Archives, Documentation and Traditional Music

By

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Abstract
African traditional music is symbolic in nature, in approach and in organization. It is identified in its utilization and services to the locals. This paper will focus on the safety and security of the African traditional music. To achieve this, information derived from quantitative research method become useful. Hence documentation and archives become very necessary. From the revolution of the discourse conclusion are drawn.

Introduction
The African traditional music is symbolic and society driving in any African traditional settings. The music of the people is an identity of the area. Music is part of culture of the people of any locality in Africa. The traditional music of the people is culture in itself. This determine their mode of dressing, feeding, dance style, norms, idioms etc which are symbolic to the people of an area or race, sects or ethnic group. Music of any area is based on the environment and what is in the environment. This simply means that the music instruments are based on the available materials of the area. Let us look at Goge for instance Goge is an Africa musical instrument of Nigeria origin, it belongs to the string family founded mainly at the northern province of Nigeria and in the area of western province that have been penetrated by the Muslim culture. It is also in those areas generally tse- tse fly free that horses are bred and widely used for pageantry and cavalry. Here knowledge of animals and of the properties of the anatomy
of animals is very high and part of traditional education. Goge, therefore, represents knowledge of animals, of sound, and acoustics properties of materials—veterinary science and musical instrument technology rolled into one—a product of a whole environment. That discourse became relevant in the sense that the instrument material is sourced from the environment or locality by the locals. Because the instruments are locally sourced, it is equally, used for activities in the environment for better utilization in the area. In line with the locality, music is composed, song, played, and danced by the people for the people. These entail that music function in the lives of the people of the environment for their education, ceremonies, festivals, and ceremonies which order man’s relationship with the supernatural and with fellow-humans’. The ceremonies include coronation of a king or a village-head childbirth, age-grade organization, traditional rite, and rituals just but a few.

The traditional stool in Ogoni is divided into four groups, namely: (1) Mene Be (compound chief) (2) Mene ga (dynasty reader) (3) Mene bon: (village head) (4) Gbere mene Gokana (Kingdom head). These four (4) stools are not contestable, rather by hereditary. The first one is usually given to the eldest in the compound likewise the second one but the last two are hereditary and is ascended by the first son of the king except the king say otherwise that had being the tradition. Although today there are additional stools like Mene boa comprises some communities and Mene gyo (Zonal chief) these last two are political and are contestable by any recognize chief of that area under that very stool.

While the Mene boa is next to the kingdom ruler, the mene gyo is next to the mene ga. Mene ga exist at the village level and at the kingdom level. In the olden times, the linage chief at the kingdom level represented their kindred at the kingdom. All matters relating to their kindred is reported to them as well as a matter of urgency stand for any one from is dynasty in the kingdom. The enthronement of any the stools mention above is done with
a special music. Each linage knows the music of their people or voice of their calls/summon.

There are more music at the village level and kingdom level. Let us look at the crowning of a village head in Gokana kingdom K. Dere in particular. This music most be played:

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This music is a call/summon of the people to the village square for an important discussion like war, choice of a king or presentation of a king to the people of the clan.

This music is played or sounded first at the first cockcrow in the morning at three forty eight am thereafter in the morning until all is done. It is almost same pattern at the kingdom level but the different is that the horn/elephant tusk will only be played within the palace of the king at the kingdom: the seat of the high chief. The singer here is like a seer who knows everybody that comes to the venue. He will greet you by your linage and call up to the fourth of your great grandparent names. He announces the arrivals of each kindred chief and all clan head. This person called Avoolo is an eloquent speaker and singer that seems to know all about the kingdom each village will be greeted by the first traditional name of the founder of the village with title attached music of various villages are played to show solidarity and loyalty from morning until the business of the day is done or the reason for the call. But if it was a call for coronation of a king; the palace is ready for business. The enthronement of a king, herald the readiness of the start of business in the palace. Anytime the king moves within the palace a special song is played to inform the guides/villagers that the king is coming for each one to be on guide. The palace music ranges from invitation, peace process, child birth, announcement of any village head arrival to the palace, and court ward music performance in the palace. Some musical instruments are regarded as symbol of a deity. Although some instruments
are regarded as symbol of a deity but the ones for deity actions are curved or designed in a special way with some symbolic marks. They are preserved by those that worship that particular deity. So in most African traditional society instruments are preserved for two main reasons;

(1) Performance of music and (2) preservation of a deity symbol. Any musical instrument that has a deity attaches are preserved at the shrine for identification. Most of these music that play a role in the society are not write down but are preserved by those in custodian of the music or those that play the role.

Because of the present state of insecurity in Nigeria, it becomes a necessity for the documentation and archiving of traditional music. This simply put to collect music and document it for upward to archives for security/preservative purpose. Ignoring this clarion call will set us backward not only in history but in the committees of states. Today English language is our medium of communication what will it look like tomorrow?, only God can tell. I am too sure that since our traditional music’s are song in the local languages any good done to the music is equally to the language.

**Music in crowning of a king**

Music is a vehicle for the enthronement of a king in Gokana, Kegbara Dere traditional stools in particular. The message of enthronement is pass-on or delivered on to the people by an aero phone musical instrument made of elephant tusk (horn). It is called ko in Ogoni. It announces a symbolic event in the clan. Like coronation of a king or war. It can be used to summons the entire community for victory celebrations such as winning a war, court case, or other victory as the king pleases. It is sounded only when authorize to sound for summoning of the people or clan. The sound/music cannot be mistakenly played in any form at no other occasion except those mentioned above. Whenever it is
played or sounded elders of the land moves the town square to cash the message and takes decision on the next line of action. Before we can discuss the music role let us focus first on the seats and who is qualified to occupy it. Let us understand some logic behind African music which make it so unique and patient to the people of an environment. (i) every African music is always written to meet a need of a people(ii) there are beautifully conceived for enjoyment when it need arise(s) (iii) It is produced always for unity. These three qualities, although many more exist, provide the blend for the lives of the society. More importantly, let us also look at some characteristics of African music. A close look at African music aesthetics show that it is an aesthetic of proportion, symmetry, harmony, order, energy, togetherness and unity. Those characteristics are what drive, attract, and appeal to the millions of audiences that view, listen, dance and play the music. Let us also understand that or state that Africa music is essentially functional. The performance of African music of any nature is usually tailored toward a goal that should eventually help that society positively. It is not done just for nothing. There is always a target driven by an ideology of the development of the given culture in which that music exists. Therefore, African music sense is predominantly responses from situations. The music functions as mechanisms for questions and answers to some of the challenges of the African community. You may understand the minds of Africans by listening to their music. African music reveals the idea that shapes or influences the musicians, the audiences, and the entire community. Traditionally, African music, performance drives African ideology. To the African society, music is an ideational construct in itself. And because it is ideational, it is also ideological. Everything that is an idea will configure as an ideology. By these dynamics, therefore, it would speak beyond itself which is what African music does. Ideas are not seen but conceived for proper understanding of the purpose of the conceiver. They can be grasped by reason only. After all, the basic foundation of education demands the learners/or would be
learners to reason. In that plain area, sensibility and reason are brought together by means of the imaginations. So, if the work of art is regarded as a sensible object, then, the beauty of any music is the reflection of the idea. African music is not for mediocre performers or music composers or musicians. Music is creativity. And creativity demand good mental and ideological co-ordinations to arrive at the targeted goal. The African music philosophy is able to shape the production of content and even the content creators themselves. A successful African –sensed music is necessarily and inevitably an interaction of various performers including the performing audience. This is already a musical discourse in itself. Every performer brings his expert perspective to that performance and the performing audience responds accordingly. At the end, everybody retire back home reconciled to nature and satisfied. African music is participatory, therefore, it belong all.

**Stools and their ranks**


A compound chief is a title given to the eldest in any family. It is not contested by given /transfer to the most eldest in case of death. There is no dethronement. Mene gyo: zonal head is a political stool, It is contestable and changes from family in the zone to whoever wins the race.

Mene ga is a stool that deals with the spiritual well beings of the lineage and is mounted only by the eldest and traditional leader of the dynasty. It is not contested in most case but the most spiritual head takes over the seat. It formation as the dynasty head and custodian of the norms and believe of the dynasty. He protects and takes care of all external attack
mostly spiritual actions and consultation for the well-being of his people or kindred.

The Mene bon, paramount ruler, is the village head and the community traditional ruler. His office is to oversee the day to day well-being of all the clan/village and their progress.

**The Instalation of a Paramount Ruler in Kegbara Dere**

The office of a paramount ruler in KEGBARA DERE is not contested rather it is ascended by the first son of the king except otherwise. But the whole truth is it is not contested rather the paramount ruler himself chooses his successor and present same to the elders while on the throne and sometimes delegate powers to him to see how he’ll rule in the case of his absent/death. The successor most be very close to him while ruling and equally observe his actions, feelings and seek his opinions on some issues.

The Mene boa is a political stool and a second-class seat and next to the king of the kingdom. In gokana the stool today is two; one is Bua Numun and Bua bookpo/ Bua Tuatua It is a government recognized stool and have good benefits to the citizens. He must be a justice of peace and handles some traditional cases in his domain and his decisions are recognized by the court of law. It is by appointment and it’s not accompanied by any special musical connotations but a praise singer can sing any rhythm or folk songs. The domain of the mene boa is usually compresses of some villages/clans unlike the mene bon whom domain is just one clan only.

The mene bua, who is a second-class chief, although may know the tradition but has no right to practice on behalf of any other stool. The stool is political so it remains. The stool is not accorded any traditional rite rather a justice of peace which comes from the government. He
attends traditional rulers council meetings at the state level, and equally does same at the local government level but can be called in the settlements of case in the kingdom only.

The king is the most celebrated one that goes with glamour. However, most music is done in the shrine. He is the custodian of the kingdom rites and rituals and ceremonies are embedded in the enthronement process. The significant aspect which always surprise people is the avoolo; the praise singer, who greet everybody in details of your father four generations backward and even more. He will be singing and herald those greeting to the amazement of all present even when he has not seen you before.

In all above, music accompanies their enthronement but the call of community and clan members are mostly associated with the crowning of a paramount ruler and the king. Not all that can visit the real coronation of a king because it is done in secret with secret cult music all through. In all music is the want gives the dance step and occupy the whole process. Masquerade from all the communities are played and danced within the area of the king’s palace and all over the nearby villages. However, movements are restricted within the palace entrance and in the palace. You must be a member, not just a member but a member with some rite to perform before you can have access to the premises.

Some communities and their founder and how they are being greeted by the avoolo, the song singer and the announcer of the occasion. The avoolo function goes beyond greetings but as he announces your name, if you have a role to play he will signal you in but if not, you remain outside. It is only at his nodding that you can go in.
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<tr>
<th>COMMUNITY</th>
<th>FOUNDER/SALUTATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kegbara dere</td>
<td>Dere saamu kawa</td>
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<td>Barayowa dere</td>
<td>Yonwa naagbo</td>
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<td>Bodo</td>
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<td>Biara</td>
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<td>Bomu</td>
<td>Bomu goromme</td>
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Those greetings are done as each village head arrives and their kingship rank as Gberesuu the xii and so on turning the enthronement of a king each community/clan has a stool in the Gbere Saako palace. This name Gbere Saako is regarded as the first king of the kingdom and come from the Gbere Saako dynasty Ga baagha, Ga Bera, Ga Bari, Ga Nor, Ga Deakoo, Ga Saa etc. All those are dynasty in Gokana kingdom. Those dynasties are the source of peace in the kingdom.

**The significance of dynasty.**

The dynasty in any Ogoni kingdom is more or higher than the clan, while the clan is environment of growth, the dynasty is the blood family linkage or relation. If anyone during introduction mentioned is dynasty any member of that dynasty around will as matter of facts take over your problem(s) if any or see to your good immediately.

It is believed that it was from the dynasty chiefs that the first kingdom ruler was selected and crowned. So the Gbere Saako was the head of Ga Deakor dynasty. Gbere title is a unique title and the rites/rituals sprang over years to arrive at the title. The title; Gbere if acquired is higher than anything called juju. It is not earned by words but by sacrifice and
traditional processes. It is those title holders that are called traditional rulers in Ogoni. The present Gbere, if any, are known by all persons ascending the throne you must first complete the rituals rite before coronation.

**Documentation**

The word document according to BBC dictionary of English language states that ‘making a detailed record of it on films, tapes, or paper:”. ‘It further state that documentation consist of documents that provide proof or evidence of something’. Therefore, documentation of our traditional music is long overdue. If nothing comes to mind let us think of history and its originality. There is this question concerning Nigeria. Who signed the amalgamation treaty of Nigeria as an original native of this nation?. And why is river Benue not reflected in naming of the country? Since river Niger and river Benue meets in Lokoja, what is the name of the river after their joining? I am posing those questions for us to see reasons why the documentation of traditional music should be welcomed. Besides, as an academic discourse, I posed those questions for us to know where we went wrong and to see or look for way or ways to address than. Today it is like joke that our origin and our diversity is hunting us. With proper documentation of our collection from our localities, beautiful melodies will emerge and the Skye will be our limit. May I on this note submit that preservations any of our heritage including music will make us great. A people without documented details of their history may seen as a race that does not exist; not only of ancestral origin, but of cultural heritage, musical heritage, language heritage, dressing heritage, dance heritage, and technological heritage. In the light of the above postulations let me conclude by saying we to work now like we never did before.
Archives

The reasons why our traditional music are indeed necessary for archives/preservation is of three main factors

(1) Insecurity
(2) Communal clashes
(3) Low life expectancy

Insecurity:
The security situation in Nigeria today is quiet alarming. If hoodlums can attack our military base/barracks, than we are not safe. Safety is security and if security is not guaranteed then we are heading for our down day and at the brink of discarders. A people without security are a people without hope, future, and a lost race or nation. I will be grateful if we can secure our valuables like music, languages, musical instrument, which are the symbols of cultures, norms, idioms, and our traditions. I hope and believe that even as we work to live behind houses, money, riches and wealth to our young ones may we add books containing and concerning our traditional music, musical instruments and out languages.

Communal clashes:
The rate of communal clashes today is more than the ear can hear, houses are burnt, barracks, markets, shops, high way killings even very close to police check points and what have you. We are not safe, even at home? Were ease can we run to for cover, for safety of our lives. Valuables at our communities are carted away in our presents in the day time without much I do to rescue then from the hands of their captors, even as there are begging for help. The adoption of a clan head is already an alarm of warning that the communities are no longer safe to keep valuables and our instruments of cultural heritage. Going by the present trend of things in this country, one may be tented to say all is lost. All may be lost when you see that some important personalities are killed or his house built or render useless. If a custodian of a culture is eliminated, what would it be of that culture! If a
person of a king or a village head is brightly expunged what will be the faith of all that depend on him? What of all he need to teach who may be his successor? In another view, if a man who is not a chief but as a role to play in a dance group in the kingdom is suddenly eliminated, who teaches the dance step? Or a producer of an musical instrument in the locality who teaches how to the that instrument? All these are questions begging for an answer from us. I am affirmed particularly of the very near future of our great country, Nigeria. Let us rise to contend and confront our present predicament and see reasons why we go all out to collect and document all our valuables of music, dance, dressing, music instruments and have you. Now that we have see reasons our traditional music documentation, let us hastily call and go for the work of our fatherland and the safety of our heritage in all its dimensions.

**Lowlife expectancy**
The United Nations rated Nigeria among one of the lowest life expectancy in the world with 50 years; I remember yes I remember that life begins at 40 years. This assertion that life begins at 40 is yet to be reviewed by any organization. My fear is that the youth are the most involved in criminal act and there age-grade, between 15-22years. So do we say life begins at 18? That is left in the hands of those concerned.

In the light of the above facts and figures may I conclude by saying archives of our traditional music better done now or we lost it to the wave of crime in and around us. What are those crimes that is sweeping our communities yester years militancy today cultism, terrorism, kidnappings of 18 sweater buses burning of villages, herdsmen/farmer clashes police killing taxi drivers because of fifty naira contribution on the road and what have you. Conclusively, let us archives our documented traditional music for the sake of posterity. cultist attacks of villages, herdsmen invading farming settlements and farmlands. Barracks and military base attacks and high
way killings. Although, it is cost intensives but what must be done better be done now before it is too late for all of us

May we begin to see ourselves as the tools to retreat the wrongs of the nation..

References