



## **Zilizopendwa: An Amalgamation of Music Territories at the Kenya Music Festival**

Nancy Masasabi  
Maseno University

### **Abstract**

The Kenya Music Festival has incorporated contemporary African musical genres in the festival under the name adaptation and arrangement of zilizopendwa. Somehow in this context, the genre has become very popular among the youth who are the performers of this musical genre. The purpose of this paper is to identify the original Zilizopendwa musical renditions and compare them with the renditions at the Kenya Music Festival in order to establish how artistic expression has been achieved by the arrangers of this genre and how this context has influenced the development and rendition of the zilizopendwa. To achieve this, I analyse contemporary African popular music in its original context. Likewise, I analyse selected pieces arranged for presentation at the Kenya Music Festival's national level. Hence, I compare the two to ascertain the developmental process that has ensued. The result unveils the evolution of the popular music genre in Kenya and contributes to the discourse on the evolution and conservation of contemporary African musical forms.

**Key words:** Contemporary African Music, Popular Music, *Zilizopendwa*, Music Appropriation, Arrangement of African Melodies, Music Festival

### **Introduction**

There is hardly any musical genre that has remained static in its rendition and characteristic features in the world. This is as a result of the dynamic nature of music as a cultural element. Intercultural exchange of ideas and globalization has impacted on the performance of all musics. The Kenyan musical scene has been graced by the contemporary African musical genres that range from Lingala, Bongo, Kwaito, Highlife and Benga among others. These genres have evolved from traditional musics from the communities within which they are performed. For instance, Benga is a musical genre that evolved from traditional renditions of the Luo and Luhya communities of Kenya but now incorporates music from various Kenyan communities. This genre was popularized by the main broadcasting station in Kenya, formerly known as the Voice of Kenya and now Kenya Broadcasting Corporation. The popularity of Benga was partly as a result of the inclusion of foreign musical instruments. Foreign musical instruments refer to those alien to the traditional musical genres of the Luhya and Luo. In addition, foreign musical elements have been amalgamated with the traditional music creating newer musical forms, which are contemporary African musical genres. This contemporary musical genre has its origins from the end of the Second World War when the guitar was introduced into Kenya. The guitar together with the violin, accordion and pedal organ were introduced by the European traders (Impey, 1998). The initial popular music in Kenya was as a result of band music that mushroomed in response to the availability of guitars. Some of the proponents of such music included D.O. Misiani with his Shirati Jazz Band, to whom the origin of Benga is accredited (Barz, 2004). As the mass media propagated musical sounds from Congo, Kenyan musicians such as Isaiah Mwinami and Fundi Konde among others, imitated the rumba style of performance. This style was popularized in Kenya together with the twist style. By the 1980s and 1990s the popular music scene had changed as the younger generation favoured the hip-hop genre. The assessment of music in popular music context was using the yardsticks of charts and popularization of the song.



Apart from the popular music in Africa is art music. What is the origin of art music in Africa? I will start by giving the characteristic features of African Art Music. It is new, highly experimental and composed by western educated African musicians in western classical idiom for contemplation (Omibiyi-Obidike, 1992; Omojola, 1995, p. 5; Smith, 2012, p. 8). The background given to African art music is traced to the coming of European missionaries into Africa and the music content taught in schools which was devoid of any African traditional music. Schools started producing educated Africans who lacked much knowledge of their musical culture. After the independence of African nations, there was need to rediscover African cultural roots and utilize those roots in creating modern idiom of art that is uniquely African. As such the educated African scholars started seeking traditional musical idioms to incorporate them in their musical compositions. This view is explained by Onyeji (2011, p. 10) stating that,

the need to be socially and culturally relevant became a driving force for Nigerian and many other African composers that sought to incorporate traditional musical elements and idioms... contemporary Nigerian composers have sought to integrate their musical arts with the various musical traditions of their sub cultures.

In addition, art music is a postcolonial construct and “a category of composed music, written or otherwise, which takes into consideration tonal, traditional, cultural and stylistic concerns in its synthesis” (Konye, 2007, p. 45).

The Kenya Music Festival was founded by some British musicians who had settled in Kenya in 1927; as they wanted some form of entertainment. This orientation meant that the Kenyans were exposed to art music in form of set pieces and had to compose in western musical idioms and notations. Here, Kenyan composers and performers together with their audiences began to appreciate the new form of musical performance. With time, the need to rediscover African roots led to the introduction of a category in the festival called, ‘Adaptation and arrangement of Africa melodies’. Here composers took African melodies, mostly Kenya, and subjected them to western compositional devices of melodic extension such as three to four-part chorale harmony, counterpoint, imitation, theme and variation form among others. In this context, the very younger generation whose popular music is hip-hop, found itself performing art music in the music festival context. At this point the popular music of the 1960s and 1970s was ancient and boring to the youth. However, another category was also introduced into the festival called the ‘Adaptation and arrangement of popular tunes *Zilizopendwa*. This in essence negates what Agawu (2011, p. 54) postulates that, “unlike African traditional music, popular music has not yet become a significant source of ideas and procedures for composers of art music.” In Kenya, popular tunes have become a source of musical materials. *Zilizopendwa* as a category has become popular among the students who perform in it as each choral group strives to outdo the other.

### ***Zilizopendwa* in its original context**

Popular music in its original context was performed as band music. The bands were predominantly performed in urban centres. At this point the music was an urban musical expression which fed on traditional music for its content, and relied heavily on foreign musical instruments as a medium of interpretation (waMukuna, 1999, p. 72). A number of styles grew beside each other and influenced each other. They include the LuoBenga, Omutibo, Rumba and Twist. Benga music borrowed from the Luo idiom; The *Omutibo* style borrowed from the Luhya *Isukutidrum* rhythm and was propagated by George Mukabi, who was influenced by Malawian maestro Mwenda Jean Bosco; Rumba is interplay of Latin American and Congolese musical idioms. ‘The melody follows the tonality of *Lingala*, the guitar parts are African and so is the rumba rhythm’ (Ewens, 1991, p. 131); Twist is a more ‘unplugged’ sound



reminiscent of other finger-picking guitarists of Western Kenya. In this case, one guitar strums chords in twist rhythm and plays a bass part on the 1st and 3rd beats; a second fills-in, for the most part, in a picking style during the verses and in solos imitating the melody. That melody is in two-part vocal harmony with the twist beat also being maintained by a shaker and a timing stick. In as much these popular music originated from certain ethnic communities, the language used was predominantly Kiswahili, Kenya's national language. Most Kenyan guitarists formed duos or small guitar based bands with improvised percussive accompaniment drawn from a struck or scrapped Fanta bottle, woodblocks and tambourine. The vocals were a two-part harmony in parallel thirds or sixths. It is worth noting here that the Kenyan based bands emphasised melodic text than rhythm. The messages which were commentaries on social issues became the norm, a characteristic feature of African traditional musics.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a number of band groups emerged such as Zaiko Langa Langa. This group omitted the wind instruments giving 'prominence to the rhythmic patterns borrowed from the traditional musical background of their composers, and compositional structures in which the *sebene* (instrumental improvisation section) is longer than the singing section, thus emphasizing dancing rather than messages of topical songs' (waMukuna, 1992, p. 74). Instrumentation was expanded to include winds, and percussions with interlocking rhythms in the upcoming bands such as Papa Wemba's Viva la Musica. This musical genre continues to be performed as it were in some social gatherings where the older generation are the majority and have a say in what forms part of the entertainment. It is not easy to find the younger generation made up of youths listening to this music in various social gatherings.

### ***Presentation form of Zilizopendwa***

Popular music of this genre is never notated on staff instead it is taught by rote, where the use of memory recall plays a significant role in the music's rendition. This method of teaching and learning borrows from Africa's oral tradition. Most of the songs begin with an instrumental introduction, followed by a two-part vocal performance or a solo vocal performer accompanied by the instruments. The musical structure could be binary, ternary, or strophic with instrumental interludes after every verse. Repetition of melodic ideas is a dominant feature of the music. Where binary structure is used, two sections can also be in strophic form as the second section marks the climax of the performance. Examples of this are Tabu Ley's song entitled *Ibeba* and Franco's song titled *Ndaya*. In as much as this structure can broadly be referred to as Binary form; there are various sub sections within it. WaMukuna (1992, p. 80) explains the schematic structure of the zairean rumba as:

A B C B' D E D' where, A is an instrumental prelude; B verse of the song in an abstract form, C is an instrumental interlude; B' repeat of the verse with some variations; D is a refrain part with some call-and-response between solo and chorus; E is an instrumental improvisation, sometimes called the *sebene* section; D is a coda.

There are instances where the strophic form is the overall structure of a piece. *Kujisifu Uleveini* by Daudi Kabaka is an example of ternary form with two musical genres in one, using two languages. This is exemplified in the songs: *Msichana wa Elimu*, *Angelike*, and *Dezo Dezo*, among others. Since the music is not notated there is a lot of improvisation especially by the instrumentalists. This means that there are very many variants of a song's performance especially when there is a change in the lead guitarists (waMukuna, 1992). The length of songs is relative especially when performed live as opposed to the recorded versions. Since this musical genre is derived from African music, there are some musical characteristic features drawn from the very cultures, a common is performance composition that allows the repetition of musical phrases during the climax section. To illustrate, I will use the song *Ndaya* by Mpong Love whose presentational form is as follows: A: instrumental prelude



of made up of an antecedent and consequent phrase. This period is repeated; B: A solo voice performed with instrumental accompaniment; B<sup>1</sup>: a repeat of B but with two part vocal harmony, against instrumental accompaniment; A: a repeat of instrument material used at the beginning; B: vocal solo with instrumental accompaniment; C: instrumental interlude; D: vocal duet with different melodic material, chorus; E; verse performed by a soloist; D; E<sup>1</sup>: vocal solo with different text; D; E<sup>2</sup>: verse with variation in text and some melodic phrases; D; F: instrumental interlude with saxophone extemporization section and some talking; D; D; D; D; D; D; D. In summary the structure is A B B<sup>1</sup> B A B C D E D E<sup>1</sup> D E<sup>2</sup> D F D DDDDDD. The part with A and B materials make up the first section, while the second section is from C with the *sebene* section beginning at F and the chorus D repeated several times towards the end.

### **Dances in Zilizopendwa**

The music was performed for entertainment in clubs, disco venues and parties to an audience that would respond to the music in dance. Through the *sebene* sections, Zaiko Lang Langa introduced a dance called *ZeketeZekete* which was surpassed by Soukous, then *Kwasa Kwasa*. *Kwasa kwasa* started in the 1970s where there is gyration of the hips. These dances became famous with the performance and development of popular music in Africa, as more dances evolved such as Ndombolo, Helicopter and Twist. Rumba is a slow ballroom dance that could be performed in pairs. Kubik (1981, p. 103) explains that,

The modern Kenyan music, largely developed from the rumba, is particularly suitable for bumping since it is relatively slow. The dancers, in the present case girls, bump one of their buttocks against that of the partner on beats one and three of the rumba schema, sometimes also the hips or the front part of the upper thigh. This has to be done at strictly regular intervals. The impact causes a slight return push leading to a short alternating step away from the impact without any further effort. The order of movement is bump (impact) - alternating step - bump - alternating step, and so on. Instead of an alternating step, a simple step may also be carried out. At the same time the more practiced dancers perform a slow anti-clockwise turning of the body between the bumps so that the impact always takes place at a new part of the body.

Twist was another popular dance at the time. The Wikipedia encyclopaedia defines the origin of twist as, 'The Twist's original inspiration came from the African American plantation dance called "wringin' and twistin," which has been traced back to the 1890s. However, its original aesthetic origins, such as the use of pelvic movement and the shuffling foot movement, can be traced all the way back to West Africa. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the dance evolved until emerging to a mass audience in the 1960s.' The Twist is performed by standing with the feet approximately shoulder width apart. The torso may be squared to the knees and hips, or turned at an angle so one foot is farther forward than the other. The arms are held out from the body, bent at the elbow. The hips, torso, and legs rotate on the balls of the feet as a single unit, with the arms staying more or less stationary. The feet grind back and forth on the floor, and the dance can be varied in speed, intensity, and vertical height as necessary. Occasionally one leg is lifted off the floor for styling, but generally the dance posture is low and with the feet in contact with the floor with very little vertical motion. African dance is cultural behaviour reflecting a society's values, beliefs, and attitudes and indeed these dance styles borrowed heavily from the African communities that were represented by the proponents of the music.

### **Arrangement of Zilizopendwa at the Kenya Music Festival**

Before embarking on the presentation form of the music, I will briefly address the venue and the kind of audiences that listen to the arranged music. The venue of performance shifts to a rather formal stage





and context, that does not allow the audience's involvement. At the festival context, performance of *Zilizopendwa* changes from mere popular music to art music. Art music is transcribed using staff notation. One function of an adaptation and arrangement of music is to personalize the music by invoking a composer's layer of expression and interpretation. It is also an opportunity for one to portray their understanding of musical theory and musical elements at the same time maintaining the style of the adapted musical item. In essence it is also composition. The Kenya Music Festival is a competitive forum in which musical presentations are rated and given positions against the percentages awarded. The music is performed for contemplation by both the audiences and the adjudicators. This function of art music is echoed by Euba (1975, p. 48) who states that, 'with the new art forms, functionality of songs has changed to that of aesthetics. Music is intended by the composers for performance by an audience that is not encouraged to participate in the performance but is required to contemplate on the music.' Members of the audience are music lovers who attend the festival: to learn the new trends and skills in musical arrangements and compositions; to assess and rate the renditions of fellow composers; and entertainment among others. The audience is made up of musically literate individuals who have either a formal or informal musical theory knowledge encompassing western musical idioms and compositional devices. The audiences' ears are also inclined to critical musical listening. Akin to the Kenyan scenario, Euba (1970, p. 92) postulates that,

new music facilitates musical comprehension for the audience since the music uses materials familiar to the lovers of traditional idioms, such as language; and to the new borrowed idioms. In a concert hall, the audience is made up of persons who are familiar with western musical elements and musical aesthetics introduced to them in schools or churches. So the composers produce music that is familiar to their audience.'

Such an audience therefore sets a standard for the composers.

### ***Introduction of Zilizopendwa at the Kenya Music Festival***

The Kenya Music Festival is an avenue for the expression of musical ingenuity by various Kenyan composers and performers. In this context, the first time a popular song was performed, its performance was engulfed in controversy. This was an example of conflict of interpretation between a performer and the adjudicator. One performer presented the George Mukabi's '*Mtoto si Nguo*' in the category of Adaptation and Arrangement of African melodies. 'According to the performer, Zalo, the song *Mtoto si Nguo* was an African melody because it was performed within Kenya in a Kenyan language' (Mindoti, Personal Interview, May 2012). However, according to the adjudicator it was a good song but in a wrong category. As a result, the performance was disqualified. In a different year the same performer presented Fadhili William's *Malaika*. Even though the audience was mesmerized, the musical item was again disqualified. The ensuing debate prompted the festival's executive committee to introduce a category of arrangements of popular tunes. Arrangements of popular melodies by Zalo gave prominence to the melody, discarding the guitar riffs and percussive accompaniment, and maintaining the rumba style. He made use of very few vocables such as 'Oh' and 'Ah'. Figure 1 is an excerpt of Zalo's arrangement of *Malaika*. This kind of arrangement was emulated by Blasto Ooko in his rendition of Paul Mwachupa's *Dereva Kombo*(see figure 2).

**Figure 1: Excerpt of *Malaika* arranged by Zalo**



SOPRANO  
ALTO  
TENOR  
BASS

Ki - de - ge hu - ku - wa - za ki - de - ge  
Ki - de - ge hu - ku - wa - za ki - de - ge  
Ki - de - ge hu - ku - wa - za ki - de - ge  
Ki - de - ge oh Ki - de - ge oh Ki - de - ge Ma - la

Ki - de - ge hu - ku - wa - za ki - de - ge  
oh Ki - de - ge oh Ki - de - ge  
oh Ki - de - ge oh Ki - de - ge  
i - ka oh oh Ki - de - ge

SOPRANO  
ALTO  
TENOR  
BASS

Ki - de - ge hu - ku - wa - za ki - de - ge  
Ki - de - ge hu - ku - wa - za ki - de - ge  
Ki - de - ge hu - ku - wa - za ki - de - ge  
Ki - de - ge oh Ki - de - ge oh Ki - de - ge Ma - la

Ki - de - ge hu - ku - wa - za ki - de - ge  
oh Ki - de - ge oh Ki - de - ge  
oh Ki - de - ge oh Ki - de - ge  
i - ka oh oh Ki - de - ge



Figure 2: Excerpt of the song *DerevaKombo* arranged by Ooko

SOPRANO  
 Ki - fu-ngu cha kwa-nza na cho cha - se - ma Ma - ma wa-cha

ALTO  
 Oh, Ma - ma wa-cha

TENOR  
 Oh Ma - ma wa-cha

BASS  
 Oh Ma - ma wa-cha

6  
 ma - ta - ta aah aah, Ki - fo cha Ba - ba E -

ma - ta - ta Ki - fo cha Ba - ba E -

ma - ta Ki - fo cha Ba - ba E -

ma - ta - ta Ki - fo cha Ba - ba E -



1.1

li ki - me - le - ta me - ngi ma - chu - ngu.

li ki - me - le - ta me - ngi ma - chu - ngu.

li ki - me - le - ta me - ngi ma - chu - ngu.

li ki - me - le - ta me - ngi ma - chu - ngu.

However, there came a group of composers who sought to perform the popular songs emulating the guitars, saxophones and other melodic instruments and the drum set as performed by the original composers but still disregarded the other percussive ones, such as the Fanta bottle and wooden blocks. The music was presented as an imitation of the original with harmony in parallel thirds or sixths, no fragmentation of melody, and no modulation but by using the voice in SATB, TTBB, and SSA groupings. The vocal melodies were distinct, but new kinds of vocables such as *tuku-tukupe*, *tunde-tunde*, *tiri-tiri* were introduced to imitate the guitar riffs and drum-set rhythms. This group of composers include Samuel Mak’ Okeyo with his rendition of Daudi Kabaka’s song *Pole Musa* and Bavon Marie-Marie’s song *Masekeya Meme* and Sammy Otieno’s rendition of ‘My Lovely Elizabeth’ (Mwiruki, Personal Interview, May, 2012). Even though these songs were performed on stage, the rumba idiom was greatly maintained in the slow dance movements.

At the onset, *Zilizopendwa* the festival was performed in one category. As this genre gained in popularity and competition, it was subdivided into three categories: Secular *Zilizopendwa* from Kenya; Secular *Zilizopendwa* from the rest of Africa; and Sacred *Zilizopendwa* from Africa.

### ***Presentation form of Zilizopendwa at the Kenya Music Festival***

Most introductory sections emulate the instrumental introductions to music. There are instances where the arrangers come up with improvised introductions not related to the original guitar riffs. Here guitar riffs are predominant with some trumpet, saxophone, and/or drum set rhythmic cues. Change of key from the original composers is quite common in order to accommodate the different vocal ranges for various combinations of voices. The melodic introduction is similar to the original in a bid to articulate the adaptation factor of the piece; for example, the arrangement of *DezoDezo*. In other cases, two vocal parts such as soprano and alto take the melody performing in unison as exemplified in an arrangement of the song *Baba Yetu*. The arranger maintains the original language of the music and the lyrics.

In the middle section, original vocal melodies are retained but they may undergo changes as the music develops. This occurs in terms of countermelodies using the same text as the original. It is this section that greatly portrays a composer’s personal musicality. There is no standard format here as the treatment of musical elements is as varied as there are arrangements. However, there are some characteristic traits that appear in a number of musical pieces.





- Tonal shifts are evident to minor tonalities, as the tempo is slowed in order to create some tonal and tempo variance (see the arrangement of the song *Angelike*). Some composers stick to one tonal centre throughout the entire piece, for instance, in the song *Ombi Langu*.
- Use of counterpoint in Kisia’s arrangement of the song *Ombi Langu* from bar 83- 87.

SOPRANO

hi - li\_\_\_ ni o-mpi la- ngu, ni o-mpi la- ngu ni o-mpi

ALTO

o - mbi la-ngu ee, o - mbi la-ngu o-mpi la- ngu\_\_\_

TENOR

hi - li\_\_\_ ni o-mpi la- ngu ni o-mpi la- ngu\_\_\_

BASS

hi - li\_\_\_ ni o-mpi la- ngu ni o-mpi la- ngu\_\_\_ ni o-mpi

- Four-part polyphonic treatment of melodic ideas become evident such as in the song *Vulindlela* arranged by Muyale.
- The use of parallel 3rds and sixths in harmony. In Kisia’s arrangement of *Ombi Langu*, he exhibits the use of parallel 3rds

Ka-ma A - ya - la\_\_\_ a-na-ta - ma - ni\_\_\_ ma - ji\_\_\_ hu-ko ja-ngwa

Some composers colour the parallel thirds with some parallel fourths such as in Muyale’s rendition of the song *Nasafiri*, exemplified as,

A-ng'a - na a - li - ku - wa mwa - na ra - ha\_\_\_ sa - na eh! a -

3  
li - vyo - pe - nda m' - zi - ki wa Da - vid A - mu - nga\_\_\_

- Use of segmentation of the melody and imitation of those segments, for example in the arrangement of the song *Kujisifu Ulevini*.
- Use of sequences of melodic sections to change tonality, exemplified in the arrangement of the song *Dezo Dezo*.
- There is the introduction of episodes whose lyrics are similar to the original ones.



### ***Dance styles at the festival***

Dancing styles in the festival context are restricted by the arrangement of choir members on stage. Even though they dance, they are not free to move much as it would be the case in the disco halls. However, there is a sense of excitement especially in the dancing which is a response to various rhythmic patterns. On one hand, there is an attempt to exhibit dances relevant to the genres of the songs chosen. For instance, dancing twist to a song such as *Angelike* which was in twist style, though this may not be the case throughout the performance. On the other hand, there are new improvised dance movements and borrowed ones. At the festival, the spirit of competition has facilitated appropriation of dance styles from one musical genre to the next. For instance, when a given choir becomes the national winner, other times will try and emulate their dancing style in the next year even though the teams present popular music from different genres. Change has continually affected African dance that are easily perpetuated outside their original context but can remain meaningful in new contexts depending on their use. The dance styles exhibited at the Kenya Music Festival reflect the cultural background of the performers who are the youth.

### **Process of evolution**

Change in music as an element of culture is inevitable. Nzewi (1991, p. 138) states that, ‘for change to occur there must be an established frame of reference’. He further explains that a change within the traditional musical structure are innovations, these are examples of musical continuity. Likewise, Meriam (1964) argues that no culture changes wholesale but there are elements of continuity and change that must be considered against a backdrop of stability. This argument posits that the different renditions of contemporary popular music by the various musicians are simply innovations. In other words, the performances of Kanda, Koffi, Werasone, Kabaka, Gabriel Omolo among others over the years are mere innovations within the contemporary African popular music. This genre becomes the point of reference for further development even though the genre has also evolved.

In Congo, popular music emerged as an amalgamation of several musical idioms: traditional Congolese, bolero, rumba and Zouk. Zouk was based on a polish dance Mazurka which was introduced in the Caribbean islands and later francophone Africa. This in itself was a process of acculturation formulating the *soukous llingala* music. This music then finds its way into Kenya and is fused with elements of *benga* music by musicians such as Fundi Konde. Besides the rumba style is the *omutibo* and *twist* style. *Omutibo* is another blend of Luhya folk melodies with the western instrumentation and rendition, while twist mixes Kenyan *benga* and the original twist style as mentioned earlier. As *Zilizopendwa* moves to the festival context, a musical change takes place. Nzewi (1991, p. 140) explains,

If with altered sound, a recognizable music type acquires a change of context or usage but still retains and generates its conceptual responses, what has occurred is a change in the usage of music... if the same music in addition generates different psycho-physical responses because of its modified sound or form or its changed context or usage, the meaning of the music has changed – a valid musical change has occurred.

Apart from the obvious contextual change, *Zilizopendwa* at the festival has some elements undergoing acculturation: percussive elements of the music as performed by the shakers, fanta bottle, rattles and drum set, are left out in the arrangements of the music. Moreover, the instrumental accompaniment by guitars that is used as middle-ground and background material in the ensemble sometimes is not used throughout the performance as prominence is given to the vocal melodies; The vocal melodies with text are retained in the arrangements. Structure is varied, basic rhythms are retained but sometimes alterations are evident, texture changes from homophonic to polyphonic and to use of imitative



counterpoint; Whereas the original *zilizopendwa* melodies are in one tonal centre throughout, the arrangements employ tonal shifts approached abruptly or using sequences; Harmony of the vocal melodies is four-part introducing some minor chords; Tempo variance becomes more pronounced in the arrangements.

When any musical culture is brought face to face with another, dominant musical elements are retained while others are isolated. During this process some traits are dropped (deculturation), others are appropriated (transcultured) and others remain the same and are performed alongside each other in their entirety (compartmentalization). In the case of contemporary African popular music, the processes of deculturation, transculturation and compartmentalization take place. All the different genres of popular music are transcultured and at the same time compartmentalized when performed besides each other. In this context the two cultures are the contemporary African popular music culture and the western classical culture of art music. Deva (2000, p. 1) explains that,

essential characteristics concern the musical language itself and may include harmony, tonality (tonal or key centre), modality (or scale), rhythm and metre. This may account for the easy spread of folk music across Europe. Non-essential characteristics may include instrumentation, tuning, temperament (division of the octave), amplification, notation and the social and behavioural features of musical performance.

In addition, Euba (1970) posits that, neo-traditional music considers the poetic element such that good music is that which contains good lyrics. Indeed, lyrics are an important factor in the selection of a *Zilizopendwa* song. Musical items at the festival also retain the original language, rhythm, melody (features of continuity) while harmony, texture, tonality, instrumentation, form, length of the music and dance styles are appropriated. As such, new identities are created as a result of creative responses to the forces of acculturation, giving rise to musical syncretism (musical syncretism occurs when the encounter between two musical systems results in a new hybrid style). The new hybrid music is African art music, which at the festival undergoes evaluation by the audience in three ways: a) what is the popular musical essence about the art work (music)? An identity of genre and must be heard in the music. b) What new devices has the arranger used in order to own it? c) How has the arranger utilized the new elements and how effective are they? The study of African art music is common in Nigeria where several scholars have composed and analysed this music. Nketia (1964) states that, there seems to be a development of new compositions of music in the popular and art music idioms. These music exist as new forms in different situations.

### **Conclusion**

Central to the definition of African art music is the premise that it is a combination of African and western musical territories (Euba, 1993, p. 6). In addition, I argue that popular music is an offshoot of both African and western musical influences, this then gives rise to another level of amalgamation of the popular music and art music written and performed for contemplation. This negotiation of musical territories has given rise to a contemporary art form called *Zilizopendwa*. Arrangement of this genre of popular music has enabled a re-manifestation of the same and popularized it in a different context. Indeed, in the Kenya music festival, the *Zilizopendwa* categories are very popular and this context has served to develop this musical genre. The youth who are choir members and their choirmasters have become consumers of African popular music in this sense and developed a taste for it.

Problems with the new art music is that; it is hardly performed once it has been performed at the festival; the ingenuity of most arrangers of *Zilizopendwa* seems to go to waste yet is a creative tool and exhibition of Kenya's musically creative minds. An anthology of such music can be made and used in the academia since musical elements are clearly manipulated.



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