

AFRICAN MUSICOLOGY ON-LINE

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Bureau for the Development of African Musicology (BDAM)

C/o H.O. Odwar, Department of Creative & Performing Arts, Maseno University, Kenya.

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The aims and objective of *'African Musicology Online'* are as follows:

- To serve as the voice of Africans at the international level in the study of their own Music;
- To publish original research papers and reviews by Africans on their own music (encompassing all categories of African music);
- To foster mutual co-operation among African scholars in the field of African Musicology;
- To promote and develop the concept and practice of African Musicology, by Africans.

All enquiries and correspondences should be directed to:

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This current edition examines various aspects of African Musicology and African Music practices. Professor Meki Nzewi's article theorized the metaphysical basis of the African Musical science; a *sine qua non* to understanding concepts, performance practices and psycho-spiritual import of African Music. Femi Adedeji took a critical look at current trends in Nigerian Music scholarship in global perspectives with the aim of reconstructing the focus of African Musicology. Ovaborhene Idamoyibo explored the anthropomorphic and symbolic interpretations of instrumental music in Africa. His assertion enhances a better understanding of gender identities in African music worldview. Olatunji's article delved into the indispensable role and interpretative analysis of proverbs in Yoruba music. Hellen Odwar dug out the *Tigo (Ngaga)* Dance of the Luo of Kenya, a traditional musical practice that is already extinct. The last article written by Ajewole described the music and the place of female court musicians in the palace of the Alaafin of Oyo in Nigeria.

It is hoped that readers will find these highly insightful papers useful in their various research pursuits. Thanks to the authors who have contributed to this edition in the spirit of 'promoting African Musicology by Africans'.

- Editorial Board

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS EDITION

Meki Nzewi, PhD, is a Professor of African Music Theory and Composition in the Department of Music, University of Pretoria, South Africa. E-mail: mekinzewi@up.ac.za

Femi Adededeji, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Music, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. E-mail: olufemiadededeji@yahoo.com,

Ovaborhene Idamoyibo, DMus, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Music, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. E-mail: idamoyibomusdel@yahoo.co.uk

Michael Olatunij, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Music, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. E-mail: mykemusic@yahoo.com

Hellen O. Odwar, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Creative and Performing Arts, Maseno University, Kenya. E-mail: dragak@swiftkisumu.com

John Ajewole, PhD, is a Principal Lecturer in the Department of Music, Oyo State College of Education, Oyo, Nigeria. E-mail: pastorajewolejohn@yahoo.com

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AFRICAN MUSICAL ARTS CREATIVITY AND PERFORMANCE: THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUND¹

Meki Nzewi, PhD

THEORETICAL PREMISES

***What we believe we see or hear is often far from the truth of what we are seeing or hearing.

***What we know we feel is often merely a sign of what we do not know is happening to us.

***Without cognitive understanding, what we do with extant indigenous knowledge manifestations will be abstracted misrepresentations and misimpressions that problematize contemporary advancement and re-deployment in initiatives.

POSITIONING SPIRITUALITY

Published literature as well as other contemporary representations and applications of the tangible products of the African indigenous knowledge systems, sometimes well intentioned, have been fraught with ignorant representations and interpretations of the nature, meanings and virtues. Hence flippant initiatives at continuing or advancing the human and societal interests of African indigenous knowledge genius abound.

Exogenous mind-set, theories and research intentions or methods disable perceptions of the deep intentions, nature, virtues and potencies implicated in the indigenous musical arts, and makes a farce of the study or contemporary advancement of its human sense and cultural meaning. Systematic research and experimental as well as evaluative procedures have fashioned the human and social science products of the indigenous knowledge systems of Africa. The musical arts was a composite thought system that was created and experienced in holistic terms as integration of music, dance, metaphysical/mythical/social drama and the symbolic/significant costumes.

The musical sound component computes and structures elements and qualities of sound to generate intangible but affective-effective energy that resonates with spiritual and tissue health. The dance component choreographs movement qualities, gestured texts and use of body in space that enrich the benevolent spirituality of participants. The drama component physically represents and interacts the immaterial worldview in elevated activities that endure spiritual security in religious and secular living.

¹ Keynote address at Music Therapy symposium, Department of Music, University of Pretoria(2005).

Inducing a healthy mind is then a primary intention as well as capability of an African musical arts creation or performance practice. Peculiar musical structures and instrumental ambience are rationalized to produce desired effects on the mind and, and thereby the body as well, of human persons, and sometimes animals. The particular or general about the healing capacity of a musical experience then depends on the calculated permutations of sound elements as much as the ambience of sound materials and the environment of musical arts experiencing.

Repetition of sonic or movement theme, starts with entrapping attention, and proceeds to anaesthetize the mind, producing sleep, calmness or composure as may be desired. Cyclicity of a motif/theme, which implies consistently re-creating or re-ordering the inside of a significant thematic completeness, engages the mind in a type of creative or perceptual expedition that eliminates consciousness of immediate perturbations. Deep tones on melorhythmic instruments pull down excitation and tension; high tones pull up down-tuned minds and bodies into psychical or physical excitation.

The primacy of promoting mass spiritual health, which live musical arts promotes, suffused African societal and human engagements with life and death, and livingness thereafter. Live musical arts is scientifically conformed in tradition to generate tangible spirit energies, and thereby regenerate human spirituality. Some structural formulae are calculatedly rationalized for mind-body health at personal and group levels.

Diabolic or diseased spirituality is probably the most devastating epidemic inflicting the contemporary human world, and yet it has received scarce attention as a global health hazard. Diabolic spirituality disorients the common pulse of a relationship, a group or a society with disastrous consequences for all concerned. The manifestations of the disease are witnessed in human decisions, actions and products that display warped consciousness of what is humanly and humanning, that is, acts or products that deliberately relegate or distort common good or humane practices in the pursuits of self, group and societal/national interests. As much as a few privileged perpetrators achieve self-centered objectives their obsessions impact adversely on the life, mental/emotional security and physical health of others, particularly the masses of a population.

Acts of legalized criminality, mass deception and official destruction of lives and values are, therefore, manifestations of syndromes of diabolic spirituality. When such overwhelming inhuman legislations/actions/decisions are perceived, diagnosed and discussed in the modern global milieu, diabolic spiritual disposition is not detected as the root cause. This is because the most afflicted are the most visible, privileged, acclaimed and sophisticated members of any world nation. Diabolic spirituality then marks a clinically sane person burdened with a perjured soul - an evil-disposed genius who is adept at contriving, inventing

and/or promoting anti-human products, morality, regulations and practices that discretely endanger humane living, human health (psychical and physiological) as well as mental and social-cultural security generally anywhere in the world. The irony of modern civilization is that the manifestations of the schemes and actions of diabolic spirituality are elegantly rationalized, justified, legitimized and mass disseminated as the brilliant, the fantastic or the enchanting, also endorsed with flippant tributes to the rule of law or as consonant with conventions that in real human experiences demonize and control the trusting populace. There is no concerted attempt to recognize and control the disease or heal the afflicted simply because diabolic spirituality is commonly a disease of sophisticated persons ensconced in the privileged structures of modern politics, religions, businesses and other high profile professions of modern world societies. The diabolic spirituality pandemic has overrun the world because the curative agency, the indigenous models of applied live musical arts, has become much purified of its healing capacity, again by diabolic spirited practitioners who pursue flippant creative theories and practices.

THE SCIENCE OF THE MIND - THE METAPHYSICAL SCIENCE OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH

The traditional African mind and society recognized the force of intangible reality in the management of human and communal health. Collective African ancestry researched the operation of active spirits and effective-affective spirit energies that impact the physical and metaphysical spheres of existence, including the potent energies of objects that have been metaphysically impregnated with spiritual force. The nature of such intangible energy sphere is harnessed and managed in interactive musical arts sites. Recognition of intangible realities necessitated theatrical communion marshaled by live musical arts with the intention of achieving a rapport with their potent essences, particularly those that impact the psyche traumatically. Inspired 'musical arts' was the primary medium for human-spirit interactions because music is a spirit force generated and deployed by human genius. The intrinsic super-ordinary energy of live musical arts makes it a potent force for managing the co-existence between humans and extraordinary forces or affects in the cosmos, physical or immaterial.

The science of spirituality, as a science of customizing the human mind for individual and societal good, permeates African indigenous knowledge systems and practices. A mind jaundiced by, or preoccupied with the methods, procedures, materiality and precision measurements of modern school science, which, most of the time is driven by diabolic spirituality, cannot easily perceive or appreciate the nature, manifestations and effects of both the benevolent and the diabolic spirituality. Live musical arts, in all its ramifications is central to African preventive and curative medical practices.

African indigenous medical science recognizes that body or physiological sickness invariably triggers spiritual indisposition, and thereby soul suffering. Hence indigenous curative science and procedures often commence with the healing of

the mind, that is, the restoration of spiritual health, which in turn tunes the mind and body for physiological cure as the case may be. On the other hand a sick mind or disabled spirituality could trigger or exacerbate sickness of the physical body. A healed mind is a revitalized benevolent spirituality that wills the body to marshal the appropriate antibodies that combat the foreign agents causing a particular sickness. Mind and body energy boost the efficacy of material, herbal cure as need be. Psycho-physiological healing, a medical function of live musical arts, is then a forte in African indigenous medical science. The musical sound component could be nominal as in the healing potency of incantations, overtone singing and formulaic poetry found in indigenous diagnostic and healing procedures. It could be any formulation of full-blown therapeutic musical arts theatre.

The motto in African medical practice then is: Heal the spirit to heal the body. Live musical sound evokes or summons empathetic community force. Experiencing spiritual bonding with the community, which live musical arts marshals, instills the disposition to overcome adversity or the will to overcome impaired health. Hence African healing theatre often involves active community participation mobilized by live musical arts. The somatic energy generated in particularly mass medley dancing is also a healing force. The intangible energies of live musical sound and theatre formulated for healing purposes produces palpable effects and affects on the sick in particular. The conception and production of music intended for healing purposes is not at all random. The process is rather grounded on theoretical principles and systematic creative-performance procedure, even when spontaneous. The form, structures, texture, vocal intonation, instrumental ambience and performance conventions are rationalized to engender or effect spiritual, and thereby psycho-physiological wellness.

THE SCIENCE OF MUSICAL STRUCTURES

Human as well as contextual intentions inform the theoretical premise that frames creative logic in any African musical arts style and type. The creative theory of indigenous music is thus humanly oriented. As much as entertainment underscores the purpose of the musical arts, the compositional grammar scarcely courts flippant entertainment objectives as a primary creative aspiration even in personal music types. The musicological features as well as the instrumentation are sonic translations/transformations of other humanly and community ideas, structures and relationships that are in themselves not musical. Generally the musical arts idioms, ensemble rationalizations and performance norms aim to humanize the individual and bond humanity.

The example of the musical bow, or the *mbira* or a song of solace is a personal music type, which invariably invokes a virtual community in the thematic structures. In such personal music the performer normally incorporates a chorus section, which means self-administered community energy, an imagined

community participation, while also creating and developing spontaneous elaborations of the solo section of the theme. The human meaning of the chorus part is that the individual needs the emotional and spiritual solidarity of the community as a base for negotiating self-expression. The human meaning embodied in other African melodic or harmonic constructs is that an individual must take cognizance of the community, real or imagined, in exploring creative originality or self-affirmation. Thus the performer of personal music type may be physically alone but interacts with an imaginary community at the spiritual level of expressing self-emotion, thereby gaining the spiritual wellness that accrues from group empathy and support. It is for the same reason that traditional performance convention coerces everybody to share the psychophysical wellness afforded by indigenous musical arts by partaking at various degrees of active participation.

How the musical arts science in traditional Africa accomplishes psychiatric and psychological functions, by managing psychological conditions and anomalous personality traits easily become apparent in certain ensemble performance schemes. Cases of non-congenital madness and psychosis were very rare in traditional Africa because indigenous health practices as well as the practical measures that afford social/emotional security prioritized preventive, rather than curative medical science, and are rationalized into live musical arts practices. It must be noted that the African conceptualization of the musical arts generally helps to form a mental disposition conducive to humane living, inter-personal relationships and sound societal living. The sound of humanly music is a spiritual force that energizes and enriches the mind. Dance, deriving from the conformation of musical structures en-spirits the dancer, thereby imbuing benevolent spirituality and affording psychotherapeutic healing. Spirit manifest drama, which embodies abstract ideas as well as supernatural or nature forces/beings in costumes, masks, objects and actions, interacts humans with ultra-mundane manifestations in order to coerce mental discipline and socio-spiritual conditioning.

SPACE

The conformation of musical structures for managing the mental state of performers and actors accord with the dualistic philosophy of African worldview about space: The affective energies of open space (in-placing the mind) and clustered space (displacing the mind or conscious ego). The science of the psychology of space is applied to the metaphysical management of psychological health and inducing stable psyche. In-placing of psychical presence or conscious ego induces a state of self *cum* other-consciousness, while displacement of psychical presence could produce states of altered consciousness. The life and health objectives of artistically rationalized space afford the desired healing of psychological indispositions to different categories and dispositions of performers as well as socialize. In practice, the potency of space can then be applied to inculcating other-consciousness, formation and reformation of attitudes, liberating inhibited ego and restraining aggressive ego.

Provision of space for the other to insert creative or expressive self in melodic and melorhythmic structures coerces inter-personal sensing, which tempers excessive self-drives while correcting introversion.

The evocation and manifestation of intangible reality is possible when space is virtually eliminated as a result of clustered melorhythmic/rhythmic impulses such as marks *Sangoma/Inyanga* healing musical arts types in southern African societies, for instance- the density of sound and texture does not make allowance for insertion of self or conscious ego. Clustered impulses do not allow the minds of susceptible agents/patients to breathe. Psychical presence is banished as the conscious mind of the ego, primed by autosuggestion, is driven into a trip outside self. Contact with ultra mundane spirits occurs as attaining a state of substituted consciousness. The desired spirit essence or character then arrives to ride the psyche, body and behavior of a human medium for the purposes of transmitting desired communication or effecting a desired psychophysical cure, or performing any other extraordinary service.

THE SCIENCE OF INSTRUMENT TECHNOLOGY

Scientific research informed the design, material and construction of peculiar timbres or sonic vibrancies of indigenous music instruments. There was no randomness in the choice of materials as well as the design and construction of indigenous music instruments used for specific social/political/health/religious musical intentions. Health objectives are commonly implicit in the human-science of African musical sound and practice, irrespective of other social-political-religious purposes. Music instruments science, including vocal intonation, generally research raw harmonics or rough timbres. The healing resonances of the rough vibrancy that characterizes the raw harmonics of indigenous music instruments massage tissues, senses and organs whether of the mind or the body, human or animal. Spirit energy rides on raw or rough terrains in the environment as well as in the body to act upon human life and nature. Purification, refinement and sophistication in appearance, substance, quality, tastes or behavior contain sparse virtue, health essence or spirit quality. In this regard the materials for making even personal instruments such as the rough fiber for the musical bow, or cast iron for the bell and the *mbira* (finger/thumb piano) produce raw harmonics. Raw resonance evokes intangible realities, which complement thematic/harmonic structures in musical sound used for therapeutic purposes. Natural healing is a gradual or discreet process of attaining wellness, which becomes holistic and lasting.

Objects, musical or otherwise, that are ritually imbued, become impregnated with potencies that impact the human mind and thereby general health. They transmit energies, which are intangible realities that are effective in indigenous healing practices, from diagnostic or metaphysical discernment of cause and effect (prescriptive divination) to treatments.

This preliminary discourse has set out to outline briefly, the human and societal foundations of musical arts creativity, production and utilization in indigenous Africa, with particular bearing on indigenous medical science. The procedure in healing is scientific, and incorporates the metaphysical science of spirituality. The peculiar structures of form, texture, performance dynamics and music instrument technology are grounded on theoretical formulations that are systematic, and can be advanced into modern relevance if properly understood. This discourse has focused on the rationalization of live musical arts in medicure and medicare practices. African cultures share common musical arts conceptualizations, human/societal/contextual intentions, theoretical principles, structural-textural formulations, and performance practices at the substructure level.

In negotiating modernity, it is important, therefore, to recognize that the indigenous scientific research attitude and methods - physical (material) and metaphysical (intangible materiality) - marked African autochthonous human practices and mental civilizations for millennia before any contact with other human cultures outside the continent. The genius of indigenous practices endures, and remains viable. They have been undergoing consistent advancement in pace and knowledge with every stage of societal history. Grounded knowledge of the core philosophical, theoretical and humanistic foundations of indigenous musical arts heritage is critical for informed contemporary representation, advancement initiatives, research studies and human/societal practices in order not to compromise the humanly commitments entrenched. The indigenous science and practice of human medicine ensured human survival in Africa for millennia. Live musical arts was critical in indigenous medical practice because it evokes the affective-effective spirit forces as well as generates and maintains the spiritual dimension of being human

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EDITORIAL

The author draws his ideas and facts from African indigenous knowledge hence, the absence of a Reference list.

NEW TRENDS IN GLOBAL MUSIC RESEARCH: THE IMPLICATION FOR NIGERIAN ART MUSIC

'Femi Adededeji, PhD

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the problems facing the contemporary local researchers of Nigerian music in the global context, especially as related to new trends in global music research, non-availability of sponsorship, and emphasis on foreign and International research publications for the promotion of music scholars in their local Universities. It is observed that there are very few major local sponsorship for research activities in Nigerian art music today. The foreign bodies and organizations that provide such facilities have their interests and foci different to the interests of the stakeholders in the development of the field locally. They therefore have research approaches, topics that suit their purposes. These developments pose a serious problem to the realization of research focus and right direction in Nigerian art music scholarship. This paper examines the situations; their causes and suggests solutions to the highlighted problems. It concludes that research in Nigerian music should be strengthened at the local level, in terms of sponsorship and opportunities. In realizing this objective, the contribution of the National bodies such as the *Musicological Society of Nigeria* and *Conference of Music Educators in Nigeria* is imperative.

INTRODUCTION

This study is born out of the observation that indigenous music training and scholarship in Nigeria and indeed in Africa is still under the bondage Euro-American ideals and this is a great factor to the slow development of the discipline at home. There are sharp differences between Western and African aesthetics, concepts and practices of music, the universalism of music notwithstanding. Agordoh (1994) argued in support of this fact and went further to identify nine areas of differences between Western "art" music and traditional African music.

As a result of the above fact, studying African music by Africans is a *sine qua non* in achieving meaningful progress and most correct representation of arts which are bound to abstract philosophies and clumsy to understand by foreigners. Despite this an ideal African researcher according to Agordoh (1994:179), should be "inquisitive, perceptive, objective, non-discriminative, impartial, candid,

diligent, persistent, creative and erudite". It should be mentioned here that the efforts of pioneering foreign ethnomusicologists are by no means underrated. In fact, African music scholarship owes ethnomusicology "eternally" for the solid foundation provided by it. This paper is aimed at the x-ray of facts and realities about the condition of music research and an examination of the trends of African musicological research in the outside World and the implication for Nigerian art music. The paper which is based on the speculative and philosophical theories (Fiagbedzi, 1989) as its theoretical framework adopts historical and pragmatic approaches in its methodology.

A major aspect of Nigerian music scholarship is research, which in turn is imperative for the development of Nigerian art music. Research by definition, is scientific investigation of issues, an experimentation of new ideas or a study to discover new facts or information. As a pioneer, legend and patriarch, the great Fela Sowande left blue prints for the contemporary Nigerian and indeed African music scholars. We could then talk about his training, his activities, his compositions, his research and philosophies, his problems and his failures. By activities, he was also a researcher but he had a peculiar problem. He could not publish many of his papers because his views opposed those of his likely publishers (Nketia 2001).

It is towards this direction especially as it applies to our contemporary time, that I like to explore in this paper. In his compositions, Sowande reflected more Europeanism than Africanism because of his Western training. Although African elements were obvious in his works but then he wanted more. And to him, his failure was his inability to realize his dreams for the true or ideal Nigerian art music. The next generation after him followed his footsteps in training and compositional stylistic techniques, but failed to research into his problems and frustrations, and could not observe his restraints. This on one part accounts for one of the reasons why things have not really changed in the direction of his contemplation. Also, the trend of research in the global context today tends to emphasize interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and applied approaches more than African musicological principles. This development which is not limited to the field of music, resulted from over emphasizing the cybernetics of different fields, although indispensable for our time, has been done at the detriment of core disciplinary development at local levels. This direction and others cannot but be explored by the Western World because her core music scholarship and research have developed long time ago.

MUSIC RESEARCH IN NIGERIA AS AT PRESENT

The growth of any field of study at a local level requires, that the professionals and academics identify areas of needs, focus and problems, all of which would dictate the direction(s) of their research. Research interests of the scholars then stem from the supposed direction(s). A fundamental problem in Nigerian art music scholarship is lack of direction. This is caused basically by the diversification of research interests to satisfy the outside World. The

development of core areas should have been well established and developed before venturing into the recent trends, or say the least, the two ends should have continued at par. Although there are areas of needs and problems but they are

not addressed from a concerted angle. For instance, in order for Nigerian academic musicians to attain the reeducation or reorientation that is embedded in African traditional idioms, which is paramount to proper integration of African musical resources and African identity in the new African art music in Nigeria, Omibiyi-Obidike (2001) recommended a tripartite research direction. She wrote:

Given the classroom context there is need to document, select and organize the variety of musical experiences to be provided and systematize them for educational use. This involves large scale research to collect and document the varied musical resources on the one hand, and research on the theoretical foundation of African music as well as transformation of an essentially oral tradition to written form on the other hand (p.156).

The first and the second levels although not yet exhausted, have been attained to a considerable extent,; firstly through uncountable number of undergraduate and graduate research long essays and theses which focus mostly on traditional genres and theoretical foundation of African music, written in various departments of music. Of a special attention in this regard, is the outstanding contribution of Institute of African Studies, Ibadan, under the leadership of Mosunmola Omibiyi-Obidike. Through the Masters and PhD theses, we have quality research works on various Nigerian traditional, popular and religious musical genres, and their theoretical foundations. What remains is the systematization of these findings for educational use.

The third level, which is the transformation of our "oral tradition" music heritage to a written form, is yet to be realized, because the task is enormous and includes the evolvement of ideal notation system and relevant terminologies. We have a lot of work to do in this regard, especially in this highly technological age (See Adedeji, 2004). Also, in another dimension, serious research effort should focus on Nigerian art music itself. We don't have to wait until we have enough. *Bi opolo ba so pe o di ojo ti ifon ara ohun ba to san, egbe omo re yoo maa baa ni 'le oko* (Delay is dangerous).

At the other end, fundamental areas that should be well established in Nigerian art music before we can start building other approaches include Music Theory, Nigerian musicology, Music Education, Composition and Music Technology. The national bodies formed for the development of these areas, have not been able to achieve the desired results, because of one problem or the other. For instance, *Nigerian Association of Musicians and Music Educators*, which was formed for the promotion of Music Education could not be sustained. *The Conference of Music Educators in Nigeria*, which was formed in 1999, is yet to realize its set objectives or have meaningful impacts on the field because the body is not yet widely known and taken serious. Besides, the body meets at National

Conferences which are not well organized and as a result do not carry along people that matter in the field. Consequently issues of interest are not exhaustively discussed and the publications are not well circulated.

The *Musicological Society of Nigeria* looks like the most widely accepted of all the national bodies. Unfortunately its activities are not consistent due to one problem or the other. For instance, conferences are not regular, and when held, attendance is poor. The papers presented and issues discussed are not also published. The implication is a retarded development of fundamental issues of research. The researches that focus on pertinent fundamental issues are not making significant progress for some reasons:

A major impediment is shortage of sustainable Nigerian Music Journal. Over the years, several Journals were founded and folded up for lack of fund, necessary materials and patronage. For instance, Lagos *Musical Journal* which was published as early as 1915 did not live long (Vidal, 2004); *Abraka Music Journal* was short lived; *The Performer: Ilorin Journal of Music* only had two editions. *The Gourd Rattle* had only the maiden edition. *Nigerian Music Review* of the Obafemi Awolowo University was pioneered by Prof. Akin Euba in 1977 and it was dead until its resuscitation in 2001. It now has five (editions), the last of which was published in 2004. *The Interlink* has just come into being and it has two editions for now. The contents of papers by some young Nigerian academics in some of the Journals mentioned above reveal lack of direction, co-ordination and serious scholarship.

RESEARCH FUNDING

Local research fellowships, grants and sponsorship for Nigerian music are very limited. This situation is in no small measure, contributing to the retarded growth of Nigerian art music. On a larger scale, in African music the situation is better a little, through private and indigenous internationally connected bodies such as *Association of African Universities*, *International Institute of African music and Dance* in Ghana, *Institut Francais de Recherche en Afrique* in Ibadan and the newly formed *Pan African Society for Musical Art Education* in South Africa. The implication is that the Nigerian academics have to depend majorly on the meager monthly research allowance; the frustrating Universities research fund and their hard – earned salary, for research works.

On the other end, there are lots of foreign research fellowships and opportunities for the Nigerian music research and these were maximally enjoyed by the old generation of Nigerian music scholars. Today, the opportunities are still there but with much more difference to what it used to be in the past. It seems the Euro-America have got most information on African traditional music.

RESEARCH TRENDS IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

At the international level today, there are so many diverse levels of research approaches based on various research interests and foci. For instance, in music, there are musicological, ethnomusicological, theory and criticism, comparative music, intercultural musicology, composition, performance, Music Education, music technology areas etc. all of which though with different approaches focus on music. There are other approaches such as social theory, gender, African American, Black, African Studies, theory of group dynamics, multi culturality and urban culture studies, the focus of which is not primarily music. In the former category, the study of Nigerian art music is lagging behind and yet to develop its own musicology, music theory and computer music technology all of which although are indispensable, are still Western in focus and approaches. Ethnomusicology is the general umbrella under which the study of Nigerian art music was accommodated. Today, research issues in Nigerian art music do no longer sensibly come under ethnomusicology, but African Musicology. Intercultural Musicology and others are still young, and Nigerian art music researchers are yet to fully grasp their foci and approaches. Commenting on the danger of exertion of Western music philosophy on African music, Agordoh (1994) wrote:

But in the 20th century the influences of the West have been paramount. It is not worthy that even freedom movements have not rejected Western culture: most of the background music in the film *Vencermos* (We will succeed) – which was provided by soldiers of the Mozambique Liberation Front – and the music of other political songs of central Africa are in a Western melodic idiom with European – derived harmony, or are even adaptations of Western popular songs (p.19).

Generally, it could be concluded that Western interests dominate all the aforementioned areas; and although today, sponsoring bodies may consider research topics from Nigerian art music (in very limited instances), the primary focus is not the development of Nigerian art music at the local level.

In the second category which presents research areas which are broader and separate, music as an area of interest is secondary, talk less of Nigerian art music. Nigerian music scholars that apply for research fellowships, grants and sponsorship, from foreign sponsoring bodies therefore must have to tailor their proposals to meet the interests and focus of the sponsors. As observed, the use of this category is the predominant trend in African studies and consequently provides the most accessible publishing outlet for Nigerian art music researchers. Most of the foreign research opportunities that come our way today in Nigeria come from this category of interest, which to say the least, is a curse rather than a blessing to Nigerian art music. Since “he/she who pays the piper dictates the tune”, local researchers on foreign sponsorship have no choice than to concentrate on foreign foci, use foreign approaches and write what the Western World wants to see. In the same vein, most of our composers compose what the

Western World wants to hear and the performers perform what the Western World wants to see. Sadly enough, respected Nigerian music scholars in many instances, also dance to the tunes of the Western world in foreign and International conferences. With all of this, it is glaring that Nigerian music scholarship is yet to be free from Western enslavement.

Unfortunately today, emphasis is being placed on foreign publications for promotion cases in some Nigerian Universities. For instance, at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, the minimum foreign publications required for the promotion to the ranks of Readers and Professors is 40%, while for Senior Lecturer, it is 20%. Thus, attention is shifted to how to satisfy the interests of the foreign publishers whose goals and foci are different to the development of Nigerian art music, especially the ones in music.

The dominant approaches expected by foreign and International publishers now a days are those already explained above; which examine a subject from the viewpoints of many disciplines, so as to serve the interests of scholars from various disciplines and to meet the expectations of the Western or international readership. This approach has its many benefits but does not enhance the solution of the fundamental research issues in Nigerian music. For most of us who are trained in African musicology and are interested in core music courses such as composition, theory and analysis, music education etc, the methods of approach have been purely musicological, ethnomusicological or pedagogical. We are thus unable to develop our areas of primary research interests, neither do we blend well in the new trends. The argument here is that in the search for universal acceptability, the original focus may be lost. The Nigerian art music scholars that write research papers for foreign Journals, present what would educate or appeal to Western or International readership and not for the development of Nigerian art music at the home- base level.

There is also the issue of politics or some disparity involved in accepting research papers from non-Western countries. Africans and people from other non-Western countries that have their higher degrees in Euro-American institutions seem to be more acceptable. The ratio of their works published in foreign books and Journals are far more than their locally trained colleagues. Most Nigerian music scholars published in foreign music Journals were the ones who trained there and hence known. The local researcher who also locally has all his/her training and has not traveled abroad is cut off from the rest of the World except from reading about them on the Internet.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of all the afore-mentioned problems on Nigerian art music are several. Firstly is the retardation of the progress of Nigerian Musicology. The growth of Nigerian art music is dependent on healthy scholarship and research, which for now are yet to be attained at home. In ethnomusicological studies of Nigerian music, the focus has been our traditional ethnic, folk and popular genres

and not our art music, even though Nigeria had started to have her art music since the 1930s. This is where the major contributions of Omibiyi-Obidike and Bode Omojola come in. Although, various works have been done on one aspect or the other on Nigerian art music as theses and Journal articles, the works of this duo, *Nigerian Art Music edited in honour of Fela Sowande* and *African Art Music in Nigeria* to my mind constitute a major landmark in the study of Nigerian musicology. Thanks to the *Institute of African Studies*, Ibadan and the *Institut Francais de Recherche en Afrique*, also based in Ibadan. It is in those works that we could discover the history, fundamental principles, stylistic techniques, analysis and some directions of Nigerian art music. The non-availability of reference materials before the publication of those works was a major impediment on the growth of Nigerian art music and musicology.

The second major issue is the inadequate Nigerian art musical compositions. When we turn to African art music at the macro level, the situation is better since the domain is larger. Although we have a number of art compositions, but we need more for the establishment of Nigerian art music legacies in the study of comparative World musicology. The challenge of the situation was posed by Agawu (2001), when he advised thus: "Whether practice will ever catch up with theory remains to be seen, but it may not be a bad idea to talk less and compose more" (p.7).

Another dimension of this issue is that the bulk of works composed by the current locally trained, young composers could not be regarded as serious works when compared with the works by the older generations of Nigerian art musicians; The Phillips, the Sowandes, the Akpabots, Eubas, the Ojukwus, the Bankoles, the Ekwuemes, the Fibresimas, the Ndubusis and the Uzoigwes. This is due to several factors which belong to a separate research.

In all of this, the issue of specialization in Nigerian Music Education which I have raised in an earlier work (Adedeji, 2004), should be revisited. It is a known fact that Nigerian academic musicians in most cases combine many functions such as teaching, research, composition, musicology etc. This practice was observed by Euba (2003), when he commented that: "unlike their Western colleagues, Africans often combine scholarly activity with composition rather than specialize in one or the other" (163). The implication is that one or more aspect(s) may be lacking when an individual assumes several functions. If specialization were encouraged, musicologists would theorize more, music educators would advance pedagogy and composers would compose more. This is not to say that other areas of interests cannot be ventured into by an individual, but let specialization be.

Also the issue of using creative works such as composition and performance as part of the promotion criteria for academic musicians should also be revisited. As of now, contrary to the submission of Idolor (2001), at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, creative works are not considered at all as a criterion for

promoting music lecturers. As a result, no one wants to sit down and spend time on what is not rewarding, rather one tries to write as many papers as possible.

CONCLUSION

It has been argued in this paper that the direction of Nigerian music research especially in terms of publication is indispensable to the development of Nigerian art music and musicology. Needless to say that few problems are responsible. In view of the discussions, the following recommendations are made.

Firstly, a research foundation in honour of Fela Sowande should be put in place as a way of achieving one of Nketia's suggestions (2001). This foundation should specifically be focused on the sponsorship of research in Nigerian art music. Also, efforts should be made to intensify rigorous research which focuses on the development of core Nigerian music as a discipline.

Ways should be sought by various bodies of academic musicians to publish in Music Journals, the research findings contained in theses and dissertations on Nigerian music. Dialogues should be made with the Nigerian government through the Federal Ministry of Education and the Nigerian University Commission on the necessity of special fund to realize this objective.

Local and foreign-based Nigerian music Journals should be floated by stakeholders in Nigerian music research. The foreign based academics may have to spearhead the publication of international Journals, as a matter of strategy. Core theoretical, analytical and musicological issues in Nigerian music would be well catered for through this medium.

African music scholars should avoid the exclusive approach of writing what the Western world want to see and composing only what they want to hear. An ideal research language that is African would be needed for effective contextualization, this has also been one of the challenges Omibiyi-Obidike poses to her Postgraduate students. I could not understand while I was a student under her, but now I appreciate the essence.

The development of Nigerian art music should not be left one sided. One can ask a multibillion-dollar question: Can African art music be fully "African" and still be "art"? No. Right from inception, African "art" music is chaotic in conception. If it assumes a dual look, and combinative in approach, I think that is its own rightful nature. Superimposing a foreign musical art on an indigenous musical culture and philosophy will definitely create the kind of tension being experienced in Nigerian and indeed African art music. It is not for everybody, so why should we seek the acceptance of everybody? If it is meant for educated Nigerians, then let it be. And of course which kind of education are we referring to? Is it not Western education? But the fact still remains, the music belongs to us! As of now there are two schools of thoughts and practices as already submitted by Omojola (2001).

On the one hand, are those who believe that the European classical music idiom can be adapted to suit the Nigerian/African situation through the use of African musical elements within largely European forms. On the other are those who believe that, for an authentic tradition of Art music to emerge in Africa, European styles would have to be abandoned for the use of African forms, instruments and performance idioms (p.101).

To use the biblical axiom, "let the two grow together". While I believe that the development of Nigerian art music could not be fully realized in abroad, I think the activities of our foreign-based colleagues are indispensable in order to cater for the international competition, comparison and audience. At the same time at home, people's interest should be mobilized to focus on the development of this promising art through the motivation and coordination of *Musicological Society of Nigeria and the Conference of Music Educators in Nigeria*.

Finally, while anthologies of existing art compositions are inevitable, new works should be composed and commissioned. In this regard, composition as a course should be emphasized in the music curricular of various higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.

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LET A WOMAN BEAT THE DRUMS: GENDER CONCEPTS IN AFRICAN MUSICAL PRACTICE

Ovaborhene I. Idamoyibo, DMus

ABSTRACT

The dominance of man over the woman has often caused fear and intimidation for the opposite sex and has been queried around the globe. In contemporary societies, struggles and dissensions arising from strong arguments on gender superiority and inferiority have generated disputes that have affected several homes. Recently, Meki Nzewi and Sello Galane (2005) co-authored an article 'Music is a Woman' which turns our attention again to critical issues on gender and feminist concepts in African musical practice. This paper therefore attempts to examine the gender and feminist concepts about drumming in Okpe culture. It will expose the restrictions and taboos associated with female beating the drums and analyse the philosophy of the people that informs such restrictions. It will attempt to answer the above queries, whether it is evil for any female to beat the drums and whether deities or members of the society place curses or sanctions on any female who violates the order. It will further attempt to provide explanation whether the Okpe people consider music to be masculine or feminine and whether the restrictions have positive or negative implications on the female in particular and on the society in general.

INTRODUCTION

In a number of cases, Western orientation on gender issues has stimulated several arguments whether Africans ever have respect for their women. In fact, Africa is often accused, attacked and condemned for oppressing their wives. In such debates, polygamy is often a yardstick for measuring Africa's egalitarianism, why men marry two or more wives and any woman cannot marry two or more men same time. It does not however occur to some people that our predecessors put up most of their ethics for the protection of the woman.

As a growing child, I once asked my father the reasons why he had to be in front and my mother at the back with us children in the middle when going to farm, and why my mother would have to be in front and he at the back when returning home. He explained that from the days of our forefathers, the man had to be in front, the children in the middle and the woman at the back when going to farm. The reason is, if there be any danger in the jungle, the person in front would be the first to encounter it. And if the father confronts the danger, in order to defend the family, whether he survives or not, the children and their mother would have some space behind him to run home. At return from the farm, any danger

attacking from the bush would meet the man behind other members of the family and while he undertakes strides of defence, the children and their mother could escape. The man wants to confront any arising danger. He does not put his wife first to confront the danger; any evil in this?

Whether we believe it or not, in those days the concept of polygamy was also in the bid to protect the interest of the first wife from extremely hard labour. In the Okpe and Urhobo area, before the emergence of the present economic system where both men and women are equally empowered through Western education, economy depended upon oil palm production and the process was strenuous. It was not the white man who gave rule to our fathers not to allow their wives climb palm trees. Our forefathers thought it wise to prohibit their wives from harvesting oil palms, because they considered the job extremely hard and inconvenient for their wives.

To carry innumerable bunches of palm nuts and fetch uncountable buckets of water for the processing of the palm oil, the men considered to relieve their wives by having two or more wives to make them take turns and have good amount of rest after few days of such hard labour. The man harvests for nine consecutive days, but for those who have three wives, each of them work with him in the farm for three days and takes rest for six days, to continue about three days more to complete the process of the oil production. The man on the whole works for about twelve days, but each of his wives support him for few days. Could there be evil in this kind of arrangement? In music, there are also some restrictions for the women of several African societies, and it is our hope that in this paper, we shall expose facts whether the men mean any evil for the women or not.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN AFRICAN MUSIC

In commercial music, we may find the men dominating the popular music scene, not because of any restriction, but perhaps interest. In the traditional African society, however, women reserve rights to participate in, and possibly dominate the scene. Meki Nzewi (1991: 135-136) intimates that some proverbs and adages are pointers to their philosophical thought about music e.g. 'a woman is never too old to demonstrate a dance she excels in...We also discern from the preference for the female sex in the proverb that dancing is an art which better suits women, and in which they are better appreciated than men'. Okafor (2005: 75) argues that in: 'the festival of the coco-yam, Ogaleté, women take the principal parts, preparing the main dish with coco-yam, making the important offerings, dominating the public ceremonies with songs and dances. He argues that: 'All the sounds, rhythms and features of the festival underline the place of women in Igbo society, especially in the realms of family, economy and parts of customary law'.

In Okpe culture, all the dance genres such as *ijurhi* dance, *egboto* dance and *akamagwe* dance are feminine. They are described as dances of young ladies. The involvement of few male performers in such groups may be only in the area of beating the musical instruments, with only two to four male dancers

participating in order to create little sex-mix and enhance discipline amongst participants. Idamoyibo (1998) intimates that in burial ceremonies in the Okpe culture, the men perform seven *ema* songs around the deceased and the catafalque, then hand over to the women group called *egboto uhuerimi* to perform around the corpse although the night. At dawn the body is interred and the women converge at the room where the elder was buried to perform music although the night for seven days.

Okafor (2005: 75) reminds us of initiation music often dedicated to puberty initiation ceremonies for young girls in Africa. He mentions the Efik, Ibibio, Ijo (Ijaw) and Igbo cultures noted for this. Sam Akpabot (1975) and Gehard Kubik (1987) have also written similar accounts of the Ibibio of Nigeria in West Africa and the people of Malawi in Central Africa respectively. E. A Wilkie (www.stclements.edu) writes that the Okpe of Delta State perform FGM (female genital mutilation) as a rite of passage for their young female between ages 12, 16, 21 and above. In Okpe, as in the other cultures cited above, when a young lady is marriageable or betrothed, she is circumcised and allocated to a room for a period of two to three months. Akpabot (1975) refers to this as 'fattening room', indicating that the circumcised lady is greatly nourished to the extent that she becomes robust, though the aim of the rite is not for the fatness.

During the rite, young girls in the neighbourhood voluntarily, though with due permission from their parents, leave their homes to live with the *Opha* (circumcised lady) as *ikopha* (attendants). The *opha* and *ikopha* dress in decorated attires and apply *ohwarha* or *ukpamara* red substance from can wood on their bodies. The attendants run errands as well as assist her and her mother both at home and in the farm throughout the period. Many neighbours come to visit the maid to provide her various forms of assistance and entertainment from time to time. Customarily, young and old people of both sexes converge at her room to provide amusement through folktales and concomitant songs for some hours every night till the period is over.

GENDER CONCEPTS AND REPRESENTATIONS IN AFRICAN MUSIC

Some writers use terms such as the following to discuss African drums: James O'Brien (1994: 308) mother drum (*uta* of the Ibibio of Nigeria); John Chernoff (1979: 43, 50) master drum; Elizabeth Oehrle (1993: 116) talking drum; Nzewi (2003:31) and Elizabeth Oehrle and Lawrence Emeka (2003: 42) master instrument. Others include: *Music of Sub-Saharan Africa* www.sinc.sunvsb.edu (2005 [author's names not in the article]) referring to *iya ilu* "mother drum", *omele ako* small "male drum", and *omele abo* small "female drum". The above terms refer to concepts of gender relationships, representative of the family.

In *Okpe* igoru music, for instance, the three drums of the ensemble are named 'mother ukiri' (*izu-ukiri*), 'baby ukiri' (*omo-ukiri*) and 'varied ukiri' (*ukiri evwarien*). Although the variant drum plays more varied melo-rhythmic patterns,

the mother drum is considered the most fundamental foreground, and thus lays the fundamental layer for the other two to build upon. To consider the roles of the varied drum, and the mother drum, one might begin to consider which of them could be called the master instrument. Although the varied *ukiri* has more variations than the mother *ukiri*, it is difficult to distinguish the most dominant among the two in the ensemble. While the varied *ukiri* seems to dominate in melo-rhythmic variations, the mother *ukiri* dominates in its deep tonal character. The concept of a master in gender relationships is often masculine, but since *igoru* musicians conceive the drums together as feminine and do not refer to either of them as “master or father drum”, we consider the roles of the mother drum very important.

In every home, for instance, we have the father who may also be referred to as the master, the mother and the babies (their children). In the local languages of Africa we find several cultures naming their drums basically as mother and baby i.e. there are only two fundamental representations of the family, the mother drums, baby drums and others that are named variously. In some African societies, the mother drum is same as the master drum. There is no culture in Africa where any drum is named as “father drum”, but we find mother drum and baby drum predominantly. This suggests that the concept of music is generally feminine. If we draw allusion to the Greece mythology where the muses, the nine daughters of the god, Zeus are regarded as the inspirers of music and the arts, it becomes clearer that music has feminine orientation.

RESTRICTION, PROTECTION AND IMPLICATION

According to Idamoyibo (2005), two *Igoru* female ensemble leaders, Amukeye Okodide and Titi Qvren confirmed that their ensembles comprise only female members (performers), but included male drummers for the reason that in Okpe women are not allowed to beat drums. The women in Okpe neither consider the restriction as a sort of evil, nor contend it, perhaps because they have deep understanding of its implications. The name and records of the *Egboto isinio Igoru* ensemble provide more evidence.

Egboto means ladies or young women and all the singers including the lead vocalist are female with only one male voice functioning as the coordinator/facilitator that introduces the names and pieces of the ensemble and sings the lower part in harmony. The drummers were also men. The first all-female Guinean percussion group, *Amazones* (Women Master Drummers) of Guinea was officially created in 2002 by reason of modernism (lespercussionsdeguinee.com [Internet: author's names not in the article]). Although the article did not inform us about the reasons why until 2002 the women in Guinea could not have an all-female ensemble that have women master drummers, or why they needed political power of government to be able to establish one, there is indication that certain restrictions would have been there in the culture from the past.

Okafor (2005: 81-83) argues that certain musical instruments are favourites of women performing groups in the Igbo culture. He remarks that women do not play the flute (*oja*) and xylophone (*ngedegwu*), but recently he found women playing flutes and big membrane drums at Awgbu (Aguata LGA); concluding that favourite instruments for Igbo women are therefore those easy to play. This brings us to the theory of protection in African taboos. A time in traditional African cultures, taboos are meant to enforce restraints, in order to enhance protection. Unfortunately, due to European orientation and hegemonic constructions in gender issues, African taboos and restrictions for the female are erroneously seen as oppression and discrimination.

For instance, when our forefathers restricted women from being close or from participating in some rituals and ritual music, or from playing some musical instruments, it is not for evil but for protection. It is for the fact that women are specially created with certain spiritual powers to procreate and to defy; thus her touch in any form is capable of defying the potency certain traditional medicine, particularly when she is in her period. Most musical-rituals that men perform are intended to protect the family and the entire community from impending danger. If restricting the woman would ensure the efficacy of the protective devices, thereby protect the family it is therefore no evil.

In Okpe, when women are restricted from beating the drums, it is to protect the female and the family from certain embarrassment. Although we argued somewhere in this discourse that music is a mother-producer, therefore certain Okpe theory provides a rule that the woman being a mother-producer, must not strike the drums that produce music, the restriction also considers protection for the woman. The woman's body system does not require great shaking, striking or vibration that would have strong impact on the buttocks. Any traumatic shock, stroke or vibration that pulls strong impact on that region of her body is capable of generating premature menstruation and the occurrence of sudden flow unprepared for at a public place would lead to very great embarrassment.

Besides, the Okpe science proves that irregular mating, particularly when a married woman sleeps with another man, the blood of the strange man is capable of changing the regularity of her circle. Peradventure a young married woman has sudden irregular flow, she could therefore become a suspect of flirtation and this will not only create embarrassment for the woman and the family, but great confusion also in the marriage institution. In *ijurhi* music for instance, the master drummer lays three drums together and sits upon them to beat and stroke the drumheads and this could generate vibrations into the body of the female player, thus lead to the above experience sooner or later.

MUSIC, A MOTHER?

Music of Sub-Saharan Africa (www.sinc.sunysb.edu 2005 [author's names not in the article]) discusses *fontomfrom*, (royal) drum ensemble of Akan communities and *bata* drums ensemble of the Benin Yoruba. For the former, the double bell

(*gankogui*), a second metal gong (*atoke*), the calabash rattle (*axatse*), and a higher-pitched drum (*kaganu*), provide the basic rhythmic reference for the others and the larger drums (*sogo*, *kidi*, and *gboba*) interlock with the *kaganu* to create a dense, four-part texture and all respond to the calls of the master drum, *atsimevu* (spelt this way in original), which enters last. Bata drums, of the latter ensemble, comprise two small ones called *omele ako* and *omele abo* that are played with sticks, and a somewhat larger one, called *eki*, that is played with the hands. Of these, the larger one, called *iya ilu* (“mother” drum), serves as the master drum of the ensemble, and interacts most closely with the smaller horizontal one, called *ako*. This reinforces our earlier argument that if the mother drum, as it is in some African cultures is same as the master drum, then the whole idea of gender in music is that it is a mother who plays some form of leadership roles in musical ensembles.

The *Ngoma*, a drum from Uganda is reported to have played very important roles in the lives of the people in communication and celebration even as a symbol of authority to the extent that an ethnic group in Uganda is called the “children of *Ngoma*” (*Discover the Ngoma drum, East African drums, Engoma: Learn to play Ngoma King of the drums, East African drums* [author’s names not in the article] www.experienceafrica.co.uk last updated on 1/12/2004). The concept of the drum *ngoma*, in this writing, though may have some mythical connections, the reference to an ethnic group as children of the drum again suggest that the concept of music is feminine, since it is the woman who gives birth, though the man possesses her and the children

In *Igoru* music, as in several African cultures, the drum that has the deepest tones in the ensemble is called the mother drum (*izu-igede*). The concept derives from the philosophy that music is caring (motherly) for the general well being of the human soul. The drums, generally in the Okpe culture, as is also evident in several other African cultures, are considered sacred, being representative of the feminine gender and her invaluable productivity. This philosophical construct further includes certain restrictions that a “mother-producer” should not sit upon or strike other “mother-producers”.

The palm tree, in Okpe, is considered to be feminine and is referred to as a productive mother (*omiomọ*). For this cause, women are neither allowed to climb it, nor attempt to fell it by cutting it with strokes of the cutlass or axe and are not allowed to sit upon it when it falls. In the same way, women are not allowed to beat the drums in traditional Okpe culture; they could compose, sing and dance. In some of the other music genres like *Ijurhi* earlier cited, the master drummer sits on the drums to beat them and as the rule is, women are forbidden to sit upon or stroke the drums, because they are all mother-producers.

THE POSITION OF THE AUTHOR

The author grew in the Okpe community and observed that the restrictions of women from beating the drums do not really carry serious spiritual implications.

There had not been any occasion of any affliction on any woman from the spirits or from human for violating the rule. The author recalls that in the early 1980s a young lady from Okwovu Oduado beat the drums as a master instrumentalist for an *ijurhi* dance ensemble. In the late 1990s an all female Okpe Disco ensemble also emerged with the young ladies playing all the musical instruments, including the drums. In the above cases, the ladies who beat the drums did not suffer any afflictions. The restriction therefore is with respect to honour and protection of the woman. Honour in the sense that mother-producers need to honour and appreciate one another, and protection in the sense that the feminine physiological response of the woman's body is protected from any form of traumatic experience, the author argues. In the modern Okpe society, any woman who has flair for playing any musical instruments could therefore do so without any fear. As a matter of fact, mother-producers are in good position to explore the wonders imbedded in, and protect one another.

CONCLUSION

The paper argued that women in African societies are greatly involved in various musical practices. Africans encourage and appreciate the musical activities of women, particularly in singing and dancing and often depend on them for such roles. In a few cases of restriction for female participation in beating the drums, the writer argued that the restrictions are often for the benefit of the women, the family and society in general, in terms of protection. Even the women, particularly in Okpe, do not contend against the only restriction, because they do not find any evil in it; rather they have an understanding that the aim is to protect their interest. The paper examined several gender concepts in African music discourses and concluded that music is feminine and indeed a mother-producer, because it not only produce entertainment that enhances good health, it produces spiritual contacts that yield hope and life. Women in the contemporary Okpe society are therefore free to play any musical instrument they have flair for.

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YORÙBÁ PROVERBS AND MUSICALITY

Michael Olútáyò Olatúnjì, PhD

ABSTRACT

This paper attempted to examine some Yorùbá proverbs, and also, through analysis establish some links between the traditional Yorùbá instrumental music and instrumentation or performance with proverb. This was done in order to determine the level of the musical (lexical and cultural) contents of Yorùbá proverbs. A total of eleven Yorùbá proverbs that reflect either vocal or instrumental performance, the two media through which the sound dimension of music is performed, were collected, categorized and analysed according to their respective functionalities among members of this ethnic group. The result of the analyses of the five categories identified revealed that, among other things, Yorùbá proverbs could be used to emphasise the importance of collaboration of music with other performing arts, express relationship between the musical instrument combination and the concept of family co-existence, uphold the use of musical instruments as communicative and panegyric tool, and emphasize the universality of Yorùbá aesthetic value on speech and music.

INTRODUCTION

Just like in many other Nigerian ethnic groups, music is as vital to the Yorùbá people as the air is vital to life. As a matter of fact, music is used in almost everyday activities of the Yorùbá people, either individually or collectively. We make bold to say that music is a vital tool in the day-to-day living of a Yorùbá man. It can also be described as an indispensable tool needed by an individual for his/her corporate existence in his/her community from the cradle to the grave.

Although scholars have always emphasised two major functions of music among African peoples, that is, entertainment and information, yet the roles and uses of music among the same peoples are just too numerous to mention. Among the Yorùbá people, for example, music is used to educate (especially the young ones about almost all the facets of culture and traditions). It is used to praise, entertain, and communicate (both in the physical and metaphysical realms). Music is also used extensively in worship and, as therapy for the drudgery of routines or to identify the members of a particular occupation or association. Also, just like most ethnic groups in Nigeria, the two media through which the sound dimension of music is performed among the Yorùbá people are the musical instruments and the human voice.

However, there seems to be little or no clear-cut boundary between vocal and instrumental music in African culture. This is corroborated by Hornbostel (1928:62), who succinctly states that “African music is not conceived without dancing nor African rhythm without drumming, nor the forms of African song without antiphony”. In his analysis of the music performances of some repertoires from the people of the central Africa, Akpabot (1975:5), comes out with an assertion that

...in effect, the vocal performance was a song with words and the xylophonist's (instrumental) solo a song without words, and since the songs are derived from speech patterns, it is easy to see how the xylophone music could be used to transmit messages (Akpabot, 1975:6).

Therefore, any attempt to conceptualize or analyze any Yorùbá instrumental music purely as a musical sound would amount to belittling its functions. The reason for this is that words and music have to be viewed in one context in order to appreciate the totality of the musician's performance.

Apart from those who are found in the Kogi and Kwara states of Nigeria as well as in some parts of the Republic of Benin, the largest concentration of the Yorùbá people is found in the Southwestern geo-political zone of Nigeria. This geographical region covers both the African forest and Savannah zones of the West African sub-region. This is mainly responsible for the inequalities in the distributions of the above-named categories of musical instruments among the Yorùbá people. While there is an avalanche of both the membranophonic and idiophonic instruments, as a result of the types of animals and trees found therein, the other two categories (that is, the chordophones and aerophones) are almost scarcely represented. However, these last two categories are usually found both in negligible quantities and, in most cases, they are sparsely distributed among some certain Yorùbá sub-groups.

In his argument on why most black African people have no precise noun for music, Francis Bebey (1975:12) asserts *inter alia* that the art of music is so inherent in black African people that it becomes almost superfluous to have a particular noun for it. However, this does not disprove the fact that most African cultures have words to define specific forms such as song, chant, and dance. In the light of this argument, although the Yorùbá word *eré* could be used for music, it has a wider meaning to cover all aspects of entertainment, which include drama, poetry, masking, and dance. In the contrary, some scholars have tried to device or coin some words to represent music. Some of these coinages include *ilù àt'orin*, which literally means drumming and singing, *t'ilù-t'ifo* (meaning drumming and blowing), and so forth. The inadequacies of all these coinages are just too obvious.

This study partially agrees with Bebey's line of argument of non-availability of definite noun to define among ethnic groups in Africa with regard to the concept of music among the Yorùbá people. However, we will like to tow another line of argument here that the almost over-distribution of membranophones is, to a large extent, responsible for the usage of the generic terminology *ìlù* (drum) for most performances of music and *lù* (beat), which, in most cases is used as the verb "play" among the Yorùbá people. Therefore, this argument becomes the framework upon which the combination of the structure, design, and approach used in this study is anchored.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AND INSTRUMENTATION IN YORÙBÁ PROVERBS

The proverb could be defined as a varied oral literary form of expression. It could also be in the form of aphorisms, wise sayings, and axioms. Therefore, it is not out of place to assert that the cumulative realism of daily experiences is expressed through proverbs. Yorùbá proverbs are usually made of short sentences, loaded with deep words of wisdom, and borne out of the experiences of the elders in the society. Hidden in these short sentences are deep meanings, which demand some knowledge of the oral tradition to decode and comprehend. Suffice it to say that Yorùbá proverbs can be mono-clausal, bi-clausal or multi-clausal in structure. Among other things, proverbs are used to facilitate an easy comprehension of the cogent points and ideas in a speech.

Most Yorùbá proverbs are predicated on the past experiences of the elders with regard to the relationships between friends, husbands and wives as well as between parents and children. Some proverbs also reflect the lives and behavioral patterns among animals such as mammals, birds, fishes and insects. Some others are derived from folk tales and oracle verses (*eṣe ifá*). This experiential concept of proverbs is held with high esteem among the Yorùbá to the extent that proverbs are generally believed to be the elders' properties. As a matter of fact, it is believed that despite the high level of wisdom or intelligence that a young person may possess – even if he is at the same level of wisdom with an elderly person – his experiences cannot match those of the elders'. This is reflected in the Yorùbá proverb that says:

Bómo dé bá lásó bí àgbà
Kò lè lákùsà bí àgbà.

Even though a young lad has the same number of "clothes" as an elderly person, The number of his "rags" will not be as many as those of the elderly man.

Here, the use of both clothes and rags is symbolic: while the former represents intelligence, the latter stands for experience. And, the Yorùbá strongly believe that experience is superior to intelligence. As a matter of fact, experience is considered as the “elder brother” of intelligence.

Be that as it may, whenever any young person is identified to be very vast in the use of proverbs, he is usually accorded with respect by both old and young members of his family and community at large. However, it is considered a great insult and an act of disrespect for a young person to use proverbs in his speech without paying homage to the elders. The homage may come either before or after a proverb or a chain of proverbs is said. If a person chooses to pay homage before saying any proverb, he will start with a short phrase like:

Èyìn àgbàlagbà le máa n so pé...

It is you elders that do say that...

In a situation where the speaker considers himself being among the oldest people in that particular gathering, he is still expected to pay homage to the fore-fathers by saying:

Àwọn baba wa ni wó máa n so wípé...

Our fathers would always say that...

When the homage comes after the proverb(s), the speaker can say:

Kí òwe jé ti èyìn àgbà o

You elders, proverbs are your properties

Or he may choose to say:

Tótó, ó sè bí òwe o

I pay homage for using proverbs

Or

N kò tó òwe pa níwájú èyìn àgbà o

You elders, I'm not worthy to use proverbs in your presence.

Tradition demands that the elders around to acknowledge the speaker's homage by saying:

Wà á pa òmíràn/Wà á rí òmíràn pa.

You will have another opportunity.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

From the foregoing, this paper therefore attempts to examine some Yorùbá proverbs, and also through analysis, establish some links between the traditional Yorùbá instrumental music and instrumentation or performance with proverbs. We shall begin this segment of the present study with an analysis of a proverb that reflects the Yorùbá concept of performance of music, which in most cases include dancing:

- (i) *Ìròmi tí n jó lójú omi,*
Onílù rè ò wà nísàlè ò odò.

A water insect that dances on the water surface,
has its musicians located at the river bed.

This proverb substantiates Hornbostel's claim, which is corroborated by Akpabot that there's strictly no absolute music. Rather, in most cases, the ensemble performance of music is usually accompanied with dancing, and sometimes singing. However, the use of the singular noun for the drummer in the Yorùbá text does not suggest a solo performance. As a matter of fact, this proverb emphasises the fact that a musical group is identified and called by the name of its leader. Hence, we hear such statements as "we are inviting Odòlayé Àrè ò mú to come and perform" or "Ògúndáre Fó ò yánmú played for them last week".

The proverb in (i) above is used on an occasion when someone, who, ordinarily could not achieve any feat on his own, is boasting or challenging a more powerful fellow into a duel just because he has a support somewhere. In most cases, the powerful person or a group who sponsors the "weak" fellow is un-identified or hidden to the general public except the person who is being sponsored.

The next set of four proverbs reflects the relationship between the combination of Yorùbá musical instrument for performance (instrumentation) and the concept of family co-existence.

- (ii) *Akorin-ì-ní-elégbè, bí e ò ní tí n jó àsán kan ilù ní ó rí.*

A singer without people to chorus in response
is like somebody who dances to a single drum (Dáramó ò lá 2004:30).

Musically speaking, it is a fact that the summation of divergent sonorities of various instruments often culminate in a unique "orchestra colour" of any instrumental ensemble among the Yorùbá people. It is also a fact that the co-ordination of a multilateral rhythmic *ostinati* and improvisation often produce a

complex resultant, which leads, guides, and guards the dancer's steps during performance.

This proverb brings into focus the Yorùbá concept of instrumentation during performance, which, on many occasions include dancing. It is believed that no single drum is capable of providing a complete focus or direction for the dancer. According to Dáramóṣí, "during performance, one drum means nothing without the others". Hence, this described as a reflection of the concept of *eṣí* or *àjòṣí* (family) among the Yorùbá people. Suffice it to say that collective responsibility forms the basis for co-existence among members of any family. Therefore, the proverb is used to encourage team-work among members of a family or community. It is also used to promote the concept of division of labour as well as leadership and followership among members.

(iii) *Bílù bá pé igba, agogo ni í borí woṣun.*

In the midst of several drums, the sound of *Agogo* is very prominently audible.

Agogo, a metallic gong has a high carrying power, which is considered even stronger than the combination of that of the other drums in an ensemble. This is so because of its strong numerous amount of overtones. This proverb emphasises the concept of leadership and followership in any Yorùbá community life. It also signifies the concept of division of labour, which is very vital for a mutual co-existence among members of a community.

(iv) *Orí alu-oṣóṣun kì í gún*

Eṣè alu-ìyá-ìlù kì í tólè.

The head of an *Oṣóṣun* player is always bowed,

The legs of a (*dùndún*) master drummer are always crooked.

This proverb reveals the effects of both the age difference and differences in areas of concentration between the players of the two instruments mentioned above. It is believed that playing in a *Dùndún* ensemble starts from the *Oṣóṣun*, which is also known as *Gúdúgúdú*. This vividly reflects the different priorities and interests between a mother and her child (*ìyá n ronú, oṣóṣun n rokà*). Therefore, in most cases, the youngest and the least experienced drummer plays the *Oṣóṣun*. As a matter of fact, an *Oṣóṣun* player is always placed in front of the master drummer or any other highly experienced drummer of the group who constantly corrects the former anytime he misses his rhythmic lines. This correction is effected by striking him on the head with the beater (*Kòṣogó*).

This hideous task of maintaining a faultless rhythmic ostinato is responsible for the *Oṣóṣun* player to constantly keep his eyes on the membrane surface of his drum. To exacerbate his dilemma, this surface is demarcated into two parts (to

produce two separate pitches) by a wax. Therefore, in keeping his eyes on the membrane, the *Oṣopón* player's head is constantly bowed down almost throughout the period of performance. On the other hand, the master-drummer is the one saddled with the responsibility of reciting poetry (*oríkì* or *oríkì-orílẹ̀*) of individuals or community, respectively. This task demands him to pull the tensioning thongs (*osán*) surrounding his drums more often. It also requires the support of his legs in order to achieve "a perfect voice of the drum". In trying to achieve all these, the master-drummer's legs, apart from being constantly on the move, always assume a limping position.

However, just as the above argument is true when thinking along the line of ensemble performance, we also need to state here that, among the Yorùbá people, some occasions do call for the performance of a solo instrument. But, we need to make it succinctly clear that the latter occasions do not call for dancing. This is similar to some occasions when a poet specialist in any of the chant modes of the Yorùbá (*ìjálá*, *ìyèrè-ifá*, *èsà*, *ràrà*, and *ekún-iyàwó*) performs *a capella* in praise of a member or a group of people in the society. In the like manner, an instrumentalist can play any on any instrument that is capable of being used as speech surrogate to render a solo performance. This can be in the form of recitation of people's *oríkì* (praise or genealogy) or to convey signals and messages to a group of individuals or the entire members of the community and even to some neighbouring villages. Among the Yorùbá, only instruments in three categories (idiophones, membranophones, and chordophones) are capable of playing this communicative role. Common examples include the village or town crier's gong (*Agogo*), the *Ògìdìgbó* (war) drum, and *Ekùtù* (a kind of flute found mostly among the hunters). For acoustic reasons, the chordophone, despite its dearth among the Yorùbá people, may not be fit for this crucial role of an open-air transmission of signals and messages which, most often requires a high level carrying power to cover a radius of several kilometres.

The next set of three proverbs under consideration deals with the Yorùbá concept of using a musical instrument either as communicative or panegyric tool.

(v) *Ajá tí yóó so nù, kì í gbó fèrè o de*.

A dog that is bound to get lost will not hearken to the hunter's signal.

When hunting for games, hunters do communicate with one another or with their dogs either by whistling or by playing the *Ekùtù*, an aerophonic instrument. It is believed that any trained hunter or dog should be capable of discerning the meaning of any call or signal conveyed at such a time. But should a dog get carried away by pursuing a game when a signal is transmitted to end the endeavour and for every hunter and dog to come together to return home, such a

dog will eventually miss its way in the bush and will not be able to find its track back home anymore.

This proverb is used when someone is identified as taking a wrong step in dealing with an issue. Tradition demands that such a member should be warned severally by other members of the family or the entire community, especially the elders, who are the carriers of culture. But in a situation where the person is still trying to prove stubborn, in spite of all the efforts of other members, he/she should be responsible for an imminent calamity that is bound to befall him/her afterwards.

(vi) *Olè tó gbé kàkàkí oṣṣa,
níbo ni yóó gbé fón óṣṣn?*

The thief that steals the king's bugle

Where is he going to blow it? (Dáramóṣṣlá 2004: 32)

Kàkàkí, a long valveless fanfare trumpet, probably a borrowed instrument from the Hausa/Fulani musical culture, has now formed part of some Yorùbá Oṣṣas' (kings') paraphernalia, especially the traditional rulers of the Òṣṣyóṣṣ-Yorùbá descent. Because of the royal dignity, which this instrument carries, it will be a hideous task for anyone who steals it to play it either for himself or for another person who is not an Oṣṣa. The implication here is that the instrument is useless if it is not played for an Oṣṣa. This proverb is used to discourage anyone who is trying to get something or has aspiration for a position which, ordinarily, he/she is not entitled to. According to Dáramóṣṣlá, the proverb is also used "as a warrant for people to desist from embarking on unprofitable ventures" because "the gold is not useful for the pigs".

(vii) *Bí òwe bí òwe là n lùlù ògìdìgbó,*

Oṣṣlólóṣṣgbóṣṣn ní í jó o

Òṣṣmòṣṣràn ní í mòṣṣ óṣṣn.

Ògìdìgbó drum is cryptically played like a proverb

It is wise men that dance to it

It is informed men that discern it (Oṣṣlátúnjí, 1984:170)

Ògìdìgbó is a drum of war, which is played to send signals and calls to the warriors at the battleground. The ability of any warrior to discern or decode the meaning of the signals of this instrument is very vital to his tactical approach and maneuvers in warfare. This proverb brings into focus the importance of interjecting conversations with proverbs among the Yorùbá people. It is also used to warn the audience to be very attentive and calculative in order to get the import of the conversation. It is therefore implied that those who are versed in proverbs are usually endowed with wisdom and understanding, especially in verbal communications (Dáramóṣṣlá 2004:29).

The next two Yorùbá proverbs, although have the same meaning and implications, are presented differently. While the first one represents the usual or direct way of presenting the proverb in the speech by an average Yorùbá person, the second one has a connotation of some level of embellishments or vocal aesthetics – as discussed earlier in this study. As a matter of fact, the three aesthetic elements (puns, heteronyms, and onomatopoeias) utilized in Yoruba poetry are present in the second proverb.

(viii) *Tí Bàtá bá n dún ládùúnjù,
Yíya ní í ya.*

When a *Bàtá* drum is played continuously at its highest pitch,
The breakage of its membrane is imminent.

(ix) *Tó bá ti pé□ tí Bàtá tí n pelá, tí n pelá,
Ó ti s□etán tí yóó pe gbè□gìrì.*

When a *Bàtá* is calling *ilá* for too long a time,
Very soon it will call *gbè□gìrì*.

Ilá (okro) is one of the draw-soups (*o□bè□é□yò□*) in Yorùbá delicacies. One of the characteristics of any *obeeyo* is to facilitate a smooth transference of morsels or lumps of principal foods (such as *iyán*, *è□bà*, *àmàlà* and *fufú*) from the buccal cavity through the oesophagus to the stomach for easy digestion by the appropriate enzymes in the body. Also, there seems to be an interesting gymnastic display of the hand after scooping the *obeeyo* with the morsel of the food. Although *gbè□gìrì* (beans) soup could also go along with any of the foods mentioned above, the movement would not be as smooth as that of *o□bè□é□yò□*. Moreso, the characteristic gymnastic display of “wrapping” the morsel with the soup will be lacking.

The Yoruba believe that Bata drum, as well as some other drum ensembles such as *Gbè□du* and *Ògìdìgbó* are limited in acting as speech surrogate when compared with some other instruments such as *Dùndún*. As a matter of fact, the Yorùbá usually refer to *Bàtá* drum as *akólòlò* (stammerer) because no member of the *Bàtá* ensemble is capable of saying a complete sentence accurately. However, this limitation is a result of the technological design of the instrument. The construction of *Bàtá* is different from that of *Dùndún*, which is built in such a way that pressure is exerted on the thongs (*o□sán*) to increase the tension of the membrane and thus raising the pitch of the drum note. But *Bàtá*'s “tensioning thongs” are bound in to the body of the drum by further leather straps, thus giving each of the two membranes both a constant tension and a note of the fixed pitch (King 1961: 2). Therefore, in order to cover this lapses, the hocket technique is employed by *Bàtá* players whereby the syllables in a sentence are shared

appropriately among the members of the ensemble. The expertise to do this is gained through the oral tradition of drum playing.

Yorùbá orthography identifies three major tone marks namely, the low (usually called *doh* and represented by \, the middle tone (referred to as *re* and represented by -), and the high tone (referred to as *me* and represented by /). These are, invariably, the first three pitches of a major scale of solfa notation in music. The limitation of *Bàtá* becomes glaring in its inability to sound or “pronounce” the low tone (*doh*) perfectly. Therefore, it stays on the two other pitches (*re* and *me*) most often. If we are careful enough to look critically at the construction of the sentence of the second proverb, we shall discover that, apart from the first syllable in *Bàtá* (which is assigned with the low tone) and the three syllables of *gbè-gìrì* (beans soup), which symbolise the sound of a broken membrane of the drum, every other syllable depicts the *Bàtá* sound mentioned above, that is, an interchange of both the middle (*re*) and the high (*me*) tones. Also, the repetition of the phrase, *tí n pelá* is a reflection of the African (and indeed Yorùbá) musical concept of utilizing *ostinati* in a bid to construct a virile multilinear rhythmic and melodic phrase.

The argument here can be approached musically and aesthetically. Musically speaking, the sound dimension is often given much prominence in any discourse of music. As a matter of fact, one of the several definitions of music is that “it is a play with sound”. But music is not an all-sound endeavour. Rather, music is a combination of both sound and silence. Any student of Rudiment of Music knows that, in terms of value, a note (the symbol used to represent sound) has a corresponding rest (the symbol used to represent silence), with which it shares the same value. Therefore, just as a no-sound endeavour is not music, so also will an all-sound endeavour be inconceivable and artistically deficient.

The aesthetic judgement of any Yorùbá traditional music is predicated on two major criteria namely, fidelity to (oral) tradition and improvisation. A situation where one of these criteria is absent will result in either “a good music but bad performance” or vice versa. Therefore, when a *Bàtá* player decides to go for either an all-sound endeavour, which, by implication, means sticking to the traditional (*po-nlá po-nlá* or *pelá pelá*) sound of *Bàtá* in a continuous rapidity, there is bound to be a rise in temperature on the surface of the membrane which will eventually lead to its breakage.

This proverb is always used to check excesses and over-doing of things and simultaneously to encourage and promote moderation in any human endeavour. It is also used to warn any individual or a group of individuals against oppressive and tyrannical tendencies, the end result of which is believed to portend self-destruction or extinction.

The last set of two proverbs strongly emphasises the Yoruba concept of mutual co-existence within a nuclear or extended family setting as well as among other members of the community.

(x) *Sṣèkèrè kò sṣe é fò pá lù,*
Jagunjagun kò sṣe é fo ba mú.

Just as *Sṣèkèrè* is not played with a wand,
a war commander cannot be forcefully arrested.

Sṣèkèrè, a gourd rattle musical instrument of the Yorùbá people, is played by shaking the instrument or by beating it with one hand while holding it with the other. Since it is made of gourd, surrounded by nets of beads, any attempt to beat it with a strong object such as a wand or metallic object will result into the breakage of the gourd and the beads. The implication is that this will result into a disharmony in the peaceful co-existence between the gourd and the beads surrounding it. In the same manner, any attempt to forcefully arrest a war commander will lead to chaos or pandemonium and, sometimes anarchy in the community. The reason for this is that, unless there is a breakdown of law and order, no warrior will obey any order to arrest his commander. Even if it so happens that the warriors' camp has been polarised, which most often leads to factionalisation, an outbreak of civil war is very eminent if the commander will be captured and arrested.

This proverb is used to discourage those who are trying to embark on missions or tasks that the society believes to be impossible. It is also used to discourage a misplacement of priority by any individual or group. However, the proverb could be used to encourage people to have respect for those in positions of authority to ensure a continuous harmonious co-existence among members.

(xi) *Ò tá n lùlù ibàjé*
O ló run o ba ni kò jé kó dún.

The enemy is always playing a derogatory music,
It is the Almighty God that dissipates the sound.

This proverb is used mostly to address colleagues and counterparts that are fond of running other people down or damage someone else's character. This kind of people are sometimes referred to as "friends like enemies" (*ò ré bí ò tá*) or "enemies like friends" (*ò tá bí ò ré*). The text of the proverb makes it emphatically clear that blackmail and deformation of character by detractors or opponents, who always choose to be faceless or anonymous, the target of their negative endeavours will always prove abortive, if one depends on the stronger power of God. This also emphasises the belief of the Yorùbá people in the

supernatural ability of the Almighty God, the creator of the universe, to save and deliver the just from the hands of oppressors.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to analyse some Yorùbá proverbs that are predicated on either the functionalities or combination of musical instruments. The study has been able to assert that the Yorùbá concept of nuclear family structure which comprises the parents and their children is strongly established in their instrumentation for most instrumental ensembles. This combination, among other things, is employed to guard and guide the dancers during any performance. The veracity of Akpabot's (1975:5) claim that to the Africans, there is no clear-cut boundary between an instrumental and a vocal music is also confirmed. This is predicated upon the fact that the medium of transmission notwithstanding, the raw material for music in the two media is song. While Yorùbá vocal music are songs with words, their instrumental counterparts are music without word.

It is also revealed that some Yorùbá proverbs may be presented in two forms, that is, either in a more direct or in an embellished form. Also, proverbs may be presented by an instrument either in an ensemble or as an instrumental solo performance. While the latter is almost an exclusive characteristic of most Yorùbá aerophones, only those membranophones that are capable of producing several pitches through tensioning can achieve this task. The generality of the membranophones depend heavily on the use of the technique of hocketing – a technique by which the syllables in a proverb are distributed among some or all the instruments in a particular ensemble.

We need to state here that very little amount of scholarship has been done so far as far as research on music and proverbs is concerned. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that more researches should be carried out in this area in order to enhance a rich scholarship in several other specialised areas of music.

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TIGO (NGAGA) DANCE OF THE LUO OF KENYA

Hellen O. Odwar, PhD

ABSTRACT

While there is some literature on the Luo people, their music and instruments, little has been written about the Luo dances. This paper describes *Tigo* (Ngaga) dance of the Luo of Kenya. Specifically the study describes the dance performance with a view to trace its origin, state its function and its present status among the Luo people. This study is based on personal interview with four informants of mature age. Two of them lived at the time the dance was preformed. The other two claimed to have seen the dance. Gendered musical practices and sheer entertainment are some of the features of the dance. The dance existed before beads were imported to Kenya. The dance is extinct due to several reasons but chief among them is Christianity that stopped some of the cultural practices as a sign of new life in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

The music of the Luo people employ a considerable number and variety of dances however, it appears that Luo dances have not attracted in-depth research. The few outstanding studies (Orawo, 1984, Zake, 1986; Omondi, 1980; Omolo_Ongati; 2005, Agak 2005) provide reference materials in the music of the Luo people in general although some of them mention dances in passing. For example Zake (1986:124) has attempted a description of five dances performed by Luo, which include *Okeng'o* (mixed courtship dance), *Yongo* (slow stepping dance), *Tigo* (dance of beads) *Otenga* (shoulder dance) and *Nyaga* (dance for old men) but in one page. Studies that have documented one or two specific Luo dances in detail are those by Agak (2005: 47) which described the *Dodo* dance and analyzed some of the songs that accompany the dance and Odwar (2006) that studied and reported *Ramogi* dance. The literature thus available on the music of the Luo provides evidence either of neglect or lack of research on the bead dance in particular. Consequently this study will specifically describe the bead dance with a view to trace its origin, its role and its current status among the Luo people. This study is based on personal interview with four informants.

WHO ARE THE LUO?

Luo are the second largest ethnic group in Kenya. They speak Dho-Luo as mother tongue. Historically, it is believed that they migrated into Kenya from Sudan following the river Nile into Uganda and finally to Kenya (Ochieng, 1985:17). For this reason they are referred to as Nilotics. History also records that the Luo are

cousins to Acholi, Padhola, Alur and Langi who camped in Uganda as they migrated and the Dinka, the Nuer, the Anywak and Shilluk settled in Southern Sudan (Ayieko, 2005). Other historical sources, however, attribute the origins of the Luo to a sacred place called Got Ramogi in Bondo area (Mogoke, 2002; East African Safaris, n,d). Got Ramogi is most likely the first place of their settlement on their arrival in Kenya. Accordingly, it has been refereed to as the pre-historic site of the origins of the Luo. According to Ayieko (2005) the Luo community and that of their cousins were headed by *Ker Ramogi Ajwanj* who was both the spiritual and community leader. The author further states that it is from *Ker Ramogi Ajwnag's* influence that the Luo refer to themselves as *nyikwa Ramogi* (grandchildren of Ramogi). The traditional attire of the Ker (who was and is always a man) is worth mentioning. He wore a got skin, and *wuor gagi* (traditional sandals decorated with beads) and *ligisa* (cape decorated with beads), a hand woven bag adorned with beads and sports; he also wore special clothing on his right hand (Ayieko, 2005)

In Kenya, the Luo are settled to the Northern shores of *nam kanyasoro* (lake Victoria) and are linked through centuries of migration with the Uganda and Tanzanian Luos. They are therefore lake dwellers. Fishing is their main occupation but they also practice agriculture and keep herds.

LUO AND THEIR MUSIC

The songs performed by the Luo people are varied and are categorized according to age, sex and occasion. They reflect societal life and are often accompanied by various dances and instruments. The Luo people perform songs and dances for several reasons: for entertainment. to educate, pass messages, praise, in reconciliation of marriages and to accompany all sorts of physical activities etc.

The common music instruments of the Luo people are *Nyatiti* (lyre), *Bul* (drum), *Tung* (horn) *Abu* (trumpet) now extinct and *Orutu* (single string fiddle). It is believed that *Orutu* was borrowed from the neighboring Bantu tribes. Wentz (1994:29) states that the Luo probably borrowed the instrument from the neighboring peoples only in the last century. The lyre on the other hand has it origins in Egypt. The instrument is named among the Jews who use to accompany their songs with it when they served as slaves in Egypt. Thus the groups of people that migrated following the Nile river most likely brought it along with them as they migrated.

The dances performed by the Luo people include most categories i.e. those that accentuate the upper part of the body, those that accentuate the lower part of the body, those that involve the whole body, those with intricate foot work (Nketia 1988:206). The dance that accentuates the upper part of the body may consist of rotation or upward and downward movements of the shoulder or expansion of the chest, along with certain arm movements and contraction and release of the shoulders. We will now describe Tigo, one of the traditional dances preformed by the Luo. The dance involves the movement of body waist and neck

TIGO (NGAGA) DANCE

The word *Tigo* is a Luo word which means beads. It has become clear from the two informants that Tigo dance is the same as Ngaga dance. Zake's information about these dances is therefore falls because he presents them as two separate dances. Perhaps he got his information from modern dancers who do not have the real information about the dances. His information about the beads dance is similar to the information given by one of the informants who claimed to have seen the dance performed after independence 1963.. This leaves a lot to be desired about the information Zake has in his book "Folk Music of Kenya".

It is not clear how *Tigo* was introduced into the Luo community, however the use of *Tigo* is known in the community. For example the costume of the Luo *ker* Ramogi Ajwang and his stool (*kom*) was decorated with *Tigo*. Three informants Auma (personal interview Dec, 2006), Ajuoga (personal interview, March 2007), and Onyango (personal interview, May 007), say that *Tigo* was brought to Kenya by the Arab traders.

Onyango (Personal interview, May 007) alluded that *Ngaga* dance was in existence before the coming of *Tigo*. He said that the Luo people used to use seeds like *Obulu* (reddish black eyed seed) or stones in the performance of the dance. They would take the seeds, make a hole through them then join them together using sisal fibre. Similarly they would smoothen stones and bore them then join them using sisal fiber. These were replaced by beads because the beads had a natural bore. This practice could also apply to the women *Salo* dance since women later own bought and wore beads around their waists and necks as fashion.

According to Obara (personal interview June 007) *Tigo* dance is synonymous with *miend Ngaga*, This dance was performed by men alone. These were elderly men of 50 years of age and above. This is corroborated by Onyango (personal interview May 007). Onyango however seems to say that the dance was for both men and women. This however could come from him confusing the two because of his age, and that fact that these dances were performed in the same arena next to each other on the same occasion though of different age sets and different genders as we shall see later. Ajuoga (personal interview March 2007) remembers to have seen the dance performed after independence 1963 by women only. Because this is a later period in time, he could have seen the adulterated form of the dance perhaps similar to *Dodo* because at this time *Ngaga* could have died out due to Christianity and since women still used *Tigo* as a fashion around their waists and necks, he could have presumed that they performed the *Tigo* dance when it was the *Dodo* dance. Auma (personal interview Dec 2006) however has the conviction that the dance arose out of imitating the white man's metallic sounding articles found on his dress. The informant does not say whether it was performed by men or women or both.

Obara (personal interview June 007) denied the fact that the dance was done by women. He explained that the Luo men of 50 years and above use to have their ears pierced and a metal was folded and stuffed with beads then the metals were worn on the ears in the holes made. One ear could have as many as 12 of such holes fitted with the beaded folded metals. These metals were graded so that the longest ones was hanged from the bottom lobe. These men were said to have *chuoyo Ngaga* (meaning they are have ears pierced with the metals stuffed with the beads hanging on the ears) and therefore were the ones to participate in the dance called *Ngaga* or *Tigo*. This brass metal Obara continued to narrate, was cleaned using hen's fat. This left the metals shining. The cleaning was done by an elderly lady. The brass metals were brought from Tanzania where the Germans had earlier introduced them including the beads. *Ngaga* staid fixed on the ears of the old men who wore them until death. After death, the metals were removed from the ears by an old man for later use. A man who did not have *Ngaga* (mane ok ochuoo Ngaga) could not danced with the others having *Ngaga*. Such a man was referred to as *Ngoro* or *Bolo* meaning that he was afraid and could not have his ears pierced.

Miend Ngaga (Tigo dance) according to Obara (personal interview June 2007) was performed during funeral of an old honorable, well known man in the community to send him off with dignity. It was like a send of ceremony for the dead man. Onyango, (personal interview May 007) made it clearer that *Ngaga* was performed during *Tero buru* ceremony. This event comes most likely three (3 days) after the burial of an old man. The dance was performed for entertainment in this ceremony. Obara however explains that several other dances besides *Ngaga* were performed simultaneously in the same dance arena which was in the home stead of the dead man. These dances were, *Bodi* for the unmarried ladies, *Meind kuodi* (shield and spear dance) for the young men, and *Salo* dance for old women 50 years of age and above. Although these dances were performed in the same arena and the same time for the same purpose, each group or set of age and gender had their own distinctive dances. One group could not cross over to the other group. Occasionally, however, if a *Ngaga* dancer mentioned a name of a lady performing *Salo* dance, she could then move out of her dance group praise the man and go back to her group.

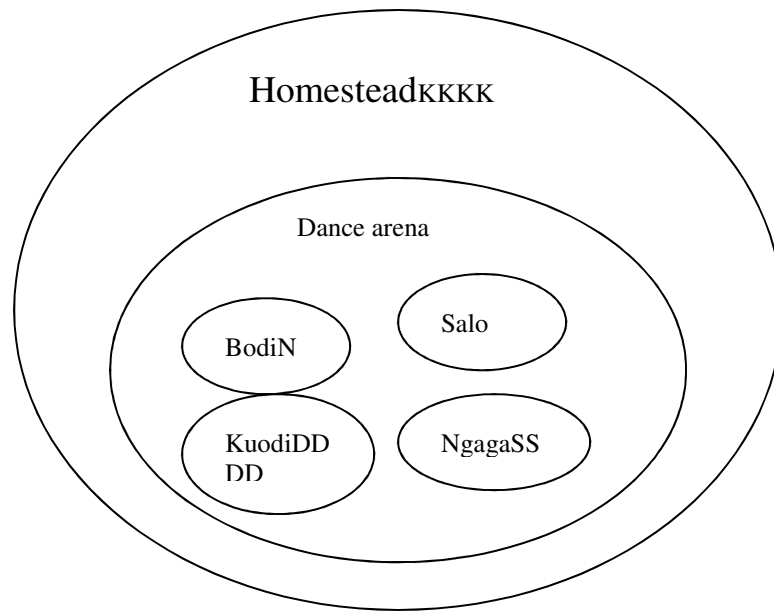


Figure 1 various dances at the homestead

Costumes worn by *jo Ngaga* (Ngaga dancers) were as follows: *Law nyadiel*. This was worn on the chest. They also wore *pein nyaroya mayom* (skin of a calf) in their waists, they also had coo's feathers shown on a rounded piece of cloth called *tach* and worn on the shoulders. The *Ngaga* dancers also used a dance stick *Okuaqjo* fitted with a metal at the bottom end which provided a steady beat as it was struck down in the time of the given song and dance. The dancers stood in a line but danced going round and foreword. The song leader who is a well-known singer stood in the middle of the dance team. The dance consisted of shaking of shoulders (*Otenga*), shaking of the heads involving shaking of the ears so that the beads heating the metals provided a percussive accompaniment. The dance was slow and graceful probably because of the age of the performers.

According to Obara (personal Interview June 007), costumes like *Ligisa* (a hat decorated with beads all round) for women and men and *Orengo* (fly whisk) could form part of the dance costumes; but they were not used by all dancers. *Ligisa* was worn by the rich and honorable people in the Luo community man or woman. This applied also to *Orengo* (flywhisk). The kind of *Orengo* used by such people was also specially made from Riwo not from cow's tail hair. If per chance such a person happened to be one of the dancers, then he wore his/her *Ligisa*. Similarly such a person would also be holding the flywhisk fixed on his arm by a string. Once in a while he would flap the fly whisk while performing the dance.

The songs that accompanied the dance were in call and response pattern according to Obara and Onyango (ibid). The songs dealt with various issues such as: Praising the community, praising an honored man, leisure, misfortunes in

community, funeral or sad moments and some were satirical. Some also praised of the Ngaga dancer for example

Ochieng woud Amollo ite leny e Ngaga
Ochieng the son of Amollo his ears shine in Ngaga

An example of satirical song is one rebuking *Nguru* or *Bolo*

Bolo Apiyo
The weak one Apiyo
Bolo idwaro ango
Weak one what do you want



Figure 2 Ligisa for women



Figure 3. Ligisa for men

(2). *Orengo* (flywhisk)



Figure 4 Orengo

(3). *Law nyadiel* (goats skin decorated with beads)



Figure 5 Law Nyadiel

CURRENT STATUS OF THE DANCE

Today, the dance is no longer performed in the Luo community. The reasons for this are several: First, is the conversion of most natives to Christianity which taught them to do away with traditional performances to embrace the Christian values and standards. Secondly, some of the favorite occasions for its performance was done away with when the government abolished the brewing of local beer; Thirdly, the dance was meant for mature aged women of 50 years who then were serving as house wives but with the coming of modernization and industrialization, both couples are now engaged in wage earning employment, in addition the village life has also crumbled with most people moving to town to seek jobs. Finally, young women who could get the training to continue with tradition were excluded from the dance hence there is now no person to continue with the tradition.

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FEMALE COURT MUSIC OF THE ALAAFIN OF OYO'S PALACE

John Ajewole, PhD

ABSTRACT

Court music occupies a significant place in traditional African classical music. This paper examines the female court musicians and their music in the palace of the Alaaфин of Oyo. The study highlights three prominent forms played by the female court musicians – Akinyungba, Apinti and Igba-titi. Apart from throwing light on the history of Oyo kingdom and the Alaaфин, revealed in this work is the musical role played by the eight titled ladies of the highest rank in the Alaaфин's palace. The analysis and discussion on the female court music centre on tonality, scales/modes, melodic structure; rhythm; harmony; form and text. The study points out various activities of the female court musicians in the Alaaфин's palace. The paper concludes that the three major categories of the female court musicians aim at the same goal of praising the Obas, the chiefs and some other people connected with the Alaaфин's palace. The study recommends that the female court music should be re contextualized and repackaged for public awareness and education.

INTRODUCTION

Court Music traditions in Nigeria are cultivated in the palaces of the Obas and the Emirs, the Alaaфин inclusive. The majority of musical expressions described by the early European explorers belong to the court tradition. In each society, court music traditions are customised by the court musicians who are employed as part of the entire court administration.

The people of Oyo together with other Yoruba communities trace their origin to Oduduwa and Ile – Ife. After the death of Oduduwa, his seven grand children, all Princes and Princesses scattered all over the place that later came to be known as western Nigeria and founded Yoruba Kingdoms.

The establishment of Oyo kingdom marked a turning point in Yoruba history in that Ile- Ife gave way political issues to Oyo but remained the ancestral and spiritual home of all the Yoruba .Oyo became the seat of government of the Yoruba people. Hence, it is sometimes called 'Yoruba Proper'. The Alaaфин is the supreme head of all the Kings and princes of the Yoruba nation, as he is the direct lineal descendant and successor of the reputed founder of the nation. The

succession to the throne is by election from among the members of the royal family. Alaafin is the first organ out of the four major organs that acted as checks on one another in the government of the Oyo Empire. Alaafin is a supreme king, he is not a dictator. He ruled according to the advice of the council of chiefs called the Oyomesi.

At present, the professional court musicians in the Alaafin's court fall into two major categories – the male court musicians and the female court musicians. This paper examines the female court musicians and highlights the three prominent musical forms played by them – Akunyangba, Apinti and Igba-titi. It is however important to first examine the importance of the female gender in the palace of the Alaafin of Oyo in order to appreciate the value of this study.

THE FEMALE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

The female gender of the Alaafin court consists of eight titled ladies of the highest rank, eight priestesses and other ladies of different ranks, besides Ìlàrí and the Ayaba or king's wives. All of them are often loosely referred to as "the king's wives", because they reside in the palace. The titled ladies and the priestesses at least do not belong to this category. The following are the ladies of the highest rank in their due order, according to Johnson (1960) Ìyá Oṣṣba, Ìyá kere, Ìyá-Naso, Ìyá-Monari, Ìyá-fin-Iku, Ìyálagbòṣṣn, Òṣṣrun-Kúméṣṣfun and Àrèṣṣ-orítéṣṣ.

The Ìyá-Oṣṣba

She is the King's (official) mother. The Aláàfin is not to have a natural mother. If his mother happens to be living when he is called to the throne, she is asked to "go and sleep", that is "die" and she would be decently buried in the house of a relative in the city. All the inmates of that house are accorded special privileges and enjoy marked defense as "members of the household of the king's mother".

The Aláàfin sends people to worship at her grave once a year. One of the ladies of the palace then assumes the position of Ìyá-Oṣṣba and she is supposed to act the part of a mother to him. It is her privilege to be the third person in the room when the king and the Basòṣṣrun worship the Òṣṣrun in the month of September every year. She is the feudal head of the Basòṣṣrun.

The Ìyá Keṣṣre

She is next to the King's mother, the Ìyá kere holds the highest rank. Greater defense is paid to the Ìyá Oṣṣba but the Ìyá kere wields the greatest power in the palace. She is in charge of the Aláàfin's treasures. The royal insignia are in her keeping, and all the paraphernalia used on state occasions. She has the power of

withholding them, and thus preventing the holding of any state receptions to mark her displeasure with the Aláàfin when she is offended. Ìyá kere is the person entitled to place the crown on the Aláàfin's head at the coronation. She is the "mother" of all the Ìlàrì's, for it is in her apartment they are usually created,

The Ìyá –Naso

She has to do with the worship of Sṣàngó generally and is responsible for anything connected with it. The Aláàfin's private chapel for Sṣàngó worship is in her apartment, and all the emoluments and perquisites arising from hers. She has to do the same at kòso.

The Ìyá-Mònàrì

She is the first Lieutenant and assistant to the Ìyá - Nasó. She is saddled with the responsibility of strangling any Sṣàngó worshipper condemned to capital punishment, as they are not to die by the sword, and hence cannot be executed by the Tetus.

The Ìyá-fin-Ikú

She is the second lieutenant and assistant to the Ìyá –Naso. She is the Aláàfin's "Adosu Sṣàngó", i.e the Aláàfin's priestess to the Sṣàngó mysteries. As all Sṣàngó worshippers are to devote one of their children to the worship of the god, she stands in place of that to the Aláàfin. She has the charge of the sacred ram which is allowed to go everywhere and about the market unmolested, and may eat with impunity anything from the sellers.

The Ìyálágboṣun

The mother of the crown prince is always promoted to the rank of Ìyálágboṣun. In case, she is not living, whoever is promoted to that office acts like a mother to him. She enjoys great influence, and controls a portion of the city.

The Òṣun- kúméṣun

The Òṣun- kúméṣun is connected with the Areṣmoṣ and performs all rituals that have to do with Aremo.

The Àrèṣi-Orító.

This official is the Aláàfin's personal attendant. She is to see that his meals are properly prepared, and his bed properly made, and also to see him comfortable in bed before retiring to her own apartment. Each of these eight ladies holding responsible positions is the head of a small compound within the palace walls.

As mentioned earlier, the three prominent musical forms played by the female court musicians are Akunyangba, Apinti and Igba-titi. We shall now take a look at them.

The Akùnyùngbà

The Akùnyùngbà play (the king's bards) is generally used to celebrate Ebo Àrèṣiṣiṣi. The Akùnyùngbà are instructed in Ìyámoṣeṣe apartments, their teacher comes there three times daily for three months or more until the learners are perfect in their studies. Corporal punishments, twisting of the ears, and knocks on the head are regular means of corrections on these occasions, especially if they are not quick at catching the words or when their memory fails them.

Apínṣí

Music is employed in singing the praise of the royalties and in the celebration of festive occasions. Among such music in the Aláàfin's palace is the Apínṣí music. Gáangan (1979) notes that,

The Apínṣí is of Ìgbìn family but unlike the Ìgbìn, the drummer's two hands are used in playing the instrument. The set of Apínṣí instrument consists of the Iya, one or two Omeles and one Agogo. The Apínṣí is suited for talking but it takes clever musical ear to hear and interpret its talk. When ever Apínṣí music is played, it talks in proverbs and other witty sayings.

Ayabas in the old Òṣoyó were fond of dancing to Apínṣí music. In those days women tied their head gears in a way to reach the waist to allow it swing as they dance to Apínṣí music. Here are few of its proverbial and witty sayings:

1. Ó d'èṣhìn ìgbín
Kátó fí karahun hà' kòkò,
Ó d'èṣhìn ìgbín.
(It is only after the snail is dead,
before its shell can be used to clean a cooking pot.
It is only after the snail is dead).

2. Ìwò□ la fi sàgbà – You have been made the head
 Ìwò□ l'a fi s□é – It is you alone
 Apásá b'ara lómú – You whose skin is smooth and glossy
 Ìwò□ l'afi s'àgbà – You have been made the head.
 Ìwò□ la'fi s□e é – It is you alone.
 Kútá-kútà kútá pin – Their efforts have been rendered futile
 Ò□nà d'órí Ò□pe□ pín – The road to the top of a palm-tree
 ends when one gets to the top.
 Àkókó dá rí pó□n – The wood-pecker wears a red cocks-
 comb and other birds in the bush are
 envious
 Túlàsì bé□e□ fé□, bé□è□ fé□ Túlàsì – Trouble is inevitable

Igbá-títí or Igbá Ayaba

This is a special music played by the consorts of the Alààfin of Òṣyó. Other Yorùbá rulers who are descendants of the Alààfin are privileged to use this kind of music during any of their important festivals. It is used till today in Òṣyó during the Alààfin's Beṣre festival and in Eṣde, during Tìmi's Sàngó festival. The music has its name from the calabashes used in making it. The set comprises: Water, one koto (a large deep calabash) or Odó (a large wooden mortar) to hold the water; One Igbá àdému (a medium size drinking calabash) to be placed on the water face downward; one pakata (a large size calabash used in carrying load). The pakata is stuffed with cloth.

The Igbá àdému (drinking calabash) placed face downward in the water is beaten by an Ayaba with sticks to produce rhythms; the Pakata stuffed with cloth is also beaten with the palms of the hand by two or more Ayabas to produce cross rhythms and they all sing together praises of the past Aláàfins and past eminent omo Obas. When praise of the reigning Aláàfin is sung, the Aláàfin gets into the arena to dance and all omo-Aláàfin present at the ceremony dance with him.

Daramola (1993:6) remarks on the Igbá-títí musicians,

There exist different groups of musicians who perform at different social events. Most of them are attached to various cults, occupation/associations groups, court of king and so forth; they perform only at specific functions depending on the events and the people involved in it.

The Igbá-títí musicians performs at the funeral rite of a deceased member of the Aláàfin's lineage, Òṣarányàn's worship and events like weddings, naming, and

house warming ceremonies. Thus, the time when they could earn some money as musicians could be said to be seasonal, irregular and as such grossly inadequate for them to earn a good living.

Ajewole (2007) observes that when there is no performance, they engage in order occupational activities such as trading and farming to mention a few. Nevertheless, the Igbá-títí musicians are identified and recognized by the community as performing artistes of an inherited craft in which they are specialists. Hence they are regarded as professionals.

Meriam (1964) argues that, public recognition of musicians as a distinctive class of specialists is basic support received from his activity". Following this line of argument Armes (1978) in connection with the professional musicians in Hausa community remarks that,

The Igbá-títí musicians can be viewed as a social specialist as well as an economic specialists. As an economic specialists they engage in other jobs while as social specialists, they perform the Igbá-títí music as part of their social obligation to the enhancement of community life.

Ajayi (1989) remarks that Igbá-títí musical group consists of six to ten female performance from the ages fifteen till when they are too old to sing. The musicians are all trained. The leader is normally the soloist, then other members sing the chorus while some play the calabashes. There is no specific role assigned to each individual as the leader chooses whom she wishes and knows can perform best during each occasion.

In the area of dance, the remaining members of the Igbá-títí group who form the chorus sometime perform supplementary dancing roles during a hot rhythmic section. They also carry out organizational duties like lifting, cleaning and arranging the instruments. The success of any occasion on the performance of Igbá-títí music depends on the collaboration of individuals performing different parts. Effective performance of Igbá-títí music depends on certain qualities the professionals must possess and these include the ability to recite genealogies, knowledge of long repertoire of praise poems of the Aláàfin's lineage, all of which require deep knowledge, good memory and a fine command of the Yoruba language, deep interest and natural flair for art. However, sensitivity in rhythmic pattern is regarded as the most important attribute, thus an Igbá-títí musician has a good sense of rhythm. From the foregoing, one can conclude that Igbá-títí musicians are trained and manifest qualities that characterize them as professional musicians.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE MUSIC

Tonality

Three types of scales have been identified in the music by the female court musicians in the Alaafin of Oyo's palace. These are pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic patterns. These scales are also rearranged to form modes.

Melodic Structure

Melodies in the court music of Alaafin of Oyo with very few exceptions, are usually short and repetitive with central focus on call and response. The melody patterns are shaped according to the speech pattern and in most cases dictate the instrumental rhythms. The melodic structure can be seen in the given musical samples

Rhythm

The rhythm of the Alaafin's female Court music relies on two popular Yoruba rhythms, one slow and sensuous, and other fast and percolating. The instruments used in the music provide complex and steady beats patterns that can literally speak to those who can understand. There are elements of divisive, additive and hemiola rhythms in the music. Cross rhythm shed light on the temporal dimension in the music. Alaafin instrumental music performed by the female court musicians is particularly rich and varied. Perhaps the most striking thing about the music is its dynamic rhythmic quality. The following characteristics the rhythmic structure:

Speech rhythm: Yoruba language possesses a natural order of stress on certain syllables used in speech which is called speech rhythm. This, in turn gives rise to a natural rise and fall of the voice and thus speech melody is created. The normal stress from spoken words is the same as the stress used in setting them to music in the court music.

Polyrhythm: The polyrhythmic effect is created on calabashes by Igba-titi musicians. Different autonomous rhythmic patterns that enter at different entry points are commonly found in various court music of the Alaafin of Oyo.

Hemiola: Several instances in the music also reveal the juxtaposition of triplets against two notes of the same value in the same bar. This is found in the rhythmic patterns of common some songs – “Laye Olugbon”, “Toba Lase”, “Eni sun m'oba”. Other rhythmic features in the female court music of Alaafin of Oyo include cross rhythm, syncopation and irregular rhythm.

HARMONY

It is observed that the harmonic Structure used by the female court musicians of the Alaafin Oyo involves doubling of melody above or below at intervals of seconds, fourth, fifths and sixths which automatically results in parallelism. The harmony is mainly parallel in progression

FORM

The most common forms used by the Alaafin female court musicians are 'call and response' and solo. In the call and response, the songs are usually already familiar songs which the audience joins spontaneously after the lead. Though the cantor merely introduces the first phrase or the whole song, there is no clear cut demarcation between her and the chorus like in the songs 'Eni sunmobi', "kile nfo ba pe", "Layiwola joba" etc.

In the solo, the song is usually performed with the speech surrogate like in the Akunyungbas. The response which is implicit is manifested in the action of the people to whom the message of the music is directed. Songs "Aye Atoba", 'Toba Lase' etc. are examples of this type of form.

TEXT

The song-texts of the Alaafin of Oyo female Court music consist largely of traditional materials, including proverbs and praise chanting (Oriki). The texts are derived from proverbs, folk- songs and feature a lot of Yoruba idiomatic expressions. It should be noted that contextual occurrence and current affairs provide necessary stimulus for composition of text. The texts are also reflective or philosophical, sentimental or satirical, humorous or comical. It requires some knowledge of oral tradition before one can fully understand and interpret the texts. For instance, the song "kile n foba pe" is used to extol the Alaafin in order to reiterate the high esteem in which Oyo people hold their king. The song "Layiwola O ju won lo", is used to show respect to the present Alaafin - Oba Olayiwola Adeyemi III who happened to be the first literate Alaafin in Oyo town. The song "Oba Toto" reinforces the traditional belief of the Oyo people as regards the respect and dignity ascribed to the Alaafin. In a song "Toba Lase", the Oyos are pledging their full obedience to their king.

CONCLUSION

Apart from general appraisal of the music, this study has revealed some of the various activities of the female court musicians in the palace of alaaḥin of Oyo. The presence of the female court musicians seems inevitable in the success of the palace activities. The three major categories of the female court music – Akunyingba, Apinti and Igba-titi aim at the same goal of praising the Obas, the Chiefs and some other highly placed people that are connected with the palace. They achieve this goal in their different performances as described in this study.

Based on the significant place of court music among the Yoruba, it is suggested that the music should be documented recontextualized and repackaged to teach the upcoming generation and the Yoruba in the diasporas.

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