The Development Process of Dance Bands in Urban Tanzania
—In Connection with Changes in Socioeconomic and Political Circumstances from the Colonial Period to the 1980s—

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Performances by dance bands (jazz bands as they are known in East Africa) have been an integral part of urban popular culture in Tanzania over the past five decades, though in an ever-changing socioeconomic environment. Amateur jazz clubs, which emerged in various urban centers from the 1940s under British colonial rule, developed in close-knit urban communities in the context of pre-existent traditions of competitive dance societies. This jazz-club movement culminated in the 1960s when Dar es Salaam, the capital, and some provincial towns produced a number of famous jazz bands which became popular throughout East Africa.

Post-independence changes in the economic and political system had a considerable impact upon the social character of urban musical activities. From the mid-1960s, chiefly in Dar es Salaam, a number of jazz bands were launched by various governmental organizations and public corporations, employing an increasing number of musicians on a regular salaried basis. Meanwhile, through the 1970s and 1980s, the commercialization of musical activities advanced in both the public and private sectors, undermining the existing jazz clubs. Along the way, jazz bands lost their communal character and were transformed into commercial enterprises, divorced from the urban communities from which they first emerged.

Key words: Tanzania, popular music, dance band, urban culture, socioeconomic change.

1. INTRODUCTION

Live performances by dance bands are one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the urban society of Tanzania nowadays, especially in the bustling metropolis of Dar es Salaam. Every weekend, live shows take place in community halls and bars throughout the city, keeping the dance floors filled with inter-ethnic audiences. On the radio, contemporary hits and standards fill the airwaves. The daily and weekly Swahili newspapers are full of news and gossip about famous bands and musicians. The dance band scene undoubtedly enlivens the townspeople's social life in many ways: as a form of leisure and amusement, as a social occasion, as a means of expression of urban life, and even as a medium for political and
economic activities.

Dance bands, which play electric guitar-based popular music, are generally called jazz bands in East Africa. As pointed out by Martin (1982), there are other concurrent popular musical activities such as taarab, traditional ethnic ngoma, and religious choral music in urban Tanzania. Nevertheless, jazz band performance is without doubt the most widespread and popular urban musical culture in mainland Tanzania (known as Tanganyika in the colonial era) in the sense that it is diffused throughout the country in a homogeneous form and has been favored by a wide variety of people almost regardless of generation, occupation, and ethnic or religious background. Notably Dar es Salaam, the largest port city and the administrative center of the country, has sustained the most active jazz music scene in the country since the colonial period.

Tanzanian urban jazz, as we may call it, has flourished over the past fifty years in the ever-changing urban socioeconomic and political context. Musical styles have changed constantly since its origin in the 1930s, though almost always under the overwhelming influence of contemporary popular music from the Congo (formerly Zaire). At the same time, the ways of organizing jazz bands and their social significance have been in a constant process of transformation from the colonial period, through the socialist era soon after independence and on to the present era of economic liberalization.

Only a few attempts on the study of jazz bands and urban jazz music in Tanzania have so far been made. Martin (1980, 1982) shows how urban jazz musical forms developed in Dar es Salaam before the mid-1970s, mainly from a musicological standpoint. Graebner (1989, 1991, 1992, 1994) also discusses various aspects of urban jazz, focusing in particular on the connection between dance music and urban society in Dar es Salaam in the 1980s. However, little attention has been given to the changing processes of the way the bands themselves are formed.

The main purpose of this paper is, therefore, to trace a historical outline of the development process of jazz bands in urban areas of mainland Tanzania from the outset down to the 1980s, especially with reference to changes in socioeconomic and political circumstances. Since I wish to examine the changing character of jazz bands mainly from a sociological standpoint, we are not concerned here with changes in musical form.

This paper is based chiefly on data collected by the author during the course of fieldwork from December 1995 to March 1997, from August to October 1998, and from July to October 1999. Let us now start to observe the history of jazz bands in Tanganyika, by examining the communal dance associations which long antedated urban jazz.

2. EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN JAZZ IN TANGANYIKA

2.1. The Early Influence of the Brass Band

One of the earliest precursors of Tanganyikan urban music was the European military brass band, introduced concomitantly with German and British military operations on the East African coast in the late nineteenth century. As early as the 1900s, there were brass bands consisting of Africans in Dar es Salaam and the northern port of Tanga (Fig. 1), both of which had a German military presence at that time (Martin 1980: 35, 41). At least one military brass band was set up in Dar es Salaam under the British administration which replaced German rule after World War I (ibid.: 39–40). Small orchestras, usually in the brass band tradition, were also formed in public and missionary schools (Graebner 1992: 224), where many early jazz musicians learned to play wind instruments and drums in Western styles.

These early influences from military brass bands were transformed into a new dance style known as the beni ngoma. This is an innovative form of the traditional ngoma (song and dance) performance, which imitates military drills and their accompanying brass bands in their dance steps and music. Invented during the 1890s in the Kenyan coastal towns of Mombasa and Lamu, beni ngoma soon reached Tanga and had spread via coastal areas into the interior of Tanganyika by the late 1910s. In Tanganyika, as in Kenya, beni ngoma basically grew out of the pre-existing tradition of dance competitions in Swahili urban society and became a means of competitive expression among rival groups in the ethnically mixed urban popu-
lation. In Tanganyikan towns, beni societies would divide into two rival groups, both of which were active in every urban and administrative center in the territory. Leading members, notably young civil servants, police officers, and war veterans, would busy themselves in building up formal organizations with hierarchical ranks, common funds, and branch networking. A remarkable territory-wide communication was eventually achieved, and the beni societies also had a strong mutual aid character within each urban center.

Despite such a rapid diffusion throughout the country, beni ngoma became outdated by the late 1930s and was replaced by Western ballroom dancing (dansi), which soon became popular with the urban African population in general. As with beni, it apparently originated around Mombasa and entered Tanganyika via Tanga, whence it was probably brought to Dar es Salaam in the early 1930s, and then popularized by branches of a dance club formed in several towns later in the decade (Iliffe 1979: 392). Dansi seems to have been popular only with educated Africans in the early days, often being associated with elite semi-political clubs (ibid.: 410, 413). However, new modes of musical performance, that is, Western dance music played on accordion or guitar, together with an accompanying dance style, began to fascinate young urban Africans as a whole so much that they were soon to establish a number of dance bands or “jazz bands” of their own(6).

2.2. Development of Rumba Bands

It was after World War II that a number of dance bands began popping up in Dar es Salaam, coinciding with the return of war veterans who brought back new knowledge and information about Western popular music (Martin 1980: 51–53). Although the first enduring influence of Western music in East Africa was the brass band, the most favored genre as the accompaniment for dansi after the mid-1940s was rumba guitar music in Tanganyika as well as in neighboring Kenya and the Belgian Congo.

The spread of records and radio broadcasting undoubtedly contributed greatly to the rapid diffusion of a homogeneous musical style. In the early 1950s, or possibly even earlier, records of Latin American music became available and many Cuban rumbas, notably those of a
group called Sexteto Habanero, were eagerly copied by musicians in Tanganyika. Latin-influenced acoustic guitar music sung in Swahili also became very popular with Africans in the 1950s, especially through commercial records made by musicians from the Congo and Kenya, along with domestic musicians.

Radio broadcasting in Tanganyika started in 1951 with the experimental Sauti ya Dar es Salaam ("Voice of Dar es Salaam") station which was run directly by the colonial government and covered only the capital and its suburbs. Soon after its establishment, the station began broadcasts of local music (Graebner 1992: 228). By the mid-1950s, when it was transformed into the autonomous Tanganyika Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), territory-wide broadcasting had been achieved and the scale of Swahili-language broadcasts had also increased (Mytton 1976).

Rumba bands, calling themselves jazz bands, became increasingly common in urban areas during the 1950s, ranging from small amateur groups playing home-made instruments to full-fledged orchestras. A jazz band ensemble at that time consisted basically of a few acoustic guitars and banjos, together with percussion instruments such as bass drums, bongos, rattles, and wooden clappers. Mandolins, violins, and wind instruments such as the clarinet, sax, and trumpet, were also in common use. The bands often played at celebrations such as weddings, and they also performed at community halls charging admission, which were common in urban centers by that time.

The acoustic rumba movement, however, was soon to be superseded by electrified rumba, which came in from the Congo in the late 1950s or early 1960s. The influence of Congolese dance music was, and still is, so great that a great deal of the original repertoire has been slavishly imitated by Tanzanian bands with only minor modifications such as replacing the Lingala lyrics with Swahili. With the penetration of Congolese rumba, acoustic instruments began to be replaced by modern electric equipment and Western drum kits.

From the sociological standpoint, the most notable feature of jazz bands at the time was that they were primarily developed as social clubs, in which non-musicians normally formed a majority of members. Especially in Dar es Salaam, along with local towns such as Morogoro, Tanga, and Tabora (Fig. 1), the development of "jazz clubs" was remarkable in the sense that these growing urban centers produced a number of nationally popular bands and musicians. It must be noted that the superiority of Dar es Salaam over these local towns in terms of population was not so overwhelming at that time as it is today (see Table 1).

Note that Tanganyika experienced unprecedented economic growth during the 1950s, mainly due to growing exports of agricultural products such as sisal, coffee, and cotton (Iliffe 1979: 451-454). Sisal production rose especially sharply in this period and sisal plantation areas such as Tanga and Morogoro benefited from the boom. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, there was also an investment boom in several manufacturing industries (Coulson 1982: 168-175). There is no doubt that the monetary economy increasingly penetrated into the lives of urban residents at that time.

We shall now look more carefully into the history of early popular jazz clubs in Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Tanga, and Tabora.

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3. DEVELOPMENT OF JAZZ CLUBS IN URBAN COMMUNITIES IN THE 1950s AND 1960s

3.1. Dar es Salaam

As early as the 1930s, Dar es Salaam had at least one native African dance band, the Dar es Salaam Jazz Band, which was later to become one of the most popular and long-lasting bands in the town(7). The band was based in Kariakoo ward, the oldest settlement of native Africans in Dar es Salaam. During the 1950s, a number of ephemeral bands emerged not only in Kariakoo but also in Ilala ward, the second oldest African settlement, adjacent to Kariakoo.

The Dar es Salaam Jazz Band was formed by several musicians of various ethnic groups and occupations, who had defected from the preceding African Association Jazz Band in the mid-1930s(8). Though most of the founders themselves seem to have been musicians, the band had become a kind of social club consisting of both musicians and non-musicians by the 1950s. In the 1960s, there were about ten musicians and two or three dozen non-musician members (including females), along with elected staff who handled the administrative affairs of the club(9).

Most musicians at the time did not maintain other regular jobs, but music was never considered as an occupation for them. Musical activities were primarily a pastime, and for most of the musicians, the primary benefits were pleasure, girl friends, and fame rather than monetary reward. They were given a negligible allowance out of admission money, with the exception of Michael Enock, a Zambian-born lead guitarist, who was paid monthly wages and lived in the clubhouse, possibly without paying rent. Young single musicians were also allowed to stay at the clubhouse while looking for a room and a daytime job(10).

Non-musician members subscribed a certain amount of money every month, and received free admission to concerts. Besides the affairs of the club, the musicians and other members also helped each other on personal ceremonial occasions. For example, if a parent of a member or a musician died, the other members would not only contribute incense money to the bereaved family, but would also attend the funeral and even sleep in the mourner’s house for several days. When a member had a wedding, the band played at the ceremony without pay. Furthermore, if a member had some problems such as illness in his family, he could borrow money from the club(11).

Aside from the Dar es Salaam Jazz Band, two popular jazz clubs emerged in the 1960s: the Western Jazz Band and the Kilwa Jazz Band, both of which were formed in Kariakoo around 1959. The Western Jazz Band was started by several Nyamwezi men, who named the band after Western Province, where their homeland was located(12). The Kilwa Jazz Band was set up primarily by musicians and their friends of Kilwa origin(13). In spite of the somewhat exclusive names and origins, these clubs had an open membership policy, and people from other places soon entered in large numbers. Like the Dar es Salaam Jazz Band, the Western Jazz and Kilwa Jazz also functioned as communal social clubs.

These three major bands retained their supremacy in Dar es Salaam until the late 1960s. Since venues for music and dance were very limited at that time, the bands tended to have regular live gigs in the same place every weekend. It is also worth noting that rivalries arose among the three bands, and they would sometimes mock each other in their songs. On the other hand, close friendships also developed with the jazz clubs of other towns. The Lucky Star Jazz Band from the neighboring town of Bagamoyo, being a rival of the Dar es Salaam Jazz Band, associated with the Western Jazz Band(14). The Dar es Salaam Jazz Band was affiliated with other town’s clubs such as the Zanzibar Jazz Band and the Cuban Marimba of Morogoro. This band would exchange visits with the others on occasions like Easter and Christmas in the early days(15).

3.2. Morogoro

Morogoro produced two prominent figures in the history of Tanzanian popular music: Salum Abdallah (1928–1965) and Mbaraka Mwinshehe (1944–1979). The former was the leader of the Cuban Marimba until he was killed in a car crash and the latter led the Morogoro
Jazz Band in the early 1970s. Both were outstanding national musical heroes and inspired many would-be musicians in their day.

In the 1940s Morogoro had a new suburb called mji mpya (new town) on the opposite side of the railway tracks, while the area around the city center was called the old town (mji mkuu). Residents of both towns fueled their rivalry by competing in sports and music\(^{(16)}\). The Morogoro Jazz Band was formed in the mid-1940s, probably inspired by two musicians from Nyasaland, who played dance music with accordion every weekend for domestic servants employed by Europeans (Mwakyoma et al. 1985: 10). The band bought a new set of instruments, identical to those of the Dar es Salaam Jazz Band, which came to perform in Morogoro in 1949. Their songs were soon recorded at a radio station in Dar es Salaam, and then by an Indian recording agent called Assanandi and Sons from Mombasa (ibid.: 10–11). The band got wide support among the people of the old town\(^{(17)}\).

Salum Abdallah, the son of an Arab merchant, often went to the capital to attend concerts of the Dar es Salaam Jazz Band. Joining the Morogoro Jazz Band at first, Salum soon went on to form his own band (“La Paloma”) in the new town around 1947, raising funds to buy the instruments by selling his father’s house without the latter’s knowledge. Though the establishment of the band seems to have owed much to Salum’s personal effort, it took shape as a communal club with administrative staff and by-laws just like its counterparts in Dar es Salaam. Salum’s role was limited to leading the band section (Mkabarah 1972: 11–14, 18).

The band, claimed as the new town’s band in opposition to the old town’s Morogoro Jazz, was soon renamed the Cuban Marimba, because Salum loved Cuban music. Word spread through the grapevine along the coastal area to Mombasa, and as early as 1952, their songs were recorded by Assanandi and Sons (Mzuri Records) (ibid.: 19). Records and radio broadcasts helped establish the band’s reputation, and Salum’s music, with its simple guitar sound, soon fascinated broader audiences. The band eventually introduced amplified instruments by getting temporary sponsorship from the same recording agent\(^{(18)}\).

When a competent guitarist-singer-composer called Mbaraka Mwinshehe joined the Morogoro Jazz Band in the mid-1960s, some key musicians were already receiving monthly salaries, and pecuniary incentives began to constitute a large part of the musicians’ interest in the band. Mbaraka himself quit twice over unsatisfactory payment, though he was finally persuaded to return (Mwakyoma et al. 1985: 12–14, 16–18). During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Morogoro Jazz Band was under the leadership of Mbaraka, while the Cuban Marimba was led by Juma Kilaza who succeeded to the leadership of the band after Salum Abdallah’s death. Both bands had achieved national acclaim by that time, and toured across East Africa. A keen rivalry arose between the two bands, not only in Morogoro but also in other towns where they had rival groups of fans\(^{(19)}\). Exchanges of provocative songs sharpened their rivalry. An example follows.

**Cuban Marimba:**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{We are going to light a fire to burn them down} \\
\text{The remedy for fire is fire.} \\
\text{Make your fire outside} \\
\text{Here inside we will extinguish it} \\
\text{The remedy for fire is water.}
\end{align*}
\]

In the 1960s, the Cuban Marimba had three branches, called “Cuban Branches”—one in Dar es Salaam and two in provincial towns in the Morogoro Region: Kimamba (a town surrounded by sisal estates) and Ifakara\(^{(20)}\). The branch in Dar es Salaam was established around 1960, or possibly a little earlier, by a former musician of the Cuban Marimba, with two electric guitars supplied by the band. Headquarters and the branch helped each other out when either of them was short of musicians. Salum Abdallah came to the capital once or twice a month and performed using the branch’s instruments\(^{(21)}\). Salum himself might sit in with the Dar es Salaam Jazz Band, another ally of the Cuban Marimba\(^{(22)}\).
3.3. Tanga

In the German period, Tanga was almost equal in importance to Dar es Salaam as a port city and was also a scholastic center with an advanced government school. Tanga was also Tanganyika’s traditional point of entry for new movements of musical culture influenced by Europe, such as brass bands, beni ngoma, and dansi. This was largely due to its proximity to Mombasa, the largest port city of Kenya, along with a comparatively large population of Europeans and Asians, in particular Goans.

Henry Mdimu, an educated Bondei Christian, may have been one of the first Africans in Tanga who engaged in Western popular dance music. He joined a band formed by a Goan in the late 1940s, which played soft instrumental music with acoustic guitar, mandolin, violin, steel guitar, and piano. In the late 1950s, Mdimu and his fellow educated Africans founded a dance band called the Rhythm Makers (later renamed the Sparrows). The band seems to have played mainly for Goans, Europeans, and the other educated people of Uzunguni (literally “Europeans’ place”), north of the railway in town.

The area south of the railway was called Ngamiani (“the place of camels”), and was settled by Africans and Arab merchants. These less educated African townspeople preferred rumba, which they regarded as local music as opposed to the Western music popular in Uzunguni. Among a number of jazz clubs that existed in the late 1950s, only five or six of the best were allowed to perform at the sole concert hall in Ngamiani on weekends by rotation, using the same rented amplified instruments. In the 1960s, the Jamhuri Jazz Band and the Atomic Jazz Band appeared as two major rumba bands in Tanga and both soon gained nationwide popularity.

The Jamhuri Jazz Band was formed in the mid-1950s, originally by members of the Young Nyamwezi Sukuma Union, a mutual aid society for the Nyamwezi and Sukuma in the town. The band was called the Nyamwezi Jazz Band in the early 1960s, but was renamed the Jamhuri (“Republic”) Jazz Band in 1966 by order of the government which was outlawing ethnic-based organizations at the time. The band got a full set of modern instruments around 1960 with the support of the European owner of a sisal plantation in Mazinde, where the band often went to perform. The man who called on the assistance of this wealthy individual was an educated Sukuma member, who was also working as a clerk in one of the surrounding plantations.

Despite its explicitly ethnic origin, the club soon came to function as a communal association for multi-ethnic members by the 1960s. Non-musician members, whose monthly contributions were used to run the club, got free admission to concerts. The club rented a whole house containing several rooms as a clubhouse, in which some musicians stayed rent-free. Johnny Kijiko, a famous singer/guitarist/composer, also lived there with his wife. When he married in 1960, the wedding, accompanied by music from the band, was celebrated by the whole club, which bore the cost of the party and transportation. Kijiko led the band from around 1963 until he defected to the rival Atomic Jazz Band in 1967, lured by a large sum of money.

Unlike the Jamhuri Jazz, the Atomic Jazz Band seems to have been formed in the mid-1950s by several amateur musicians from different ethnic groups and occupations, and then developed as a social club including many non-musicians. They managed to introduce an electric guitar and other modern equipment by 1962 and then launched several hit songs and records in the mid-1960s, even before Johnny Kijiko joined the band. The band often toured in Kenya, and had recorded in Nairobi and Kericho by the early 1970s.

After Kijiko left the Jamhuri Jazz Band, a sharp rivalry developed between the two bands and they sometimes abused each other in their songs. Jamhuri Jazz’s hit tune Wanyama Wakali (“Fierce Animal”) attacked the Atomic Jazz (referred to as bad animals in the song) which was alleged to have put a curse on musicians of the Jamhuri Jazz. Kijiko himself was reproached for his defection by his former pupils in a song:

\[
\text{Eh mwana usipayuke, siri yako nimeijua} \quad \text{Hey brother, don’t talk foolishly, I know your secret}
\]

\[
\text{Walimwengu wakudanganya oya} \quad \text{The people are cheating you}
\]
Kibanda ninacho ishi mimi kimekukuza.

Kijiko then replied:
Nimeponzwa na zile fadhili zangu.
Tulipokuwa sote wenzangu, mengi nilitenda

Sina shaka oh, wengine wanikumbuka
Wala sikuwana roho mbaya, mengi mwayajua.

You were brought up in the hut where I live.
I was given evil in return for good
When we were all together, I did all sorts of things
No doubt some people remember me
I had no evil intentions, you all know it.

3.4. Tabora

Tabora was one of the oldest pre-colonial trading centers of the interior. Founded in the nineteenth century, it later developed into a regional administrative, transportation, and scholastic center under colonial rule. As with the cases of Morogoro and Tanga, two popular jazz clubs emerged in Tabora: the Kiko Kids and the Tabora Jazz Band.

In the mid-1940s, there was at least one dance band in Tabora, called the Argentina Jazz Band. The musicians were mainly made up of African clerks who had moved into Tabora from elsewhere and worked at local government administrative offices, post offices, and railways. The band soon collapsed following the transfer of the founders to posts in other areas, and the remaining members then established the local townspeople's own band, the Kiko Kids. In the mid-1950s, some of the club members broke away and set up another band, the Tabora Jazz Band, merging with another dance band that had been formed by African personnel at the government offices.

Made up mostly of Muslim townsmen of various ethnic groups, the Kiko Kids had musician members and dancing members in their early days. The former comprised the band itself, including the founding members. The latter came to dance at concerts admission-free, but had to make contributions when the club was in need of funds. If a member or his relative died, the band and the dancers contributed to the funeral expenses as separate groups. When a memorial service for the deceased was held, some of the cost might be defrayed from the club account. If a member needed to repair his house or build a new one, everyone had an equal right to assistance from club funds, which were allocated by rotation. Most musicians had day jobs, and the gate money was mostly used to run the club.

From the late 1950s, the Kiko Kids were led by Salum Zahoro, a Nyamwezi Quranic teacher who composed some hit numbers with the local ethnic ngoma flavour. The band introduced modern instruments such as an electric guitar, a saxophone, and a trumpet as early as 1957, and went on to tour Dar es Salaam, where they performed at an anniversary function of TANU (the Tanganyika African National Union), the leading political party which was campaigning for independence. The Kiko Kids once launched a short-lived branch called the Special Jazz Band in neighboring Shinyanga town. The band also had a friendly relationship with other towns' bands such as the Western Jazz Band, which treated the Kiko Kids as guests when they came to perform in Dar es Salaam.

By the mid-1960s, the Tabora Jazz Band had emerged as a strong rival. In the early 1960s, the Kiko Kids succeeded in getting two skilled musicians from Bujumbura, the capital of neighboring Burundi, by offering them regular salaries and accommodation. It was the beginning of an influx of professional musicians from outside Tabora. From the late 1960s, the Tabora Jazz Band started to bring in musicians from Ujiji, a town located on the Congolese border, and the old-fashioned musical styles were replaced with the current Congolese ones. The Tabora Jazz eventually overwhelmed the Kiko Kids, although the latter tried to employ some musicians from the Congo around 1970, only to see them leave for Nairobi several months later. At the time the Kiko Kids were forced to move from their clubhouse based at a bar in the city center owing to rent arrears, while the Tabora Jazz Band, led by Shem Karenga, a musician from Ujiji, launched several hit songs in the 1970s.

3.5. Social Characteristics of Jazz Clubs in the 1950s and 1960s

Most of the jazz clubs considered here shared many social features. In many cases, jazz clubs were composed of (mostly male) townspeople almost regardless of ethnic groups and
social strata. Even if a newly-founded band assumed an ethnic or regional orientation (as with the Western Jazz, Kilwa Jazz, Jamhuri Jazz), or associated itself with a specific social status such as the local government elite (as in Tabora), it soon acquired wide support and allowed almost anyone to join. Another notable feature of jazz clubs in the early days was that the majority of their members were non-musicians who contributed to the club and enjoyed the right to dance at concerts with free admission. So it may be assumed that jazz clubs came out of the tradition of the dancing (dansi) clubs of the 1930s, which, as suggested by Iliffe (1979: 392), had probably developed in turn from their predecessors, the beni ngoma dance societies. The emergence and eventual nationwide diffusion of jazz bands, therefore, should be considered not as a break from the beni movement but as its continuation.

Martin (1980: 54–56) argues that beni ngoma established some important precedents for the later development of urban music in Tanganyika: a multi-ethnic make-up of groups, the use of European instruments, and the use of Swahili song lyrics. In addition to these points, the jazz clubs seem to have inherited not all but some of the important social characteristics of beni societies: they functioned as mutual aid societies, created inter-town networks of affiliated bands and branches, and displayed a modern organizational form with membership, by-laws, and administrative staff. “A common propensity towards rival factions”, to borrow Askew’s term (Askew 1997: 140), was also found in each urban community. Ranger (1975: 154) is probably right to assert that in Dar es Salaam, “the central place which Beni had occupied with modernizing youth had been assumed by Jazz Bands. ... The Jazz Bands played many of the same roles as Beni. ...The songs of the Jazz Bands had the same salty topicality as the old Beni songs”.

The social characteristics of jazz bands as communal societies did not last long, however. As we have seen, the recreational and amateurish character of the early jazz clubs was gradually fading away through the 1960s. The post-independence political milieu added another new dimension: the incorporation of these local activities into larger state-wide institutions.

4. UNIFICATION OF THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS AFTER INDEPENDENCE AND THE EMERGENCE OF PUBLICLY-OWNED BANDS

4.1. Establishment of Jazz Bands in the Public Sector

After complete independence from British rule in 1961, the ruling TANU party initiated a de facto and then de jure one-party system. Under the supreme political leadership of TANU, a number of existing organizations, including trade unions and cooperatives, were united. Among them were the National Union of Tanganyika Workers (NUTA), the Cooperative Union of Tanganyika (CUT), and the TANU Youth League. By the mid-1960s, the new independent government had established two military forces, the Tanzania People’s Defense Force (TPDF) and the National Service, besides reorganizing the existing police and prison service (National Service Headquarters 1973: 3–6). TANU also officially launched a socialist programme in 1967, and soon nationalized many private interests and companies. Furthermore, many public corporations were established by the government during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Coulson 1982: 272).

Such a rapid integration of political and economic systems had a great impact upon jazz musical activities. While jazz clubs flourished in various urban centers, as has been noted, the governmental organizations and sections began to launch their own jazz bands in Dar es Salaam from the mid-1960s. Among the first bands established by the public sector during the 1960s were the NUTA Jazz Band (run by the trade union, the Polisi Jazz Band (“Police Jazz Band”) of the police force, the National Service Jazz Band (later renamed the JKT Kimbenga Stereo) of the National Service, the Mwenge Jazz Band of the TPDF, and the Magereza Jazz Band (“Prison Jazz Band”) of the prison authority. In the 1970s, the TANU Youth League Jazz Band, which was later renamed the Vijana Jazz (“Youth Jazz”), and the Uhamiaji Jazz Band (“Immigration Jazz Band”) were launched by the TANU Youth League and Immigration Department, respectively. The Washirika Tanzania Stars were formed by
WASHIRIKA (the Cooperative Union of Tanzania), the successor of the CUT, in the late 1980s(33).

Public corporations, as well as governmental institutions, were eager to set up their own bands in Dar es Salaam. The Urafiki Jazz Band ("Friendship Jazz Band") was founded in 1970 under the patronage of Friendship Textile Mill Ltd. Subsequently the STC Jazz Band(34), Bima Lee, and the UDA Jazz Band were set up in turn during the 1970s by the State Trading Corporation (STC), the National Insurance Corporation (BIMA in Swahili), and the Dar es Salaam Public Transportation System (UDA in its Swahili acronym), respectively. In 1978, the Tanzania Taxi and Transport Service launched the famous Mlimani Park Orchestra, whose ownership was transferred to the Dar es Salaam Development Corporation in 1982(35).

Many of these government organizations and corporations launched jazz bands primarily in order to provide their workers with entertainment, though also recognizing opportunities for publicity and profit. The bands owned by public corporations, such as the Urafiki Jazz, the Biashara Jazz, and Bima Lee, for example, would broadcast advertising songs through the airwaves, and toured even into quite remote rural areas to promote the company’s products(36). It is also important to note that the publicly-owned bands produced numbers of professional musicians who received regular monthly salaries together with fringe benefits (travel allowance, free health care, etc.), like other civil servants. Depending on their place of employment, the musicians might work in offices or factories, besides engaging in daily music practice and weekend performances, which would be held at dance halls and bars in the town. They may have received performance allowances like those of the full-time private bands.

The publicly-owned bands even appeared in small provincial towns. Notably, during the 1960s and 1970s, provincial branches of the TANU Youth League launched jazz bands not only in regional capitals such as Iringa, Mwanza, Mbeya, Moshi, Lindi, and Songea, but also in district headquarters such as Bagamoyo, Tunduru, Biharamulo, Nachingwea, and Njombe. In the 1970–80s National Service had jazz bands in at least three of their provincial camps: Mafinga, Mwanza, and Dodoma. Bukoba and Moshi both had an Usalama Jazz Band ("Security Jazz Band"), run by the local police force and police college, respectively. In the 1980s, there were bands set up by local government RDD (Regional Development Directors) in Arusha and Dodoma(37).

4.2. Political Mobilization of Jazz Bands

The prosperity of publicly-owned bands can be largely, if not entirely, attributed to the political circumstances of the post-colonial era. The close association between jazz bands and politics, specifically TANU, had already existed in the capital and provinces alike from colonial times, especially in the period of the anti-colonial struggle for independence (Abrahams 1961: 250–251; Graebner 1992: 228; Tsuruta 1998: 113–115). This linkage between jazz bands and politics was strengthened after independence, and the bands began to be directly involved in political activities in various ways.

Amidst the climate of growing nationalism and patriotism, political songs, propagating the new socialist ideology and nation building philosophies, were always part of the repertoires for the bulk of jazz bands, including private ones, until the 1980s. National radio broadcasting contributed greatly to the nationwide dissemination of such songs. In 1965, the sole radio station, TBC, was reorganized as Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD), and came under the direct control of the government and TANU. Restrictions were soon placed on the amount of foreign music that could be played. As a result, according to a survey held in July 1968, 84% of the songs played on the three request shows in the National Program (Swahili Service) were Tanzanian songs in Swahili, many of them rumba tunes, and including a significant number of songs on national politics (Mytton 1976: 251, 285).

Until recently, most of the recordings in mainland Tanzania were made at RTD for the purpose of radio broadcasting(38). Most major bands recorded at RTD once a year to get nationwide publicity, and out of the five to ten songs recorded at one session, as Graebner (1992: 231) points out, there was likely to be at least one political song. It might deal with
political events taking place in other African countries, such as anti-colonial struggles, but in many cases, the song would express support for either TANU and its leaders or current national policies such as ujamaa (socialism), a term which embodied the political concepts of Tanzanian socialist ideology. The following song, made by the Vijana Jazz Band in the mid-1970s, was designed to exhort people to join the party-run scheme for replacing private shops with cooperatives:

All citizens, let us respond to the call of the party for the establishment of cooperative shops in order to implement ujamaa.

Operation Maduka (shops)!
To eradicate exploitation in the country and to reach complete ujamaa, we must accomplish this purpose(39).

The Vijana Jazz Band was a TANU party organ, and often made tours upcountry, especially on national ceremonial occasions such as the annual Uhuru (independence) Torch rally(40). The band was also mobilized for the party’s election campaigns, along with the trade union’s NUTA Jazz Band. The NUTA Jazz Band energetically toured throughout the country in the 1960s and 1970s, bringing a generator in case there might be no electricity supply in the most remote villages. Educational films might be brought along and showed before the concert, for the purpose of enlightening the public about the correct ways of work in the offices and fields. In the concert, along with love songs, the band would play didactic political songs including those advertising NUTA itself(41):

All the workers, let us join our organization NUTA.
NUTA is an organ for enlightening workers and farmers all over the country.
Ladies and gentlemen, every worker has the responsibility to join NUTA for his own benefit(42).

In the military forces, jazz bands consisting mostly of professional soldiers were seen as a means of promoting political education inside and outside the army. According to Swai (1982: 78), the Mwenge Jazz Band and other performance groups in the TPDF were organized by political education officers in the army, with the intention of inculcating soldiers with the party’s policy. National Service’s band, also supervised by the political education section of the army, not only entertained people inside and outside the military camps, but also played the role of propagating the policy of socialism and self-reliance through its music (National Service Headquarters 1973: 17, 28). In 1979, after the war against Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, the jazz bands of the two armies toured throughout Uganda to entertain the Ugandan people as well as the Tanzanian military, playing songs attacking the ousted dictator and praising the bravery of the Tanzanian soldiers(43).

Private jazz clubs too cooperated with TANU. Notably the Kilwa Jazz Band, which had connections with some influential politicians and was occasionally sponsored by them, was one of the bands often mobilized in the party’s political campaigns, including fund raising concerts. The band also performed at Tanganyika’s Independence Day celebrations in 1962, and was then sent to Malawi in 1964 to celebrate that country’s independence(44). The presence of jazz bands at such national and international ceremonial events was very common at the time.

4.3. The Decline of Former Jazz Clubs

With the rapid socioeconomic changes of the 1960s, successful jazz clubs were forced to change their amateur characteristics and gradually commercialized. The advent of rival publicly-owned bands may have enhanced this tendency, especially from the 1970s, since musicians at the time were eager to be employed in the public sector where they would get a more stable monthly income. By the mid-1970s, many jazz clubs had ceased to be social clubs dependent on contributions from non-musician members and the bands were made up mostly of paid musicians. However, in most cases, attempts by the clubs to transform
themselves into independent businesses proved very difficult.

In Dar es Salaam, the Kilwa Jazz Band folded around 1968 due to heavy debts\(^{(45)}\). The Dar es Salaam Jazz Band and the Western Jazz Band recorded a number of successful songs at RTD and Kenyan record companies in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but went into decline in the mid-1970s. Both bands suffered from frequent defections of musicians and worn-out instruments, until they finally broke up around 1980\(^{(46)}\).

At around the same time in 1973, both of the band leaders in Morogoro, Juma Kilaza of the Cuban Marimba and Mbaraka Mwinshehe of the Morogoro Jazz Band, broke away with several fellow musicians and established new bands called TK Lumpopo and Super Volcano, respectively. After the withdrawal of leading members, both the Morogoro Jazz Band and Cuban Marimba soon declined\(^{(47)}\). The former disbanded around 1976 (Mwakyoma et al. 1985: 28–29), while the latter seems to have continued up to around 1980.

Mbaraka’s Super Volcano seems to have started as an entirely commercial enterprise, performing in Kenya to raise money to get instruments and featuring some female dancers on stage (Mwakyoma et al. 1985: 24). Mbaraka and his band retained immense popularity until his tragic death in an automobile accident in Mombasa in 1979 (Martin 1980: 81–87). TK Lumpopo also acquired instruments from the Kenyan record industry, and began to pay musicians on a monthly basis from its inception. The band was defunct by 1982, however, since they could not replace the broken instruments\(^{(48)}\).

Some leading members of the Jamhuri Jazz Band of Tanga went to Arusha to join another band in 1972. They soon moved to Kenya, and later achieved commercial success under the name of Simba Wanyika. After losing its key members, the Jamhuri Jazz Band dissolved in the mid-1970s\(^{(49)}\). The Atomic Jazz Band, the Jamhuri Jazz’s main competitor, had also disappeared by the late 1970s, because they could not afford to renew their instruments\(^{(50)}\). In Tabora, both the Kiko Kids and the Tabora Jazz Band all but collapsed in the mid-1980s\(^{(51)}\).

Thus, all the once-popular jazz clubs had come to an end at the latest by the mid-1980s, in Dar es Salaam and the provinces alike. They did try to transform themselves into commercial bands, but always struggled because of the disadvantages of being in the private sector under socialist rule. They suffered from constant and acute shortages of funds and instruments. The closing of the Kenyan border in 1977 made the situation worse, because Tanzanian bands, especially the private ones, depended largely on the record industry in Kenya for both recording facilities and instruments. In addition, the urban population increasingly concentrated in Dar es Salaam, as seen in Table 1, in response to political and economic centralization in the principal city. Given these circumstances, many local jazz musicians eventually moved to Dar es Salaam where there were many bands sponsored by the public sector, as well as better commercial outlets.

5. THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF MUSICAL ACTIVITIES AND THE LIBERALIZATION OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

The emergence of private bands as purely commercial units may date back to around 1960, when the Kilimanjaro Chacha Band was launched as the house band for a bar owned by a Chagga merchant in Dar es Salaam\(^{(52)}\). Even under socialist rule, jazz bands continued to be set up in the private sector, mostly by local youths and businesses, but few of them lasted long.

Quite a few private bands in this period involved musicians from the Congo (formerly Zaire), who began flowing into Tanzania as early as the mid-1960s in search of well-paid jobs. In particular from the 1970s, bands launched by Zaireans mushroomed in Dar es Salaam. The most successful and long-lasting Zairean band at the time was the Orchestra Maquis, which settled in Dar es Salaam from the early 1970s\(^{(53)}\). Maquis was followed in the late 1970s by the emergence of Super Matimila and Orchestra Safari Sound (OSS), both of which were established by Tanzanian entrepreneurs with some Zairean musicians as key members\(^{(54)}\).

During the early 1980s Tanzania faced severe economic difficulties under the socialist system. The process of economic liberalization finally started when a serious decline in the
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economy forced Tanzania to sign an IMF accord in 1986. The eventual disintegration of the economic and political system under the socialist regime led to the breakup of a number of publicly-owned bands, especially in public corporations. The Biashara Jazz Band, Urafiki Jazz Band, and UDA Jazz Band were dismantled in the 1980s, victims of cost-cutting measures or the collapse of the sponsoring companies(55). The Uhamiaji Jazz Band and Washirika Tanzania Stars also disbanded in the mid-1980s and early 1990s, respectively(56).

Despite the national economic crisis, the jazz music scene in Dar es Salaam in the 1980s was very active, propelled mainly by profit-minded incentives in both private and public sectors. In addition to privately-owned bands such as Maquis, Super Matimila, and the OSS, other popular and profitable bands at the time included the Milimani Park Orchestra, Vijana Jazz Band, Bima Lee, and the JUWATA Jazz Band (formerly the NUTA Jazz), all of which were publicly-owned. One of the remarkable features of this period, as Graebner (1994: 361) also points out, was the frequent movement of celebrated musicians among these top bands, normally attracted by higher salaries. This fueled competition among the bands, and commercialization of musical activities accelerated in step with economic liberalization.

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper, I have given a rough sketch of the historical development processes of jazz bands in urban Tanzania from the British colonial period down to the 1980s.

The most remarkable feature characterizing the early jazz bands was that they developed primarily as social recreational clubs including many non-musicians. They also functioned as mutual aid societies for their generally multi-ethnic memberships. Like the beni ngoma dance societies that preceded them, “jazz clubs” fostered relations of rivalry within geographically compact urban centers, while they also had close relations with their counterparts in other towns. In the 1960s and 1970s, nationwide popularity and commercial success were achieved by several jazz clubs in Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Tanga, and Tabora, a development which perhaps epitomizes the transformation of jazz bands from communal dancing clubs into commercial enterprises.

From the mid-1960s, urban jazz acquired a new dimension with the advent of a number of publicly-sponsored bands. Enjoying the various advantages of public sector patronage under socialist rule, they were often mobilized for the political and economic purposes of the government. Frequent local tours and radio broadcasting contributed largely to the achievement of nationwide fame by these bands. During this stage, the earlier jazz clubs became gradually marginalized, and many musicians in both the capital and the provinces gravitated to publicly-owned bands in Dar es Salaam. Economic liberalization and intensifying commercialism after the mid-1980s, however, led to the collapse of many publicly-sponsored bands, while several other bands in the public sector succeeded in transforming themselves into purely commercial units.

To summarize this sequence of developments, the social basis for urban jazz musical activities shifted from close-knit local groups in urban centers to state organizations, and then toward private commercialism. Such changes may also reflect a more general social change in Tanzanian urban society, that is, a weakening of communal bonds both in the densely populated principal city of Dar es Salaam and in depressed provincial urban centers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Field trips in 1998 and 1999 were made possible by grants from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and the Toyota Foundation, respectively. I am also grateful to all the people mentioned here for their generosity in sharing their rich memories of jazz bands with me. My deepest gratitude to Mr. Athumani Manicho and Ms. Samia Hujat for supporting me in the research.
NOTES

(1) *Taarab* is another major genre of urban popular music in Tanzania. Originally formed under the strong influence of modern Arab music, it has flourished along the East African coast and on the offshore island of Zanzibar, especially among the Swahili people.

(2) *Ngoma* is the generic term for traditional performances with drum, dance, and song, usually performed as the accompaniment for all kinds of festivals and ceremonies.

(3) Since documents concerning this matter are very limited, most of the materials treated herein are derived from personal interviews by the author with musicians and ex-musicians who had actually engaged in the activities concerned, unless otherwise indicated.

(4) The tradition of brass bands still survives in the form of the *tarumbeta* (trumpet), a small brass orchestra which plays the accompaniment at wedding celebrations and other kinds of ceremonies. Notably in Morogoro, a Catholic priest ran a brass band in the 1970s, which produced a number of horn players who are still active today in the top bands in Dar es Salaam.

(5) All the information on *beni ngoma* here is based on Ranger (1975).

(6) Anthony (1983: 154–156) points out that *dansi* was started as an imitation of the European way of life and mainly adopted by members of the urban African elite dressed in Western clothing, but in the 1940s and 1950s, it permeated even the urban Muslim majority, despite its explicitly Christian origin.

(7) In the 1930s, Goan dance bands consisting of violins, guitars, and drums were popular in polite society in Dar es Salaam (Anthony 1983: 155). Even in the 1950s and 1960s there were several bands playing soft instrumental music mainly for high-status audiences. Along with some Goan bands, there were also bands formed by educated African governmental officials, such as the Merry Black Birds (later renamed the Shelly Merry Makers).

(8) Interview with Muharami Charambo (one of the founders of the Dar es Salaam Jazz Band), Dar es Salaam, 22 September 1996.


(12) Idi Nhende (one of the founders of the Western Jazz Band), Dar es Salaam, 31 March and 26 May 1996.

(13) Juma Mrisho (a former singer with the Kilwa Jazz Band and the Urafiki Jazz Band), Dar es Salaam, 25 May 1996.

(14) Hamisi Ngulu, 6 September 1999; Zahoro Nasor (a founder of the Lucky Star Jazz Band), Bagamoyo, 6 January 1996.

(15) Hamisi Ngulu, 6 September 1999; Muharami Charambo, 22 September 1996.

(16) Kulwa Salum (a former leader of the Morogoro Jazz Band), Morogoro, 8 December 1996.

(17) Kulwa Salum, Morogoro, 24 February 1996.

(18) Juma Kilaza (a former leader of the Cuban Marimba), Morogoro, 25 February 1996.

(19) Juma Kilaza, 25 February 1996; Kulwa Salum, 24 February and 8 December 1996. The following example of singing rivalry also draws upon the interviews with Kulwa Salum.


(21) Selemani Mwaipungu (a founder of the Cuban Branch), Dar es Salaam, 22 February 1997.

(22) Hamisi Ngulu, 6 September 1999.

(23) Except where noted, this section draws mainly upon interviews with Johnny Kijiko (a former leader of the Jamhuri Jazz Band, the Atomic Jazz Band, and the UDA Jazz Band), Dar es Salaam, 26 December 1995, 26 May 1996, 22 February 1997, 4, 7 September and 21 October 1999.

(24) Henry Mdimu, Tanga, 1 January 1997. After his marriage to a Muslim woman, he converted to Islam.

(25) Managers of sisal plantations at the time appear to have been willing to sponsor bands to entertain the workers in their estates. There were dance bands on specific estates, such as the Amboni Kids on the Amboni estate, which was once led by Henry Mdimu.

(26) Salim Msema (a former chairman of the Atomic Jazz Band), Tanga, 1 January 1997; *Nchi Yetu* 70, 1969, p. 24.

(27) Ibid., pp. 11 and 23.

(28) Except where noted, this section is based mainly on interviews with Salum Zakhoroh (a former leader of the Kiko Kids), Dar es Salaam, 10 March and 25 May 1996, 14 March 1997, and 12 October 1999.

(29) Shaabani Mabomba (one of the founders of the Kiko Kids and the Tabora Jazz Band), Tabora, 9 August 1996.

(30) Mlekwa Suleiman (a former manager of the Tabora Jazz Band), Tabora, 8 August 1996. According to him, the band also launched a junior section called the Nyanyembe Jazz Band in 1968.

(31) Sudi Saidi (a former manager of the Kiko Kids), Tabora, 8, 9 August 1996.

(32) The NUTA Jazz Band changed its name to JUWATA Jazz in 1977 and then to OTTU Jazz in 1991, coinciding with the renaming of the mother organization.

(33) The information on these bands launched by public institutions is mainly based on interviews held in Dar es Salaam with Mhidini Gurumo (present leader of the OTTU Jazz), 15 February 1997; John Simon (a former musician of the NUTA Jazz and the JKT Kimbunza Stereo), 23 March 1996; Hamza Kalala (a former leader of the Vijana Jazz and the Washirika Tanzania Stars), 1 May 1996; Ali Adinani (a former leader of the Uhahi Jazz Band), 17 March 1996.

(34) The band was renamed the Biashara Jazz ("Business Jazz") later in the mid-1970s, coinciding with the reorganization of the company.

(35) The information on these bands launched by public corporations is based mainly on interviews held in Dar es Salaam with Juma Mrisho, 24 December 1995; Johnny Kijiko, 4 September 1999; Juma Ubao (a former leader of the Biashara Jazz), 5 April 1996; Dankan Ndumbalo (a former musician of Bima Lee), 6 April 1996. In addition to the bands mentioned here, according to Askev (1997: 407), there were jazz bands sponsored by Dar es Salaam International Airport, the Tanzania Railway Authority, and the Dar es Salaam Port Authority.


(37) The examples of bands referred here are taken from lists of recording dates at the RTD, newspapers, and various interviews by the author.

(38) Since there was no indigenous record industry in Tanzania until the 1980s, except for the state-owned Tanzania Film Company (TFC), commercial recordings of Tanzanian jazz bands were mostly made in Kenya.

(39) "Wananchi wote kwa pamoja titike wito wa chama kwa kuanzisha maduka ya ushirika ili kutekeleza ujamaa / Operation Maduka / Kwa kufuta unyonyaji nchini na kujikia ujamaa kamili hakuna budi kutekeleza lengo."

(40) Hamza Kalala, 1 May 1996.

(41) John Simon, Dar es Salaam, 18 October 1998; Mhidini Gurumo, Dar es Salaam, 15 February 1997 and 3 September 1999. The following song also draws upon the interviews with Mhidini Gurumo.

(42) "Wafanyakazi wote tujiunge na chama chetu cha NUTA / NUTA ni chombo cha kuelimisha wafanyakazi pamoja na wakulima Tanzania nzima / Mabibi na mabwana kila mfanyakazi ana wajibu wa kujinga na NUTA kwa maslahi yake ya baadaye."


(49) Johnny Kijiko, 7 September and 21 October 1999.

(50) Salim Msema, 1 January 1997.

(51) Salum Zahoro, 10 March 1996; Mlekwa Suleiman, 8 August 1996.

(52) Mhidini Gurumo (a former musician), 15 February 1997.


(54) Hamza Kalala, 1 May 1996; King Kiki (a former leader of the OSS), Dar es Salaam, 13 April

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