

## **A Relational Study of Music and Royalty in Yoruba Land: A Focus on Foko Traditional Council in Ibadan Land, Oyo State**

Alade Dorcas Oluwasemiloore

Department Of Music

Mountain Top University, Ògùn State

[dorcasalade18@gmail.com](mailto:dorcasalade18@gmail.com)

09016251474

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‘Bayo Ogunyemi Ph.D.

Department of Music

Mountain Top University, Màgbòrò Ògùn State

[aoogunyemi@mtu.edu.ng](mailto:aoogunyemi@mtu.edu.ng)

08023018515

### **Abstract**

This study explores the intricate relationship between music and royalty in *Yorùbá* land, examining how the musical practices of the people reflect the cultural and political significance of their royal institution. Employing a mixed-methods approach, comprising ethnographic study, historical research, interviews, and song-text analysis, this research aims to re-present *Yorùbá* music from an emic perspective. By doing so, it provides a nuanced understanding of the cultural context, challenging existing thesis presented by non-native writers. The findings reveal that *Yorùbá* traditional music extends beyond its sonic qualities, by serving as a tool for power negotiation, political administration, and social relations. Music embodies the philosophy, history, and cultural beliefs of the *Yorùbá* people, underscoring its profound importance in their royal traditions. This study recommends further research on *Yorùbá* traditional music, making it accessible for classroom use and for the *Yorùbá* diaspora. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the significance of music in *Yorùbá* cultural, social, and political contexts.

**Keywords:** Yoruba traditional Music, Music and Royalty, Ibadan Traditional Council, Royal courts, Cultural Beliefs.

## Introduction

Music in Africa is deeply intertwined with social and political life (Stone 7). As a result, its conception and practices permeate daily social activities. From birth to life thereafter, African children are enveloped in various rites, festivals, and musical ceremonies that reflect the communal nature of music. According to Blacking (1967:17), music is "essentially a social activity" that explores musical structures for their actual and symbolic representation of social hierarchies and relationships. In this context, music operates as a functional art, closely associated with related arts like plastic arts, dance, and acting. It manifests in various forms, including songs, poetry, recitation, and instrumental music, which are employed in the organization and administration of society. African music can be categorized into traditional, neo-traditional, contemporary, and art music. Traditional music, which predates foreign influence (Euba, 1990), forms the focus of this discussion. This type of music is characterized by its lack of foreign influences and is a vital part of African cultural heritage. The *Yorùbá* people, numbering over 40 million, constitute one of Africa's largest mono-ethnic groups. They primarily reside in six Nigerian states: *Ọ̀yọ́*, *Ọ̀ndó*, *Èkítì*, *Ọ̀sún*, *Ọ̀gùn*, and Lagos. Significant *Yorùbá* populations also exist in neighboring states like *Kwara*, *Kogi*, and *Edo*. This culturally rich group is known for their diverse festivals, games, and religions. Beyond Nigeria's borders, *Yorùbá* people can be found in countries such as Benin, Togo, Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad, and Tobago, where they maintain distinct cultural practices and traditions. According to Ògúnyẹmí (2022), *Yorùbá* music is deeply ingrained in the people's way of life, serving as a repository of traditional knowledge, philosophy, and beliefs. Traditional institutions play a vital role in establishing connections between the

people, their ancestors, and the gods through music. The *Yorùbá* organized themselves in network of villages, towns, kingdoms, headed by an *Ọ̀ba* (king) of *Baálẹ̀* (chief) with the King's palace in the center of the city and the King's market opposite it" (*Àsòjò*, *Jaiyéọ̀ba*, 2017: 259). The palace, otherwise known as the court, is the home of the *Yorùbá* King. (This is general to most Africans). It is that multipurpose residence of the king, strategically located to contain his (kings') living rooms, his entertainment yard, and his court- where he reigns and adjudicates over his people. The initial impression the outside world had of *Yorùbá* music was through the *Yorùbá Ọ̀ba's* courts. As recorded by one of the earliest British Explorers, Clapperton, *Alààfìn Majaotu* (1802-1830) sent his attendants to meet and escort Clapperton to the royal entertainment at *Ọ̀yọ́* (*Kátúnga*). It records that the attendants "kept drumming, blowing (horns) dancing and singing all night" (1892: 34). The impression these visitors had about African music, mostly inaccurate and negative, had remained a subject of concern for several decades. This has informed the need for scholars to re-present the state of music in the continent from the insider's perspective.

According to various sources at the palace of *Baálẹ̀ fòkò* music-making is the responsibility of royal bards, known by various titles such as *Onílu Ọ̀ba*, *Akígbe Ọ̀ba*, *Asunrárà Ọ̀ba*, and *Oní kàkààkí Ọ̀ba*. The *Ọ̀ba's* chief drummer holds a revered position, typically bestowed upon the most skilled drummer with deep knowledge of the *Ọ̀bashi* institution's cultural and historical ethos. Akínyẹmí (2001), buttresses this submission saying that *Yorùbá* royal bards serve four primary functions: palace entertainers, repository of tradition, chroniclers of the kings' genealogy, and morale boosters for men going into battle. Traditional rulers, being the custodian of culture and tradition, play an active role in

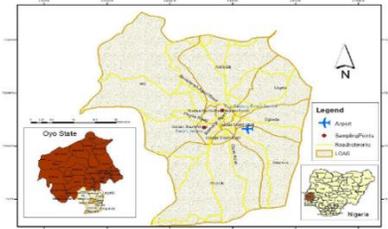
establishing rapport with the people, ancestors, and gods through music.

In *Yorùbá* land, certain instruments and ensembles are dedicated to the kings and royal institutions, reserved for their exaltation and admiration. These include instrumental ensembles like *Gbèdu* drumming and vocal forms like praise singing. The bards, griots, and praise singers perform eulogies, recite history, and say panegyrics in honor of the monarch. Some musical instruments, such as *Gbèdu*, *Àgbá*, and *Ìgbìn*, are anthropomorphic in nature, godified, and venerated. (Ogunyemi, 2022)

This paper explores the role of music in the traditional institution of the *Mógàjí* of *Fòkò*, using the palace as a case study. The *Yorùbá* people have different rulers but the most prominent one the '*Aláàfin of Òyó*' and *Òní Ilé-Ifẹ*, *Ọwá of Ìjèsà*, *Awùjalẹ of Ìjẹbù*, *Aláké of Abéòkuta*, and many others. Because of the monolithic nature of the Yoruba people, the system of traditional administration is closely related. However, the form of administration of *Ìbàdàn* town is very unique. The town has two major lines of administration which are categorized as political lines and military lines. On top of each line of administration is the *Òtún*, who heads the political line and *Òsì* or *Balógun* who heads the military line. Sitting at the tip of these two lines is the traditional ruler called *Ọba*. *Ọba* is the king of the town from whom all decisions and authorities are sourced. They called him *Aláse Èkejì Òrìsà* (the one with the authority and next to that of the Pantheons). The peculiar circumstance of Ibadan may be due to certain sociological factors as it relates to her existence.

Unlike so many other Yoruba towns, *Ìbàdàn*, came into being as a resting camp for the *Òyó* warriors that fought war. It is in the heart of

*Yorùbá* land. It is one of the prominent cities in Nigeria. It is the capital of *Òyó* state and loosely referred to as the political capital of *Yorùbá* land. *Ìbàdàn* used to be the largest city in West Africa at the independence of Nigeria. The word *Ìbàdàn* was coined from the phrase '*Èbá Òdàn*' which means 'edge of the meadow'. The name was given to the settlement by the passer-by because of the location between the savannah and the forest. Time reduced the two words to *Èbàdàn* and finally to *Ìbàdàn*. *Ìbàdàn* city started with the migration of *Lágelú* "*Orò Àpata Májà*" a war chief of *Ifẹ* descent from *Àtíkí* compound in *Ilé Ifẹ* towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Because of how large the place was, people started selling goods there and from there, it became a center of attractions for buyers and also warriors. The first *Ìbàdàn* settlement broke up around the early 18<sup>th</sup> century caused by the massacre of the *Ìlári* and the liberation of the *Ègbá* from the *Aláàfin*'s control in 1775. Oyèbíyì (2008). The second settlement of *Ìbàdàn* broke up by a man called *Olówu Akínjóbí* who offered the only daughter of the *Olúbàdàn* as a sacrifice for his men to cross the *Ọba* river. *Ìbàdàn* was again re-populated in 1820 not by the original founders but by the allied army consisting of the *Ègbá*, *Ìjẹbù*, *Ifẹ* and *Òyó* war veterans. Today, all these constituting bodies have formed power blocks in the leadership of the town. *Ìbàdàn* had a huge impact on *Yorùbá* society economically, politically and militarily. *Ìbàdàn*'s population is about 4,144,000 people and operates as a republican



**Picture 1: Map of *Ìbàdàn* Tijani et al (2018)**

society. (Population review,n.d)

The traditional administration of *Ìbàdàn* is also significantly outstanding. It is pseudo-republican in structure, where each enclave, an autonomous community, has its own traditional administration, yet subject to the authority of the *Olúbádàn* of *Ìbàdàn*land. *Fòkò*, the focus of this study is one of such autonomous community. It is headed by the *Mógàjí Fòkò*, a title recently transformed to that of a king. The *Olúbádàn* crowned the new king on July 7, 2023, marking a significant development in the traditional institution. As a part of social changes occasioned by evolving political realities, the *Mógàjí Fòkò* rules as a king, yet he remains a chief of the *Olúbádàn*, the primal ruler of *Ìbàdàn* land. Oral sources reveal that the *Mógàjí* title was traditionally given to the eldest family member, but now considers factors like youth, influence, and leadership qualities. To be chosen as a *Mógàjí*, one must possess leadership qualities, good communication skills, and be willing to serve the people. Additionally, the person must be a true indigene of *Ìbàdàn*, having a number of interest in Ibadan. This paper explores the traditional institution of the *Mógàjí* of *Fòkò*, examining the role of music in this context.

*Fòkò* autonomous community in *Ìbàdàn* is led by *Mógàjí Eddy Oyèwolé*. The history of *Fòkò* epitomizes history of other autonomous community in *Ìbàdàn*. The people of *Fòkò* are one of the deep-rooted families who have been present since the inception of *Ìbàdàn*. They are one of the first settlers in *Ìbàdàn* who now hold a very significant position in *Ìbàdàn*. The place known as *Fòkò* today is

named after a one of the first warriors to settle in *Ìbàdàn*, chief *Aiyéjènkú*, who was also known as *Fòkò*. When he came, he was an old and very experienced war chief. He came with one hundred and thirty-seven (137) warriors to settle with him. They were the warriors who had won battles against the *Ègbá* with him. He was the *Àsájú* for *Olúyòlé*, the first *Basòrun*, and also the *Arègò* of *Balógun Ìbikúnlé* during the *Ìjàyè* war. When the *Ìjàyè* war was over, he was installed as the *Fòkò* of *Òyó* town. The name *Fòkò* was a title that later sunk in than his original name because people did not even remember his name again but his title. *Fòkò* was a man of honor who always spoke the truth and was not afraid to look into the eyes of those that were in authority to tell them that they were wrong. The area called *Fòkò* today was where chief *Aiyéjènkú* fought war and seized the land from those who were earlier settlers. Therefore, Using *Fòkò* autonomous community in *Ìbàdàn* as a study, this paper is joining the league of others papers to present *Yorùbá* music, in the opinion of *Yorùbá* scholar, in an ethnomusicological research. In this paper, the role of music in the traditional administration of *Yorùbá*land will be explored in an attempt to emphasize the place of music in the cultural balance of Africans. The paper will engage in historical narration of the importance of music to the people's life. It will discuss the interrelations of music to the political administration of the people and roles of music in the general administration of the traditional institutions.



**Picture II: The first *Fòkò* court where Chief Ayijenku lived as soon as he was installed as the *Fòkò* of *Ìbàdàn*. Source: The Researcher.**

An ethnography method was adopted in the course of this study, primary data were gathered through unstructured oral interviews with the musicians and the traditional chiefs. This is in addition to interviews with knowledgeable elders in the community. These people were asked questions about their understanding of the place of music in the administration of the community and Ìbàdàn in general. The incumbent *Mógàjì* of *Fòkò* Ìbàdàn who also doubles as the *Òsì Olúbádàn* of *Ìbàdàn* land was also interviewed. Focus group discussions were held on several occasions with the various ensembles and other musicians in the court. This paper also uses available library and other documentary evidence in seeking to explain in detail the relationship between royalty and music in Yorùbá land. This paper aims to fill this gap by exploring the musical tradition of Ìbàdàn people, including its forms, instrumentation, and social and political relevance.

### Literature review

The study of African music has evolved significantly, moving beyond the limitations of ethno-centricism. Scholars such as Euba (1988), Arom (1991), Agawu (2003), Omojola (2012), Marriam (1964), Vidal (2012), and Ògúnyemí (2020) have explored various aspects of African music, including its definition, context, functions, and sociological relevance. Traditional music is characterized as the musical practices and genres that originated in the pre-colonial era. (Omojola, 2014). Euba (1987) defines traditional music as the class of music practiced in Nigeria before European influence, which has survived to this day. Traditional music typically combines singing with accompaniment, either by hand clapping or musical instruments. Euba (1988) emphasizes the significance of the palace as the center of musical activities in *Yorùbá*

land. The palace is where traditional music is often performed, and it plays a vital role in the cultural and social life of the people. Okunadé (2010) notes that *Gbèdu* music, for example, is reserved for the palace and is an essential part of Yorùbá royal traditions. However, the present reality is such that this particular type of music has been shaped by various exogenous and endogenous factors such as civilization, globalization, internal and external migration and a few others. This has warranted a study of the nature of the article for the purpose of retelling the story for it to be relevant in the present circumstance.

Bádé Àjàyí (1989) discusses the functions of musicians and the roles of music in the courts of Yorùbá kings. Royal drummers, such as the *Onilù Ààfin*, perform daily at the palace, praising the king and entertaining visitors. Akínyemí (2010) categorizes the roles of royal bards into four: palace entertainers, repository of tradition, chroniclers of the king's genealogy, and morale boosters for men going into battle. Recent revelations have shown that beyond the fundamental purposes of entertainment and information, traditional music is used to galvanize power, negotiate political relevance and emphasize authority. This is what this paper intends to explore adequately. In his essay, *Dipsticking the Study of Indigenous African Music from the John Blacking Era into the 21st Century*, Mapaya (2018) evaluates the epistemological state of indigenous African music in academe and advocates the recuperation and/or reconstruction of Africa-sensed approaches and the cultivation of African exigency in pursuit of the study of African music. He argues that the study of African music deserves musicological experts beyond the narrow purview of the subject done by creatures of erstwhile colonial, imperial and now neo-imperialist agencies. Thus, the importance of papers like this, which writes from the indigenous perspective, is

imperative. Mapaya, enjoins scholars to assert the place of indigenous African music within the broader scheme of musicology (114). It is from this perspective that the paper explores the topic being addressed.

### Findings and Analysis of Findings

The study reveals three forms of music in the court of Mògàjí, Eddy Oyèwólé: instrumental, singing, and poetry. These forms are integral to the traditional court's activities, from coronation to the Mògàjí's reign. Drumming, dancing, singing, and poetry are activated immediately after the Mògàjí's nomination, with poetry, which is usually in the form of chants, recitative, eulogy are predominantly performed by women, while drumming is exclusive to men. The performance space is open to all, with no clear demarcation between audience, performers, and respondents. The interplay between musical idioms, such as singing, dancing, and chanting, is fluid, with participants freely switching roles. This collaborative approach reinforces the idea that African arts are complementary and interconnected. The art of music making in the court of Mògàjí fòkò is undertaken by both professional and non professional. The professionals are mainly drummers who are not primarily a-fixed to the court but are mainly itinerant drummers. These categories of drummers give their services unsolicited in most cases. Some of them appear at the court for the singular purpose of installation of the new Mògàjí or for special occasions. While there are no permanent drummers or musicians in the court some drummers particularly have made it mandatory to visit

#### CHANT 1

#### Oríkì . Fòkò (Fòkò Songs)

*Ọmọ fẹ́éré Ọmọ jòba díẹ̀, jagundìẹ̀  
little*

the court regularly in search of patronage. Remuneration, for these drummers, usually in the form of food, money and material things, comes in the form of token doled out the celebrants, friends, admirers, visitors and well-wishers . The non professional arms of the musicians are dominated by women of the household of the Mògàjí. They are daughter of the family as well as women married into the family. They are non-paying musician but are not usually appreciated with either money of any other societal acceptable means. While the professionals undertake both instrumental and vocal renditions, the non professional are mostly unaccompanied singer, dancers and chanters, in cases where they are accompanied, it is done by either a mono rhythmic instrument or hand clapping. Most of these women are traders who volunteered to partake in the celebration as a mark of respect to the newly installed Mògàjí and as a fulfillment of traditional conventions that had seen women chaperon such occasions. In return, the Mògàjí, who is now the accepted leader of the community, is committed to the wellbeing of these women. The involvement of these women terminates at the end of the installation. Although they appear sparingly at special occasions, the responsibility of musicking at the court of Mògàjí after that day returns wholly to the professional/itinerant musicians.

The coronation ceremony involves a procession to the *Olúbádàn's* palace, accompanied by drumming, specifically the Dùndún ensemble.. Vocal music in the *Fòkò* Royal court includes chanted songs, such as *Oríkì* and *ewì*, and sung songs, orin.

#### English Translation

*Rest being, ambivalently reigning a while, warring a*

<i>Ará odò ọrọ Ọmọ onígbòwó ogùdu residents</i>	<i>Ally of inhabitants of River Oro, defender of Ogudu</i>
<i>Ọmọ owó yaalé owó ya oko</i>	<i>Stupendously wealthy at home and farmstead</i>
<i>Kò mi ógẹẹ</i>	<i>distinctly fashionable</i>
<i>Ọmọ afin ju elépo</i>	<i>without blemish like lam oil seller</i>
<i>Òpìn tàn kí ríyèléléjù</i>	<i>the idles have no place in the battle front</i>
<i>Àkí bimọ félé jù ka pòse owó ní ná</i>	<i>no child born to a great warrior lacks money,</i>
<i>Ọkọ orí tookí</i>	<i>as Oritooke's husband</i>
<i>Igba ẹrú lafi nso Ọmọ lórúko</i>	<i>marked a child's naming with 200 slaves</i>
<i>Kọọ mi óge ará òkè-asà</i>	<i>trailblazer, ally of Oke Asapeole</i>
<i>Ọmọ ahó hanraun mágbe</i>	<i>the robust enigma who cannot be despised</i>
<i>Ọmọ àfi arà Ọmọ àdúgbò</i>	<i>the veteran warrior whose valor has</i>
<i>mesmerized neighbors</i>	
<i>Ọmọ olúkete fòdògùn jó</i>	<i>burning charms in the hallowed pot</i>
<i>Bi bá nse enu wúyẹ wúyẹ wúyẹ</i>	<i>invoking incantations with measured lips</i>
<i>Òdògùn ní nsà</i>	<i>grinding accurate herbs with aggressiveness</i>
<i>Bi bá nse ìgbòwú su su su òdògùn ní nlo</i>	<i>his loins are bedecked with ample amulets with</i>
<i>Ìdí kò gba ògùn oko yoku há párá</i>	<i>leftovers kept in attic</i>
<i>Àbàtì àlàpà àbámò abámá se</i>	<i>the formidable barrier which ought not to be</i>
<i>Wón se tán ódi áápon</i>	<i>became insurmountable to his assailant</i>
<i>Ọmọ agídí gbongbon gídì</i>	<i>Obdurate and intransigent object</i>
<i>Agídí gbongbon tìn je lówùjo ókuta</i>	<i>infallible in the assemblage of rocks</i>
<i>Agídí eiye tìnje ní gbangba oko</i>	<i>adamant bird feeding in the foremost of the</i>
<i>crop Farm</i>	
<i>Mònàmoná to òrun lépa.</i>	<i>The predetermined course of lightning sealing up the curtains of heaven</i>

## **CHANT 2**

*Erín káwó jà lóri*

*the elephants in full blown fight moo*

### CHANT 3

*Èbáàko, èbáàya,*

*not caring if it's borrowed or not*

*È bá n rówó fún Fòkò kó ró wóna  
Agada bi ina bi ina Omo Aiyéjẹnkú*

*Fòkò must be given money so he can spend  
a stranger like fire, Aiyéjẹnkú's heir*

*Aberu agada bi ida bi ida Omo Aiyéjẹnkú*

*a servant like a slave completely submissive*

The drumming serves as a means of political engagement and power negotiation, extolling the virtues of the *Mógàjí's* family and accomplishments. The drummers use speech surrogate functions of the talking drums, conveying messages through drum language, which is understood by those familiar with the *Yorùbá* language and drumming patterns. As defined by Nzewi, (2007), musical meaning in the African arts milieu is central to musical communication and appreciation. Therefore, the duty of these musicians engaged in the service of *Mógàjí fòkò* is to give implicitly meaning to the traditional ceremony. Their performance delivery exceeds the immediate challenge of entertainment and communication. Their involvements are usually designed to communicate and accomplished extra-musical sentiments and objectives respectively (Nzewi et al ibd). The Traditional institution in *Yorùbá* land is largely focused of power negotiation, interest balancing, influence trading and relationship mediation, and that is what the first chant narrated about the progenitor of *Fòkò* in *Ìbàdàn*. Power in this context of *Yorùbá* traditional institution is not limited to skills or grit in the battle fields. It extends to other variables like enrichments in magical powers, wealth and diplomatic influence. Wealth in the *Yorùbá* parlance transcends financial accruals; it is inclusive of the size of farmstead, number of slaves and servants. Therefore, the chant is an account of the magnitude of wealth, influence and powers in

the possession of the progenitor of *Fòkò* while he reigned. Like most *Yorùbá* oral poetries, this chant is laced with figures of speech like hyperbole, metonyms, personifications, epigram, irony and so many others. All these are flowery languages that are meant to convey deeper meanings that will characterize the occasion.

The chant dwells on the achievement of the progenitor of *Fòkò*, *Aiyéjẹnkú*, emphasis his riches in wealth and charms which he applied to the benefit of his people. As stated earlier the progenitors of *Fòkò* was a warrior who attained an enviable status as a warrior and an outstanding traditional man. These songs and chants, therefore, chronicle family events, narrate genealogy, and celebrate victories and achievements. Some songs are praise songs, while others may be abusive or extol the virtues of the *Mógàjí*. The songs often employ proverbs and coded language, requiring analysis to fully understand their meaning.

In this chant which has become the *Oriki* of the entire lineage of *Aiyéjẹnkún*, music becomes the purposeful agency of power negotiation and resistance. The first part of this chant celebrates the strength and bravery of Chief *Aiyéjẹnkún* and references him as the defender of *Ogùdu* and the veteran warrior whose valour is mesmerized by his neighbors. All these are extolling his exploits in the various wars he fought for *Ìbàdàn* against the external forces and how he was feared and revered at war. The line “

.....stupendously wealthy at home and farmland.....” and “ .....marked a child’s naming bringing 200 slaves.....” illustrate how rich he was and successful he was. His success as a man of war and means not withstanding *Aiyéjẹnkú* was also a man who gave much to society and family.

The chants also constitute music as a body of knowledge and repose of historical dates and landmark activities. For instance, the illustration of the “palm oil seller” who hides “us” from the battlefield shows that he holds a traditional authority. That could be why the *Ààre* ( *Are* was the title of *Olúbàdàn*) at that time was scared of him, he fought for cities and made sure that it was for just causes and defended those who needed to be defended, he wouldn’t go to war if he knew that the cause of the war is greed and selfish.

In chant 2, Elephant otherwise known as *Erin* or *Àjànàkú* in Yorùbá land personifies the strength , influence and invisibility of the progenitor of *Fòkò*. It is customary in Yorùbá to personify great men and women in the elements of animals that awes the people in habits and conduct. So many kings adorn the symbol of a lion or leopard and elephants and emblem of staff. *Aiyéjẹnkú*’s followers used this chant to hail him whenever he was provoked by the enemy, to urge him to fight more and destroy the enemies.

The structure of the third chant follows the same trend on holding intrinsic meanings, that are communicated in coded, flower poetries and chants. In an oral interview with *Alhaji Talfa*, The song was brought about when the descendant of chief *Aiyéjẹnkú* that the first baale *Báálè Oyèwólé* became the *Baale* in *Ìbàdàn* and there was no money for the *Báálè* to spend, one of the military men in council, Captain Ross (the first service officer of *Ìbàdàn*) came and explained to him that the money the *Fòkò* community council had is belonging to the *Baálè* and he should not in any way lack anything. when things are going down financially, , he will just demand

for money from the council not caring if there was money or not. This story became well known and that almost every *Oriki* associated with the *Fòkò* family starts from the song that tells this story. The chant speaks about how the bale of *Fòkò* deserves all the money because his fathers have fought for the victory of the people and shouldn’t be in need.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study illuminates the profound significance of music within the traditional court of *Mògàjí*, Eddy *Oyèwólé*, showcasing its pivotal role in both ceremonial and everyday contexts. By examining the intricate dynamics of instrumental music, vocal performances, and poetic expressions, this research reveals the multifaceted nature of musical traditions in Yorùbá culture. The findings underscore the complexity and richness of drum language, proverbs, and coded vocal expressions, while also highlighting the collaborative essence of African arts. Ultimately, this study enhances our understanding of music's enduring importance in traditional Yorùbá society, offering valuable insights into its continued relevance in modern times

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