



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
TRADITIONS OF MUSIC AND DANCE

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE ICTMD STUDY GROUP ON TRADITIONS OF AFRICAN MUSIC AND DANCE

March 9 – 13, 2026
Department of Music,
University of Port Harcourt

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

DAY/TIME/VENUE	ACTIVITY
Monday, 03/09/2026	
8a.m. – 6p.m. Venue: Music Quadrangle	REGISTRATION
9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. Venue: Recital Hall, Department of Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Introductions (Rita Sunday-Kanu, Chair, LOC) • Welcome address by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Owunari Abraham Georgewill. • Brief Background of the Study Group (Susanne Fürniss) • Performance by the Department of Music, Uniport
10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	TEA BREAK
11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Venue: Daro Owei Room	Sustainability of African Indigenous Music and Dance in Modern Society
	<p>CHAIR: Ukeme Udoh</p> <p>Agyefi, Papa Kow AGYPAP001 - <i>Sustainability of African Music Traditions: Arguments About the Seperewa musical Tradition of the Akan, from West Africa</i></p> <p>Pyper, Brett - <i>Revaluing African music as heritage: Critical considerations from South Africa</i></p>

	Udoh, Ukeme A. - <i>Children in Ikon (Xylophone) Performances: Sustaining the Traditional through Popular Music in Ibibio Culture of Nigeria</i>
12:45 p.m. – 2 p.m.	LUNCH BREAK
2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Venue: Daro Owei Room	Sustainability Through Teaching
	<p>CHAIR : Isaac Ibude</p> <p>“Sonkanise ka” Nkosi, A.D - <i>Pracademic Scholarship and Applied Ethnomusicology : A Case Study of South African Indigenous Instrumental Percussionists and a Music Educator</i></p> <p>Dao, Daouda - <i>The Paradox of Transmission: Associative Revaluation and the Decline of Gbogo Instrumental Practice Among the Mamala/Minyanka of Mali</i></p> <p>Matiure, Perminus - <i>Perceptions and constructions on how to promote the Shona mouthbow, chipendani</i></p> <p>Bangoura, Bernard - <i>Teaching traditional music in Senegal: between historical conservatism and current lucrative hybridity</i></p>
Tuesday, 03/10/2026	
8:00 a. m. – 5:00 p. m. Venue: Music Quadrangle	REGISTRATION
9:00 a.m.- 10:30 a. m. Venue: Daro Owei Room	Creative Reinterpretation / Innovation (Online Session)
	<p>CHAIR: Perminus Matiure</p> <p>Dawson, Nana Amowee - <i>Asempayetsia: A Triadic Process of Artistic Translation for Sustaining Indigenous Knowledge through Sonic and Visual Reinscription</i></p> <p>Kouame, Francis Yao - <i>Interpretation and (re)presentation of the Goly through contemporary Ivorian music: an attempt to perpetuate a cultural heritage in peril</i></p> <p>Deja, Rick and Thabisa Dinga - <i>Ancient Instruments, Sustainable Futures?: Musical Bows in Cosmopolitan South African Settings</i></p>
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	TEA BREAK
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p. m. Venue: Recital Hall	PLENARY: KEYNOTE (Online)
	<p>Jean Kidula – <i>Calibrating the ‘normative ear:’ (Re)Newing music traditions in disposable time’ in Africa</i></p> <p>Vote of Thanks: Christian Onyeji</p>
12.45 p. m. – 2.00 p. m.	LUNCH BREAK
2.00 p. m. – 4.00 p. m. Venue: Daro Owei Room	Transmission Through Writing (Online Session)

	<p>CHAIR: Essele Essele, Kisito</p> <p><i>PANEL: Representing sounds and texts in Cameroonian musical traditions</i> Dueck, Byron Essele Essele, Kisito [Chair] Manifi Abouh, Maxime Y. J. Makasso, Emmanuel-Moselly</p>
Wednesday, 03/11/2026	
8:00 a. m. – 5:00 p. m. Venue: Music Quadrangle	REGISTRATION
9.00 a. m. – 11.00 a. m. Venue: Daro Owei Room	Indigenous Music in a Modern Social Context
	<p>CHAIR: Timothy Ajiboye</p> <p>Forchu, Ijeoma Iruka - <i>Green rhythms: Environmental and cultural sustainability in indigenous Igbo popular music</i></p> <p>Maina, Ketty Jackline - <i>Interstice as Resilience: Cultural Ambivalence, Musical Translation and Negotiation in Nairobi, Kenya</i></p> <p>Onyeji, Christian and Elizabeth Onyeji - <i>The mother kills the child: transcontinentalism, transnationalism, urbanization, and the dilemma of sustainability of indigenous musical arts in Nigeria</i></p> <p>Ouattara, Ouologo Jonathan - <i>Initiatory beliefs, Christianity and the problem of the perpetuation of Ivorian musical cultures</i></p>
11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	TEA BREAK
12:00 p. m. – 1:00 p. m. Venue: Recital Hall	PLENARY: Lead Paper
	Goerge W. K. Dor – <i>‘Natural Amplification’ and Ambivalences in BorborborDance-Drumming of Today’s Ghanaian Ewe Youth</i>
1:00 p. m. – 2:00 p. m.	LUNCH BREAK
2:00 p. m. – 4:00 p. m. Venue: Daro Owei Room	Music in the Traditional Setting [=> Transition to Topic 2 “ethics”]
	<p>CHAIR: Bassirima Koné</p> <p>Darkwa Asare, Amos - <i>Sounding heritage: Sustaining minority music and dance across spaces of learning in Duakor</i></p> <p>Adeleke, Blessing D. - <i>Indigenous Music and Dance Traditions in Africa: A Study of Osun Deity's Musical Tradition</i></p> <p>Djedjess, Albert Atchory - <i>Dassoukou, a tool for transmitting adjoukrou musical knowledge (know-how) (Côte d’Ivoire)</i></p> <p>Koné, Bassirima - <i>Intangible cultural heritage of oral societies: Ethics, rights and conservation issues</i></p>
4 p.m. – 5 p.m. Venue: Recital Hall	Music Concert – An Evening of Music
Thursday, 03/12/2026	
8: a. m. – 5 p. m.	REGISTRATION

Venue: Music Quadrangle	
PLENARY: Workshop 9:00 a. m. – 9:45 a. m. Venue: Recital Hall	Onyee N. Nwankpa – <i>Highlife Music: Mythology and Reality in Cardinal Rex Jim Lawson</i>
9:45 a. m. – 10:15 a. m.	TEA BREAK
10:30 a. m. – 12:30 p. m. Venue: Room 4	Archives of African Traditional Music and Dance (Online Session)
	CHAIR: Susanne Fürniss Eaby-Lomas, Dion Malcom and Vuyisani Mkwambi - <i>Ama-Archive: Engaging Indigenous Knowledge Through Afro House and Amapiano</i> Fürniss, Susanne - <i>Reappropriation or rejection? Different attitudes towards historical recordings from South Cameroon</i> Kouakou, Mickael - <i>Dzama/dschama/zam-zam: The permanence of a ritual repertoire of songs "insulting women" among the Fang (Cameroon, Gabon, 1908-2025)</i> Tsope, Christiano - <i>Sound archives as a colonial sociocultural and political project: Mozambican 78 rpm records in the Radio Mozambique archive</i>
12:30 p. m. – 2:00 p. m.	LUNCH BREAK
2:00 p. m. – 4:30 p. m. Venue: Room 4	The Ethics of Ownership in African Music and Dance
	CHAIR: Jason Buchea Angya, Paul and Charity Angya - <i>From village square to streaming platforms: legal and policy gaps in protecting communal music heritage in Nigeria</i> Calapi, Sisa and Rémy Jadinon - <i>Be-MUSIC - online sound archives and the intellectual property rights issues</i> Buchea, Jason - <i>From Schizophonia to Enophonia: Black Panther in Concert and the Reunion of the Wakandan Sounds with their Sources</i> Ekpo, Omotolani E. - <i>A critical review of AI, Authorship, and Intellectual Property in contemporary African art music composition</i> Mochere, Joyce Mudengani - <i>Beyond the beat: navigating the ethical maze of AI, authorship, and cultural commodification in African music</i>
Friday, 03/13/2026	
PLENARY 9:00 a. m. – 10:15 a. m. Venue: Daro Owei Room	THE STUDY GROUP MEETING
10:15 a. m. – 10:45 a. m.	TEA BREAK
11 a. m. - 1:00 p. m. Venue: Room 4	African Music and Dance Outside of Africa (Online Session)
	CHAIR : Linda Cimardi Cimardi, Linda - <i>Scenes of African Musics and Dances in Slovenia's Past and Present</i>

	<p>Seye, Elina - <i>Looking for a space for West African dance and music in Finland</i></p> <p>Wartner-Attarzadeh, Talieh - <i>African Traces in Iran's National Puppetry: Kheymeh Shab-Bāzi</i></p> <p>Nascimento, Ailton Mario - <i>The Renaissance of Mbia in contemporary Brazil</i></p>
<p>1:00 p. m – 3:00 p. m. Venue: Recital Hall</p>	<p>CLOSING CEREMONY</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing remarks by the Study Group Chair • Parting remarks by the Vice Chair of the Study Group • Vote of thanks by Daniel Avagbedor • Performance by the Department of Music

ABSTRACTS

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Calibrating the ‘normative ear:’ (Re)New(ed) music traditions in ‘disposable time’ in Africa

In most canonic music studies, ‘normative ear’ usually presupposes that an individual can adequately recognize standard or expected patterns, forms, and norms that demonstrate artistic, cultural, social or other musical competencies. Musical competencies are socially acquired formally or otherwise and may be enculturated during what Karl Marx and others referred to as ‘disposable time,’ that is, outside formal working hours or as extracurricular activities or as electives in select educational institutions.

In this presentation, I describe developments that can be perceived as notable shifts in the study and performance of African instruments and styles while also entuning to European orchestral and popular types. The techniques for performance are imparted formally in contemporary educational and other institutions but also acquired informally in socializing spaces be they secular, religious, ritual, cultural and nationalizing events. New techniques have also emerged over time to accommodate repertorial adjustments or institute new musics and dances.

While African instruments and styles were for the most part calibrated to the ‘sonic ear’ and modes of the specific cultures that ‘owned’ them, neighboring groups could share artistic systems. With the advent and imposition of the European ‘normative ear,’ as well as changes in constructing and producing the instruments, attempts are continually made to ‘standardize’ musical systems much more than adjusting stylistic conventions associated with African instruments.

European instruments were mostly introduced in modern African spaces through the colonial education system, military and police establishments, Christian religious institutions and urban(ized) secular entertainment events; all organizations that advanced colonial and post-colonial political, religious, social and economic agendas. Until as late as the 1970s, European orchestral instruments and ‘high art’ repertoire were inaccessible to majority populations in rural and urban areas. While I theorize that this was partly due to a lack of access to the instruments, there was also open resistance to submit to the European ‘normative ear.’ However, some instruments gained traction in popular music practice and some even replaced indigenous ones, sometimes resulting in new musical styles.

Nevertheless, African and European instruments are also played together with African ones commonly ‘retuned’ to the Eurocentric ‘normative ear. The practice is exacerbated by the ubiquitous presence of studio generated and other synthesized sounds that impose an ‘industrial’ ear and often minimizes or leads to the adjustment of idiomatic movements intrinsic to the styles.

My discussion will scenarioize the turn to the study and performance of European orchestral music instruments and repertoire in both rural spaces and in metropolises, leading to new or renewed traditions that [re]calibrate the ‘normative ear’ and reorganize ‘disposable time’ in contemporary society. Meanwhile I will trouble the (re)turn to valorizing indigenous instruments with or without institutional support, as well as the adjustment of indigenous ‘normative ears’ in service of commercial expediency, outstanding difference, and audience recalibration. I will then comment on the swivel towards synthesized sound production and what it portends relative to acoustic and physical instruments and their associated artistic tendencies. I will draw most of my examples from Kenya.

Ultimately something is gained, something is lost, and something is in process. The historical trajectories of these developments impact not only music curricular in institutions of learning, but they infiltrate and reorient the life-audio-motors of their participants for good or otherwise.

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LEAD PAPER

‘Natural Amplification’ and Ambivalences in Borborbor Dance-Drumming of Today’s Ghanaian Ewe Youth

Borborbor, the most popular dance of the Ghanaian Ewe youth, has undergone a phenomenal degree of innovative transformations that exemplify the ingenious creative agency and inventiveness of its practitioners. Invented in the mid 1950s by Kodzo Nuatrɔ of Kpando in the Volta Region of Ghana, Borborbor has witnessed substantial changes in the areas of instrumentation, dance movement, geo-cultural and physical demographic scope of its practice, typology and multiple performance contexts and their attendant meanings, as well as its economic potential. In this paper I elucidate Ewe youth’s augmentation of Borborbor’s master drums from one to four and argue that what I have called ‘Natural Amplification’ has challenged the drummers’ creativity with added procedural options, thereby positively impacting the genre’s vibrancy. Also, I interrogate the emerging ambivalences in the areas of dancing and Borborbor in the church. I base this paper on ethnographic data that I gathered during a one-day Symposium we organized on Borborbor at the University of Ghana (UG) in June 2024. The symposium brought together invited practitioners from the socio-cultural and academic communities to dialogue, and video recordings of the focus group interviews with practitioners, and discussion sessions involving faculty, graduate students, and practitioners; as well an evening concert by the Abeka Edzordzinam Fafali Borborbor Band and Kpoeta Ashanti Dekaworwor Mile Norvisi have yielded research data that this paper draws from. Finally, I close the discussion with some summative thoughts and ramifications of the symposium for our research project on the generational changes and creative innovations in Borborbor dance-drumming to explore the nature and processes of changes that have shaped the genre over its seven decades’ period of existence.

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Indigenous Music and Dance Traditions in Africa: A Study of Osun Deity's Musical Tradition

African indigenous music and dance have been an integral part of traditional societies, playing significant roles in worship, rituals, and cultural practices. This paper examines the sustainability of African indigenous music and dance in modern society, focusing on the musical tradition of Osun deity, a revered goddess

among the Yoruba people in Nigeria. Despite scholarly explorations of music's role in deity worship, there is a gap in documenting music used in Osun worship. This paper employs a descriptive survey design, involving in-depth interviews, observation, focus group discussions, and recordings to document and analyze Osun deity's music. The research focuses on song texts, instrumentation, performance practices, and presentational styles, highlighting the significance of this musical tradition in preserving cultural heritage. The paper's findings contribute to the preservation of this rich tradition for future generations, providing valuable resources for ethnomusicology and promoting cultural sustainability in modern society. The paper underscores the importance of documenting and promoting indigenous music and dance, ensuring their continued relevance and transmission in contemporary times. By bridging the gap between tradition and modernity, this paper provides insights into the role of indigenous music and dance in shaping cultural identity and promoting sustainable development in African societies.

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Sustainability of African Music Traditions: Arguments About the Seperewa musical Tradition of the Akan, from West Africa

This paper critically examines contemporary debates surrounding the sustainability of music cultures and the widely promoted revival of indigenous African musical traditions, situating these discussions within the context of evolving sociocultural formations and intersecting economic and political processes. While numerous scholars and cultural institutions advocate for the preservation of so-called “dying” traditions, this paper suggests that such advocacy often lacks conceptual nuance. Drawing on sustained ethnographic engagement with the *seperewa* musical tradition in West Africa, alongside a critical engagement with sustainability discourses advanced in existing scholarship, the paper argues that sustainability should not be understood solely as conservation. Rather, it is framed as an ongoing process of cultural negotiation through which musical traditions undergo adaptation, transformation, and modification over time. Informed by theories of cultural change (Hall, 1997; Bhabha, 1994), music sustainability (Titon, 2009), and ethnomusicological perspectives (Agawu, 2003; Nketia, 1974), the study examines how globalization, urbanization, individual preferences, and nostalgic attachments to indigeneity shape contemporary African musical practices. Employing the capability approach developed by Sen (1999) and later applied by Beardslee (2014), the paper critiques UNESCO-oriented safeguarding frameworks and proposes a more context-sensitive, agency-centered approach to sustaining musical traditions in Africa. The paper concludes by calling for a reassessment of prevailing sustainability strategies by cultural stakeholders and practitioners.

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From village square to streaming platforms: legal and policy gaps in protecting communal music heritage in Nigeria

The global push for the recognition and protection of Traditional Knowledge (TK), Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs), and Genetic Resources (GRs) has highlighted the urgent need for national frameworks that safeguard indigenous intellectual and cultural heritage. In Nigeria, communal music – ritual songs, folklore chants, praise poetry, and other traditional performances, form a crucial part of its TCEs. However, as these expressions increasingly transition from village squares to digital streaming platforms, they become vulnerable to misappropriation, commercial exploitation, and cultural dilution. This paper examines the legal and policy lacunae within Nigeria’s intellectual property (IP) regime as it pertains to the protection of communal music heritage. Employing a doctrinal and comparative methodology grounded in Nigerian legislation, judicial decisions, and international instruments such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation – Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources (WIPO – IGC), the convention on biological Diversity, and UNESCO conventions, and supplemented by academic and policy literature, the paper interrogates the effectiveness of Nigeria’s copyright Act of 2022, the Trademarks Act, and other relevant regulatory frameworks. It interrogates judicial attitudes and statutory definitions that privilege individual over communal ownership, and highlights case law that reveals the fragility of communal IP claims. Through comparative insights from countries like India, South Africa, and Australia, and drawing on academic analyses, the paper argues for a sui generis legal framework rooted in cultural context, community ownership, and equitable benefit-sharing. It concludes by recommending legislative reform, institutional capacity building, and digital tracking protocols that align with global best practices and protect Nigeria’s rich musical heritage from exploitation in the digital age.

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Teaching traditional music in Senegal: between historical conservatism and current lucrative hybridity

The inclusion of traditional music in educational and vocational training programs in Senegal began in the early 1960s. This choice aimed to reconnect the public with expressions of the traditional cultural system after decades of colonial-era influence. But the period of asserted sovereignty also presented, at the local level and in the West African sub-region, an open artistic creation, featuring dominant and often hybrid sonic and choreographic expressions. These flourish today under the influence of the media and the entertainment industry, to the point of posing a threat to the representation of traditional music, previously designated as "musical reserves" to be protected. This is a set of general social conditions which, under a legal principle and combined with freedom of cultural expression, offers opportunities for the dissemination of contemporary artistic creation. This situation also presents financial benefits through widespread adoption and almost a standardization of tastes. This, however, is not without negative externalities for traditional music. Considering the current state of traditional music in Senegal from an instructive and educational point of view, as bulwarks for its survival, initiatives can be considered that preserve its productions as facts (sound identity and aesthetics) and objects (instruments). The communication project

is part of the initial objective of cultural reforms, to consolidate them, by proposing conservative approaches applied to teaching and training programs for traditional Senegalese music.

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From Schizophonia to Enophonia: Black Panther in Concert and the Reunion of the Wakandan Sounds with their Sources

“Schizophonia” —the splitting off of a sound from its source— has been an enduring term in ethnomusicology for decades. Schizophonia is the site where musical utterances can be captured by modern recording technology (Schafer 1977), and in Feld’s conception (1994), the beginning of a process where musicians can increasingly lose creative control over, and the ability to profit off of, their own sounds—an issue long-plaguing artists working in the music industry, only further exacerbated when such “collaborations” cross Global North-South lines. For the Senegalese musical contributors to the *Black Panther* films, this may still have largely been the case. But with the introduction of *Black Panther In Concert*, a stage adaptation of the blockbuster film, many of the original musicians were called back in to perform their parts live. Drawing on participant-observation as an ethnomusicologist closely involved in bringing the production to fruition, this paper demonstrates how *Black Panther In Concert* recentered the original African musicians from the film’s score, leading to new career opportunities and proper recognition for their contributions, to an extent that the film itself never achieved. Where schizophonia marks the capture of musical performances for use in finished and fixed media products (commercial recordings), the process of starting with a “finished product” (the movie) and reverse-engineering it to be performed live unveils a process of “enophonia”—the reuniting of the sound with its source— which counteracts the schizoponic process, repatriating the borrowed sounds back to the original creators, and increasing the amount of artistic credit and financial remuneration they could receive from their own work. It suggests that, though most critical attention is generally paid to legal mechanisms like copyright and royalties, live performance opportunities may continue to be the most empowering space for “sub-altern” collaborators, even on large-scale mass-mediated releases like *Black Panther*.

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Be-MUSIC—Online sound archives and the intellectual property rights issues

Databases are fundamental cornerstones for research and understanding in the field of musical traditions. The Be-Music project will bring together the digitized music collections (photos instrument, field photos, records, and sound recordings) housed at the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) in Tervuren and the Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments (RMAH-MIM) into a new, multi-lingual information platform for musical heritage. One of the major challenges facing scientific institutions when putting intangible collections online is to establish good practice in terms of current law and ethics. The sound archives preserved in Belgium represent the musical heritage of the former Belgian colonies, the legitimacy of which in terms of ownership or representation is regularly contested. In this presentation, we will address the methodological issues of copyright and intellectual property of sound archives with a view to 10ecolonization processes, and the creation of a national platform using crowdsourcing tools. The aim is to

question the notion of legal ownership of sound archives through the legal frameworks used by cultural institutions to put their collections online. We also want to look at the moral and/or emotional issues involved in (re)appropriating cultural heritage.

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Scenes of African Musics and Dances in Slovenia's Past and Present

As one of the Republics of ex-Yugoslavia and involved in the international networks of the Non-Aligned Movement, Slovenia hosted several students from Africa since the 1960s. While, before that, contacts with Africa and its performing arts were minimal, the formation of a sizable community of African students, especially in the capital Ljubljana, led in the 1970s to the development of an African folklore group as well as of regular nights of Afro disco. From the late 1980s, bands dedicated to African traditional music (mostly drumming) and diasporic African popular music emerged in Slovenia, formed by Africans, Slovenians or both. This continued also after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, when international students diminished, thanks to the stable presence of some former African students and the increased interest of Slovenes in African musics, leading to the formation of various bands and the organization of events that included African drumming and DJing. Since the 2000s, this multiform landscape has been enriched by two female dancers of African descent born in Slovenia, who started performing and teaching African dances, as well as by new African performers moving to the country. This paper focuses on the transformations that occurred in the scenes of African musics and dances in Ljubljana from the 1970s to recent years. While documenting the various formations and genres that marked these scenes during the considered decades, the discussion focuses on the multiple interactions between African and Slovenian performers and audiences, highlighting the different motivations and visions of the interpreters, the influences of world music trends on their repertoires and approaches and the space and role of African musics and dances in Slovenian society.

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The Paradox of Transmission: Associative Revaluation and the Decline of Gbogo Instrumental Practice Among the Mamala/Minyanka of Mali

This paper examines the sustainability of African musical traditions in contemporary society, focusing on the case of the *gbogo* instrument (chordophone or idiophone) among the Mamala/Minyanka communities in Mali. While the sustainability and transmission of cultural knowledge have become essential components of public discourse, our study reveals a profound paradox. In Mali, cultural revaluation is manifesting through the multiplication of local associations (such as « Ceborogoto » or « Ensemble pour le Mamala ») and unprecedented media exposure, all aimed at perpetuating the tradition. However, despite this highly visible (re)presentation, the effective transmission of *gbogo* practice to the younger generation is in crisis, failing to achieve the desired outcomes. We observe that the instrument is often used « inappropriately » in contexts that are frequently disconnected from its original function. This situation is leading to the near disappearance of the Mamala/Minyanka music, if left unchecked. This loss is more than just artistic ; it results in the decay of vital extra-musical functions, such as the instrument's role in defense, healing, the repertoire of praises for great cultivators, and its use in traditional farming techniques. To address this

decline, the study proposes a path forward. Resonating with the work of Kouyaté (2022) on the *kamalen goni* and Nketia (1961), we advocate for a hybrid transmission model. To overcome the limitations of informal enculturation, it is crucial to integrate the teaching of *gbogo* and similar traditional instruments like the *m'bolon* into the fundamental school music curricula. This institutional approach must operate in synergy with traditional modes of transmission. In conclusion, safeguarding these traditions requires an « individual, collective, and state responsibility » that transcends simple inscription on intangible heritage lists. Sustainability must be achieved through the active practice and re-functionalization of these cultural forms within education and community life.

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Sounding heritage: Sustaining minority music and dance across spaces of learning in Duakor

In my ethnographic fieldwork at the minority fishing community of Duakor in Ghana, I observed how children were being socialized into their cultural heritage through their native music and dance using both formal and informal spaces of learning. The musical culture of this minority community, however, is continually shaped and challenged by the pervasive influences of the dominant culture. While formal educational sites, such as the school environment provide more structured learning opportunities for embedding heritage in music and performance, equally meaningful spaces of transmission emerge in community contexts such as seashore labour, funeral durbars, ritual ceremonies, and gatherings that are more akin to the Anlo Ewe culture. These diverse pedagogical spaces form an ecology of learning in which children and youth of the minority Duakor community acquire musical practices, historical consciousness, and cultural identity. But how are these practices and spaces of learning sustained for the generation now and the future? Framing the discussions within cultural sustainability theory and employing participatory observations and interviews, I argue that the music of the minority Duakor are shaped by everyday practices of formal and informal learning operating as strategies of survival, preservation of cultural memory, promotion, and protection of identity against erasure in the face of dominant cultural influences.

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Asempayetsia: A Triadic Process of Artistic Translation for Sustaining Indigenous Knowledge through Sonic and Visual Reinscription

This paper presents *Asempayetsia*—a compositional and artistic-research framework developed to sustain Ghanaian-Akan oral traditions through creative translation. Derived from my doctoral project, which resuscitated the *Kodzi* (a narrative–musical folklore form) by transforming it into a visual-programmatic composition, *Asempayetsia* proposes a triadic process of cultural excavation, compositional translation, and audiovisual reinscription. The framework is grounded in decolonial artistic research and engages 4IR technologies as tools for safeguarding intangible heritage in contemporary creative practice. Through this triadic process, the study repositions indigenous creativity as a living, adaptive system rather than an archival relic. The cultural excavation phase involves interpretive engagement with oral sources, proverbs, and performance contexts. Compositional translation reimagines these elements within structured musical and narrative forms, while audiovisual reinscription extends them into multimedia spaces—such as

animation, digital soundscapes, and intercultural performance. This approach demonstrates how artistic creation can function simultaneously as research, pedagogy, and preservation. Situated within the broader objectives of the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and AU Agenda 2063, Aspiration 5, the paper advocates for artistic methodologies as sustainable models for reclaiming African heritage and reactivating indigenous knowledge systems. It argues that creative reinterpretation, when ethically and contextually grounded, ensures continuity between ancestral wisdom and modern innovation, rearming the centrality of art in Africa's cultural future.

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Ancient Instruments, Sustainable Futures?: Musical Bows in Cosmopolitan South African Settings

In this paper, we discuss aspects of the promotion and dissemination of *uhadi* and *umrhubhe* musical bows of indigenous southern African origins. We advocate for emphasizing innovation via personal artistic expression, together with socio-cultural dialogue, in order to sustain these instrumental traditions within modern societal contexts. As researcher-practitioners of different origins, we highlight our shared interest and understanding of these cultural practices while also reflecting on our contrasting backgrounds. As such, we use a dialogical approach rooted in convivial scholarship and collaborative ethnography. In doing so, we examine questions regarding changing performance contexts, extra-musical associations, and (multi)cultural values. One of our aims is to explore possible intersections between modern and indigenous values (and the resulting aesthetics) so that the circulation of diverse influences can be assessed in a meaningful way. Ultimately, we strategize how to enrich existing traditions in a way which honours their essential characteristics while going beyond merely preserving a static historical model. Our findings are based on artistic research, co-composition, and collaborative dialogues. We present our work in relation to other case studies on African instruments in conjunction with scholarly discourses related to organology and musical hybridity. With careful consideration of past and present contextual changes and shifting values, we stress the roles of innovation, personal artistic expression, and socio-cultural dialogue with the hope of presenting viable and dynamic paths towards the sustainability of indigenous traditions within the current ethos of cosmopolitanism and modernity.

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Dassoukou, a tool for transmitting Adjoukrou musical knowledge (know-how) (Côte d'Ivoire)

This paper offers an ethnomusicological exploration of the *dassoukou* of the Adjoukrou people of Côte d'Ivoire, not only as a musical expression, but above all as an essential didactic tool in the transmission and acquisition of local musical and cultural knowledge. In a context of rapid social change, marked by the growing influence of new Christian religions, the sustainability of traditional Adjoukrou practices is examined. The analysis is structured around three main points. The first deciphers *dassoukou* as a complex cultural practice where music, songs, and dance convey essential values linked to Adjoukrou identity. The second examines the practical methods of transmitting know-how, from learning through observation and imitation to virtuoso performance techniques, and the associated social skills. Finally, the last addresses the contemporary challenges of this transmission and the strategies implemented by the community to preserve

this heritage. The study reveals that the sustainability of the *dassoukou* lies not only in its static preservation but also in its ability to remain a vector of identity and cohesion for the community.

Dueck, Essele Essele, Manifi and Makasso:

PANEL: *Representing sounds and texts in Cameroonian musical traditions*

This panel brings together the ethnomusicologists and linguists who have been the lead contributors to the *Anthology of Music of Central Cameroon*, a collection of transcriptions of traditional and neotraditional songs from the Centre Region of Cameroon. Online publication of the first edition of the anthology is planned for summer 2026. The first paper considers questions that have arisen during the production of the anthology, involving representations of the musical elements, representations of the texts, and potential future uses of the transcriptions. The second paper looks in detail at a key problem in presenting song texts in the anthology: namely, whether to privilege phonetic precision or orthographic legibility in the transcriptions. The third contribution considers the sustainability and promulgation of traditional musical games, stories, and epics of the Basaá people – practices not currently represented in the anthology.

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Representing musical traditions in the Anthology of Music of Central Cameroon: problems of notation, transmission, and future use

Beginning around 2017, members of our panel have collaborated on an anthology of music from central Cameroon, a collection of transcriptions of traditional and neotraditional musical expressions. This paper reflects on problems that have emerged in the course of documenting sounds and texts, as well as questions around the eventual uses of the volume. We begin by considering issues involving musical notation, especially the correct identification of the beat/tactus (see Arom 1985, 2025) and the representation of this in the transcriptions. Next are problems related to the representation of texts in Cameroonian languages. The first edition of the anthology will contain items in Ewondo, Yezum, Eton, Basaá, and Yambeta. One question involves the best way to represent these languages for an audience that will ideally include people from both inside and outside Cameroon, and people who are more and less familiar with Bantu languages. Another question involves the representation of linguistic sounds that are musically important but not usually included in orthographies of the languages. A final section focuses on potential uses of the forthcoming anthology. How valuable is a collection such as this in a context where users do not have a personal connection to the musical tradition or to the language? Notwithstanding warnings imparted in the preface or notes, do the transcriptions risk creating misleading perceptions of the fixity or stability of the pieces and practices in the anthology? More broadly, to what degree does an anthology contribute to the task of fostering sustainability?

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Representing Cameroonian languages in musical transcriptions: between phonetic accuracy and orthographic legibility

Cameroonian traditional music is closely linked to the languages that carry it. Each language conveys a unique way of expressing, rhythmising and experiencing the world. However, when transcribed for educational, scientific or heritage purposes, the question arises as to the most appropriate mode of linguistic representation: should phonetic accuracy or orthographic stability be prioritised? This paper examines the implications of this choice in a context where most Cameroonian languages still have spelling systems that are in the process of being standardised. After reviewing the linguistic and cultural issues involved in musical transcription, the analysis compares two approaches: the phonetic approach, based on the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which allows for accurate reproduction of oral performance but remains difficult for the general public to access; and the orthographic approach, which is more readable and suitable for teaching, but sometimes far from the prosodic reality of singing. Using examples of Yambeta lullabies, the study proposes a two-level annotated orthographic transcription model: a quasi-phonetic spelling based on the General Alphabet of Cameroonian Languages (AGLC) and a rewriting in accordance with established standards. This approach aims to reconcile scientific rigour with community accessibility. This reflection contributes to rethinking musical transcription as a point of articulation between linguistics, musicology and the transmission of African intangible heritage.

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The communicative function of traditional Bassa songs

The Bassa are an ethnic group located in the forest zone of southern Cameroon, more precisely between the country's two largest cities, Douala and Yaoundé. With a rich material and immaterial heritage, Basaa society often uses traditional songs to accompany various types of events. Whether it is the narration of stories or epics, festive rhythms or traditional games, the inevitable sung text delivers important messages and teachings from their cultural universe. There are several levels of intersubjectivity that the various participants in the act of communication must decode in order to bring discursive and cultural value to the song. These levels of intersubjectivity include the individual level, which focuses on the individual; the social level, which focuses on social codes; and the metadiscursive level, which focuses on the act of communication itself. This study aims to document and examine the songs embedded in traditional games, tales and epics of the Bassa culture, as a mode of communication that is now under threat, with the modest ambition of eventually modernising and disseminating them. The theoretical basis of this study is ethnocriticism (Scarpa 2013:4), which is presented as a crossing between Bakhtin's semiolinguistic research and the work of ethnologists on symbolics.

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Ama-Archive: Engaging Indigenous Knowledge Through Afro House and Amapiano

Ama-Archive is a collaborative project between Vuyisani Mkwambi and Dion Malcolm Eaby-Lomas which aims to remix, revitalize and decolonize Percival Kirby's collection of African instruments and Hugh Tracey's recordings of African music. The Zulu plural “ama-” is a reference to *amapiano*, but also to the use of multiple archives and forms of engagement with those archives. By sampling, arranging and re-contextualizing these sounds in the styles of Afro house and *Amapiano*, this creative exploration seeks to explore embodied creative practice as a means of rethinking the archive. Both members offer their creative intuitions to the archive in order to draw attention to the marginalized knowledges they represent, while also expanding access to the wider public. Originally offered in the Kirby collection, this presentation will share about how the project came about, our creative processes and the challenges we experienced working with the archival material. We will present our individual remixes of Tracey's recording of Chemutoi Ketienya and a group of Kipsigis girls from Kenya, titled “chemirocha 3”, detailing our unique approaches at reworking the sample and how we included other archival or natural elements in our final works. Using commercial, popular musics and digital audio software with which we are familiar, we draw attention to various forms of indigenous knowledges, such as those captured in the archives and those of popular music producers from the townships. Thus, digital technology becomes a tool to revitalize knowledge of the past, present and future, and bring sound back into the silenced collection that is the Kirby.

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A critical review of AI, Authorship, and Intellectual Property in contemporary African art music composition

The accelerating integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into creative processes has begun to reshape the epistemologies and aesthetics of African art music composition. This paper interrogates the ethical, cultural, and legal implications of AI-assisted composition within contemporary African musical landscapes, asking: *whose voice, creativity, and ownership are represented when algorithms generate or co-create music?* Drawing on case studies of emerging African composers experimenting with AI tools, the study explores how traditional compositional agency and indigenous creative philosophies are being redefined by digital mediation. It further examines tensions between communal authorship, rooted in African musical ontology and the individualistic intellectual property frameworks inherited from Western legal systems. Through an ethnomusicological lens, the paper situates AI not merely as a technological tool but as a cultural actor that challenges existing notions of authenticity, originality, and ownership in art music creation. Ultimately, the study argues for the development of a context-sensitive ethical framework for AI-mediated composition, one that safeguards African composers' creative rights while embracing innovation and preserving the communal ethos central to African artistic expression.

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Green rhythms: Environmental and cultural sustainability in indigenous Igbo popular music

In recognition of the importance of diverse perspectives in addressing the global environmental concerns, this paper investigates how the indigenous popular music of the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria relates with the environment. Indigenous popular music of the Igbo denotes traditional Igbo musical forms that have been modified by a synthesis of Western popular idioms and instrumental techniques. This paper seeks to uncover both the subtle nuances and explicit expressions of environmental concerns in indigenous Igbo popular music. Employing the ethnomusicological methods, including ethnographic fieldwork, the analysis of musical structures, performance practices and the sociocultural context of the selected songs, it examines Igbo popular music as a site of ecological discourse. This paper draws on Igbo philosophy as encapsulated in two Igbo idioms, *akọ bu ije* which conveys that wisdom is the key to success, and *ọ chaa gbute, ọ chaghị, gbute*, which reflects the relentless pursuit of wealth at all costs. It argues that some Igbo popular musicians occasionally engage with the natural environment in their music. Their artistic expressions sometimes incorporate values such as equity, wisdom, respect, and cooperation. These are core principles that portend well for ecological sustainability and social wellbeing. By engaging these values, the musicians contribute meaningfully to local and international conversations on environmental concerns. This article also offers new perspectives and avenues for exploring the ecological and societal functions of music, especially in the context of sustainability. Its indigenist ecomusicological approach introduces novel theoretical frameworks that contribute to multiple fields, particularly ethnomusicology, environmental humanities, and related areas of human inquiry.

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Reappropriation or rejection? Different attitudes towards historical recordings from South Cameroon

Over ten years of research on sound archives from South Cameroon provide insight in different kinds of attitudes towards archived items in the communities they come from. South Cameroon is represented in the *Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv* by 186 wax cylinders recorded between 1907 and 1909 either in their cultural context in the former German protectorate of *Kamerun* or in the German capital of Berlin. The aim of my research is to rescue these recordings from oblivion and to give the original communities the opportunity to establish a relationship with them. It also investigates the question of who was behind and in front of the microphone and the motivations of these protagonists to participate in recordings. Several fieldtrips to Cameroon served to shed light on the contents and ethnic origin of the items, to find traces of the musician's having travelled to Berlin, and to reconstitute the recordings in the places where they had been realized. Such research gives rise to several forms of informal restitution and to different degrees of re-appropriation of the recordings. Long listening sessions and discussions about the recordings with local musicians, elders and community leaders draw on collective and individual memories and reactivate important cultural knowledge. The release of the CD *Recordings on wax-cylinders from South Cameroon. 1907-1909* (Berlin, SMB-SPK) gave rise to other forms of restitution, such as presentations to the general public in dialogue with traditional chiefs and musicians, or the collaboration with a contemporary artist. The experience shows that the reception of archive recordings is not the same everywhere. Depending on the social structure of a

community, recent religious developments, and the personal knowledge of one's cultural history, the response may be indifference, an assumed rejection of old practices or a major interest in order to understanding the society's history.

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Intangible cultural heritage of oral societies: Ethics, rights and conservation issues

When the sounds of *djéguélé* music ring out in a Senufo village, everyone feels involved: young and old, adults and children, women and men, musicians and non-musicians alike, everyone prepares to take part in the specific rituals or ceremonies associated with this form of expression that is *djéguélé* music. No one in this community stands on the sidelines of the socio-cultural events announced by this music, which is an essential part of the Senufo people's intangible heritage. It therefore seems obvious that, beyond the emotions they arouse in ordinary Senufo people, the expression and practice of these types of music leave traces of 'constituent elements of the people's musical system, in that they come together to form a coherent whole, specific to this culture' (Arom, 2019). These elements contribute to reinforcing, both in people's memories and in the popular consciousness, the notion of a heritage shared by the people. Following on from the scientific approach to these traces of culture, this study examines their original authors. This raises the following questions: what ethics govern works of intangible heritage, especially in oral societies such as those in Africa? Who enjoys the rights and what are the challenges of their conservation, or even their perpetuation? Who are the authors of intellectual works produced in oral societies? To develop a holistic approach to this issue, this study focused on the specific case of *djéguélé* music, a popular music genre and the main form of cultural expression among the Senufo people of Côte d'Ivoire. The study found that *djéguélé* music, like other forms of living culture in similar contexts, does not benefit from any legal protection. As a result, various initiatives (cultural, socio-political, scientific, etc.) are undertaken without any real controls or supervision, leading to the mass production of these works, the benefits of which are not redistributed to the actors involved. Consequently, discouragement sets in among the actors, leading to an exodus to other places or other more profitable professions. These (over)exploitations, some of which are intended to preserve these types of music, could, on the contrary, be the cause of their demise.

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Dzama/dschama/zam-zam: The permanence of a ritual repertoire of songs "insulting women" among the Fang (Cameroon, Gabon, 1908-2025)

Günter Tessmann (1884-1969) was commissioned by the Ethnographic Museum of Lubeck (Germany) to conduct an ethnographic study of the Fang populations, spread across Equatorial Guinea, northern Gabon, and southern Cameroon. Between 1908 and 1909, he recorded 86 wax cylinders with Fang sound practices. The discovery of these archives raises the question of what their meaning both for the populations concerned and for current research. Particularly intriguing are the metadata designating 3 items by the title *dschama* mentioned by Tessmann as "insult songs for women". What does this mean? And why should women be insulted? Is this linked to a specific ritual practice? The translation of the lyrics of these three items showed lascivious remarks of men against women. The complete analysis of the data and metadata gathered by Tessmann revealed that these lascivious expressions were used at the end of many rituals, with four

characteristics. First, to seal and confirm the success of the ritual; second, it was a mix of singing, shouting and other noises; third, it was very brief; fourth, it was allowed only in the ritual context. Two fieldwork trips in 2025 (Gabon, Cameroon) allowed me to notice the permanence of this kind of transgressive expression at the end of several rituals and to bring into light their social function. These particular songs have not been mentioned in anthropological studies after Tessmann, nor have they been documented by scholars having worked on Fang music since the 1960ies (Pepper, Sallée, Mifune, Le Bomin). The research on Tessmann's archives allows for the identification of an important element of the Fang ritual system and offers the Fang a precious testimony of its permanence over time and space.

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Interpretation and (re)presentation of the Goly through contemporary Ivorian music: an attempt to perpetuate a cultural heritage in peril

Originally, the *Goly* was a sacred mask. In the villages where it is practiced in central Côte d'Ivoire, its public performances are accompanied by an orchestra. The music and dances it inspires thus give rise to lively spectacles that draw large crowds. A cultural heritage entrusted to the Wan and Baoulé peoples, *Goly* thus appears as a multifaceted artistic tradition. It embodies a blend of music, choreography, and visual arts. While traditionally performed during ritual ceremonies and celebrations, *Goly* has lost its former prominence and is declining in popularity within traditional societies. Paradoxically, this cultural practice has garnered the interest of some musicians through their contemporary musical works. This raises a question: How, as a cultural heritage, is *Goly* interpreted, (re)presented, and perpetuated in contemporary Ivorian society? In other words, how do contemporary Ivorian musicians manage to make *Goly* one of the distinctive features of their aesthetic(s)? These are the main questions this paper attempts to answer, aiming to analyze contemporary Ivorian music in order to identify the outlines of *Goly*. Our study is based on the analysis of the content of a corpus of 6 musical pieces and on documentary research. It shows that the interpretation of the *Goly* through contemporary musical works results from a (re)appropriation of this heritage by musicians with diverse profiles.

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Interstice as Resilience: Cultural Ambivalence, Musical Translation and Negotiation in Nairobi, Kenya

The city is regarded as a cosmopolitan space; a nexus for cultural diversity, modern technology and development. Here, traditions are created, redefined and translated, transcending cultural boundaries. With such porosity, it is assumed that the city might erode indigenous traditions. However, it is a hub for their expression and preservation. In Kenya, Nairobi has embodied this complexity since its establishment during the colonial period. It has been a contact zone for ethnic and global cultures to interact, negotiate and hybridize, creating ambivalent cultural productions. Under British rule, this dynamic was exemplified by the forced rural-urban migration of African laborers, racial segregation and confinement to overcrowded urban settlements that pushed African urbanites to develop new hybridized traditions rooted in nostalgic indigenous practices. It turned Nairobi into a space that cultural producers thrive in, positioning it as a resilient nexus for cultural maintenance rather than erasure. In contemporary Nairobi, musicians integrate

national and ethnic traditions with global influences to propel and enrich their culture. Just as colonial pressures propelled nostalgic cultural fusions, modern cosmopolitanism prompts these musicians to express, preserve and develop indigenous traditions left behind or never experienced. They do so through ethnic dance or instrumental groups (*kibende*), Rumba or *Zilizopendwa* (Kenyan oldies) bands, Afrofusion groups and solo artistes. Theme nights, festivals and concerts with similar ideals are also curated. These platforms enable artists to maintain their heritage, resonate with diverse audiences through fusion, and acquire socio-economic capital. Consequently, Nairobi emerges as an interstitial space where music and other cultural forms translate into hybridized identities that sustain traditions while propelling new ones. It is in this context that I conduct an inquiry using ethnographic research methods and analytical frameworks. I examine how Nairobi's diversity and ambivalence inspire musicians to recontextualize indigenous traditions for contemporary audiences, ensuring cultural sustainability and cross-cultural reverence.

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Perceptions and constructions on how to promote the Shona mouthbow, chipendani

Unlike its counterpart, the *mbira*, the mouth bow (*chipendani*) of the Shona people of Zimbabwe has not withstood the effects of technology despite its rich history and numerous harmonics. According to Kubik (2019), the hunting bow evolved into mouthbows like *chipendani* both historically and structurally. Although usually associated with herd boys, Kyker (2018) opines that this instrument is played by people of all ages. Its distinctiveness lies in the overtones the player produces in their mouth, which I call "thousand voices" in this work. However, the instrument, along with its equivalents, the *chitende* and *chizambi*, has been replaced by other louder instruments, such as the *mbira*, due to its delayed transfer from the personal to private domain and soft multiple harmonics. In the end, the number of *chipendani* musicians and recordings of its music is quite small. Considering this, this study investigates the potential for *chipendani* sustainability. It was established through an instrumental case study and a survey that involved interviews with traditionalists from the Shona communities that musicians try to preserve *chipendani* by performing it together with other western instruments and adding microphone pickups to make it loud enough to be played in public gatherings. Additionally, it was discovered that some academics are creating platforms that allow young people to share information with *chipendani* layers and culture bearers. To sustain *chipendani*, I suggest developing content, developing a notation for teaching it to students, and documenting this instrument more thoroughly through written texts and documentaries.

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Beyond the beat: navigating the ethical maze of AI, authorship, and cultural commodification in African music

This systematic review synthesizes recent academic literature to address the burgeoning ethical challenges at the intersection of African music traditions, intellectual property, and artificial intelligence (AI). While African music enjoys unprecedented global reach, the rise of generative AI platforms threatens to commodify cultural heritage without equitable benefit or community consent, creating a critical knowledge gap in established legal and ethical frameworks. Guided by the PRISMA 2020 reporting guidelines, this review applies a theoretical framework of postcolonial theory and critical AI studies to evaluate the extant

literature. We conducted a systematic search across six peer-reviewed databases—Web of Science, Scopus, ProQuest, PubMed, Sabinet, and IEEE Xplore—using a predefined search string and inclusion/exclusion criteria. The analysis reveals a stark dichotomy: while AI offers powerful tools for archiving and analysis that can advance endogenous African musicology, its uncritical implementation risks perpetuating techno-colonialism and algorithmic bias by displacing indigenous knowledge systems and cultural custodianship. The paper's core finding is that a decolonial AI framework, built on principles of indigenous data sovereignty and community-led collaboration, is essential to realize the promise of technology while mitigating its perils. This research contributes a concrete conceptual model for ethical engagement, offering a roadmap for scholars and practitioners seeking to protect African cultural heritage in the digital age.

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The Renaissance of Mbira in contemporary Brazil

In this presentation, we aim to document and analyze the resurgence in contemporary Brazil of the lamellophone, a family of instruments that was very popular during the Brazilian colonial and imperial periods until the end of the 19th century, under the generic name "marimba". It is a type of instrument widely used in Sub-Saharan Africa, known by various names: *sanza*, *kisanji*, *karimba*, *kalimba*, *nsansi*, *malimba*, *mbira*, etc. (see Silva 1995, Ricciardi 2000, Galante 2015 and Nascimento 2020). The *mbira nyunganyuga*, an instrument originating from the region between the banks of the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers in southern Africa, more specifically from the Shona people of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, is today the main instrument in the lamellophone revitalization movement in Brazil. This is due to several factors: the existence of studies on *mbiras* (Tracey, Berliner, Turino, Silambo); strong movements to revitalize the *mbira* in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, which promoted its international distribution (Silambo, Turino); increased academic mobility of Brazilian students in Mozambique; and a growing interest among Brazilian musicians in learning about African musical traditions. I will present my own journey of encountering the *mbira*; the movements to revitalize the *mbira* in Southern Africa; the nascent movements to popularize *mbira nyunganyunga* in Bahia; hypotheses about the possible reasons for its disappearance in Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century, in addition to some ethnographic examples of musicians engaged in the dissemination of *mbira*, in an attempt to promote the resurgence of lamellophones in the Brazilian musical universe, in the style of the Musical Revivalism movements (Livingston, 1999) and the concept of "invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm; Ranger, 1983).

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The mother kills the child: transcontinentalism, transnationalism, urbanization, and the dilemma of sustainability of indigenous musical arts in Nigeria

Current socio-political occurrences in Nigeria leading to economic, security, human and social challenges have imposed sever constraints on Nigerians, forcing a greater number of the younger generation to rethink their continued stay in the country. Successive Nigerian governments have engendered palpable social challenges which directly stimulated the yearning for unplanned migrations and the search for better economy, social life and indeed solutions to the unprecedented security challenges bedeviling the country. A common slogan among the youth is *Japa*, a Yoruba word which translates to escape from danger.

Uncontrolled *Japaing*/migrations from Nigeria has implications on the creative life and sustainability of our indigenous music art. Such “forced” migrations translate to deliberate killing of aspirations of the younger generations whose only option is seeking survival elsewhere. Youth transcontinental/national/urban migrations have left a strain on the indigenous music of various subcultures of Nigeria which requires more investigations. This study discusses the nature of the current situation, its impact and implications on the cultural/indigenous music practices and sustainability in Nigeria using a combination of ethnographic and descriptive methods. It sustains the notion that the country is destroying its indigenous musical arts practices through harsh socio-political/economic and security challenges which rob the younger generation of opportunities and reliance on the country.

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Initiatory beliefs, Christianity and the problem of the perpetuation of Ivorian musical cultures

In Côte d'Ivoire, initiatory beliefs, such as the Poro, constitute systems for communicating knowledge, fostering social integration, and connecting with ancestors through a shared spirituality within the community. These age-old networks of exchange ensured the preservation of culture in general, and musical traditions in particular. However, Africa as a whole experienced significant upheaval during the colonial period. Among these changes was the arrival of Christianity. The Church, eager to influence its new environment, turned to African musical cultures for better communication with the people. This process, known as inculturation, proved fruitful in the missionaries' communication and evangelization efforts. But does the use of African musical cultures by these new belief systems not pose a problem? In a context where many African musical cultures are threatened, can the Church present itself as a channel for sustainability or perpetuation? Among proponents of initiatory beliefs, there is a widespread belief that Christianity is synonymous with the loss of cultural values. However, we believe that critical dialogue is essential. In a context of rapid urbanization and globalization, we think the Church could offer an opportunity for the survival of these musical cultures. This recommendation-based work in Côte d'Ivoire presents a model for the perpetuation of musical cultures through dialogue between Christianity and initiatory belief systems. Methodologically, this qualitative study requires documentary research and semi-structured interviews for data collection. Content analysis was used for data processing.

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Revaluating African music as heritage: Critical considerations from South Africa

One of the domains in which the sustainability of African traditions of music and dance has become an integral part of public and political discourse in modern society has been evident in heritage discourse. The idea that modern society is called upon to steward its heritage on behalf of subsequent generations derives from the ways in which notions of heritage have extended beyond material inheritances like buildings and monuments to natural ecosystems and from there to so-called intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Music is particularly amenable to being understood as ICH, and initiatives to protect, preserve, and disseminate musical heritage have become a recognizable transnational trend. In recent decades, critical inquiry has shown how heritage projects have their own “rhetorics of value,” a notion developed by Corinne A. Kratz, who has shown how museums, exhibits and performances can communicate values and shape identities.

They convey social meanings and judgments not only by virtue of *what* they present – their content – but *how* – what she productively calls their deployment of “persuasive form” (Kratz 2011, 23). Like the modes of heritage production discussed by another prominent theorist of heritage display, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, heritage projects are not only evidence of creativity and its continuity and vitality, they are also, crucially, “instruments for adding value” to the cultural forms they present (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 156). They thus “leave their own traces” on what is presented, revealing what she calls the agency of display. In this paper, with reference to my experience as both an academic and a former festival director, I will reflect on the affordances and limitations of applying heritage discourse to sustaining music in modern African settings such as the public spaces in which I have worked in and around Johannesburg.

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Looking for a space for West African dance and music in Finland

In my research on the communities of West African dance and music in Finland, the theme of space came up in several interviews and other situations somewhat unexpectedly. Especially West African percussionists mentioned in interviews their difficulties in finding appropriate spaces for rehearsals and teaching. The same issue also came up when trying to organize a West African style dance event in collaboration with research participants at the University of the Arts Helsinki. Although the University of the Arts Helsinki has several concert halls and other performance spaces, finding a suitable one turned out to be surprisingly complicated. West African dance and music traditions are similarly struggling to find space in cultural institutions in Finland in a broader sense: most West African artists are lacking the formal education and related diplomas to be considered professionals, and regardless of the artist’s nationality, the opportunities to gain a professional certification in Finland, if one’s main expertise lies within a West African tradition, are limited. In this paper, I will discuss how Finnish cultural and educational institutions effectively exclude dance and music traditions that are incompatible with Eurocentric ideas of what constitutes an artistic practice worth teaching and performing. People thus have very different levels of access to the resources needed to become a professional artist or to work as one depending on the dance and/or music styles they practice. Using insights from interviews and discussions with professionals of West African dance and music, along with personal experiences of organizing events, I will analyze the structural exclusion that African music and dance are facing in the field of arts and culture in Finland.

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Pracademic Scholarship and Applied Ethnomusicology: A Case Study of South African Indigenous Instrumental Percussionists and a Music Educator

In many South African institutions of higher learning, ethnomusicology is still predominantly framed through theoretical, historical, and archaeological lenses, often with limited emphasis on praxis. This imbalance can unintentionally perpetuate the misconception that Indigenous African instrumental traditions are static, marginal, or no longer active within contemporary musical landscapes. However, within the South African music industry, a vibrant community of professional percussionists continues to embody, sustain, and innovate within Indigenous African instrumental practice. Many of these musicians—whether self-taught or apprenticed to master practitioners—serve as cultural ambassadors and sonic archivists,

carrying forward the living heritage of African traditional music. Alongside these practitioner-led forms of knowledge transmission, interdisciplinary collaborations between music departments and health sciences are emerging, particularly research exploring the therapeutic efficacy of Indigenous African drumming in supporting psychological and social wellbeing, including its potential role in mitigating depression and anxiety. This paper presents two interrelated case studies. The first examines three South African percussionists who specialise in Indigenous African instruments and who actively contribute to popular music, jazz, and contemporary traditional genres. The second highlights an ongoing research project investigating the well-being benefits of Indigenous drumming practices. Together, these cases illuminate the essential role of pracademic engagement—where academic inquiry and lived musical practice intersect—in affirming, preserving, and creatively re-situating Indigenous African musical arts within modern society. Ultimately, this paper foregrounds the dynamic work taking place both within higher education and in the professional music sector to safeguard and revitalise Indigenous African musical cultural heritage.

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Sound archives as a colonial sociocultural and political project: Mozambican 78 rpm records in the Radio Mozambique archive

This paper examines sound archives from the perspective of the archive as an epistemological field, highlighting their role as historical and political tools that shape our understanding of both the past and present. In the African context, the development of these archives was influenced by colonial motivations, which initially emphasized "cultural preservation" through the collection of African folk music deemed "authentic" and "on the verge of extinction" by European ethnographers. This effort materialized institutionally with the establishment of the African Music Society based in Johannesburg. Using the Radio Mozambique archive as a case study, it explores 30 Mozambican shellac discs recorded in South Africa between the 1940s and 1960s. For decades, their classification as "commercial records" stripped them of scientific value until the late twentieth century. Employing the concept of the archive as an "epistemological experience" (Stoler 2002), I advocate for a reinterpretation of these records as sources of alternative knowledge to colonial epistemologies and as valid objects of study, with increasing use in research. This analysis examines how the processes of archiving and sound circulation are intertwined with the social and political histories of institutional developments that influenced the preservation of this music. It emphasizes the interplay between technology, power, and colonial policies within the radio archive, which serves as a technology of memory. The discussion highlights how selection, classification, and listening practices have shaped the representation of Mozambican musicians in the collection of 78 rpm records.

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Children in Ikon (Xylophone) Performances: Sustaining the Traditional through Popular Music in Ibibio Culture of Nigeria

In most African societies, children and adults are represented in distinct social groups, and their engagement in musical activities reflects these social distinctions. Music making for children has been attributed to play primarily as *mbre-etokeyen* (children play) as they explore with toy instruments and imitate musical

activities in their localities. In this paper, I examine how children's musical culture among the Ibibio people of Nigeria has moved into adult instruments, as exemplified in *ikon* (xylophone) performances. Although little scholarly attention has been given to children's musical activities, I examine how their engagement with *ikon* (xylophone) performances has contributed significantly to the growing popularity of *ikon* music and dance traditions, particularly on social media platforms. What motivates the changing trajectory from adults to children in *ikon* music and dance traditions? Why do they incline towards popular music instead of traditional music for which *Ikon* music is known? To examine these questions, the paper employs ethnographic fieldwork with two cultural groups, utilising oral interviews and participant observation. Secondary data will also contribute to the study, examining the involvement of children in music performance and the sustainability of music and dance traditions in societies of colonial history. This radical shift (from adults to children) challenges fundamental assumptions about the role children play in musical socialisation of the past across different cultures worldwide and demonstrates how modernity contributes to the sustainability of Ibibio music.

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African Traces in Iran's National Puppetry: Kheymeh Shab-Bāzi

Kheymeh Shab-Bāzi, recognized as the national puppet theatre of Iran, is a performance tradition with deep historical roots extending at least to the eleventh century. Combining narrative, improvisation, and musical elements, it has long served as a medium for social commentary and popular entertainment. Among its diverse cast of characters, the puppet Mobārak has emerged as the most iconic figure in the repertoire. Significantly, Mobārak is the only Black puppet in the tradition, presenting a unique site through which to investigate representations of Africanness within Iranian cultural performance. This ethnographic study examines the presence of Africanness in *Kheymeh Shab-Bāzi* through a detailed analysis of Mobārak's sonic and narrative dimensions. Drawing on performance observations, interviews, and an analysis of the musical motifs and songs performed by Mobārak, this research traces how vocal style, humor, and verbal play shape his persona. The study also analyzes the stories, roles, and improvisational patterns that accompany Mobārak's appearances, with attention to how his character mediates notions of otherness, equality, and authority. Findings reveal that Mobārak transcends stereotypical portrayals and becomes a uniquely Iranian cultural hero. Through his humor, musical expression, and bold critique of social inequalities, he acts as a spokesperson for ordinary Iranians and a challenger of injustice. His Blackness, rather than marginalizing him, becomes integral to his capacity to disrupt hierarchies and voice public concerns. By situating Mobārak within the broader historical and cultural context of Iranian performance, the study illuminates how Africanness is embedded, reinterpreted, and ultimately celebrated in this longstanding national art form.