

MUSICAL PRACTICES OF IGUNNUKO FESTIVAL AMONG AWORI PEOPLE OF LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

This paper identified the Musical Practices of *Igunuko* Festival among Awori people of Lagos State. It explored the various concepts within the festival such as musical elements and instrumental practices. Both primary and secondary data collections were employed in this paper. The primary source comprised observation method where audio and video recordings were taken. Interviews were conducted with purposively selected individuals. These included the *Ndaso* of *Igunuko* o (the head or chief priest of *Igunuko*) in Ogudu, one of the *Awori* settlements; ten purposively selected singers, and six enthusiasts of *Igunuko* festival. Functionality theory of Emile Durkheim was also adopted for this paper. Findings revealed that festivals in Yorubaland represent the climax of event whereby public worship is involved, as they manifest themselves through oral expression and actions. Furthermore, the paper observed that the concept of music in festival can also be seen from perspective of total theatre, in which music, dancing, acting accompany the stage performance. The paper concluded that *Igunuko* music is bound in its cultural and traditional roles.

Keywords: Musical Practices, Festival, *Igunnukó*, and *Àwòrì* People

Introduction

The Awori are sub-ethnic group of the Yorùbá of Lagos, speaking a distinct dialect of the Yorùbá language called Àwòrì. They are culturally, historically and politically bound as a Yorùbá people. The Àwòrì constitute the bulk of the indigenous population of seventeen, out of the Twenty Local Government areas of Lagos State as at the year 2023, the only exception being Èpé, Ìkòròdú and Ìbẹ̀jù-Lẹ̀kkí who are the Ìjẹ̀bú. The remaining Local Government occupied and owned by the Àwòrì include: Àlímòṣó, Ajéròmí-Ìfẹ̀lódùn, Kòṣòfẹ, Mushin, Oshòdì-Ìṣolò, Òjò, Sùúrùlẹ̀rẹ, Agége, Ìfàkò-Ìjàyẹ, Sómólú, Amúwo-Òdòfin, Lagos Mainland, Ìkejà, Etí-Òsà, Badagry, Àpápá and Lagos Island. As earlier mentioned, the Àwòrì could be grouped into two major divisions, that is, the early and the latter Àwòrì groups. Among the early Àwòrì settlements are Ìshẹ̀rì, Òtò- Olófin, Ìddó, Èbúté-Méta, Àpá, Ìbèréko as well as Òtá and Adó-Odò in Ògùn state of Nigeria. A common feature of these settlements is that they were founded before 1500. They also have a related migratory history and recognize Olófin Ògúnfúnminíre as their progenitor. The latter settlements include Òjò, Ìtírẹ, Mushin, Ògùdù, Ìkejà, Onígbongbò, Ibà, Òtò-Àwòrì, Ìjàníkin, Ìlogbò Èlẹgbà, Ìlogbò-Erémí, Iwóró, Àgbára all of which are post 1500 settlements located in Lagos State of Nigeria (Adebola, 2019, pp. 33-34).

There are cultural evidences that suggest unifying themes in the ways of life of the Yorùbá people of Nigeria of which Àwòrì is one. Such includes language, the physical indices, and cultural complexes of which religious cults, masquerades, and

festivals; and other cultural manifestations are a common trait among the Yorùbá communities of the world (Nigeria, Benin Republic, and Brazil).

Abiodun (2005, p. 78) observes that festivals in Africa are full of joy, pomp and pageantry. It gives people opportunities to be proud of their group inheritance and to also showcase them. "Festivals in Yorubaland are a form of theatrical expressions which contain all elements of artistic productions such as dance, mime, music, and acting. Festivals, like other musical activities, are auspicious joyous occasions". People enjoy a passion that moves them to dance, rejoice, and also weep in occasions that demand weeping. Ìgunnukó festival is one of such festivals in Aworiland, which is normally held first before other festivals among the people (Àwòrì). This festival (Ìgunnukó) is observed in same manner throughout Aworiland in Lagos State such as Òtò-Àwòrì, Ògùdù, Àgbòyí, Ìjàníkin, Ìṣolò, Ìrù, Ibà, Òtá, Ìgbesà, Ìkejà, Ìtírẹ, Ìjù-Ìshàgá, Ìpájà, Èbúté-Méta, Èpétèdó, Bàrígà, Agége among others. However, there are slight modifications in terms of performance styles from one Àwòrì community to the other.

The purpose of this festival (Ìgunnukó) is to pay homage to Olódumarè (Supreme Being) through Òrìṣà Ìgunnukó (Ìgunnukó divinity); and also for witch hunting and to cleanse the societies of their (witches) acts. It is believed that there are supernatural personalities regulating nature, of which Ìgunnukó is one. Apart from Ìgunnukó festival, there are other festivals such as Egúngún, Orò, Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ, Èyò, Èlùkú, Olókun, Olósà, Èṣù (Èlẹgbára) that are observed in Aworiland on yearly basis. Euba

in Elúwólé (2020, p. 42) asserts that there are three types of festivals in Yorùbáland, they are: *Òsẹ̀*, *Ìtádógún*, and *Odún*. *Òsẹ̀* is a kind of festival observed every five day such as Ifá, Òṣun, Qbátálá, Olókun among others; *Ìtádógún* festival is such that is also observed every seventeenth day by some groups such as Ògbóni/Òsùgbó, Ìyàmi Èlẹyẹ, even Ifá, Òṣun, and Qbátálá, while *Odún* is the yearly festival that is the most popular and elaborately celebrated such as Egúngún, Ìgunnukó, Èyò, Èṣù, Gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ̀, Ifá, Qbátálá, Òṣun, Orò to mention but a few. All these Òrìṣà (divinities) are appeased in what is referred to as ritual worship in which sacrifices or libations are performed at a set time of the day, week, month, and yearly known as festival.

This paper examines the state of performance of Ìgunnukó festival and equally investigates the musical practices of Ìgunnukó music among the Àwóri people within the framework of its celebration.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Functionalist theory by Emile Durkheim. According to Crossman (2018), Functionalism is one of the major theoretical perspectives in Sociology, which has its origins in the works of Emile Durkheim who was especially interested in how social order is possible or how society remains relatively stable. As a theory, functionalism focuses on the macro-level of social structure, rather than the micro-level of everyday life. Functionalism concentrates on the functions of social structure and interprets each part of society in terms of how it subsidises to the firmness of the society as a whole. Society is more than the sum of its parts; rather, each part of society

is functional for the immovability of the whole.

From the perspective of Durkheim, Crossman projects society as an organism, just like each component plays an indispensable role, but none can function alone without the other. Functionalism therefore stresses the consensus and order that exist in the society, concentrating on social stability and shared public values. From this perspective, ineptitude in the system, such as deviant behaviour, leads to change because societal apparatuses must adjust to achieve stability. When one part of the system is not working or is dysfunctional, it affects all other parts and creates social problems, which leads to social change.

This theory is germane to this study when applied in the sense that it will help in understanding the musical analysis and considerations of the musical perception, judgement and applications of Àwóri culture. Àwóri people are structuralised into different societies and institutions, which include age grade, royal/kingship, marriage and family life, occupation and the religious institutions. Ìgunnukó musical groups link up all these institutions by making them to see their roles and functions within Àwóri societies through the regular interpretations, timely worships and promotion of Ìgunnukó musical activities in Aworiland. Individuals that constitute the group such as men, women, kings and different religious leaders and followers are linked through Ìgunnukó musical formation, performance, instrumental and vocal structures.

Concept of Music in Yorùbá Festival

Music is a cultural expression and every culture decides for itself what is music or not (Okafor, 2005, p. 2). Music finds its place in every aspect of human endeavours, especially at festivals among the people of Africa in general, Nigeria in particular, and the Yorùbá to be specific. To the Yorùbá, “A festival is that chain of activities, celebrations, ceremonies, foods, drinks and rituals, which mark the continuity of culture in an environment” (*Ibid*, p. 4). In similar notion, Vidal (2012, p. 205) explains that “the festival, from Yorùbá definitive viewpoint is an annual event, in remembrance or commemoration of a god, spirit, ancestor, historical event or king”. In the words of Omibiyi-Obidike (2005, p. 29), festivals are periodic celebrations in acknowledgement of blessings already received, and means of requesting for more blessings, protection, and guidance from Olódùmarè (Supreme Being) through the Òrìṣà (divinities), and Baba-Nlá-Wa (ancestors). Festivals pave ways for cultural spectacles, ritual observances, and social entertainment. It (festival) brings about social reunion among friends, families, and the community as a whole, where distant members return home to participate in the celebrations.

It is most gratifying that the concept of music in festival celebrations can be seen from the perspective of total theatre, in which dancing and acting accompany the stage performance. This is noted in the involvement of musical performances in Ìgunnukó festival among the Àwòrí people. Music is therefore seen to be very functional from the beginning to the end of the festival.

It is considered part and parcel of the whole celebrations on yearly basis (Adébólá, 2019, p. 43).

Elúwólé (2020, pp. 47-48), assert the importance of *Òṣàrà* music in Ilé-Ifè, and that music and musicians play major role during the festival. He notes that *Òṣàrà* festival comes up yearly and is characterised by different performance and atonement to the spirit World in order to bring peace and tranquillity to the people of Ilé-Ifè. He further asserts that Abẹ̀bẹ̀ (hand fan) is the only musical instrument used in accompanying *Agbón* music, that is, *Òṣàrà* music. Lókò (2005, pp. 155-156), on the other hand, observes that music serves as a means of entertainment during the Egúngún festival in Òttò-Àwòrí land. It plays a vital part in the invocation of the divine beings and also in the public appearance of the Egúngún and his initiates during the festival.

Concept of Ìgunnukó Festival in Aworiland

The Ìgunnukó festival is one of the major festivals among the Àwòrí people, especially in such towns as Etiòṣà, Ògùdù, Èpètédó, Bàrìgà, Ìsàlẹ̀-Èkó, Òtá, and Ìgbẹ̀sà among others. It is usually performed to hunt witches in the community, and to honour an important member(s) of the society who might have departed. In addition, traditional monarchs/chiefs use the festival as one of the programmes to celebrate their coronation anniversary on the throne; and to commemorate special occasions such as burials, rituals to mention but a few. Chief Lateef Ísàù (Oral interview, 2019), the Shíàbàkòkò of Ìgunnukó (the custodian of the Ìgunnukó shrine) in Ògùdù-Àwòrí,

Kòṣòfẹ Local Government Area of Lagos, informed that Ìgunnukó festival is traditionally fixed for the month of January each year and lasts for fourteen days.

Àtíkù in Adébólá (2019, p. 16) also mentioned that the festival is always fixed for the month of January in order to avoid rainfall that may disturb the celebration, public display and Ìgunnukó performances. He (Adébólá) further recalls a historical and significant event, which involved the exile of a witch, Laiko, in Sambufu, a town in Kwara State, because of her evil deeds in the community. The incident occurred in January and the festival became fixed for the same month to serve as a remembrance of the event. To Ìgunnukó practitioners, the first, third, seventh and the fourteenth day, which marks the end of the festival are very important in the sense that special events take place, but the other days during the festival are for merry making and entertainment of guests as well as well-wishers. The days that constitute major events of the festival will be discussed below.

On the first day of the festival, which is called “*Ojò Àìsùn*” (the watch night), rituals are usually conducted by the initiates for ‘*Ìlù Ìkòkò*’ (pot drum) before anyone beats it. In addition, both young and old men of the society (Ìgunnukó) go in procession at night between 1am and 4am to uproot a living tree which is called ‘*Kúsò*’ as part of the ritual performances. Ìgunnukó practitioners believe that when the *Kúsò* is drizzled round the community, it waves off diseases, sickness and untimely death as seen in Plate 1. This ritual performance is of great significance during the festival. Apart

from appeasing the Òrìṣà Ìgunnukó against epidemics, issues relating to social, economic and political situations in the community are also prayed for according to Chief Lateef Ísàù (Oral interview, 2019). The ritual performances are always carried out in the innermost area of “*Ibasoshi or Igbó Ìgunnukó or Igbó Ñlá* (the Ìgunnukó groove or shrine)”. *Ibasoshi* is made up of two compartments for categories of members: *Igbó Kékeré* (small shrine), and *Igbó Ñlá* (bigger shrine).



Plate 1: Young men of Ìgunnukó society coming from Kúsò, drizzling the uprooted tree on the ground in Àwòrì-Èpètédó, Lagos (Source: the Researcher)

The new members of this society, whether male or female, are restrained in *Igbó Kékeré*. There; they run errands, the elders of the society also monitor and guide their dispositions. *Igbó Ñlá* is meant for the male members only in the sense that Òrìṣà Ìgunnukó is worshipped there, and also serves as a dressing apartment for Ìgunnukó masquerades to put on their regalia for the purpose of performances. As such, women or new member(s) are forbidden entrance into *Igbó Ñlá*. In *Igbó Ñlá* according to Chief Lateef Ísàù (Oral interview, 2019), there are items for ritual performances such

as *ewúré ibílè* (native goat), *pépéiyẹ* (duck), *eyelé* (pigeon), *ìgbín* (snail), *àkùkọ adìẹ* (cock), *ìjàpá dúdú* (black turtle), *òwú àràbà* (cotton wool), *ìgbá* (calabash), *obì* (kola nut), *orógbó* (bitter kola nut), *otí ibílè tàbí ògógóró* (local gin), and *aşo funfun òpá mètá* (three yards of white clothes) to mention but a few. These items constitute part of the ritual materials used on the first, third, seventh and last day of the festival, all of which plays significant role in the success of the festival.

The third day of the festival is called “*Ojọ Ìta*”. The Ìgunnukó masquerades are seen outside the shrine as seen in Plate 2. The Ìgunnukó dresses in ropes on stilt having no resemblance of a human body as the person is completely hidden inside. It is a very tall figure used in hunting witches in the community as earlier mentioned. As such, the masquerades (Ìgunnukó) parade the streets and use the opportunity to visit important people in the community. The festival is celebrated with various musical performances, dance, and display of magical powers. Apart from dance display and Ìgunnukó performances, another ritual sacrifice is performed as part of the tradition for the festival. As earlier mentioned, all the ritual materials except native goat on the first day constitute the items for this ritual. Throughout the festival, the Ìgunnukó masquerade dances to the music of *Bèmbé* and *Ìkòkò* drums.



Plate 2: Ìgunnukó masquerades being accompanied out of the shrine by members of the cult on *Ojọ Ìta* of the festival at Èpètèdó, Àwòrì, Lagos (Source: the Researcher)

The dance performance is made up of members of the singing group and Ìgunnukó masquerades as seen in Plate 3. The Ìgunnukó is the leading figure in the dance performance while other singers in the ensemble accompany it. Most of the time, the drummers dictate the dancing style of the dancers through different rhythmic patterns. The singers also consist of both male and female members of the Ìgunnukó society. The singers have their leader who leads them in singing while the drummers are playing. Songs 1 and 2 below are some of the songs used during the musical performances.



Plate 3: Ìgunnukó and members of the society, while spectators watch the performance on the last day of the festival in Bàrìgà, Lagos (Source: the Researcher)

Song 1

YINA YINA BAKAJE

Yi na, yi na ba ka je e ba ka je e

4
yi na yi na ba ka ta e so, e so so ko da ho ro.

Text in Tápà

*Yina yina baka je,
Baka je yina yina bakata,
Esu, esu soko da ho.*

Translation

Today, today there would be no rain,
All our doings will be peaceful,
Tomorrow, tomorrow god will keep us.

Song 2

A Ja'we Akoko

A ja' we a - ko - ko o e a ja' we a - ko - ko k'a ba

5
r'e bo, e - yi t'a de ma ja o k'a ba r'e bo.

Text in Àwòrì (Yorùbá)

*A jáwé àkókó o e,
Ajáwé àkókó kamú're bọ o,
Èyí ta dẹ ma já o, ka báre bọ.*

Translation

We pluck the first leaf,
We pluck the first leaf to bring good,
The next we are to pluck will bring us good.

The seventh day of the festival is called “*Ojọ Ìje*”. Like the first and third day, ritual is also performed and members of Ìgunnukó have to go in procession again to *Kúsò* to uproot another living tree. It is believed that the *Kúsò* ritual on the first and third day were not enough to wave-off diseases and untimely death in the community, hence, the need for *Kúsò* ritual on the seventh day, which according to the practitioners of Ìgunnukó society will completely eradicate any form

of epidemic hovering around the community. The other days stuck between the seventh and the fourteenth day of the festival, have no specific importance attached to them other than merry making, and Ìgunnukó masquerades will have to move around the community to visit important dignitaries such as kings, chiefs, and few elderly individuals. As a means of expressing gratitude, members of the community avail themselves the opportunity

of these days to appear before Ìgunnukó in sharing testimonies and also to redeem their pledges either in cash or kind for answered prayers and other blessings received during and after the festival in the previous year. Some also seize the opportunity of these days to petition the Òrìṣà Ìgunnukó called “Mọmọ” in the shrine through the Ìgunnukó masquerades for their problems and paramount needs.

On the last day, the grand finale, which is called “*Ojò Ìtọwọbọmi*”, the Ìgunnukó masquerades will file out in their large numbers than any other day, and they (Ìgunnukó) can be up to 50 or 60 in numbers according to Chief A. Ajímọtútù (*Commentator/Narrator on Ìgunnukó festival in Lagos State, 2019*). One thing that is amazing about Ìgunnukó masquerades is that they can be as tall as fifteen feet, and in a twinkle of an eye, be as short as two feet at the same time. They can roll on the ground like drums, or spread like mats all in one breath doing all forms of performances with the aid of magical powers for the sake of entertaining their spectators/onlookers. Apart from the costume in Ìgunnukó festival music, there are also some elements of aesthetic values which are associated with their costumes, which give the performance scene a glamorous and gorgeous outlook.

Still on the last day, there is what is called ‘*ẹrọ*’, a special concoction prepared by Ìgunnukó in the shrine to be given to all the people present. The leaves of the uprooted tree from *Kúsò* and other ingredients are used to prepare the *ẹrọ* in a very big local pot (*Ìkòkò*) and this signifies the end of the festival. It is believed that the efficacy of *ẹrọ* is so strong to cure and heal

any kind of disease and sickness, and when it is put in any home, the place is said to be saved of any evil forces and attack. Plate 4 below shows some members of Ìgunnukó in procession carrying *ẹrọ* in a local pot to be distributed to both members and non-members. However, the festival is often accompanied by a big feast where the community members engage in eating, drinking and dancing on a large scale. After this, the traditional ruler(s) and all Ìgunnukó masquerades will move to the shrine (*Ibasoshi*) where they will finally and jointly offer prayers for the progress and peace of the community. It is to be noted that the prayers offered for the community during the festival constitute part of the spirituality in Ìgunnukó festival. To Ìgunnukó practitioners, it is believed that prayers are channel to Olódùmarè (Supreme Being) through the Òrìṣà Ìgunnukó (Ìgunnukó divinity) in the shrine. This belief is noted in the works of some scholars in African traditional religions such as Abimbólá (2014a, 2014b, & 2014c), Parrinder (1969), Ìdòwú (1974; 1996), Brown (1975), Mbiti (1989), Fuller (2017) to mention but a few. This belief according to members of Ìgunnukó society is a system that integrates the spiritual force and the mundane, influencing every aspect of life.



Plate 4: Young men and boys bringing *èrò* from Ìgunnukó shrine for the people on the last day of the festival in Àwóri-Èpètédó, Lagos (Source: the Researcher)

Oral Nature of Ìgunnukó Festival Music

In discussing about oral nature of African music, Agawu (2003, p. xvi) explains that

African music is best understood not as a finite repertoire but as a potentiality. In terms of what now exists and has existed in the past, African music designates those numerous repertoires of songs and instrumental music that originate in specific African communities, and performed regularly as part of play, ritual, and worship, and circulate mostly orally/aurally, within and across language, ethnic, and cultural boundaries.

Oral tradition is the passing of beliefs or customs from one generation to another without being written. Idamoyibo (2008, p. 18) argues that there has been much controversy about the authenticity of such an unwritten tradition by those who have not had much significant interaction with the music of such culture. In her submission, she maintains that traditional artists/musicians are custodians of their societal history. Oláníyan (2000, p. 43) expresses a similar notion when he observes that “a traditional

musician is an entertainer who acquired or inherited his musical expertise through oral tradition from older and more experienced musicians.” In the same vein, Idamoyibo (Ibid, p. 18) mentions that

A traditional musician is one who has gotten facts of realities through imagination and oral sources to subsequently transmit onward to present and future generation his creative stills. His works (music) live within and outside him, even in the heart of his audience. His song texts may be found to be expository, narrative and instructional in the folk idioms, upon unfolding events, over substantial periods of time.

However, the nature of Ìgunnukó music is patterned by the use of songs that are passed on orally from one generation to the other, and in the process, it is modified by the succeeding generations. As one of the characteristics of African music suggests, text bound, in like manner, strong emphasis is laid on the meaning of the texts of Ìgunnukó music than the melodic and rhythmic elements it possess. As observed, the songs are mostly poetic and satirical in nature, often used to correct evil and social vices in Àwóri community during the festival.

Instruments and Instrumentation of Ìgunnukó Festival Music

In African music, there are four basic categories of musical instruments as classified by Nketia (1982, pp. 67-107). They are: Chordophones, Aerophones, Membranophones, and Idiophones. In

Ìgunnukó festival music, two of these classifications stated above are employed. They are membranophones and idiophones with special strength from membranophones family. The musical instruments found in Ìgunnukó festival music includes *Ìkòkò* and *Bèmbé* as they belong to membranophone family, and *Bàbò* from idiophone family.

Ìkòkò

Ìkòkò, which literally means ‘pot’ is the major musical instrument used in Ìgunnukó festival music. *Ìkòkò* as a musical instrument, is made from *amò* (clay) on top of which the *awò* (skin) of *ológbò* (cat) or that of *Ìjímèrè* (a small brown monkey) is used to cover the surface or resonator, and pegged with bowstring made of *osán* (thong). There are two types of *Ìkòkò* drum, the bigger one and the smaller one. The bigger one is called *Ìyáàlù*, and the smaller *Omele*. The player(s) of these instrument always tie *songa* (flexible metal) to their hands in other to produce distinct and desired sound. *Ìkòkò* drum plays a major role in Ìgunnukó festival music in the sense that during the performance, it leads other instruments in the ensemble. It is also used to speak different proverbs in Tápá language, which is one of the two languages used in Ìgunnukó festival music in Aworiland.



Plate 5: Showing the *Ìkòkò* drum used in Ìgunnukó Festival Music in Aworiland (Source: the Researcher)

Bèmbé

Bèmbé (Hausa drum), is another important musical instrument of the membranophone family employed in Ìgunnukó music. It is made of wood of the tree of the banyan family (*igi òmò*). Like the previous instrument, *Ìkòkò*, the surface is covered with the skin of a cat (*ológbò*) or a small brown monkey (*ìjímèrè*) and pegged with bowstring made of thong (*osán*). Unlike the *Ìkòkò*, it (*Bèmbé*) has both ends covered with the above mentioned animal skin. The player of this instrument hangs it with a strong rope on his chest. During the performance, *Bèmbé* drum compliments *Ìkòkò* drum. At the festival when Ìgunnukó masquerades move and dances to pay homage to important dignitaries, such as *Ọba* (King), *Ìjòyè* (chiefs), and *Àwòrò sàṣà* of Ìgunnukó (top members/initiates of Ìgunnukó), *Bèmbé* drum is played to accompany the dance steps of Ìgunnukó masquerades simply because it is not as heavy as *Ìkòkò* drum to carry and manipulate.



Plate 6: Showing the *Bèmbé* drum used in Ìgunnukó Festival Music in Aworiland (Source: the Researcher)

Bàbò

Bàbò, a Tápá name for *Şèkèrè* is a small gourd surrounded by net of cowries. The *Bàbò* is spherical in shape with its neck serving as the handle. During musical performances, women are assigned or

privileged to play it as seen in Plate 8. However, some male members of the group can also play it when women are not available but the instrument is traditionally assigned to be played by the women during musical performances. The player of this instrument (*Bàbò*) holds it firmly with both hands and shakes it in line with the rhythmic pattern of the songs. As earlier mentioned, the main function of this instrument (*Bàbò*) is to maintain constant rhythmic line for the other two drums (*Ìkòkò* and *Bèmbé*) of the ensemble.



Plate 7: Showing the *Bàbò* drum used in Ìgunnukó Festival Music in Aworiland (Source: the Researcher)



Plate 8: A group of Women performing as main vocalists, also playing *Bàbò* with their male counterpart playing instruments during Ìgunnukó festival at Bàrìgà, Lagos (Source: the Researcher)

The instrumentation of the Ìgunnukó festival music consists of the musical instruments

earlier mentioned, *Ìkòkò*, *Bèmbé*, and *Bàbò*. The instrumentation is simple but enhances the overall aesthetics of the music. The introduction and interludes are however short. The instruments were played aloud to the extent that the texts may not be heard clearly in some cases, and the lead vocalist or cantor will have to sing above her voice in order to be heard by the spectators/audiences. While the *Bàbò* plays the basic rhythmic pattern (a kind of timeline) in the ensemble, the drums, that is, *Ìkòkò* and *Bèmbé*, improvise.

Language in Ìgunnukó Musical Expression

In African music, the tonal structure of the music is based on the tonal structure of the language (Vidal, 2012, p. 155). This means that music and language are closely interconnected, and the tonemic structure of language has powerful constraining effect on the melodic structure of the songs. Music and language share some forms of organization and expression, these two forms of communication have in common, rhythm, intonation, and dynamics. Vidal went further to say that the accent and the speech tones govern the music to a great extent.

The language of communication in Ìgunnukó music is both Yorùbá in Àwòrì dialect, and Tàpá. In a tonal language, a change of pitch creates a change of meaning. This shows a major difference when compared to a non-tonal language such as English. Yorùbá language, which is a tonal language, is made up of three tones: low (ˊ), middle (-), and high (/). Tàpá language on the other hand, as one of the African languages, is also tonal and conforms to the

above three levels of tones. As observed in some of the songs analysed, the tonal inflections of both languages to some extent are preserved, but, occasionally altered at different points. This is as a result of hexatonic scale employed, which is more or less conforming to western diatonic scale system.

Conclusion

The thrust of this paper has been the musical practices of Ìgunnukó festival music among the people of Aworiland of Lagos State. The paper traced festivals in Aworiland and the connection between music and Yorùbá festivals in general from the perspective of Ìgunnukó festival music. It also examined among others; the cultural heritage, oral transmission, festival and some musical elements that unite Africans despite societal differences in terms of culture and languages. Furthermore, the paper concluded that every culture in Yorubaland celebrates one festival or the other on yearly basis. The essence of Ìgunnukó festival for instance is concerned with witch hunting and also cleansing the society of their acts. A review was done on festivals and Yorùbá music. Instruments and instrumentation of Ìgunnukó festival music was highlighted where various accompaniments of Ìgunnukó festival music was discussed using *Ìkòkò*, *Bèmbé*, and *Bàbò* as the musical accompaniment during the musical performances.

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