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THE RE(PUBLIC) OF SALSA: AFRO-CUBAN MUSIC IN *FIN-DE-SIÈCLE* DAKAR

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Dakar has some of the best live music in the world today.[1] Few cities in Africa have as wide an array of musical offerings. On any given night, it is possible to hear Senegalese rap, *sabar* drumming,[2] jazz, lounge music, acoustic 'modern' folk music, *m'balax*, Mande music from Casamance,[3] Cabo Verdean music, and, in a surprisingly large number of venues, Afro-Cuban music[4] and *salsa m'balax*.[5] While the widespread popularity of Afro-Cuban music in Senegal subsided in the 1980s, at the turn of the millennium it has been performed more frequently than its diminished public standing seems to warrant. Cassette/CD sales for Afro-Cuban music have dwindled and only rarely do the Senegalese media divert their gaze from *m'balax* stars like Youssou N'Dour or *chanteuses* like Coumba Gawlo to Afro-Cuban stalwarts like James Gadiaga of Super Cayor. Despite its lower profile, though, Afro-Cuban music continues to flourish in Dakar's many *boîtes*.

This article explores the cultural dynamics that have sustained the Afro-Cuban style as a significant variety of *performed*, if not recorded, music in Dakar, even as it has been overshadowed by newer musical genres appealing to younger segments of the listening public.[6] I argue

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[1] For a historical survey of Senegalese popular music, see Benga 2005. See also Benga 2002, covering much of the same material.

[2] For an intensive examination of *sabar* drumming traditions, see Tang 2006.

[3] For more on Mande music, see Charry 2000.

[4] This article will use the stylistic labels 'Afro-Cuban', 'salsa' and 'Latin music' interchangeably. In the Caribbean, these categories have significantly different meanings. The Senegalese are aware of these differences, especially when discussing Cuban music made in Cuba. However, when talking about Cuban music played in Senegal, the Senegalese in recent years have elided these three terms. My usage in this article reflects this convergence.

[5] *Salsa m'balax* is a hybrid of Cuban music and the Senegalese musical genre *m'balax* that emerged in Senegal in the early 1990s. In this new musical form, a song starts in *clave* and states the melody in typical Cuban style. However, where the 'traditional' improvisational *montuno* section would come in the middle of the song, the *salsa m'balax* musicians substitute *m'balax* rhythms usually in 12/8 time. At the song's conclusion, the musicians return to *clave*. For a description of a *salsa m'balax* performance, see the section on Pape Fall later in the article.

[6] I carried out the research for this article between 2001 and 2006. During this period, I was resident in Dakar in 2002–3 and made half a dozen shorter research trips at other points. My research entailed extensive formal tape-recorded interviews of Senegalese Afro-Cuban musicians and figures prominent in the Latin music scene (radio and television broadcasters, media executives, academics, bureaucrats, dance instructors, club owners, recording engineers, journalists), some active, others long retired. In addition, I interviewed individuals in the United States (some of them Senegalese) who have been involved with

that Afro-Cuban music has been the 'anthem' of the generation that came to power during the Independence period of the 1960s. For this cohort, listening and dancing to Latin music embodies a 'modern' tropical sensibility and repertoire of behaviours they see as the bedrock of a viable post-colonial national culture. Keeping Afro-Cuban music alive in Senegal sustains this sensibility and perpetuates these behaviours, allowing this generation to exercise its power in the cultural and social domain and solidify its dominant political position. Its performance thus creates a space where generational rivalries and differing notions of cosmopolitanism can be 'played out' and negotiated under controlled conditions.[7] Exploring where these performances take place illuminates the shifting relationship between sociability and authority in contemporary Senegal and the changing nature of the public sphere in the capital, Dakar.

PERFORMANCE SPACES FOR AFRO-CUBAN MUSIC

In conversation, the Dakar Latin musicians divide performance spaces into two hierarchies, one relating to cultural status, the other to profitability. From their perspective, playing in both types of spaces ensures a successful career, especially since they have to appeal to a prestige-hungry audience.[8] For a number of years, the most distinguished place for any musical performance in Dakar has been the Centre Culturel Français in the Plateau ('downtown' Dakar). The CCF, which is outdoors, has superior sound and lighting equipment and attracts a well-heeled crowd of resident foreigners and influential Dakarois. Since it is run by the French government, any group playing there knows that if their performance attracts the attention of one of the French cultural commissars, French government patronage may ensue (sponsored tours, festival appearances in Europe, overseas recording opportunities). Few Senegalese Afro-Cuban groups have appeared there in recent years. Sometimes, if a Cuban group like Orquesta Aragon is touring, the CCF management will invite local Latin musicians to play with them.[9] The Dakar Afro-Cuban musical

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Afro-Cuban music in Senegal, such as record label executives and US and Cuban Latin musicians who have played in Senegal. My research also involved extensive informal interactions with the Senegalese Latin music community and my appearing twice as an interviewee on a Radiodiffusion Télévision Sénégalaise (RTS) show on Senegalese salsa. Attending performances of Afro-Cuban music in Dakar was an important part of my work. Between 2001 and 2006, I attended hundreds of Senegalese salsa events.

[7] For a contrasting situation in Africa where generational rivalries and competing notions of cosmopolitanism and authenticity played out in a different way from Senegal, see Bob White's study of popular music in Mobutu's Zaïre (White 2008).

[8] There are not many detailed descriptions of music performance spaces in contemporary African cities. For a fascinating if brief survey of music venues in Addis Ababa in the 1960s, see Yohannès 1966. For a detailed look at Kinshasa in the 1990s, see White 2008: 97–129.

[9] The musicians who played with Orquesta Aragon at the CCF still talk warmly of the experience. If the pay was minimal, they feel the recognition of their virtuosity and artistic seriousness was priceless. Roots in Reverse Interview No. 15, Yahya Fall, 2 April 2003,

community considers such opportunities extremely prestigious, as they provide the most advantageous type of exposure and publicity.

The Senegalese government-owned Théâtre Daniel Sorano, also located in the Plateau, is another 'elite' place to perform. During the Senghor and Diouf presidencies, playing the Sorano certified that an entertainer stood high in the favour of the functionaries who determined what constituted 'official' Senegalese culture. In recent years, though, musicians or promoters have rented the auditorium to stage special concerts since Dakar has few other facilities of this type. Performing at the theatre no longer necessarily means that an artist has received a government stamp of approval. Still, the hall retains its air of distinction and formality. Concert patrons put on some of their most stylish clothing and behave as if they are at a state-sponsored event. Afro-Cuban musicians have appeared there at irregular intervals in recent years, organizing soirées to celebrate bands' anniversaries or evenings in honour of revered figures like the late Senegambian *sonero*, Laba Sosseh.

Since the 1990s, Dakar has had two or three upscale nightclub/restaurants like 'Just 4 U' or 'Central Park' (which closed in 2006) that cater primarily to resident foreigners in Dakar and well-to-do Senegalese. These clubs, clustered near the campus of Cheikh Anta Diop University in the quartier Point E, are expensive by local standards (US$6 to US$10 admission depending on who is playing) and rarely feature dancing. The attentive audiences are composed of casually dressed patrons seated at tables outside. The programming at these spots is cutting-edge and knowledgeable, covering many different genres of Senegalese music. International musical figures passing through Dakar often show up to play a set or sit in with the local musicians. A number of Afro-Cuban orchestras have had sporadic bookings at these clubs in recent years, especially Orchestre Baobab after it achieved global success. The sound systems in these venues are basic and the pay low. However, Afro-Cuban musicians appreciate the sophisticated audiences and otherwise pleasant working conditions.

Many social associations and government groups in Dakar also organize private parties at public spaces like the Maison Douta Seck in Medina and the Club des Douanes at the edge of Point E. Admission to these events is by invitation only. The ambience is decorous and chic. The audience tends to be late-middle-aged (in their fifties and sixties), successful government officials and business people. Each occasion has some speech making with flowery votes of thanks and identification of prominent individuals in attendance.[10] There is always a large dance floor. For Senegalese Latin musicians, these 'dates' are particularly

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Point E. ('Roots in Reverse' is the name of my research project and a soon-to-be-completed book manuscript. Point E is a well-known neighbourhood in Dakar.)

[10] Ousmane Sembene in his film *Xala* (1975) shows such a party, a wedding with music provided by the famous Star Band. Though his film was made thirty years ago, these social gatherings are little changed, except that they now involve much less alcohol consumption. Thanks to Fiona McLaughlin for reminding me of this reference.

desirable bookings. The pay tends to be good and the event planners treat the musicians with civility. More importantly, they believe that the gentility of the proceedings mirrors the cultured values they are trying to project through their music.

Lower in prestige for the Afro-Cuban musicians but more economically important are the four or five Dakar nightclubs specializing in Latin music. These clubs provide steady employment and a hospitable environment for the city's Latin orchestras. They offer interaction with their public on a regular basis, facilitating whatever little patronage they might receive.[11] The owners of these clubs are prosperous businessmen and restaurant owners who are connoisseurs of Afro-Cuban music. Though making a profit is their primary motive for running these clubs, they also gain a significant amount of status from being associated with this type of artistic activity.[12] This quest for status is reflected in their establishments' longevity and in the clean, dignified and gracious manner in which they are run. Patrons are orderly and the club personnel unfailingly polite.[13] Every effort is made to create an atmosphere in which Dakar's powerful and well-connected would feel comfortable and welcome, whether they are present or not.

Unlike the open-air upscale clubs that are located in the parts of Dakar where rich Senegalese and expatriates congregate, these 'temples of Salsa'[14] are indoor spaces scattered throughout the metropolitan area. The clubs are equipped with a small bandstand, a bar, a linoleum-covered dance floor and either banquettes or tables and chairs where the audience rests between band sets. Decor is simple but tasteful with mirrored walls and dark or coloured lighting. The sound is mediocre with murky mixes and distorting reverbs. Capacity ranges from around 75 to 200 and when there's live music, the clubs are full. Admission is half of what the fancier clubs charge (approximately US$2.50 to US$5). The audience is almost entirely Senegalese with sometimes a few Lebanese and one or two expatriates. The dress code is more relaxed than at the private parties but still formal. The men either dress in slacks with an ironed shirt and sometimes a jacket or in high-end boubous. The women, if they are middle-aged, wear 'up and down' African cloth ensembles or, if they are young *femmes libre*s, tight designer jeans and a jersey.[15] As is the case with many music clubs in

[11] Unlike elsewhere in Africa (Mali, Guinea, Nigeria, the Congo under Mobutu), Senegalese bands receive little financial backing from politicians, the state or wealthy merchants. Basically, they subsist as best they can on their performance fees and their 'day jobs'.

[12] It is impossible to calculate just how much money they do make. Senegalese club owners, like their counterparts everywhere in the world, are loath to reveal their profit margins. Certainly, if such information became public, it would negatively affect their business relationship with the musicians.

[13] I have been to hundreds of evenings at these clubs and have yet to see an altercation or even any sort of argument at any of them. As a result, security inside the clubs is light. Outside the clubs, though, the atmosphere is much more unruly.

[14] One of the salsa clubs (Fouquet's) advertises itself in this way.

[15] Senegalese fashions change constantly and the costume of these women may vary significantly from year to year.

Dakar, there are nearly as many women as men. Most of the patrons are middle-aged (40s–60s), the men generally older than the women. They are familiar with each band's repertoire (and with each other) and are well versed in the history and aesthetics of Latin music, both Cuban and Senegalese. Conversation and alcohol consumption are minimal; all come to dance.

The composition of the audience depends on the night of the week, which band is playing, and whether any special events are being held. Band anniversaries, birthday parties for respected musicians[16] and commemorative evenings such as a memorial concert for Celia Cruz in June 2006 have a more expensive gate fee and attract a more distinguished crowd, including media executives and radio or television personalities. On other nights, the audience is a diverse group, consisting of sales clerks, other musicians, business people, government employees, and, at some clubs, sex workers, some looking for customers, others enjoying a night off. Nearly all the patrons are habitual customers. On most nights, the music begins late, almost always an hour after midnight, though on Sunday 8 p.m. starting times are common. The musicians play two sets, each lasting approximately seventy-five minutes with a fifteen-minute break in between.

The three most significant Afro-Cuban music clubs in the *fin–de-siècle* period have been Fouquet's, Soumbé, and Chez Iba. Named after the renowned café in Paris's 8th *arrondissement*, Fouquet's is tucked away in an arcade, not far from Dakar's Catholic Cathedral. During the day, it is a lively restaurant, serving excellent Senegalese food to the commercial class in downtown Dakar. After dark, the owner Abdoulaye and his wife transform the space into an intimate *boîte*, a salsa club in miniature. The dance floor and the improvised bandstand are both Lilliputian. The club's constricted space obviously limits its profitability and the owners pay the salsa musicians performance fees commensurate with the club's tiny size. Over the years, this has been one of several factors that have led to friction between the proprietors and the Dakar Latin musical community. Some bandleaders refuse to play there. Others will only appear on an off night when no other work is available. Despite these obstacles, the club manages to engage top talent and attract a bohemian clientèle rare for Dakar.

Soumbé is part of a tourist development built by the Senegalese government that also includes a small hotel and a 'traditional' crafts bazaar. The hotel and the club never attracted the foreign visitors that were expected, in large part because of the odour of rotting fish that from time to time wafts in from the famous Soumbedioune fish market next door. The club, though, has long been one of the most pleasant performing venues in Dakar. Opening out to the sea, it is spacious, airy and well-designed, with a large, raised bandstand and a tiled dance floor. Not surprisingly, it draws a more prosperous-looking

[16] These birthday parties can be lucrative for musicians, since it is expected that patrons will make cash donations to them as birthday presents.

group than the other salsa clubs. Middle-aged married couples predominate, all elegantly dressed. The ambience is sedate enough for band members to bring their families to watch their performance. The club has become a fixture on the Afro-Cuban and salsa *m'balax* circuit from the 1990s on. Every Latin orchestra of consequence has played there numerous times.[17]

Chez Iba is the epicentre of Senegal's Afro-Cuban sub-culture. Its proprietor, Ibru Iba, is a well-to-do businessman who obviously runs the *boîte* as a labour of love. Though Iba is committed to running an elegant establishment and largely succeeds in that objective, there is an undefinable louche ambience to Chez Iba that inhibits prominent Dakarois from going there frequently.[18] However, it is precisely that mixture of refinement and disreputability that endears the space to Afro-Cuban musicians, who find the room uniquely suitable for playing their music. For them, the club ideally combines the aesthetic distinction of Afro-Cuban music with the ambience of the street, recreating, in mood and texture at least, the world of the early Cuban *soneros*.

Chez Iba takes seriously its role as the nexus of the Afro-Cuban music community in Senegal. The only salsa club with a house band (led by the salsa veteran Yahya Fall), it regularly stages soirées promoting some aspect of the salsa scene. As far as live music goes, it has a 'salsa only' policy. The musicians like and respect Iba. He consults with them frequently and he and his staff treat them like artists, not hired hands. He knows many of his customers, seemingly from encounters outside the club. Unlike many other club owners in Dakar, he continually reinvests in his enterprise and looks for ways to enhance its reputation.

Lower in prestige than the salsa clubs but more financially rewarding is playing at five star hotel restaurants and lounges. Only three of the hotels consistently book salsa musicians – the Savannah and the Sofitel, both in downtown Dakar, and the posh Hotel Meridien in Ngor, further out on the Cap Vert peninsula. Playing at a hotel like the Meridien requires a suave approach and a wider repertoire than just Afro-Cuban music. Bands are expected to play calypsos, bossa nova, Dixieland jazz, Tino Rossi covers, reggae, beguines and a merengue or two. The bands' sound is supposed to contribute to an air of tropical luxury and languor and provide calming ambient noise for the diners at the hotel's restaurant. These artistic constraints notwithstanding, the level of musicianship of these hotel bands can be high.[19] Musicians like these jobs for their stability, their high pay and for the fact that the music starts and ends early (8–10.30 p.m.).

[17] The future of this club is uncertain as President Abdoulaye Wade rebuilds the Corniche oceanside highway and develops the areas in its immediate vicinity.

[18] Many of my Senegalese friends who are prominent in intellectual, journalistic and government circles were always planning to meet me there. Never once did such a rendezvous take place, uncharacteristic behaviour for this group.

[19] For more on hotel music in a global context, see Hayward 1999.

Two popular Dakar performance spaces have been off limits to salsa orchestras in recent years: stadium extravaganzas and promotional events organized by radio and television services. These types of events generate enormous amounts of publicity and help expand fan bases. Needless to say, they also often pay very well. Generally, the organizers of these concerts hire hip-hop and *m'balax* ensembles that appeal to Dakar's huge population of young people. The audience for an Afro-Cuban band performance is too small to fill a stadium. Moreover, despite the rise of *salsa m'balax*, Latin music in Senegal can't fully shake off its reputation – among the cultural bureaucrats who run RTS, the Senegalese national radio and television network – as less culturally 'authentic' and 'original' than other genres of Senegalese music, and as a foreign-derived music that no longer speaks to Senegal's present-day predicaments.

In contemporary Dakar, an evening of Afro-Cuban music entails performances by both the musicians and the audience. The musicians are playing songs associated with a post-colonial *belle époque*. For them, playing Latin music is not an exercise in nostalgia. They regard themselves as participants in an ongoing cultural tradition of cosmopolitanism and diasporic unity that, while it may have ceded its once dominant position in urban Senegal, remains vital and significant. For many in the audience, dancing in the 'correct' manner to the music exhibits their mastery of refined behaviours, legitimating their respected position in society. The next section of this article looks at three Afro-Cuban performances, examining the varying meanings Afro-Cuban music has for *fin-de-siècle* Dakar café society.

PERFORMANCE PORTRAIT 1: A NIGHT AT THE HOTEL MERIDIEN WITH THE WORLD MELODY MAKERS

The Hotel Meridien was originally built with Saudi Arabian government money as a conference centre for a meeting of Islamic nations in Senegal. After the meeting, it became a luxurious international hotel. A distance from downtown and other neighbourhood nightspots, the Meridien draws few callers at night, unless they are staying there or meeting a guest for business. The hotel has two restaurants and a bar and, on many nights, all three have live music of some sort. Salsa music is in the garden dining area. The outdoor restaurant is well lit and simply decorated. It abuts the sea on one side, a large swimming pool on the other; there are flowers and decorative plants everywhere. It is an attractive and tranquil setting. A corner of the restaurant next to the kitchen has been reserved as the bandstand. It lies directly opposite an elaborate dinner buffet. The space in between the bandstand and the buffet is the dance floor, on the off chance that some of the diners want to dance after eating their meal.

As the maitre d' leads patrons to their tables, they pass the orchestra, the World Melody Makers, assembling their instruments for the 8 p.m. starting time. The World Melody Makers are different in a number

of respects from other Dakar Latin bands. They were started and still are sponsored by a retired civil servant, Garang Coulibaly, who uses his prestige to help them secure engagements. Concerned that Latin music might die out in Senegal, Coulibaly set up a music school in the courtyard of his house in the early 1990s. By starting the school, Coulibaly hoped both to provide employment for the then out-of-work salsa musicians whom he hired as teachers and to train a whole new generation of salsa instrumentalists.[20] The band grew out of the school and its bassist, David, is one of its prized graduates. Reflecting Coulibaly's influence, they are committed to reviving the Afro-Cuban style of the 1960s. Their material, their dignified bearing and even their personnel bring to mind the famous Star Band of the immediate post-Independence period. The talented guitarist Mbaye Seck, who functions as *chef d'orchestre*, played with the seminal Dexter Johnson during the heyday of the Star Band in the 1960s and is perhaps the foremost proponent of the Star Band approach to Afro-Cuban music in Senegal today.[21] In the 1960s, all the musicians would have been attired in matching tuxedos or suits. Tonight, though, they are dressed in a variety of styles ranging from African to dress-down informal.

The band has been playing at the Meridien since 2005. It is their first big opportunity and they are determined to make a good impression. Tonight, they have three vocalists, a crooner who doubles as an *animateur* and sings in surprisingly good English; the gifted Camou Yandé, a master of the 'deep' Afro-Cuban singing style and a superb *conguero*;[22] and Maguette Dione, 'the Celia Cruz of Senegal'. Dione does more than take the late Cuban singer as her inspiration. She models herself after her as much as possible, down to her hairstyle.[23] She is the only woman to make a place for herself in the male world of Senegalese Latin music and the other musicians treat her with respect, laced with fear of her violent temper.

The music begins at 8 p.m. sharp. Besides the three singers, there are four musicians – the bassist mentioned above, Mbaye Seck the electric guitarist, an electric pianist and a drummer. Camou Yandé both sings and contributes his conga and clave playing.[24] The band's sound is unique for Senegal. It projects the smoothness that the hotel management prefers but which most Dakar Latin bands disdain. However, it also has a rhythmic propulsion and complexity beyond that which one would expect to hear in hotel 'lounge' music. The vocalists sing in hushed, conversational tones, reminiscent of the Brazilian bossa

[20] Roots in Reverse Interview No. 19, Garang Coulibaly, 13 May 2003, HLM (well-known Dakar neighbourhood).

[21] Roots in Reverse Interview No. 31, Mbaye Seck, 29 July 2003, HLM.

[22] For more on Camou Yandé, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 9, 20 February 2003, HLM.

[23] For more on Maguette Dione, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 13, 25 February 2003, SICAP (well-known Dakar neighbourhood).

[24] Yandé plays his conga in the front of the group, an unusual location for a percussionist in a Senegalese salsa ensemble. Usually they are in the middle of three rows of musicians.

nova style. The intent of the musicians is not to disturb the audience with anything too artistically adventurous but simultaneously to avoid boredom and banality for themselves by subversively injecting subtle flourishes and discordant jazz harmonies.

Their audience, absorbed in their gourmet dinners, ignores the music, to the point of not applauding after a number. Three quarters of the patrons are European business people and diplomats. The other patrons are wealthy Senegalese who are as uninterested in the orchestra as the Europeans. No one gets up to dance. No one sends any musical requests to the orchestra. When the musicians finish their set at 11 p.m., they quickly pack up their instruments, many to play a second date elsewhere in Dakar.

PERFORMANCE PORTRAIT 2: A NIGHT AT MAISON DOUTA SECK WITH PAPE FALL AND L'AFRICAN SALSA[25]

The Medina, which was one of the main African *quartiers* in Dakar during French colonialism, occupies a special place in the history of Afro-Cuban music in Senegal. It was the location of Ibra Kassé's club, Miami, where African artists perfected and indigenized their Cuban musical style after Senegalese Independence. Since then, the Medina, which once housed many prosperous Dakarois, has become a crowded neighbourhood with a lively street life. It has spawned several famous *m'balax* singers, most notably Youssou N'Dour. The Miami has long since closed down and today in the Medina there is only one small club, run by Kassé's son, Alioune, which still features Latin music.[26]

One of the few serene spots in this raucous urban environment is the Maison Douta Seck, near Marché Tilène. Formerly the enormous estate of a prominent Senghor-era politician, the property was confiscated by the Senegalese government when Senghor and the politician had a falling out. Today it is run by the Ministry of Culture, which has some offices there. There is also rehearsal space for the Orchestre National.[27] The walled complex has beautiful gardens, studded with tall palm trees, an open-air theatre and a privately run restaurant serving Senegalese cuisine. To finance its upkeep, the Ministry of Culture rents out the Maison for private functions. Often social organizations and impresarios take advantage of the availability of the space and stage gala evenings there. On this Saturday night, one such organization in Medina has hired Pape Fall and his orchestra to provide the entertainment for their private party. Admission to this gathering is by invitation only, although everyone has to pay a cover charge of 5,000 CFA

[25] This performance took place in April 2003. I am most grateful to Monsieur Fall for inviting me to attend this private gathering.

[26] For more on the Kassé family, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 37, Fatou Diop and Alioune Kassé, 1 June 2006, Medina.

[27] The Orchestre National, one of the few government-supported ensembles in Senegal, often plays Afro-Cuban music at state receptions. Several of its musicians are active in Dakar Latin music circles.

(approximately US$10) at the door. The printed invitation itself lists numerous sponsors, patrons and guests of honour, including a prominent businessman and the elected official in charge of the Medina. Many of the invited dignitaries are not expected to attend. It is sufficient that they allowed their names to be associated with the event on the invitation.

To reach the part of Maison Douta Seck where Pape Fall is playing, audience members have to walk along a dark garden path. After a five-minute stroll, one reaches the concert area, a restaurant with the feel of a tropical resort. There is a large outdoor dance floor surrounded by thatched structures sheltering plastic tables and chairs. Restaurant staff have strewn strings of lights around the trees in the area and the effect is lovely. Even though 11 p.m. is the reported starting time, few of the guests have arrived. Pape Fall is there, however, with one or two of his band members and his wife. He is resplendent in a blue African-style suit. The band's amplifiers have been set up but the instruments have not yet been unloaded. An hour and a half later, the guests start trickling in, all couples. The patrons are dressed as if for a wedding or a major holiday. Their clothes seem to have been made for the occasion and the women are wearing expensive-looking jewellery. Most of the men dress Western-style, with suits and ties. The women are attired in layered, loose dresses, tailored out of costly African cloth.

At 1 a.m., Pape Fall motions for those of his band members present to start the music. A pianist, trumpet player and bassist play a series of dreamy, atmospheric ballads. In the middle of a song, the guitarist arrives, plugs his guitar into an amp, and nonchalantly joins in. The musicians drift in one by one for the next hour. In other Senegalese Afro-Cuban bands, the leader might exchange harsh words with the late-comers but Pape Fall likes a more relaxed feel for his ensemble. He smiles at each one as they wend their way to the stage. By 1.30, the band has at last assembled. Its line-up contrasts significantly with that of the World Melody Makers. A younger singer serves as the chorus for the group, his high, thin voice complementing Fall's vocals. Instead of a drummer with a drum kit, there are three percussionists. Two play Cuban instruments, the timpani and the conga. The third is a griot who specializes in Wolof *sabar* drumming. In addition to the pianist, the group also has a bassist and a guitarist. One of the most impressive features of the ensemble is its two trumpet players, a rarity for any Senegalese band since the 1980s. Both of Fall's trumpeters learned their instrument in the army and their recreation of the Cuban style has a tart military feel to it.

The music commences in earnest at 1.45. As if on a prearranged signal, the remainder of the party's guests stream in. The first two numbers are Afro-Cuban instrumentals and several couples begin dancing. Pape Fall now comes to the stage without any introduction. His first song is a Cuban classic and nearly everyone rises from their seats simultaneously to make their way to the dance floor. Their dancing is skilled and stately. Fall's second song is another canonical Cuban piece from the 1920s. However, when he reaches the part of the

song where ordinarily a Cuban band would go into the *montuno* (the rhythmic, improvisational middle of a song), he and his band without missing a beat shift to 12/8 *m'balax* time. The dancers immediately alter their dance style in response, becoming looser and more energetic, though not as wild as dancers at an *m'balax* band show. Fall's singing becomes more urgent, repeating rhythmic figures over and over again. After approximately 10 minutes of *m'balax*, Fall and his ensemble adroitly return to the Cuban melody and rhythm of the song for the reprise. The music stops and everyone returns to their seats. A few seconds later, Fall begins his next song and the crowd rises in unison at about the tenth measure to occupy the dance floor again.

At around 2.15, Balla Sidibé saunters in with his trademark tiny metal pipe. Sidibé and Fall have been close friends for many years. At the moment, Sidibé is a full-time member of two groups, Fall's African Salsa, and the internationally celebrated Orchestre Baobab, the only Senegalese Latin musician to have such multiple allegiances.[28] He and Fall embrace and Sidibé starts playing the timbale, of which he is the master in Africa, and joins the young singer in the chorus. After a few songs, he and Pape Fall sing a series of intricate duets, perfectly timed and harmonized. Then, Sidibé sings several numbers in his deep voice and relaxed style. After his turn, he and Fall walk off the stage to get something to drink and African Salsa's young singer gets his time in the spotlight. He is much more of an *m'balax* singer than his two older colleagues but lacks their charisma. With him as lead, the band shifts almost completely into an *m'balax* ensemble, with the crackling of the *sabar* drum front and centre.

After two numbers, the band takes a break. During the pause, members of the audience walk over to Fall's and Sidibé's table to chat. They seem familiar with nearly all of them. After greeting Fall, couples go from table to table quietly intermingling with other partygoers. The guests appear to be mostly in their fifties and sixties, at the height of their power and influence. They are stiff and somewhat formal with one another. The obligatory speeches soon begin in French, with votes of thanks, recognition of the VIPs who have been able to be present (few) and regrets from those who couldn't be (many). Fall goes to the microphone and says a few words in Wolof, making a witticism that draws laughter from the audience. His band members stride onto the stage and in an instant the music begins again.

The next set lasts an hour and fifteen minutes. At the beginning of the set, Fall introduces his band, the only time during the evening when he talks to the audience from the stage. During the last half hour of the music, the crowd begins to dwindle. Towards the end of the night, Fall slows down the pace and sings some boleros. The dancers, too, have slowed down a step or two and seem to enjoy the more leisurely pace.

[28] This arrangement changed in 2006 when Orchestre Baobab began playing the club circuit in Dakar after a hiatus of many years. Sidibé no longer had the time to alternate between the two groups.

Without any warning, the music stops after a number. The musicians quickly pack their instruments and load the band truck with all the sound equipment. Within twenty minutes, everyone has left.

Those present at the soirée obviously were very familiar both with Afro-Cuban music and with Pape Fall and his ensemble. However, few of them ever go to one of Dakar's salsa clubs. They constitute an important part of the Latin music community in Senegal yet their enjoyment of the music is always in private. The musicians believe that these audiences best embody the values which Afro-Cuban music celebrates – cosmopolitanism, decorum and refinement. In a sense, they comprise the most significant and valued audience for the Senegalese Afro-Cuban musicians, even though they have become invisible. Their absence makes any Afro-Cuban music performance in Dakar incomplete. Though they have been physically absent from the Dakar's Afro-Cuban music nightclub scene since the 1980s, the musicians wait for their return, which they feel is mostly a question of having new, more elegant performance venues for salsa music. Until Dakar has such spaces, the musicians hope in vain that this segment of their public will start appearing more frequently at places like Chez Iba.

PERFORMANCE PORTRAIT 3: MONDAY NIGHT AT CHEZ IBA WITH YAHYA FALL AND THE CHEZ IBA ALL STARS[29]

No other spot for music in Dakar has an ambience like Chez Iba's. The audience comes here for one reason: to hear Afro-Cuban music interpreted in the Senegalese style and celebrate the sensibility associated with it. The club is simultaneously a project in cultural revival preserving a variety of music and a conservatory for nurturing the next generation of homegrown Afro-Cuban musicians. Just as importantly, it also functions as a ritual space for (re)enacting the 'correct' behaviours that Senegalese who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s regard as linchpins of a well-ordered society. These are heavy cultural burdens for just one modest music club to carry but Chez Iba bears its loads lightly. It never compromises its identity as an unpretentious place to hear a classic popular music played with skill and sincerity.

Chez Iba is located on a street filled with rough-looking drinking places in Dieuppeul, a middle-class quartier of Dakar. A neon sign announces its presence. A mounted board in front of the sole entrance point has scrawled in chalk the names of the musicians who are scheduled to perform that evening. On Monday nights, the names rarely vary. Before one reaches the music area, one passes on the right a veranda housing a *dibiterie* selling roasted meat. Patrons purchase tickets at the

[29] I would like to thank Monsieur Ibru Iba and his staff for the warm welcome they have given me over the years at Chez Iba. This description of a typical Monday night at Chez Iba is a composite portrait drawn from a number of evenings at the club between 2003 and 2007.

entrance (2,500 CFA, approximately US$5) and approach a dance floor that can accommodate forty to fifty couples. The walls of the box-like room are covered with mirrors, though in the dim reddish light no one can see his/her reflection. A disco ball hovers over the linoleum-covered dance area that is surrounded by vinyl-covered banquettes and low-standing drink tables. A ground-level bandstand is at one end of the dance floor with the sound mixing board to one side. At the back of the club, adjacent to the bandstand, is the bar. To the right of the bar is another raised seating area. The club reserves four of the banquettes for that night's vocalists, visiting celebrities, and friends of the performing artists. The singers crowd themselves into the banquette to the right of the bandstand while their friends lounge in the banquette to its left. Dignitaries are ushered to a banquette opposite the bar that affords a degree of privacy. A second banquette at the edge of the dance floor handles the overflow from the VIP area. The club can accommodate approximately 200 individuals in close but not overly cramped quarters.

Mondays at Chez Iba provide a unique overview of the present-day Dakar salsa scene. Nearly all *salseros* of note leave their own ensembles behind for an evening to take their turn singing with the Chez Iba house band, led by the guitarist Yahya Fall.[30] The atmosphere between vocalists is collegial. While the competition for work is fierce among them the other six nights of the week, there appears to be little personal animosity among them on Mondays. They enjoy each other's performances and it is common to see one star inconspicuously singing in the *coro* for another. Yahya Fall serves as the organizer of the Monday night soirées. He selects the music, puts together the arrangements, determines the order in which the *salseros* will sing, and orchestrates the egos of his talented but sometimes temperamental crew. The repertoire rarely changes. It is predominantly a mixture of Afro-Cuban music from the 1920s and 1930s and Senegalese music from the 1970s and 1980s (mostly numbers from the group No. 1 with which many of the singers had been associated). Occasionally, an up-and-coming younger singer will be given the opportunity to perform. The neophyte is expected to sing the same music heard week after week, though he is allowed to bring his own new artistic twist to the old standards.

Despite Tuesday being a work day, the music starts late on Mondays. At midnight, the club is still empty. Between midnight and 1 a.m., the audience begins to drift in. Around 12.30, the band arrives. They swiftly say hello to their many friends in the audience and then occupy themselves with tuning their instruments. The Chez Iba band consists of six musicians: a drummer, a *conguero*, a bassist, an electric pianist, a rhythm guitarist and a lead guitarist. With the exception of Yahya Fall, who has been a professional musician for more than thirty-five years, the band members are young and somewhat inexperienced. As they ready themselves for the evening's performance, Fall works with each

[30] For more on Yahya Fall, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 15, Yahya Fall, 2 April 2003, Point E.

one of them, giving them tips and ensuring that they stay in the Afro-Cuban style. Between 12.45 and 1 o'clock, the singers one by one make their way to the bandstand. They systematically greet everyone they know in the room, pausing for a quick hello or more conversation. There is no backstage or green room at Chez Iba. After mingling with the audience, the vocalists take their place on the banquette reserved for them.

There is no master of ceremonies to introduce the performers and very little talking between numbers. At precisely 1 a.m., the band members take their seats and the music suddenly begins. Fall likes to begin Monday nights with three or four instrumentals, featuring his virtuoso guitar playing. Generally, the first number is a mid-tempo 'jump'. It is followed by a lush bolero, punctuated by Fall's expert chording. Next, Fall picks up the pace with a song that oddly recalls California surfer music of the 1960s. After a brief pause, Fall puts down his guitar and picks up his *tres*. Fall may be the only *tresero* in Africa and his skill with the instrument is impressive. Though he stays within the Cuban aesthetic tradition, his playing creates Jimi Hendrix waves of sound that animate the dancers on the dance floor. After several numbers on the *tres*, Fall returns to his guitar for one of his trademark songs, a rock-tinged version of the Compay Segundo Buena Vista Social Club song 'Chan Chan'. When he finishes, a smattering of applause acknowledges his efforts. By now, the club is filled. The dance floor has barely enough room for anyone to move, although the adroit dancers execute their moves without bumping into one another.

The first vocalist to appear is Alias Diallo, originally from Casamance. Diallo sings in a 'hot', raspy style, accompanied by jerky movements. Even though his material is Cuban, the feel is totally Senegalese. As he performs, he moves from the bandstand into the mass of dancers, singling out particular individuals. Some of the audience sidle up to him and dance with him but, immersed in his performance, Diallo takes little note of them. The longer he sings, the more self-possessed he appears. By the time he finishes his short set, he looks on the verge of falling into a trance.[31]

Pascal Dieng, the next singer, used to be one of the two frontline singers in Super Cayor, one of the earliest *salsa m'balax* ensembles. Now he has his own band, which has grown steadily in popularity.[32] Dieng is an affable singer in the mode of Pape Fall. He sings in a relaxed but precise style that shows an expert knowledge of both the Cuban and Senegalese idioms. Maguette Dione, the only woman to carve a place for herself in the world of Senegalese salsa, follows him. Dione, as mentioned earlier, specializes in recreating the style and mannerisms of

[31] For more on Alias Diallo, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 8, 20 February 2003, Dakar.

[32] For more on Pascal Dieng, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 11, Pascal Dieng, 25 February 2003, Point E. Dieng's work recently attracted the attention of record producer Ibrahima Sylla who featured him on the latest instalment of his *Africando* Pan African Salsa project Africando CD, 'Ketukuba' (2006).

the late Cuban singer, Celia Cruz. She captures the essence of Cruz's rhythmic suppleness but has a darker, smokier voice. Her stage manner is much more controlled than Cruz's, focusing attention on the music rather than her showmanship. Moreover, she has none of Cruz's sartorial flamboyance. Instead of being dressed in revealing gowns, covered with feathers, Dione is wearing an elegant Senegalese 'lace' outfit.

After Dione sits down, Doudou Sow climbs onto the stage with his crutches. A famous singer in the 1970s, Sow in his last years suffered from diabetes. As his condition worsened, he had to have a leg amputated. Sow is not actually an Afro-Cuban singer. His speciality is *m'balax*, which he helped pioneer.[33] However, he developed close ties with many of the Latin music community when he was a star with the group No. 1 and Yahya Fall prevailed upon him to join the Monday night Chez Iba regulars. Sow greets the audience courteously in Wolof and commences a song by launching into his famous falsetto. The dancers flood onto the floor. Sow is a beloved figure and his 'hits' bring back many memories for the audience. More than the other performers, he openly traffics in nostalgia. His performance, though, reveals he has lost none of his power or creativity and he inspires Yahya Fall to take several extended solos. After finishing his time on the stage, he greets the audience again in Wolof and signs off with one of his falsetto whoops.

As he slowly makes his way off the stage, James Gadiaga lurches up to the microphone. Gadiaga was the founder with Pascal Dieng of Super Cayor and still leads the group.[34] He is a mainstay of the salsa scene in Dakar and has had several European concert tours. Tonight, he is wearing a pork pie hat, jeans and a dark shirt. He is visibly drunk. Fall is not happy with Gadiaga's inebriated condition and they exchange some heated words. However, once the band and Gadiaga start the first number, he is transformed. He quickly finds his groove. The dancers 'lock in' and the atmosphere at Chez Iba becomes heightened and energized. Gadiaga plays with the beat like a true *sonero*, sometimes anticipating it, at other times lagging behind. When he is finished for the evening, he strides back to his place at the performers' banquette and takes a prolonged drink of his beer.

Mar Seck, the next singer, is in sharp contrast to Gadiaga. He is quiet and unassuming, somewhat shy. He has been singing Latin music longer than any of the other vocalists and he has completely absorbed the Afro-Cuban style.[35] He sings in a high, slightly nasal manner, looking for nuances in the lyrics and searching for subtle harmonies within the melody line. He makes little eye contact with the audience and takes little notice of them. Though his performance is among the most emotionally intense of the evening, there is an internalized, almost

[33] See Roots in Reverse Interview No. 7, 18 February 2003. Sow was emphatic on this point.

[34] For more on James Gadiaga, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 10, 21 February 2003.

[35] For more on Mar Seck, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 4, 17 January 2003.

dreamlike quality to it. When he finishes for the evening, he disappears into the crowd rather than returning to the performers' corner.

Camou Yandé, the next performer, adheres closely to the classic Cuban style that he has spent years studying.[36] Like Alias Diallo, he is from Casamance, but his performing style is significantly different. He jokes with the other musicians as they take their instrumental breaks and performs with a smile. He has a resonant baritone, unusual for a Senegalese vocalist. He sings in Spanish and, unlike the other Chez Iba stars, he doesn't mix Cuban and Senegalese rhythms.

The evening closes, as it almost always does at Chez Iba, with Pape Fall and Balla Sidibé[37] performing their inimitable duets. Fall and Sidibé like to wait their turn at Chez Iba on the street outside the club, hanging out by the entrance. When it is time to perform, they wend their way through the dancers and the seated patrons, pausing to greet known acquaintances. Fall is beautifully dressed in a jacket reminiscent of the cover of Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club band. Sidibé is dressed in his customarily casual fashion. Without any introduction or banter, the pair begin their set and give the dancers one last workout. Around 4 a.m., they finish and the crowd vanishes almost instantly.

THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF DANCE IN SENEGAL

Monday nights at Chez Iba demonstrate how much room there is for stylistic individuality in Senegalese salsa. Each vocalist positions himself in a continuum, ranging from fidelity to the Cuban tradition to an immersion in Senegalese 'authenticity'. Camou Yandé in his timbre, stage manner and rhythmic sense is ensconced in the *son* music of 1920s Havana and Santiago. Doudou Sow only occasionally ventures into Afro-Cuban music, preferring to modernize local material. Pape Fall, Pascal Dieng, and James Gadiaga embrace hybridity, successfully drawing on both musical worlds in their work. At Chez Iba, the audience approves of this range of stylistic choices as long as they don't veer too much towards the frenzied *m'balax*, championed by musicians like Youssou N'Dour and Lamine Faye in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The criteria governing their acceptance of the music being played is how appropriate it is for the style of dancing they deem the essence of civility. For the generation growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, the Latin dance style that accompanied Afro-Cuban music was as important as the music itself. Its emphasis on elegance, a gender-integrated social life and a ritualized respect for women was for them a crucial dimension of modernity. Dance for this group was more than just movement. It was an embodiment of 'correct' social behaviours and sophistication. Properly dancing the cha-cha-cha was not merely keeping up with the latest trends. It was laying the foundation for a

[36] For more on Camou Yandé, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 9, 20 February 2003.
[37] For more on Balla Sidibé, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 6, 18 February 2003.

viable post-colonial national culture, rooted in the cosmopolitanism of the diaspora.[38]

The roots of these behaviours lie both in twentieth-century French pedagogical notions and in indigenous concepts of correct comportment. Colonial French schooling in Senegal stressed carrying oneself well – with dignity, grace and élan. This emphasis coincided with the Senegalese concepts of *kersa* and *teggin*.[39] *Kersa* involves modesty and discretion while *teggin* refers to respect and deference. Older Senegalese regard Latin music as a modern means for embodying these important qualities from both French education and their own culture that they deem especially crucial in building a post-colonial society. For them, the music was a guide to how a sophisticated individual should act in the contemporary world.

The *m'balax* 'revolution' of the 1980s challenged these cultural assumptions. Many writers on Senegalese music have misrepresented the stylistic originality of the *m'balax* bands of the late1970s and 1980s like Étoile de Dakar and Super Diamono.[40] While the quality of their music was superb, older bands like No. 1 and Orchestre Baobab had been performing and recording *m'balax* or similar 'cultural' material before the 'nouvelle vague' ensembles formed.[41] What made these new bands such a rupture with the past was the composition of their publics and the variety of dancing coupled with their music.

The *m'balax* orchestras initially enlarged the public for popular music in Dakar more than they transformed it. They pitched their music not to the generation of the 1950s but to the first Senegalese generation born after Independence that was just coming of age in the late 1970s. This generation, as so often is the case, was looking for a music that could differentiate them from their elders. The new style of *m'balax* with its aggressive edge helped give this generation an aural identity. In addition, music like Étoile de Dakar's addressed the concerns of recent migrants to Dakar from the rural villages and towns of the interior by celebrating important pre-colonial historical figures and incorporating 'traditional' Wolof proverbs into their songs' lyrics.[42]

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[38] For more on Senegalese Latin dancing, see Roots in Reverse Interview No. 30, Patrick Nancy, 28 June 2003, Fenêtre Mermoz.

[39] These terms are Wolof. They are widespread in Senegalese society and have their equivalents in other Senegalese languages.

[40] See, for example, Broughton *et al.* 1994: 263–74. See also the album notes by Graeme Evans for Étoile de Dakar's 'Absa gueye' (Stern's Music STCD 3004).

[41] Listen, for example, to the Orchestre Baobab CDs 'Baobab roots and fruits' (PAM 304) and 'A night at Club Baobab' (Oriki Music CD01). The Dakar Sound CD 'Baobab N'Wolof' (Dakar Sound, Volume 7), especially, contains this type of material. The European labels Popular African Music and Dakar Sound have been re-releasing much of No. 1's recorded output. See 'No. I de No. 1' (Dakar Sound, Volume 6) and 'No. III de No. 1' (PAM 307). Their work also occasionally appears in anthologies of African popular music like 'Love's a real thing: the funky fuzzy sounds of West Africa' (Luaka Bop 6 80899 0052-2).

[42] A magnificent example by Youssou N'Dour is the song 'Jalo' which he has recorded several times in his career. A particularly fine version was recorded in 1979 at Jandeer Night Club in Dakar. It can be heard on Étoile de Dakar, Volume 1, 'Absa gueye' (Stern's Music STCD 3004).

The result was a music that was more urban than urbane, in sharp contrast to Senegalese salsa.

Much more disturbing to the Afro-Cuban aficionados was the type of dancing connected to *m'balax*. Exuberant new dances like the *ventilateur* involved exaggerated hip movements and bursts of frenzied movement. Senegalese Afro-Cuban dancing, by contrast, has emphasized fancy footwork, erect postures, and rigidly controlled movements.[43] For the Latin music public, the new dance styles entailed an abandonment of the inner discipline they so prized. It is difficult to convey how troubled they were in the 1980s by the public displays of eroticism, especially by women, in nightclubs featuring *m'balax* music.[44] For them, it smacked of *fayda*, of uncouth behaviours more appropriate for the marketplace than a gracious cosmopolitan society. From their perspective, nightclubs in the 1960s and 1970s had been laboratories where new forms of sociability could take hold and spread. The advent of the *m'balax* revolution turned these nightclubs into cultural battlegrounds where two generations mixed uneasily with one another. They felt the first casualty of this clash was the loss of the dignified and distinguished ambience of Dakar's music establishments. Dancing their precise Afro-Cuban style next to the more aggressive *m'balax* moves made them feel embarrassed and estranged in spaces they previously felt they controlled. Distressed, they withdrew from Dakar's nightlife to their private parties in places like Maison Douta Seck.

Moreover, the rougher atmospheres in the *m'balax* clubs made them increasingly disreputable. Few high-ranking public officials, intellectuals or successful business people felt they could risk being seen in them without diminishing their status. They stayed home instead and listened to their lovingly preserved Afro-Cuban LP collections.[45] Simultaneously, the market for home-grown recorded Afro-Cuban music collapsed in the mid-1980s and radio play of Senegalese salsa precipitously declined.[46] Few Senegalese salsa groups made any recordings from 1983 to the early 1990s. Faced with dwindling club dates and even fewer recording opportunities, many Senegalese Afro-Cuban ensembles disbanded in the 1980s. By the end of the decade, the Senegalese salsa scene was moribund, at least in its public manifestations.

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[43] Senegalese Latin dancing is poles apart from contemporary Cuban, Puerto Rican or Dominican models. It also bears minimal resemblance to European 'ballroom' traditions. Senegalese claim their Afro-Cuban dance styles come from Caribbean television shows of the 1950s. However, kinescopes from that period from Cuba show dancing styles very different to those you see in a Dakar nightclub today.

[44] Interestingly, this point came up often in off-the-record conversations but never in a formal interview situation.

[45] There are hundreds of such collections in Dakar. They often are kept out of sight under lock and key.

[46] Interestingly, the Senegalese public was still eager to buy new cassettes of Cuban music recorded in Côte d'Ivoire or Cuba itself.

However, while Afro-Cuban music may have lost its public, it retains its audience. It has not gone 'underground'. It underwent a minor revival in the 1990s, stimulated, in part, by the global success of the Buena Vista Social Club project.[47] This revival augmented the audience for Latin music by attracting a cohort of younger women who find Senegalese salsa more 'romantic' than the hard-edged *m'balax*. It still remains the music of choice for many of the 1950s–1960s generation that now dominates Senegal's bureaucratic, educational and corporate institutions. Increasingly, though, this generation has demonstrated its power by spatially isolating itself from the rest of Senegalese society. Unlike elsewhere in Africa – Nigeria, say, where prominent figures conspicuously and perpetually circulate – the Senegalese governing class after working hours now move in spatially constricted realms, often centred around their homes.

While members of this generation may have restricted physical presence in the public sphere, they are aware that they derive their status in part from their ability to appear distinguished when in the midst of their fellow *citoyens*. In their youth, many made their mark by being active participants in Dakar's 'café society', where the ability to dance well and have a connoisseur's appreciation of Afro-Cuban music were great social assets.[48] The 'refined' behaviours they have championed relate to how to conduct oneself properly in *public*. Hence, these behaviours have a performative dimension and need a theatre for their actualization. The closing down of the salsa clubs in the 1980s was a minor crisis for this generation since no other public stage served their social purposes as well as a genteel dance floor with Afro-Cuban music provided by a live ensemble.

The decline in mass popularity of Latin music was not a grave problem for this group since, paradoxically, mass popularity detracted from the music's prestige. However, the disappearance of elegant clubs like the Baobab and the Miami was a more serious matter. New establishments like Chez Iba haven't entirely filled the void left by the shuttering of the old sophisticated nightspots. The *fin-de-siècle* salsa spots lack that atmosphere of exclusivity that turned the *boîtes* of the immediate post-independence period into the workshops of a republic in the making. However, they can still provide an opportunity for a grand entrance during special celebrations, or a vehicle for showcasing one's air of distinction. Even if this generation rarely visits these 'temples of Salsa', they are assured that their absence will be noted and that the code of conduct they value will be on public display. The music is still playing and the dancing continues.

[47] The Buena Vista Social Club was a recording featuring a collaboration between several generations of Cuban musicians and the United States guitarist Ry Cooder. It especially appealed to African audiences who were already familiar with the project's 1950s Cuban repertoire.

[48] President Abdoulaye Wade, for example, was a well-known habitué of Dakar's Afro-Cuban nightclubs in the 1960s, during the early phases of his career.

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ABSTRACT

This article explores why, despite its diminished popularity, Afro-Cuban music remains among the most *performed* musics in Senegalese music clubs. Since the Second World War, many Senegalese have associated Afro-Cuban music with cosmopolitanism and modernity. In particular, Senegalese who came of age during the Independence era associate Latin music with a new model of sociability that emphasized 'correct' behaviour – elegant attire and self-discipline. Participating in an emerging 'café society' was especially important. The rise of *m'balax* music in the late 1970s, deemed more culturally 'authentic' by a younger generation coming into its own, challenged many of the values associated with Senegalese salsa. As an enlarged Senegalese public embraced *m'balax*, the older generation stopped going out to Dakar's nightclubs where they felt increasingly uncomfortable. However, the model of sociability this generation has championed calls for *public* displays of distinction and refinement. In *fin-de-siècle* Dakar, a number of venues emerged where Afro-Cuban music is played and powerful older Dakarois congregate, even if less frequently than formally. This article describes these venues and documents their patrons and the performances that take place there.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article explore pourquoi la musique afrocubaine, malgré sa baisse de popularité, reste l'une des musiques les plus *jouées* dans les clubs de musique

sénégalais. Depuis la seconde guerre mondiale, de nombreux Sénégalais associent la musique afrocubaine au cosmopolitanisme et à la modernité. En particulier, les Sénégalais qui ont atteint leur majorité pendant la période de l'Indépendance associent la musique latine à un nouveau modèle de sociabilité qui mettait l'accent sur le «bon» comportement (tenue élégante et autodiscipline). Il était particulièrement important de participer à une «café society» émergente. L'essor de la musique *m'balax* à la fin des années 1970, considérée plus «authentique» culturellement par une jeune génération en devenir, a remis en cause beaucoup des valeurs associées à la salsa sénégalaise. Sous l'effet de la popularité croissante du *m'balax* au Sénégal, la génération plus ancienne a cessé d'aller dans les clubs de Dakar, s'y sentant de moins en moins à l'aise. Cependant, le modèle de sociabilité prôné par cette génération exige de faire montre de distinction et de raffinement en *public*. Le Dakar de cette fin de siècle a vu émerger des lieux où l'on joue de la musique afrocubaine et où les Dakarois de pouvoir plus âgés se rassemblent, même si plus rarement que d'avant. Cet article décrit ces lieux, leur clientèle et la musique qui s'y joue.