

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

THE PERCEPTION OF BAX RAGGA MUSIC AMONG THE YOUTHS IN
KAMPALA

(A CASE STUDY OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS)

BY

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DECLARATION

I Muvunyi Umar hereby do declare that the information provided in this dissertation is my original work and has never been presented for any academic award whatsoever in this or any other university or institution of higher learning.

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SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research presented by Muvunyi Umar in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Bachelor of Arts in music degree of Makerere University was completed under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my friends, family members, my teachers, composers, instrumentalists, musicians, and those in need of knowledge in this dissertation.

Above all, I dedicate this work to the almighty God for granting me the power, wisdom, knowledge and good health to accomplish this study.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the perception of Bax Ragga music among youths in Makerere University, Kampala. Through a case study approach, the research investigates the understanding, impact, and appreciation of Bax Ragga music among university students.

I conducted a qualitative study with fieldwork at Makerere University, employing a range of data collection methods. These methods included interviews, observation, participant observation, sampling, documentary analysis, literature review, and attending to different informants through interviews. Furthermore, the researcher used the internet and photography to gather information about Bax Ragga and how this music is perceived by the youth at Makerere University.

The research findings suggest that Bax Ragga, a once-popular music style, has faded out, with few students familiar with the genre. The study reveals that the music style is no longer commonly played by artists, and its impact on the lives of youths is minimal. This research aims to contribute to the revival of Bax Ragga music by identifying the factors contributing to its decline and proposing strategies for its resurgence. The study's findings have implications for music industry stakeholders, policymakers, and artists seeking to promote Ugandan music heritage.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study is about the perceptions of Bax Ragga music among the youth in Kampala most especially at Makerere University. I examine how these youth understand this music and the meaning it has to them. By investigating the nature of these perceptions, I have gained insight into how Bax Ragga music thrives at Makerere University and Kampala at large. While some youth may appreciate the genre for its nostalgic value and deep cultural roots, others may view it as outdated in comparison to contemporary genres such as hip-hop, pop, and dancehall and others has no knowledge about the genre of music. However, understanding these perceptions is crucial in exploring the role of traditional music in the cultural identity of young Ugandans and how it coexists with the rapidly evolving landscape of global music influences.

This chapter presents the background to the study as well as the statement of the problem. It also presents the objectives, research questions and scope of the study, literature review, methodology, limitations, ethical considerations as well as the significance of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This study, the research is centered on analyzing the appreciation of Bax ragga music among the youths with specific focus on Makerere university students. It has to be noted that there is a difference between Raga music with single G and Ragga music with double G. that is to say Raga music is a melodic framework used for composition and improvisation in Indian classical music, acting as a blueprint that uses specific notes, ascending and descending patterns and distinct emotional moods to color the mind while Ragga music with double G refers to the popular music genre that originated in Jamaica in the late 1960s, known for its offbeat rhythms, slow groove, and messages of social justice. And in this case we shall be looking at the raga music with double G

According to this study, the term Bax Ragga refers to the type of music genre in Uganda that first emerged when a musician known as **Aziz Azion** came up with a song known as “Omulembe Guno Ogwalo” and it was a blend of traditional music style known as

Baakisimba and western music style known as Ragga together thus creating a distinct and unique sound that represents their cultural heritage.

It should be remembered that before the creation of Bax Ragga music in Uganda, there has been a fusion of Baakisimba together with different styles of music in Uganda to create more sweet sound of popular music's such as Baakisimba and Kadongo Kamu, Baakisimba and jazz (Ugandan indigenous music in fusion with jazz by Godfrey Lubuulwa, 2023) and many others. Due to the outcomes of globalization; Uganda like other countries has witnessed a growth in modern audio production. Later after different fusions with baakisimba, Ugandan artists forged a new style of music where the mixed Baakisimba with contemporary musical elements, their fusion represents a unique blend of cultural influences, showcasing their artistic expression and contributing to the preservation and evolution of Ugandan and African musical traditions,(Ugandan indigenous music in fusion with jazz by Godfrey Lubuulwa, 2023). These artists saw kadongo kamu fading and they decided to add in more spices thus coming up with Bax ragga. K. Robinson (09, November, 2016).

According to Mr. Edgar. R. Batte, (5, Jan, 2021) Bakisimba is a dance believed to have originated from the movements of King Ssuuna of Buganda Kingdom in Central Uganda. The dance is thought to have come from a story about the king tasting a drink made from Matooke, and then praising the people who made it. The king said "abaakisiimba", which means "those who planted the bananas". The audience noticed the king was excited, but it was taboo to say he was drunk. The musicians began playing drums and imitating the king's words, and a group of people walked gracefully while imitating the king's movements. This eventually became the Bakisimba dance. And in Bax Ragga the Baakisimba rhythm is maintained.

Baakisimba music is rooted in the indigenous Ugandan drums, known as ngoma, which play a vital role in Ugandan and African cultures. The term ngoma encompasses singing, dancing, drumming, and it is a communal means of expression, invoking past experiences during ritual and initiation ceremonies for the Bantu ethnic groups in south, central and east Africa (Mapana,2022).

Nannyonga-Tamusuza, (2014) explains that the drum is considered the “king of instruments” among the Baganda people and those men are expected to control its power. Baakisimba, an indigenous rhythm and dance, serves as a “stage” for gendered relations, identities, and roles

to be performed through the context of performance, drum symbolism, sound, and dance choreography and formations and costumes.

The term Ragga refers to the type of music that combines elements of Reggae, Rap and dancehall music. It originated in Jamaica during the 1980's, in this style of music, the instrumentals primarily consist of electronic music with heavy use of sampling.

According to Rheno Entertainment C.E.O Mr. K. Robson, (09, November, 2016) had the various conversations with Many artists who claim to be the founders of this style of music such as Aziz Azion due to his song and Sheebah called” Omulembe guno” and also Bebe Cool says that he is the founder of the style due to his song with Nandujja called “Kamugolo” and many others. (wordpress.com)

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Bax Ragga music have been in existence in Uganda for years and many musicians have come up with songs in this style of music such Paul Kaffero, Herman Bassudde, Fred Ssebata, Bebe Cool, Aziz Azion, Hassan Nduga, Willy Mukabya and many others. And also many broadcasting companies such as radios (X FM, Beat FM, Simba FM, CBS FM and others), televisions like Spark TV, NTV, NBS, UBC and others. These broadcasting companies have played a great role towards the growth of Bax Ragga music in Uganda through giving a lot of airplay which forced the audience to opt it thus making many artists to come up with new songs. Despite the above, Bax Ragga music have begun to decline in the young generation and there has been insufficient research carried out on Bax Ragga in relation to how Makerere university students (youths) appreciate it. Therefore the aim of this research is to find out the perception of youths on Bax Ragga music and why? A case study of Makerere University students. This research is necessary because

Bax Ragga music may continue to decline and it may reach an extent of being in history if we don't know how the youths (Makerere University students) have actually appreciated it in order to come up with the solution to this problem.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Major Objectives

To find out the youths perception about Bax Ragga music in Makerere University.

1.3.2 Other Objectives.

- 1) To investigate whether they listen to Bax Ragga music and if they have this music on their gadgets or not.
- 2) To find out why some have this music on their gadgets and how the youths /Makerere University students have actually appreciated other music styles in Uganda such as Luga flow, Jazz, KadongoKamu, R&B, Country music among others over Bax Ragga music.
- 3) To examine the factors for the collapse of Bax Ragga music in Uganda.
- 4) To find out the meaning of Bax Ragga music according to the youths in Makerere university
- 5) To examine the possible solutions / ideas on how to improve the dissemination, production and consumption of Bax Ragga music in order to save it from collapsing/ fading in Uganda

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a) What do the youths in Makerere University understand by the term Bax Ragga?
- b) What is their perception in appreciating Bax Ragga music? And why?
- c) What are the factors making Bax Ragga music to fade in Uganda?
- d) How has this type of music impacted on their lives?
- e) What is the difference between Bax ragga and other music styles in Uganda?
- f) What are the possible solutions to the problems facing this kind of music in the music industry of Uganda?

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Content Scope

This research mainly covers the negative and positive perceptions of Kadongo kamu music among the youth at Makerere University. It also highlights the significance of Bax Ragga music, as well as its key characteristics and also focuses on the connection between Bax Ragga music and the youths in their daily lives.

1.5.2 Time Scope

In this research, I focused on Bax Ragga music from the time the term Bax Ragga was coined by Aziz Azion up to 2025 because Bax Ragga music differs according to the period it was made. The music also has its own characteristics, which may make it boring to the youth since it is seen as a faded music genre of music in Uganda now. Therefore, by focusing on this period, the researcher aims at exploring how this music has evolved over the years and how it is appreciated among these young people.

The researcher focuses on youths aged 18 to 35 years. This is due to the fact that the age of eighteen is the start of someone's youthfulness, and 35 is the end of one's youthfulness; music, either directly or indirectly, is one of their hobbies during their youth.

1.5.3 Geographical Scope

The research was conducted in Kampala District, with a specific focus on Makerere University's main campus, encompassing various colleges and departments, particularly the Department of Performing Arts. Kampala is the Capital City of Uganda, located in the central region of Uganda. Kampala is a developed city with various social services available both within and around it, Kampala is more populated with the youths and it's the center where music is made, disseminated and consumed mostly, and it is home to Makerere University. That is to say, it is where Makerere University's main campus is located, which has made it suitable for this research, as I was confident of obtaining students who would be willing to participate in the study.

This research was carried out in Kampala district specifically focusing on Makerere university students.. The Researcher selected Kampala because. And the Researcher selected Makerere university students because many stay in Kampala, accessing them is easy, Kampala acts as a center for every one most especially the youths since it's the capital city of Uganda and there has been insufficient research carried out on Bax Ragga music in relation to how it is appreciated by the youths most especially in Makerere university.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

First of all, this research will contribute to the music industry of Uganda in relation to how the youths (Makerere University students) have actually appreciated Bax Ragga music style

over other music styles in Uganda. And this will help musicians to know what to do in order to improve on Bax Ragga music in Uganda in a way of reviving it back since it seems to be faded thus make it to be more appreciated also over other genres in Uganda.

This research is aimed at contributing to the existing music industry of Uganda. Many people/ researchers have come up with many writings about the concept of music and therefore this research will add value to the already existing music industry, since some of the areas that the earlier researchers/ writers might not have looked at/managed to handle such as the appreciation of Bax Ragga music among the youths in Kampala.

In addition to the above, The research will benefit the artists in the way that they will be able to know the audience that they are composing to and also understand the various challenges they may face while creating, disseminating their music in Bax Ragga style since they will be competing with other music genres in Uganda thus coming up with distinct ideas on how to improve on the production of Bax Ragga music.

The research is also expected to help the educators/ facilitators by adding on knowledge they give to their students in the academia about popular music in Uganda by bringing many things in relation to Bax Ragga music for example definition, how it sound, prominent musicians who compose this style of music and many others.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

Godfrey Lubuulwa (2023) explains that “Baakisimba, a traditional drumming style from Buganda, Uganda, holds historical, social, cultural and political significance, and Baximba wave’s draws on these rich musical traditions to inform their expressive concepts and musical practice. This demonstrates the bands deep understanding of their heritage and the ways in which it shapes their creative output. And it also highlights the importance of recognizing the cultural and contextual influences on musical practices and how they contribute to the richness and diversity of musical traditions”.

Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2014) also stress that “the drum is considered **the king of instruments** among the Baganda people and that man are expected to control its power. Baakisimba, an indigenous rhythm and dance, serves as a “stage” for gendered relations, identities, and roles to be performed through the context of performance, drum symbolism, sound, and dance choreography and formations and costumes”.

Pedagogy of the oppressed (Paulo Frère) in chapter three of the book (page 88-91), Paulo F. talks about a dialogue and he says that “a dialogue is a conversation between two or more people and it is dichotomy meaning it should be a comparison between two parts”. He continues to say that the dialogue have two dimensions that is to say reflection and action (pg. 88) he says that “to say a word is to transform meaning that the research is carried out to transform something. Paulo Frère continues to say that a dialogue is an Existential necessity that can’t happen without profound love, faith, humility, hope and critical thinking” (pg89-91) these are the things someone must use during the process of field work most especially while using the methodology of interview and questioner in order to accomplish his or her research well.

Ethnomusicology in east Africa: perspectives from Uganda and beyond S.A NannyongaTamusuza (T Solomon 2012-books.google.com.) Definition of popular music is one of the issues that have been addressed in the study of popular music. For example, Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2006) offers numerous definitions and suggests that popular music should be defined historically. She argues that popular music should be defined as that which is time and culture specific. Further, her field research revealed that popular music is that music which is mass-mediated and commercially determined, a definition I adopt in this study. Although Nannyonga-Tamusuza uses the numerous definitions to examine the challenges in the identification and classification of Popular music for archiving purposes, the present study adopts one of the definitions to give focus to the study and this definition will help the researcher to know whether Bax Ragga is popular among the youths in Kampala specifically Makerere University students.

Introduction to qualitative research (Bailey 8/14/2006) page 1-13, this chapter provides an overview of field research and several themes Integrated throughout this guide: the effects of status characteristics on the field research process. It shows that rigid rules are ineffective for many aspects of the research process and field work/research simply requires flexibility. The chapter continues to present different suggestions derived from different generations of researchers, guide lines to use as a flashlight rather than a map throughout your journey into field work thus acting as guide lines during my research.

Research planning, Introduction to research (Syed Muhammad Sajjad Kabir july2016) this chapter talks about how to conduct an organized and systematic investigation/ research. M. Kabir continues to bring out the differences between qualitative research and quantitative

research, the classifications of research how to write a proposal and many others which are the things are going to use during my research.

1.8 METHODOLOGY

Methodology refers to the more concrete and specific activities of the way in which one's empirical study is carried out (research strategy) and the specific manipulative and fact finding operations which are used to yield data about the social world (Bulmer Research techniques 1984-5). This section describes the procedures the researcher used during in Data gathering and conducting interviews and below is some of the tools of research that the researcher used during the study.

1.8.1 Interview method

This is a verbal interaction between two or more people and it involves question and answers. Therefore the researcher carried out interviews on different people inside and outside the university (youths) on how they appreciate Bax Ragga music and the researcher used different types of interviews such as structured, unstructured, open and close ended interviews, formal and informal interviews, and lastly conversation

1.8.2 Observation method

This is more of participant observation whereby the researcher attended some of the performances done by the youths most especially PAF (Department of Performing Arts) students to check whether they do perform Bax Ragga music.

1.8.3 Focus group discussion

With this method, the researcher sets out the use of focus group discussion by engaging youths in discussions about their perceptions And response to Bax Ragga music in Kampala Uganda.

1.8.4 Document review and Analysis

This can refer to the use of different documents about specific topics of study in comparison with the gathered data and the already existing documents to come to an informed conclusion. And with this method, the researcher always read the existing documents related to Bax Ragga music in Uganda and among the documents were read and analyzed they include; published books, dissertations, newspapers and journals among others.

1.8.5 Sampling method

Sampling is the selection of units of population for the study/ the people to act as informants to your study and the researcher used this method by interviewing people who are actively engaged in music most especially song writers, music producers, artists, music journalists and youths at Makerere University.

1.9 DATA ANALYSIS

As a researcher in the field of data analysis, he critically looked at the information given to him by different informants and through participant observation comparing the inter-relationship. In data analysis the researcher dedicated himself in reading different documents on popular music in Uganda in the field related to the topic of study he was researching about so as to come up with a clear conclusion.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study, the researcher used confidentiality and consent forms to respect participants' consent. According to (Orb, Eisenhaune, & Wynaden, 2000) Ethics deals with the rights of participants to keep privacy. The details of the research were clearly explained to the research participants and they were given chance to withdraw from the study for if they felt it was against their comfort ability. This explains that; the participants, who engaged in this study, first consented for their participation.

As a researcher, I moved to the head of the department of the performing arts and film to request for an introductory letter of which I presented to the concerned people in and outside Makerere University, requesting for acceptance to conduct research with them.

For privacy issues, as a researcher I will ask for the participant for the permission to record them during data collection process and I will also make sure that the data collected from the participants is handled carefully and won't mention their names anywhere in case they request me to do so.

All the data collected shall be archived in Makerere University Archive to limit access to public domain hence protecting privacy and respect for research participants. However, the knowledge generated shall be accessible to researchers, students at Makerere University and any other scholars through the University library.

1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The time allocated for the researcher by the university to do the research collides with internship which may limit the researcher from collecting all the necessary data thus making the time for the research limited. As a researcher, I made sure that I budget my time very well and inform the responsible party for internship of the research process so that I don't miss out any of the two.

To the researcher's expectations, some respondents may deliberately refuse to provide any kind of information to me about the research due to unbearable circumstances which may therefore hinder me from getting all the required data. Sometimes is due to privacy but I will assure my informants about their safety and also follow the ethical considerations

During the method of interview I faced the problem of language barrier. This is due to cultural diversity in Kampala (Makerere University) hence limiting my data collection in the field. With this as a researcher I will make sure that the researcher learn some of these languages and also use English since all the University students know/ understand and also speak English.

There's a problem of fear by the participants to offer valid and sensitive information due to high levels of privacy hence limiting the research. As a researcher, I made sure that I provide the environment for the respondent to open up and give all the necessary information about the study. I will also follow the ethical considerations in order to overcome this problem.

Limited funding of the research process inhibits me from accessing the different materials that may be needed to conduct the research hence hindering me from collecting all the relevant data in the field. I seek for help from different organizations and my parents in order mitigate this problem which acted as hindrance to my research.

During the field work I faced a problem of lack of confidence within the participants and this lead to the delay of information during the field work. As a researcher I had to make sure that I establish a conducive environment for me and the participants/ informant so that we can feel secure.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY (THE CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF BAX RAGGA)

2.0 INTRODUCTION



FIGURE 1: A map of Uganda showing the location of Kampala city.

This chapter provides the contextual understanding of the current study by conducting an in-depth analysis of the key terms in the topic of study, relating them to various studies that are similar or closely related to the current study that is to say Bax Ragga, Baakisimba, Ragga

music, Youths and the history of Makerere University. However I will stress more on Ugandan music and Uganda as a country since the case study is found in Uganda.

Uganda as a country is located in East Africa, with ethnic diversity that is to say, it's endowed with 56 ethnic groups classified into four main categories: Bantu, Nilotic, Nilo-Hamites, and Hamites. Each group has its unique cultural beliefs and practices that are reflected in various aspects of life such as; social, political, and economic activities, kingdoms, languages, artworks, rituals, norms, and behaviors.

The country is divided into four regions - Central, Western, Eastern, and Northern - which are further subdivided into political districts. The capital city, Kampala, is in the Buganda kingdom, which occupies the central part of Uganda.

Musically, in Uganda the musical practices have been shaped by various socio-cultural, Socio-economic, and socio-political forces, both internal and external since the pre-colonial era.

"In the pre-colonial period, knowledge and skills were transmitted through oral traditional methods". (Godfrey Lubuulwa)

However, with the colonization of Uganda by Britain in 1894, and the arrival of Christian missionaries from France and England in 1887, there was a deliberate effort to Dismantle Uganda's musical heritage by imposing foreign cultural values over indigenous Practices that were seen as being evil such as worship among others. The education introduced by the European missionaries aimed at furthering their imperialistic objectives, and indigenous knowledge and social organization systems were marginalized, despite their earlier utilization by the colonialists to gain access to Buganda society before declaring it a colony (Ssempijja, 2012).

"The colonialists and missionaries brought new music styles, instruments, and approaches to music education, including staff and sol-fa notation, as well as transmission through radio (1954) and television (1963). Christianity and the colonial power also led to the suppression of Ugandan indigenous musical cultures, considering them archaic and satanic, which resulted in the discouragement and extinction of some traditional musical performances".

The importation of foreign musical materials and knowledge, intercultural marriages, technological influences, and demographic movements has all contributed to the evolution of Ugandan music. However, indigenous music training approaches have been overshadowed by

2.1 BAAKISIMBA MUSIC OF THE BAGANDA



FIGURE 2: Buganda and its location on the map.

Buganda is one of the oldest and most dominant kingdoms in Uganda whose origin is still subject to speculation among scholars. That is to say, by Kabaka Kyabagu's time Buganda had been for centuries one of the largest and most powerful of several kingdom states flourishing in the fertile lands around Lake Victoria, the region of the source of the Nile. (Peter Cooke 1996)

The Baganda people are believed to belong to the Bantu speaking family, constitute the largest group among more than forty different ethnic groups in Uganda. About five million Baganda are located in Buganda region, in the south-central region of Uganda, north of Lake Victoria and south of Lake Kyoga.

It should be remembered that Buganda lies on the equator and thus enjoys a tropical climate, which enables the growth of food, especially Matooke (bananas) throughout the year. Buganda is hilly with a mixture of grassy lands and with forests, is slowly disappearing because of the increased populations. The trees are not only used for building houses, firewood, and furniture, but also for making musical instruments, especially the drums. Buganda has many counties, and the first three that Buganda begun with was Kyaddondo, Busiro and Mawokota. After different wars with her neighbors, Buganda begun to annex other places from neighbors forming other counties such as Butambala , Buddu , Kyaggwe , Busujju and many other counties.

Nannyonga says that "the Baganda speak a language referred to as Luganda and the term "Kiganda" denotes what belongs to the Baganda. Therefore, one can speak of Kiganda music, Kiganda culture, Kiganda gender, and so on. Sometimes the generic term **Ganda** is used to refer to the region, the people, their language, culture, music, and so on". However, scholars and people who are not Baganda mainly use the term Ganda; the Baganda never refer to themselves as the Ganda or refer to their language as Ganda. And in fact, one is considered to be a Muganda if his or her father belongs to a Kiganda clan. (Nannyonga Sylvia Tamusuza 2012)

Many scholars have constructed different histories relating to the origin of Buganda. Nannyonga S. Tamusuza reports that "Nonetheless, based on the analysis of oral tradition, these scholars have argued that Kintu is the founder of the Buganda kingdom. For instance, M. B. Nsimbi, a Muganda linguist, has noted, "Kintu was the first [person] to bring

together the people he found in Buganda and to rule them as one nation" (1996: 149). However, Kiwanuka argues that all the histories "contain much that is myth and legend" (1972: 95)" (S. Tamasuza 2012).

2.2 ORIGIN OF BAAKISIMBA

We may accept that musical traditions in Uganda vary according to the linguistic and cultural divisions of the country, and that no musical style can be fully understood except in relation to its cultural background. Superficially similar sounds may arise coincidentally from the application of different concepts of sound production and in the first stage of comparative analysis it would be wrong to assume that two Ugandan musical styles are necessarily closely related because they sound the same. (John Blacking music in Uganda). Therefore it is imperative that the music of Ugandan culture be studied as a unified system related to the patterns of its associated culture.

It has to be noted that many scholars have carried out research on the music's of Uganda and these includes native (indigenous, insider) and non-native scholars (foreign). The native scholars were those believed to carry out research about their own cultures from a position of intimate affinity. (Nicholas Ssempija 2011). Many scholars have come up with different origins and definition of Baakisimba such as;

Baakisimba as an integrated music and dance genre. Therefore, understanding baakisimba calls for the examination of how baakisimba dance and music co-create each other in a given performance context, since different performance contexts produce different musical and dance structures(S.T. Nannyonga 2012)

As it is stated that the integration of music and dance among African people is well-articulated phenomenon both within and outside ethnomusicology (John Blacking 1973).

Ruth stone reports that " African music performance is a collection of arts that is to say it's a wrapped bundle of arts such as singing, drumming, dancing, masquerading and dramatizing are part and partial of conceptual package that many Africans think of as one and the same.(1998:7). That is why Baakisimba is integrated as music and dance. Howard Becker also points out that making art is a process that involves the cooperation of a network of people with special talents and abilities and describes these as "collaborative links" in the art world (1974:768).

“Music is much more than just the sounds captured on a tape recorder. It is the use of the body to produce and accompany the sounds. Music is an emotion that accompanies the production of, the appreciation of, and the participation in a performance. Music is also, of course, the sounds themselves after they are produced. Yet it is intention as well as realization; it is emotion and value as well as structure and form” (Anthony Seeger 1987: xiv).

Music is innate to human culture, that is to say it has been an integral part of every known society and beyond providing a means of expression, and it has also played a role of unifying communities while conveniently tying them to a rich and shared history. (Katelin Gray’11, 2010:78-83). Therefore, when employed for its original use in current societies, music has the ability to root communities in tradition and the power to become stirring soul of the people, providing them with an education that allows a proactive citizenry form.

Nannyonga S. Tamusuza stress that since dance and music are highly integrated in Baakisimba, the term “baakisimba” is quite loaded. That is to say, Baakisimba refers to a dance genre in Uganda; it is a musical style performed with the dance; and it is also the name of asset of drums that is used in performing Baakisimba dance. And it has to be noted that the “Embuutu” (main and mother drum) is also called Baakisimba. (Nannyonga S. Tamusuza 2005)

On the other hand, Albert Bisaso Ssempeke notes that Baakisimba is not only just a dance but more importantly a beat that was developed into drum beats during the reign of Sekabaka (former king) Suuna the second of Buganda kingdom. It should be remembered that Sekabaka Suuna reigned during the 18th century. (Batte R.2013)

Baakisimba is a site for struggles over power. In Buganda, the drum is symbolic of power and, therefore men must control; and yet, women's dancing is associated with their sexual objectification. However, men dance either for economic reasons or as a way to negotiate their homo sexual identities. Baakisimba is a "stage" where gendered relations, identities, and roles are performed. (Nanyonga S. Tamuuza 2005)

Afrigo Band also explains that Baakisimba is a six-by-eight multi-rhythm featuring a dialogue and discussion of instruments both melodic and percussive. That is to melodies are sung and played on top of this song rhythm and later a dance. It is one of the most popular and recognized rhythms and dances in Uganda. (Batte R. 2021)

2.3 ORIGIN OF BAAKISIMBA MUSIC AND DANCE

Baakisimba dance can also be known as Nankasa or Muwogola because they are all sections of this dance. It is a “traditional” dance form originating from the people of Buganda kingdom in the central region of Uganda and the instruments used in this music and dance are; Engalabi, Namunjoloba, Ensasi /shakers, Empunyi among others.



FIGURE 3: INSTRUMENTS USED IN BAAKISIMBA MUSIC AND DANCE.

Nannyonga S. Tamusuza cites (Williams 1983:319-20) in one of her works that “traditional” seems to propose “a description of habits or briefs inconvenient to virtually any innovation”. The concept suggests a changeless structure and yet Baakisimba has undergone change, since the social, political and cultural structures that created Baakisimba have continually changed through history. (Nannyonga Tamusuza S. 2003: 97-118)

The dance should be remembered that it was initially performed in the Buganda royal court in ancient time and it holds significant cultural and social importance within the community and it was often performed during tribal ceremonies, celebrations, and festive occasions as Koffi Agawu 2016, stresses that contexts and occasions for making music in Africa are many, perhaps infinity and the most common occasions includes; giving a name celebrations, initiation rites, marriage, religious rites, funerals, post-funeral celebrations, harvest celebrations among others.(African imagination in music 2016)

To begin with, the date of the origin of Baakisimba is unknown, but the story that precedes it is of an early Kabaka who drank a local beer made out of ripe bananas. However there has been many contradictions among different research about the origin of Bakisimba and the debate continues since there is no written history about the origin but it was passed down to different generation verbally. “The king became intoxicated, but since according to Ugandan musicians it is taboo to call a king “drunk”, the people said he was “happy”. He praised the abaakisimba (those who planted the bananas), become so happy and relaxed that he begun to move and dance. The women imitated the Kabaka’s swing hips and the men with their drums, mimicking his steps.” (Katelin Gray’11 2010:78-83)

While Katelin Gray presented the above, daily monitor reports that “one time Kabaka Suuna went out to visit in one of his counties where his subjects were waiting to meet him. And one of the surprises they had prepared for him was a drink, a mixture of sweet bananas called (Embidde) and millet (omuwemba), he was served the drink in a calabash locally known as “Endeku” as they were no fine glasses like is the case today. The king liked the taste of the brew, so he drunk on and on and naturally got drunk. It was unheard of for one to say that the king had got drunk, so when the Kabaka got drunk he said that “abaakisimba be baguwumya” translated that those who planted the sweet bananas are the reason the brew tastes this good. So from his words came the rhythm accompanies to the Baakisimba dance and drums for the kabaka left, each of his steps was recounted by his words, “abakisimba be baguwomya”, and when you keenly listen to the drum arrangement you will hear those words. As the subjects applauded the kabaka, his entertainer who he moved with wherever he went took note and decided to play drums to this sequence and that’s how the dance and music came about.”(Batte R. 2021)

It should be noted that the kabaka(king) had seven groups of musicians within the palace walls who performed at various times of each day that is to say; “Abakondere”(the king’s trumpeters and praise drummers), the “Abaongo ba kabaka”(the king’s lyre, fiddle and flute band), “Abalere ba kabaka”(the king’s flute players), “Akadinda”(xylophone), “entamivu” ensemble (composed of small xylophone and drums), “Entenga” drum-chime (it is a battery of 12 tuned drums) and lastly is the “Omunanga”(the king’s harpist). (Peter Cooke 1996). It should be remembered that such musicians were the ones that the king used to move with whenever he was visiting any place in the kingdom.

However, further research reveals that there are three major movements in the dance that were created after the royal musicians mimicking the king's graceful movements that is to say Baakisimba, Nankasa and Muwogola,(Batte R.2021). Nankasa is fast paced, with rhythmic hip movements and intricate footwork that is to say the dance involves a circular movement of the waist, tip toeing, and specific hand gestures, with movements often dictated by the tempo of music. On the other hand, Muwogola is a dance that is usually performed alongside Nankasa and Baakisimba and it is characterized with energetic, rhythmic and synchronized movement. That is to say the dance involves intensive flowing waist movements and rhythmic hip rotation featuring a circular formation often with dancers moving in a way that showcases both grace and strength and the speed or the tempo of the dance is dictated by the music.

Music and dance are highly integrated to create a unified genre called Baakisimba. The Baganda create specific drum rhythms that induce particular body movements and any changes in the music propose changes in the body movement. As a result of this integration, any innovations in the dance movements result into recreations in the drum music and vice versa. Moreover, there is a constant interaction between musicians, dancers, and the audience. And yet, this interaction does not only contribute to the fluid meaning in baakisimba, but also participates in the structuring of music and dance.

As Nicholas Ssempijja cites Andy Bennett in one of his works that the role of the audience is also an important aspect in the meaning generation, especially from performances (African music in context, institutions, culture, and identity). For instance, energetic drumming induces vigorous dancing, and yet, when the audience applauds the interaction is intensified more. However, the vigor of the dance is dependent on the performance contexts; a performance in the church will require a reserved behavior than one in a village context at a wedding party.

During the performance of baakisimba, when performers and the audience interact, the audience creates new sounds beyond what the performers produce. That is to say, the audience shouts, ululates, and claps; adding to the structure of the sound heard when the composition is recorded.

2.4 CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN BAAKISIMBA

In Buganda, like in many African cultures, roles in music and dance performance have long been assigned based on the performers' being "men" or "women." Until the mid-nineteenth century, the female-women within the palace and women outside the palace, in most cases, were the dancers. However, during the mid-nineteenth century, the male-women also began to dance within the palace. Yet, until the 1940s, it was unheard-of for a man to dance formalized baakisimba outside the palace (Nannyonga S. Tamuusuzza 2005).

On the other hand, until the 1960s the males-male-women in the palace and men outside the palace-were assigned to beat the drums in baakisimba performances. However, female-women beat the drums only during rituals that empowered the king and the kingdom. Although the ngoma (drum,) the basic instrument in Baakisimba, is also central to the self-identification of the Baganda, that is to say every clan has a specific drum rhythm that identifies it and women outside the palace were not allowed to beat it or even touch it. However, women occupied the dancing space until the mid-twentieth century when they started encroaching on the "forbidden fruit," the drum.

Since the 1960s, men lost control over women's access to the drum when manly-women and sisters began beating the drum outside the palace, especially in churches and schools. While Baakisimba has evolved through time and location, change was especially noteworthy in 1967 after the Buganda kingdom was abolished, because of the radical social upheaval of the time. Drastic changes in the music, dance choreography, costumes, and the context of performance became especially evident. Baakisimba began to be performed in theatrical contexts, schools, and churches. Further, more womanly-males joined the dancing arena, while manly-females, although still with limitations, began to beat the drums. With changed political, cultural, social, and economic structures of the Baganda, baakisimba took on new meanings and helped to negotiate new gender identities, roles, and relations in significant ways.

While Baakisimba dance and music of the Baganda people of Uganda has been redefined and re-configured throughout its history and there has been many continuities and changes in the performance of this music over the years that is to say females are the dancers and the males are the drummers. However with the commercialization of formally communal and free performance practices and it's now common to find troupes with one or two male dancers as

well as female troupes in which females are both drummers and dancers which was not the case before.

It should be noted that after the abolition of kingdoms in Uganda by Dr. Apollo Milton Obote by 1967, everything changed in line with Baakisimba for example there existed two names of Baakisimba that is village Baakisimba and palace Baakisimba which was not the case before. Village Baakisimba was performed during ceremonies, celebration of life, ancestral spiritual rites among others well as palace Baakisimba was performed before the king in the palace (Nannyonga S. Tamusuuzza2015). She continues to talk about different innovations in performance practices, musical accompaniment, choreography and costuming of baakisimba in her work (competitions in school festivals 2003:97-118).

2.5 RAGGA MUSIC AND ITS ORIGIN

Ragga, also known as ragamuffin music, is a subgenre of dancehall and reggae that emerged in Jamaica during the 1980s. It is characterized by its heavy use of electronic instrumentals, digital production, sampling, and fast-paced, rhythmic vocal styles often delivered in Jamaican Patois language. Unlike earlier roots reggae, which emphasized acoustic sounds, spiritual themes, and Pan-African unity, ragga tends to focus on urban life, materialism, social issues, and energetic dance elements.

It should be noted that many Scholars and sources provide varying emphases on its origins, often tying it to technological shifts, socio-economic conditions, and cultural re-appropriations:

According to cultural historian Louis Chude-Sokei, Ragga originated in Jamaica's urban ghettos amid the 1980s political climate under leaders like Edward Seaga, alongside influences from the cocaine trade and multinational capitalism. He views it as a departure from 1970s roots reggae's Rastafarian focus on mythic African origins and exile, instead embracing a "raw, materialistic presence" with digital sounds that highlight local realities like gun violence and ghetto specifics. Chude-Sokei traces its roots back to the 1960s rude-boy culture, where unemployed youth drew from American films and ska/reggae to assert outlaw identities, and he contrasts ragga's "aesthetics of presence" with roots reggae's nostalgia for elsewhere (1994).

Anthropologist Norman C. Stolzoff, in his book *Wake the Town and Tell the People: Dancehall Culture in Jamaica* (2000) situates ragga within the broader evolution of Jamaican dancehall culture, emphasizing its emergence as a youth-driven response to economic hardship and urbanization in the post-independence era (2000).

Linguist and cultural studies scholar Stascha Bader explores ragga in her 1986 dissertation *Worte wie Feuer: Dancehall Reggae and Raggamuffin*, framing it as an extension of dancehall reggae with fiery, expressive lyrics that reflect the aggressive, street-level concerns of Jamaica's younger generation in the 1980s (1986).

In analyses of gender and representation, such as in scholarly work on ragga's cultural impact, it is seen as originating in the mid-1980s with a shift toward inclusivity, incorporating dancehall elements and patois to celebrate Black women's sexuality and agency while co-modifying it in a socio-economic context of material success. This perspective highlights ragga's ambivalent portrayal of women empowerment through visibility and subversion of norms but often disrespectful in male-dominated narratives and notes the rise of female artists like Lady Saw by the 1990s (Carolyn Cooper, 1995).

Ethnomusicologists like Lisa Gilman and John Fenn discuss ragga's global adaptations, but in its Jamaican roots, they align it with the influx of electronic music styles in the 1980s that appealed to youth through competitions and male symbols, though it quickly spread and fused with local traditions elsewhere.

A pivotal moment commonly cited across these views is the 1985 release of Wayne Smith's "Under Mi Sleng Teng," produced by King Jammy using a Casio synthesizer, which popularized the digital "Sleng Teng" riddim¹ and marked ragga's break from analog reggae sounds. The term "raggamuffin" itself reclaims a colonial-era pejorative for ragged street youth, transforming it into a badge of ghetto pride. Overall, while consensus points to 1980s Jamaica as the birthplace amid technological and social changes, scholars differ in focus—some on political/economic drivers, others on gender dynamics or linguistic identity (Norman C. Stolzoff, 2000).

¹ The world riddim is the Jamaican patois pronunciation of "rhythm". Historically, it means the instrumental backing track or groove of a reggae, dancehall, or ska song, which multiple different artists often use to record separate vocal tracks.

2.6 RAAGA MUSIC IN UGANDA

Ragga music in Uganda, often synonymous with or fused into the local genre with different names such as kidandali /afro ragga or Ugandan dancehall, represents a vibrant adaptation of Jamaican influences blended with indigenous sounds. It emerged as a dominant force in the country's popular music scene, reflecting urban youth culture, globalization, and socio-economic shifts. Below is a breakdown of its origins, evolution, key figures, and factors contributing to its rise and any perceived collapse?

Bennetta Jules (1987:93) suggests that popular artists often produce for diverse genres. They draw upon commercial genres originally targeted towards outsiders in order to enrich local, popular art forms. By the same token, they borrow syncretism ally from both conventional and new communal art forms to diversify their art works. Popular artist may aspire toward and enter the gallery trade or elite publishing networks while simultaneously producing “for the people”. The product diversification is carefully, even artfully calculated.

Ragga in Uganda traces its roots to the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Jamaican raggamuffin (ragga) styles was characterized by fast-paced rhythms, patois-inflected lyrics, and electronic production infiltrated the local scene through imported music from artists like Shabba Ranks and Buju Banton. This artist played a crucial role in shaping the musicians in Uganda since they were inspired by songs of Jamaican artists such as Buju Banton, Shaba Ranks among others.

Richard Ssewakilyanga says that artists like Shanks Vivi Dee who was originally a back-up singer for Big 5 Band in Kampala released some Luganda Ragga songs and his first song was Bundu. This was the first rap song to be produced by Kasiwukiri Studio based on traditional folklore and it was produced by Steve Jean. Another artist Ragga Dee (Dan Kazibwe Kyeyune) has been a household name throughout the 1990s through and has been associated with Ange Noir discotheque. Ragga Dee influenced the music of the 1990s with his very groovy Ragga style that he sings in Luganda. Ragga Dee's style has not only mixed Luganda with Jamaican Ragga lyrics but it has also consistently kept everyone busy on the dance floor. Ragga Dee is one of the artistes that have been very consistent in the kind of music they play.

As the Ragga fame was being popularized another space was emerging where new forms of popular music were being nurtured. These include Sabrina's Bar and Restaurant among others. This space started the karaoke nights every Saturday thus offering an opportunity to

emerging and would-be young stars to try out their newly found skills. This inspired many artists in Uganda thus populating the style of music in the country.

Some of the factors for the development of Ragga music style in Uganda include the following;

Different DJs in Uganda contributed to making ragga and vernacular rap popular in Kampala these include Dj Charlie, Dj Elves among others. Dj Charlie insisted on playing some of the best dance hall ragga music mostly from the Jamaican Buju Banton's raspy voiced tradition thus popularizing the style of music in Uganda. Furthermore, over the years Charlie improved the Ange Noir discotheque to such an extent that it now looks like any first class discotheque in Europe or America whilst also catering for various tastes of the Ugandan audience were he also hired some of the best names in the Kampala DJ world including people like Robert 'Rasta Rob' Ogwal who popularized the mixing of ragga music with local rhythms.

It should be remembered that DJ's RS Elvis also found a career slot in radio which had a more mass oriented audience than the six hundred to eight hundred capacity of Ange Noire. Elvis took ragga records from Ange Noire which he played on his Friday nights mid 1990s Radio Sanyu Hot Mix programs, many of which were recorded and learnt by heart by aspiring musicians including the artiste of the new millennium Jose Chameleon among others.(Richard Ssewakilyanga)

This liberalization of the radio economy led to 'aesthetic liberalization' of popular music and art in Kampala. 23rd December 1993 will always be remembered in Uganda as a great day in the history of the liberalization of radio waves. This was the day when Sanyu FM, the first FM station in Uganda was opened. The station started by playing the latest global hits, which for a long time were only accessible through audiocassettes, sold on Kampala's streets. In the era of audiocassettes therefore good music was expensive music. Now an FM station was pouring out these expensive musical vibes onto the airwaves free of charge (Ssewakiryanga Richard. 1999)

Another major turning point in the evolution of Ragga music in Uganda was the proliferation of young people's neighborhood singing groups. These were Young people in urban high schools and university who used to stage music shows for their colleagues during school holidays and many of them went around miming the latest R&B hits. These included groups like the Muyenga Youths, Sharing Youth, Bugolobi Youths, Bukoto Youth and Hot Soul

Crew, which staged small concerts 14 for their friends. Most of their performance was based on the music videos of MTV and some of the music that was coming out on the MNET pay TV channel that had just opened its doors in Kampala.

In conclusion, these first two stations were modeled on the western FM stations and so, initially targeted the urban educated elite where the proprietors were unwilling to experiment especially because they did not know how the audience would receive these FM stations. They hired presenters who could speak very good English with a good radio personality. Good music was free and the entertainment industry was growing. To date over 40 new stations have been opened up in all parts of the country targeting different audiences in both rural and urban Uganda. Most of these FM stations are now modeled around the diverse ethnic groups in Uganda as well as the different social classes. These factors all impacted on the evolution of Ugandan music industry thus popularizing Ragga music in Uganda.

2.7 THE BACKGROUND OF BAX RAGGA MUSIC

Bax Ragga is the style of music that was already in existence and given a name after by an artist called Aziz Azion after his song called “am bad”. The term Bax Ragga is a combination of two different music genres that is to say Baakisimba which is literally the traditional music of the Baganda people from and Ragga music from Jamaica. These two music genres were fused together to come up with one new genre of music that was to represent the music scene of music. The idea was to give a genre a name, a Ugandan name that can identify Ugandan music just like Afro beats from Nigeria, Congolese Rhumba from Congo among others. (Joseph Batte. Interview, 8th September, 2025). He continues to say that it's a combination of two words that is to say Baakisimba and Ragga. They are compatible because they follow 16 beats, meaning they follow the same time signature. Many artists have created songs in Bax Raga style before it was given a name such as Afrigo band with their song “nfunda n’omubi nga azaala” so nice by David Lutalo, and many others.

According to Google, the song Am Bad by Aziz Azion has conflicting release dates across different platforms, suggesting different album release or digital updates, but it appears original song and video were released around mid-2015 that is to say between July and September.

It should be noted that Cultural music serves as a foundation for understanding different music styles, and knowledge is acquired through both formal and informal music training, as

well as participation in performances. This is what the founder of the name of this genre of music did in order to learn how to fuse traditional music /folk music (Bakisimba) with dancehall reggae (Ragga) from Jamaica in order to come up with a new style of music in Uganda called Bax Ragga.

Bax Ragga was once, one of the popular genre of music in Uganda by the time it was given a name and by 2022 it begun to fade out that's why now many don't know this genre of music. For example in one of my interviews my informant doing music at Makerere University said "Bax Ragga music is it Ugandan, is it African or is it from outside I don't know...." Meaning the genre is no longer being known / being recognized. (Personal interview, October, 8th, 2025)

It should be noted that popular means something loved, admired, liked, enjoyed and many others by many people, a particular person or a group of people. Many scholars have come up with different definitions of popular music and I will go with this definition which says "Popular music is the music that is time and cultural specific." (Nanyonga Slyvia Tamusuza, 2006). Because this means what is popular today may not be popular tomorrow and what is popular in one culture may not be popular to another culture.

The musical scene of Uganda has much changed since independence. Traditional music's has been encouraged throughout the whole country and this has led to an increase in musical practices in some areas. (Gerhard Kubik. February, 1996). That is why we see different fusions occurring such as Bax Ragga among others. And below is the breakdown of each genre that was fused to come up with this genre of music in Uganda that is Bakisimba and Ragga.

2.8 MAKERERE UNIVERSITY IN DETAILS

Universities in Uganda are institutions of higher learning that offers degree programs and postgraduate studies in various disciplines and are further classified into Public Universities funded by the government. Some of these public universities include: Makerere University, Kyambogo University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, and Gulu University among others.

Since Makerere University is the case study for the current research, the researcher provides an in- depth understanding of the institution. Makerere University was established in 1922,

and it is Uganda's largest and oldest higher education institution. It is a leading research-intensive university in Africa and offers a broad range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The institution has ten colleges and the School of Law. These are the different colleges at Makerere university; College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), College of Business and Management Sciences (CoBAMS), College of Computing and Information Sciences (CoCIS), College of Education and External Studies (CEES), College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT), College of Health Sciences (CHS), College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS), College of Natural Sciences (CoNAS), College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Bio-security (CoVAB) and the School of Law (Functions independently but is equivalent to a college)

At Makerere University, majority of the students in all ten colleges are youths between 18 and 24 years, and they listen to various music genres, including Kadongo kamu, which is the main theme of the current study.

2.9 YOUTHS AND KAMPALA

Kampala is the capital city of Uganda and is one of the fastest-growing cities in Africa with annual population growth rates of 5.6%. Currently, the city has a daytime population of over 4.5 million and is home to nearly 1.7 million people, 60% of whom reside in informal settlements. With the rapidly increasing population, the city is grappling with major infrastructure and service planning and provision deficits.

Young people constitute most of Kampala's population that is to say 46% of residents are under the age of 20 – 30 years and have huge economic and political significance. There is a vast data gap on the youth demographic as well as on youth-targeted initiatives in Kampala. As a result, many youths are unable to benefit from governmental and non-governmental programs, while key actors are working in silos and basing their activities on largely out-of-date data and information. Additionally, young people remain highly vulnerable in different aspects which includes the following:-

Exploitation by elites to further political agendas, although certain youths are capitalizing on their association with political elites to promote their own personal interests and ambitions, violence and insecurity, which they are also accused of creating. And Teenage pregnancies and drug abuse thus making them susceptible to a vicious cycle of poverty and vulnerability.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE PERCEPTIONS OF BAX RAGGA MUSIC AMONG YOUTHS IN KAMPALA:

A CASE STUDY OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

3.0 INTRODUCTION.

This chapter is aimed at making an in-depth analysis on the perception of Bax Ragga Music among the youths in Kampala: A case study of Makerere University students and also engages in the discussion of data collected from the field, in addition, it also aims at answering the major research objectives and research questions as previously set up before field work. This chapter also contains various themes and sub-themes as developed from the gathered information from field work as told by the various informants. Since my hypothesis is that Bax Ragga has faded a bit in Uganda, this chapter is intended at examining my hypothesis in a way of finding out whether it is true that Bax Ragga music has truly faded in Uganda.

3.1 CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF BAX RAGGA MUSIC

In this study, I conducted different interviews regarding the perception of Bax Ragga music among the youths in Kampala and Makerere University as the case study and many informants had different origins and understanding of the term Bax Ragga as explained below.

First and foremost, Bax Ragga music is a genre of music that was not new in Uganda but rather a named fusion of existing traditional music called Bakisimba and modern elements of Ragga music by one of the musician from Uganda called Aziz Azion and the idea was to create a genre of music with a Ugandan name in order to be with the Ugandan origin. (²Batte

² Mr. Joseph Batte is a music journalist, producer, arranger, and veteran in the Ugandan music industry who studied a little music theory from school of music and he came from a strong music family. His father was called Edmund Hanington Batte, who was the first black to own a recording studio in Uganda, and he wrote many compositions like he wrote victory in 1979 for UBC when they are going to read news, the matters anthem, “Kama katono by Elly Wamala”, then he wrote “Kana ka kawalya kawanyana”, and he was also the producer of Afrigo Band for a long time. Mr. Joseph’s uncle called George William Kakoma wrote the National Anthem of Uganda, as an expert informant with decades of experience, his perspectives provide rich insights into the origins, evolution, strengths, challenges, and future prospects of **Bax Ragga** music.

J, interview, on 8th Sept 2025). He continues to give different examples to show that Bax Ragga existed long time by saying;

“Bax Ragga has been there groups like Afrigo Band (sings nfunda n’omubi ngazala). Now remove the melodies. You can rap over it so it is Baakisimba, the dance hall, which is their, and then the rapping of the singing over them that is the creation, you know, like toasting over a beat, giving it a different flavor altogether. That's what these young men did. They were trying to experiment. And of course, they stumbled on a style which is ours, but has always been there”.

He continues to bring the examples of origins of different genres of music related to Bax raga like Kadongo Kamu among others that is to say;

“.....that was how Kadongo Kamu was born as well. Because Kadongo Kamu was born out of, you know Elly Wamala got a guitar and strummed a Baakisimba beat,.....So that is how, when you get a traditional instrument or whatever traditional instruments, and then you fuse them with the a modern whatever then you create.....”

In addition to the above, Mr. John K also described Bax Ragga music as a distinctly Ugandan innovation that rooted in the traditional folk music of the central region called “engoma enganda”, particularly **Baakisimba**³, that was fused with Ragga elements to create a groovier sound suitable for the young generation.

Just like Mr. Batte J, informant two also do believe that Bax raga music existed way back but it lacked a name to describe this genre of music and he says that Aziz Azion gave the style of music the name and popularized it through his different songs such as “Omulembe Guno” among others and this positions Bax Ragga music as a cultural hybrid of music rather than a completely new invention of music in Uganda;

“.....there was a paradigm shift. You remember we had the kadongo Kamu, The kadongo Kamu, when you listen to the bass drum that is played, it is almost the same with the Baakisimba, but then the Baakisimba, it alone, would not move the generation now you understand, Now Aziza, in fact, Aziz Azion gives it a name, Bax Ragga did not exist, not

³ Baakisimba is a traditional music and dance form originating from the people of Buganda kingdom in the central region of Uganda and the instruments used in this music and dance includes; Engalabi, Namunjoloba, Ensasi /shakers, Empunyi among others.

until Aziz Azion named it.**Omulembe guno ogwaleero** but you very well know that this song existed way back. It was not a creation of Aziz Azion. So what Aziz did was to get a folk song that existed earlier on, and he fused it with the Ragga, which was a genre that was booming you understand so he made what we call the Bax Ragga”. (John K. interview, 19th, September, 2025)

He also said that the groove of Baakisimba naturally lends itself to celebratory music thus making it engaging and danceable not only to the performer but also to the audience. This explains why songs in this genre tends to be energetic and interactive making them to be similar to Congolese music structures for example he said in the interview I had with him that; “....the groove, it's not one that can let you sit. The way it's played, yeah, it can't let you sit.....” (John K. interview, 19th, September, 2025).

Following the contextual understanding of Bax Ragga music, Mr. Kiguli A. however also describes Bax Ragga music as a fusion of traditional music or folk pop and afro beats of which he says many perceive it as Ragga genre in Uganda and this fusion was created to modernize traditional Ugandan folk music called **engoma enganda** and he also credits Aziz Azion as the person to give this genre of music the name thus giving this genre of music strong visibility and relevance in Uganda;

“....it is a fusion of our folk pop you get it and afro beat what people here identify as Ragga. You get it. So I think the fusion of these two, it's a fusion of two genres the Ragga beat and also the folk, our folk styles. You get it? What here people call the **Engoma enganda**. So literally, it's like they wanted to modernize **engoma enganda**....”

Unlike other informants above, Mr. Kasekende D. says that Bax Ragga music is a fusion of the modern music like Afro beat and some other genres such as R&B, with the local drum rhythms known as Baakisimba. And he says that Raga is some style of modern rap recorded in studio today thus a fusion of Baakisimba with Raga music. (Kasekende D. interview, Nov 3rd, 2025).

Although many informants had a clue about the term Bax Ragga music, others did not know anything about this genre of music and this could be due to the fact that many of these informants with the clue about Bax Ragga music have been in the music industry for so long and they are exposed to different music genres all over the globe, and to those who do not

know this genre of music it could be due to the fact that they are not being exposed to the music or even ignorance of them to the extent of asking where this style of music originates and where it is found. For example one of my informants when I asked her about this style of music she said;

“Is it African? Is it Ugandan? Is it from out? I don't know”. Meaning either she lacked information about this style of music or she had never heard about it. (Ayebazibwe. L. interview, November, 3rd, 2025)

Unlike madam Ayebazibwe, other informants describe Bax Ragga music as the genre of music that originated from Uganda and it is a combination of the central drums, which are from Baganda the central region of Uganda and this fusion is of the Baganda drums with the Ragga beats or the Ragga percussions. It should be noted that they fuse different instruments, mainly from the central that is to say Buganda. And they use Baakisimba rhythms most of the time. (Monnedde. H. And Bwagi. S. interview November, 3rd, 2025)

3.2 THE PERCEPTION OF BAX RAGGA MUSIC AMONG THE YOUTHS

Throughout this research, different youths from Kampala a case study of Makerere University students have different perceptions about Bax Ragga music as discussed below.

To begin with, Bax Ragga music is viewed positively as a genre that preserves and revitalizes Uganda's traditional sound thus making it appealing to contemporary audiences. It should be noted that during field work the role of Bax Ragga Music in providing originality and national identity was emphasized by many informants as Mr. Kiguli A. says in an interview:

“It is a genre that... represents our originality and who we are... When I listen to Bax Ragga, it is literally somebody providing room for our traditional sound to still have relevance even in the modern setting.” (Kiguli A. Interview, 2025)

Youths who knew Bax Ragga music genre throughout this research, generally had a positive perception, by describing this genre of music as something groovy, danceable, culturally authentic, and capable of evoking happiness and a sense of Ugandan identity. For example in an interview with one of the youths from Makerere University, he described Bax Ragga as danceable genre of music and also cultural authentic as seen below;

“When I listen to that song [Okuzala Kujagana], the only thing that comes in my mind is just to get a cloth, tie it in my waist and start dancing... I feel that belonging of being a Muganda.” (Monedde H. Interview, 2025)

However much the youths generally had a positive perception on Bax Ragga music, some did not agree on that since they had negative perception to a certain extent. That is to say some criticize the genre with not being relatable to their daily lives as explained below by one of the youths during interview;

“.....the song was not that much relatable into my daily life, **Omulembe** is a Luganda term meaning the generation. If you are to analyze that song, the only thing you can vibe to is the groovy beat of the Baakisimba drums. That groovy beat can make you dance, enjoy the moment, but you can't relate to the lyrics.....” (Kassekende D. Interview, 2025)

In addition to the above, this takes us back to another informant who says that Bax Ragga music is celebratory music or Mikolo music which is created for celebrations as it was done from different generations. It should be remembered that a major convergence across the interviews is that Bax Ragga songs are predominantly linked to **Emikolo** (introduction and traditional wedding ceremonies). The informants explained that this is logical because Baakisimba is inherently a celebratory rhythm traditionally used in festive cultural functions since it is a fusion of the two that is to say Baakisimba and Ragga thus making it be in form of ritual music and that's why all the songs in this style of music have lyrics which are closely related as Mr. John K explains in one of the interviews;

“..... So here we are, and the song and the moment is a celebratory moment. And then you, you know, so Baakisimba, culture wise, or early in the tradition. Yeah, this was a style that was played to celebrate. So that is why every song comes out well, when it is a celebration song.” (John K. Interview, 2025)

According to this research many youths have a perception that Bax Ragga music is outdated, traditional, conservative and music for older people since its more of the traditional music elements such as Baakisimba drum rhythm and others and that is why they don't even bother to give this type of music time but rather listen to what they seem to as music for the youths since its music from outside Uganda as many informants explained for example: “....the general perception that Bax Ragga music is a old genreSo if lesser artists are doing this,

so literally no people will listening to it, that is why many people do not want to do it because they're traditional and they don't feel like many of the young people will relate to it". (Mugoya M. Interview, 2025)

In conclusion, the perception of Bax Ragga music genre differs from one person to another since they have different perspectives and this may be due to the cultural diversity in Uganda that is to say there are many languages and traditions followed in Uganda thus not making Bax Ragga the priority and the above are some of the positive and negative perceptions of different youths un Kampala about Bax Ragga music genre in Uganda.

3.3 IMPACTS OF BAX RAGGA MUSIC

Bax Ragga music genre has had a profound impact on the lives of people both positively, negatively and emotionally as diagnosed below according to different reports got from different informants during this research.

Positively, many informants believe that Bax Ragga has a largely positive influence on young people. That is to say, It helps them connect with their cultural heritage and fosters a sense of pride and belonging while remaining modern and danceable through different elements en-cooperated in this style of music which are traditional for example the language used, Baakisimba rhythms, the dances in the videos and many others thus making it particularly relevant for Ugandan identity both locally and in the Diaspora as many informants stated:

"Everything that teaches us about where we come from and who we are... I would perceive it as something that is positive without a doubt..... when you look at this kind of genre, it is a genre that represents our originality and who we are. So when I listen to Bax Ragga, it is literally somebody is providing room for our traditional sound to have to, to still have relevance. Even in the modern setting". (Kiguli A. Interview, 2025)

Secondly, Bax Ragga music has produced new notable hits for artists such as Navio ("Nawulira"), Bebe Cool (kabulengane), aziz Azion (Omulembe Guno), Omulangira Suuna (ya Allah) and others. These artists have tried so much to bring this style of music to live by popularizing the genre and among all Aziz Azion is more credited for giving this style of music a name called Bax Ragga thus creating a new distinctive sound as Mr. John K give him his flowers during an interview;

“Now Aziza, in fact, Aziz Azion gives it a name, yes, Bax Ragga did not exist, not until Aziz Azion named it. Yeah, so Kabulengane comes after Omulembe guno ogwaleero but you very well know that this song existed way back. It was not a creation of Aziz Azion....” (John K. Interview, 2025)

However much the music created in the Bax Ragga style is not related to the daily lives of some of the youths but to a certain extent the songs in this style of music help to pass down information to different generations in form of edutainment since the information in the lyrics sometimes talks of different crucial matters thus providing guidance to the youths as one of my informants explains below.

“.....look at most of the songs that are done in folk pop, message is the key factor. You get it? Either, they used to do them to talk about childbirth. Hunting if you, if you trace back, you get it. So the message is, is very intact....” (Kiguli A. Interview, 2025)

Furthermore, some informants acknowledged the danceable and celebratory nature of Bax Ragga that evokes emotions thus creating joy, uplifts moods, and fosters cultural pride since the music being played originates from the roots of our cultures. For example one of my informants says that:

“It is a really fun genre to play... the beats, the rhythms are really exciting....when I listen to Bax Ragga songs, they give me joy, they give me happiness, ...they are very strong rhythms, and sometimes they are also at fast tempos, so it's about the catchy melody mostly in disregard to the message, so I would like to say they bring up emotions of happiness, in case you are having a good time like a party,.” (Matovu, J. Interview, 2025)

And another one said;-

“what I can talk about, evoking the emotions, like if I listen to those songs, I can mention **Okuzala Kujagana** by Irene Namatovu, so if I listen to that song, the only thing that comes in my mind is just to get a cloth, tie it in my waist and start dancing, because I feel that belonging of being a Muganda or being from Uganda or being a Ugandan person, so if I listen to that song, I feel well, because I feel like we have a music that originated from Uganda or from our societies in Uganda.” (Monedde H. Interview, 2025)

In addition to the above, Bax Ragga is highlighted to have a competitive advantage of a chance to reclaim our position to the international market since this music belongs to us as the Ugandans and this music is our original sound as the Nigerians having their sound called Afro Beat ⁴thus Uganda being recognized internationally, due to its sound with the ability to make people want to dance and feel connected to their roots.

“.... Bax Ragga can give us a better cooperative advantage due to the uniqueness, the authenticity of our sound; we can compete on the market space. Because music is a universal now it's a universal on a universal market. We are not going to be better than Chris Brown at R&B. No, we are not going to be better than Asake, yeah, with the Afro beats, you understand, but we are going to be better than Chris Brown in the Bax Ragga because he can't do it.” (John K. Interview, 2025)

In a conclusive manner, Bax Ragga music holds strong cultural value and is appreciated for its groove, danceable, and identity-forming potential, and due to this I think this style of music can act as sign of identity to the Ugandan sound just like the Afro Beats of Nigeria and Amapiano from South Africa so long as it is given more time in Uganda and adopted by Ugandans.

3.4 LIMITATIONS/ REASONS FOR DECLINE OF BAX RAGGA

In my conversation with one of the informants I had a feeling back in mind that Bax Ragga music faded since its golden age that is between the Year 2017-2018 but during this research one of the informant approved my point by saying that this style of music has faded a bit;

“.....Yeah. The Bax Ragga, by the way, is, if you have noticed, it is sort of like faded a bit, and then when it faded” (Batte J. Interview, 2025). Below are the limitations or reasons for the decline of Bax Ragga music in Uganda as they were presented by different informants during field work.

⁴ Afro Beats were created by Fela Kuti in 1975 and the percussion is totally traditional. The template for this style of music that was set up by Fela Kuti, he fused jazz, funk and traditional **Ibo** instruments to come up with a distinctive sound called Afro Beats.

3.4.1 Lack of Professionalism and Music Education

During this research, many informants repeatedly highlighted systemic weaknesses in the Ugandan music industry that is to say lack of music education and professionalism particularly the absence of trained **music directors** (as opposed to mere managers), poor investment in arrangement, sound design, pre- and post-production, and limited formal music education among practitioners thus making this style of music to fade. As Mr. Batte J tries to explain to me in one of the interview carried out during field work;

“.....but you go to the studio, they make a beat “man nteramu beat awo nsobole okutekako ebigambo byange” then you start free styling. What the hell is that? And that's where the sickness is. Lack of music knowledge.....” (Batte J. Interview, 2025)

Others say;

“And also the other thing is that, there are not so many producers that are doing it well, you get it, so you realize that most Bax Ragga songs quite have a similar element and this is due to the fact that the producers and musicians do lack music knowledge.....” (Kiguli A. Interview, 2025)

3.4.2 Competition from other genres of music

It should be noted that Uganda is flooded with many different imported sound or genres of music for example reggae, R&B, Afro Beats, Congolese Rhumba, Hip hop among others which many people in Uganda are interested in more than their own music and many have ended up adopting these styles of music since these genre of music are more on the international market thus making it hard for Bax Ragga music to be heard in Uganda because all artists in Uganda are focusing on the international market leading to decline of this genre of music as many informants explained during different interviews below:

“For example, in Uganda, we have a flooded imported market of sounds, so now the competition is hard. It's too much against Bax Ragga music.....it is very hard to find market, yeah, for this style now.....” (John K. Interview, 2025).

3.4.3 Laziness of musicians and lack of consistence

In addition to Mr. John K's augment, many artists have become lazy due to different imported sound that is seen as something simple making many artists to go in for them. That is to say people always go for simple things where they think that Simplicity is the way to go and they have always choose comfort zones and complexes over hard work

"You realize that in Uganda people have been doing certain styles of music that they have referred to as their favorite genres such as Ragga, R&B, maybe a little bit of Zuku, Afro Zuku. So if people are in that, and here we have Bax Ragga, You realize that not so many people are likely to change from those genres to Bax Ragga....." (Kiguli A. Interview, 2025).

In relation to the above, there are few producers doing this style of music in Uganda and those doing it they don't do it well since their music lacks authentic instruments to create authentic sound that really defines our sound as Ugandans thus making few youths to give it time and also opt for it as one of my informants reports during research;

".....And also the other thing is that, there are not so many producers that are doing it well,... so you realize that most Bax Ragga songs quite have a similar element and you see when something looks similar, in most cases, many people might not really appreciate it....". (Mugoya M. Interview, 2025)

In addition to the above, the style of music was not given a lot of time or was not given the best of doubt by different musicians since there was Lack of consistency and collective embrace of the genre after Aziz Azion faced criticism making it to decline as reported by Mr. John K were he says that if this style of music was embraced by many artist, it would have been the best sound from Uganda as he gives the example of the Afro Beats from Nigeria that was created by Fera Kuti as seen below;

".....the fusion was not given the best of doubt. Why? Because, if you remember very well, Aziza Zion comes with a fusion. That's Bax Ragga, you understand, but then he faced a lot of criticism. "Naye nga'te" When you look at songs like "kabulengane" you know! If we had a number of artists, take on the fusion, because this is the thing Afro beats when they were created by the man called **Fela Kuti**, you would realize that many artists embraced it, and hence, up to now, even the grandson, Burna Boy has popularized this style of music you understand, yeah. So there has been consistency, but there wasn't consistency with Aziz, he

faced criticism and then withdrew, yeah but he had done something good you understand, so the consistent, the consistency would help us”. (John K. Interview, 2025)

3.4.4 Monotony and Creative Stagnation

A dominant criticism that emerged from different informant’s interviews is the **monotonous** nature of Bax Ragga music. That is to say, Batte Joseph noted that the repetitive rhythmic patterns have led to listener fatigue, contributing to the genre’s gradual decline in popularity.

“It is sort of like faded a bit... because it's too monotonous. The rhythmic patterns are the same, and then there is not so much that you can do with it.” (Batte J. Interview, 2025)

He also compared this to similar challenges faced by Afrobeat and older Congolese Rhumba, which were revitalized through innovation by different Artists in different styles such as, Afro-trap and Afro-Congo by artists like Fally Ipupa and Innos B. he also continues to blame the producers who are not doing their work in a way of upgrading this style of music and they end up bringing the monotony in this music with no value addition or elements that can make you stand out as a good producer.

“.....Sounding monotonous? And I blame the producers.....Probably the producers could do more, what is the value addition, .what can make you stand out as the producer...” (Batte J. Interview, 2025)

3.4.5 Perception of Bax Ragga Music as “Old” Music

Bax Ragga music is viewed or perceived by many youths in Uganda as “old” or “traditional” or conservative genre of music for older generations and sometimes it is called alternative music since it is associated with traditional or older audiences due to different elements in this style of music such as the rhythms, dances and the information thus not being given so much attention by the young generation in Uganda be it the artists or the audience as Mr. Mugoya Musa Reports in one of his interview about this aspect;

“....the general perception that Bax Ragga music is a old genreSo if lesser artists are doing this, so literally no people will listening to it, that is why many people do not want to do it because they're traditional and they don't feel like many of the young people will relate to it”. (Mugoya M. Interview, 2025)

In relation to the above, Mr. Mugoya Musa continues to say that since the music is referred to as old music many producers do not know how to produce this style of music that why we have few producers doing this genre of music and he went on to appreciate some of these producers for their wonderful job such as Yaled, Eno beats and many others though they don't usually use authentic sound of this style of music but he credited them at a certain point.

“.....And also the other thing is that, there are not so many producers that are doing it well,... so you realize that most Bax Ragga songs quite have a similar element and you see when something looks similar, in most cases, many people might not really appreciate it....”. (Mugoya M. Interview, 2025)

3.4.6 Music Industry Challenges

The music industry has had many challenges that can also be seen as part of the reasons for the decline of Bax Ragga Music in Uganda. To begin with, Survival syndrome is the most common challenge faced by the music industry of Uganda where the artists creates music for not a long time effect but to only get what to eat and one of the informants termed this as a biggest disease which is called Survival syndrome and due to this our music as Ugandans is termed as fake music as Mr. Batte Joseph reported in one of the interviews I had with him. And it is said that it is in only Uganda's music industry, where artists create music primarily for quick market gains rather than artistic development;

“.....the reason as to why we do not embrace this style of music, it's because of so many reasons, but the most outstanding reason is Uganda's type of music industry. It has a very big disease called **survival syndrome**.....we only do music, not to compete or career, but we do music as survival meaning we do not create music to create market, but we create music for market....” (Mr. John K. Interview, 2025)

In relation to survival syndrome, many informants say that survival syndrome has led to another problem that has led to the decline of Bax Ragga music in Uganda which is known as **commercialism**. This is where music is made only for money in other wards artists perform only focusing on money not good music thus corrupting their minds since they always think of making money not making music that is the same case with Bax Ragga music were many did not engage in creating music of the kind because they were more focused on making money rather than making good music thus leading to the decline of this style of music in

Uganda since Few artists and producers are willing to invest in Bax Ragga music due to high financial risk and preference for quick returns.

“....the artists who perform, they are focused on money, the commercialism, has killed it. So they are always thinking about making money instead of making music. That's where the problem is.....” (Batte J. Interview, 2025)

Furthermore, there has been little or no sufficient research that has been done in a way of trying to see how best the genre of music can be improved such as Folk pop or Bax Ragga Music is usually done on traditional and physical instrumentation making the sound to come out more authentic, more original among others and this research has to be done by different stakeholders such as the artists, producers, song writers among others thus leading to the creation of similar or stagnant music which is not related to everyone be it youths, young or elderly.

“.....Folk pop is something that is really done on traditional and physical instrumentation. You get it. So the sound is more authentic, it is more original..... I was telling you that the reason why sometimes this even sound similar is that a lot, not a lot of research were involved, you know, in trying to see how they can improve the genre.....” (Kiguli A. Interview, 2025)

In regard to the problems faced by the music industry of Uganda, **Lack of Professionalism** is also one of the reasons why Bax Ragga music has declined in Uganda. Batte Joseph in one of the interviews with him, he repeatedly highlighted different systemic weaknesses embedded in the Ugandan music industry and these includes the following, the absence of trained **music directors** (as opposed to mere managers), poor investment in arrangement, sound design, pre- and post-production, and limited formal music education among practitioners.

He went on and criticized the over-emphasis on commercialism at the expense of artistic growth and this has labeled much of Ugandan music as “**Ufakies**” (fakes) in the eyes of Nigerian counterparts due to shallow imitation rather than deep creativity. This theme is critical for understanding why youth perceptions of Bax Ragga may be mixed in appreciating its cultural roots while being aware of its artistic limitations. Thus leading to the decline of Bax Ragga music in Uganda.

“.....that's why we're not getting anywhere, because we copy them, we try to rap like them, try to do everything like them, and it takes us nowhere. Do you know why and what the Nigerians call us? **Ufakies**. They call us; you're fake because of our fake music. We're faking, we don't invest in the music, and we are just their fighting for a little space”. (Batte J. Interview, 2025)

Poor Promotion and Marketing strategies used by the artists in Uganda have also led to the decline of Bax Ragga music since market infiltration is hard. This involves Lack of consistent airplay and visibility since Bax Ragga music is seen as alternative music or music for old people that's why even more musicians abandoned the genre due to that since in Uganda there's limited market for this kind of music and the promoters have done little or insufficient work in promoting the music in a way of creating market for the music thus the decline of this style of music in Uganda.

“.....there are so many Ugandan artists that are doing so well, but the market infiltration is hard, you understand, people like the Giovanni Kyiyingi's, yeah, do you know the type of music? Music, “Gwebakola omanyi wetumuyita?” we call it (alternative music). It's alternative and yet it should be our own music”. (John K. Interview, 2025)

3.4.7 The effect of colonialism

It should be noted that the decline of Bax Ragga music in Uganda is closely related or tied to Colonialism and its impacts to the colonized territories since during colonial periods African music, language, dances and art were often pushed to the margins while European forms were presented as more valuable and superior compared to Africans that is why one of the informants from Maker ere university said that colonialism has affected Bax Ragga so much in way that Ugandan always supports what does not belong to them and leave their own hanging hence leading to the down fall of this style of music and this is due to colonizing of the mind⁵ brought by the colonialist..

“.....on my side, I don't know, we the Ugandans, maybe we are more affected by neo colonialism up to now. We don't like appreciating our own things like the Bax raga that started from Uganda, so we are influenced by those outside things, because like I can give you an example of R&B, Jazz that's coming from European countries, Western countries. So,

⁵ Colonizing the mind is a process whereby the colonizers or imperial powers control people's perceptions, cultures, and values through education, language and media. (Ngugi Wa Thiongo 1986)

we love more of the things created by other people than our own things. So, that's why even it has a limited fan base". (Matovu Z. Interview, 2025)

In addition to the above, the weakness of some broadcasting companies such as radio stations and television stations has also contributed to the decline of Bax Ragga music to a certain extent. That is to say broadcasting companies often favor outside countries than Uganda by giving them a lot of airplay treating foreign sounds as more marketable than locally rooted music like Bax Ragga thus leading to the decline of this genre of music since the audience will be used only to foreign sound that Bax Ragga as one of the informants reports during interview;

".....I'm someone who does more of radio and you'll find even that on the mainstream, like even the media itself has not taken part in the playing of this music. You'll find yourself listening to songs from abroad, like outside Uganda. Basically, they are forcing you to love what you're not supposed to love...." (Mugoya M. Interview, 2025)

In conclusion, the above are the reasons as to why Bax Ragga is fading in Uganda or the problems faced by this genre of music and many informants gave their view on this matter however I may disagree with some of the reasons above such as monotony in the music, I think music is ever the same though there some innovations that are put in place to add in spices in the music and I think this style of music was not given too much time by both the artists and the audience that's why it is fading but not due to the monotony sound. For example many Jamaican artists have come up with different riddims such as Sleng Teng riddim, over proof riddim and many others and many artists have used the same Ragga riddims meaning they appreciate the sound thus making this style of music flourish in the world.

3.5 STRATEGIES FOR THE REVIVAL OF BAX RAGGA MUSIC/ THE WAY FORWARD TO THE PROBLEMS FACED BY BAX RAGGA MUSIC

Despite the current situation of Bax Ragga music in Uganda, this genre of music can be revived as many informants explained during the research and below are the possible solutions to the problems faced by Bax Ragga music in Uganda or possible ways of reviving Bax Ragga music to be booming as it was before.

To begin with, thorough research should be done most especially by the artists, producers and song writers in a way of knowing what should be done in order to revive our sound which is Bax Ragga music. Despite its current decline, Batte expressed optimism in one of the interviews that I had with him that Bax Ragga can be revived. He also advocated for deeper engagement with traditional elements, cross-genre experimentation in a way of carrying out research by incorporating EDM, trap, or southern hip-hop and professional arrangement practices which could be so crucial in the revival of our sound called Bax Ragga music.

To make his point clear, he gave a detailed example of how he successfully revitalized Irene Namatovu's song "Nsambira Nyuma Ngejanzi" by using a different tribal tube fiddle player that is to say a Musoga instead of Munyoro, adding orchestral chords, akogo (thumb piano), and real traditional shakers. This practical case demonstrates that innovation and proper production can transform ordinary traditional material into award-winning music (AFRIMA winner). Hence reviving back Bax Ragga music.

"Yes, it can be revived... How can we make it richer? Listen to other sounds... Make good music, and the money will come." (Batte J. Interview, 2025)

In addition to Batte Joseph's argument, Mr. Abdul also observed that Bax Ragga music stagnated because of inadequate research and failure to effectively integrate live traditional instrumentation into modern studio production by both artists and producers. He also went on and highlighted more about his point by putting more emphasis on the element of **authenticity and originality** as something other genres in Uganda should borrow from Bax Ragga to create a distinct national sound which can also be used in a way of reviving back this genre of music. And also cited artists such as the late Phillip Bongole Lutaya as successful examples of meaningful cultural fusion.

".....the live instrumentation. You get it into the audio production; it would make it sound more authentic. And I think more, people would be into it..... The biggest element that I can talk about is the element of originality. That element is very key for these other people that are really producing music...." (Kiguli A. Interview, 2025)

Improvement in the creative process of musicians can help so much in reviving back this sound. It should be noted that a powerful overarching theme is that Uganda lacks a clear defined **national sound** and with this challenge, Batte challenged the notion that musicians

and youths are truly “modern” when they heavily copy foreign styles especially from much smaller markets like Jamaica among others while neglecting rich local resources such as Bax Ragga, Kadodi, Acholi music, and others that can make our music so authentic. He argued that Bax Ragga has the potential to become part of Uganda’s national musical identity if artists stop being “pretenders” and invest in authentic creativity and musical knowledge.

“.....We are now on what is called Dembo. We are using, a Dembo beat. That was created by two producers, Sly and Robbie in Jamaica. Now we are copying music from a country with a population of 1.8 million. And we are almost 40 million, 50 million copying music from a country of 1.8 million, 1.8. You can get the whole of Jamaica and put it here in Kampala and it will fit in. Lacking in the music education, these guys study the music, the creativity. We lack it.....” (Batte J. Interview, 2025)

In addition to the element of improving the creativity of musicians, Mr. John K emphasizes the creative process were musicians could create within the existing materials in order to come with something new to the market and he also gave an example of Dr. Jose Chameleon who used to create within the Congolese music and this could help more in reviving Bax Ragga Music.

“.....Many artists in Uganda created within what chameleon created. You understand, but we needed to have artists who would create out of space, not out of space of what has not existed, but to look at what has existed and create it in their own way, just like a chameleon he created the Afro beats from the Congolese Lingala”. (Mr. John K. Interview, 2025)

Furthermore, institutional support to the creative industry can also help in the fight of reviving Bax Ragga Music in Uganda. these institutions include the government of Uganda, Makerere university and national cultural centre as many of the informants explained for example Mr. John K emphasized that if institutions like Makerere and the government collaborate with the creative arts Bax Ragga music can be revived and he also gave the example of the government of Tanzania that has worked hand in hand with the local artist thus selling all over the world.

“.....Institutions like Maker ere University, institutions like government, they should draw more interest in developing these sounds .Why shouldn't Maker ere University as an institution, have, let's say a project, let's say reviving our sound. Yeah, and on this, they make an album which is supposed to come to the mainstream to serve as an example. You

understand, Let the institutions like government do something about improving this what, you understand, yeah, do research, then also sponsor, also fund. Now, for example, I'll give you a very good example in Tanzania, yeah, in Tanzania, government funds, wasafi, in this way our sound will be revived". (Mr. John K. Interview, 2025)

In the same spirit, informants emphasize the issue of many musicians to engage themselves in creating more music in Bax Ragga style and adopting this style of music in away were we have specific musicians doing only this style of music which will help in creating the target audience of this style of music since these musicians will be having a fun base thus reviving back this genre of music as Monnedde Herbert reports in one of the interviews carried out during fieldwork;

".....I'm suggesting that we should at least have specific musicians who are focusing on Bax raga only. So if we do that, maybe Bax ragga will maybe get the popularity in Uganda because if a musician comes and starts singing only Bax ragga music or songs, people will give him or her attention. But since we don't have specific musicians that are focusing on Bax ragga, someone can sing R&B, then the other time sings dancehall, the other time sings Bax raga he or she ends up confusing people and so we need to work on that. Get the specific musicians to be focusing on just Bax ragga, sing only Bax ragga songs, so people will focus on him. Then Bax ragga will develop in Uganda". (Monnedde H. Interview, 2025)

In addition to the above , Kassekende D. emphasizes the issue of promoting this genre of music by doing many things such as creating good music, pay for the adverts online, promote fellow musicians doing this genre of music among others and at the end this music style can be revived back on trend in Uganda.

"It's just to promote the genre.

Create songs, make it trend, pay for the ads online, promote artists who are doing the genre because that's an original work. It can make Uganda iconic in Africa just by starting up something outstanding and different, new to the market, new to the ears of the people. Just like South Africa came up with Amapiano, Nigeria came up with Afro beats, Congo came up with Lingala. So, if we support our sound, our Bax Ragga, we can become iconic. And people who will listen to the songs of Bax Ragga genre, they will say that that sound originated from Uganda." (Kassekende D. Interview, 2025)

In relation to what Kassekende said, Mr. Kiguli abdul also continues to empower the people and the musicians to recognize this style of music and also recognize those who has come up with the songs in this style of music which will empower more and join the genre thus reviving the genre of music.

“.....let Bax Ragga music be recognized. First of all, let people know it exists. Let it be given its flowers. And the other thing that I would also talk about let it have that social appeal. We have here the National Culture Center. So let it be recognized as a genre and let them create avenues through which people can fully exercise it and put it into play. In addition to this, I would also add artists. Let them do more projects in this genre.....” (Kiguli A. Interview, 2025)

Apart from all the above solutions, decolonization of the minds of Ugandans and Africa at large I think must be the priority if we want to bring out our sound in order to out compete the sound of the colonizers. Decolonization of the mind is the process of overturning the dominant ways of seeing the world and representing reality in ways which do not replicate colonialist values. (Ngugi Wa Thiongo 1986, Mc Leod 2000:22), these dominant ways includes fashion, education, cultures, art and others. Thus bringing back Bax Ragga to the music scene worldwide.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR:

(SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains compressed details about the whole dissertation, breaking down what has been discussed in every chapter. It contains a discussion of the recommendations that the researcher makes that can be considered by future researchers, and also conclusions about the findings of the research. The views got from different experts in the music industry of Uganda, will be triangulated with data collected from Makerere University students to provide a holistic understanding of youth perceptions of Bax Ragga in the discussion chapter that is to say chapter three above.

4.2 SUMMARY

In this dissertation, the researcher has considered the perceptions of Bax Ragga music among the youths in Kampala, a case study of Makerere University students. Were the researcher has made a critical analysis of the topic of study, such as finding out the background of Bax Ragga music in Uganda, and also the prominent Bax Ragga musicians. The study also considers the themes that Bax Ragga musicians consider while composing songs under this genre of music and it is evident that the genre has catered only for one theme about celebration or what is known as **mikolo** theme.

The researcher has also looked at the nature of Bax Ragga music in Uganda and in this study; the findings show that Bax Ragga music is the style of music that was already in existence and given a name after by an artist called Aziz Azion after his song called “am bad”. The term Bax Ragga is a combination of two different music genres that is to say Baakisimba which is literally the traditional music of the Baganda people from and Ragga music from Jamaica. These two music genres were fused together to come up with one new genre of music that was to represent the music scene of music. The idea was to give a genre a name, a Ugandan name that can identify Ugandan music just like Afro beats from Nigeria, Congolese Rhumba from Congo among others. This helps one to understand and distinguish the components of the genre from those of other genres.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The interviews carried out in this research reveal strong consensus that **Bax Ragga is a culturally rich and valuable genre** with significant potential to serve as part of Uganda's national sound. And it is appreciated because of its hybrid nature, danceable groove, and identity-forming qualities are major strengths. However, monotony, limited music knowledge, laziness of musicians, stiff competition from foreign genres, structural industry weaknesses among others have contributed to its decline and this has led to the proving of my hypothesis that Bax Ragga music has faded a bit in Uganda due to the views got from different informants in the field. And to sum it up the main reason as to why Bax Ragga music has faded is neo-colonialism according to me since all the reason above have some special attachment to colonialism.

Although this style of music has faded a bit due to different reasons as highlighted above, there is hope for reviving Bax Ragga music back and boom as it was in the beginning since the findings suggest that with enhanced creativity, professional production, institutional backing or support, intensive research, consistent promotion among others, Bax Ragga can be successfully revived and positioned as authentic Ugandan music that appeals to both local youths and international audiences.

4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Following all the findings in this research, the research has only considered the perceptions of Bax Ragga music among the youths in Kampala, a case study of Makerere University students. Concerning this, the researcher recommends that future researchers should also go beyond what this study has managed to do and find out about the perceptions of other music genres in a way of looking for possible solutions to the problems facing this genre of music and the Ugandan music industry at large. And more efforts should be put into the exposure of Bax Ragga music among the youths, right from young generation to elderly. This can be done through organizing jam sessions where Bax Ragga music is performed, through the assistance of different institutions such as the government, universities like Makerere among others, hence promoting the original Ugandan sound.

In addition to the above, addressing the issue of neo-colonialism where foreign genres of music dominate local music genre and it is commonly done by broadcasting companies, the

researcher thus urge the musicians, media houses, cultural institutions and the government of Uganda to collectively work hand in hand in order to decolonize the music industry of Uganda by prioritizing local content, offering more support to the music industry by investing in indigenous sounds to boost and stimulate its growth and the indigenous instruments, because music has proved to be an avenue of communication, employment, and education to the nation and also monitoring new Bax Ragga artists creating more empowerment among the new generations of artists.

The researcher recommends that the department of performing arts and film of Makerere University, and other music departments in other universities, emphasize the performance of Bax Ragga music so as to make it popular among the young generation. This will help the students to learn and get exposed to our own music with a distinctive mind.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of Informant

NAME	DATE	LOCATION
Matovu Jesse	8 th October, 2025	Makerere University
Bwagi Shakib	8 th October, 2025	Makerere University
Monnedde Herbert	8 th October, 2025	Makerere University
Muganga Willy	11 th , September, 2025	kikoni
Kassekende Douglas	8 th October, 2025	Makerere University
Najjemba Joan	20 th , September, 2025	Kampala
Mr. John K	19 th , September, 2025	Natete
Kiguli Abdul	6 th , September, 2025	Kansanga
Mr. Joseph Batte	8 th , September, 2025	Industrial Area
Lelia Ayebazibwe	8 th , October, 2025	Makerere University
Matovu Zac	25 th , September, 2025	Nsabya
Producer Yaled	19 th , September, 2025	Lungujja

Appendix 2: LIST OF QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

For Music Journalists:

1. How do you think Bax Ragga music has evolved over the years, and what impact has it had on the music industry?
2. What do you think sets Bax Ragga music apart from other genres, and how do you think it resonates with its audience?
3. Have you noticed any trends or shifts in the themes or styles of Bax Ragga music in recent years?
4. How do you think Bax Ragga music is perceived by different demographics or age groups, and what do you think accounts for these differences?
5. What role do you think music journalism plays in shaping public opinion about Bax Ragga music, and how do you approach writing about the genre?

For Songwriters:

1. What inspires your lyrics and themes in your Bax Ragga songs, and how do you think they relate to the experiences of your audience?
2. Can you walk me through your creative process when writing a Bax Ragga song, and how do you think the genre's unique rhythms and melodies influence your work?
3. How do you think Bax Ragga music can be used as a tool for social commentary or activism, and have you ever incorporated these themes into your own music?
4. What do you think is the most important aspect of a Bax Ragga song, and how do you balance creativity with commercial appeal?
5. Have you collaborated with other artists or producers on Bax Ragga projects, and what was that experience like?

For Artists:

1. How did you get started in the Bax Ragga scene, and what motivated you to pursue music as a career?
2. Can you describe your creative process when performing or recording Bax Ragga music, and how do you connect with your audience?
3. What do you think is the most challenging part of creating and performing Bax Ragga music, and how do you overcome these challenges?
4. How do you think Bax Ragga music reflects or challenges societal norms and values, and what role do you think artists play in shaping cultural attitudes?
5. What do you hope your music achieves or communicates to your audience, and how do you think Bax Ragga music can make a positive impact on listeners?

For Producers:

1. What do you think is the key to producing a successful Bax Ragga track, and how do you balance the creative and technical aspects of music production?
2. Can you walk me through your production process when working on a Bax Ragga project, and how do you collaborate with artists and other stakeholders?
3. How do you think Bax Ragga music has evolved in terms of production quality and style, and what trends do you see emerging in the genre?
4. What role do you think producers play in shaping the sound and direction of Bax Ragga music, and how do you stay innovative and ahead of the curve?
5. Have you worked with artists or musicians from different backgrounds or genres, and how do you think these collaborations have influenced your work in Bax Ragga music?
6. What criticisms do you think people might have about Bax Ragga music?
7. Can you think of any potential drawbacks or limitations to Bax Ragga music?
8. Are there any other genres or forms of music that you think could learn from Bax Ragga?
9. How do you think Bax Ragga music could be improved or expanded upon?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO OTHER INTERVIEWERS.

1. What comes to mind when you hear Bax Ragga music?
2. How would you describe Bax Ragga music to someone who has never heard it before?
3. What do you think is the appeal of Bax Ragga music to youths?
4. Do you think Bax Ragga music has a positive or negative influence on youths? Why?
5. Have you ever attended a Bax Ragga music event or concert? What was your experience like?
6. How does Bax Ragga music make you feel? Does it evoke any emotions or memories?
7. Do you think Bax Ragga music reflects the values and experiences of youths in your community? Why or why not?
8. Have you learned anything from Bax Ragga music that has impacted your life or perspective?
9. How do you think Bax Ragga music compares to other genres of music in terms of its appeal and impact on youths?
10. Are there any concerns or criticisms you have about Bax Ragga music or its impact on youths?
11. What do you think about the lyrics and themes in Bax Ragga music?
12. How do you think Bax Ragga music influences youth culture and identity?
13. Do you think Bax Ragga music has a role in shaping youth attitudes towards social issues?
14. How does Bax Ragga music fit into your daily life (e.g., do you listen to it regularly, share it with friends)?
15. What is your favorite Bax Ragga song or artist? Why do you enjoy it?
16. Do you prefer Bax Ragga music over other genres? Why or why not?
17. How often do you listen to Bax Ragga music, and in what contexts?
18. Can you think of a specific Bax Ragga song that resonates with you? What does it mean to you?
19. How do you think Bax Ragga music reflects or challenges societal norms and values?

20. Do you think Bax Ragga music has a role in shaping youth identity or culture? How?
21. How does Bax Ragga music relate to your own experiences or struggles?
22. Can you think of any Bax Ragga songs that address social issues? What do you think about these songs?
23. As a music student, what do you think about the lyrics in Bax Ragga music? Are they relatable, impactful, or thought-provoking?
24. Can you think of any Bax Ragga songs that have inspired you or made you think differently about an issue?
25. Are there any themes or messages in Bax Ragga music that you think are particularly relevant or important?
26. Do you think Bax Ragga music is sometimes misunderstood or misrepresented? How?
27. What is their perception in appreciating Bax Ragga music? And why?
28. What is the difference between Bax Ragga and other music styles in Uganda?
29. What are the possible solutions to the problems facing this kind of music in the music industry of Uganda?

LIST OF PICTURES

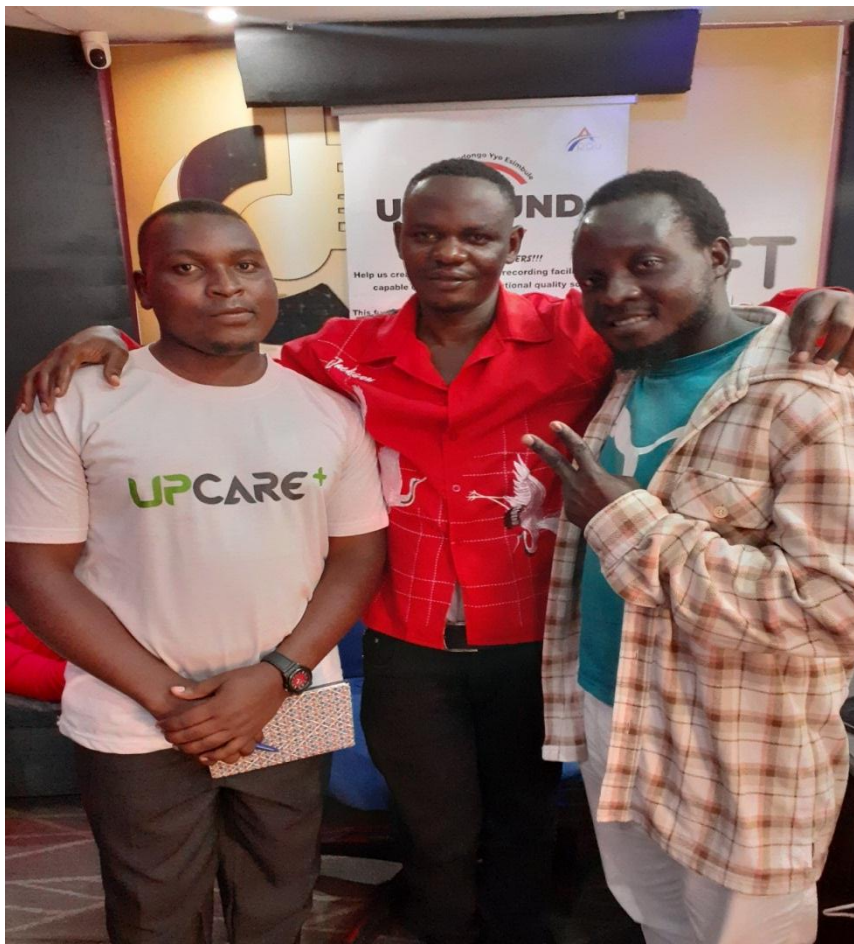
Picture of the Researcher with Joseph Batte



Picture of the Researcher with Matovu Zac and Mugoya Musa



Picture of the Researcher with producer Yaled and Real stable



Picture of the Researcher with Mr. John K



Picture of the Researcher with Kassekende Douglas and Bwagi Shakib



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