

AFRICAN MUSICOLOGY:

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



A Festschrift for
Mosunmola Ayinke

Omibiyi-Obidike

Edited by

Charles Aluede, Kayode Samuel & Femi Adedeji

ADVANCING ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL RESEARCH EFFORTS ON FEMALE MUSICIANSHIP: A FOCUS ON YORUBA FEMALE *DUNDUN* DRUMMERS

Kayode M. Samuel Ph.D

Abstract

One major area where Professor Mosunmola A. Omibiyi-Obidike has made a substantial scholarly mark to African musicology is in the study of female musicians. However, more than two decades after expressing her concern about a lack of in-depth musicological studies into and documentation of the contributions of female musicians to the growth and development of African music, there has not been any significant response on the part of Nigerian musicologists to heed this call. This dearth of information has often been attributed to both a combination of the male dominated field of African Studies and the patriarchal structures of communities usually being studied in Africa. This paper, therefore, is a modest attempt to set the tone for a fresh direction as it examines efforts of female *dundun* drummers at promoting an egalitarian and positivist modern African society. The discourse is limited to Ara and Ayanbinrin - two contemporary urban popular female *dundun* practitioners based in Lagos, Southwestern Nigeria. The paper posits that apart from being entertainers and promoters of culture, the female *dundun* musicians, judging by the themes of their music and the overall messages of their art, are also social engineers, teachers and instructors, mobilizers as well as nation builders among others.

Introduction

African female musicians, like their counterparts in other professions, are making their marks in their chosen career. However, there is a relative dearth of information on their roles and contributions to the growth and development of African music as well as lack of systematic documentation of their activities within their various societies. Marshall (2001) stressed the need for more research to be conducted in the area of women and music in West Africa. She attributed lack of research in this area to both the combination of the male dominated field of African studies, as well as the patriarchal structures of communities usually being studied in Africa as a whole. Duran (2000), whose work represents one of the few extensive research on women and music in West Africa, opines that the greater value placed on male versus female genres of music is a microcosm of male-female status in Mande society of Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. She states further that studying gender in West African music is of central importance in studying West African culture to redress the prevailing view that women

in West Africa play marginal roles as professional music makers and concludes that "not only does more research need to be done on women and music in West Africa, but also on the gender roles within West African musical performances" (Duran, 2000:142).

One major area where Professor Omibiyi-Obidike has made a substantial scholarly mark to African musicology is in the study of female musicians. Omibiyi (1979) mentioned a few female musicians in her trail blazing treatise on Nigerian musicians and composers. In another article, Omibiyi-Obidike (2002a) identified quite a number of women who were actively involved in western music during the colonial period mostly as performers who specialized either in singing or in playing of the piano and violin or sometimes combined both singing with instrument playing. These women belonged to a class of Nigerians referred to as educated 'elite' indigenous people who emerged and collaborated with colonial civil servants and Black immigrant missionaries to produce several concerts for entertainment. In that paper, Omibiyi-Obidike specifically singled out three outstanding women, namely, Mrs Charlotte Olajumoke Obasa, Ms Elfrida Esther Thomas and Ms Oyinkan Ajasa who all contributed significantly to the growth and development of African art music during this era. For instance, she noted that Mrs Obasa (nee Blaize), as a performer, was both a singer and excellent pianist who taught many girls to play the piano apart from largely promoting musical entertainment programmes and being the only lady in Lagos during this period who owned a brass band known as 'The Alafia Band'. In the case of Ms Thomas, she was initially a teacher at Tinubu Chapel Sabbath School, Lagos and later choir trainer at Abeokuta. The last but not the least of the 'three musketeers' is Ms Oyinkan Ajasa (later Lady Abayomi) who was formally trained in music abroad but returned to Nigeria and taught at Anglican Girls School, Lagos as well as Queen's College. According to Omibiyi-Obidike (2002a: 11-12), Lady Abayomi "spent her later years as an activist and a champion of female causes".

The honoree, who is a distinguished and the first female professor of musicology in sub Saharan Africa, had earlier in a writing (Omibiyi-Obidike, 1988/1989) observed a lack of in-depth musicological studies into and documentation of the contributions of female musicians to the growth and development of Nigerian music. She remarked that since Nigerian women are "continuously making their mark on the music scene, their role in music in the past and contemporary period should receive special attention" (Omibiyi-Obidike, 1988/1989: 111). Over two decades since this submission, there persists same gap in knowledge. therefore, is a modest attempt to set the tone for a fresh direction as it examines efforts of female *dundun* drummers at promoting an egalitarian and positivist modern African society. The study from which the paper emanated is one of the first documentary researches on female involvement in drumming in Nigeria¹ which provides some insight into its performance practice, thereby furthering our knowledge on the role of women as an important aspect of African music. There is no gainsaying the fact that a study such as this that focuses on women in music has the potential of enabling a much better evaluation and appreciation of the contributions of women to the development of music not only in Nigeria, but in Africa as a whole.

Women are increasingly venturing into some professions once considered the exclusive reserve of the male folks. For instance, the idea of female soccer competitions has developed to become universally acceptable. In the same light, although more women such as Ayannike Odedoyin, Ayanbanke Lawani, Adeola Ajoke Ayan, Oluwatosin Olakanye (also known as Ayanbinrin) and Aralola Olamuyiwa (also known as Ara), and more recently, Ayangbajumo and Ayanbukola are getting involved in the art of *dundun* drumming (Samuel, 2009), this paper limits its discourse to only two of the female *dundun* drummers - Ara and Ayanbinrin. They are both based in Lagos, Nigeria's biggest commercial urban centre, and practice the contemporary urban popular form of drumming.

Roles of female *dundun* practitioners

In another paper, Omibiyi-Obidike (2002b) affirmed that the role of musicians in Africa as specialists in performances on instruments or in singing transcends mere performance to include being social critic, historian and commentator, chronicling contemporary events in the community. Her view is in agreement with that expressed by Bower (1965: 5) who noted that the musician is "not merely an entertainer, but a reminder of the times, a supporter of the royalty and an interpreter of events and a transmitter of the past". In the light of the foregoing, this paper analyses the drum and song texts of the music of Ara and Ayanbinrin and argues that apart from being entertainers and promoters of culture, both female *dundun* musicians, judging by the themes of their music and the overall messages of their art, are also social engineers, teachers and instructors, mobilizers as well as nation builders among others. In other words, the author's intent in this paper is to highlight the modest contributions of these two artistes to the development of African music in an attempt to bridge a gap in knowledge which Professor Omibiyi-Obidike once identified.

Female *dundun* drummers as social engineers

Many of the themes used by both female *dundun* drummers were taken from Yoruba folklore and worldview in general. Numerous resource materials including *owe* (proverbs) are at the disposal of the musicians in conveying their messages. *Owe* are short, memorable and condensed wise sayings often embedded with imagery based on sages' experience and are commonly used in the day-to-day discourse and conversation of the Yoruba. On some occasions, *owe* have proved most useful to the female drummers in warning members of the audience and listeners against antisocial behaviours as they select specific allegorical sayings as sign posts to guide and regulate their actions. On some occasions however, the female drummers might choose to be categorical thereby saying it point blank. A typical example is a song by Ara titled '*Lakiti*', here she derided theft. According to this song, a thief's reputation can no longer be redeemed after committing such an ignoble act in the society, in spite of the person turning a new leaf and

working hard to become successful later in life. The song (example 1) is an adaptation of a popular Yoruba folksong: *Alakiti jín*, used as a didactic song by elders to teach morals to the children especially during tales by moonlight.

Example 1:

The musical score for 'Alakiti jín' is presented in three systems. Each system includes a SOLO line and a CHORUS line. The lyrics are in Yoruba. The first system starts with 'Ki ti ki ti, Ki ti ki ti, Ki ti, ki ti, ki ti, ki ti, E ni ba'. The second system includes 'j'a le re kan, B'o ba s'o gun o dun, b'o ba d'a so a ran bo ra, A so'o le lo da bo ra da bo ra'. The third system includes 'da da da da da You, you, ma j'a le mo Ki ti ki ti'. The chorus lines are 'A la ki ti jon; A la ki ti jon; A la ki ti jon A la ki ti' and 'jon; A la ki ti jon; A la ki ti jon; A la ki ti jon; A la ki ti'.

Text,

Kiti, kiti, Alakiti jín¹

Kiti, kiti, kiti, kiti,

,ni bá j'alè l'r'kan,

Bó bá s'ogún Ídún,

Bó bá d'así àrán bo'ra,

Así olè ló dà bo'ra,

Dà bo'ra, dà dà dà dà dà

You, you, má j'alè mí

Translation

Hurry, hurry, The never-do-well

Hurry, hurry; hurry, hurry

Anyone that has ever stolen

Even after twenty years,

If you put on the àrán velvet dress,

You are wearing a stolen dress

You put it on, putting it on

You, stop stealing

A portion of the song: 'e yéé k'ówó ilú je' (stop embezzling the nation's money) shows that Ara was direct and clear in her message to typical Nigerian politicians especially those in power with their penchant for corruptly enriching themselves through the instrumentality of political authority. In a similar vein, another portion 'won n j'áso aláso, n j'omo olomo, won n gb'oko oloko, won n gb'aya aláya, won n j'ogún, j'ogbon; You, you, má j'alè mo', meaning: 'They stole someone else's clothes, they stole somebody's child, snatched someone else's husband, snatched someone else's wife, they took over somebody's inheritance; you, you stop stealing' speaks to the conscience of the corrupt leaders. In the song, Ara unequivocally declared that whatever status the person might attain in future, irrespective of the number of houses he builds, nonetheless, members of the society would still hold it against him as if it was the proceeds from the stealing that was used to acquire such properties. Ara's crusade and advocacy against economic and financial crime can be seen as a form of social engineering; a piece of advice to wrong doers to desist from negative acts. From the foregoing musical excerpt, Ara maintains a Solo/Chorus format but presents her message using the hip-hop flavour to ensure greater appeal to a wider audience especially the youth.

Ayanbinrin, on her part, used *owe* on her *dundun* to deride an obstinate person as follows:

Text,

A wi wi wi wi, won l'awon o gbo

A fo fo fo fo, won l'awon o gba,

A gbe'lu sile, a tun f'enu wi,

Apoti s'alakara, ka bi a wu,

Oun tee se, ni n fu yin lara,

lwa tee wu, ni n ba yin l'eru

Amuni si wi, amuni si so,

Amuni t'okele bo'mu ni baba won

Translation

We warned repeatedly, they pretended not to hear

We spoke ceaselessly, they remained adamant

We left off drumming and chose to speak in clear terms

Cooking stool has turned the bean cake seller into a nuisance

Your conscience is what is pricking you

Your past behaviour now causes you to fear

Ever so recalcitrant, obstinate being

Their father is a confusionist

a wi wi wi wi, won la won o gbo, a fo fo fo fo, won la won o gba, a gbo lu si le, a

6
tun fe nu wi, a po fi sa la ka ra ka² hia wu, o un te e se, ni nfu yin la ra, i

11
wa te e wu, ni nha yin le ru, a mu ni si wi, a

14
mu ni si so, a mu ni to ke le b'o mu ni ba ba won

She also went ahead to use another *owe* to caution against antisocial acts such as envy. An example is this *ikilif* (warning):

Example 3:

iyáálù Ba a ba l'e ni, ba a ba b'a ni, i won la un ba ni i s'o ta mo

Meaning: It is dangerous to continue hostility to an innocent person to the point of living in perpetual enmity (without any just cause); because obstinacy might boomerang. To that end, she also could be described as a social engineer.

Many African nations are bedevilled with myriads of challenges, which have greatly hampered the continent in developing its full potential as an egalitarian society. Some of these challenges include corruption, debt, poverty, diseases and political instability. In a track entitled *Tolongo*, an adaptation of another Yoruba folksong, Ara outrightly decried antisocial behaviours such as bribery and corruption, senseless and heinous crimes against fellow human beings including genocide by greedy African leaders. It is instructive to note that the folksong is a reflection of Yoruba worldview and belief in the presence of mystical world of witches and wizards as well as their possible repressive acts against fellow human beings. They are believed to be capable of transforming into nocturnal birds to perpetrate their dastardly acts and thereby cause destruction at will. According to the music, both birds can be identified by the colours of their feathers; one being black and the other reddish indigo. The arrival of these birds from the celestial to this

terrestrial world signifies doom and calamity. Ara, therefore, unequivocally declared that these birds are not welcome among mortals, hence they must depart immediately:

Text,	Translation
<i>Solo: Eye melo tolongo wá'yé,</i>	How many birds named <i>Oloñgo</i> (Robin) came to the earth?
<i>Chorus: Tolongo</i>	Tolongo
<i>Solo: Won n'tolongo wá'yé,</i>	They sneaked into the world
<i>Chorus: Tolongo</i>	Tolongo
<i>Solo: Tolongo, tolongo, tolongo 2x</i>	Tolongo, tolongo, tolongo
<i>Solo: Okan dúdú aró...</i>	One is as black as <i>aró</i> (a blue dye)
<i>Solo: Okan rere osùn... (Repeat)</i>	One is as red as <i>osùn</i> (a body cream)

Ara allegorically preaches against inordinate ambition of political leaders in African countries whose obsession with power always made them to cling to power at all cost even to the detriment of poor innocent citizens. Many power drunk African leaders often caused socio-political turmoil and instability in their respective countries so much so that their countries witnessed needless civil wars, coup d'état, attacks against their citizenry sometimes to the point of genocides of various degrees as well as ethnic cleansing. Such leaders have remained adamant neither willing to relinquish power nor submit to democratic process, which could result into a change in government administration. The constant fear that their past corrupt actions whenever they leave office might be called to question, probed and prosecuted, and if found guilty, jailed for their corrupt lifestyles. As a result, many of them prefer to set their country on fire by engaging in acts which could fuel civil unrest and promote chaotic situations in their domain. In extreme cases, some of them even prefer to die in office because of their insatiable thirst for power. Such unpatriotic acts and vices of these leaders are likened to unwanted wicked birds which cause destruction in the society. As a social crusader, Ara, thus, attempts to promote stable political order in Africa by addressing these undesirable elements in the following portion as illustrated in example 4:

Example 4:

SOLO We don't want you... ah! ah! We don't need you... ah ah... You made the child

6
Sol — ren cry, — you made their mo thers die, you made their fa thers die,

Ara dreams of utopia, through the following texts: 'we want love, we want joy, we want peace, we want life; no more war, no more death, no more pain; we want life, we want life, we want life'. As an advocate of forthrightness in governance, she hopes that peace, progress and development which had eluded many African nations would soon be restored through purposeful leadership.

b) Female *dundun* drummers as teachers and instructors

Generally, the elders have the responsibility of teaching and training their children in African societies. This role has, for long, been taken up by the community musicians prior to when the western missionaries utilized music as a veritable medium of instruction. Mnemonics and other resource materials remain vital tools in the hands of school teachers in effectively inculcating educational values into their pupils in schools. Simple melodies and songs were composed to aid retention of learnt concepts such as numbers, alphabets and so forth. In a composition entitled '*Gedegbe*', Ara used a funkified version of a popular folksong to teach the concept of number counting to children. The melodic part is found in example 5 below:

Example 5:

E ni bi e ni, E ji bi e ji, E ta n ta gba a n
 E rin wo ro ko, A run i bi do, E fa, e fa, ti e le, ti e le, ti e
 le, ti e le le ti e le, Bi ro, hi ro, i ro ba ta;
 Mo ja la k'e san, Gban gba e wa; I ta n ta, n ta n ta

Text,

Ení bí ení, èjì bí èjì,
Eta ntagbáa, erin woroko,
Àrún igbido, Efa, efa
tí ele, tí ele, tí ele, tí elele tí ele
B'íro n bíro, íro bata, Mojalak'esan,

Translation

One like one, two like two
 Three like a calabash, four is shapeless
 Five is like carrying a mortar, six is
 with a cutlass, with a cutlass, with a cutlass
 Like a sound, like a sound, the *bàtá* drum sounds, I
 am from Akèsán

Gbangba ewa 2x Ita nta nta nta... Ten is plainly 2x A space, space, space
O duro gedegbe, gedegbe, lo duro l t stands out, stands out, stands out clearly
O duro, o duro, o duro, oo o It stands, it stands, it stands very clearly
O duro gedegbe, gedegbe lo duro It stands out, stands out, stands out clearly
Gedegbe, gedegbe, gedegbe, gedegbe, Clearly, clearly, clearly, clearly.

The performance of the foregoing folksong - '*ení bí ení*' - in its traditional setting often involves an elder counting the numbers from one through ten. After leading the song a couple of times, the children could easily follow and subsequently recall the sequence of the numbers in the song. Awobuluyi (1993 :33) comments on the complex nature of the numeral system of Yoruba as follows: "most of the numerals in the language are derived in an often very cumbersome and complicated manner involving multiplication, addition and subtraction." Thus, in traditional Yoruba counting, seventy-one, for instance is: *ikànléléàdín*, which literally means 'one plus four twenties minus ten'. Ara, however repackaged the folksong with full instrumental accompaniment. It was presented in a rich Western popular musical genre: funk² which consists of a complex groove with rhythm instruments such as electric guitar, electric bass, keyboard, and drums playing interlocking rhythms.

In terms of its musical content, *gedegbe* is a composition that is well interspersed with funk elements such as staccato, syncopated bass lines and scratchy sounding guitar. Numerous societal values and concepts are inculcated into younger ones as presented by Ayanbinrin in the drum text below. It corroborates the fact that female *dundun* drummers are teachers and instructors:

Text,

Èniyàn l'asoo mi 2x

Translation

Friends are like clothes! (without them you feel naked)2x

Bí mo bá b'ojú weyin tí mo rásoo mí,

Whenever I look behind me, and find that I'm surrounded

Inúù mí a dùn, Araà mí a yá gá gá,

I become glad; I am vigorously cheerful

Eniyan l'asoo mi.

People are my clothing, If you feel lonely, don't be afraid,

B'ó bá g' òkè, má mikàn, lwo nikan ko.

If you feel lonely, don't be afraid, You can never be alone.

Eniyan l'asoo mi.

Friends are like clothes! (without them you feel naked)

(Ó di peki) 2x

(Fortune smiles at me) 2x

Ire gbogbo pàdè mí lonà Ó di peki

Every good thing meets on the way. I am fortunate

The foregoing teaches togetherness and cooperation as vital ingredients that can engender development within the people. Samuel (2009) posited that these elements operate within the concept of teamwork and they serve as the bedrock of any successful society.

The last example to be cited to show female *dundun* drummers as instructors is taken from a track entitled: *Àràùmùréré*, which is an adaptation of a Yoruba folksong 'Àgbámùréré'. The lyrics of the song reflect Ara's personal choice of music as a career. Even though, her parents recognized her musical talent early in life and did assist in nurturing and cultivating it, nonetheless, they wanted her to study what they considered a more 'prestigious' profession, which is law. After much persuasion, her parents eventually gave their blessing by granting her request to pursue her heart's desire - music. According to the song, she was destined to become great through music and would probably have been unfulfilled had she been forced to opt for any other profession. Example 6 presents the solo/chorus format, followed by a short narrative extracted from the solo part:

Example 6:

<i>E bami yo, moti r'ogo se</i>	People rejoice with me, I am now famous
<i>E bami yo, mo ti r'ise se,</i>	People rejoice with me, I found a new profession
<i>Ise ori ran mi wa se ni,</i>	This is the profession I am destined to take
<i>Emi o lee se, k'emi ma k'orin,</i>	I cannot do without singing
<i>Kereji, kereji, kenke luke</i>	(Some musical sounds inversions)
<i>Iya nkigbe, k'emi mama lo</i>	Mother is calling that I should not go
<i>Baba nkigbe, k'emi mama seeee</i>	Father is calling that I should desist from the profession
<i>Baba nkigbe, 'Ara, ka we re'</i>	Father is calling, "Ara, study hard!"
<i>Iya nkigbe, 'Ara, ma ko ba mi'</i>	Mother is calling, "Ara, please, don't embarrass me!"
<i>Ise orin?, gbee je!</i>	"Music, as a profession? Don't dabble into it
<i>Ise orin?, (hiss),</i>	"Music, as a profession? (hisses)
<i>Ise orin, ise asi ni,</i>	Music, as a profession is for the 'never-do-wells'
<i>Ise orin, ise alagbe ni,</i>	Music as a profession is for beggars
<i>Kereji, kereji, kenke luke</i>	(Some musical sounds inversions)
Refrain:	
<i>All: Ise o, ise o, ise o, ise o,</i>	O! lovely profession it is
<i>Ise ori ran mi ni, All: Eje o see se o</i>	It is my destined profession... All: May I prosper in it
<i>Ise ori ran mi ni, All: Eje o see se o</i>	It is my destined profession... All: May I prosper in it

Ara attributed her success in her chosen profession and also in life generally to her parents' prayers and blessings. The structural form of the song is strophic, for it has two stanzas sung to the same melody although with slight variation. Below is the text of the second stanza:

Stanza 2

<i>Iya ti gba, Iya f'ori jin mi</i>	Mother has accepted, She has forgiven me
<i>Baba ti gba, Baba sure fun mi..</i>	Father has accepted, He has given his blessing
<i>Solo: Won wa sope, All: Kole baje o</i>	They both prayed, saying 'it will not be spoilt'
<i>Kole baje o (Ise Oluwa, lai, lai, lai)</i>	It cannot be spoilt, because it is my God-given profession

Refrain repeated

Ise ori ran mi ni, All: Eje o see se o It is my destined profession... All: May I prosper in it
Eje o ye mi o, All: Eje o see se o May I prosper in it, May it turn out well for me

One could also deduce from the song that Ara advocates for freedom of choice for everyone including that of one's profession, as fate alone could determine what profession would bring prosperity to each individual in life. Parents are enjoined to give their children and wards opportunity to discover themselves, follow their calling and also give the necessary support to enhance their success in life.

c) Female *dundun* drummers as encouragers and bridge builders

The texts of the music of some of the female reveal that they are encouragers and bridge builders. A notable example is '*Tipátipá*' by Ara, which is a composition directed at any responsible house wife to assiduously work hard to ensure she keeps her home (marriage) intact from any intruder.

Example 7:

The musical score for 'Tipátipá' is presented in a staff format with two systems. Each system has a SOLO line (treble clef) and a CHORUS line (treble clef). The lyrics are written below the notes.

System 1:

- SOLO:** B'o ko o mi k'o yan a le, ma b'e ni si; B'o ko o mi k'o yan a le, ma b'e ni si;
- CHORUS:** Ti pa ti pa

System 2:

- SOLO:** Ma fa a mo ra, Ma be n kan. mi; Ma a ni, O lo wo O ri
- CHORUS:** Ti pa ti pa

System 3:

- SOLO:** mi, Jo wo da mi lo un, Dari ji mi o, fo hun ti mo ba se;
- CHORUS:** Ti pa ti pa

<i>B'okoo mi ko 'yan ale ma b'ni si</i>	If my husband refuses pounded-yam for supper, I will send emissary to beg him
<i>B'okoo mi ko 'yan ale ma b'eni si</i>	If my husband refuses pounded-yam for supper, I will send emissary to beg him
<i>Maa faa m'ra, Maa b' nkan mi</i>	I will embrace him, I will beg him all by myself
<i>Maa faa m'ra, Maa b' nkan mi</i>	I will embrace him, I will beg him all by myself
<i>Maa ni olowo ori mi, Jowo dami lohun</i>	I will say, 'payer of my dowry, please, heed my call,
<i>Dariji mi o, f'oun ti mo ba se</i>	Forgive all my wrongful acts.'

The texts of the song represent pieces of advice as well as various tactics by which a house wife can manage occasional schisms and inevitable conflicts between couples. A portion in the song, 'ahon at'eyin ma n ja, but they stay, they stay together' likens the relationship between a couple to that of tongue and teeth. Despite the hurt and injury which the teeth sometimes inflict on the tongue, which might threaten their harmonious relationship, nevertheless, both of them are inseparable especially since one cannot live without the other. She further provided a recipe for a continuous pleasant relationship. These include, that both parties should be transparently open, accept each other, overlook and forgive each other's mistakes, show respect and understanding, and above all, take up the conjugal responsibilities towards each other with all seriousness that it deserves. Ara specifically reminded the wife of her strong influence on her husband including her ability to win him over whenever a conflict ensued and he felt discontented to the point of refusing to take the meal she had prepared. Although the word 'tipatipa' literally means 'forcefully', the context in which it is rendered here is quite different. It means 'tactfully'.

Example 8:

O bi nu wo lc, Ma tc lc lo, Ma tc lc wo lc, Ma ti lc kun tan, Ma s'o bin rin fun, Ma s'o bin rin tan, Ma bi me je e, Ma je un o mo, Ma sun gba la ja a

In the last sentence of the song, the wife is enjoined to adopt every means to win her husband's attention 'at all cost'. The wife should do everything possible to ensure she secures his forgiveness including arousing him sexually and luring him to bed should he refuse to eat the prepared meal. Ara predicts that the act which was to follow all these would result into pregnancy, which would produce multiple babies to the delight of the couple.

d) Female dundun drummers as social mobilizers

Ayanbinrin's single track titled: 'kere o' contains a message mobilizing Nigerian women to arise and brace up for the challenge thrown at them by men. Readings from a text from example 9 below suggest a form of galvanizing more women towards a form of cultural revolutions and a call for them to take on more visible roles in politics and socioeconomics structures in Nigeria. It stresses the need for the womenfolk to continue to press for greater access to key positions in governance, the workforce, and other arenas until the society recognizes and supports these endeavours including emergence of women in public musical performance as reflected in *dundun* drumming. According to the song, it is high time women took their rightful position in building an egalitarian and positivist modern African society as contained in example 9 below:

Example 9:

A wa lo ku, ku a mu ra (A wa o bin rin o) a wa lo ku, ka a mu ra, Awon'o kun rin ti go ke o do, k'a fa rao to ja, a wa lo ku, ka a mu ra

Text,

Awa lo ku kaa mura, (awa obinrin o) 2x
Awon 'kunrin ti goke odo, kafara o to ja

Awa lo ku kaa mura

Translation

We are the ones left, we should brace up (all women).
Men have crossed the river before the collapse of the bridge

We are the ones left, we should brace up

e) Female dundun drummers as entertainers

There is no gainsaying the fact that both female *dundun* drummers are entertainers. This is perhaps the first role that comes to mind considering their performance of *alujo* (dance mode). It was also derived from the most popular name - 'alare' (entertainers) by which musicians are addressed in Yoruba society. In example 10 below, Ayanbinrin confirms that musicians are merry makers.

Example 10:

A wa la mu gb'o ro dun, A tun de dun mo mi, dun mo mi, di ken ken lu,
A wa la mu gb'o ro dun, A tun de! poon poon poon A tun de! A wa la mu gb'o ro

As common with *alujo* (dance mode of drumming), besides the 'awa la mu gboro dun, a tun de', meaning (we are the merry makers, here we come), most of the rhythmic phrases are nonsensical.

The last example is titled: 'Kúlúsf'. It is an original composition by Ara, but might have been inspired by a Yoruba folksong titled 'Kúlúsf'. Below is an excerpt:

Example 11:

SOLO

Ro bo to_ Ro bo to_ To bo to_ Bin tin_ Bin tin_ bin tin_ Ku lu so, ku lu so

Sol

Ku lu so_ Ku lu so, to ba gb'o rin, A ja de; Ku lu so, to ba gb'o rin, A jo_

Text,

Roboto, roboto, roboto

Bintin, bintin, bintin,

Kúlúso, kúlúso, kúlúso

Kúlúso, to ba gb'orin, a jade

Kúlúso, to ba gb'orin, a joo

Translation

Roundish (in shape), roundish, roundish

Tiny, tiny, tiny

Mole, Mole, Mole

If a Mole hears music, it will come out from its hole

If a Mole hears music, it will dance

Just like many of their compositions, both Ayanbinrin and Ara package their music to gain much acceptance with the general public as seen in the foregoing. Indeed, their compositions sometimes are a fusion of western popular musical elements such as funk, soul, blues as well as Latin American forms (salsa) with traditional Yoruba folk genre coalescing to bring about new art forms.

Conclusion

There is no gainsaying the fact that as far back as the pre-colonial era, Yoruba women have occupied a significant place in political organization, religion, family life and the economy (Fadipe, 1970). Professor Omibiyi Obidike's contributions in this direction are tremendous and have not only opened new vista in scholarship on African women in general, but have also undeniably set the tone for contemporary realities especially in Nigeria whereby women are seen to be taking on more visible roles in politics, socioeconomics and cultural revolutions in the country. It is on record that women have performed creditably well in administering government ministries, parastatals and agencies at different levels. In achieving these, they have brought remarkable transformation into the system to such an extent that many people are now

clamouring for increased participation of women in administrative matters.

On the entertainment scene, more female folks are taking their place in the scheme of things by breaking new grounds especially in male dominated professions including drumming. Ayanbinrin, a graduate of chemical and polymer engineering and who is one of the subjects in this paper, is a notable example of such. This attests to the fact that there is no basis for gender discrimination. Furthermore, the success of these female *dundun* drummers further lends credence to the fact that given early and proper musical training, adequate exposure and an enabling environment, more talented females would become proficient in the art of *dundun* drumming. Finally, women's contributions to the growth and development of African music and promotion of an egalitarian society deserve to be brought to the front burner as this paper modestly attempted. Consequently, more studies are required in this area and musicologists and other interested music scholars should be encouraged to address the challenge.

Endnotes

¹ Doctoral thesis by the author entitled *Female involvement in dundun drumming among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria*, 2009.

² Kiti, kiti and Alakiti jín are both nonsensical syllables, which are common features of folktale performance.

³ Funk is an American style that originated between the mid and late-1960s when African American musicians blended soul music, jazz and R & B into a rhythmic, danceable new form of music. A major element is employment of strong rhythmic groove of electric bass and drums and use of extended vamp on a single chord.

References

- Awobuluyi, O. 1900. *Yoruba Metalanguage: Ede Iperi Yoruba*. Ibadan: University Press Ltd, 1990.
- Bower, C. 1965. "Nupe Singers." *Nigerian Magazine* 84:53-56.
- Duran, Lucy. 2000. *Women and the 'Mystique of Hunters in Mali', The African Diaspora: A Musical Perspective*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc.
- Fadipe, N.A. 1970. *The Sociology of the Yoruba*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press
- Marshall, K. "Changing Gender Roles in *Sabar* Performances: A Reflection of Changing Roles for Women in Senegal." 2001, Retrieved 23 March, 2009 from <http://www.ecu.edu/african/sersas/Papers/MarshallFall2001.htm>
- Omibiyi, Mosun A. 1979. "Nigerian Musicians and Composers." *Nigerian Magazine* 128-129:75-

88.

Omibiyi-Obidike, M.A. 1988/1989. "Women in Nigerian Music." *Urgent Anthropological and Ethnological Research* 30/31:101-115.

Omibiyi-Obidike, M.A. 2002a. African Art Music and the Contribution of Women in Colonial Nigeria. *African Notes* xxvi(1&2):8-18.

Omibiyi-Obidike, M.A. 2002b. "The Musician in Contemporary Nigeria." *Interlink: A Journal of Research in Music* 1(1):1-23.

Samuel, K.M. 2009. "Female Involvement in *Dundun* Drumming among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria." PhD diss., University of Ibadan

Samuel, K.M. 2005. The Art of Female *Dundun* Drumming in Yorubaland. *African Notes* 29(1&2):77-97.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY