

GITA AFRICA

The voice of the guitar community in Africa

IRATWUMVA DEO SALVATOR

"Dreaming Under
The Locust Tree"

NGARE MUKIRIA
In the realm of blues

MUSHAGA
Ugandan musical heritage

GUITAR EXTRAVAGANZA

GEAR REVIEWS

FRET VENTURE



NAIROBI GUITAR FESTIVAL

Greetings Guitar Enthusiasts,

Welcome to the second edition of Gita Africa magazine.

We're excited to continue this journey with you, delving deeper into the world of guitars and the vibrant musical community in Africa. As we embark on this journey, I am reminded of the musical tapestry that intertwines our lives. From the vibrant rhythms of the African continent to the universal language of music that transcends borders, our collective passion for the guitar unites us.

Building upon the success of our inaugural release, we set out to elevate your experience further. Together with a dedicated team and support from our extended network, we continue to celebrate the growth and achievements of our guitar community. This edition aims to build on that foundation, broadening our perspective and showcasing the diverse talent and stories that define our unique musical landscape.

Discover narratives that resonate - stories of artists, their experiences, and the creative processes that bring music to life. Our reviews and features are tailored to provide insights, offering you a compass through the vast terrain of guitars and gear.

The guitar is a timeless companion and a faithful friend to many on their musical expeditions. Thank you for being part of this journey. Let's continue making music, sharing stories, and embracing the soulful spirit of the guitar.

With all best wishes,



Amos Kiptoon,
Founder & Artistic Director
Nairobi Guitar Festival

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NGARE MUKIRIA

IN THE REALM
OF BLUES

Credit: Paul Munene

In the realm of blues, an artist emerges, deeply rooted in the essence of this iconic genre. With each note, we enter a soulful narrative resonating with the rich history and heartfelt experiences unique to the blues. Join us as we unravel Ngare Mukiria's story, his unyielding passion for this timeless art form, and how life is infused into every strum and bend of a string. Get ready to be transported to the heart of soulful blues, where every musical note narrates a profound tale.

What initially drew you to the blues genre, and how has it influenced your playing style over the years?

Whilst I was in my late teens, a friend from church gave me a DVD of John Mayer's 'Where the Light Is' concert. This was my first real experience watching blues music. I had already picked up the guitar by this time and I was blown away by his guitar playing.

After this, I would end up attending jam sessions at a Blues club in my neighborhood where I also put together my own blues trio that later blossomed into a larger ensemble. The blues taught me a lot about the possibilities of playing both the electric and acoustic guitar. It also influenced

my sound and songwriting as well.

How do you approach creating emotion and storytelling through your blues guitar solos?

Soloing to me is mainly about phrasing which is creating melodies both on the spot and crafting melodies for a song. Storytelling for me comes from pitch and dynamics. Solos are usually used to heighten and sometimes resolve a song. I've also learned that a solo can start at the beginning of a song to introduce or hint at the melody of the chorus or verse of a song.

When I am performing, I rely a lot on the audience and band to elicit the emotion meaning I could crack open a solo very aggressively or do so quietly to enhance and lengthen the emotion of the particular song I am playing. Most of my solos will start at a lower or mid-range pitch but I may want to pull back the attention of the audience by starting higher up.

With studio work and songwriting, the solos will be shorter and more thought out but I will still use these tools to compose the solo. Another aspect is having a strong sense of time-feel. This is extremely important as nothing will sound enjoyable if I'm out of time.

"I've also learned that a solo can start at the beginning of a song to introduce or hint at the melody of the chorus or verse of a song"



Credit: Miguelle Mahuton

Can you share a memorable experience or encounter with a legendary blues musician that left a lasting impact on your musical journey?

I've had the joy of meeting and playing with two great blues guitarists one of which I've been playing for 2 years now in the 'Dagoz Nomads Blues Band' called Steven Fisher. He has spent a lot of time learning how to play like Albert King. He usually performs with his amazing White Falcon Gretsch guitar.

Whilst I had my weekly gig at the Blues Club, I got to meet another seasoned American Blues guitarist called George Dyer whose

playing is heavily influenced by B.b King. He taught me quite a lot about improvisation and the relationship between blues and jazz music. He had a very good sense of time which was one of the first things I noticed about him. Finding someone to teach you the theory and basics of blues isn't easy so I was very lucky.

In your opinion, what are the essential techniques or elements that every aspiring blues guitarist should focus on mastering?

I believe that phrasing and gaining a good time-feel are extremely important. You can get away without knowing a lot of fancy techniques, scales, and chords if you have this. Being aware of the band is also important. Sometimes people play over each other or too loudly without realizing it. Learning how to play a shuffle and a slow blues for starters in any key is where I would advise any guitarist to start.

How do you strike a balance between honoring traditional blues roots while infusing your unique personal touch and innovation into your music?

I try to study as many genres as I can which isn't easy and requires a lot of patience with myself. Having a personal touch comes with experimenting with different things such as fusing reggae and blues or inserting modes into my improvisation.

Learning about Mali blues which is where blues and most Western music originated from, really inspired me to learn and listen more to it. It showed me new ways to approach African music. As not many people have studied it, it does give me a unique sound.

Can you describe your process of improvisation during live performances? How do you keep it fresh and spontaneous while staying true to the blues?

I try as much as I can to pay attention to the audience and the band whilst staying true to the message of the song. Therefore, the dynamics and lyrics of the song will mainly dictate how I choose to improvise; if a song is very loud and energetic, I will try to match it by starting mid-range or higher up in pitch. If the song is more sentimental and nostalgic, I may play around with lower notes and melodies and then make my way up.

Blues lyrics often tell tales of hardship, love, and life struggles. How do you translate those emotions into your guitar playing during a performance?

That's a very good question as I like to bring in all my personal pain into my playing because I feel that people listening will pick up on it whether they are aware of it or not. Infusing emotion with playing really comes with allowing myself to be vulnerable when performing as I'm not just playing for the people watching but for myself as well. I play what I am feeling and it helps me heal and

process what I am going through. I feel the audience benefits and enjoys watching me play when I do this because they can relate more.

What role does your choice of gear (guitars, amps, effects) play in shaping your blues sound? Any specific favorites you rely on?

I use a Fender Squire Stratocaster. Its single-coil pickups give me a clean and controlled sound. It's also a great guitar for aggressive right-hand techniques. I also love the access I have to the volume knob and pick-up selector. Being able to switch the pick-ups and play with the guitar's volume as I play is a lot of fun. I currently use a Boss-GT 6 FX unit. What I gain from it mostly is its pre-amp options. I have grown to love the 'Tweed' pre-amp which gives me a slightly distorted tone when playing. Its expression pedal is also reasonably sensitive and reliable. My favorite amp is the 'Fender Tone Master Deluxe Reverb' which has an incredibly sexy tone.

How do you approach collaborations with other musicians, and how has working with diverse artists influenced your approach to blues music?

When working with other artists, it helps to know what an artist

expects as different genres have different approaches. I've learned, through failure and success the need for research and disciplined study of different styles of music. Having had a blues background, I find it easy to craft solos and melodies on the guitar.

Blues music has a rich history, and its influence can be seen across various genres. How do you see the future of blues guitar evolving, and what do you hope to contribute to its ongoing legacy?

I would like to see Mali blues and its style being used more in pop music. I hope to introduce it more as it blends well with a lot of Afro-Pop music. As a songwriter, I want to write Alternative pop music with the guitar playing a lead role.

My Ep which is called 'Ondieki Studios' was released last year. It had a lot of Mali and American blues mixed with African folk. I am praying I can use both my lyricism and blues playing in a unique way as an African Songwriter to build my own sound.





SOCIAL HANDLES

Music In Africa Bio

<https://shorturl.at/dlorW>

Instagram

@ngare_music

Facebook

@ngare_music

Youtube

@easternsunguitarist5791



MUSHAGA

Dive into the melodic world of an extraordinary guitarist hailing from the cultural mosaic of Uganda. With a guitar as his brush and the Ugandan musical heritage as his palette, he crafts soul-stirring compositions that reflect the very essence of his roots. Mushaga is not just a musician; he's a storyteller, and his guitar is the pen that weaves the tales of Uganda's vibrant musical narrative through his artistry.

Tell us more about you and your journey in becoming one of the leading guitarist in Uganda

My name is Mushagalusa Charmant, also known as "**The Son of Buhendwa**". My musical journey began at the age of 8 when my parents noticed my affinity for the guitar. I couldn't resist picking up the instrument, especially during church choir performances.

In 2004, I found refuge in Uganda as a Congolese, and it quickly became my second home. Over the years, I've become an integral part of the Ugandan music scene, not just as a guitarist but as a full-fledged artist. My guitar melodies have inspired many young talents across Uganda, and I'm profoundly grateful for the gift of music that has allowed me to connect with people in this beautiful country and beyond.

Where would you say you really cut your teeth as a guitarist and learned all the fundamentals?

My father introduced me to the world of guitar playing, and my skills were further honed by my teacher, Mrs. Jerry Kakya, who provided me with three months of invaluable guitar lessons.

COVID 19 was a major industry disruptor especially at its onset. How

did you cope with it?

While the world faced the challenges of Covid-19, I was fortunate to be among those untouched by its impact. I am grateful to God for choosing to protect me during this time and for the close friends who played a crucial role in observing precaution. It's a reminder to always appreciate the good people in our lives.

You have worked with some of the big names in Uganda's music industry and some iconic names in Africa. What was your most memorable event/gig?

My musical journey, even before arriving in Uganda, has been a fascinating tapestry of connections and divine interventions. God has consistently placed incredible people in my path, enriching my life with meaningful collaborations. To address your question, I'll focus on my experiences in Uganda. I've had the privilege to collaborate with an array of local music luminaries, both within and beyond the church community.

Locally, I've had the pleasure of working with Judith Babirye, Exodus, Isaiah Katumwa, Isaac Serukenya, Brian Lubega, Limit X, Pastor Robert Kayanja, Bebe Cool, Bobi Wine, Big Eye, Eddy Kenzo, Rema Namakula, Juliana Kanyomozi, Eddy Yahweh,

Afrigo Band, and many others.

Internationally, I've had the honor of sharing the stage with some incredible talents, including the late South African legend Hugh Masekela, whom I had the privilege of performing with in two unforgettable concerts in Kampala. His influence on my life and artistry was profound, and I'll forever cherish those memories. Similarly, collaborating with music icon Manu Dibango, who was based in Europe, in a single concert was another transformative experience.

I'm immensely grateful that God allowed me to cross paths with these iconic and deeply respected legends before their passing. May their souls rest in eternal peace.

Which music style do you often play and how do you define your sound?

I predominantly explore three distinct genres within my music, each converging to create a unified musical identity. My primary genres are folk and Afro-jazz, and I often draw inspiration from various sources, resulting in a fusion that permeates my songwriting.

It's worth noting that my music has made notable appearances in local film projects, including this year's TV series in 2023. This journey has been nothing short of captivating, and I am

genuinely passionate about the path my life has taken.

You can sing and play the guitar. Given one option to select between those two skills which one would you settle for? Why?

If I were given the choice between singing and playing the guitar, I would choose singing. While the guitar has been the gateway to my musical journey, singing allows me to convey a message directly to a broader audience. My guitar has always been the source of sweet, deep, and beautiful melodies, and these melodies must find expression through well-delivered words. I believe that every instrumentalist should have the ability to sing, as it enhances the connection between the music and the listener.



What guitar(s) do you use?

I utilize a collection of five different guitars in my musical journey. However, my choice of guitar for a particular gig depends on the style and requirements of the performance. The acoustic guitar, in particular, holds a special place among my instruments and often takes the spotlight as one of my main stage guitars.

What's one piece of advice you would give to your 10-year-oldself looking up to the adult version of you?

If I could offer a piece of advice to my 10-year-old self who once looked up to the adult version of me, it would be a threefold message:

1. Know yourself.
2. Dare to dream of the person you aspire to become.
3. Understand that without dreams, you'll never evolve into your envisioned self. Therefore, always hold onto your dreams for the future.



Mushaga with the Legend
Hugh Masekela



YouTube

Charmant Mushaga

Instagram

@Charmant_mushagaOfficial

Facebook

Charmant Mushaga

X (formerly Twitter)

@CharmantCm

TikTok

Charmant Mushaga



NAIROBI GUITAR FESTIVAL

IRATWUMVA DEO SALVATOR

With over a decade of experience in Rwanda's music scene, Deo has played hundreds of shows, showcasing his skills and passion for the guitar.



Credit: Nora-Fhuber (Sofar Linz)



IRATWUMVA Deo Salvator, also known as "Deo Salvator," is a talented Rwandan guitarist, recording artist, music curator, and the founder of Fingerpickers in Africa and its Academy.

Credit: Mutesa Christian

Originally starting as a dancer in 2009, Deo's love for music brought him back in 2014 as an instrumentalist, inspired by his uncle who was a former military sousaphone/tuba player, multi-instrumentalist, and music tutor. Influenced by his uncle's classical music background, Deo embarked on a solo career as a fingerstyle guitarist, creating a unique and captivating sound;

Who/What inspired you to start playing the guitar?

My inspiration to start playing the guitar was deeply rooted in my family's musical influence, particularly my uncle's accordion playing and the musical spark it ignited within our household. Additionally, my cousins played guitar and piano and my sister's drum classes contributed to this musical atmosphere.

However, it was fate that led me to

the guitar when a lumbar disk injury ended my dreams of dancing, offering a thrilling new path to creativity. Listening to Rwandan palm-wine music on Radio Rwanda provided invaluable wisdom about the essence of music, emphasizing that it's not merely about playing the guitar but about expressing what comes from the heart. This insight shaped my journey into music and led me to share the stories of fellow African guitarists through this column.

Can you share the story behind your first guitar composition?

My inaugural guitar composition, "Dreaming Under The Locust Tree" was crafted for the 2019 Hamwe Festival, with the theme of "Art and Health." This composition embarks on a deeply personal and introspective journey, narrating the poignant story of Salva, a 12-year-old boy who once served as a guide for his visually impaired mother in their village.

The narrative unfolds around their weekly meetings beneath the locust tree in an affluent neighborhood, where Salva also held the role of secretary for the association his mother was establishing.

Over time, these gatherings transformed into a cooperative effort. Through this musical piece, I aim to encapsulate the dreams that Salva, as a child, cherished under the tree, amidst prosperity, and among fellow individuals with visual impairments. It serves as a testament to the transformative power of music.

Congratulations on your latest album – Life Within Vol 2! It sounds like a deeply personal endeavor. Can you tell us about

the inspiration behind this project and give us an idea of its recording process?

Thank you so much! "Life Within Vol II" is indeed a deeply personal project, akin to a refreshing stream that circles back to its source. It's a tribute to my roots and the traditional sounds of my upbringing that have always held a special place in my heart.

This album is emotionally connected to its predecessor, "Life Within Vol I," which delved into the poignant stories of my early life with my mother, albeit with a more melancholic

tone.

Vol II, in contrast, exudes a sense of happiness. The track order on the album effectively captures the transition to traditional music, paving the way for my next project, which will be a full translation of Inanga (Rwandan Traditional Zither) tunes to the guitar. The crisp and sweet sound of this album owes much to the exceptional mixing and mastering by the legendary Antoine Dufour.

The recording process was a graceful collaboration with the late Giorgio Fontana at Capolinea Studio and his producer friend



Geno. "Life Within Vol II" features 11 tracks and is available for streaming on various platforms or for purchase on Bandcamp, where you can acquire it directly from me.

The Songs of Ighodaros is an enthralling fingerstyle guitar track that weaves a captivating musical tapestry. The flow gently draws you into a world of serene beauty and contemplation. What tuning did you use and how did it contribute to the soundscapes captured in the track?

In creating "The Songs of Ighodaros," I harnessed the brilliance of the EAEC#AE open E major tuning, a choice that enriched the composition with a lush and resonant foundation, especially in the lower registers.

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This tuning's inherent benefits in the base ranges lent depth and warmth to the music, complementing the emotional depth of the composition. Moreover, in the background, the haunting strains of a violin, masterfully played by my talented musician friend Michel, wove an additional layer of depth and emotion into the song.

The rhythm, carefully crafted to evoke the sensation of a highway drive through the heart of Africa, invites listeners to reminisce about their own memories from this vibrant continent. "Song of Ighodaros" not only celebrates humility and appreciation but also pays homage to individuals like Johnny Drille, emphasizing the profound impact of humble souls.

This dedication, combined with the harmonious interplay of the open tuning and the violin, crafts a musical tribute that resonates deeply with listeners.

Fingerstyle guitar can be deeply meditative. How has it influenced your personal mindfulness or approach to life outside of music?

Fingerstyle guitar has been a transformative journey that extends beyond music. Starting something unconventional in Rwanda, I learned self-management, logistics, and survival skills while cultivating patience and authenticity. It's not about ego but about creating something unique that resonates deeply.

This approach, distinct from playing covers, has taught me the power of conveying and convincing people to embrace new creations. Moreover, fingerstyle guitar's meditative quality has influenced my personal mindfulness, fostering patience, perseverance, and an appreciation for authenticity. It's about being in the moment, knowing that music can heal both oneself and others in profound ways.

This journey has shaped me as both a musician and an individual who values the soulful impact of genuine creation.

Many musicians talk about their instruments as extensions of themselves. Do you feel that this also applies to you?

Absolutely, I resonate deeply with the notion of my guitar being an extension of myself. When I play, my eyes are closed, and I'm transported to a place of profound serenity and connection. It's as if I leave my physical self behind and embark on a journey where my soul gains wisdom and heightened awareness.

Playing my own compositions is like tapping into a wellspring of inner richness. In those moments, the guitar becomes more than just an instrument; it becomes a vessel for my emotions, thoughts, and experiences. It's a bridge that connects me to the deepest corners of my soul, allowing me to express myself in ways words cannot capture. So yes, my guitar is undeniably an extension of who I am, a conduit for my innermost feelings and a source of boundless creativity and enlightenment.

Could you share some insights into the specific gear and equipment you rely on to achieve your signature fingerstyle guitar tone, and how has your choice of gear evolved throughout your musical journey?

In the pursuit of my signature

fingerstyle guitar tone, I've simplified my gear while focusing on quality. I choose between my Yamaha CX40 nylon-stringed guitar and my Takamine steel-stringed one, both offering distinct tonal nuances. For amplification, I either go direct for a clean acoustic sound or use the versatile Dacapo 75 by Udo Amps, which enhances both my guitar and vocal performance. I use Elixir strings, which provide the perfect blend of longevity and tone. G7th Capos ensure precise fretting, and Fusion Bags offer convenience and protection during tours.

What motivated you to establish the Association of Fingerpickers in Africa?

I founded the Association of Fingerpickers in Africa in 2019 out of a profound passion for fingerstyle guitar music and a strong desire to promote this genre across the African continent. This association serves as a collective for fingerstyle guitar players, focusing on cultivating and sharing this unique musical form.

Our core mission involves offering

free workshops in various countries, eliminating financial barriers to accessing guitar and music knowledge. We firmly believe that music is an invaluable and universally accessible form of expression, making it an essential initial investment for anyone interested in exploring its beauty and power.

"Despite uncertainties, my unwavering belief in the movement's potential and persistent determination drove me forward, serving as the driving force behind our progress"

What challenges did you face when founding the Association of Fingerpickers in Africa guitar movement, and how did you overcome them?

Establishing the Association of Fingerpickers in Africa posed challenges, particularly in finding like-minded members and staying committed to the cause. To overcome these obstacles, I diligently sought out fellow enthusiasts through social networks and music communities, gradually building a dedicated group.

Despite uncertainties, my unwavering belief in the movement's potential and persistent determination drove me forward, serving as the driving force behind our progress.

Could you describe the evolution of the association since its inception and describe the community / following that has developed around it?

Since its inception, the Association of Fingerpickers in Africa has grown exponentially. We began with free workshops across the continent, expanded into the digital realm with an online festival in 2020, and our members remotely attended the Acoustic Guitar Bootcamp by Thomas Leeb. With 17 thousand followers, our Instagram page has become a thriving hub for fingerstyle guitarists from over 15 countries.

This diverse and passionate community exemplifies the associa-

tion's evolution, fostering connections and inspiring musicians across Africa's fingerstyle guitar landscape.

Are there any memorable performances that have shaped your journey as a guitarist?

There have been many memorable performances that have mainly shaped my journey as a guitarist. Playing at various festivals, as well as sharing the stage with incredibly talented musicians, have been pivotal moments in my career.

Moreover, various festivals, including those from my first self-organized Europe and UK tour as a fingerstyle guitarist, have greatly influenced my musical path.



A guitar workshop held by the Association of Fingerpickers workshop in Rwanda

I cannot stop without mentioning the profound impact of performing in front of fellow fingerstyle guitar players during the boot camp this year in Austria. Facing an audience that included luminaries like Thomas Leeb and Jon Gomm was both a humbling and transformative experience, pushing me to continually evolve as an artist.

These collective experiences have deepened my passion for music and enriched my journey in ways I couldn't have imagined.

What do you envision for the future of fingerstyle guitar in Africa, and how do you plan to contribute to its growth and popularity?

I envision a vibrant future for fingerstyle guitar in Africa, one where it stands as a recognized and respected genre on the global music stage. To materialize this vision, we will persist in organizing events, workshops, and collaborations that promote fingerstyle guitar across the continent.

However, there's more work ahead. We must introduce our own digital platforms and distribution methods for selling our music. The existing distribution and online music platforms often favor

artists from outside of Africa, which has left us more as consumers than creators – a pain I am determined to address. Additionally, we plan to establish dedicated festivals for fingerstyle guitar and create opportunities for emerging talents.

While we've made progress in the past, we now seek partners and serious investors to support these larger projects. Together, we can enhance the presence of fingerstyle guitar in Africa and amplify its beautiful melodies for the world to hear.

What advice would you give to someone who is just starting out on their finger-

style journey, both in terms of technique and pursuing a career in music?

For someone embarking on their fingerstyle journey, I would offer this advice: Technique is essential, much like wheels on a car, but be cautious not to place excessive confidence in technique alone, as it can lead to accidents, which I refer to as ego.

To truly succeed in your music career, remain authentic to yourself, allowing your resonance to naturally attract those who appreciate your unique sound. Finger-

"To truly succeed in your music career, remain authentic to yourself"

style guitar is incredibly versatile and expressive, so embrace experimentation and let your individual voice shine through.

When it comes to pursuing a career in music, dedication, perseverance, and a deep passion for your craft are paramount. Collaborate with fellow musicians, continue your learning journey, and never cease exploring the boundless horizons of your musical path.

"When it comes to pursuing a career in music, dedication, perseverance, and a deep passion for your craft are paramount"



Credit: Dajana Birk



Social Media Handles
Instagram/Facebook/X
@deosalvator

A vibrant photograph of a man and a woman dancing at the Nairobi Guitar Festival. The man, on the left, is wearing a tan suit, a blue shirt, and a colorful patterned tie. He is smiling and looking towards the woman. The woman, on the right, is wearing a black long-sleeved top and black pants, and is holding a purple smartphone. They are both in motion, with their arms and legs extended. In the background, there are colorful, concentric circular patterns in shades of blue, red, and yellow, suggesting a stage or festival setting. A red electric guitar is visible in the lower left foreground.

Guitar Extravaganza

NAIROBI GUITAR FESTIVAL

BY LANE DAVE (Co-founder – Nairobi Guitar Festival)

Credit: Cheru

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gitaafrika.com

Last July, Nairobi witnessed a harmonious celebration of music and talent at the much-awaited Nairobi Guitar Festival. Hosted at a vibrant venue, Alliance Francaise - Nairobi, in the heart of the city - the event served as a melting pot for guitar enthusiasts and music lovers. We reflect on the memorable experience feeling the reverberations of the diverse performances and the spirit of unity that permeated throughout the festival.

In the radiant glow of the sun, the Festival unfurled, promising a captivating journey through the soulful artistry of four remarkable guitarists and an exceptional supporting band. The stage was set for an afternoon of fretboard magic and melodies that would echo through the hearts of every attendee. The festival kicked off with a dynamic DJ Hueskillz set, setting the perfect daytime ambiance. The instrumental rhythmic foundation and melodic finesse provided a delightful introduction to the musical extravaganza that was about to ensue.

First to grace the stage was Kevin Munyi, whose nimble fingers danced across the strings, conjuring a tapestry of classical notes. The audience was

spellbound by the sheer intensity of every note as if each pluck of the strings resonated with the spirit of the sunny day.



Kevin Munyi

Next, Tugi Mlamba took the stage, bringing a soulful fusion of contemporary guitar techniques into the daylight. Backed by two vocalists, his performance was nothing short of a sonic adventure, a journey that spirited the audience to far-off lands and intricate musical landscapes. The harmonious balance between precision and passion left the crowd in awe, marveling at the presented artistry.



Tugi Mlamba performing with his sister

As the day progressed, the stage seamlessly transitioned to Mabiza Pro. The delicate notes emanating from the strings seemed to resonate with the warmth of the sun, filling the air with a sense of introspection and tranquility. In a moment of electric connection, he engaged in a captivating exchange of musical notes with the audience.



Mabiza Pro

With a charismatic presence and a genuine desire to involve the crowd, the guitarist initiated a call-and-response like no other. The strings sang out, and as if guided by an unseen force, the audience responded vocally, echoing the melody and rhythm in an impromptu symphony of voices.

It was a powerful testament to the unifying language of music, a beautiful dialogue between artist and admirer that transcended the boundaries of the stage to a harmonious musical conversation.

Between performances, the festival paused for a special presentation by Yamaha (by Moses Mbogo, Sales & Marketing head – Sub Saharan Africa), unveiling the latest gear that is set to revolutionize the guitar world. The audience followed through the showcase of cutting-edge equipment, sharing insights into how these innovations continue to shape the future of music.



From left Kibe (Credible Sounds), Vishal and Moses Mbogo (Yamaha), Robin, David and Amos (Nairobi Guitar Festival)

Adding to the festival's vibrant tapestry, the stage was graced by the sensational Benga artist, John Were. Were's mastery of the guitar became evident as he skillfully played, even employing a remarkable technique of playing with his teeth at times, which left the audience in awe.

This unique style added an electrifying flair to his performance, showcasing his

versatility and showmanship. Were transported the audience to the heart of traditional Benga rhythms, his guitar seemingly an extension of his very being.

His performance carried the very essence of Kenyan music, blending traditional Benga tunes with modern twists seamlessly.



Were

Finally, the festival culminated in a mesmerizing performance by the guest band - Tha Movement featuring Mutoriah, leaving the audience entranced. Led by one Robin Marcel (Director of Events at NGF), their symphonic fusion was a grand finale that resonated in every corner of the venue, a perfect harmony to wrap up a day brimming with musical genius.



Robin (Left) and Mutoriah
(Right) from Tha Movement

There was an undeniable sense of gratitude in the air - gratitude for music's ability to unite, inspire, and evoke profound emotions, even in broad daylight. Nairobi Guitar Festival was not just a display of exceptional musical talent; it was a testament to the unifying power of music and the magic that unfolds when artists come together to create something extraordinary.





Revelers enjoying the performances



Checkmate Mido



Revelers at the 2023 festival



Hueskillz



Revelers at the 2023 festival



Mutoriah

IN EAR MONITORS

– KZ PR1

BY VICTOR
GICHOHI



KZ in-ear monitors offer an impressive audio experience at an accessible price point. Known for their exceptional sound quality, these monitors deliver clear highs, rich mids, and solid bass. The build quality is commendable, featuring detachable cables and a variety of ear tips for a personalized fit.

While they lack some of the premium features found in higher-priced options, KZ monitors still provide excellent value for both casual listeners and budding audiophiles. Whether for music enjoyment or stage performances, KZ in-ear monitors are a reliable choice that strikes a balance between quality and affordability.

In-ear monitors (IEMs) offer numerous advantages over traditional stage monitors. Firstly, IEMs provide isolated sound, reducing stage noise and allowing for precise monitoring. This leads to improved vocal control and instrument balance.

Secondly, IEMs enhance mobility on stage, eliminating the need to be stationary near bulky monitors. Additionally, they offer customizable mixes for each performer, catering to individual preferences.

IEMs are inconspicuous, providing a cleaner stage aesthetic. Moreover, they offer hearing protection by reducing the need for high volume levels. While requiring an initial investment, the benefits of clarity, customization, and comfort make IEMs a preferred choice for musicians seeking enhanced live performances.





More Rock More Life

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FRET VENTURE

Years of Musical Brilliance



In the dynamic world of music, certain events emerge as milestones, shaping the course of musical culture. Fret Venture stands as a testament to this impact - a living embodiment of artistic commitment and unbridled passion that has transcended its role as a mere concert.

This has evolved into a platform that unites artists and enthusiasts in the pursuit of musical excellence. Year after year, this annual event has woven unforgettable stories through sound, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of all who have experienced it.

The concert has become a canvas for a spectrum of musical styles, from the classic to the contemporary. The lineup's diversity mirrors a celebration of the guitar's versatile voice. From soothing acoustic melodies to electrifying guitar solos, each performance contributes to the harmonious mosaic that defines the concert.

Central to Fret Venture's allure is Mannaseh Uzele whose virtuosity has been a driving force that infuses life into the event. His performances are a testament to the guitar's expressive power,

seamlessly blending genres and invoking emotions. His artistry resonates with enthusiasts, showcasing a fusion of technical prowess and heartfelt storytelling.

Beyond the stage, Fret Venture has cultivated a community, a gathering place for individuals who share a common reverence for the guitar's magic. Over the years, Fret Venture's impact has transcended its annual occurrence and has served as a launch pad for emerging talents and a platform for established artists to explore new realms of creativity.

The journey that began with a single note continues to evolve, embracing fresh talents and novel sounds. With each edition, concert renews its commitment to nurturing the guitar's legacy while pushing boundaries.





Mannaseh at the NGF's Guitar Masterclass held on 5th August 2018 at the Hedgehog Creative Sarit Centre




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