

## CHAPTER THREE TRANSCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSES OF IGBO TRADITIONAL MUSIC

### 3.1 Problems of transcription and analyses in Igbo Music

Transcription is "to record (something spoken or played) by writing it down". (Cambridge International Dictionary 1996:1549). Musical transcription therefore, is the specific application of literary tools to the documentation of a hitherto orally documented musical art. "Transcription has played a crucial role in the development of Africanist ethnomusicology, both as an analytical tool and as an emblem of professional competence". (Waterman 1993: 247) Before discussing possible problems that would or could be encountered in the process of transcribing Igbo music, it would be necessary to have a survey of some comments, observations and propositions on indigenous music transcription in Africa.

Writers on African music have variously drawn attention to some aspects of African music that they consider problematic for its transcription. The major problem is notating some peculiar rhythmic and tonal features of African music. Some of the writers call attention to some problems of transcribing African music without prescribing any new system of notation. They discuss the need for a new system of notation to be formulated for African music. Others discuss some perceived problems of transcribing some African music types and there from prescribe new notational systems.

The writer shall attempt a critical survey of the propositions made by some of the writers. Strong note is taken of Nzewi's (1977) contribution that has substantially critiqued attempts at notating African music. His contribution serves as a reference point for this study.

In a comparative survey of African and European music, Abiodun states that:

Nigerian traditional music structure and style are different from the European's. Its style features flexibility of its pitch system. Its pitch system is based on a relative rather than a fixed pitch system. Its scale comprises majorly five notes (pentatonic)...Its melody makes use of "off beat phrasing of melodic accents" with a limited range and "supposedly in the same key (tonal)." (2000:40)

Abiodun's observations are quite misleading. The conclusion that Nigerian music "style features flexibility of its pitch system" raises the question of whether Nigerian cultures do not have knowledge of pitch. Pitch is universal, though culturally ordered. As such Nigerian cultures have clear understanding and application of pitch. Nigerian's traditional music pitch system being culturally rationalized should not necessarily be compared with the equal temperament of Western classical music. The tuning of some instruments is based on culturally determined tonal/key system. Abiodun is perhaps, implying some sonic nuances of some instrumental tunings, which he discusses as flexibility of the pitch system.

Nigerian music does not comprise majorly of five notes (pentatonic) as Abiodun claims. Transcriptions have shown that Nigerian music features more of heptatonic scales, particularly the vocal music. Pentatonic scales are found but not as predominant as Abiodun states. Abiodun's conclusion that Nigerian melody makes use of "off beat phrasing of melodic accent" casts some doubt

on the extent of research informing the conclusion. Off beat phrasing, though encountered in Nigerian music, as in other cultural music types, does not characterize it. These conclusions seem to be based on assumptions. Abiodun betrayed the scholarly merit of his argument with the conclusion that Nigerian melody has "limited range and supposedly in the same key (tonal)". Nigerian traditional music is not rationalized along western classical key system, or we will also insist on modulations in Nigerian music. The concept of key in the Western sense should not be a basis for determining the formal features of Nigerian music. Although the Western key system applies to a variety of Nigerian music, its rationalization does not derive from Nigerian music. There is no discussion of the rationale for concluding that Nigerian melodies have limited range in the presentation.

Abiodun continues:

Western notation is inadequate for a representation of what a Nigerian music is and there has not been a generally accepted form of notation for Nigerian music. (Ibid: 42).

Abiodun gives the impression that Nigerian music is so complex and different from other world music that Western notation cannot be used for its transcription. His rejection of Western notation does not seem to be founded on convincing argument. For instance, pentatonic scale and off beat phrasing of melodic accents are representable on Western notation. Abiodun may have come across numerous transcriptions of Nigerian music using the Western notation. The easy performance reproduction of Nigerian music transcribed in Western notation system over the years belies his arguments.

Abiodun also suggests some developmental strategies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

One of the strategies is:

By structured rehabilitation, (which means) putting in good condition; to put back to former position and fame. These can be done in the following ways: Formation of our symbols of notation... (Ibid: 43)

Abiodun is obviously advocating for a notation system to be formulated for Nigerian music without providing a sample that is adequate for representing Nigerian music. His argument does not therefore, present a basis for assessing the merit of his contributions.

The argument that the pitch system of Nigeria's traditional music culture is based on relative rather than on a fixed pitch system can only stand when considered in terms of the equal temperament of European classical music, which is an entirely different music tradition. Such a comparison is irrelevant when one is discussing a human product that is autonomous. In folk music, each cultural entity determines her own pitch system through sensory perception of sound vibrations in her ecosystem. Uzoigwe made similar observation in his discussion of some Igbo ensemble music. He says that:

There is no specific Igbo word for 'scale', although in Ukom, Ese and Mgba instrumental ensembles scale is synonymous with the folk term aria nkwa (drum row). This may be compared with Venda mutavha (Blacking 1970:12), which refers to a row of keys on a xylophone or hand piano as well as a set of divining dice, of metal amulets, and of reed pipes. In effect, Ukom musicians perceive an in-extricable

organisation of musical instruments and tonality to social organisation; they see and explain the order of both physical and tonal relationship between the drums that make up the aria nkwa drum row in terms of human qualities and behaviour rather than in the abstract. (1998:43).

Abiodun argues that Western notation is inadequate for the representation of Nigerian music, but does not define the uniqueness of Nigerian music from the world indigenous musics. He does not critique examples of transcriptions of Nigerian music using Western notation in order to demonstrate the extent to which his conclusions are justifiable. His call for a formation of a system of notation for Nigeria's music begs the question about whether every country will have to develop own system of notation. Some caution needs to be exercised in advocating for new notation system. There should be no arbitrariness, otherwise, scholars will then have to cope with countless notational systems in order to understand and perform or discuss the music of different cultures of the world. The issue that needs to be addressed is whether the intrinsic qualities of Nigeria's music bordering on pitch, scale, rhythm, form, texture, presentational styles etc. are sufficiently non conventional to warrant a new notational system. There is no gain saying, however, that where there exists a peculiar deviation from the conventional norms of elements of musical sounds, there would be need for a special mode of representing such peculiarities.

In his contribution to the idea of developing a notation system for African music, Hugh Tracey expresses some reservations. He argues:

In his contribution to the idea of developing a notation system for African music, Hugh Tracey expresses some reservations. He argues:

The danger of writing down African music as interpreted by a foreigner in conventional staff notation with plus and minus or other signs to indicate assumed discrepancies from the tempered scale is obvious, particularly as it tends to represent the local African gamut as an imperfection of a conventional foreign scale, whereas in reality, the indigenous one, if generally accepted by a contemporary community, has an integrity of its own. Only after a considerable period of empirical research we will be justified in suggesting or establishing a form or forms of notation in respect of pitch, which will adequately reflect African norms. This will not necessarily mean avoiding the use of a staff notation but rather the creation of suitable symbols or the use of tablatures, which will indicate to the reader a set of note pitches that have oral validity within their specific context of time and place. How this will be done is still an open question.

(1968:73)

Tracey's position is contradictory. He seems to fluctuate between proposing the application of caution in the formation of new notation for African music and proposing the development of it. He appears to recommend that new symbols and tablatures should be created for the transcription of African music but does not know how these would be done. His argument emphasizes the undertone of "imperfection" should a different system for

notating African music be devised. This evokes Alain Danielou's (1968: 19-21) discussion on cultural genocide.

Tracey's argument cautions African music writers not to be in a hurry to conclude that African music cannot fit into the conventional system of notation. He rejects the idea of adding plus or minus in the transcription of African music while using Western notation. He, rather, proposes a fusion of the conventional Western notational system and any developed system. The writer shares Tracey's objection to adding plus or minus on staff notes while transcribing African music. Such signs do not give much insight into the degree of minus or plus that would be applied to the notes in actual performance. It may make some technical or scholarly impression but serves no practical purpose. On the issue of practical (performance) reproduction of transcribed music using any system, the writer shares Nzewi's warning that:

Notational systems and the resulting transcriptions should be helpful devices to encourage meaningful performance reproductions, adaptations, as well as basic universal appreciation of music. Where notation misrepresents the essential features of a performance; and where transcription obscures or complicates the interpretative features of performance-composition such an exercise can constitute a disservice to the music tradition in question --- The more complex a notational device or the visual impression of a transcription is, the more inadequate it would be for understanding the music and its performance. (1977:873).

Also discussing notation, Sam Akpabot says:

It is the view of this author that many problems concerning African music have been exaggerated to such proportions as to make them appear insoluble. In fact the problems can be divided into two: (a) Those facing a Western scholar trying to understand the music of Africa, (b) Those facing anyone trying to transcribe and measure this music. (1986:51).

He continues:

Anyone trying to notate African rhythms must have come across certain parts that seemed to defy conventional notation. The tendency in these is either to try and employ elaborate western metric notations to solve the problem, or propound yet another dubious theory on African rhythms... Another notational problem commonly found in the transcription of African rhythms is that of bar lines. In any given ensemble where the instruments are playing strict rhythm, there should be no problem determining the meter of each instrumental pattern from the tactus. The problem comes when one tries to transcribe the free improvisations of a master drummer within a strict rhythmic framework; surely this is not more impossible than trying to notate the free improvisation of 'bop' chorus by Charlie Parker or Dizzy. (Ibid: 52-53).

It is evident from Akpabot's arguments that he is not opposed to the use of Western system of notation for the transcription of African music.



Rather, he is of the opinion that proper understanding of the cultural peculiarity of rhythm, melody etc, is needed for the representative transcription of an African music type. He is of the view that it is dubious to propound strange theories in order to wriggle out of problems of some unfamiliar cultural facts about African music. Similarly, he is opposed to prescribing new notation systems that complicate African music performance. He acknowledges some problems that are encountered in transcribing some African music types, especially those that are based on speech-tone and music performed in free time.

Moses Serwadda and Hewitt Pantaleoni prescribed a tablature system as a possible notation for African dance drumming, arguing that:

It has long been recognized that Western musical notation is less than a satisfactory vehicle for recording African dance drumming. The symbols impose a fairly standardized Western interpretation that cannot be avoided, and they are incapable of expressing the lifeblood of African drumming, which is its timbre. A new system is needed, one without Western connotations and capable of indicating the quality of the sound, at least approximately. (1967:47)

The authors recognize that timbre is central to understanding African drumming. However, there is always a combination of tonal and rhythmic essence in African drum music performance. Serwadda and Pantaleoni present a misleading argument about African drummers when they state that "We distinguish between 'technical virtuosity' and 'good tone'. The African drummer does not. He understands a drum pattern as a sequence of timbres,

and faulty timbre is not just unpleasant or not to one's personal taste, it is wrong" (Ibid: 47). Africans, at least the Igbo master musicians, are able to distinguish between technical virtuosity and good tone. This is why the Igbo music community is always able to distinguish a master musician with high interpretative dexterity on an instrument from a musician who merely plays out the same music on an instrument with technical (mechanical) virtuosity. The former performer is acclaimed as a master musician and his music is popular. Musical apprentices also graduate from technical virtuosity to performing with good tone.

The assertion that Western notation discriminates a stressed beat also suggests that African music does not implicate a stressed beat. The concept of beat is understood and applied globally. It is the regulating pulse of any music or the stressed and unstressed motion of sound in time. If beat implicates these, then African music has stressed beat. When the rhythmic pattern:



is reproduced, it would be discovered that inherent stressed beats occur in the configuration as follows:  $\overset{12}{8} \cdot \cdot \cdot \cdot$

One technical problem of the tablature is that there are so many horizontal and vertical lines that inhibit easy reading of musical notes. This hampers its application in a performance situation. Relating the tablature to the Laban notation, as a justification for having the notation run from bottom upwards, brings to focus the issue of whether the tablature must be combined with Laban notation in performances. An independent system that captures

the essence of African drumming is needed. It is not really true that while the Westerner taps his foot to give himself a regular stress on which to hang his part; the African taps his foot to mime the motion of the dancers or any other part of the ensemble he wishes to add particularly strongly to his own. This is a misrepresentation. The African performer taps the foot to guide his regularity of stress points. The tablature does not appear to have achieved its aim of expressing the lifeblood of African drumming. The tablature could produce the same result if used for other non-African drums. The tablature has been discussed and similarly assessed as inadequate when Nzewi agrees that:

Nevertheless the Serwadda-Pantaleoni experiment represents a probable foundation for African drum music notation. With modification it has immediate possibilities for transcribing metronome and pulse patterns. For melo-rhythmic compositions on drum that play moving ensemble parts the rhythmic dimension of the system does not speak the fundamental truth about African drum music and is therefore inadequate. (1977:875)

Despite the shortcomings, Serwadda and Pantaleoni's contribution constitute a bold effort to address some technical aspects of notating African drum music.

Another attempt at African music notation is that of Pantaleoni and Ladzekpo (1970) for Takada drumming in the Anyako, Volta region of Ghana, which also appears to have demonstrated inadequate grasp of the musical tradition for which the system was prescribed. In the discussion of an example of Takada music written in Western notation, Pantaleoni argues:

communication yet to allow anyone tell in Western terms just what the role of stress is in drumming ensembles. It would seem to be something less than an organizing principle, since the organization of *takada* music is clear without any reference to it. It is perhaps something used more to style a line than to tie it to the ensemble, the way Westerners use grace notes. Since we feel hesitant to assign African stress a Western value, we can not employ Western notation.(1970: 11)

It is quite misleading for Pantaleoni to conclude that stress accent is an ancillary part of African drumming, akin to grace notes of the Western classical music. The hesitation to assign African stress a Western value suggests that African stress, although existing implies a different musical phenomenon. He fails to explain what African stress accents are in contrast to those of Western music. Again, the notation for *takada* drumming poses the problem of easy reading. There are so many vertical and horizontal lines that impede easy reading and performance reproduction. Also, the voice part is read from left to right while the drum and dance parts are read from bottom upwards. This suggests that a *takada* drummer cannot sing while playing his drums as is sometimes done in African music.

Pantaleoni-Ladzekpo conclusions on the use of 'stress' in African music has been viewed from a "culture-superior" stand point thus:

Pantaleoni feels hesitant about assigning to 'African stress a Western value' ---As if some values about the character of music are inviolably Western culture-specific and must be made to imply something

Pantaleoni feels hesitant about assigning to 'African stress a Western value' ---As if some values about the character of music are inviolably Western culture-specific and must be made to imply something different even if it is equally a musical fact in the music of a non Western culture. The fact that western music has developed a practical symbolic system of notation, some features and implications of which may have universal reference, does not make the musical facts represented by the symbols exclusive to western musical heritage. (Nzewi1977: 877)

Koetting's Time Unit Box System – TUBS (1970) which was "developed at University of California at Los Angeles in 1962, for didactic purposes in West African drumming,"(Shelemay 1998:157) TUBS use boxes of "equal length, put in horizontal sequence. Within each piece of music, each box represents one instance of the fastest pulse."(Ibid: 157) African musicians create music on the basic regular pulse. It is on the basic pulse motion that rhythmic progressions- slow or fast, are structured. The rigid squaring of sounds in the graphic boxes makes this system difficult for use in more free-flowing performance-composition of most African music. Also, Africans do not base their musical creativity on the principle of the fastest pulse as used in TUBS. African creative and performance style favours elastic approach to the basic regular pulse as against the regimented TUB system. Again, the arrangement of numerous boxes with dots inhibits easy reading for performance reproduction.

Andrew Tracey developed a notation for Matepe Mbira music of Rhodesia. Tracey (1970:51) says that he uses treble clef for the note names

of the Matepe Mbira notation. In the actual transcription however, treble clef was not included. There is no justification for the non-inclusion of the clef in the discussion of the notation system. One conclusion from this is that the Mbira tones do not have equivalents in the notes of the treble clef. Another possible conclusion is that he finds it necessary to make his notation complicated for some inexplicable scholarship reasons. However, apart from excluding time signature, clef sign and bar lines, the notation does not vary much from the Western staff notation.

Roderick Knight's (1971) notation and tablature for the Kora creates problems of readability with its arrangement of numerous digits, dashes and dots within a rectangular plane. Knight acknowledges the complexity of his tablature. He says: " this tablature, since it employs pitch numbers, does give some idea of the sound as well, but it is difficult to follow melodic movement since it shifts rapidly back and forth across the center line. For this reason it may often be desirable to add a horizontal line of ciphers or staff notation alongside the tablature, extracting the melody from the overall texture"(1971:32). If kora music would be less complex to reproduce from a staff notation, then his tablature is of no immediate need for the transcription and performance of kora music.

There is also a notation developed by Meki Nzewi for the Ese, an Igbo set of tuned drums. It was an attempt at combining some aspects of Western notation system with some culturally derived symbols. The notation system was necessitated by the need to capture the performance direction of Ese music that moves from the right to the left. The notation system for Ese captures the cultural essence of Ese music performance as well as other Igbo

membrane drums. Nzewi's notation is so far, the only attempt at developing a notation for Igbo drums that enables a practical performance reproduction of written music. Its rationalization is also culturally derived.

It is evident that some of these forays into African music notation, creditable as they may seem, have not provided the solutions they sought to provide. Most of them do not seem to present the performance-interpretation of the music/sound so that reproduction based on such notations would capture the aesthetic/artistic quality of the music. Almost all of them present complex formats that impede fast reading in performance situations. It is important to note that "transcription of a performance-composition is only representational of unfinished music and should be conceived as a reference, a guide to other compositions of the same music. It must not be proposed or represented as the absolute thing". (Nzewi 1977: 905).

In view of the fact that the Western system has not been adequately explored or adapted to African music, Tracey and Nzewi's cautioning for some restraint in the proposition of new notational systems are not to be ignored.

The main subject of this thesis is not to recount and assess all attempts by different music scholars to provide new systems of transcribing or notating African music. The attempt is also not to design or prescribe any notation system, rather, to put in perspective a critical issue in African music studies. Therefore, critical study of some contributions on the subject matter in order to note the merits and demerits as well as relevance to this work is presented. It is evident from the survey that there is no generally accepted system for transcribing African music.

Much of the prescriptions for African music notation are for African instruments. The writer is yet to come across a new notation for the transcription of African vocal music to be able to determine its merit or otherwise for this work. "For transcription and analysis of oral traditions, twentieth-century African scholars have preferred to use staff notation rather than alternative systems (Kyagambiddaya 1955; Nketia 1963; Ekwueme 1975-1976; Agawu 1987,1990)". (Shelemay 1988:159-160) Nearly all published transcriptions of African vocal music use conventional staff notation. The staff notation has been adapted to African choral music of different traditions. "Scholars often select it because of its ubiquity and easy readability"(Ibid: 157). It is also selected because African choral music is representable with the staff notation.

A representative transcription of Abigbo choral music for performance reproduction and study is possible using the Western staff notation. The formulation of new notational system for the transcription of Abigbo music is not necessary. This is because the pitches of the songs correspond with the pitches of the staff notation. Its elements (tonality, rhythm, harmony, texture) are representable on the staff notation.

In transcribing Igbo music and any indigenous music for that matter, a transcriber reckons with:

1. The tone/pitches (in horizontal relationship);
2. Harmony (the vertical impressions and relationships of notes in space);
3. Rhythm (intricate and simple, long and short durational values);
4. The form (prescribed or contextual), ornamental and dynamic elements of the music type.



There is no perceived problem of transcribing Igbo music. Igbo vocal music uses definite pitches, clear pulse and rhythmic organization most of the time. The writer does not observe any peculiar problem bordering on pitch or rhythm in Igbo vocal music totally different from other music cultures. Igbo instrumental music also features clear pulse sense, rhythmic organization as well as tonal distinctions on various instruments that enable the transcription of ensemble music. These guide the transcription of Igbo music. However, note should be taken of the following in the transcription of Igbo music and African music in general.

Igbo music must not be perceived as strange musical art that cannot be discussed in the conventions of European classical music, particularly the notation system. Any unique notation, as need be, must be derived from Igbo cultural rationalizations. The attempt by some writers to impose abstracted notational systems seems to demonstrate that African music is strange or undeveloped. It is the view of the writer that African music transcription should not be perceived as an outlet for intellectual exercises that merely dehumanize the art. Most Igbo musical instruments play melorhythm, not percussion. "Drum music is a process of deriving a rhythmic essence melodically, that is, a melorhythmic principle." (Nzewi 1997: 35) A representative transcription must take into account the various tonal properties of the instruments. There are at least two tones on Igbo membrane drum and slit drum.

Most Igbo choral music types are in the diatonic tonality (seven-note scale and its octaves). This conclusion is based on the practical field and analytical experiences of the writer. The writer has been involved in the

transcription of a wide range of Igbo choral music types totaling more than 300 folk songs and including Nkwa nwite, Ikorodo, Egwu Umunwanyi Ihiagwa, Egwu UmunwanyiAtani, Egwu Umuoji, Egwu Omugwo, Or'onu, etc. as well as having participated in the performance of a large number of Igbo songs in tradition.

Although a song type may make use of a selection of tones from the diatonic scale, seven-tone scale is prevalent. Jones observes that Swahili "melodies are nearly all diatonic, accidentals or change of key being rare. Yet it is by no means always diatonic in the European sense of being based on a key-note, with its dominant as the next note of importance."(1975/76:106) John Blacking also reports "the Venda traditional music makes extensive use of heptatonic and hexatonic modes."(1980:206) These are pointers that sub-Saharan Africa has heptatonic music tradition.

The rhythmic content of Igbo music could appear complex for a person that lacks adequate grasp of the sociology of Igbo rhythmic texture. Igbo music textures are constructed with varied and clearly marked rhythmic patterns contributed by individual musical instrument players and singers in a given ensemble. The rhythmic patterns of Igbo vocal music in isolation are not more complex than what is found in the vocal music of other world cultures. Correct transcription of the rhythmic patterns of a given song again depends on the skill and aural acuity of the transcriber. Note must however, be made of the problem that could be encountered while transcribing an Igbo vocal passage in free time.

Igbo music and African music in general, have "the basic form and the presentational form. The basic form is purely a musical rationalization, a

constant musical shape; while the presentational form takes into account the intention of the musical type/piece as well as the contingencies of a specific performance." (Nzewi 1997:42) Contextual forms are prescribed, and then negotiated in the performance situation.

Peculiar problems that may arise from the transcription of Igbo choral music will largely derive from the transcriber's musicality and cultural background rather than from the music itself.

### **3.2 SPECIFIC APPLICATION OF TRANSCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES TO ABIGBO MUSIC**

#### **3.2.1 Notes on transcriptions**

The transcription of examples out of Abigbo music repertory recorded is guided by the need to choose examples that contain the stylistic distinctions of Abigbo music that would be incorporated in the modern composition. The transcribed examples capture the essence of Abigbo music without prejudice to the creative content of the untranscribed music items.

The treble staff has been preferred for transcribing the parts of some of the examples for easy reading. All the examples are transcribed in the key of C not only for ease of reading, but because the traditional musicians do not conceive music on specific keys. The diatonic key of C major is arbitrarily chosen to serve the purpose of the transcription.

In the transcription of the three drum passages, the different pitch levels derivable from each drum (low- high) as used by Abigbo musicians are shown on different lines. The lines do not assign pitch or tonal levels to the sounds. They also do not specify intervallic relationship of the tones on the drums. They merely assist in the perception of the distinct tonal levels

derivable from the drums. In other words, the lines distinguish the high and low tones of the drums without fixing the tones on any intervals. The sign (x) is used to represent the tones of the instruments in order to distinguish them from the definite pitches of the vocal part. The durational values are shown with corresponding staff note values. Voice drops in the vocal parts are shown with wavering lines down the affected notes:



Exp. 1 is a transcription of the whole song. Exp. 2 is a transcription of a major part of the song. Exp. 3 is a transcription of the whole song. Exp. 4 is a transcription of a part of the song. Exp. 5 is an extract of some variations of some of the drums in a fast instrumental section of Abigbo music. All the phrases of the examples are marked with alphabetical letters to distinguish them musically and textually. Variations on the musical themes or statements are shown with figures.

Tables showing the interrelationships of phrases as well as the chord structures in some examples are provided for analytical reference. The conventional representation of chord structures is used for this purpose. The musical transcription and textual translation of each example is presented before the analysis of the song. A summary on the analysis is presented to highlight the dominant features of the Abigbo music.

### 3.2.2 Transcriptions and Analyses of Musical Examples

### Example I - H'OKARA (What he said)

mm = ♩. 56

Solo

U - mun - n'a - h'o - ka - ya wu ne - shi - o

Chorus

he e he e he

Solo

a h'o - ka - ra wu n'e - shi

Chorus

ei e - - -

Solo

Chorus

-he

Note: voice drop

Ex. i – ‘H’Okara (what he said) A Consensus Signifier

Call: Umunna' ho'kara wu ne'shi – o  
My people what he said is the truth

Resp: he e he e he e I  
Yes (agreement)

Call: A' hokara wu n'eshi  
What he said is the truth

Resp: E – he  
Yes (agreement)

Example I is a piece inspired by contextual occurrence. It was spontaneously composed in the context of the writer's initial interaction with the musicians in the field. The writer was explaining why he would be unable to pay the fee Abigbo members were demanding before they could give a performance of their music for a research recording. The lead singer extemporized the song when he became convinced about the sincerity of the writer. It is a typical example of performance–composition a contextual composition deriving from the contingencies of a performance. (Nzewi 1997:67-69)

It is significant of the potency of music in indigenous transaction of issues where what is validated in song is more binding and definitive than mere verbal agreements. Music signifies consensus, and what is stated in music has spiritual legality/endorsement, because music is an impersonal, non-

subjective agency for transacting socio-cultural relationships and contracts in African traditions.

The text of the sung affirmation is: "Brothers, what he has explained is believable." The chorus answers "he". "E" is a common one-syllable expletive in Igbo language for affirming a dictum, a pronouncement, an opinion a community consensus or interpersonal discourse. In normal language situation the expletive will be dropped with slight prolongation of vowel sound. Set to music it acquires melodic elongation that in the first statement b, has inconclusive cadence marked by a voice drop. In the chorus, second chorus response, b2, the melodically-harmonically varied repeat of the theme has a definitive cadence as per Igbo cadential idioms.

This example is five bars long. It is in compound quadruple meter (12/8) and is performed in a slow tempo. The structure is the call and response pattern. The lead singer raises the call that carries the message proper while the chorus responds with a melodic-harmonic setting of the signifier of consensual endorsement/affirmation. It begins with a quaver anacrusis. The anacrusis is necessitated by linguistic reasons. The "U" is a pick up vowel that gives stress to the mu in speech version. Hence it is given anacrusic musical setting that positions mu on a strong beat. The first solo-chorus setting of the textual statement (a, b,) constitutes an antecedent section pausing on the fifth of the scale sense. The second solo-chorus setting of the textual statement is a concluding sequence pausing on a normative restful cadence with the sixth in the root position. Whereas the first melodic statement of the chorus moves down a major second to establish a

non-restful cadence, the second statement moves up a major second to give a strong sense of finality.

A variant of the melodic theme is used for creative and aesthetic reason in the second chorus statement. The melody rises in stepwise motion and then slopes down to the final cadence. In order to articulate the melisma in "b" and prepare for the final cadence, the expletive "e" is used. With the consonant "h", added to the vowel "e", it accrues more emphasis that makes the final cadence more marked. The final chord of the chorus part is the sixth chord of the major scale in its second version.

In "a<sup>1</sup>", a musical and textual variation of "a" occurs. In "a<sup>1</sup>", the noun Umunna (brothers) is omitted. The composer beckoned on his kinsmen in "a". It would be unnecessary to repeat the beckoning since they have already responded. The normative omission necessitates melodic variation in "a<sup>1</sup>". Therefore, "a<sup>1</sup>" omits as many notes as would accommodate the text omitted, thereby creating suspense. The variation also results in slight textual adjustment. The noun, n'e-shi (the truth) which comes at a weak beat in "a" becomes more marked as it comes on the strong beat in "a<sup>1</sup>". The syllable n'e becomes a pick up syllable. Thus, whereas the communicative textual-musical emphasis in "a" is on "umunna", calling attention, it shifts to "n'eshi" the truth of consensus in "a<sup>1</sup>". This portrays how setting of text to music is not a casual affair, rather, guided by highlighting markers of meaning in a text. A melodic leap of a minor 6<sup>th</sup> down occurs in this example among others. There is judicious mixture of leaps and stepwise motions in the example.



Solo

U - mun - n'a - h'o - ka - ya wu ne - shi - o

Ex.1.1

Strict adherence to the overall pitch contour proper to the spoken version of the text is not maintained in this example. In "a", h'o kara wu n'e shi,

Solo

U - mun - n'a - h'o - ka - ya wu ne - shi - o

Solo

a h'o - ka - ra wu n'e - shi

Ex.1.2

is set to the following melodic intervals: Minor 6<sup>th</sup> down, unison, minor 3<sup>rd</sup> up, unison, unison. It acquires new melodic intervals in a1 thus: minor second down, major second up, major second up, unison, unison. This again contradicts the assumption that tonal language implies inflexible adherence to speech tones. Musical reasons govern melodic setting most of the time as long as meaning is not obscured. Marking devices for key words in a text ensures that this does not happen.

The difference in intervallic relationships of the call part is explained by the need for musical variations and melodic effect more than the need to have the melody adhere slavishly to the tonal inflections of the words. The argument is based on the consistency of linguistic meaning in "a" and "a<sup>1</sup>". It would not be

aesthetic or creative to repeat “a” or merely transpose it up or down in order to maintain the same pitch intervals.

The relationship of tone and tune in this example is such that although the tune accommodates the tonal inflection of words, it does not rely entirely on it. Whereas the text is essential in the construction of melodies, there is evidence that melody has a level of independence from the tonal inflections of the text, except in the construction of a mediocre composer. Traditional aesthetics demands musical finesse in text setting.

Chord structures in “b” are as follows: minor chord, major chord without the 3<sup>rd</sup> and a major 7<sup>th</sup> chord. The chords are constructed on three degrees of the scale: A, G and F, (ACEA; GDG; FACE). The octave duplication of the bass notes of the chords generates parallel octave progressions. In “b” the chord structures are: major chords without the 3<sup>rd</sup>, but with a major 2<sup>nd</sup> added, last inversion of 7<sup>th</sup> chord on the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the scale, major chord without the 3<sup>rd</sup>, last inversion of a 7<sup>th</sup> chord on the 6<sup>th</sup> degree without the third and major chord with the 5<sup>th</sup> degree at the bass. These demonstrate sophisticated chordal procedures without need for accidentals to produce harmonic tensions and catharsis.

The harmonic structure of Ex.1 is characterized by the progression of parallel 4ths and 5ths between the highest chorus voice part and the voice part immediately below it. Parallel progression of 4ths is clearly manifested in “b”. Parallel 5ths are used by the lowest voice part and the middle voice also. In “b1”, parallel 4ths also dominate.

Cadential notes of the solo and chorus parts are distinguished by long durational note values. The prolongation of the notes is necessitated by

musical and linguistic reasons. They ensure proper structuring of the melodic and harmonic phrases. In Igbo language, the phrases of spoken passages end on slightly prolonged vowel sounds. In other instances, a short moment of silence separates phrases. The prolongation of the cadential notes articulate the prolongation of the vowel sounds in spoken versions.

The interrelationship of the phrases a=a1; b=b1; in Ex I is given below:

Phrase	Bar	Related Phrase	Bar	Musical Relationship	Textual Relationship
a	1	a'	3	melodic	textual
b	2 - 3	b'	4 - 5	harmonic	textual

Table 1

### Example 2 - Ekele (Greeting)

Transcription of a major part of the song

**A** In free time

Solo

U - n'a - yo - l'i - zu n'a - bu o - nu      u - n'a - yo - l'i - zu n'a - bu o - nu

*a*      *a1*

u - n'a - yo - l'i - zu n'a - bu - o - nu      e he hei e a

*a2*      *b*

heo - jo nna na jon - de wu ya nio - bia dun na mo gbo shi gi

*c*

je jue - va - re - si, nwa d'a - go e - e - be

*d*

mu na gi ji r'a - wo me mu o - yi - m'a - bia - du - la mu o e - kwe - ke - r'a -

*e*

-di di nu no - kun - b'a - m'a - gba - wa - la e - o N -

*f*      *8va*      **B** *mm = ♩.56*

Ekere

Igbugbo

2 In strict time

13

Solo

g

d'a - bi - gboa - bia - duo - la

o - lu

Chorus

e - e - e ei

e he e ha ha e

15

g1

n'e kwu-k'u - n'a - bia - du - la

hie e e e e

hie e e e e

17

i

u - mu nna o - kwu l - gbo wui - lu - lu

he e he e he ei

he e he e he ei

n -

20

Solo

Chorus

Atani

- de chi - o - chia - ga - wa - la

hie e ei e e

hie e ei e e

22

Solo

Oyo

Ekere

Igbugbo

A 1

In free time

o bia-ri ch'o-bia-r'o-ji bia-ri nam ji

k

24

a - wu!

a - me - zu ko to ro ji bia ri nam ji

k1



C *mm* = ♩.98

32 In strict time

Solo

o - nwa\_ ka l'e - de rin - do le\_\_\_\_\_

Chorus

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwa  
Ukwu

Nkwa  
etiti

Nikelebe

Mkpo

Igbugbo



6

34

Solo

a - nyi

Chorus

nde - nw'a - la nw'e - zen - de nw'a - gwua bia dan na le

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwa  
Ukwu

a l

Nkwa  
etiti

Nkelebe

a

Mkpo

Igbugbo

36

Solo

ga n'i - po - tu - zo kw'e - ke - leu o - nyi - shie - ke - le

Chorus

ga n'i - po - tu - zo kw'e - ke - leu na - bian - na le

U-

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwa Ukwu

Nkwa etiti

Nielebe

Mkpo

Igbuzho

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a performance. It features a solo part and a chorus part, both with vocal lines and accompaniment. The solo part is marked with a '36' and a 'q' (quarter note) above the first measure. The chorus part is marked with a 'q1' above the first measure. The score includes ten instrumental parts: Atani, Oyo, Ekere, Nkwa Ukwu, Nkwa etiti, Nielebe, Mkpo, and Igbuzho. The Atani part consists of a series of quarter notes. The Oyo, Ekere, and Nielebe parts consist of eighth notes. The Nkwa Ukwu and Nkwa etiti parts consist of quarter notes. The Mkpo part is a single line with a few notes. The Igbuzho part consists of quarter notes. The vocal lines are in a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are in Igbo. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The solo part is on the top staff, and the chorus part is on the second staff. The instrumental parts are on the remaining staves. The score is divided into two measures by a vertical line. The first measure is marked with a '36' and the second measure is marked with a '7'. The lyrics are written below the vocal lines. The instrumental parts are written below the vocal lines. The score is written in black ink on a white background.

8

38

Solo



Nwan - ne lei

Chorus

gban - ga bia ge - r'o - lua - yi e



-na bian na b'i - ge - r'o - lua - yi e




Atani



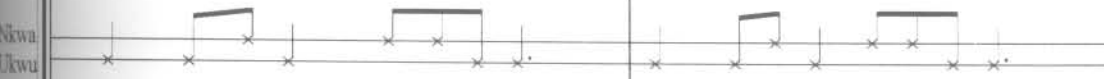
Oyo



Ekere

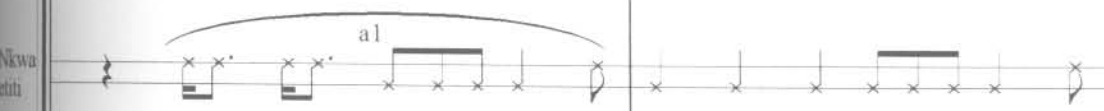


Nkwa Ukwu



Nkwa etu

a l



Nkiebe



Mkpo



Igbugbo



40

Solo

Chorus

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwa  
Ukwu

Nkwa  
etiti

Nkwa  
lebe

Mkpo

Igbugbo

a e

a2

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a piece with a solo and chorus section. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 40-41) features a solo part in the top staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The solo part begins with a whole rest in measure 40 and a quarter rest in measure 41, followed by a melodic phrase in measure 42 consisting of a quarter note G4, an eighth note A4, and a quarter note B4. Below the solo part are two empty staves for the chorus, one with a treble clef and one with a bass clef. The second system (measures 42-43) features seven instrumental parts: Atani (treble clef, dotted quarter notes), Oyo (treble clef, eighth notes), Ekere (treble clef, eighth notes), Nkwa Ukwu (treble clef, eighth notes), Nkwa etiti (treble clef, eighth notes), Nkwa lebe (treble clef, eighth notes), and Mkpo (treble clef, whole rests). The Igbugbo part (treble clef, dotted quarter notes) is positioned at the bottom of the system. A large slur labeled 'a2' covers measures 42 and 43 for the Nkwa etiti part. The page number '40' is at the top left, and '9' is at the top right. The lyrics 'a e' are written below the solo part in measure 42.

10

Solo

42 u  
hoai

Chorus

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwa  
Ukwu

Nkwa  
eti

a3

Nkalebe

Mkpo

Igbogbo

44

Solo

e - di - wo - do wo - zo

Chorus

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwa  
Ukwu

Nkwa  
diti

Nzilebe

Mkpo

Ighagbo

Note: - voice drop

**Exp. 2 - Ekele (Greeting) *Welcome song***

**SECTION A. SOLO IN FREE TIME\_**

Line 1 – 3

Una yo lizu n'abu onu (3times)

You are all welcome to the gathering for the song of happiness

(3 times)

Line 4 E –he hei e – yes (affirmation).

Line 5 A he ojo nna na jonde wu ya ni obiadin na mogbo

Whatever bad thing a man does to his people is not expected around me.

Line 6 Shigi je ju'Evaresi nwa da'Agoe –

I said go and ask Everest the son of da'Agoo. ("Daa" is an appellation of respect while calling the name of an elder woman in southern Igbo area. Ago is the shortened form of the name of the woman.)

Line 7 Ebe mu na gi jir'awo me mu oyi m'abiadu la mu o –

Make some gift offerings to me my friend for I have come

Line 8 Epekel' a didi nokunba m'a gbawala

The clay pot has not yet heated up before the news started spreading.

(This is a proverb, which means that their music has not yet heated up but people are already talking good of it).

Line 9 E – o yes (affirmation)

**SECTION B CALL – RESPONSE**

Call: ndi"abigbo abiaduola  
Abigbo people have come

Resp: E –e-e-ei – e –he –e – ha – hae –  
Yes (affirmation)

Call - Olu n'ekwu k'una bia dula-  
The voice that talks you are welcome.

Resp: Hie –e-e-e-e  
Yes (affirmation)

Call: Unu nna O-kwu Igbo wu llulu-  
My people Igbo language is proverb.

Resp: He – he he e he e – I  
Yes (affirmation)

Call: Nde Chiochi agawala,  
The Churchgoers have started going.

Resp: Hie – e e-i e-e  
Yes (affirmation)

**SECTION A1 SOLO IN FREE TIME**

Line 1 Obiariche obiaroji biarinamji, Awu!  
He who has come negatively for my kola nut came for my yam as well.  
Exclamation

Line 2 Amezukotoroji biarinamji.  
All the people who come negatively for my kola came for my yam as well.



Line 3 Tirie elpa no ma l'eze ji nwo.  
Let there be something that would hold them.

### SECTION C CALL- RESPONSE

Call: E-Ekwuato nweze nde nwe m'u-n'abia n'abigboe, 'Pekelea didi n'uloku  
mbamagbawala. Onwa ka l'ederi ndo le-

Yes, Okwuato the descendants of the king you are welcome to Abigbo.  
The clay pot has not heated up before the news started spreading.  
The moon is brighter than the bush lantern.

Resp: Nde nwa ala nw'eze nde nw'egwu abia dan na le-  
The owners of the land, descendants of the king and owners of the  
music have come.

Call:/ Resp: Anyi ganipotuzo kw'ekele unn'abianna le –

We must first offer our greetings, welcome to you all.

Call: Onyishi ekele –  
The leader greets you.

Resp: Gbanga bia ger'olu anyie-  
Come here and listen to our voices

Unu biana bi ger'olu anyi e –  
You are welcome to listen to our voices.

Call: Nwa nne lei  
My brother/kinsmen  
A e ho a-l  
Exclamation  
Ediwodo wozo  
You expect one thing, another comes.

Ex.2 is a welcome song. The group performs it in any context to salute and welcome the audience. Among the Igbo, it is customary to welcome guests. Quite often, the ritual of welcome is performed with the symbolic Igbo kola nut. The kola has been accepted among the Igbo to signify warm reception, goodwill and happiness. The Igbo person attaches great importance to reception and hospitality in all circumstances. Therefore the

ritual of welcoming guests precedes any other business. Although the symbolic kola is not used in performance situations, the ritual of welcoming the audience as musical guests is nevertheless observed. It is presented in musical form. Abigbo musicians perform this song to simulate the ritual.

The song is also an example of the Abigbo chorus with instrumental accompaniment. It is performed in moderate tempo. The metric organization of the song is compound quadruple (12/8). Forty five measures of the song are transcribed. This musical example has three distinct sections marked A, B and C. A variant of section A is marked A<sup>1</sup>. Structural features and presentational style distinguish these sections.

Section A is an unaccompanied solo prelude performed in free time by the lead singer. The text generally announces the presence of Abigbo music and musicians. It also welcomes the audience. The style of delivery is a combination of direct speech and proverbs. The section is rounded off with a proverb that alludes to the popularity of the music. Ekwekere adidi nunoku'ba m'agba wala literally is the "clay pot has not yet got hot but the news is already spreading". The earthen pot signifies the musical orchestra. This proverb means that Abigbo music is just beginning but people are already enjoying it. It implies that all the people enjoy Abigbo music all the time.

This section is twelve bars long. There are seven melodic and textual statements marked a to f. The first melodic statement is modified in a<sup>1</sup> and a<sup>2</sup> by starting a third higher than a. This variation is aimed at producing musical effect and variety to avoid the monotony of repeating the same text three times at the same level and with the same exact setting. The third statement

leads to a restful cadence that is melodically decorated in bar 4. Off beat entries characterize  $a$ ,  $a^1$  and  $a^2$ . These articulate the position of  $\underline{u}$  as a pick up vowel in the spoken version. From  $c$ , anacrusic opening characterizes the melodic statement till the end of this section. The anacrusis articulate the unstressed positioning of the corresponding textual syllables in the spoken version.

Between  $a$  and  $a^2$ , melodic variations occur using the same textual statement. While the melodic intervals vary, the text and rhythm do not. The intervallic relationships of  $a$ ,  $a^1$ ,  $a^2$  are as follows:

A	$a^1$	$a^2$
Unison	Unison	Unison
Major 2 <sup>nd</sup> down	Pft. 4 <sup>th</sup> down	Pft. 4 <sup>th</sup> down
Min. 3 <sup>rd</sup> down	Min. 3 <sup>rd</sup> down	Min. 3 <sup>rd</sup> down
Maj. 2 <sup>nd</sup> down	Maj. 2 <sup>nd</sup> down	Min. 3 <sup>rd</sup> down
Maj. 2 <sup>nd</sup> up	Maj. 2 <sup>nd</sup> up	Maj. 2 <sup>nd</sup> up
Aug. 4 <sup>th</sup> down	Pft. 5 <sup>th</sup> down	Pft. 4 <sup>th</sup> down
Unison	Unison	Unison
Unison	Unison	Unison

Table 2

From the intervallic relationships of the phrases, it is again evident that Abigbo melodic constructions are not bound by the tonal contour of the text. Musical interest is as important as clarity of text. There is a clear sense of phrasing in the song as shown with phrase marks. The expletives,  $e$ ,  $he$ , and  $o$ , are used

to round off each sub-unit of the section either at a non-restful cadence (bar 8) or at a restful cadence (bar 4 and 12).

Section B of this song is solo-chorus performance in strict time. A variant of the thematic material of Ex. 1 is used. Abigbo musicians use this musical section for affirmation of group consensus as well as solidarity in different contexts. Section B starts with affirmation of the group's solidarity. The lead singer welcomes members to the music performance. The group responds to affirm solidarity. The lead singer then addresses the group figuratively. Instead of repeating Nd'Abigbo (Abigbo members) he uses Olu n'ekwuka (the voice that talks). This poetic device ensures variety and textual interest.

The melodic statement "g" changes a note to accommodate the text in g<sup>1</sup>. The chorus responses have strong chordal interest featuring up to five notes as the voice parts separate and combine. The chorus response "h" pauses on the fifth degree of the scale. Its variant "h<sup>1</sup>", pauses on a restful cadence. A combination of e, he and ha are used in h. The third variant, h<sup>2</sup>, accrues the double vowel sound ei. The i acting as a voice dropping figurai, gives a glissandi finish. In h<sup>1</sup> and h<sup>3</sup>, a combination of the consonant h and double vowel sounds ie being emphatic that makes the entry of the chorus more marked. In h<sup>2</sup>, he is alternated three times with its consonantal ellipses. The third repeat is the preparation for the cadential note, a double vowel sound, ei which again features the voice-dropping figurai, i. The last chorus response of this section pauses on a restful cadence. The second inversion of the first note chord is used. Again the chorus features strong chordal progressions containing up to five notes. At measure 22, three instruments

(Oyo, Ekere and Igbugbo) structurally bring the section to a definitive ending in order to introduce the solo passage in free time.

Having affirmed the group solidarity, the lead singer prepares the ensemble for the main song in A<sup>1</sup>. This is an unaccompanied interlude presented in free time. Vocal and instrumental interjections are used for effect. In the presentation, the melodic statement "k" is varied to accommodate textual variation in "k1". A leap of a minor 7<sup>th</sup> down occurs at k1. This leap is properly countered by a move to the opposite direction as per voice leading rules. A variation of "f" is introduced at f<sup>1</sup>. In f<sup>1</sup>, a transposition of the anacrusic beats a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> up is used.

At C, the music is performed in strict time. It employs the call and response technique. The call part at "o" creates suspense on a relatively high note. This is resolved in the chorus response as it slopes to a restful cadence at "p". At "q", the lead singer gives a cue and then joins the chorus to present the main textual message of the song: "we shall first offer greetings." The lead singer breaks off from the joint action to present greetings as the leader at "r". This produces a slight overlapping of parts at "r".

The musical score for Ex.2.1 is presented in two systems. The first system is labeled 'Solo' and the second is labeled 'Chorus'. Both systems use a treble clef and a common time signature. The Solo part begins at measure 36 and features a melodic line with lyrics 'ga n'i - po - tu - zo kw'e - ke - leu' and 'o - nyi - shie - ke - le'. The Chorus part also begins at measure 36 and features a melodic line with lyrics 'ga n'i - po - tu - zo kw'e - ke - leu' and 'na - bian - na le'. The Chorus part includes a bass line with lyrics 'U-' at the end. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'q' and 'r'.

Ex.2.1

In "r", the lead singer explores the high tessitura of his voice in order to emphasize the text. The suspense created by the lead singer in "r" is resolved as the chorus response comes to a restful cadence. At "u" the lead singer uses the expletives, a, e, hoai, to heighten the mood of the performance.

The interrelationships of the melodic and textual phrases in Ex.2 are given below.

Phrase	Bar	Related phrase	Bar	Musical relationship	Textual relationship
a	1	a1	2	Melodic	Textual
		a2	3	Melodic	Textual
f	10-11	f1	30-31	Melodic	Textual
g	13	g <sup>1</sup>	14-15	Melodic	Textual
h	13-14	h1	15-16	Harmonic	Textual
		h2	17-18	Harmonic	Textual
		h3	19-20	Harmonic	Textual
k	23	k1	25	melodic	Textual

Table 3

This musical example is characterized by the undulating melodic contour. Chords of varying number of notes are used in the chorus part of this song. These range from dyads to 13<sup>th</sup> chords. Homophonic texture is dominant. Parallel 4<sup>th</sup> is predominantly used. This occurs between two high

voice parts at 'h', 'h<sup>1</sup>', 'h<sup>2</sup>' and 'q<sup>1</sup>'. It is evident in this example that even when not used in parallel progressions, harmonic intervals of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> are predominant.

The chord structures cum progression per beat are tabulated below.

Phrase	Chord no	Type of chord	Degree of the scale	Special feature
h	1	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
	2	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	5 <sup>th</sup>	-
	3	minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
	4	major triad	5 <sup>th</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	5	7 <sup>th</sup> chord	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
	6	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	5 <sup>th</sup>	-
h <sup>1</sup>	1	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	1 <sup>st</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>
	2	minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
	3	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	1 <sup>st</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	4	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	2 <sup>nd</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>
	5	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	5 <sup>th</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>
	6	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> inversion
h <sup>2</sup>	1	Minor triad	2 <sup>nd</sup>	-
	2	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	1 <sup>st</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>
	3	minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	without the 5 <sup>th</sup>
	4	major triad	5 <sup>th</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	5	major triad	4 <sup>th</sup>	-
	6	minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>

h <sup>3</sup>	1	13 <sup>th</sup> chord	5 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 7 <sup>th</sup>
	2	13 <sup>th</sup> chord	5 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>
	3	13 <sup>th</sup> chord	5 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>
	4	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	5 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	5	major triad	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> inversion
p	1	Minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 5 <sup>th</sup>
	2	Minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 5 <sup>th</sup>
	3	7 <sup>th</sup> chord	6 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 5 <sup>th</sup>
	4	7 <sup>th</sup> chord	6 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 5 <sup>th</sup>
	5-8	minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
q	1	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	5 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>
	2-4	major triad	5 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>

Table 4

It is evident that some chord structures in this example are characterized by the omission of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The dominance of the chords without the 3<sup>rd</sup> indicates that in Abigbo music, chords with open 4<sup>ths</sup>, 5<sup>ths</sup> and 6<sup>ths</sup> are normative.

In bar 31, the instruments come in to accompany the vocal part. Nkwa etiti makes the first entry, establishing a strict time frame before the other instruments join. The entry of the instruments playing rhythmic and melorythmic themes mark the continuation of the music in strict tempo.

Each instrument plays an identifiable rhythmic or melorythmic theme. The membrane drums play melorythmic statements while the other instruments play rhythmic theme. The thematic statements of the instruments



are marked "a", while the variations on the themes are shown with numbers after the letters.

Nkwaetiti has four variations on its theme in the example, while nkwaukwu has one variation. They are internal modifications of the rhythmic and melo-rhythmic contents of the themes. All the other instruments maintain their respective thematic statements throughout.

Atani and igbugbo duplicate the same rhythmic theme on different instrumental timbres while oyo and ekere do the same with a different rhythmic theme. In his discussion of the theoretical content of African music, Nzewi identified and discussed the ensemble roles of African instruments as Master/Principal instrument (most freedom to develop theme and interpret actions phonically), Obligato instrument (aesthetic compliment for an ensemble), Action motivation instrument (could develop sections of theme), Phrasing-referent (reiterates theme without variation) and pulse (marks pulse without variations) instruments. (1997:35-57) Some of these roles are used in Abigbo music and are used for the analytical discussions on the instrumental part of the music. The phrasing referent pattern played on the ekere is re-enforced on the oyo. Atani and Igbugbo combine to mark the beats of the music. Nkwa etiti and nkwaukwu play similar melo-rhythmic themes. There is interstructural relationship between Nkwaukwu and Nkwa etiti.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Nkwa Ukwu' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Nkwa etiti'. Both staves feature a series of rhythmic pulses marked with 'x' symbols. The Nkwa Ukwu staff has a melodic line with a bracketed section labeled 'a1' and an asterisk symbol. The Nkwa etiti staff has a similar melodic line below it.

Ex.2.2

The thematic statements played by nkwa etiti and nkwa ukwu make a complete melorhythmic statement when isolated. Although the two drums in the ensemble share the statement, a single drummer would play it as a single drum line. The three drums play the action motivator role (Nzewi 1997:50). The interplay of the various thematic statements of the instruments generates multilinear polyphony.

### Example 3 - Ndiamumauga (False prophets)

Transcription of full song

Solo

Chorus

lbugbo

O - kea - mu - ma chio - chia - ka - ria - la ni U - nu

Yes

3

kpa - cha - ra - d'a - nya o - kea - mu - ma chio - chia - ka - ria - la

5

O - nwa\_ ka - ri - r'e - de - rin - do o - kwu o O -

o -

7 *mm = ♩. 72*

kea - mu - ma - chio - chia - ka - ria - la o - nye n'i - be bi - lim - kpu - ghu

- ka - mu - ma chio - chia - ka - ria - la ni a - e o -

9

o - nwa - ka - rie - de - rin - do da da di

kea - mu ma cho - chia - ka - ria - la ni a - nyi -

2

11

ha sh'a - nyi meo - ji  
nwe - ru chi - le - ke n'i - shim - bu  
ni

13

O - nwa ka - ri - r'e - de - rin - do - gu o  
an - de k'a - nyie -  
e -

15

U - mun - kwa m'a - bia - la  
we - r'u - lo cho - chi je ma - chi - e  
e -

17

hu - la n'i - be e - bi - le nne  
we - te - le cha - du - le - ti a - nyie - kpe - we - le ni  
e -

19

U - mun - kwa m'a - bia - la  
we - te - le se - men - si a - nyie - kpe - we - le ni  
an - du - loa - nyie

21

e - nyi de - de - le  
che - ne ma cho - chi m'o - yua - hia  
o -

23

na ga - duo

- na wue - be - le - b'a - hu - ru n'a - ga - la - ba

25

we - r'u - lo cho - chi we ma - chi - e

O - nye n'i - be - bi le n - neo

27

lu - wa

pu - a - kwa la n'u - zo je kpo di - bia shi hu bia - wo - kpe - re a

29

O - tu nwa - ta' - da mne le

31

ye wuo - le cho - chi n'a - ka - la - ba

O - nw'a - ka - le - de - rim - ba - du nwa le

nwe - ru - lo cho - chi shi - me di

33

shi gi je ju E - va - re si o - gu - o

nwe - ru - lo cho - chi s'i - ria - nu

4

35

O - nye n'i - be - bi - le n - neo

nwe - ru - lo cho - chi soa - fi - me a - nyi

37

O - nwa - ka - rie - de - rin - do e

ga n'i - jue - l'u - wa a - ju - ju a - nyi

Atani

39

gi ka - ram chi - le - ke - n'e - kwen - sun -

ga - n'i - jue - l'u - wa a - ju - ju chi - le - ke n'e - kwen - sun -

41

-di ke nwe cho - chi soa - fi - me e o e

-di ke nwe cho - chi soa - fi - me e o e

Note:  Voice drop

### EXP. 3 Ndi Amuma Ugha (False Prophets)

Call: Oke amuma chochi akaria la ni,  
The prophesies of the church are too much now – Yes! (affirmation)

Unu kpachara d'anya Okeamuma Chochi' a karia la-  
Be very careful, the prophesies of the church are too much

Onwa kariri ederindo – Okwu O-  
The moon is brighter than the bush lantern – the word (affirmation)

Call/Resp: Oke amuma chochi akariala ni-

Call/ Onye n'ibe bilimkpughu-  
Everybody with his kins should be on the alert

Resp: a-e Oke amuma chochi akariala ni-

Yes (affirmation) The prophesies of the church are too much now

Call: Onw'a kariederindo da da di-  
The moon is brighter than the bush lantern (affirmation)

Resp: Anyi nweru Chileke n'ishimbu ni  
We have God right form the start

Call: Ha shanyi me oji-  
They said we should change

Resp: A nde k'anyi ewer'ulo chiochi je machie-  
Our people immediately built churches around

Call: Onwa ka ririederind'ogu o –

The moon is brighter than the bush lantern – justice

Resp: Ewetele chapuleti anyiekpewe ni –  
They brought chaplet and we started worshipping

Call Umu nkwa m'abia la-

My musicians have arrived

Resp: Ewetele Semensi a-nyi ekpeweke ni-  
They brought C.M.S and we started worshipping

Call: 'Hula ni be bile nne –

Make your kin to be at alert

Resp: Ewetele Katoliki any'ekpeweke ni-  
They brought Catholic and we started worshipping

Call: Umu nkwa m'abiala-

My musicians have come

Resp: A ndulo anyi echenie ma cho chi m'ovuahia-  
Our people thought the church has some wares for sale

Call: Enyi de de le-  
My good friend

Resp: Ona wu ebeleb'ahuru n'agala ba.  
It is now a matter of wherever they find space in any community

Call: Ha ga duo-  
When they get there

Resp: Nwa nda mum'ashi ewer'ulo  
Chiochi we machie (Luwa)  
The false prophets will build a church

Call: Onye n'ibebile nneo-  
Let your kin to be at alert

Resp: Apuakwa la n'uzo jekpo di bia shi hu bia wokpere a ye wuole chochi  
n'akalaba –  
They go to the roads and call the traditional doctors, telling them to  
come to church that they have built churches in the community



Call: Otu nwat'ada nne le-  
Any child, a daughter (an expression)

Resp: Onwer'ulo chochi sh'ime di-  
There are churches that abort pregnancy

Call: Onw'aka lederi maba du nwale –  
The moon is brighter than the bush lantern my people

Resp: Onwerulo chochi s'iri anu -  
There are churches that prohibit the eating of meat

Call: Shigi je ju Evaresi Ogu – o -  
I said go and ask Everest Ogu

Resp: Onwe dirulo chochi soaf'ime –  
There are churches that prohibits pregnancy

Call: Onye n'ibe bile nne o –  
Let your kin be at alert

Resp: Anyi ga n'iju el'uwa ajuju-  
We will ask the world a question

Call: Onwa ka rie de rin doe –  
The moon is brighter than the bush lantern

Resp: Anyi ga n'iju el'uwa ajuju -  
We will ask the world a question

Call/Resp: Gi ka ram Chileke n'ekwensu ndike nwe Chochi soafime e-o-e-  
Tell me is it God or Satan that owns the church that prohibits pregnancy.

EX. 3 illustrates the unaccompanied Abigbo choral music style. Forty two bars of the song are transcribed for this study. The song is a satire that queries the activities of the different Christian denominations in Igbo land. The text cautions people to beware of false prophets. It draws attention to the

hypocritical activities of Christians and the existing conflict between the Christian churches and traditional religion. Of particular interest is the view of the musicians that God has been known and worshipped in Igbo land before the Christians came with their own God. The song also mocks the conflict among Christian denominations resulting from the scramble for membership. It portrays the extent the Christians have gone to destabilize traditional practices in "m" and "n" to the extent of inviting traditional doctors to join the churches. The musicians present a vivid example of the hypocrisy of contemporary Christians. According to them, the traditional doctor merely needs to pretend to be a Christian by attending church services but is allowed to carry on with spiritual activities and healing practices embedded in traditional religious observances. Abigbo musicians thereby satirize the contradictions of modern religions.

The linguistic style involves direct statements as in "a", as well as proverbs as in "b". These are given poetic form in order to synchronize with the musical presentation in strict time. The setting of the text lines inter-structures solo statements (a, a<sup>1</sup>), independent chorus passages (k, m, g<sup>1</sup>, n) and solo prompted chorus responses (b, c, e, etc). Occasional variations on the same text occur without conflict of meaning. There are instances of this at "b", "b<sup>1</sup>", and "b<sup>3</sup>". The variations result from semantic modifications normative in Igbo language.

The song starts on a quaver anacrusic beat. This ensures proper positioning of o, a pick up spoken syllable that enables the accented ke to also fall on accented musical beat. The melodic theme in "a" is repeated at bar 7, and varied at "a<sup>1</sup>". In "a<sup>1</sup>", the extension of the melodic statement is

necessitated by the addition of more words. The phrase "a" acquires different intervallic structure in "a<sup>1</sup>". The same text is used without conflict of meaning. Similar melodic variations containing intervallic modification on the same text occur at "f<sup>1</sup>" and "f<sup>2</sup>"; "i<sup>1</sup>" and "i<sup>4</sup>".

Musical notation for f<sup>1</sup>. The melody is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics are "U - mun - kwa m'a - bia - la". The bass line consists of a single note G3. A bracket above the melody is labeled "f1".

Musical notation for f<sup>2</sup>. The melody is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics are "U - mun - kwa m'a - bia - la". The bass line consists of a single note G3. A bracket above the melody is labeled "f2".

Musical notation for i<sup>1</sup>. The melody is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics are "O - nye n'i - be - bi - le n - neo". The bass line consists of a single note G3. A bracket above the melody is labeled "i1".

Musical notation for i<sup>4</sup>. The melody is on a single staff with a treble clef and a 7/8 time signature. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The lyrics are "O - nye n'i - be - bi - le n - neo". The bass line consists of a single note G3. A bracket above the melody is labeled "i4".

### Ex.3.1

In these instances, melodic intervals are not bound to the tonal leaps of the spoken text. This further demonstrates that melodic interest occasionally overrides textual interest in Igbo vocal music.

A characterizing feature of this song is the use of voice drop on the syllable ni. In the spoken version, the syllable would end on a short voice drop, depending on its contextual application. In the contexts of use in this song it is correct to use it with a short drop. Set to music, it acquires rhythmic emphasis as it comes on the accented beat. The "i" is the figurai that gives a gissandi finish to the voice drop. The voice drop concludes melodic statements at a, e, "h" and "h1", and can be regarded as a cadence indicator.

The melodic and textual theme "b" occurs five times in this exmple. It also occurs at section C of Ex. 2 at phrase "o".

5

O - nwa\_ ka - ni - r'e - de - rin - do o - kwu o O -

C

32 In strict time

Solo

o - nwa\_ ka l'e - de rin - do le\_\_\_\_\_

5

### Ex.3.2

It is, perhaps, a catch phrase of Abigbo music. In Ex. 3, it is used to emphasize a major text message in the manner of exclamation (as in b<sup>2</sup>, b<sup>3</sup>, b<sup>4</sup>) or to brighten the mood of the performance (as in b). At bar 7, the solo

and chorus join to emphasize the textual theme of this song. This results in two-part heterophony that breaks off to parallel 4<sup>th</sup>. In "g", the chorus part alternates duple rhythmic pattern within triple rhythm sense.

This is a creative feature that ensures rhythmic variety within a metric framework.

There are instances of overlapping of parts between the solo and chorus parts. These occur at "b", "b<sup>1</sup>", "b<sup>2</sup>", "b<sup>3</sup>", "b<sup>4</sup>", "f<sup>2</sup>", "i<sup>3</sup>", and "i<sup>4</sup>". Overlapping of the parts is structurally required to properly position some of the affected textual syllables as pick-up to the accented syllables within the metric organization. In all these instances, fleeting polyphonic texture results. The alternation of solo calls and chorus responses ends on non-restful and restful cadences, respectively. The solo and chorus come together to mark the three bars ending the song, in which the last bar is further marked with two long notes linked with double quaver embellishment. The crochet and quaver beats are predominantly used to carry the speech rhythm of the text. Longer beats are then used to mark cadential pauses.

The chorus part is primarily heterophonic. It, however, occasionally breaks off into two-part polyphony and three-part polyphony. These produce chords of two notes and three notes. In the instances where two-part polyphony occurs, six different harmonic intervals are used. These are major 2<sup>nd</sup>, minor 3<sup>rd</sup>, major 3<sup>rd</sup>, perfect 4<sup>th</sup>, perfect 5<sup>th</sup> and minor 7<sup>th</sup>. A statistics of the harmonic intervals from bar 9 where two-part polyphony starts in the chorus part, till the end of the music shows that while major 2<sup>nd</sup> occurs five times, major 3<sup>rd</sup> occurs twenty two times. Minor 3<sup>rd</sup> occurs twelve times while perfect 4<sup>th</sup> occurs sixty two times. Minor 7<sup>th</sup> occurs two times, and perfect 5<sup>th</sup> occurs

once. The statistics recommend that although the interval of 4th is dominant in this example, harmonic 2nds, 3rds, and 7ths are normative in the culture. The structures of the chords that occur in the chorus part are given in the table below. These range from dyads to 11<sup>th</sup> chords. Dyads are two note chords that appear in different harmonic intervals. They are normative harmonic structures in traditional music. Although dyads bear underlying sense of chords, they are not presented in this table. Only chords with three or more notes are presented. This is because they present clearer chord structures in the example.

Phrase	Chord no	Chord type	Degree of scale	Special feature
g <sup>2</sup>	1-3	Minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup> inversion
n	1-2	Minor triad	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	3	Minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
	4-7	Minor triad	2 <sup>nd</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	8	7 <sup>th</sup> chord	6 <sup>th</sup>	without the 5 <sup>th</sup>
	9-10	11 <sup>th</sup> chord	2 <sup>nd</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup>
	11-15	minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
O <sup>2</sup>	1-2	7 <sup>th</sup> chord	6 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 5 <sup>th</sup>
i <sup>4</sup>	1-2	7 <sup>th</sup> chord	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
p	1	7 <sup>th</sup> chord	6 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 5 <sup>th</sup>

Table 5

It is evident from this chord chart that chords occur on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the scale only. More chords occur on the 6<sup>th</sup> degree than on the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree. Chords without the 3<sup>rd</sup> are common in this example.

The interrelationships of the phrases in EX.3 are given below:

Phrase	Bar	Relates phrase	Bar	Musical relationship	Textual relationship
a	1	a <sup>1</sup>	3	Melodic	Textual
		a <sup>2</sup>	9	Melodic	Textual
b	6	b <sup>1</sup>	10	Melodic	Textual
		b <sup>2</sup>	14	Melodic	Textual
		b <sup>3</sup>	32	Melodic	Textual
		b <sup>4</sup>	38	Melodic	Textual
f	12	f <sup>1</sup>	16	Melodic	Textual
		f <sup>2</sup>	20	Melodic	Textual
g	13	g <sup>1</sup>	21	Harmonic	Textual
		g <sup>2</sup>	25	Harmonic	Textual
h	15	h <sup>1</sup>	17	Harmonic	Textual
		h <sup>2</sup>	19	Harmonic	Textual
					Harmonic
i1	18	i <sup>1</sup>	26	Melodic	Textual
		i <sup>2</sup>	30	Melodic	Textual
		i <sup>3</sup>	34	Melodic	Textual
		i <sup>4</sup>	36	Melodic	Textual
o	31	o <sup>1</sup>	33	Harmonic	Textual
		o <sup>2</sup>	35	Harmonic	Textual
p	37	p <sup>1</sup>	39	Harmonic	Textual

Table 6

The interrelationships of the phrases occur in the form of internal rhythmic variation, tonal variations, harmonic variations and sequential use of them. Textual variations occur in the form of semantic modifications entailing addition of more words or syllables as well as substitution of certain words in order to modify or amplify the message of the text. In some instances ("l" and "i3"), melodic phrases are adapted to different textual phrases.

This musical example features primarily, two chords at non-restful and restful cadences. The non-restful cadences pause on a 5<sup>th</sup> note chord. While the restful cadences pause on the 6<sup>th</sup> note chord. The 5<sup>th</sup> note chord is generally approached with the 6<sup>th</sup> note chord while the 6<sup>th</sup> note chord is approached with the 5<sup>th</sup> note chord.

39


gi ka - ram chi - le - ke - n'e - kwen - sun-

ga - n'i - jue - l'u - wa a - ju - ju chi - le - ke n'e - kwen - sun-

41

-di ke nwe cho - chi soa - f'i - me e o - e

-di ke nwe cho - chi soa - f'i - me e o - e

Note:  Voice drop

Ex.3.3

This cadential progression pervades Abigbo musical examples.

Although the call and response pattern is used, the melodic and harmonic themes are developed by the solo and chorus parts according to the continuously varying text.



### Example 4 - Ekwe Chochi (The church bell)

Transcription of part of the song

*mm = ♩.72*

**System 1:** Measure 1. Solo: E - kwe cho - chi n'a - ku n'o h'a - nyi le. Chorus: o - yi - m'a - bia - wa - la - mu.

**System 2:** Measure 3. Solo: U - mu n - ne le. Chorus: o - yi - m'a - bia - wa - la - mu.

**System 3:** Measure 5. Solo: a - . Chorus: o o e - he - e eh.

**System 4:** Measure 7. Solo: lu - lui - du - m'i - je le m'i - be a - ma - ra - na ma a - gba e - pe - ke - lea.

**System 5:** Measure 9. Solo: di - li nu - ro kum - ba - m'a - gba la. Chorus: o - we - le wu - le - je - du - wa da e o - .

2

11

Solo

U - mun - ne le

Chorus

- yi - m'a - bia - wa - la - mu o o e ei o -

Atan

Oyo

Ekeru

Nkwa  
Ukwu

Nkwa  
etiti

Nkelebo

Mkpofu

Igbugbo

The musical score is written on ten staves. The top two staves are for vocal parts: 'Solo' and 'Chorus'. The Solo part begins at measure 11 with a rest, followed by a melodic line with a 'cl' (crescendo) marking. The Chorus part has a 'f' (forte) marking and lyrics: '- yi - m'a - bia - wa - la - mu o o e ei o -'. Below the vocal staves are seven instrumental staves: 'Atan', 'Oyo', 'Ekeru', 'Nkwa Ukwu', 'Nkwa etiti', 'Nkelebo', and 'Mkpofu'. The 'Oyo', 'Ekeru', 'Nkwa Ukwu', 'Nkwa etiti', and 'Nkelebo' staves feature a '7' (seven) marking and an 'a' (accents) marking. The 'Igbugbo' staff at the bottom shows a rhythmic pattern with eighth notes. The score is in a single system with a repeat sign at the end.

13

Solo

Chorus

- yi - m'a - bia - wa - la - mu o o e e

Alari

Oyo

Eare

Nkwa  
Ukwu

Nkwa  
nti

Nlebe

Mkpo

Izugbo

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a piece with a solo and a chorus. The score is written for ten parts: Solo, Chorus, Alari, Oyo, Eare, Nkwa Ukwu, Nkwa nti, Nlebe, Mkpo, and Izugbo. The Solo part is a single treble clef staff with a whole rest. The Chorus part is a treble clef staff with a melody and lyrics: "- yi - m'a - bia - wa - la - mu o o e e". A fermata is placed over the first 'o'. The other parts are rhythmic accompaniment. Alari, Oyo, Eare, and Izugbo use a staff with a single line and a clef, with notes marked with 'x' and dots. Nkwa Ukwu and Nkwa nti use a staff with a single line and a clef, with notes marked with 'x' and dots, and some notes have a downward-pointing triangle indicating a voice drop. Nlebe uses a staff with a single line and a clef, with notes marked with 'x' and dots. Mkpo is a single treble clef staff with a whole rest.

Note:  Voice drop

**Exp. 4. Ekwe Chochi (The Church bell)**

Call: Ekwe chochi n'aku n'ohanyi le –  
The church bell is tolling in our neighborhood

Resp: Oyi ma biwalamu o – ei-  
My friend I am coming (affirmation)

Call: Umunna le –  
My kinsmen

Resp: Oyi m'abiawala mu o – o – ehe –eh –  
My friend I am coming (affirmation)

Call A lului du m'ije lem i be a marana ma agba –  
The urge to follow my kins has griped me

Epekere adili nur'okum b'am'agbala –

The earthen pot has not yet heated up and the news has started spreading

Call: Owele wule je duwa da e

Where is the world going my dear?

Resp: Oyimabiawala mu o-o e ei

My friend I am coming (affirmation)

Call: Umunne le

My kinsmen

Resp: Oyimabiawala mu o-o-e-e

My friend I am coming (affirmation)

Ex. 4 is an Abigbo music in which the chorus uses distinct melodic settings of the same textual statement in response to the call part. Fourteen measures of the song are transcribed. The measures transcribed capture the essence of the music without prejudice to the creative variations in the untranscribed sections.

This song again satirizes the activity of the church in Igbo land. The style of delivery of the textual message is metaphorical. Ekwe Chochi (church

bell) is a figurative presentation of the conflict of beliefs between Kinsmen and women that are separated by the different church denominations. The tolling of the different denominational church bells in contemporary Igbo societies symbolizes division of belief. The Christians are divided among the denominations as well as against Igbo traditional beliefs and practices.

The song is performed at a moderate tempo in strict time. The first eight measures constitute an unaccompanied choral introduction. The first melodic phrase "a" starts off the main beat. This has been constantly encountered as idiomatic in positioning the strong vocal syllable on the accented beat according to the rhythm of the spoken version. The melodic phrase contains a leap of a minor 7<sup>th</sup> between n'o and ha which is appropriately contrasted with movements in the opposite directions before and after the leap.

The musical score is written in 12/8 time. The Solo part (top staff) begins with a melodic phrase marked 'a' that spans across the lyrics 'E-kwe cho - chi n'a - ku n'o h'a - nyi le'. A specific interval is marked with an asterisk between the notes for 'n'o' and 'h'a'. The Chorus part (bottom staff) begins with a rest and then enters with the lyrics 'o - yi - m'a - bia - wa - la - mu'.

#### Ex. 4.1

This demonstrates voice-leading procedures in Igbo music illustrated in Abigbo music. Whereas the tonal inflection for the text n'o-ha is low low, the

leap gives low and high tones to it. This places rhythmic and tonal stress on ha without compromising the textual meaning in the context of use.

The leap prioritizes the musical interests over spoken tones. Similar example occurs at measure 9: li nu.

Phrase "a" pauses on a non-restful cadence, prompting the chorus response "b". The response brings the thematic statement to another non-restful cadence on the 5<sup>th</sup> note chord that finishes with a voice drop. Another call by the soloist prompts a response that brings the thematic statement to a restful cadence.

The chorus presents variations of the thematic statements as the song progresses. The melodic theme is answered with a harmonic variation of b. The opening chorus theme "b" acquires more notes and chords at b<sup>1</sup>. The call and response structure is interrupted with a three measure solo statement (bars 7-9). A solo statement by a cue cantor overlaps the soloist's statement and brings in the chorus. The chorus response at "f" is followed by the soloist's transposition of "c" a 4<sup>th</sup> down at c<sup>1</sup>.

The image shows two systems of musical notation. The first system, starting at measure 3, features a Solo part on a treble clef staff and a Chorus part on a bass clef staff. The Solo part has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes followed by a quarter note, then a half note, and finally a quarter note. The lyrics 'U - mu n - ne le' are written below the Solo staff. The Chorus part consists of a series of chords. The second system, starting at measure 11, shows the Solo part transposing the melody down a fourth, with lyrics 'U - mun - ne le'. The Chorus part continues with a similar harmonic structure. Labels 'b' and 'c' are placed above the Solo staff in the first system, and 'f' and 'cl' are placed above the Solo staff in the second system.

Ex. 4.2

The chorus response here demonstrates a possible result of basing the intervallic structure of tunes on the tonal speech levels of words. A melody must be transposed up or down without intervallic alterations in order to retain the tonal inflections of spoken text. On the contrary, a new melody must be composed for the same text each time it is used. The exact transposition of *c* is normative but does not appear to be a deliberate attempt to adhere to the tonal flow of the text. This is because the technique is not dominant in the examples. Phrase "b" occurs four times in the transcription with four different melodic and harmonic variations.

Overlapping of parts occurs in this song between the cue cantor and lead singer at measure 9. The overlap produces two-part polyphony. Harmonic Intervals of 5<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> result. The interval of perfect 4<sup>th</sup> is dominant in the song (bar 2,3,4,11,etc). It occurs twenty one times, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> occurs three times. The harmonic interval of a 5<sup>th</sup> occurs three times in the song. Chord types range from dyads to 9<sup>th</sup> chords.

The chord structures are given below. Dyads are not included.

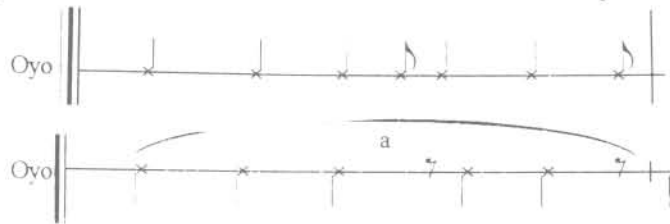
Phrase	Chord no	Chord type	Degree of the scale	Special feature
Bb	1	Minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
b <sup>1</sup>	1-2	Minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	3	Minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	4	Minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
	5	Minor triad	5 <sup>th</sup>	-
b <sup>3</sup>	1-2	7 <sup>th</sup> chord	6 <sup>th</sup>	Without the 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	3	Minor triad	6 <sup>th</sup>	-
	4-6	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	5 <sup>th</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>
	7	Minor triad	1 <sup>st</sup>	-
	8	9 <sup>th</sup> chord	2 <sup>nd</sup>	without the 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup>

Table 7

It is evident from these chord structures that the use of chords without the third is normative. Chord structures that feature harmonic 4<sup>th</sup>s and 5<sup>th</sup>s are predominant. The 6<sup>th</sup> note chord is again used more often than the other scale notes.

The instruments start accompanying the voice after a cue given by nkwa etiti at bar 10. The instruments play the same thematic statements as in Ex. 2. However, oyo plays a variation of the thematic statement by dropping some pulses thus:

Ex.4.3



The instruments maintain the various ensemble roles performed in Ex. 2. This demonstrates that Abigbo musicians have predetermined roles for instruments in the ensemble irrespective of the song accompanied.



### Example 5 - Instrumental themes and extemporisations on Nkwaetiti and Nkwaukwu in an intensive dance section

$mm = \downarrow . 136$

Atani

Oyo

Ekeye

Nkwaukwu

Nkwaetiti

Nkelebe

Mkpo

Igbugbo

a

a

a

a

a

a

a

a

a

b

3

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwaukwu

Nkwaetiti

Nkelebe

Mkpo

Igbugbo

a

a

a

a

a

c

bl

a

a

a

a

a

a

5

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwaukwu

Nkwaetiti

Nkelebe

Mkpo

Igbugbo

a

a

a

a

b1

c1

a

a

a

a

7

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwaukwu

Nkwaetiti

Nkelebe

Mkpo

Igbugbo

a

a

a

a

d

a

a

a

8

Atani

Oyo

Ekere

Nkwaukwu

Nkwaetiti

Nkelebe

Mkpo

Igbugbo

a

a

a

a

a

d

b2

a

a

a

a

## Extemporizations on Nkwaukwu on the above music background

The image displays three staves of handwritten musical notation, each representing an extemporization on the Nkwaukwu background. The notation is written on a five-line staff with a treble clef and a 12/8 time signature. The notes are marked with 'x' and some have stems pointing downwards. The first staff is labeled 'a' and features two phrases, each under a slur. The second staff is labeled '4' and contains two phrases, 'a1' and 'b', also under slurs. The third staff is labeled '6' and contains a single long phrase under a slur, ending with a double bar line. The notation is a form of shorthand used in African music notation.

Ex .5 demonstrates extemporizations on two instruments (Nkwa etiti and Nkwaukwu) in a primarily instrumental section of Abigbo music. This is transcribed from an instrumental section that is performed in fast tempo after a chain of songs in moderate tempo. The example illustrates formal orchestral design. Normally intense instrumental variations are avoided in the choral sections of Abigbo music while being highlighted in the instrumental sections. Although extemporizations are allowed in such sections, it is nevertheless properly sequenced as instruments take turn to extemporize. Singing is not dominant in the instrumental movements.

Nkwa etiti presents the first extemporization in Ex.5. The other instruments retain unvaried themes. There are four thematic statements presented by nkwa etiti. These are marked a, b, c, d. Two variations of b occur. In "b<sup>1</sup>", the thematic statement "b" is presented on a single tone level while the same motivic pattern is compressed into two dotted crotchet beats in "b<sup>2</sup>". A rhythmic variation of "c" occurs in "c<sup>1</sup>". The motivic pattern is a rhythmic counterpoint of nkwaetiti theme.

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Nkwaukwu' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Nkwaetiti'. A vertical bar line is placed between the first and second measures. In the first measure, the Nkwaukwu staff has a melodic line with four notes, each with a downward stem, and a rhythmic accompaniment of 'x' marks. A slur is placed over the notes, and the letter 'a' is written above it. The Nkwaetiti staff has a rhythmic accompaniment of 'x' marks and a melodic line with four notes, each with a downward stem. A slur is placed over the notes, and the label 'b1' is written above it. In the second measure, the Nkwaukwu staff has a melodic line with four notes, each with a downward stem, and a rhythmic accompaniment of 'x' marks. A slur is placed over the notes, and the letter 'a' is written above it. The Nkwaetiti staff has a rhythmic accompaniment of 'x' marks and a melodic line with four notes, each with a downward stem. A slur is placed over the notes, and the label 'c1' is written above it.

Ex.5.1

Nkelebe plays the inversion of the rhythmic cell of nkwa etiti in b. Nkwaetiti cadences the extemporizations with long notes at "b2" (bar 9) enabling a return to the motivic pattern.

Extemporizations on nkukwu are performed on the same instrumental accompaniment background used for nkwaetiti. Three thematic statements are presented. The first thematic statement "a", is varied at "a<sup>1</sup>" with a slight rhythmic adjustment by adding more notes that restructures the accents.

It is evident in this example that logic in Abigbo music orchestration assigns lead roles to some instruments while others perform accompaniment roles.

Extemporizations and variations are normative, but structurally controlled.

The analyses of the examples presented in this work do not pretend to cover all the details of the music analyzed. Such in-depth analysis would belong to a different research approach to the nature of Abigbo music. The attempt in this work is to discover the basic features of Abigbo music that would inform the modern art music composition. All theoretical conclusions that have been directly or indirectly drawn in the course of this analysis form the background for further studies on Abigbo music, Igbo music and African music in general.

### **3.2.3 Summary of the Analyses**

#### **Interrelationships of the examples**

All the examples feature basic antiphonal structure. This is applied according to the textual content of each song. The occurrence of melodic/textual statement "o" used in Ex. 2, in Ex. 3, indicates that Abigbo musicians aspire for unifying features in their songs by retaining appropriate musical statements in different songs. In all the examples, stylistic



consistency pervades the songs in the nature of undulating melodic contour, chord structures that are dominated by intervals of 4<sup>th</sup>s, consistent cadential idiom, and instrumental accompaniment characterized by cyclic thematic materials.

Two chord structures are normative at restful cadences: that ending on 1st note chord and that ending on the 6<sup>th</sup> note chord. Voice drop is also normative in Abigbo songs especially to signify cadences. Abigbo melodies employ judicious mixture of conjunct and disjunct motions. There is conformity to voice leading norms. Wide melodic leaps are contrasted with movement in the opposite direction.

### **Form**

Antiphonal structure is basic in abigbo music. The presentation features solo statements and chorus statements. Solo statements occur in Ex. 2(bar 1-12) and Ex. 4(27-29). Abigbo music maintains clear sense of phrasing. Although the lengths of phrases vary from song to song, two-bar phrases are preponderant.

### **Setting of texts to melodies**

The languages of most sub-Saharan African societies are tonal. The Igbo language, also tonal, influences the pitch and rhythm elements of songs to a degree. There are three primary levels of tone in Igbo language: low, mid and high. "A word could have many meanings depending on it's intonation, application and of course, it's function in a sentence"(Agu 1984:194) Correlation of speech tone and melodic leaps in tonal languages retains as much as possible the linguistic implications or meaning of the text. While this

is a norm, it does not appear to be a rule. In Abigbo songs, there is a balance between musical interest and textual tones. While correlation between speech tones of text and melodic leaps occur, the expediency of aesthetics warrants deviations. Instances of tonal violations for musical interest without obscuring the linguistic meanings of the texts have been observed.

The Abigbo example furnishes evidence that African melodies are not slavishly dependent on the tonal inflections of the texts. It would also be possible to debunk the underlying notion from such tone-text relationship that the tonal contour of text suggests melodic motion for traditional composers, implying that African composers are not capable of original melodic inventions.

Syllabic setting of text is a norm in Abigbo music but not a rule. Therefore, in addition to syllabic text setting, there are instances of one syllable sung to two or more pitches as in bar 4 of Ex. 1 and bar 5, 8, 9 and 10 of Ex. 3. This is evidence that Abigbo music and perhaps, most African music, are not rigidly structured on one syllable per note fashion. Text setting appears to be free and music determined in Abigbo music.

### **Tonality**

Abigbo musicians maintain distinct tonal system. The songs are constructed on heptatonic scale. The diatonic seven-note scale and its octaves are used. Abigbo music is, however, not constructed on specific keys. Songs are performed on pitch levels that are convenient to the singers. A song may be stopped and re-started on a convenient pitch level if the initial pitching is higher or lower than the singers can manage. In general, Abigbo

chorus singers take tonal cue from the lead singer who normally starts Abigbo songs.

### Harmony and Texture

The chorus part of Abigbo is often sung in more than one voice part, ranging from two to four or more parts. Each voice part is conceived to have independent existence while matching the others as per traditional harmonic idiom of vertical intervallic concord. Each part is conceptually linear but supports the vertical unity of the parts. The linear harmonic idiom in Abigbo derives from the Igbo harmonic culture, which is intuitively acquired. In the linear harmonic thought, each part is an identifiable melody. Such melodies are called harmonic melodies in this work. From the vertical thought, the parts produce chords of varying number of notes and structural qualities. Therefore, harmonic conceptualization is gestaltic. A whole melodic statement is taken as a unit in horizontal thought to match another melody. The apparently incidental harmonic result conforms to cultural idioms, otherwise it would be rejected. In an earlier study, Nzewi agrees that: "Every ensemble theme for a piece played by any member of an ensemble constitutes a component of the ensemble harmonic length and block. When its tonal/ pitch or timbre implications are matched with corresponding lengths of other ensemble themes, harmony perceived in horizontal affect, results." (1997:54)

Abigbo music features a wide range of chordal results. The following chord structures are identified in the examples: dyads, triads, 7<sup>ths</sup>, 9<sup>ths</sup>, 11<sup>ths</sup> and 13<sup>ths</sup> chords. These appear in different qualities on different degrees of the scale. A feature of the chords is the omission of the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Harmonic interval

of a fourth is frequently used in the dyads, and more often, between two adjacent parts. The chord on the 6<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale is more frequently used than other chords types. Often, it occurs at restful pauses. At such instances, the chords on the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree or 5<sup>th</sup> degree are used to approach it. In other words a progression of II - VI or V – VI occurs. A second inversion of the major chord on the first degree also occurs at restful pauses. It is often approached with a chord on the 5<sup>th</sup> degree. It is evident from the chordal structures that Abigbo music has consistent features of highly developed harmonic idiom.

Abigbo music features a combination of heterophonic, polyphonic and homophonic textures. However, these do not appear evenly, in each song. While Ex. 1 is essentially homophonic in the chorus part, EX. 2, 3 and 4 combine the three textures.

The instrumental section features cyclic presentation of thematic materials. Each instrument plays an identifiable theme that combines with the other instrumental themes to produce dense rhythmic polyphony.

The writer presented a critique on the contributions of some writers on the notation of African music in this chapter. The observation of the writer is that there has not been a universally accepted system of notating African music other than those that combine aspects of Western notation. In view of the inchoate state of some of the prescriptions, and the adaptability of African

music to the Western notation, the writer has used the Western notation for this work. It is also argued in this chapter that the transcription of Igbo music does not pose any special problem. Analyses of transcribed Abigbo music have been undertaken in the chapter. The analyses, which aim at revealing specific features of Abigbo music, also led to some theoretical conclusions. In the next chapter, Abigbo musical features are applied in the composition of Abigbo for symphony orchestra.

## 3.3 PLATES



The chairman's compound. The researcher at the compound before the arrival of Abigbo members.



Abigbo musical instruments and some members of Abigbo.



Abigbo leaders in Okwuato, Mbaise.





The researcher and some members of Abigbo listen attentively to some explanations by a member.



The researcher and Abigbo members listen to Mr. A. Akwuruaha as he answers some questions.



Abigbo members in the performance formation.



Abigbo costume displayed by Mr. Aguogbuo, the chairman and lead singer in Okwuato.



The lead singer leads the group into a musical performance.



A child playing the knocker during a performance. Note the younger brother's involvement.



An Abigbo dancer demonstrates Abigbo dance. Note the vibration of the whole body.



Abigbo instrumentalists in action.





Abigbo drummer in action.



Abigbo drummers in complimentary extemporatory performance.



The researcher and Abigbo members dance to Abigbo music.



Abigbo music banner in Amuzo, Ezinihite.



Mr. Nwala Ejenyoku and Mr. Daniel O.C Onwuka, the past and present chairmen of Abigbo in Amuzu, Ezinihite, Mbaise, where Abigbo has its origin.



The researcher with Abigbo leaders in Amuzu Ezinihite, where Abigbo originated.