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SCHOOL OF LIBERAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS AND FILM

BACHELOR'S DEGREE OF ARTS IN MUSIC

THE ROLE OF COVER SONGS IN PROMOTING SELECTED UPCOMING

MUSICIANS IN UGANDA

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS
AND FILM, SCHOOL OF LIBERAL AND PERFORMING ARTS, COLLEGE OF
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OF ARTS IN
MUSIC OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY.**

SEPTEMBER, 2022

DECLARATION

I Joseph Emmanuel Bemba, declare that this study is my original work and has never been submitted for any academic award in any University or Institution.

Signature



Date


31st/10/2022

JOSEPH EMMANUEL BEMBA

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation presented by Joseph Emmanuel Bemba, was written under my supervision and I recommend it for presentation to the board of examiners in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the award of a bachelor of Arts degree in music of Makerere University.

Signature  Date 31/10/2022

SUPERVISOR

MR. Stephen YungRwoth Kasamba

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Young Artist Exchange Program (YAEP), my Benefactors, for I would not have achieved this success without you. I also dedicate this work to Mr. Damian Kateregga, for being a supportive friend, and to Training of Rural Women in Uganda (TORUWU), who have supported me in my studies. Last but not least, I dedicate it to my family and friends, who have always encouraged me whenever the journey became unbearable. May the Almighty Lord bless you.

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ABSTRACT

This study addressed the role of cover songs in promoting selected upcoming musicians in Uganda. I conducted this study to find out how cover songs promote upcoming musicians. I set out to examine why, when, and how cover songs promote upcoming musicians. In addition, the study examined the benefits of singing cover songs.

The upcoming musicians in Kampala have increasingly engaged in singing and recording cover songs because these songs expose them to the world and their target audience. In conjunction with the selected upcoming musicians, this study was conducted in different parts of Kampala. Based on the information acquired from my research, I carried out a qualitative study, with fieldwork in Kampala, (Makindye, Kawempe, and Rubaga divisions) that involved tools such as interviews, autoethnography, and observation. I gathered this data by conducting interviews with musicians who have sung or produced cover songs in the past five years.

Additionally, with the help of the internet, and through attending band rehearsals and performances that involved singing and recording cover songs, I gathered various information concerning the current study, document analysis, and literature review for my dissertation.

The research established that most upcoming musicians in Kampala benefit a lot from singing cover songs. They use cover songs as a shortcut. It is easier to promote themselves as musicians by singing cover songs. Upcoming musicians who have sung cover songs have tremendously increased their social media following, fans, audience, and the rate at which they get booked for paid performances. Some have become well-known and branded musicians, and are now performing on stage, recording songs, and shooting videos of their songs. My findings showed that the promotion and benefits are attained through sharing the cover songs on social media platforms hence gaining more audience and improving their skills.

In conclusion, I discovered that singing and recording cover songs have greatly promoted upcoming musicians in Kampala. These cover songs have had a great impact on the music industry in Uganda.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURE.....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem	2
1.4 Objectives of the Study	2
1.4.1 Main Objective	2
1.4.2 Specific Objectives	3
1.5 Research Questions	3
1.5.1 Main Research Question.....	3
1.5.2 Specific Research Question	3
1.6 Significance of the Study	3
1.7 Literature Review.....	4
1.8 Scope of the Study.....	7
1.8.1 Time Scope	7
1.8.2 Content Scope.....	7
1.8.3 Geographical Scope.....	7
1.9 Research Methodology.....	8
1.9.1 Research Design	8
1.9.2 Sampling Technique	8
1.9.3 Research Tools	9
1.10 Data Analysis	11
1.11 Ethical Considerations.....	11
1.12 Limitations to the Study	12
CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND OF COVER SONGS	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 The Background of Cover Songs.	14
2.3 Role of Cover Songs in Promoting Ugandan Upcoming Musicians.....	17
2.4 Benefits of Singing Cover Songs	19
2.5 Cover Song Singing Lowers Creativity; Why Cover Songs!.....	20
2.6 Step and Process of Covering a Song.....	20

2.7 General Lessons Learnt from the Literature Review and background to Cover Songs .21

CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLE OF COVER SONGS IN PROMOTING SELECTED UPCOMING MUSICIANS IN KAMPALA, UGANDA22

3.1 Introduction22

3.2 Background to the Singing of Cover Songs in Uganda22

3.3 Steps of Learning a Song for Covering24

3.4 How Cover Songs Promote Upcoming Musicians.....28

3.5 Benefits of Singing Cover Songs30

3.6 Views of Established Artists on Cover Songs Singing32

CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION 33

4.1 Introduction33

4.2 Summary33

4.3 Conclusions34

4.4 Recommendations34

REFERENCE 35

APPENDICIES..... 38

Appendix 1: Interview Guide38

Appendix 2: List of Informants Interviewed40

Appendix 3: Budget Estimates41

LIST OF FIGURE

<i>Figure 1: Shows Bemba Joseph Emmanuel on Saxophone Participating in Cover Song Singing with one of my Informants Mr. Ssewante Joseph Ssewaali on the extreme left.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Figure 2: Shows Map of Kampala and its Divisions Extracted.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Figure 3: Shows Joyce Nakalyango singing a cover song on stage</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Figure 4: Catherine Nakyoomu Singing a Gospel Cover Song with the Trinity worship Team from Nsambya Yes Center.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Figure 5: Shows Moonlight Band Performing.....</i>	<i>28</i>

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UPRS: Uganda Performing Rights Society

Fig: Figure (also representing a photo)

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study focused on upcoming musicians who sing cover songs. A cover song is a remake of an original recorded song. The new performance is created or recorded by someone new other than the original artist or composer. The first recording is referred to as the “original song” irrespective of who wrote the song, while the cover song is referred to as the interpretation of the original song or composition. This interpretation can be an acoustic version or a slightly twisted melody in relation to the original song, with different instrumentation. This study aimed at finding out how cover songs promote upcoming musicians and also traced the history of cover songs in Uganda.

A musician is a person who composes, produces, or performs music. An upcoming musician or artist refers to someone who has not been consistent in mainstream performance for more than two to four years and has no recognizable brand.

In this study, the upcoming musicians I refer to are generally Performers and singers who provide vocals. This study does not include musicians who are instrumentalists.

1.2 Background

The practice of doing cover songs started in the United States of America (USA) around the 1950s. This was a result of record companies trying to reach out to more people by a way of reproducing original songs. It was a common practice for a group of white artists to do a cover song of a song originally sung and composed by a black artist. This was a way of reaching out to white people who had less interest in black people’s music.

The history of cover songs is not so clear in the growth of the music industry in Uganda. But the number of artists doing cover songs has steadily increased over time. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, local Ugandan artists developed a culture of re-doing their original songs in collaboration with new artists, and they called them remixes.¹ This did not stop with their songs. Kaggwa (2014) says “ten years after the death of Elly Wamala, Ugandan local artists did a tribute of cover songs from Elly Wamala’s original compositions, in remembrance of

¹ Elena (2018) Remixing is a practice, which changes the parts of original music material to create a new piece. The changes can be stylistic or rhythmical, when, for instance, a ballad is being transformed into a dancing song. Most stars of the 1990s 41 added remixes to their music albums as bonuses or released them separately.

his musical works and contribution to the music industry of Uganda. These artists included Bobi Wine, Irene Ntale, Rema Namakula, Chris Evans, Mesach Ssemakula, Joanita Kawalya, and Judith Babirye, among others”.

In the early 2010s, the upcoming musician in Kampala known as “Geosteady” only got to be known by illegally doing a cover song entitled “Viola” from Elly Wamala’s original compositions. Since then, the redo of original songs known as cover songs has increased with the growth of social media use in Uganda. This implies that the singing of cover songs benefits those who do it. Therefore this study examined the role of cover songs in promoting selected upcoming musicians.

If you visited YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, and other social media platforms where videos and audio can be uploaded, in search of a specific song, the search result may give you three more songs with the same title. In most cases, these are cover songs of the original song you may be looking for. This forced me to ask; why there are more artists singing cover songs. It is clear that upcoming musicians easily get known through singing cover songs. Therefore I set out to find, out how they get promoted through the practice of singing cover songs.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Singing cover songs lowers the level of creativity among upcoming musicians, when doing a cover song there is no new product created, and the upcoming musician does not improve his or her compositional and writing skills. Therefore the music industry misses out on a new product that would attract its market and audience. Singing cover songs would in a way still be promoting the original artist, but it also introduces the upcoming musicians who sing the cover song to music fans. While the latter is true; there has been no study on the role of cover songs in promoting the upcoming musician.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

To create a steady course of study, my research was based on the following objectives.

1.4.1 Main Objective

- i. To examine how cover songs promote upcoming musicians.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To trace the history of cover songs in Kampala.
- ii. To examine the benefits of singing cover songs.
- iii. To examine the steps taken in the process of learning and recording a cover song.
- iv. To examine views of original artists or composers on cover songs

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 Main Research Question

- i. What is the role of cover songs in promoting upcoming musicians?

1.5.2 Specific Research Question

- i. What is the history of cover songs in Uganda?
- ii. What are the benefits of singing cover songs?
- iii. What are the steps taken in the process of learning and recording a cover song?
- iv. What are the views of original artists or composers on cover songs?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will hopefully help the students of music to familiarize themselves with cover songs from an academic point of view. It will hopefully be their point of reference on studies concerning the role of cover songs in promoting upcoming musicians, the history of cover songs, and steps taken to record a cover song. It will also hopefully help upcoming musicians to understand the proper steps taken when choosing to do a cover song, and more so have the right reasons for doing a specific song cover. It will hopefully help upcoming musicians to know how to benefit from doing cover songs.

The finding of this study can be a point of reference for the ministry of culture and development. When trying to regulate and solve the problems faced by the music industry in Uganda today.

The finding of this study can be used to help musicians stop doing covers and create new music of their own; where the result of creating new music is getting more earnings.

I hope that the findings of this study will be used as secondary research by future researchers in similar areas of study.

1.7 Literature Review

The term cover song originated in the 1960s to describe a new recording or performance of a song that someone else had already made a hit. A typical dictionary meaning is a recording of a song that someone else has already recorded.

Elena (2018) mentions that “It is the biggest and the most common group as such remakes are made by many young and unknown artists as a starting point of their career.” Elena is trying to say that there are many cover songs because many known and unknown artists keep covering different music.

Sungkyun, Juheon, SangKeun, and Kyogu, (2017), say “Cover songs share key musical elements, such as melody shape, basic chord progressions, and lyrics, with the original song. However, sometimes they are different from the original song in other aspects, such as instrumentation, tempo, rhythm, key, harmonization, and arrangement.”

The study of Sungkyun and friends was focusing on how to identify cover songs and differentiate them from the original song using electronic software. This made me realize that there was a need to know why cover songs have increased, to the extent that the world needs electronic software to identify them and differentiate them from their original versions. Therefore I examined the benefits of singing cover songs.

In his study on how cover songs sold Italy in Europe; Paolo (2007) says “Cover songs play an important role in the economics of popular music. This role became crucial when the music industry shifted from a sheet-music-centered to a record-centered orientation.” While Paolo’s study was focused on a whole country, this study focused on only selected upcoming music and how cover songs have promoted them.

George (2010) says “By the late 1980s and into the 1990s, popular music was undergoing a qualitative change, and there was no clear distinction between authenticity and imitation, borrowing and artistic plagiarism. Cover songs were at the center of this musical market and

cultural movement. In 2009, the internet database Second-Hand Songs estimated that there were 40,000 songs with at least one cover song. By the mid-1990s, cover songs and tribute records saturated the marketplace to the extent that they go recognized as a subgenre.”

The estimation that by 2009 over 40,000 songs had at least one cover song inspired me to find out the benefits of singing cover songs to upcoming musicians.

Magnus and Mag (2013) talked about the difference in the type of covers that are sung by artists. They talk about the factors that cause the difference in the cover songs, and also name the different cover song types. that is; mimic covers, rendition covers, referential covers, and transformative covers. Their study shows that because people do covers for different reasons, these covers would be classified depending on the intentions of the person singing the cover. When the singer intends to remind the world of a forgotten song, it is referred to as a referential cover. This inspired me to examine the steps one takes to sing and record a cover song.

Tsai (2008: 1670) says “cover songs are often used as a means to attract audiences who like a specific song or to increase the popularity of an artist by adapting a proven hit. Arranged pieces could give the original song a new life and new interpretation. Some cover songs gain more popularity and become more known by the fans than the original song, therefore they could be preferred over the original version.”

This statement creates a question about the specific intentions of upcoming artists when choosing to do a cover song. Are they trying to prove to the original artists that they can do these songs better? Hence one of my research questions stated; what are the benefits of singing cover songs?

Joan, Emilia, and Perfecto, (2010) say “Anyone can prove the increasing interest for cover songs just by looking at the emergence of related websites, databases, and podcasts in the internet that harbor these songs; such as Second Hand Songs, YouTube, Frequently, these sites also allow users to share or present their cover songs, exchange opinions, discover new music, make friends, learn about music by comparing versions, and many more. Therefore cover songs are becoming part of worldwide social phenomena. Cover songs were originally part of a strategy to make profits from ‘hits’ that had achieved significant commercial success by releasing them in other commercial or geographical areas without remunerating the

original artist or label. Little promotion and highly localized record distribution in the middle of the 20th century favored that.”

Upcoming musician today release their cover songs in the same geographical area as the original artists and the original song, which yields no profits. I went to the field to learn why upcoming musicians engage in the non-profitting venture and established the benefit of singing cover songs and how cover songs promote upcoming musicians.

Elena, (2018), says “Cover songs surround us. We cannot escape them: every time we want to find a song on YouTube, there will be plenty of cover versions on it, both professional and amateur. Sometimes it is even difficult to find the original one, as the search results in hundreds of versions of the same song, made by different people. The interpreters often change the style, production, and words in such a way that you can barely recognize the original song. Fast-growing streaming services like Spotify, WiMP, Pandora, Apple Music, and Deezer offer a great selection of cover songs too.”

The increasing number of cover songs on the music media platform, encouraged me to do a study on the role of cover songs in promoting selected upcoming musicians in Uganda.

According to Coyle, (2003), what we now so ubiquitously refer to as cover records developed from a practice as old as the recording industry itself. Like everything in the United States, that practice was informed by racial segregation. And acknowledge the existence distinctly of black-and-white musical markets. He adds that; The cover record per se developed only when ‘race’ records began to have mass appeal on ‘white’ pop charts, and the key figure in the process was none other than, Elvis Presley the ‘King’ who came to his throne largely on the strength of the first cover records the world has ever known.”

The focus of Coyle’s study is on the events and practices that gave birth to cover records. This forced me to examine why cover songs still exist today. Therefore when I examined the benefits of singing cover songs, I was trying to find out why covering songs is still a growing practice.

Lastly, It is important to note that one of the first ever known popular artist Elvis Presley rose to fame in 1954 when he recorded a cover song version of an old blues song called That’s All Right (Mama) in downtown Memphis. This crowns my literature review confirming that cover songs have a role in the promotion of upcoming musicians. However, there had been

no study to prove this hypothesis in Uganda. Chapter three will present my finding on the role of cover songs in promoting upcoming musicians in Uganda.

1.8 Scope of the Study

1.8.1 Time Scope

My study was conducted between February 2022, and October 2022. This kind of period was enough for me to Conduct interviews with the informants as well as review the already existing literature about the study, and analyze my data.

1.8.2 Content Scope

This study focused on the role of cover songs in promoting upcoming musicians. It also traced the history of cover songs in Uganda, examined the benefits of singing cover songs, the steps taken in the process of learning and recording a cover song, and established the views of original artists on cover songs. This was a case study of six selected musicians, who were interviewed using structured and unstructured interviews, and the findings were generalized.

This study did not cover the legal implications of doing a cover song. It did not focus on cover bands, but rather on upcoming musicians who sing cover songs.

1.8.3 Geographical Scope

This study covered the district of Kampala, Makindye, Kawempe, and Rubaga divisions that are found in the central part of Uganda. It also focused on upcoming musicians singing cover songs and residing or working in the mentioned divisions. It focused on cover songs that were sung and produced within the district of Kampala.

My study did not cover all upcoming musicians who reside in the above-mentioned divisions of Kampala. I instead did a case study of six musicians. (three upcoming musicians, one original artist/composer², and two elderly musicians selected purposively from the divisions). Two of my respondents were from the Makindye division, three from the Rubaga division and one from the Kawempe division.

² Original artists/ composers refer to already known and branded musicians who write and create their own music. They can be recording artists or just composers. I think their views are very important for study on cover songs because it is their music/songs that are being covered day after day.

1.9 Research Methodology

This study was about finding the role of cover songs in promoting selected upcoming musicians. It was more about finding out people's views, ideas, and experience. So I used a qualitative research methodology. This methodology helped me to get descriptive information from analyzing the views, suggestions, and experiences of the participants in the study when I started collecting data in the field. Since my study was about understanding how cover songs promote upcoming musicians; I interviewed six musicians who are directly involved in the cover song singing practice. This helped me get first-hand information from the people who are directly involved in the practice of singing cover songs. Clarifications, observations, and interpretation, were easy because data was collected from informants who are directly involved in the cover singing and recording practice.

1.9.1 Research Design

Since my study was about the upcoming musicians in Kampala, there were so many and Kampala is also too big. Most likely the circumstances they grow through as musicians are similar, therefore I used a case study of three upcoming musicians and two elderly musicians for more information on the history of cover songs in Uganda. One established/branded artist who is also a composer, for the views of an original musician/composer on cover song singing. Afterward, I generalized the findings.

1.9.2 Sampling Technique

Abrahamson (1983:200) defines a sample as;

A portion of the population, contains some and only some of the elements which, in total constitute the population [...] ideally a sample provides an unbiased reflection of the population, differing only in size from the population (the sample will always be smaller).

Purposive sampling is the technique where the researcher looks for people who are directly involved in the practice he or she is going to research.

The purposive sampling technique was the most appropriate for me since I looked for people (upcoming musicians) who were directly involved in cover song recording projects and singing because these specific musicians possessed the information that I needed to answer

my research questions. And yet that information was not available to ordinary members of society.

1.9.3 Research Tools

The following are the devices or instruments that I used while in the field to collect data

1.9.3.1 Interviewing

I used both structured and unstructured interviews. My study focused on the role of cover songs in promoting upcoming musicians, the benefits of singing cover songs, steps taken to do or record a cover song, and the history of cover songs in Uganda. This required me to have a specific set of questions written down on paper which aimed at covering my research questions. But I also used an unstructured interview in the process of demonstrations and observation as the need for more clarification and understanding arose. This helped me come up with more detailed information about my study.

1.9.3.2 Participant Observation

I used participant observation to help me be involved in the process and steps of recording a cover song. I participated in and observed a studio recording session of a cover song sung by one of my informants. Being available when the recording was taking place, helped me understand the workload concerning the steps taken to record a cover song. I saw the singer known as Joyce Nakalyango singing the same line over and over again, such that the music producer could choose the best line. I realized that the more time she repeated the better she sounded. I also participated in a live band performance of one of my informants. The band is known as Moonlight band. I realized some cover songs are recorded as live band stage performances.

Figure 1: Shows Bemba Joseph Emmanuel on Saxophone Participating in Cover Song Singing with one of my Informants Mr. Ssewante Joseph Ssewaali on the extreme left



1.9.3.3 Audio Visual Recording and Note Taking

While studying the role of cover songs in promoting upcoming musicians, I used the following recording apparatus such that data was collected effectively. These included; an audio recorder for sound, a camera for photos and video recording, a notebook, pens, and pencils for note-taking. These tools together helped me to collect data effectively and also ensure effective data analysis when transcribing. I was consistently referring to my audio, videos, and notes for any important information that had skipped my mind.

1.9.3.4 Library Research

I used the Makerere University Library for secondary data analysis and comparison. This helped to identify inconsistencies in my primary data findings and clarify them with my informants. I also used library research for my literature review to learn more about what other researchers had done concerning my topic of study.

1.10 Data Analysis

This was a process that included inspecting, sorting, transcribing, transforming, and organizing information in a logical write-up. It is an activity that I did during and after my fieldwork.

1.11 Ethical Considerations

The following are the ethical considerations that I followed during my fieldwork:

I did not do any sort of plagiarism when doing my research. That is; copying other people's work from books blogs and articles. I have cited and referenced all my sources of information at the end and within my work.

When in the field I ensured voluntary participation by all informants, I introduced myself and present my identity cards. This helped to create trust between me and the informants.

I explained and introduced my study to the informants so that they get a clear view of the intended objectives of my research; I also kept my relationship with the respondents only academic. This helped to keep both the informants and me focused on the study.

I requested permission from my informants to allow me to record the interviews because it was also a way of proving to my supervisor that I carried out the research.

I did not give incentive or promise anything to the informants, because this would force the informants to give me wrong or exaggerated information, intending to please me.

I made sure the information I collected from the informants was confidential. Only to be shared with my supervisor and no other person. The respondents were made aware that their information is going to be used for academic purposes, and disclosure or hiding of their identity was by their consent.

When carrying out research in the field I dressed decently to convey a responsible image. This was done to avoid diverting the focus of my informants from the research study and to avoid offending people in the community where I carried out my research study.

Time management was part of my values in my daily routine. That is; every time I set an appointment with any of my informants or supervisor I made sure I did not disappoint him or her by not keeping time.

1.12 Limitations to the Study

The success of this study was affected by the following challenges;

The Covid-19 Phobia and Health Alerts; although the economy was opened, most people still feared meeting strangers in public. This study required meeting people and interviewing them, but because of the need to protect themselves from the covid 19 virus, some respondents were hesitant to meet me. This slowed down my study and made it hard for me to find willing informants to participate in my study. Where the need arose and it was applicable I used the social media platforms for safe communication with the informants and also making clarifications.

Financial Constraints, moving from one place to another was expensive because the prices of everything had increased; therefore the transport costs were high. I resorted to getting respondents who resided near my home area. I also had to buy internet data to reach my respondents for clarifications on a few missed issues.

Unpredictable Weather of Uganda; It could rain any day or become too hot. Protective wear like umbrellas, raincoats, gumboots and waterproof bags were purchased before the study was carried out. These gadgets helped me keep my notes and recorders safe.

I Solved these Limitations by Planning: I contacted my informants before time and agreed on the most favorable place to meet or media platform to use. In case of lockdown and Covid 19 regulations.

I drafted a small budget beforehand such that I do not find myself short of funds, which would slow down my study.

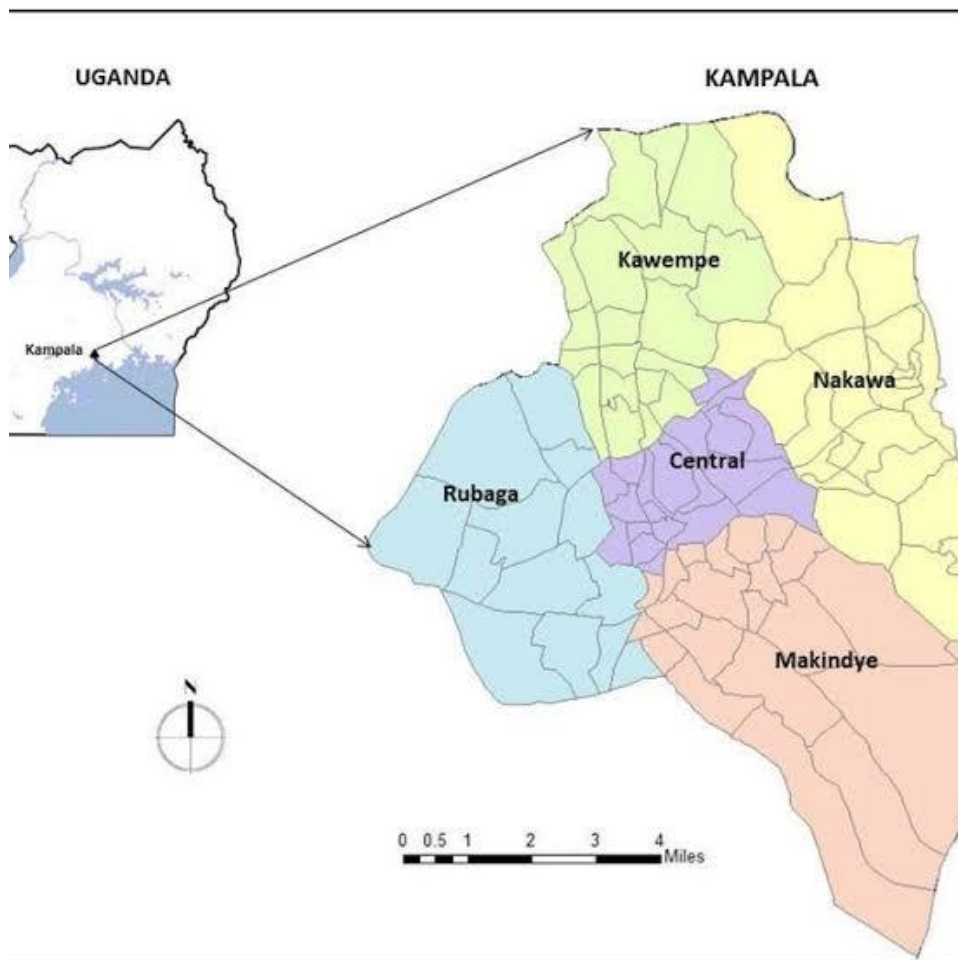
I moved with at least an umbrella in my bag every day just to be ready in case it rained.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND OF COVER SONGS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of this study. It examines other studies that are related to the current studies. It also examines the popular understanding of the role of cover songs in promoting upcoming musicians. It begins by analyzing keywords that are important in the study. Therefore this section contains several secondary research studies that have been reviewed concerning the current study; Below is a map of Uganda with an extract of Kampala city with its divisions.

Figure 2: Shows Map of Kampala and its Divisions Extracted.



The map extract is helping me give a geographical representation of the area where I did my study. I got my respondents from the divisions of Kawempe, Rubaga, and Makindye.

2.2 The Background of Cover Songs.

The practice of doing cover songs started in the United States of America in the 1950s. It was a result of publishing companies wanting to maximize profits or increase the market base of black music. They made white musicians re-do songs originally sung by blacks, such that these songs can become appealing to the community of whites. The practice of singing cover songs has kept on changing shape till today, where I believe it is currently playing a role in promoting upcoming musicians.

Magnus (2022), says “Initially, customers tended to seek out a particular song rather than a particular recording of that song by a particular artist. By covering a song, a record company could steal sales that would have gone to a competitor. As John Covach and Andrew Flory write, ‘When the original version appeared on a small independent label, a larger independent label (or a major label) could record a cover and distribute its records faster and more widely. They add that ‘to some extent, this explains the greater success of these versions and why we call them “covers”’ (2018: 87). Ray Padgett writes that covers in the 1950s were ‘copycat recordings done quickly’ and suggests two reasons these might have come to be called ‘covers’: First, a publisher might be “covering its bets” by releasing its recording of a popular song.’ Second, it was aimed to “cover-up” another version of the same song.”

Magnus is clearly explaining why record labels chose to invest in cover songs, and how the name ‘cover song’ came into existence. His study helped me understand the cover songs business and encouraged me to research how these cover songs promote upcoming musicians.

Maaïke says “The term cover points to a field in which the object of the re-enactment is artistic creation rather than a historical event. And it also points to how re-enacting artistic creations results in new works: covers. Covers exist in a specific relationship to the original work, the cover being a remake of, or response to, the original work from the position of another artist at a later moment in time. The notion of covers also points to how this relationship is mediated by recordings and documentation. The term ‘cover version’ originates from the 1960s when it was introduced to describe a rival version of a tune recorded to compete with an already released original version.”

Maaïke’s study is more focused on the recreation of historical accounts and dance, but his elaborative description of the term cover helped me understand when and how the term

'cover song' should be used. Maaiké points out that sometimes the re-doing of artistic creations can result in new works. This will help the readers of my research know how to identify cover songs today.

Lee (2014) defines a cover song as "a recording that we are invited to place in some kind of comparative evaluative relationship with an original recording of a given song."

Lee's article was more on how to know a good cover song or a bad cover song, he was also trying to differentiate between a re-make and a cover song. In this study, we are considering all re-recorded songs as cover songs. It is important to note that all cover songs create a comparison in the listener's mind, between the original song and the cover song.

A re-make is almost like a complete redo of a song only the style may differ. Yet a cover song is a reinterpretation of an already existing song. The melody may be modified; the chords may also change depending on the harmonic interpretation of the one covering the song.

Carl (2018) says "The status of the cover song has shape-shifted throughout pop-music history. Well into the 1950s, it barely even needed a name: It was just the routine way of doing business. During the rock era, covers became suspected as inauthentic, the stuff of the hack bar band, unless an artist "made the song their own." With the rise of hip-hop, covers were displaced by sampling and remixes, but then samples themselves became more concealed and layered, for reasons of both art and copyright. In the 2000s and earlier this decade, the practice migrated to YouTube, where concert clips or home videos of one-off covers, rearrangements, and parodies might show off the skills and wit of amateurs and pros alike but still seldom troubled the charts—unless they also made it to soundtracks or TV ads, where acoustic remakes of once-upon-a-time hits (either twee or glum or both) have become a staple."

Carl is writing about how cover song singing has taken different shapes over time. He points out that today it is mainly done on social media platforms. Meaning any person can record a cover song and upload the video or audio on any online platform. There was a need to know why this practice has been carried on to different generations. Therefore I set out to study the role of cover songs in promoting upcoming musicians.

It is important to mention at least the five most ever-covered songs. According to Carl (2018), the Beatles are responsible for composing and writing most of the popular songs that are frequently covered. Connor's list of some of the most covered songs in history includes: "Yesterday" by the Beatles, "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen, "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" by The Rolling Stones, "My Way" by Frank Sinatra, "Over the Rainbow" by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Yip Harburg, and sung by actress Judy Garland.³ While the above-mentioned songs are frequently covered, we did not know the role they have played in promoting the musicians who keep covering them. Therefore my study examined the role of cover songs in promoting the upcoming musicians who sing these cover songs.

³ ***"Yesterday" by The Beatles***

Undoubtedly the most covered song in history, "Yesterday" has racked up approximately 2,200 variations since it was released in 1966. It seems that almost every genre of music has a version of "Yesterday," from classical orchestras to country stars such as Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard putting their southern twang on the tune, no one wanted to miss out on this infinite classic. Other big names who couldn't resist this song's hopeful and calming melody include Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, and Aretha Franklin.

"Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen

One of the most beloved religious songs of all time, this powerful tune has been covered by several different artists, religiously related or not. Despite being written by Leonard Cohen, the most famous version of this song is sung by *Jeff Buckley in *1994, winning multiple awards and being included on multiple greatest songs lists.

"(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" by The Rolling Stones:

Toward the top half of the most covered songs throughout musical history, "Satisfaction" has approximately 400 different recordings strewn across streaming platforms everywhere. Released in 1965, jam bands like the Grateful Dead to all female groups such as The Shirelles have given this tune a try. Even The Beatles, the band with the most commonly covered songs, have played this track throughout their career, earning The Rolling Stones some serious bragging rights.

"My Way" by Frank Sinatra

This song is originally a French song about a man who had become sick with his marriage, which had been destroyed by the boredom of everyday life. This song was heard by the ears of Paul Anka, a popular singer-songwriter throughout the '60s and '70s, who rewrote the lyrics and pitched the idea to Frank Sinatra, who eventually recorded it, releasing the tune in 1975. This song has been covered by some of the greats such as Elvis Presley, Sammy Davis Jr, and even Seth MacFarlane on the popular TV show *Family Guy*.

"Over the Rainbow" by Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg, sung by Judy Garland

"Over the Rainbow " is a song written for the movie *The Wizard of Oz*, and sung by Judy Garland as her character Dorothy in 1939. One of the most famous covers of this song, arguably more famous than the original, is sung and performed by Hawaiian artist Israel Kamakawiwo'ole. In Kamakawiwo'ole's version of the song, he mixes it with "What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong, giving it a unique and catchy sound that blends well with Garland's "Over the Rainbow." Other covers of this tune include Eric Clapton, P!nk, Trisha Yearwood, and Frank Sinatra.

2.3 Role of Cover Songs in Promoting Ugandan Upcoming Musicians

An upcoming musician is a musician that has not become memorable, or consistent in mainstream music performance and production for more than two to four years. Often these musicians do not have a discography, recognizable brand, or well-set up commercial streams. Someone can have a hit song but still be an upcoming musician.

In this study, the term ‘promoting’ is used to refer to that crucial step that follows the production of music, and its distribution on streaming platforms. It entails making the artist known to prospective supporters/fans and accessible for performing opportunities. It is an intangible sell-out of a musician’s skills into the entertainment market. One of the most common ways that upcoming musicians get promoted into the entertainment market is by singing cover songs.

Nantaba, (2019) says “Nshuti Sarah Mbabazi has become famous for doing cover versions of songs by some of Uganda’s top musicians. Her Facebook videos have become a sensation. She has covered Elly Wamala, Mowzey Radio, Juliana Kanyomozi, Bobi Wine, and Irene Ntale among others. Her talent is evident in how she can switch style and rendition to suit the artistic attributes of the greats. She also takes it a note higher by playing guitar during the performance of popular tunes. Her breakthrough cover was the ‘*Nga Bwewakolanga*’ tune by Elly Wamala. The feedback was overwhelming and some of her fans pointed her to do her music. Nshuti states; “The feeling was different and being the pioneer of live covers with my voice and guitar, I was inspired to do more”.

Two years after she had uploaded her first cover on Facebook, Nshuti had become a popular cover girl on social media platforms. Nshuti’s rise story proved to me that cover songs promote upcoming musicians, and it encouraged me to do an in-depth study on how cover songs promote upcoming musicians.

Pamela (2019) reported that Herbert Ssensamba a cover artist and writer said that:

“Doing acoustic covers is a niche that many musicians disdain as selling of their souls. Yet it is abundant with financial provisions. There will be a time for me to release and promote my original songs. That time is not now. My market is not

mentally or psychologically ready to pay for my music – why make deliberate losses?!”

The above statement is proof that the singing of cover songs can be a source of income for upcoming musicians. They can use this income to fund their other projects like; audio and video recordings. Pamela’s interview with Herbert Ssensamba, pushed me to do a study about the benefits of singing cover songs to upcoming musicians in Uganda.

Ruby (2019) says “One of the biggest scandals in his music career also doubles as the moment that catapulted him onto the big scene. Geosteady still relishes any opportunity availed to him to redo the late Elly Wamala’s music. In 2013, the issue of copyright and rights to artists’ intellectual property took center stage in the Ugandan music industry when Geosteady made a rendition of the late Elly Wamala’s song titled ‘Viola’. Despite executing the rendition perfectly, Elly Wamala’s family and legal team, as well as a section of his fans, did not welcome the idea that a little-known Geosteady had used their icon’s property.”⁴

Although Ruby(2019) in his article is focused on the legal implication of doing a song cover without permission, it is clear the cover song of “Viola” helped to promote Geosteady as an upcoming musician. Therefore I needed to prove if this was the same case to other upcoming musicians in Kampala.

⁴ They claimed it was a crime committed by the young singer because nobody gave him the right to redo the late singer’s music. The issue was later settled after several visits to court and Geosteady received a warning to desist from using content for which he has not secured rights. It’s been about five years since then but the singer cannot stay away from the temptation to go down that same road again. He revealed that if there are any songs he would love to redo then Elly Wamala’s songs would be the first on the list because he believes he is the best person in doing that.

2.4 Benefits of Singing Cover Songs

The singing of cover songs has benefits that go beyond just singing, some of these benefits include developing a great market for one's music.

Christian and Marc, (2011) say "Producing cover songs of established top sellers is an approved worldwide market strategy. Nevertheless, cover records of evergreen and world hits are more than mere commercial re-editions of proven material. They correspond to the same musical material and yet repeatedly construct different configurations of musical, lyrical, technological and ideological concepts, they build complex networks of cross-generational commentaries, allusion, indications to work of reference but sometimes they can also cause its destruction."

Christian and Marc focused their study on the marketing outcomes of singing cover songs. This raised a question: How is a cover song a marketing strategy for the artist who sings it? Therefore I examined how cover songs promote upcoming musicians.

Magnus (2022) says "The motivation for publishing covers was often to capture sales which could otherwise have gone to the original. So when the original recording was by a black artist and the cover was by a white artist, covers could be a tool of exploitation and oppression. Yet covers were also sometimes recorded just because a current artist had fond regard for a classic recording." The above statement encouraged me to find out the views of selected established artists in Uganda, wondering if there is a way covering their music benefits them.

Elena (2018) points out that "almost every professional or amateur band nowadays starts its career from covers. Remaking is a great educational source. Playing the world's masterpieces, younger musicians can develop similar music skills or even go further. Thus, twenty years ago, when the famous electronic, partly sampled, man-made "Diva Song" from The Fifth Element was released, nobody could sing it live."

She argues that covers are a good educational source for artists. Singing your songs only would limit professional spectrum in the future, and many young bands risk becoming the hostages of their talent this way. Therefore to develop technical and performative skills, most musicians add covers to their playlists. Elena focuses on the educational purposes of singing covers, which is proof that covering songs is beneficial to upcoming musicians.

2.5 Cover Song Singing Lowers Creativity; Why Cover Songs!

In my problem statement, I mentioned how singing cover songs lowers creativity; but I did not elaborate; when one sings a cover, he or she is just repeating something that has already been composed by someone else.

George (1992) says “From an artistic point of view, the covering can be conveniently criticized for lack of originality, needless repetition, imitation and providing the artist with “fill material” or a way to release a record without having to write a new song.”

This quote encouraged me to focus my study on finding out the intrinsic benefits of singing cover songs yet they lower creativity.

Magnus (2022) says “There are not many alternative to starting out playing covers. Perhaps one could come into songwriting just at the same time one came into playing an instrument, playing one’s songs right from the start. More realistically, one might just play standards—songs that either predate recording or which do not have a canonical recording. Nevertheless, most musicians naturally start with covers.”

Magnus points out that it is hard to start your music career by doing your music. The most common practice is singing covers. But today it does not look like musicians are starting by doing covers. They have branded themselves as the cover artists. This prevents them from creating anything new of their own.

2.6 Step and Process of Covering a Song

When choosing to do a cover song one should prepare him or herself to follow specific steps. Whereas the order of these steps differs from one artist to another they are almost the same.

David, (2013) says “Today when one does a cover song there are some rules to follow; first, you have to acknowledge the original composer or artist. Secondly, if you make money out of it you have to send a certain portion to the original artist. Finally, you cannot modify the original lyrics.”

This means there are steps one should follow when doing a cover song. This raised the need for me to find out steps taken to record a cover song in Kampala.

Patrick, (2018) says “taking the time to learn and record another artist’s song can teach you a ton about song structure, melody, phrasing, arrangement, and other useful parts of music theory. Covering music requires you to break down songs into their most basic elements. Mastering these elements and putting them together will walk you through an effective workflow for writing.”

This means doing a cover song is a process that we need to understand. This inspired me to do a study on the steps taken by upcoming musicians in Kampala to learn, sing and record a cover song.

2.7 General Lessons Learnt from the Literature Review and background to Cover Songs

- There is a clear difference between a re-make which is a complete redo of a song and a cover which is a reinterpretation of a song.
- Cover songs create a comparison yardstick in the listener’s mind, between the original song and the cover song.
- The singing of cover songs increases the market demand for original songs and boosts the audience of original artists.
- Racial segregation is partly responsible for the birth of the practice of covering songs in America.
- Cover songs can provide quick and easy income to upcoming musicians.
- It is illegal to do a re-make of any song without permission from the copyright owner of that particular song.
- Cover songs are a good educational source for artists in the business of singing.
- Cover songs can lower an artist’s creativity.
- When searching on online platforms it may be hard to find the original of a specific song, as there are many cover versions of the same song uploaded on the same platforms.
- It is next to impossible to become a famous music artist/singer without adding cover songs to your repertoire.

CHAPTER THREE: THE ROLE OF COVER SONGS IN PROMOTING SELECTED UPCOMING MUSICIANS IN KAMPALA, UGANDA

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three presents my findings from the field and makes an in-depth analysis of the data collected. It engages related writings concerning the topic of study. The chapter discussion also aims at answering the major research questions and research objectives, presented in the proposal before fieldwork. This chapter also contains several themes, sub-themes, and sub-sub themes as developed from the collected information from fieldwork as told by the various informants. This chapter will also present the researcher's views on different issues from the informants. Furthermore, Several issues are examined concerning the study from perspectives like; social, political, and economic that are closely related to the current study.

3.2 Background to the Singing of Cover Songs in Uganda

The practice of singing cover songs was in Uganda even before the coming of the term cover song. Due to oral transmission of information; people used to learn songs from one person and then go sing them in different places, and teach them to other people. They would always say, "I learned this song from my grandmother" while they are starting to sing the song to a new audience. Some singers would improvise and add new words, so the song would take new forms depending on the interpretation of the singer. Just like those who sing covers do today.

According to Shucky (10th August 2022), interview, a female artist; "the practice of covering songs has been around but we did not know they are called cover songs. With the coming of guitars to Uganda upcoming musicians used to move around playing guitars and singing other people's songs. For example; songs of the late Paul *Kafeero* and Herman *Basudde* were common pieces of this practice. These songs were not re-recorded by upcoming artists because the technology was not easily accessible at the time. People have always done covers just that they had different names to call them, for example Karaoke. The only things that have changed are the social media platforms where re-done songs are posted and calling them cover songs." She concludes by emphasizing; "the formal covering of songs has started with the modern age of the internet, with us being able to see from social media what other people or musicians are doing in other countries.

Catherine Nakyoomu, (6th /July/ 2022), a fashion star and Upcoming Musician said in an interview; “Even without recording cover songs we were singing African folk songs. As primary and high school students of the 1990s and early 2000s, we used to write down song lyrics and learn songs by heart, and sing them to our friends as a way of showing off. This was typical covering though we used not to record the songs”. She adds and says “Instead of singing ‘*Njabala njabala*’⁵ to our friends we have evolved to covering recent songs.”

The official use of the word “cover” to refer to a redone song became prominent in Uganda in 2017, thirteen years after the death of legendary artist Elly wamala, who had registered his music with the Uganda Performing Right Society.⁶ Earlier in 2010, an upcoming musician at the time, known as Geosteady sang Elly Wamala’s “Viola” without permission from the late artist’s family.⁷ This conflict went to courts of law and was published by Ugandan newspapers. For weeks local journalists held television talk shows on the matter. This raised awareness among Ugandan musicians about re-doing someone’s song without permission.

Matovu (6th /July/2022), an interview, an elderly music producer and bass guitarist, informed me that; “it is like five years back, that is when the singing of covers officially started. Because it is then that the UPRS tried to seriously enforce the copyright laws, trying to protect the works of musicians who had registered their works with the society and also collect royalties⁸ for them. These royalties were collected from local music-consuming organizations like Television stations, radio stations, and disco clubs. Artist would be paid annually.”

The increased use of smartphones and computers between 2010 and 2020, has exposed Uganda musicians to the term “cover song.” Today in Uganda; once a song is re-done and named a cover, while mentioning and acknowledging the original artist, then it is okay for whoever wants to sing it to do so and also share it on different platforms.

⁵ Njabala njabala is a Ugandan local folk song from Buganda region that talks about a girl who is into marriage but she is very lazy. It is a song that has been orally transmitted through different generations.

⁶ The Uganda Performing Rights Society (UPRS) was formed in 1985 by authors (mainly musicians) to advance the cause of copyright administration in Uganda. It registered with the Registrar of Companies as a Company Limited by Guarantee having no share capital as it belongs to all of its members

⁷ Geosteady did not call his redo of Elly Wamala’s song a cover,

⁸ Music royalties are payments that go to recording artists, songwriters, composers, publishers, and other copyright holders for the right to use their intellectual property.

Matovu added that “singers started copying things from America, like naming the songs they redo “covers,” because with the word cover fixed to a redone song one does not get legally penalized for redoing the song. More so for covers, one does not have to sing the whole song. The singer may just do a verse and chorus, then record a short video and audio clip.”

According to Berts Kalyango, (6th /July/2022), interview, an elderly music producer and Keyboard accompanist “Covers came because the word cover protects the upcoming musicians from copyright infringement. Because when naming the redone song one has to mention that this song was originally by so and so. Kalyango adds and says; “it is important to acknowledge the owner of the song. for example, the world does not know the original owner of the song *Omusujja* which was sung by Carol Nakimera. The song has been covered by many local bands and musicians without mentioning the original owner.”

Introduction of new technology for recording with simplified gadgets in the 2010s, forced upcoming musicians to develop the urge to redo old songs using modern recording styles and technology, therefore giving birth to cover songs in Uganda. (for example the use of computer programs like the logic pro that gave room for editing and creation of beat style.)

Kalyango informed me that, music like *kadongo kamu*⁹ initially did not have a bass kick; it was played with only a snare and hi-hats. Some singers started redoing songs adding a modern style of beats with a bass kick. Elderly musicians gave their songs to young artists to redo or cover them. For example Mesach Ssemakula¹⁰ covered Dan Mugula’s¹¹ *Ntongo*.

3.3 Steps of Learning a Song for Covering

The skill of learning how to sing other people’s songs is acquired through consistent practice, especially if that music is not scored in staff notation. It is generally a combination of aural skills, listening skills, and at times reading skills. My study findings are affirming the above-mentioned skills.

⁹ *Kadongo Kamu* is a music genre native to Uganda and is the oldest mainstream music genre in the country. The word “*kadongo kamu*” is a term in the Luganda language that means “one little guitar”. To understand why the genre has this name, one has to understand the stylistic structure of the music which is created with only one acoustic guitar.

¹⁰ Mesach Ssemakula is a Ugandan Afro-pop singer and songwriter who joined music at a teenage stage was back in 1993.

¹¹ Dan Mugula is a Ugandan *Kadongo kamu* singer and songwriter who started singing in the early 1960s

Step one: The song should first speak to your heart, do not force yourself to learn a song that you do not love. The new touch and interpretation you want to give it only comes out well if you love the song and no one is forcing you to do it.

Joyce Nakalyango, (6th July/2022), interview, a cover artist and fashion star, said; “first fall in love with the song, if you like it, you will sing it with all your heart”

Figure 3: Shows Joyce Nakalyango singing a cover song on stage



Step two: inform the copyright owner of the song, if your end goal is to record your version of the song. This would prevent the upcoming musician from falling into the trap of copyright infringement. In her own words, Shucky a well-established and branded artist/musician cautioned me that, “when doing a cover song you have to first inform the owner of the song”.

Step three: listen to the song over and over again, as many times as possible. This listening involves both active and passive listening; active listening helps one cram the lyrics and specific melodic shape. Passive listening helps one get the inner groove of the song. I think this is why

Joyce Nakalyango said; “I listen to it over and over and get to feel it in my heart and mind”

Catherine Nakyoomu said; “get the music on a device you can use to play audio repeatedly, and play the song back to back”

Figure 4: Catherine Nakyoomu Singing a Gospel Cover Song with the Trinity worship Team from Nsambya Yes Center



Step four: Get the lyrics of the song, and read them while you are listening to the song, this also helps one get the clear message of the song in form of a poem. The main reason for downloading the lyrics is to get those words that may not be clear while listening to the song. The second reason is to get the actual words in case the song is in a language you do not speak or understand.

Catherine Nakyoomu said; “also download the lyrics and read through the lyrics while listening to the song.

In her own words, Joyce Nakalyango said; “I get the lyrics from the internet. If there are no lyrics on the internet, I listen and note the words down because I do not want to sing the wrong lyrics. When I get the lyrics I start reading while following the audio and also singing along.”

However, some cover song singers do not download lyrics straight away. Downloading lyrics is something they do if they cannot understand the language in which the song is being sung.

Mr. Ssewante Joseph Ssewaali, (16th /August/2022), interview, a vocalist and computer scientist said; “I only download the lyrics, when I am learning a song from a language I do not know. For the languages I know I do not download”.

Step five: Try singing the song from memory without listening to the audio or reading the lyrics. At this step you try to remember the lyrics with the melody, combining them to sing. If you successfully achieve this then you have learnt the song.

Catherine Nakyoomu informed me that; when you can sing it without forcing yourself to remember the lyrics, then you have learnt it. More so if I can, out of the blue start singing the song, then I know I have learnt the song.

Joyce Nakalyango said; “if I can sing it spontaneously while I am doing other things, then I know I have learnt the song.”

Step six: Recording myself; the levels of recording cover songs are different some use phones and ask friends to record them while they are singing or performing on stage. Many use phones on phone stands and Others go to studios and involve music producers. The most important is producing a recording.

According to Catherine Nakyoomu; music producers demand more passion during the time of recording. Normally they want you to give the cover your interpretation. Some producers change the key of the song because the original may not be favorable for you.

Joyce Nakalyango said; “I get an instrumentalist to play for me while I sing the song, and I record myself using the phone.”

Mr. Ssewante Joseph Ssewaali said; “I only record a cover song if I love it and appreciate the original artist.”

Figure 5: Shows Moonlight Band Performing



Moonlight band,¹² from the left is Mr. Ssewante Joseph Ssewaali, singing, myself playing the saxophone (Joseph Emmanuel Bemba), Nankuba Doreen a backup vocalist, and far right is Mr. Micheal Sitakange on the keyboard.

3.4 How Cover Songs Promote Upcoming Musicians

Everyone who sets out to learn a cover song is planning to sing it for some people. In one way or another, the singer expects something in return. The rewards may come from the audience listening to the singer or they may be lessons learnt, and skills gained from singing a particular song. This whole study was based on an assumption that cover songs promote upcoming musicians.

Cover Songs Expose Upcoming Musicians to the Fans/audience of a Particular Song; Take for example; there is a tendency of fans who love a specific song, to look out for the different versions of the same song. In that process, the upcoming musicians who redo these cover versions get exposed to the fans.

Mr. Ssewante Joseph Ssewaali said; “I have a friend who I got to know about through singing cover songs. He is called Nick Fella. He sang a song that I loved so much at the time.”

¹² Moonlight band is a cover band based in Kawempe town, I met this group through one of my informants Mr. Ssewante Joseph Ssewaali. It performs cover songs on different functions.

Cover Songs help Upcoming Musicians to Gain Popularity; when a song is published¹³ the people who love the original song look for the cover versions of their favorite song, to listen to the same song, in different styles, and with different interpretations. Some people tend to share these cover songs on their social media platforms praising the person who did the cover song. In this practice, the upcoming musician who sings the cover song gains popularity.

Shucky informed me that; when you sing a cover, the listeners could love the way you have interpreted the song, your voice tone, different flavors you add, and people would wish to know who did those changes to their favorite song.

Joyce Nakalyango said; “you become popular because people who love these songs also get to know you”

According to Catherine Nakyoomu; cover songs are more promoting especially for a starting musician. It will be easier for me to break through by doing a cover song of an already established musician, as opposed to me doing my original song.

Developing a Fan Base; upcoming musicians have won themselves diehard fans and social media followers by doing cover songs. This is simple; when you post on social media platforms content that people love they start following you, and watch all your other posts. This creates assurance that any other content you plan to post or share in the future already has an online audience of followers waiting to view it.

Matovu said; “many musicians are on TikTok¹⁴ today because when you post a short video and it starts trending, many people watch it and the singer gets more followers.”

Getting Connection and Contacts for Future Performing Opportunities; people tend to ask for contacts when they meet a good singer. And this is always followed with a question: how much do you charge for a performance? Some upcoming musicians who sing covers get invited to join bands, therefore getting employed in a band as a vocalist. The lucky ones get studio and live performance backup gigs from the established artists who own some of the covered songs.

¹³ Publishing a song is the business of promotion and monetizing music compositions. This is done to ensure that song writers, singers, producers, and all who take part in music production get royalties.

¹⁴ TikTok is a social media platform for creating, sharing, and discovering short videos the App is used by young people as an outlet to express themselves through singing, dancing, comedy, and lip-syncing, and it allows users to create videos and share them across a community.

Joyce Nakalyango said; “the owner of the song a celebrity may get to know you and appreciate you financially and also support you.”

Catherine Nakyoomu said; “it feels good when I am doing a cover song and the original singer/artist of the song is in the audience. Sometimes they give me their contacts and connect me to more performances and give me more work.”

The way cover songs promote upcoming musician in Uganda is exemplified through the known musicians like Geosteady who redid Elly Wamala’s Viola, and Nshuti Sarah Mbabazi who covered Elly Wamala’s *Nga bwewakolanga*¹⁵ I have extensively discussed these two in chapter two.

3.5 Benefits of Singing Cover Songs

Cover songs do not only promote the popularity of the people who sing them. They also impact the musicians who sing them with some skills and techniques. The following are the other ways through which upcoming musicians benefit from singing cover songs in Uganda.

Source of Income to the Upcoming Musicians; In the process of trying to promote and boost their music, established artists pay upcoming musicians to do covers of songs they are distributing to the public. The end goal is to increase their audience and market base.

According to Shucky; big artists love it when upcoming musicians cover their songs because it is a way of promotion. Most artists even pay young musicians to do covers of their songs. They also pay people with a big social media following to redo their music.

Mr. Ssewante Joseph Ssewaali informed me that; singing cover songs is the reason why he is employed. Therefore it is a source of income.

Improving the Vocal Techniques and Agility; in the process of trying to learn different songs from different artists, one tasks his or her voice to learn the required technique to sing a particular song well. By the time a singer learns over ten songs, he or she is equipped with a hand full of vocal techniques like vibrato control and use, breath control, resonance, and others.

¹⁵ Nga bwewakolanga is a local famous song originally sung by Elly Wamala, that has been covered by different artists. It is a love song.

Joyce Nakalyango said, “You grow vocally because you force yourself to learn different songs that require different singing techniques.”

Mr. Ssewante Joseph Ssewaali informed me that; singing cover songs is limitless because there are so many songs in the world, one would keep learning new singing techniques through the singing of cover songs.

Gaining Confidence and Self-esteem; the moment one chooses to sing a song and share it with the public, then that person is going to receive feedback from his or her audience. When this feedback is positive it encourages the upcoming musicians to work hard and do better music and more covers.

Joyce Nakalyango said; “you start believing in yourself, when you sing other people’s songs well then you are sure you can also do your music even better.”

Helps one gain performing experience; the singing of cover songs requires more than just melody and lyrics. Often time one has to learn the chord progressions of the songs he or she is covering, and learn the meaning in case the song is in a foreign language. Such experiences make upcoming musicians better performers.

Catherine Nakyoomu said, “It widens your experience of music sometimes it is jazz, soul, reggae, and more, you grow deeper in music. For example, if today you are doing a hi-pop the following day you do a different style. All these experiences are attained and incorporated in you, hence widening your musical abilities.”

According to Joyce Nakalyango; you get the experience of how to sing and how to write songs by singing other people’s songs.

It is a way of advertising the singing skills of upcoming musicians; when one sings a cover song and posts it on social media platforms, he or she is literary marketing his or her skills. The shared videos on social media have a limitless number of people who can watch them at any time of the day.

Joyce Nakalyango said; “I also get feedback from people when I share a cover song, and it is also a way of advertising me.”

Covering songs is an indirect way for learning how to become a better singer every day because it exposes the singers to new challenges every day.

3.6 Views of Established Artists on Cover Songs Singing

When you sing cover songs one may not take you as a serious musician, because you are not creating any new product. Most people think that the singing of cover songs should just be a starting point for upcoming musicians. Therefore they should not devote their entire life to the singing of cover songs.

According to Shucky a well-established female artist; People may mistake you as a musician who is not serious when they get to know you as someone who sings other people's music. She adds "for example singing in a band and just doing other people's songs, the audience sees you in another person's image"

Most of the promotion you do as a cover singer is for the original artist; every time you push your song as a cover artist and upcoming musician, you are indirectly promoting the original artist to your audience.

Shucky said, "It is like you are promoting another person. Even the money you make from a cover song, a given percentage of it should go to the original artist or copyright owner of the song. The cover artist may forget to promote him or herself."

It is time-wasting having to learn a song and sing it. Shucky says; "everyone has his or her intentions, plans, and strategy. I do not want to waste my time learning another person's song, yet I have to write my music and record it."

General view from Shucky: "I cannot condemn someone for redoing a cover song. I would feel nice if someone covered any of my songs. Because that would mean it is a good song. People do not redo bad songs, this implies that this singer loved my song, and it is a way of showing appreciation."

CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a discussion of findings, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from the findings of the whole study. These conclusions and recommendations can hopefully be relevant for future researchers who may wish to study closely related topics or similar topics.

4.2 Summary

In this study, I have examined the background of cover songs in Uganda, and the step taken to sing and record a cover song. I found out how cover songs promote upcoming musicians, examined the benefits of singing cover songs, and established the views of already-known artists/musicians towards cover song singing. I found out that cover song singing has always been in Uganda, it just took a different name and was distributed through a different medium of transmission or communication.

I also found out that it is important to notify the copyright owner of the song if you intend to redo or record someone's song. However, with the coming of the term "cover song" anyone can just redo a different version of the song without notifying the copyright owner of the song. This holds as long as the redone song is named cover song and acknowledgment of the original owner is properly done in the specifications about the redone song.

The research has revealed that almost every singing musician in the Ugandan music industry, has sung cover songs at some point in his or her musical journey. There is no other way of starting and reaching your audience unless you sing a cover song of a well-known song. The only difference is that earlier musicians just sang these cover songs for friends at school, communities, and in local bands. Today almost everyone who sings a cover song records it either in a professional studio or using any gadget at his or her exposure.

Finally, I found out that singing cover songs is a source of income for upcoming musicians. They sing these songs in bands around Uganda and get paid, therefore some families are just surviving on this business. The other interesting fact is that; original owners of popular recorded songs pay upcoming musicians to redo their songs, as a way of marketing and boosting their recordings and brand.

4.3 Conclusions

This study has revealed that singing cover songs has always been a common practice in Uganda, because of our oral traditional way of passing on information, in our local communities, churches, and schools. Singing other people's songs has been the order of the day. It is only the term "cover song" and the context in which it is used that are new.

The study has also revealed that it is next to impossible to get known by your intended audience; unless you sing a cover of a song that is already known by your target audience. Such that people get to know the upcoming musician through the song they already know. Therefore cover songs are an effective promotional tool for upcoming musicians.

The study further noted that; upcoming musicians earn income from cover song singing in bands, and also get paid by song owners to redo their songs.

4.4 Recommendations

I recommend that upcoming musicians should sing cover songs because they directly promote them to new audiences. Furthermore, cover songs indirectly help singers improve their singing techniques.

I recommend that future researchers do a study on the legal implication of singing cover songs in Uganda, concerning the Copyright and Neighboring Rights Act. This will help all upcoming musicians to know the right way of redoing someone's song, without infringing on the owner's rights.

I recommend that future researchers do a study on the role government could play in uplifting the upcoming musicians. This will help upcoming musician to know what they should expect from the state/government, and also be well informed of the workload awaiting them as upcoming musicians.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

SCHOOL OF LIBERAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC DANCE AND DRAMA

RESEARCH GUIDE QUESTIONS; TOPIC: THE ROLE OF COVER SONGS IN PROMOTING SELECTED UPCOMING MUSICIANS IN UGANDA

Objective. This questionnaire is intended to collect data about the factor responsible for the rising cover songs. This is to help me get more information on the subject and also create awareness. Please answer genuinely.

PART ONE: Particulars of the informant.

1. Name.....
.....
2. Sex: male Female
3. What is your occupation?
.....
4. Highest level of education attained.
.....
.....
5. Titles used to refer to you. E.g. Sir, Mr. Mrs.
.....
6. How many cover songs (originals) have you sung or recorded?
.....
7. Do you belong to any music group/band?
.....
8. Name it.
.....

PART TWO. Participation Experience. (Please answer with honesty)

1. How did you get to know about singing cover songs? (year)
2. What is your experience as you sing cover songs?
3. How do you benefit from singing cover songs?
4. How do cover songs promote upcoming musicians?
5. What are the steps you go through when learning to sing a cover song?
6. What are the steps you go through to record a cover song?
7. What do you need to know before you record a cover song?
8. Why do you think there are more upcoming musicians singing cover songs?
(established artists)
9. What is your view on the practice of doing cover songs? (established artist)
10. How did the singing of cover songs start in Uganda? (optional)

Appendix 2: List of Informants Interviewed

DATE	NAME	POSITION	PLACE
6 th /07/2022	Joyce Nakalyango	Cover song artist and fashion star	Zana, Makindye division
6 th /07/2022	Catherine Nakyoomu	Cover song artist and fashion designer	Kansanga, Makindye division
6 th /07/2022	Matovu	Music producer, bass, and solo guitar player.	Busega, Rubaga division
6 th /07/2022	Bert Kalyango	Music producer and keyboard accompanist	Busega, Rubaga division
10 th /08/2022	Shucky	Established recording artist	Wakaliga, Rubaga division
16 th /08/2022	Sswante Joseph Ssewaali	Cover song artist and computer scientist.	Jinja Kalooli, Kawempe division

Appendix 3: Budget Estimates

ITEM	QUANTITY	UNIT COST	AMOUNT
Airtime/internet data		Shs 40,000	Shs 40,000
Transportation	5 trips	Shs 10,000	Shs 50,000
Meals	5 meals	Shs 5,000	Shs 25,000
Stationary		Shs 30,000	Shs 30,000
Smartphone	1 phone	Shs 400,000	Shs 400,000
Umbrella	1 item	Shs 15,000	Shs 15,000
Masks	5 masks	Shs 1,000	Shs 5,000
Total Amount			Shs 565,000