

Independence musical won Kabuye doctoral degree

By Mathias Mazinga



Fr Kabuye is based in Mityana

Rev. Fr Dr James Kabuye has enjoyed local and international acclaim as a born-virtuoso Church musician. With an incredible repertoire of over 5,000 songs to his credit, Kabuye 82, is arguably the most celebrated writer of sacred music on the continent.

However, there is another aspect of Kabuye, which many of his admirers since the early 1960s when he started his musical ministry, may find unique. It is his zeal and love for his country, which is manifested in his musical work, *Amadinda N'amagwala Bivuge* (Luganda for "Let the xylophones and drums sound").

Kabuye wrote this work in 1966, in celebration of Uganda's independence. It is also this work that Kabuye later presented at Marian College, Indianapolis in the US for his doctoral thesis.

Unique musical work

Kabuye's *Amadinda N'amagwala Bivuge* is acknowledged by many analysts as a unique musical work, locally and internationally. Kabuye vividly brings out the African jubilant musical character, while maintaining the polyphonic Western style in which he arranged his music.

The 10-minute piece, which has a swift movement (allegro) is in three parts. Kabuye skillfully begins his work with the

mood of celebration, when he invokes the sounding of the musical instruments. He then interplays the melody up to the song's climax. The song also has a fascinating solo in a slow movement (andante), which makes it even more blissful.

Essence of the work

Its complexity and technicality notwithstanding, Kabuye's *Amadinda* is simply a wake-up call to Ugandans to be alert for Uganda's independence which was unfolding at the time. He asks Ugandans to participate in the grand celebration of the event, through singing and playing musical instruments.

Kabuye portrays his deep conviction and respect for our national independence, which according to his lyrics, had been long-awaited. But he is keen to remind Ugandans that it is God, the Lord and master of history, who gave us the gift of independence. So as we celebrate, we must be mindful to glorify, praise and thank him for this great gift.

Raymond Ssendi, a music critic and composer is full of admiration for Kabuye's work: "The song is unique. It has a rich African touch which makes it even more admirable globally. Through this great piece, Kabuye also justified Uganda's independence in practical terms, by show-casing the ability of Africans to write great musical works," Ssendi said.

Fr Kabuye says: "Ugandans had waited for our country's independence for so long. They hoped independence would give them political and economic freedom. They had high expectations, which was why they were engrossed in celebrations.

FACT FILE

- Born on January 14, 1934 at Ttanda, in Mityana.
- Studied at Naluggi Primary School, Bukalasa Minor Seminary and Katigondo National Major Seminary.
- Ordained a priest at Rubaga Cathedral in 1962.
- Received specialised music training in Switzerland.
- At Marian College, Indianapolis, US, awarded doctoral degree in music composition.
- Worked at Rubaga Cathedral, Mirembe Maria and Kiyinda-Mityana parishes.
- Worked as Rector at Mubende Minor Seminary.
- Currently based at the Catechetical Centre in Kiyinda-Mityana.

My song depicts the mood of jubilation and celebration that prevailed."

Other talents

Further to being a guru of Church music, Kabuye is also a talented footballer, who graced many soccer teams on the right wing, during his youth. He is also a skilled driver and could drive at 180km per hour, without causing an accident. A story is told that one day, as youthful priest, Kabuye got a new car. When he was testing it with his friend, he drove it so fast that he ended up at the border of Burundi, without realising it.



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Long Live President Museveni! Long live the people of Uganda!



H.E. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda

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Hon. Baglire Aggrey Henry
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Mr. Alex B. Okello
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