

AFRICAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN IDEMILI CULTURE OF IGBO LAND

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Introduction

African music and its musical instruments play prevailing roles in inter-cultural scheme of activities and events. The music of Africa and its instruments are very traditional and are handed down from generation to generation. Referred to the vastness of the African continent, the traditional music and musical instruments of Africa is historically ancient, rich and diverse with the different regions and nations of Africans having distinct musical traditions and culture. In addition, African continent is the second largest continents in the world and its people constitutes a tenth of the world population with about 1,000 indigenous languages spoken throughout the continent. Therefore, the people's musical instruments go a long way in spreading the culture of the inhabitants as we can see in the African Musical Instruments in culture in Idemili North and South Local Government Areas of Anambra State Nigeria in Africa. Adegbite (2006) noted:

It is no wonder therefore, that all the variety of musical instruments found in Yoruba land provide avenues for the traditional Yoruba musicians to express their creativity, since the distribution of all these varieties is by no means uniform in Nigeria (p. 47).

Musical instruments in Africa portray the life style of the people and their culture in general. Hence, music and culture are embedded in the way of Africans and African Musical instruments play great part in the people and their community's well being from cradle to grave as regards the musical performances in the people of Idemili North and South Local Government Areas of Anambra State Nigeria. However, African Musical Instruments in culture in Idemili (North and South) expose the usage as an important aspect of the people's way of life because their musical instruments add flavour and succour to their well-being. Thus, African musical instruments are seriously involved in their music-making thereby disseminating the culture of the people of Africa, which is a continent of diverse and rich culture with over 800 languages and 2,000 tribal diversions. The ancient African culture encompasses music and its instruments in their everyday life.

Besides the voice, a wide array of musical instruments are used which embrace other areas of their life activities like dance, story-telling and religious practices as they are grounded on the music of their culture. Therefore, this study is to portray the embodiment and beauty of African musical instruments as they carry the culture of its people; and possibly look into some of the examples of the instruments classes and their method of sound production with the names of towns that make up Idemili North and South Local Government Areas of Anambra State, Nigeria.

Culture

Culture is seen as the attitude and behaviour of a particular people or society (Oxford Dictionary). Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. The word "Culture" derives from a French term, which in turn derives from the Latin "Colere", which means to tend to the earth and grow or cultivate and nurture. It shares its etymology with a number of other words related to actively fastening growth. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary culture is the customs and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group (P. 357). Thus, the continent of Africa is essential to all cultures and African musical instruments should be part of the culture because music starts from conception to grave. However, human life originated on this continent and began to migrate to other areas of the world around 60,000 years ago according to the Natural History Message. Africa is home to a number of tribes, ethnic and social groups and one of the key features of this culture is the large number of ethnic and social groups and one of the key features of this culture is the large number of ethnic groups throughout the 54 countries on the continent. Hence, Nigeria alone has more than 3,000 tribes as regards reference to the 54 countries.

Currently, Africa is divided into two cultural groups. North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa because Northwest Africa has strong ties to Middle East, while Sub-Africa shares historical, physical and social characteristics that are very different from North Africa according to the University of Colorado. The harsh environment has been a large factor in the development of Sub-Saharan Africa culture, as there are a number of languages, cuisines, art music and its musical

instrument styles that have sprung up among the far flung population. Alan P. Merriam divided Africa into seven regions for ethno musicological purposes to enable and enhance the study of African music through ethnicity.

1. The music of the North Africa which is often treated under the Middle Eastern and North African music tradition.
2. The West African music which includes the music of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia, Mali, Niger, Burkina-Faso and also the coastal nations of Cote D'ivore, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroun, Gabon, the Republic of Congo.
3. Central Africa music includes the Chad, Central African Republic, Zambia.
4. The Eastern region, this includes the music of Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe as well as Madagascar.
5. The Southern region which are South Africa, Besotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Namhi and Angola.

During the 7th century, Arabs reached North African culture and influenced the existing African culture. This is why Africa and Arabian music share a certain degree of similarity and this extends to some musical instruments as well.

Merriam (1982) stated:

Music is studied in anthropology because it is a part of culture. It is a part of man's learned traditions and customs, a part of his social heritage. It can be analyzed in the same way as other customs and traditions, in terms of form and function, or interrelationships with other aspects of culture (p.17).

Continuing:

Music, then, plays a part in all aspects of culture. In political organization, for example, the function of music are apparent in songs sung in prouse of chiefs, but many other manifestations may also occur (P. 69).

This shows that music and its instrumental materials are one-in-one as regards African Musical instruments in culture in Idemili North and South Local Government Areas of Anambra State.

African Musical Instruments

A musical instrument is any device for producing a musical sound. Hence, musical instruments are universal components of human culture with special regards to its four main divisions (Meriam, 1982:76). Under the classification proposed by Hornbostel and Sachs (1914), musical instruments have been divided into four main classes – idiophones, membranophones, aerophones, and chordophones with at least ten major subdivisions and many smaller divisions; it is safe to say that African musical instruments are represented in every division.

Therefore, African musical instruments are grouped into four main divisions according to their:

- Method of sound production,
- Material of make (materiaphone) and
- Geographical location

Nketia also opined:

The instrumental resources at the disposal of performers naturally tend to be limited to those in which their respective communities specialize. They may be instruments believed to be a local origin, or instruments which have become integrated into the musical life of their communities from other areas (P. 67).

He went further to state that:

It must also be noted that, while the aggregate of instrumental resources used throughout Africa is quite large, the assortment used by individual societies is limited to a small selection from the four main instrumental classes to be discussed subsequently. This limitation may be related to environmental factors to the kind of occupation in which a society engages, or to historical factor (P. 67).

Thus, we have:

1. Idiophones

They are rhythmic and self-sounding instruments without the addition of a stretched membrane or vibrating string. They are further classified according to how they are agitated to make sound. Example;

(a) **Shaken Idiophones**

Shaken idiophone is further sub-divided and grouped under primary and secondary rattles which Nketia said that:

Functionally, they can be subdivided into two major groups: primary rattles, which are held in the hand and played, and secondary rattles, which are worn on the body of performers and activated by their movements, or attached to their instruments as modifiers (P. 70).

(b) **Struck and Concussion Idiophones**

This is in form of a resonant slab of stone or wood or iron wooden bells with clappers.

(c) **Scraped and Friction Idiophones**

This sub-group sound is got by scraping a bottle with the lid of a tin or rubbing a calabash or gourd against a board, or by rubbing board on which some charcoal have been sprinkled with friction sticks. It is familiar with the blacksmiths.

(d) **Stamped Idiophones:**

This group produces sound by the use of stamping sticks and the stamping tubes. The stamping sticks are used on the ground.

(e) **Tuned Idiophones**

It is tuned in the sense that the metal prongs are adjusted to produce the correct musical notes, example the thumb piano and xylophones.

2. **Membranophones**

Chukwu (2011), noted:

The African membrane drum is made from a log of wood or a wood trunk, hollowed at the centre of the trunk. The trunk of a particular membrane drum is determined by the group that intends to use the particular specie for its musical accompaniment purposes. The hollowed log or trunk is covered at one top-end or both ends with animal skin (Pp xii-xiii).

However, it is the top part covered with animal skin that is usually struck to be agitated for vibration to produce sound. Examples are: Igba (Igbo), Dundun (Yoruba) and Tom-tom etc.

In addition, drums appear in a wide variety of shapes like conical, cylindrical or semi-cylindrical in shapes. It is a melo-rhythmic instrument.

3. **Aerophones:**

Aerophone produces sound when it is blown and air inside it will vibrate to produce sound. Aerophones can either be end or side blown. It has three sub-divisions.

(a) **Flute:**

The flute family has natural bore inside it example bamboo, husk of cane, paw-paw stalk, stalk of millet, example, pipiilo.

- Reed pipes example, Kakaki
- Horns and Trumpets

This group may be side or end blown, example, elephant tusk and animal horn.

4. **Chordophones:**

The chordophone instrument is a string instrument. The stretched string are struck or plucked to make or produce sound. Its sub-divisions are:

- Struck string, example lutes, zither
- Plucked string: une, harp etc.

African Musical Instruments in Culture in Idemili

The Musical Instruments of Africa as seen and used in socializing the culture of Idemili North and South Local Government Areas of Anambra State and very vital in the life of the people as well as the general community. Hence, the way of life of Idemili people is seen in their music and musical instruments. The musical instruments in Idemili North and South is an integral part of their historical activities like Offala, marriage, new yam, birth and burial ceremonies. They are used as socio-musical activities and cultural displays. Onwuka (2011) observed that:

As part of African orchestra, therefore, Nigerian dance ensembles are constituted on the same principles. To this and, each musical instrument of a dance ensemble in socio culturally chosen in

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consideration of its propensities to perform one, two or more socio
cultural roles (pp 48-49).

In addition, African musical instruments in Idemili North and South Local Government Areas of Anambra State is very important in establishing friendly ties as well as communication purposes. Okoro (2011) opines that:

To enhance globally committed musical instruments construction for performance serve its purpose, such undertaking necessitating conviction and has to be contextually organized and executed to achieve "Social action" for public information or promotion of a given cause-with the view of busting the citizenries oneness. Again, social dedication, in a global community via music instruments constructed for performance and utilized for communication, is highly imperative in facilitating neighbour association or companionship void of phobia; encouraging societal organizations demeanor thereby promoting friendly ties (P. 30).

Moreover, the traditional songs of the people are handed down to succeeding generation through their musical instruments which help in training the historical background of their people. Thus, Forchu (2012) stated:

Development processes therefore, are related not only to economic and social factors, but also to history, values, self-understanding, attitudes and the process of interaction. Consequently, the foundation of human development must be based on the culture, for it is these cultural concepts and ideals that propel development or underdevelopment (P. 208).

Therefore, Idemili North and South musical instruments go a long way in developing socializing, exposing and spreading the culture of its people through musical activities. As an entity, they relate with their musical instruments through inter marriage ceremonies and Ofala festivals as well as burial ceremonies. It should also be noted that African Musical Instruments in culture embraces all aspects of one's life both in songs and accompanying instruments as pointed out by Merriam (1982) that:

Two brief generalizations may be made here on the use of musical instruments in African culture. The first is simply that both instrumental soloists and groups of instrumentalists are found in Africa; the second is that accompanied song is perhaps more important in African music than solo instrumental performance. The second generalization is supported by the fact that almost all songs have words, whether or not those songs are actually sung, so that when a song is played upon a musical instrument, words are automatically conceptualized, although they may not be verbalized (P. 76).

In Idemili North and South Local Government Areas, the use of musical instruments in African culture is seriously applied in their daily activities. With the seventeen (17) towns in Idemili North and South-ten towns from Idemili North and seven towns from Idemili South. African Musical Instruments in culture, will elevate our musical practices to the nation, Africa and the world in general. The seventeen towns are as follows:

1. **Idemili North:** Abacha, Abatete, Eziowelle, Ideani, Nkpor, Obosi, Ogidi, Oraukwu, Umuoji and Uke
2. **Idemili South:** Akwu Ukwu, Alor, Awka Ekiti, Nnobi, Nnokwa, Oba and Ojoto.

Findings and Suggestions

From the study, we see that African musical instruments play a great role in the life of the people that carry and use it. Tracing the history and distribution of Igbo musical instruments to their identical forms; especially the parts considered unessential to sound production which invariably share cultic roles worldwide; it is seen that the instruments are real carriers of culture. Secondly, musical instruments of Africa down to Idemili North and South Local Government Areas have no appropriate recognition in the churches because the worshippers out of ignorance regard it as satanic and idolatry as well as archaic.

In addition, the users of African musical instruments are regarded as pagans who compromise their faith in God. It has also been observed that our children

who were born and brought up in the metropolitan areas feel shy to embrace our music and its musical instruments. They have even failed and refused to associate themselves with its ethics. As a result of western culture and its musical instruments, the inferiority complex engulfed the instrument owners and carriers, thereby feeling ashamed of their cultural identity which the musical instruments portrays.

Therefore, attention should be given on how to boost our culture to the world through African musical instruments and ideal methods and the ways in which we can revive them are:

- Cartoons should be introduced for folk and play songs.
- African musical instruments and its music should be put into electronic media.
- Our songs and their instruments should be introduced in churches, village meetings in our vehicles, home videos and Nollywood tapes.
- It should also be used as ringing tunes.
- During cultural carnivals, it should be solely used because we lost our values after the independence therefore, we have to revive it.
- Students of music in the higher institutions and universities should at least be made to learn and play at least five (5) categories of African musical instruments in their different course levels.
- The arm of government in-charge of sports and culture needs to organize African musical instruments exhibition from Idemili both at local government and state levels.
- African musical instruments should also be used as jingles
- Display of African musical instruments with billboards and signposts should be used.
- It should also be given equal attention like other school subjects in the nursery, primary and secondary schools because students prefer it to western theory of music and the pedagogy in teaching it.
- Children and students should be allowed to use and play them freely in their early ages so as to be perfect carriers of African musical instruments and its culture.

Conclusion

Africans see music and musical instruments as an integral part of their lives and they carry it along in their everyday activities. Music has specific function with dance as an integral part to music and musical instruments which are used to entertain as well as provide moral guidance. Hence Nketia (1982) noted:

Music performed in contexts that dramatize social relations, beliefs, crisis, history and communal events naturally develop a dramatic orientation and stress the use of those sound materials, texts, and elements of structure that stimulate or provide avenues for motor behaviour (P. 206).

Performing music and the use of African musical instruments are integral parts of most communities, towns and villages in Idemili North and South Local Government Areas of Anambra State Nigeria in African continent of the whole world. Thus, African music and musical instruments are important part of African culture and making musical instruments is also more of a hobby habit in Idemili Local Government Area and Africa in general as Wade (2004) wrote:

The countless and varied musical instruments that have existed through time are evidence of how people make music meaningful and useful in their lives. Because people have taken them wherever they have gone-for signals in war, for entertainment on expeditions, as items for trade, as gifts for foreign potentates-instruments also provide evidence of cultural diffusion...when people design and craft instruments, they both express cultural values and create musical practices through them (Pg. 27).

Finally, we should promote African Musical Instruments to promote our culture because our instruments sing, talk, give signals and in some instances intoxicate the maker, carrier and owner.

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