

A F R I C A N M U S I C

by Chiefpriest Okonfo Rao Kawawa

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1

Playing Enables Music To Be Alive, Who Ever Plays Good Prays Good

Music starts from Birth till the end of life, the last breath of a living creature:

Sound of joy, noise of pains, the falling of a leaf, flowing of water, blowing of wind. The falling of a tree with its gigantic sound. The thunder, the father of sound with its unexplainable lightning colours and its music. The birds with their melodies chirping.

The cows, goats, chickens, elephants make use of their voices. Even the earthquake which I have never experienced and won't pray for, has got its own noise with its lava explosion.

Human music apart from using the voice as an instrument for singing, starts from knocking stone on stone or wood against wood for example a xylophone which has different forms and shapes. Metal instrument can also be melodious or rhythmic.

Calimber – steeldrums – flutes Sanza, copper aluminium etc. are also family of steel out of which mouth organ, saxophone, trumpet etc. are being built. To mention some strings production which are half wood half metal are guitar - cello - violin - kora zither etc.

The most important is the performer, his or her condition before touching (operating) the instrument.

Psychologically-physically-philosophically what he or she wishes to express on the instrument. Let's look at the drums (carved) made out of trees, covered with animals skin. In different continents - countries or towns and tribes they all have different names and sizes.

For example:

The biggest drum today built by my students in Germany sold to a Japanese customer is carved and designed with our historical background, the Journey I had through the Sahara with the family of mine after spending fifteen years in Germany and also the death of my wife (Gruma) R.I.P. Elke Omoniyi was portrayed on the drums.

The Osun Osogbo festival and its fish symbol was not left out in the drum carving and later blessed with the name of biggest drum.

My personal experience with the Japanese Kodo drums, while I was in Japan Tokyo in "Sunshine Cultural Centre" to perform on the biggest drum with two of my Students one German one Nigerian.

Our instruments *Iyalu* (talking drum of the Yoruba in Nigeria), *Agogo bells*, *Sekere Olowoeyo shake* with Kauri shells, *Apintin* of the Ashanti known in Europe as Congas, *Agbaja drums* of the Ewe Togo, *Odoondo* and *Kpanlogo drums* of the Yoruba - with all these mentioned instruments we were able to perform to the Japanese audience satisfactory.

Which I know that it is a pride for me for Nigeria and Yorubas.



2 The Traditional Music of West Africa

In that word "Tradition" we have trade and also addition. Tradition means personal inherited communication system whether in music, handwork or system of living.

An approved and experienced ancestral style of doing things. In this view traditional music means a music which has been in life for longer period.

In different tribes and families of West Africa music was compared to foodstuff. Every family has his own style of music or musician with they play or which they play.

Through colonisation, things are forced to change their shape. People loose their identities. Most musicians have to neglect their jobs, the handworkers instrument producers their talent and also the consumers their taste.

New religion has taken place, most worshippers were brainwashed and followers flew other direction to the newly brought ideas. Anyway everything must change nothing stays the same:

A proverb says "No condition is permanent." The human race is also changing always, what must be must be.

Traditional music has its own feelings, who ever knows about it can simply identify it through the way it's being performed. Let's start with songs, they are songs with energy and mostly with chorus.

The backing instruments may be drums or Sekere shake. In some case by the Yorubas Aro the two iron roundbells which are knocked against each another rhythmically.

To mention some of the musicians who performed good on strings called Goje was *Baba Legba* who is dead but still has his record on the market, he played Sakara music (*Yusuf Olatunji*).

Some of the Yoruba well known drummer in America with the name *Olatunji*.

A Ghananian famous master drummer *Mustapha Tettey Addy* whom I met in Germany from the Ga tribe playing Tigari Kpanlogo Agbaja etc.

The frankophone drummers with their djembe and Koras will not stay unmentioned.

Thanks be to the Almighty who gave to our ancestors the energy for such artistical product left behind, which we have been improving day by day because the more you do the more you get.
Lift up the culture.





3 Highlife Music of West Africa

Manu Dibango of Cameroon, *King Sunny Ade*, the Juju musician *Fela Anikulapo Kuti*, the late King of afro beat of Nigeria. *Jerry Handsome and African Brothers* of Ghana. These are some of the highlife musicians with their groups.

Highlife music started from palmwine bars and today is a recognised Saloon music with its electrical instruments. It started all as the colonial masters entered into the continent.

Mouthorgans rhythmic guitars enriched the palmwine bars. Songs were composed while enjoying the palmwine - Accordion was also then introduced.

Clubs hotels and halls were developed where musicians were given the possibility of entertaining their audience. Gate fee was collected or free of charge, today shows are no more comparable to that of yesterday.

The musicians posses electrical instruments such as E.-guitar, keyboard, synthesizers, setdrums, leadguitars. Mostly without microphones a musician can have a performance, also the instrumentalist because of electrification.

Victor Uwaifo, *Bobby Benson* are other names of the known musicians in Nigeria. Though highlife is known to be modified in style of composing but still have its root in the ancestral rhythm.

Philosophy story tales are sang, jokes are served with laughter even france are sometime exposed in their music. Incantations with guitar are already introduced in the music of highlife. As means of jokes big vocabularies are sometime explained.

Such musician as *Fela Anikulapo Kuti* who song most of his songs in Pidgin English known as West African English. Religion is not like formerly inherent in highlife music, but most of the musicians are christians from birth and they seem to be proud of their christianity.

They perform under different etiquettes such as *Afro Juju*, *Afro Beat* or *Afro Rock*. The newest of the society in Yorubaland of Nigeria are the moslems with their Fuji-musicians with their stars.

Ayinde Barrister, *Kollington Ayinal - Iya Aladuke* and *Sefiu Alao* whom I have to crown on an occasion at Osogbo sport club as - Alayeluwa of Fuji an award from the Ratawu (Radio and theatre workers union) from which I'm appointed as grand patron.

With all these illustrations you can see that trend of highlife music has changed from that of yesteryears, through modernisation.



4 Music of Africa

Music is a dangerous and fearful weapon.
Music is so high that one cannot jump ever so low that no one can.
Limbo limbo through.

In case of apartheid music has helped in south Africa, such name for example *Masekela* the trumpeter, *Miriam Makeba* the kswahili famous singer known as the Queen of Africa.

The pianist *Ibrahim Dollar Brand* who is known for playing drums on his piano fought musically against the apartheid which has brought them their freedom today.

Osibisa a musical group of Ghananians based in Great Britain, mix themselves up with Jamaican Trinidad and some Nigerian and were able to release some albums. Afro rock was a type of music they play, with this they were able to bring continents together.

In togetherness music plays important part.
Music notes have not been existing in our ancient African society.
Every music was orally delivered.

In our modern world of today reading of music notes is introduced in music lessons. Music students do write them and play according to notes. Written music is part of preservation and survival of the missing thoughts.

Writing promotes the music of Africa Cultural centres and Universities and Institutions promoting the culture of our society through the government.

I observed the Senegal National Ballet which is widely known respected to be of good help to their economy one and secondly inviting tourists who are culturally interested to their Mother-land.

Madagascar an Island in Africa has toured round the world with good musicians, dancers and acrobats, it makes the country or continent known to the other part of the world of ours.

The *National Ballet of Congo* which I personally experienced in Düsseldorf, Germany was a very exciting crew. Their performances brought our ancestors back to life through their music.

Despite the colour of north African which is mostly white, they give respect to cultural identities.

African music and dances were exported through Asia to Europe and America. One can experience that in the music of 20th century. Music and dance as goods for sale shouldn't be overlooked.





5 Music and Dance as Therapy World Music

It's already known by the ancient people, music and dance to be involved in healing. To invoke spirit one needs music and dance, to get into trance for the sake of treating a patient, one needs the traditional form and instruments such as *Aja bell* or *Sekere* (shake), drums, sometimes flute.

We human kind are not the creator of this universe. We just try to keep it intact for the sake of our own survival. Our living expressing is sound. Language which starts with music and ends with musical instrument.

Movement of meditation for specific organ is dance.

The warriors are bound to give sound of boldness before facing the so called enemies. The modern soldiers are trained with songs and drums to wage wars.

Matching songs are also there to convince the body and psyche (obey before complain) to obey the laws and regulations.

My personal experience with the German Government in 1981 seems to be unacceptable:

In Africa house Essen-Steele where I was then practising my healing power through drums and dance of West Africa, I had a patient who was unable to urinate or go to toilet.

She was everyday on dialyse for good three years in the treatment of school medicine without better result. She was getting weaker day by day, and their diagnostic computer announced her death in two weeks.

She was then brought down to my centre, she narrated to me her life story, I gave moral support and later consulted the oracle which gave me more assurance that the lady will survive the treatment.

We started with breathing treatment therapy, then followed by *Aweyo Nankaba*, a dance of the herbalist which is today being practised in some churches in Ghana.

After some weeks she was able to walk. We continued with different ritual dances such as *Tigari, Kune, Bata* etc.

This lady is still alive but I had that case with the Government over good four years, which brought about my returning home to Nigeria after the stay of fifteen years.

I was interviewed several times from Magazines, Radios, Television Stations and also at the embassies. After many time of appearance in the courts, I was set free to continue with my healing powers in the African house.

Music and dance therapy should exist in hospitals, schools, universities, shouldn't be only for the intellectuals.



6 **World Music and Dances**

Louis Amstrong the world famous old late trumpeter, whose name will never perish with his personal voice of singer.

The history of Afro-American negroes who were sent abroad through slave trade has brought different types of music and dances.

Names like *James Brown* the King of Soul, a shoe shine boy who later became a superstar with his dancing steps. Bringing back the remembrance of his ancestors, physical and musical expressing of the slave time.

Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, Bob Marley of the rastafari. The king of guitar *Jimmy Hendrix*.

People say music comes from Africa which personally means porposity in my view. Let's have a look at European music.

On the side of classic, we have people like *Beethoven* and *Mozart* who have spent their lives in writing of music. Many pop stars derive from America and Europe.

The *Beatles*, *Rolling Stones*, *Elvis Presley*, their types of music are Rock and Roll, cha-chacha, twist, boogie, blues and gospel etc. Berimbau and instruments of the aborigine red Indians of America.

Digeridou Australian aborigine long trumpet with deep sound. Music and dances bring races together positively. Dancing and expressing of relief technical steps are countable, choreographically dancing are steps figures which can be compared to painting.

Dances are useful in all stages of life. Even animals do dance, the same applies to singing. While speaking of dances whether positive or negative, the tongue which is being used to explain words also dances around in one's mouth.

The circulation of blood also means dance, as the earth dances round the sun.

A proverb of the Yoruba says "Ijo Lowo" which simply means *dancing is the trade*. Every movements, steps or balancing have to do with dance, the only difference is the choreographic understanding that matters.

A good choreographer has to keep a close observation to the animals.

The newest out of our industrial era is the roboter dance, breakdance etc. Compared to the newest industrial music which gives back the noise of the factories.

Dance is foodstuff, as an Asante word says "Diasa" which means *chew the dance* or *dance chewing*, so you are welcome to the world of Dance and Music.





7

The Modern Music of the Yoruba

Everything is being modernised.

The youngsters are in hurry of riding big vehicle, the old men flirting with young girls. It goes from hairstyling to the food production, the coiled african is been stretched long for it to look likewise european hair.

The pounded yams which were normally covered with Kentefe leaves are today wrapped in plastic paper. The Olele (Moinmoin) half wrapped in Kentefe half in news papers. The same happens to Eko the maize cake.

Nothing stays the same but the production technics are still unchanged.

A woman will be a woman whether in wrapper or trousers, and a lady will be a lady whether with sun glasses or not. The quality is the most important.

Naturality never means nakedness, it goes with the understanding of the nature, society and academical valuation.

Back to the modern music of my surrounding in Osogbo, nobody will admire being called oldman is an insult, youngman or sunnyboy.

The poor musicians will spent lot of money on their outfit, just for the admiration of their audience, listeners.

I started my music in Germany with an arabic drum, which I was able to afford in price made out of clay. Later invited to bigger festival I borrowed Congas from my Germany friends because of the height of my personal drums and the sound.

To Switzerland by an open air concert with different tribes countries and continents, I was also sent there by Andreas Leny my publisher.

There I came across original Ghananian drums brought in by sailor for sale. I was able to purchase some drums, shakes sekere, which became my first accepted and respected instruments.

Today with my family Orchestra we possess *Bata set, Apintin* of different types, *Bembe* (Bass drums) of different sizes and also saxophones, trumpets, mouthorgans, modern set drums etc.

Not all these instruments are being used on tour but are being used in the centre.

We have been able to release one LP "Orobiniyo", two MC "Musical Experiment" and "Okonfo Rao Kawawa and the Akom family" also CD. Our latest production on our fifth tour is "Ejeka jo jo".

We pray for more betterness of our quality in music and dance for enjoyable audience.



8 Music and Dance as Business

Ayanyojuran is a word which simply means incapable drummer (unauthorised). To defend his profession one is supposed to originate from a family of musicians or should be trained by know musician or drummer.

In our area Isale-Osun, Osogbo we have such families, for example *Alaparo Iyalu drummers, Akolodo* they are known for their Sekere and Aro bells and also in our surrounding *Erin Osun Bata* players with their acrobatic dancers.

These ancient artist families who have survived the Colonial ideology are highly recognised and respected by me.

Prince Oyinlola is special the Juju musician, *Prince Oshuntoki J.P* known as *Twin Seven Seven*, *Dr. Nike Ekundaye* with her cultural troupe, they all have been travelling overseas for performances and exhibitions in the business of arts and culture.

The Late *Duro Ladipo, Oba Koso* with *Uli Beier, Suzan Wenger* who opened the school of arts in Osun State, are personalities who should not stay unmentioned.

Arts as business starts in the family and ends in studios.
Encouragement is always needed morally and financially.

A talented artist should not be disappointed in time of financial breakdown, why because an artist in need is an artist in deed.
The more pressure the more music and dance descend.

Who ever will like to shine in the corner where he or she is has to endure and study hard. As a proverb says "Practice makes man perfect".

In my family business of today are bound to organise with my students abroad. After rehearsing for almost one and half years, we then organise concert performances over thirty towns with workshops in Germany and its surrounding.

To enable us to pay for our flight and accommodations, the buses for our tour, the collected fees are shared among us.

The Lion share is mostly given to me for the sake of our project in Osogbo / Nigeria J.C.C. Jungle Communication Centre being money swallowing project which we pray to be the best the nature has brought out of the Jungle.

Punctuality being the soul of business, we pray we will never be late to receive our blessing Amen.



9 Action Talks Louder than Words

Empty barrel makes the most noise:
That's not the case of thunder which we human being will like to control with our narrow mind. The sound of thunder is what is comparable.

Show me your friend, I tell you your character, a proverb which is not always true or right. Mankind can always do an undo.

Jimoh Buraimoh the president of COPA¹ in Osun State who is also a family of mine with *Chief Yemi Elebuibon* the Awise of Osogboland and Ifa priest, *Susanne Wenger* the old lady (Mother of the artist), *Professor Oyelami* the Eesa of Iragbiji town, with all these personalities I usually discuss on art, spiritually, humanity etc.

Sangodare Ajala of sacred art whose father late *Baba Sango* was a relative and a friend of my father will never go unmentioned for his miraculous performance.

Iya Olosun the caretaker of Osun river goddess and the R.H. of Osogbo-land *Oba Oyewale Matanmi III*, our rubbing minds together in sense of expressing thought of spirituality.

Mountain high valley deep, a song of *Ike* and *Tina Turner*. The stars far with the moon from the earth, despite the distance we still enjoy their existence. The sun which shouldn't be heater because of it's danger with its positive light supply.

The earth on which we walk and talk since its existence are points enough for us living creation to be grateful. Water (River) which we always use is still powerful enough to swallow the earth but great gods of the nature give us the chance of survival. These should be enough song for the acceptance of the will of gods.

I thank first *Okonfo Asokye* the first Akom priest of the Ashanti from whom is said to have brought (prayed) dawn the goldenstufil of the Ashanti.

I also thank my parents, with their forces I have become an Akom priest of Boninka fetish.

My thanks go to everybody who has taken this opportunity and energy for this seminar and workshop to become a success.

This cosmos of ours should be more enjoyable trust forward encouraging and holy, for the coming generation of ours to know and understand more of the gods power, which will bring solution to the disaster of today problems, Trust and Obey towards human future.

¹ Confederation of Professional Artists





10

Music and Dance as Spiritual Cleaner of Soul

Prevention is better than cure, a proverb of healing system.
Better be late than late misses.

Through the industrial development era human being tries to turn a deaf ear to the ancestral Philosophy, which has been known long time ago by the society. Practice makes man perfect, the less the science of the ancestors is being put into practice, the more source will be forgotten.

Back to the roots should not be only slogan. We should make use of our scientific knowledge to organise scholarlistical, preternature. The genuity of spiritualism should not be only materialised. Materialism is the fear which brings burden to spiritualism.

As *Dr. Osagyefo Kwame Nkurumah* had said: "The secret of the world is to have no fear." At least to minimise the fear of speaking the truth. Transcendental simplified trance has to do with music and dance philosophy.

Who ever wishes to fall into trance has to accept pains, body pains one, second been neglected by the family or society who may misunderstand such behaviour.

Spiritually minded have to be ready in the case of loneliness - isolation, the experience you observe in that time may bring you nearer to the spirit.

Cause experience is the best teacher. In life everybody wishes to be winner or champion, the same applies to the character of mankind.

Once wealth was roaming about, it met people mentioning its name cause everybody wants to be rich, they all bowed down and choose if to be their leader.

Then appeared health, explaining how important it's to be healthy, became immediately master of wealth.

Later descended patience for everybody unbelievable to human-thinking, but all became true.

Initiation as fetish priest was my next dream after preternature experiences with the healing technics. To the unbelievers which brought about this seminar and workshop.



11 Towards Human Future

With subtheme nature of man and the world, happened at Costa-Brava Spain 1981 in the hotel Monte-Ray where I was challenged or provoked which brought about calling down spirit for justice.

Surely these who were there will never forfeit the day. They will always remember the miracle they experienced.

Towards human future should be a seminar and workshop of peace. The more doubt we have the less miracle can be experienced.

Towards human future seminar should bestrengthen our believe, to enable us to experience wonders of our nature musically, socially, psycho-logically and philosophically etc.

So thanks again to listeners, hope the words of mine have some light of wisdom for the society who has conceived me with this thought of ideology.

Thanks again and Gods bless!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

OKONFO RAO KAWAWA