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“Indépendance Cha Cha”: African Pop Music since the Independence Era

Hauke Dorsch

Abstract: Investigating why Latin American music came to be the soundtrack of the independence era, this contribution offers an overview of musical developments and cultural politics in certain sub-Saharan African countries since the 1960s. Focusing first on how the governments of newly independent African states used musical styles and musicians to support their nation-building projects, the article then looks at musicians’ more recent perspectives on the independence era.

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When we were at school we were taught to sing the songs of the Europeans. How many were taught the songs of the Wanyamwezi or the Wahehe? Many of us have learnt to dance the “rumba”, or the “chachacha” to “rock n’ roll” and to twist and even to dance the “waltz” and the “foxtrot”. But how many of us can dance, or have even heard of, the Gombe Sugu, the Mangala, the Konge, Nyang’umumi, Kiduo or Lele Mama? Lots of us can play the guitar, the piano, or other European instruments. How many Africans in Tanganyika, particularly among the educated, can play the African drums? [...] It is hard for any man to get much real excitement from dances and music which are not in his blood (Nyerere 1967: 186).

In his much-quoted inauguration speech, Julius Nyerere, Tanzania’s first president, expressed a widespread concern that the dominance of Western musical styles might pose an obstacle to the creation of a national awareness in the wake of independence. He furthermore announced that he intended to establish a ministry to counter these transnational musical influences. Above all, however, he drew attention to a puzzling phenomenon: The soundtrack of Africa’s era of independence had an American – more precisely: Latin American – ring to it. Given the importance of American musical styles in general and Caribbean music in particular, it is remarkable how little systematic research has been done in this field, though some authors have studied the influences from Cuban music (e.g., Bender 2005; Coester and Gretz 2005). The present contribution will examine this phenomenon by providing a concise overview of the pop music styles found in various regions during the era of independence, and of the development these styles have since undergone.

Congo Rumba and Indépendance ChaCha

Caribbean music in general and Cuban music in particular have been listened to and performed in both the Belgian and French Congo, as well as in the adjacent countries, since the 1930s. As early as in colonial times, the twin capitals Léopoldville and Brazzaville, situated on opposite sides of the Congo River, were a melting pot of the most varied cultural influences. French and Belgian colonial officials, missionaries and businessmen from various European and African countries, West African mariners and civil servants all brought their diverse musical tastes (and gramophone records) to the Congo River. From these musical encounters emerged the Congo rumba which, as already suggested by its name, was influenced by Cuban styles. For decades, the Congo rumba and its derivatives *soukous* and *kwasa kwasa* were the most popular styles of dance music on the entire continent (cf. Ewens 1994; Monsengo Vantibah 2009; White 2008).

While it is true that famous African artists such as Miriam Makeba, Salif Keita, Youssou N'Dour, Manu Dibango, Khaled and Angélique Kidjo have audiences in all the metropolises of the continent, it is likely that only rumba and *soukous* can lay claim to being pan-African music. The charisma of personalities such as Franco, Grand Kallé, Mpongo Love, Tabu Ley Rochereau, Papa Wemba, Patience Dabany, Koffi Olomide, etc., reaches far beyond Central Africa, radiating out to West, South and particularly East Africa. Their music is played in discos and bars, on the radio, and local bands cover their compositions. The title of the present contribution, too, was inspired by a Congolese piece: “Indépendance ChaCha”, which has been called the first pan-African hit, as it expressed the euphoria of the moment felt all over the continent.¹ Not only do its lyrics tell of the round table where Belgian authorities and Congolese representatives came to an agreement about how to manage the process of independence; the easy-going tune of the piece, too, gives an idea of the euphoria of the moment, of the hope for the creation of a freer society. Retrospectively, however, the piece leaves a bitter taste, as it sings in one and the same line of Patrice Lumumba, who carried the hopes of the independence movement, and his rival Kasavubu. Implicitly, music of the independence era thus also tells of dashed hopes.

Precolonial Continuities and Pop Music in West Africa

People in West Africa, too, were already familiar with Caribbean music, in particular from the French Antilles, in colonial times. Along with European and local influences, it left its mark on urban dance music. In the wake of the Cuban revolution in 1959 and the independence of the majority of African countries, the idea was propagated that common interests unite the Global South – that is, the nations exploited by colonialism and imperialism. This idea, which basically emerged in the Bandung Conference, was to later have an impact on the movement of non-aligned countries as well. In concrete terms, there were also forms of exchange between Cuba and various African nations. Malian musicians, for example, were trained in Cuba in the 1960s; many of them are still on the stage today, and some continue to count among the most important representatives of the Malian music scene.² It is thus not only in the realm of music that West Africa has to be

1 Arnaud and Leconte 2006; a transcript of the text is given in Monsengo Vantibah (2009: 49).

2 A group of musicians who went by the collective name “Maravillas del Mali”, was very successful in both Cuba and Mali. Of the individual musicians, Boncana Maiga

viewed as part of the sphere of cultural exchange characterized by Paul Gilroy as “Black Atlantic” (cf. Gilroy 1993 and Dorsch 2000). With varying intensity, trans-Atlantic influence left its distinctive mark on styles such as *gombay/gumbe* and “palm wine” in West African countries such as Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and Liberia. In Ghana and Nigeria, “highlife” emerged from this type of music. As is suggested by its name, this is an elite music style which celebrates the *dolce vita* enjoyed by the urban upper class both before and after independence. Highlife also had a decisive influence on the styles of *juju* and *fuji*, which are popular among the Yoruba ethnic group. Thus, it comes as no surprise that “Ghana Freedom”, the piece that accompanied Ghana’s independence, was composed by the famous highlife musician E.T. Mensah whose band played not only highlife influenced by American swing, but also calypso and Congolese-Cuban pieces.³

Due to the institution of *griots* acting as praise singers, the situation is particularly interesting in West Africa. According to oral sources, the griot tradition goes back to the tenth century AD. Having originated in the Kingdom of Ghana, it was later spread throughout northern West Africa by the musicians of the subsequent West African kingdoms, particularly in the course of the expansion of the Mali Kingdom. After independence, this tradition became a way to connect to the past, and particularly the first presidents of Mali and Guinea put themselves forward as being able to further establish such a connection: Modibo Keita came from the family of Sunjata Keita, the Mali Kingdom’s most prominent Mansa. Countless stories have grown around this Mansa; the social structure of the Mande communities is accounted for by narratives associated with Sunjata. For the griots, this was an ideal point of departure when it came to celebrating the first president of the independent Republic of Mali, as he could be praised in songs as a descendant of the Mansa of the medieval Mali Kingdom (Hale 1998). Sékou Touré was similarly legitimated in historical and genealogical terms: He was said to be a descendant of Alhadj Samory Touré, a nineteenth-century ruler who combated the French colonial army for years, thus blocking its advance; in addition, he envisioned the resurgence of a Mande kingdom. The famous album “Regard sur le Passé” by the Guinean band Bembeya Jazz National, which celebrated Samory Touré, was thus at the

is still active in the group Africando. Information on the group can be found on Radio France International’s website: <http://www.rfimusique.com/siteen/biographie/biographie_7894.asp> (21 March 2010).

3 Since a number of brilliant studies are available on palm wine, highlife, and *juju*, these styles need not be discussed in detail in the present article. See in particular Collins 1991, 1992, 1996, and Bender 2007. On the role of musicians in nation-building in Ghana, cf. Schramm 2000.

same time a homage to Sékou Touré. The piece “Mandjou” by the Malian artist Salif Keita is in the same vein: Referring to the Tourés’ centuries-long history as Muslim scholars, he praises Sékou Touré in griot style as the worthy descendant of great ancestors (Person 1968; Charry 2000; Counsel 2001; Dorsch 2006).

Senegal’s first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, on the other hand, was a poet and thus well aware of the amalgamation of musical and literary elements in griot art. He wrote a number of poems, adding instructions regarding the griot musical instruments that should accompany them. And indeed, griots such as the *kora* player Lamine Kouyate subsequently recorded Senghor’s poems with musical accompaniment on LP.

On one hand, this praise-singing of the independence era is clearly in the tradition of the griots. On the other hand, however, the accompanying music is not strictly in line with the courtly griot music of yore, and neither are all successful musicians of the independence era griots. As a matter of fact, that period of transition gave rise to new types of music. Griots no longer solely accompanied recitals of epics and praise songs with their *koras* or *ngonis*; younger griots in particular began to also perform for their peers who were keen on dancing. The range of topics addressed in the lyrics broadened as well: Epics and hymns glorifying high-ranking individuals were now complemented by love songs, anecdotes from everyday life, and comments on the current social situation. In short, a courtly genre became transformed into popular music played for entertainment. However, the older generations in Mali, Senegal, and Gambia did not boil over with enthusiasm for these innovations, because they realized that a time-honoured tradition was in decline. The new genre was mockingly dubbed “*diarabi, diarabi*” (“love” or “passion”), an allusion to the lyrics, whose content the elders deemed quite one-sided (Durán 1995: 206).

The scepticism of the older generations did not keep the elites of the fledgling nations from integrating the new musical style into the repertoire of the newly established national orchestras. This was probably done out of gratitude for the commitment of artists such as Keita Fodéba in Guinea, whose Ballets Africains dance troupe became the cultural flagship of that country, bringing Guinean dance theatre and its music to the stages of the world. The commitment of musicians such as Sidiki Diabaté was likewise appreciated. A native of Gambia, this *kora* player supported the cause of the independence movement in French Sudan (later to become Mali) within the *Kaira* movement. *Kaira*, an Arabic-derived word, means “happiness” or “peace” in the Bambara and Mandinka languages, and was the name of a youth movement in which griots played a crucial part. Prior to independence, *Kaira* was reputed to be composed of young troublemakers; following

independence, however, it merged into the youth organization of Mali's leading political party. To this day, the movement's song "Kaira" has continued to be a standard piece in the griots' repertoire in Mali and Gambia (Charry 2000: 156, fn. 91).⁴

Yet, it is likely that the elites of independent Africa, who were educated in Europe, were also aware of the European model of adapting folk-music themes into a classical repertoire, which was of great importance for the development of national awareness. Guinea, which under Sékou Touré had gained independence relatively early (1958), led the way in the cultural policy of West African states such as Senegal and Mali, and later on also Gambia and Cameroon, irrespective of all political differences. All these states strove to blend regional styles into a national form by means of regional contests and the establishment of national ensembles. National music scenes could emerge thanks to government aid. In that process, regional and national contests gave artists the feeling of being part of a new entity which was no longer defined along ethnic, regional, colonial or religious lines but along national ones. Furthermore, these artists represented this entity on the stages of their countries' capitals as well as on those of Western and African foreign countries.

Due to education and migration – both to the colonial African cities and the colonial metropolises abroad – elites and urban societies had emerged in the African capitals. They yearned for some musical expression that, in contrast to the musical styles of their mostly rural regions of origin, would reflect their attitude towards life. Those who were into religion turned to singing Christian hymns. Otherwise, however, that attitude toward life was most commonly expressed by Western music – by jazz and Caribbean, particularly Cuban, music. Colonial officers introduced shellac records from the Caribbean, and African bands copied Caribbean styles such as *beguine*, calypso, *gumbay*, mambo, or *son*. African nationalism was thus expressed by pieces with patriotic or revolutionary lyrics about the collective task of furthering the progress of the budding nation; these included songs praising the respective rulers and referring to the former glory of the precolonial kingdoms – a glory to be restored. While the tunes, too, were often inspired by motifs of precolonial or folk music, the instruments and rhythms showed a decidedly Latin American influence, as was mentioned at the beginning of this article. In the music of the independence era, praise songs for historical figures such as the Mansa Sunjata Keita were no longer accompanied merely by *kora*, *ngoni* and balaphone, but also by congas, saxophone and maracas

4 A French translation of the lyrics of the piece "Kaira", which denounce the cruelty of French prisons, is given in Camara (1976: 270).

(Charry 2000: 242ff.; Harrev 1992: 209ff.). In West Africa, there was apparently little concern that these trans-Atlantic styles might fail to get the local population's blood pumping or fuel enthusiasm for the nation. It was tacitly accepted, however, that specific ethnic or linguistic groups were intentionally overrepresented in the music that was played by national orchestras. In Guinea, for example, the Malinké-speaking people, of which President Touré was a member, were represented much more prominently than others, particularly the Fulbe. This overrepresentation of certain ethnic groups in the development of a national popular music is not a specific feature of West Africa, as is aptly illustrated by Chirambo (2009) in his description of politicized cultural populism in Malawi. With this, we now turn our attention to East and Southern Africa.

Performing the Nation and Musical Internationalism

East Africa provides a very good example of the degree to which the Congorumba can be viewed as pan-African music *par excellence*. Congolese musicians successfully toured the East, East Africans started bands that replayed Congolese music. In addition, trans-oceanic exchange had an impact on developments within the local popular music scene in the East. Arab and Indian styles – ranging from pieces for the *oud* to the musical scores of Bollywood movies – were integrated continuously and successfully into local ones, particularly on the Swahili Coast. The Egyptian singer Umm Kolthum, for example, has had a profound and lasting influence on female *taarab* singers (Ntarangwi 2003; Askew 2002).

Local popular musical styles abound in East Africa, including *taarab*, *ngoma*, or *bongo flava*, the latter currently being the most popular style. Using the example of Tanzania, Kelly Askew has convincingly shown how music was made part of the process of nation-building (Askew 2002). As she focused on music and performance, she was able to take a critical perspective on the prevalent approaches to nation and nationalism, which she characterizes as not being sufficiently unbiased. Her emphasis is on the performative and dialogic aspects at work in the emergence of nation and nationalism.⁵ In spite of all nationalization, the Western – and Eastern – influences

5 In Tanzania, too, independence was praised in songs, for example in the following lyrics, which have a rather triumphant undertone – quoted by Lange (1995: 30) in the original Sukuma and translated into English: *Lelo namubuje, bebe / Ng'walalaga kinabe bazungu / Nene namabuje / Iki ng'wagandaga ng'walubaga giki / Ng'wilek' inyam' indoto*: "Let me ask you today / Europeans how are you today? / You look de-

on Tanzanian music continued to be just as important as they were elsewhere in Africa and, in fact, all over the world. Like many others, Nyerere mistakenly believed in the essentialist idea that humans have music, dance or rhythm in their blood. Just like all cultural forms of expression, they are learned – and particularly in the sphere of music there is a pronounced craving for new, hitherto unknown forms of expression that transcend boundaries. In this context, theories on the dialectic of the global and the local have shown how global forms can nevertheless be used for specific local ways of expression (cf. Probst and Spittler 2004 and Loimaier et al. 2005).

A glance at Southern Africa in particular shows that the independence era is, of course, not limited to the 1960s. Neocolonial dependencies and other phenomena should remind us of the fact that independence may be viewed as more of a continuous process than an era of the past, especially since many countries gained independence only in the decades that followed. This applies first of all to the Portuguese colonies, whose paths to independence were bloody, as is generally known. Portugal's refusal to accept the end of the colonial era triggered wars of liberation which turned into equally cruel civil wars immediately following independence in 1975. This involved the two large countries of Angola and Mozambique as well as small Guinea-Bissau, which won independence not only for itself but also for the Cape Verde Islands. Only on the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe did independence come about in a comparatively peaceful manner. In the Lusophone countries, the victorious liberation movements turned to the socialist camp – in particular to the Soviet Union and Cuba – for support, while the oppositions were supported by the US, South Africa and China (Chabal et al. 2002).

The importance of music in nation-building (mentioned above with regard to the Tanzanian example discussed by Askew) took a quite unusual turn in Angola and Mozambique due to the relations with the Soviet Union and Cuba. Thousands of Angolan and Mozambican students attended school and university in these two socialist countries as well as in other Eastern Bloc states. In Cuba, schools were constructed specifically for students from abroad, who were taught by both Cuban teachers and teachers from their respective countries of origin. The schools were built in isolated places on the countryside, each for students of a particular nationality. Besides the usual subjects with a focus on their native countries, the pupils were instructed in the cooking, musical styles and dances of their countries

pressed, weak and gloomy / Are you thinking about the fresh meat / That you are about to leave?"

of origin. By learning dances and musical styles from the most diverse regions of Mozambique, they acquired a sense of the nation as a whole. They were encouraged to speak Portuguese instead of their ethnic languages, and thus came to identify as Mozambicans rather than as Shangaan or Makonde, Muslims or Christians. This feeling of community still persists today.⁶

Cuba's relations with Angola were even closer than its relations with Mozambique: For years, Angolans formed the largest contingent of foreign students in Cuba. Most importantly, however, the Cuban government sent both soldiers and civil development personnel – physicians, engineers, teachers – into the Angolan civil war. It is likely that the military victory of Cuban and Angolan troops over the South African army precipitated the end of the Apartheid regime. This is at least the opinion held by Nelson Mandela, who, in the course of his first international journey after nearly 40 years of imprisonment, visited Cuba, among other countries, and published a book jointly with Fidel Castro (Mandela and Castro 1991). The commitment of Europe's Left to the Third World went along with enthusiasm for the music of the African freedom movements; at least in terms of language, the step from the songs of the Portuguese Cloves Revolution to Angolan liberation songs was just a small one. The Angolan singer Bonga Kuenda has been very successful both on the international and national stages. Following his career as an athlete, he became a musician in the 1970s – that is, during the Salazar and Caetano dictatorships in Portugal and prior to Angolan independence in 1975. Due to its revolutionary lyrics, his first record, "Angola '72", was released in the Netherlands. It was banned in Angola and Portugal. Bonga lived in exile in France, Germany and the Netherlands. Even following independence, he continued to maintain a second "home base" in Europe during the troubled times of the Angolan civil war. It is interesting to note that the euphoria we associate with the era of independence is by no means always reflected in the biographies of the musicians under discussion. The Cape Verdean singer Cesaria Evora, who is now famous worldwide and was already renowned on a national level in the 1970s, suffered a creative crisis in the years immediately following independence and withdrew from the stage. It was not until the late 1980s that she started her international career from Paris.

With regard to Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, the social transformations comparable to the independence gained by other countries are even more recent. It is not so much the unilateral declaration of independ-

6 This information is based on research conducted by the author and Katrin Hansing in Cuba, Mozambique and South Africa within the scope of the SFB/FK 560 at the University of Bayreuth; for further details, see Dorsch 2008; Hansing and Dorsch 2005.

ence by Rhodesia's white minority in 1965 that is comparable in this context, but rather the armed struggle of the population against the white settlers' regime. In allusion to a nineteenth-century movement, this struggle has been called *chimurenga*, a name subsequently borrowed by a pop genre principally influenced by the musician Thomas Mapfumo and his band Blacks Unlimited. Similar to the griots in West Africa who adapted the melodies of the local string instruments *kora* and *ngoni* and of the xylophone-like balaphone for the guitar, Mapfumo transferred the music of the *mbira* (a variant of which is known in the West by the name *kalimba* or "thumb piano" and is mainly played by Shona) into a pop context and played well-known *mbira* themes on the guitar. For a long time, his lyrics – sung in the Shona language – were ignored by the white population, in spite of the fact that they quite openly called for resistance against the white regime. It was not until 1979 that the government became aware of the true nature of his lyrics, whereupon the singer was put in jail and his music was banned. The latter measure, however, was not very successful because the radio station "Voice of Mozambique" broadcasted Mapfumo's music from that neighbouring country. When the black majority of the population came to power, Mapfumo was released from prison and played his music on the occasion of the public events celebrating the independence of the new nation of Zimbabwe where Bob Marley performed as well. However, independence did not mean the end of Mapfumo's criticism of injustice in his country, and he attacked Mugabe's regime no less forcefully than he did that of Mugabe's white predecessors.⁷

Of course, the era of independence did not go unnoticed in South Africa, and resistance against the Apartheid regime radicalized in the 1960s. The regime took brutal action against its critics, as is apparent from the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and the shots fired on schoolchildren in Soweto in 1976. Many politically active musicians either fled into exile or were forced into it. Among these, Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela are certainly the most famous. When Makeba married Black Panther activist Stokely Carmichael, she realized that critical voices were not always welcome in the West, either. Stage performances were cancelled, she found herself exposed to hostility, and the couple eventually decided to go into exile – to Guinea, where Makeba was not only supported by Sékou Touré but also provided with a house and a diplomatic passport. This enabled her to criticize South Africa's Apartheid regime before the UN, acting as a representative of Guinea. Incidentally, she learned the art of griot praise-singing in

7 Biographical information (by Banning Eyre) is available online at: <[http://www.afropop.org/explore/artist_info/ID/26/Thomas Mapfumo/](http://www.afropop.org/explore/artist_info/ID/26/Thomas%20Mapfumo/)> (21 March 2011).

Guinea, and practised it right away in honour of Sékou Touré (Makeba 1987). Other South African musicians, too, used the stages of the West to call for solidarity with the struggle of South Africa's black population for freedom. In South Africa itself, the regime strove to create a musical landscape divided into spheres that were separate from each other, in accordance with the "racial" categories defined by the Apartheid ideologists. However, these boundaries were repeatedly ignored not only by members of the jazz scene in Cape Town, but also by individual musicians such as the internationally famous "white Zulu" Johnny Clegg. A dance called *toyi toyi* became the expression of the struggle, mainly spearheaded by the ANC, against Apartheid. Later on, *kwaito* became the music of the new post-Apartheid nation, a style combining elements of house, hip-hop and reggae with South African styles such as "bubblegum", *mbaqanga*, *isacathamiya*, and *kwela* (Erlmann 1996; Coplan 2008; Schumann 2008). Most recently, *kwaito* songs were used to market the FIFA World Cup. Given the prominent role played by Latin American music in the era of independence, it came as no surprise that the official World Cup anthem was recorded by the Colombian singer Shakira.⁸

A Retrospective Look at the Era of Independence

From the perspective of the POLISARIO, which strives for the independence of Western Sahara from Morocco, it might be argued that the era of independence still has not come to an end. The recent renaissance of Cuban music in Africa, too, sometimes seems like a commentary on the unfulfilled promises of a bygone revolutionary era. However, the "re-blossoming" of the Cuban music scene in West Africa should not be overrated: In light of the success of Cuban music at the turn of the millennium (read: "Buena Vista Social Club"), this revival can also be interpreted as a product of Western "world music" marketing strategies that reunited legendary bands, such as the Senegalese Orchestra Baobab, and sent them on world tours. In addition, it is very likely that political factors played a role as well – for example, Senegal's establishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba in 2001

8 The piece by Shakira and the South African band Freshly Ground, "Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)" can be seen at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjToBvpxw6E&feature=fvvr>>. It is based on the piece "Zangalewa" by the Cameroonian band "The Golden Sounds". The videoclip is available at: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHV7gmT5m8I&feature=related>>; for further information on the song, see <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zamina_mina_\(Zangalewa\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zamina_mina_(Zangalewa))> (21 March 2011). I wish to thank Axel Heinemann for drawing my attention to these links.

(Coester and Gretz 2005). Nevertheless, artists and audiences seem to wish for (and indeed, even need) a genuine artistic look back at the era of independence.

The questions of what has been achieved, what dreams have come to naught and what chances have been missed seem to find expression in this new retrospective view. The Cameroonian rap group Ak Sans Grave, for example, decidedly and critically addresses the thwarted hopes of the independence era in its version of “Indépendance ChaCha”.⁹ And even a praise song can be intended to criticize – for example, when it does not extol politicians ruling today but rather those who have long passed away: Just like Salif Keita once did, the widely respected Malian *griotte* Bako Dagnon now sings the praises of Guinea’s late president Sékou Touré in her piece “Le Guide de la Révolution” (on her album “Sidiba” released in 2009). In light of what we know today about the infamous prison camp Camp Boiro and Touré’s paranoid persecution of potential oppositionists, this praise song has a very problematic ring to it. The persistent esteem for Touré becomes comprehensible, however, if we recall his strong commitment to a revolutionary form of independence – that is, his strict refusal of any integration into neocolonial structures. This esteem, particularly on the part of musicians, becomes even more understandable if we make ourselves aware of the importance of Touré’s massive support of music, not only for Guinea but also for entire generations of musicians. It thus comes as no surprise that Dagnon’s song, intended to celebrate Touré as a revolutionary hero, is musically modelled after the Cuban *guajira* style.

Undoubtedly, a collective biographical dimension enters into this retrospective glance as well: In the autumn of their lives, the generation of musicians whose careers began during the independence era have, since the early 2000s, been taking a look back at their youth. To stay with the example of Mali: Both Ali Farka Touré and Boubakar Traoré reflect on the era of independence in their more recent releases. Jacques Sarasin’s 2002 film *Je chanterai pour toi* vividly portrays the atmosphere of independence and the revolutionary spirit of optimism in which the guitarist and singer Boubacar “Kar Kar” Traoré celebrated his first successes. Recently, he re-recorded the music of that era.¹⁰ The internationally famous Malian “bluesman” Ali Farka

9 The video clip for this song is available at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HW1OTj3EdNs&feature=related>> (21 March 2011). I would like to thank Daniel Künzler for drawing my attention to this link..

10 His most recent CD, “Kongo Magni”, released in 2005 (World Village), for example, features the piece “Indépendance”. The 2003 soundtrack “Je chanterai pour toi” (Marabi) includes the famous pieces “Kayes Ba” and “Mali Twist”, which both date from the independence era.

Touré also played pieces from that era on his last CD, which was released posthumously. Incidentally, he recorded them in collaboration with the *kora* player Toumani Diabaté, the son of the late Sidiki Diabaté, who once supported Mali's independence movement.

At first glance, it may seem surprising that Cuban music, of all things, still continues to epitomize the feeling of the independence era. We need to take into account, however, that Latin American music in turn has firm roots in African rhythm. This fact was, of course, known to the African musicians and their audiences. Latin American music could thus be viewed as a modern form of African music. In addition, there is no doubt that the idea of a common identity as inhabitants of the Global South was important as well. This self-image enabled people to distance themselves both from the North and from the image of African backwardness promulgated by the colonizers. It is thus not surprising that later generations of musicians, too, sought inspiration in styles from outside Africa. African-American music was "in" among the youth of Bamako in the 1970s, as they viewed it as an expression of pan-African feeling, and listening to it as an act of opposition to the ongoing French cultural dominance (cf. Diawara 1998). A similar function – the expression of a "style of one's own" as opposed to the West – was attributed to reggae a decade later, as was pointed out by the Malian reggae musician Oumar Koita in an interview (Dorsch 1994). In order to understand how Latin American music – and especially the Congo rumba – came to be the expression of the independence era, we need to consider the trans-Atlantic exchange discussed earlier. Still, there is some irony in the fact that in Sékou Touré's Guinea as well as in the Congo and in Zaire under Mobutu, Latin American-inspired music became the soundtrack of the African *authenticité* decreed by the respective governments, while Nyerere's attempts at "re-Africanizing" Tanzanian music were not particularly successful.

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“Indépendance Cha Cha”: Afrikanische Popmusik seit der Unabhängigkeit

Zusammenfassung: Der Beitrag gibt eine kurze Übersicht über die Entwicklung ausgewählter Musikstile in verschiedenen afrikanischen Ländern seit der Unabhängigkeit. Der Autor schildert die Bemühungen der Regie-

rungen in den jungen Nationalstaaten, Musik in ihr Projekt des *nation-building* einzubinden; er folgt dem Blick, den Musiker in jüngster Zeit auf die Unabhängigkeitsära richten, und diskutiert dabei die Frage, warum ausgerechnet lateinamerikanische Musik zum “Soundtrack” der Unabhängigkeit wurde.

Schlagwörter: Afrika, Musik, Soziokultureller Wandel