

**Mampi the Queen Diva:  
Articulating Feminism in Zambia's  
Fast Music**

by

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Drawing on fieldwork and published literature on Zambia's popular music and feminism, I analyze how Zambia's *fast music* has provided spaces in which Zambian women musicians articulate feminism as they contest and challenge patriarchal hegemony. Zambia's *fast music* is produced quickly, for profit, and consumed by a mass audience. Also colloquially known as Zed Beats, *fast music* blends indigenous Zambian rhythms with R&B, reggae, rap, Jamaican dancehall, hip-hop, and other popular music genres. Zambia's *fast music* is sung in local languages, mostly urban vernaculars Bemba, Nyanja, and English, and celebrates the pleasures of the body.

This thesis consists of three main sections. In the first section, I introduce Zambia's *fast music*. The second section focuses on the emergence of feminist movements of the 1990s in Zambia. The third section explores female musicians' participation in Zambia's popular music industry since the introduction of *fast music*.

I posit that the democratization of Zambia's national politics in the 1990s coupled with the liberalization of Zambia's economy that followed the change of government facilitated the emergence of Zambia's *fast music*. The democratization of national politics led to the mushrooming of feminist organizations which campaigned for women's rights. The feminist movements of the 1990s inspired female musicians including Mirriam Mukupe (a.k.a. "Mampi, the Queen Diva") to start using music as a platform for articulating a feministic agenda. Since the 1990s, when *fast music* debuted on Zambia's music scene, female musicians have participated

more in the music industry. An analysis of one of Mirriam Mukupe's most popular songs "Why" exemplifies the articulation of feminism in Zambia's *fast music*.

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## **Acknowledgements**

My daughter, Nzinzi, began to learn to play electric bass around the time that I started writing my thesis. Sometimes I would spend whole days writing. On those days, it was so refreshing to watch Nzinzi perform pieces she made up on her bass during my writing breaks. Often I joined her on the keyboards or kalimba. Thank you so much, Nzinzi Tembo, for making it easier for Daddy in times like this. Daddy loves you.

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## 1.0 Introduction

I am always amazed when I drive around my home town of Lusaka in Zambia to spot fast food restaurants such as McDonalds, KFC, and Subway. These restaurants have become ubiquitous in Lusaka, and they are symptomatic of the way people view their relationship with time. William Cheng in *Just Vibrations: The Purpose of Sounding Good* inquires:

...I asked what we are running from, running to, and running for. Some answers so far show that we run from monstrous failures, run toward success, and hopefully at times, run for something other than just our pride and preservation. Hard to deny is that we are indeed constantly running. In an era of social media and flash-in-the-pan phenomena, there is little time for slow (Cheng, 2016:44).

Although Cheng is referring to what life has become in the West, a similar situation exists in Zambia. The 1990s liberalization of the Zambia's economy accompanied the shift from Kenneth Kaunda's communist economic model to Frederic Chiluba's capitalist one.

Capitalism introduced private ownership of property, capital accumulation, wage labor, as well as an attitude that "time is money." In capitalism, fast food spaces provide the cheapest and most convenient access to one of humans' basic needs as the demands of modern life leave little time to prepare one's own food. The ubiquity of fast food restaurants in the city of Lusaka evokes the contemporary production and consumption of Zambian pop music, colloquially known as Zed

Beats, especially among Zambia's youth. Zed Beats blends traditional Zambian rhythms with R&B, reggae, rap, Jamaican dancehall, hip-hop, and whatever music styles are trending at the time of its production. For example, in its seminal stages in the mid 1990s and 2000s, some of the most famous Zed Beats musicians included Anthony Kafunya aka Daddy Zhemus, Daniel Siulapwa, (aka Danny), and Jordan Katembula (aka JK). Danny and Daddy Zhemus were heavily influenced by Jamaican dancehall whereas JK drew influences from choral music, hip hop, and R&B. Recently, Zed Beats artists have been influenced by Nigerian pop. One could argue that one of the characteristics of Zed Beats has been a lack of a definitive style of its own. Zed Beats musicians and producers have continuously defined and redefined the style by making use of both local and global popular music trends in their productions. Similar to "fast food," Zed Beats are produced quickly, for profit, and consumed by a mass audience. Therefore, I will refer to the style as Zambia's *fast music* in this thesis.

The production of *fast music* involves one person performing, tracking, and manipulating all or most of the instrumental parts of a piece of music, usually making use of samples from an electronic source or some music software. In *fast music*, the individual behind the computer, also referred to as the producer, is the production team, sound engineer, and the band. The producer in all the studios I have recorded in or observed are male, an issue that I further elaborate on in chapter two. Zambia's *fast music* is sung in local languages, mostly urban vernaculars Bemba, Nyanja, and English, and celebrates the pleasures of the body. Zambia's *fast music* production also involves use of recycled drum patterns, rhythmic and melodic phrases from previously released local and nonlocal pop songs.

The 1990s democratization of Zambia's national politics that I briefly discussed earlier provided spaces for women to contest the patriarchal hegemony and advance their feminist ideas.

This democratization of national politics saw the mushrooming of feminist organizations that have since been campaigning for women's rights and empowerment. Since the 1990s, when *fast music* debuted on the Zambia's music scene, female musicians have participated more in the music industry. Today, some of the most famous acts in the industry are fronted by women. In the 2000s, women began crowning themselves "Diva," a term that has become synonymous with feminism in Zambia. Although in the beginning "diva" was associated with female singers that had attained some degree of success in their music careers, recently the term has been redefined to mean a successful, financially independent woman who does not depend on a man to provide her with the basic necessities of life. Some people have contended that the "diva attitude" is the cause of men's abuse by their partners and the disintegration of the nuclear family in Zambian society. However, I posit that as women became more empowered, they began to express their resentment and anger to the longstanding abuse that they have endured by in turn responding to signs of male dominance in their relationship with men. These expressions form the basis of some women's songs in the Zambia's *fast music* genre.

In this thesis, I explore how Mirriam Mukupe, the self-crowned "Queen Diva," redefines, performs, and articulates feminism in her music. I also examine and compare performances of feminism in Mampi's music to performances of feminism in the reportedly abusive male-female relationships as women continue to contest and challenge patriarchal hegemony in Zambian society.

## 1.1 Zambia: Geography, Population, Economy, Politics

Zambia, centrally located in the Southern part of Africa, is a landlocked country sharing its borders with Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Mukwena & Sumaili, 2016:42). The World Bank reports Zambia's population to be about 16 million, out of which about 2 million live in the capital Lusaka (World Bank, 2016). From the outset, Zambia's economy depended immensely on copper exports. By the time of independence in 1964, Zambia was one of the most industrialized and urbanized of the new nation states in Africa (Rakner, 2003: 44). However, due to events that were beyond Kaunda's control, such as the slump in copper prices in 1975, Zambia's economy collapsed. Political scientist Lise Rakner states: "[T]he 1970s-80s collapse of copper export earnings – exacerbated by Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP)<sup>1</sup> government's failure to adequately address the economic decline – triggered the political opposition leading to the 1991 transition to multiparty politics" (Ibid, 2003:41). After twenty-seven years of one-party rule by the UNIP government, Frederic Chiluba's Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) government which displaced Dr. Kenneth Kaunda's UNIP in 1991 got tremendous support from civil servants, trade unionists, students, intellectuals, activists and peasants (Carmody, 2004:4). The new MMD government embarked on an ambitious project of liberalizing Zambia's economy. The 1990s liberalization of Zambia's economy helped to transform Zambia's music industry and the development of *fast music*.

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<sup>1</sup> UNIP was the ruling and only political party at the time.

## 1.2 Methodology

I used three primary methods to collect data for this thesis. First, I conducted interviews with popular musicians and their fans in Zambia starting in summer 2017. Secondly, I read scholarly studies about Zambia, Zambian music, and women in Zambia and other parts of Africa. Thirdly, I drew from my own experience recording in both *fast music* and *pre-fast music* studios.

I spent most of the summer of 2017 in Zambia doing research on *fast music* and the participation of women in Zambia's music industry. In my quest for information about women's increased participation in Zambia's *fast music*, I conducted interviews with Michael Linyama, one of the progenitors of Zambia's *fast music*. I also interviewed female musicians Tamara Nyirongo, Namakau Kayombo, and Gina Hiddie, about the status of women in Zambia and their motivation for participating in Zambia's *fast music* industry.

### 1.2.1 Theoretical Framework

In *fast music* studios, sound engineers/music producers, with their technical expertise, are at the center of music production. My understanding of the production of Zambia's popular music, both in *fast music* and *pre-fast music* production spaces, is partially informed by Louise Meintjes's theorizing of studio recordings in *Sounds of Africa: Making Zulu Music in a South African Studio*. Discussing how technology in the Gallo Music's Downtown Studios of Johannesburg is fetishized, Meintjes observes that recording sessions in the studios alienated but fascinated musicians who did not fully understand how producers and sound engineers manipulated, recorded, and produced music. Similarly, recordings in the Zambia's *pre-fast music* studios alienated musicians from the

production of their own music by sound engineers because of how recordings were done then. I use Meintje's idea of "studio as a fetish" to analyze music production in Zambia's *fast music* studios in the sense that *fast musicians* believe that *fast music* producers possess the skill and technology that will make them sound good regardless of their level of skill.

To discuss gender disparities and feminism in Zambia, I draw on Taylor D. Scott's *Culture and Customs of Zambia*, a monograph that explores heteronormativity and gender disparities in Zambian society. Scott asserts that "women were always regarded as inferior to men in Zambia, especially after colonialism" (2006:92). Scott's findings on the relationship between Zambian men and women in his book resonate with my findings in my study on the status of women in Zambia's *fast music* where often men control, impose, and sometimes dictate the production of the music in the studios. According to one of the most renowned Zambia's music producers Maurice Malowa, also known as Raydo in the music circles, most female musicians with whom he has worked are not able to fluently play a musical instrument let alone possess the technical skills to produce music in a music software on a computer (personal communication, June 2018). Therefore, it is not far-fetched to argue that *fast music* studios in Zambia favor male producers and musicians, and marginalizes women.

For my discussion of Zambia's *fast music* performance spaces, I build on Lenore Manderson and Margaret Jolly's idea of "sites of desire"—spaces that are eroticized and imagined as sites for romance, sexual adventure, and license. Manderson and Jolly's "sites of desire" expanded my understanding of music performance spaces in Zambia. Bars and night clubs, where Zambia's musicians often perform in, are perceived as spaces where licentious behavior takes place. One of my interlocutors Edward Chande explained to me in an interview that physical fights, drunkenness, and sexual transactions are common at performances of music in Zambia. Manderson

and Jolly's "sites of desire" informs my analysis of Zambia's *fast music* performance sites as those where business, sexual adventure, and license intersect.

In highlighting participatory practices in Zambia's *fast music*, I draw on Thomas Turino's idea of *participatory performance*. In his monograph, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, Turino describes a *participatory performance* as "a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artistic-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number in some performance role" (Turino 2008: 27). Turino observes that *in participatory performances*, music-making is a communal endeavor. Similarly, music-making in Zambia's *fast music* studios is a participatory activity.

In exploring the gendering of the music profession, I reference *The Future of Female-Dominated Occupations*, the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development's report that highlights the gendering of professions in Africa. In this document, it is recorded that women's work is concentrated in occupations such as nursing, teaching, and secretarial work while careers in the military, engineering, and medicine are male-dominated. The categorization of the gendering of professions in *The Future of Female-Dominated Occupations* broadened my understanding on the dominance of male musicians, producers and sound engineers in Zambia's *fast music* studios. Engineering, including that of sound, and music are two of the professions that are still dominated by men in Zambia.

Rhacel Salazar Parreña's theory of gendered sex hierarchy in *Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo* inspires an insightful gaze on male-female relationships in Zambia where it is believed to be normal behavior for men to engage in extra-marital relations while women who are thought to engage in such relationships are severely castigated. According



to Parreña, “a gendered sex hierarchy defines our sexual activities with stigma limiting the tolerable sexual activities of women more so than those of men” (Parreñas, 2011:19). Female Zambian musicians have since the 1990s used music to contest the gendered sex hierarchy in Zambian society. I use Parreña’s theory of gendered sex hierarchy to understand gender relations in Zambia.

Ethnomusicologist Cheryl Keyes’s categorization of female rappers in the United States of America (US): the “Queen Mother,” the “Fly Girl,” and the “Sister with an Attitude” has led me to formulate similar categories among female Zambia’s *fast musicians*: “diva,” “queen diva,” and “slay queen” (Keyes, 2008). In Zambian pop culture, these terms have become part of the pop culture lingua, especially in the urban regions. In Zambia, the word feminism is mostly used among scholars and the middle-class population. In day to day conversations, “queen diva” or “girl power” are used in place of feminist and feminism.

Liberal feminism posits that the liberation of women consists of their freedom to choose their lives, to be able to compete with men on equal terms in the professional and political worlds, and in the labor market. It is worth noting that feminism is defined differently in different cultures. I draw on ideas about feminism in Africa, more specifically, Zambia, and I use these as an interpretive lens to examine the performance of feminism in Zambia’s *fast music*. Based on my analysis of lyrics and video of a song by *fast music* singer Mirriam Mukupe, aka Mampi, I explore the meaning of feminism in the Zambian context. How Zambia’s female *fast musicians* like Mampi aspire to be treated is a reflection of the situation of women in Zambia.

## 2.0 Zambia's *Fast Music*

The following story describes a typical *fast music* session in Zambia. In July of 2017, I contacted one of Zambia's top reggae singers Milimo Muyanga, also known as Milz by his fans, for a possible studio collaboration. Milz, a prominent figure in *fast music*, was excited to collaborate with me on a recording. I booked a session with Jericho Banda (Fingerz hereafter) of Jerry Fingerz's Studios in Lusaka. Fingerz, like Raydo, is a well-known *fast music* producer in Zambia.

On the morning of August 1, 2017, Milz and I drove to the Kamwala neighborhood in the capital Lusaka where Jerry Fingerz Studios is located. Fingerz's studio setup is basic: Two M-Audio BX8a studio monitors, a Sterling Audio studio microphone, a six-track mixer, which he uses as a preamp, and an M-Audio Delta 1010 Interface, all in one square room of approximately 9 x 9 feet. The room is soundproofed by foam spotted on the walls. Other *fast music* studios that I have recorded in such as D n'D and Kula had a similar set up. *Fast music* studios usually make use of low budget recording equipment that typically includes a recording interface or sound card, as it is called in Zambia, a microphone, studio monitors/speakers, and a computer.

Fingerz, with the help of his co-producer William Bwalya, had our session setup and was ready to produce our track. I did not know what to record. I sang a few phrases of “Fale,” a song in my mother tongue Nsenga that I had been working on that week:

*Maliko mwana wamama* Michael the son of my mother

*Lelo akonda Fale* Today he is in love with Fale

*Fale opala amama* Fale who resembles my mother.

*Fale, Fale, Fale* x3

*Banja kukana banja* Family, refusing family

*Bana kukana bana* Children, refusing children

*Ati ofuna Fale* He says he wants Fale

*Fale osweta* The light-skinned Fale.

Fingerz asked me to keep singing as he programmed the drums in Cubase, a music software program that he uses for recording but also serves as a sound bank. After programming the drums, Fingerz went on to program electric bass, synth strings, and piano. Minutes later, it was time to track vocals and so Fingerz again asked me to sing some more of “Fale.” I had sung a few phrases when he interrupted my singing. “I want to know where the hook is,” he demanded. I didn’t know where the hook was either; I was just improvising. Fingerz and Milz agreed that the first four lines I sang could make a great hook, and so I obliged. A hook in *fast music* is a set of catchy lines that

are often repeated and harmonized in a song.<sup>2</sup> It was Milz's turn to record vocals. While Fingerz was tracking Milz's vocal parts, I drove to downtown Lusaka for a meeting with some concert organizers who booked me to perform at their event later in the week. When I returned to the studio after about an hour, Fingerz was done recording Milz's vocal parts and our new track was blasting from the studio monitors—*fast music* indeed.

When Milz and I recorded at Jerry Fingerz Studio, Fingerz setup the studio for the recording session, manipulated, performed, tracked, and recorded "Fale." Milz and I only made suggestions as to what sounds we liked or did not like. Jerry was the sound engineer, the band, and the production team while Milz and I served as co-writers and improvisers of "Fale." As is the style in *fast music* productions, most parts of "Fale" were not written down or notated beforehand. We improvised most of the lyrics on the spot after Fingerz hastily put an instrumental together.

The production of "Fale" exemplifies the aesthetics of *fast music*. Having been introduced to the music industry through "live" participatory music-making, I was initially resistant to *fast music*. In my view, music was meant to be performed with others in real time and not programmed using music software on a computer. I felt that *fast music* producers lacked creativity and were too dependent on technology. I only recorded my music in *fast music* studios when I could not access studios that facilitated live recordings. Even then, the only instrumental parts I had programmed were drum kit and percussion because they were the most difficult to record in *fast music studios*.

After having worked with *fast music* producers such as Fingerz, and Elijah Tembo of Kula Studios, I realize that some of these producers are extremely talented and creative. In fact, a good number of them are good musicians who still pursue an active performing career alongside

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<sup>2</sup> In the pre-*fast music* era (pre-1990), musicians referred to this section as the chorus.

producing music in the studio. When Zambia's *fast music* premiered in the mid-1990s, music fans argued that it was not "real music." They called the music *ducha* after the sound of the drum: a kick drum on each downbeat of a 4/4 measure ("du") and a snare on each upbeat ("cha"). At this writing, the most prominent drum pattern in *fast music* is still *ducha*.

## **2.1 Zambian Popular Music and the Evolution of Zambia's *Fast Music***

Zambian popular music began in the 1940s after Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) acquired a radio service. The main factors that led to the development of popular music include the introduction of radio, high rates of urbanization and rural-urban migrations, and the introduction of Western musical instruments to the Zambia's local population. Harry Franklin, an information officer, author, and politician at the time is credited with propagating the idea of making radio accessible to the masses (Koloko, 2012:359). "In 1945, the station which was mainly installed for purposes of broadcasting war related information, at Harry Franklin's initiative, also began broadcasting programs focused on the natives, birthing the Central African Broadcasting Station (CABS), later rebranded Zambia National Broadcasting Cooperation (ZNBC)" (Ibid, 2012:359). One of the successes of Franklin's project was the launch of one of the world's most extensive collections of ethnic Zambian/African music (Ibid, 2012: 359). "Radio opened the region to the world and exposed the average Zambian to more musical styles. Musicologist Hugh Tracey, with the assistance of Alick Nkhata, recorded Zambian folk elders like Mapiki, Bwalya, Makawa, John Lushi, Stephen Tsotsi Kasumali, William Siwale and Isaac Matafwani, who all found their music on the radio and in later compilation albums from the International Library of African Music such as *From the Copperbelt: Miners Songs and Origins of Guitar Music*" (Alapatt, 2017:13).

For the first time, Zambian music was produced and mediated in similar ways to Western popular music, which had previously dominated the airwaves. Radio not only exposed the local Zambia's population to a variety of Western music styles but also provided a platform to hear Zambian music. In 1949, an inexpensive shortwave transistor radio placed in an aluminum, saucepan-shaped case, "the saucepan special," became available and accessible to most Zambians. I discuss more on the story of radio in Zambia in Chapter Three.

The European-managed development of the 1930s Zambia's copper industry led to a high rate of urbanization mostly in Lusaka where the central colonial government was based, and on the Copperbelt where most of the mining industry flourished at the time (Ibid, 2017:13). In her article "Why Zamrock is Back in Play," Henning Goranson Sandberg observes that "mass migration into Zambia's rich mining districts meant musicians had sudden exposure to different musical styles. Traditional instruments—from drums (such as the high-pitched 'talking' vimbuzi) to stringed instruments (like the babatone) to the kalimba (hand piano)—joined with instruments such as the accordion and guitar, which were brought into the country by the British ruling classes" (2013). Rural-urban migrations that led to the high rate of urbanization and the incorporation of Western music instruments with indigenous Zambian rhythms engendered music styles that resembled Western popular music styles.

Alapatt notes that "by the mid- to the late- '60s, rock music from a varied bunch—Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Jimi Hendrix, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Hollies, Chuck Berry—and soul and funk music by the likes of Otis Redding and James Brown—had taken hold as the Zambian African youth's musical undercurrent...Bands imitating these artists mushroomed around Lusaka and the Copperbelt and black Zambian bands fluent in Western styles soon found

booking at venues frequented by White European expatriates” (Ibid, 2017:17). These bands pioneered what later came to be known as Zamrock.

I consider the period between 1960s and 1970s the golden era of Zambian music because of the number of recordings that were published during this period. The Malachite Film Studios in the city of Chingola on the Copperbelt, Zambia Broadcasting Corporation Studios, and later Decibels (DB) studios in Lusaka hosted numerous acts facilitating recordings of Zamrock. Rhokana Melodies, the Crooners, the Jokers, Emmanuel Mulemena, Charles Muyamwa and the Big Gold Six Band, Lusaka Beatles, the Rave Five, the Crusaders, Keith Mlevhu, Amanaz, Dr. Footswitch, Mosi-O-Tunya, Chrissy Zebby Tembo, Paul Ngozi Nyirongo and the WITCH figured prominently in the Zambia’s sonic spaces of the 1960s and ’70s including radio and music venues.

However, by the late 1980s Zamrock was giving way to *kalindula* music, a genre based on ethnic Zambian rhythms inspired by mostly Congolese rumba with acts such as Five Revolutions, Nashil Pitchen Kazembe, Peter Tsosi Juma, and Masiye Band taking over the Zambia’s music soundscape. The 1980s were a challenging time for Zambia’s music industry. The declining economy due to the falling copper prices on the London Metal Exchange, night curfews imposed by the UNIP government, and the emergence of mobile discos in night clubs sidelined musicians to playing in hotels as cabaret acts (Ibid, 2017: 37). Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) radio, the only radio station at the time, also preferred to play American disco and some kalindula but not so much Zamrock anymore. By the early ‘90s most musicians that envisioned a career in music left Zambia for more prosperous music industries. Among them, Rikki Illilonga relocated to Denmark, Larry Maluma to Australia, Spuki Mulemwa to Germany, and Willie Mbewe to South Africa.

However, the much-needed revival of Zambian music began in the mid 1990s when Roger Sombe's Digital Networks International (DNI) and Chisha Folotiya's Mondo Music committed to re-issuing previously published Zamrock and *kalindula* on cassette and compact disc (CD). Isaac Mulinda, Disc Jockey (DJ) at the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) Radio 2 almost single-handedly popularized *kalindula*. DNI and Mondo Music also published new music by Daddy Zhemus, JK, Burning Youths, and the female duo Shatel among others. The new music saw a shift in the production of Zambia's popular music from ensemble recordings in the studio as was the case with Zamrock and *kalindula*, to recordings by one person using music software on a computer—*fast music*.

It is worth noting that until the early 1990s, almost everybody who had made a career in music was male. Some of the reasons for this situation were that music performances happened in the night mostly in night clubs and women were not encouraged to hang out in such spaces, especially at night. Also, there were very few women musicians because in Zambia's traditional settings men play musical instruments while women sing, and dance. Women who wanted to make a recording in a studio had to hire an ensemble and pay for studio time. For example, to save time and money, bands that recorded at DB Studios, rehearsed and had all the song arrangements worked out before studio sessions as studio fees were mostly unaffordable.

Lawrence Lupiya, a staff member at DB studios, notes that it was expensive to record at DB. "In fact, most musicians that could afford recording at DB were those that were signed by Teal Records [record company founded in 1973]. Starting in the late 1990s into the early 2000s, most musicians recorded elsewhere in home studios and only went to DB studios for tracking vocals as most of the home studios still had technological challenges recording vocals" (personal communication July 2017). Echoing Lupiya's observation, sound engineer Michael Linyama



explains, “in the old system [pre-*fast music* era], you had to find a live band and rehearse with them” [before going to record in a studio] (personal communication, July 2017).

As Linyama and Lupiya note, recording music before *fast music* studios was expensive and time consuming. After *fast music* studios were introduced on the Zambia’s music scene, musicians had options of recording cheaply.

The 1990s Zambia’s economic liberalization led to the availability and accessibility of cheaper studio equipment and technology which facilitated the production of *fast music* in home studios. Technology has made it plausible for musicians and producers to access music software that had never been available to them before, encouraging the rapid development of Zambia’s *fast music*. For the first time, musicians had access to computers and computer accessories, studio recording equipment. Access to technology encouraged people to build home studios. On 27 June 2017, I interviewed Michael Linyama at DB Studios in Lusaka about the evolution of *fast music* in Zambia. Linyama with his longtime friend Francis Mwiinga are the pioneers of the genre. The following is an excerpt of the interview:

Michael Linyama (ML here after): Well that is programming. That is programming in keyboards. Now the next part now comes...

Mathew Tembo (MT here after): With Francis right? That’s when you started computer music.

ML: Yes...[be]cause when I met Francis, he was a computer wizard. So I learnt how to use computers from him.

MT: When was this?

ML: 89 that’s when I bought my first computer.

MT: And where did you get it from?

ML: Locally. There was some guy who came from the UK and he looked at this [the computer he brought with him] and he thought it was just a toy...because computers were progressing so to him it wasn't much. He didn't have much to do with it. And I looked at it and I thought I could make use of it [laughs]. It was actually done by a genius called Sir. Clive Sinclair... it had no programs...all it had was 64 kilobytes of memory. Now we are talking about gigabytes...But you see I had to now start making programs (music programs) for it because programs didn't exist at that time. That time you had to make your own programs.

MT: You made your own program?

ML: I made my own program which could read the keyboard...after doing that...I was able to make it now play back what one played. So, that was when my first music program started...

MT: And when was that?

ML: '93, 92-93. So, for the first time I had something that functioned properly. Then all sorts of people started coming to the farm (where the studio was located). Ballad Zulu...they were a number. Who was that? Sonile Zulu, Wako Jam with Ras Willie...

MT: You guys got busy.

ML: We got so busy...We got one program called PRISM. And it is no longer used...Because we didn't even have Windows. Windows was just beginning. All the computers were using DOS...so there were no Windows programs. Later we had to try and upgrade the computer so that it could run Windows. And that was

the very first Windows. Windows 3. Windows 3.1... and that computer, it was so slow...

MT: So what did PRISM do? How did you use it?

ML: PRISM? Eh, we could use it to program. The way a keyboard synthesizer is programmed, we could program it the same way. Only that editing was much easier [be]cause we did it on the computer screen...

MT: Did it work the same way? Like same way as what you do with recording interfaces these days?

ML: Well, half of it in that, no voices, no guitars...But that part [programming] worked the same...Sound Blaster [interface], it was just meant for games but it could record. It had a mic input... So, we got that. And it also came with a program called Cakewalk.

MT: Okay...how good was Cakewalk as compared to PRISM?

ML: ...Eh Cakewalk was more professional in that...PRISM could basically play sequences whilst Cakewalk could play your entire song... so you didn't have to keep looping things. You could actually play the whole song from beginning to end...so that way it was better. And if you had a voice, you could insert the voice...Record it separately then insert it...but we needed a program which could record them together...

MT: So, at this time you were still the only ones doing this...?

ML: Yes. Yes. Although we were very worried because it was a very simple thing...and we knew that if someone...liked the idea he could easily buy a computer and a keyboard...and we knew it was going to happen so we were trying

to upgrade as quickly as possible...so we managed to get...the more advanced version, Cakewalk 5. Cakewalk 5 could record the voices...Then that was the first time...I can say the computer was actually doing the job because it could record the voices, it could play the instruments. It could do the entire song. The only thing is we kept running out of space...

MT: You had to import them [computers]?

ML: ...change of government [from UNIP to MMD] was shortly before that.

MT: Ya, it was 1992...

ML: Ya. What happened is that when they [MMD government] ...brought Game Stores (South African chain store) and that kind of thing...some things became available locally...like for the computers. It was now easier to get things like the mouse, the computer keyboards...but shortly after that, we also got a CD writer...so we could finish the whole production...when the CD came, oh! It changed everything...because CDs became available so it was now easier to back things up.

MT: When do you think there was a boom. Like after you guys got this started, you know, when do you think these other people started setting up their own home studios?

ML: It was, ah...the nineties... So roughly I would say... around '97, '98 people started doing a lot of recordings...so from that point, people had to find cheaper ways of recording. That's when all sorts of studios now started coming up...



**Figure 1 Michael Linyama at DB Studios in Lusaka**

Leonard Koloko observes:

One positive aspect that the MMD policy of free market economy brought about was that of new initiatives from individuals who started running small recording facilities to help keep the music scene afloat (Koloko, 2012:153).

*Fast music* is usually recorded in home studios. These home studios that Koloko refers to as “small recording facilities” are usually operated by self-trained sound engineers, arguably one of the reasons that the quality produced from them was mostly compromised in the beginning.

As was the case with Linyama and Mwiinga, studio engineers/producers program everything in a music software such as Cubase, Logic, or ProTools on their computers without needing ensembles to track live. Recordings that took weeks in studios like DB only take a few hours in these home studios. Studio sessions that I have observed in *fast music studios* reveal that unlike in the pre-*fast music* recording spaces such as DB where sound engineers were not a part of the music-making process, music-making in *fast music* studios is a more participatory endeavor with engineers/producers at the center of the process.

Narrating his experience when he recorded part of his album “Spiritual War” at DB in the late 1990s, Khuzhwayo Chisi of the reggae outfit Bantu Roots points out that “at DB you didn’t even know where the sound engineers were. All you heard was Peter Musungilo’s deep voice from the control room telling you what to do (Musungilo is the longest serving sound engineer at DB). When I recorded there, the vocal booth was dark. All I could see was a microphone. I didn’t sing my lines well when I attempted to sing the first time in DB studios and then I heard a voice (Musungilo’s), ‘Iwe siwunadye? Kuno sikosobelela ka (you didn’t eat? Here we don’t come to play). And then they charged me more money after the recordings” (personal communication, May 2017).

Singer, Mau Mwale of the female group Mwale Sisters, described recording at DB as serious. “Peter Musungilo, the sound engineer was very strict. When I recorded a commercial for the Meridien Banque Internationale pour L’Afrique Occidentale (BIAO) with Flintu Chandia (sculptor/musician), It was mostly me and Flintu in the recording booth. Musungilo was usually in the control room” (personal communication, 12 February 2018). Mwale also pointed out that although it was not unusual to find some musicians hanging out in the corridors or outside DB Studios, they were never allowed to be in the studio during recording sessions of other musicians

unless they were a part of the session. Both Chisi and Mwale's anecdotes confirm that music-making during recordings at DB did not encourage collective participation.

While *fast music* producers can program drums, manipulate, and perform or track other musical instruments in some music software on the computer themselves, DB and other such bigger studios made use of six-track recorders in the earlier days. Recordings using a six-track recorder involved first simultaneously tracking players of musical instruments after which singers would be recorded.



**Figure 2 Six-Track Brenell Recorder at DB Studios**

A good recording in pre-*fast music* studios depended mainly on the musicians' skills as sounds could not be manipulated during or after being recorded. The sound engineers could only

mix down the recorded tracks but did not have the technology to auto tune vocals or cut and replace badly performed sections for example. In those spaces, bands had to retake whole performances even in cases where only one musician messed up a small section of the performance.

Power dynamics in *pre-fast music* production spaces were more visible. There was a clear separation between the production team and the musicians and an audience was never tolerated. When Chisi went for a recording session at DB, he didn't even have a chance to meet the sound engineer, except through a voice that authoritatively directed him where to go and when to perform. The voice was setting the boundaries and establishing power relations—you are the musician, I am the engineer and I am in charge here. Because of the seriousness of recording sessions in *pre-fast-music* recording spaces, the actors participated in the music making process as separate entities. The sound engineer manipulated his equipment to record an ensemble whose performance took place in a different space from the engineer's, each actor minding their own business except in situations where performances deviated from standard music practices such as performing out of key.

In *fast music* studios, producers in collaboration with their clients play the role of an ensemble, the producer, and the sound engineer. In *Sounds of Africa: Making Zulu Music in a South African Studio*, Louise Meintjes observes that “studio music-makers with their superior aural competence can imagine sonic wholes, new sound worlds, and set about creating them with the technical expertise of their sound engineer. They can hear the details of complex sounds and set about reshaping them” (Meintjes, 2003: 93). Based on Meintjes' observation, I noticed that when Fingerz was producing “Fale” on his computer, he was reimagining a live band performing together. “Liveness [being] an illusion of sounding live that is constructed through technological intervention in the studio and mediated symbolically through discourses about the natural and the



artistic” (Meintjes, 2003:112). Cubase and ProTools music software programs that Fingerz uses on his computer provides him with access to imagined musicians, and multitudinous musical instruments and performance spaces. In his studio, Fingerz is the most influential member of his imagined ensemble. He is the only band member who shares physical spaces with the musicians whose music he produces. He controls, manipulates and directs his imagined bandmates by making careful decisions on who should play what, when, and what his imagined musicians should sound like as he attempts to construct liveness in the recordings.

Besides the producer’s expertise, the practice of *chifwinda* comes in handy in *fast music* studios. In my mother tongue Nsenga, *chifwinda* refers to spaces in which music and dance performances take place. *Chifwinda* also refers to the actual performances that take place in those spaces. *Vifwinda* (plural) are participatory performance spaces. Turino notes that in *participatory performances* attention is focused on the sonic and kinesic interactions among participants rather than on an end-product that results from the activity (Turino 2008: 28). Likewise, in *vifwinda*, everybody present is a part of the music-making process, including musicians, singers, dancers, and the audience who might only be there to cheer on the performers.

These interactions facilitate what I refer to as *unrestricted corporeal mobility*. Victor Turner (cited by Thomas Turino, 2008) describes a collective state achieved through rituals where all personal differences of class, status, age, gender, and other personal distinctions are stripped away allowing people to temporarily merge through their basic humanity or *communitas*. In such a state and physical space, bodies’ mobility is not restricted based on skill or identity categories such as class, gender, age, or status. Similarly, in *vifwinda*, performers and potential performers interact and the divide between them is blurred.

Bantu Roots' Chisi and Mau Mwale, who I talked about earlier, narrated to me how intimidating and threatening it was to record in big commercial studios like DB, and Rogers Sombe's DNI. In capitalist societies of the West, people often associate space with freedom and opportunity (Yi-Fu Tuan, 2014: 56). The more space one inhabits, the more one can accumulate wealth and power from the exploitation of the resources available in the space. However, Tuan writes "...But to the Russian peasants, boundless space used to have the opposite meaning. It connoted despair rather than opportunity; it inhibited rather than encouraged action" (Tuan, 2014: 56). This is the case for performances in big studios. However, *fast music* studios are smaller spaces in which unrestricted corporeal mobility is encouraged. Tuan further observes that "when people work together for a common cause, one man does not deprive the other of space; rather he increases it for his colleague by giving him support" (Tuan, 2014: 64). Similarly, in *fast music studios*, opportunities abound as a result of the intimate interactions that take place in them. For aspiring musicians and producers, participatory music-making in *fast music* studios provides opportunities for them to learn and gain the much-needed experience as they support each other.

In *vifwinda*, everybody present is a part of the music-making process, including musicians, singers, dancers, and the audience who might only be there to cheer the performers but join the performances when they so wish.

The idea of *chifwinda* is similar to musicologist Christopher Small's *musicking*. According to Smalls, "to *musick* is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or dancing" (Smalls, 1998:9). However, unlike Small's idea of *musicking* where even practicing, or even janitors are a part of the music making process, *chifwinda* only refers to an overall performance by all the actors present at a performance in real time and space.

*Chifwinda* does not include preparations before the performance itself. In a way, *fast music* production spaces are *vifwinda*—everyone present during recording sessions is welcome to participate in the music making process. To demonstrate this scenario, I narrate proceedings of a studio session I was invited to in 2003 by John Njebe, an up-and-coming reggae musician at the time. Njebe asked me to produce one of his songs, “Sembe Onafunsako Ba Neighbor” (You Should Have Asked the Neighbor), at DnD Studios, a *fast music* studio that was located in the Music Building of the Evelyn Hone College of Applied Arts and Commerce in the capital Lusaka at the time. Njebe reached out to me because he had prior experience working with my band and he knew me as a keyboardist besides being the lead singer of the ensemble. Because most *fast-music* studios use a controller, a small keyboard designed for purposes of sending commands to the computer during recordings, or a keyboard synthesizer, keyboardists come in handy in these studios. At DnD, I realized that my role during the recording session was mostly to play rhythmic phrases and short riffs on the keyboard synthesizer that Fingerz, who I was co-producing the song with, would then manipulate in a music software on the computer.

At the beginning of the session, I got into an altercation with Jimmy Banda [not related to Jericho Banda (Fingerz)], another producer who also worked at DnD but was not supposed to be working on the session that day. Jimmy insisted that he wanted to play keyboards even though Njebe preferred me to. After the brawl, Jimmy resigned and left the studio and the production continued. Although there was only Njebe, Fingerz and me in the studio after Jimmy’s unexpected but most welcome leaving, other musicians, mostly amateurs, were hanging out outside the studio. In the middle of the session, a boy who I hadn’t seen before came into the studio to tell us that the song we were recording sounded good. He went further to sing a melody that he thought complimented and made the song sound even better. I later learnt that he was one of the amateur

musicians I saw hanging out outside the studio before the session. While I was still figuring out what was going on, I realized Njebe and Fingerz were okay with the music spontaneity that had just intruded our session so I performed on the keyboard the parts the boy was singing for Fingerz to track.

Jimmy Banda's intrusion into the recording session was an attempt to be a part of *chifwinda* with Njebe, Fingerz, and I, so was the amateur musician's who came in the middle of the session to tell us that we sounded good and went on to contribute to the production by singing a line that we ended up recording. As exemplified by this anecdote, music-making in *fast music* studios is an act of *chifwinda* and participation is open to everyone present during recording sessions. The producer's role is mostly to arrange pieces of music and to make singers sound good by manipulating sounds and using effects. Although *chifwinda* is a traditional practice that has existed in Zambia for a long time, its practice in *fast music* studios is a new trend because music-making in Zambian pop was modelled on Western practices where there is usually a divide between performer and audience.

Technology has not only revolutionized music production, but also music circulation. In the section that follows, I explore what I refer to as *fast circulation*-the distribution and circulation of music by means of new smartphone technology.

## **2.2 Fast Circulation: Use of Technology in Circulating *Fast Music***

Technology, which is at the center of music production today, has also revolutionized music circulation in Zambia. In this section, I focus on how cellphone technology has impacted the consumption of Zambia's *fast music*. I also explore how this new medium of distributing and

circulating music has motivated female musicians to participate in the Zambia's music industry even more.

*Fast music* has provided a platform on which women can musically express themselves in more intimate but less intimidating spaces. The availability of technology including the internet and especially the smartphone has aided music circulation making it accessible to a broader audience. *Fast-musicians* such as Jordan Katembula (JK), Masauso Sakala (Ruff Kid), Mirriam Mukupe (Mampi), and Cynthia Kayula Bwalya (Kay Figo) to mention a few, have excelled in their music careers in which *fast-circulation* has played a significant role. I have had friends in Zambia share with me some newly released Zambian hit songs on WhatsApp.

Cellphone technology has internationalized Zambia's *fast music*. For example, I have heard Mampi's music played in a club in Denver, Colorado in the United States of America (USA). Both Mampi and Kay Figo have performed in Africa, USA, and the United Kingdom (UK) among other locations. YouTube has also exposed local artists internationally. On YouTube, Kay Figo's "Kanyebele (Ant)" has been viewed more than 7 million times including comments from Mauritius, Turkey and Armenia. Mampi's music video "Walilowelela (You Are So Sweet)" boasts of 3.6 million views with comments coming from New Papua Guinea, Algeria, Cameroun, New Zealand, Equatorial Guinea and Mauritius among other locations. Robert Banda, also known as Roberto in the music circles is one of the most internationally celebrated male *fast musicians*. His most liked song "Amarula" has been viewed 1.5 million times.

Mass circulation of music in the pre-*fast music* era was mostly mediated through the radio and record companies such as Teal Records, DNI and ZNBC that distributed physical copies of music, first on vinyl, cassettes, and later CDs. To understand how music has been circulated in Zambia, a brief history of radio is warranted.

The story of radio in Zambia begins at the time of World War II when Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) acquired a radio service in 1941 after the government's Information Department installed a 300-watt transmitter in Lusaka (Koloko, 2012:359). At the time of Zambia's independence from Britain on 24 October 1964, state-owned Central African Broadcasting Services (CABS) housed the only radio station in the country. However, after the economic liberalization of the 1990s by Frederic Chiluba's MMD government, the number of radio stations snowballed, mostly privately owned: Radio Phoenix, QFM and Hot FM in Lusaka, Radio Ichengelo in Kitwe, and later, Radio Maria in Chipata were among the most prominent ones, including state owned Radio 4, which was an expansion of ZNBC's national radio. Most of these stations played music, all day and all night interspersed with jingles, which were also mostly musical. ZNBC Radio 2, Radio Ichengelo and Radio Maria featured mostly local music.

When I started music in the mid-1990s, I remember recording my first demo tapes using a cassette recorder with the Afro-Vision Band, an ensemble that was based at Mumana Pleasure Resort in Lusaka. I would then take my demo tapes to radio stations where I asked Disc Jockeys (DJs) to play my music. Radio was one of the dyad media, the other being television, that circulated music to the masses. Musicians mostly depended on their personal relationships with radio personnel to have their music played on radio. Those that were friends with some DJs were guaranteed air play.

Radio air play has always been a contested issue between musicians and DJs and negotiations regarding it fluid. Motivation for DJs to play the music often oscillate between business, friendship, sometimes intimacy, with DJs desiring to receive gifts and favors in exchange of airplay. Explaining how this works, I discuss an experience I had with DJs in 2005 followed by two other experiences as narrated by female acts Wezi and Davaos.

After the release of my *Vikonda Moyo* album in 2005 that featured among other musicians Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, the first president of the Republic of Zambia, I took some CDs of the album to DJs at ZNBC Radio 4 seeking air play. I was hopeful that the album on which I collaborated with Dr. Kaunda, who I thought most people respected and loved, was going to be well received by the DJs and airplay on radio guaranteed. However, that was not the case.

Every time I had new music that needed to be promoted, I began with Radio 4 DJs because the station had the widest coverage, at least among the radio stations that played music for most of their programming, and some of the DJs that worked at the station were my friends. I didn't hear my music play on Radio 4 and neither did I hear from my fans, some of whom religiously called me or sent me messages on the phone or emails whenever they heard my new music on radio. After a couple of weeks of waiting for *Vikonda Moyo* to be played on radio and realizing that it was probably not going to happen, I went back to the radio station to inquire why the DJs hadn't played my music yet. A prominent DJ I talked to advised that they would only play my music on radio if I gave them some money or bought them alcohol. "Mdala (big man) you need to be friends with us if you want air play. You need to take us out for lunch sometimes. Come to see us even when you do not have new music. Bring us a bottle of whiskey..." (personal communication, 2005).

What my DJ friend was insinuating was that DJs expected some form of transaction in exchange for radio airplay. Not only was he suggesting that I invest some time in hanging out with them and facilitate fulfilling their pleasurable desires such as buying them lunch and getting them drunk but that I also commit to friendships with them.

In an interview on Q TV, a privately-owned TV station in Lusaka, Violet Phiri of Davaos, an upcoming duo of two women musicians, explains how the duo was asked to pay 3,000 Kwacha

(\$300) by a DJ from a privately-owned radio station to have him play their music on radio. Although the group ended up paying the DJ in question, their music was only sporadically played on radio (DJ Showstar, 2016). Phiri went on to explain that “Some Zambian DJs are so corrupt that they are only interested in having sex with you (female musicians) or money in exchange for air play” DJ Showstar, 2016.

In an interview with Akwasi Sarpong of BBC, singer Wezi Mhone, aka Wezi, observes that “for a female artist to have mainstream play, you need to befriend a lot of men and sometimes they (men) really do want to compromise you. The DJs will request more than they ask from male artists...ask for sexual favors. I have had friends who have experienced that and I also have had personal encounters where someone would insinuate...” (Akwasi Sarpong, 2018).

At a fee, DJs in Zambia in collaboration with other DJs from various radio stations are able to orchestrate a song’s airplay so as to make the song popular, arrangements that have often situated women in compromising situations and therefore made it difficult for women to participate in the music industry. As observed by Wezi and Phiri, although DJs expect musicians—male and female—to befriend them, do them favors, and give them gifts or money in exchange for radio air play, female musicians are more vulnerable as it is common for male DJs to pressure female musicians into performing sexual favors in exchange for airplay. Often, relationships between musicians— particularly female— and DJs get blurred and complicated as business mixes with desire.

However, technology which coincided with the emergence of Zambia’s *fast music* in the late 1990s changed the way music was to be consumed and circulated. Cellphone technology, especially via smartphones, has provided alternative spaces in which women can still participate in the music industry without fear of being sexually harassed.



### 2.3 Smartphone Technology in Zambia's Fast Music

The most recent medium for circulating *fast-music* is the smartphone. On the history of cellphones in Africa, Sebastiana Etzo and Guy Collender state:

The story [of mobile phones] begins in 1987 when the first mobile call was made in Zaïre, now the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Market liberalization in a few key countries in the late 1990s and early 2000s contributed to the rapid growth in mobile phone (cellphone) subscribers. The increase since 2003 has 'defied all predictions,' according to Sami Al Basheer Al Morshid, Director of the Telecommunication Development Bureau at the UN's International Telecommunication Union. Business leaders and investors did not anticipate that a continent invariably labelled as poor and corrupt would be able to provide the infrastructure and customer base required for considerable market growth (Etzo & Collender, 2010:660).

Cellphones were introduced to Zambia in the late 1990s roughly at about the same time that *fast-music* studios were taking off (Linyama, personal communication, July 2017). By 2000, there was about 1 cellphone user per 100 inhabitants and by 2011 there were 60 subscribers per 100 inhabitants (Ngoma, Parker & Wycoff, 2012). *Lusaka Voice*, an online publication reported a total of 10.1 million cellphone subscribers, about two-thirds of Zambia's population, as of

December 2014 (Lusaka Voice, 2015). Smartphones have transformed sonic spaces and listening experiences in unpredictable ways. Compressed data such as MP3 music files, and ringtones are easily shared among cellphone users. Record companies such as Mondo Music (now defunct) worked with phone companies, Celtel and MTN in the first decade of the 2000s to circulate music through cellphone ringtones. Since then, cellphones, especially smartphones, have become one of the major players in circulating and distributing music. Unlike the times when the circulation of music depended on a physical commodity, for example a vinyl, cassette or CD, to be transacted in person, the circulation of music through cellphone technology has transcended such physicality and defied limitations of space.

In August of 2017, I had an opportunity of interviewing Danny Mwikisa, the content manager of Spice VAS Zambia, a subsidiary of Spice Vas Africa. Spice VAS Africa also has offices in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire among other locations. Spice VAS Zambia collaborates with phone service providers Airtel, an Indian telecommunication phone service provider, South African Mobile Telephone Network (MTN), and the local Zambia Telecommunications (Zamtel) to provide what he refers to as value added services (VAS). According to Mwikisa, the business he manages adds value to phone services by substituting traditional ring back tones with music tunes and mobile radio among other services. As content manager, Mwikisa is in charge of content management in Zambia. His job description includes identifying new music, negotiating contracts with artists regarding selling their music to subscribers via phone service providers (personal communication August 2017).

The following is an excerpt of an interview I had with Mwikisa when I met him at his office located in the Airtel Headquarters Building along the Great East Road of Lusaka as he explained to me the process of selling music via service phone providers:

Danny Mwikisa (DM): Some of the products that we have, which are music oriented...music on demand (MOD). This one (MOD) is like a radio. People need to dial a code, usually provided by the service providers, to access a song list. Subscribers can then create their own song lists. Another service that we have is the caller ring back tunes (CRBT). In CRBT, when a subscriber calls someone, instead of hearing the traditional *tru tru* sound, they hear a song by an artist or a tune that the subscriber has uploaded onto their phone.

Mathew Tembo (MT): How do you sell the music?

DM: ...We run various promotions of the networks (Airtel, MTN, Zamtel). For example, we have the top ten, the artist of the month, text blasts, and prompts.

MT: So, you get this content from these musicians then you feed it into your system? Then...?

DM: Once it is in our system then we start promoting.

Subscribers purchase ringtones that they like using phone credit. Usually, musicians and producers involved in the production of *fast-music* and their fans are young fashion conscious technophiles who prefer to be identified as the economically affluent and owning a smartphone and being able to use one effectively are some of the markers of affluence. Cellphones have become extensions of these technophiles accompanying their bodies wherever they go, which has made it easier for *fast-musicians*, producers and fans to share music anywhere, anytime.

Musician James Banda, also known as Red Linso (Red Eye) observes that music circulation is quicker than it used to be as a result of music sharing platforms such as phone Apps WhatsApp, and Facebook which are accessible via smartphones (personal communication, August 2017).

Although musicians and music fans have argued that circulating music through cellphone technology has exacerbated piracy, female musicians have benefited from the technology. Not only is *fast circulation* cheaper as compared to replicating CDs and distributing them to DJs but has also provided spaces in which female musicians can circulate their music without having to deal with transacting their bodies as they are pressured to fulfill male DJs sexual desires in exchange for radio air play. I argue that gender relations in Zambian society have situated women musicians to marginalized positions, one of the factors that has led to sexual harassment of women in recording studios and the media. In the chapter that follows, I present an account of the history of gender relations in Zambia.

### 3.0 Women and Gender Relations in Zambia

The status of women in Zambia has evolved over centuries. In the precolonial era it was not unusual for women to be entrusted with influential political positions as was the case among the Tonga speaking people of southern Zambia, although men generally dominated the political spheres in traditional settings (Rwomire, 2001:163). Colonization and Christianity marginalized women in decision-making processes both at household and national levels. Scott D. Taylor in *Culture and Customs of Zambia* observes:

Women were always regarded as inferior to men in Zambia, even before the coming of colonial powers...Nonetheless, a number of powers were available to women or a woman's family. These were altered by colonialism and the arrival of Christianity, which diminished the role of the bride/wife while elevating the role of the father/husband Taylor, 2006: 92).

I spent part of my childhood in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. I consider my family to have been middle class. My father worked as a health inspector at a civic office in the city while my mother was mostly a homemaker although she sporadically involved in trade business. Most of my friends' families had a similar set up—fathers went out to work while mothers stayed home doing housekeeping and nurturing children.

Every time my mother found me in the kitchen eating from a pot or even cooking, she would jokingly say to me in my mother tongue, Nsenga, “*umele maziba*” to which the literal

English translation is, “you will grow breasts.” When I was growing up *umele maziba* was a common phrase that grownups said to boys that engaged in what was considered feminine chores or activities. When my sisters engaged in what was thought to be masculine roles such as chopping wood using an axe, I heard grownups say, “*siwukabala*,” meaning you are not going to be able to give birth or have kids. Such sentiments affirmed and encouraged gender roles in the Zambian traditional settings, in line with Judith Lorber’s observation in *Paradoxes of Gender* when she says “children’s relationships with same-gendered and different-gendered caretakers structure their self-identifications and personalities” (Lorber, 1994:25). My family anecdotes reflect how these gender roles are socially and culturally constructed. Elizabeth Colson in *Marriage and the Family Among the Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia* (now Zambia) narrates:

Girls are deflected by lack of encouragement and sometimes direct ridicule from undertaking work which is considered appropriate to boys, while their attempts within the area allotted to them meets with support. The reverse is true for small boys. If a tiny girl tries to use a stamping pole in imitation of her mother, she is praised and offered advice for improving her effort...When a small boy makes the same attempt, the bystanders laugh or ignore him, and he receives neither praise nor encouragement to continue (Calson, 1958:261).

Although Colson is specifically referring to the Tonga people of southern Zambia in the quote above, the observation she makes is representative of how gender roles are inculcated in traditional settings throughout most of Zambia. Through the process of socialization, children are

trained and prepared in their respective gender roles. In most traditional Zambian settings, especially before the money economy was adopted, men's roles involved hunting, trapping small game including birds, honey gathering, skinning dead animals for food, tree cutting, fishing, building and thatching houses. Women's duties included bearing and caring for children, drawing water, sweeping the house and yard, cooking, searching for edible leaves, finishing interior clay walls, pounding and grinding peanuts (Kashoki, 2004: 56).

In Zambia, men who cheat on their spouses are perceived to not be as bad as women who do. In fact, a man involved in an extramarital relationship is considered to be more masculine than one who faithfully pursues a monogamous relationship. Most times when a man's extramarital affair is exposed, it is not unusual to hear people say "*ndiye mwamene balili bamuna*" in the Chinyanja language, mostly spoken in the capital Lusaka, meaning "that's just the nature of men." Usually this sentiment is presented to a woman who has been cheated on as a way of making her feel better and asking her to forgive her cheating man.

Often, women forgive their cheating spouses mainly because of the unequal dependency between women and men in these relationships. On the other hand, women whose extramarital relationships are brought to light are strongly reprimanded and forgiveness on the part of the male partners is uncommon.

Initiation rites are conduits in the process of socialization. For example, *Chisungu*, an initiation ceremony for adolescent girls among the Bemba speaking people of northern Zambia focuses on teaching girls the values and ways of marriage, encompassing sex, pregnancy, child rearing, and accepts and challenges of married life (Taylor, 2006:100). *Chisungu* prepares initiates for womanhood. Boys' initiation rites are also common. For instance, *nyau* of the Nsenga and Chewa people of eastern Zambia welcomes boys to manhood. *Nyau* encourages boys to grow up

into responsible men who would provide for their kin when they marry and start a family of their own. In *nyau*, boys are also taught about sex, hunting, and other duties that are perceived to be men's responsibilities.

Sometimes there is an overlap in the allotting of gender roles in traditional settings. For example, fetching firewood, weeding, and attending to domestic animals are performed by both male and female. The best way to analyze the distribution of gender roles in these settings is to look at it as a continuum. On one end of the continuum are all the most physically demanding chores allotted to men who are generally larger and physically stronger than most women. On the other end of the continuum are roles that demand less physical strength and are often assigned to women. In between the continuum are all the chores that can be performed by either men or women, or both together. In these settings, women and men contribute equally although complementarily to the micro economy of the household according to their almost equal status.

The sociocultural change that came with colonization and Christianity redefined gender roles and female-male relationships in Zambia. Colonization was legitimized in 1890 after Cecil Rhodes, an ambitious businessman who hoped to build a rail line from Cape Town in South Africa to Cairo in Egypt, obtained mineral rights through a concession that was secured from Lewanika I, the Paramount Chief of Barotseland. In June 1890, the western part of what is now Zambia became a British Protectorate under the Lochner Concession, named after Rhodes agent Frank Elliot Lochner who was credited for making the arrangements (Sardinas, 2014:14). Christian missionaries began their expeditions to Zambia about four decades before the 1890 concession. In 1853 David Livingstone, a missionary with the London Missionary Society (LMS), crossed the Zambezi to explore Zambia (Chanda, 18 October, 2017). By 1881 Rev. Stewart Wright's London Missionary Society in the north, Jesuit Mission in the south, François Coillard's Paris Evangelical



Mission in the west, and the Free Church of Scotland in the east had been established (Kaluba, 14 December, 2014).

The introduction to the local population of Christianity by European missionaries and the gendering of the labor market in the 1890s after the signing of a business concession between King Lewanika I of Barotseland and Cecil Rhodes of the British South African Company (BSA) are some of the factors that engendered the disparity that mostly favored men in most professions, including music, promulgating patriarchal hegemony in Zambian society.

Teachings in Christianity, supported by several scriptures from the Bible, promoted patriarchal hegemony. For example, the book of Ephesians 5:21-33 reads, “Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.” First Corinthians 11:9 declares, “Neither was man created for woman but woman for man.” Titus 2:4-5 instructs, “And so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.” First Timothy 2:12 rebukes, “I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man. Rather, she is to remain quiet.”

These scriptures propose that man dominate female-male relationships. The third chapter of Genesis, goes further to suggest that man be the sole provider of the household. After Adam and Eve were tricked into eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden by the serpent, God administered punishment to the couple and the serpent. An excerpt taken from verses 9-18 of the New American Bible outlines:

The Lord God then called to the man and asked him, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden but I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid myself. Then the Lord asked, “Who told you that you were naked? “You have eaten then, from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!” The man replied, “The woman whom you put here with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, and so I ate it. The Lord God then asked the woman, “Why did you do such a thing?” The woman answered, “The serpent tricked me into it, so I ate it.” Then the Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, you shall be banned from all the animals and from all the wild creatures; on your belly shall you crawl...To the woman he said [the Lord], “I will intensify the pangs of child bearing; in pain shall you bring forth children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall be your master.” To the man he [the Lord] said: “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat, cursed be the ground because of you! In toil shall you eat its yield all the days of your life.

The last sentence in the excerpt particularly, “In toil shall you eat its yield all the days of your life,” places man to the role of sole provider of his household. Such teachings reinforced dominant gender roles and decision-making in favor of men. After Christianity and colonization, women assumed silhouette positions in households while their participation in decision-making diminished. Chibesa Kankasa, a freedom fighter during the struggle for the country’s

independence and one of the few female top government officials in the United National Independence Party (UNIP) government, lamented about the situation of women in the 1960s and 70s Zambia:

For over 70 years that Zambia was ruled by the British, African [Zambian] women were the most down-trodden and exploited. Through the system of exploitation of man by man, women were, by law, relegated to the status of inferior beings... “All people are equal in the eyes of God,” not so to the exploiters who considered women as mere “means of production” whose place and main function were housekeeping, the kitchen and raising children (Kankasa, 1974:2).

Christianity did not only introduce its gospel to Zambia but also inculturated the converts into the Christian/European culture. As observed by Kankasa, the exploitative laws of colonization worsened the situation of women. In this way, colonization and Christianity inspired men in modern-urban Zambia of the 1960s and 70s to take dominant roles in male-female relationships while women became more confined to homely duties.

Colonization also brought about urbanization, which in turn favored the male population. The presence of copper deposits in the northern part of Zambia, also known as the Copperbelt, enticed the British South African Company (BSAC) to push for the colonization of the country in 1890. Copper mining on the Copperbelt and colonial government administration centers in selected parts of the country sparked rural to urban migrations, especially in the 1930s when mining

production improved as a result of international demand for copper in the United States of America and Europe (Taylor, 2006:15). The migrations were motivated by hopes of better modern lives in the urban regions (Mususa, 2012:571). At this point the urban regions were the mining areas on the Copperbelt and the colonial government administration centers spread out all over the country. Most natives that migrated to the urban centers worked as laborers in the mines or as cleaners in the colonial offices (Taylor, 2006:16).

Urbanization directly favored the native male population. Firstly, migrating from rural to urban towns took days due to the lack of infrastructure at the time, which made it difficult for women, who performed the role of taking care of families, to travel to urban centers. Secondly, urban employment, mostly unskilled labor for the native population in the beginning, was more physical in nature and therefore favored men. Furthermore, the White businessmen preferred to employ men and discouraged the presence of African women and children in their neighborhoods (Mususa, 2012:574). This situation coupled with the Christian belief that propagated the idea of man as sole provider and leader of the household further engendered inequality in the distribution of resources and influenced decision-making processes in favor of men.

### **3.1 The Birth of Feminist Organizations in Zambia**

The UNIP that spearheaded Zambia's independence from Britain on 24 October 1964, was initially committed to improving the status of women. According to Mr. Njekwa Anamela, Vice President of UNIP, both men and women were equal partners in the emancipation process that led to Zambia's independence. After independence, the UNIP government encouraged women's participation in policy-making (personal communication, August 2017). The formation of

Women's Brigade by the UNIP government was an effort to involve women in national politics. In 1960, the Women's Brigade represented by Julia Chikamoneka and Emeria Saidi confronted the Colonial Government Secretary, Mr. Ian McLeod, and the Governor of Northern Rhodesia then, Sir Evelyn Hone as they advocated for Zambia's independence (Lubosi Kikamba, 2012:162). In 1973, almost a decade after Zambia's independence, Ms Chibesa B. Kankasa was elected Member of the Central Committee, the highest decision-making government organ at the time (Lubosi Kikamba, 2012:164). Since the 1980s, the UNIP government advocated against gender discrimination that marginalizes women. The United Nations (UN) convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which entered into force in 1981, was ratified by Zambia in June 1985 (Mainga, 2001:92).

Although UNIP demonstrated a certain level of commitment to empowering women and raising their status, women's conditions barely improved. Apollo Rwomire in *African Women and Children* notes that less than eight female politicians made it to the Central Committee (the supreme branch of UNIP government that decided national policy) in the 27 years that UNIP was in power (Rwomire, 2001:164).

The multiparty politics of the 1990s Zambia made way for the emergence of opposition political parties, feminist movements, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As I earlier alluded, these institutions provided platforms on which women articulated their agenda for gender equality, and participation. NGOs and civil organizations have been in the forefront in exposing the low status of women while promoting and encouraging women's participation in economic, social and political sectors (Mainga, 2001:92). The Non-Governmental Organizations Coordinating Committee (NGOCC), established in 1985 as an umbrella organization for women's NGOs, with a membership of over sixty-five NGOs, reaches out to about 75 percent of women in

Zambia (Mainga, 2001:92). In the wake of the UN Beijing Conference on Women, the Zambian government through the Gender in Development Division devised the Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (SPAW). The initial plan (1996-2001), prioritized five areas:

- 1) The persistent and growing burden of poverty on women and their unequal access to and participation in economic structures, policies, and resources.
- 2) Inequality in access to and opportunities in education, skills development, and training.
- 3) Inequality between women and men in the sharing of power and decision-making
- 4) The rights of the girl.
- 5) Women's unequal access to health and related services.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) government dignitaries, to which Zambia is a member, signed the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development on 8 September 1997 (Mainga, 2001:95). The declaration encouraged member states to commit to ensuring equality through equal representation of both women and men in decision-making positions with a 30 percent target share of women in political and decision-making positions by the year 2005 (Mainga, 2001:95).

The Zambia National Women's Lobby Group (ZNWLG) founded in 1991, endorsed by several political parties: Agenda for Zambia (AZ), UNIP, MMD, United Party for National Development (UPND), Liberal Progressive Front (LPF), National Citizenship Coalition (NCC), and the Zambia Republican Party (ZRP), with a mission of promoting women's equal representation and participation in socio-political affairs organized workshops at which women networked with stake holders in the hope of increasing their chances of accessing political and public fora at which they could propagate their agenda on equality and in relation to women (Mainga, 92).

The ZNWLG collaborated with the NGOCC to lobby for more representation of women at national level politics in the 2001 Zambia's elections. This collaboration paid off as for the first time in Zambia's political history two of the eleven candidates who contested for the presidential seat, Konnie Gwendoline and Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika were women.

Although both Gwendoline and Lewanika only managed to amass less than one percent of the total vote, the democratization of Zambia's politics by way of political parties, civil rights, and non-governmental organizations, has provided spaces in which Zambian women continue to advance their feministic agenda advocating for equal access to and participation in economic structures, policies, and resources, and equality between women and men in the sharing of power and decision-making at both household and national levels.

Edith Nawakwi of the Forum for Democracy and Development Party (FDD) went on to win the Munali Constituency beating eighteen other candidates, most of them male, that contested in the parliamentary elections. Levy Mwanawasa who won the 2001 presidential elections appointed three females in his cabinet: Judith Kangoma Kapichimpanga, Witner Kapembwa Nalumango, and Merina Malokota Nsingo, in the hope of giving a platform for women to participate more in national politics.

The feminism movement of the 1990s into the 2000s did not only happen in national politics. In the education sector, "virgin power" and "girl power" became fashionable words in institutions of learning. In music, the terms "diva" and "queen diva" advanced feministic ideals. The Girl Power Alliance (GPA) which commenced in 2013 had by 2015 empowered over 4,000 women and girls from selected parts of Zambia with entrepreneurship and leadership skills (Siwaza, 23 December 2015).

It has been reported that since the 2000s, men's abuse by women has been on the rise. Sometimes these abuses have led to deaths. For instance, in May 2016, a 30-year-old woman of the Woodlands neighborhood in Lusaka shot dead her husband for suspected cheating. The news went viral and for a few months Zambians discussed and shared their concerns on social media about the abuse of men by their spouses. Another such incident was reported by journalist Doreen Nawa in the *Zambia Daily Mail* article "Domestic Violence Against Men Slowly Rising," where she observes:

It is not just men who can be murderers and violent, women too have lately been making headlines abusing men... This has in the past few months brought into grim focus cases of women murdering men, the recent being the February 14, 2017 murder in which a 37 year old woman of Mansa allegedly killed her 50 year old husband after he found her at the home of her suspected lover... while ending violence against women and girls has rightly been given the priority, there is no specific strategy to end violence against men... Whereas women who experience domestic violence are openly encouraged to report it to the authorities, it has been argued that men who experience such violence often encounter pressure against reporting, with those that do facing social stigma regarding their perceived lack of bravery... Men are reluctant to say that they have been abused by women, because it is seen as unmanly and weak [to be abused by a woman] (Nawa, 22 February 2017) .



As pointed out by Nawa, men are not open to reporting their abuse by women for fear of being perceived as “castrated,” either metaphorically or physically. Men are hesitant to report abuse cases against their spouses for fear of compromising their masculinity. However, it is important to note that since the 1990s, structures have been put in place to curb the abuse of women. Women are encouraged to report cases of abuse to any of the gender organizations available to them in their locales, a service that is not available to men. This is so because for a long time women have been the ones who have been victims of abuse and so there has been a need for structures that would look into their plight to be put in place.

What has turned the tables for men to be on the receiving end? Singer Tamara Nyirongo argues that “most women in this day are divas. Gender roles in the past were clearly defined. In the modern world women perform roles that were in the past allotted to men. Most of them have a job, have as good an education as that of a man... (personal communication, March 2018). According to singer Namakau Kayombo, “most [marriage] counselors focused on teaching women how to take care of their husbands. It was all about the woman making her man happy. Women were asked to *shipikisha* (tolerate) no matter how bad the marriage is. [But] the number of divorce rates keep on rising,<sup>3</sup> meaning people [women] do not *shipikisha* in their relationships anymore. There is lots of girl power and independent woman sensitization going on where women are encouraged to work hard and not entirely depend on men” (personal communication, March 2018).

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<sup>3</sup> Chomba Musika reports in the *Zambia Daily Mail* published on 28 August 2017 that over 28,000 cases of divorce were recorded countrywide in the first six months of 2017. Zambia has a population of 15.5 million people according to the Central Statistics Office.

In Zambia, marriage is colloquially referred to as *shipikisha club*. *Shipikisha* in the Bemba language, spoken in the northern part of Zambia, means to be tolerable and/or resilient. Marriage counselors, or *alangizi* as they are locally known, coined the phrase to refer to marriage life. Often *alangizi* warn the newlyweds about the demands of married life that needs tolerance, hard work and resilience. *Alangizi* discourage divorce and warn that whatever happens after one marries, tolerating and making the marriage work is priority.

Ginna Hiddie, a musician and Executive Director of the feminist organization Zambia Children Embassy (ZCE), has worked with *alangizi* since 2010. Echoing Kayombo's remarks about marriage counselors' focus on women submitting to their husbands, Hiddie notes that most *shipikisha* sessions include teaching women to be more submissive to their husbands, how to take care of their husbands, tips on love making, and encouraging the newlyweds to not give up on each other (personal communication, March 2018).

However, Hiddie is aware that times have changed. "These days, educated women are too many. No dependence syndrome," She said to me in a phone interview. "Women are more independent, they can provide for themselves so they do not care about being with a man," she added.

The ZCE that Hiddie manages support vulnerable girl children with education and offers sensitization and awareness programs on child defilement and early child marriages. The following is an excerpt of an interview I had with Hiddie on Sunday 25 March 2018:

Mathew Tembo (MT): Can you explain what ZCE does for the children you work with?

Ginna Hiddie (GH): We train the girls to be independent and not rely on men.

MT: Have you received any support from the government?

GH: The government has been very supportive through the Ministry of Gender and Child Development.

MT: Talking about not depending on a man, what would you do if you were married and your husband left you?

GH: *Nishi ayenda we. Tinabadwa bonse? Atenga vake naine nasala na vanga.* Are we twins? (He is free to leave. Were we born together? He gets his stuff and I get my stuff. Are we twins (for me to care)?

MT: *Bana uzachita nabo chani?* (Then what do you do with the kids?)

GH: Mwana ni blessing (a kid is a blessing). I try to provide for my kids. They go to prestigious schools. Some married couples cannot afford to take their kids to such schools. Husbands spend all their money on alcohol.

Hiddie's views in the excerpt above align with the conceptualization of diva in the Zambian musical context. In the *pre-fast music* era women were discouraged from pursuing a career in music. Female performers who were courageous enough to pursue one were usually stigmatized and perceived to be not ideal marriage partners. The *pre-fast music* era required performers to exclusively perform with a public—an ensemble that usually comprised of men, and before a public—audience, that mostly consisted of men, and often at night. Music venues in the *pre-fast music* era included The Barn Motel, Masiye Motel, Month's Bar, Ridgeway Hotel and Intercontinental Hotel, Moon City, Star Market in Lusaka, and Bull and Bush and Falcon in Ndola. Most of these spaces were bars and therefore stereotyped as centers where licentious behavior took place. Musicians, especially female, that performed in these spaces were seen as facilitators of

licentiousness and their presence in those spaces was often mistaken as being sexually available (Brian Chengala, personal communication, August 2017).

Michael Linyama observes that the public did not support women's performing in these spaces:

Because in our culture, a woman is supposed to be home not being found in night clubs. So... musicians...people didn't talk about them very nicely. And the ones who had it really difficult were the dancing queens [dancers]. Aaaah, people didn't have nice words for them. They [people] didn't understand...that it was their work...their profession. For the men, it was fine. Ya, but for the women...even if they wanted to, it was a bit difficult because the way you had to get involved with music was with a band and bands would play at night. So, the night time thing made it very difficult (personal communication 2017).

To confirm Linyama's argument, William Makaika, a Zambian who has lived in Washington D.C. for almost a year, narrated to me how he would never allow his girlfriend, who sings in a church in Zambia, to sing in a bar (personal communication 2017). When pressed for reasons, Makaika could not give me any, although he implied that a Christian woman performing in decadent spaces was sinful and sinful behavior is discouraged in Christianity.

In Makaika's view, an ideal wife is one who takes care of the children, cooks for the husband and family, does laundry for the family, and one who does not display her body in public spaces associated with illicit behavior. In Zambia, it is not uncommon for men to police what

women (wives, daughters, including females that are not related to them) should wear, say, and do. Parents point out to their daughters, examples of what they think men like in women so their daughters can one day get married and have a family of their own. Since marriage and family are still considered important aspects of womanhood in Zambia, most women accept these terms without question (Taylor, 2006:96).

For reasons explained by Linyama and Makaika, some women only preferred to sing in advertising jingles, that were often recorded in *fast music* studios, as opposed to making public appearances. To further explain this scenario, a short excerpt of an interview with Linyama follows:

Michael Linyama (ML): ...Now with programming, you could do it [record/perform] during the day time. You didn't have to do it at night...Things like adverts...because they could hear their fellow women doing advertisements/jingles... Women thought this is good. This can work out...without being harassed as being a night time person.

Mathew Tembo (MT): So, you think women were more involved in adverts than guys?

ML: A lot! ... the number increased ...because they were using them [women] for adverts and later ...in songs as back vocalists...because they [women] could do things in the day time. That's why more of them got involved. Previously it was night life with live bands. Usually on advertisements, that's where they [other women] noticed that some women could really sing...This encouraged other women [to start singing].

The convenience of being able to perform music during the day, cheaper recording options provided by *fast music* studios, and the fact that music has commercially become a viable business has made it easier for women to participate in the music industry and has decreased the possibility of being pressured, policed, and/or sexually harassed.

While female musicians are still being stigmatized, the Zambian society is slowly warming up to the idea of women pursuing music as a career. Alice Chali, lead singer of one of the longest existing bands, Amayenge Cultural Ensemble, asserts that the Zambian society is more tolerant about having women in the music industry these days because *fast music* has become a lucrative business (personal communication, August 2017).

*Fast music* production spaces do not only facilitate women's participation in music but also provide spaces in which women's voices can be heard as they articulate feminism. In the next chapter, I discuss the articulation of feminism in the music of Mirriam Mukupe (Mampi).

#### 4.0 Mampi the Queen Diva

As I explained in chapter three, the number of women who got involved in music in the late 1990s increased because *fast music* studios provided safer, cheaper, and more convenient spaces in which women musicians could record music. *Fast music* studios benefited amateur musicians who had limited or no skills to record with an ensemble and especially women, whose participation in the pre-*fast music* era was more marginalized than men's. Performance spaces such as night clubs and recording studios were dominated by male musicians and the Zambian public did not approve of the presence of women in these spaces.

Miriam Mukupe (Mampi here after), the self-crowned queen diva, whose career was catapulted by a combination of *fast music* studios and *fast circulation* is one of the most celebrated female singers in Zambia. "Mampi, the queen diva" is a line that one hears on most of Mampi's recordings, as in the following lyrics from two of her songs "Why" and "Walilowelela (You are so Sweet)" reissued by the French Yanis Records in 2015:

*It's another brand new ridim [rhythm]. The queen diva on the beat.*

*Mampilicious, queen diva.*

*It's another one. Mampi, the queen diva.*



**Figure 3 Mampi at One of Her Performances**



Mampi is the undisputed queen diva, the only female singer who has claimed the “crown” of queen diva (Tamara Nyirongo, personal communication 14 April 2018).<sup>4</sup> Kayombo, who I quoted in the previous chapter, compares Mampi to Beyoncé: “Beyoncé is a diva. Mampi is a diva” (personal communication 14 April 2018).

Although Mampi does not explicitly model herself as Beyoncé, it is clear that she is inspired by American female pop singers including Whitney Houston (Mirriam Mukupe, personal communication, July 2018). In her song “Why,” which I analyze later in this chapter, Mampi sings to her man in the Chinyanja language<sup>5</sup>, “*ngauvipanga ati ndiwe...ndine J-Lo*,” meaning “if you want to act like a superstar, I am J-Lo (Jennifer Lopez).” By referring herself to J-Lo, Mampi implies that she is at the same level as the American female pop star or at least that she is aspiring to be like her. I earlier mentioned that Kayombo compares Mampi to Beyoncé Knowles. What does Mampi do that makes Kayombo compare her to the American pop singer Beyoncé?

Like Beyoncé, Mampi has been involved in some philanthropy work alongside her successful music career. Beyoncé has donated her music performances at a number of benefit concerts. For example, on 20 October 2001, Destiny’s Child, a group Beyoncé belonged to before launching her solo career, performed among other well-known artists at Madison Square Garden in New York City raising more than \$30 million for the 9/11 victims (Arenofsky, 2009:64). In 2003, Beyoncé co-headlined the Nelson Mandela’s Foundation’s concert in Cape Town, South

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<sup>4</sup> Tamara Nyirongo is the daughter of Paul Ngozi Nyirongo, one of the most well-known Zamrock musicians of the 1970s and 80s. Nyirongo is a Zambian singer and a model who now lives in Washington D.C. in the US.

<sup>5</sup> Chinyanja is a lingua franca spoken mostly in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia.

Africa, donating a percentage of the gross earnings from the concert to the foundation (Arenofsky, 2009:64). Beyoncé has since performed at many other benefit concerts after these.

Similarly, in December 2014, Mampi donated some of her own clothes to the Flying Angels Orphanage in Lusaka's Ng'ombe neighborhood. In an article written by Zambian journalist Kevin Kachingwe of the *Zambia Daily Mail*, Mampi explains, "I took some time to visit the Flying Angels Orphanage and donate some of my clothes to the orphanage because I believe in humanity" (Kachingwe, 13 December 2014).

Other than her schoolmates making fun of her light skin color, Beyoncé's childhood was comfortable and her parents supported her music career. Although Beyoncé was talented and won awards from when she was nine, her music career was interpolated with challenges. Before her breakthrough with Destiny's Child in the late 1990s, Beyoncé's music group Girls Tyme lost a contest on the television program *Star Search*, a precursor to *American Idol* in 1992 (Taraborrelli, 2015: 92). After the group's defeat on *Star Search*, Ashley, one of the members left the group, which incited the group to be renamed Dolls (Taraborrelli, 2015: 107). At a showcase that Daryl Simmons sponsored in Atlanta for record label agents, the Dolls were rejected for being too sexy for their age (Taraborrelli, 2015:129).

Mampi, on the other hand, had a difficult childhood. Her mother succumbed to cancer when she was fourteen. A couple of years later her father and brother were mysteriously murdered. At sixteen, Mampi was an orphan. Sometimes she spent nights on the street with no food until a friend of hers offered her a place to stay. In the beginning of her music career, Mampi walked for miles between Lusaka neighborhoods of Kabwata, where she lived, and Chelstone where a *fast music* studio she recorded her music in was located (Lusaka Times, 4 April 2016).

In the past decade, Beyoncé has presented herself as a feminist. Trier-Bieniek (2016: 11) observes:

Even before pop star Beyoncé took a stand (quite literally) in front of the neon-lit “FEMINIST” sign at MTV’s Video Music Awards (VMA) in 2014, her previous articulations of a feminist consciousness had already garnered attention. Whether we point to her early years in the girl group Destiny’s Child—singing along Kelly Roland and Michelle Williams, with such empowering hit songs such as “Survivor” and “Independent Women”—or to her more forthright “Run the World (Girls).” Beyoncé Knowles-Carter has generated popular narratives of feminism writ large.

Beyoncé herself confirms Trier-Bieniek’s observation when she says, “I think I am a feminist in a way...it’s not something I consciously decided I was going to be” (Beyoncé cited in Gordon 2010).

Beyoncé has generated popular narratives of feminism because she has challenged patriarchal heteronormativity not only through lyrical content in songs such as “Independent Women” and “Run the World (Girls),” but also by demonstrating that she is an independent woman. It can be argued that Mampi is also a feminist too because she has similarly challenged patriarchal domination and encouraged women to work hard and be independent through songs such as “Why,” “Swilili (Sweet)” and “Bundulila (Stolen Glance).”

The anecdotes that I narrated above show that both Mampi and Beyoncé have similar characters. They both are hard-working persevering musicians who did not give up on their careers

even when times were hard. They both are committed to uplifting lives of people around them through their philanthropy work that they are doing in their communities. Most of all, both are independent women who through their music advance feminism and encourage women to rise above oppression. However, Mampi's feminism differs considerably from Beyoncé's, a topic I discuss further in the next section.

#### **4.1 Mampi “The Queen Diva” as a Feminist**

In their article “What Is Feminism? And What Kind of Feminist Am I?” Michelle Friedman, Jo Metlerkamp, and Ros Posel observe that “the origins of feminism are diverse—ranging from resistance to oppressive practices such as foot-binding and clitoridectomy in the third world, to struggles for equal rights in the first world” (Metlerkamp, Friedman, & Posel, 1987:3). In defining liberal feminism, the authors highlight the liberal feminists' argument which posits that the liberation of women consists of their freedom to choose their lives, to be able to compete with men on equal terms in the professional and political worlds, and on the labor market. Liberal feminists argue that women, like men, are endowed with reason, and that they should be free to choose, just as men are (Metlerkamp, Friedman, & Posel, 1987:5).

It is worth noting that feminism is defined differently in different cultures. In *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Gwendolyn Mikell writes that “African feminism owes its origins to different dynamics than those that generated Western feminism. It has largely been shaped by African women's resistance to Western hegemony and its legacy within African culture...The slowly emerging African feminism is distinctively heterosexual, pro-natal, and concerned with ‘bread, butter, culture and power’ issues... The African variant of feminism

grows out of a history of a female integration within largely corporate and agrarian-based societies with strong cultural heritages that have experienced traumatic colonization by the West” (Mikell, 1997: 4).

In Zambia, similar to the scenario Mikell highlights in the quote above, feminism is viewed from a localized lens. Historian Christine Saidi, who has extensively worked with Zambian women, argues that in precolonial Zambia, women weren’t oppressed as women but rather the oppression was based on their ranking in society. For example, younger women were oppressed more than older women. Saidi further observes that while feminism in the West emphasizes sisterhood, African feminism emphasizes motherhood. She posits that Zambian feminism means women going back to their roots. Going back to a space where women can take charge of nurturing and life (personal communication, July 2018). Bertha Mwale, a Literature and Gender Studies professor at the University of Zambia emphasizes that feminism in Zambia entails women working together with the male folk for a greater goal (personal communication, July 2018). I argue therefore that feminism in Zambia is about women taking control of their lives and their families’ but in collaboration with the male folk. It is about women reclaiming their position as collaborators and nurturers of life. In Zambia’s feminism women desire to be equal partners with men in socio-economic and cultural developmental undertakings both in their households and beyond the confines of their homes.

The academia and the middle-class population in Zambia have been in the forefront advancing feministic ideals and have often used the terms feminism and feminist in their discourses. In Zambia’s pop culture, the terms girl power and especially diva are often used in place of feminism. Mampi echoes Saidi’s and Mwale’s views on how feminism has been redefined in Zambian society. She refutes the feminism label and argues, “I don’t think women are equal to

men. All I am saying is that women should be treated with respect” (Mirriam Mukupe, personal communication, July 2018).

The term diva, “goddess in Latin,” was originally used to describe adept and celebrated female opera singers in Italy, especially sopranos (Graham, 2011:5). Recent discourses on diva have extended the term to include female performers of non-operatic works. The term diva has evolved to mean a female popular performer with an expressive singing voice, who dresses glamorously and has a commanding presence where ever she goes (Bollinger & O’Neill, 2008: 147).

In Zambia, the *queen diva* identity has featured prominently in the Zambian pop culture including *fast music*. Qualifying what the term means, Kayombo explains that “a diva is an independent woman who fights for herself. She is innovative and she works hard.” (personal communication, March 2018). A Zambian diva depicts a resilient and independent woman who is not afraid of her own vulnerability and stands ready to defend her right to be respected and be accorded equal opportunities as men.

In her article “Empowering Self, Making Choices, Creating Spaces: Black Female Identity via Rap Music Performance,” ethnomusicologist Cheryl Keyes identified four distinct categories of female rappers: the “Queen Mother,” the “Fly Girl,” the “Sister with an Attitude,” and the “Lesbian” (Keyes, 2000:256). The Zambian queen diva identity partially aligns with Keyes’s “Queen Mother” category. Women in this category adorn their bodies with royal or kente cloth strips, African headdresses, goddess braid styles, and ankh-stylized jewelry, their rhymes embracing Black female empowerment and spirituality, making clear their self-identification as African, woman, warrior, priestess, and queen (Keyes, 2000:256). While Mampi and others who identify themselves as divas in the Zambian popular music industry may swathe their bodies in the

latest Western wear in place of kente cloth strips, Zambian divas in many ways fit into the description of “Queen Mother.” For example, Mampi is known for her glamorous dressing as well as for being a warrior, and a fighter. She self-identifies as a Zambian woman and some of her lyrics advance female empowerment.

The “Fly Girl” is another one of Keyes’s category that applies to the Zambia’s “Queen Diva” identity. According to Keyes, the “Fly Girl” identity is characterized by women who wear fashionable clothing and make up, accent their curves and show off their bodies, and position themselves as an erotic subject rather than an objectified one (Keyes, 2000:256). The Zambian queen diva identity can be seen as a merging of Keyes’s “Queen Mother” and “Fly Girl” identities. In Zambia, queen diva has become synonymous with a female celebrity who has good looks and is successful and financially independent. She does not depend on a man to live her life. She positions herself as an erotic subject but not one in need of a man or material wealth. Also, she speaks up for other oppressed women.

In the past few years, the expression “slay queen” has been used alongside “queen diva.” Following Keyes’s “Fly Girl” category, a slay queen is one who like the “queen diva” wears fashionable clothing and make up, accent her curves and show off her body, but positions herself mostly as an objectified body.

In the Zambian context:

“A slay queen is a wanna-be. She has no money but pretends to have it all” (Tamara Nyirongo, personal communication, March 2018).

“A slayer (slay queen) is a girl who aspires for material gain by any means necessary including using her body. She is morally weak and sexually loose” (Milimo Muyanga, personal communication, March 2018).

A slay queen is financially dependent on a man. She is considered lazy and unproductive for the most part and thrives on her beauty and looks to gain access to luxuries.

Lee Bollinger and Carole O’Neill’s definition of diva (2008:147) — a female popular performer with an expressive singing voice, who dresses glamorously and has a commanding presence—fits Mampi’s persona. She is beautiful, glamorous, and she is known to speak out for herself and her female folk. According to Nyirongo and Kayombo, these qualities define Mampi’s “queen diva” identity. Unlike most *fast musicians* who can hardly sing outside studio spaces, most people I talked to agree that Mampi has a relatively decent singing voice and a commanding presence on stage. Mampi has redefined feminism in the Zambia’s pop culture to stand for a movement of strong-willed, ambitious, and hard working women who demand to be accorded the same treatment, respect, and opportunities as men without demanding to be like men.

## **4.2 *Fast Music* and Feminism**

*Fast music* has provided a platform on which women can musically express themselves. In contrast to the large commercial recording studios in Zambia’s pre-*fast music* era where singers had to sub-contract sizable ensembles to record music, *fast music studios* have provided more intimate spaces in which the producer/sound engineer serves as an ensemble. It is important to note also that when *fast musicians* perform at concerts, they rarely use an ensemble.



In the mid 1990s when *fast music* debuted on Zambia's music scene, *fast musicians* often performed with bands at concerts. After recording the music in *fast music* studios, singers would then find a band to rehearse the music for a concert. The common practice today is *fast musicians* lip-synching their own music. All they need on stage is a DJ to play their recorded music from a CD, flash drive or a computer. Although there has been contestation regarding these kind of performances in Zambia, it is evident that women prefer them to sub-contracting expensive ensembles of mostly men for performances. Easy access to cheaper recording facilities and *fast circulation*, both mediated by modern technology, have facilitated and empowered women's participation in music in ways never imagined before.

By mid-2000s, a decade after *fast music* debuted on the Zambia's music scene, some controversial songs released by female musicians took over the Zambia's music-scape. Daputsa Nkhata, also known as Sister D released "Vitendeni (Cut Them Off)," a song that was inspired by sexual abuse of underage girls by older men, a phenomenon that was common at the time. In "Vitendeni," Sister D was proposing that men who were found guilty of sexually abusing underage girls should have their penises cut off as punishment for the crime. Live performances of the song included imagery of Sister D holding a knife in her hands and gesturing cutting off a penis. Charity Mwinga, aka Cha, released "Kapolo" (Slave) on James Ngoma's Sure Sounds Entertainment.<sup>6</sup> In the song, Cha challenges her man and insists that he does not provide for her and tells him that she is not his *kapolo*. She further tells her father that her man is a shadow of a man as he cannot provide for her.

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<sup>6</sup> "Kapolo" was produced by Ngoma and guitarist Mongri at Muvi Studios. The production of "Kapolo" made use of both *fast music* production and live recording techniques.

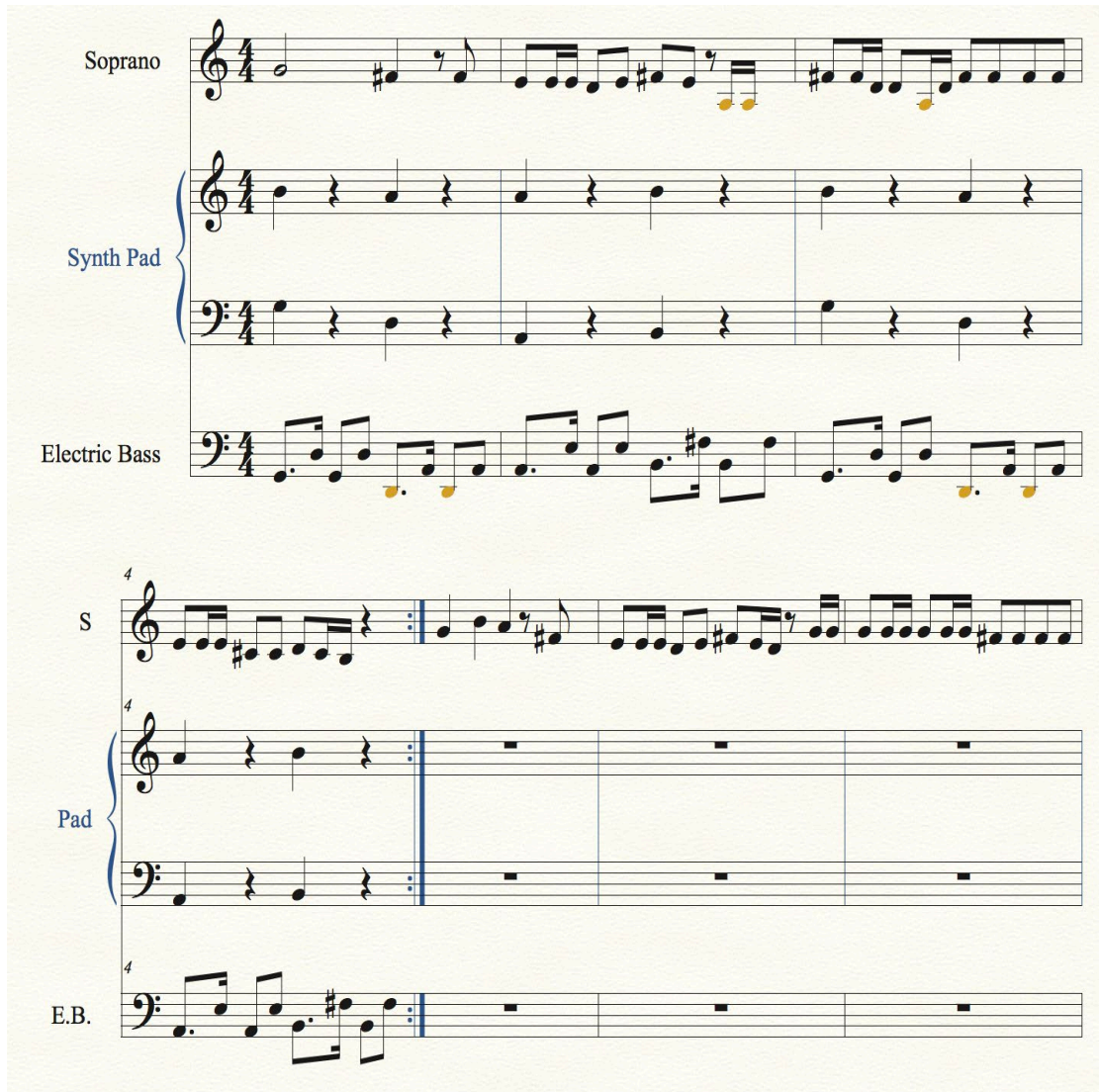
Mampi's "Why," a song that challenges masculinity, released in 2007, a few years later after Sister D's "Vitendeni" and Cha's "Kapolo" was equally controversial. "Vitendeni," "Kapolo," and "Why" mark the beginning of use of *fast music* as a space in which women articulate and perform feminism. I use the term 'perform feminism' because some female singers, including Mampi, do not see themselves as feminists although they still advance feministic ideals in their music.

**Table 1 An Analysis of Mampi's "Why"**

|                      | <b>Instrumentation</b>                           | <b>Measures</b> | <b>Duration in Seconds</b> |
|----------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Intro</b>         | Synth pads                                       | 1-8             | 0-8                        |
| <b>Chorus 1</b>      | Snare Drum, Hi-hat, bass                         | 9-32            | 9-35                       |
| <b>Verse 1</b>       | Synth pads, Snare drum,<br>Hi-hat, bass          | 33-56           | 36-63                      |
| <b>Chorus 2</b>      | Synth pads, Snare drum,<br>Hi-hat, bass          | 57-80           | 64-90                      |
| <b>Verse 2</b>       | Synth pads, Snare drum,<br>Hi-hat, bass          | 81-112          | 91-128                     |
| <b>Chorus 3</b>      | Synth pads, Snare drum,<br>Hi-hat, bass          | 113-136         | 129-155                    |
| <b>Rap</b>           | Synth pads, Snare drum,<br>Hi-hat, bass          | 114-140         | 156-174                    |
| <b>Chorus 4</b>      | Synth pads, Snare drum,<br>Hi-hat, bass          | 141-154         | 175-202                    |
| <b>Repeat Chorus</b> | Synth pads, Snare drum,<br>Hi-hat, bass          | 155-186         | 203-239                    |
| <b>Strings Riff</b>  | Synth pads, Snare drum,<br>Hi-hat, bass, strings | 187-203         | 240-258                    |

“Why” exemplifies *fast music* production aesthetics. In the production of “Why,” Maurice Malawo, aka Raydo, the producer at Digital X Studio in Lusaka, made use of synthesized pads, sampled drum sounds, and auto tune effects on Mampfi’s vocals, all elements that figure prominently in Zambia’s *fast music*. The song structure and instrumentation is as follows:

In the pre-*fast music* era, this song would have required at least three musicians to record the instrumental tracks: a bassist, keyboardist, and drummer. However, in *fast music*, the synth pad, drums, and electric bass parts were all performed by Raydo in a music software on his computer. It is also important to note that as shown in the figure above, “Why,” like most *fast music*, does not feature elaborate instrumental solo parts. The transcription in Figure 5 below shows the different parts of the chorus that were all performed by Raydo.



**Figure 4** Notation of the Chorus of “Why”

In the section that follows, I discuss how Mampi uses her song “Why,” to articulate and perform feminism. I will begin by discussing the lyrics of the song followed by the choreography and the dramatization in the video.

### Lyrics

Mampi’s “Why” highlights the struggles that women go through in relationships where

men cheat on their wives and goes further to declare that women do not need men to provide for them.

In “Why,” which is sang in Nyanja, mostly spoken in the capital Lusaka; Nsenga, spoken in the eastern part of Zambia; Bemba, spoken in the north; and English, Zambia’s constitutional language, Mampi takes a look at her relationship with her man, a reflection of male-female relationships in Zambian society, and explains that she is tired of being lied to and cheated on. She further asks to be treated as an equal and assures her man that she can take care of herself and does not need a man to provide for her. The song’s chorus in Nyanja, Bemba, and English is as follows:

*Why, why, why chikala [aba] so?*

Why, why, why is it always going to  
be this way?/Why, why, why is this  
penis (dick) this way?

*Nga walinjebele nga nalishiba ati efyo chikalaba efi*

If you had told me, I would have  
known that this is what it was going  
to be.

I am tired of being lied to.

*Nalema nazo zoninyenga wenye*

I am tired of being lied to/I am tired  
of being fake-fucked.

“Why chikalaba so” can either be read as “why is it always going to be this way?” or “Why is this penis like this?” In “Why chikalaba so?” Mampi is questioning why she as a woman should always be treated badly or unequally and be cheated on. The line might also be read as “Why chikala aba so?” in which case Mampi would be questioning why her man behaves like a dick, an interpretation that Mampi denies although she is aware that some of her fans have chosen to interpret it that way.

The lyrics to the second verse in Nyanja are as follows:

*...Beibe nenzokukonda chikondi chonse nenzokupasa*

Babe, I loved you and I gave you all the love.

*So beibe listen ungayende suzakapeza wina monga neo*

So, babe listen, you can leave, you will never find anyone like me.

*Apa manje ninzankhala one bo*

Now I am going to be alone.

*Napeza kuti mwamuna anganidelele*

I see, a man thinks I am not any worth.

*Nizankhala chabe solo*

I am going to be alone

*Nizapita nikauze namakolo*

I will even go and tell my parents.

*Nalema nazo beibe zoninyenga wenye*

I am tired of being lied to/I am tired of being fake-fucked.

*Kunichita monga sunifuna iwe beibe*

You act like you don't need me babe.

*Nalema nazo beibe zoninama wenye*

I am tired of being lied to.

*Mutima ubaba*

My heart is aching.

The lines “*Apa manje nizankhala one bo*” and “*Napeza kuti mwamuna anganidelele*” present Mampi as an independent woman who does not need a man to provide for her. In urban traditional settings, a man is the main provider in male-female relationships. It is not unusual for a woman to ask her partner for money for groceries or to pay the bills including house rent. An ideal man is one who provides for his partner's needs, rendering him to be more powerful and take a leading role in decision-making in the relationship.

In “Why,” Mampi vows to be alone and even go public about her decision to leave her man by letting her parents know, “*nizapita nikauze namakolo*.” In Zambia’s traditional settings, telling one’s parents about the status of their relationships with their significant other is a way of making the status official, whatever the status may be.

In the verse that follows Mampi sings:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Oh oh shit vamene wachita siningakulekelele no</i> | ...What you have done I<br>won’t let you [I won’t forgive<br>you] no.         |
| <i>Nga uvipanga ndiwe... ndine J-Lo</i>               | If you think you are...I am J-<br>Lo (Jennifer Lopez).                        |
| <i>Olo ulinaija boza ya Pinocchio</i>                 | Even if you lie like Pinocchio<br>Nobody is gonna treat me like<br>an animal. |
| <i>Mwenionekela mushe muma video</i>                  | How beautiful I look in the<br>videos,  |
| <i>Ndiye mwe nimvekela mushe napa radio</i>           | Is how beautiful I sound on<br>the radio.                                     |
| <i>Ndine we baitana ati number one</i>                | They call me number one<br>From today, you better treat<br>me like a lady     |

Mampi is standing up for herself. She declares that what her man has done is unforgivable. In *Culture and Customs of Zambia*, Scott D. Taylor observes that “women are always regarded as inferior to men in Zambia” (Taylor, 2006: 92). When Mampi sings “Nobody is gonna treat me like an animal,” she is demanding that she be treated as an equal. Like a man, she is a human and not an animal.



## Video

The lyrics to “Why” are not the only component of the song that advance feministic ideals. The visuals of the song in the video make it clear that Mampi is challenging heteronormativity that has for a long time proliferated male domination in heterosexual relationships in Zambia. The video begins with a scene in a grocery store where Mampi runs into her man holding a baby shopping with another woman, probably his girlfriend and the mother of the baby he is holding. Mampi almost hits her cheating man before leaving the store in frustration. As Mampi starts singing the verse, fifty-four seconds into the track, she plays the role of an auto mechanic working on a broken car.



**Figure 5 Mampi Acting as a Mechanic in the Video**

In *The Future of Female-Dominated Occupations*, it is noted that women's employment in most African countries including Zambia is concentrated in professions such as nursing, teaching, and secretarial work (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 1998: 8). The military, engineering, medicine, and auto mechanics are male dominated careers. By role playing an auto mechanic in the video, a gendered career, Mampi is making a statement—she can be whatever she wants to be, including taking over a man's role. 1 minute 30 seconds into the video Mampi is wearing a police uniform carrying a baton in her hands. Her cheating man is spotted sitting in a chair handcuffed while Mampi stands right in front of him poking him with the stick as she sings “You should know, *nifuna kunilava* (I want to be loved), *osati kuninama* (not being lied to).” 2 minutes 35 minutes into the song, the image of Mampi in the police uniform reappears, this time almost hitting her man with the stick as she sings, “*apa manje nizankhala one bo* (This time I will stay single), *napeza kuti mwamuna anganidelele* (I see that a man wants to take advantage of me).



**Figure 6 Mampi Poking Her Man with a Button Stick in the Video**

Mampi's performance of masculinity in the video resonates with Rhacel Salazar Parreña's idea of mimicking behavior. Parreña's mimicking behavior borrows from the English Indian theorist Homi Bhabha's concept of colonial mimicry. Bhabha's colonial mimicry refers to the process by which colonized subjects appropriate characteristics and ideals of the colonizer (Parreñas, 2011:280). Parreña further posits that "mimicking involves subversion, what Bhabha refers to as "mockery," that disavows dominant cultural practices (Parreñas, 2011:280)." In the video, Mampi mimics the behavior of a man by working on cars and threatening her partner with violence.

Dominant cultural practices in Zambia entail that a man dominate heterosexual relationships. A woman submits to her man. It is considered disrespectful for a woman to dominate heterosexual relationships. For instance, among the Nsenga speaking people of eastern Zambia, traditionally a man sits on a chair and a woman sits on a mat on the floor. A woman kneels as she

serves her man and not vice versa. By playing the role of an auto mechanic and police officer in the video, Mampi is performing masculinity. She is subverting and reversing gender roles by mimicry. A woman who in traditional settings should be sitting on a mat on the floor beside her man has her man handcuffed and is standing right in front of him in a police uniform, a symbol of power, poking him with a baton stick. Although some women have successfully pursued careers in auto mechanics and the police force, these careers are still associated with males on the labor market.

Having Mampi be the subject in Bhabha's equation of colonial mimicry, Mampi, a supposedly colonized female body is appropriating the characteristics and ideals of the supposedly male colonizer by performing male roles in the video, reversing gender roles in a society where a woman's place is presumably in the kitchen. Mampi's success in the male dominated music industry exemplifies the shifts in heterosexual power dynamics.

Sista (Sister) D's "Vitendeni" released in early 2000s challenged men's masculinity. The word "vitendeni" is Nsenga for "cut them off," by which Sista D meant cutting off the penises of the men that sexually abuse underage girls. In Zambia's traditional settings, a man's genitals are referred to as *umwamuna* in the Chinyanja language meaning manliness. Castrating a man, even metaphorically, entails depriving him of his masculinity.

Some women have been performing *vitendeni* to their men as a way of punishing them, not for sexually abusing underage girls but because these men have cheated on the women or they have failed to sexually satisfy them. As early as the 2000s, I remember seeing news clips on Zambian privately owned television channel MUVI TV of men having their genitals cut off by their spouses mostly for cheating but also for other reasons. In 2014, Lizi Mulalula a 32-year-old

woman of Chongwe, a small town about 80 kilometers east of the capital Lusaka, sliced her husband's genitals using a knife for failing to sexually satisfy her (TopNews365, 14 July 2014).

Mampi's images in the "Why" video of her wearing a police uniform poking her man who sits handcuffed in a chair with a baton stick as she sings "*nalema nazo zoninyenga wenye kungonisiya nachilaka* everyday" (I am tired of being fake-fucked leaving me wanting more everyday/I am tired of being lied to and leaving me wanting more)" mirrors Mulalula's castration of her husband for failing to sexually satisfy her. Although Mampi did not physically castrate her man in the video, him sitting handcuffed in a chair makes him powerless and in a way castrated as he is deprived of his masculinity.

The images of Mampi's performance of masculinity in the "Why" video reflects how men have been emasculated in the Zambian society and how heteronormativity has been challenged in families, which has in some cases involved the abuse of men. Reports of men being abused by their spouses have been on the rise since the 1990s, coinciding with the emergence of feminist organizations in Zambia.

## 5.0 Conclusion

The *queen diva* identity has featured prominently in the Zambian pop culture including *fast music*. In this study, I aimed at exposing these gender disparities and ways of how women negotiate gender relations in heterosexual relationships. To achieve my objectives, I analyzed how, aided by technology to produce and circulate her music, Mampi, the self-crowned “Queen Diva,” defines, performs, and articulates feminism in her music. I further compared and contrasted performances of feminism in Mampi’s music to performances of feminism in Zambian society as women continue to contest and challenge patriarchal hegemony.

In Mampi’s song “Why,” both the images in the video and the lyrics clearly exhibit feministic resonances although Mampi does not consider herself a feminist. In ordinary conversation, a woman who speaks out against a man in public spaces, especially derogatively, is castigated and thought to have crossed boundaries because women in Zambia are not encouraged to speak against men publicly. However, men who speak out against women in public are rarely reprimanded. Although the status of women has improved in the past few decades, generally speaking, women still inhabit peripheral spaces in public spaces.

In *fast music*, women take leading roles in performance spaces. Although producers, who are often male, have the power to manipulate, and impose their ideas on the music they produce in the studio, women musicians have some agency on the production of their music as they make decisions on what to sing and how to sing it. After the music has been produced in the studio, *fast musicians* perform the music at concerts without needing the producers or musicians that produced the music in the studio. Electronic gadgets such as laptops, smartphones, and flash drives play surrogate to ensembles. The fact that female musicians have total control of their performance in

spaces outside studio settings has accorded them freedom to express themselves however they want without being censored by male musicians and producers who hold prejudiced ideas about how women should behave in public spaces. It is evident that public discourses that advance feministic ideals are more palatable when a musician like Mampi uses music to articulate, expose gender disparities and express her feministic ideas. This scenario transcends music circles and reflects what has become of gender relations in Zambia. Divas, the women who are perceived to be successful and financially independent, command more respect from men, although they are not considered ideal potential partners for long-term relationships.

The diva as an empowered woman is contributing immensely to bridging gender disparities in Zambia. Although some people have contended that diva-ship is the cause of men's abuse and the disintegrating of the nuclear family in the Zambian society, in this study I contested this argument by positing that men's abuse by women is as a result of their resentment, frustration, and anger at the long- standing abuse that women have endured.

My study has also revealed that technology, which is at the center of music production in the world today, has revolutionized music production and consumption in Zambia. While circulation of music in the Zambia's *pre-fast music* era (before 1990s) was mostly mediated through radio and record companies such as Teal Records, and ZNBC that distributed physical copies of music, first on vinyl, cassettes, and later CDs, technology via the smartphone and online media including YouTube and Facebook is the main medium used to circulate Zambia's *fast music*. Producing music and circulating it via technology has encouraged women's participation in the Zambia's music industry as it is cheaper and involves less physical contact with men who historically are known to have sexually harassed women musicians.

Earlier studies on Zambian music, which focused on more ethnic music traditions, have been those by Zambian born British music producer Michael Baird, Hugh Tracey, and Gerhard Kubik. The lack of scholarship on Zambian music stands in contrast to the many studies on African music in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and West Africa. My study therefore offers an opportunity to engage scholarship on Zambian popular music with the interdisciplinary dialogue on African popular music that has been going on in other parts of the continent for decades. Most importantly, my study is aimed at initiating a conversation on gender, and feminism in Zambia's popular music. For future research, it is my hope that the following be considered as some of the potential inquiries:

- 1) How has the shift in gender roles affected work relationships in *fast music* recording studios in Zambia?
- 2) To what extent are women *fast musicians* involved in the production of their own music?

I am aware that the questions I posed above are not the only ones that need answers, especially considering that only scanty research has been conducted on Zambian popular music. However, I strongly believe that this inquiry will open doors to other areas of research interests to scholars of African popular music.



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