

PLAYLIST

70 years of Malagasy Pop Music



The history of Malagasy popular music began long before the colonisation of Madagascar by France and the subsequent independence of the country in 1960. Ever since British missionaries became active on the island in the 1820s, influences from European classical, military and church music have led to the emergence of all kinds of hybrid genres that have been created in conjunction with Malagasy and other Indian Ocean musical traditions. The result is a highly diverse range of popular music styles that continue to evolve and transform.

Welcome to the AMA-Lounge

The major European and American record companies, such as Odeon or His Master's Voice, had already recorded Malagasy music in the first half of the 20th century. However, it was not until the 1960s and 1970s, when radio became more affordable to larger parts of the population, that a wider mediatisation began. The first French-Malagasy label, Discomad, began to record neo-folk, but also a lot of ballroom dance music, beat music and Malagasy chanson, as well as early Malagasy rock, funk and soul.

These styles have merged into all sorts of new genres that have become popular throughout the island, the most notorious of which are *salegy* and *tsapiky*. The latter, however, also mark a division between the coastal regions, where these so-called "musique tropicales" and African influences are omnipresent, and the central highlands with the capital Antananarivo, where European influences such as French chanson, rock or jazz fell on much more fertile ground. Today, with bands such as LohArano, Malagasy music is even at the forefront of the latest developments in global popular music, despite ongoing economic and political hardship.

- A compilation by Martin Büdel, Lea Pulter and Markus Verne -