

# International Music and Women Symposium

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**Theme: Women Play/Sing The Earth**

# Women, Music ensemble, and the Social Structure of Traditional Yoruba Society

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# Abstract

- ▶ Place of women in African Society
- ▶ Perceptual view of Yoruba society as patricidal
- ▶ Focus of the paper is on the place of women in stabilizing the society with / by the usage and application of arts in various forms.
- ▶ Traditional music ensembles patron by women

# Introduction

- ▶ Who are the Yoruba people/
- ▶ The patricidal nature of Yoruba people
- ▶ The place of Music in Yoruba Land
  - ▶ How is their society organised
- ▶ Roles/ Functions of music n Yoruba land
- ▶ Place of women in Yoruba Society

# Aim And Objectives

- ▶ The aim of this paper is to situate properly the place of women in African Society vis - a vis their involvement in the musical arts for social balancing and regulations.

Specific Objectives are to:

1. Examine the composition of musical ensembles owned and patroned by women in Yoruba society
2. Analyze the song texts of music of the identified music ensemble
3. Forms of music used by women in the process of their involvement in social formation and regulation

# Methodology

- ▶ Ethnomusicological approach
- ▶ Qualitative research method
- ▶ Interview/ Observation methods to collate data
- ▶ Archival and Ethnographic sources of data gathering

# Theoretical Framework

It hinges on the theory of Balogun (2007) which he tagged

*Ọtún wẹ òsì, òsì wẹ ọtún.*

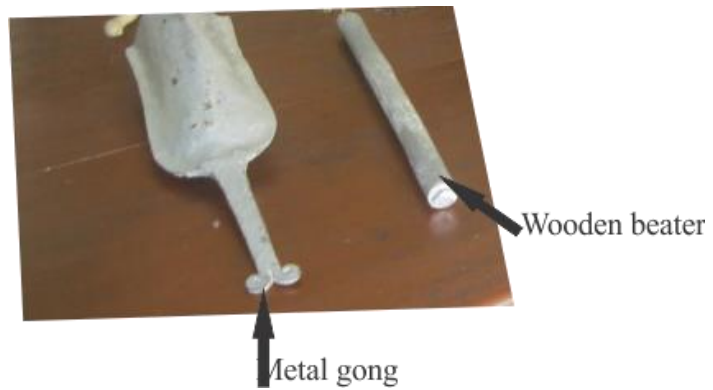
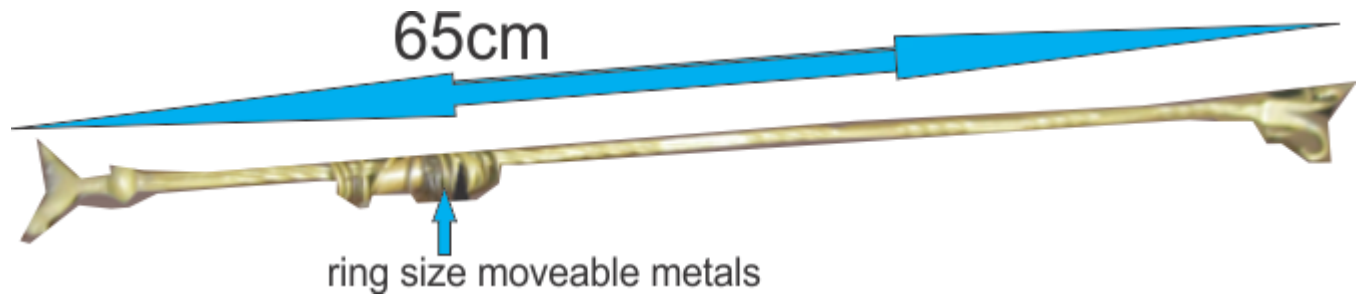
he called the binary complementarities between the Yoruba men and women in their relationship

# Findings

- ▶ Ensembles selected for the research are
  - ▶ 1. Ajogan Ensemble of the Badagry people of Lagos State
    - ▶ Igbe Olori of Iga Idunungantan Palace
    - ▶ Igbe Oloto Of Oto Awori people



# The Instruments



# Igbe Oba Instruments



Upright Drums



Gongs

# Igbe Olori Performance setting



# Igbe Oba Eko



# Ajogon Performance setting



# Song text

| Text                           | Translation                                  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Ajogan ni fon Toyi lobo        | Ajogan should wake Toyi (King)               |
| Majamo be a gba pe maku po     | Wake up from your sleep, we are awaiting you |
| Ajogan mi faraka he na ni      | We wake the king with Ajogan                 |
| Aja moron me be aga pe maku po | wake up from sleep we are awaiting you       |

| Song 1                      | Translation                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| All Erelu gbayi O gbola     | Erelu is honour and revered      |
| Omo Olumagbayi ilu imagbo   | Son of Olumagbayi in Imagbo town |
| Eyin gbo                    | Did you hear                     |
| Omo Alakomo Ogbolumaja      | Son of Alakomo Ogbolumaja        |
| O bi Sowokun fun wa Aganna  | Gave birth to Sowokun for Aganna |
| Obi Kutere Asaloogun        | Gave birth to Kutere Asaloogun   |
| O bi Adele Ajose fun Aganan | Gave birth to Ajose for Aganan   |
| Omo Alakomo Ogbolumaja      | Son of Alakomo Ogbolumaja        |

| Song                     | Translation                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Kí lo rú ko Oyàto Ọba wa | What is the name of Oyàto, our king |
| Omójowólo Oye látò       | Omójowólo is our Oye látò           |
| Ọmọladé ìgà ye wa        | Ọmọladé ìgà is ours                 |
| E wá f'àyè gbàwá         | he who give us freedom              |
| Lorúko Oyàto Ọba wa      | Is the name of Oyàto Our king.      |

## Contextual Analysis of The songs texts

- ▶ Song text in the music of the Yoruba people are more than music sound or phonetics.
  - ▶ Song text activates the language,
    - ▶ Texts make use of philosophical nuances using figure of speech.
- ▶ Songs are full of metaphors, imageries, euphemism, allegory, humour, satire, aphorism and onomatopoeias.
- ▶ Yoruba, being a tonal language, understanding the phonology of the language is prerequisite to knowing the meaning the song text is conveying.



# Conclusions

- ▶ 1. Yoruba Society gives due reference to the Women gender.
- ▶ The women play complementary role to the men in the process of regulating the Yoruba society
- ▶ The women employ a lot of musical arts in discharging their roles in the society

# Recommendations

- ▶ 1. More research work need to be commissioned examining the place of women in Yoruba Society.
- ▶ Concerted effort must be made in portraying Yoruba Society, by extension, Africa Society, as one with adequate space for the women to explore and grow in their arts.

Thank you

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