

# *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.

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## ABOUT THIS EDITION

African Musicological issues examined in this edition include Therapy, Music Education, Ethics and the metaphysical quality of African 'art' music; all of which are integral part of the fundamental pillars on which the concepts and practices of what is called African Music rests. Also we wish to state categorically here that there is no way the true indigenous African music could be theorized, understood, practised or taught correctly in contemporary times without those dimensions.

In the first article, Mutuku highlighted and described the *kilumi* music of the Kamba, its therapeutic power and its significance as a link to the spirit world. Such models are found all over Africa. These dimensions are further proved in the third article, written by Aluede and Omoera as the duo supported their submissions and arguments with concrete experiments and vivid illustrations from the Iyayi community in Nigeria. Faseun in the second article, argued that music curriculum must be student-centered and be kept abreast of human developmental trends in order to remain relevant to African nations. His conclusion that the theory and practices of African music should be the basis of music taught in African schools, is indispensable for the needed freedom from mental bondage that still exists in African musicological studies today. In the fourth article, Lebaka analyzed Pedi ritual songs, with a view to digging out the African ethical values inherent in them. The author also examined the correlations that exist between the Pedi ritual songs and the biblical Psalms; thus asserting the relevance of the Psalms to the contemporary African peoples. This bi-disciplinary approach between music and Theology is a growing trend in African Musicology and African Theology. In the last article, Adedeji analyzed various 'African' metaphysical elements that define the distinctiveness of African art music. His challenge to Africans to redirect and remobilize their metaphysical forces and legacies to better their lives is apt for all times.

While believing that these current articles will be found useful to students, teachers and researchers in African music, we encourage Africans in the field of African Musicology and related fields to research into more 'dark' and 'dry' aspects and submit the outcome of such research to *Africanmusicology Online Journal* for publication.

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## **KILUMI DANCE AMONG THE KAMBA COMMUNITY: A LINK TO THE SPIRITUAL WORLD**

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***James M. Mutuku***

### **ABSTRACT**

Generally in Africa, music educates, scorns, warns, entertains, heals and links the community to the ancestral world, among other functions. Music can be termed as a golden treasure that needs to be well preserved and taken care of to benefit the current and future generations. Africans and Kenyans in particular, have done a lot to see to it that their traditional music is passed over from one generation to the next. This is implied by the government's, communities' and individuals' efforts to preserve Kenyan traditional folk music. The Kamba is one of the communities that have kept their musical traditions, despite many forces of discouragement. Their folk music performs significant role in the lives of the members till date. The Kamba community has a belief system which is based on the spiritual world and the only way to communicate to the spirits is through sacrifices, songs and dance. Kilumi is one of the dances that binds the people to their gods (the spiritual world) and also provides healing therapy to various diseases and sicknesses. This paper therefore seeks to describe the *kilumi* dance and how it is used to heal the sick and deliver those allegedly possessed by evil spirits.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Gehman (1989) observes that there is nothing that happens by chance to a traditional Mukamba. Virtually every unusual event or tragic experience can be attributed to or connected with supernatural powers. Circumstances like poor harvest, sicknesses, death, accidents, disasters, poverty and unhealthy relationships are linked to some supernatural powers at one point or the other. That is why there is a famous Kamba saying that '*mukamba ndakusaa mana*' (A Kamba person does not just die – there is always a supernatural reason behind the death). Whenever unusual phenomena strike in Kamba land, sacrifices have to be offered to appease the spirits. The Kamba community maintains the belief system which is based on the spiritual realities and an effective way to link or communicate with the spirits is through music and dance. Just like many communities in the World, music in Kamba community communes, heals, educates, entertains and invokes. That is why it is a common statement in Africa that 'music is life and one cannot do without it'.

In Kenya, Christianity and Islam established centres to preach their new religions but this could not daunt the Kamba community to practice its own traditional religion. Healing dance (*kilumi* dance) is one among the many traditions that the Kamba community holds dearly. This dance, originally known as *Mwase* and

later changed to be *kilumi*, is used to link the community to the spiritual world. Whenever there is a problem, the ancestors (the potent protectors), who according to their beliefs exist in the form of spirits, are consulted and the most effective way of reaching them is through music and dance – the *kilumi* dance.

According to Kigunda (2007:44) there is little possibility, if any, for Akamba to experience the supernatural form of healing without performing music and dancing to it. It seems the gap between the living and the dead in this tradition cannot be any further narrowed, as the only clear difference is that the dead have no physical bodies, as they are believed to exist even around the home where they lived before they died. They (the dead) are so much valued that not only their surviving relatives pour libations in their honour but also special all-night feasts are organized specifically to enable the dead to dance through the bodies of the living in the famous *kilumi* dance. The question that remains in one's mind when the feasts and dances are performed in the name of healing therapy is 'what makes the dance potent as a healing therapy' Or what is the role of music in such healing processes'? This paper was as a result of a guided investigation carried out in order to answer the question.

The study is based on the theory of aesthetic functionalism as proposed by Akuno (2005:160) which views the meaning of music as being rooted in the role music plays in the life of those who make it. Just as the author puts it, the functionalists attribute the meaning and value of a work of art to its relationship with the activities of the society. As a work of art, the value of Kilumi music is therefore judged from society's involvement with and in it and consequently the role or function that it performs in that society's existence. Since this paper seeks to establish the role of *kilumi* music in a traditional healing process, hence the applicability of the aesthetic functionalism theory. The data for this research was collected through oral interview. Two performing groups were purposively sampled to provide the much needed information on Kilumi music.

## **HISTORY AND ORIGIN OF KAMBA PEOPLE**

This paper cannot be complete without first of all explaining who the Kamba people are. The Kamba community is widely known in Kenya for its witchcraft and *kamuti* (love potion). There has therefore been an exaggerated assumption that all Kamba people are witches and on the basis of this, many people want to avoid them. This is not really the case. witchcraft is only practiced by just a few Kambas. Historically the Kamba community is believed to have migrated from the Congo basin in West Africa, which is believed to be the core of the demonstration of mystical powers in Africa and this may explain the reason behind their attachment to traditions (Kavyu, 1977:1).

According to Coughlin and Kieti (1990:2) the Kamba community belongs to a large group of Bantu speakers in Africa, found in the Eastern province and

occupy Central South Eastern part of Kenya, bordering the Kikuyu to the West, the Mbeere/ Orma/ Liangulu and Tharaka people to the North, the coastal communities, mainly the Taitas to the East and finally the Maasai to the South. Population distribution in Kamba land (Ukambani) is guided and determined by the productivity of the area (Mutuku, 2005). According to Kavyu (1977:1), the highlands west of the Athi River from Kilungu up to Kangundo have the highest population density. A second area with high population concentration is Kitui Central, a relatively hilly and productive area.

Kavyu submits that there are four slightly different dialects between the Kamba people. There is one dialect around Machakos, the second dialect in Mwingi, third dialect in Kitui which is mainly due to the bordering communities of the Tharaka and Mbeere. The fourth dialect is found in Makueni commonly known as Kikumbulyu zone, which is influenced by Swahili speaking. This is evidenced by many of their words which are usually coined from Swahili.

The Kamba community has several clans (*mbai*) for example the *Awilu*, *Ambua*, *Atangwa*, *Ekuaa*, *Akitutu*, *Aiini* (or *Anzauni*), *Amuui*, *Aombe*, *Aanziu* and *Akitondo* clans. Kamba community traditionally has great passion for rituals and initiation, religion is part of life and everyone believes in a Creator. Their faith is based on the main god - *Mulungu* or *Mumbi* (creator) also called *Mwatuangi* (he who divides) (Mutuku, 2005:23).

### **THE KILUMI DANCE MUSIC**

In a personal interview with Kalei (16<sup>th</sup> June, 2007) at Barazani location, Makueni district, he pointed out that the term '*Kilumi*' came as a result of the accompanying main instrument – the *kilumi* drum, originally known as *mwase* drums. Therefore the dance is named after the main accompanying instrument.

Fig. 1 Photographs of a kilumi drum



Fig. 2 Kalei demonstrating some skills on the kilumi drum (during the interview)



*Kilumi* is a performance for appeasing possessing spirits such as those of the medicine people (*andu oe*) and the soloist (*ngui*), which may cause illness if displeased; but on the other hand, may empower the medicine men/women to exercise healing and to enable the soloist and some drummers to perform their valued musical tasks in *kilumi* performances. Healing powers of the medicine persons depend heavily on how the spirits are appeased. The main reason why *kilumi* dance has to be performed regularly is to placate the spirits (Kigunda, 2007).

*Kilumi* dance is always performed at night. The reason behind this, according to Kalei, being that the spirits are very particular about the times at which they can be 'danced' and that most of them are active during the night. The organization of the music should also be taken into account for the spirits to be properly appeased. By organization, the singing begins first, then followed by drumming finally, dancing. That order must be strictly followed. Dancing should not start before drumming and drumming should not start before singing. In most cases, the soloist starts in a free rhythm kind of a style (chanting) but the chorus is not as free as the solo part. After several rounds, the *kilumi* drums join and then dancing begins. The dance is normally started by the sick/possessed person. The drumming gradually intensifies in tandem with the dance vigor. In most cases singing is usually ignored at the climax (Kigunda, 2007:64).

The choice of words to use or the song to sing is largely influenced by the particular spirit in operation at that time. During the performance, songs are not just rendered, that is why the *ngui* must be in the same wave length with the spirits and this call for thorough preparation before the actual dance. From interviews, it was established that sometimes the spirits will give words to be sung by the *ngui* - he/she then acts as a mouth piece for the spirits. Kigunda (2007:64) notes that different melodies are used for different spirits, so that a

dancer appears only when a song specially designed for one of his/her spirits is being sung. In other words, for a particular spirit to be appeased a particular melody/tune is mandatory.

As noted earlier, the main accompanying instrument in this dance is the drum, even though in the climax other instruments like the whistle and leg/shoulder shakers, maybe added. *Kilumi* songs are characterized by call and response type of song patterning. The soloist sings a certain phrase then the chorus joins, repeating the same phrase or singing a different phrase all together. In other cases the soloist will sing a phrase and before finishing it, the chorus completes it. The call and response song pattern is not used in the preparation section when the chief medicine person is privately invoking spirits, but the music is as repetitive as in the main *kilumi* function.

According to Kigunda (ibid), all *kilumi* songs are in monophonic texture (unison) whereby male and female voices sing the same notes in an octave apart. Sometimes there exist some harmonies especially when the soloist starts to sing before the chorus end their phrase or vice versa. This overlap creates a kind of an overlapping polyphony, provided that the end point and starting points are in different pitches.

There is no fixed tempo in *kilumi* dances. It gradually gets faster as the performance approaches the climax. The intensity of the music also grows with the tempo as more instruments join the performance. Generally the organization of a *kilumi* dance is such that it begins on a low profile ending with a bang – the climax.

### **THE KILUMI DANCE CEREMONY**

*Kilumi* dance is used for various purposes that are associated with the ancestors (spiritual world), the main ones being to appease the spirits so that they (spirits) can heal the sick, drive away bad omen, protect the community from calamities, initiate a person into the traditional healing and finally to empower the existing medicine persons. According to Katei(personal interview) the dance usually takes place at the chief medicine persons' homestead or at the young initiate's home or at the community shrine depending on the purpose for the dance. For example, if a medicine person wants to appease the spirits or s/he is treating somebody the dance will be held at his/her homestead and if there is a young person who is being initiated into this profession of traditional healing then the dance will be held at that young person's homestead. Otherwise the dance will be held at a shrine if it is something that involves the whole community like praying for rain from the gods.

The *Kilumi* ceremony is generally divided into three sections namely; the preparation, the *Kilumi* performance and finally the closing section.

## Preparation Section

This section is mainly led by the chief medicine person and the family members of that particular spiritual function. He/she has to be careful as this stage is crucial and determines the success of the ceremony. Any slight mistake can displease the spirits and make them uncooperative during the ceremony. A goat (of a particular colour dictated by the spirits) is slaughtered while making sure that there is no blood that is poured at the slaughter venue. An insertion is made at the neck and the blood collected in a calabash and stored properly. After slaughtering the goat, the meat is roasted in readiness for the sacrifice.

Soil is collected and poured at the doorstep of the medicine person's house or the young initiate's house depending on where the ceremony is held to prepare the offering ground. Traditional beer is put in a calabash and family members take a sip of it as a sign of family bond and approval of the ceremony. After this, the chief medicine person sips and spits on the offering ground then the senior family member takes the calabash and blesses the offering ground by pouring the liquor while calling the ancestors by their names as well as asking them to be comfortable throughout the sacrifice. He then takes the calabash round and each family member spits on it as a sign of blessing.

Roasted meat is put into the calabash, mixed with blood and the beer and then poured on the offering ground just to feed the ancestors. In the case of a young initiate his/her mother will come forward to give offering of porridge at this particular point as she calls the ancestors. [The researcher wonders aloud why the offering is poured on to the ground while the spirits are believed to come from above.] From the skin of the sacrificial goat, ceremonial ornaments are prepared which should be adorned by the initiate when treating the sick traditionally. Other pieces are fastened on a stick that is used to make the *Uta* - musical bow used when invoking the spirits. Sometimes the medicine woman/man will privately invoke the spirits but with a few members of the family. This is common especially when the ceremony takes place at the home of the medicine person. The things that happen here are usually a secret though some researchers have gained access to these rooms after being granted permission by the spirits to carry out research. Kigunda (2007:48) who was able to gain access states:

After the door was shut, the chief medicine woman imbibed mouthfuls of a number of drinks and poured some of them on the floor next to the door as she whispered something to herself... as she arranged her paraphernalia on a small area of operation in the centre of the living room, bringing one thing after another from her bedroom, she was either whispering or making unusual sounds with her mouth closed. The latter sound was similar to that of a hen with chicks. While pouring bits of traditional beer (*Kaluvu*) and Fanta soda at one side of the door, she murmured to her spirits and returned to her work place already covered with a cloth material of different colors. After physical manipulation of beads (*mbuu*) in a

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small medicine man's gourd (*kititi*) and smearing of powders of different colors, she picked up a bow (*uta*) and attached half calabash (resonator) and began to play. Soon afterwards she started to sing a song (solo) with *uta* accompaniment. She sung one more song before she got possessed, although it was not clear at what time her personality changed. The possession would be noted from the changes in her facial expression which could be described as 'attentive', 'tense' and 'relaxed' at different times in her performance.

The main purpose of the invocation of the spirits is to welcome them to be part of the ceremony. After this section of seclusion, the group moves out to join the rest who by this time are waiting outside.

### **The Kilumi Performance**

*Kilumi* dance makes a healer (*mundu mue*), heals, strengthens a medicine man/woman and the lead singer (*ngui*) and finally urges the spirits of the dead to cure through healers (*andu oe*). It is believed that, traditional healer cannot heal, medicine person/soloist cannot be strengthened and neither can the spirits be appeased without *Kilumi* music – a reason why music is so valued in Ukambani.

As noted earlier; the purpose for a *Kilumi* dance may be to appease the spirits, to empower a healer, to initiate a person into the healing or to treat the sick, whatever the reason, the organization of activities in this section are more or less the same. After the chief medicine person finishes his/her private affair inside the house, he/she puts up a ceremonial fire outside the house but close to his/her door which should be kept burning throughout the ceremony. After the fire she will sing briefly to welcome the visitors and ask them to draw near the arena and then the *ngui* takes over. There is usually one *ngui* per night for sometimes the performance might last even a week depending on the number of people whose spirits wants to be danced. Note that there are no two of more spirits that can be danced at the same time since their demands are usually very different, it is only one spirit at a time.

The *Kilumi* drums are by this time arranged in a line, the number may range from one to six, and players sitting on them to play them(see fig. 3).

Fig.3 Sitting position while playing the Kilumi drums.



The drummers usually include the main soloist and sometimes the chief medicine person. The soloist will sing in a free kind of a rhythm and after a few exchanges with the chorus she starts drumming then the first person to open the arena is usually the chief medicine person after which the spirit possessed person is called by the *ngui* to dance. After dancing for sometime s/he might stop dancing abruptly and this also calls for a sudden stop in the singing and drumming. The dancer may demand things like water, food, beer, cigarettes and other food items to be consumed right on the dance arena. When orders are not easily understood then the medicine person has to take the possessed into a secluded area for a divine intervention and to find out exactly what the spirits require. The dance will only continue after the demands are met.

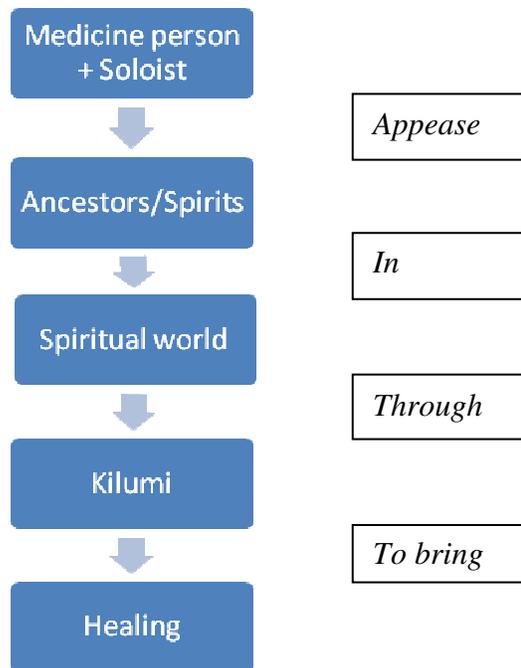
A person dances to a specific song, in a specified dance style and in a specific dress code as required by a spirit. In an interview with a member of *Mbowe* women group in Barazani (name not given), she was of the opinion that if the audience wanted to dance at this particular time they had to copy the dancing styles of the possessed person otherwise they had to wait until the demands of the spirits are met. Even though *ngui* was the leader of this section, the possessed controlled a *Kilumi* performance for once she stopped dancing the singing and drumming had to stop too and only continue when the demands are met.

*Ngui* continues to call one spirit after another throughout the night to enable all the spirits to be danced. In a case where all the spirits cannot be danced within a night then the ceremony is continued in the next night until all the spirits have been danced. The *ngui* must be well versed with the spirits that want to be danced for it is his/her sole responsibility to call the spirit to the dance arena. The question that one asks at this point is; how does *Kilumi* music heal? Or what is the connection between *Kilumi* music and healing?

**KILUMI MUSIC AND HEALING**

In the healing traditions of Akamba, nothing can take the place of music. Both *mundu mue* and *ngui* need music and dance to appease their spirits once a benevolent spirit begins the initiation process. Once someone is initiated to be a *mundu mue* or a *ngui* then s/he has to host *kilumi* and dance the spirits as a way of replenishing the spiritual powers for healing (Kigunda 2007:83). For a *mundu mue* to heal, s/he needs to be told by the spirits what the problem is. For the spirits to talk of the problem they have to possess him/her and for him/her to be possessed *Kilumi* music has to be performed. Therefore it is worth noting that music does not heal but remains a main component in the healing process; it prepares the mind for healing. Music requests the spirits to descend upon a medicine person who acts as a communication channel for the spirits to be able to talk about the problem and give a solution. Music is therefore very crucial in this equation in fact the main pillar of a traditional healing. For healing to be achieved the medicine person and the soloist have to invoke the ancestors (spirits) in the spiritual realm through *Kilumi* dance. The chain of command in the healing process is shown in the chart below:

*Chart 1: Healing process through Kilumi music*



Kigunda (ibid) notes that music is necessary in the whole life history of a *mundu mue* or the *ngui* since it fashions them through an initiatory dance, refreshes the connection between them their spirits sustaining a strong link between the two. Music also calls a spirit to address a problem presented when it (music) facilitates spirit invocation where a *mundu mue* sings asking the spirits that they are needed, visited, greeted and so on; in which case the spirits would descend into her to meet the 'visitors' and in the process recognize any health problems and heal the sick.

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## Closing Section

After all the spirits have been appeased and all problems addressed, there is the closing section that is intended to give thanks to the spirits for their cooperation in the ceremony. This section involves pouring of libations on the offering ground to thank the spirits and urge them to continue helping and protecting the community. There is also a promise made to the spirits that the community will continue holding more *Kilumi* ceremonies and offering sacrifices to them. After which everyone leaves happily for their homes; already assured that the spirits have been appeased and that the spirits will protect them.

## CONCLUSION

Akamba communities from long time ago have continued to enjoy admiration from other communities for their strong attachment to their spiritual world and ancestral bond that has been their help in times of problems in their day-to-day lives. Music plays a major role in this bond and acts as a link between them and their spiritual world; where their main source of power comes from.

For biological illnesses there is usually an administration of herbs and the type is communicated to them by the spirits and the spirits have to be invoked during the musical performance. For problems associated to the spirits then *Kilumi* dance is performed and the particular disease-causing spirits are identified and the *ngui* composes songs to appease them. It is worth noting at this point that there are good and bad spirits. Good (benevolent) spirit will solve a problem and are usually associated with the *andu oe*. Bad (malevolent) spirits originate from the witches and curses and they cause havocs but the *andu oe* performs rituals to neutralize them. For all these things to happen, the spirits have to be mollified and then music has to be performed; thus qualifying *kilumi* music as a link to the spiritual world among the Kamba.

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PPMC video tape. *kilumi dance*.

KBC video tape. *A documentary on the kilumi dance ceremony*.

Resource persons: Mbowe women group - Barazani

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## **THE DYNAMICS OF MUSIC CURRICULUM IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY: THE NIGERIAN EXAMPLE**

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***Femi Faseun, PhD***

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper argues that music curriculum must be kept abreast of human developmental trends in order to remain relevant. It draws on the perception of 48 music teachers in Lagos State of Nigeria and finds out that theory and practices of Nigerian music should be the basis of music taught in Nigerian schools and that the music curriculum must be student-centered for it to maintain relevance to the Nigerian society.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Academic music education in Nigeria proceeded from a perception of the subject as hymn-singing. It has since the years gone by, passed through various changes and modifications which have always been in line with the changing patterns of our society. Society is a dynamic force that keeps changing in its magnitude and direction. Such changes are reflected on the school curriculum which has always been a major force in the assimilation, conservation and transmission of a people's culture.

Music education, like any other form of education, should in addition to serving as a means of cultural assimilation, conservation and transmission, also serve as a means for cultural creation and criticism. For the dynamism of the conservation society to be properly mirrored by the curriculum, the curriculum should have room for improvement. It is when such provision for change is made that transmission of knowledge that is worthwhile and meaningful can be ensured. For example, the Russian 1918 syllabus had singing as standing for and meaning music. By 1920, the situation had changed. In reflecting the new perception, Kabalevsky (1988: 13) stated that:

...the music teaching of the first post revolutionary decade proceeded from the conviction that a knowledge of music as an integral art in all its facets and with all its connections with life, not merely music as singing (in the choir), must form the content of music lessons in schools.

Euba (1975:57) noted that "Music cannot live without new creative forces to sustain it through changing social circumstances". The new creative forces arising from changes in musical taste year in year out are expected to be the constant determinants of music making in any society. In the early sixties, the music that

was much favoured by the average Yoruba man was *Juju* music as performed by I.K. Dairo but the trend changed in the seventies. *Juju* as played by Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey took over the music scene. In the present-day Western Nigeria, *Fuji* music is given *Juju* music the greatest challenge and has virtually taken over the leadership. The change and improvement in the nature of *Fuji* music from its old form of music performed only during Muslim *Ramadan* festivals to music performed at all socio-cultural occasions, is a major factor that has enhanced its joining the bandwagon of favoured popular music Nigeria.

In a country with diverse cultural backgrounds such as Nigeria, therefore, changes occur as practices among the various culture areas transpire. In a situation such as the one that exists in Nigeria, Bonner (1975:33) noted that:

If school music is to have relevance for the general populace (as differentiated from a subject for tutorially conditioned, talented elite few), music educators must be capable of devising strategies, materials and experiences through which most students, if not all, will discover appropriate uses for music as a personal medium of interest and expression. In addition, the education of the music teacher will have to include experience with music pluralism.

It is important, therefore, when planning music curriculum for any society to ensure that such a plan reflects the general features of the society. Curriculum planners must consider the society, its needs, goals, values and value system, its aspirations and expectations, with its general pattern of life before adopting acceptable and workable curriculum for the populace.

Expressing a similar view, Okeke (1985: 105) noted that:

The purpose of the curriculum is in fact, to transmit to the young, the society's beliefs, values, aspirations and ideals. But then, these societal values, goals etc. change with time. If the curriculum is to be effective, these changes will have to be reflected in the curriculum.

## **PRINCIPLES, METHODS AND APPROACHES FOR WORTHWHILE MUSIC CURRICULUM DESIGN**

The average Nigerian's conception of music should be one of the main factors to be considered in the selection of the musical learning experiences in Nigerian secondary schools. In the Nigerian society (as could happen in some other places), nobody is recognized as a musician unless he can play one or more musical instruments and sing. In planning a programme of instruction in music, the interest of the child must be borne in mind, for as Wheeler (1978: 270) puts it, 'the only effective learning goals are those which the student proposes for himself or those teacher-goals which the student is prepared to accept as his own'.

Education is a problem solving device. It can be planned and modified to combat life's problems. Kabalavsky (1988: 14) wrote that at a point in the fifties and sixties, Soviet Union deemed it virtually necessary to mobilize all forces to solve a countrywide problem of raising the cultural appreciation of her citizen. As a means to their end, they considered musical education based on Soviet tradition as a major tool. If Nigeria is to achieve her national goals and aspirations, and for her philosophy to be in harmony with her national objectives which is 'geared towards self realisation, better human-relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity, as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress' (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981: 7), she must evolve a truly Nigerian curriculum. Such a curriculum must be based on the principles and methods of music-making of the nation and approached from the children's level of musical understanding. With this done, we will be assured of a solid basis for our musical and aesthetic education.

For education not to lose sight of its function as the body and soul of the culture of a people, the programme of instruction in music should be planned not with the view to educate the musician but above all 'to educate the human being' (Suchomlinsky in Kabalevsky 1988: 14-15). Music is a scientific discipline to be taught and studied. This is more especially so in Africa where it is part of the African's complete life.

Consideration of learning experiences for possible inclusion in the curriculum must be based on well-thought-out principles which must always guide the choices to be made. The underlisted seven principles for the selection of curriculum content are very significant:

1. Social utility
2. Social responsibility
3. Common culture
4. Personal satisfaction
5. Cognitive concern
6. Parental and social pressure and
7. Mental powers.

Emeruwa (1985: 51) noted that 'a corollary matter (in curriculum building) is how the school will correlate its programme of schooling with the education that has occurred and that will occur continuously outside the school'. He went further to identify what he described as pre-requisites for effective curriculum planning namely:

1. a general knowledge of the society which the curriculum is to serve.
2. an understanding of the social and cultural milieu of the society in which the education is being provided.
3. an acquaintance of the planners with the nature of knowledge, general and particular nature of the process of learning (Emeruwa, 1985: 54 - 56).

In line with Hirst's and Emeruwa's views, Music Educators National Conference, in a position paper at the end of their 1974 Conference, had identified five

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objectives which a carefully planned education in general and music education programme (for our purpose) should aim at achieving. They are:

1. Self realisation,
2. Human relations,
3. enrichment of (community) life,
4. Sustaining and improving health, and
5. Improvement of occupational competence.

### **ISSUES IN STRATEGIES FOR MUSIC CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT**

In approaching music curriculum improvement, it is desirable to base the programme on the ways in which music is utilized by human beings in real life. This is contrary to what happens in the music curriculum of Nigerian secondary school of today where European elements such as history of European music, literature, instruments, theory etc. dominate the curriculum content. Planners of the programme put in more of the studies of western musical elements which have resulted in continuous criticisms and ineffectiveness of the programme.

Philosophers, curriculum studies experts and academic musicians (both foreign and local) are of the same opinion that the principal factor for the inclusion of any learning experience in the curriculum is its utilitarian function and relevance.

Sowande (1967: 22) is of the opinion that:

...for a 'Fine Art in Music' tradition to evolve, it must communicate and be meaningful to the common man and woman in that group viewed as a homogeneous whole, and accepted as such by the group.

Thinking along the same line, Nzewi (1987: 2) maintained that 'the philosophy and content of our literary music education must derive from our African resources and realistic experiences'. Faseun (1988: 5), commenting on the realistic value of the current Junior Secondary School syllabus, was of the opinion that 'most of the learning programmes contained in the document do not face the reality of Nigerian situations'. Writing further on the implication of irrelevant learning experiences contained in the Junior Secondary School curriculum, he noted that 'a school programme will be failing in one of its greatest and most important tasks if it fails to teach for transfer'.

Omibiyi (1973: 10) in a similar reaction noted that 'music is a cultural phenomenon which varies often in principles and always in detail from region to region and from locale to locale'. It should therefore be planned to reflect such variations. More explicitly and put in the words of Achinivu (1985: 147), 'one's taste in music depends to a considerable extent, on the surrounding in which one grows up and the type of music to which one has been exposed'.

If Nzewi's (1987: 1-2) observation that 'our current literary music programme merely perpetrates and perpetuates our mental colonization ...and make us look towards imaginary European setting as our spiritual and cultural base' is viewed seriously, then there is need for a total overhauling to ensure a programme that will be African, suitable for African minds and cultural experiences.

Smith in Okeke (1985: 105) stated that 'curriculum is interwoven with the social order that sustains it ...what the society values, what it believes in, her ideals and purposes direct, as it were, what should be in the curriculum'. Educational activities would therefore be justified, according to Pring (1980: 131), in utilitarian terms – their value would be measured in terms of their tendency to make life more pleasurable either for the individual or for the society generally'. Viewed from the philosophers' angle, the pragmatist epistemology of Dewey and Jones 'considers learning, knowledge or truth not in terms of what is in the mind, but in terms of that which is usable in action and verifiable in terms of that which works out in practice' (Okafor, 1984: 154). Therefore, in the process of learning, there should be present in some sense or other, a subordinate activity of application. The degree of transfer possibility of a learned concept depends largely on its meaningfulness and insightfulness to the learner.

On the expectation of parents, Agwagah (1988: 41) noted that:

parents ....expect that schools prepare students adequately for varied career aspirations – whatever they may be, parents are quick to indict the educational system if their children experience failure in school, are unable to secure employment, display problems of adapting to societal norms etc.

As a major strategy for the effectiveness and relatedness of a curriculum plan to a people's culture, there is in Sowande's view, the need to marry the traditional with the orthodox. Nigerian instructors, whether they are semi-literate or non-literate, who is versatile in the field of our traditional music, should be made to give practical instructions on traditional drumming, singing and dancing. The construction, care and maintenance of traditional instruments should also form part of such programmes. The Western system of music notation is equally desirable to ensure proper documentation and continuity (Sowande, 1967: 262).

Oliva (1982: 46) identified curricula continuity as a major strategy that should be considered to ensure a good curriculum plan. Dewey (1973: 74) supports this view in his assertion that:

It is a cardinal precept that the beginning of instruction shall be made with the experience the learners already have; that this experience and the capabilities that have been developed during its course provide the starting point for all future learning.

Oliva (1982: 42) identified the major causes of inefficient or unsuccessful curriculum articulation to be the result of a breakdown in communication at the transitional state – community music stage to elementary music stage; and elementary music stage to secondary school music stage, etc.

Iwotor (1981: 12) noted that all the participants in Tanglewood symposium on music generally agreed and are of the opinion that as a matter of necessity, music education should be freed from its traditionally narrow approach ‘wherein young people are being presented with only those aesthetic values that were related to nineteenth century music taste’. Sur and Schuller (in Iwotor, 1981: 13), as a follow up to the varied literature cited earlier, expressed that:

The secondary school music teacher must sometimes turn to the use of current popular music as a natural means of establishing contact with the musical interests of his pupils. They warn that to ignore popular music or to condemn it as all trash, places an impassable barrier between teacher and class.

The problem raised above is of prime importance and also agrees with the view of a great Nigerian music education specialist, Okafor (2005:20), who opined that ‘to make the study of music meaningful, practical, relevant and applicable to the Nigerian student, the curriculum, right from primary school, should make folk or traditional music the foundation of music education’. It is obvious that students came to school with some well defined music-type preferences. If the curriculum is to be related to their interest and enjoy clearer perception on the part of both teachers and pupils, their music-type preferences must, as a matter of positive strategy for success, be reflected in the school curriculum.

Ifemesia (1988: 89) discovered in a study that secondary school music teachers are not in any way involved in the planning of the curriculum for their pupils. Their interests are therefore not reflected in the programme used in schools. In another independent study carried out by Ifemesia (1988: 127) on the types of music Junior Secondary School music students would rather want to learn, 77% of the respondents were in favour of teaching African music as the major area of concentration in Nigerian schools.

It is our view that the interest of learners should occupy the topmost position in the minds of music curriculum planners. Leeder and Haynie (1966: 4) wrote that to ensure a comprehensive music education programme in schools ‘the programme should take care of the varied musical interests and abilities of all the students. The interest will include the exceptionally talented, the composer, arranger, conductor, and concert artiste, skilled creators, performers as well as listeners’.

A study carried out by Osuji (1984: 24) revealed that music curriculum of the secondary school as operated in both Junior Secondary School and Senior

Secondary School pay more attention to examination requirements rather than aim at developing the musical talents of the students.

**RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

A research question was designed to examine the reaction of selected music teachers in Lagos state public schools to the underlisted considerations that could enhance the suitability of curriculum operated in any identified society.

1. What are the perceptions of music teachers in Lagos state public schools on the suitability of the following:
  - a) Relevance/Applicability of what is taught in school to real life;
  - b) Comprehensive content and Evaluation Technique;
  - c) Provision of Local human resources; instructional materials and textbooks;
  - d) Removal of religious bias and consideration for personal satisfaction.

**Identified strategies to be tested for arriving at a popular curriculum plan:**

**Relevance/Applicability**

**Table I**

Item No	Item Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Theory and practices of Nigerian music should be the basis of music taught in Nigerian schools.	23 47.9	16 33.3	5 10.5	4 8.3
2.	Music at the secondary school level should include the types the children understand and probably play themselves.	27 56.3	15 31.3	5 10.5	1 2.1
3.	The relatedness of what students are taught to the likes dislikes and culture of the society should determine its inclusion in the curriculum.	13 27.1	25 52.1	10 20.8	- 0.0
4.	What is selected to be taught should be carried out with a view to applying them in practice.	30 62.5	16 33.3	- 0.0	2 4.2
5.	Anybody interested in the study of music at the higher institutions must have studied and passed it at the secondary school stage.	15 31.3	13 17.1	15 31.3	5 10.4
6.	The interest of the learners should be considered in choosing what should be taught in music.	14 27.2	17 35.4	8 16.7	9 18.8
7.	There should be no sharp				

	difference between the varieties of music taught in school and those played in the society	6 12.5	12 25.0	15 31.3	15 31.3
8.	The principles and practice of music taught to students in secondary schools should be determined by the job available for them in the society.	11 22.9	16 33.3	16 33.3	5 10.4

**Research Question:** What are the perceptions of music teachers in Lagos state public schools on the suitability of the following strategies for improving Junior Secondary School Music Curriculum?

### Relevance/Applicability

Table 1. presents the perception of music teachers of strategy 'A'. There are altogether eight items to which the teachers responded as follows (Please see the table).

**Item 1:** It is popularly perceived by the music teachers that this strategy will effectively improve the curriculum. From the table, a total of 23 teachers (47.9%) strongly agreed with the strategy, 16 (33.3%) agreed, 5 (10.4%) disagreed while only 4 (8.3%) strongly of the respondents disagreed.

**Item 2:** The teachers strongly agreed with the second item of the strategy. 27 respondents (56.3%) strongly agreed, 15 (31.2%) agreed, 5 (10.4%) disagreed and only 1 (2.1%) strongly disagreed.

**Item 3:** 13 respondents who form 27.1% of all respondents strongly agreed, 25 (52.1%) agreed and 10 respondents (20.8%) disagreed with item.

**Item 4:** 30 (62.5%) out of the 48 respondents strongly agreed with the item, 16 (33.3%) agreed and 2 (4.2%) strongly disagreed with the strategy.

**Item 5:** A total of 15 respondents (31.3%) strongly agreed with this item, 13 (27.1%) agree, 15 (31.3%) disagreed and 5 (10.4%) strongly disagreed. This show that the popular opinion of the respondents to the items positive.

**Item 6:** 14 respondents (27.2%) strongly agreed with the item, 17 (35.4%) agreed, 8 (16.7%) disagreed and 9 (18.8%) strongly disagreed with the item.

**Item 7:** The responses show that 6 (12.5%) strongly agreed, 12 (25%) agreed, 15 (31.3%) disagreed and 15 (31.3%) strongly disagreed.

**Item 8:** 11 respondents (22.9%) strongly agreed, 16 (33.3%) agreed, 16 (33.3%) disagreed, and 5 (10.4%) strongly disagreed with the item.

**Comprehensive Content and Evaluation Technique**

Table II presents the perception of music teachers of strategy 'B'.

**Comprehensive Content and Evaluation Technique**

Item No	Item Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	Examination in music should be designed to test students' knowledge, skills and attitude to values for western musical history and Literature.	17 35.4	18 37.5	11 22.9	2 4.2
10	The Comprehensive nature of Nigerian music should be the basis of evaluation.	11 22.9	27 56.3	10 20.8	- 0.0
11	Evaluation of students performance in school should be on continuous basis	20 41.7	24 50.0	3 6.3	1 2.1
12	Music as a school subject should teach Islamic, Christian, Folk and Music of general interest,	17 35.4	24 50.0	3 6.3	4 8.3

There are four items (number 9, 10, 11 and 12) under this strategy. The responses of the music teachers are as presented below:

**Item 9:** 17 respondents (35.4%) strongly agreed, 18 (37.5%) agreed, 11 (22.9%) disagreed, and 2 (4.2 % strongly disagreed with the item.

**Item 10:** Out of 48 respondents, 22.9% strongly agreed; 56.3% agreed, and 20.8% disagreed with the item

**Item 11:** 41.7% of the respondents strongly agreed; 50% agreed; 6.3% disagreed and 2.1 strongly disagreed with the item.

**Item 12:** 35.4% of the respondents strongly agreed , 50% agree, 6.3% disagreed and 8.3% strongly disagreed with the item.

**Provision of local human resources, instructional materials and textbooks.**

The responses of music teachers are presented below under Table III.

Item No	Item Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13	Availability of textbook, teachers and instructional materials should determine what students are to be taught in music.	18 37.5	26 54.2	4 8.3	- 0.0
14	Textbooks used in the teaching of music should be relevant to the experience and background of the children.	15 31.3	27 56.3	6 12.5	- 0.0
15	Sophisticated aspects of Western music should be learnt to improve on Nigerians	18 37.5	17 35.4	11 22.9	2 4

16	Local instructors should be invited to our schools to teach how to play, repair and make traditional musical instrument	26 54.2	20 41.7	1 2.1	1 2.1
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The weighing of the perception of the music teachers of this strategy is heavier on the positive side. More respondents are of the view that the provision of human resources, instructional materials and textbooks should be localized.

### Removal of Religious bias and Consideration for Personal Satisfaction

The perception of the teachers of strategy 'F' is presented in Table IV below:

Item No	Item Description	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17	The teacher should choose the type of music to be taught and learnt.	9 18.8	9 18.8	22 45.8	8 16.7
18	Understanding and appreciation should determine what is included in the curriculum.	15 31.3	25 52.1	7 14.6	1 2.1
19	Both purely traditional music groups and concert band music should function as parts of the school system.	22 45.8	24 50.0	2 4.2	- 0.0
20	Religious background should determine the type of learning experiences in music offered to the pupil.	2 4.2	5 10.4	27 56.3	14 29.2
21	Music taught in secondary schools should emphasis music of general interest and not that of any religious group.	38 79.2	8 16.7	2 4.2	- 0.0

**Items 17 and 20:** Their responses to items 17 and 20 clearly show that the majority of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea of making the teacher choose the type of music to be taught and learnt. The similarly responded negatively to allowing religious background to determine the type of learning experiences offered to pupils of music.

In item 18 and 19, respondents are of the view that

- a) Understanding and appreciation should determine what is included in the curriculum.
- b) Both purely traditional music groups and concert band music should function as part of the school system and that

- c) Music taught in secondary schools should emphasis music of general interest and not that of any religious group.

In American schools, *music* also passed through the kind of problems it is going through in Nigerian schools today. It was, for instance, also equally not regarded as a school subject at the inception of formal instruction in schools. However, it went through a number of planning and executing, trial and retrial of ideas before it reached its present status in American Education.

In summarizing, for learning experiences to be meaningful, they must be understandable to the students. The curriculum of a subject should be determined by the most fundamental understanding that can be achieved of the underlying principles that gives structure to those subjects. The determination done in the way stated above will ensure relevance which according to Onwuka in Alaezi and Etim (1988), 'is concerned with the belief that any curriculum ought to recognise the existence of the real world'.

In line with Mkpa's (1987: 8) view, 'the task of planning an educational programme should be largely localized'. Nye and Nye (in Olaitan and Faseun, 1988: 203), wrote that it is important to ensure that learning experiences to be included in a school music curriculum will:

- a) help the child to live better in today's world;
- b) assist the child to formulate important generalizations and to realize objectives; and
- c) help the teacher in realizing the objectives of music in the secondary school.

Summing up this review, Olaitan and Faseun (1988: 204) wrote that 'music is universally important to every human being and his culture. The interest, (based on cultural background and developmental differences of child) is of prime importance in selecting and utilizing resources for the teaching subject'. The child should study the world as it affects him.

For education to be effective, it must not be separated from child's real life. This is because among other things in the view of the pragmatist, education is life itself and not the preparation for it. The curriculum must not only reflect the real life situation but it must be child-centered (Okafor, 1984: 13).

## **CONCLUSION**

Using African music as a springboard, music education on a bi-cultural basis is a fusion, designed to embrace traditional Nigerian (and by extension African) art patterns on the one hand, and on the other, European forms and techniques (Sowande, 1967: 262). Music has been identified in the Nigerian traditional setting, as it obtains in some other African cultures, as having a strong epistemological, spiritual, moral and cultural base. Its functional nature can only be achieved if, as it should be, properly and sincerely rooted in the culture of the people for the assurance of learning that lasts (London, 1983: 36). In order to

have a return to authentic African self, through cultural revival, education, political emancipation and self reliance in all respects of our life, our music curriculum needs a total overhauling.

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**THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF MUSIC THERAPY IN  
IYAYI COMMUNITY OF THE ESAN, EDO STATE OF  
NIGERIA**

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***Charles O. Aluede, PhD***  
&  
***Stevenson O. Omoera***

**ABSTRACT**

The healing effect of music on man is very significant in most parts of the world. However, not much has been done by African researchers to study music and the ailments it heals especially among the peoples of Nigeria. This work examines the therapeutic effect of music in Iyayi society of Esan community, Edo state of Nigeria. The concept of illness, illness causation, the healing system and the specific songs used in healing of some ailments are investigated. It was found that music in the society is used as medicine as well as accompaniment to healing rites. The study concludes that Iyayi songs hold much promise for the development of pan African music therapy and as such should be notated. It is therefore concluded that Iyayi songs are of immense benefits in the treatment and management of labour pains, insomnia and general debilities.

**INTRODUCTION**

The healing powers of music have become an ever-growing subject in academic discourse and have given rise to the term music therapy which has formed an alternative way of healing in orthodox medical praxis. Today, scholars have developed interest in the extra musical functions of music. Such interest has culminated in studies on music and healing. This has led to the formulation of theories on the science of sound in healing by Mamman (1997:1) and that which states that music heals more efficaciously in cultural contexts (Scott, 2006:4), which this study relies on as its theoretical framework. This paper examines the processes of music in healing in Iyayi society. It identifies the ailments which Iyayi can effectively treat, documents and analyzes some Iyayi songs used for such healing thus contributing to the bibliography of therapeutic music in Nigeria.

**DEFINITION OF MUSIC THERAPY**

Alvin (1975:4) defines music therapy as the controlled use of music in the treatment, education, training and rehabilitation of children and adults suffering

from physical, mental or emotional disorders. Mereni (2004:9) indicates that the word therapy comes from the Greek word "therapeia" which means "healing", in the same sense as treatment of a disease: a curative intervention for the purpose of healing a sickness or restoring health.

### ORIGIN OF ESAN AND THE IYAYI SOCIETY IN ESANLAND

The term Esan is applied to people in five local government areas in Edo Central senatorial district of Edo state. Esan is located in the tropical zone of the northern part of the Nigerian forest region (Okoduwa, 1997:45).

What exactly is Iyayi and when did the religious society evolve in Esan? Iyayi in Esan means "I believe" or "faith in God" - (Iyayi Osenebua). For congruent presentation, Osenughegbe religious movement changed to Iyayi for fear of arrest similar to the situation in Benin; hence, a decade after the arrest of Osenughegbe (Idubor), the high priest in Benin, a different name was adopted to facilitate registration. One of the Iyayi worship songs, "*Orea yi shoshi*" as translated shows the linguistic evidence of borrowing and adaptation of the Urhobo word in an Esan song:

<b>Text in Esan</b>	<b>Translation</b>
<i>Oare ha yi shoshi</i>	Even though it is in the church
Ose a so tie o	It is God one calls on.
<i>Osenobula kpa</i>	It is only one God
<i>na mien bha gbon</i>	that is found in the world.

Although *Ishoshi* is non-existent in Esan, according to Ofosu (2001:78), '*Ishoshi* is the Urhobo word for church. Thus "*Ishoshi Erhi*" means spiritual church'. The Esan word for church is *Otue*. Interestingly, Esan is not in any way a neighbour of the Urhobo to allow for cross cultural borrowing and adaptation of language. Thus, Iyayi society of the Esan is undoubtedly an out growth of Igbe Ubiesha religious movements of Kokori, Delta State. This is why the groups in Esan pay homage to Kokori during their annual meetings in Kokori (Echekwube; 1994:22 and Nabofa 2003:238). In recent times, however, because of economic hardship and political restructuring, this homage has been de-emphasized and conventions are now held at Usugbenu, Agwa and other areas chosen by the head priests.

### CONCEPT OF ILLNESS AND ITS ETIOLOGY IN ESAN

Among the Esan, four classes of disease causation are discernable by both the healers and the generality of the people. These are:

1. Emianmhen
2. Emianmhen - Ason
3. Emianmhen - Elimhin
4. Emianmhen – Arialusi

- 1 **Emianmhen** is sickness, which is natural and very tractable. The ailments under this category are those contacted from poor living conditions, heredity and through sexual promiscuity.
- 2 **Emianmhen – Ason** which means, night sickness, refers to diseases caused by witches and wizards. In this case, while the sickness may manifest itself in natural form, careful prognosis and diagnosis is required so that the related forces can be appeased to facilitate prompt healing.
- 3 **Emianmhen – Arinmhin or Emianmhen – Elimhin**, according to the different dialects in Esan, is sickness caused by ancestors, gods and spirits. This type of sickness is often contacted through neglect of ancestors, village gods, eating a totem animal, breaking binding rules, having canal knowledge of a brother's wife, infidelity or willful destruction of a relative's property.
4. **Emianmhen – Arialusi**. This is the kind of sickness carried over from past earth life. There is a general belief in Esan that when a spouse dies and is not mourned by the widow or widower or when one commits an unexposed crime before death, when he reincarnates he begins to suffer and he can only be cured by offering of sacrifices.

#### **THE HEALING SYSTEMS IN IYAYI SOCIETY**

Iyayi society has two major kinds of healing procedures and they are: healing basically through music and music as an accompaniment to healing rites. What follows are the use of music in the management of illnesses.

##### **Music as Audio Analgesic in Labour Pains**

Audio analgesic could be simply explained as sound one hears that helps to reduce pains considerably. Explaining the action of musical sounds on human brain and the entire body, Zatorre (2005:312) remarks:

...sound waves from a musical instrument after being introduced into neural impulses by the inner ear, travels through several ... stations in the brainstem and midbrain to reach the auditory cortex. The auditory cortex contains distinct sub-regions that are important for decoding and representing the various aspects of the complex sound. In turn, information from the auditory cortex interacts with many other brain areas, especially the frontal lobe, for memory formation and interpretation. The orbito-frontal region is one of the many sections involved in emotional evaluation (Zatorre, 2005: 312).

Consequently, when a person who suffers from pains is faced with the appreciation and interpretation of sound, the source of pain is forgotten because the brain, in particular and the entire body bathes in the music provided. It is generally known that pregnancy is no sickness and falling into labour is no sickness either. However, falling into labour has its associated excruciating pains and health complications. Among members of Iyayi society, labour pains during delivery are managed through intense music and dance

using selected songs from their repertoire which have relevance to delivery and motherhood. In what follows, we would report cases of ailment brought to Iyayi society and how they have been cured with the application of music.

**Case Study 1**

Around 10.25 pm on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, 2007, Mrs. Obehi Aaron (nee Egbadon) of Idumebo, Irrua, was led by Mrs. Lucy Egbadon to the home of Oga Williams Urieto . Mrs. Aaron who lives with her husband in Lagos was sent home to her parents in Edo State when her expected date of delivery was very close. The expectant mother had registered in the pre-natal arm of the out patients department of Irrua specialist teaching hospital. For fear of high fee of discharge from the hospital and the incidence of caesarean section which is sometimes performed on pregnant women, Mrs. Aaron was led by her mother to the home of Oga Williams Urieto.

**i. Investigation and diagnosis**

At the time when Mrs. Egbadon led her daughter to the healing home, Mrs. Obehi Aaron was already feeling uncomfortable with her condition. Her stomach was big and Oga Williams Urieto observed that the baby has not positioned its head downwards towards the cervix for proper engagement to facilitate delivery.

**ii. Treatment**

At 1.15 am on the 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2007, on the order of Oga Williams Urieto, Mrs., Obehi Aaron was stripped of her blouse and bra by two women who also rubbed *Uden* (palm kernel oil) on her stomach down through her legs to touch the floor with their palms. She was given a mixture of Uden<sup>3</sup>, Ogbon<sup>4</sup> bi amen (palm kernel oil, clay and water) to drink, after which they performed the following songs for her.

**OMON AIGBE MEA**

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song 'OMON AIGBE MEA'. The music is written in a single treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 6/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Staff 1:  
 O mon ai gbe me an o mon hi gba sie do o mon hi gba sien do

Staff 2:  
 o mon hai gbe me an o mon hi gba sien do o mon hi gba sie do

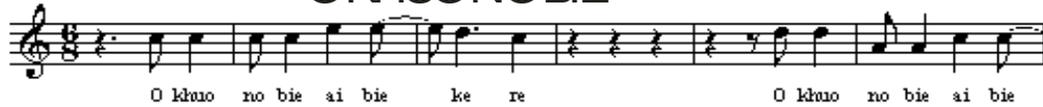
**Text in Esan**

Omon ai gbe mea  
 Omon hi gba sien do  
 Omon hi gba sien do

**Translation**

Baby do not kill me  
 Children do not kill Alligator pepper  
 Children do not kill Alligator pepper

**OKHUONOBIE**



**Text in Esan**

Okhuo no bie  
 Ai bie kere  
 Okhuo no bie  
 Ai bie kere  
 Dagbare

**Translation**

Woman in labour  
 Do not reserve anything  
 Woman in labour  
 Do not reserve anything  
 Let the baby come out

**ABIELE**



**Text in Esan**

Abiele  
 So ma me bhe ho  
 Abiele  
 So ma me bhe ho

**Translation**

Delivery news  
 Isn't pleasant to the ears?  
 Delivery news  
 Isn't pleasant to the ears?

**OBIOMON**



**Text in Esan**

Obio mon ria omon a  
 nene men i ria men  
 Obio mon ria omon a  
 nene men i ria men

**Translation**

Mother has spoilt a child.  
 My mother did not spoil me.  
 Mother has spoilt a child.  
 My mother did not spoil me.

She could barely dance to the first two songs before she requested for permission to sit down. The remaining three songs were performed for her while she was seated. The style in the therapy sessions was a mixture of individual and group sessions. In the individual session, the priest/healer performed some selected songs for the patient alone. She was encouraged to sing and dance to the songs performed by members of the society. When the patient was too weak to stand or even sit well, members of the society sang and danced while the patient became the spectator. This then turned out to be group session.

### iii. **Management**

Two women who are members of the society were put in her charge in the labour ward while priest William Urieto was regularly checking on her in the labour room.

### iv. **Result**

At 5.30am on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August 2007, Mrs. Obehi Aaron delivered a baby girl.

### v. **Follow-up**

She stayed with her baby in the healing home for three days before going to her parents' home on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September, 2007.

## **INSOMNIA**

Insomnia is a condition of being unable to sleep. This is a common accompaniment to mental disorder. The mind is so busy grappling with problems that it is just unable to rest. Efforts to go to sleep are to no avail and the sufferer spends agonizing nights worrying about how he will cope with life (Trevor, 1983:42). Sleeplessness, sleep truncation and early waking, according to Iyayi members, are usually a result of emotional issues bottled up in the mind, which are related to wrong actions against self, friends, relations or the land. Over a period of time, the effect of fear and anxiety concomitant with the wrong deeds begins to manifest. Physiological defects become palpable in the patient's clinical picture. Commenting on fear as a complex emotion which may negatively affect health, Mbanefo (1991:4) said:

Human beings operate on a basis of check and balance system consisting of three departments: the physical, the intellectual and the emotional. When there is harmony in the respective working of the three, the individual is sound and normal. A disabling fault in one of the three creates an imbalance that often appreciably reduces efficiency of the individual (Mbanefo, 1991: 4).

What follows is an account of the procedure used in treating a case of insomnia with music by members of the Iyayi society.

## **Case Study 2**

Thomas Otobo was born at Ekekhen, Igueben. He was a secondary school drop out who started business early. His elder brother, Peter, was in school when he impregnated Martha, his school mate. Subsequently Martha was given to Peter as a wife. As a young boy who was sponsored by his parents, he was hardly ever able to meet the financial needs of his new status as a married man and student. Thomas then decided to help his brother Peter and his wife financially. As a result of this, Thomas began to have affairs with Martha, his brother's wife. Soon his sin started worrying him and he began to feel unsafe even in the midst of friends. He was afraid to go out at night and he began to experience sleepless nights caused by his wrong actions and thoughts over what would happen if his brother got to know this secret affairs with his wife.

### **i. Diagnosis**

Since he could not find solutions to his problems, Thomas then confided in one of his friends about his sleeplessness. He also informed his friend of how he has spent much money buying medicine which did not improve his situation. It was this friend who then led him to the Iyayi society at Usugbenu on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, 2006. On his second visit during worship, a priestess Alice Omondiale pulled him out before the congregation. He was told that he has used his own hands to attract evil which could annihilate a whole lineage if something was not done to avert it. The woman asked him myriads of questions among which were: who is Martha? Where do you know her? He was then told to say to himself "may the trouble coming from Martha's abode not engulf me". Having been prompted by these questions, he recounted the whole story of the secret affairs he has been having with his brother's wife.

### **ii Treatment**

After recounting his story, he was asked to return to his village immediately to confess to his people what he has done. As a result of his confession, he was fined a goat which was killed for the propitiation of ancestral spirits. For Martha, ritual cleansing was done for not reporting Thomas' overtures promptly. She was purified by using a chick to cleanse her body after which it was smashed on the floor. She was further required to take an oath of fidelity to her husband after which, she was given a bath which indicates washing sins away. This exercise was supervised by elderly women in the village.

Thomas was then kept in the temple for three days. Every evening for thirty minutes, special music was played for him from 7:30pm to 8:00pm after which he was given a piece of kola nut blessed by the healer/priest to eat. The blessing centered around admonishing the patient and asking God to forgive him of his sins. By the third day, he had recovered and was discharged. The Iyayi repertory for this ailment are songs 'Orehayisiosi', 'Akhumenkhian,' 'Ona Ughele' and 'Ujedugbo' transcribed below.

## OREAYISIOS



**Text in Esan**

Oare ha yi sho shi  
 Ose ha so tie – o  
 Ose no bula kpa  
 Na mhien bha gbon

**Translation**

Even if it is the church  
 it is God one calls on  
 it is one God  
 that is in the world

## AKHUMENKHIAN



**Text in Esan**

Akhumen Khian  
 Ine gbe no se meo  
 Ose no nyan mhen  
 Ole ha hi mhin me  
 Bho na gbon nan

**Translation**

They are pursuing me  
 I have taken refuge in God  
 It is only God who owns me  
 that can rescue me  
 in this life

## ONA UGHELE

Musical notation for 'ONA UGHELE' in 8/8 time. The first staff contains the melody with lyrics: O na 'ghe le O na'ghele O na 'ghe le. The second staff continues the melody with lyrics: o naghe le na dabi me o fu re ni ha miebho o naghe le.

### Text in Esan

Ona ugele  
 Ona ugele  
 Ona ugele  
 Ona ugele na de biemen  
 Ofure ni ge mie bho  
 Ona ugele

### Translation

This is the land  
 This is the land  
 This is the land  
 This is the land where I was born  
 It is peace I will find in it  
 This is the land

## WEDUGBO

Musical notation for 'WEDUGBO' in 8/8 time. The first staff contains the melody with lyrics: O bha ja a mue ra wu - we e u se dugbo. The second staff continues the melody with lyrics: o bha ja - a mue ran wu - me - e - e u je dugbo.

### Text in Esan

Uje du gbo  
 Obha ja mue ran uwu we ee  
  
 Uje du gbo  
 Obho ja ue ran uwu me ee

### Translation

The Farm Road  
 does not allow wood to be  
 carried sideways  
 The farm road  
 does not allow wood to be  
 carried sideways

### iii. Management

While he was on Iyayi music daily, for three days, Thomas was kept in the healing home. His diet was not altered nor his movement restricted. In Iyayi society, rituals, and music are concomitant. Rituals are added to music to present holistic healing. In some cases, rituals serve placebo effects. In the case being reported, Thomas was routinely given a piece of Kola nut during the three musical sessions held for him.

**iv. Result**

He became well and was relieved of all forms of fear.

**v. Follow up**

Since his discharge, Thomas has been living in Benin and doing well in his business.

**SPIRIT POSSESSION**

Spirit possession is associated with mental disorder capable of distorting a person's reasoning faculty. The behaviours associated with this ailment or disorders are soliloquy, poor dressing, laughing without cause, not responding to instructions and unnecessary hostility. These are abnormal behaviours which cause considerable embarrassment and harm to sufferer of the ailments and even others (Trevor 1983:45). In terms of abnormality, Crooks and Stein (1988:462) remark:

There is no universally accepted definition of abnormality, however, psychologists who specialise in studying abnormal behaviour tend to emphasise a common core of four criteria that may be used to distinguish normal and abnormal behaviour: atypicality, maladaptivity, psychological discomfort and social unacceptability (Crooks and Stein, 1988: 462).

They explained further that behaviour is atypical when one displays very peculiar conduct or when one's behaviour deviates extremely from the way people act. Maladaptive behaviour has to do with a person's inability to function adequately in every social and occupational role. People suffering from psychological discomfort are often seen to be leaving in their own worlds. They have observable anxiety, depression or agitation which makes them uncomfortable within themselves and among friends. Socially unacceptable behaviours of psychologically disordered people are often judged as culturally unacceptable; for example, a young girl of seventeen who refuses to have a bath for days, eats or tears her clothes and sings throughout the night may be seen as a person who is not enjoying good health. In Esan, spirit possession is often seen as a kind of initiatory sickness. This concept has also been observed by Hart (1990:106), Kongo (1997:9) Friedson, (1997:11) and Nzewi 2002:2) in different African societies.

Initiatory sickness or illness in Esan comes to someone who is a member of a traditional religious group and who is being divinely selected as a healer, priest or

priestess. Such a person suffers from one kind of affliction or the other which is seen as a call to service. For instance, among many African religious groups, the healer or medicine man is often a former patient and this is also the case among the Mashawe in Malawi (Chilivumbo, 1972:8). The idea of initiatory sickness or illness surrounds the special selection of master healers. In this regard, Nzewi (2002) explains:

In some African cultures a person who will eventually become a healer is supernaturally selected through signs such as sickness. The signs, which often result in strange behaviour of physiological ill health, manifest irrespective of age and gender. When diagnosed, proposing or capacitating the person to become a healer could entail the medical- musical theatre of opening the inner eyes to perceive beyond the commonly visible or the reception of extraordinary communications (Nzewi, 2002: 2).

These kinds of spirit possession quite often leave the sufferers psychotic and quasi-psychiatric. To bring the patient back to a state of well being, Iyayi music is used and exorcism is central to the healing rituals. How healing is done through music in this society is substantiated in the cases reported below.

### **HEALING THE LAND AND MEMBERS OF GENERAL DEBILITIES.**

Members of Iyayi society hold the view that the community (land or environment) could become sick due to deliberate act of deviance or corrupt practices. As a result of such development, individuals living in it may begin to experience poor health. To retune the land, all night musical retreat is held to cleanse the land of its impurities and ailments. This is done by singing and dancing around a particular host community while spraying *Ere bi umen*<sup>5</sup> (a mixture of traditional chalk and salt) on the land as they dance through the village. This idea of healing the entire land through music and dance is a common phenomenon among the people of Nigeria. For instance, Ekewenu (1996:45) discussed Odegbigba<sup>6</sup> ritual in Awankere festival of Warri, while Iyeh et al (2005:131) also discussed Agba Kuro<sup>7</sup> ritual in Ichu-Ulor festival of Asaba people of Delta state, Nigeria. Apart from cleansing the land, the performers of the rituals are themselves believed to be given prophylactic treatment.

Rigorous dance movements reduce blood pressure and the risk of heart diseases. During worship, every member of Iyayi society is encouraged to dance off diseases, sweat out ailments and be rejuvenated. It is a medically accepted view that deficiency in tissue salt results from too much water in the body is injurious to the body. However, when members are subjected to constant music and dance performances during worship, sweating occurs and the liquid level reduces.

Healing is thus achieved regularly as members dance and sing Iyayi songs. These songs are attested to by both members and non-members as healing general weaknesses, drowsiness and constipation, to mention just a few.

Music therapy as used by the Iyayi society is different from the one used in western praxis. In the west, music therapists are members of the Medical and Dental Councils, they believe that diseases are primarily caused by microbes and they stress clinical approach to healing. In Iyayi society, the healing methods are traditional; this is discernable in the training of music healers, their conception of illness and the healing patterns employed. These healers consider multiple variables in disease causation such as the individual, his lineage, his social life in connection with his environment. It is this encompassing or holistic approach that has given this society eminence in Esan in particular and Edo state in general.

Music making is not restricted to organized sound only; it also includes a symbolic expression of a social and cultural organization, which reflects the values, the past and present ways of life of human beings. Our study of the text of Iyayi songs randomly collected from the field indicates that some of their songs among other things are therapeutic. Their texts speak to the patients and the ailments directly. The patients are further encouraged through songs to imbibe positive thinking about their wellness. This idea is reflected in the song '*Eran hi gbo bhiuku men*' - fire cannot burn my brother because if water contacts fire it quenches immediately. Fire in this context is symbolic of ailments and worldly troubles. *Obhiuku* is member of or child of *Uku* – this simply refers to the members of the Iyayi fold or persons who have run to them for safety. Water as used in the context is the healing attribute inherent in Iyayi society.

Another song that reflects the healing attribute of Iyayi songs is *Egholemianmen*. The song addresses sellers of different kinds of ailments, that is, evil forces in the community not to sell diseases to innocent members. To sell ailments as used in this context means in the actual sense, spreading of diseases. The song is indirectly saying that whoever devices evil against the innocent should be consumed by evil machinations.

Musical sound enters the human body primarily through the ears and also, through the pores in the body. This sound goes directly into the pituitary gland which in-turn secretes endorphins directly into the blood to kill pains thus, healing is achieved. Healing is achieved when a patient bathes continuously in the music being performed to the extent of dancing to it, this dance induces sweating and in this process the patient forgets pains he originally had. Through music, patients are afforded the opportunity of development of group feeling and socializing with peers, gain relief from self concern and discover avenue for exercise. In Iyayi society, there are certain symbols that are used in healing; they are water, salt, songs, palm kernel oil, and traditional chalk. While in some cases,

they are administered orally in some others, they are simply rubbed on the patient's body; these symbols might be different from one community to the other in Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have identified and discussed Iyayi society's concept of illness, its causation and the musical treatment used in treating some selected ailments. The paper has further established the sharp difference between the Western and traditional African concepts and practices of Music therapy. From the roles it plays in the host community and its environs, it is suggested that Iyayi music holds much promise in health care delivery. It is, therefore, the position of this paper, that similar researches on the use of music for therapeutic purposes be carried out among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. If any meaningful progress is to be made in this direction, there must be a synergy between traditional healers, religious leaders, musicologists, anthropologists and medical practitioners.

## END NOTES

1. Igbe in Esan is meaningless but to Iyayi devotees, it is the spirit of god, which possesses members causing them to tremble, shiver, and quiver and behave in a strange form ecstatically while giving revelations.
2. *Uden* is palm kernel oil. It used in the same manner as the anointing oil of Pentecostal churches
3. Ogbon is brownish type of clay.
4. Traditional chalk and salt are viewed as coolants and purifiers in Iyayi society.
5. Spirit possessed people in Iyayi society are often rubbed with traditional chalk it is believed among them to have soothing effect.
6. *Ode gbigba* ritual sweeping (cleansing) of the streets through music and dance during Awankere festival of the Itsekiri of Delta State.
7. *Agbakuro* ritual sweeping (cleansing) of the streets through music and dance during Ichulor festival of the Asaba people of Delta State

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## PEDI RITUAL SONGS: A MOTIVATION FOR AFRICAN ETHICS

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*Edward K. Lebaka, PhD*

### ABSTRACT

Pedi musicology often approaches the analysis of ritual songs from a perspective as the analysis of biblical psalms. Folk songs are often distinguished from ritual songs in the case of Sekhukhune in Limpopo Province (South Africa) with the distinction based on sociological aspects. Ritual songs are confined to a particular tribe whereas the communicability of folk songs is usually wider. However, strictly speaking, even ritual songs belong to the category of folk songs since folk songs are defined as “the product of a musical tradition that has evolved through the process of oral transmission” (Wachsmann 1980:693), or as ‘the expression of the melodic creativity of a community; it includes songs which are sung or were sung by a people living in a certain geographical area, and which are elemental expressions of the musical instincts of that particular people’ (Bartok 1981:9), etc. Besides, the distinction between folk songs and ritual songs in Sekhukhune area, Limpopo Province is not viable on the musical grounds, as “the traditional uses of music appear to be similar among tribal and non-tribal peoples; also, in terms of music itself the divergences do not necessarily fall along tribal and non-tribal lines” (Wade 1980:147). In this respect the present paper discusses Pedi wisdom songs, a motivation for African ethics, under the label of ‘Ritual Songs’.

### INTRODUCTION

The *Pedi* is a Northern Sotho tribe in South Africa with their Northern Sotho language. *Pedi* ritual songs and music as such cannot be discussed without their relationship to the *Pedi* culture.<sup>1</sup> Several researchers have investigated African religions and philosophy in the African context. Mbiti (1969:2) for example, acknowledges that, to be human, is to belong to the whole community. This involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. In this article, the emphasis is on the types, characteristics, and analysis of some of the *Pedi* traditional religious ritual songs. *Pedi* traditional

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<sup>1</sup> In the *Pedi* tribe music may be examined in terms of its use within the context of social activities. Since music forms an integral part of many social and religious occasions, its use is generally quite obvious. Music may be labour-related, associated with a birth or marriage ritual, used to accompany a dance, death, and so forth. Speaking of the universal use of music, Merriam (1964:210) says “When we speak of the use of music, we are referring to the ways in which music is employed in human society, to the habitual practice or customary exercise of music either as a thing in itself or in conjunction with other activities”.

songs reflect the heart of the *Pedi* culture and tradition. Akuno (2005:52) describes African music as an expression, a work of art and performance. In his view, African music is a human behaviour involving people with their communities. It is an agent of socialization. He is convinced that since African music reflects and expresses culture, it embodies a people's total existence: beliefs, philosophy (worldview), religion, norms, mores, language, expressions, relationships and aspirations. The *Pedi* society considers life as a continual process of favourable circumstances for the promotion of life, health and fertility in house and field. Ancestors are closely bound up with the shepherding of their people. They are part of the family, clan, or lineage, it uses their names, they govern the social order among the living and the ancestors, though dead, are present and continue to influence life in their erstwhile communities on earth.

*Pedi* ritual songs are used to express success (joy), happy times (thanksgiving), times of sorrow (laments), protesting (liberation), the inauguration and funeral of the chief (royal), telling stories (wisdom), emotional expression (rituals), ancestor veneration, pouring of libation and communication (security and survival), irony (imprecation), instructions (law), as well as prayers of trust.

Since the book of Psalm in the Old Testament has not been subjected to a comparative analysis with *Pedi* ritual songs, the prime objectives of the study were to:

- Compare these two literary traditions with regard to similarities and differences in their nature, content and function(s);
- Contribute to the development of the African cultural heritage, especially the *Pedi* culture, by documenting and translating indigenous texts into English for future reference.

## **DEFINITION OF OPERATIVE TERMS**

Apart from the term "African Ethics", other principal terms being employed in this article that need to be defined include "ethics", "morality", "moral law", "moral code", "ethical reflection" and "value".

- **Ethics** is the study of the standards of conduct and moral judgement, a reflection on morality as well as a body or system of morals of a particular group like the *Pedi* or a religion like Christianity.
- **Morality** implies "righteousness or wrongness as of an action", "moral principles", "right or moral conduct".
- **Moral** means "dealing with or capable of distinguishing between right and wrong".
- **Moral law** is used to refer to the law of nature or of the ultimate source of being which gives to morality an ultimate sanction.

- **Moral Code** refers to the social sanctions by which a community like the Pedi organize and regulate their social behaviour.
- **Ethical reflection** is the attempt to clarify the logic and adequacy of the values that shape the "lived" world of our daily experience.
- **Value** in a simple dictionary definition is "the quality of a thing which makes it more or less desirable, useful and so on.

As guided by the above definitions, one can safely define "African Ethics" as a critical reflection on the moral decisions and actions of individuals and of the African Community. African ethics also connotes the traditionally accepted norms, values and sets of guiding principles upon which Africans live.

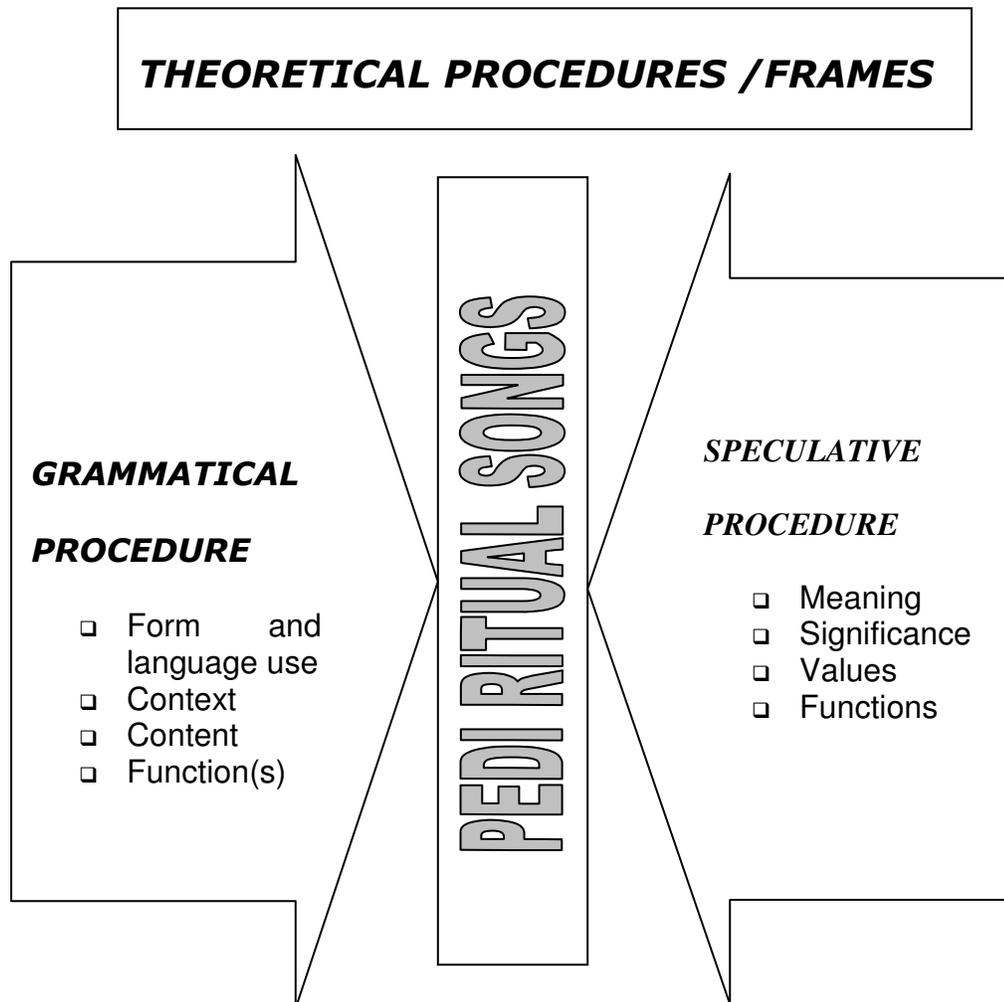
## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is primarily a textual critical study based on primary oral traditions and secondary literature. In order to situate the study theoretically and generate the conceptual framework, secondary data was consulted and assessed. Secondary evidence included written sources like books, journals and other articles, MA and PhD theses, etc.

Due to the oral character and scope of the African context the literature aspect is complemented by a wider text sourced through interviews, observation and recording. Thus recordings on audiocassettes and videotapes captured group performances on *Pedi* ritual songs. In this article the information on the ritual songs was translated into English. Collected *Pedi* Ritual Songs were classified and assessed according to their function(s). This was done by counterchecking, comparing, contrasting and corroborating the collected information of the various sources with the outlined theoretical framework, research questions, hypothesis and objectives.

This study has adopted a comparative approach based on Fiagbezi's ethnomusicological theoretical framework (see figure 1.5.3).

**FIGURE NO. 1: Illustration of theoretical procedures/frames derived from Fiagbedzi's (1989:45) "Philosophy of theory in ethnomusicological research".**



Equally this research draws from inculturation hermeneutics' emphasis and reappraisal of indigenous cultural systems (Adamo 2001:45; Ukpong 2002:18)<sup>2</sup>. While inculturation is nuanced variously in different parts of the Third World, Fabella (2003:105) is of the opinion that it addresses the following concerns: first, culture is seen as comprehensive, taking into account the tension between the influences of modernity and Westernization on the peoples' culture as well as the traditional ways of life; second, as a dialogical process, inculturation takes into account the anti-life components in both the local culture and the biblical accounts (e.g. its patriarchal orientation), which must be critiqued and transformed. In this sense, Fabella (2003:105) insists that inculturation is liberative. Third, in our age inculturation is mainly the responsibility of the local community and religious communities/leaders, not of expatriate missionaries or of local experts alone. Fourth, inculturation is an ongoing process since culture is

<sup>2</sup> Inculturation hermeneutics takes its cue from the methodology of Third World theology (Torres and Fabella 1987:269-271).

dynamic and continually evolves. Fifth, inculturation cannot be so local that religious faith is no longer recognizable by others within the communion of churches in general. Sixth, it is believed that divine intervention or involvement has an essential role in the work of inculturation.<sup>3</sup>

In the context of this study, the grammatical procedures focus on a structure to assess both biblical psalms and *Pedi* ritual songs. This procedure underscores the form and language use, content, functions and contexts of genres or literary styles. Furthermore, they are a useful tool in the determination of techniques of making and transmitting of *Pedi* ritual songs from one generation to the other. The speculative procedure on the other hand addresses the meaning, significance and value of *Pedi* ritual songs and their performance. An integration of the two approaches is utilized in this investigation. Hence this study interrogates form, language-structural elements and characteristics, content and context and function according to set objectives. This theoretical framework forms the conceptual framework of the study. Grammatical aspects of language embedded in song texts are analyzed. Form analytical investigations search literary devices such as metaphors. Thematic motifs are revealed against the related contextual background. Similarly the speculative analysis illuminates the meaning of concepts, their significance and functional values.

At the conceptual level, it is observed that *Pedi* ritual songs are not static. There is a continuous interaction between values embedded in their form and content and values associated with the modern western/eastern social values. Within this interface, we encounter the *Pedi* ritual songs to be assessed: these are emergent *Pedi* songs in the modern traditional interface context. When examined through the theoretical framework of this study, the grammatical theory focuses on the text, context, form and ritual purpose. On the other hand, the speculative theory illuminates meaning, significance, values and functions of the *Pedi* ritual songs.

Consequently the results from the assessment of biblical psalms and *Pedi* ritual songs are compared. The basis of this comparative assessment is done on form and language use, contexts, content and functions of genre styles (literary genres) in their unique religious context(s). In this way the religious significance of both *Pedi* ritual songs and biblical psalms is confirmed.

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<sup>3</sup> Fabella (2003:105) continues to say that in Africa emphasis is given to cultural values such as relationship with ancestors, rites of passage, and traditional healing services. According to him Africans focus on the Africanization of Christianity rather than on the Christianization of Africa, while recognizing that not all aspects of African culture are in consonance with the Christian gospel.

## ASPECTS OF THE MUSICAL ANALYSIS OF PEDI RITUAL SONGS

The musical aspect of Pedi ritual songs cannot be detached from their literary and socio-cultural aspect. It is important to know the cultural and social characteristics of the community and region to which the song belongs. Even a musical analysis should start with at least a brief introduction of the genre of the ritual song, its theme and literary structure.

The classification of Pedi ritual songs vary from district to district, reflecting the diversity of the numerous Pedi folk song traditions. Some Pedi folk songs fall into more than one genre: e.g. a work song may at the same time belong to the genre of women's songs, a religious song may be a dance song, too, performed on a particular holiday, and festival songs may also be dance songs, religious songs or fun songs, etc.

It is desirable to understand the text of the analyzed song, although it may not be always possible for the researcher to obtain the correct translation. However, at least the theme and the gist of the text of the song should be known. The structure of the literary form is vital, since it often closely corresponds to the musical structure. Some songs are made up of numerous lines of text which, however, function as individual lines. In some songs, two lines form a unit, making up couplets. Other songs may combine numbers of lines to form the unit of a stanza. Numerous songs are structured into verses and a refrain. The knowledge of the literary form is useful in connection to the musical form.

Pedi folk songs exhibit a large variety of musical forms. The musical structure is best analyzed with individual musical phrases corresponding to individual sections in the musical form, since folk songs are considerably shorter than classical compositions. The simplest form of Pedi folk songs is a strophic form which repeats the same melodic phrase for each line of the text. The phrase, however, is often repeated in variation, making up a chain form which can be denoted as AA<sub>1</sub>A<sub>2</sub>A<sub>3</sub> etc., with A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, A<sub>3</sub> representing the variations of the original phrase A.

Many folk songs exhibit a structure made up of two or more melodic phrases and their variations in various sequence and repetition. These can include a simple binary structure of A B, with A and B denoting two individual melodic phrases, and various modifications of this form, like the ternary forms A B A<sub>1</sub>. An even greater variety is seen in *Pedi* folk songs which use more than two individual melodic phrases. These range from a simple ternary form A B C to more complex structures involving the repetitions and variations of the individual phrases.

The melodic analysis deals with the melodic pattern of the phrases, the melodic progression, characteristic melodic formulas and ornamentation. Many *Pedi* folk songs exhibit a regular shape of melodic pattern in at least one of their phrases. This can be arched, descending, ascending, pendulum-like, zigzag, terraced, or parabola. The progression of melodic movement can be conjunct, moving in steps of neighbouring notes, or disjunct, involving larger intervallic leaps. In some songs, certain melodic formulas occur repeatedly and are characteristic for the

song. Folk songs of some districts in Sekhukhune region use relatively high ornamentation whereas other districts sing with plain notes.

The metro-rhythmic analysis focuses on the meter of the song and on the rhythmic characteristics. Some songs move in notes of uniform metric values, some songs are more varied in this respect, some songs exhibit dotted rhythm, etc. Some folk songs contain repeatedly occurring rhythmic formulas.

In this article, I shall discuss some of the distinct secular songs sung in the Pedi society, namely: *Mokgoronyane* (wisdom song) and *Kgogedi* (wisdom song). The focus will be on their nature and type, form, language (structural elements and characteristics), content and context, functions as well as their sentiment expressed through these songs.

### MUSICAL ANALYSIS OF TWO *PEDI* RITUAL SONGS

To demonstrate the above aspects of analysis, two *Pedi* folk songs are presented and analyzed below. The songs have been chosen in the same scale and from the same genre. The analysis of the two songs demonstrates the notion of unity in diversity and diversity in unity present in *Pedi* ritual songs.

#### Wisdom Song (Mokgoronyane: Initiation song for boys)

##### Text and translation

Northern Sotho (Pedi)	English
1. Hela ... Hela!	1. Hallo ... Hallo!
2. Mokoronyane swaiswai,	2. Mokgoronyane is passing by,
3. Wa Mmasekapilwanabotsha.	3. My mother's child.
4. Molongwana moswana.	4. With black lips.
5. ka morago ga kgoro tsa botsha.	5. Have a look at the back of the kraal.
6. Maswikana maswikeng.	6. On the stones.
7. meetse re ya go nwa neng?	7. Shall we be able to drink water?
8. Re yo nwa selalelo,	8. We shall enjoy an evening drink,
9. bjalo ka mosadi wa mesereteletsane.	9. Like a woman who is ignorant.
10. Sereteletsa boroko.	10. Who likes sleeping.
11. A re go go bona ba gagwe ba robala,	11. As she sees her children sleeping,
12. A re rekereke boroko.	12. She becomes excited because she can also sleep.

Recorded by the author at *Ga-Maloma* village, *Sekhukhune* area in *Limpopo* Province in April 2004 during the unveiling of the tombstone of *Lehumo Mmotla* (Father to *Matshekge* Christinah *Molangwana*). Refer to track 1, Audio CD.

“*Mokgoronyane*” is an initiation song for boys. “*Mokgoronyane*” is the name of a bird. *Pedi* people are under the conviction that the bird “*Mokgoronyane*” is one the most clever birds they know (Mahlomola Majatladi Personal communication, 9 April 2004). The “*Mokgoronyane*” is the first to wake up early in the morning. She daily looks for food for her children. Before all birds wake up, “*Mokgoronyane*” would be back with food. This song is associated with this clever bird “*Mokgoronyane*”.

This Wisdom Song falls into six clearly defined sections: a) plea for a hearing (line 1); b) advice (line 2); c) appreciation (lines 3-4); d) advice (lines 5-6); e) belief (lines 7-8); and f) warning (lines 9-12).

Within this short song, we identify eleven successive metaphors than can be interpreted in different ways. To enable readers to make meaning from them, I have translated them interpretively. But for this discourse I give a kind of transliteration to enable readers to comprehend how these metaphors function.

The first metaphor in this song (line 2) translates well. The bird called *Mokgoronyane* is passing by. It means that the subjects, the initiates (boys), should imitate this clever bird, by waking up early, to look for food for their children daily when they are later heads of their families. In the second and third metaphors (lines 3-4) which read ‘my mother’s child’ and ‘with black lips’, the literal meaning could be misleading. What could be misleading is that ‘*mother’s child has black lips*’. The interpretation of the second and third metaphors is that initiates are handsome.

The song presents other two metaphors namely ‘have a look at the back of the kraal and on the stones’ (lines 5-6). In most cases the initiation regiments are erected at the back of the royal kraal and is surrounded by stones. The metaphors ‘have a look at the back of the kraal and on the stones’ (lines 5-6) imply that in future if initiates might have social problems, they should not hesitate to come back to the regiment’s elders for advices. In this context the singers suggest that any grown-up member of the society who practices evil or imbibes very bad habits that have ill implications on him and the society, and fails to take counsel from the performances of *Pedi* initiation songs such as ‘*Mokgoronyane*’, would certainly live to regret in the end.

The singers make use of two other metaphors in lines 7 and 8. They develop the theme in such a way that only those who can interpret them could comprehend the message completely. The sixth and seventh metaphors ‘shall we able to drink water and we shall enjoy an evening drink’ strengthen the belief of the *Pedi* people, that if one is in the forest and thirsty and does not know where to get water, you can just follow the clever bird ‘*Mokgoronyane*’. Then you will definitely get water. The belief is that the bird takes water very often. In this context it is expressed that initiates should take water very often. By so doing they shall not dehydrate.

The ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelve metaphors are a warning to the initiates that they should not behave like a woman who is ignorant (line 9), and likes sleeping (lines 10-12). Sleeping is time consuming and brings no reward. Hereby it is suggested that this song is taught to the initiates by their supervisors at the initiation school. It is initially sung by the initiates' supervisors and later on the initiates are afforded the opportunity to sing the song too. There is much wisdom in the above song. *Mokgoronyane* provides enlightenment to the initiates concerning accountability and responsibility. The enlightenment is significant in the society because very often, it is parents who suffer the blame and consequent attacks from their children and wards, especially when the children are not successful in life. The following is an initiation song for girls.

### Wisdom Song (Kgogedi: Initiation Song for girls)

#### Text and translation

Northern Sotho (Pedi)	English
1. Kgogedi, Kgogedi.	1. Kgogedi, Kgogedi.
2. Ngwananoka Kgogedi.	2. River's child Kgogedi.
3. Ke ya le noka, Kgogedi.	3. I am flown by the river, Kgogedi.
4. Kgogedi ya Kwena Madiba.	4. Kgogedi who belongs to crocodile's lakes.
5. Ngwananoka Kgogedi,	5. River's child Kgogedi,
6. mme ntshware ke a ya.	6. my mother, please hold me, I am sinking.
7. Ke ya le noka, Kgogedi.	7. I am flown by the river, Kgogedi.
8. Kgogedi ya kwena le kubu,	8. Kgogedi of crocodiles,
9. Ngwananoka kgogedi.	9. River's child, Kgogedi.
10. sekwakwalala ngwananoka.	10. sekwakwalala, river's child.
11. Ngwananoka ke kgalegile.	11. River's child, I am thirsty.
12. Ke hloka le mogedi wa meets.	12. I am in need of someone who can fetch me water.
13. Ngwananoka ke kgakegile.	13. River's child, I am thirsty.
14. Sekwakwalala ngwananoka.	14. Sekwakwalala, river's child.
15. ngwananoka ke kgalegile.	15. river's child, I am thirsty.

Recorded by the author at *Ga-Maloma* village, *Sekhukhune* area in *Limpopo* Province in April 2004 during the unveiling of the tombstone of *Lehumo Mmotla* (Father to *Matshekge Molangwana* Christinah). Refer to track 2, Audio CD.

Synthetic philosophy is the original and traditional method by which human beings reach the knowledge of truth through reasoning, often referred to as rationalism (Ajah 2004:16). With some past experiences and synthetic approach, the older generations have passed down some values on the meaning of names in the *Pedi* culture like in most other cultures. *Pedi* people then follow and apply this synthetic philosophy in ascertaining truth about the meaning of names as they manifest in the lives of people in the society.

“*Kgogedi*” is an initiation song for girls. “*Kgooga*” is the name of a small, beautiful and slow moving animal which looks like a tortoise. The song “*Kgogedi*” is associated with this slow moving animal called “*Kgooga*.” Therefore the tempo of the song “*Kgogedi*” is slow. Most ritual dances that are not intended for a trance are slow in tempo. They have the solemn mood of the contexts of the performance (Bakare and Mans 2003:223).

The initiation song *Kgogedi* can be divided as follows: a) It begins with an advice and enlightenment on co-operation and mutual relationship (lines 1-3 and 5-7); b) signal of appreciation (line 4); c) praise (lines 8-10) and d) request (lines 11-15).

In ‘*Kgogedi*’ the poet depicts the small and slow moving animal called ‘*Kgooga*’. The term has two primary classes as follows. The poet addresses name of the song as well as the name of the character (line 1). The song was originally composed to educate and enlighten initiates about their behavior. Lines 2 and 3 present metaphors ‘river’s child *Kgogedi*’ and ‘I am flown by the river *Kgogedi*’. While the one implies that *Kgogedi* likes taking a bath and she is always clean the other literally means the poet is in a dire need for the person called *Kgogedi* to rescue her as she is flown by the river. The intention of the poet is to educate initiates that they should love and take care of one another.

The expression ‘*Kgogedi ya Kwena Madiba*’ (line 4) indicates that *Kgogedi* is always clean. ‘*Kgogedi*’ is associated with the crocodile which is always in the water. The expression suggests a signal of appreciation. In this context, the poet inspires the initiates to take a bath as often as possible to be clean and beautiful like *Kgogedi*. The metaphors in lines 5-7 suggest a similar meaning as in lines 2-3. They imply that the poet is flown by the river and intend to remind initiates to love and care for one another.

The meaning of metaphors in lines 8-10 is clear. With repetitive praise they express that ‘*Kgogedi*’ looks after herself and she is beautiful. With the expression ‘river’s child *Kgogedi*’ the song reminds initiates to look after themselves to be as beautiful as ‘*Kgogedi*’ or as the slow moving and beautiful animal called ‘*Kgooga*’.

The last four metaphors (lines 11-15) utter that the poet is thirsty. Initiates should go to the river to fetch water. Utterances in lines 11, 13 and 15 are forms of expression in the *Pedi* culture especially when one is thirsty. Lines 12 and 14 convey the same meaning. Repetition is clearly present in the structure of this song. It is evident in lines 2, 5 and 9 ‘*ngwana noka Kgogedi*’ and lines 11, 13 and 15 ‘*ngwana noka ke kgalegile*’. There are two dominant ideas in the above song, namely, ‘*ngwana noka Kgogedi*’ and ‘*ngwana noka ke kgalegile*’. The repetition technique is a clear emphasis of the central message of the song. Joshua Uzoigwe (1998:20) examines the use of repetition in song texts and writes as follows:

As repetition of musical phrase is one of the most important compositional features in *ilulu nkwa*, it often serves as a useful means by which the soloist emphasizes and projects to the listening audience the principal idea or ideas of the particular song. Thus, in

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*ilulu nkwa* song-performance it is the phrasal idea or group of ideas with the greatest number of occurrence that usually constitutes as the main theme.

Burton and Chacksfield (1979:115-116) similarly write that repetition is a powerful, forceful, rhetorical and expressive device skillfully employed by poets to hammer key words home, in order to implant dominant emotions in listeners or readers' mind. In *Pedi* songs, repetitions often appear in forms of chorus refrain or a frequent return of the narration to the principal idea at strategic intervals (see the song *Kgogedi*).

Most *Pedi* themes are educative either by use of direct statements or by use of idioms, epigrammatise, metaphors and proverbs that are poetically structured to stimulate further reasoning and realization of meaning through deduction. The theme of the song, '*ngwana noka Kgogedi*' for instance, is metaphorically educative. It implies that initiates should take a bath as often as possible. The song has didactic significance. Similarly, the female initiates are taught different formulas that are intended to prepare them for womanhood. Most of these formulas are presented as songs, such as *Kgogedi*. Some of them are intended to be self-consoling in view of the hardships the initiates endure everyday (Sekhukhune 1988:186).

The song is sung during and after the girls have been circumcised. While singing the girls are ill-treated by their supervisors in different ways. For example, they administer corporal punishment on them, curse them, make them to work hard without rest or intervals, etc (Sekhukhune 1988:186). They are deliberately doing these unacceptable deeds to the initiates to show them that to become a responsible adult is not an easy task. A girl will go through difficult experiences. Formal education is given to the girls in the initiation schools. This education plays a very important part in the life of every individual (Krige 1937:99).

## **FUNCTION**

Initiation for boys in the *Pedi* culture is divided into two distinct ceremonies: *bodika* and *bogwera*. The aim of *bodika* ceremony is to put to the test the initiates' strength, courage and endurance through various devices. The second initiation (*bogwera*) usually takes place after a year has lapsed since the first school. Its chief function is to help the initiated boys create lasting friendships with one another. Once again, the boys enter a lodge, but they are not completely separated from the rest of the community. During the day they receive further training in the initiation formulae. The second ceremony, *bogwera* ('friendship'), reinforces the bonds that were forged between the boys and the first school (Levine 2005:151-152).

Initiation for girls in the *Pedi* culture has two phases. During the first phase the daily activities of the female initiates follow a set routine. In the mornings, after they have washed in the river and eaten breakfast, they form a single, S-shaped line, and perform a dance-song with slow movements. They have formal training

sessions during which the older girls teach them the extensive repertoire of initiation songs. They learn the school's formulae, chanting the short phrases over and over as well as using mime to learn the behaviour that is expected of them as women. And the duties that they will be obliged to perform as adults (Levine 2005:156-157). During the second phase of the initiation school, the girls are located at the head-kraal. The most important activity throughout this period is the singing that takes place in the enclosure every morning and evening. In between, the girls work in the chief's fields, or are hired out to work elsewhere. Towards the end of the initiation, role-play and disguise are an important feature in their activities. In the evenings, mini-dramas are performed as a method of instruction. Disguised figures wearing reeds and leaves sing and dance for them, using symbolic gestures (Levine 2005:157).

Through the singing of these wisdom songs, in the *Pedi* culture the aim of initiation school is to *preserve the Pedi cultural heritage*. Other aims are to *inspire the initiates to be respectful* as well as to *reduce crime and divorce rates*. One of the main objectives of the *Pedi* initiation school is to train the boys in *courage and endurance* (Krige 1937:101). Boys have to sleep on their backs on the bare ground without covering, and are severely punished if unable to repeat the formulae and songs that are great features of the *Pedi* tradition. Boys receive *a good training in hunting*.

The function of an initiation school is *to test who has perseverance and who has not*. At times the initiates both girls and boys are made to suffer from hunger and thirst. They are compelled to spend few days without food. In traditional life, initiation was a long process involving the whole community and lasting at least several weeks. Initiation is an integral part of the life of the community. The youth of a particular age group would be initiated into adulthood together (Mugambi 2005:532).

*Pedi* Wisdom Songs contain a lot of wisdom in as far as virtues related to ideal humanistic creativity, sensibilities and meanings are concerned. They therefore, embody the African philosophy of life, achievement and identity. A lot of ideas may be borrowed from virtues/lessons and philosophies embedded in the cultural practices. Music, therefore, being held high among the African societies plays a role of training and preparing the individuals to understand their societies and themselves better for the survival of the human race (Orawo 1998:142).

The function of the song "*Mokgoronyane*" is to make the initiates aware that sleeping is time consuming and brings no reward. Every evening most families in the *Pedi* tribe meet as family members of the same household to share good and bad news of that day. They then convey teaching to their children by means of wisdom sayings. The song also functions to alert the initiates of how precious time is.

The small and slow moving animal called "*Kgooga*" can be described as well behaved, beautiful, and as fond of water and honey. By singing this song the initiates' supervisors are urging the girls (initiates) to behave like "*Kgooga*". They

should 1) sit properly and not expose their private parts; 2) take a bath very often to look beautiful like this animal and to avoid the bad smell; 3) look after their husbands by cooking them delicious food; 4) be friendly to other people like this animal; 5) respect their husbands and whenever the husbands are angry should be humble to calm down the situation; 6) walk slowly as that will make them secure their reputation.

The *Pedi* people believe that a woman, who walks at a fast pace, does not deserve respect. She is also associated with prostitution. The song is about teaching the initiates to look like "*Kgooga*". *Kgooga*'s body is covered with hard skin, which is not easy to break. When it sleeps, the head is also hidden, covered by this hard skin. With this song, the girls are advised to cover their whole bodies like "*Kgooga*" and not to be half-naked. This would result in people respecting them, especially their husbands and children.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

The relationship between the biblical psalms and *Pedi* ritual songs is a difficult and detailed issue. This is due to historical cultural distance between the two traditions. African societies may not have undergone similar developmental processes as ancient Israel. The purpose of this article is to compare the psalms of wisdom and *Pedi* wisdom songs: to provide a genre comparison, in order to point out some of the similarities and differences between the two cultures' poetry and religio-cultural texts.

The current study may be considered as a pioneer investigation because preliminary research has revealed that there is no investigation that has employed a comparison between biblical psalms and *Pedi* ritual songs. The clearest differences and similarities between the biblical psalms and *Pedi* ritual songs relate to religious experience. A comparison of biblical psalms and *Pedi* ritual songs yielded the following significant similarities and differences.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

### Form

Old Testament wisdom psalms are identified by motifs like retribution, counsel, fear of Yahweh, juxtaposition of wicked and righteous people and the two 'ways'. An important feature of wisdom psalms is their didactic character. Wisdom psalms contain vocabulary of turning from evil and a connectedness between wealth and uprightness.

*Pedi* wisdom songs are educational. They focus on adult responsibilities. For that reason they are taught at *Pedi* initiation schools. At such schools neophytes are taught the aged customs of *Pedi* people. In this way individuals are equipped with skills to participate in the larger community and in adult life.

Few differences exist between Old Testament wisdom psalms and *Pedi* wisdom texts. In wisdom psalms prohibition against foolish conduct is very often mentioned whereas in *Pedi* wisdom songs the use of irony is evident. However, both Old Testament wisdom psalms and *Pedi* wisdom songs share a general characteristic of wisdom poetry and language.

### **Language (structural elements and characteristics)**

Old Testament wisdom psalms offer advice about life. They promote righteousness over wickedness through contrast. The fear of the Lord as principle for everyday behaviour is promoted. Other poetic devices that are used in wisdom psalms are the acrostic structure, rhetorical elements, formulaic language and repetition. This genre is cast in a father-son setting. Language in wisdom psalms is didactic and meditative.

Since most *Pedi* wisdom songs are prominent in initiation rites they are characterized by taboos and traditional beliefs. Structurally these songs have short solo-response forms. Proverbial language is generic. Equally *Pedi* music is reiterative which signifies its didactic nature. *Pedi* initiation songs are artistic-aesthetic communication which integrate dance and other visual and verbal arts.

In both traditions practical life is central. Psalms focus on righteousness and wickedness and the resultant success or failure from such lifestyles respectively. *Pedi* songs on the other hand promote an adjusted lifestyle through taboos and customs. Exemplarily *Kgogedi* a *Pedi* initiation song for girls addresses issues of loneliness and estrangement through words of encouragement. Further, the girls are motivated to enjoy their work and ease their minds. The expressiveness of *Pedi* music is either subdued or accounted for in wisdom psalms where a sombre meditative approach is preferred. There is a distinction in the structure of the song texts from the two traditions. This is demonstrated by the occurrence of variant elements in the songs. Old Testament wisdom songs include the following elements: proverbs, sayings, admonitions and prohibitions while *Pedi* wisdom songs include a plea for God to hear, a general character of wisdom poetry, despair and irony.

*Pedi* songs are marked by the presence of short solo-response phrases. Their reiterative characteristic enhances wisdom sayings. Another common feature of *Pedi* songs is its artistic-aesthetic aspect conveyed by dance, visual and verbal arts. Paramusical features such as whistling, yelling and ululating are common too.

In view of the above discussion similarities are found in use of proverbs. To the contrary artistic-aesthetic practices, paramusical features and reiterative aspects are uncommon in Israelite wisdom psalms.

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**Content and context**

Old Testament wisdom psalms (e.g. Pss 1; 9; 10; 25; 34; 49; 73, etc) could be interpreted as an expression of Israel's worship, but their purpose is to offer believers wisdom views. They convince of righteous behavior.

*Pedi* wisdom songs like *Mokgoronyane* and *Kgogedi* are teaching songs. The songs are educational focused on how one should become a responsible adult. Wisdom texts are meant to convince the hearer of wise conduct. They are not initiation texts, have no attempt to speak to the ancestors, no concern with the problems of modern Western living challenges. *Pedi* initiation texts show a directness in language; they address to ancestors and of ancestors. Thus these songs have kept or retained their popularity in oral tradition down through the centuries.

**Function**

There is a strong emphasis on the didactic character in psalms of wisdom. This corpus is an expression of Israel's behavioural guidelines. By promoting the fear of the Lord the psalmists intend to raise practical lifestyles conforming to the admonition. Hence the community is urged to shun wickedness.

*Pedi* wisdom songs are aimed at promoting community well-being. Cultural heritage is preserved through retentive memory. These songs assist in the preservation and transmission of religion and custom. It appears that the presence of initiation schools and a strong value system in *Pedi* society have contributed to the reduction of social delinquency, crime and divorce rate. Conversely respect, politeness, authority courage and endurance are pronounced due to cultural education forms.

Wisdom songs feature prominently in the Psalms and in the *Pedi* society. Emphasis is placed on didactic aspects. Through teaching and warning the communities are urged to live exemplarily. However in the Psalms the origin of wisdom is the fear of the Lord while among *Pedi* people it is drawn from the community. In any case results from both religious experiences impact on the respective communities.

*Pedi* wisdom songs like other African songs embody an African philosophy of life. They assist in the training and preparing of individuals to be better citizens and contribute to society positively. Laziness is eschewed while hard work is encouraged (e.g. *Mokgoronyane*). Equally the value of time management, decency, hygiene, spousal honour and family care are inculcated in girls at the initiation school through song. Wisdom psalms are didactic; believers are urged to live wisely through the fear of the Lord. They are advised to reject folly and refrain from wicked behaviour. To that end wisdom songs in both traditions encourage right living. The emphasis on the fear of the God obtaining in biblical psalms is however lacking from *Pedi* songs.

## CONCLUSION

Wisdom psalms belong to the larger biblical corpus of wisdom. Psalmists locate meaning in life in the fear of God. Ideally, those who follow God's ways are successful. Wisdom psalms are therefore instructional and aimed at promoting a godly life. Poetic devices of rhetorical speech, contrast, acrostic style, repetition and formulaic language are employed. Similarly, *Pedi* people employ wisdom songs to promote well-being and success in life. Its domain is the cultural educational system centred on initiation schools for boys and girls. It is hoped that through teaching *Pedi* society will comprise well adjusted adults.

In this research it was demonstrated that when Psalms of the Old Testament (wisdom) are compared to the *Pedi* ritual songs, definite conclusions follow. On the one hand, there appear to be many general similarities between the songs of the two cultures with regard to a variety of issues. On other hand, a closer look at the songs themselves reveals many significant differences on a variety of levels.

The different historical and cultural contexts of the two textual traditions suggest that each tradition must be appropriated in its own context. Only thereafter can commonalities of the human condition and oral affinity be established. *Both traditions indicate religious experience of believers and enhance their worship of the divine.*

While the African ritual songs exhibit rich cultural, moral and spiritual contents, modern biblical and religious scholars are yet to recognize the need to discover their spiritual, moral and social impact on African worship.

*Pedi* ritual songs are deeply rooted in myths, taboos and beliefs that form basic philosophical foundations of the *Pedi* cultural fabric and hence its context-utilitarian nature. Therefore, in order to appreciate the relevance of *Pedi* ritual songs, biblical and religious scholars/theologians need to be cognizant of its cultural underpinnings.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above findings I conclude with some suggestions.

- Further study should be conducted with regard to retention and transmission of *Pedi* cultural values.
- By so doing results thereof shall enrich education, African theology, indigenous knowledge as well as the preservation of *Pedi* cultural heritage.
- Further research into the function of music in *Pedi* religious rituals pertaining to initiation will advance the wealth of a *Pedi* approach to the divine and people's religious well being in difficult life situations.

These suggestions might be of value to African Christian theology. It is evident that the Bible can be interpreted by all cultures. Every culture is important and

none of them is superior to others. Also, the experience of the Old Testament texts relates to any individual culture, the *Pedi* culture, included.

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## **COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES IN AFRICAN ART MUSIC: THE META-MUSICAL DIMENSION**

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***'Femi Adedeji, PhD***

### **ABSTRACT**

Global attention in scholarship which seems to focus on Africa today makes any curious African mind ponders. The assumption is that there are lots of peculiarities, untapped wealth, special endowments and great future prospects in Africa that the World could benefit from. Its music generally; be it traditional, folk, popular or art; is unique in many ways. Its rhythm, world of sounds, stylistic forms, instrumentation, functionality, aesthetics, diversity, creativity, fine art and mysticism have no parallel. This uniqueness calls for the understanding of the underlying techniques used by the composers. A predominant dimension of these techniques and which is the concern of this paper, is what we term 'meta-musical'. It bothers on unconventional 'spiritual' sources of sounds, inspiration and techniques that go beyond the physical and mere musical processes. The knowledge of this dimension unlocks the understanding of 'Africaness' in African music. Most African composers, performers, musicologists and audience attest to the theory of 'meta-music'. This paper therefore attempts to unravel the mystery behind the composition of African Art music; the uniqueness of which continues to hold the World spell-bound.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper theorizes that:

- in Africa, music is used to invoke, worship, appease and entertain the supernaturals and hence the supernaturals are concerned about which types of music are played, and their composition and performance practices.
  
- in Africa, music and the inspiration to compose it are also received from meta-musical i.e. metaphysical or spiritual sources.
  
- there is no way the artistry of an African music composer can be totally separated from his spiritual background and experiences.

Issues of styles, techniques and sources in art music composition are all distinct but interwoven. Not only are they crucial to composition as an art, they also constitute essential elements responsible for distinctiveness in compositional works. African art music compositions are not exempted from these characteristics. Few literature on compositional techniques available to me while

writing this paper include Echezona 1966; Schoenberg, 1970; Cope, 1977; Ekwueme, 2001; Omojola, 1995; Adedeji, 2002, 2007 and Nketia, 2004. From these works we have identified three clear but interrelated broad techniques used in African art music composition. They are Western techniques, African techniques and individual composer's techniques.

But crucial and fundamental to these techniques is the source of the music. From where and how does the composer get the music? The source of any artistic work explains for its type, outlook and greatness. Although art music is a global phenomenon, it has developed in different dimensions. Today we talk of bicultural, multicultural and intercultural music; but what constitute those fabrics come from different sources. Hence we talk of European Art Music which comes from Europe, African art music which comes from Africa etc. Indispensable in compositional process is a big word that is also abstract – 'inspiration'. It permeates every aspect of compositional process, including the techniques.

The melodic source theories of Sachs/Hornbostel include the melogenic, logogenic and pathogenic. But taking a macro look at the source of inspiration that precipitates the act and art of composition, we will identify two broad categories, musical and non-musical. While the musical may include diverse musical experiences such as training, performance, inquisitiveness, listening, musical heritage and foreign influences; the non-musical may include among others, physical and spiritual phenomena. The physical includes events, success, needs, failure, adventures, new discoveries, love, pain, disappointment, nature, war and violence, culture, society and physical world, while the spiritual encompasses diverse meta-physical experiences. This latter constitute the focus of this paper.

Aware of many literatures from the West on art music composition, I have relied heavily on oral interviews, questionnaire to Nigerian African composers and few literatures by Africans. The data used in this study were collected through the administration of questionnaire returned by fifteen (15) African 'art' music composers from Nigeria. I also had oral interviews with some of them to discuss their compositional procedures and their views on the subject matter. Relevant literature on African beliefs and practices were also consulted in addition to my intrinsic experiential knowledge in the subject as 'an African boy'.

The findings in this paper therefore are based on the information supplied by African art music composers themselves as contained in the questionnaire and oral interviews.

## **JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY**

The justification for this study is not far-fetched. For too long a time Africans have subjected themselves to mental bondage under Western musical aesthetics even after the abolition of slave trade. And a lot of damage has been done to our

musical heritage as a result. There has been blind acceptance of Western ideals and rejection of our heritage and this has relegated us to the back seat. While we have always tried to be like 'them', we have never been 'them'. We can never perform and interpret Western music exactly as 'them'.

The reason for embarking on a study like this had been advanced by Nketia (2001) when he wrote:

Since the milieu in which a creative person operates is important for understanding both the general and specific aspects of his style, choice of materials and techniques, modes of thought, and the directions of development he envisages. When this becomes evident in his discursive writings, the cultural context of creativity and by extension, the particular circumstances and role of Fela Sowande's creative output can also be examined (10).

This view was supported by Nzewi's argument (2005):

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 (7).

Another purpose as advanced by Nketia (2001) is for proper education of the African art music composers themselves.

In this connection there is also room for a critical discussion of issues in musical aesthetics that contemporary African composers of art music need to be aware of as they grapple with intercultural processes in their creative work, for while creativity is universal in human cultures, its application in music is guided by different philosophies. Where as a result of a particular historical development, emphasis is laid on the cultivation of music for enjoyment and appreciation for its own sake, conscious development of sophisticated techniques of composition applied to the creation of musical pieces as works of art may be the rule, as in Western art music which is distinguished from the music of other cultures by its focus on multi-voiced, multi-textured hierarchical structures, and whose aesthetic theories are, in the main, theories of works of art rather than cosmological moral or social theories (10).

There is also the need to know as Nketia (2004) asserted:

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Many factors influence a composer's perspectives and approach to his work, in particular his nurture, training, cultural background, personal philosophy, response to the colonial encounter, and musical experiences (16).

The imperativeness of Africans to assert their cultural independence (Ekwueme, 2004) is another crucial factor.

It became imperative for the Black man to assert not only his political freedom but perhaps more importantly his cultural independence (152).

Finally this paper as a corollary to both the question and answer raised by DjeDje (2003):

What gives African music its power? In my opinion, understanding the nature, essence and underlying theoretical and humanistic principles of African music is critical because this may explain why people are attracted to the music (vii).

### **THE 'META-MUSICAL' DEFINED AND EXPLAINED**

According to Vidal (1987: 277), the two-dimensional nature of African aesthetic concepts of musical sounds constitute 'the physical and the metaphysical or the musical and the extra-musical dimensions'. Also, asserting the theory of African science of sound as a principle that governs African musical arts creativity and performance, Nzewi(2005) wrote:

The science of spirituality as a science of customizing the human mind for individual and societal good, permeates African indigenous knowledge systems and practices (3).

The 'meta-musical' theory in the compositional procedure of African art' music is hinged on Nzewi's theory quoted above. The term 'meta-musical' connotes beyond music, extra-musical or non-musical factors. A synonymous terminology is meta-physical; not necessary philosophical but something that goes beyond physical laws and structures, having its basis from spiritual laws. Whether we talk about it or not, this spiritual dimension exists and African composers know it. This is what I call the meta-musical or 'meta-physical', that is, beyond musical or physical realms. It is beyond aesthetic theories, almost inexplicable, so we tend to overlook its reality. Nzewi (2005) described it as 'the meta physical science of spirituality (7).

Lamenting on the gradual loss of this reality in African music, Sowande as quoted in Omojola (1995) wrote:

What the contemporary African has lost – if Nigeria is indicative –is the recognition and acceptance of the

metaphysical correspondence through which sound can become for us –as it was for our traditional man –creative and evocatory (Omojola, 46-47).

Sowande's statement here reveals the significance of the spiritual dimension in musical processes. It is indeed the source of African music greatness and uniqueness.

Although Kofie (1994:6) argued that 'music as organized tone or noise is not a metaphysical phenomenon; nor is it a gift of the gods' because of his semiotic approach to his search for extra generic meaning in African music. But the fact is that the realities of diverse spiritual experiences and supernatural contributions to musical processes in the traditional Africa abound far too numerous to be denied.

Nketia (2001:9) describing Sowande's paradigms referred to the meta-musical concept as 'the metaphysics of African music or the symbolic interpretation of African praxis '. Sowande as quoted in Nketia (2001:13) gave the concept another description when he said 'What makes this music (i.e. African) what it is... let us call it the Psychic Energy of African music in its pristine state'. Omibiyi-Obidike (2001) described this same concept as 'extra-musical or intrinsic aspect of music' (155).

By implication, we are reasserting in this paper that a great deal of compositions in African art music have their source from meta-musical, metaphysical or spiritual conceptions and we also state categorically here that this dimension forms the greatest 'power' legacy of all African musical types. There is no way a Western-trained African art music composer can be totally free from this legacy.

## **AFRICAN COSMOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW**

In order to appreciate the meta-musical theory of musical composition in Africa, and to understand why Africans do certain things certain ways, the knowledge of African cosmology is indispensable. African cosmological theory and worldview are strictly dualistic. By this we mean that the World and everything in it are dualised. This is what Agordoh (1994:39) described as 'the African view of the universe'. It is this same concept Nzewi (2005:5) referred to as 'the dualistic philosophy of African worldview'.

Also according to Nzewi (2005),

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 (7)

Africans believe that there is the physical world and there is the spiritual world; there are physical beings and there are spiritual beings; there are physical forces and there are spiritual forces; there is the physical head and there is the spiritual head. It is the strong belief of Africans that the spiritual entities control and determine what happens to the physical entities. The African traditional religion had been erroneously thought to be polytheistic and pantheistic. But rather than being polytheistic, it is a diffused-monotheistic religion i.e. a belief in a Supreme God that is approached through several gods as intermediaries. Also, rather than being pantheistic, African religion uses natural objects such as stones, seas, trees, etc as emblems, representatives and links to worship the gods and as theophanical mediums. In traditional Africa, as already established by several scholars of African traditional religion (Idowu, 1962; Mbiti, 1968, 1969; Kayode, 1984, etc.) we do not worship the physical objects but the supernaturals which they symbolize and represent.

In African traditional religious worldview, the spiritual world is real, complex and hierarchical. We have the Supreme Being at the top of the ladder, followed by the gods, spirits and ancestors. Although the Supreme Being is considered to be too holy, transcendental so great to be approached directly by the sinful man, and as a result has no place of worship or shrine built for him, the Africans strongly believe that He has interests in what they do and He directs their overall affairs through the gods. He is the giver and the taker of life, blessings and gifts, including arts. The African pantheon consists of thousands of gods, which Christianity regard as 'demons'. In Yoruba alone, there are one thousand and seven hundred divinities (Mbiti, 1969) comprising of four hundred and one (401) primordial gods and the apotheosized ones. These gods are all worshiped in Ile-Ife, the cradle of the Yoruba, every day of the 365/6 days in the year except one, Each day is dedicated to the worship and veneration of a god. Unlike in ancient Greek, traditional Africa has no god of music, rather, each god has got his/her own special music. For instance, among the Yoruba, the music of Ogun, the god of iron and technology is Agere, that of Sango the god of lighting and thunder is Bata, while that of Orunmila (Ifa) the god of divination and wisdom is Aran or Ipele (King, 1961; Daramola and Jeje, 1975). These gods and others have their stipulations and preferences as regards music and how they should be worshiped through them. As a result, both the compositional and performance practices among other things, are either dictated or influenced by the gods.

The spirits which are regarded as 'familiar or evil spirits in Christianity are numerous in number and operate in categories and zoned into marine, earth, mountainous, forest and the skies' 'legions'. The realities of these spirits had been established through direct contacts, assistances and empowerment, by great hunters, *ogbanje* or *abiku* children and through mysterious occurrences that happen to people through dreams or contact with mysterious 'wind' or intermarriage between human beings and personified spirits. These spirits not only enjoy music, they also create and play music as confirmed by hunters, give people gifts and inspiration of music and teach traditional musicians.

The ancestors in Africa are the deceased or the dead, In Africa, it is believed they are still living (although in spiritual form) and hence called 'the living-dead'. They

constitute a spiritual community and actively participate in the activities of the physical community. The traditional Africans therefore venerate, appease and consult them for guidance, power and blessings. The ancestors are believed to be powerful and so could bless or curse the physical community, their interests and instructions therefore have to be protected and observed.

### **The African Heritage**

To me, it is still an irony how and why peoples as great as Africans could be captured by the Euro-Americans. The African unpopular enslavement and colonization by the Western World caused a lot of damages to African heritage, her greatness, her pride and self-esteem, her cultures and civilization, her science and technology and sadly, her arts. The question remains unanswered: 'Who were to blame, the Euro-Americans, Africans themselves, the gods or the Christian Satan?'

Whereas facts of history revealed that Africans were first in everything called development. Senghor (1967) as quoted in Ekwueme put it this way:

Africans were people 'who, forty thousand years ago, were the first to emerge as Homo Sapiens, the first to express themselves in art, the first to create the earliest agrarian civilization in the valleys of the Nile and Mesopotamia (Ekwueme, 2004, 153).

Africans were great in religion and were in perfect ontological balance with their physical and spiritual environments. Since emancipation from the clutches of slavery and colonialism, Africa has taken the back seat in many areas as she lost her heritage and compass and makes futile effort to catch up with the scientific and technological developments of the Western World. With this hopeless pursuit, the widening gap between Africa and the Western World continues. While the latter with her science and technology continues to dominate the globe and other planets and galaxies, Africans are still battling with myriads of problems of inter communal crises, crimes of unimaginable magnitudes, religious crisis, political instability, corruption and abject poverty, debts and hardship.

On the other hand, Africa is still great despite her not making good use of her heritage and resources. African greatness lies in her history, culture, wealth, arts, religion and spiritual (mystical) empowerment. As for her arts, Ekwueme wrote:

But works of art of Africa have been hailed in all parts of the world. Our antiquities are considered second-to-none; our music and dance are reckoned to be the highest cultural standards throughout the world. Even today African writers have made an impact in world literature: Achebe's novels have been translated into over ten languages of the world.

Ben Enwonwu's paintings and sculptures have adorned many galleries of the world; Fela Sowande's compositions have been recorded by international recording companies, and Wole Soyinka's plays have been performed on stages across many seas. Thus it is in the arts that the African can, in our judgment, make a major impact on and a serious contribution to world civilization (163-4).

Earlier, Fela Sowande had argued for the dominant position of the Arts for the development of Africa when he wrote (as quoted by Nketia 2001):

In view of Africa's preoccupation with economic scientific and technological development Fela Sowande reminds us that "the soul of a Nation is not to be found in her scientific or technological achievements but in her art"...

For upwards of three decades we have permitted ourselves to be so hypnotized by what we think the West has to offer, and by her apparent superiority in so many fields, that we have bent over backwards in our hurry to disentangle ourselves from anything that did not have the stamp of approval of Western civilization... (11).

Tragically, the history of World music excludes the contribution of Africa even while many of the stylistic techniques of Western 20th and 21st centuries' music were already existent in Africa in the pre-colonial era. This situation and the need to properly place African contributions were discussed by Akpabot (1986):

We sought here to 'reverse the painting in its frame' and bring to the attention of the Western world what has been an unfortunate (deliberate?) omission of the primary sources for many of the musical styles of the twentieth century. It is certain that as more black musicologists emerge to write about the music of their people, there will be a need for music historians to re-write their books to accommodate the contribution of Africa to world music (67).

African heritage in its exportation has contributed immensely to the development of World music and this has been attested to by Mbiti (1968):

Africa has also exported part of its heritage to Europe and Asia, through many centuries of contact with these continents. Geographically, Africa and Europe are very close to each other. Africa and Asia are joined together between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, and run close to each other along the Red Sea. Trade, political rule, and the migration of peoples have been the main links between Africa and these two neighboring continents. This has gone on for more than six thousand years.

Much of the African heritage which was exported to the outside world was cultural and religious. African music, for example, became very popular in the Arab countries in the seventh century A.D. (the time when Islam began). African music has influenced the evolution of popular music and dance in South and North America, and the famous 'Negro Spirituals' of the United States of America are based on African musical and religious feeling. In recent times many of the great artists of Europe and America have studied and copied African art.

We see, therefore, that the African heritage has been of benefit not only to the peoples of Africa alone, but also to the world at large. We, too, have profited from our contact with peoples of other continents. Each continent, each people, and each generation has made its contribution to human life in ideas, arts, sciences, learning and response to different situations (3-4).

It is a suppressed fact that the early history, most ancient civilization and early achievement (in terms of science, technology and the arts) of man are traceable to Africa (Mbiti, 1968). Culturally, moral and ethical values in traditional Africa which are indispensable in ameliorating the destructive tendencies of Western science and technology, are a *sine qua non* (Mbiti, 1968). The traditional religious systems, philosophies, structures and tenacity of the African people are superb (Mbiti 1968).

As far as wealth is concerned, it is an undisputable fact that Africa is a rich continent in terms of population, mineral resources, games, human talents, etc. The African heritage which forms the basis of this research is spiritual (mystical) empowerment. Spiritual, mystical or metaphysical power in Africa is a reality, as clearly demonstrated in witchcraft, sorcery, magic, traditional medicine, divination, judgement on evil doers, and other supernatural causations. According to Mbiti (1968),

there is a mystical order governing the universe. It is held in all African societies that there is power in the universe, and that it comes from God. It is a mystical power, in the sense that it is hidden and mysterious. This power is available to spirits and to certain human beings. People who have access to it are sometimes able to see the departed, hear certain voices, see certain sights (such as fire and light), have visions, communicate at a distance without using physical means, receive premonitions of coming events, foretell certain things before they happen, communicate with the invisible world, and perform 'wonders' and 'miracles' which other people may not ordinarily be able to do (37).

This mystical power may be 'given' or acquired from spirits or gods, it may also be inherited from parents (whether one is aware or not) and sometimes there are special prodigies that are born with it. These are all realities in Africa.

Being surrounded by very powerful spiritual forces, their benevolence or malevolence is another case study. But it should be mentioned here that these forces can be manipulated for either purposes. For instance, corruption poverty, debts destruction of lives and properties are people's choices through the negative use of the spiritual forces. This is what Nzewi (2005:2) described as 'diabolic spirituality'. This is why typical Africans, in search for higher or more powers readily accept foreign religions and belief systems such as Christianity, Islam, Rosicrucianism, Grail message, Hare Krishna, etc. In fact, I have met some Christians who embraced the Christian Holy Spirit as an alternative power to the African mystical power. And up till today, African Christians still try to use the Holy Spirit to perform the same tasks they used the mystical powers for. The same thing has been observed with the use of music in the African church (Omojola, 1995).

To Sowande, therefore, the musical legacy of the African Church does not represent any fundamental difference or change from the nature and the role of music in traditional religious worship – the use of music for the purpose of communion with God in the Church represents a continuity of, rather than Sowande's conception of religious works and the fact that virtually all his major organ pieces are based on Yoruba Anglican pentatonic melodies (47).

Let us now look at how the supernatural forces influence compositional procedures and techniques in Africa.

## **THE META-MUSICAL DIMENSION OF AFRICAN ART MUSIC COMPOSITION**

The meta-musical theory of African art music composition seeks to prove that the supernatural and spiritual powers in Africa have significant input in the creation and performance of not only traditional and popular music forms but also African art music. Eighty percent of Nigerian art music composers that returned the questionnaire affirmed this fact. African meta-physical power or supernatural forces had been tapped by composers such as Meki Nzewi, Joshua Uzoigwe and others in their works, a factor that make their works, 'magnetic', 'magical' and irresistibly impressive.

### **The 'Given' and 'Received' Concepts**

The four common approaches identifiable in terms of compositional inspirations are the one that arises from determination to compose or when composing by method, inspiration through intuition, inspiration through meditation on nature, philosophical/religious issues or unique experiences and inspiration through

spiritual sources. Although distinct, the four are interwoven. The first approach is based on the need to compose. The composer has the need to compose and sits down under 'musical' inspiration to figure things out. In intuition, the composer may not even think of composing, thus bypassing predetermination and pre-compositional processes. It occurs like a spark; a kind of an illumination from the sub-conscious. It is a natural talent that all of us have, but in varying levels. The inspiration and the music just spring up without being ready for it and without conscious reasoning. Also in support of this truism, Sowande (according to Southern: 1976, and as quoted by Vidal, 2001) was claimed to have said:

I don't compose unless I feel that I have to put to this way. I never say to myself that I must write something. Something says to me. "I want to be written". This is the only time I compose (99).

The third approach which comes out of keen observation and meditation of the environmental factors is another valid source of compositional inspirations. But the spiritual source which is the concern of this paper is the one that is less known and understood. In Africa, this is what is described as the 'given' or 'received' concept. It simply means that the composition or the inspiration that leads to it is 'given' to the composer and hence 'received' by him/her by the supernaturals. The composer gives the overall credit to God, the deities, the spirits or the ancestors, because of the awareness that the ideas were received through divine sources. Many African composers trace some of their works to this source. One of my professors, Mosunmola Omibiyi-Obidike used to hammer into our heads that whatever feat performed in music were 'received' and not 'earned', and there is every reason for me to believe this ever since, as an African.

It is on this experiential fact the theory of meta-musical theory is based. This however does not undermine the indispensability of skill as Sowande (in Vidal, 2001) had rightly remarked.

## **THE SPIRITS**

According to Mbiti (1969:78), 'spirits are the 'common' spiritual beings beneath the status of divinities (gods) and above the status of men'. Spirits are invisible but do make themselves visible to people of their choice for specific purposes. They give special powers to some human beings to see them and sometimes they change to human forms and interact with people and participate in human activities. They are therefore at a vantage position to influence our musical activities. Mbiti (1969) commented about this premise:

People report that they see the spirits in ponds, caves, groves, mountains or outside their villages, dancing, singing, herding cattle, working in their fields or nursing their children. Some spirits appear in people's dreams, especially to diviners, priests, medicine-men and rain-makers to impart some information. These personages may also

consult the spirits as part of their normal training and practice (81).

Some African art music composers have also confirmed that they see spirits or celestial beings in their dreams performing unusual music of highest beauty and grandeur. These composers claim that such music when remembered were always put down and developed into full-fledged compositions. When they are not remembered, the inspiration from the experience always lead to very impressive compositions.

There are occasions when the spirits come to teach or instruct the composer on what to compose in the dream or while awake. The spirits give the tune, the text and the techniques; all of which may still appear in skeletal forms. The actual development lies with the composer and his skill.

An important meta-musical dimension in music creation is rooted in spirit-possession. All over Africa, spirit possession is a common phenomenon. During religious rituals or musical performances, the spirits do take absolute possession or influence a person in order to communicate special message to the people or perform a special task. It pictures someone under intoxication. When this happen to a musician, he/she is no more in charge, it is the spirit now creating and performing the music through him/her as a medium. A composer who sits to compose may compose under similar influence.

Other instances of receiving musical compositions from the spirits is when a composer is given the special privilege of hearing the music of the spiritual beings in the thick forest in the dead of the night (which is similar to what Akin Euba, 1975 termed 'Scenes from traditional life' in one of his works), or when such spiritual encounters are narrated to the composer. Although there is no way the complexity and the mystery of such a music can be exactly duplicated but certainly its expression and portrayal.

Among the Yoruba, a popular spiritual personality that is closely related to 'Abiku' concept (short-lived, or reincarnated children syndrome) is 'egbere; a wandering spirit or ghost of an untimely deceased 'abiku' that goes about around houses at night with a 'spirit' mat and lamp and sing 'dirges'. I have never heard it myself but it is an established fact. I also think the 'Abiku' of Prof. Akin Euba has something (if not directly then indirectly) in connection with this concept.

### **THE ANCESTORS AND EARTHLY PARENTS**

The ancestors participate actively in the affairs of their living communities although in the spirit. The hallmark of their physical participation is celebrated as egungun festivals. The ancestors do bless their communities when they do things according to laid-down customs and they do curse them when they depart from given norms and traditions. As a result, the African communities seek their favour by asking for guidance in all they do, they also appease them through rituals and sacrifices when calamities as a result of disobedience struck them.

Ancestral families and clans have cultural norms which included musical practices. For instance, among the Yoruba, there are families known as Oje or Ologbojo that produce egungun. They have peculiar music (including chanting, singing, drumming and dancing) that accompanies the masquerade festivals and this differs from one family to the other. Specific guidelines are also observed. The ancestors ensure the guiding norms concerning all things including musicals. It is therefore not strange for an art music composer that hails from such families compose in patterns laid down by the ancestors in order to please them. There is that awareness and consciousness; there is that teleguiding by the ancestors and he/she dares not break the 'taboo' for the wrath of the ancestors.

The earthly parents, though are not yet spirits, have pertinent spiritual functions and powers conferred upon them by the ancestors. One of the uniqueness of African cultures is the belief and practices of receiving parental blessings. Africans believe that parents (father and mother) have been given spiritual authority to invoke blessing (favour, fortunes) and curse on their children. It is also believed that blessing or curse so invoked have permanent efficacy. Most Africans therefore enjoy parental prayers at one stage or the other in their lives – at pregnancy, at birth, at naming and christening, early in the morning during greeting, during the choice and beginning of a new career, marriage, at special achievements, etc. May be there could be one or two African here who did not receive any prayer of blessings from his/her parents. My theory here therefore is that seeing any successful African art composer, he/she must have received prayer of blessings from the parents such as a Yoruba father will pray:

<i>Ori mi a maa ba e lo</i>	May 'my head' go with you
<i>Awon asiwaju a ti e lehin</i>	The ancestors will support you
<i>O o ni se ti</i>	You will not fail
<i>Awon a la le yii, a fun e se</i>	The forefathers will do it for you
<i>Ase ye lalekan n se po</i>	You will surely be successful
<i>Wa a mo o se</i>	May you receive fortunes
<i>Wa a ta' won egbe e yo</i>	You will excel among colleagues

Apart from the spiritual force and divine knowledge which such prayers bestows on the candidate, the confidence and morale that they give are unparalleled. As an African boy or lady, when you know your father and mother has prayed for you, you move with boldness and great inspiration to face any task. It is a great spiritual legacy.

### **The gods**

As said earlier, the African gods have their sacred musical ensemble and forms which are not alterable. Actually, there is also the incitement caused by gods to create music spontaneously and unpreparedly by the musician. This is common occurrence among Ifa priests. While the non liturgical musical performances are not exactly same when repeated, it is not the case in liturgical forms because the gods have their specifications. African composers; be it traditional, popular, religions or art, still reflect some of the features of the sacred music of the gods in

their music. It will therefore not be strange to find among Yoruba art musical compositions the use of Bata, or sacred songs in praise of gods.

Also, just like the spirits, the gods do impress certain musical ideas on the mind of the composer. Besides, the gods also give songs to composers whether during the dream or when awake. Also, the gods do bestow special spiritual power or wisdom on their subjects. Apart from the above, a composer who is a worshipper of a particular god knows the likes and dislikes of the god and may want to portray the power and attributes of such a god in music.

### **‘Spirit of Africa’**

You wonder what this means. Yes, there is what I call ‘the spirit of Africa’. There is an innate charisma in every African that class him/her so. It is a kind of a motivating force, a spiritual driving power, something magnetizing, more than or patriotism or nationalism, found in the sub-conscious. It is something that makes you leap when you hear ‘Africa’. It is a spiritual bond. It intoxicates. I don’t know how you feel but that is how we feel. For instance, I am not a bata nor dundun dancer, but anytime I hear bata or dundun play the African rhythm, the ‘Africanness’ inside me automatically responds correctly. That is what I call the spirit of Africa. There is an inspiration, a confidence that you are an African, whether you are a Nigerian, Kenyan, Togolese, or Malawian. It is the spirit that binds the continent together as a whole. An unparalleled joy that fills your heart when you are among other African people other than your countrymen, it is the spirit of Africa. It takes pride in its legacies and heritage and has nothing to do with problems of poverty or socio-economic hardships. The African spirit makes an African powerful, strong and unbeatable. The composer reserves a special pride and ego not to betray his/her ‘African’ essence’, thereby utilizes every resource at his/her disposal to put forth the best. The best lyrics that illustrate the spirit of Africa are found in the recorded debut of Beautiful Nobia. I like to cite it here although may not be able to analyse it in this paper:

### **Seven Lifes/ I’m an African boy ©Beautiful Nubia**

In my journey through the world, over land and over seas  
I see different cultures and different people’s ways  
I was born where the sun never sets and never rises  
I was born where the heat is like a second skin

Children ’re crying on the streets, automobiles are making noise  
The land is growing dry and weak, spirits standing low  
The forefathers are calling me, never tired, never weak  
The pride in me is bursting loose, I m an African boy

On the farm, my father called me down behind the tree  
He said ‘prostrate at my feet, and say few prayers’  
Then he told me all the stories of my brave ancestors  
He said ‘look into my eyes, son, you are born to be great’  
So with that while I went home behind my father with a hoe

Listening to the songs of birds, whispers of the nights, I was singing

Refrain 1

Seven gold, seven beads, seven cowries,  
Seven nuts, seven lives: that's what I've got  
I'm an African boy  
Over sea, over land  
Over mountain in the wild  
I've been brave and I've been strong  
I'm an African boy

In the evening mother called me down into her hut  
She said 'lay upon my bosom and take few prayers'  
Then she told me to go forward, never looking back  
'The spirits are with you, and you will never fail'  
So I go into the world, into the deeps, into the wild  
In the market place I dance the sound of Bata dancing

Refrain 2

Seven jumps, seven wriggles, seven cowries,  
Seven nuts, seven lives: that's what I've got  
I'm an African boy  
Over sea, over land  
Over mountain in the wild  
I've been brave and I've been strong  
I'm an African boy

I can feel it deep in my soul, I was born to be great  
I can feel it deep in my soul as an African boy  
I can feel it deep in my soul the future will be nice.

When a composer is possessed with this spirit, the composition is full of divine inspiration and majesty. The extent to which a composer allows foreign knowledge to dominate this legacy is what determines his artistic freedom and Africaness.

### **Magic Power**

Whether we are ready to admit it in the public or not, we cannot deny the existence of magic power and witchcraft and their contributions to works of arts, especially music. Among the Yoruba, there is *oogun isoye*, a special herbal concoction to impact retentive memory and boost intellectuality. This is given to musical apprentices to aid their memorization and the effectiveness is justified by the volume of long items they memorize. A good illustration is the case of Ifa apprentices that have to memorize the whole Ifa chapters and their verses as long and many as they are.

Secondly, reference is frequently made by Yoruba popular musicians to the supports and assistances received from witches. These no doubt, are also enjoyed by many African art music composers.

### **CHRISTIANIZATION OF AFRICAN META-MUSICAL POWERS**

It is not strange as mentioned earlier to see Africans accepting Christianity in search of more powers and alternative cheaper powers. It is in the same vein many African art musicians adopt Rosicrucianism, Echanke, Grail message, etc. as means of more enlightenment or empowerment. There are composers who claimed they are aided spiritually by their membership in these and similar socio-religious bodies.

The Holy Spirit of Christianity which is believed to be imparted on Christians at the baptism of the spirit is said to empower the receivers to do excellently well in their chosen careers. There are African composers that trace their compositional source of inspiration and supernatural instruction on musical creativity to the Holy Spirit. I believe the fundamental basis from which this stems is their African meta-musical power. For instance, Timi Osukoya, a talented Yoruba gospel artiste sang of the Holy Spirit as his intoxicant in one of his songs:

Ki lo n 'intoxicate' e?	What is intoxicating you?
Emi mimo n 'intoxicate' mi	It is the Holy Spirit.

Narrating one of his unique experiences in an oral interview, Vidal said:

In my dream, the heavenly choir and orchestra played a special passion chorale for me in original tunes, with superb voices that could not be compared with; and the music was performed over and over again.

According to him,

this operation does not come when one is intoxicated with wine or preoccupied with mundane things. The mind was placed at a higher spiritual level.

### **A SAD TREND**

Having achieved the main objectives of this paper, it is sad to note from observations that a significant amount of the original traditional stuff is no more to be found in Nigeria and in some other African countries. This is because the traditional religious institutions and heritage that host the real traditional musical practices are dying out due to influences of Western education, foreign religions and socio-economic problems. The few practitioners at 'home' are no more diligent in keeping the traditions. Due to socio-economic hardships, they have desacredized vital aspects of the legacies by taking some of the practices out

of their original contexts in order to satisfy foreign inquirers and to make Nollywood films for monetary gains.

Apart from theses and dissertations in African Universities and few local documentation projects, the development, promotion and documentation of traditional African musical cultures are being carried out and sponsored by Euro-Americans, on their soil and for their use. There is a kind of injustice here. The West 'sold' Christianity to Africans and not only condemned but made them throw away their traditional religious and musical heritage, only for them to come back now to be demanding for what they had once made Africans throw away.

Music education curricular in Africa, especially in Nigeria, is still largely Western oriented, thus putting traditional African music at a disadvantage. Currently, the system therefore produces students that know little or nothing on their traditional musical heritage and practices.

It is speculated that in the nearest future, the remnant and modified versions of real traditional African religious and musical practices would only be found in Western research institutions and among neo-traditional African performers (outside Africa) and among Africans in diasporas such as African Americans, Cubans, Brazilians and Caribbeans.

## **CONCLUSION AND CHALLENGES**

Considering the aesthetic quality of compositions by African art composers and considering the meta-musical dimension and the message therein, it can be concluded that African art music can still be fully artistic while at the same time psycho-spiritually functional. I think there is nothing wrong with this. We even need more of this now that there is increased need for what I have theorized as 'transformative muscality'.

Arising from the findings and the conclusion in this paper, there is the need for Africans to keep, uphold and promote their meta-musical heritage and refuse to sell it out in the face of intimidation, racial prejudice, discouragements and socio-economic hardship. This is because in developing their arts, their spiritual empowerment needs be strengthened.

Judging from the fact of continental struggles to capture the world, Africans especially the art musicians need to free themselves from the metal bondage and cultural enslavement of the West. Composing music as taught and demonstrated by Euro-American composers and theorists will only continue to make us trail behind. The only way out is to strengthen our uniqueness and heritage. Thus the need for the African composers 'staying tuned' to the voice of the supernaturals can not be overestimated.

Another challenge stemming from this paper is the need for African composers to document the historical background to their compositions as obtained in hymnological studies. Such will give great incentive to the promotion of the meta-musical dimension of compositional techniques of African art music. It is a good strategy of showing the way and teaching the coming generation 'the how' of composing art music the African way.

As a way of redeeming the loss and reviving the heritage, it is recommended that traditional African religions be taught as a subject in both primary and post-primary institutions. Scholars and researchers in African music, African religions and African Studies in general, should also as a matter of urgency, undertake research and document the primitive nitty-gritty of the worship of the supernaturals in the ancient Africa.

The final challenge here is the need for Africans to redirect and remobilize their metaphysical forces and legacies to better their lives. Power used selfishly i.e. 'diabolic spirituality' always lead to destruction of lives and properties, reduces corporate greatness and lead to perpetual backwardness, while possible use of power always fuel societal corporate strengths, greatness and prosperity. This is the greatest challenge of the time.

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#### **DISCOGRAPHY**

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#### **APPENDIX**

##### QUESTIONNAIRE ON ‘META-MUSICAL DIMENSION OF COMPOSITION IN AFRICA’

1. What are your sources of inspiration that spur you to compose or during composition?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2. What techniques do you consider personal to you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

3. Which of these is your legacy (pls. underline them)?

Christianity, Islam, Traditional Religion, Hare Krishna, Echanakar, Grail  
Message, Rosicrucianism, \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Which of the followings give you music or inspiration to compose? (Pls. tick  
the relevant ones).

1. spirits and gods
2. The Ancestors
3. Spirit of Africa
4. Spiritual power from your religion
5. Spiritual power from any other body or spiritual knowledge
6. Holy Spirit
7. Alcohol
8. Any other (pls. specify) \_\_\_\_\_ ,  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much!