

CHAPTER 4

IGORU MUSIC AND ITS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Definition

The term Igoru, literally connotes something that is considered to be very precious and of high value. It later became associated with gold. That is many Okpe call gold *igoru*, though the commonest name for the ornament is *oro*. This is not to argue that Igoru music appeared or came in vogue about the time when the ornament gold flourished in the Okpe country during the sea route trade by batter which existed between the Portuguese and the Okpe around the Delta tributaries in the 16th century. It simply means that Igoru music is a typology the Okpe cherish immensely. However, to mark out the value of the typology, in accordance with the connotation, *Igoru* (gold ornaments) formed part of the costume for the dance. Since the ornament was not part of igoru performances from the beginning, the ornament as part of the dance paraphernalia was not made a strict requirement, but permissible to those who have it.

4. 2 Origin and historical development

Igoru is one of the oldest music in Okpeland. Oral accounts identify *iphri* as

the oldest music of the Okpe. The form and text of this typology is not influenced by any other neighbouring culture. Its performance is hereditary by right of primogeniture and as such only two related families have been known for its performance in Okpe. They are the families of Ode Isuanbo of Onyeke and Erhiorhodame Ojokolo of Okwokpokpo. Igoru music became the second

typology to evolve among the people. These two typologies are regarded as indigenous to Okpe heritage before, during and after their migrations. The third among the oldest typologies is *ema*, a royal music that the Okpe traditional council holds in high esteem. It was created for the socio-political activities concerning the people in the process of chieftaincy and kingship installations, as well as the burial of the titled personalities (Okpe Chiefs and rulers). The historical development of Igoru music, in this study, is divided into four periods as follows.

4. 2. 1 First period (c. 1100 – 1900)

This study attempts to discuss the development of Igoru music from the time the Okpe arrived their present settlement in the 12th century. This period seems long, but only little information is available since the culture is oral. Igoru music from this time was regarded as daily reporter and the musicians as broadcasters of current affairs in the society. Thus, its original idea focused on how to put wrong attitude into correctitude and to maintain social order. There was proliferation of Igoru ensembles around the Okpe nation, such that almost every Okpe town and village had Igoru ensemble. Members of these ensembles functioned as investigators, taking note of deviant activities in the communities. These discoveries were set to music and performed in public at appropriate occasions. So far, of the eighty seven songs collected from the

field, only three songs could be linked to this period. One of the three songs attempts to protect the Okpe political system and this is linked to the political imbroglio in the reign of Ezezi I, the despot king discussed earlier in chapter three. The second song philosophically examines the position of a father in the home, to firmly establish his leadership roles and the third song relates spiritual encounter associated with the belief on witchcraft activities.

4. 2. 2 Second period (1900 – 1945)

This period covers missionary and colonial activities in the Okpe nation up to the year Ezezi II was crowned (after the first interregnum). The themes of the

period focused on the protection of Okpe heritages. Some of the songs attempted to contest that the Okpe traditional religious system has more values to the people than the Christian religion introduced by the missionaries. Subsequent songs suggested efforts to protect the territorial inheritance of the Okpe from settlers who often laid claims of ownership to the portions of land the Okpe allowed them to inhabit over the years. Song 25, page A1 – 39 for instance refers to the Uvwie (Effurun) who share common boundary with Okpe. Oral tradition states that Okpe gave Uvwie the land they now occupy when they first migrated to the area. Years later, they naturalized and became neighbours, sharing common culture and paying homage to the Orodje of Okpe. Much later, they began to contend the ownership of the land with the Okpe. Nevertheless, the elders of Okpe remained accommodating in letting the Uvwie occupy the place, since their forefathers had accommodated them in the past. Some Igoru performers however argue that the same song

was performed as innuendo to caution the Itsekiri settlers who in the 1940s contended the ownership of Sapele land.

In the 1930s and 1940s, *Igoru* music became a social tool for fighting corruption, wickedness and moral decadence within and outside the Okpe country. The themes began to centre on individuals who contravene cultural norms. Miserly married women who starved their husbands; traditional and customary court chiefs who were corrupt and sex workers became the main focus. Other themes defended traditional ethos, commended members of the community who maintained moral uprightness and defended the music profession.

4. 2. 3 Transfusion to Yorubaland

The Okpe Union played a major role in the furtherance of Igoru musical performances in Lagos. Within the second period, beginning from the late 1920s to the 1930s, groups began to show concern and deliberated on the

election and installation of a new king, particularly as neighbouring communities were passing scornful innuendoes on the Okpe. This brought about the rise of Okpe Union that was formally inaugurated on May 16, 1930. The Union had branches in many major towns and cities around Nigeria and overseas, but had its headquarters at NO. 67, Moshalasi street Obalende Lagos. It soon became a formidable force that championed the Okpe political reforms, furtherance and preservation of Okpe cultural heritage, human and non-human development strategies among other issues of common interest. The Okpe Union, London branch, under the chairmanship of Chief Edison

Otemewo also contributed immensely to these issues of development in Okpe. Obaro Ikime (www.waado.org) argues that:

Throughout Nigeria, the 1930s and 1940s were the years which saw the rise of 'Progress Union.' The reorganization of the 1930s... was common to all of Southern Nigeria. Native Administration were required and encouraged to engage in developmental projects – the building of inter-village and inter-clan roads, dispensaries and maternity centres, schools and other works of public utility...'Progress Unions' developed alongside with village and clan councils of N. As [Native Administrations] to serve as forums for the coming together of a cross section of the populace, irrespective of traditional status and educational qualifications, to think about development projects and how to finance them; to serve when necessary as pressure groups of the N. As; to forge ethnic unity, to provide a supra – N. A. leadership. The fact that often branches of such unions sprang up in different parts of the country meant that even those not at 'home' could still contribute their views and means to the development of the 'homeland.'

The activities of Okpe Union in Yoruba land favoured Igoru musical performances in Lagos, as a socio-cultural tool for Okpe unification and propagation. There exist common oral accounts on how Igoru music became the much-needed instrument. Mebitaghan (2001: 21) writes about the formation of the Okpe Union and some of its objectives that include music as

follows:

Firstly, a rumour was current that the Itsekiris had decided to resuscitate their moribund Oluship with the intention of colonising the Urhobos. The need to form a Union to ward off any Itsekiri ambition became necessary.

Secondly, the Union came into being as a result of a sort of 'overlordship' by Uvwies, Okpes' neighbours. By the late 1930's [apostrophe in the original] the Okpes and Uvwies usually combined to organise dances especially during the Christmas season in Lagos. It came to be observed that only Uvwie songs and dance steps were employed during the combined dances resulting in the Uvwies collecting lion share of the proceeds. This made the Okpes to put a stop to this social combined songs and dances. This move... thought the time had come for Okpe Union to compose songs in Okpe [dialect], with accompanying dance steps.

Some oral accounts indeed claim that the Okpe and Uvwie conjointly organized dances at important seasons in Lagos between the late 1920s and 1930. During the events, only Uvwie songs and dances were performed and this made the Uvwie claim superiority over the Okpe. The insults that resulted from this experience made the Okpe to stop the joint performances and began to perform Igoru music of the Okpe in Lagos. The Uvwie thus challenged the Okpe Igoru ensemble to a contest which the Okpe won at Lagos in 1930.

Oral interview with Peter Etalo, a prominent Igoru musician who lived and performed Igoru music in Lagos in the late 1930s, however suggest that there was neither formal musical contest nor joint performances between the Okpe and the Uvwie in Lagos. According to him, a certain woman, Irhimirhuvwie Akalusi whose mother was Uvwie from Effurun and father Okpe from Mereje town, had a dispute with a wealthy Uvwie woman in Lagos around 1930. In the process of their dissension, they challenged one another to publicly show

what they worth and own. They fixed a competition for themselves and Irhimirhuvwie requested the Okpe Union in Lagos to be in her company so as to give her moral support during the event. In preparation for the event, her Okpe supporters met with her by night and rehearsed some music. The group chose *ema* music which songs, as at then, had mixture of the Edo and Okpe languages. The Uvwie woman and her supporters arrived at the venue of the competition at Luis Street by Gbamgbose, Obalende, Lagos. To display her wealth, the Uvwie woman changed her dress three times successively and received rousing ovation from the audience who admired her expensive dresses. On her third appearance, she paraded with a well-dressed beautiful pussycat.

When Irhimirhuvwie arrived at the venue with her *ema* ensemble, her supporters began to eulogize her by use of her father's praise names:

Praise name	Her response
• <i>Ekpekpere</i> (short, but strong);	<i>Ugben oghwe obra</i> (fat thigh of salmon fish)
• <i>Agbin</i> (the unshakeable);	<i>Mia sa ne</i> (I'm now coming)
• <i>Olorogun</i> (great warrior);	<i>Meme o</i> (I am she)

Irhimirhuvwie married one of the white men that constructed the North-West Nigeria Railways and had five mixed colour children with whom she came for the contest. The appearance of these well-dressed children in her entourage, caused heart attack for the Uvwie woman, because she was barren. Her supporters quickly took her away from the venue and this marked the end of the event. While the Okpe rejoiced with irhimirhuvwie, the aggrieved Uvwie supporters insulted the Okpe that they could never sing songs completely in their own language.



Plate 4 – 1: Peter Etalo of Mereje, Igoru performer

Some Okpe who heard these remarks presented the issue at the floor of the immediate General meeting of the Okpe Union. At the meeting, Egbikume Azano of Ughwoton, Ememo Itehinagi of Ugolo, Okiokio whose praise name is Igbeni of Egborode and Esanukpe of Amwokpe were charged with the responsibility to compose new songs in Okpe. This assignment yielded dividends, but the team this time decided to compose in Igoru forms. Song 13, page A1 – 24 became the first to be composed by this team of composers. They took a procedure whereby each member of the team provided at least a

sentence. They put the sentences together to form a simple statement which formed basis to the short composition.

Hugh Tracey (1970: 2 and 3) observes similar compositional procedures among the Chopi:

Their instruments and their songs and dances reflect great credit upon the abilities of the Chopi. When one remembers that not a note of their music has ever been written down, nor has anyone within their experience, they say, written or translated the words of their poems, it is remarkable to find that they compose new Ngodo with almost unfailing regularity every two years or so... A description of how Katini and Gomukomu set about composing a new orchestral dance will show how musically advanced these men are. Both of them say that the first thing they do is to find appropriate words for their song and compose the verses of the lyric before the music. The subject-matter may be gay, sad, or purely documentary. In every case it is highly topical and appropriate to the locality, so much so, in fact, that most of the allusions would be caught only by those in close touch with the villagers and the district. They are often highly critical of those in authority over them, white or black, and to a large degree it may be said that the poems reflect the attitude of the common people towards the conditions of their society.

Several rehearsals were held to master the new Igoru songs well in Lagos. Then the Okpe Union headquarters fixed date and invited the general public to an inaugural performance of the Igoru music. This event marked the beginning of Igoru performances by the Okpe in Lagos. Thereafter, the Union held annual performances of Igoru music from 1931 to 1944. Within this

period, several ensembles emerged amongst the Okpe in Lagos, particularly when the surge for commercial sex began to receive critical assessment. The Jeddo, Ughwoton, Mereje, Deghele, Ugborhen and Elume people had Igoru ensembles accordingly, in order to represent their community interest in Lagos. These ensembles and individuals began to watch out for one another's ill paths which made Igoru music become a genre of satire. By this time, performers often intrigued their audience by their courageous attitude in pointing fingers at offenders, if they were unfortunately present at the performance venue.

The first generation of *Igoru* musicians in Lagos includes Egbikume Azano of Ughwoton, Ememo Iteminagi of Ugolo, Okukushi Akpoto of Mereje, Okiokio of Egborode, Esanukpe of Amwokpe and the great Boyi Eyekaghe of Okwokpokpo Ugolo, the brave Okpe who led the protest against taxation and was consequently gunned down at Maciver, Sapele by the colonial masters in 1927. "The tax riots were in 1927 and payment began in 1928 (D. A. Obiomah, www.waado.org). Later generation of Igoru musicians include Igben Eghwughwuakpo and Peter Etalo of Mereje, Ohi Inikoro alias Olokpokpodjen of Ogirisen, James Osia, Jolly Agbinije, Idisi Adibo and Smart Ukiri of Onyeke, Udogu Olocho of Mereje, Esadjumi of Okwokpokpo, John Omaromwaye Igbide and Ohworerhine of Jeddo,

Some oral accounts claim that the Okpe women in Lagos also had their own Igoru ensembles. Identified members of these female ensembles include Agbadi Egbele of Onyeke, Emetiwuru Otemewo of Adeje, Enatomone, Takpevwiere, Atagbasha, Titi Oyibo, Afisi, Mene, Edafe and Enakorame,

some of whom were great and wealthy international business tycoon who also performed Igoru satires. The researcher however met Titi Oyibo at Adeje who remarked that though she lived in Lagos during the period under investigation, but did not perform Igoru music.

4. 2. 4 Third period (1945 – 1970)

The third period covers the reign of Esezi II, his death and the second interregnum. The period also marks the diminution of Igoru performances in Lagos as many Igoru musicians began to return to Okpe land to continue their living. The last Igoru performance of the Mereje in Lagos was around 1944, while that of Jeddo was in 1945. The musicians who returned home joined existing Igoru ensembles or formed new ones and continued their musical practice. Themes in this period declared the joy of the Okpe concerning the successful reformation of the Okpe political institution, with the installation of

Esezi II in 1945. One of the songs also presents a lamentation on the death of the king which occurred in 1966.

Other themes draw reference to the genealogy of children whose parents came to Okpe as slaves during the slave trades. The Okpe claim, according to oral accounts, that their forefathers never sold slaves, but bought from some neighbouring ethnic groups during the slave trade era. Any person dwelling in Okpe land who is not able to trace his genealogy to any of the four sons (or ruling quarters) of Okpe is therefore considered the descendant of a freed slave, who has no knowledge of his/her origin. Much attention during the period was focused on the activities of sex workers and the consequences of

the practice, as well as other wanton attitudes of community members. This period was characterized by attacks against Igoru musicians, for performing satire. Several themes reflect the conflict situation arising from the performances and the sorcery attacks.

4.2. 4. 1 Competitions back at home

The spirit of competition marks Igoru music. The understanding of the term competition, in this context, is in two dimensions. The one being that members of an ensemble would go back to more serious rehearsals, after watching the immediate performance of a rival group, and present a performance with efforts to beat the standard of the former and the other being that the two ensembles would perform one after the other before a panel of judges. The aim is to distinguish oneself as a greater composer, a better singer or ensemble. It further includes daring attempts to challenge a good performer, ensemble or community who in its previous performance had insulted one, to the contest of musical creativity.

Since Igoru musicians in this period focused their disparaging compositions on one another, and directly insulted and scandalized individuals who are

either members of particular ensembles or village, the competitions were characterized by retaliatory performances and patriotic community defense. That is, when an ensemble performs in its community and insults members of a neighbouring community, the ensemble of the insulted community composes and rehearses for a reprisal performance to insult the former. The second category of competition arises when a sponsor bids to take the best

ensemble to the studio for recording. In this form of competition, judges are appointed and two or more ensembles are invited to a neutral venue to perform one after the other before the judges who in the end decide the winning ensemble. These competitions strengthened Igoru ensembles and performances during the period.

4. 2. 4. 2 Cynosure to opposite sex

Music has a natural tendency to make performers popular in the society and enable them attract much attention from the public. In this way, greatly talented and excellent Igoru musicians became cynosure to members of the society and attracted much attention from the opposite sex. Young men desired to marry female singers and young ladies desired the great male singers for their artistry. Idisi Adibo of Onyeke after a brilliant performance at Aghalokpe had a young pretty lady who voluntarily followed him home and became his wife. Another experience is that of Amereka Emakpo of Okwovu Oduado. He sojourned at Oluwa, a village in former Ondo State, as an oil palm farmer. The task of processing palm oil manually was too enormous for him to single-handedly cope with. He therefore needed a spouse to assist him, but had no money to go through the customary process of marriage. He came to Sapele and found a beautiful young woman who hawked *Ogogoro*, locally brewed gin. He proposed to her unsuccessfully and by night, visited her with a relation and two friends. He then thrilled the lady with some songs, thus won her love and they got married.



Plate 4 – 2: Amereka Emakpo of Okwovu Oduado, Ikoru composer

4. 2. 4. 3 Appreciation, patronage and recompense

The masses enjoyed and valued Ikoru music so much in the society. This explains why there was always a great crowd of admirers who formed phalanx around Ikoru performers. As it was always so difficult for late comers among the audience to break through the phalanx, young men used to climb to the top of coconut trees in the surrounding, in order to have a good view of the performance. The audience normally claps hands to support the

accompaniment and raise very loud ovation in approval of good performances. They further spray the musicians with money, kola nut, cigarette, drink, etc. The peak of appreciation, patronage and recompense occasioned by excellent performance is the presentation of young ladies by their parents to the musicians as wives.

Kiki Ēȳenruja of Onyeke, for instance, had a pretty lady presented to him by her parents at Ujevwe, Urhobo town after a brilliant performance of Igoru music. The lady became his first wife and they had children together. Similarly, Idisi Adibo had a wife freely presented to him by her parents at Ekpan, Effurun in appreciation of his performance. Igoru musicians also had their rewards from payments made for negotiated performances. It is noted that when Igoru musicians are invited to entertain family guests and circumcised daughters at private homes, they may not necessarily sing Igoru songs, because a great number of them are satirical and would be out of context. They may rather perform any other form of entertainment music.



Plate 4 – 3: Idisi Adibo of Onyeke, Ikoru musician

4.3 Fourth period (1970 – 2005)

The fourth period covers the reign of Orhoro I to the present day. Although several oral accounts claim that the performance of Ikoru music ended in the

1940s, evidence from the field show that active performances of Igoru music continued till the late 1970s in some communities. In fact one of the Egboto Isini short playing records was released in 1973. Amukeye Okodide of Ughwoton, as at 2004 says her ensemble still performs whenever they are invited to any occasion by any member of the community. She however confirms that their recent performances were not necessarily Igoru songs and that they experience very limited invitations. Some themes in this period again focused on the Okpe political institution. Two of the songs available in our collection narrate the events that surround the coronation of Orhoro I and his mutual relationships with his brother and the chiefs. Attention on sex workers' activities reduced in this period, suggesting that the practice diminished. Themes focused more on the behaviour and condemnable acts of individuals in the society.

4. 3. 1 Sponsorship of short playing record albums:

Prior to the advent of long playing (LP) recording facilities, short play recording was available in Nigeria in the early 20th century when Igoru performance reached its height. Thus, almost all available Igoru records are in the short play form. The musicians had earnest desire to record their songs for the purpose of wider dissemination. Many of them however could not bear the cost, but depended on the well-meaning affluent for sponsorship. Some of the rich voluntarily sponsored a number of ensembles for recording. Amongst these eminent sponsors is Chief Ogbevo Okpenihwo, popularly known as Chief Omoraka of Sapele who sponsored Udogu Michael Olocho's recording.

Others include Boyi Tebu of Djakpa Elume who sponsored Ughwodjokporo Usumabo of Okwovu Oduado and Ukorudama Idimi of Ituru Elume who sponsored Amereka Emakpo of Okwovu Oduado. Other Igoru musicians like Egbikume Azano of Ughwoton and the Egboto Isini ensemble sponsored

their own recording. Majority of those who were sponsored had only one or two successful records, while those who were self-reliant had several records to their credit. Some of the records however carried wrong inscriptions that contained misinformation. Inscriptions such as *Ijurhi* or *Odjoboro* are found on some of them, whereas the music is Igoru. Other errors include omission of the artiste's names or entry of the ensemble's name without the names of the lead vocalist.

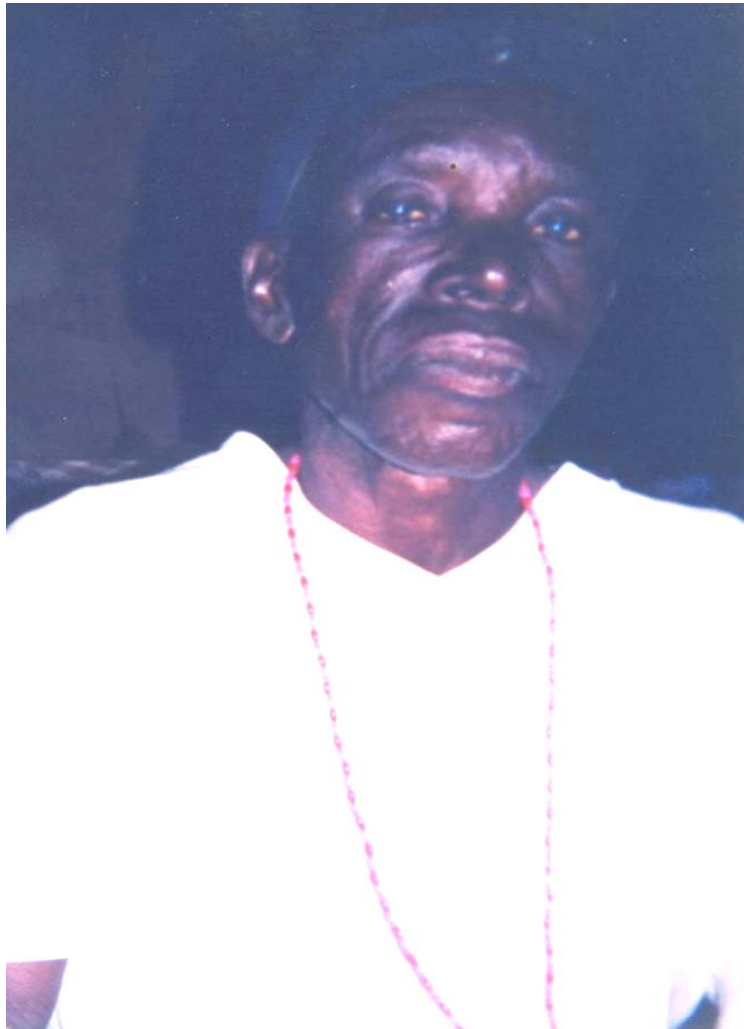


Plate 4 – 4: Udogu Michael Olocho

4. 3. 2 Transformation to a New Genre:

By the late 1940s and 1950s, many of the Lagos based Igoru musicians had retired home to Okpe land. Notable among them was Egbikume Azano who established a private chemist in Sapele. He trained many other Igoru singers during this period. He was recognized as the most talented, and productive Igoru and Ighoṣha composer in Okpe. As Igoru ensembles continued to deride members of the public through performances, some victims of the satire resorted to the use of traditional medicine and sorcery devices to afflict the musicians. Oral accounts testify that one Aghomiche Olosho mysteriously stood lifeless at a performance in Sapele in the 1940s. But some members of the performing ensemble who had spiritual powers encouraged members to keep the performance on while he was being resuscitated.

At a public performance, Titi Ukereti of Deghele Elume, the lead singer in her ensemble, opened her mouth to raise a song, but her voice suddenly failed. She could no longer talk, sing or hear, in spite of several efforts made by members of the ensemble. She was immediately taken to a great *Ọbo*, medicine man, in Deghele who had great spiritual healing powers. The process of her healing took quite some time, such that she had to live very close to the medicine man, Mr. Ukereti, who eventually became her husband. His efforts made her to be able to hear and talk faintly for the rest of her life.

Ebiaigbe Egbedi, at a public performance in Deghele, narrowly escaped death from similar attacks. This faithful day, someone in the crowd sprayed Ebiaigbe with a poisoned stick of cigarette. One of his brothers, Adjagba who was a medicine man with great spiritual powers was present at the performance scene. Adjagba forced his way through the crowd and attempted to pull his brother, Ebiaigbe away from the performance scene. But the phalanx of admirers disallowed him. Ebiaigbe himself was still under his

oruru, force of inspiration, and therefore pleaded with his brother to let him thrill his audience a little more. But Adjagba would not listen to persuasions. He announced to the audience that he was on a mission to rescue his brother from those who attempted to kill him. His explanations seemed incredible and untenable to the audience, for which they resisted him.

To prove his point, Adjagba picked up one stick of cigarette from the lot and challenged any doubting member of the audience to come and smoke it. No one dared to smoke it, but doubts persisted and he was asked to prove his point further. He demanded for a bowl of water, which was brought before him. He dropped all other sticks of cigarette and they melted and sank. Then, he picked up the one he had earlier identified as poisoned, dropped it into the water, and it remained afloat (not absorbing the water). This persuaded the audience and the crowd finally dispersed.

Many other Igoru singers, including Egbikume Azano, Idisi Adibo, etc, were also afflicted with refractory ailments that they suffered for many years. This trend brought Igoru music to gradual extinction between the 1960s and 1970s, and gave rise to a new typology known as *Ighopha*. This evolution was a result of Egbikume Azano's efforts to transform the utility of musical prowess from performing satire to the performance of educative music. The new typology therefore became highly contemplative and most appreciated by the Okpe elders. Upon this recognition, the Orodje of Okpe, Orhoro I invited him to the palace as mentioned earlier. He accommodated him in the palace at Orerokpe and gave him a free plot of land to develop. Egbikume had a good number of albums both of Igoru and *Ighopha* music to his credit. He died in 1947 and was buried at his hometown Ughwoton. Today, however, this *Ighopha* is being revived by Egodemuerin Osia (alia Iredio) of Okwetolo, an

Okpe Disco musician who has introduced modern instruments and sound equipment to its performance.



Plate 4 – 5: Egbikume Azano of Ughwoton

4. 3. 3 Ighopha music

It is pertinent to briefly discuss *Ighopha* music, in order to differentiate it from Igoru music, particularly as they both present similar lyrical themes. *Ighopha* music began with long narratives accompanied by use of hand clapping only.

The performer later introduced one *ukiri* drum and much later replaced it with a thumb piano (*isorogun*). Although it is not quite clear when the typology became separated from Igoru, the performer in one of his albums remarked that he began performances in 1931. Since 1931 falls into the early period of Igoru performances in Lagos, which he, Egbikume Azano contributed much to, it is believed that he meant both Igoru and *ighopha* music in the remark. Most *Ighopha* songs were through-composed. The lead singer sings it through and the chorus takes it over.



Plate 4 – 6: Egbikume Azano and some members of his ensemble

A lot of the songs were also homophonic and a few had one male voice that provides a harmony part. Some of the songs are antiphonal – they are presented in repeated/recycled call and response pattern. Others have very long solos with a two-line poetic chorus coming at the end of every verse. Their contemplative characters and long winded musical sentences differentiate it from Igoru. The themes had little attention on sex trade. They present biographies and some autobiographical remarks. Some of the themes also made reference to the Okpe political institution and the grouping of Okpe with Urhobo, suggesting the need for each ethnic group to maintain its own dignity. Most themes draw analogy on general issues that concern mutual understanding, application of wisdom to one's living, and patriotism. The following text is one example of analogical theme that comments on such general issues.

OBO RE ORHOMURUN ARHA MERE UKO

Ẹkpare: E, uvu obo r' orhomurun, arha mēre ukọ,
Owo no roro avbaye-e;
Gbe nighe ughwaro, r' oka obaro erhumu,
Avbaye ọrhọ mēre ikerawon re kpaanre;
Uvu avbaye na ọrhọ mēre ikẹro r' ituru,
Uvu ughwaro na,
Arha je ghene mēre ẹton ẹgban,
Ri din biomu;
Ughwaro re ghọrọkọ r' ame ejire na,
N' uvu avbaye arha mēre okan ubiobiomu,
Re ji fi onyakpọ, e!

Ehwe: Avba rha mēre ukọ, e!

Ẹkpare: Ọna omēmē re roro akpọ,

Mi rhe rorie ri obaro hin,
Mi vbe rorie ri oberhumu;
Mi rhe rorie ri obo ọrhen hi,
Mi vbe rorie ri obohwere;
Akpọ oji ghini bẹn enyerẹn.
Arha same ọfọfọ da,
Ọvbọ dẹriẹ oma rhi ọdjodjẹrẹ;
Arha nya izede ọphophẹrẹ,
Ọvbọ dẹriẹ oma rhi oseseri.
Nighe ọkpan usaphẹ rode,
Osolobrughe ọma rhe uvu ephan,
Owan ovbo je ighwe ọwa-a,
Owan ọvbọ mẹrẹ ephan ọwa-a;
Ọran nẹ umwu usimi urhomu,
Ro simi t'ọbu t'ogbori.
Ọrieda ro kpokpo ọwan,
Yoro lele ọwan simi oma;
Ame ighroghro ọrhọ dẹriẹ oma rhi urhie oku,
Er' ọwọron na,
Arha dabo ghwo ọtọriẹ,
Ọkpan Ehọ rode ọrọ h'avbaye.
Uvu obo r' orhomuru arha mẹrẹ ukọ,
Otu inughe, ọwo no rho roro avbaye-e,
Ehwe: Ọye, uvu obo r' orhomuru,
Arha mẹrẹ ukọ.

Ekpare: Ghwo akpọ r' enyerẹn na,
Idadọneye yire nyeren;
Ohworho r' okoko idọlọ,

Idọlọ na irhe koko riẹn,
'Hworho roje ha emese,
Emese na irhe mevi riẹn,
Ohworho roji vbiẹ emọ,
Ọsoso emọ na irhe ji vi riẹn,
Nọye ọroi rh'akpọ nyeren.
Ọrọ rọ ghwọlọ eneyen, ọrọ mọrọn aye,
Erha ghrọrọ se,
N'ọrana itu akpọ a mẹn,
S'oro vboi rhe akpọ nyeren;
Uvu obo r'orhomurun, arha mẹn ukọ,
'Tu inughe, ọwo no rho roro avbaye-e.

Ehwe: Ọye, uvu obo r'orhomurun,
Arha mẹn ukọ.

Ẹkpare: Akpọna r'enyeren na,
Avbaran arha mẹn ọmọ ọdafe,
Ro nyeren akpọ djigbo djigbo,
Zighi zighi, pharhiẹn pharhiẹn,
Erhobo r'oso avbaye-e;
Uku r'ose ye ohu jovbo,
Ọvbọ ghwọghọ aye rh'urhomu hin;
'Mọ ọdafe ọvbọ dẹriẹ oma rhe ovbiogbere uvu ẹghware.
Ọrọ ha ọdafe wan oma,
Ọsoso ẹghware ne kumie eche;
N' odedede awan eburhun irhuen rọye urhomu,
Uvu ẹghware.
Uvu ọkp' egodo ọmiọmọ,
N'avbaran arha je mẹn aghen;

Rọvbọ sabu vbię ukorohu,
Erhobo r'ọso avbaye-e;
N'ehware ọravbọ ovbo brę,
Gbini erhirhię y'ovbo rhirhię?
Ikun ime wo na je męřę gbe r'onyakpọ uvu avbaye?
Uvu obo r'orhomurun arha męřę ukọ,
Otu inughe, ọwo no rho roro avbaye-e.

Ehwe: Ọye, uvu obo r'orhomurun,
Arha męřę ukọ.

Ękpare: Iyibo ri n'inọko rhe,
Mọ hwarhię akpọ r'ọwan nyeręn,
Aye rha bọn oghwa Isipito,
T'otu edafe t'ivbiogbere,
N'avbaran erhe simi oma ọphę,
Aye rha bọn Isukuru,
T'emọ edafe t'ivbiogbere,
N'avbaran erhe yono iwe ọphę;
Ọran n'ọkpęghęlę rode,
R'iyibo na iji kiki ru.
Ekete r'ọke ọhavbọ na,
Wo rha h'ọmọ ri 'Sukuru,
Avba gba esiso idọlọ mwu oma,
N'odedede ọye wa dję ufan,
Ake męřę osa wo na hwa;
Ọro kpomu ri Osipito,
Ọvbọ gba esiso idọlọ mwu oma,
N'odedede ọye wa dję ufan,
Ake męřę osa re wo na hwa;

- Uvu obo r'orhomurun arha mēre ukọ,
Otu inughe, owo no rho roro avbaye-e.
- Ehwe: Ọye, uvu obo r'orhomurun,
Arha mēre ukọ.
- Ẹkpare: 'Tu re hwrọ akpọ na rh'udo,
Raye dumẹ gudu gudu,
Ere kpare akpọ kpahen urhому,
Taghene aye na rhua akpọ rie,
Aghene Osolobrughwẹ ọgbọ ghwai se rhe,
Na ye rhọrọ;
Nighe oboro se ode Okpẹ,
Aye vba rhua ye ri obi Koko,
Ọmọ r'ole izie omerhẹn,
Marhẹ ọmọ na onoru merhẹn?
Uvu obo r'orhomurun arha mere ukọ,
'Tu inughe, ọwo no rho roro avbaye-e.
- Ehwe: Ọye, uvu obo r'orhomurun,
Arha mēre ukọ.
- Ẹkpare: 'Tu re gbobọ hi akpọ aye,
Sa me biomu akpọ awọrọ na,
'Hworho r'odo ghwẹ onyakpọ,
'Solobrughwẹ ọdo ghwẹ ọravbọ.
Ọbo orho ri ẹbo ekporo,
Orho simi ọwan,
Erhe hu ghelie,
Ọrhọ h'epha kpa otọre,
Ọvbọrhọ karorhọ ghwiẹ aye-e.

Omara Osolobughwe ono bru orhiẹn ọna,

Rẹ ọwan mẹrẹ.

Uvu obo r'orhomurun arha mẹrẹ ukọ,

'Tu inughe, ọwo no rho roro avbaye-e.

Ehwe: Ọye, uvu obo r'orhomurun,

Arha mẹrẹ ukọ.

IN WHAT IS GOOD, WE MAY FIND EVIL

Solo: Yea, in what is good, we find evil,

Let no one consider that;

See the face that is in front (of the human head),

There, it saw broken teeth;

There, it also saw eyes that were blind;

Still on the face,

We also saw beards,

That grew roughly;

This outstanding beautiful face that we commend,

In it, ugliness is found,

To insult human being.

Chorus: There, we find evil!

Solo: I take a deep thought of the world,

After I had thought it forward,

I come to think it backward;

After I had thought it to the right,

I come to think to the left;

The world is truly difficult.

When we drink cold water,

It changes temperature and becomes hot;

When we take a shortcut,
It turns to be very long way;
See the great padlock,
That God created inside the human belly,
We cannot open one another's door,
We cannot see one another's thought;
That is the protective medicine,
That keeps everyone safe.
The witch/wizard who afflicts one,
Is the same person who pretends to treat us;
The still water turned to a flowing river,
That is stormy;
If we investigate thoroughly,
It is a great deity that is there.
In what is good, we find evil,
Audience, do not consider that.

Chorus: See, in what is good,
We find evil.

Solo: This life that we live,
Each person lives his own way;
He/she who gathers wealth,
If the wealth holds together;
He who marries wives,
If the wives prosper and live with him,
He/she who bore children,
And all the children live,
Is the only great achiever;
He/she who finds his/her own and holds them,

And they slip off;
The world sees him/her,
As one who lived wrongly;
In what is good, we find evil,
Audience let no one consider that.

Chorus: See, in what is good,
We find evil.

Solo: In this world,
We found a rich man's child,
Who lived foolishly,
Roughly and carelessly,
We do not know the cause of that.
His/her inheritance after the father's death,
He/she lavishes all;
The son of the rich becomes a poor man in the assembly,
If he boasts of his wealth,
The assembly busts into laughter;
People use their noses to scorn him,
In the assembly.
Within the large family of a fruitful mother,
Is found a barren,
Who cannot even bear one child;
We do not know the cause of that.
Is it that the person does not sleep,
Or that she does not menstruate?
What story can you tell one about this?
In what is good, we find evil,
Audience let no one consider this.

Chorus: See, in what is good,
We find evil.

Solo: The whites, who came from overseas,
To make life more pleasant for us,
Built hospitals,
Where the rich and the poor,
Receive free medication;
They built schools,
Where children of the rich and the poor,
Receive free education;
That was a great gift (blessing),
The whites brought at first.
In the present time,
If you take your child to school,
You must have plenty of money on you;
You then give much bribe,
Before paying fees;
If anyone falls sick and goes to the hospital,
You must have much money on you;
You then give much bribe,
Before paying fees;
In what is good, we find evil,
Audience let no one consider that.

Chorus: See, in what is good,
We find evil.

Solo: Those who put the world into a mortar,
And crush it heavily,

Those who put the world on their heads,
And want to carry it home,
Say God should fall down at once,
So that they would pick him;
See, any good development that is due the Okpe,
They would take it to Koko,
The child who stops the mother from sleeping,
How would the child sleep?
In what is good, we find evil,
Audience let no one consider that.

Chorus: See, in what is good,
We find evil.

Solo: Those who lose focus of their lives,
And come to destroy the lives of other people,
One who is greater than the other,
God is greater than him/her.
If a medicine man goes to perform,
And he treats someone,
And the patient dies in his presence,
If he spreads his divination pellets,
He does not remember to pick them up.
This is how God will give this judgment,
For us to see.
In what is good, we find evil,
Audience let no one consider that.

Chorus: See, in what is good,
We find evil.

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