SOCIAL IMPACT OF ABIGBO DANCE MUSIC GROUP IN UMUOKIRIKA MBAISE COMMUNITY, IMO STATE

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Introduction

Music is part and parcel of every culture. In Igbo land in particular, Music making forms the integral part of their lives; starting from birth, marriage to death. Agu (1990) opines that "in African societies, all aspects of life ranging from birth to death are believed to be targeted with music making". (p.49). This implies that music is a life cycle that takes place in all activities of man. Outside its entertainment and performances, it brings unity and love to a particular society. Euba (1969) sees music as "a powerful tool that encourages unity among people irrespective of their age and social status" (p.480). Music performance knows no age limit as it concerns social activities. There are children's types of music, maiden, youths, male, female, mixed (both males and females) age grade, royal music and so on. For the substance of social activities in Igbo Social Musical performances are organized in different areas which include chief's palace, village square, market places, and personalities in the village open places like school playground and so on. Traditional music forms the heartbeat of social activities in Mbaise communities and in Igbo land at large. Abigbo dance music group of Umuokirika in Mbaise is not only for social activities but also for cultural identity.

Historical Background of Abigbo Dance Music Group

Abigbo Dance Music is one of the cultural dances performed in Mbaise community. Although there are other dances in Mbaise like ekpe, Uko, agbachaekurunwa, egbangelenge, eseala, eseelu and a host of others. The researcher deemed it fit to work on Abigbocultural dance music of Umuokirika in Ahiazu Local Government Area of Mbaise. According to oral interview which the researcher had with Ogu Sunday although not the leader but the elderly one in

the group, Abigbo present day is traced to early 1930s. Onyeji (2012) noted that; "Abigbo is social/entertainment choric – dance music that is not strictly event-bound. The intention is to promote the social and cultural lives of the Mbaise people primarily within the Igbo interactional milieu". (p. 50) in line with Onyeji's statement, Abigbo cultural dance music of Mbaise perform in all social activities in Mbaise and that is why it is enjoyed by Mbaise community. Some of these social activities where this ensemble performs include traditional weddings, chieftaincy installation, iriji Mbaise festival and others. This is why it is loved and enjoyed by Mbaise community. Abigbo is a traditional music group which uses both traditional musical instruments and Igbo language during their different performances both within and outside Mbaise community.

To prove that part and parcel of Mbaise man is music, Imo (2011) observes that: "When they say Mbaise loves music; we say it is an understatement. Music is part of our life and we have varieties". (p. 9). What Imo means is that in Mbaise Community, they are blessed with so many types of traditional dance music; which means that Abigbo dance music is not the only music they are known for. Njuko (2009) states that:

While providing entertainments to people in homes and at work, the main purpose of music and dance in our (Mbaise) culture is to bring the community together and forge a social aesthetic or mystical link among its members. Music and dance are for the community and instruments for creating social emotional and aesthetic solidarity and are also for ritual and religious purposes (p.198).

This is an indication that music and dance play important roles in Abigbo cultural dance of Mbaise community of which when combined with the instrument of the ensemble creates social, emotional and adds beauty to the music performances.

Musical instrument of Abigbo Dance Group Nketia (1982) observes that "The instrumental resources at the disposal of performances naturally tend to be limited to these in which their respective communities specialize. They may be instruments believed to be of local origin. (p.67). all the instruments used by Abigbo are locally made by Mbaise people with the exception of the bell

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(*Mgbiringba*) and whistle (*Opi*). Their instruments include drums of different sizes. The biggest is *adimala*, followed by the middle *nduduala* and the smallest ekelebe. Other instruments used by this group are bell (*mgbirimba*), whistle, rattle (*oyo*) and wood block (*okpakoro*).

Okorodu (2014) opines that "culture comprises the entire gamut of a people's way of life which is reflected in the social, political, economic system of such people (p.87). Generally, culture is the totality of the life of a particular society. This could be their type of music, dance, communication, musical instrument, language, food, hair style, work of arts and a host of other things that look alike which may be used in identifying a particular set of people or community. Nwoga (1978) says that "The people of Mbaise cultural achievement are in its music and dance, in its songs and literary skills. Every form of native Igbo dance ensemble is to be found in Mbaise. (p.33). Culturally Mbaise communities are blessed with music and dance which they are identified with.

Song Texts

Ojukwu and Onuora - Oguno (2015) observed that:

Indigenous Nigerian Music springs from the womb of the people's culture. It does not have to confirm to the music of other people, though it could share in some common factors and elements. It is often a people chosen expression but is part of the universal language of the people which is called music (p.36).

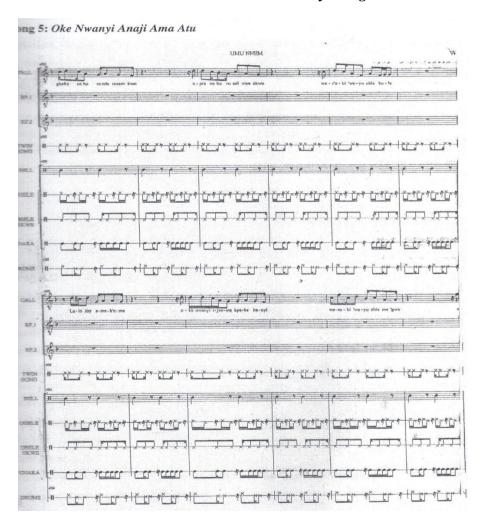
Abigbo dance music is part and parcel of the culture of Mbaise community. Whenever the name Abigbo is mentioned, it is traced down to Mbaise community. They make use of their indigenous language during their dance performance in order to understand and communicate easily among themselves.

Nwoga (1978) says "Abigbo music band and singers philosophize, criticize, and admonish praise in language expressions which not only makes its points but also pleases while it hurts" (p.2). They make use of their language as they sing to avoid mixing words. They sing about a woman who has good character (Lolo Joy Emeka). "lolo Joy Emeka, oke nwanyi a na eji amatu ebekanyi". Lolo Joy Emeka, a woman of good examples life in our community.

Song 1

Lolo Joy Emeka, okenwonyi Anaejiamatuebekanyi Were obi nwayochemeegwu Unu were obi nwayo egwe n'abia Lolo Joy Emeka, a woman of good exemplary life in our community calm down and wait for dance calm down dance is coming

Arri. by Anugwa U. L.



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Song 2

Abigbo dance music group also sing when expressing their anger

Resp. Onwereokwu di mkpo anyiriekwu government ntige onwere okwu di mkpa anyijiribia

Call: umuAbigboanyi

Resp: Ndiochawetaraoriaedisn'alanyi

Call: Dede le

Resp: Eburulaha Ebola bubaanyi
Umumadugejiakpannu asawaahu
Ebeufodumadugejiakulu mere nri

Call: Wogu le

Resp: AnyiariolaChukwukere Anyibikonyereanyi aka, ima

Naoriaebolajoron njo

Call: UmuAbigboanyi le

Resp: Iwe di anyin'obi o e a e iwe e a e

lwe di anyin'obi e a e

we come with an important talk
government listen
we come with an important talk
our Abigbo people
the white men brought aids in our
country

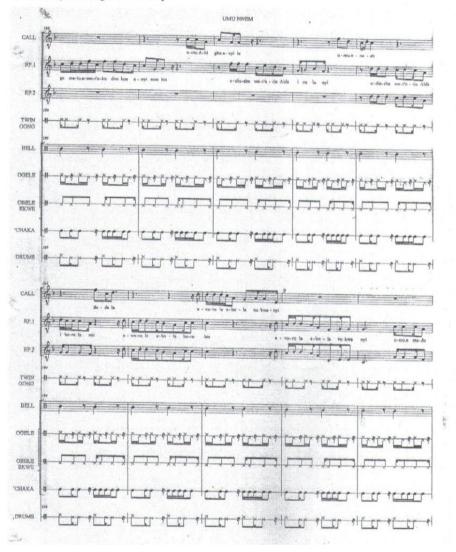
brother see
they brought Ebola everywhere
people are bathing with bags of salt
while some feed on bitter cola

Wogu O

we are pleading that God our creator should help us because Ebola is a very bad sickness. our Abigbo people o we are angry o e a e angry ea e we are angry e a e

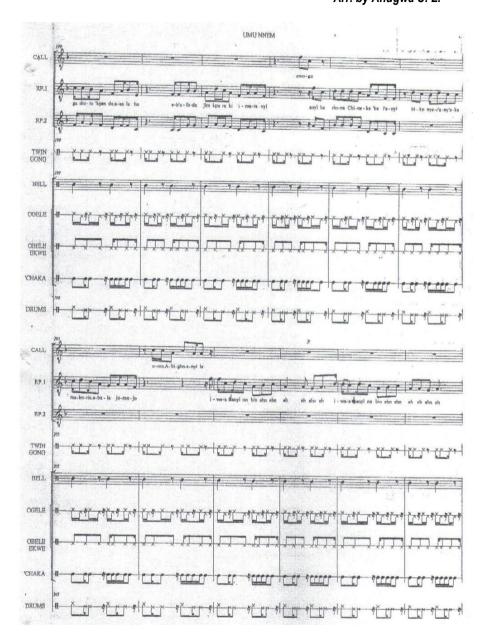
U. L. Anugwa: Social Impact of Abigbo Dance Music Group in Umuokirika Arr. by Anugwa U. L

This particular song was directed to the government on how Aids and Ebola have attacked community and it goes this way:



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Arr. by Anugwa U. L.



Functions of Song Text in Abigbo Dance Group

Song texts in the Nigerian or African context are cultural indicators and most of the cultural traits peculiar community or people are often reflected in their song text according to Okafor in Onuora-Oguno and Nwamara (2014). "Through song text, a person learned moral codes of his land he also learned about his own language, the things his people lived by and how the society worked". (p.116)

Due to the fact that Abigbo ensemble during their performances, make use of Igbo language, the Mbaise people learn more of their moral conducts, language and norms and values of their community. In their music performances, they sing revealing the history of Abigbo Dance Music Group. "Abigbo o si na nnenanna rue anyi aka". (we learnt Abigbo through our parents).

Other songs serve special functions to depict certain aspects of people's behavior such as songs of social control. These songs are usually topical and specially selected either in form of praise or abuse to regulate the social order in the community while others may also serve mainly for entertainment. Furthermore, social views such as corruption, stealing, adultery, going to native doctors to acquire powers by some of the church priests, and a host of others are usually revealed during traditional "iriji" Mbaise festival which is done annually being a collective art, often seen to reveal elements of oral traditions which are handed down from generation to generation. This is observed in one of their songs that say "Abigbo wunu ihe okpu" (Abigbo is an aged song).

The rich cultural heritage of Mbaise communities is showcased as they perform the above mentioned dances during their festivals and other ceremonies. In support of the above explanation, Onyeji (2011) writes:

Abigbo as a group employs the agency of entertainment to maintain the moral norms of the community such as crime control and avoidance of deviant behaviours through the lyrics as well as performance dynamics. Defaulters are used as themes of satric texts to serve as a deterrent to others. Abigbo members say, "We also sing about any bad person in the community". In this way, they directly and indirectly contribute to social music. Such music becomes a veritable instrument for social sanctions and erring members of the community (p.56).

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During their performances, as nobody's name will be mentioned, the person(s) involve will adjust his or her life to a better one. By so doing errors or bad characters are being corrected in Mbaise community.

Social Impact of Abigbo Dance Music of Mbaise

- Music is an essential component of the festival, it serves as the accompaniment to the rhythm of this dance and it makes it easier for the performancers to perform well. Also during performance, the rhythm of the music makes the dancers get to the climax.
- Music brings out the excitement and attitude to dance in all these festivals... some of their songs unveil the good and bad attitude of the members of the community. They also sing in praise of their parents who initiated the rich cultural heritage of Mbaise.
- They sing in praise of their elderly ones who are always in support of these dance groups.
- They also make use of verbal and non-verbal method in conveying messages to different communities who have come to witness these occasions on festivals and events thus have a long historical interrelationship with musical performances in Mbaise community.



Instruments of Abigbo Dance Music of Mbaise



Members of Abigbo Dance Music Group of Mbaise

Musical instruments used by Abigbo dance music group have different functions they play. Okafor (2005) observes that:

They feature in dances instrumental ensemble and in spiritmanifest displays. They also play accompaniments to some vocal music. Some instruments play a double role depending on the social context. For example, the xylophone, flute and some slit drums (ushe/uvie, ikoro, ododem) are both melodic and melorhythmic instruments. (p.178).

In Abigbo dance group, the instruments they use play vital roles. One of these instruments play double role. The big drum (*edimala*) is for cueing in dancers for a change of dance steps and also as melodic and melo-rhythmic instrument. The other remaining two drums are for compliment. For example middle drum (*nduduala*) smallest (*ekelebe*). Other instruments that are used for accompaniments including wood block (*okpokoro*) rattle (*oyo*) while bell is (*mgbirimba*) for timing. They also have a lead singer whose duty is to always introduce the song for the chorus to respond.

Generally, Abigbo traditional music is loved by almost all the communities of Mbaise. This is because of the way and manner they perform. Abigbo music and dance always bring people together. People from all works of live visit Mbaise whenever this dance music is performed.

Conclusion

From this research work, it is well believed that Abigbo cultural dance is the main music of Mbaise community. The culture they cherish and keep for posterity. Also Mbaise community appreciate Abigbo dance as a culture that communicates through music and dance in order to correct ills in the community and at the same time recognize those that do good things in the community. Due to use of language by the group, people have been touched emotionally for a positive change in their lives. This communication is not only for Mbaise community, the audience is also inclusive. This is because, during Abigbo, this group communicates to both indigenes and non-indigenes. In conclusion, the Igbo and even Nigerians as a whole gain a lot from Abigbo dance group of Mbaise during their music and dances performances.

Recommendations

Due to the information's gathered from this work, these recommendations are made.

- 1. Traditional dances should be practiced in schools from nursery to secondary levels, so that the younger generation will grow with it as their culture.
- 2. Government should encourage people in the state, Local Government Areas and the community by awarding prices to the best performance in the cultural display.
- 3. The elders should as well encourage the younger ones to form their own Abigbo dance music group in order to sustain Mbaise culture.
- 4. On no account should Abigbo cultural dance music group of Mbaise be asked to stop performance because of the way and manner they correct errors in the community through music and dance.

Oral Interview

NAMES	AGE	OCCUPATION	PLACE	DATE
Casmir Emeribe	32	Civil Servant	Ahiazu	15/08/2018
Anyanwu Ikechukwu	40	Business Man	Ahiazu	25/10/2018
Ogu Sunday	32	Builder	Umuokrika	25/10/2018
Ebuka Nwokorie	32	Builder	Umuokrika	25/10/2018
Uzochukwu Okereke	35	Tailor	Umuokrika	25/10/2018



The researcher with Casmir Emeribe (Leader of the Group) and Ikechukwu Anayanwu (Secretary of the Group) as the interviews to the leaders during Iriji Mbaise on the 15th of August, 2018

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