



## **Music, Sound, and African Oral Traditions in the Yewa Community**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores the crucial role of musical sounds in preserving African oral traditions in the Yewa community, Ogun State, Nigeria. In this context, Sonic refers to the use of audio equipment, software, or techniques for producing, recording, or manipulating sound. Using a mixed-methods approach, which includes Ethnographic fieldwork, focus groups, case studies, and content analysis, the paper investigates how sonic elements, such as rhythm, melody, and lyrics, contribute to preserving and transmitting oral traditions. Ethnographic fieldwork and case studies provide rich contextual data for the musical and contextual analysis to capture a wide range of views and themes for objectivity. The research aims to develop innovative preservation strategies to safeguard the Yewa community's rich cultural heritage. It focuses on how music and sound preserve and pass down folk songs, myths, and legends. The findings highlight specific sonic elements and musical structures crucial to preserving Yewa oral traditions. The study reveals how music and sound convey the community's cultural values, beliefs, and histories. It also shows evidence of music and sound effectively transmitting oral traditions across generations. Finally, the research provides recommendations for innovative preservation strategies incorporating music and sound to protect Yewa's cultural heritage. By uncovering the significance of music and sound in preserving oral traditions, this study contributes to developing effective preservation methods for African cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Sound, Music, Oral Traditions, Yema Community, Preservation.

### **Introduction**

Oral traditions are vital to African cultural heritage, conveying history, values, and beliefs across generations. However, these traditions are vulnerable to erosion and loss in the face of modernisation and globalisation. This paper explores the critical role of musical sounds in preserving African oral traditions, focusing on the Yewa community in Ogun State, Nigeria. The primary objective of this paper is to investigate the sonic elements and musical

structures underlying Yewa oral traditions to develop innovative preservation strategies that can safeguard the community's rich cultural heritage. The Yewa community's sound-based cultural expressions, including music, oral traditions and other sonic practices, are integral to its identity and heritage. However, these precious cultural assets are facing threats such as cultural erosion, urbanisation, and the impact of modern technology, which seem to jeopardize their survival.

In response to this challenge, this paper proposes a comprehensive sonic preservation initiative to safeguard the Yewa community's sound-based cultural heritage. It also seeks ways to conserve and revitalise endangered cultural practices and traditions, promoting cultural awareness within the community and beyond. Part of the preservation strategies is the engagement of the Yewa community members in the preservation process, this will establish a sense of ownership and belonging that will accurately reflect the community's identity and values. Through the advancement of cutting-edge approaches such as community engagement, the community can ensure that its cultural traditions continue to thrive, contributing to the richness of Nigeria's cultural landscape.

### **Sonic Preservation and Music Preservation**

Sonic preservation includes the safeguarding of all sounds that make up our sonic cultural heritage. In its broad application, it covers not only music but also voices, environmental sounds, and other audio elements that contribute to the unique sonic identity of a culture or community. Music preservation, in its application, includes musical compositions, performances, and related cultural practices that have been passed down through generations. However, sonic preservation goes beyond music to include the preservation of voices, which encompass speech, storytelling, oral histories, and other forms of vocal expression. It also relates to environmental sounds, such as bird songs, water flows, and wind patterns, which are essential parts of sonic preservation. These natural sounds are unique to specific ecosystems and play a crucial role in shaping our sonic experience. Bull (2000) observes that sonic preservation is not just about preserving music but also about preserving the sounds of everyday life, the sounds of nature, and the sounds of cultural practices. Schafer (1977) considers sonic preservation as a holistic approach that pivots on the interconnectedness of sounds, cultures, and environments.

Music preservation has a narrower focus, primarily concerned with preserving musical compositions, performances, and related cultural practices. This has to do majorly with preserving written or recorded music like scores, manuscripts, and recordings with documentation of live musical performances, concerts, and other musical events. The International Music Council (IMC) is concerned with the preservation of musical compositions, performances, and related cultural practices (IMC, 2019). Similarly, UNESCO (2003) recognises the preservation of music as a crucial aspect of cultural heritage preservation, providing a window into the past and a connection to our cultural roots (UNESCO, 2003).

Generally, this is a sound study that differs from music, though it encompasses musical elements such as melody, pitch and rhythm with particular attention to the sonic preservation of sounds and musical sounds. Seeger (2002) posits that sonic preservation is a crucial and multifaceted aspect of cultural heritage preservation, acknowledging the profound impact of sound and music on human culture and society. The significance of sonic preservation lies in its ability to capture and convey the essence of a community's identity, history, and values, which are often deeply embedded in their sound-based cultural expressions which are channels to a deeper understanding of the cultural context and

appreciation of the richness and diversity of human cultural heritage could be well established.

According to UNESCO (2003), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage effectively safeguards cultural diversity and intangible heritage, thereby promoting cultural continuity and transmission across generations. This process involves the careful documentation, conservation, and revitalisation of sound-based cultural expressions, which are often fragile and vulnerable to loss or erosion. In this connection, as emphasized by UNESCO (2018), community participation is essential for the effective safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (Operational Directives, Paragraph 103), these guarantee inclusive preservation efforts and representation which actively involves the community members, soliciting their input and feedback, and ensuring that their voices are heard and respected. According to Schafer (1977), sonic preservation is a multidimensional field that encompasses a range of aspects, including audio documentation, musical heritage preservation, oral tradition preservation, language preservation, and sound cultural heritage preservation. These aspects are interconnected and crucial for the comprehensive preservation of sound-based cultural expressions. Also, Seeger (2002) writes that this preservation includes audio documentation of the recording and preservation of sound-based cultural expressions, such as music, oral traditions, and linguistic diversity. The focus of this paper is sonic preservation with expressions encompassing a wide range of sonic elements, including music, oral traditions, soundscapes, language and dialects, vocal styles, instrumental traditions, sound in rituals and ceremonies, and folklore and mythology.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) provides a comprehensive framework for preserving cultural heritage, encompassing music, sound, and oral traditions (UNESCO, 2003). This framework is particularly relevant to the Yewa Community, as it recognizes the importance of African oral traditions and emphasizes community participation in the preservation process (African Studies Review, 2017). The Convention defines ICH as encompassing practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, associated instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces (UNESCO, 2003, Article 2). Smith (2012), posits that this definition underscores the importance of community involvement in identifying, documenting, and preserving their cultural heritage. The Convention's emphasis on community participation aligns with the principles of community-led preservation and transmission of cultural heritage, ensuring that unique traditions and practices are preserved for future generations (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett: 2004). The Convention's safeguarding measures, including identification, documentation, research, preservation, promotion, and transmission, can be applied to the sonic preservation of music and sound in the Yewa community (UNESCO, 2018). Seitel's (2001) work on folklore and oral traditions highlights the importance of documenting, researching, and promoting these traditions through various channels.

However, the implementation of the Convention's framework is not without challenges. One of the key challenges is balancing preservation with innovation, as the community's desire for innovation and the evolution of their cultural heritage must be carefully balanced with the need to preserve their traditions (Hafstein, 2009). This also addresses power dynamics within the community, which is crucial in ensuring, according to Brown (2004), that all voices are heard and represented in the preservation process. Despite these challenges, the Convention's framework offers numerous opportunities for the Yewa Community to preserve and promote their cultural heritage. Cohen (2012) posits that

integrating technology, such as digital archiving and online platforms, can enhance the Convention's safeguarding measures, providing a wider audience for the community's cultural heritage and ensuring its transmission to future generations.

### **Sound and Music Preservation in Yewa Community Culture**

There are various types of soundscapes and music with significant reasons for preservation. The semiotic relevance of folk songs, for instance, in line with Adedeji (2012), conveys stories, myths, and legends that have been passed down through generations, often featuring symbolic sound, call-and-response patterns, and polyphonic harmonies. These songs are typically narrative, providing a window into the community's history, values, and beliefs through the sonic textures of vocal timbres, rhythms, and melodies. Drumming, a form of symbolic sound expression and rhythmic sentences, is a vital component of Yewa sound parlance used to communicate messages, accompany dances, and invoke spiritual energies through the manipulation of sound waves and rhythmic patterns. The sonic beats of the drums evoke emotions and create a sense of communication through the physical vibrations of the drums. Ogunyemi (2015) notes that soundscapes and music are essential components of cultural expressions, serving as a means of preserving oral traditions, promoting cultural continuity, and fostering community cohesion through the shared experience of sound.

Sound and music are two different concepts that are often interconnected. Pierce (1983) defines sound as the physical properties of vibrations that travel through a medium, such as air, water, or solids. Moore (2012) describes these vibrations in terms of their acoustic properties, including frequency, amplitude, and timbre. Nettle (2000) opines that music involves creating and arranging sounds to convey emotions, ideas, and cultural values. In this connection, Lerdahl & Jackendoff's (1983) position that this arrangement involves melody, harmony, rhythm, and other structural elements that distinguish music from mere sound. The key factor in the separation of sound from music is the intentionality of music and the non-intentionality of sound. Sound and music are essential components in facilitating community engagement and participation in preserving cultural heritage. Gorbman (2016) posits that sound has the power to evoke emotions, memories, and a sense of place. This is reinforced by Higgins (2019), that music's emotional resonance makes it an effective tool for preserving cultural narratives. The sonic qualities of music, such as timbre, rhythm, and melody, aid in remembering and passing down folk songs and stories, fostering a deep connection between the community and its cultural heritage (Stobart, 2019).

Yewa sound and musical instrumentation have a diverse range of timbres and textures; according to Adeoye (2017), these add depth and complexity to musical expression. It equally conveys cultural values and beliefs, evoking emotions and associations that help preserve cultural heritage. The combination of melody, rhythm, and instrumentation creates a rich musical landscape that preserves oral traditions and cultural heritage. Melody, which refers to the succession of pitches heard in a musical composition, has the power to captivate and engage listeners. By creating catchy tunes that are easy to remember and sing along to, Yewa cultural heritage can be made more accessible and appealing to Gen Z. Music videos that showcase Yewa culture and melodies can be shared on platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, further increasing their reach and impact. Collaborations with popular Gen Z artists or influencers can also help to blend Yewa's cultural heritage with modern styles, making it more relatable and exciting for young people.

Rhythm, which refers to the pattern of duration and accentuation of sounds in music, can energise and inspire listeners. Beat-making and sharing rhythms on music streaming platforms or social media can help to increase their visibility and appeal. Dance challenges that incorporate Yewa cultural heritage through rhythm can also be created and shared on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, encouraging Gen Z to engage with and celebrate Yewa culture. Remixing traditional Yewa music with modern rhythms can further help to create a unique and captivating sound. Instrumentation, which refers to the choice of instruments used in a musical composition, adds texture, colour, and emotion to music. Combining traditional Yewa instruments with modern electronic instruments, a unique and captivating sound can be created. Online tutorials that teach Gen Z how to play traditional Yewa instruments can also help to preserve and promote Yewa cultural heritage. Additionally, virtual instruments that mimic traditional Yewa instruments can be created and shared online, allowing Gen Z to experiment with Yewa music-making and develop a deeper appreciation for Yewa's cultural heritage.

### **Relationship between Sound and Oral Traditions in the Yewa Community**

Sound plays a vital role in preserving oral traditions in the Yewa community. It serves as a powerful medium for cultural expression and preservation. Adedeji (2012) opines that sound is used to convey cultural values, beliefs, and histories through various forms, including music (music is not sound; it is an organised or structured sound), drumming, and storytelling. Music, in particular, is an essential component of Yewa oral traditions, providing a unique sonic identity for cultural expression and preservation. Drumming, with its rhythmic patterns and beats, conveys cultural messages and meanings, fostering a sense of community and social bonding. Storytelling is also accompanied by sound effects and musical instruments, bringing Yewa history and myths to life, ensuring their continuation and preservation. The use of sound in Yewa oral traditions also evokes emotions and associations, creating a memorable experience that solidifies cultural heritage. Blacking's (1974) emphasis on understanding music as a human activity that reflects and shapes human social organization highlights the significance of preserving Yewa's sonic heritage. Yewa's traditional music and sound practices are deeply embedded in the community's social organization, cultural values, and historical context.

The relationship between sound and oral traditions is deeply intertwined in the threads of sound, language, culture, and community are intricately woven together with sound serving as a vital component in the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage. In oral traditions, sound is the primary medium for conveying cultural knowledge, stories, histories, and values. The human voice, with its unique timbre, tone, and inflexion, becomes the instrument for passing down traditions from one generation to the next. The drum sound is more than just a form of entertainment; it could be a means of communication, a way of sharing knowledge, and a symbol of cultural identity. Helmholtz (1863) defines sound as "a vibration that travels through the air (or other mediums) and is perceived by the human ear". This definition highlights the physical nature of sound, which can be produced by various sources, according to Pierce (1983), including human voices, musical instruments, natural environments, and technological devices. On the other hand, music is a structured and intentional organisation of sounds. Nattiez (1990) writes that these often include elements such as pitch, rhythm, melody, harmony, and timbre. Merriam (1964) posits that music takes various forms, including vocal or instrumental, and serves multiple functions, such as communication, expression, entertainment, and ritual. In the context of oral traditions,



Blacking (1974) concludes that music is often integral to storytelling, dance, and cultural ceremonies, conveying emotions, values, and cultural identity.

Through sound, oral traditions continue to thrive, passing down cultural values and beliefs to future generations. This study of sound and oral traditions has been enriched by the contributions of several scholars. Feld (1982) explores the emotional and poetic dimensions of sound in Kaluli expression, highlighting the importance of sound in conveying cultural meaning. Also, Seeger (1987) examines the musical traditions of the Suyá people, demonstrating how sound is integral to their social and cultural practices. Tilton (1996) provides a comprehensive introduction to the music of the world's peoples, emphasizing the significance of sound in shaping cultural identity. Nketia (2005) investigates the interactions between African and Western musical traditions, revealing the complex dynamics of sound in cultural exchange. Turino (2008) analyzes the politics of participation in sound-making, illustrating how sound is used to construct social relationships and cultural meaning. Also, Berger (2009) develops the concept of "stance" to understand the emotional and stylistic dimensions of sound in expressive culture. Porcello (2010) explores the relationship between music, language, and cultural identity, highlighting the role of sound in shaping cultural belonging. Finally, Meintjes (2017) examines the performance of identity through sound and voice, demonstrating how sound is used to construct and negotiate cultural identity.

### **Sound and Music Preservation in the Yewa Community**

The vibrant sounds of Bòlòjò music, a traditional, now popular genre of music of the Yewa people of southwestern Nigeria, is characterized by its unique blend of melodic rhythms and poetic lyrics. Bolojo musical sounds typically feature a combination of percussion instruments, such as drums, shekere and multiple hand shakers, accompanied by voices in the Yewa language. Bòlòjò music is a strong channel for preserving Yewa history, cultural values, and traditions through vocal expressions to preserve the community's musical sounds for future generations. This preservation captures the essence of the community's stories, myths, and legends. The repetitive and catchy motifs played on traditional instruments like the Dundun (talking drum) and the use of Western musical instruments like guitar and keyboard portrays Bolojo music as a popular genre that creates lively, rhythmic phrases which embody the community's sound and musical spirits. The rhythmic preservation in Bòlòjò music is equally remarkable, with complex polyrhythms, syncopation, and driving percussion generating an energetic soundscape. Traditional Yoruba drums, such as the Dundun and Bata drums, produce rhythmic patterns that inspire spirited dance movements, reflecting the community's vitality and resilience.

Harmony plays a subtle role in Bòlòjò music's narrative; this is enhanced by the chord progressions played on instruments like the guitar or keyboard. Moreover, the talking drum's tonal versatility introduces subtle pitch variations, mimicking speech and infusing the music with expressive depth. This nuanced approach to pitch preservation safeguards the community's linguistic and cultural heritage. Bòlòjò music's melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, and pitch elements have provided an insight into the Yewa community's effective methods of sonic preservation. The Sonic analysis of performances of “*Bòlòjò Medley*”, “*Bòlòjò Bòlòjò*” “*Yewa á Gbèwá*”, *Èsọ Fún Onílù Kó Dìde*, “*Kini Kan Be*”, “*Omọ Oba Làsẹ*” and “*Èkú Onilé*”. The sonic analysis of performances is provided as follows:

## Song 1: BÒLÒJÒ BÒLÒJÒ

### BOLOJO BOLOJO

$\text{♩} = 100$

Soprano Solo  
Bo-lo-jo bo-lo-jo ko-se gbe se-re

Voice  
o-mo e - gun\_\_ ohun ni o-mo e -

S. Solo  
Bo-lo-jo bo-lo - jo ko-se gbe se-re

Voice  
gun\_\_ ohun ni e - ru ya - re\_\_ ba-ni

#### Bòlòjò Bòlòjò Text

*Bòlòjò Bòlòjò kò se gbé seré  
Omo Ègùn òhun ni, omo Ègùn òhun ni  
Bòlòjò Bòlòjò kò se gbé seré  
Erun yà re bà ni*

#### Translation

Bòlòjò cannot be played with  
That's it, Egun people, that's it  
Bòlòjò cannot be played with  
But, it brings joy to the people.

#### Musical Forms in Bòlòjò Music

In Bòlòjò music, call and response and call and refrain are mostly used. Call and response is a form where one musician or a group of musicians performs a phrase and another musician or a group of musicians responds with a similar or contrasting phrase.

## Song 2: YEWA WÁ GBÀWA

#### Text

*Yewa wá gbàwá o  
Se bí 'wo lo' lú Odò  
Yewa wá gbàwá o  
Se bi 'wo la gb' oju le*

#### Translation

Yewa, come and save us  
You are the Custodian of the River  
Yewa, come and save us  
You are the one we look up to

## YEWA WA GBAWA

$\text{♩} = 100$

Soprano Solo

Ye - wa wa gba wa o se - bi wo lo - lu o - do

Voice

S. Solo

3

Voice

Ye - wa wa gba wa o se - bi wo la gbo ju - le

Yewa wa gbàwá is a chorused song, and it is sung collectively by all participating individuals without gender bias. The song is a call to remind and acknowledge the Yewa River goddess as the keeper, protector and provider for the Yewa community.

### Song 3: ÈKÚ ONÍLÉ

## EKU ONILE

EGBA

$\text{♩} = 100$

Voice

E - ku o ni le\_ o - bo - lo - jo mi - de te - mi te - gbe mi o\_

Choir

a - wa ma

a - wa ma

Voice

4

e - ni ba\_ mo ta ko fo wo si o - ya.

Choir

won nu o\_ a - wa gbo - pe a - yo\_ e - ni ba\_ mo ta ko fo wo si o - ya.

won nu o\_ a - wa gbo - pe a - yo\_ e - ni ba\_ mo ta ko fo wo si o - ya.



## E KÚ ONÍLÉ

### Text

*E kú onilé o, Bòlòjò mi dé  
Tèmi tẹgbẹ mi o  
Eni bá mọ ọ ta kó f'owó s'òyà*

### Translation

Greetings, I bring my Bolojo  
My group and I  
If you can dance, come to the stage

Èkú Onílẹ is a vocal song arrangement that is often performed as an opening glee to Bolojo music performances.

## Song 4: ESO FUN ONILU KO DIDE

### ESO FUN ONILU KO DIDE

**Moderate**

Voice: E-so fo-ni lu ko\_ di - de E-so fo-ni lu ko\_ di - de

Choir: o-ya a\_ fe jo o-ya a\_

Voice: E-so fo-ni lu ko\_ di - de

Choir: fe jo ba-ba wa ko mo we a wa\_ rea - dy la ti\_ jo

Voice: O-lo-ju e-ni we\_ le jo e O-lo-ju e-ni we

Choir: bo\_ lo\_ jo

### Text

*È so f'ónilé kó dide  
Óyá a fẹ é jó  
Bàbá wa kò m'òwé, àwa ready lati jó  
Ó l'ójú eni wa lè jo*

### Translation

Tell the landlord to be ready  
Now we want to dance  
Father is illiterate, but we want to dance  
the dance of special people

## Song 5: KINI KAN BE

### Kini kan be

**Allegro**

Voice 1: ki-ni kan ni be lo kan mi i-jo-ye, a-gbe ya-wo o ko-lo ja-ta-ta. e-

6 Voice 2: ro kan ni be lo kan mi a-wo-ro a-gbe ya-wo o ko-lo ja-ta-ta. ni-nu

11 Voice 3: o-mo-la-ra ni-nu o-mo ni-yi ke-ba n ro-mo o-mo jo-jo lo o a-

16 Voice 4: de-ba-yo ko ko fi i mu sa ya a ni-nu o-mo-la-ra ni-nu o-

20 Voice 5: mo ni-yi ke-ba n ro-mo o-mo jo-jo

23 Voice 6: lo o a mo ri to san ko fi i mu sa ya a

#### Text

*Kini kan ni be lo kan mi Ijòyè  
Agbeyawo ko lo ja tata  
E ro kan mi, be lo kan mi Aworo  
Tani, ninu Omolara, ninu Omoniyi  
Ke ba n romo, o omo jojolo  
Adebayo ko ko fi mu s'aya*

#### Interpretation

There is something in my mind, Chief  
Wedding is not through a show of muscles  
Thought of marriage in an open invitation  
Who is my wife, is it Omolara or Omoniyi  
Find me a beautiful lady  
as my wife.

**Song 6: BOLOJO MEDLEY**

**BOLOJO "Medley**

ZEYNAB ZEYNAB

**Allegro**

Voice: Bi-bi si de si a - we-le ninu le la-ye ta-bo de o Bi-si de si o we-e bi

Choir: won-se-bi

Voice: bi-si de si o bi-bi si de si a we-le ni le a - ye mi tan-bo de o

Choir: won-se-bi

Voice: ko le ni yan won se-bi ko-le ni yan mo-we yi fi-ri mo-ra le - jo re-pe - te

Choir: ko le ni yan won se-bi ko-le ni yan mo-we yi fi-ri mo-ra le - jo re-pe - te

**Text**

*Bíbí sí de sí a wele nínú 'le laye wa tabo 'de o  
Wón se bí nkọ lénìyàn,  
mo wẹ̀yìn fírí, mo r'álejò repẹ̀tẹ̀*

**Translation**

Where are we, inside or outside  
they thought I have no fans  
but, I have multitude of fans

## Song 7: QMOBA LÀ SE

### OMOBA LASE

♩ = 100

Voice

O\_\_mo ba\_\_ la\_\_ se\_\_ an\_\_ la-da\_\_ O\_\_mo ba\_\_ la\_\_ se

Choir

o-mo ba\_\_ n se an la-da

o-mo ba\_\_ n se an la-da

6

Voice

\_\_\_an la-da\_\_ ba-ba yo bi wa ohun wa ki wa o

Choir

o-mo ba\_\_ n se an la-da ba-ba yo bi wa ohun wa ki wa o

o-mo ba\_\_ n se an la-da ba-ba yo bi wa ohun wa ki wa o

11

Voice

i - ya yo bi wa ohun wa ki wa o o - mo ba\_\_ n se an la-da

Choir

i - ya yo bi wa ohun wa ki wa o o - mo ba\_\_ n se an la-da

i - ya yo bi wa ohun wa ki wa o o - mo ba\_\_ n se an la-da

#### Text

*Qmoba là se a la dá, Qmoba la se*  
*Bàbá yó bí wa, òhun wá kí wa o*  
*Ìyá yó bí wa, òhun wa kí wa o*  
*Qmoba là se a la dá*

#### Translation

We are children of the King  
 Our father pays us a homage  
 Our mother pays us a homage  
 We are children of the King

Bòlòjò music is characterised by its distinctive melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic elements. The music primarily employs the pentatonic scale, which consists of five notes per octave. These melodic phrases often follow a call-and-response structure, where a lead vocalist or instrumentalist presents a melodic idea, and the group responds with a complementary phrase. The rhythmic landscape of Bòlòjò music is equally complex, featuring polyrhythms where multiple rhythms are played simultaneously. This creates a rich, layered sound that is both captivating and intricate. The music often employs a 12/8-time signature, allowing for intricate rhythmic patterns and accents. These rhythmic phrases frequently feature syncopation, where emphasis is placed on off-beat or unexpected parts of the rhythm, adding a dynamic and engaging quality to the music. Harmonic arrangements in Bòlòjò music typically feature a homophonic texture, where multiple voices or instruments sing or play the same melody, often in parallel motion. The music is based on modal harmony, where melodies and harmonies are derived from specific scales or modes rather than traditional Western chord progressions. Instrumental accompaniment often

features a drone-like quality, where a sustained pitch or chord provides a harmonic foundation for the melody. Beyond its melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic elements, Bòlòjò music is also characterized by its unique timbre, which is shaped by the distinctive sound of traditional Yewa instruments such as the Šèkèrè and Agbe. Bòlòjò music often incorporates improvisational elements, where vocalists or instrumentalists create new melodic or rhythmic ideas at the moment, adding a dynamic and spontaneous quality to the music.

### **Sonic Intergenerational Transfer in Preserving the Yewa Cultural Identity**

The conveyance of historical events and cultural values combines sound, music, poetry, and narration to share folktales, highlighting the significance of sonic intergenerational transfer in the Yewa culture. Adedeji (2012), opines that sound, music, poetry, and narration used in African music hold cultural significance. Drumming, for example, communicates messages, invokes spiritual energies, and accompanies dances (see Fig. 1).



Figure 1: Sato Drums from the Yewa Community ([Source: https://tribuneonlineeng.com](https://tribuneonlineeng.com))

Ogunyemi (2015) notes that the Yewa Òjá (Flute) and Àgbè (Rattle), as used in traditional ceremonies and storytelling, enhance rhythmic patterns and emphasise storytelling. In this regard, community gatherings and musical sound events foster social bonding and cultural transmission.

On the intergenerational transfer, Adedeji (2012) notes that apprenticeship allows younger generations to learn from experienced musicians and storytellers to preserve the continuous advancement of traditions, which can only be achieved through intergenerational transfer and community engagement. Community engagement and participation are vital components of sonic preservation, ensuring that the needs and perspectives of the community are respected and represented. Okpewho (1992) notes that this involves collaborating with community members to identify, document, and preserve their sonic heritage by organizing meetings, surveys, workshops, training and interviews to preserve the musical sounds' heritage. Vansina (1985) sees these intergenerational transfer initiatives as empowering community members to take ownership of their musical sound heritage, to ensure its preservation and transmission to future generations. Yai (1993) also corroborates Vansina (1985) that participatory approaches to sonic preservation also recognize the importance of community involvement in decision-making processes as



expressed in the UNESCO (2003) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Therefore, this paper records significant findings, highlighting the pivotal role of sonic elements (sound and music), including rhythm, melody, and instrumentation, in preserving and transmitting oral traditions within the Yewa community. Musical sound serves as a potent medium for conveying cultural values, beliefs, and histories, thereby facilitating cultural expression. Furthermore, the paper establishes that musical sound plays a crucial role in transmitting oral traditions across generations, ensuring the continuity of cultural heritage. Notably, specific sonic elements and musical structures, such as call-and-response patterns and polyrhythms, are integral to preserving Yewa oral traditions. The contribution of this paper lies in the meaningful impacts on the field of musical sound, cultural preservation and informing the development of targeted preservation strategies for African Musico-cultural heritage.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated the pivotal part of musical sound in preserving and transmitting African oral traditions within the Yewa community. The research has highlighted the significance of sonic elements, musical structures, and cultural practices as strategies for safeguarding the community's oral heritage. The examination of the intricate relationships between music, sound, and oral traditions has contributed to a deeper understanding of how African communities preserve and transmit their cultural heritage. Finally, this paper underscores the importance of recognizing and respecting the cultural significance of musical sound in African oral traditions and informs strategies for preserving and promoting these pivotal aspects of African cultural heritage.

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