



## A MUSICAL JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

BY RAS BANAMUNGU

Rujindiri, an esteemed musician and master of the traditional Rwandan inanga, bore the legacy of Rwanda's rich musical heritage. Born in 1900, his contribution to the preservation and promotion of this unique musical style represents a remarkable chapter in the annals of Rwandan culture.

Rujindiri's musical odyssey harks back to the 8th century, as his repertoire commemorated the war triumphs of King Rwabugiri through lyrical expressions. He stood as one of the last living custodians of this musical heritage, a living link to a bygone era when Jos Gansemans made a recording in 1974 that captured the essence of his art.



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His artistry found immortalization in the 1990 album "Musique De L'Ancienne Cour Du Rwanda," released under the Fonti Musicali record label. This album serves as a testament to his unwavering commitment to the preservation of Rwanda's musical traditions. Songs such as "Inkotanyi," "Imitoma," and "Kamujwara" remain iconic in the realm of Rwandan music.

Rujindiri's musical talents were nurtured through a lineage of musicians, learning his repertoire from his father, Mahwehwe, who himself was born during the reign of King Rwojera. This generational transfer of musical knowledge underscored the deeply rooted nature of Rwandan musical heritage.



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His mastery of the inanga, a lyre-like string instrument, set him apart as a virtuoso. His performances at the Court of the last king, Mwami, solidified his status as a distinguished singer and instrumentalist. His contributions transcended music, serving as a bridge to the traditions of the past and a symbol of cultural preservation.

Rujindiri's influence extended beyond recordings and albums. His music became an integral part of Rwandan cultural identity. His performances, alongside other renowned inanga players like Sebatunzi and Rwishyura, played a pivotal role in shaping Rwanda's sonic landscape.



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In a world undergoing rapid transformation, Rujindiri's work stood as a poignant reminder of the significance of safeguarding cultural heritage. His melodies, interwoven with Rwanda's historical narratives, remained a source of national pride.

Rujindiri's legacy is not confined to the past; it continues to inspire and resonate with present generations. His influence transcends Rwanda's borders, illustrating the universal allure of traditional music that speaks to the heart and soul of a people.



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As we reflect on the extraordinary journey of Rujindiri, we commemorate the enduring power of music to bridge the past with the present and uphold cultural traditions. Rujindiri's melodies, reminiscent of echoes from the past, remind us of the beauty and importance of our shared heritage. Inanga, originating from Rwanda, is considered the historical roots of today's blues music.

Rujindiri's memory endures as an everlasting melody that continues to inspire and uplift the hearts of all who encounter his music.