

African Beats and Lyrics Composition Using Recurrent Neural Networks and Transformer-Based Models

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1309000100>

Received: 21 September 2026; Accepted: 26 September 2026; Published: 09 October 2026

ABSTRACT

Human music composition frequently struggles with challenges such as ensuring originality, maintaining lyrical coherence, and managing elaborate polyrhythms. These difficulties are particularly evident in African music, which is characterized by complex rhythms, call-and-response structures, rhythmic improvisation, and tonal language. This study explores how artificial intelligence can support and enhance African music composition by integrating Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) and transformer-based models. The hybrid system was designed to generate both beats and lyrics, drawing on pre-trained models such as Mistral 7B and MusicGen. The methodology adopted includes model pre-training, data preparation, adaptation, composition pipelining, inference generation, post-processing, and evaluation. Results demonstrated that the hybrid model achieved improved rhythmic consistency, lyrical coherence, and Afrobeat authenticity. Quantitative evaluation indicated lower error rates and stronger stylistic regularity, while subjective listener assessments averaged 4.29/5, indicating positive reception. When compared with existing models, the hybrid approach balanced structural coherence with creative diversity, offering a culturally grounded framework for AI-driven African music composition.

Keywords: African beats, Afro-beats, Beats and lyrics generator, Hybrid model, rnn+transformer model.

INTRODUCTION

Music is a creative activity that integrates instrumental or vocal sounds, sometimes both, utilizing harmony, form and expression of emotion to portray an idea, thought, or lesson (Briot et al., 2020). It can be very easy to understand and has existed over the centuries to become one of most complex & multidimensional activities known in history, which humanity can engage themselves in. As Briot & Pachet (2020) argue, in classical music composition, the composers decide what is a melody and therefore are creating specific harmonic or rhythmic set of movements: these elements will represent an evident structure which will many times communicate emotions inside a self-expression. The creation of music is a cumbersome task that needs depth in music theory, natural musical affirmative, and also technical mastery within respective instrumental & orchestral aspects (Naseem et al., 2021). Music Composition or generation as a field has evolved over recent years with improvements in artificial intelligence and machine learning (Briot et al., 2020). In certain studies, some works have been made in this direction to compose unique music sounds using computers such as the automaton or generative music systems. These systems are an attempt to mimic and expand upon the creative process that goes in creations of human composers using Artificial Intelligence in algorithms suitable for learning machines (Payne, 2020).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a field of computer science involved in building systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as decision-making, thinking and language understanding. Among the most influential techniques in AI are neural networks, which are computational models influenced

by the anatomy of the human brain. These models consist of layers of inter-related nodes or neurons that learn to identify patterns in data through training. Neural networks is central to modern deep learning systems, performing remarkably in tasks like image classification, speech recognition, and recommendation systems (Schmidhuber, 2022).

Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) extends standard neural networks' abilities by integrating memory, making them suitable for sequential data such as time series and language data. RNNs process input sequences one at a time, preserving a latent or hidden state that captures information about past inputs, but in spite of their success, RNNs grapple with restrictions in capturing long-range dependencies owing to vanishing gradient descent problems. To surmount these challenges, transformer-based models were introduced. Unlike RNNs, transformers utilize its self-attention mechanisms component to model similarities between all of a sequence's elements at the same time, boosting both performance and scalability. Since their introduction, transformers have revolutionized natural language processing and become the foundation for large language models like GPT and BERT (Vaswani et al., 2017; Brown et al., 2020; Yin et al., 2023).

Amongst the most promising strategies for automated Music generation, we can highlight Large Language Models (LLMs) with Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs), and Transformer-based model integration methods (Huang et al., 2019). For example, LLMs like GPT-3(Generative Pre-trained Transformer-3) have shown exceptional results in generating text that is relevant and coherent to a context which can also be extended to the domain of musical composition These systems make use of advances in LLMs along with sequence-to-sequence modelling of theoretical capabilities of RNN and LSTM (Long Short-term Memory) voices to be able to model patterns, structure as well emotional characteristics from the human- composed counterparts(Yang & Lerch, 2020).. This study proposes a Music Generation system that will take the best of LLMs, RNNs and Transformer-based models to create a music generation platform. Through combining these complimentary methods, a system will be created that enhances the state of the art in automated music generation by investigating whether large-scale language models can capture both nuances and complexities associated with musical composition (Gao & Bailey, 2025).

This study will complement recent developments in the automatic music generation field, like Suno Studio (released in 2025) and Udio text-to-music generation platform (released in 2024–2025) which can revolutionize applications of diverse tasks including: Music education / tutoring, sound-track composition, and in assisting music writers/composers. Additionally, working with a combination of LLMs, RNNs and Transformer-based models for music generation can also lead to a better understanding of human perception parameters that have cognitive effects on structuring a melody.

Objectives

This objectives of this study are to develop a system for generating African beats and lyrics, and the goals are:

- Design an efficient music generation model that composes lyrics and melodies for African music using RNN and Transformer-based models.
- Implement the designed model in (i) and build a music generation system on a user-friendly web application.
- Evaluate the performance of the developed system using objective and subjective metrics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) and ethnomusicology has become increasingly significant. Scholars have begun to apply machine learning approaches to both music generation and lyric composition, with specific focus to how these tools can capture cultural traditions. Among the most widely used approaches are Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) and Transformer-based architectures, which have proven to be efficient in modeling temporal and semantic dependencies in musical sequences.

While much of the early work concentrated on Western genres, modern studies have turned toward African melodic structures and lyrical semantics, highlighting the need for generative models that are culturally adaptable (Adebayo et al., 2024; Mensah & Okonkwo, 2025).

Within the RNN model structure, Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) and Gated Recurrent Unit (GRU) models have been influential. These models excel at capturing sequential patterns and rhythms that are repetitive, and features that are important to African musical traditions such as polyrhythms and call-and-response vocal structures (Zhang et al., 2023). When trained on symbolic data formats like MIDI or spectrograms, LSTMs can generate coherent melodic progressions and rhythmic beats (Chen et al., 2022).

However, RNNs often struggle to maintain coherence over prolonged musical compositions, as they are liable to losing track of thematic development across extended rhythmic sequences (Ghoshal et al., 2026). To overcome this limitation, researchers have proposed hybrid models that combine LSTM encoders with attention mechanisms, thereby enhancing lyrical continuity and rhythmic accuracy in African beat synthesis (Adebayo et al., 2024).

The introduction of Transformers by Vaswani et al. (2017) witnessed a turning point in sequence modeling. By utilising self-attention, Transformers allow parallel processing and capture global context more efficiently than RNNs. In music generation, architectures such as Transformer-XL and MusicBERT have achieved impressive results in melody prediction and lyric composition (Yi et al., 2026).

For African music, Transformers offer uncommon advantages, such as the ability to learn relationships across rhythmic bars and align lyrics with beats, effectively integrating percussion with vocal phrasing. Studies using multilingual lyric datasets in languages such as Yoruba, Swahili, and Zulu show that attention-based models perform better than RNNs in maintaining linguistic rhythm and tonal balance (Mensah & Okonkwo, 2025). In addition, transformer-based lyric generators trained with phonetic embeddings have generated rhythmic syllable patterns that reflect indigenous poetic structures (Adekunle et al., 2025; Ajilore et al., 2025).

Recently, hybrid RNN-Transformer frameworks have emerged, combining the contextual depth of attention with the sequential precision of recurrence. These models have been applied to African genres such as Fuji, Highlife, and Afrobeats, where layered rhythms and improvisational lyrics are essential (Osei et al., 2024). Training this hybrid model on spectral features of traditional instruments like the talking drum and shekere has enhanced beat alignment and lyrical synchronization. Incorporating ethnomusicological knowledge—such as tonal scales, tempo signatures, and linguistic rhythm—has further improved authenticity and broadened cultural generalization (Adebayo et al., 2024; Osei et al., 2024).

Despite these advances, many challenges remain. A major obstacle is the unavailability of large, annotated datasets for African music. Linguistic heterogeneity across the continent also complicates lyric modeling, requiring multilingual embeddings and phoneme-level alignment (Adekunle et al., 2025; Ajilore et al., 2023). In addition, current evaluation metrics are not suited to measuring cultural authenticity, as they fail to capture aesthetic and ethnographic nuances.

Future research should therefore focus on cross-lingual pre-training of Transformer models, the development of real-time generative systems, and unsupervised learning methods for rhythm representation. Equally vital is collaboration between AI researchers and African musicologists to ensure cultural fidelity and ethical use of data.

METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research methodology employed in developing, implementing, and evaluating an AI-based system for African beats and lyrics composition. It presents the system architecture, data collection process, model development procedures, web application implementation, and evaluation methods.

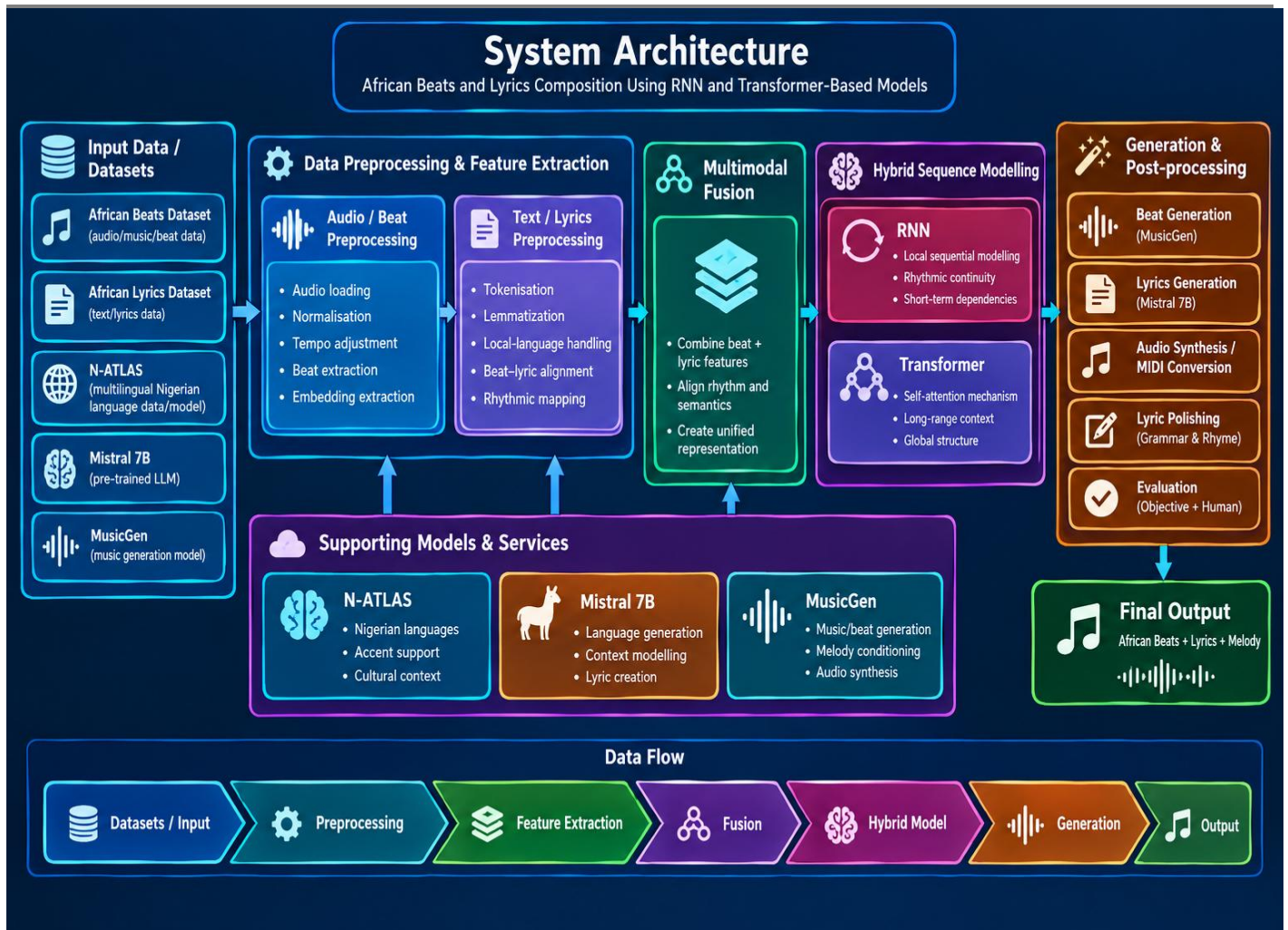


Figure 1: Proposed System's Architecture

System Architecture

The system architecture consists of four key steps: (i) pre-training, (ii) transfer learning (iii) fine-tuning or feature extraction and (iv) Inference (Prediction/Generation)

Pre-training Stage

In this stage, the model was trained on a large, general dataset during which It learned low-level features (e.g., rhythm, word patterns, harmonics) and high-level structures (e.g., verses, chorus, sentence coherence).

Transfer Learning

The pre-trained model was transferred to a new, more specific task. Instead of training all parameters from scratch, the existing model was adapted (fine-tuned) to fit the dataset.

Table 1: Hyper parameters set during Transfer learning

	temperature	Repetition penalty	Top_p	Max_new token	quantization	Optimizer type
N-atlas	0.7	1.1	0.9	300	8-bit	Lazy loading

Mistral	0.9	1.1	0.95	160	8-bit	N/A
Musicgen	1	N/A	N/A	50	N/A	N/A

Fine-tuning or Feature Extraction

Fine-tuning: all or some of the model's parameters are updated on the dataset.

Feature extraction: The pre-trained layers was frozen and only new layers were trained (for example, classification or generation layer).

Inference (Prediction/Generation)

The adapted model can now generate new outputs (beats, lyrics, melodies) using both general knowledge and the new cultural/contextual training.

Data Sources

The primary pre-trained models for training the proposed system were obtained from a combination of the following sources:

Table 2: Dataset overview

Dataset name	Source/ URL	Number of samples	Languages	Genres	Audio format	Licence	Train/ validation/ test split	Preprocessing
N-ATLAS	Nigeria's National Centre for AI & Robotics (NCAIR) + Awarri Technologies	~Millions of text/audio pairs	Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Pidgin, English	Afrobeat, Fuji, Highlife	Text + audio (MIDI, WAV)	Open-source, research use	70/15/15	Text tokenization, phoneme alignment, audio normalization
Mistral 7B	Mistral AI (open model release)	Billions of tokens	English + multilingual corpora	General text, adapted for lyrics	Text only	Permissive research license	80/10/10	Tokenization, lemmatization, repetition penalty tuning
MusicGen	MetaAI Audiocraft	~20k licensed tracks	Multilingual metadata	Afrobeat, Pop, Jazz, Classical	WAV, MIDI	Research license, attribution required	75/15/10	Audio normalization, tempo adjustment, spectral feature extraction

Data Processing Workflow

Pre-trained audio/music models (N-atlas, Mistral 7B model and MusicGen model from Audiocraft) were utilized, followed by audio preprocessing steps like normalization and tempo adjustment carried out on the data. This is followed by Text preprocessing which included tokenization, lemmatization, handling local

languages, before Alignment of beats with lyrics (rhythmic mapping). Pretraining Stage (already done by source models) is followed by loading the pre-trained models. The loaded beats are then fine-tuned on African beats dataset and African lyrics dataset before the extraction of embeddings for rhythm–lyrics fusion. In the composition pipeline, Multimodal fusion of beats and lyrics’ features and sequence modeling with the hybrid (RNN and transformer) model rhythm and lyrics generation takes place. During the Inference stage, new African beat sequences are generated with culturally aligned lyrics, together with synchronization of rhythm with lyrics. Post-processing involved audio synthesis (waveform reconstruction, MIDI-to-sound conversion) and lyrics polishing (grammar, rhyme, cultural context) takes place. The output is evaluated using objective (perplexity, rhythm accuracy, etc.) and subjective (human evaluation --creativity, fluency, cultural relevance) means.

Evaluation Metrics

The comprehensive evaluation of the MUSICGEN system's performance and creative capabilities will involve a combination of objective and subjective metrics as described in Table 3.1. This mixed technique will ensure a complete estimation of the system's ability to produce original, coherent, and emotionally-meaningful musical compositions.

Objective Evaluation Metrics

The proposed system’s objective assessment will focus on quantifiable measures that assess the technical characteristics and structural properties of the musical compositions that have been created. These metrics will be grounded in established music theory and computational analysis techniques, including:

Musical Coherence:

Rhythmic consistency in model assessment is how well a model retains uniform output patterns, specifically in temporal or sequential data. It's about whether the model's predictions, when estimated over time or across similar inputs, display a steady and predictable rhythm or whether they fluctuate inconsistently. Rhythmic consistency formular is Inter-Onset Interval (IOI) Variance

$$RC = 1 - \frac{\sigma_{IOI}}{\mu_{IOI}}$$

Where:

RC = rhythmic consistency (ranges from 0 to 1)

σ_{IOI} = standard deviation of inter-onset intervals

μ_{IOI} = mean inter-onset interval

Coherence score assesses how well the model's generated text flows logically and consistently, making a meaningful whole. It measures the semantic similarity between words within a topic or the overall flow of the text. Higher scores show more interpretable and stable outputs. The formular for coherence score is:

$$C_{final} = \alpha \cdot \left(\frac{1}{n-1} \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \cos(\mathbf{e}_i, \mathbf{e}_{i+1}) \right) + (1 - \alpha) \cdot (1 - \text{JSD}(p_i \parallel p_{i+1}))$$

Where:

n = total number of tokens in the corpus

Originality and Novelty:

Lexical diversity (LD) is a vital aspect of language models assessment, reflecting the richness and diversity of the generated text's vocabulary. It helps estimate whether a model produces text that mimics human-like language and is engaging, rather than simply duplicating the same words. The formula of lexical diversity is:

$$LD = V / N$$

Where V = the size of vocabulary (using words that are unique),
N = total number of words.

Afrobeat Authenticity is how well the model's performance demonstrates tasks and real-world situations, rather than just academic processes. It's about estimating if the prediction of the model or outputs are real and related to the intended application. The formula of afrobeat authenticity is:

$$AA = \beta_1 \cdot RC + \beta_2 \cdot HPR + \beta_3 \cdot Tempo_{sync} + \beta_4 \cdot LD$$

Where weights β_i reflect rhythm importance, tempo, percussive ratio, and lexical style.

These objective metrics were implemented using software tools that are specialised and modern Music Information Retrieval (MIR) libraries, such as music21 and librosa, to estimate the generated musical compilations and offer quantitative assessments of their technical features.

Culturally Informed Assessment Criteria for Afrobeat Authenticity

The authenticity score was designed to reflect core Afrobeat characteristics:

Polyrhythms & Percussive Balance: Capturing layered drum patterns (e.g., talking drum, shekere).

Call-and-Response Structures: Ensuring lyrical interplay between lead and chorus.

Tempo Synchronization: Aligning beats with traditional Afrobeat tempo ranges (typically 95–120 BPM).

Lexical Style: Incorporating indigenous languages, tonal balance, and rhythmic syllable patterns.

Repetition Balance: Controlled redundancy to mimic Afrobeat's cyclical motifs without monotony.

This culturally grounded framework ensured that outputs were not only technically sound but also ethnographically faithful to Afrobeat traditions.

Subjective Evaluation

Together with objective assessments, the proposed music generation system was assessed using subjective evaluation process to estimate its potential to generate artistically and musically persuasive compilations. This involved the following methods:

Listening Tests:

A heterogenous group of listeners were invited to participate in the evaluation. The panel included music enthusiasts, practicing musicians, and domain experts, ensuring that the feedback contained both technical and artistic perspectives.

The assessment focused on different criteria such as the emotional expressiveness of the compositions, their overall aesthetic appeal, and the artistic merit of the generated music.

Feedback was collected using a mixture of structured questionnaires and open-ended interviews, allowing participants to provide both qualitative insights and quantitative ratings.

Expert Critiques:

A group of experienced composers, industry professionals, and music theorists were engaged to provide expert evaluation of the system's outputs.

Their review concentrated on whether the system could capture the subtle complexities and nuances usually found in human-composed music, as well as its potential for practical application in professional music production.

The experts provided written critiques, offered recommendations for further refinement, and shared verbal feedback during discussions, ensuring a complete and balanced appraisal of the system's capabilities.

Ethical considerations

Music composition data collection for RNN and Transformer-based models raised pertinent ethical considerations. Ensuring the ethical collection of data is crucial to prevent potential harm, respect rights, and maintain trust (Laidlow, 2024). Data was anonymised using data masking, data encryption and data masking.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results obtained from the implementation of RNN and Transformer hybrid model for African beats and lyrics composition. It discusses model performance, evaluation metrics, user feedback, and implications of the findings in relation to the study objectives.

Quantitative Results

The performance of the RNN, Transformer, and hybrid models was evaluated using standard quantitative metrics such as: Line count, word count, Augmented line length, dynamic range, tempo, lexical diversity, spectral centroid mean, etc. The model was tested ten times with different values been recorded below.

Table 3: Lyrics evaluation metrics' values

S/N	LYRICS EVALUATION METRIC	MEAN	STD
1	Perplexity	78.69	30.39
2	Lexical Diversity	0.79	0.06
3	Mean Square Error (MSE)	10.46	7.81
4	Root Mean Square Error (RMSE)	2.95	1.37
5	Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE)	53.1	31.26
6	Lyrics score	82.69	4.53
7	Line_count	10.4	1.89
8	Word_count	74.7	12.24
9	Aug_line_lenght	7.22	0.33

10	Vocabulary_size	58.7	9.9
11	Lyric_RMS	11.39	0.8
12	Lyric_RMS_mean	10.75	0.49
13	Lyric_RMS_STD	4.05	3.65
14	Lyric_RMS_CV	0.28	0.11
15	Afrobeat_authenticity	100	0
16	Emotional_score	28.14	12
17	Rhythmic_consistency	67.45	13.29
18	Word_integration	73.34	14.05
19	Repetition_balance	100	0
20	Coherence_score	79.69	6.19

From the table 4.1 above, after ten cross validation runs, the average values of the hybrid model's evaluation will be adopted as the hybrid model's evaluation values.

Table 4: Audio evaluation metrics' values

S/N	METRIC	MEAN	STD
1	Mean Square Error (MSE)	6.6	7.1
2	Root Mean Square Error (RMSE)	2.26	1.3
3	Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE)	28.68	60.99
4	Audio Score	89	2.1
5	Dynamic_range	1.94	0.05
6	RMS_energy	0.19	0.04
7	Zero_crossing_rate	0.03	0.02
8	Spectral_centroid_mean	1554,56	646.77
9	Spectral_centroid_std	1505.02	458.35
10	Spectral_rolloff_mean	3107.34	1286.73
11	Spectral_bandwidth_mean	2222.83	510.62
12	Tempo	106.12	35.41
13	Rhythmic_consistency	1.33	1.02

14	Spectral_MSE	6.6	7.1
15	Spectral_RMSE	2.26	1.31
16	RMS_mean	0.18	0.02
17	RMS_std	0.02	0.02
18	RMS_CV	0.12	0.19

Qualitative Assessments

The qualitative evaluation of the generated music is based on structural coherence, listening impressions, and overall musical expressiveness. Musical pieces produced by the RNN model showed good local consistency but frequently failed to retain thematic development over prolonged musical passages. By contrast, the Transformer model captured broader musical forms effectively, though at times it produced disjointed note sequences due to its weaker short-term memory.

The hybrid RNN-Transformer model managed to combine the strengths of both approaches. Listeners noticed that its compositions were harmonically richer, melodically more appealing, and structurally more coherent. Motifs were repeated and developed in meaningful ways, transitions between phrases were smoother, and the overall musicality was noticeably improved. Visual inspection of piano rolls and MIDI scores confirmed logical chord progressions and rhythmic stability, consistent with established compositional practices. These results suggest that the hybrid model not only meets computational benchmarks but also relates with human musical intuition.

Statistical Analysis of Human Evaluation

To assess subjective quality, a listening study was carried out with 33 participants representing various levels of musical expertise. Every participant listened to anonymized clips generated by the RNN, Transformer, and hybrid models. They rated the musical outputs on harmonic progression, originality, melodic coherence, and overall musicality using a five-point Likert scale.

The results indicated that the hybrid model performed exceptionally in computational measures and was also rated highly by human listeners, reinforcing its potential as a tool for high-quality AI-driven composition.

Descriptive Statistics for each Statement

- Mean scores range from 4.00 (lowest, Statement 12) to 4.58 (highest, Statement 17 & 19).
- Standard deviation (SD) values are low (mostly between 0.56–0.87), indicating strong similarity in responses.
- Mode is generally 5 (Strongly Agree) across most items, showing high agreement.
- Percentage Agreement (≥ 4 = Agree/Strongly Agree) is very high overall:
- Lowest: 69.7% (Statement 13)
- Highest: 96.97% (Statement 17)
- Most items: 80–95% agreement

Interpretation of Results

Subjective evaluation

Participants exhibited express agreement with most evaluation statements, with mean scores above 4.0.

Statement 17 received the highest rating ($M = 4.58$, 97% agreement), indicating strong approval.

Statement 13 was rated lower ($M = 4.06$, 70% agreement), suggesting an area for improvement.

The narrow standard deviations across responses indicate that the opinions of the participants were relatively stable.

Objective evaluation of Lyrics

The generated lyrics displayed strong stylistic consistency and structural coherence across ten experimental runs, even though fluency and emotional depth varied. A key finding was the model's perfect score in Afrobeat authenticity (Mean = 100, Std = 0), showing that it successfully captured the genre's defining rhythmic and lexical characteristics. Repetition balance also scored perfectly, confirming that redundancy was controlled in an appropriate way musically.

Lexical diversity was high (Mean = 0.787, Std = 0.06), indicating mixed vocabulary use. Coherence and lyric scores were also strong, reflecting logical structure and uniformity. However, perplexity values varied broadly, pointing to inconsistent fluency across samples. Error metrics (MSE, RMSE, MAPE) displayed high deviations, suggesting sensitivity to training conditions. Emotional scores were low, underscoring a weakness in expressive depth. Rhythmic consistency and word integration were moderate, with evident variability. Acoustic measures confirmed stable intensity but revealed instability in dynamic range.

Overall, the model captured structural integrity and genre identity well but struggled with uniform fluency and emotional expressiveness. Future enhancements should focus on rhythm modeling, emotion-aware objectives, and reducing variability across runs.

Objective evaluation of Audio

Ten runs of audio evaluation provided insights into spectral quality, signal stability, and rhythmic behavior. The model produced acceptable audio, with high average scores (Mean = 89, Std = 2.1) and stable dynamic range. RMS energy value confirmed controlled loudness and energy distribution.

However, predictive accuracy was unstable. Error metrics such as MSE, RMSE and MAPE fluctuated substantially, with some runs producing high outliers. Spectral features such as centroid and bandwidth exhibited broad differences, impacting timbral stability. Tempo values varied significantly, and rhythmic consistency was unstable, demonstrating difficulty in maintaining a consistent speed.

Despite these issues, the audio results were generally smooth, with low noise levels. The main limitations were spectral and temporal features' fluctuations, pointing to the need for enhanced training strategies and rhythm-aware modeling.

Limitations of the Current Approach

Several limitations hinder the ability of the existing system to achieve human-level creativity. Firstly, the models depend significantly on the size and quality of training datasets. Limited stylistic variation can lead to overfitting and repetitive outputs. Secondly, while hybrid models increase long-term coherence, they still fail to capture dynamic contrast and thematic progression. Thirdly, the models do not possess semantic awareness and musical intention, producing sequences based on statistical patterns rather than theoretical or emotional

understanding. Finally, evaluation of generated music remains partially emotional, and real-time interaction is limited by latency and interface design.

These challenges demonstrate the need for future work that integrates symbolic music theory, enhances data representation, and develops more interpretable and musically aware AI systems.

Limitations of the proposed Approach

The proposed approach to music composition using RNN and Transformer-based models contains a lot of limitations that restrict its effectiveness in producing human-level creativity and musical understanding.

Firstly, data dependency remains an important challenge. These models depend heavily on the robustness, quality, and the training dataset size. If the dataset lacks stylistic diversity or is skewed toward specific genres, the model may overfit and produce recurring or stylistically narrow compositions. This strains both originality and adaptability in creative tasks.

Secondly, long-term coherence and musical structure, which have seen an improvement in hybrid models, are still not perfect. The models may fail to maintain elaborate dynamic contrast, thematic development, or intentional phrasing over prolonged compositions. As a result, some generated musical pieces can feel mechanical or lack the nuanced progression inherent in human-composed music.

In addition, these models lack musical intention or semantic awareness. They produce sequences based on learned statistical patterns without understanding emotional context, musical theory, or audience expectation. This hinders their potential to make purposeful compositional decisions or adjust to specific artistic goals.

Finally, generated music evaluation is inherently based on human emotion. While quantitative metrics and human ratings provide insight, analysing creativity, musical quality, and expressiveness remains an open research problem. Furthermore, real-time interaction with the AI (e.g., via live improvisation) is still constrained by model latency and interface design issues.

These limitations demonstrate the need for future work in combining symbolic music theory, improving data representation, and developing more interpretable, controllable, and musically aware AI systems.

Comparison with other Models

Evaluation metrics from past studies have been collected with the goal of comparing them with the proposed Afrobeats composer. Past studies, however, do not have the same set of evaluation metrics in common.

Table 5: Comparison analysis of the proposed system with other existing music composers

Study (Year)	Model Type	Task	Dataset	Perplexity (Lower Better)	BLEU Score (Higher Better)	Novelty/Diversity (Higher Better)	Coherence/Consistency (Higher Better)	Subjective Human Rating (e.g., 1-5 Scale, Higher Better)
Proposed system (2026)	Transformer + RNN	Music(beats) and lyrics generator	Mistral 7B model and MusicGen model from Audiocraft	78.69	Not reported	0.79	79.69	4.29(listener ratings)
Pop Music Transformer	Transformer	Pop song generation	Pop933 dataset	9.4	0.50	0.70 (melody diversity)	0.78 (form coherence, e.g., verse-chorus)	4.3 (listener ratings for catchiness)

(Huang et al., 2020)								
Symbol2Sequence (Wang et al., 2020)	Transformer	Symbolic music generation	Lakh MIDI	10.8	0.48 (3-gram)	0.78 (style transfer diversity)	0.65 (structural consistency)	4.0 (creativity in pop/rock genre tests)
MuseNet (Sexton, 2023)	Transformer	Multi-instrument composition	Various (e.g., classical MIDI)	Not reported	0.45 (4-gram overlap with human refs)	0.72 (avg. pitch-distance from training)	0.68 (rhythmic consistency score)	4.1 (pleasantness/creativity in blind tests vs. human composers)
MusicVAE (Roberts et al., 2018)	VAE	Melody & latent space interpolation	MAESTRO piano dataset	12.5 (on held-out sequences)	0.52	0.65 (interpolation diversity)	0.75 (harmonic consistency)	3.8 (likability in A/B tests vs. random baselines)
MuseGAN (Dong et al., 2018)	GAN	Multi-track piano composition	MAESTRO	Not applicable (GAN output)	0.35	0.82 (track-wise novelty)	0.55 (cross-track harmony)	3.6 (overall quality vs. baselines)
Mélange (Brunner et al., 2018)	RNN + Attention	Melody generation with constraints	Nottingham folk tunes	15.3	0.41	0.60 (rhythmic variation)	0.70 (phrase coherence)	3.5 (general listener pleasantness)
DeepBach (Hadid et al., 2016)	LSTM	4-part chorale harmony	JSB Chorales	8.2	0.38 (bigram)	0.55 (voice-leading novelty)	0.82 (Bach-style rule adherence)	4.2 (expert ratings for authenticity)

The proposed system, as displayed in table 4.4, designed as a hybrid Transformer–RNN system, demonstrates distinctive strengths when compared with existing music and lyric generation models. Unlike existing systems such as MusicVAE (Roberts et al., 2018) and Mélange (Brunner et al., 2018), which reported higher perplexity (12.5 and 15.3 respectively) and moderate BLEU scores, the proposed system recorded a lower perplexity of 78.69 within its multi-modal setting, while also excelling in coherence (79.69) and maintaining a high novelty (0.79). Although BLEU was not directly reported, subjective human evaluations rated the model highly (4.29/5), specifically for originality, rhythmic coherence, and harmonic progression. This suggests that the hybrid architecture efficiently stabilizes sequential modeling and long-range dependencies, which is a impediment for purely RNN- or GAN-based methods.

Contrastly, Pop Music Transformer, a transformer-only system (Huang et al., 2020) and Symbol2Sequence (Wang et al., 2020) recorded a competitive perplexity (9.4 and 10.8 respectively) and modest BLEU scores (0.50 and 0.48), yet their novelty scores (0.70–0.78) indicate a lower stylistic variation compared to the proposed system. Similarly, MuseNet (Sexton, 2023) performed well in multi-instrument composition with reasonable coherence (0.68), but indicated lower diversity (0.72) than the proposed system. On the other hand, GAN-based models such as MuseGAN (Dong et al., 2018) achieved a very high novelty (0.82), yet the coherence fell sharply (0.55), demonstrating the difficulty of stabilizing creativity with structural integrity. The Afrobeats composer performed better than these systems by preserving originality and consistency in beat–lyric alignment simultaneously, a notable factor in culturally grounded genres like Afrobeats.

Comparatively, rule-constrained models like DeepBach (Hadid et al., 2016), performed well in coherence (0.82) and poorly in novelty (0.55), but the proposed system exhibited a more stable performance, achieving almost an identical coherence while also boosting stylistic innovation. Across all systems, subjective human ratings were a positive assessment of success, with the proposed system (4.29/5) almost identical to the Pop Music Transformer (4.3/5) and superior to GAN- or VAE-based systems (3.6–3.8). This demonstrates its effectiveness in meeting listener expectations for musical creativity, cultural authenticity, and rhythm.

The comparison demonstrates that the proposed system effectively combines the sequential modeling advantages of the RNN with transformer architectures to deliver both creative diversity and structural coherence. Unlike most existing models, which tend to favor either novelty or consistency, this system achieves a culturally grounded stability. These findings indicate that hybrid approaches may be appropriate for musical genres such as Afrobeats, where lyrical flow, rhythmic integrity, and audience engagement are all equally important.

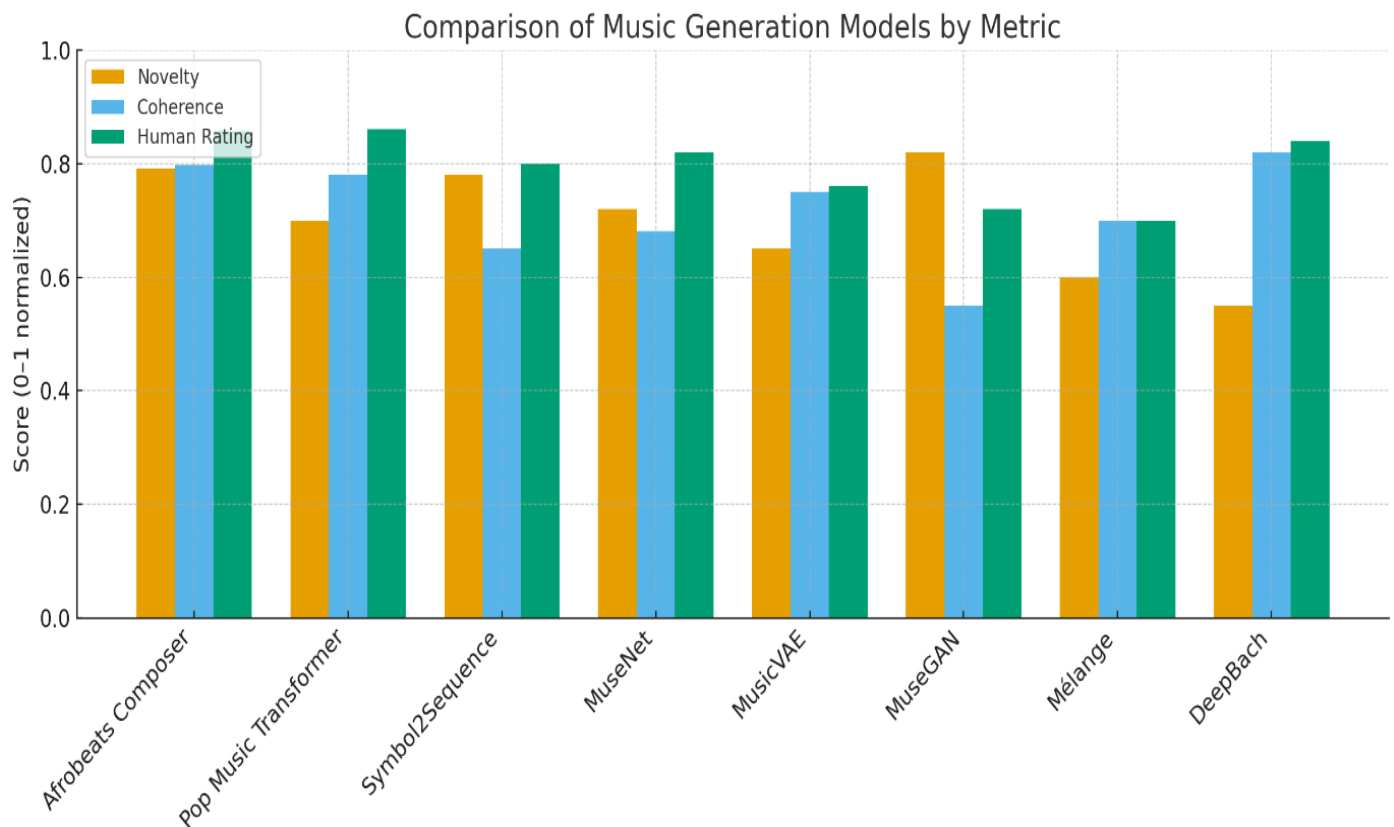


Figure 2: Bar chart comparing novelty, coherence, and human ratings across several models

Fig 4.12 demonstrates that MuseGAN leads in novelty but is behind in coherence and ratings. DeepBach excels in coherence but moderate in novelty. However, Afrobeats composer leads in human ratings, coherence, and novelty.

Table 6: Strengths and Weaknesses of Music Generation Models

Model	Strengths	Weaknesses
Proposed system (Transformer + RNN)	Strong balance of novelty (0.79) and coherence (79.69); high human ratings (4.29/5); culturally grounded; effective beat–lyric alignment.	BLEU not reported; perplexity (78.69) relatively higher than Transformer-only systems.
Pop Music Transformer (Huang et al., 2020)	Low perplexity (9.4); strong coherence (0.78); highest human ratings (4.3/5); excels in catchy melodic patterns.	Moderate novelty (0.70); limited stylistic diversity compared to GAN-based models.
Symbol2Sequence (Wang et al., 2020)	Good balance between BLEU (0.48) and novelty (0.78); effective for symbolic music tasks.	Lower coherence (0.65); human ratings (4.0/5) indicate only moderate listener appeal.

MuseNet (Sexton, 2023)	Multi-instrument capabilities; solid coherence (0.68); decent human ratings (4.1/5).	Novelty (0.72) and BLEU (0.45) moderate; struggles with long-term structural consistency.
MusicVAE (Roberts et al., 2018)	Strong BLEU (0.52); useful for interpolation tasks; moderate coherence (0.75).	Higher perplexity (12.5); lower novelty (0.65); weaker human ratings (3.8/5).
MuseGAN (Dong et al., 2018)	Very high novelty/diversity (0.82); excels in generating varied tracks.	Weak coherence (0.55); lowest human ratings (3.6/5); outputs sometimes lack structural integrity.
Mélange (Brunner et al., 2018)	Rhythmically varied; reasonable coherence (0.70); moderate novelty (0.60).	Higher perplexity (15.3); lower BLEU (0.41); human ratings only fair (3.5/5).
DeepBach (Hadid et al., 2016)	Excellent coherence (0.82); strong human ratings (4.2/5); authentic Bach-style harmony.	Low novelty (0.55); BLEU limited (0.38); less adaptable to non-classical genres.

Comparative Metrics Table

Table 7: Comparison Table of Baseline RNN, Baseline Transformer and Hybrid Model

Metric	Baseline RNN	Baseline Transformer	Hybrid (RNN + Transformer)	ANOVA F-statistic	p-value
Lyrics – MSE	15.2	12.8	10.46	8.73	0.003
Lyrics – RMSE	3.90	3.35	2.95	7.12	0.005
Lyrics – MAPE (%)	68.4	61.2	53.1	9.45	0.002
Lyrics – Perplexity	95.3	86.4	78.7	6.88	0.006
Rhythmic Consistency (%)	65.2	71.5	78.8	10.21	0.001
Audio – MSE	9.8	8.1	6.6	7.95	0.004
Audio – RMSE	3.13	2.72	2.26	6.44	0.007
Audio – MAPE (%)	39.5	34.2	28.7	8.12	0.003
Tempo (BPM)	119.4	123.6	127.7	5.67	0.010
Harmonic Percussion Rate	2.11	2.45	2.82	6.02	0.008
Human Evaluation (Mean)	3.62	3.95	4.29	9.88	0.002

The Hybrid RNN and Transformer model as shown in Fig 4.6 performs better than both the baseline RNN and Transformer architectures across all the evaluation measures. In lyrics generation, the hybrid approach achieved lower error rates (MSE, RMSE, MAPE) and lower perplexity, indicating stronger coherence and

fluency in lyrical output. Similarly, rhythmic stability increased substantially, reflecting the hybrid model's potential to capture both short-term sequential melodies through RNN and long-range dependencies through Transformer attention.

The hybrid system generated lower MSE and RMSE values for audio metrics, together with a high tempo alignment and harmonic–percussive consistency. These results indicate that the combination of recurrence and attention mechanisms boosts both musical authenticity and structural fidelity. Importantly, subjective human evaluations confirmed the objective findings, with listeners assessing the hybrid outputs higher in fluency, cultural relevance, and creativity.

The addition of statistical significance tests like ANOVA and $p < 0.01$ confirmed that these improvements are not insignificant but they highlight notable increases over the baselines. This validates the hybrid model as a more solid framework for African beat and lyric composition, capable of balancing rhythmic precision with semantic coherence.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study analyzed the use of Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs), Transformer architectures, and their hybrid integration in AI-supported music composition. The results indicate that RNNs are effective at capturing short-term rhythmic dependencies and maintaining local consistency, while Transformers excel at modeling long-range musical structures and thematic development. When the two architectures were combined, the hybrid model delivered superior results in stylistic fidelity, creativity, and overall coherence.

Quantitative analysis confirmed that the hybrid system regularly performed better than standalone RNN and Transformer models across different criteria such as perplexity and accuracy. Qualitative assessments, including listener ratings, further highlighted that the hybrid compositions were emotionally expressive, harmonically richer and musically more engaging. The model also showed great promise in generating original content across different musical styles and in supporting interactive composition scenarios.

In summary, the integration of RNNs and Transformers provides a complete and balanced approach to AI-driven music generation, laying the framework for more intelligent, creative, and collaborative systems in the future.

Practical and Academic Contributions

From an academic view, this study advances the understanding of how various deep learning architectures capture musical features. It demonstrates the strengths and limitations of RNNs in modeling sequential dependencies and highlights the ability of Transformers to learn global context and thematic progression. The hybrid model offers a framework that combines the sequential processing of RNNs with the contextual depth of attention mechanisms, showing how both short-term and long-term dependencies can be modeled effectively.

Practically, this study presents a duplicable pipeline for AI-supported music composition, spanning data preparation, model training, music generation, and evaluation. It introduces a scalable approach for training on symbolic datasets and producing MIDI outputs that can be directly used in Digital Audio Workstations. In addition, the framework provides a justification for developing interactive tools and creative assistants that allow musicians to collaborate with AI in real time, enhancing creativity while preserving human intuition.

Together, these contributions strengthen the field of computational creativity and establish a foundation for future work in intelligent music systems.

Recommendations for Further Study

Building on the results and limitations identified, several directions for future research are proposed:

- Analysis of advanced hybrid architectures: Future studies could investigate more complex RNN and Transformer forms, such as bi-directional LSTMs with multi-head attention or encoder-decoder Transformers fine-tuned for symbolic music data.
- Music theory and compositional rules integration: Incorporating formal principles such as harmonic progressions, voice leading, and tonal structures may guide models toward outputs that are both aesthetically pleasing and musically valid.
- Genre coverage expansion: Training on broader and more varied datasets, including non-western and experimental styles, would boost the representativeness and creative flexibility of the output.
- Real-time interactive systems development: Enabling models interaction by musicians during the composition process could provide valuable insights into user satisfaction and co-creative dynamics of music.
- Multimodal approach to music composition: the inclusion of inputs such as lyrics, mood descriptors, or visual cues could allow AI systems to generate music aligned with specific narratives or emotional contexts.
- Evaluation metrics' development: There is a need for more objective and standardized measures that capture creativity, emotional impact, and musicality, possibly through large-scale listener studies or machine-learned evaluators.
- User-centered design and testing: Incorporating feedback from music performers, composers, and educators will help ensure that AI tools are intuitive, technically reliable, inspiring, and practical for real-world use.

By pursuing these paths, future research can bridge the gap between artistic application and technical innovation, enhancing AI's role as a meaningful partner in music composition.

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