

CMHLIVE

The Wild Ones Residency

# Sustaining the Stage Live Performance Residency Report

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By Collin Sserunjogi

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## Executive Summary

This report outlines the objectives, methodology, and outcomes of a live performance residency led by Collin Sserunjogi, aimed at innovating and refining how music is presented and experienced in Kampala Uganda. The project involved research, collaboration with artists, and the development of new performance formats. The residency highlighted the importance of emotional connection, professionalism, and storytelling in engaging audiences and enriching the music experience. This document serves as both a record and a guide for those seeking to evolve live music performance in meaningful, impactful ways.



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### **Research Inspiration & Support:**

When Marcus Warry, founder of The Wild Ones, invited me to become the first resident at their creative studio *The Jungle*, I gratefully accepted. The opportunity aligned perfectly with my ongoing work in live performance and artist development. I chose to explore profitable performance formats—an area central to both my practice and livelihood. I'm especially grateful to Marcus for his trust and to Mathew Cwiny-ai (aka Cooky), who joined as my research assistant. His support and insight were invaluable from the very beginning.

## Introduction

This residency aimed to explore new ways of experiencing live performance. It sought to challenge traditional performance formats and create engaging, emotionally resonant shows through collaborative artist development.

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## Week One: Research & Global Inspiration

Initial research gathered community insights on live performance shortcomings. Themes such as poor sound, lack of originality, and low emotional engagement emerged.



Photo of me and Mathew inside the Jungle Creative studio on the first day of the research

### 3. Key Trends & Practices

Global trends like thematic shows, tech-driven immersion, and hybrid formats were explored. On the African scene, community-centered and innovative micro-events are gaining traction.

Central Research Question; To begin this journey, I asked a central question: "In your experience as an artist, audience member, or event organizer, what do you think is missing or needs to improve in the way live music

performances are presented and experienced in our industry?" This question guided my desk research, peer conversations, and field observation, eventually leading to direct audience input via a survey.

Mapping the Performance Landscape; Live performances come in diverse forms, shaped by context, artistic discipline, and audience intention.

These include:

1. Music Performances;

Concerts (solo, band, orchestra), Acoustic sets/unplugged shows, Jam sessions, DJ/electronic live sets, Street/busking performances, Studio/live session recordings

2. Theatre Performances; Stage plays, Musicals, Improvisational theatre, Monologues

3. Dance Performances; Ballet Contemporary/modern dance Cultural/traditional dance Freestyle dance circles

4. Spoken Word & Poetry; Poetry slams, Storytelling nights, Literary readings

5. Interdisciplinary/Hybrid Formats; Performance art (visual art, sound, movement), Multimedia shows (AR/VR, projection mapping), Theatre-music or dance-theatre hybrids

6. Cultural and Ritual Performances; Traditional ceremonies/festivals, Community storytelling/music rituals

7. Showcases and Talent Events; Open mics, Artist showcases, Competitions or talent-based shows

## GLOBAL INSIGHTS & FORMATS THAT WORK

### 1. Marketable Global Formats

#### 1.1 Narrative & Thematic Framing;

Concept Shows; Unified thematic sets (e.g. immersive musical storytelling)  
Artist Takeovers; Single-artist-focused mini-festivals or themed residencies



## **1.2 Mixed-Media & Immersive Experiences;**

Visuals synced to live performance

Interactive tech elements (e.g. real-time polls, AR filters)

## **1.3 Hybrid Formats;**

Live-studio recording hybrids

DJ-band performance fusions for sustained dancefloor energy

## **1.4 Exclusive and Intimate Editions;**

Surprise pop-up shows; Paid fan club events with exclusive access

## **1.5 Community-Centered Engagements;**

Multi-night residencies with local artist collaborations.

Neighborhood-anchored showcases to build grassroots followings.

## **2. African Context-Specific Approaches**

### **2.1 Curated Open Mics & Themed Nights;**

Pre-selected talents combined with headliners

Rotating themes blending poetry, acoustic music, and art

### **2.2 DJ-Cover Band Crossovers;**

Live remix battles of African classics

Mashup performance formats for fresh, energetic appeal

### **2.3 Multi-Sensory Festivals;**

Combining music with food, fashion, and brand activations

### **2.4 Niche and Pop-Up Events;**

Concerts in skate parks, rooftops, or urban warehouses

Brand-aligned shows in lifestyle spaces (e.g. breweries, boutiques)

## 4. Prototype Performance Formats

Formats were proposed for local testing, focused on audience engagement, feasibility, and storytelling.

### PROTOTYPE IDEAS & TEST FORMATS

Prototype	Core Ideas	Metrics
Mojjo Select Nights	3 established artists + 3 curated newcomers	Ticket sales, social media buzz
Cover Remix Battle	Two bands remix the same classic Afro-pop hit	Audience voting, repeat engagement
Story and Sound Salon	Acoustic music + poetry + visual projection	Dwell time, emotional response
Beer x Beats Pop Up	Limited concert at local brewery	Beer sales, surveys
AR Enhanced DJ sets	Live AR visuals viewable through phone	App downloads, user engagement
Brand collab residency	Weekly show with fashion/beer label	Partner visibility, repeat tickets
Hidden Rooftop Show	Secret show revealed 24 hrs in advance	Newsletter open rate, share rate

### HOW TO PILOT NEW FORMATS (IDEAS)

- 1. Design Minimum Viable Events (MVEs): Focus on one new format feature, keep production costs lean.
- 2. Define KPIs Early: Quantitative: ticket sales, reach, dwell time  
Qualitative: feedback on connection, surprise, value

- 3. Leverage Partnerships: Work with breweries, boutiques, and galleries to broaden appeal.
- 4. Test, Iterate, and Scale: Run small tests over a few weeks. Compare results and evolve.
- 5. Capture and Share: Document the events via short video recaps for online traction.

## SURVEY RESULTS

To ground the research in community insight, I shared an online survey. Here are key responses:

Q: What's missing in live music shows?

Common themes from 21 responses:

- Poor sound quality
- Lack of audience engagement
- Weak stage presence
- Late starts and unprofessional setups
- Too much hype, not enough delivery
- Lack of originality and emotional resonance

Q: Solutions? (21 responses):

- More artist collaboration
- Hiring qualified sound engineers

- Intimate show formats
- Creative event design
- Better venues and performance infrastructure
- Professionalism and rehearsal discipline

## 5. Week Two: From Theory to Practice


With key insights in hand, I shifted from research to experimentation at The Jungle, the creative lab at The Wild Ones. I worked with artists in different phases of development to shape and test performance concepts. Artists collaborated within 'The Jungle' to experiment with emotional storytelling and format reimaging.

### 6. Artist Profiles and Experiments

1. Tilda – The Character Cover Artist; Tilda reimagines cover songs through vocal emotion and character performance. We explored Alicia Keys and Amy Winehouse pieces, focusing on confidence, vocal technique and presence as tools for audience connection.

2. Davix & Talemwa – The Beatbocoustic Duo; This new collaboration between a beatboxer and singer-songwriter led to a 15-minute format blending rhythm, melody, and stripped-down instrumentation — a low-cost, high-engagement model for small venues.

3. Maureen & Michael – Soulful Vocal Fusion; Blending soul and pop influences, the duo reinterpreted local hits in jazz styles, creating fresh emotional experiences for familiar songs. Their vocal chemistry shows the power of sonic surprise.



4. Wild Ones Band – House Band Formation; With a full band setup, we developed and performed a set with singer Jovia. The rehearsal process and live showcase revealed how tight arrangements and artist leadership can captivate an audience throughout an entire set.

5. Mitirikpwe – The Storytelling Soloist; Mitirikpwe’s set, built for her World Tour, relies on voice, guitar, and story. Her performance underscored that solo acts can be powerful when narrative and intimacy are emphasized.

## 7. Emerging Patterns & Insights

- The key to connection is intentionality. Performers who offered emotional clarity, surprise, and honest expression created the most audience impact.

From these sessions, several patterns emerged:

- Engagement is not optional: Audiences crave real emotional connection.
- Originality matters: Reinterpretation and narrative create lasting impact.
- Professionalism pays off: Rehearsal, sound quality, and structure elevate the experience.
- Low-cost doesn’t mean low-value: Stripped-down formats can be memorable when intentional.
- Context is king: Format must fit the venue, audience, and story being told.

## 8. Next Steps

This residency has revealed a key truth: the future of live performance lies not in bigger budgets, but in better ideas. By combining professional artistry



with intentional storytelling and audience connection, we can redesign how music is experienced in our region.

Next steps:

- Continue prototyping and documenting new formats.
- Launch public pilot events in Kampala to test resonance.
- Develop partnerships with venues, brands, and artists.

## **9. Conclusion**

This residency demonstrates the power of collaboration, care, and innovation in live music. We can build more meaningful shows and a stronger industry by focusing on connection and creativity.

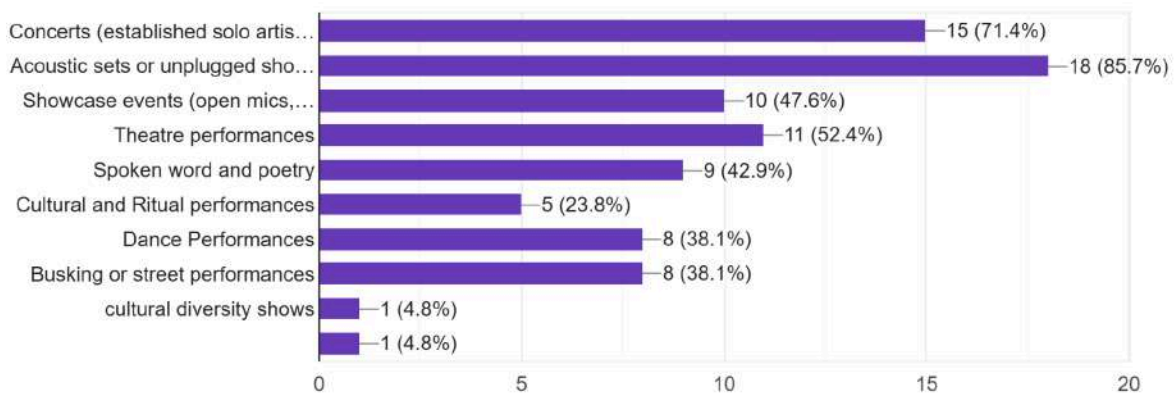
## **10. Appendix (Photos, Metrics, Tools)**

This section includes photo placeholders and notes on engagement metrics for evaluating performance success.

## Survey stats

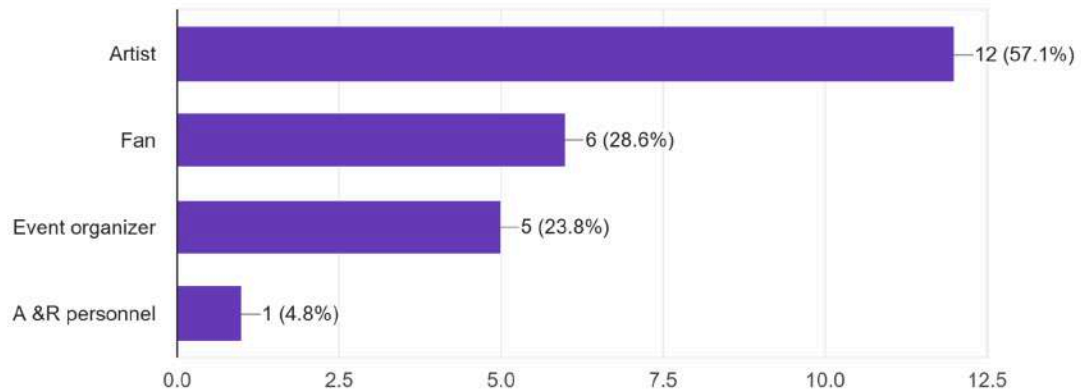
Out of the following, what is your favorite live performance style ? (Choose all that apply)

21 responses



Which of these categories do you represent as you answer this?

21 responses



*Photos from the Jungle at The Wild Ones in Industrial Area 7th Street Kampala, where I carried out the research for more than two weeks.*

*Photo 1; The view of the building from a balcony of the Jungle, it was always refreshing to walk out and look at the blue sky and the massive painting in the space yard.*


*Photo 2; Meeting and jamming with the new members of The Wild Ones band inside the jungle. The band now plays in the space every Sunday evening.*

*Photo 3; Myself during one morning when I had just arrived at the temporary table I set up for my desktop work inside the Jungle studio throughout the residency. I am wearing a The Wild Ones Tee that was made by Marcus (the owner of the space) and Norman (another resident doing a fashion residency in the space)*









For more information/Inquiries contact Collin Sserunjogi on [thecmhacademy@gmail.com](mailto:thecmhacademy@gmail.com)

Social Media;

<https://ug.linkedin.com/in/collin-sserunjogi-artistdeveloper>

<https://www.instagram.com/cmh.live/?hl=en>