

Most legends are measured by awards or arena crowds. But Lwanga's legend is measured differently. He has played with Ugandan greats, Elly Wamala, Moses Matovu, the Afrigo Band, chooses to remain honest, sensitive, and utterly himself.

How Harry Lwanga became music's most honest legend

BY EDGAR R. BATTE

He says he does not set out to write songs that he catches them raw, unfiltered, and full of truths most people spend their lives trying to silence. In the pantheon of Ugandan music, few names command the quiet reverence of Harry "Lungfishman" Lwanga. He is not a chart-topper in the commercial sense, nor does he chase radio rotations. Yet among musicians, producers, and those who truly listen, he is a legend, not because of fame, but because of fearlessness.

To meet him is to encounter a man in constant conversation with himself; measured, searching, occasionally haunted, but always honest. Even his name carries intent. "Lungfishman," he explains, is not merely a stage identity but a deliberate reference to his clan and to his roots.

"I chose that specifically because I really want to identify myself with my clan," he says. Officially, he is Henry. But the man audiences meet is the one who stands under dim light, bass guitar in hand, offering something far more layered than entertainment. He is a writer, singer, and poet disguised as a musician.

Survival and the weight beneath

"The last 15 years have not been very easy, life has demanded endurance as much as expression," he says. These experiences have found their way into his music. In Ntabadde, "I am questioning the whole validity of society and life," he says. "There are moments when you question it all... why am I like this?" The song does not resolve those questions.

That same honesty shapes how he moves through life. "If I feel like crying, I cry," he says. There is no attempt to contain it for the sake of appearance. "I will cry it out. It cleanses the soul." He has learnt to sit with what comes rather than push it aside. He walks, watches films, keeps his mind occupied without losing himself.

"I have learnt to be real and true with myself," he says. And then, plainly: "I am very much alone." It is solitude as a way of staying grounded, not loneliness, but a chosen distance from noise.

Loss has shaped that understanding. "I have lost so many very close people," he says. Most devastating, he lost both parents within eight months. "The pain never really goes away. You just learn to deal with it." There is no resolution offered, only acceptance. That acceptance is, perhaps, the truest mark of his legend.

The stage as sacrifice

On stage, all of this is present, even if unseen. "When you go on stage... you are giving and giving and giving," he says. It is not just performance; it is release. "You are giving from deep inside where nobody else cannot touch you." When it ends, there is a need to return to himself. "You need a hug. Or time," he says.

Lwanga has played with Ugandan greats, Elly Wamala, Moses Matovu, the Afrigo Band. "They taught me the power of discipline," he says. And what it means



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THE EMOTIONAL CORE OF A LEGEND

"I am a very emotional person," he says, without apology. "Very, very sensitive... to everything that happens." That sensitivity is the centre of how he lives and how he works. Unlike many artists who manufacture feeling for effect, Lwanga waits for something real to move him. There is no deliberate sitting down to construct a song. Instead, he waits.

"When it hits me... I grab my guitar and I start. And it all just comes," he says. What arrives, he leaves as it is. "As it comes, it is how I put it out there." There is no revisiting, no sanding down of emotion into something easier to swallow. "I do not think I create. I express."

That instinct to trust the first feeling was shaped early. "I grew up in a home that always had music," he recalls. It was not curated or taught; it was simply present. Radios played, records spun, and his mother sang often, filling the house with a natural sense of melody. A childhood performance he once watched stayed with him long after the music stopped. "It impressed on me," he says. "Something settled within him. 'I always thought... bass guitar.' The bass suits him. It holds everything together from beneath, steady, unflashy, essential. city."

If filling from empty, the amount dispensed should match your vehicle's stated tank size. A few seconds of attention at the pump can save you from losing thousands of shillings worth of fuel and the frustration of running empty far sooner than expected.

to give yourself fully to the craft. "You give it your all, even your life." That is not hyperbole for Lwanga. It is simply how he understands the work.

A legacy beyond fame

When he speaks about his daughter, Sheila Gabriella Karungi, there is a gentle shift. "She is doing it on her own merits," he says. He is careful not to shape her path. "I do not force her to do things my way. Still, there is pride in what she represents. 'It gives me a real sense of continuity,'" he says.

Most legends are measured by awards or arena crowds. But Lwanga's legend is measured differently. It lives in the listeners who feel seen when they hear his songs. It lives in the musicians he has quietly influenced over the years. And it lives in the unfiltered truths he refuses to soften for anyone. In a noisy world, he remains a deep, steady note on the bass, holding everything together from beneath.

When commenting about the future, Lwanga says right now he is thinking about where he should be headed. He does not sound uncertain but he rather sounds unfinished just as his music, and the life behind it. And perhaps that unfinished quality is the essence of his legend. He is a man who refuses to arrive at false conclusions. Instead, he chooses to remain honest, sensitive, and utterly himself.