

CHAPTER 2

TERMINOLOGY FOR AFRICAN MUSIC

2. 1 Need for defining and redefining African music terms

Numerous publications that contain great depth of knowledge on African music have made use of terminologies, some of which have generated controversy among scholars over the years. Some of the terms are borne out of misconception, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misrepresentation and wrongful adaptation. The factors responsible for the malapropism often result from the background of some writers (researchers or scholars), from Europe, America or Africa. It may seem amazing that some Africans even misrepresent their own music, which, one would think and believe they are in the best position to interpret and represent. To foster proper understanding and further use of these terms in the context of this study on Igoru music, particularly the controversial ones, we need to re-examine them in order to avoid continuous use of terms that could misrepresent indigenous knowledge formulation. The first term to examine in this context is “African music,” since a number of scholars dispute its usage to generalize discourse where the authority of the writer might only be the study of a music typology of an ethnic group.

2. 1. 1 African Music

John Chernoff (1979: 28) writes that African music is an art form that results from a spontaneous and emotional creation [of African origin] that is an uninhibited

dynamic expression of vitality. Komla Amoaku (1985: 32) re-deriving from Francis Bebey (1969: vi) and Mbiti (1970: 87) discusses African music as principally a collective art and communal property, whose spiritual qualities are shared and experienced by all, as well as it is that aspect of tradition which provides the repertoires of its belief, ideas, wisdom and feelings in musical forms. In this regard, Agawu (2003: xiv) argues that:

African music is best understood not as a finite repertoire but as a potentiality. In terms of what now exists and has existed in the past, African music designates those numerous repertoires of song and instrumental music that originate in specific African communities, are performed regularly as part of play, ritual, and worship, and circulate mostly orally/aurally, within and across languages, ethnic, and cultural boundaries (Agawu 2003: xiv).

Given the above definitions, African music is simply any music that originates from any ethnic group or community in any African country; therefore, Igoru music, for example, like any other music of African origin, is African music. Much as diversity is inherent in the music of Africa from one culture area to another, there exist in its features greater amount of unity or similarities. Whether the term is adequate for describing all musics of Africa or not, depends on our focus on the similarity or on the dissimilarity that exists in various cultures. The adoption of the term "African music" for the discussion of Igoru music should then be understood for the fact that previous studies and current observations show much agreement in the characteristics of the musics of Africa.

2. 1 2 Background of foreign writers

Some of the early writers on African music were European explorers and scholars, who knew little or nothing about Africa or African music. They had much knowledge of their own musical cultures that were unfortunately not quite

applicable to African music in many respects. They got to the continent of Africa, whose culture was principally of oral tradition, and made efforts to represent and document the culture. The first misrepresentations by the explorers are found in the spelling of place names (towns and villages) that are yet to be corrected till date. The mis-spelling and mis-pronunciation of place names alter their indigenous meanings, as names and meanings in Africa have important cultural denotations and significance. In Ghana for example, the following places misspelt, "Aburi", "Dagomba" and "Ewe" by the foreign explorers are pronounced "Eburi", Dagbamgba and Eve by the indigenes.

In Okpe, Nigeria, misrepresentations in spelling make the official names of towns and villages meaningless to the people who are represented. The name Sapele for instance does not mean anything in Okpe, while *Urhiapele* means the River of *Apele* (*Apele* is the god of the River, worshipped by the inhabitants). Ogiedi means nothing too, but *Odjedi* (*Odje-Edi*) means the "goddess or king of oil palm" suggesting that the land was blessed and made fertile for oil palm production, thus attracting the inhabitants from their earlier settlement. Elume also means nothing, but *Unume* means "my mouth" suggesting the significance of taming one's tongue.

One of the Igoru records released by Gabriel Peru Edeyiomete and his *Egboto Isini* ensemble in the 1970s reveals this type of wrong representation. The song was a narrative on the mutual relationship that existed between Chief Edwin Ayomano, and his half brother, the then king (Orodje) of Okpe. They were both children of the same mother, but with different fathers. The lyrics narrate that Chief Ayomano was based in *Urhiapele* (Sapele). The listener who is not well informed about this and who is not an Okpe from Sapele Local Government Area

might think that *Urhiapẹlẹ* is an archaic or strange word that probably means something else. Another Igoru song refers to the same town of Sapeḷẹ in the following narration: “I passed through Adeje to Oorerokpẹ and I shall continue to Urhiapẹlẹ” (see song 58, page A1 – 94). Explorers found it very difficult to comprehend African music in much the same way as they could not understand the names and terminologies of the people. Thus the music often peeved them as they remarked in some of their writings. They found it completely strange and unpleasant; because they could make no sense of it and their judgment became biased. For example, Richard Lander, one of these early explorers writes:

On the morning of Thursday, the 12th, we left Chiadoo, followed by the chief and an immense crowd of both sexes, amongst whom were hundreds of children, the ladies enlivening us with songs at intervals, without regard to time, forming altogether a most barbarous concert of vocal and instrumental music, which continued to our great inconvenience and annoyance till we arrived at Matone, when they took leave of us. It would be difficult to detach singing and dancing from the character of an African, as to change the color of his skin... to deprive him of which would be indeed worse than death...the instruments of Africa are the rudest description. A large drum, made from the trunk of a tree, and covered with sheep-skin... Yet even on these instruments they perform most vilely, and produced a horribly discordant noise, (Lander: 1967: 1, 292).

An examination of the account above shows that from singing to dancing, and from the construction and sizes of the instruments to their playing, nothing about African music seemed pleasing to Richard Lander and Captain Clapperton. Igoru musicians may sing and dance in the day or at night to observe or celebrate rewarding observances that are often seen as communal responsibility as well as to entertain the public. The performances have several roles to play in the society

as we have discussed in chapter six. John Chernoff (1979: 1, 3, 5) expresses his lack of understanding for African music and how he felt one could just look for words that could describe it in his own cultural way:

African music does not require a theoretical representation or an explicitly interpretive understanding (p 1)... In such an investigation, we can learn as much about ourselves as about other people because we must see through our own eyes and we must find our own words to describe their world (p 3)... But I liked Dagomba music for a different reason: the drumming was completely incomprehensible to me. I could never hear where the beats were or how the different parts fit together. When I had a chance to listen to these drums, I would become lost and disoriented. In short, they were wonderful in subjective complexity, and I was attracted (p 5).

One would acknowledge that Chernoff is a very sound scholar, but he could not understand some things about the Dagomba music he studied. In his own opinion, he did not believe that African music requires any theoretical nor interpretive understanding. Although he could not comprehend the internal patterns of the Dagomba drumming, he was however able to discuss the playing techniques, which have similar features with those of Ikoru music. But one notes his remark “we must find our own words to describe their world”, as an approach that could lead to misrepresentation of the practitioners’ conceptualization in the culture. Ruth Stone who did her Doctoral research in Liberia, because her parents sojourned, gave birth to and brought her up there, argues as follows:

While the study object [of music] is the event, the locus of the interest in this event is the participants’ interaction. In focusing on the interaction with all its idiosyncrasies and incongruities, we are looking at musical meaning as “World

producing” rather than as simply a product of the nature of things [Berger and Luckmann 1966: 89]. Such recognition is profoundly important for it acknowledges the centrality of meaning created in interaction. The participants in music events include both the individuals producing music and the people experiencing the music performance as listeners or audience, and as the auditors’ meanings and interpretations are just as significant as those of the performers ([Stone 1982: 4] Stone 2002: 58-59).

True as the above statement may seem, meaning, as “World producing” is not without its limitations, bearing in mind that the peculiar meaning of musical events to the practitioners could differ from the understanding of outsiders or foreign observers and the interpretation they might give it. The interpretations of the researcher/observer, therefore must seek agreement with those of the performers. In the discussion of Igoru music, we look for the interpretations of the practitioners to found our theories. This approach will no doubt reduce the use of terminologies that could misrepresent the interest of the practitioners. Hugh Tracey (1970: 9) remarks as follows:

I must admit here that my knowledge of *Chichopi* is slight, and except for a working knowledge of *Chikaranga* and a little *Isizulu* I have had to rely to a large extent upon my interpreters. Whenever in doubt I checked and cross-checked by asking the same question in different contexts... It is quite impossible to adhere to the rhythm of the original without artificiality, and that would leave a wholly false impression. The original poems are crisp and full of the most unexpected rhythmic patterns which I find are not suggested at all in cold print, except, perhaps, in the division of the lines and verses... The Chopi, of course, have never visualized their songs in print. They only think of them aurally in terms of melody and dance rhythm (Tracey 1970: 9).

Tracey relied on his interpreters who might even have had their own difficulty of interpretation and translation, because it is not quite easy to translate from local patois to English language. Like John Chernoff, he could not understand the beats of the music and he simply consolidated his lack of understanding with the conclusion on the fact that the Chopi, after all, never conceived their music in print. The problem of perception is that some researchers channel their efforts toward comparison between African and Western music, with the primary aim to seek out the world of difference. Nzewi (1977: 8) observes:

On the other hand, it is rare to find literature of the folk music of the 'primitive' people by Euro-American ethnomusicologists and circumstantial musical commentators which does not imply or talk about 'them' and 'us'; 'theirs' and 'ours'. I know a few. But they are very few indeed. 'Them' and 'us' as a research attitude is inevitable, but it is the root of ethnocentrism. This is equally evident in the attitude of those who superficially condemn ethnocentric arrogance. My reaction on that score is that maybe the time is ripe for retroactive ethnocentrism up to a level that would concentrate attention on the need for reciprocal human respect for one another's culture, intelligence and skin pigmentation (Nzewi 1977: 8).

The attitude of comparison and ethnocentrism made some of these foreign writers to be subjective, degrading African music as if it were inferior to Western music. One of such subjective approaches includes the claim that African music cannot be well represented by use of the conventional staff notation. Individuals and groups of researchers began therefore to invent new and unconventional notation systems for transcribing African music. This is discussed under another heading below.

2. 1. 3 Background of African writers

The foregoing discussion is not an assumption that an African or indigene might represent his musical culture better than any foreign scholarly researcher. Thus it is necessary to equally examine the background that could influence any African in misrepresenting the music of his culture. Training and followership is a factor that has contributed to the issue of wrongful adaptation of terminologies in African music scholarship. By this, we mean the place of study, and the authorities under whom studies were carried out. Reflecting on the issue of training and followership, Agawu (2003: xvi) observes the following:

And so would a specific incident like that which unfolded in the pages of the journal *African Music* during the mid-1970s. Music theorist and composer Lazarus Ekwueme guest-edited a special issue of the journal to which he himself contributed an analytical essay. The essay included, among other things, an exhaustive intervallic account, invocations of Schenke, and a strategic playing down of matters of context. Ekwueme's thumb-in-your-face declaration that we want to know "*what* the African does musically, instead, merely, of *why* [*italics in the original*] he does it" provoked two strong reactions, one from Meki Nzewi, the other from Sam Akpabot. Nzewi found the analysis incomplete, and the suppression of context unacceptable. Akpabot complained about the skimpy citations of previous theoretical work (his own included, of course) and, more devastatingly, of the author's intellectual orientation. According to him, Ekwueme was trying to "think white", he, Akpabot, would prefer a white trying to "think black" any day (Agawu 2003: xvi).

Beside the above model, some authorities hold the somewhat colonial view of subjective humility, meaning that one must learn to accept everything his superior says or writes and continue to uphold it as a mark of loyalty. Another is the fear of where and who to publish one's works, if one's views are found

contrary to those of constituent or recognized authorities, who are even likely to be the publishers' assessors. This is followed by the constraints of following the conventions of sponsors.

In an oral interaction between Kwabena Nketia and the visiting postgraduate music and dance students of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria in Ghana (1997), he reacted to a certain question as follows: 'Any shortcoming that may be observed in the book I authored, *Music of Africa*, would not be unexpected, because I had a commission in the US to write "for them" a publishable resource book on African music within six months. That book you see is an outcome of research and writing within the limited timeframe and one should expect inadequacies'. He who pays the piper dictates the tune, so we can see some of the reasons for the terminology adaptations. Another factor is the fear of prima facie assessment for promotion among scholars, some times believing that one is not an authority until he becomes a professor, otherwise professors who find his writings opposing [even in truth] would remark negatively about his promotion at some level.

2.2 Music as an art

In order to capture exactly what music means to the African, it is necessary to begin by taking a brief look at some existing definitions of music. Komla Amoaku (1985: 33, 35) examines various definitions of the term 'music' as follows:

"Music is organized sound." In fact, Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* (1973) defines music as "the science or art of ordering tones or sounds in succession, in combination, and in temporal relationships to produce a composition having unity and continuity." In contrast, Willi Apel (1969: 548) in defining music proposes that we accept Boethius' concept, describing it as "an all-embracing

'harmony of the world,' divided into *musica mundane* (harmony of the universe), *musica humana* (harmony of the human soul and body), and *musica instrumentalis* (music as actual sound)..." This perspective blends with Sowande's view that there are actually three tiers of music – (1) music of the cosmos or the gods, (2) the psychological and symbolical, and (3) mathematical or structural music... music among the Ewe is viewed as an expression of a psychological situation, which involves the visible as well as the invisible worlds. It envelops the society as a unit and music makers are not isolated individuals, but inseparable parts of that unitary whole.

The themes of Igoru music capture all spheres of community life including the total philosophical and belief systems of the Okpe. In several African cultures, there is hardly a single word found as equivalent to the word music, though the phenomenon and practice exist. Igoru musicians, like many others in Okpe do not have a word that is equivalent to the term music. But before we consider how the Igoru musicians discuss their musical practices or activities, we shall first examine how some other African peoples refer to it in their own cultures. Kubik (1994: 330) remarks that:

As is the case in most Bantu languages, there are no terms in those of eastern Angola whose semantic fields could be considered congruent with that of the Latin word *musica* and its derivatives in European languages, nor are there any words exactly equivalent to "dance" or "game". It is not easy to find a general term for "musical instruments" either, although native speakers sometimes construct one to satisfy translation needs or insistent questions by foreigners. The sound-producing utensils are normally called only by their specific designations (Kubik 1994: 330).

Agawu (2003: 62) quotes Charles Keil that the Tiv have no equivalent word for music. Laz Ekwueme (2004: 66) examines the terms that refer to "kinetic and audio-visual arts" (music, dance and drama), which are integrated

interdependently as conceptualized in the Igbo tradition and finds no equivalent to the word music as is defined in the Western tradition, but states the Igbo terms that express the arts as follows:

Ona-agu egwu	He is singing;
Ona-aku egwu (no italics in original)	He is playing music/musical instruments;
Ona-agba egwu	He is dancing;
Ona-egwu egwu	He is playing/joking;
Ona-ezi egwu	He is teaching (showing) a play/music/ a dance/dancing (Ekwueme 2004: 66).

Simha Arom (1991: 7) while quoting Senghor (1958 and 1964: 238) asserts that:

Art itself is simply one of many artisanal techniques, the one that is most effective for identifying with one's ancestor or for integrating with the vital force of God. For the latter is the source of *life* itself, which in Black Africa is the supreme good. Which is why the word *art* does not exist in the Negro-African languages – I do not mean the notion of art nor the word beauty. Because it is an *integral technique*, art is not divided against itself. More precisely, the arts in Black Africa are linked to each other, poetry to music, music to dance, dance to sculpture, and sculpture to painting.

The Okpe use the following terms to classify music and its associated art activities:

- *Ijoro* (song): e.g. *Ijoro ẹsuọ* (singing of songs); *Ijoro eroro* (composing songs); *Ame erie Ijoro ẹsuọ*, or *Ame aya suọ Ijoro* (We are going to sing or perform songs).
- *Ekporo* (playing or beating); e.g. *Igede ekporo* (playing of drums); *Eho ekporo* (Performing a spirit-manifest dance-music); *Ame eye kporo* (we are going to play or perform) or *Ame ivbo ukporo* (we have a performance)
- *Igbegbe* (Dance): e.g. *Ame ivbo igbegbe* (we have a dance); *Ame na ha Igbegbe phia* (we shall present a dance performance to the public); *Ame egbe Igbegbe* (We are dancing).
- *Iruẹn* (game, play, or musical event): This is the most general term the Okpẹ use in describing the holistic theatre e.g. *Ame na ha iruẹn phia* (We will present a performance); *Ame eru iruẹn* (We are performing) or *Ame ha vbọ iruẹn* (we are in a performance).

The foregoing reveals that Africans' concept of the term music, as in Igoru, is broader than the Western definition of it. While the West separate dance and drama from music and treat or perform them as separate arts, with the exception of Opera, Africa views and practices them as an integrated art where each is often considered incomplete without the others. Apart from the general classification models above, Igoru musicians (and the Okpe in general) further classify the various performances into two forms. The first category is called *Ijoro* (song), while the second is *Igbegbe* (dance). The former refers to the typologies of performance where music is the most focal feature, while dance and other associated arts are complementary to it. The latter refers to typologies, which emphasize focus on the dance and drama elements over all other associated arts.

In the context of the above, Igoru musicians often refer to the various typologies, for example, as *Ijoro Igoru* (Igoru music); *Ijoro Ighoḡpha* (Ighoḡpha music); *Igbegbe Ijurhi* (Ijurhi dance), etc. These classifications, notwithstanding, there is no performance of any music typology without the integration of the other arts. Likewise, the dance performances put music and dance, as well as some other arts almost at equal complementary levels. In the discussion of Igoru music, it should be borne in mind that the terms music and dance are used interchangeably to describe a holistic performance of both the music and dance, as is known in the Okpe tradition. Some Igoru musicians say they perform Igoru dance and others say they sing Igoru songs. Either of the above cases refers to the same manner of Igoru performance simply because they do not divorce the two aspects from one another. Although the accompanying dance of Igoru music is very mild, majestic and honourable, and though singing of narratives is given more prominence, several themes of the songs refer to the holistic performance as a dance.

This is evident in the performances of Igoru musicians like Idisi Adibo's satire directed to a certain man of Okwabude stating that Igoru dance, requires one to put on a shirt, but *Ohworho* dance requires one to put on only a singlet or no top, except the wrapper tied over the waist. The cue solo found in most Igoru songs, is another example which often refers, in the following text, to Igoru performance as simply a dance, though performance proper focuses more on the music aspect of the artistic communication:

Ame emuegbe Igoru ame r' ame ine gbe,
We are preparing to dance our Igoru,
otu igberadja n' aye a dje ame eghren
And the sex workers began to keep enmity with us.

2. 2. 1 Concept of composition

Willi Apel (1970: 189) *Harvard Dictionary of Music* writes that Guido Adla first used the term *componere* in c. 1030 in connection with the writing of melodies. He [Apel] then defines composition as “The process of creating musical work” by literally “putting together” various voice parts as it were in early polyphonic music, and in later complex consideration, includes putting together numerous and diversified elements just as much as voice parts. He further writes that “the term is highly appropriate for the twelve-tone technique and even more recent methods of creating music by putting together assorted sounds on a recording tape [*electronic music, *serial music]”. The definition, according to Apel, is no doubt the concept of composition in the Western world.

Percy Scholes (1991) writes that composition, etymologically and practically, is merely the ‘putting-together’ of materials such as words to make a poem, an essay, or a novel, and notes to make a waltz or a symphony [music]. He adds that “For all but most recent and relatively tiny fraction of the world’s history, musical composition has been entirely melodic and probably has been far more instinctive than reasoned”. Mitchel Strumpf, William Anku, Kondwani Phwandaphwanda and Ncebakazi Mnukwana (2003: 120) argue that;

It has been suggested that the culture is the composer, because the culture establishes the palette of agreeable sound elements to be put together and called music. A better term for the individual who selects items from the palette and uses these items in variation to create a composition might be ‘the arranger’. In Africa the individual who creates a new ‘style’ using the elements on the palette creatively is remembered and revered more. Creators of new musical compositions must in any case be well versed in the musical traditions of the culture.

The authors assert that in Zimbabwe, people think of a musician as 'a mediator, a dreamer' and some of the composers think of themselves as 'spiritual medium' and a man of old age, who receives creative tunes from ancestors through dreams. They finally define the concept of composition in Africa as a dynamic, changing sound creation; interplay between one or more individuals and the other people of the culture, using the agreements of sound usage established by the culture in primarily an oral, non-written creation based on the musical traditions of the culture. Kofi Agawu (2003: 4-5) writes that the concept of composition in Northern Ewe of Ghana is described as *hakpakpa*, the carving of songs while the composer is described as *hakpala*, a carver of songs. He discusses the individual and collaborative roles of individuals in the creative process, as well as the spiritual essence of these. He makes clear that:

The act of composition is therefore not aimed at some disembodied space 'out there'. Composition is more than the abstract manipulation of musical materials, more than the creation of beautiful melodies, harmonies, timbres, rhythms or messages. A composer means to say something edifying; he aims to deliver a spiritually relevant message. Composing with actual or imagined others, as if the composer were a plural rather than a singular subject.

Composition in Igoru music is seen as the process of putting together all musical elements such as text, melody and harmony in mentally oral form as is the tradition. The compositions are conceived first in text and thereafter melody at the individual level. This is similar to the idea of composition in the Shona culture of Zimbabwe where the composer thinks of the lyrics first and after, adds the melody (Mitchel Strumpf, William Anku, Kondwani Phwandaphwanda and Ncebakazi Mnukwana 2003: 120).

Igoru composition involves collaboration and collective contributions, and the harmony often derives from this experience, either at the compositional level or at rehearsal. What this means is that the composer would conceive both the text and melody mentally and orally, and at rehearsal he or any skilled part singer in the group creates the harmony that would go together with it. At this stage, the composer sings the song and another experienced performer-composer with good knowledge of the traditional harmony creates the second part simultaneously. Sometimes, the composer himself would teach members the melody and he creates the harmony part to the song simultaneously as they begin to sing together. When this is the case, he then has to teach both the melody and the harmony parts to the ensemble members at rehearsals. Satirical as Igoru is, Peter Etalo, a performer remarks that:

At the beginning, Igoru musicians assumed the special roles of edification, communicating the ethos concerning socio-moral behaviour to members of the society and thereby correct misdemeanor. Everyone accepted it as a way of life then, and it was like fun correcting one another in such an entertaining art. Even members who were identified for ill practices sang Igoru songs to deride and correct one another in functional manners and everyone smiled over it. But changing tides and changing values brought new dimensions to it.

The Igoru composer is known and well revered, particularly if he is remembered after the very songs he composed. We can also say that the Okpe see all musical compositions of Igoru and other typologies as products of the culture, owned collectively by the entire people. The creative works of an Igoru composer are simply acknowledged as invaluable contributions to the repertory of the culture. The composer may be applauded for his creative prowess, but the achievement is considered, both in his credit as well as of the culture and none is

placed above the other. Having acknowledged the composer, the entire community takes credit for the creation. Thus, Igoru musicians and members of the society would refer to all the repertoires as *Ijoro Igoru Okpe* (Igoru songs of Okpe) and any performer–composer could perform them creatively anywhere.

2. 2. 2 Syllabic and melismatic

Willi Apel (1970: 516) defines the term “melisma” as an expressive vocal passage sung to a syllable found mostly in Gregorian chants as opposed to “coloratura”, a virtuoso-like and frequently stereotyped style. Desmond Desai (1993: 17), in the discussion of the performance of South African Islamic music, *Ratiep* did not quite define the term, but observes the practice of melismatic singing in the vocal form. Simha Arom (1991: 28) remarks that:

The basic production of Central African vocal songs is like the natural production of sound: a full open voice without vibrato, with no attempt at refinement. The songs being syllabic, the singing voice has only to produce one note to each syllable, or sometimes, due to the nature of the language, two or three but never more. Song therefore is not melismatic, and the Central Africans do not cultivate the art of vocalization.

Igoru music is highly syllabic, in that each syllable is often assigned to a tone, with little use of slur expressions involving only two or three pitches to colour sustained tones or movements in the melody. The use of these slur expressions are primarily applied to link syllables, either at the beginning or at the end of phrases. So far, the syllabic feature of Igoru music is not attributed to the tonal nature of the Okpe language. Igoru musicians consider the language flexible and therefore treat the text as such in the melodic craftsmanship. The basic philosophy behind the syllabic treatment is to allow constant flow of

communication, since narratives require much use of words. This is discussed in more detail in chapter seven.

2. 2. 3 Influence of tone language

Simha Arom (1991: 11) suggests that music and language are very closely interconnected and that the phonemic structure of language has powerful constraining effect on the melodic structure of the songs. He writes that almost all the Central African vernacular languages are tonal and that in a tonal language, each vowel can be inflected with the same syllable carrying different meanings when uttered at different vocal pitches or registers. He quotes Thomas (1970: 8) that “The Ngbaka language, for instance, has three *level* tones (low, medium, high), to which are added four *gliding* tones (low-high, high-low, low-high-low, high-low-high)”.

He cites the language of Monzombo among others that resort to four level tones with more gliding tones that further impose more melodic combinations on her music (Simha Arom 1991: 22). Quoting Kirby (1930: 406), he states that the Bantu speech-tone does not only influence its melodies, but also directs the course of its polyphonic thought. Quite explicitly, he quotes Senghor (1958 and 1964) that word and music being intimately linked consubstantially, the tonal languages are themselves pregnant with meaning and each syllable has its own pitch, intensity and duration to which may be assigned a musical notation (pitch and note). He argues that:

It follows, if the words of a song are to keep their meaning and remain intelligible, that its melody must necessarily remain subservient to them and reproduce their tonal schema. Every change in the words of a given melody, if their tonal schema ever varies, inevitably entails a modification in the melodic line. There is every reason to

suppose that the essentially syllabic treatment of sung texts is attributable to these same linguistic constraints (Arom 1991:12-13).

Igoru musicians believe much in the interrelatedness of words that precede and follow each other to communicate thoughts and expressions. Although the language is tonal with some identifiable tone levels, low, medium, high and glides, words are set to melodies with a lot of flexibility. Igoru compositions and performances show that even the gliding tonal syllables in the language that naturally would have required slur expressions are treated normally like every other syllable. In speech the second syllable in the word *O-ro-dje* in song 70, page A1 – 126, has a glide, but this is ignored in the composition as the syllable is assigned to only one melodic tone without the use of slur or melisma. In the same song, the three-syllable word *mi-ne-gbe* would in speech sound high, low, high and one could have thought that the melody would go the same way, but the composer puts them on a monotone.

The signature tune formula of Igoru, labeled song 10, however, shows that syllables that glide in speech may also be melodically treated as such by use of two-tone slur expression. The word *ada* (outside) in the song, when spoken in the affirmative does not require a glide, but in the restrictive form would require a glide to duplicate the last vowel. For example, *Evbe le ɔmɔ ada-a* [you don't stop a child from going out] is restrictive and requires a glide to duplicate the last vowel as it is; but *Ada ɔyɔ ro le ɔmɔ* (it is the outside fearsomeness that stops a child from going out) is affirmative and does not require any glide. In this song, the restrictive case is given a slur expression thereby duplicating the last vowel accordingly to correspond with the glide. More attention is given to this in chapter seven.

2. 2. 4 Concept of performance:

Andrew V. Jones (2001:346) argues the concept of musical performance as virtually a universal human activity whose fundamental form is a private biological necessity of mothers singing to their babies and its most elevated form is a public property that plays pivotal functions in all human societies. He puts these views as follows:

Music-making is a virtually universal human activity. At its most fundamental, it is a form of private biological necessity (in that, for example, individual survival is assisted by being sung to as a baby by a birth mother). At its most elevated, musical performance is public property; it played a pivotal role in some of the earliest traces of elaborate Western Art, with the story of Orpheus, a pre-Homeric hero (thus now of at least some 3000 years' standing), possessing the legendary ability to tame wild animals and resist the sirens by singing and by playing the lyre. Across the ages and throughout world civilizations it is the actual, direct live experience of music that seems to have been integral to the human culture carried forward from its apparent European origins some 40,000 years ago to the modern world (Andrew Jones 2001: 346).

Jones' argument that musical performance is a live experience, integral to the human culture is true, but that it is an art with European origins is contestable in the context of Igoru music. This is because there was no contact between the Okpe and European cultures until the Portuguese exploration of the West African region in the fifteenth century (Agawu 2003 1), yet the concept of Igoru performance, according to renowned practitioners like Idisi Adibo, Amukeye Okodide, Peter Etalo and John Igvide is not traceable to any specific period in history. No one Igoru musician of the contemporary society can precisely state the time that Igoru musical performances began. Just as the Okpe elders who

are the repositories of the history of the land simply express that (*Okpẹ oma jiri ne*) Okpẹ was founded very long ago, so do Igoru musicians put the historical beginning of its performances. They all suggest that the concept and its performance practices probably came with Okpẹ, the founder of Okpẹ himself. Igoru performances are historical in a way as they focus on some historical issues such as the events that unfold in the society over time. Some Igoru performances have, thus served as documentary to these events. Several examples abound, which are given detailed discussion subsequently in chapter six.

Nollene Davies (1993: 12) in the discussion of *Maskaranda* writes about the performance integration of music and dance as follows:

The associated dance beat is an important and integral part of the music and must be present for a successful performance. This also applies in a solo performance where the beat is implied. It is not uncommon for a member of the audience to respond to a good performance by “realising” this beat, that is, dancing to the music. Perhaps the disappearance or waning popularity of some of the older *maskaranda* styles is due to the fact that these were not associated with a popular dance form.

Idolor (2002: 3) attempts to define the concept of musical performance as ‘the act of playing a musical instrument, singing, dancing, acting in a music drama or conducting/directing a group of performers’. Differentiating between Western and African perspectives, he writes that it ‘is the art of decoding, enacting, and interpreting the composer’s intentions’ from a music score and ‘a skill in presenting pre-rehearsed imaginations or aspirations to a listening audience without a written score’ respectively. In both cases, he identified the primary uses

of audio-visual instruments, which include the human voice, gestures, and appropriate scenic paraphernalia in the presentation.

The concept of Igoru performance, with regard to the number of performers, is often a group work of between seven principal members and about six supporting members enlarged by members of the audience to a limitless number. The performance does not require a conductor who stands before the group to beat time pulse. Cooperation required by team work manifests itself amongst performers who watch and listen to one another attentively to ensure perfect blend. Igoru music, more often than not, requires accompaniment by the *ukiri* drums and handclapping. The purpose of lyrical clarity might require performers to enact long vocal narratives with full chorus participation, first without accompaniment, before it comes to involve instrumental accompaniment in the second cycle. This is evident in *Egboto Isiniq* ensemble record. Unlike the Western concept where an individual's vocal singing accompanied by a pianist is regarded as a solo performance, in Igoru performance, though the lead composer-performer may be acknowledged for his excellence, the entire product of the performance, the singing and the accompaniment, is credited to all the performers of the group.

2. 2 5 Concept of timbre, pitch, and dynamic (volume):

Willi Apel (1970: 678, 852) writes that the term timbre is a French medieval name for 'tambourin', but also means tone colour. He defines the concept of pitch as a definite sound experienced by psychological sensation, assessed by the frequency of its vibration indicating whether it is high or low. He explains that:

The exact determination of pitch is by frequency (number of vibrations per second) of the sound...Pitch as a psychological sensation also depends to a small degree on

other factors (e.g., intensity), which are, however, negligible from the musical point of view...The absolute pitch of one specific note, standardized for the purpose of obtaining identical pitches on all instruments. The present – day standard of pitch is a' = 440 (double) vibrations (cycles) per second. This standard was universally adopted in 1939 by an international conference held in London under the auspices of the International Standards Association. It replaced the old standard of 435 that had been fixed by the Paris Academy in 1859 (*diapason normal*) and confirmed, under the term "international pitch", at a conference held in Vienna in 1885.

In Igoru musical performance, one finds no term equivalent to the word pitch. Discussions by the performers however show concepts related to the notion. In the discourse of the vocal sections, for instance, we could hear terms or expressions such as *uphele na ori erun phan* (the voice is too high), *ori erun te-e* (it is not high enough) or *ori otore phan* (it is too low). The instruments of Igoru music though possess two or more tones in melo-rhythm, do not in construction and in discussion show any idea of definite pitches. This is so because the Igoru *ukiri* (the drums) are constructed and tuned in manners that would have them blend naturally with the human voices, and at the same time be able to generate tones that are capable of spurring up the spirit of the performers and audiences. Igoru musicians at rehearsals and performances relate also to the notion of dynamics, loudness and softness as to pitch. For example, they would say *ha uphele ri otore so ijoro na*, bring your voice low and sing the song softly; *so ijoro ni unu*, sing the song out of your mouth (loudly), or simply *suę gbahon*, sing it loudly.

Simha Arom (1991: 28), while discussing issues relating to timbre, writes as follows:

However, in an attempt to differentiate vocal timbres, this 'natural' production is used in as many ways as possible. Thus, the men often have recourse to a 'falsetto'. Not infrequently, one hears a song sung entirely in a falsetto voice. One should also mention the ululations of the women, particularly in moments of joy. Besides these devices of production, the Central Africans, like people in many other countries, add special effects to their voices. So, for example, they produce a 'tremolo' by hitting the throat with the hand. Or on specific ritual occasions it happens that the singers disguise their voices: by pinching the nose, or hitting the throat, they evoke 'their ancestors' voices'.

Roger Kamien (2004: 6-7) simply defines the term dynamics as the degrees of loudness or softness in music, and pitch as the relative highness or lowness of sound determined by the frequency of its vibration and is measured in circles per second. Kebede (1982: 14) writes that the performance of *mwashshahat* music in Egypt avoids the use of narration, mood portrayal, musical painting, as well as dynamic variations. The term timbre also does not have its equivalent in Igoru music. Expressions that relate closely to the concept exist in certain appreciative or appraisal forms, more or less on voice sonority. In this regard, there are such expressions as the following:

- *Uphele na ophiṅ re*
The voice is clear and bristles
- *Uphele na oḱpovi*
The voice is straight and soothing
- *Uphele oḱmemerhe*
A sweet voice
- *Uphele na omerhe ijoro*
The voice is sweet-singing
- *Uphele oḱkokamo*

- A small and shrill voice
- *Uphele eghrēghrēn*
Voice modeling (a technique)
- *Qghrēghrēn uphele*
She is modeling her voice
- *Uphele oduado*
A big and deep voice
- *Ovbo uphele*
He/she has a sonorous voice
- *Ovbo uphele-e*
He/she does not have a sonorous voice

Falsetto singing is not a common feature in Okpe musical culture, except in Okpe Disco typology. Few male singers in Igoru performance are however capable of making smooth movement from high register to a lower one or a sudden leap from low to a higher range of pitches. Ululation exists in Okpe musical tradition as vocal formulas of encouragement and appreciation discussed in chapter five. Voice disguise of any kind, such as discussed by Simha Arom above, is not a practice in any music typology of the Okpe. The musicians prefer to perform as naturally as possible, using other dynamic techniques that can enhance good vocal behaviour.

2. 2. 6 Notation and transcription of African music

Ashenafi Kebede (1982:10, 26 & 27) writes that Egypt was one of the earliest societies to establish a system of writing around 3000 B. C. and one of the first to experiment a system of musical notation. The Egyptian notation used symbols, signs and letters and is no longer in use. Other notational systems include the Ethiopian notation invented by Yared in the reign of King Gebre Meskel that was

more developed than the Egyptian and used pneumatic signs such as curves, dots, dashes, and letters. Others are the Time Unit Box System (TUBS) developed by Philip Harland in 1962, the Cipher notation developed by Gerhard Kubik, tabulature notation advocated by Moses Serwadda and Hewitt Pantaleoni, circular representation made famous by David Rycroft, etc. Invention and reinvention are parts of life; therefore, it is not absurd to find new inventions of notational systems such as those listed above.

Discussing notation as a means of musical preservation, Bruno Nettl (1985: 16), in the article *The Concept of Preservation in Ethnomusicology*, argues as follows:

It seems to me that for the mere preservation of non-Western cultures, notations are now unnecessary. We have recordings; we have videotapes. We can preserve rather easily without the use of the printed page. Notation has, therefore, been liberated, as it were, to be a tool for research methods of a more sophisticated sort. Notations made by melographs are incredibly complicated and I think it is noteworthy that they have elicited only a relatively small number of studies. There has been no wholesale adoption of melographic notations in ethnomusicological literature. But it seems to me that those times when melographic materials have been used with success to solve specific problems, these were problems which the scholar could not solve readily by simply listening to the music. It seems, then, that melographic devices are essential helping hands in certain instances, but they are not central to the area of preservation by notation.

Some other researchers have also argued that the conventional Western notation system is inadequate for transcribing African music. Arom (1991: 169-170) reinvents the argument of Saussure (1916, 1971: 51-2) that “writing veils language; it disguises rather than clothes it”. He also quotes Senghor (1958, 1964: 238-9) that “Black Africa has had good fortune to ignore writing, even when

it was not aware of its existence”, because it impoverishes, crystallizes and freezes reality, which when properly alive is fluid and shapeless. He further presents the argument of Chailley (1967: 118) that writing, be it language or music, is responsible for “*immobilising reality in a univocal way* [italicized in original]” and that notation, until recent time, was only intended to transmit a fleshless indispensable skeleton of ‘note music’, which recipients ought to bring alive again according to their own sensitivity and intelligence. He summarizes the limits of staff notation thus:

As we have seen, the opposite procedure is followed in ethnomusicology: the investigator starts with a living musical reality produced by traditional performers. Through his notation, he tries to reveal the structural principles on which this reality is based. In this field, even Estreicher (1957: 91), himself a stickler for accuracy in musical transcription, recognises limits to written notation: ‘It should never be forgotten that a score is nothing but a projected shadow of the music itself, a flat and colourless silhouette of a living being’... All these observations lead to the same conclusion: in oral expression is life, of which writing is only a pale reflection... This has given rise to the question of whether the transcription should contain every possible elements. In other words, should it be a kind of photograph reflecting the acoustic reality as accurately as possible, or should it be like a sketch containing only the relevant features? We, of course, favour the latter alternative (Arom 1991: 170).

Agawu (2003: 66) however argues differently that “Notations are read by communities of readers, so in order to consolidate African practices that can eventually gain some institutional power, it makes sense to use the existing notation, however imperfect... Is there not, in any case, something suspicious about Westerners telling Africans to use new notations for their music? Beware when the Greeks bring you gifts (Agawu 2003: 66)”. No Igoru song has, so far,

been notated or transcribed before the time of this research. Since staff notation would enable readers follow our interpretations and analytical discourse more critically and since only listening would not be exclusively sufficient for this theoretical study we have adopted the use of the conventional staff notation for our transcriptions.

2.3 Concept of rhythm

The concept of rhythm has been a focal point of interest to explorers, researchers and scholars writing on African music. It has thus received a lot of analytical discussion of a very wide range that in turn has evolved numerous descriptive and analytical terms, some of which have also stirred queries and contention. Willi Apel (1970: 729) defines rhythm as “the whole feeling of movement in music, with a strong implication of both regularity and differentiation”. He explains that breathing (inhalation vs. exhalation), pulse (systole vs. diastole), and tides (ebbs vs. flow) are all examples of rhythm. He however distinguishes between rhythm and motion that the former means movements in time while the latter means movement in space (as in pitch). In common enthusiastic expressions on this concept, we find the following ideas in Chernoff's (1979: 40) writing. He quotes Senghor :

...that rhythm is the basis of all African art, and regarding, music, (Jones writes), “rhythm is to the African what harmony is to the Europeans, and it is in the complex interweaving of contrasting rhythmic patterns that he finds his greatest aesthetic satisfaction”

If the rhythmic systems used by different African peoples are not the same (though they are often surprisingly similar), they at least have in common the fact that they are complex, and the greater complexity of West African rhythmic systems supplies us with a more thorough and intelligible analytical tool.

Agawu (2003: 57) examines the notion of rhythm viz a viz the emphasis so far laid on it in the discussion of African music. He observes A. M. Jones' (1994) remarks that "if anyone were to ask, 'What is the outstanding characteristic of African music?' The answer is, 'A highly developed rhythm...the African is far more skilled at drumming rhythms than we are – in fact our banal pom, pom, pom, on the drums is mere child's play compared with the complicated and delicate interplay of rhythms in African drumming". He further quotes Leopold Senghor that "in a set of guidelines for adjudicating music festivals in Africa, judges were told that "complexity of rhythm is often a fair guide to the authenticity of an African song" and argues conclusively as follows:

Allied to the retreat from comparison is a retreat from critical evaluation of African musical practice...these are acts of mystification designed to ensure that the discourse about African music continues to lack the one thing that would give it scientific and hence universal status, namely, a *critical* element...African rhythm, in short, is an invention, a construction, a fiction, a myth, ultimately a lie.

It seems remarkable that it never occurred to A. M. Jones...to ask his "native" informant, Mr Desmond Tay, whether the Ewe have a word for rhythm or a concept of rhythm. Had he done so, Jones might have met with a blank stare or a puzzled look... There is no single word for rhythm in Ewe language...although the equivalent of a single word meaning "rhythm" is not to be found in Ewe, related concepts of stress, duration and periodicity do in fact register in subtle ways in Ewe discourse (Agawu 2003: 63).

Igoru musicians have no single word equivalent to the term rhythm, although the concept of movement in time exists in their discourse of Igoru performances. The most significant term that relates to the concept of rhythm is *udje agwe* meaning the symbolic movement of a dance or walking pace. In rehearsals, remarks such as *kporo udj-agwe na omana* (beat the step this way) or *omana udj-agwe ye ose*

(this is how the step sounds – on the drum) are heard. The expression is also applied in relationship to tempo, being either fast or slow. In vocal music, Igoru musicians refer to the concept of rhythm as *onya* meaning movement, which is certainly in time. There are remarks such as *omana uphele na onya* (this is the way the voice moves). Stanley Sadie and Alison Latham (1988: 17) state that “The most basic element in music is *rhythm*” (italics in original) and some musical systems, in fact, use rhythm alone. While painting and architecture depend on space, music depends on time”. Although the above observation may be true of Western music, it is not applicable to Igoru music, because its performers do not consider this element in isolation from melody, harmony and even dance.

Nketia (1979: 125) remarks that “Since African music is predisposed towards percussion and percussive texture, there is an understandable emphasis on rhythm, for rhythmic interest often compensates for the absence of melody or the lack of melodic sophistication. The music of an instrument with a range of only two or three tones may be effective or aesthetically satisfying to its performers and their audience if it has sufficient rhythmic interest”. It needs to be stressed here that African music, Igoru in particular, does not lack melodic interest and sophistication as Nketia puts it. In Igoru music, the drums are not played alone as purely instrumental music, and the texture of the drums is not conceived in rhythm sense only. Thus in verbalization of the drum patterns, unintelligible texts are set to it melodically. This observation, notwithstanding, the vocal melodies do have melodic interest as well as in rhythm. Compared to Western melodies that may progress in stepwise motion with a few skips and leaps that adhere to conventions, Igoru melodies make use of continuous leaps upwards or downwards and more about this is given attention in chapter seven.

2. 3 1 Additive and divisive rhythm

Nketia (1979: 128-131) writes that “*Divisive rhythms* are those that articulate the regular divisions of the time span, rhythms that follow the scheme of pulse structure in the grouping of notes. They may follow the duple, triple, or hemiola schemes”. He gave examples in simple duple time as 1+1; in triple time as 1+1+1 and in compound duple time as 3+3 or the hemiola scheme 2+2+2. He defines additive rhythms comparatively as follows:

While divisive rhythms follow the internal divisions of the time span, *additive rhythms* do not. The durational values of some notes may extend beyond the regular divisions within the time span. Instead of note groups or sections of the same length, different groups are combined within the time span. That is, instead of a phrase of twelve pulses being divided into 6+6, it may be divided onto 7+5 or 5+7...The use of additive rhythms in duple, triple, and hemiola patterns is the hallmark of rhythmic organization in African music, which finds its highest expression in percussion music.

Agawu (2003: 86) writes that additive rhythm “describes a pattern of organization in which nonidentical or irregular durational groups follow one another” and operates at two levels: within the bar and between bars or groups of bars. He illustrates that “a single 12/8 bar may be divided additively into 5+7 or 3+2+2+5 but *not* into 3+3+3+3. Thus, the so-called standard pattern or time line in Anlo-Ewe music...is sometimes counted (in eight notes) additively as 2+2+1+2+2+2+1, while *Gehu’s* time line... may be rendered with a sixteenth-note referent as 3+3+4+4+2. Similarly, at a larger level, an entire passage may display the metrical succession, 5/8+3/8+2/4+3/4. At both levels, the groups are irregular”.

In Igoru music, the idea of divisive rhythm involves regular division of beats such as we find in the vocal and instrumental sections. The pulse-mark instrument (*Qm̄* or Baby *Ukiri*) whose pattern is divided into 1+2+1+2+1+2+1+2 in twelve-eight (12/8) time presents an example of regular division of beats. Although this pattern suggests the pulse structure, it does not maintain the compound unit of beats such as 3+3+3+3. Other forms of division exist in regular patterns as discussed in chapter eight. One understands that the term additive literally suggests an addition to what already exists. In this study we did not find occasions where extra note values are added to normal units of beats or measures. Whether a dotted crotchet beat for instance is divided into three or four sub-units, all the sub-divisions last within the duration of the larger whole. Even glides occur and last within the beats where they appear.

2. 3. 2 Cross rhythm, inter-rhythm and staggered rhythm/entries

Chernoff (1979: 46) discusses the term cross rhythm as follows:

In Zhem, a lead dondon and any number of supporting dondons play two independent rhythms which are interlocked with great precision to make a tight and intriguing combination. Again, one could not try to play either rhythm by counting the music in a single meter: the rhythms do not meet at any point, and the lead dondon gives a feeling of $\frac{3}{4}$ time, while the supporting dondon plays to a count of four. In such music, the conflicting rhythmic patterns and accents are called cross-rhythm ... In something like Adzogbo or Zhem it is not easy to find any constant beat at all.

Chernoff (1979: 47) elaborates the concept of cross rhythm by adopting the term “staggered entries” to describe the independent rhythmic patterns of different instruments resulting from layers of entrance points; the concept earlier described by Robert Thompson as “apart – playing” meaning separation of parts.

Agawu (2003: 58) quotes A. M. Jones' remarks on the concept of cross rhythm as follows: "To call these "complex" is an understatement; the very thought of them makes one dizzy! Imagine two drummers playing together in cross rhythm, 3 against 2. Now stagger them so that they are out of phase. Now add two other drummers, and a singer, and clap accompaniment, all rhythmically at cross purposes and out of phase with one another".

Nzewi (1997: 36, 40) however argues that, in communal African team relationships, there exist no cross purposes, but inter-dependence for the collective achievement of success. He thus sees the relationship between two or more players who utilize triple motive against other motives as playing inter-rhythm and not cross rhythm. He stresses as follows that:

From point of view of enabling a student of African music to develop the right mental perception of the social-creative philosophy and structural principles implicit in African musical thoughts we have argued that the term "cross rhythm" is mis-informing and, therefore, inappropriate. African reasoning accrues in depth of argument (action oriented), rather than breath of argument ([maneuvering] or evasive). Rationalization of creativity thus accrues complexity and depth even in isolated, simple-appearing themes or motives (Example 2). What has been termed cross rhythm, hitherto, is an example of the unilineal relationships in African ensemble music structures. We have argued and illustrated elsewhere (1993b) that the theory of cross rhythm is strange to African creative philosophy.

It is noteworthy that Igoru musicians do not consider the relationship of drum patterns and singing as meeting at cross purposes. It is in fact absurd to think so, because Igoru musicians, drummers and singers, relate cooperatively in agreement of thoughts and patterns of melo-rhythm, melody and harmony. They

all aim at the same goal of communication and cross purposes would only lead to failure rather than success. To describe the various entries as “staggered” is indeed erroneous, since the notion of “staggeredness” often suggests unstable movements. The movements in Igoru music, both in time and space, are well organized, orderly and stable; otherwise it would be very difficult for the ensemble to coordinate itself in sounds and dance responses. There is what we may call equidistant entry, where each instrument and voice may come in at strategic entry points within the ensemble thematic cycle. This must be understood as systematic entries and not staggered, since staggering often connotes imbalance and confused movements.

2. 3. 3 Time line, bell rhythm, topoi, and phrasing-referent

Akpabot (1975; 1986; 1998) says the bell is always dominant with specific patterns and roles in almost all ensembles in Africa. Thus, its rhythmic pattern(s), although not always played in all ensembles, is often referred to as the bell pattern or bell rhythm. In every ensemble where it is present, it plays a rhythmic phrase or sentence which normally begins the instrumental section of any ensemble as a base established and upheld regularly, which other instruments and musicians of the ensemble refer to for all their entries (Okafor, 1998). Nketia (1979: 131-132) argues that

Because of the difficulty of keeping subjective metronomic time in this manner, African traditions facilitate this process by externalizing the basic pulse. As already noted, this may be shown through hand clapping or through the beats of a simple idiophone. The guideline which is related to the time span in this manner has come to be describe as a *time line*...Because the time line is sounded as part of the

music, it is regarded as an accompaniment rhythm and a means by which rhythmic motion is sustained. Hence, instead of a time line that represents simple regular beats reflecting the basic pulse, a more complex form may be used.

Nzewi (1997: 35) argues that the rhythmic figure so termed “time line” or “bell pattern” is often not played by the bell in some African ensembles, and sometimes, the bell assumes the role of a master instrument. Examining the concept of time in African ensemble performance, he states the notion of melorhythm and megarhythm in contrast to the Western conceived idea of percussion. He therefore refers to this important ensemble component as “phrasing referent” in the African ensemble composition thought. This coinage, though different, however agrees with Okafor’s observation that other instruments of the ensemble refer to it for all their entries. Nzewi (1998: 458, 460) again argues that ‘The Phrasing Referent role-theme is a unique theme played as non-variational and is reiterated for the duration of a piece or a significant section of it. Other performers playing different thematic layers of the significant ensemble sound (the Ensemble thematic gestalt) have varied degrees of freedom to develop their respective themes in and as per context’.

Andrew Tracey and Joshua Uzoigwe (2003: 79) quote Peter Seeger (1961) describing this concept, as the most important part in a steel band, using the term ‘perfect rhythm’. They however refer to it as ‘ensemble beat’ or ‘time-keeper’ in the African ensemble situation as follows:

Peter Seeger (1961), writing about steelband, says that ‘certainly the most important quality of a good steel band [is] PERFECT RHYTHM’ [capital in the original]... nothing less than perfect. To say that African musicians are rhythmically acute is no overstatement. There is only one

way to play, sing and move, and that is with total consciousness of ensemble beat. The structure and meaning of the music demand it. Learners therefore have to master the art of playing the simpler, time-keeper (and junior) parts or instruments before they are free to go on to other parts. Not only learners play these parts – simple parts involving clapping can be played by anybody who is not a music specialist, everyone to his own level of talent, as Berliner (1975/6) describes for instance in Shona *bira* ceremonies. But talent or no talent, no one may play without ensemble accuracy.

Agawu (2003: 73) prefers the term *topoi* [or *topos* in plural] to time line, bell pattern or phrasing referent in describing this “short, distinct, and often memorable rhythmic figure of modest duration (about a metric length or a single cycle), usually played by the bell or high-pitched instrument in the ensemble, and serves as a point of temporal reference”, held as ostinato throughout a performance session.

The kind of rhythmic figure often described as bell pattern or time line is played by the baby (*omo*) *ukiri*, which is high pitched in Igoru music. Although it is the simplest and most memorable pattern in the ensemble organization, it however does not seem to serve as the phrase referent figure as much as the mother (*izu*) *ukiri* does. In general ensemble perception and common phenomenon, as expressed by the practitioners, the phrase referent instrument normally begins to establish the base on which other instruments coming in after would make reference for their accurate entries. In Igoru performance practice, it is the mother *ukiri*, which has the deepest pitches that starts first and establishes the base on which reference is drawn for further entry of the other two *ukiri*. The baby *ukiri*, though after her entry, does maintain the basic pulse in her own

rhythmic pattern, this is considered supportive to keep the metrical structure and tempo steadily.

2. 3. 4 Polyrhythm and syncopation

Apel (1970: 687) states that the term polyrhythm is restricted to rhythmic variety of special effect often referred to as “cross rhythm” and described as the use of striking contrasted rhythm in simultaneous different parts of a musical fabric, a significant feature in a contrapuntal or polyphonic music. Arom (1991: 39) quotes Riemann (1931: 103) that polyrhythm is defined as the superimposition of multiple rhythms [different rhythms] in different voice parts. He further states that:

Rhythmic counterpoint (or polyrhythm) is to unpitched instruments as melodic counterpoint (or polyphony) is to voices and pitched instruments. In Black Africa, this kind of counterpoint is essentially made up of so-called ‘cross-rhythm’, i.e., of different rhythmic patterns interweaving with each other. The principle of *cross-rhythm* [italics in original] (a term apparently introduced by Percival Kirby (1934: 54), involves the combination of two or more rhythmic figures in such a way that they cross rather than coincide with one another. There are nonetheless moments when the different figures correspond, but the overall ostinato pattern that is created emphasises their points of divergence or their oppositions rather than their points of connection (Arom 1991: 42).

One finds from the above explanation that the term polyrhythm is used almost in the same context as cross rhythm. They both refer to the notion of multiple rhythmic figures or patterns that play together simultaneously, probably beginning and ending at various points. The only sharp difference is that cross rhythm is often defined as the interplay of multiple rhythmic patterns that are at cross purposes, or rather unorganized, while polyrhythm is seen as such interplay of layers that interweave within the fabric.

Since in Igoru music, melo-rhythmic and polyphonic interplay between instrumentalists and singers are not conceived in vertical order as in Western hymns, but rather conceived horizontally, there is this idea of cooperating motives. But it should be understood that the practice is not in any way a confused multiple movement of parts. We can hear either the lead singer or one of the drummers at one time or the other during rehearsals and performances say *amoriḗn* hold it (together), *amoriḗn gbahon*, hold it firmly, or *dadḗḗye more*, let each person hold his own part. These expressions all suggest that the performers are aware they are playing and singing together, using different melo-rhythmic, melodic and harmonic figures simultaneously that each performer needs to maintain his or her part inter-dependently to keep the ensemble together.

Don Randel (1986: 1002) writes that the term syncopation refers to the displacement of either the beat or the normal accent of a piece of music. He asserts that regular accent has been a regular feature of most music since about 1600, with recurring beats that group themselves irresistibly into twos and threes and the first of each group making itself felt as such by a slight extra stress. He explains that "If, [within] the feeling of regularity being thus established in the mind of the listener, irregularity is momentarily introduced, that is syncopation". Syncopation is noted to be a prominent feature in Igoru music. It is employed and explored as both compositional and performance style and this is given more analytical attention in chapter seven.

2. 3. 5 Melo-rhythm, mega-rhythm, hot rhythm and hocket technique

Janet Topp (1993: 134) adopts, though did not define, the term “hot rhythm” in the discussion of *Taarab* music of Zanzibar, Swahili. By description, she refers to the manifestation of a faster rhythm in a performance progression as follows:

In the performance of *kidumbak*, popular “ideal” *taarab* songs are played straight through adhering as closely to the original as the different instrumentation will allow. Once the song is completed, the musicians alter the pace of the piece by changing to a “hotter” rhythm and tempo. Again these rhythms are usually from local *ngoma*. These faster sections are designed to get the audience to dance.

There is no expression as such that signify “hotness” of rhythm in the performance of Igoru music. The notion of gradually increased tempo does exist, however in the performances. The practice is described as *udj-agwe ophophere* [fast step], *-okpokpata* (very fast), or *-otwatwa* (intensified). Although, psychologically, the term “hot” practically suggests things that can burn or cause one to perspire profusely, which the process of dancing, whether fast or slow, is also capable of doing, Igoru musicians do not consider the practice this way. Since Igoru music is highly narrative and is designed for a slow dance, it does not often require fast tempo. Sometimes, a gradual change may be observed and at other times, the same tempo is maintained throughout a section or a full length of a composition-performance. The perception of tempo in Igoru performance follows more the dimension of intensity, which has great influence on the melo-rhythmic texture and tempo together. In this discourse, we prefer to adopt the term “rhythmic intensity” to “hot rhythm”.

Nzewi (1997: 32-33) argues that rhythm, in African music context, is not played in isolation as a musical presentation, but as an integral part of a poetic perception

of motion that altogether make what he refers to as megarhythm. He also argues that the concept of “percussion’ is not African, because Africans conceive the drums and bells as having tones.

He states these as follows:

In the African musical thought the element which is regarded as rhythm is an integral not an integer. It is an integral of a poetic perception of motion, not a statistical calculation. Thus there is a composite sensibility about the movement of music in time which has temporal span, tonal depth, emotional quality. It is perceived by the senses in visual, sonic and psychedelic dimensions...The depth qualification of African musical motion concerns its tonal implications. Hence the term melorhythm captures more, the essence of the African’s approach to “rhythm” thought and production. The isolatable ensemble component in African musical expression which appears to be purely a statistical equation is the Phrasing Referent (bell) pattern, and that, for special ensemble reasons. The pattern is not developed in performance, and has no independent existence as a personal or public music-event.

The terms cross rhythm and polyrhythm have caused so much confusion that one cannot find a very clear cut between them. Most significantly in this context, we have examined definitions that portray the two terms as practices in African music that are incongruous. The philosophical thought of Ikoru musicians concerning ensemble team work shows a perception of a kind of blossoming of simultaneously multiple melo-rhythmic parts that come together as a larger whole. This being the case, we shall in this context, adopt the term megarhythm instead of polyrhythm.

Arom (1991: 42) examines the concept and definition of hocket technique, in the light of earlier writings by Riemann (1931: 596), *Dict. Larousse* (1957: 1, 454) and Nketia (1962: 50 – 1) as follows: Hocket technique is a compositional device of the twelfth and thirteenth century polyphony in which each voice stops in turn and starts in rapid alternation. It is a technique that requires at least two voices, where the first voice may sing one or two notes and pause for the other voice to do the same alternately.

Although in Western art music of the Middle Ages, hocket seems to have been mainly a vocal technique, it is found in Africa, and particularly in the Central African Republic, essentially in instrumental music, where it is applied with extreme vigour. The device is in fact used there in music for groups of wind instruments where each instrument can produce only one sound, which is tuned to a specific pitch. The combination of the different instrumental parts necessarily produces a rhythmic counterpoint that is here the result of the purest hocketing. From their interweaving there results a polyrhythm with sounds of fixed pitch; i.e., a polyrhythm that is spread over the degrees of a perfectly defined scale...Each player must have a general awareness of the resultant, as well as the knack of coming in at the right moment (Arom 1991: 43)

The practice of alternate singing exists in Igoru performances, but not in a hocket style. The form of alternate singing that manifests between two singers in Igoru performance is discussed in chapter seven.

2. 3. 6 Inter-locking rhythm

Mantle Hood (1985: 23) writes that:

Only in the course of the past decade or so, however, have I really begun to appreciate the apparently unlimited number of ways and means by which different cultures may bring their music to a very high degree of cultivation

indeed. I mention, for example, the complexity of rhythm and tonal texture achieved in Ashanti, Ga, and Ijaw drumming ensembles; the sophistication of the singing bards (*jail*) of West Africa and the rhythmic intricacy of the *Kora* accompanying them; the extraordinary fluency of a master drum like the *iya ilu* of the Yoruba; the rhythmic inventiveness of the *didjeridu* of Australia and the remarkable cultivation of its sonic properties; the interlocking rhythms and tone color of the *amadinda* of Uganda or the Lobi xylophone of Ghana; the recognition and impeccable control of ten or more distinct voice qualities functioning in five different modes and two genres in traditional Hawaiian chant...

Mitchel Strumpf, William Anku, Kondwani Phwandaphwanda and Ncebakazi Mnukwana (2003: 131) describe the co-existing call and response vocal structure in three dimensions, adopting the following terms, adjacent, overlapping and interlocking. They describe the first as involving the response following immediately after the call section, as 'adjacent relationship' and the second situation where the call enters sooner than expected, over the ongoing response as overlapping. They describe the third, involving a continuous response with a counter solo passage over it, and acting as two separate songs concurrently, as interlocking.

The adjacent call and response relationship exists in Igoru performances, where the chorus waits for the soloist to finish his or her line before coming in. The overlapping kind of relationship occurs too, mainly between two soloists who prompt one another in the development of a narrative. The interlocking relationship seldom occurs between two soloists, where one weaves a florid melodic passage over the principal or leading part momentarily. We discuss these further in chapter seven.

2. 4 Concept of harmony

Percy Scholes (1991: 218) explains that while melody is the putting together of notes in succession, harmony, in the contrast, is the putting together of notes simultaneously and that the first notions of harmony date apparently only from the ninth century. James O'Brien (1994: 140) argues that in Asian cultures such as Chinese, harmony is almost incidental to musical development. He contends that "It occurs, but is not used to support a well-focused melody in the foreground. It occurs rather as a result of divergent pitches that *might* occur in two or more simultaneous but slightly different versions of the main melody (italic in original). This is known as *heterophony*, a texture that is largely Asian". He adds that heterophony is more lucid when there is a different timbre on each of the melodic lines with one sustained, another detached and the third elaborated through ornamentation, explaining further that: "When singing is accompanied by instruments, for example, they closely follow the voice, in both rhythm and melodic contour. This texture, foreign to Western thinking, is quite typical of most Asian music, particularly Chinese, Japanese, and Korean". Igoru musicians have the concept of harmony in the general organization of the music. They express concept of the harmonic part as *ogani* meaning a deep sonorous voice or part. This is discussed in chapter five.

2. 4. 1 Homophony, monophony and drone

Kebede (1982: 7) discusses the contrast between monophony and homophony, describing the former as a composition or performance with a single melody featuring, and the latter as one with a principal melody supported by other accompanying voices or instruments. He adds that the performance of *mwashshahat* composition in Egypt involves the use of monophonic texture. Arom (1991: 36, 37) quotes Riemann (1967: iii, 378) that homophony is

'progression through a series of chords in which all the voices move in a rhythmically identical way or nearly so'. Examining the characteristic features, he quotes Malm (1972: 248) that even if different voices of the multi-parts perform different tones, but have the idea of 'homorhythm' (the use of the same basic rhythm), the form is homophony.

Apel (1970: 390) defines homophony in contrast to polyphony as the music in which one voice leads melodically, while it is supported by an accompaniment in chordal or slightly more elaborate style. In other words, all parts contribute unequally to the musical fabric. There are some Igoru songs that are performed in a homophonic style, a practice where the chorus responds with the one and only melody, even singing it together with the lead singer as a note-by-note repeat of the solo line. The homophonic style is adopted in choruses that accompany narratives. In this form, we find principally two parts maintaining independent melodic parts, but identical rhythmic features simultaneously. These are discussed in chapter seven. Arom (1991: 36) argues that Fasquelle (1958: 1, 435) and Hornbostel (1909: 300) define drone as a continuous bass on a sustained and uninterrupted single note sung, or usually played by an instrument, which serves as a base for the principal melody; while according to the latter, Riemann (1967: iii, 118) adds that the practice is generally applied to the lower register of the instrument or voice in form of invariant notes. Drone is not a feature in Igoru performance practice.

2. 4. 2 Plurivocality, Polyphony, heterophony, reduplicative and pseudo- unison

According to Willi Apel (1970: 383), in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, the term heterophony was earlier used by Plato and first adopted by Carl Stumpf to

describe a type of improvisational polyphony involving the use of slightly or elaborately modified simultaneous versions of the same melody by two or more performers; adding few extra tones or ornaments to the singer's melody. Geoffrey Hindley (1971: 20, 23) notes that musicologists and ethnomusicologists do disagree with the application of the term 'polyphony' to music of oral tradition, but that some prefer the term heterophony while they use the former narrowly for only Western written music. He however used the term 'polyphony' to discuss the music of the Bushmen and Pygmies of South Africa, and the Bororos and Baoule of Ivory Coast.

In this context, he uses the term to denote the simultaneous execution of several parts in their musical performances. He writes that the Baoule "music shows a predilection for a kind of 'diaphony' in parallel thirds", adding that the style is used for long melodies of unequal phrases punctuated by sustained notes linked to each other like garlands, with the chorus intervening massively and stopping at perfect consonances, producing a kind of struck chord. He concludes that "It has been suggested that the interval of the third is part of the musical heritage which Coastal Africa is believed to have assimilated from the Indonesian seafaring peoples".

Arom (1991: 20 & 34) discusses 'plurivocality' as an equivalent of the German term *Mehrstimmigkeit*, and of the term *multi-part singing* [italics in original] used by Anglo-Saxon musicologists. He says, to European musicologists, polyphony describes the technique of compositional practice that belongs to the Western world exclusively; the art which dates from the first one thousand years AD and blossomed in the school of Notre-Dame of Paris, particularly in the *organa* of Perotin around 1200. In this parochial view, he quotes one of the Western

writers, Pierre Boulez (1958: 584) who claimed that polyphony, an independent part movement with strong theoretical foundations, is a cultural phenomenon belonging to the civilization of Western Europe, and that in so-called exotic musics, there is frequent superimposition caused by simultaneous relationships in time, which do not mean independent movement of parts.

He nevertheless brings to bear Larousse's (1957: ii, 208) critique and position that the Western idea expressed above is ethnocentric, remarking that ethnomusicology had made known the fact that 'polyphony is found throughout primitive music' in a form that is different from classical and harmonic conception. He thus, defines polyphony as follows:

Polyphony is therefore defined as *any multi-part vocal or instrumental music whose heterorhythmic parts are, within the culture of its traditional performers, considered as the constituent elements of a single musical entity* [italics are in the original]. This definition is, by intention, limited in its application to vocal musics and music for instruments of fixed pitch. In the case of percussion instruments, more frequently of indeterminate pitch, the term *polyrhythm*, analogous to polyphony, is used. By this term should be understood *any multi-part arrangement based on the superimposition of different rhythmic figures whose interlacing results in a rhythmic polyphony* (Arom 1991: 38).

Arom (1991: 35) writes further that Guido Adler (1908:24) defined heterophony as an unorganized rudimentary plurivocality to be classified as a third stylistic category of homophony and polyphony. He states that heterophony 'consists of simultaneous intervals, consonant or dissonant, usually isolated, that occur at indeterminate points throughout a melody that is performed collectively and *conceived as monodic*' often in several unclear parts. He says this is common among the Islamised people of Central Africa whose vocal music is essentially

monodic. He quotes Andre Agide's (1928) description of overlapping that the end of each phrase by the soloist was normally lost in the response from the choir. He describes homophonic singing as a multi-part form in parallel third, fourth, fifth or octave movement; a plurivocal form described by some authors as *organum*, *harmony*, *parallel homophony*, or *tonally linked parallelism*, though he finds the last term most suitable for the form.

Arom (1991: 35) reinvents Nketia's (1972: 29) argument that "This type of organization is fundamentally linear rather than multilinear: occasional heterophony is to be considered as purely ornamental". Kebede (1982: 13), in his discussion, uses the term pseudo-unison as an equivalent of the word heterophony. Gerhard Kubik (1994: 279-280) argues the concept of reduplications as determinants of consonance effect in melodic configuration. He contends that where the reduplication of one note is followed by a reduplication of another which is in consonance relation to it, either in fourth or fifth, the reaction is to produce a kind of "mirror image" by using the same notes in the contrasting part, but in a melodically complementary shape. He purports that such passages are typical in *amadinda* music. To elucidate the point further, Kubik writes as follows:

In all musics there are kinds of melodic movement which we may call reduplicative. By this I mean continuous melodic progression in the same direction and (underlined in original) by the same interval...The simplest example is a steady progression to an equal tone, a series of primes. Another is movement from step to step in the scale (upwards or downwards)—in xylophone music to the next slat. This gives a ladder-type melody (Kubik 1994: 279-280).

Nzewi (1997: 45) asserts that the harmonic texture of African music is predominantly heterophonic, or otherwise possesses a unique feature of polyphony, which by unilineal principles is conceived more in horizontal and not vertical association of theme components. He argues that the unilineality, though accommodates the idiosyncratic creative decisions of individual musicians within the tradition's musical creative norms and idioms, coerces group co-operation. He thus adds that it generates and establishes the awareness and consciousness of one another's creative competence and existence amongst the performing musicians, as well as it enhances the need for agreement, co-operation, and stability in the bid to achieving musical humanistic objectives collectively. Not many vocal independent and interdependent melodic parts feature harmonically in Igoru music. Basically, we find two-part polyphonic singing and this is discussed in chapters six and eight under vocal organization and harmony respectively.

2.5 Concept of metre

Deidre Hansen (1993: 57) discusses the concept of metre and melody relationships in the songs of the Xhosa-Speaking Xhesibe *Indlavini* of South Africa as follows:

The basic metrical patterns of Xhesibe Walking Songs [capital case in original] are based on sequences of either duple (d) or triple (d.) beats, defined by walking movements, or by stick contact with ground...These two main physical activities, walking and stick-beating, express the basic meter and tempo of the music or at least indicate it.

In the walking songs, the coincidence of vocal melodic patterns and basic metrical (motional) patterns is characteristic of melody-meter relationships in Xhesibe music generally. The process is one in which the accents of

the vocal-melodic patterns establish a fairly systematic cross-rhythm with the main beats of the percussive accompanist (walking, stick-beating).

Igoru musicians often describe the dance of its performance as *igbegbe egolo* (the dance of a majestic walk). The walking movement is much demonstrated to the melo-rhythm of the accompanying instruments and of the melodic phrasing of the vocal section. The walking-pace dance steps and the movement of the hands then punctuate the metrical pulse as well as the melodic cadences. This has been discussed in chapter five. Arom (1991: 23) remarks that:

Africans are more concerned when adding another voice to preserve the scale – here pentatonic – than to produce a strict parallelism. Therefore, if they wanted to sing strictly fourths, they would have to modify the scale organization, which in this case would mean virtually creating another mode; the result would be a ‘polytonality’ with the following awkward consequences: (a) the concurrence of two pentatonic modes would entail the introduction of the semitone interval, which is so carefully avoided in all the scales, and therefore a rupture in the scale system; and (b) on account of the lack of tonal ‘attraction’ in pentatonic systems where there are neither ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ degrees, there would result a ‘modal’ unbalance, resulting from the ambiguity created by the two superimposed pentatonic modes.

Igoru polyphonic singing does not yield any polytonality. Although it could move through a series of fourths and occasional third and fifth and resolve on the consonance of a perfect fourth cadence, it retains a central tonality. While the upper melody may resolve from the submediant to the tonic, the lower part may resolve from the submediant to the dominant at a lower octave. See chapter seven for details.

2. 5. 1 Polymetre

Chernoff (1979: 47) writes that in spite of what the Westerners think that African music is often in 7/4 or 5/4 metre, he found that “most African music is in some common variety of duple or triple time (like 4/4 or 12/8). He adds that “Music in 7/4 time would be very difficult to dance to” and argues further that “If the drummers played in unison, there would, obviously, be no polymeter...the cardinal principle of African music is the clash and conflict of rhythms”. Chenoff’s observation about African music metre is right, except that we are yet to find any form of strict triple metre in Igoru music. All the transcriptions we have done, so far, are in compound quadruple and simple quadruple metre (12/8 and 4/4).

Nzewi (1997: 41-42) argues that “Traditional musics are rationalised mediation and transformation of nature, life and the people’s world view. Psychopaths are not recognised as producing culturally sensible or meaningful music. Polyrhythmicity and polymetricity impute irregular, psychopathic thoughts on the creative configurations of African musical systems which rely on certain structural indices to ensure regularity and symmetry”. This implies that the use of polymetre, if it were true in African music, would create irregular and unorganized performance product, which could also be intolerable, therefore unsustainable and unappreciable. He suggests that if we lose understanding of the fundamental principle of the pulse pattern that underlies a musical performance, we might speculate polymeter, and if we lose sight of melorhythm, we might speculate polyrhythm.

In Igoru music, the metric pulse and phrase referent instruments have been very significant in the sustainability of unity within the ensemble. These underlying patterns have also justified the use of a single metre within a composition as at

creation and performance. The composition, being orally and aurally conceived and reproduced first without the instruments, the composer normally conceives the basic instrumental patterns that suggest the metre in mind when creating the melody. Thus Amereka Emakpo would tap some rhythm with a match box as he is composing a song and those basic rhythmic figures could remind him of the tune later on. He describes this technique as composing the songs into the match box and this has been fully discussed in chapter six. What this implies is that Igoru musicians do not create their music in multiple metre that could be difficult to coordinate.

Agawu (2003: 79-80) writes that “polymeter is the simultaneous use of more than one meter in an ensemble composition”, where each functional component of the texture exposes “a distinct rhythmic pattern within its own metric frame without any obvious regard for a larger coordinating mechanism”. He states further that “Constituent meters do not collapse into each other or into a larger meter, but persist into the background, creating a kind of metric dissonance or metric polyphony. Philosophically, polymeter indexes coexistence, not (necessarily) cooperation”. He examines A. M. Jones’ analysis of Anlo-Ewe dance, which transcription shows the bell, rattle and hand clap in 12/8; the master drum in 5/8; support drums in 6/8; while the song, though not given any time signature by Jones, moves in series of measures that evince 7/8, 6/8, 4/8, and 3/8.

He finally states his position that the notion of polymeter in discussing African music must be rejected for three reasons. The first being that the notion of polymeter is probably an invention and imposition on African music, since the idea is not found in the discourses and pedagogical schemes of traditional African musicians. The second is that the analysis being on dance, the

choreographic supplement is an irreducible component of the rhythm which could culminate [with other components] into a compound rhythm expressed in a variety of internal articulation suggesting as Chernoff earlier observed, that music in irregular time signature would be difficult to dance to. The third reason is that “Polymeter fails to convey the true accentual structure of African music insofar as it erases the essential tension between a firm and stable background and a fluid foreground”.

There are no terms or references to such a phenomenon, polymetre in any discourse amongst Igoru musicians. Even in actual performance practice, we have not observed the use of polymetre where various instruments perform in different metres. It is therefore safe to conclude that there is no use of polymetre in Igoru music.

2. 5. 2 Measured, unmeasured, metronomic, non-metronomic, variable and movable bar

Arom (1991: 179) defines measured music as ‘music *comprised of durations with proportional values*’ (italics in original). He then writes as follows:

Let us recall that the distinction between measured and unmeasured music has a long history. It existed in the cultured music of the ancient Greeks, and in medieval musical theory, in the contrast between the *cantus mensuratu* (measured chant) and *cantus planus* (plain chant). Closer to our own times, it can be found in classical opera, where arias or measured pieces alternate with unmeasured *recitativo secco*. Measured music, sometimes referred to by the Italian expression, *tempo giusto*, is thus defined by contrast with unmeasured music. The latter is not governed by fixed quantities, i.e., the values of durations are not strictly proportional... In measured music, however, all durations are strictly proportional.

He further quotes Rousseau's (1768: 283) dictionary definition that the term *measured* corresponds with the Italian *a tempo* or *a batuta*, meaning proportional durations based on a reference unit; the smallest visible unit in Greek music was referred to as *a chronos protos* while in the West it meant the conductor's beat [equivalent of *batuta*]. He observes from Chailley's (1961: 255) writing that grouping of beats into measures only became possible in the seventeenth century 'when the use of bars invaded the written material of musical instruction (Arom, 1991: 183). He concludes, therefore, that most African music is still based on the principles of the medieval *tactus* with no use of the notion of matrices of regular contrasts of strong and weak beats. He puts this clearly that: "African music is thus based, not on measures in the sense of classical musical teaching, but on *pulsations*, i.e., on a sequence of isochronous temporal units which can be materialised as a beat".

Van Leeuwen (1999: 39) writes that "measured time divides the flow of time into measures which are of equal duration and which are marked off by a regularly occurring explicit pulse ('accent', 'stress', 'beat') which comes on the first syllable or note or other sound of each measure and is made more prominent than the surrounding sounds by means of increased loudness, pitch or duration, or some combination of some or all of these" (p 39). He explains that measured time is the time one can tap feet to while counting the metrical units, a practice which is not possible with unmeasured time (p 6); adding that two kinds of counting signifying two metre [duple and quadruple metre] have dominated the Western 'high art' music since the introduction of measured time system (p48).

He describes unmeasured time as a slow meditative time 'fluctuation' that creates absence of a regular pulse or beat (p 51). He argues that proper and regularly patterned dance as a physical reaction is possible to a measured music, while only a slow swaying of the body is possible to an unmeasured music. He further argues that:

The 'metronomic' system is more 'delicate' than the 'measurement' system: 'metronomic' and 'non-metronomic' time form a subdivision of 'measured time'. 'Metronomic time' is governed by the implacable regularity of the machine, whether or not a metronome (or a drum machine or stopwatch) is actually used. It is the time of the machine, or of soldiers on the march. 'Non-metronomic time' is also measured, but it subverts the regularity of the machine. It is the time of human speech and movement, or of Billie Holiday singing a slow blues while 'surfing on the beat' (Leeuwen 1999: 7).

The foregoing definitions and explications of the concept of measured, unmeasured, metronomic and non-metronomic sensibility show some measures of strict applications in musical practice. In Igoru performance, however, the composer/performer has some liberty slowing down the tempo or increasing it to enact climatic messages in narratives. This may appear in resemblance of unmeasured durations, but if the listener has the opportunity of watching or participating in the performance, it would be clear that the durations are still regular, only at a slower pace somewhat. If an Igoru musician performs singularly as a soloist, this character is persistent than when he is accompanied. The drums' punctuations of the main beats, as well as the syllabic accent reflecting on the vocal melody cumulatively regulate the whole performance into regular durations.

Although Igoru music is not written on scripts to formally structure its measures by use of bar lines, the putative conglomeration of the regular pulse and durations give it the character of a measured music, not visually conceived, but mentally perceived with the sensibility of body motor-impulse. So far, we have identified the dominance of the compound quadruple metre. Igoru musicians at no time in history used any mechanical means of keeping to strictly regimented tempo at any performance. The use of metronome, clock, stick or any other mechanical device was never practiced by Igoru musicians who enjoy the freedom of musical expression in sensitive and cooperative regularity of voices and instruments.

Deidre Hasen (1993: 59) adopts the term variable metre to describe a composition that has a free metrical organization, where the textual lines are unequal. She writes to buttress this point as follows:

Common to all is their delivery of lines of *ukubonga* (praising [phrasing?]) of different length, which occur successively. There appears to be no prescriptive meter in *izibongo*, as is the case in real songs, in which words are fitted against a specific metrical pattern of fixed length. When composing this walking song the unknown composer deliberately drew upon a basic structural feature of *izibongo* [not italicized in original], a non-musical oral tradition long associated with the institutions of kingship and chieftainship. This is the reason for the use of variable meter, i.e. varying lines of text (carrying melodies) of different length.

Chernoff (1979: 47) quotes S. D. Cudjoe using the term “movable bar” to describe the kind of rhythm that evolves from the performance extempore of a dexterous drummer as follows: “The changing configuration of Ewe drumming...is so well exploited by the greatest master–drummers that one gets

the notion of a movable bar contracting or expanding in time signature according to the inspiration of the moment”.

Igoru musicians do not conceive their poetic lines in writing, but follow the grammatical structure of the Okpe language to ensure that the lyrics of their songs make meaning poetically and melodically. Going through some of the poems, we find some lines having one or more syllables over the preceding or following line. They nonetheless suggest a common metre, following the accent of the language reflected in the lines. Some of the transcriptions show a line of eleven syllables followed by a line of ten. In this case, the first line is metrically treated in the melody with the last syllable given a longer duration to create a balance. Sometimes, we have a line of eight syllables followed by another line of seemingly seven syllables with the last syllabic vowel doubled in pronunciation. The last syllable is thus treated with a slur that links the sounds of the duplicated vowel. This eventually gives the melody its metrical balance. We also find lines that naturally balance with one another in six or more syllables in certain metrical patterns, but it should be understood that this is not as consistent as one would find in Western hymns. These features receive more attention in chapters six and eight. But it should be noted that the notion of variable metre and moveable bar are not found in the perception and discourse of Igoru musicians.

2.6 Form, genre, style and typology

These terms have often been used interchangeably by many writers to describe different types of music. Percy Scholes (1991: 218) defines form as an internal pattern of music organization, from the putting together of musical phrases into sentences, up to putting together of themes and long sections into movements of various sorts and putting together of movements into such cyclic forms as suites,

sonatas and symphonies. Willi Apel (1970: 326-327) argues that the term form has different meanings, depending on whether it refers to “form in music” or “forms of music”. He writes that the former refers to the orderly organization of the sounds of music with relationship to pitch, melody, rhythm, etc, while the latter refers to “the existence of certain schemes that govern the overall structure of a composition and were traditionally used in various periods of music history, e.g. the fugue or the sonata”. In other words, he writes that “the form *in* [italics in original] a composition is entirely dependent on its content” while “the form *of* a composition (if it has a ‘form’) is essentially independent of its content”. The various forms in Igoru music are discussed in chapter seven.

John Dowling (2001: 657) defines genre as a class, type or category of musical works or practices, based on the principle of repetition sanctioned by convention. In poetry and folk music, as it were in classical discourse, he states tragedy, comedy, epic, lyric, novel, ballad, legend, proverb, lyric folksong and absolute music as genres and that titles such as sonata, symphony and quartet marked the quest for autonomy within instrumental music. Tom Manoff (1982: 2) argues that “musical style may be thought of as the outer layer of musical experience” thus most people would recognize familiar musical styles such as classical, country, jazz, rock, as well as Bulgarian folk dance, Irish jig, American square dance and classical ballet as different from one another.

Lawrence Witzleben (2002: 91) uses the term genres of music to refer to categories of performances that include unaccompanied folk songs, instrumental music, narrative songs with instruments, and dimensions of music drama and religious ceremony. It seems that no dictionary of music has considered the definition of the common term typology, though several authors have used it at

different times to refer to the notion of music types. Arom (1991: 215), however, adopts the term typology to refer to the various characteristics of Central African music such as strict polyrhythmics, polyphony produced by hocket, polyphony produced by melodic instruments and vocal polyphony. In our discussion of Igoru music, we shall adopt the terms form and typology to refer to the internal structures of Igoru music and Igoru music as one of the various types of music practiced in Okpe respectively.

2. 6. 1 Antiphony, responsorial, call and response

Kebede (1982: 7) writes that 'responsorial' is a common style of singing amongst the sub-saharan cultures. It is a pattern of call and response that involves two or more singers, a solo or group response to the lead singer imitatively, duplicative or otherwise. He defines 'antiphony' or 'antiphonal singing' as the call and response form that involves two independent groups that respond to one another, or two performers from each group responding to each other. Deidre Hasen (1993: 58) describes the concept of antiphonal singing as a structure that comprises solo and chorus phrases with occasional overlapping. Arom (1991: 18) discusses these concepts as follows:

Antiphonal and responsorial structures are the dominant characteristics of traditional Central African music. In certain pieces in which the melodic material is more developed, the two techniques may appear alternately. But, very generally a soloist is contrasted with a choir made up of the whole of the audience. Musical repetition, in its simplest form, is responsorial or litanical. The soloist sings a series of phrases that the choir punctuates with a response, which is usually shorter than the solo utterance. This response, or consequent, is most often sung in unison, and could therefore in the last resort be provided by a single performer: sometimes it is sporadically in parallel intervals of fourths and fifths. The other kind of repetition

takes the antiphonal form. Unlike responsorial form, there is regular alternation between the two parts: each phrase, having been announced by the soloist, is immediately repeated note-for-note by the audience. In both forms, the solo and choral parts can overlap.

The definition of Arom seems more explicit, clearly distinguishing between responsorial and antiphonal styles. The former being call and response pattern involving a soloist and a chorus where the chorus response, whether imitative of the solo line or not, is shorter, and the latter involving a note by note repeat of the solo line by the chorus. In Igoru music, there are these forms of call and response patterns discussed in chapter seven. But the kind of group versus group call and response singing defined by Kebede as antiphony does not exist in Igoru performance practice.

2. 6. 2 Strophic and narrative

Apel (1970: 811) writes that strophic is a designation for a song, in which all stanzas of the text are sung to the same music, in contrast to through-composed which has a new music for each stanza. He also discusses strophic bass as a technique in 17thc monody where the same bass is applied to all stanzas of a song with varying melodies in its upper part. Kebede (1982: 6-7) states that when the same melody is repeated for every stanza or strophe of a song poem, it is said to be in strophic form. He remarks that the strophic form is often performed solo with or without accompaniment, observing that slight variations may exist between the verse lines and these are also set to fit into the standard repetitive melodic lines. Igoru music uses the various forms of call and response as well as through-composed forms in its narratives. If a song is short, the chorus may repeat it after the soloist, but a strophic form where verses of equal length are set

to one melody to be sung over and again is not commonly practiced by Igoru musicians.

2. 6. 3 Ensemble thematic cycle, soloist and receiver soloist

Nzewi (1997: 44) adopts the term “ensemble thematic cycle” to describe “the plan of an ensemble gestalt (gross durational content of differentiated instrumental thematic gestalt) which recurs in essentially the same shape and time but with continually changing sound quality”. He defines the concept as clearly as follows:

Within the scope of this discussion we define Ensemble Thematic Cycle (11) as the significant musical form or module by which a piece of African music is recognised. It is the aggregate sound of the layers of role-themes in an ensemble. Its length and significant content is the lowest common multiple of the unequal lengths cum differentiated contents of all the compositional themes assigned the various instruments of an ensemble for the purposes of the performance-composition of a piece on any performance occasion or session. The Ensemble Thematic Cycle is recycled within a fixed time frame but with varying qualitative affect in the course of a performance.

The ensemble thematic cycle in Igoru music is most recognized in the working together of the mother *ukiri*, varied *ukiri* and voices, whose characteristics are discussed in chapter five.

Kebede (1982: 6) examines various concepts of performance to include solo performance by only one person, duet by two persons, trio (three persons), quartet (four), quintet (five), sextet (six), septet (seven), octet (eight), nonet (nine) and chorus (more than nine). He asserts that most African and Asian vocal

groups number between ten and twenty five and their religious music is often performed a cappella. Uzoigwe (1998: 4) adopts the terms soloist and receiver soloist in the context of *ukom* performance to refer to a style where the principal soloist hands over to the second player who takes a turn playing another solo section. An Igoru musician may perform as a soloist, backed up by a chorus thereby involving a group. The standard Igoru performance, however, according to Udogu Olocho, Amukeye Okodide, Idisi Adibo, and the records of Egboto Isiniq ensemble involves principally four singers with a chorus.

The principal singers include the *Qbo ijoro* (the lead singer or soloist), *Ofru ijoro*, (receiver soloist) *Ohwe ijoro* (response singer) and *Ogani* (lower part singer). The *Qbo ijoro*, lead soloist normally hands over to the second who acts as the receiver soloist, while the chorus comes in together with the lower part singer. The terms *qbo* literally means a physician; often a spiritual-magical or spiritual-medical practitioner, while *ofru* means the one who picks up fast. In the context of Igoru performance practice, the *qbo ijoro* is more or less a spirit-filled powerful expert who is capable of configuring, concocting and performing music excellently. And the *ofru ijoro* is one who is capable of picking up or receiving the solo from the lead soloist to relieve him/her and to link up the chorus by giving the appropriate cues. In the discourse among Igoru performers at rehearsals and performances, as observed in Amukeye Okodide's ensemble, the lead soloist could be heard instructing the second soloist to receive the solo from her. She would often remark "*haye mie me*", meaning "receive it from me" or "*fru e mie me*" meaning "take it fast from me". This is given detail discussion in chapter five under vocal organization.

2. 6. 4 Improvisation, extemporization and performance composition

Apel (1970: 404) defines improvisation and extemporization as the art of performing music spontaneously without the aid of manuscript, sketches or memory, and may also mean an introduction of unprepared details into written compositions at the time of performance. Don Randel (1986: 395) argues that “music in oral tradition is normally composed by improvisation of a sort: the audible rendition of pieces (though usually without audience), whose components may then be altered and recombined and finally memorized”. He further argues that the performance of music in oral tradition, however, may or may not involve improvisation. In contrast, he adds that since Western art music is heavily dependent on notation for transmission, its notion of improvisation includes phenomena such as the addition of extemporized ornaments as well as special improvised genres.

The process of composition in Igoru music cannot be described as improvisation as Randel suggests. It is a process of constructive metaphysical, philosophical and sociological thought as Peter Etalo, Idisi Adibo and Udogu Olocho put it. The process of real composition of Igoru is to be understood as something quite different from the process of spontaneous creation or embellishment at performance. The real composition situation follows certain procedures as a grand preparation that precedes rehearsals and performances. The composition or the piece so composed, is stored in the memory of the composer in all its form, just as a piece of composition may be ‘stored’ in the manuscript in written cultures. At rehearsal or performance, the song is retrieved from memory by human efforts and recollection principles and is presented as prepared or pre-composed. Such a composition is by no means an improvisation.

Zabana Kongo and Jeffrey Robinson (2003: 95) define improvisation as the art of composing music as it is being performed, in forms of elaborating or modifying existing pre-composed material and in a free style where there are few or no parameters, conventions or rules to which it is required to fit. They further state that:

Improvisation is not exclusive to music, as the term refers to any act of spontaneous creation and is applicable to all of the performing arts. In its most general sense it means to 'make do' with whatever is immediately at hand, including what one brings into a situation by way of knowledge, skill and imagination...Improvisation in music is the equivalent of extemporization in verbal discourse. But while it would be ludicrous to call someone linguistically competent if he or she were unable to extemporize, many call themselves musicians though they are unable to improvise. Imagine not being able to speak beyond uttering words that have been worked out and written down in advance, usually by someone else! An important point regarding extemporization is that virtually everyone can do it. Some may do it better than others, but it is by no means a specialized behaviour demanding special inborn talent.

Improvisation as Kongo and Robinson present it is an essential ingredient required in oral performance. This is where the beauty and functionality of Igoru musical performances manifest a great deal. Even if a short song is introduced and repeated by the chorus, one cannot presume that it is ended or that continuity might be repetitive without variations. A skillful Igoru musician would improvise over the principal theme developmentally and only the chorus response may have to be repeated to punctuate or complement the solo sections. This is evident in song 25, page A2 – 63 which some Igoru musicians might perform only as an introductory formula, but was fully developed by Omaromuaye Igside and his ensemble members at a performance in Jeddo.

Arom (1991: 19) argues the concept and process of improvisation as follows;

Finally, improvisation, which I have described as the driving force behind melodic and rhythmic variations, plays an important part in every group. But there is no such thing as free improvisation, that is, improvisation that does not refer back to some precise and identifiable piece of music. It is always subordinate to the musical structure in which it appears, in respect of mode, metre and rhythm. Improvisation of text and melody are also closely linked: in any song with more than one verse, as soon as the words change, the melody too must be modified, to follow the language tones. Furthermore, even if the singer allows himself considerable freedom in the enunciation of the text phrases, he is nevertheless constrained, as Kubik has observed, by strict rules requiring a return to the principal phrase from time to time, and by respect for the meaning of the text.

We find in Igoru music that improvisation of text does modify both the rhythm and melody, in order to maintain clarity of meaning. That is, the new text may consist of more or less syllables than the former and would require a different pattern of durations and additional or reduction of pitches. Improvisations are usually executed within the existing scheme in metre, mode and phrasing.

Nzewi (1997: 67-68) adopts and defines the term performance-composition as “the situational re-composition of a known piece deriving from its significant formal-harmonic-thematic frameworks. It is further guided by the extra-musical contingencies of every performance occasion as well as the musical integrity of an alert master musician”. He distinguishes between improvisation and performance-composition, stating that the former is a spontaneous creation guided by the conventions of the music culture, type, piece, group, and audience sensitization; while the latter is “a mediation of continuity and conformity in a

creative situation". Meki Nzewi, Israel Anyahuru and Tom Ohiaumunna (2001: 99) and Andrew Tracey and Joshua Uzoigwe (2003: 87) use the term performance-composition subsequently to refer to the concept of spontaneous creation by a performing composer on the spur of a performance situation. Performance-composition is a feature in Igoru performance practice, a situation by which a performer creates spontaneously, using the immediate events around him/her in the performance arena.

2. 6. 5 Repetition, ostinato and tempo

The term repetition has been applied to the discussion of African music in both positive and negative manners. Earlier reports, out of intolerance and lack of respect for the creative thought of other races, applied the term negatively, but later studies examined the practice more objectively. Nketia (1970: 12) quotes one of the early explorers, Lt. Col. H. P. Northcoth's *Report on the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast* as follows:

Iteration and reiteration of the same airs never seem to weary the West African. His chief musical treat, however, is the tom-tom. In season and out of season, all day and all night, he is prepared to abandon himself to the delight of a noisy demonstration on this instrument of torture, and it is more often exhaustion on the part of the performers than boredom by the audience that puts a period to the deafening and monotonous noise (Nketia 1970: 12).

Repetitions result in recycling themes wherein developmental variations occur in Igoru music. They are not, particularly in the vocal section, strict repetitions

without variations in thematic module and style. Arom (1991: 17) argues while discussing formal musical structures as follows:

All musical pieces are characterized by cyclic structure that generates numerous improvised variations: *repetition* and *variation* [italics in original] is one of the most fundamental principles of all Central African music, as indeed of many other musics in Black Africa. This principle excludes the process of development, fundamental to European art music, but totally unknown in African musical thought. As Gilbert Rouget aptly remarked: 'There are indeed musics which find in repetition or variation – and consequently in non-development – their very accomplishment' (Rouget 1956: 133). It is upon extremely simple elements that a process of maximal elaboration is constructed, by using variations that exploit the basic material to the utmost.

Cyclic structure is one of the fundamental characteristics of Igoru music. It is an approach adopted for extensive thematic development of narratives. This, of course, presents several variations in the process as is found in song 39, page A2 – 116. Each versification in the solo section is a new idea in text and creates modification on the previous melodic line to suit the new text. The chorus response, similarly, presents a new idea in the text to complement the idea introduced by the lead soloist and so modify its own melodic line as well. The process produces a gradual building up of the narrative thought with series of variations resulting from the first solo and response motives.

Lara Allen (1993: 4) writes the following on the cyclical structure in a South African urban popular music typology known as *Kwela*, a good justification of African identity for which Africans must be unblushing, but be proud of this character:

The repetitive nature of *Kwela*, so complained of by elite critics, results from the style's cyclical structure. Not

surprisingly it is one of the most African aspects of *Kwela* and is greatly responsible for the style's popularity amongst the proletariat. However, as soon as the *Kwela* obtained the very international status desired by the black elite, pennywhistlers and their music received almost excessive positive publicity from the press. The black elite realised that their needs would be more easily fulfilled through the consolidation of identity along lines of race, rather than class.

Arom (1991: 40) examines the term *ostinato* from the background of previous literature written by Riemann (1931: 953), Bruno Nettl (1956: 87) and Rose Brandel (1965: 31; 1970: 20). He then writes:

Ostinato here means *the regular and uninterrupted repetition of a rhythmic or melodic-rhythmic figure, with an unvarying periodicity underlying it* (Italics in original). This definition, though intended as a description of traditional Central African music, does not conflict with Western musicological definitions of the term. Thus Riemann defines *ostinato* as 'a technical term that describes the continual return of a theme surrounded by ever-changing counterpoint...Many Central African musics correspond exactly to this definition. They are indeed musical pieces based on a short phrase, which reappears 'in all sorts of modified forms'...'The African *ostinato*, usually quite small in length and pitch range, may be continuous or intermittent, vocal or instrumental, and may appear above or below the main line. Frequently there is a multi-*ostinato*, two or more *ostinatos* moving contrapuntally, with or without a longer melodic line'.

In the instrumental section of Igoru music, bi-*ostinato* is found to exist between the mother and baby *ukiri*. The baby *ukiri* plays a simpler version while the mother *ukiri* plays a more complex one with syncopations. It should be noted; however, that in the height of performance spur the mother *ukiri* player could be

inspired to create a few variations of its fundamental thematic cycle to the limit it is allowed.

Apel (1970: 250) defines tempo as the speed of a composition or sections of it, as indicated by use of tempo marks such as *largo*, *adagio*, or more accurate metronome indications like crotchet = M. M. 100 meaning that a crotchet lasts for 1/100 of a minute. Arom (1991: 17) discusses the concept of tempo in Central African music as follows:

Finally, *tempo* [italics in original], or what Claudie Marcel-Dubois calls 'organic speed or movement' (1965: 204), is the only constant element in Central African musical discourse; all the others (melody, rhythm and instrumental patterns) may give rise to variations. But there is never, within the one piece of music, the slightest variation in *tempo*; it remains constant right to the end, without *accelerando*, *retardando*, *rubato* or *fermata* [italics in original]. If, for ritual reasons in particular, there are successive pieces of music with differing tempos (during a ceremony for instance) Central African musicians never create a transition from one piece to the next; they juxtapose them, preserving a clean break between the two. Furthermore, even when a piece is slow, the unit of the *tempo*, the 'beat', whether expressed or implicit, is never slow. The basic pulse underlying every piece of music is somewhere between 80 and 140 units per minute (approximately). Finally, it should be borne in mind that unintentional fluctuations in tempo in a musical performance are extremely slight.

In recorded Igoru music, we find a very strict and constant tempo maintained as in Egboto Isini's, perhaps an effect of the studio environment. In live performances, though a steady tempo may be sustained over a period of time, we observe freedom of expression wherein the performer could slow down the pace occasionally to enact a salient point in the narrative as stated earlier in this

discourse. Igoru musicians are skilled in connecting two or more songs together without a major break, particularly when they are under the imbuing influence of performance mania. Sometimes, in fact, if one does not carefully examine the subject of the pieces, he/she could conclude that two connected pieces are but one. Usually, a major break between two songs is often established by the return of the Igoru signature tune or any of the numerous closing formulas. If smooth connectivity is desired by the performer, either of these closing formulas is deliberately avoided in order for the next song to be introduced immediately. This is discussed further in chapter seven.

2.7 Drum and drumming

Don Randel (1986: 243) writes that drums are principally membrane instruments spread around the cultures of the world. He notes, however, that some idiophone categories of instruments are grouped or classified as some kinds of drum. Among these idiophone and membranophone instruments, he lists the following classification to include those struck (slit drums); those shaken (rattle drums); those rubbed (friction drums); those plucked (string drums); and those with tension ropes. The drums appear in various forms, sizes and shapes descriptively classified as bowl, cylinder, barrel, cone, hourglass and simple frames. The membrane drums essentially have one or two heads that are laced, nailed, glued or held by modern counter-hoops and bolts to their body. John Chernoff (1979: 43) discusses Ewe drums that are made like barrels, with a strong hide of a small bush antelope which serves as the drumhead sewn to a hoop around the rim of the mouth, leaving hoops of strings that fit into notched pegs driven into holes on the side of the drum secured by friction. The three *ukiri* used in Igoru performance are short single-headed cylindrical drums that appear

in various sizes. They are made from wood and animal hides, which have been discussed in-depth in chapter five.

About Drums ([author's names not in the article] www.danmcdrum.supanet.com 2005/05/18) discusses how drums are normally played. The writer states that the *Djembe* has a vast range of tones and is very responsive to three conventional strokes, in that slight change in positioning, pressure and accentuation of each stroke could create slightly different sound. He/she argues that non-existing touch or grace notes can be represented by gentle touch on the drum; whereas *Kpanlogo* drums like the *Djembe* have three conventional strokes, but with slap notes that involves a slap that rests on the skin rather than bouncing off it. *Sabar* drums, he/she adds, are played with palm and stick to generate sharp and penetrating sounds, but require a lot of carefulness to avoid bruising one's fingers as the drumhead is small.

Discover the Ngoma drum, East African drums, Engoma: Learn to play Ngoma King of the drums, East African drums ([author's names not in the article] www.experienceafrica.co.uk last updated on 1/12/2004) discusses the Ngoma drums of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo as instruments made of wood and covered mainly with cow skin all around it, a group of seven or four may be found making an ensemble. The three big ones are beaten by hand while the small one among them is beaten with stick. In Igoru music, only two or three of the *ukiri* may form the instrumental accompaniment and they are all beaten with stick. Although the circumference of the drums is small and the player uses the left hand to manipulate some muting and tensioning, no Igoru drummer runs the risk of striking his fingers, because the left hand works only within a small space around the edge of the membrane.

Moreover, an experienced or expert drummer is not expected to bruise his finger at a performance.

Don Randel (1986: 243) remarks that “in *Africa, the *Near East, *South Asia [asterisk in the original], and elsewhere, the contrast of two or more higher and lower indefinite pitches on one, two, or more drums is a central feature of drumming” and this is achieved by application of various playing techniques. Nketia (1979: 89) writes that the techniques of playing by use of cupped hand, palm, palm and fingers, straight stick, curved or bent stick with or without knob on different positions of the drumhead determine the sonority of the drums. Chernoff (1979: 43) again discusses the playing technique of the Ewe drums, stating that the master drums are often beaten by hand or with one hand one stick and striking the drumhead freely so that the stick bounces off it gives a resonant and stressed beat in contrast to secondary notes that derive from “pressing the stick onto the drumhead to produce a muted beat several intervals higher than a free stick beat”. The mother and baby *ukiri* of Igoru music are played by application of the techniques identified by Chernoff above. The drummers strike loosely or freely so that the stick bounces off the membrane to produce deeper tones and press the stick against the drumhead to generate higher tones. This has been discussed in chapter five.

2. 7. 1 Talking drum and varied drum

Several articles have been published on the concept of “talking drum”, particularly in West Africa and we need to examine such a concept whether the drums actually speak the spoken language or some kind of coded language of communication within some limits before adopting it (the term) for discourses. Catherine Schmidt-Jones (2004: 1 [accessed on the internet]) differentiates

between message drums and talking drums, that the former are log drums that can be heard miles away with messages in some kind of code that may be based on spoken sentences; while the latter are a kind of drums referred to as “waisted drums” in Korea and India, but known as “talking drums” in West Africa. The talking drums found among the Ashanti of Ghana and Yoruba of Nigeria are referred to as ‘waisted drums’, because they have an hourglass shape with a ‘waist’ at the middle. In the article *Francis Awe and the Nigerian Talking Drum Ensemble*, the writer says that the drum *dundun* (meaning sweet sound) in Yoruba land is called talking drum, because it emulates the tonal quality of the Yoruba language ([author’s names not in the article] www.nitade.com 2005/05/18).

In the *Language of the Drum*, the article argues that the Yoruba talking drums were first invented for battle, thus they could mimic speech and warn warriors of impending attack across a distance before they became used later as musical instruments. And as musical instruments, if a drummer plays a wrong note at a ritual, it is believed he has caused the entire village ([author’s names not in the article] www.thehealingdrum.com 2005/05/18). In another article *How the Bata Drums Talk and What they Say*, the writer argues that “The bata drums speak. Not in a metaphorical sense, but they really can be used to speak the Yoruba language, and have been used traditionally to recite prayers, religious poetry, greetings, announcements, praises for leaders, and even jokes or teasing” ([author’s names not in the article] www.batadrums.com 2005/05/18). The *Instrument Encyclopedia on Talking Drum* states that talking drums are part of a family of hourglass shaped pressure drums, namely the *gangan* and *dundun* of Yoruba Nigeria. They have the ability to closely imitate the rhythm and

intonations of the spoken Yoruba language ([author's names not in the article] www.si.umich.edu 2005/05/18).

The Ngoma from Uganda is reported to have played very important roles in the lives of the people in communication and celebration even as a symbol of authority to the extent that an ethnic group in Uganda is called the “children of Ngoma”. Much as the roles of communication are associated with this instrument, the writer however did not claim that the people call it talking drum ([author's names not in the article] www.experienceafrica.co.uk last updated on 1/12/2004). Yaya Diallo and Mitchell Hall (1989: 93) argue as follows:

The *tama* is another popular drum in my culture. Americans call this a talking drum, but in my tribe we only play music on it. We are happy to talk with words and do not need drums for our conversations. The *tama* [not italicized in original this time] drum is small, carved from a tree trunk, and shaped like an hourglass, wider at both ends and narrow in the middle.

The *ukiri* and the *agogo* (bell) are normally used to announce messages in various Okpẹ communities, but as musical instruments, neither the *ukiri* nor the *agogo* are referred to as a talking drum or bell in the discourses of Igoru musicians. It should be noted that the bell is not a member of Igoru ensemble. We have mentioned it here, because it is a message instrument like the *ukiri*. The only instrument the Okpẹ musicians believe talks in a way, is *Ekperẹ* (Elephant tusk) used in *Ema* (royal and chieftain) music. Not everyone is able to decode the language texts it communicates. It is played in dialogue with an oral performer who understands its language and challenges it to go on praising. Igoru musicians, however, refer to the medium *ukiri* as a varied drum (*ukiri evwariẹn*), because it plays a lot of varied melo-rhythms over the ensemble thematic gestalt. It is the instrument among the three in the ensemble that has

more freedom to develop its motive extensively without any limitations. This is discussed further in chapter five.

2. 7. 2 Drum language and Voice masking

Kenichi Tsukada (2001: 150) argues that a system of oral transmission of instrumental music based on idiophonic principles has been well developed in Japan and many parts of Africa:

In Japan, the system was devised to indicate the playing techniques of an instrument, to aid memorization and even to substitute for actual performance in certain contexts. In African societies, it is sometimes employed in drum lessons “to bring out the duration of the drum beats and the tone contrasts” (Nketia 1963: 33) to aid memorization of patterns and playing techniques. This practice has normally been discussed under such designations as “nonsense syllables”, “oral mnemonics”, “oral notation” and “solmization” [so spelt in original]. These terms, however, have been more or less loaded with cultural biases related to Western musical practice. A more neutral, more universally applicable term is required for discussion, and I propose the term “verbal representation of instrumental sounds”. I use this term (hereafter abbreviated as VR).

Olaniyan (2001: 69) writes that the onomatopoeic statement *bo tan ma tun roko* meaning “if it ends, I shall return to the farm” is used to train children how to play the *gudugudu* drum. *Music of Sub-Saharan Africa* ([author’s names not in the article] www.sinc.sunvsb.edu 2005) illustrates the *atumpan* in its “speech mode,” drumming as if for a ceremonial occasion with possibilities of producing its rhythms and tones on the two drumheads following the Akan *Twi* language, which is tonal. The practice is sometimes referred to as “speech surrogation”. The drum plays in alternation with a translation of its speech and first greets those present, then recites verses in praise of a king and of the River *TanoGahu*,

one of several popular styles of social music and dance in Ewe communities. Igoru musicians use a kind of verbalization to represent the tones and melo-rhythms played on the *ukiri* drums. This is used as a means to enable a learner memorize the phrases and conceptualize the melo-rhythmic tonality of the drums. Although, the *ukiri* contributes to the entire communication system of the Igoru performance between it and the singers, dancers and audience, its language at this level is not considered near equivalent to the Okpè language itself. This is discussed further in chapter five.

Kebede (1982: 6) states that in most African and Asian vocal group performance, some singers mask their voices by singing through a musical instrument like horn or flute, which disguises the identity of the performer's voice. He asserts that "Wearing masks and voice masking are very common practices, particularly in the magicoreligious ceremonials throughout sub-Saharan Africa". It is important to state here that there is no voice masking of any kind in Igoru performance. Sonorous voices are recognized as naturally sonorous even though attempts are made to facilitate mellifluous voices in the performance practice. This is normally done before the performance proper as a kind of application of traditional medicine as discussed in chapter five.

2. 7. 3 Bass, tenor, tom tom, master, mother and baby drums

The above terms have often appeared in the discourse of African drums, and it would be necessary to examine how Africans, particularly Igoru musicians in this context, construct thoughts about them and how they name them in their local patois. John Blacking (1967: 21) discusses the performance practice of the Venda boys and girls' initiation ceremony musical instruments, adopting such

names as alto, tenor and bass drums. He writes that “The girls’ dance, **tshigombela** (bold in the original), and the boys’ reed-pipe dances are not sufficiently important to merit the use of the bass drum, which is reserved for the music of the **domba** initiation and the national dance. Similarly, only the tenor and alto drums are used in the girls’ initiation schools”. Kevin Brown (2005: 2 [Internet]) writes that Cymbals and tom tom came from China as addition to the earliest forms of [Western, mine] drum set. There is no drum in the Igoru ensemble called by such names used by Blacking above. The three drums that form the instrumental ensemble are called *Ukiri* as stated earlier, though each of them is further designated by representative names according to their roles in the ensemble.

Some writers use terms such as the following to discuss African drums and their players: James O’Brien (1994: 308) mother drum (*uta* of the Ibibio of Nigeria); Jan Ijzermans (1995: 259) master drummer; Nzewi (1977: 379) master musician; John Chernoff (1979: 43, 50) master drum, master drummer; Elizabeth Oehrle (1993: 116) talking drum; Kenichi Tsukada (2001: 159) master drummers; Nzewi (2003:31) master instrument; Elizabeth Oehrle and Lawrence Emeka (2003: 42) master instrument. Others include: Andrew Tracey and Joshua Uzoigwe (2003: 84, 88) master musician, and master drummer; Zabana Kongo and Jeffrey Robinson (2003: 105) master musician; Jerry Leake ([Modern Drummer Magazine](#), December, 2004: 2), master drummers and master musicians; *Music of Sub-Saharan Africa* www.sinc.sunvsb.edu (2005 [author’s names not in the article]) *iya ilu* (“mother” drum) serving as the master drum, *omele ako* (small “male” drum), and *omele abo* (small “female” drum).

In Igoru music, as in several African cultures, the drum that has the deepest tones in the ensemble is called the mother drum (*izu ukiri*), while the second is called the baby drum (*omo ukiri*) and the third varied drum (*ukiri evwarien*). The concept derives from the philosophy that music is caring (motherly) for the human soul and general well-being. The drums, generally in the Okpe culture, as is also evident in several other African cultures, are considered sacred, being representative of the feminine gender and her invaluable productivity. This philosophical construct, further includes certain restrictions that a “mother-producer” should not sit upon or strike other “mother-producers”. Breaking these set of rules has spiritual implications that the offender could be punished by the ancestral spirits.

The palm tree, in Okpe, is considered to be feminine and is referred to as a productive mother (*omiomom*). For this cause, women are neither allowed to climb it, nor attempt to fell it by cutting it with strokes of the cutlass or axe and are not allowed to sit upon it when it falls. In the same way, women are not allowed to beat the drums in traditional Okpe culture; they could compose, sing and dance. In some of the other music typologies like *Ijurhi*, the master drummer sits on the drums to beat them and as the rule is, women are forbidden to sit upon or stroke the drums. Two Igoru female ensemble leaders, Amukeye Okodidę and Titi Qvřen confirmed that their ensembles comprise only female members (performers), but included male drummers for this reason.



Plate 2 – 1: Amukeye Okodide (left) and Titi Ovren (right) female ensemble leaders and Esther Eni, member

The name and records of the *Egboto isinio* Igoru ensemble provide more evidence. *Egboto* means ladies or women and all the singers including the lead vocalist are female with only one male voice functioning as the coordinator/facilitator that introduces the names and pieces of the ensemble and sings the lower part in harmony. The drummers were also men. If according to (lespercussionsdeguinee.com (Internet: author's names not in the article) "the first all-female Guinean percussion group, Amazones - Women Master Drummers of Guinea was officially created in 2002" [by reason of modernism,

mine], similar reasons as those of Igoru music might have precluded women from beating the drums earlier.

Silver Burdett (2005: 2) writes that "Drum ensembles are often led by a **master drummer** [bold in original] who plays solos against the overlapping patterns. The master drummer also leads the ensemble by playing signals that tell the other players to switch to a different section, change drum patterns, change the tempo, or end the piece. Drums within an ensemble may be called into a dialog with the master drummer in a call-and-response pattern. The master drummer also works with dancers to coordinate the dances and tempos".

Music of Sub-Saharan Africa (www.sinc.sunvsb.edu 2005 [author's names not in the article]) discusses *fontomfrom*, (royal) drum ensemble of Akan communities and *bata* drums ensemble of the Benin Yoruba. For the former, the double bell (*gankogui*), a second metal gong (*atoke*), the calabash rattle (*axatse*), and a higher-pitched drum (*kaganu*), provide the basic rhythmic reference for the others and the larger drums (*sogo*, *kidi*, and *gboba*) interlock with the *kaganu* to create a dense, four-part texture and all respond to the calls of the master drum, *atsimevu* (spelt this way in original), which enters last. Bata drums, of the latter ensemble, comprise two small ones called *omele ako* and *omele abo* that are played with sticks, and a somewhat larger one, called *eki*, that is played with the hands. Of these, the larger one, called *iya ilu* ("mother" drum), serves as the master drum of the ensemble, and interacts most closely with the smaller horizontal one, called *ako*. *Obo Addy: Master Drummer* (www.oboaddy.com 2005 [author's names not in the article]) quotes a remark on the master drum as follows: "The precision astounded me with the drums changing for each item, from the sharp sound of the Ewe master drum to the warm sound of the Ga master drum."

Many writers have described the mother drums of some African cultures as master drums for their roles in the ensemble. Some even avoid talking about it as mother drum and simply refer to it as master drum. In Igoru music, though the varied drum plays more varied melo-rhythmic patterns, the mother drum is considered a fundamental foreground, and thus lays the fundamental layer for the other two to build upon. To consider the roles of the varied drum, and the mother drum, one might begin to consider which of them could be called the master instrument. Although the varied *ukiri* has more variations than the mother *ukiri*, it is difficult to distinguish the most dominant among the two in the ensemble. While the varied *ukiri* seems to dominate in melo-rhythmic variations, the mother *ukiri* dominates in its deep tonal character. The concept of a master in gender relationships is often masculine and since Igoru musicians conceive the drums together as feminine and do not refer to either of them as “master drum”, we shall then prefer the use of the terms mother drum, varied drum and baby drum to describe the three drums in this discourse.