

**MUSIC IN THE ORAL LITERATURES OF THE SEPHARDIC JEWS  
AND THE IGBOS OF EASTERN NIGERIA:  
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract**

Music is the universal language of the soul and the music of oral literature flows from the core essence of a people's existence. Here it becomes a way of expression intricately tied to their social, cultural, economic and political aspirations and to a great extent becomes the determinant of the peaceful co-existence of the society of people that spawn it. Ordinarily, traits of music in the oral literatures of different people have been instrumental to the establishment of links and bonds between societies of people and affirming relationships between peoples now widely separated in spatial, historical, and cultural terms. All through the ages, scholars of oral literature and anthropology have tried to trace the link between the Jews and the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria. There have been claims of satisfactory empirical evidence to support the fact that these two societies of people have a kinship bond of a sort. Daniel Lis, from the Institute for Jewish Studies, University of Basel, Switzerland, is one of the foremost researchers on Jewish identification among the Igbo. He said in an oral interview that there has been a clear continuity of Jewish identity among the Igbo. "It's not just something that happened yesterday." The Swiss-Israeli anthropologist says that Igbo-Jewish identity can be traced back to the 18th century. Apart from Lis, cross-cultural comparisons have been documented by people ranging from George Thomas Basden, the influential Anglican missionary and ethnographer who proposed that the word "Igbo"

evolved as a corruption of the word "Hebrew," to Olaudah Equiano, a freed Igbo slave that lived in the 18th century British society. This paper analyses the musical elements in the folk literatures of the Sephardic Jews and the Igbos with a view to establishing some similarities in their eccentric values.

### **Introduction**

The avid claims by scholars over the years that there are striking oral stories and historic notations of cultural resemblances between the Igbo and the Jews have proven convincing enough to attract varied groups of scholars of assorted fields of study to the Eastern Nigeria. These scholars have tried to prove the assumptions that the Igbo Jews originated from Syrian, Portuguese and Libyan Israelite migrants into West Africa. Certain Igbo communities with Judaic practices have been discovered in recent years by individual Israelis and American Jews who worked in Nigeria.

Some out-reach organizations like the American Kulanu and African-American Jewish communities in America have also made concerted efforts to place some plausibility to the claims of kinship between the Igbos and the Jews. To this end, Jews from outside Nigeria founded two synagogues in the 1970's in Nigeria, which are attended and maintained by Igbos. Due to the fact that no official census has been taken in the region, it is rather difficult to state with certainty the number of Igbos in Nigeria who identify as either Israelites or Jews but presently about twenty six synagogues of various sizes have been cited among Igbo communities indicating very strong Jewish presence.

Even more important in the tracing of this linkage between the Jews and the Igbos, is the impact of the strong scholastic evidence of the widely influential statement made by an Igbo man, Olaudah

Equiano, a Christian-educated freed slave who remarked in his autobiography of 1789 that :

the strong analogy which... appears to prevail in the manners and customs of my countrymen and those of the Jews, before they reached the Land of Promise, and particularly the patriarchs while they were yet in that pastoral state which is described in *Genesis* – an analogy, which alone would induce me to think that the one people had sprung from the other." For authoritative support, he gives reference to "Dr. Gill, who, in his commentary on *Genesis*, very ably deduces the pedigree of the Africans from Afer and Afra, the descendants of Abraham....

Though his assertions have since been strongly contested as mere speculations by contemporary historians, archaeologists, historical linguists, and other scientifically based disciplines who held as controversial the proposition that Jews were directly involved with Igbo-speaking people in prehistoric times, there still remains, sufficient evidence of the Jewish presence in the Saharan trade centres during the first millennium.

An analysis of some common traditional songs from these corpuses with a view to establishing some similarities is the major business of this scholarship. Therefore, taking into cognisance the fact that the prosody of a culture's spoken language can influence the structure of its music this analysis will endeavour to apply simple comparable quantitative measures to the melody and rhythm in music of the oral literature of the two societies under study.

### **Origin of Music in the Oral Literatures of the Sephardic Jews and the Igbos**

The Hispanic Jews like the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria have a rich body of songs embedded in their oral literature which can be traced to the

original medieval corpus. While the Igbos take the music in their oral literature as a rich thriving, dynamic culture of sonorous tunes defining an intrinsic and integral aspect of their communal existence, the Hispanists, tend to look on the music in the Sephardic oral literature as an essentially static, richly evocative treasure trove of medieval survivals (Menéndez Pidal 1973: 335-336). This establishes the facts that just like the Serphadic Jews, the Igbos in fact have a long and ancient history of excellent traditional music lacing every aspect of their oral literature. Intrestingly, music is seen and portrayed in every aspect of life and every activity of these two societies of people. Evidences abound to authenticate the fact that every interaction in these societies is submerged in music and every activity is laced with music. This is manifested in the slightest day-to-day interactions of members of these societies.

Yet, in as much as there exist many linguistically diverse folk music in the literary traditions of the Jews and the Igbos with indeed, highly significant and invaluable instances of medieval features of Judeo-Spanish traditions, it will take an in depth analysis to assume that any of these texts are related.

Customarily, the music in the Sephardic oral literature is located in two major generic types: narrative ballads (*romansas*) and lyric songs (*cantigas*). While the Igbo oral literatures is fully laced with music in form of ballads (*abu ifo*) and Lyrical songs (*abu oto n'ubulu*). This study wades into the rich synthesis of diverse cultural components, gathered from the many peoples encountered by the Spanish Jews during their multiseular pilgrimage in Mediterranean lands as well as the dynamic sonority of the Igbos songs to establish or refute traces of similarities

### **The Sephardic Ballads (*Romansas*) Versus the Igbo Ballads (*Abu Ifo*)**

The Sephardic ballads are strongly tied to the Pan-Hispanic ballad tradition. Ordinarily, the two Sephardic traditions (Eastern and North African) and the repertoires of other Hispanic language areas—Castilian-speaking regions of Spain, the Canary Islands, and Spanish America; Galicia, Portugal, the Portuguese Atlantic islands and Brazil; and the Catalan-speaking areas of Spain, France, and Sardinia—are communally harmonizing. This is evident in the fact that from the philological standpoint, the ballads are regarded as an ongoing dynamic process of the oral tradition involving constant recreation and a high degree of poetic creativity (Bénichou 1968*b*). This makes the entire ballad tradition (the *Romancero*) so much of a Pan-Hispanic experience.

Like the other branches of the Pan-Hispanic *Romancero*, the Judeo-Spanish ballads include songs based on medieval Spanish and French epics; others concern events in Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian history; still others recreate Biblical episodes, legends from Classical Antiquity, or details of medieval *romans d'aventure*; many ballads embody a variety of topical, novelesque plots: prisoners and captives, the husband's return, faithful or tragic love, the unfortunate wife, adultery, various amorous adventures, tricks and deceptions. Many ballads can be traced back to medieval Iberian origins, others were invented by the Sephardim in exile, still others can be shown to have reached the Jewish communities well after 1492, doubtless brought there by *converso* emigrants; a few Eastern *romances* are adaptations of Modern Greek ballads (*tragoúdia*), while others translate French *chansons populaires*, or Italian and Catalan narrative songs.

Judeo-Spanish *romansas* (Spanish *romances*) are narrative ballads characteristically embodying 16-syllable, usually monorhymed verses, divided into two octosyllabic hemistichs, with assonant rhyme in each second hemistich. The eight-syllable assonant ballad verse

ultimately derives from the anisosyllabic assonant verse of the medieval Spanish epic, and a certain number of Judeo-Spanish ballads, together with some ballads from other Hispanic regions, can be shown to be genetically derived, through direct oral tradition, from medieval Spanish heroic poetry. It is pertinent to mention at this point that the earliest evidence of the existence of ballads among the Hispano-Jewish exiles does not consist of full texts, but involves an extensive corpus of *incipits* (or, in some cases, of crucial internal verses), used as tune markers in 16th- and 17th-century Hebrew hymnals (*piyûtfîm* collections): A typical heading might read: "Pizmôn leḥan Arbolera tan gentil" (A hymn to the tune of *Arbolera* etc.)

On the other hand, the Igbo ballads have a wide range of utility because they are derived from the core essence of the society's existence. This gives rise to various forms of songs for various activities. This variety is due to the fact that the traditional music is used in articulating every human experience in the society. The Igbo traditional Oral ballads encompass all forms of public recitals and renditions in form of songs, chants or narration. There are also traditional Igbo folk ballads which are enacted in form of folk dances. These may be an enactment of a myth or legend presented on festive occasions for entertainment and the rhythm and rendition is also determined by the occasion of use.

Because life in the Igbo society is a celebration, ballads for celebrations are the most popular. Through this medium, important and exemplary achievement, distinguished persons, heroes and deities are celebrated with praise poetries. Ballads are also an avenue through which morals and societal etiquettes are imbued into the younger generation. Old sages and griots relay ancient wisdom to the new generation through music. Religious beliefs and didactics are also spread and fostered through the Igbo traditional ballads.

What is more, the Igbo ballads are the societal medium for emphasizing and re-echoing the nature of relationships between man and his environment, man and his fellow man, and between man and his ancestors. They are means of promoting cordiality, culturality and peaceful co-existence in the society. In Igbo traditional society, it is not uncommon to see local bards entertaining mixed audience of old and young, men and women, boys and girls with ballads of love, war, heroic deeds, history, epics, legends and myths. Through this type of rendering the history of the society is perpetuated and preserved. As a tool for entertainment, the Igbo traditional ballads enlighten and satisfy man's intellect and emotions.

Remarkably, just like the Jewish *romansas*, the Igbo ballads are mostly narrative in nature and are typically composed in a 16-syllable, monorhymed verses, divided into two octosyllabic hemistichs, with assonant rhyme in each second hemistich. although the eight-syllable assonant ballad may not necessarily draw from the anisosyllabic assonant verse like the medieval Spanish epic they tend to be genetically derived, through direct Igbo oral traditions.

Below are two contrasting examples:

### **La Bella En Misa (The Beauty in Church)**

La bella en misa (The Beauty in Church) is a Sephardic ballad of medieval origin—sung in both branches of the Judeo-Spanish tradition, as well as in Castilian-, Galician-, and Catalan-speaking areas of Spain, in northern Portugal, and in Mexico and Argentina (RPI S4). Apart from its delightful content, it eloquently illustrates the basic principle that each ballad has its own, sometimes highly distinctive—if not, as in this case, unique—individual history.

- |   |                           |                                |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Tres damas van a la misa  | Three ladies are going to mass |
|   | por hazer la oración.     | to say their prayers.          |
| 2 | Entre'n medio va mi spoza | With them goes my bride,       |

- |                                |                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| la que más quería yo.          | the one I love most of all.          |
| Sayo ye va sovre sayo;         | She wears many pleated skirts        |
| un xiboy de altornasión.       | and a waistcoat of fine cloth.       |
| 4 Su covesa, una toronĝa       | Her head is round like a grapefruit; |
| sus caveyos briles son.        | her hair is golden thread            |
| Cuando los tomó a peinare,     | and when she combs it,               |
| en ojos despuntó el sol.       | it glistens in the sun.              |
| 6 Las sus caras coreladas      | Her red cheeks                       |
| mansanas d'Escopia son.        | are apples from Skopje;              |
| Los dientes tan chiquiticos    | her small teeth                      |
| dientes de marfil ya son.      | are all like ivory.                  |
| 8 Su boquita tan chequetica    | In her tiny mouth                    |
| y que no le cave'n peñón.      | a rosebud would not fit;             |
| La su seja enarkada            | her arched eyebrows                  |
| árcol de tirar ya son.         | are like taut bows.                  |
| 10 Melda, melda, papazico,     | The priest, reading his prayers,     |
| de meldar ya se quedó.         | stopped in his reading.              |
| —Melda, melda, papazico,       | "Read on, little priest;             |
| y que por ti no vengo yo.      | I've not come here for you.          |
| 12 Vine por el hijo del reyes, | I have come for the king's son,      |
| que de amor v'a muerir yo.     | for I am dying of love."             |

### **Oma Nwanyi Mma (Oma the Beauty)**

Oma the beauty is a traditional Igbo ballad about two star crossed lovers who would go against all dictates of culture and reasons to be together. Just like *La bella en misa* (The Beauty in Church) it is of medieval origin—sung and accepted in all corners of the Igbo tradition

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Oma bu Nwunye m ooo | Oma is my bride            |
| Nwanyi m huru n'anya   | she is the love of my life |
| obu m ga alu ya ooo    | I am her ordained spouse   |
| Aga m aluriri ya       | I must marry her           |
| 2. Nne ya kwere m ooo  | with her mother's consent  |
| Nna ya ekwere m ooo    | and her father's consent   |



umu nna ya kwere m ooo	And the consent of her kinsmen
Aga m alu niri ya	She must be my bride
3. Obu akwa? Aga m egoro ya	Fine apparel? I will buy in quantum
Obu uwe? Agam ego juru ya	Dresses? I will buy them in quantum
Obu ola edo? Aga m ego juru ya	Gold and silver? I will buy in quantum
1. Oma jebe nku, anyam n' eleru ya	Oma fetches fire wood, I look out for her
Oma chube iyi, anya m n' eleru ya	oma goes to stream, I look out for her
Oma jebe egwu, anya m n' eleru ya	oma goes to dance, I look out for her
Oma jebe oru, anya m n' eleru ya	oma works, I look out for her
2. Odi okporo ato jebe nku	Three maidens go to fetch firewood
Oma no n'ime ha	Oma is among them
Odi okporo ato chube iyi	Three maidens go to the stream
Oma no n'ime ha	Oma is among them
3. Oma na agba mbo	Oma is hard working
Oma gbasiri ike	Oma is strong and healthy
Oma n'eme ezi omume	Oma is cultured
Oma na eje ozi	Oma is dedicated
4. Oma mara mma ooo	Oma is a great beauty
Ochia ochi, eze ya di ka aku miri igwe	Oma smiles, her teeth is as white as snow
Ogba egwu ukwu ya n'ebu aju	When she dances her waist overwhelms
Oma n'egbu m ka manya	Oma is intoxicating like fresh wine

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 5. Oma n'eye uka<br>Kwa ututu, Oma n'eye uka<br><br>Kwa ehihie, Oma n'ekpe ekpere<br><br>Kwa mgbede, Oma n'eye Uka | Oma is pious<br>She goes to church every<br>morning<br>Every afternoon, she prays<br>fastidiously<br>Every evening she goes to church   |
| 6. A bughi m nwa eze<br>Mana Oma huru m n'anya<br>Abughi m nwa igwe<br>Mana Oma na anwuru m                        | I am not a prince<br>But Oma loves me dearly<br>I am no royalty<br>But Oma loves me to<br>distractions                                  |
| 7. Oma kwuru na Ogbo ooo<br>Ona adi iche<br><br>Uwe ya bu kwa peke m<br>Obu Oporu iche ooo                         | When Oma stands out in public<br>She looks world apart from<br>others<br>Her dress fits perfectly<br>She is worlds apart from<br>others |
| 8. Oma odi n'obi m ooo<br>Oma bu anya m<br>Nti nji anu ihe<br>Imi m ji eku ume                                     | Oma my hearthtrob<br>Oma the apple of my eyes<br>The only tune I hear<br>The air I breathe  |

Notably, the prosodic and syntactic structures in both songs involve organized acoustic sequences. The pitch and intensity create structured rhythmic and melodic patterns and, though there are glaring differences in the rhythmic organizations, representing the divergence in language, there is a discernible semblance in the sequence in the pattern of the structural rhythmic pulse of the two ballads.

### **Lyric Songs in Serphadism (*Cantigas*) Versus the Igbo Lyrics (*Abu Oto N'ubulu*)**

The Sephardic Jews have abundance of traditional lyric songs embedded in their oral literature. These songs have strong ties to the Iberian tradition but they embody the religious lyrics that are authentically traditional lyric song. There are traces of certain poetic forms, notably the Moroccan wedding songs that strongly embody what might be termed "vocabulary" of parallelistic, synonymous rhyme words that are partly or wholly identical (Alvar 1985:44). In as much as the Sephardic ballads also have specific communal functions and lyric qualities like wedding songs, lullabies, songs of mourning, their uses in specific utilitarian social contexts, are in general much more sharply defined. Lyrics in Serphadism are therefore more of liminal songs that delineate the thresholds of human life, the crucial moments of transition: birth songs, wedding songs, funeral dirges (Armistead 1993: 364-367).

Essentially also, the Igbos have rich repertoire of lyric songs closely tied to their traditional poetry and folkbeliefs; several of which turn out to have very close inclinations. The local bards use music to playfully and tactfully checkmate the society. One special aspect of the Igbo traditional music is that it can be composed without much formality. The local bards and some obnoxious brats make use of this quality to extremities.

Lyrics are composed on the spot especially about immoral and errant men and women. Lyrics of abuse and cynical lyrics of denigration and degradations can be composed against a drifting member of the society. Lascivious men and morally bankrupt members of the society are always under very close surveillance by the local bards. Lyrics of petty gossips and local scandals keep the society alive with fun and perpetually keep everyone on the alert as anybody can become an object of the gossips of lyrics and the lyrics of abuse.

*Music in the Oral Literatures of the Sephardic Jews...*

In the Igbo traditional society, it is just natural to hear lyrics - soul lifting lyrics at the birth of a baby, at naming ceremonies, at traditional weddings and on festival occasions. Even labourers have chants to lighten the laden of work. The lyrics are composed such that the beating goes in rhythm with the working tempo. The rendition strengthens and reinvigorates the labourers.

There is really no aspect of the Igbo communal life that lyrics do not surface. In nursing the baby, lullabies are sung and chanted to sooth the baby to sleep. At the death of a member of the society, elegies and dirges are sung to relieve the sorrowful experience. These mournful chants may involve wailing, weeping sobbing and even serious gnashing of the teeth. The themes for such lyrics are abuses on death as an archenemy of mankind, as a thief and a spoiler. They can also dwell on the mysteries and ephemeral life or consolations for the bereaved or even the greatness and heroic deeds of the man or woman that passed on. Music is used to celebrate life and death. Just as a person is celebrated in his lifetime, so is he mourned at death.

The most distinguished aspect of the Igbo traditional music is that it is a communal activity. Every member is involved in the rendition either by clapping hands, humming or chanting the chorus. The bard initiates the music and the audience responds with rhythmic choruses. Nobody is exempted from this exciting aspect of the society's culture.

Music in the Igbo society is indeed a cultural experience. It is a heritage handed down from generation to generation. In the morning, it is quite customary for the elder and head of a family to welcome that dawn with sonorous and rhythmic incantations which expresses appreciation happiness, success, joy and appellations to the deities.

**Below are two examples from both cultures:**

The following is a Serphadic *endecha*—sung at funerals and also during the nine days of the month of Ab (*Thish'ā bē-'Āb*) to commemorate the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, which is evoked in vv. 1-8. The rest of the poem involves a conversation between a mother and her deceased son or daughter:

- |    |                             |                                 |
|----|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1  | Ḥaḥamim nombrados,          | Famous wise men,                |
| 2  | de honra y de fama,         | of honor and of fame,           |
|    | los yevan atados            | are carried off bound           |
| 4  | y arrastrados por la vía.   | and dragged along the streets.  |
|    | iYoren, yoren, las señoras, | Weep, weep, you women,          |
| 6  | las que tienen razón,       | for well may you weep,          |
|    | por la Caza Santa           | for the Holy City               |
| 8  | y el ḥorbán de Sión!        | and the destruction of Zion!    |
|    | —Si había algún Consuelo    | "If there were some comfort     |
| 10 | y en éste mi corasón,       | in this heart of mine,          |
|    | yo vos rogo, la mi madre,   | I beg you mother,               |
| 12 | por las piadades,           | for the sake of charity,        |
|    | que escribáis mi dulce      | to write my sweet name          |
|    | nombre                      |                                 |
| 14 | y en vuestros lumbrales.    | on the threshold of your home." |
|    | —Y escrito lo tengo,        | "And I have inscribed it        |
|    | escrito,                    |                                 |
| 16 | y en la veluntade.          | within my very soul.            |
|    | Los días que fuere viva,    | As long as I live,              |
| 18 | mi madre, con tus pesares.  | I will mourn for you."          |
|    | —Yo vos rogo, la mi madre,  | "I beg of you, mother,          |
| 20 | por las piadades,           | for the sake of charity:        |
|    | que saquéis mis nuevos      | Take out my new clothes         |
|    | vestidos                    |                                 |
| 22 | del arca y del ajugares.    | from the dowry chest.           |
|    | Con la hoja del adefla,     | With leaves of the rosebay,     |

- 24 mi madre, los bufeares. Mother, fumigate them for me.  
Con la hoja de la retama, With leaves of the furze,  
26 mi madre, los safumare. Mother, perfume them for me.  
Y si al año no volviere, If I don't return in a year,  
28 sacáilos al delale. take them to be sold  
Y al primero precio, And at the lowest price,  
30 mi madre, los qaddeare. Mother, sell them off.  
Y el que los comprare, And whoever buys them,  
32 que no pase por la mi caye. let him not go by my street,  
No los vea la mi madre, so my mother may not see them,  
34 los de dolor al corasón. those clothes of heartfelt grief."

### **Akwa Nwunyedi (The Cry of a Co-Wife)**

This is a song of sorrow from a maltreated woman. It is a conversation between a woman carrying a baby and a river goddess. The woman was found at the bank of the river trying to fetch water on a forbidden day of the week. Babies are revered in Igbo culture, almost deified; a woman carrying a baby is given special preference in all things. The child stands for the future and for posterity. Maltreating a baby is a crime against the gods and humanity. There is an apt image of conveying the fact that the woman contravened the laws of the gods because of her baby. The last part is a consolation from the spirit.

- |                                       |       |  |
|---------------------------------------|-------|--|
| 1. O Nwa mmuo isi mu koro gi          | inine | Spirit do I tell you my story              |
| O Nwa mmuo isi mu koro gi             | inine | Spirit do I tell you my story              |
| 2. Na nwunye di mu di njo             | inine | My co wife is evil                         |
| na nwunye di mu di njo                | inine | My co wife is evil                         |
| 3. Agara m kuru miri m n' enye nwa    | inine | I took a cup of water for my baby          |
| 4. Osi mu kwuo ya ugwo miri, miri nwa | inine | She demands a replacement                  |
| Nwa n'ebe, nwa n'eti                  | inine | The baby cries, the baby shrieks           |
| 5. Osi m je n'Ogba churu iyi puta     | inine | She demands I should go to the river       |
| M si ya ejighi taa eje n'Ogba lota    | inine | I told her the river is forbidden<br>today |
| 6. Osi mu kwua ya ugwo miri, miri nwa | inine | She demands a replacement                  |
| Osi m jee n'Ogba chute iyi puta       | inine | She demands I should go to the<br>river    |
| 7. Eze Ogba, isiri gini?              | inine | You mean the sacred river?                 |

Ubochi eke?	inine	On an eke day?
8. Miri kuru gbam gbam la n i'gwe?	inine	The sacred river of thunder?
Miri gburu amuma ka onwa n'eti?	inine	That draws lightening on a moonlight night?
9. A bum nwanyi, nwanyi ku nwa	inine	I am only a woman carrying a baby
Biara ekuru miri nwa	inine	I came to fetch water for the baby
10. Ahhhahhaa nne nwa ndo	inine	Ahhhahhh baby's mother what a pity
Ewoooo nne nwa ndoooo	inine	Ewoooo baby's mother what a pity
11. Ewoooo churu ogba lawa	inine	Fetch as much as you want
Ewoooo churu aku lawa	inine	Fetch also as much wealth
12. Ewoooo Ndo ndooooo	inine	Ewoooo what a pity
Ndo ndoooo Inineeeee	ininee	A pity indeed!

The two songs exploit the literary devices of paradox and imagery to effectively communicate meaning. There are apt stylistic manipulations of the songs which to a great extent reveal a rich exploitation of literary devices like metaphor and imagery and rhetorical questions. All these combine to imbue the songs with solemn lyrical effects. The two have the ability to draw pathos from the audience. The dynamic levels of both songs naturally indicate the emotional state of both women. The elements of turmoil and conflict seem too close to the surface. The timbre is touchy and easily influences the psychological "richness" of the human mood thereby eliciting compassion. The rhetorical questions "The sacred river of thunder? That draws lightening on a moonlight night?" helps to accentuate the woman's predicament.

### **Conclusion**

From the ongoing, one can say without fear of contradictions that the Igbo traditional music and the music in the Sephardim have wide range of utility. Similarly, music in both cultures articulates every human experience in the societies. There is to be found in both cultures, Traditional Oral Music that encompasses all forms of public recitals and renditions in form of songs, chants or narration. There are also traditional folk songs, myth or legend which are enacted in form of

folk dances and presented on festive occasions. There is therefore a poetic form for every occasion and the rhythm and rendition are also determined by the occasion of use.

This study also arrived at the conclusions that life in both the Igbo society and the Serphadic is a celebration therefore songs for celebrations are the most popular.

It was also discovered that both societies use their traditional music as avenues through which morals and societal etiquettes are imbued to the younger generation. Religious beliefs and didactics are also spread and fostered through traditional music. *La bella en misa* (The Beauty in Church) is a Sephardic ballad drawn from the Judeo-Spanish religion while the Serphadic *endecha* is an invocation and prayer used during the nine days of the month of Ab (*Thish'ā bē-'Āb*), the Igbo lyric *Akwa Nwunyedi* (The cry of a co-wife) is a type of invocation with strong ritualistic supplications.

There is also strong evidence that in Sephardim as well as in Igbo traditions, music fosters unity, promotes cordiality, culturality and peaceful co-existence between people of the same culture. It stands as a societal medium for emphasizing and re-echoing the nature of relationships between man and his environment, man and his fellow man, and between man and his ancestors. These societies simply live music!

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