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OF THE WORLD



VOLUME XII
GENRES: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Hausa Popular Music (Northern Nigeria)

The Hausa people of northern Nigeria are predominantly an African Muslim group. Islam has made inroads in the region since the thirteenth century through trading networks headed by Malian Muslim clerics from West Africa. The Hausa are predominantly peasant farmers, traders and itinerant merchants following long caravan routes that saw a Hausa mercantile and social presence in cities in the North African countries of Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Libya. They were the original source of the *gnawa* music genre of North Africa. The spread of the Hausa over the Sahelian regions of West Africa gave them distinct diversity, and yet they retain a culturally homogeneous identity. Beside northern Nigeria, they are also spread across the countries of Niger, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Togo, Ghana and the Sudan. This entry is concerned with the urban popular music of the Hausa of northern Nigeria, although diasporic Hausa share more or less the same musical traditions.

This entry begins with an account of Hausa traditional music, which forms a backdrop to the development of urban Hausa popular music. This account is followed by a section on *nanaye filmi* music. Although not the only impetus for the development of urban Hausa popular music, the music of Hindi films was undoubtedly the major one. It gave rise to a form of music known as *nanaye* for Hausa video films. The music known as *nanaye* gradually came to have a life of its own as a genre somewhat distinct and independent from Hausa films. *Nanaye filmi* music played a significant role in the development of two other forms of Hausa popular music, *madhee* or *madhu* (Islamic gospel music of northern Nigeria) and technopop, genres that are the subject of the entry's final two sections.

Hausa Traditional Music

Despite its long history and variety of styles, Hausa traditional music has retained a consistent structure that has defined it over the centuries. A distinct characteristic of the genre is that its creative focus is not on instrumental accompaniment but on the lyrics the bandleader sings, delivered in a verse-chorus (*amshi*) structure. This structure came to later pervade nontraditional performances that rely on electronic instruments. Hausa songs relying

exclusively on acoustic (as opposed to electronic) instrumentation define Hausa music and are referred to as *wakokin gargajiya* (traditional songs). It is very common for Hausa musical groups to play only one type of instrument, typically a percussion instrument such as the *kalangu* or 'African' drum, maintaining more or less the same beat throughout the song. The skills of the bandleader, who is always male, are essentially measured by the philosophy and poetry of his lyrics rather than the musical accompaniment.

This focus on singing rather than instrumental Hausa music creates a social world where Hausa musicians are given a low social status because of the client-focused nature of Hausa lyrical performance (Smith 1959). With its main function of appeasing specific clients, the music thus is viewed as a nonart form – in the sense of 'art for art's sake' – because the *maroka* (praise singers) praise their clients in return for money or other material goods. A client who is not generous receives the short end of the singer's stick, often with sarcastic barbs thrown in for good measure. Naturally, a very generous patron enjoys the full-blown poetic powers of the singer.

Hausa traditional music does not, however, include poet-musicians, who often recite their poetry without any accompanying instrumentation. Older *madhu* singers are cast in the same mold of not using musical accompaniment. These older *madhu* poets, such as Sheikh Nasiru Kabara, Sheikh Bala Maiyafe, Mallam Magaji 'Yantandu and Sani Hasasan Kafinga, often focused their repertoire on classical Arabic poetry and restricted themselves to the a cappella tradition of such performance. They provided inspiration for the younger *madhu* singers who initially used the frame drum (*bandiri*) and then, later, Yamaha synthesizers for musical accompaniment. Secular Hausa singers in other traditions have not been influenced by these poet-singers.

Non-*madhu* a cappella poets do not perform publicly for payment and, subsequently, have been seen as representing the Hausa oral art form and the cultural characteristics of quintessentially elite Hausa forms of entertainment. Mainly highly educated (both in Western and Islamic traditions, in contrast with traditional 'lowbrow' musicians who often have had only an Islamic education), these poets tend to employ either political or religious thematic elements. Aliyu Namangi's nine-volume *Imfiraji*, for instance, is

a Dante-esque exposition of life and death, and what comes after death – all admonishing the Muslim to lead a pious life. Ahmadu 'Danmatawalle's *Wakar Tsuntsaye* is a blistering critique of the ruling house of one of the emirates of northern Nigeria, structured in the form of an Orwellian *Animal Farm* landscape in which the characteristics of the various courtiers are juxtaposed with characteristics of specific birds and animals in a jungle in their quest for a new ruler.

The Three Elements of Hausa Traditional Music

Hausa traditional musicians perform in a single cluster of three elements. The first is the singer (*mawaki*). Considered the bandleader, the singer provides the central focus of any Hausa traditional music performance, whether on stage or in the studio. The pure 'classic' traditionalist singers rarely play an instrument themselves, preferring to provide the lead vocals only. The few exceptions include musical groupings of stringed instruments, where the singer often plays one-stringed instrument or another. Examples of such bandleaders include Hassan Wayam and Garba Supa, as well as solo performers such as Danmaraya Jos.

The second element is the backing musicians (*makada*), who provide the music to accompany lyrics sung by the bandleader. The musicians are often made up of about three to five individuals, usually playing percussion instruments (*kalangu*, *jauje*) of various pitches. Wind instruments are unusual. The drummers rarely sing, but may form part of the chorus.

The third element is the backup choristers (*'yan amshi*), who provide a call-and-response soundscape for the singer's lyrics. These *'yan amshi* are often made up of between three and ten individuals of the same gender; mixed-gender musical formations do not exist in Muslim Hausa traditional music because of Islamic prohibitions.

The Four Categories of Hausa Traditional Music and Musicians

Historically, Hausa traditional music and musicians were often divided into four categories. These categories did not merge into each other, but rather developed concurrently, with the last category, *makadan jama'a*, gaining predominance from the 1980s.

The first category was *makadan yaki* (war musicians), who flourished from the mid-nineteenth century up to 1920. Singing for palace armies of Sokoto territories such as Gobir, Kebbi and Argungu, these included Wari Mai Zarin Gobir (d. 1800), Ata Mai Kurya (d. 1899), Kara Buzu Mai Kan Kuwa (d. 1920) and so on. Their instruments included *zari* (any piece of equipment used to create a musical tone, such as a ring beaten with a metal rod), *kurya* (a variety of drum) and *molo* (a three-stringed 'guitar' like a lute) each accompanied by a backing choir.

The second category, *makadan sarakuna* (emir's palace musicians), centered their musical performance around drum orchestras. Again found predominantly around the Sokoto basin, these musicians included Buda 'Dantanoma Argungu (1858–1933), Ibrahim Gurso Mafara (1867–1954), Salihu Jankidi Sakkwato (1852–1973), Aliyu Dandawo Argungu (1925–66), Ibrahim Narambada Isa (1875–1960), Muhammadu Sarkin Taushin Sarkin Katsina (1911–90), Musa 'Dankwairo (1909–91), Sa'idu Faru (b. 1932), Sani Aliyu Dandawo Yauri (b. 1949) and Abu 'Dankurma Maru (b. 1926). Their main music styles were based on a variety of drum rhythms accompanied by slow, mournful and elegant vocals, as befitting one in the presence of royalty. The main drums were *kotso* (a drum with only one diaphragm), *taushi* (a conical drum with only one diaphragm, beaten softly), *kuru* (a drum about one meter long) and *turu* (a large drum). Although predominantly palace musicians, they nevertheless used their skills to sing about issues such as politics and the importance of traditional culture.

The third category was *makadan sana'a/maza* (those who sang for members of specific occupational guilds and professions, predominantly male). Perhaps the most famous of these was Muhammadu Bawa 'Dan Anace (1916–86), whose main – although not exclusive – specialty was singing for traditional boxers, the most famous of whom was Muhammadu Shago. 'Dan Anace also sang for farmers and members of the aristocracy.

The most eclectic category was the fourth, *makadan jama'a* (popular singers). Although often singing for emirs and other gentry, their predominant focus was on ordinary people and their extraordinary lives. And while other musicians tended to favor the drum in its various forms, popular singers employed a variety of musical instruments and incorporated a variety of

styles and subject matter – marking a departure from a closeted traditional society to a more cosmopolitan product reflecting the transnational flow of media influences.

Departing from the dominance of Sokoto musicians and the staid emir's courts, Hausa popular folk musicians also adopted new instruments to replace the predominantly percussion-based music of the emir's courts and occupational guild singers. Thus percussion instruments, such as *duman girke*, *ganga*, *tauje*, *banga*, *taushi*, *kotso*, *turu*, *kalangu* and *kwaira*, wind instruments such as *algaita*, *kakaki* and *kubumburuwa*, and stringed instruments including *garaya*, *kuntigi*, *molo*, *kwamsa*, *goge* and *kukuma* all became the vogue among Hausa street and popular folk musicians up until the 1990s before the introduction of the Yamaha PSR series of synthesizers created new forms of urban musics that eclipsed the folk music genre among the Hausa. For instance, Mamman Shata, the most famous of all Hausa traditional and popular entertainers, used the *kalangu* in his band and Danmaraya Jos used the *kuntigi* (a small, one-stringed fiddle-type instrument). Equally diverse was their subject matter. Shata was predominantly a praise singer (*maroki*) for emirs, gentry, women, the infamous, high society, civil servants and so on, having composed thousands of songs for all categories of people, while Danmaraya Jos devoted his repertoire to social philosophy.

Women Singers in Hausa Traditional Music

Very few popular singers in Hausa traditional music have been women – perhaps due to the low-class status often afforded to musicians in Islamicate Hausa society. Generally, music and popular entertainment are not seen as credible or acceptable career options for women in a traditionally closeted society. This results from the mixed-gender nature of public performances of many forms of music. Islamicate societies – societies with Islamic social institutions that do not operate with strict Islamic constitutions because of the secular nature of the larger nation-state – nonetheless do not encourage mixed-gender social spaces. The few women performers in traditional music often include what is considered bawdy subject matter in their performances. These are seen as being too loud, and contrary to the expectations that women keep out of sight in the public sphere.

The most notable of female traditional performers were the late Uwaliya Mai Amada (active between the 1960s and the early 1980s) and the late Sa'adatu Barmani Choge (active from the 1970s to the 1990s), both of whose accompanying bands used calabashes as percussion. Restricting their performances exclusively to all-female audiences, these two elderly female performers were accepted by the larger Hausa society, which gave them opportunities to 'tour' the various naming and marriage ceremony circuits providing entertainment to exclusively female audiences. Between the two of them, Uwaliya and Barmani provided entertainment for well-heeled Hausa women during ceremonies.

The Diminishing Fortunes of Hausa Traditional Music

In the early twenty-first century the patronage system of Hausa traditional music relegated the genre to the status of a quaint archival performance, valued essentially because of its preservation of Hausa cultural performing heritage. Modernization reduced the desire to sustain the patronage of the musicians, whose creativity is driven by clients, with compositions made in honor of their generosity. With performing as a musician viewed increasingly as a lowbrow and unrewarding occupation, many Hausa traditional musicians were unwilling to see their offspring follow in their footsteps. As a consequence, an entertainment vacuum developed for Hausa young people, filled initially in the 1970s and 1980s by African-American disco. At the same time, however, modern Hausa music began to make inroads into northern Nigeria with music principally from Ghana and Niger. Wide acceptance of such musics, particularly among young people, accelerated the diminishing fortunes of traditional Hausa performing artists. In this environment, the main impetus for the development of modern urban music among young Hausa people came from Hindi film music rather than African-American music, although Western musical structures more generally did exercise an influence on Hausa *nanaye filmi* music once synthesizers became available, and African-American disco, R&B and rap became one impetus for the development of Hausa technopop. Rap, in particular, became an important impetus for Hausa rap.

One challenge in adopting African-American music was that it required skills on the instruments

used to perform it, skills not easily accessible to young Hausa people. In addition, the largely hostile attitude toward US entertainment maintained by the Muslim Hausa cultural establishment also militated to a degree against the adoption of African-American music. By contrast, Hindi films had themes more consistent with those of Hausa culture. These themes included those of arranged marriages, gender hierarchies and colorful but modest dress. As a consequence, Hindi films enjoyed significant exposure and patronage among Hausa young people from the 1960s onward. In addition, Hindi film music could be easily reproduced using the cheap synthesizers that came onto the market in the 1980s (Adamu 2006, 19–21).

Hausa *Nanaye Filmi* Music

The expression '*filmi* music' evolved in relation to Indian cinema, where 'music is often used as a transformative medium accompanying moments when the protagonists achieve illumination and enlightenment, particularly during traumatic events or turning points in their lives' (Sarrazin 2016, 91). This is precisely the same style of soundtrack music that has been adopted by Hausa video filmmakers in northern Nigeria. This Hausa music genre became known locally as *nanaye*, and is made up of music and songs composed for, and performed during, the choreographed song-and-dance sequences that have become central motifs in Hausa video film dramas of northern Nigeria. These are films that from 1990 onward were initially recorded on videocassettes (as opposed to the usual celluloid film stock of the professional film industries) due to the low-cost availability of video cameras and tapes. However, with the increasing availability of digital recording media, especially from 2013 onward, these films began to be recorded with digital cameras containing internal hard drives or digital memory storage devices.

Hausa *nanaye filmi* music evolved from the Muslim Hausa cinema of northern Nigeria. It was created as a consequence of immersion in the Indian films which were screened by resident Lebanese cinema theater owners throughout northern Nigeria beginning in 1960, when Nigeria became independent from British colonial rule. Young, urban and male Muslim cinema audiences saw reflections of their cultural milieu in the depictions of life in India. Women were excluded from going to cinemas because of the strict Islamic

culture of gender separation. However, women became audiences for the films after the state-run television stations established in the 1970s began broadcasting them and making tapes available for home consumption. Radio stations had also begun broadcasting the soundtracks of popular Hindi films in the 1960s.

The appeal to young, urban and male Muslim cinema audiences occurred especially through films in the 1960s to early 1970s, in particular where dress codes, behavior toward parents and communal cohesion were concerned. Films from the United States, the United Kingdom and Chinese-language 'chopsocky' films were favored by the older educated elite. However, the vast majority of young people preferred Indian films with their spectacular and attractive song-and-dance routines. Eventually, the songs in these films, played intensively over the radio, provided onomatopoeic meters for young audiences in playgrounds to create equivalent Hausa lyrics. This development was crucial in the changing gender relations of Hausa popular music, as these audiences, made up mainly of boys, also included girls. Women's voices eventually emerged as a central characteristic of *nanaye* music. These lyrics were subsequently adapted by Islamic school clerics to create *madhu qasida* (panegyric poetry) in praise of the Prophet Muhammad. This adaptation constituted an attempt to 'Islamize' the Hindu-based lyrics while retaining the same musical structure. Girls were also prominent as students in the Islamiyya schools whose teachers were instrumental in 'Islamicizing' the Hindu-based lyrics.

When urban young men in the city of Kano in northern Nigeria decided to enter into the film industry, their immediate creative reference point was Indian film. These young men created a video film industry principally because of an inability to purchase the right equipment and film stock to shoot on celluloid. Videotape technology in the 1980s was leading-edge, cheap and easily available. Storylines were not aimed at creating artistic, social, political or intellectual statements. Using Indian film templates and, in many cases, completely appropriating popular Indian films, the storylines focused on the romantic theme of love triangles – a social phenomenon quite familiar to the young filmmakers. By 1999 the young filmmakers had labeled the video film industry

'Kanywood' after Bollywood and Hollywood and long before Nigeria's 'Nollywood,' a term coined in 2002 by *The New York Times*. Kanywood films subsequently became popular in other Hausa-speaking parts of Africa, such as Niger, Ghana and Cameroon, and provided templates for the local production of diasporic Hausa films in these African countries.

Hausa video films do not use music scores in the same way as conventional cinema, as a musical accompaniment to or emphasis of the film's moods. Instead, the films use specially composed soundtracks that do not interact with the film's storyline; indeed, in most cases, the musical interludes are unrelated to the film's narrative. They do, however, serve as sub-narratives superimposed on the main plot. These sub-narratives often occur when the contents of a song narrate a story or event that differs radically from the main plot. They are achieved through flash-forward scenes shot in futuristic vignettes that recount the fantasies of the protagonists (the main narrative is often frozen until the sub-narrative song is concluded).

So powerful were the *nanaye filmi* soundtracks in Hausa video films that they often determined the name of the film. This was because the songs were often composed first, before the script was written. In some cases, lyricists would promote an independent song and, if it were considered catchy enough, it could be purchased by a film producer. A film would then be created around the song.

Hausa *nanaye filmi* music was composed using standard commercial piano synthesizers, mainly from the Yamaha and Casio companies. Like other forms of Hausa music, including traditional acoustic performances, this music follows the verse-chorus form in its lyrical composition, the verse-chorus form (referred to as '*amshi*') being a fundamental characteristic of Hausa singing. However, unlike Indian *filmi* music, *nanaye filmi* is not based on traditional Hausa musical harmonies; if anything, *nanaye filmi* musicians go out of their way to create a sound more in tune with Western musical structures, made possible by the numerous stored samples of various genres of Western music stored in the databanks of the synthesizers they used.

The verses are arranged so that each one ends with a specific rhyming word (referred to as '*kafiya*'). The verse structures themselves may be couplets (*kwai*

biyu), tercets (*kwai uku*), quatrains (*kwai huɗu*) or quintets (*kwai biyar*). *Nanaye* singers usually adopt one of these structures, interspersing them with a chorus, which then acts as the hook of the song.

The lyrics are in Hausa and often recorded separately from the accompanying music, with alternating male and female voices singing each verse. There is no fixed number of verses in a song. The lyrics are then mixed with the music later by session musicians in the studio. The mixed-gender structure of the songs, which is quite different from that of Hausa traditional music with its strict gender segregation, was as a result of the Indian film duets after which the musical structure is patterned. The choruses, with their memorable hooks, are always sung by female voices, perhaps providing an outlet for women's social power. The female voices are often enhanced with Auto-tune software after the recording when editing the song, creating a higher-pitched vocal delivery that approximates famous and popular Hindi female playback singers – singers such as Asha Bhosle and Lata Mangeshkar whose prerecorded performances were used as soundtracks with actors then miming the songs during shooting sequences.

The word '*nanaye*' refers to the chorus of traditional Hausa girls' playground songs in a style referred to as *gada* (handclapping). Oil wealth in Nigeria resulted in rapid infrastructural development in cities during the 1970s, which in turn resulted in increasing urbanization. As a consequence, the quintessential 'village playground' of most Hausa towns and villages started giving way to housing expansion and the clustered playgrounds where children played and sang *nanaye* songs disappeared. This style of music was, however, revived with the development of Hausa video films because it was a style that seemed suited to the domestic themes and plots of the films. Both the music and storylines of the films target women and explore domestic issues such as romantic relationships as they affect women.

The first Hausa video films, made from 1990 to 1994, relied on Hausa traditional acoustic music ensembles for their soundtracks. These soundtracks were just that: incidental background music to accompany the film that was not integral to the storyline. The Hausa video film that pioneered a changeover to electronic music was *In Da So Da Kauna* (dir. Ado Ahmad, 1994), whose score was

composed with a Casiotone MT-140 keyboard. With 20 instrumental sound samples and rhythms, this keyboard was seen as providing a 'modern' sound for Hausa music as opposed to the limited acoustic instruments used by the more classical, traditional Hausa musicians.

Clearly seeing the future in keyboard music, Hamisu Lamido Iyan-Tama, a Kano-based Hausa entrepreneur who was also an actor, decided to invest in a pioneer music studio, establishing the Iyan-Tama Multimedia studio in Kano in 1996. The studio's first purchase was the Yamaha PSR-220, which provided an instant appeal for modern Hausa musicians seeking to explore a combination of sounds without being hampered by the inability to play traditional acoustic instruments. Traditional Hausa music performances are usually based on a single musical instrument of various types, one example being provided by Aliyu Dandawo's ensemble, which plays about six different types of drums. Performers such as Hassan Wayam and Nasiru Garba Supa, who use different musical instruments in the same event, are rare. The availability of the Yamaha PSR series of synthesizers thus enabled modern Hausa musicians to combine different musical sounds in the same performance – creating truly innovative outcomes in Hausa music that broke the monopoly of the single instrument characteristic of traditional Hausa music. In so doing, synthesizers enabled Hausa video film *nanaye* artists to creatively approximate Hindi film music, a music which they copied avidly.

The first *nanaye* hit that set the pace was 'Sangaya,' composed on a Yamaha PRS-730. Written in 1999 by Alee Baba Yakasai at the Iyan-Tama Multimedia Studios in Kano, it was the leading *nanaye* song in the film *Sangaya* (dir. Muhammad Sabo, 1999). The success of *Sangaya* sent a strong message that *nanaye* music could achieve massive sales, especially if executed with what practitioners called a '*fiyano*' (the Hausa word for 'piano'). The flexibility afforded by the Yamaha PSR series of keyboard synthesizers enabled improvisations that would not have been possible with Hausa traditional orchestras and propelled *nanaye* as a pioneer Hausa urban music style.

Hausa *nanaye* songs are derived from many sources including, importantly, Hindi film songs. The main sources, however, are independent lyricists such as

Sani Yusuf Ayagi, Musbahu Ahmed, Sadi Sidi Sharifai, Yakubu Muhammad and Rabi Mustapha. Their lyrics have been set to music by a burgeoning group of Yamaha synthesizer instrumentalists in the numerous studios that emerged in Kano in the aftermath of the *nanaye* music revolution, especially after 2000.

As *nanaye* songs do not have to relate to the storyline of any particular film, they are inserted at any point in a film where the director needs a song-and-dance sequence. The CD of the song is then taken to the location where the actors – who have learned the lines of the song by heart – mime the song while the finished recording plays in the background. The first Hausa video film to incorporate this process of *nanaye* mixed-gender miming was *Badakala* (dir. Dan Azumi Baba, 1997). The lyricists rarely contribute to the musical structure of the songs, leaving decisions about the beat and the rhythm to the studio musician. An exception was *nanaye* lyricist Adam A. Zango, who composed his own music and became a famous actor and lyricist, having started his career as a studio technician.

A lull in Hausa video film production in 2007 forced *nanaye* singers to start releasing songs not intended for any film. However, the songs did retain the format used in Hausa film song-and-dance routines. These singers, including Aminudeen Ladan Abubakar, Binta 'Fati Nijar' Labaran, Maryam Fantimoti and Mahmud Nagudu, created a new substyle which came to be referred to by Hausa social media fans as *sabon alƙawari* (new testament, new future), because the songs were composed for general popular consumption rather than for a particular film. In addition, they have been considered 'modern' because of the role of Yamaha synthesizers in their composition. This substyle also included burgeoning Islamic gospel music, centered around praise of the Prophet Muhammad, that used the same *nanaye* performance format. This development echoes Indian filmi music for, as Sarrazin (2014, 178) has noted, 'filmi music has become so powerful that quite often its aesthetics in turn influenced the original co-opted genre outside of the cinemas.' The development of *madhu* religious poetry and political songs all based on the *nanaye* format attests to the enduring power of *nanaye* and its technologies of production among Hausa young people (see below). Indeed, audiences often want to know which particular film featured

a particular political or religious song, indicating a complete crossover in musical styles across the genres.

In 2008 the emergence of *nanaye* songs totally disconnected to the Hausa film industry heralded the emergence of what can only be called ‘post-*nanaye*’ – a musical style with a massive output rooted in Hausa urban cultures. Without any film outlet, the lyricists simply keep recording song after song – sometimes in the hundreds – and uploaded what they could into MP3 sharing websites. Social media features heavily in the dissemination of *nanaye*. This is because young urban Hausa people have ready access to the Internet through commonly available smartphones that make it easy to upload songs to social media sites such as Instagram, YouTube and MySpace, as well as social network sites such as Facebook. Bureaucratic processes associated with record labels and the professional pressing of CDs have made social media the most effective way for both performers and their audiences to participate in wide-scale music dissemination, often for free.

Hausa *nanaye* has come to reflect the dynamism of the contemporary music scene in urban Africa. By focusing on women’s voices as its central characteristic, it has redefined social spaces for women, particularly in northern Nigerian Muslim cultures. The duet, its central feature, gives greater prominence to women and has brought them out of the social ‘cold.’

***Madhee (Madhu)* – Islamic Gospel Music in Northern Nigeria**

Madhee is a style of music performed by Muslim peoples based on panegyrics in praise of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, as well as of venerated sheikhs of Islam. It has been significantly influenced in its development by *nanaye filmi* music.

Among the Muslim Hausa of northern Nigeria, this style of *madhee* music is referred to as ‘*madhu*’ and originated in religious schools referred to as Islamiyya schools. It is, to all intents and purposes, Islamic gospel music. Established in the 1960s, and based on similar schools in the Sudan, Islamiyya schools provided a modernized, expanded and inclusive curriculum, as opposed to the older traditional and more established religious schools that teach only the Qur’an. These schools’ more inclusive religious curriculum is based on Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Tauhid (oneness of God),

Seerah (Prophetic biography), Tahfeez (memorizing and fluently reciting the Qur’an) and Nasheeda (*a cappella* poetry, although, in some schools, especially those of the Sufi brotherhoods – mystics of Islam – the *bandiri*, a frame drum, is used as accompaniment).

While *madeeh* poetry is original to the Islamiyya schools, the schools nevertheless always incorporate three classical poems into the Nasheeda curriculum as a template for the subsequent development of not only the style but also the content of popular Islamic poetry. Hausa *madeeh* poets differ from traditional poet-musicians in the sense that they focus on purely religious narratives, whether modern or classical, while traditional poet-musicians tended to philosophize about life.

The first Islamic poem incorporated by Hausa *madeeh* poets was Al-Fazazi’s *Ishriniyyat*, originally composed in 1208 by Abu Zayd Abd al-Rahman ibn Yakhlaftan ibn Ahmad al-Fazazi from Córdoba. Its full title was *Al-Wasail al-Mutaqabbala* (The Accepted Paths), or more commonly, *Qasid al-Ishriniyyat fi Madh Saiyidna Muhammad* (Poem in the Praise of Muhammad). The second was Al-Busiri’s *Al-Burda*. This was composed in the thirteenth century by Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Sa’id ul-Busiri Ash Shadhili from Morocco, commonly referred to as Al-Busiri. *Al-Burda* is commonly referred to by its longer title of *al-Kawakib ad-Durriya fi Madh Khayr al-Bariya* (The Celestial Lights in Praise of the Best of Creation). The third is the *Hamziyya*, also composed by Al-Busiri. The *Hamziyya* is a poem, all of whose verses rhyme with the letter ‘*hamza*.’ Imam al-Busiri wrote a *Hamziyya* with more than 400 verses, which contains the biography and history of the Prophet Muhammad. Between them, these three classic poems provide the Islamiyya school students with an effective summary of the Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad, and became templates to be used as a basis for the development of similar poems.

When Hindi films became very popular in northern Nigeria from the 1960s onward, their Hausa audiences became enamored with the catchy music of the films. It was mainly young boys who, having heard the songs played on the radio, started mimicking them in playgrounds. Noticing this, Islamiyya school teachers took the step of ‘Islamizing’ the Hindi film songs by composing songs in praise of the Prophet using the Hindi songs’ vocal harmony.

This 'Islamizing' was a deliberate step motivated by an understanding that a lot of the Hindi film songs were either odes to various gods of the Hindu religion or romantic songs. These adaptations, which were purely vocal, emerged principally in the 1980s during an Islamic religious resurgence in northern Nigeria after the 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution, a revolution which had a significant impact in the region. The basic idea was to wean Hausa children away from repeating Hindi film lyrics which they did not know, and which, in marked contrast to the monotheism of Islam, could contain references to the multiplicity of deities characteristic of Hinduism.

With the establishment of a system that got children to sing something considered more meaningful than a substitution of Hindi words from Hindi film soundtracks, more structured performance groups started to appear from 1986 onward, principally in Kano, but soon spreading to other parts of northern Nigeria. Devoted to singing the praises of the Prophet Muhammad in local languages with performances based on the templates of the three classical poems, the groups were referred to collectively as *Kungiyoyin Yabon Annabi* (Panegyric Singers of the Prophet). The more notable of these included Usshaqul Nabiyyi (established in 1986), Fitiyanul Ahbabu (1988), Ahawul Nabiyyi (1989), Ahababu Rasulillah (1989), Mahabbatu Rasul (1989), Ashiratu Nabiyyi (1990) and Zumratul Madahun Nabiyyi (1990). These groups used the *bandiri* instead of the *a cappella* performance of the Islamiyya schools. The *bandiri* itself has a special place in Hausa Muslim Sufi religious performances, a practice that has often led to controversies about the use of music in Islam, as well as the use of music in mosques during Sufi religious activities. The *bandiri* was used by the groups to attract audiences to their performances.

Emerging in an era of Nigerian political turbulence (1979 to 1983) that saw an increased number of gangs made up of young people come into existence as well as an increase in political thuggery, Yabon Annabi poets formed themselves into groups of young people aimed at curbing the miscreant excesses of their peers. These groups felt the best way to achieve their ends was to emphasize love for the Prophet Muhammad in the belief that intense love for the Prophet alone was a significant enough deterrent to offset bad behavior by young people. In effect, the Yabon Annabi poets

were preachers, adopting the motif of popular culture to preach rather than the usual fire and brimstone approach of elder clerics.

In the 1990s a new style of Islamic gospel music emerged, riding on the coat tails of the Hausa film industry's use of Yamaha PSR keyboards to compose the predominantly romantic songs embedded in the narrative of Hausa films. Noting an overwhelming tendency on the part of young people to recite the songs of the Hausa video films, a new group of Islamic gospel singers emerged who also relied on a Yamaha synthesizer to accompany their poems – thus lending them a 'modern' sound that was in competition with Hausa film songs. This approach worked. The *majalisi* (concert) organized by these performers usually drew mammoth crowds. This music was instrumental in attracting people, and young people in particular, to the religious messages embedded in the poems. Led by Rabi'u Usman Baba – a Sufi poet in Kano who became the first individual to use a Yamaha piano synthesizer in his performances – other poets followed, and the electronic sound became a signature of both secular and Islamic singers. Some of the most successful of the singers to emerge as 'modern' Islamic gospel performers include Umar Abdul'aziz Wudil, with the stage name of 'Fadar Bege' (The Palace of Yearning'), Auwalu Habib Bichi, Kabiru Dandogarai, Kabiru Maulana and Ibrahim Autan Sidi. With increased access to recording technology, these modern Islamic singers quickly moved from compact cassette recordings of their performances to CDs that were sold in markets across northern Nigeria. These CDs were neither produced nor marketed by major recording companies since these did not exist for this genre of music. They were produced and marketed through amateur recording studios with limited pressings that sold for less than 50 cents each.

Islamic gospel music in northern Nigeria has therefore evolved as a rallying point for the revival of the Islamic mysticism of Sufism through panegyric performances which focus on the Prophet Muhammad. However, with increasing emphasis on the Seerah (biography) of the Prophet, performers of this music became increasingly devoted to veneration of the two main classical Sufi sheikhs, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (1077–1166), Iran, founder of the Qadiriyya, and Sidi Ahmad al-Tijani (1737–1815), Morocco, founder of the Tijaniyya Sufi order. In Kano,

most of the Islamic popular singers were Tijaniyya, embracing technology and using the Internet to spread their gospel.

While Islamic gospel songs were targeted initially at moving young people away from secular songs containing undesirable subject matter (mainly romantic in character), their proliferation has served only to add color to the musical landscape in northern Nigeria rather than diminishing the existing and increasingly burgeoning secular music scene.

Hausa Technopop

Hausa technopop is an urban music style created in Kano. Although it made appearances on northern Nigerian radio as early as the mid-1990s, it only emerged as a fully formed style from 2008 onward, when it ran counter to the dominance of Hausa *nanaye*, the romantic urban music style created initially for the song-and-dance routines of Hausa video films. Hausa technopop performers consider *nanaye* less macho and more 'girlish' due to the latter's dependence on women's voices. While Hausa technopop artists often use women's voices in their chorus to attract larger audiences, the main focus of their performance is on men's voices. The subject matter of Hausa technopop is as diverse as the music. However, unlike *nanaye* singers, Hausa technopop singers focus less on romantic themes and more on social and educational issues. Most often the words are simply assembled to form a rhyme, since the main essence of Hausa technopop is to provide a dance-oriented entertainment within a matrix of 'modern' beats.

The style emerged as a result of the desire on the part of young Hausa people in urban areas to create modern musical forms that respected musicians in Hausa society, since music and musicians were considered to be of a low status among mainstream conservative Hausa – a legacy stemming from Hausa traditional music. This modernity was triggered by the increasing popularity of transnational urban music styles of dance music, R&B and, significantly, rap. This popularity created a desire among young urban Hausa to domesticate these music styles.

The opportunity to create Hausa technopop first presented itself in 1996 when 18-year-old Nasir Gwale, based in Kano, received the gift of an old Casiotone MT-140 keyboard. With over 20 sound

samples and rhythms, the keyboard provided him with an opportunity to sequence the various samples into a soundscape that approximated 'modern' music, although reflecting no particular distinctive style. This keyboard was eventually replaced by the Yamaha PSR series of synthesizers, which provided the main creative template for the composition of *nanaye* music for Hausa video films (see Hausa *nanaye filmi* music above). Technopop thus came to be based exclusively on sounds generated by the Yamaha PRS series of synthesizers. Hausa instrumentalists have used the term 'dance-hall' to refer to the samples stored in the Yamaha synthesizers they used and it is not to be confused with the Jamaican music genre of the same name.

Due to the variety of ways technopop musicians use synthesizers to create their music, there is no single, recognizable style preferred by session and studio musicians. Lyricists usually either come to the studios with lyrics that are written down or simply pay to enter the recording studio and sing to a beat that in general is created by a studio musician. Consequently, dance rhythms are the only connecting tissue in all Hausa technopop music in Kano and other parts of northern Nigeria.

Vocals are sung mainly in the Hausa language, although lyrics in English are occasionally used in order to create a sound that is 'authentically modern.' In adopting this latter style of delivery, Hausa technopop musicians copy southern Nigerian Afropop counterparts such as D'Banj, Davido, Wizkid, P-Square and 2Face Idibia – although most of these southern Nigerian musicians prefer to see themselves as rap artists in that they combine Afropop (a contemporary, urban, electric popular music style targeted at dance clubs) with elements of rap (with lyrics targeting audiences that can easily compare them with those of mainstream US rap artists such as Ice Cube or Snoop Dogg).

Due to the diversity of approaches adopted by the various musicians who compose the instrumental parts for Hausa technopop songs, the style has no specific musical pedigree. It is generally recognized as technopop because of its disco beat. Like most Hausa modern music, the technopop rhythm and beat follow the oral contours of the song, in that the rhyming words correspond to the beat, while the musician creates a sound equivalent to the rhyme

(*kafiya*). This lyrical structure is borrowed from the Arabic poetic structures to which most Hausa musicians are exposed through the compulsory Islamic education they undergo at various stages of their lives. Technopop thus becomes poetry set to music that conforms to the structure of the rhymed lyrics.

In the Muslim states of northern Nigeria that from 1999 onward have implemented Shari'ah Islamic law, strict Islamic rules governing entertainment for young people in public spaces has severely limited performances of technopop (or any other form of music) in clubs. There was as a consequence an absence of a structured culture of nightclubs and concert venues in Kano. Young people, especially unmarried women, could be arrested for vagrancy by the morality police after 10 pm. This initially restricted the reception of technopop to iPods and smartphones and its distribution to Bluetooth. The form of technopop known as 'dance-hall' was thus paradoxically prohibited from use for dancing in public due to restrictions on public gatherings for the purposes of nonreligious entertainment. As a consequence, audiences for this form of technopop came to appreciate its dance beats at small gatherings in the privacy of their homes. In the absence of CDs until 2005, radio stations gradually became the main platform in northern Nigeria for Hausa technopop musicians.

In December 2003 a new FM radio station, Radio Freedom, was opened in Kano. Within two years the station had become a catalyst in showcasing the increasing pool of emerging Hausa technopop stars. These were led by Bello Ibrahim (Billy-O). His demo (a studio recording distributed exclusively to other users through Bluetooth technology) 'Rainy Season' received massive airplay on Freedom Radio in 2005. Its appeal to young urban audiences was due to its use of EngHausa – starting a verse in Hausa and ending almost every line of the verse with an English word that captures a particular emotion.

By 2006 Hausa technopop musicians were still in what may be called the 'demo mode' because of a lack of record deals and a total absence of record companies willing to market Hausa music. The 'demo' method of production consisted of a lyricist going to a studio with a song and asking the resident musician to listen to the song and create a tune based on its

rhyme. Eventually the song was set to music, recorded on a CD and disseminated as an MP3 in club circuits and on FM stations, and shared by fans through Bluetooth technology.

The first Hausa technopop CD was Abdullahi Mighty's *Taka*, released in 2005 in Kano. Its lead track, 'Sanya Zobe,' was a pure dance-hall composition. Aimed squarely at the commercial side of the music industry, it attained its success through its adoption of a technopop dance matrix over-layered with a thin veneer of Hausa *nanaye*-style singing. This form of Hausa technopop music was followed by others, despite the contempt technopop singers felt toward *nanaye* singers. Indeed, the competition and scorn with which the rising Hausa technopop musicians treat *nanaye* lyricists and musicians were brought to the fore in one of the top-selling independent CDs of 2007 – *Jeeta*, by Kabiru 'Shaba' Shariff. Shariff was a resident session musician-turned lyricist in Kano who put down some of the *nanaye* stars.

A crisis in the Hausa video film industry in 2007 led to the banning of the film industry by the Kano State Censorship Board, the government agency responsible for regulating all creative activities in Kano. This ban affected the music industry because the musicians and lyricists relied on the film industry for their trade. Some of the *nanaye* singers such as Adam A. Zango reinvented themselves as technopop artists, at least until the film industry revived in the middle of 2008. Zango thus combines the two styles in his performances. The lull in film production also led to the emergence in 2008 of a new crop of singers that included X-Dough, Double D, Cast, AY Fashion and Funkiest Mallam. Funkiest Mallam differs from the other singers in using comedy in his lyrics. This has given him a sizeable following on YouTube. Using a variety of subject matter mainly drawn from social issues, all these performers have catapulted technopop to a new height of Hausa urban cool. With a regime change in 2011, when a new, less puritanical governor was elected in Kano, technopop came to be performed more publicly at 'shows' or concerts at the end of major religious festivals.

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