

TO: DAVE MARUS

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## Uganda

This East-Central African republic has had a turbulent history, involving invasion and internal strife lasting for centuries up to the present day. Although the site of the oldest discovered human remains is in Uganda, most of the peoples now living there are descendants of those who came from the Sudan and Congo regions. The Ganda, who traditionally inhabited the north shore of Lake Victoria, are the ethnic group which came to dominance in the late nineteenth century, assisted by the British. Other peoples include the Nyankole, the traditional rulers of the south-west region and the Chwezi whom they deposed. In modern Uganda many of the old ways and customs are disappearing, but the Nyankole retain some of their old skills in poetic praise songs. Also from western Uganda come the Nyoro and Toro who were part of the Bunyoro-Kitara empire. Bunyoro is famous for its traditional music and crafts. The Sogo of the eastern region, who were the court musicians of the traditional king, also have a rich variety of traditional music, as do the Acholi people of the north, whose dancers and musicians are popular throughout the country.

Instruments heard in Ugandan music which are rarely heard elsewhere include double-note horns, found only here and in northern Zaire, and a single-stringed lute. There are also mbiras (sanzas), xylophones, harps, stick zithers and, of course, a range of drums. The Ganda use an eight-stringed lyre called the endongo and they are also renowned for their massed drum ensembles. For all its wealth of traditional music Uganda, like several other African countries, suffers from a paucity of recorded material, with the notable exception of the Kaleidophone and Hugh Tracey discs.

GALP 1319  
KMA 10

Music of Uganda  
Uganda 1

### Popular Music

As in all the countries in central Africa, the congolese influence on popular music has been dominant, to the extent that most of the groups playing at dances and social events are either Zairean nationals or imitators of that

style. In the north east the Luo benga influence is also heard. There is virtually no record industry; discs, and more often cassettes, are most often smuggled in across the Kenyan and Zaire borders. Sandwiched between two relatively vibrant sectors of commercial pop music, it is not surprising that Uganda trails behind them.

Of the few names to have had exposure in the west are Sammy Kasule, Maria Wandaka and Jimmy Katumba. Wandaka, who played in London in 1979, now lives in Sweden. Katumba is a popular variety singer, who records with his group, the Ebonies, at their own studio in Kampala. In 1982 they visited Britain with a stage show that gave a musical tour of the country. The dramatic content was provided by students at Makerere University. Katumba's voice has echoes of church-choir training, but the Ebonies have much in common with other central African groups, particularly the ubiquitous soukous guitar. On record they are subservient to the ballad style of Katumba, but on stage they can fly. They have had several national hits, the most popular being 'Twalina Omwukano'. As most of the market for recorded music is in cassettes and singles, there are few albums available.

Jimmy Katumba & The Ebonies: Queen of  
Love Drum Beat

Maria Wandaka: Greatest Hits

This from 1988 published book —

play Zairean &  
Kenyan music!