

The Musical Analysis of *Egwu Ede* Music and Dance in Ovoko Community, Enugu State, Nigeria

Francisca Anuli **UGWU**

Department of Music

Faculty of Humanities

Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI)

&

Folorunso David **JAYEOLA**

Department of Music

Faculty of Humanities

Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike (AE-FUNAI)

jayeolafolorunso@gmail.com

Abstract

The traditional music genre of *Egwu Ede* is an interregal part of the cultural heritage of the *Ovoko* community in Enugu State, Nigeria. This research aims to conduct a musical analysis of *Egwu Ede*, examining the musical structure, rhythmic pattern, melodic contours, and harmonic framework of this genre. The findings of this study will contribute to a greater understanding of the musical characteristics of *Ewu Ede*, as well as its role in the cultural life of the *Ovoko* community. This research uses ethnographic method which requires a visitation t the field to gather musical materials for scoring, arranging and analysis. The results give a detailed analysis of *Egwu Ede* musical. This research has a broader implication for the study of African music and culture, as it seeks to seeks to explore the significance of traditional music in promoting cultural heritage and social cohesion in Nigeria. It also informs efforts to preserve and promote traditional music in the region, ensuring that these musical traditions continue.

Key words: Music, Dance, Analysis, *Egwu Ede*, *Ovokos*

Introduction

Ovoko people are well known for their traditional music of different categories that varies in quality to suit various occasions. The selection of membership and instruments also varies from one music to another. These different types of music are made to suit occasions like title-taking, funeral ceremonies, cultural festivals, traditional wedding ceremonies, masquerade, cults and initiation into adulthood, to mention but a few.

Among all these traditional music, it is pertinent to know that *egwu-edede* is eligible for, and feature prominently in grand occasions such as coronation of the king, new yam festival, burial ceremonies of the initiated men and the initiation into *ede* title-taking. *Egwu-edede* is a distinct music on its own and a symbol of high social status of those who dance it and the occasions in which it features. It is neither special due to its sound nor designed to gladden an occasion, but well fashioned music with its peculiar dance pattern and socio-cultural implications.

The researcher tends to do the textual analysis of music and dance of *egwu-edede* in Ovoko. The study geared towards preservation of *egwu-edede* in Ovoko community. The performance feature complex rhythmic patterns, lively melodies, and dynamics choreography, reflecting the cultural and historical traditions of the region. While Egwu Ede has undergone changes over time, its basic elements remain rooted in the cultural and social life of the Ovoko community. Through an examination of its rhythmic patterns, melodies, harmonies, and choreography, one can gain insight into the musical and cultural traditions of this traditions.

This analysis aims to provide comprehensive understanding of Egwu Ede, including its history, cultural significance, and musical characteristics. This research will contribute to the body of knowledge on Nigerian music

and dance, while also serving as a resource for music educators, performers, and enthusiasts alike.

Geographical Location of Enugu State, Nigeria

Enugu State is among the South Eastern States in Nigeria. It is located at 6°30' North, of Equator and 7°30' East of Longitude. Also, Enugu State is also known as 'Coal City', sharing a border with Abia State and Imo State to the South, Ebonyi State to the East, Benue to the North East, Kogi State to the North West and Anambra State to the West.



Map of Enugu State Showing the various local government



Map Of Nigeria showing the position of Enugu State.

The People of Ovoko and Egwu-Ede Songs in Enugu State

Ovoko people are well known for their traditional music of different categories that vary in quality to suit various occasions. The selection of membership and instruments also varies from one music to another. These different types of music are made to suit occasions like title-taking, funeral ceremonies, cultural festivals, traditional wedding ceremonies, masquerade, cults, and initiation into adulthood, to mention but a few.

Among all these traditional music, it is pertinent to know that *egwu-ede* is eligible for, and feature prominently in grand occasions such as the coronation of the king, new yam festival, burial ceremonies of the initiated men, and the initiation into *ede* title-taking.

Egwu-ede is distinct music on its own and a symbol of the high social status of those who dance it and the occasions in which it features. It is neither special due to its sound nor designed to gladden an occasion, but well-fashioned music with its peculiar dance pattern and socio-cultural implications.

The researcher tends to investigate *egwu-ede* music and its socio-cultural implication in Ovoko..

Ethnographic view

As an ethnomusicologist-in-training, the researcher has the opportunity of developing the interest she had in *egwu-ede* right from childhood. She is a native of Ovoko in Igbo Eze south local government area of Enugu state of Nigeria and was born and brought up in Ovoko. In 1994 there was an initiation of some men of Ovoko into the prestigious *ede* society. Notable personalities including *ede* Ossai and *ede* Umuodu were among the initiates. During that ceremony, which lasted for 28 days, the drummers performed wonderfully well. The music was so

interesting that the researcher picked interest in it.

Nketia (1974:94) says that “in traditional African societies, music-making is generally organized as a social event, public performances, therefore, takes place on social occasions”. That is, on occasions when members of a group or a community come together for the enjoyment of leisure, for recreational activities, or for the performance of a rite, etc, which might be assigned to specialized agencies. Looking around, one would note that people are not very sure about their background due to the effect of acculturation. Presently, our cultural music is almost neglected with no one to hand over our cultural music, history, dance, belief, etc to the next generation. These problems are due to the western civilization brought by education to Africa. There is a need to look at our traditional cultural music such as *Egwu-ede*. It is used purely for entertainment purposes.

General Survey of Ovoko Town.

Ovoko is one of the towns in Igbo Eze south local government area, Enugu state. Geographically, the town is bounded by Iheaka in the north, Orba in the south, Obukpa in the west, and Iheakpu in the east. From the well-known University of Nigeria Nsukka, Ovoko is just a few kilometers away southwest. Approximately, Ovoko covers an area of 25r kilometers. It is densely populated, so much that it is statistically projected to be the largest town in Igbo- Eze South second only to Ibagwa Aka. Ovoko Akpurokwe is socially organized into three wards, namely-Umuelo, Umulolo, and Ejuona. Legend has it that these are direct descendants of the very children of Akpurokwe. They equally speak a local dialect known as Ovoko language.

Music-Making in Ovoko Community

Nketia (1975:21) says that “in traditional African societies, music-making is generally organized as a social event. Public performance, therefore, takes place on social occasions –that is, on occasion when members of a group or a community come together for the enjoyment of leisure, for recreational activities or performance of a rite, ceremony, festival or any kind of collective activity, such as clearing paths and building bridges, going on a search party or putting out fires-activities that in industrialized societies, might be assigned to specialized agencies”. In our society, no activity is performed without music. An instant of such event in which traditional music plays a prominent role is the initiation into *ede* title. For Ovoko community, music is not a luxury but a part of life. The people’s total involvement with music cannot be overemphasized. Ovoko people have periods of relaxation from work and tension in their lives. These periods are categorized into distinct forms namely religious and secular. In religious worship, music is usually performed to appease and to invoke the spirits such as *okwuchiri* (god of old women) apart from the use of this music in Ovoko, musical performances are often part of religious festivals such as *onwe esa* (7th-month festival) *iriyi ji ohuu* (new yam festival) and *odo shire* (god). Such festivals usually provide for communal music-making in which every member of the community shares a satisfying musical experience. In the area of secular music, social events like a naming ceremony, funeral ceremony, birth, marriage ceremony, the coronation of a new king, and the *ede* title taking have their own music. It is worthy to note that Ovoko has both vocal and instrumental music. These social activities involve various vocal, instrumental, and dance types performed by various groups.

Instrumental music types are varied. For example, *egwu ogene*, *Igba enyi* (elephant drum music) *Igba eze* (kings drum music), etc. Each of these social events or festivals comes up at a particular time of the year with its own music. For example, *egwu ogene* performs during funeral ceremony, while *Igba eze* performs during *ofala* festival, while *egwu-ede* performs during *ede* title taking ceremony and the burial of an *ede* titled man. *Egwu-ede* is purely instrumental music. The performers are noted for their ingenuity and dexterity in playing the instruments. Their ability to communicate with the *ede* initiates through *igba* (drum) is highly captivating. The theme of their music is drawn from history, satire, advice, and praise. Other festivals like *iriyi ji ohuu* are very popular in Ovoko. During *iriyi ji ohuu* festival, most indigenes of Ovoko, residing abroad, come home for the celebration. The *igwe* of Ovoko and the *ede* titled men celebrate their own first during which the music performs. The following day, the entire Ovoko community celebrates theirs.

Ovoko people are blessed with good singers and instrumentalists. They are also noted for their craftsmanship. Some of these indigenous musical instruments are produced by some local musicians in Ovoko. The *Igba* is played by males from the age of twenty-two. It is a medium of communication because it is a talking instrument in Igbo culture and beyond. It is regarded as spokesman to the *ede* initiate; the *Igwe* and titled men generally who can interpret the language of the music

Transcription and Analysis of Egwi-Ede

The Music is interpreted in Western notation for the benefit of the outside world. But which should better be regarded as an approximation. It is also important to mention that no African or folk song has a fixed pitch since they are not scored. *Egwu-ede* has variations and coda. The variations may not

be understood in terms of the unity and diversity in the section of the music. The analysis of the music is exemplified as shown in the accompanying pages.

Variations and the Musical Analysis EGWU-EDE VARIATION 1

The musical score for Egwu-Ede Variation 1 consists of two systems. The first system includes Drum 1 (top), Drum 2 (middle), and oyo (bottom). Drum 1 has a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and rests. Drum 2 has a more complex pattern with eighth notes and rests. The oyo part is a melodic line in a 4/4 time signature. The second system continues the patterns for Drum 1, Drum 2, and oyo, with a measure number '5' indicated above the first staff.

THE MUSIC ANALYSIS OF EGWU-EDE VARIATION: 1

Scale mode:

A pentatonic scale.

Melody:

Range: narrow within an interval of a 5th from C-G.

Leaps: close leaps

Leaps of 3rd from E-G, G down to E, E down to C, C-E in bars I-5.

Leaps of 5th from C-G in bar 6. G-C in bar 7, C-G in bar 8

Melodic contour: static, ascending and descending

Time signature: 4 crotchet beats in a bar.

Rhythmic mode: It has notes of long durational values, crotchet, and crotchet rests groups of single, 2 notes and musical rests example.

Texture: monophonic

Form: through composed

Tempo: moderately fast

Ornamentation: use of syncopation by the first drum. Repetition of notes.

EGWU-EDE VARIATION 11

DRUM1

DRUM2

OYO

7

IGBA1

IGBA2

OYO

13

IGBA1

IGBA2

OYO

19

IGBA1

IGBA2

OYO

**The Musical Analysis of Egwu-Ede:
Variation II**

Scale mode:

Four tone scale mode, diatonic in conception.

Melody:

Range: narrow within an interval of a 4th from E-A

Leaps: close leaps

Leaps of 3rds from E-G, G down to E

Leaps of 2nd from G-A, A down to G

Melodic contour: static, ascending, static, descending and ascending

Rhythm:

Time signature: 6 (six quaver beats in a bar). An example of a compound duple time.

Rhythmic mode: it has notes of short durational values, groups of 2, 3 notes and rest example.

The oshaka started almost with the slit wooden drum in bar I. It plays an ostinato rhythm thus:

Texture: through composed

Form: fast

Ornamentation: repeated tones, syncopation

Pitch: the pitch is played by Igba 1

EGWU-EDE VARIATION 111

The Musical Analysis – Variation III

Scale mode:

Five tone scale mode from a hexatonic scale

Range: narrow within an interval of a 6th from C-A

Leaps: close leaps

Leaps of 2nd s G-A in bars I, 5, 6, F-G bar 8

Leaps of 3rd s E-G, bar 2, E down to C bars 10 and 11, C –E bars 10 and 11

Melodic contour: ascending, static, descending and ascending

Rhythm:

Time signature: 6/8(six quaver beats in a bar). It is an example of compound duple time

Rhythmic mode: it has notes of short durational values, quavers crotchets, quavers rest, crotchet rests, groups of three, two, single notes and dotted rest thus:

Oshaka plays an ostinator rhythm from bar 1 to the end thus

Texture: polyphony (dual part relationship)

Form: call and response

Tempo: fast

Ornamentation: repeated tones, syncopation sign of call and response.

EGWU-EDE VARIATION IV

The Musical Analysis of Egwu Ede: Variations IV

Scale mode: Three tone scale mode from a pentatonic scale

Melody:

Range: narrow within an interval of a 4th from D-G

Leaps: close leaps

Leaps of 3rd s, G down to E bars 1, 3 and 5

Leaps of 2nd s, E down to D bars 5- 6, D- E bars 7, 8,11,13,15

Melodic contour: static, descending and ascending

Rhythm:

Time signature: 6/8(six quaver beats in a bar). It is an example of a compound duple time

Rhythmic mode: it has notes of short durational values, quavers, crotchets, quaver rests, crotchet rest, dotted crotchet rests, groups of three notes, two single notes rest and dotted rest. Example

Texture: polyphonic (dual part relationship)

Form: A B call and response

Tempo: moderately fast

Ornamentation: repeated tones, syncopations, sign of call and response patterns

Pitch: Igba 1 plays higher pitch and oshaka plays an ostinato rhythm thus:

EGWU-EDE VARIATION V

The musical score for Egwu-Ede Variation V is presented in two systems. Each system contains four bars of music. The first system is marked with a '1' and the second system with a '5'. The score is written for three parts: igbal (top staff), igba2 (middle staff), and oyo (bottom staff). The time signature is 6/8. The igbal part features a melodic line with various rhythmic values including quavers and crotchets. The igba2 part provides a counter-melody. The oyo part plays a consistent ostinato rhythm, represented by 'x' marks on the staff.

THE MUSIC ANALYSIS OF EGWU-EDE: VARIATION V

Scale mode: Two tone scale mode from a diatonic scale.

Melody:

Range: narrow within an interval of a 3rd from E-G.

Leaps: close leaps

Leaps of 3rd s from G down to E in bars 1-8, from E-G in bars 2-8

Melodic contour: descending and ascending.

Rhythm:

Time signature: 6/8 (six quaver beats) in a bar. It is an example of a compound duple time.

Rhythmic mode: It has notes of short durational values, quavers, crotchet, quaver and crotchet rests. It contains single quaver notes and rests, thus

Texture: polyphonic (dual part relationship).

Form: Through composed.

Tempo: moderately fast

Ornamentation: repeated tones, syncopation, repeated signs.

Pitch: Igba 1 plays higher pitch than Igba 11 and oshaka still plays an ostinator rhythm throughout the music thus:

EGWU-EDE VARIATION VI speech rhythm

The Music and Analysis of Egwu-Ede: Variations VI

Speech Rhythm

Scale mode:

Four tone scale mode from a pentatonic scale.

Melody:

Range: Narrow within an interval of 5th from D-A.

Leaps: close leaps

Leaps of 2nd s from A down to G. From G - A, D-E, E down to D.

Leaps of 4th from G down to D in the second stave.

Melodic contour: descending and ascending, static

Rhythm:

Time signature: Irregular.

Rhythmic mode: single notes and rest groups of two notes, thus

Texture: Polyphonic dual part relationship

Form: Through composed

Tempo: Moderately fast

Pitch: Higher pitch always come from Igba 1 and oshaka plays an ostinator rhythm throughout

Ornamentation: repetition of tones, syncopations.

EGWU-EDE VARIATION VII

The musical score for Egwu-Ede Variation VII consists of three systems of music, each with three staves: IGBA1 (top), IGBA2 (middle), and OYO (bottom). The time signature is 6/8. The first system covers bars 1-6, the second system covers bars 7-12, and the third system covers bars 13-18. Bar numbers 7, 13, and 19 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quavers, crotchets, and rests, with some notes beamed together.

The Musical Analysis of Egwu Ede: Variation VII

Scale mode:

Three tone scale mode from a pentatonic scale.

Melody:

Range: Narrow within an interval of a 4th from E-A

Leaps: close leaps

Leaps of 2nd from A down to G in bar 1-15.

G-A in bar 1-2, 9, 10, 11

Leaps of 3rd s from G down to E in bars 3, 8, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 24

Leaps of 4th in bar 2

Melodic contour: descending, static and ascending.

Rhythm:

Time signature: 6/8 (six quaver beats in a bar). It is an example of a compound duple time.

Rhythmic mode: It has notes of short durational values, quavers, crotchets, quaver rests and crotchet rests, dotted crotchet rests, single notes, groups of two and three quaver rests thus

Pitch: Igba 1 plays higher pitch.

Texture: Polyphonic

Form: Call and response AB variation form

Tempo: Fast

Ornamentation: Repetition of notes, running notes, syncopation.

CODA

The musical score for the CODA section consists of two systems of three staves each. The top system is marked with a 4/4 time signature. The first staff, labeled IGBA1, contains a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The second staff, labeled IGBA2, contains whole rests. The third staff, labeled OYO, contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, with a quarter rest following each note. The bottom system is identical to the top system but includes a dynamic marking of *f* (forte) at the beginning of the first staff.

The Musical Analysis of the CODA

The coda is in AB form. The time is 4 crotchet beats in a bar. It is an example of simple quadruple time scale mode.

Scale mode:

Two tone scale mode diatonic scale.

Melody:

Range: narrow within an interval of a 2nd from G-A

Leaps: close leaps, leaps of 2nd.

Melodic contour: Descending, static and ascending.

Rhythm:

Time signature: 4/4 time.

Rhythmic mode: It has notes of short durational values like quaver and quaver rests. It contains single quaver note crotchet rests, thus.

Texture: Polyphonic

Form: It is in AB form.

Ornamentation: Repeated tonnes, repeat signs, syncopation.

Pitch: The Igba 1 plays higher pitch than Igba 11. Oshaka plays ostinator rhythm, thus

Conclusion

Egwu Ede is a rich and dynamic music and dance genre that reflects the cultural and historical traditions of the Ovoko community in Nigeria, through the historical background, musical elements such as rhythmic patterns, melodies, harmonies, etc.

The analysis has shown that Egwu Ede is a living and evolving tradition, with elements that continue to change and adapt over time while maintaining a strong connection to the community's cultural values and traditions. By understanding and appreciating these aspects of Egwu Ede, we can better appreciate the complexity and beauty of Nigerian music and dance, while also promoting cultural understanding and appreciation. This article has shed light on the rich cultural and musical traditions of the Ovoko community and also provided a valuable resource for scholars, musicians and educators, while also contributing the preservation and celebrating the world's diverse Musical and cultural traditions.

References

- Baseden, G.T (1921). *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*. London: Frank Cass and Co Ltd.
- Emeka, L.C (1961). *Ama Ama Amasiamasi: Dance of the Spirits among the Igbo People of Nigeria*. Paper for bollagie Study and Conference Centrr in Itally.
- Enekwe, O .O (1991). *Theories of Dance in Nigeria*. Nsukka: Afa Press.
- Idolor. G. E (2002). *Music in Africa, Facts, and illusions*. Stirling- Horden Publishers (Nig.) LTD.
- Jayeola, F. (2015). *Indigenous Music in Nigera: Its role Towards National Development*. FUNAI Journal of Humanities and Social Science. 1 (2), 102-109.
- Jayeola, F. D. (2024). *Exploring the Musical Instruments and Instrumentations of Nkwa Umuagbogho in Afikpo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria*. IKENGA, International Journal of Institute of African Studies. 25 (1)
- Nettle, B. (1963). *Theory and Methods in Ethnomusicology*. London: The Free Press of Glencoller Macmallian Ltd.
- Nketia, J. K (1994). *The Music of Africa*: New York. W. W Rorton and Co.
- Okeafor, R, C (1994). *Minstrelsy in Ezeagu Local Government Area. The Nigerian Field*.
- Omojola, B. (1995). *Nigeria Art Music*. Institutes of African Studies. University of Ibadan.
- Sachs, Curt and Hornbostel, E. (1961). *Classification of Musical Instruments (1914)* Trans by Baines and K. Watchman in *Galphin Society Journal* 14:4-29.
- Schools, P. A (1978). *The Oxford Companion Dictionary of Music*. London: Oxford University.