

## **The Interplay of Genres: Ethno-Contempo Fusion in “Sika” by Okyeame Kwame and Kofi Kinaata**

**Abstract.** This paper examines “Sika” (2024), a collaborative song by Ghanaian artists Okyeame Kwame and Kofi Kinaata, as a case study of cross-genre and intercultural collaboration in contemporary African popular music. Drawing on interculturalism, postcolonial hybridity, and African-centered music scholarship, the study situates “Sika” within the ongoing negotiation of tradition and modernity, local identity and global soundscapes. Using Philip Tagg’s (2013, 2015) analytical framework, the analysis explores the song’s formal structure, harmonic language, lyrical personas, and production techniques, showing how its fusion of highlife, hiplife, rap, drill, and brass band styles creates a complex cultural dialogue. The findings demonstrate that “Sika” functions not only as musical innovation but also as a cultural artifact that reflects socio-economic realities, preserves Ghanaian heritage, and expresses cosmopolitan identity. In doing so, the paper contributes to broader discussions of hybridity, interculturalism, and African popular music, emphasizing the transformative role of cross-genre collaboration in Ghana’s musical scene.

**Keywords:** cross-genre composition, interculturalism, hybridity, Ghanaian popular music, cultural negotiation.

### **1. Introduction**

Ghana’s music scene has changed significantly, blending traditional sounds with global influences. This paper examines “Sika” (Kwame 2024), a collaboration between Okyeame Kwame and Kofi Kinaata. The song combines highlife, hiplife, brass band style, contemporary rap, and drill. This mix connects different generations and addresses wealth and economic uncertainty. Highlife is a genre that developed in early 20th-century Ghana. It features polyrhythmic structures, storytelling, and danceable melodies, influencing subsequent musical styles and reflecting cultural identity (Collins 2018; Graham 2021). Hiplife emerged later, merging highlife’s storytelling with hip-hop rhythms, providing a platform for youth expression and social commentary (Oduro-Frimpong 2017a). Hiplife artists often tackle political corruption and social inequality through their music. Brass band music adds a communal aspect to “Sika,” as these bands are integral to local celebrations and events (Bradley 2018). Their inclusion evokes a sense of heritage and community. Contemporary genres such as rap and drill resonate with younger audiences, addressing social issues and aspirations while linking local and global music trends (Boateng, 2023; Alim, Ibrahim, and Pennycook 2020).

The fusion in “Sika” serves as a transformative practice, enhancing artistic communication and cultural narratives (Stokes 2022). The combination of highlife’s thematic richness with rap and drill creates a song that explores the complexities of economic life in Ghana, balancing traditional values with modern ambitions. This paper argues that “Sika” illustrates the relationship between traditional and contemporary music, showing how genre fusion reshapes Ghanaian music in a global context. The analysis employs a cross-genre compositional framework to understand how different musical elements come together. Insights from interculturalism highlight the cultural importance of these musical interactions and changing identities. Moreover, the collaboration between Okyeame (Kwame Nsiah-Apau) and Kofi Kinaata (Martin King Arthur) is examined through collaborative musicking, revealing how their partnership enriches the song and reflects cultural exchange. Philip Tagg’s (2013, 2015) model provides a basis for analyzing the technical and thematic aspects of the piece. These approaches highlight the role of genre fusion in addressing contemporary themes in Ghana and beyond. “Sika” exemplifies the resilience of Ghanaian music, showing its ability to adapt and remain relevant amidst global changes.

### **2. Conceptual framework: cross-genre composition**

Cross-genre composition involves blending various musical traditions and styles, creating new forms of artistic expression. It plays a significant role in contemporary music, as demonstrated in “Sika” (2024) by Okyeame Kwame and Kofi Kinaata. This song fuses traditional highlife and hiplife with rap, drill, and brass band elements, reflecting Ghana’s changing musical landscape. This approach simultaneously expresses cultural identity and explores themes of economic aspiration and uncertainty. Cross-genre composition highlights the interaction between musical traditions, fostering innovation and opening cultural dialogue (Bradley 2021). By integrating distinct musical styles into a cohesive whole, it redefines cultural narratives and engages broader audiences. “Sika”’s blend of different genres produces a culturally multi-layered sound, combining traditional heritage with contemporary innovation.

### 2.1. Historical context of highlife and hiplife in Ghanaian music

Highlife, which emerged in the 19th century, represents one of Ghana's most influential musical traditions. Blending African rhythms with European influences from military and church brass bands, it is characterized by its polyrhythmic vitality and use of Western instruments. E. T. Mensah, known as the "King of Highlife," popularized the genre by incorporating jazz idioms, thereby shaping a distinctive West African sound (Collins 2018). By the 1920s, highlife had become central to social life in Ghana, embodying themes of celebration, storytelling, and community identity. Its adaptability has ensured its enduring relevance. In the 1990s, hiplife developed as a modern evolution of highlife. It fused rap, hip-hop beats, and Ghanaian vernaculars to capture the realities of urban youth. Reggie Rockstone, celebrated as the "Godfather of Hiplife," pioneered this blend by merging highlife melodies with hip-hop aesthetics, thereby aligning Ghanaian traditions with global musical currents (Oduro-Frimpong 2017b). Hiplife has since served as a vehicle for political commentary and youth expression, linking Ghana's musical past with its contemporary socio-cultural identity. "Sika" exemplifies this trajectory by drawing on highlife's narrative tradition while incorporating hiplife's urban sensibilities, producing a culturally layered soundscape that speaks to Ghana's evolving realities.

### 2.2. The role of brass bands in Ghanaian music history

Brass band music has a long history in Ghana, dating back to the 19th century when it was introduced by European missionaries and military ensembles. Initially associated with colonial and formal occasions, it was later embraced by local communities and became integral to social ceremonies such as funerals, festivals, and parades, symbolizing resilience and collective joy (Boateng 2023). Mensah's early innovations in highlife were profoundly shaped by brass band traditions, demonstrating their role in Ghana's modern musical foundations. Today, brass band music remains culturally relevant. It is still a central feature of community gatherings and public celebrations, while its stylistic influences surface in contemporary popular compositions, including "Sika". Through its celebratory tone and communal associations, brass band music provides continuity between past and present, reinforcing its importance in both Ghanaian society and modern musical creativity (Bradley 2021; Boateng 2023).

### 2.3. Contemporary influences: rap and drill

Rap and drill music have become prominent genres for expressing resilience, ambition, and social critique (Alim, Ibrahim, and Pennycook 2020). Drill, with its distinctive rhythmic drive and stark lyrical directness, appeals especially to younger audiences worldwide. Both genres have introduced new perspectives into Ghana's music scene, even though older generations often perceive their explicit and sometimes provocative lyrical style as unconventional or inappropriate. Rap, with its African-American origins, emphasizes storytelling and social commentary, while drill foregrounds raw depictions of urban struggle and survival (Alim, Ibrahim, and Pennycook 2020). In Ghana, both genres have been localized through the incorporation of indigenous languages, proverbs, and everyday themes, creating a distinct hybrid form. Within "Sika," the interplay of rap and drill enriches the musical and lyrical narrative, bridging generational divides and positioning the song within both local and global soundscapes.

### 2.4. Cross-Genre composition as a transformative practice

The transformative potential of cross-genre composition lies in its capacity to bridge cultural and generational divides. In "Sika," the fusion of highlife, hiplife, rap, drill, and brass band music simultaneously engages diverse audiences and preserves cultural heritage. This hybridity reflects the complexity of modern Ghanaian identities and socio-economic realities, illustrating how tradition and innovation can coexist in meaningful ways. Through this creative dialogue, Okyeame Kwame and Kofi Kinaata revitalize older traditions such as highlife and brass band music by recontextualizing them within a global soundscape, demonstrating the adaptability and resilience of Ghanaian music. "Sika" thus resonates with international trends of genre hybridity. Shakira's blending of Latin pop with rock and Arabic influences, the global rise of Reggaeton through artists such as Bad Bunny, and Yo-Yo Ma's (2016) *Silk Road Ensemble* exemplify how genre fusion can generate new cultural meanings and connect diverse audiences (Bradley 2021; Stokes 2022). Similarly, contemporary African popular music demonstrates this adaptability: Afrobeat and hip-hop fusions by Davido, Burna Boy, and Wizkid illustrate how African artists simultaneously maintain cultural roots and engage

global audiences (Adegoke 2020; Falola and Euba 2019; Emielu 2017). By placing “Sika” within this broader global trajectory, its intercultural layering emerges not merely as stylistic experimentation but as a transformative cultural practice. In this light, the song functions as both entertainment and as a cultural artifact that encapsulates Ghana’s negotiation of heritage, innovation, and globalization.

### 3. Theoretical framework: interculturalism

Interculturalism provides a productive lens for analyzing “Sika” because it emphasizes cultural negotiation, transformation, and hybridity rather than static coexistence. The song’s fusion of highlife, hiplife, brass band, rap, and drill exemplifies this intercultural process, where traditions are not simply juxtaposed but reconfigured into new forms of expression. By focusing on the dynamics of exchange, interculturalism highlights how “Sika” functions as a site of cultural dialogue that both sustains Ghanaian heritage and reinterprets it for a global soundscape (Matsunaga 2021).

#### 3.1. Hybridity and the “Third Space”

Homi Bhabha’s concept of the “Third Space” (1994) is especially useful here. He argues that hybridity emerges in the in-between spaces of cultural encounters, where new identities and meanings are negotiated. “Sika” operates within such a space, where traditional idioms like highlife and brass band music are reimagined alongside global genres such as rap and drill. This hybridity is not additive but generative: it produces what Bhabha describes as a performative act of cultural translation, destabilizing rigid distinctions between “traditional” and “modern.” In this way, “Sika” embodies the postcolonial condition of Ghanaian music, creating an aesthetic that is simultaneously local and transnational.

#### 3.2. Indigenous theoretical perspectives

While interculturalism benefits from postcolonial theory, it is equally important to draw on African-centered music scholarship. J. H. Kwabena Nketia (1974) emphasizes the inseparability of African music from its social and cultural contexts, reminding us that compositions like “Sika” must be understood in relation to lived experience. Similarly, Akin Euba’s (1989) writings on intercultural composition and his advocacy for blending African idioms with Western techniques anticipate the genre hybridity evident in “Sika.” Building on these perspectives, Willie Anku’s (2000) rhythm theory further grounds the analysis in indigenous scholarship. His work on *geometrical set theory of African rhythm* demonstrates how African music is structured through cyclicity and polyrhythms, offering a lens for interpreting how highlife and brass band idioms are layered into “Sika.” By weaving Anku’s rhythmic insights with intercultural frameworks, we see how the song does not simply imitate traditional forms but reconfigures them within contemporary global idioms.

#### 3.3. Interculturalism as a bridge

The intercultural perspective also clarifies how “Sika” bridges cultural and generational divides. As Toyin Falola (2016, 2020) argues, African modernity is shaped by the tension between tradition and innovation. “Sika” exemplifies this by simultaneously appealing to older audiences familiar with highlife and to younger listeners attuned to drill and rap. Intercultural music, in this sense, is not only an aesthetic phenomenon but also a socio-cultural practice that fosters dialogue across divides and enables shared narratives. A parallel can be seen in collaborations such as Yann Coppier and King Ayisoba’s *Body Language XXI* (Djuma Soundsystem, Coppier, and Ayisoba 2019), which fuses electronic soundscapes with traditional *kologo* music to create a hybrid expression that resonates locally and globally. Branch (1999) notes that such fusions hold not only aesthetic but also economic potential, expanding the cultural reach of African music. Similarly, Austin Emielu’s concept of *progressive traditionalism* (2011, 2022) affirms that African traditions remain vital precisely because they adapt to modern contexts. Artists such as Mr. Eazi and DJ Mix Master Garzy exemplify this adaptability, blending electronic production with indigenous idioms to showcase the creativity and resilience of African musicians. In “Sika,” highlife and brass band idioms are not static relics but living traditions recontextualized within a global framework, underscoring interculturalism’s capacity to explain the vitality of hybrid practices.

### 3.4. Critical and global perspectives

Complementing African theorists, perspectives from critical musicology also strengthen this framework. Lawrence Kramer (1990, 1995) insists that musical meaning is inseparable from its cultural performance, inviting us to interpret “Sika” as both text and social practice. Martin Stokes (1994, 2022) similarly foregrounds music’s role in shaping identity and articulating cosmopolitan belonging. His notion of *musical cosmopolitanism*—where local sounds engage global forms without erasing their roots—directly applies to “Sika,” which navigates Ghana’s cultural heritage while resonating with worldwide trends.

### 3.5. Implications for Ghanaian music

Taken together, these perspectives position interculturalism as more than a descriptive tool; it is an explanatory framework that illuminates why and how “Sika” matters. Bhabha’s Third Space helps us grasp the song’s hybridity; Anku and Nketia ground it in African-centered scholarship; Kramer and Stokes frame its cultural meaning within broader critical discourse; and Emielu demonstrates its progressive traditionalism. Through this lens, “Sika” becomes more than a musical collaboration: it is a cultural artifact that encapsulates Ghana’s negotiation of heritage, identity, and globalization.

## 4. Methodology: collaborative musicking

Building on the theoretical framework of interculturalism, this study uses collaborative musicking as its method for analyzing “Sika.” While interculturalism emphasizes the cultural negotiations involved in genre fusion, collaborative musicking focuses on the creative processes where artists work together to create meaning. This view considers the song not just as a cultural artifact but also as the result of intentional artistic collaboration, allowing us to explore how individual contributions come together to form a shared musical story. Collaborative musicking provides a valuable framework for understanding the creative teamwork behind the song. This approach highlights the collective effort of artists who bring their unique strengths to create a unified musical narrative (Small 1998). In this collaboration, Okyeame Kwame’s background in hiplife and rap blends with Kofi Kinaata’s in highlife to produce a lively musical fusion that demonstrates the potential of genre-blending. Notably, Kinaata performed on a drill beat for the first time, showcasing his versatility and openness to experimentation (Dadzie 2024). His melodies, rooted in highlife rhythmic patterns, added an uplifting vibe, while Kwame’s rap verses offered narrative depth by addressing hopes and economic challenges relevant to Ghanaian communities (Mends 2024; Stokes 2022). The collaboration also illustrates the broader impact of collective creativity in contemporary Ghanaian music. By merging different styles, Kwame and Kinaata expanded their musical horizons and enhanced the cultural significance of their work. Their partnership reflects the complexities of today’s society, demonstrating how musicians can strengthen one another’s talents while preserving their unique artistic identities. The result is a song that resonates with a wide audience and exemplifies the benefits of collaborative work in music.

## 5. Analysis of the composition in light of Philip Tagg’s model

This study selectively adapts Philip Tagg’s framework, drawing on his essay “Analyzing Popular Music” (2015) and his monograph *Music’s Meanings* (2013). The following elements are most relevant for analyzing “Sika”:

- a) Mood and Semiotics (Hypothetical Subtext): Tagg emphasizes that music communicates affect and meaning through culturally embedded codes of connotation (Tagg 2013, Ch. 5).
- b) Stylistic Features and Genre Markers: Genre conventions and instrumentation encode identity and cultural tradition, guiding interpretation (Tagg 2015, 11).
- c) Structure and Form: Song structure (verses, chorus, bridges) guides emotional and thematic development (Tagg 2013, Ch. 5).
- d) Intertextuality / IOCM: Tagg’s interobjective comparison compares musical motifs with structurally similar examples to uncover meaning (Tagg 2015, 8–13; Tagg 2013, Ch. 7).
- e) Semiotics and Connotation: Music carries meaning through semiotic codes (iconic, indexical, symbolic), which listeners decode through shared cultural understanding (Tagg 2013, Ch. 5).

This approach enables us to analyze “Sika” beyond its lyrics—considering melody, rhythm, instrumentation—and to trace how the fusion of highlife, hiplife, rap, and drill expresses broader socio-economic themes in contemporary Ghana.

### 5.1. Formal and layered structure of “Sika”

To understand the complex layers of “Sika,” the song was organized based on its formal structure (Intro → Verse → Chorus → Bridge → Outro) and examined across various aspects: genre influence, mood, melody and rhythm, harmony, instrumentation, lyrical themes, and production effects. The table 1 below provides a schematic overview of these interconnected layers.

Table 1. Full Analytical Scheme for “Sika”

Song Section	Genre Influence	Mood / Atmosphere	Melody & Rhythm	Harmony / Chords	Instrumentation	Social / Lyrical Theme	Electronic Effects
<b>Intro</b> (0:00–0:15)	Establishes a drill/rap-influenced sound	Energetic, anticipatory	Minimal melodic content, syncopated drill rhythm	Static harmony (tonic pedal)	808s, hi-hats, electronic bass	Sets up the theme of money and ambition	Reverb on snare, stereo widening
<b>Verse 1</b> (0:16–0:45)	Combines drill, highlife, brass band (percussion) elements, and introduces thematic content	Reflective, socially aware	Melodic highlife phrasing	I–IV–V with occasional ii chord creating tension	Highlife guitar riffs	Persona stresses financial independence, resilience	Auto-tune effects, subtle delay
<b>Chorus</b> (0:46–1:00)	Fusion of drill rhythm with highlife chorus delivery	Uplifting, communal	Singable chorus with a call-and-response feel	I–IV–V progression, bright tonal center	Mix of guitars, backing vocals, 808s	Shared aspiration, communal call for prosperity	Layered reverb for chorus vocals, wide mix
<b>Verse 2</b> (1:01–1:30)	Rap vocals and singing merge with highlife influence and drill undertones.	Tense, urban, aspirational	Rhythmic rap delivery, accented syncopation	Alternation between tonic and dominant, V7 cadence	Drill beat, rap vocals, subtle guitar backing	City struggles, ambition, resilience amidst hardship	Compression, EQ emphasis on voice, delay
<b>Bridge</b> (1:31–1:45)	A varied refrain with added vocal improv and brass band plus highlife motifs.	Grand, celebratory, reflective	Brass band melodic riffs, cyclic rhythms	Inclusion of I <sub>c</sub> and V7 for grandeur	Synthesizer, subtle pads, 808s	Cultural pride, bridging generations	Reverb and panning for grandeur
<b>Chorus</b> (1:45–2:00)	Repeat of chorus – highlife + drill fusion	Reaffirming, hopeful	Repetition of chorus melody, reinforcing unity	Return to I–IV–V, tonal stability	Layered vocals, guitars, electronic beats	Collective hope, emphasis on unity	Reverb-drenched chorus, fuller mix
<b>Verse 3</b> (2:00–2:46)	Highlife + drill fusion	Advisory, hopeful	Speech-singing style to pure highlife	Static harmony (tonic pedal)	Drill/highlife beat, subtle electromusical effects	Hopefulness, satisfaction	Compression, EQ emphasis on voice, delay
<b>Chorus</b> (2:46–3:01)	Fusion of drill rhythm with highlife chorus delivery	Reflective, socially aware	Melodic highlife phrasing	I–IV–V with occasional ii chord creating tension	Highlife guitar riffs layered with rap vocals	Persona stresses financial independence, resilience	Reverb and panning for grandeur
<b>Outro</b> (3:01–end)	Highlife cadence with fading drill beat	Resolution, reflective closure	Guitar and brass fade-out, cyclic closure	Cadential closure on tonic	Highlife guitar, brass fade, percussion	Closing reflection on ambition and resilience	Fade-out with echo and reverb wash

A unifying feature across these sections is the thematic hook, first introduced in the chorus and repeated throughout the song. This theme serves as the anchor of the composition, blending highlife melodic contours with drill-inspired rhythmic elements. Figure 1 shows a transcription of the theme, emphasizing its pentatonic foundation, syncopated rhythm, and phrasing.

The transcription shows how a relatively simple melodic structure is enriched through rhythmic placement and harmonic context. The pentatonic framework connects the theme to highlife and folk traditions, while the beat and harmonic progression place it within common Afro-diasporic practices. This hybridity reflects the broader intercultural dynamics of “Sika”: tradition and modernity are not just placed side by side but actively intertwined in a single melodic idea.

celebratory (*enyigem'*)

The musical score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats. It features five vocal parts: Kofi, Chorus (Vox 1), Chorus (Vox 2), Okyeame, and Chorus (Vox 3). The lyrics are in Ewe, with English translations provided below the notes. The score is divided into four systems of staves.

**System 1:**

- Kofi:** Ko fi maa nyi'o
- Chorus (Vox 1):** Hon
- Chorus (Vox 2):** Hon m'enn gy' m'e nyi wa Si ka a m'e nya.yi-
- Okyeame:** Hon
- Chorus (Vox 3):** Hon

**System 2:**

- Chorus (Vox 1):** Hon m'enn gy' m'e nyi wa ka kra\_m'e nya.yi ah! a he' aaa!
- Chorus (Vox 2):** Si ka m' nya.yi

**System 3:**

- Chorus (Vox 1):** ka kra m' nya.yi
- Chorus (Vox 2):** Hon
- Chorus (Vox 3):** Hon m'enn gy' m'e nyi wa Si ka a m' nya.yi - Me di'a ma'man'e di.o
- Okyeame:** Hon
- Chorus (Vox 3):** Hon

**System 4:**

- Chorus (Vox 1):** oo! Si ka m'e nya.yi

Figure 1. Transcription of the central theme from "Sika"

This analysis reveals several key patterns. First, the *genre shifts* match the thematic development: the drill-infused intro creates anticipation and ambition. At the same time, the bridge uses brass band and highlife traditions to highlight cultural pride and generational connection. Second, *harmonic changes* often match the lyrical tension. For example, the introduction of the ii and V7 chords in Verse 2 aligns with the persona's depiction of struggle and uncertainty, increasing a sense of instability. Third, *production choices* strengthen these themes: reverb and stereo widening in the intro make the sound more open, while heavy vocal processing in rap verses amplifies the urban, aspirational vibe. By combining these elements, the analysis shows that "Sika" is not just a mix of genres but also a carefully planned dialogue between sound, lyrics, and cultural meaning. The thematic hook and its recurrence across the formal structure play a central role in this process, creating coherence while simultaneously signaling cultural hybridity. The blending of drill, rap, highlife, and brass band styles is more than just style—it creates a semiotic interaction where musical techniques reflect the socio-economic and cultural stories told in the lyrics.

### 5.2. Harmony and semiotic layers

Sika's harmonic framework is primarily based on the I–IV–V progression typical of highlife, which creates a sense of tonal stability and accessibility. However, adding extra chords—such as the ii (F minor), Ic (Eb/G), and V7 (Bb7)—brings expressive nuance. These harmonic variations carry symbolic meaning when interpreted alongside the lyrics. For instance, the ii chord briefly disrupts the diatonic cycle, creating tension that reflects the protagonist's struggles with financial insecurity. The Ic chord smooths bass movement and adds continuity, symbolizing persistence and resilience. The V7, with its increased dissonance and expectation of resolution, coincides with lyrics about ambition and longing, embodying both the uncertainty and hope associated with economic aspirations. These harmonic choices do not act alone but interact with other musical layers. In the chorus, returning to the stable I–IV–V progression emphasizes the collective hope and desire for prosperity. Conversely, the bridge expands harmonic color through brass-band idioms, highlighting themes of cultural pride and continuity. Therefore, harmony in "Sika" functions symbolically: it signals shifts between stability and instability, aligning musical tension with social stories of hardship, ambition, and resilience.

### 5.3. Persona and lyrics

The lyrical dimension of "Sika" operates through distinct personae rather than through direct self-representations by the performers. Framing these voices as constructed identities helps avoid reducing the artist to the lyrical subject, while still acknowledging the cultural resonances they evoke. In Verse 1, the lyrical persona highlights financial independence and resilience, expressing values of hard work and dignity. This voice aligns with Kinaata's highlife-influenced melodic style, yet it also serves as a broader cultural archetype: a striving individual grounding ambition in moral responsibility. In Verse 2, the persona shifts to the perspective of an urban dweller facing precarity and social aspirations. The rap delivery intensifies the urgency of this voice as the lyrics explore themes of homelessness, ambition, and survival. Instead of viewing this as Kwame's autobiography, it is more productive to see the verse as representative of contemporary urban struggles in Ghana. The chorus, in contrast, universalizes these perspectives by framing them as collective hopes and communal affirmations. The repeated refrains function as a chorus of society itself, where personal struggles and ambitions become shared cultural narratives. Through these evolving lyrical personae, "Sika" creates a dialogue between the individual and the collective, between aspiration and uncertainty, and between tradition and modernity.

### 5.4. Sound production and effects

The production techniques in "Sika" are not just decorative elements but active parts of the song's meaning. Effects like reverb, delay, and auto-tune shape how listeners perceive space, emotion, and identity in the music. The intro uses reverb and stereo widening to create a sense of openness and anticipation, reflecting the song's central theme of economic aspiration. This spatial effect places the listener in a sonic environment of possibility, setting the stage for the narrative voices that follow. In the rap verses, subtle auto-tune and compression give the lyrical voice a more processed, urban sound, fitting the aesthetics of drill and highlife. Rather than simply being stylistic choices, this sound world conveys the mediated, technologized experience of modern urban life—an aural metaphor for balancing authenticity and survival in the digital age. The chorus, on the other hand, features layered vocals with sustained reverb, creating a communal and resonant sound.

This treatment emphasizes the chorus's role as a shared statement of hope, giving it a choral feel that transcends individual performers. Finally, in the bridge, brass instruments are enhanced with reverb and panning, producing a sense of grandeur and public space. This spatialization highlights cultural pride and continuity, placing traditional idioms within a modern, global sound landscape. Overall, these production strategies do more than decorate the track; they reinforce the lyrical and harmonic themes, emphasizing ambition, uncertainty, resilience, and collective identity.

### 5.5. Synthesis of findings

The analysis of “Sika” shows how cross-genre collaboration creates a layered musical piece in which sonic, lyrical, and cultural elements support one another. By placing the song within Tagg’s analytical framework, we see that its structure, harmonic changes, lyrical characters, and production choices come together to express themes of ambition, uncertainty, resilience, and cultural continuity. Several patterns stand out. The formal structure (intro–verse–chorus–bridge–outro) acts as a backbone, guiding changes in genre, mood, and lyrical themes. The harmonic language—based on highlife’s I–IV–V cycle but expanded through ii, Ic, and V7 chords—matches moments of social tension and resolution. The lyrical characters’ voices present individual and collective perspectives that highlight the realities of modern Ghana, while the production techniques turn these stories into spatial and emotional experiences. The result is a song that functions not just as entertainment but also as a cultural artifact. “Sika” demonstrates how Ghanaian musicians navigate tradition and modernity, local identity and global sounds, individual dreams and collective resilience. By blending drill, rap, highlife, hiplife, and brass band styles, the composition showcases intercultural dialogue in sound, transforming everyday social issues into an aesthetic of hope and continuity. Therefore, the analysis confirms that “Sika” is more than just its parts. It is a lively space of cultural negotiation where musical hybridity serves to express both the challenges and opportunities of Ghanaian modern life.

## 6. Conclusion

This study explores “Sika” as a cross-genre composition that illustrates the intercultural dynamics of contemporary Ghanaian music. By examining its formal structure, harmonic language, lyrical personae, and production techniques, the paper demonstrates how the song functions beyond mere entertainment: it acts as a cultural artifact negotiating between tradition and modernity, local identity and global connectivity, personal aspiration and collective resilience. Drawing on theories of interculturalism, postcolonial hybridity, and African-centered music scholarship, the analysis shows that “Sika” represents a living dialogue across generations and cultures. Its fusion of highlife, hiplife, brass band, rap, and drill confirms the adaptability of Ghanaian traditions, while its global impact highlights how popular music articulates cosmopolitan belonging. The main contribution of this paper is positioning “Sika” as a case study of how cross-genre collaboration in Ghana operates both aesthetically and socially: as a space for musical innovation, a reflection of socio-economic realities, and an expression of cultural continuity. In doing so, it contributes to broader discussions on interculturalism, hybridity, and African popular music, while providing a framework for future analysis of similar musical practices. Future research could explore other collaborative works in Ghana and across Africa that use cross-genre strategies, especially concerning audience reception, digital media circulation, and economic sustainability. Such studies will enhance our understanding of how African music continues to negotiate its place in an increasingly interconnected world.

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### Žanrų sąveika: etno- ir contempo sintezė Okyeame'ės Kwame'ės ir Kofi Kinaata'os kūrinyje „Sika“

#### Santrauka

Straipsnyje analizuojamas kūrinys „Sika“ (2024), sukurtas bendradarbiaujant Okyeame'ei Kwame'ei ir Kofi Kinaata'ai. Tai skirtingus žanrus jungiantis muzikinis projektas, atskleidžiantis šiuolaikinės Ganos muzikos tarpkultūrinius procesus. Derinant *highlife* ir *hiplife* muzikos žanrus, pučiamųjų muzikos instrumentų orkestro stiliškumą, repą ir *drill* požanrį, „Sika“ kuriama kaip daugiasluoksnė garsinė struktūra, kurioje tradiciniai elementai interpretuojami šiuolaikinės globalios muzikos kontekste.

Remiantis Philipo Taggo analitiniu modeliu bei tarpkultūriškumo teorija, postkolonijinio hibridiškumo samprata ir į Afrikos kultūrą orientuotomis muzikologinėmis studijomis, tyrime atskleidžiama, kaip harmoninė kalba, ritminė daugiasluoksnė struktūra, lyriniai personažai ir postprodukciniai aspektai perteikia ekonominio nesaugumo ir atsparumo temas. Analizė rodo, kad „Sika“ įkūnija Austino Emielu apibrėžtą progresyvaus tradicionalizmo sampratą: kūrinyje gaivinamos Ganos muzikos idiomos, kartu aktyviai įtraukiant globalios populiariosios muzikos kalbą. Tyrimas taip pat parodo, kad kūrinys atspindi Homi K. Bhabha'os hibridiškumo koncepciją bei Martino Stokeso kosmopolitinio priklausymo idėją, leidžiančias Ganos muziką suvokti kaip vienu metu lokaliai įsišaknijusį ir globaliai rezonansinį reiškinį. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad „Sika“ yra daugiau nei populiariosios muzikos bendradarbiavimo rezultatas – tai kultūrinis artefaktas, dokumentuojantis Ganos visuomenės santykį su kultūriniu paveldu, tapatybe ir globalizacijos procesais. Ši analizė prisideda prie platesnių diskusijų apie tarpkultūriškumą, hibridiškumą ir Afrikos populiariosios muzikos raidą, kartu pabrėždama tarpžanrinio bendradarbiavimo potencialą kaip kultūrinio tęstinumo ir kūrybinės inovacijos formą.