you get a product and literally force the people to understand your product. To achieve good marketing, Mukisa uses social media because it is the booming way of marketing and its where people can get or access music products in a shortest time. He uses different platforms like Tik-tok, you-tube. Concerning the internet and social media Mukisa uses aggregators that is a person responsible for contracting different companies to start selling your music on different channels such as spotify, Amazon, and many others. Tune core is responsible for making his music available on all platforms and also to sell it on big scale in order to make it go viral.

For Anderea Baguma, one has to publish the work first. For him he uses a publishing company called Opus music publishers who publishes his music and makes it available on all platforms. He continues that he also avails some hard copies to sell when his performing somewhere. He also uses social media as well for example Tik- tok, Facebook and many others.

Baguma has a management team called Easy music management and this company manages artists and other events which are authentic and this has really helped and shaped him to be what he is right now. According to Kiiza Reagan the marketing strategies he uses involve reaching out to radio stations that need new music to play to their listeners. To him this is really a major way of marketing his music.

4.5 Challenges faced by upcoming musicians while marketing their music

Mukisa reported that getting the audience one deserves is really a hard. According to him it is good to work on local performances and other avenues but for the emerging musician to step on

stage and get abused weakens and demoralizes them. He continued to reveal that in Uganda emerging musician suffer the most to the extent of throwing empty and water bottles at them while on stage. He says it really hurts and if don't persist you may find yourself quitting however much you liked the industry.

Mukisa also says that it takes a lot of money and time because there is no short cut even if one is your friend still you have to give some amount for your song to be aired out for example on the television and the radio stations. He continued to assert that even when the music is so interesting onen has to give in money to the presenters in order to develop a reliable following.

Mukisa argues that being a student and at the same time a worker and an artist has really given him hard time because it is not easy to put those three things together. He asserted that looking for tuition and other money to support the career and also to look for the basic needs is quite challenging. According to Baguma, the biggest challenge in Uganda is economy because every process of creating music (including studio production, marketing, online promotions) requires money.

My personal interview with Kiiza Reagan revealed that the richest musicians pay for the placements in the contests and the display shows which has hindered the upcoming musicians because since they are poor they cannot afford paying for those judges to favor them also which is illegal and bad. He continued and said that no one can even stop them from bribing for what should not be paid for.

4.6 How upcoming musicians overcome the challenges faced in marketing of the music?

According to Mukisa and Baguma, the only solution to the many challenges faced by upcoming musicians is getting connections. For example, a friend who works on a radio station or on a

television can help to play your song at a lower cost which enhances the dissemination and the marketing of your music.

Mukisa advises all upcoming musicians to creating good relationships with big musicians. He continues that every young and aspiring musician should connect with others because it is a vital resource in ones rise. Mukisa also argues that upcoming musicians need to exercise patience because the road to success is rough and if one is not careful he or she may find him or herself giving up. He argues every musician to be ready to help the emerging musicians in the mastering of their craft. Baguma believes that "the best way to start is to start." And as such musicians need to start with what they have in the moment and keep working on their craft. According to him, regardless of the many problems, upcoming musicians should consider to collaborate with other musicians on the globe and make things happen.

CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a discussion of the study findings, provides recommendations and conclusions on the topic.

5.1 Discussions and Conclusions

This research study has revealed that there are very many musicians who have totally failed to record their music due to the challenges they face in the recording process. For example, many have failed due to lack of finance and the limited or lack of connections. Although many reported that they managed to look for possible ways of overcoming the challenges, many upcoming musicians fail due to lack of finance to acquire some basic recording equipment such as computer, microphones and audio interface. Actually, all the musicians I interviewed do the basics of recording on their own and then take the demos to the producers to polish and add in a few things. They have also done personal savings to get some amount which can be paid to the producer who is tasked to edit and to polish their work. In additional musicians have found it interesting to do most of the recording process on their own to control the high costs and expenditures and to help the writer to put in his music the effects that can bring out all his intentions and the emotional expression.

Much as these musicians have toiled to overcome the challenges faced in recording their music there is also a major challenge of marketing and promoting their music on radio, televisions and social media or online marketing. Literature review revealed that vast musicians make no monies on internet and the current study stresses that upcoming musicians put a lot of money in marketing and promoting their music online but still it takes a lot of time for one to earn.

According to the reviewed literature, having high competition in the industry is common. The same applies to the current study where the respondents stressed that working with different people is really challenging because some perceive it as a competition which affects the working relationships and the quality of production. Also choosing the right platform is tedious in all aspects of marketing, the current study stresses the use of aggregators in order to ease the marketing process and choosing the best platform.

5.2 Recommendations

The study has mainly focused on the challenges faced by emerging musicians in recording and marketing of their music. As a researcher, I recommend the future researchers to also put emphasis on the process of recording in the studio and the reasons as to why the recording in the studio is very expensive. More still, I recommend that music schools need to put more emphasis on the course unit of studio production to enable all students be conversant with the process of recording and also to help them know how to do self-recording rather than emphasizing only the theoretical course units. This will help the emerging musicians not to spend a lot on recording and it will give them a chance to develop both in mind and economically.

I also recommend that the government should sensitize the masses about the disadvantages of not respecting emerging musicians who are many times booed when performing on big stages, usually as curtain raisers. It's important to educate the public that becoming a success musician is a process which requires financial support, patience and understanding from audiences and everyone who may be involved in the process.

As a researcher I recommend that the producers should be merciful to the upcoming musicians by not levying large amounts of money for studio recording. This will encourage those who have nice songs but unrecorded to come up and record and also it will help in the promotion of talent.

As a researcher, I further recommend that the people responsible for organizing the display shows and the contests should be considerate and do their work professionally and avoid looking for bribes in favor of placing people who do not deserve to be placed in the first positions. Finally, further research should be conducted to study the success stories of successful music artists so as to inspire coping mechanisms and effective approaches that can be adapted by upcoming musicians.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

1. How do you record your music?
2. What challenges do you face while recording your music?
3. How do you overcome the challenges faced while recording music?
4. How do you go about marketing your music?
5. What challenges do you face while marketing your music?
6. How do you overcome the challenges in marketing?
7. What advice do you give to other upcoming musicians who want to succeed in the industry?

Appendix 2: List of informants interviewed

NAME	PROFESSION	DATE	VENUE
Mr. Mukisa Walter	Singer, guitarist, song writer, composer and a student at Makerere university.	22nd August, 2022	Lumumba west
Mr. Anderea Baguma	Songwriter, artist, guitarist and a composer	4th. July. 2022	Phone recording
Mr. Kiiza Reagan	Guitarist, songwriter and a performer	7th. July. 2022	National Theatre Kampala