<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Author</strong></th>
<th>NWAMARA, Alvan-Ikoku Okwudiri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PG/MA/03/34127</strong></td>
<td>The Biography and Music of His Cultural Majesty, The King (Professor) Obewe and His Ohuhu Brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty</strong></td>
<td>Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department</strong></td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>February, 2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Signature** | Digitally signed by Ojionuka Arinze
DN: CN = Ojionuka Arinze, C = US, O = University of Nigeria, OU = University Library
Reason: I have reviewed this document
Location: Enugu State
Date: 2010.05.26 10:32:28 -07'00' |
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THESIS SUBMITTED BY

AWAMARA'A N. I. C

HAS ADOPTED IN FURTHERMENT OF

The Research for the Degree Of

MA

HE CO-ordinator OF THIS UNIVERSITY

DATE OF AWARD IS

[Signature]

[Name: D. I. A. O.]
THE BIOGRAPHY AND MUSIC OF
HIS CULTURAL MAJESTY, THE KING (PROFESSOR) OBEWE
AND HIS OHUHU BROTHERS

BY

NWAMARA, Alvan-Ikoku Okwudiri
REG. NO: PG/MA/U3/34127

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC,
FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA,
NSUKKA

FEBRUARY 2007
TITLE PAGE

THE BIOGRAPHY AND MUSIC OF
HIS CULTURAL MAJESTY, THE KING (PROFESSOR) OBEWE
AND HIS OHUHU BROTHERS

BY

NWAMARA, Alvan-Ikoku Okwudiri
REG. NO: PG/MA/03/34127

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC,
UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN MUSIC (Ethnomusicology)

FEBRUARY 2007.
APPROVAL PAGE

This Project Report has been read and approved for the award of Master of Arts (M.A) degree in the Department of Music.

by

Dr. Christian Onyeji (HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

Dr. Christian Onyeji (SUPERVISOR)

Dr. Chukwuemeka E. Mbanugo (EXTERNAL EXAMINER)

3/05/2017
DEDICATION

To The Entire Late William Nwamara's Family
of Umumba-Nsirino Umuahia.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of this work could not have been possible without the various inputs made by my parents, lecturers, friends, brothers and sisters, colleagues, and well wishers. I vividly remember the numerous contributions made by these people in various capacities both morally and physically and ask God to continually prosper them in their various lives' endeavours. I sincerely owe them my heartfelt appreciation. To God be the glory.

I am especially grateful to my wife, Anuli who stood firmly by my side through all the changing scenes of life as I worked on this project. Her encouragement was a strong pillar, which firmly supported me. I must not fail to thank my entire family members, starting from my dear parents – Chief C. I. and Lolo E. U. Nwamara, down to my brothers - Christian (Nanna), Uzoma and his wife Oge, Johncross, Chidi and my one and only dear sister – Mrs Uche Ohugbe and her husband, Chyke, for giving me their maximum support throughout the period this programme lasted.

My classmates and other colleagues in the Department of Music both at Awka and Nsukka contributed a lot in building up this report through academic discussions that influenced my ideas positively. I thank them all.

All the lecturers in the Department of Music University of Nigeria, Nsukka, especially, Mr Sam Chukwu (Sam Cee), Dr A. O. Adeogun, Mr Joe Onyekwelu (Uncle B), Rev. Dr. A. K. Achinwue, Mr Emma Nwachukwu, Mr Peter Sylvanus, Major MacDonald, Mrs Anya-Njoku, Rev. Sr. M. T. O Keke, Dr. Ahanotu, Rev. Fr. Ben Agbo etc, deserve to be thanked for their positive criticisms, which improved the standard of this work.
I will forever owe a special gratitude to my mentor, teacher, colleague and friend, Prof. Sir D. C. C. Agu for being who he is.

To my supervisor, Dr. Christian Onyeji, whose advice and criticisms gave me new ideas and deeper understanding that widened my knowledge, I am deeply indebted.

Above all, I thank the Almighty God for his mercies, faithfulness and protection. I promise to always use my talent to edify him.

NWAMARA, Alvan-Ikoku Okwudiri
ABSTRACT

This work, as the title indicates is basically on the biography and music of His Cultural Majesty, the King (Professor) Obewe and his Ohuhu Brothers of Okaiuga Nkwoegwu community of Abia State. It consists of six chapters. The first chapter covers the preliminaries such as: aims and objectives of the study, research background and statement of problem, limitations and delimitations of the study, research methodology and literature review. Chapter two dwells on music and music making in Okaiuga Nkwoegwu and presents the biography of King (Professor) Obewe; his education, musical career, formation of his performing group and organisation of the ensemble. Chapter three is a study of the text of Obewe’s music, covering the song texts, translations and their messages while chapter four presents transcription of some of the songs and their analysis. Chapter five examines Obewe’s contributions and innovations in the cultural development of Okaiuga Nkwoegwu and finally chapter six that reviews Obewe’s music in contemporary music scene, summary and conclusion of the study.
# LIST OF PLATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>King Professor Obewe in front of his house</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Okaiuga Nkwoegwu Central School</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Members of the Ohuhu brothers</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Researcher with King Professor Obewe</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>King Professor Obewe in front of his Outing Bus</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Album Sleeve of Obewe '96</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Album Sleeve of Ihe Adiwo Nma</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Album Sleeve of Onye Ndidi Nwe Nmeri</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The researcher with Obewe's Daughters</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL PAGE</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF PLATES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE:</strong> INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Research Background and Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Aims and Objectives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Limitations and Delimitation of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Research Methodology</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Review of Related Literature</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO:</strong> BIOGRAPHY OF KING (PROFESSOR) OBEWE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 The Man Obewe</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 His Education</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 His Musical Career</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Formation of the Performing Group</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Organisation of the Ensemble</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER THREE:</strong> STUDY OF THE TEXTS OF OBEWE'S MUSIC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 The Song Texts and their Translations</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 The Messages of the Texts</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**CHAPTER FOUR:**
TRANSCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF SOME OF OBEWE’S MUSIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Transcription</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Melodic Structure of the Music</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Harmonic Structure of the Music</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Rhythmic Structure of the Music</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Formal Structure of the Music</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Summary of Selected Musical Examples</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER FIVE:**
OBEWE’S CONTRIBUTIONS AND INNOVATIONS IN THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF OKAIUGA NKWOEGWU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>His Contributions and awards</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Obewe’s Recorded Works</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>His Musical Instruments</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>His Dance</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Costume</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Performance Practise</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>The Audience Of Obewe’s Odumang'o Music</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER SIX:**
A REVIEW OF OBEWE’S MUSIC IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC SCENE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary and Conclusion</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Much has been written on quite a number of various Nigeria's traditional music but no detailed research work has been conducted on King (Professor) Obewe and his Ohuhu Brothers of Okaluga Nkwoegwu in Umuahia North of Abia State of Nigeria. This may be traced to the fact that the group and their music have not been widely publicised so as to attract the attention of many music scholars/researchers.

This project seeks to explore and document the biography and the music of this traditional musician who is well known in Abia State. He is His Cultural Majesty, The King (Professor) Obewe, who is the exponent of a musical genre - Odurnodu (later called Odumorigo). His musical genre is very popular among the people of Okaluga, Nkwoegwu in Umuahia North, Abia State of Nigeria.

According to Akpabot (1986: 91), "one method of finding out about the culture of a people is to examine how they conceptualise their music". In view of this, it is the hope of the researcher to contribute towards increasing the number of materials in ethnomusicology and also bring this aspect of Okaluga Nkwoegwu's culture and music to world music history.

Music is an integral part of the Igbo culture. Bebey (1975) asserts that "music is an integral part of African life, from the cradle to the grave." Music is found in almost all the socio-cultural activities of Igbo people as a significant part. Games like wrestling, moonlight plays and cultural activities like burial, title-taking, ritual performances, naming and marriage ceremonies and so on, are fully associated with music making. It is in line with this that
Okafor (2005) confirms that "the musical culture of the Igbo is said to be rich and varied, because it is associated with their worship, occupations, homeland and rites of passage, and it is an integral part of Igbo life."

For a better understanding of the culture of any African society, music is essential. No wonder Akpabot (1986:88) opines that, "culture embraces many aspects of human existence; but perhaps in no better way is it expressed than in music and the art". In the same view, Euba (1977:80) suggests that "it is necessary to devote a certain amount of time to the musical part of a society in order that its culture may be better understood".

Music contributes immensely to the continuity and stability of culture by giving room for physical interaction, aesthetic pleasure, emotional expression, conformity to social norms and religions, rituals, communication and entertainment and other forms of cultural activities of human existence. Okafor (1993:12) sees culture as, "the systematic way of life evolved by man for his survival, development, comfort, and edification in a particular environment. ... thus culture is man-made art".

Anoke (2004:40), in her own opinion states that:

Culture signifies the sum total of human creations, the organized result of group experiences up to the present time; a modified form of adaptive behaviour embodying all conventional practices and mechanical contrivances which give human behaviour an institutional form, performance and also promotes the retention of accumulated experiences for the benefit of future generations. It refers to general idea of
knowledge, beliefs, customs, traditions, and skills that are available to the members of a society.

In an attempt to expatiate on culture as it relates to music, Akpabot (1975:3) in his book, “Ibibio Music in Nigeria Culture,” quoted Bascom and Herstovits as having said that:

The study of culture involves not only the institutions that frame man’s reactions to the fellow members of his society but also the extra-institutional aspects of human behaviour, including language, the relation between language and behaviour, between personality and culture, and the system of values that gives meaning to the accepted modes of behaviour of a people.

Okaiuga Nkwoegwu people are very cultural conscious people just as many other tribes in Igbo land. They occupy themselves with various traditional socio-cultural activities and each of these socio-cultural activities has specific music type set aside for it. It is necessary to note at this point that in most Igbo societies, participation in musical activities is not always open for everybody. Certain music types are categorised for some special individuals. This is in some cases done according to age differences, status attained by some individuals or certain kindred in the societies involved.

In Okaiuga Nkwoegwu for instance, there exists a peculiar music type, which is set aside for the elderly men. This music is known as ‘Odumodu’, which is the main source of King (Professor) Obewe’s music.

Odumodu music in Okaiuga Nkwoegwu is entertainment music, music used to educate the young, to praise achievers and to correct evil doers as
well as a religious music. It is performed during Okaiuga Nkwoegwu community’s annual ‘Ekpe’ festival where it is used to usher in the ‘Eru’ (a community goddess). Agu (1990) observes that:

*Among the Igbo, music and religion go hand in hand. The power of music was fully recognized by the people and they never failed to utilize this effectively. In the society, there was strong belief in the use of songs in achieving control of power: songs of supplications, songs of spirits, melodic invocations, magic songs, songs for curing, and in fact, songs for every aspect of life. These songs were often used to achieve various desires.*

Odumodu music is performed during the funerals of titled chiefs, the elderly and also during chieftancy title-taking ceremonies in Okaiuga Nkwoegwu. Its application and significance during these ceremonies is dependent on the purpose it is intended to serve.

The lyrics of Odumodu music relate to the Okaiuga Nkwoegwu people’s socio-cultural environment, they comment on the people’s social and political lives mostly through proverbs. In view of this, Alor (1987:9) states that:

*In communal administration, the priceless role of music is of great effect, it is a medium through which citizens are advised, warned and/or praised. Notorious chiefs and citizens castigated in satirical songs and cultural ethos of a people are also reflected in their folk music, which serves the purpose of social organization and reformation.*
Odumodu music is well integrated into the people's socio-cultural life. Everyone understands the essence and message of the music as long as the person understands the culture of the people of Okaiuga Nkwoegwu. Echezona (1963) observes that:

...it seems imperative that before a person can understand the music of the Igbo people, he must fully understand the culture of the people and the relationship of music to that culture. By whatever standard the music of the Igbo is being studied, it must be approached anthropologically.

Uzoigwe (1981) adds that "traditional music makes a distinction between musical sound patterns and their inherent social-musical meaning."

Okaiuga Nkwoegwu people are music-loving people. They make music out of any available natural resource. In Odumodu musical ensemble, the musicians use musical instruments such as udu (pot drum) ekpete (locally made drum), osa (shaker) and ekere (small wooden gong), which are constructed to suit their tastes and to serve various purposes of their music.

1.1. Research Background and Statement of Problem

In every Igbo community, music is a highly valued creative art that is an expression of various aspects of life. For so many years, strong scholarly interest was shown by ethnomusicologists like A. M Jones, J. B Blacking, A. P Merriam, Bruno Nettl, W Bascom, J. H. K Nketia, Meki Nzewi, Sam Ekpe Akpabot, Richard C. Okafor, Akin Euba, Dan C. C. Agu, Joshua Uzoigwe, Christian Onyeji and many others in discovering and documenting music
genres in various traditional communities of the world, especially in Africa. This notwithstanding, many musical genres in so many musically rich communities of the world, especially Igbo communities of Nigeria, still remain unnoticed, yet to be discovered and documented.

Absence of documented record on Obewe’s music, which poses a lot of problems for researchers who may be interested in his music, or even the musician, necessitated this research work. Secondly, the music genre under study needs to be brought to the knowledge of the wider society especially at this point in time when much interest is being shown in the documentation and study of African music by world musicologists.

Finally, there is need to direct efforts towards promoting our indigenous music and musicians by means of documentation for the sake of posterity.

1.2. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to explore and document the life and music of His Cultural Majesty, the King (Professor) Obewe and his Ohuhu Brothers of Okaluga Nkwoegwu Community of Umuahia North Local Government Area in Abia State. This became necessary as nothing is known to have been written on the man, his group or his music. Therefore, this work aims at introducing this musician and his music type and contributing positively to a greater understanding of this Igbo traditional music type. The researcher hopes that this study would be found a useful contribution to the field of ethnomusicology.
1.3. Limitations and De-limitation of the Study

In an attempt to cover as much grounds as possible on this research work, the researcher was faced with some unfavourable conditions and situations, which include the following;

- Very busy schedule of most of the interviewees.
- Difficulty in fixing interview appointments with King (Professor) Obewe, who is always busy with his performances and shows.
- Unavailability of written materials on Obewe, his group and music.
- Difficulties in sorting out concrete and reliable information since some of the information got were contradictory to others.

Nevertheless, the researcher was not discouraged by all these problems; instead he went ahead to devise alternative means of hitting his target although he does not claim to have exhausted all that can be said or written on this subject matter.

The project is therefore de-limited to the biography and music of Obewe and his group based on information gotten through interviews, personal experiences fieldwork, related literature and researches.

1.4. Research Methodology

Research according to Olaitan (1988:1):

... is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data.
Merriam (1964:37) in his own theory of method and techniques, believes that "method depends... upon theoretical orientation and basic assumptions particularly those which concern the aims of the discipline."

Generally, the reliability of any research output largely depends on the method used in data collections.

For the work under study, the researcher drew materials from interviews, the researcher's personal experiences as an Igbo from Umuahia South Local Government Area of Abia State, field research and research on related literature. Though difficult to accomplish, the researcher relied mostly on oral information got from Obewe, his wife, members of Obewe's group and few elders in Okaiuga Nkwoegwu who know about Obewe, his group and the Odumodu music in general. The researcher's attendance to some of Obewe's performances helped him in no small measure to have more insight into what Obewe does on stage and also widen the researcher's knowledge of Obewe, his group and his music. All these contributed immensely to the successful completion of this work.

1.5. Review of Related Literature

Miller (1979:32) observes that:

Those who take music seriously say that it beautifully expresses and communicates ideals and emotions and that they return again and again to music to find again the fulfillment and revitalization they may have found at a concert, in church, or wherever they as individuals were touched and moved to a different feeling about life.
The Igbo is a musically active tribe as music plays a major role in the social and religious lives of the people. Igbo audiences participate actively in every musical event. Jones (1949) gives a reason for this active participation thus:

... in a land where science does not provide ready-made recreation the people have to make it themselves; and so all social recreation is always accompanied by music. One might almost say that it is built in music and it is a social musical occasion.

In every Igbo traditional society, music is performed for various reasons. It can be performed for the sheer fun of it, the message it communicates, the outlet it provides for social interaction or the sharing of community’s sentiments. It may also be performed as a tribute to an individual, an offering to a deity or a service to a potentate.

Adesokan (1998:5) notes that:

... in Africa, the context of music making covers various social events such as social, political, religious, economic, entertainment, ceremonial rituals, creative, occupational, psychological, educational, recreational, socio-economic and communicative role.

Agu (1990:51) also observes that:

... the Igbo equally made, and still make music for entertainment and social gatherings. Games like wrestling, moonlight plays, and cultural activities like burial, title taking, naming and marriage ceremonies and so on.
In any typical Igbo traditional society, virtually everybody contributes to and draws from musical lore. The musician draws his inspiration from the collective wisdom of the community, from his environment and the entire social milieu. The audience reacts and interacts with the musician, giving him inspiration, thereby expanding and contributing to his entire musical output, through spontaneous refrains, ululations, improvised dancing, confirmation of a singer’s statement, response to the call of instruments, etc.; and gifts of appreciation to the musician. In this way, music making conforms with what music scholars refer to as collaborative or a communal activity in Igbo society – everybody receives and generates music or dance.

In the same view Merriam (1964:6) opines that:

*Music sound is the result of human behavioural processes that are shaped by the values, attitudes and beliefs of the people who comprise a particular culture. Music sound cannot be produced except by people for other people, and although we can separate the two aspects conceptually, one is not really complete without the other.*

Echezona (1963) adds that "... to every Igbo, life has a melodic and rhythmic orientation, and again, no event happens that is not associated with music. The Igbo has an ardent personal feeling for music."

The study of the music of King (Professor) Obewe, a music which took its root from the Odumodu music of the Okaiuga Nkwoegwu Community of Umuahia North Abia State, cannot be meaningful without an in depth study of the Okaiuga Nkwoegwu Community, the Odumodu music and Obewe's music.
itself. This is necessary, as music in Africa remains a part and parcel of the lives of the people who own it. Jones (1949: 291) asserts that:

\begin{quote}
music is woven into the very fabric of African life; it pervades a man from the cradle to the grave... There is ceremonial music, music for communal work, music for communal recreation, and private, individual music.
\end{quote}

The King (Professor) Obewe's music can be said to be multi-functional in the sense that it serves so many functions. In addition to very many other functions, Obewe's music serves mostly as entertainment music and features in various occasions like: birth, marriage, death, funerals, burials etc.

Obewe's music combines vocal and instrumental music and a unique solo dance style done by Obewe himself, which sometimes is unconsciously accompanied by some unregulated bodily movements of some of his instrumentalists. Textual themes of his music include praise, love, religion, satire, derision and politics possessing significant and extensive literature content. Hence, Okafor (1989) observed that "the Igbo cannot do without music and one of the most important attributes of Igbo music is that it is not only to listen to, but also to learn from."

Nzewi (1980:15) contends that:

\begin{quote}
Folk music is an ubiquitous social organiser. It supervises the operation of established government; asserts in the maintenance of the laws of the land; safeguards and perpetuates tradition, discourages the degeneration of personal or corporate morals; promotes social equity and fights injustice;
\end{quote}
crowns rulers, welcomes births, buries the dead, enforces public health programmes, generally organizes and enlivens all purposes of communal get together.

Music is distinguished from other sounds by the presence of four main factors, which is referred to as properties of musical sounds. These factors include pitch, dynamics, timbre and duration (rhythms). Kamien (1998:231) described the four main musical properties thus:

1. **Pitch** - The relative highness or lowness we hear in a sound. The pitch of a sound is decided by the frequency of its vibration. The faster the vibrations, the higher the pitch; the slower the vibrations, the lower the pitch.

2. **Dynamics** - The Degree of loudness or softness in music. Loudness is related to the vibration that produces the sound. The harder a guitar string is plucked (the farther it moves from the finger board), the louder its sound.

3. **Timbre (tone colour)** - The quality that distinguishes the tone of one musical instrument from another. Tone colour is described by words like bright, dark, brilliant, mellow and rich.

4. **Rhythm** - The "lifeblood of music." It is the flow of music through time. Rhythm has several inter related aspects; beat, meter, accent and syncopation and tempo.

Furthermore, there exist three elements, which are found in music. These elements are rhythm, melody and / or harmony. Okafor (1991:4) in his
own view states the following about these elements of music; Rhythm, Melody and Harmony;

Three elements go into the chemistry of music. The first is rhythm—the general movement of pulse and sound; the drill of various constituents of music... so important is rhythm in the general character of music that it is often called the soul of music... an arrangement of different sounds is called the melody. The melody consists of a single line of music... it is like an individual human being with all forms of finiteness. Harmony is like clothing worn by melody. It comprises different musical sounds—vocal or instrumental—built round the melody. Just as the royal regalia is part of the majesty of a king... the harmony gives character to the music.

So many scholars and musicologists have tried to view, discuss, describe and interpret music in so many ways; yet, nobody has ever exhausted what music embodied. The more music is explored, the more it is pregnant with treasured meanings and qualities. The description of music is basically dependent upon the individual’s conception of it in time and situation.

Summarily, in this research, views, discussions, descriptions, interpretations and opinions cited should be considered as being dependent on the researcher’s conception of them at the time the research was carried out.
Plate I: King Professor Obewe in front of his house
CHAPTER TWO

BIOGRAPHY OF KING (PROFESSOR) OBEWE

2.1. The Man Obewe

Lawrence Eberuchukwu Nwubani (popularly known as Obewe) was born at Egwunaeleke, Okaiuga Nkwoegwu - a town in Umuahia North Local Government of Abia State in the year 1958. He was the fifth of six children (three males, three females) and the last male child of his parents, Uluaucha and Eunice Nwubani, who were a musician and a farmer respectively at Okaiuga Nkwoegwu. He spent his early childhood years with his parents at Okaiuga Nkwoegwu where he witnessed and enjoyed performances of his people's traditional music. He was particularly fascinated by a music genre known as Odumudu, of which his father was one of the musicians. Obewe did not only enjoy this music but also accompanied his father to several performances, where in some cases, he was allowed to carry the drums to their performance venues.

Owing to lack of finance, Obewe could not go to school early. Instead he joined a local football team to become a footballer. According to him, the name "Obewe" came into existence as a result of his incessant cries at any match they lose during the early years of his football career (Each time he cried people would laugh at him and say "obewele" meaning "he has started crying"). Whenever he was not in the field as a player, he would be there as the lead singer of their supporters' club. He later became so popular as a lead singer of the fans' club that his village youth's musical group picked interest in him and decided to use him as their lead singer.
Okaiuga Nkwoegwu is a town made up of villages like Umuoru, Umunnenweze, Nkataalaocha, Mgboko (where Egwunaeleke, Obewe’s clan belongs to), Umuohuru, and Umuakam. Towns like, Afougiri, Umuawa, and Ekeoba surround the town. Okaiuga Nkwoegwu people are predominantly farmers and they are culturally and musically rich. Each socio-cultural activity has a music type set aside for it.

In the early days of Obewe’s life, when his father was a member of the village musical group, Odumodu musical genre was very popular in their area and was respected and honoured as the core traditional music of the people of Okaiuga Nkwoegwu.

Being a people of rich cultural tradition, the people of Okaiuga Nkwoegwu hold an annual festival known as ‘ekpe’ in honour of their ancestors. During this festival, odumodu music is used to usher in the ‘oru’ (the goddess of their land). This music was then played by four elderly men and was danced to and enjoyed by the entire villagers at will.

Obewe, as a young boy used to join them during their outings, especially at their annual musical outing at the Nkwo market square of their town. That was how he learnt to play most of the instruments especially the drum (their master instrument). One interesting thing about this annual event is that it later became so popular that the entire town became known with ‘Nkwoegwu’ meaning Nkwo (market) of music, which took over their identity.

The traditional music legend (Professor) Obewe got married to Miss Echidime Uwaeme Nwakamma of Amaokpara in Umuahia North local government area of Abia state in 1992. The wife is an Umuahia based
businesswoman. Their lovely marriage is blessed with two beautiful daughters – Faith Oluomachi Obewe-Uluocha and Gift Akunna Obewe-Uluocha who were students as at the time of this research.

2.2. His Education

King (Professor) Obewe had his primary education in Central School Okaiuga Nkwoegwu, his secondary education in Okaiuga Secondary School. It was during his secondary school career that his musical talent manifested and was discovered, having participated in secondary schools’ music competition. He was selected to teach and lead the musical troupe of his school.

Incidentally, the furtherance of Obewe’s educational career was marred by lack of finance though, according to him, much later in life, he enrolled in a London based school for a correspondence programme in Marketing from where he graduated with a diploma in Marketing.

2.3. His Musical Career

His Cultural Majesty, The King (Professor) Obewe, who has received many awards and titles through his music, started music informally as an errand boy in a musical group where his father was a member. He later learnt how to play drums by imitating the masters in the group and much later other instruments by the help of his father and personal efforts.

Apart from the fore mentioned, Obewe had the opportunity of leading lots of local musical groups; his village youth musical group, his home church’s youth chorus group, football fans clubs and some schools’ choral
groups. These experiences helped him physically, socially and emotionally to get stabilized as a group leader.
2.4. Formation of the Performing Group

The young Obewe, as a lead singer in his village youth musical group, became so popular that each time the group was invited for certain performances and Obewe was indisposed to attend the programme, those inviting them would rather forfeit the group's appearance entirely. In those days there used to be no form of cash reward or honorarium attached to all the efforts put into the activities of the group. After one of their outings, Obewe suggested that an honorarium should be made available for the members of the group since they are the exponents of the means through which the money is being made. The executive bluntly refused Obewe this suggestion. He therefore decided, with some of his friends, to form another independent musical group.

Initially, they started with few musical instruments they could lay their hands on and later, having attended some musical engagements where they were paid, they bought some more musical instruments and added to the ones they had. They also increased their numerical strength by scouting for individuals who had musical talents within their community and neighbouring communities.

Their genesis saw difficult times as a result of oppositions and pressures from the former youth musical group coupled with lack of fund to sustain the new group and occasional abandonment by some of their members. These notwithstanding and with the help of God, the group known as King (Professor) Obewe and the Ohuhu Brothers came to stay. Presently, the group is made up of fifteen (15) members whom Obewe said he recruited on the basis of talents found in them. These members include
two back-up vocalists; Chidiebere Ebegbu, who is also known as “Mkpokoro onya” and Prince Ugwumba Agommuo (a.k.a. Mushii). Four drummers; Onyewuchi Egeonu, popularly called Councillor, Mekus Atuloma (a.k.a. Baba), Chidiebere Okpokoro (a.k.a. Awuse bi n’osso) and Onyewuchi Nwokoji who is also called "Okakaa. Barry Onwugharam (a.k.a. Mmaagha) plays the osha (shaker), Obioma Nwigwe (a.k.a. Canon) plays the first “ekere”, “koi-koi” or "okpokoro" (small wooden gong) and Ikemefuna Agbarakwe (Gab as the members of the group fondly call him), plays the second 'ekere. The two pot drums are played by John Nwosu nicknamed 'O. P. P' and Ebere Nwoha while Obiukwu Anyadike (a.k.a. Akpuobi) plays ‘ekpiri’ (rattle). Other non-instrumentalists, who are members of the Ohuhu Brothers include; Okwudiri (a.k.a. Iwe la ewe) as the Welfare Officer, Promise Onwuonwuye as their driver and Emmanuel Iheeke their manager.

King Prof. Obewe and his Ohuhu Brothers first public appearance was at the campaign in Kaduna for the creation of Abia State by Late Dr M. K. I. Okpara about the year 1981.

2.5. Organisation of the Ensemble

Membership and Recruitment of Members

As has been stated earlier, members are recruited on the basis of special musical talents found in them. According to the leader of the group, Obewe, as soon as he discovers musical talent or learns of the existence of someone who has such a talent around the corner, he and his group members would invite such a person to their rehearsal venues, interview the person and co-opt him on the basis of the outcome of the interview.
It is important at this juncture to point out that the group is made up of males exclusively. No woman member has ever been recruited in this group as at the time of this research and no such plans were known to be in the pipeline.

Plate III: Members of the Ohuhu Brothers

Training of Members and Rehearsals

In order to avoid disturbances, disruptions, distractions and to provide security and make dance appear new and attractive to its audiences during outings, trainings usually take place in enclosed places.

The training venue of Ohuhu Brothers is the hotel. They meet with the proprietors of any convenient hotel of their choice, pay them and fix practice
and rehearsal sessions there. This is possible because they do not rehearse often; they only rehearse when they have new compositions in preparation for recording. Trainings and rehearsals go hand in hand during such camps. General skills are learnt collectively while special skills are taught to persons who possess exceptional capabilities. The techniques used during the teaching and learning period were demonstration, repetition, guidance, participation, imitation, practice and memorization. Other rehearsals are on individual basis with recorded tapes of the group.

Contracting and Preparation for Performance

Obewe and his group stage their performances during personal or communal social and political ceremonies; be it civil or governmental. Their contracting fee ranges from forty thousand naira to over seventy thousand naira, depending on the venue of the performance and the client. In some cases, this fee is paid in addition to the provision of a reliable means of transport and refreshments. The leader of the group mostly makes the negotiations.

As soon as the contracting client meets all contracting requirements, the group makes sure that their instruments and equipment are ready for the performance and sets their minds towards the success of such engagements. No oracle consultations, ceremonies to appease the gods of the land nor sanctifications or consecrations are made before any of their public performance.

The performers on their own part, having set their minds on the on-coming performance begin serious rehearsals on individual basis in order to
perfect their styles. They sometimes try to add new items/styles into the already existing repertoires.

The costumes are not left out in these preparations; instead they are kept in order. Those that are worn out are replaced with new ones. Manageable ones are updated. Musical instruments are repaired, painted and beautified. Old ones are changed with new ones and as soon as all these things are put in order, they now get set for the actual performance.

The Composer

All the songs performed by the group are either originally composed by Obewe himself or an old traditional folk or gospel tune re-arranged by him. Obewe is also the lead singer of the group, therefore, he brings in new ideas into the music during performance by way of extemporization and improvisation. These he does at will and sometimes with the promptings of his group members just as Merriam (1964:166) emphasized in the statement that:

*there are group contributors to style; and there are also known processes of composition in which a group of individuals work together; but in all cases, these are individuals working creatively.*

Unlike the traditional music that is believed to have no known composer, Obewe's music is either composed by him or originates singly or collectively from folklore or traditional gospel tunes. What is constant in traditional music composition is change.
CHAPTER THREE

STUDY OF THE TEXTS OF OBEWE'S MUSIC

3.1. The Song Texts and their Translations

The text of (Professor) Obewe's music is mainly in Igbo language and in a few cases English or Pidgin English. His music is largely text-based and like the Abigbo music, according to Onyeji (2004:57) communicates matters of interest to the audience. His textual messages are mostly based on folk stories, true-life stories, politics, religious issues, social issues and so on. It sometimes presents satire, derision, praise, general commentaries on communal events and on governmental issues topically commenting on people's lives "incorporating the values of the people" (Mbanugo, 1989:116) and their various socio-cultural activities mostly through proverbs, allusions and figurative expressions.

Examples of the text of some of his music with their English translations are as follows:

Example I

"KA ANYI LEWE HA" (Igbo with their English translations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ayi lewe ha nu wo!</em></td>
<td><em>Ayi lewe, lewe, lewe,</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let us watch them!</td>
<td>Let us watch, watch, watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lewe, lewe ha nu o, kayi lewe ha</em></td>
<td>watch, watch them, let us watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anya.</td>
<td>them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ayi lewe ha nu wo!
Let us watch them!

Ayi na-aju unu, ayi na-aju unu,
We are asking you, we are asking you

Ayi na-aju unu, ayi na-aju unu,
We are asking you, we are asking you

Ọle mgbe onye na-aru oru
When shall the workers

ga-eri ugwu?
be paid?

Ọle mgbe onye na-azu ahia
When shall the trader

ga-azuwa?
begin to trade?

Ọle mgbe ulo akwukwo anyi
When shall our school

ga-emepo?
re-open?

Ọle mgbe obodo ala anyi
When shall our town

ga-adizi?
Be organised?

Ayi lewe, lewe, lewe,
Let us watch, watch, watch
lewe, lewe ha nu o, kayi lewe ha
watch, watch them, let us watch
anya.
them.

Ọle mgbe?
When?

Ọle mgbe?
When?

Ọle mgbe?
When?

Ọle mgbe?
When?

Ọle mgbe?
When?

Ọle mgbe?
When?
Ole mgbe ihe obibi ndu
When shall the good things of life
gaa-abata?
Come in?
O wu ole mgbe lee?
When shall it be?
O wu ole mgbe lee?
When shall it be?
Ole mgbe?
When
Ole mgbe?
When
Ole mgbe?
When

Ayi lewe ha nu wo!
Let us watch them!
Ayi lewe, lewe, lewe,
Let us watch, watch, watch
lewe, lewe ha nu o. kayi lewe ha
watch, watch them, let us watch
anya.
them.

Ayi lewe ha nu wo!
Let us watch them!
Ayi lewe, lewe, lewe,
Let us watch, watch, watch
lewe, lewe ha nu o, kayi lewe ha
watch, watch them, let us watch
anya.
them.

Ayi lewe ha nu wo!
Ayi lewe, lewe, lewe,
lewe, lewe ha nu o, kayi lewe ha
anya.

Ayi lewe ha nu wo!
Let us watch them!
Ayi lewe, lewe, lewe,
Let us watch, watch, watch
lewe, lewe ha nu o, kayi lewe ha
watch, watch them, let us watch
anya.
them.

e
c.

e
x

e

Example II
"ILU IGBO" (Igbo with their English translations)

Call                                Response

Introduction (A capella)

O kwa ilu ka ndi Igbo la-e ji
ekwu okwu?
The Igbo speaks in proverbs

Nwanne m e Kwere m ekwe
My brother, I agree

Ilu ka ndi Igbo la-e ji ekwu okwu
The Igbo speaks in proverbs

Nwannem tuwara m m'anunu,
My brother, Speak for me to hear

Ngwanu werenu ya n'wa eee! Ilu
Now go on for the

ka ndi Igbo la-eji ekwu okwu o, o
Igbo speak in proverbs, this

Igbo speak in proverbs, this

wu ya
is true.

(All instruments come in at this point)

O kwa ilu ka ndi Igbo la-e ji
ekwu okwu?
The Igbo speaks in proverbs

Nwanne m e Kwere m ekwe
My brother, I agree

Ilu ka ndi Igbo la-e ji ekwu okwu
The Igbo speaks in proverbs

Nwannem tuwara m m'anunu,
My brother, speak for me to hear
Ngwani were n ya ni wa eee! Ilu
Now go on for the

ka ndi Igbo la-eji ekwu okwu o, o
Igbo speaks in proverbs, this

wu ya
Is true.

Ka elufutara utara tini ya
When the food is okay

mmanu, aye o ga-emu gini?
what do we do?

Ilu, ilu, ilu ilu ka ndi
Proverb, proverb, proverb proverb,

Igbo la-eji ekwu okwu o, o wu ya
Igbo speaks in proverbs, this is true

Onye tchaa aku lufue nkume,
After cracking the palmnuts and lose the

aku ga-agu ya ubochi ozo
cracker, you will need it another day

Ilu, ilu, ilu ilu ka ndi
Proverb, proverb, proverb proverb,

Igbo la-eji ekwu okwu o, o wu ya
Igbo speaks in proverbs, this is true

O kwa amgmide uwa "George"
When people cover up,

Ya a di ka uwa ci na nna
You think all is well with them

Ilu, ilu, ilu ilu ka ndi
Proverb, proverb, proverb proverb,

Igbo la-eji ekwu okwu o, o wu ya
Igbo speaks in proverbs, this is true

O kwa ilu ka ndi Igbo la-eji ekwu okwu?

Nwanne m e Kwere m ekwe
The Igbo speaks in proverbs
Ilu ka ndi Igbo la-e jii ekwu okwu
The Igbo speaks in proverbs

My brother, I agree
Nwannem tuwara m m'anunu,
My brother, speak for me to hear

Ngwanu werenu ya n'uwa eee! Ilu
Now go on for the

ka ndi Igbo la-eji ekwu okwu o, o
Igbo speak in proverbs, this

wu ya
is true.

etc.

Example III
"NNE MBE" (Igbo with their English translations)

Call

(Duet)

Nne mbe dara oria,
Tortoise's mother fell sick

oh nne mbe, nne mbe dara oria n'uwa,
oh, tortoise's mother fell sick

oh nne mbe, nne mbe dara oria n'uwa
oh, tortoise's mother fell sick

mbe agbalaga, why?
Tortoise ran away, why?

Maka ujo I di ya m' onwu o
To avoid fear of her death

Nne mbe dara oria,
Tortoise's mother fell sick
Oh nne mbe, nne mbe dara oria n’uwa,
oh, tortoise’s mother fell sick

Oh nne mbe, nne mbe dara oria n’uwa
oh, tortoise’s mother fell sick

Mbe agbalaga. why?
Tortoise ran away, why?

Maka ujo I di ya m’ onwu o
To avoid fear of her death

Oteghi anya ka mbe gbapuru,
Shortly after his disappearance,

Nne ya anwuo nu e, umunna ya
The mother died, the kinsmen

E dunye ozi, ka a ga zie mbe (kelenue!)
Ka a ga zie mbe na nne ya anwuola
sent him a delegation
To inform him of his mother’s death

Ka a ga zie mbe
To inform him

Ngwanu a ga zie mbe
Let’s inform him

Ka a ga zie mbe na nne ya anwuola
To inform him of his mother’s death

Ndi ozi eru gwa mbe na nne ya
The informants got to tortoise and told

Anwuola nu e, mbe is ma o
Him that the mother died, Tortoise said

Wurunu otu a ma ha ga lie ya,
that in that case, they should bury her

Nih ihe ha gwara ya bu ihe
because her death is a
na-eme eme, mgbe ihe di ilo
possibility, that he would only come

ulo bu mgbe eme eme mere,
home when the impossibility happens

kayi ganu zie ya
Let's go and inform him

O si ya gini?
What?

O si ha gini?
What?

"Even" aturu
Even the lamb

Nyekene mu ya ozo!
Give it to me again

Unu ahugo n'odu igu
Palm frond holds a ripped palm fruit

Onye no n'ala dagburu onye no n'elu
The man on the floor has fallen on the one above him

Na nwoke a dila ime n'ulo
That a man has become pregnant

Aturu, aturu efuole mpi n'ulo
The lamb has developed a horn

Na nwoke a dila ime n'ulo.
That a man has become pregnant

(Speech in pigeon)

"Cunny man die?"
Come home now, o ka nma
n'amà, I dey go home na
people full am o

(Song)

kayi ganu zie ya
Let's go and inform him

O si ya gini?

Unu ahugo n'odu igu
Palm frond holds a ripped palm fruit

Onye no n'ala dagburu onye no n'elu
3.2. The Messages of the Texts

A careful study on the above lyrics shows that the music example 1 ("Ka Anyi Lewe Ha" p. 23) is based on politics. Obewe tries to bring the attention of the government to the basic needs of the people by asking questions; When shall the worker be paid? When shall the trader begin to trade? When shall our school re-open? When shall our town be organised? One can also say that the song is satirical in a sense.
Music example II ("Ilu Igbo" p. 26) is entirely on proverbs. It requires a good and sound understanding of Igbo proverbs for one to actually appreciate the content of the music.

Example III ("Wne Mbe" p. 28) is based on a popular folktale centred on the tortoise and its cunning behaviours and activities. In Igbo folktales, the tortoise is synonymous with cunning behaviours and activities.

Plate IV: The Researcher with King Prof Obewe
CHAPTER FOUR
TRANSCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF SOME OF OBEWE’S MUSIC

4.1. Transcription
(Nota: All songs are performed an octave lower than transcribed as they are for male voices)

Example I: KA ANYI LEWE HA (with instrumental accompaniment)

\[
A - nyi  
\text{le - we}  
\text{ha nu o,}
\]
As Angel Lewa Ha, Obuek

Ni-ge-ria 'yi

A-nyi le-we ha 'nya

36
I
Ayl. na 'ju 'nu

O - le mgbe?
Example 11: CHINEKE BU ONYE OBI EBERE (with instrumental accompaniment)

Solo

A - ga m'ie - gbuj - kpe - re m'a - la, a - ga m'a -

Chorus

Ekperi

Igba

(Udu)

Igba (Bass)

I & II

Udu I

Udu II

46
Onye Obi libete, Obewe

kpri-si-a - la' nye Nnam, a - ga m'e - gbu ji - kpe re.
Chinese Bu Onga GNI Eboye, Obewe
Alpha Omega

Nnam a-gam e-gou j-kpe-re na-la

Chukwu Ihe Ompa Ole Ezeem, Obeowo

50
Chineke Bu Ompa Ohi Ehem, Oboos

ma di n - jo gbuj - ke re nye Chi gi,

A - gan e -
gbu-i-kpe-re n'a-la, A-gam a kp'i-si-la la rye
Obewe

Nnam a-gam e-gbe uka na la

O bu Chi-ne ke Nna
Example III: I HAVE TO SERVE MY GOD (with instrumental accompaniment)
I Have To Serve My God, Oh! (Partitura)
I have to serve my God, Ohebreu.
I have to serve my God, Ohnew.

Serve my God before I go.
I have to serve my God, Owhere

Alleluia, Amen, Alleluia.
I Have To Serve My God, Ohara
I Have To Serve My God Above
I have to serve my God before I
I Have Seen My God, Ohwuo

A - men.
Example IV: NNE MBE (with instrumental accompaniment)
waa e e N nem - be, N nem - be
Ntie Mbe, Obewe

dar-o-ria n'u-wa mbe gba-la-ga. Why?

76
Nne Mbo, Obewu

78
Nne Mbe. Obewe
4.2. Melodic Structure of the Music

In Igbo speaking societies and most other Sub-Saharan African societies, song melodies are in most cases influenced by the tonal inflexion of words. For the words of a song to retain their meanings intelligibly, its melody requires some degree of subservience to them. According to Agu (1999: 42), "The implication of the tonal levels ... of the spoken words is that, for a melody to convey an intelligible message, it should, as much as possible, correlate with the speech-tone of its text." Although this does not apply to all cases, it is strongly evident in the melodies of Obewe’s songs.

In Obewe’s songs, the use of short melodies is prevalent and small intervals between seconds and fifths are commonly used. The melodies move within the framework of the scale system used. The scale system commonly used in his songs is diatonic scale. The ranges are within an octave. The melodies hover around the tonal centre, thereby maintaining a particular key without modulations. In summary, the melodies are short and repetitive (but with some level of alterations as they are being repeated).

4.3. Harmonic Structure of the Music

Harmonies in African music appear in unisons, seconds, thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, sevenths, octaves etc. Various intervallic structures are possible depending on the nature of the
music in question. Agu (1999:45) observes that harmonies can be achieved through:

1. the use of part doubling and parallel harmony; where primary melodies are doubled an octave lower or in some cases, higher.

2. Additional parts; where each performer or singer in a group is allowed to sing in any part of his/her choice.

3. The use of counterpoint; usually in songs in call and refrain or call and response patterns, where overlapping of parts is evident.

In Obewe's music, the three techniques mentioned above are evident one way or the other: the use of parallel harmony (in music example III), additional parts (in music example III also) and the use of counterpoint, (slightly evident in music example I). His songs are usually in form of call and response, call and refrain or solo and chorused refrain and in some cases, the mixed structural form. In the instrumental sections, various instruments of varied sonorities, supply contrapuntal rhythms that combine with the vocal harmony to enrich the harmonic structure.

4.4. Rhythmic Structure of the Music

John Miller (1979:40) in his book titled “African Rhythm and African Sensibility,” quoted Senghor and A. M Jones respectively that “rhythm is the basis of all African art” and that “rhythm is to
the African what harmony is to the Europeans.” He went further to state that it is in the “...complex interweaving of contrasting rhythmic patterns that he finds his greatest aesthetic satisfaction.” Rhythmic complexity is one of the basic characteristics of African music, especially in the instrumental section.

Discussing rhythm, John Miller narrated his experiences when he was learning how to play African drum thus;

*During my first day practicing with Gideon, I was following him well until he suddenly performed a rather complicated series of rhythms and then went back to the basic rhythm he was showing me. A few minutes later, a man who had passed at that moment returned with two bottles of beer.*

- Miller (1979: 75)

He later concluded by saying that there is no way a discussion on African music could be complete without describing how their drums talk.

In instrumentation, effort is made to assign as much as possible different rhythmic patterns to various instrumentalists. This may be achieved through modification of a basic, already established rhythmic pattern or mere alteration of the instrumentalists’ entry points thereby creating conflicting rhythmic patterns, which appear as if different rhythms are competing for attention. These individual rhythms may be very simple but how they are combined makes them seem complex, as rhythmic complexity is more pronounced in instrumental ensemble than in vocal ensemble.
In Obewe’s instrumental ensemble, ekere I and II (wooden bell) provide the phrasing referent, igba (bass) provides the bass background that gives a firm support to the music, while ekpete I and II are for melorhythmic essence. Melorhythm according to (Nzewi, 1974: 24) refers to a rhythmic organization that is melodically born. The rhythmic patterns played by ekpete I and II are based on extemporization, as other instrumentalists often, maintain a particular rhythmic pattern on their instruments with little or no variations. They sometimes provide contrasting parts sounding within the main beats of the music while others sound separately - an example of instrumental polyphony.

4.5. Formal Structure of the Music

As earlier mentioned, the formal structure of Obewe’s music varies from one song to another. They usually appear in the forms of call and response, call and refrain or solo and chorused refrain and the mixed structural. He makes extensive use of repetitions with variations as a means of extending the short melodic motif that is typical of his compositions and also to balance the phases. Repetition in Obewe’s music creates a sense of unity and binds his composition together.

According to Kamien (1998:54) “when a musical idea returns, the effects are not duplication but balance and symmetry”. Agu (1999:48) adds that, “the exact performance or presentational length of African song depends on the type of repetition applied”. 
He further identified two main repetition techniques in African songs performance, which include repetition of the whole song; and repetition of a section of the song. These two techniques are evident in Obewe’s compositions. For example, the Music Example I in 4.1. p. 33, he repeats the first two phrases exactly at the introduction before going on to develop the established musical idea. At the end of the song, the entire song may be repeated from the beginning to elongate it. This repetition is not exact but with alterations, improvisations and extemporizations in order to avoid monotony, boredom and loss of interest of the listener. This is typical of many African songs and according to Agu (1999:50) has the following advantages:

a. ... not only emphasizes the words but makes them register properly in the minds of the listener.

b. Helps to create variety in performances and thereby arouses more interest.

c. Helps to lengthen the short songs, thereby avoiding very brief performances and undesired endings.

d. Offers enough time for those who wish to express their inner feelings through dancing.

e. Offers the soloist sufficient time to improvise and extemporize; while the composer is also offered enough opportunity for melodic variation in his composition.
4.6 Summary of Selected Music Examples

Example I: KA ANYI LEWE HA

Introduction: A capella with the lead voice call and response by the Chorus

Text: Igbo language
Form: Call and response pattern
Melody: There are stepwise movements and leaps in bars 23 and 22 respectively. The melodic flow is influenced by the tonal inflexion of the Igbo words as in bar 2.
Range: The call section falls within the range of an octave while the response, going by the first part melody, has a narrower range of Perfect 4th.
Scale: Diatonic scale system is used
Harmony: The chorus sings in thirds and fifths apart. See bar 4.
Time: $\frac{6}{8}$ time.
Instrumentation: A total number of ten instruments are in use with ekpete I and II playing the role of the master instrument.

Example II: CHINEKE BU ONYE OBI EBERE

Form: Call and Response
Text: Igbo language (religious)
Melody: The response is a repetition of the call section. Compare bars 1 to 9 and bars 9 to 15.
Harmony: There is evidence of part crossing. Since none of the
individual singers has any standardized scored part, each singer picks up and drops any part of choice at will and harmony is achieved.

**Range:** The ranges for both the call and response sections fall within an octave.

**Scale:** Diatonic scale system is used

**Time:** $\frac{6}{8}$ time.

**Example III: I HAVE TO SERVE MY GOD**

**Form:** Call and Response

**Text:** English language (religious)

**Melody:** The response repeats the melody of the call section. Observe bars 1 to 16 and bars 17 to 31. Tonal inflexion of words had no effect on the melody here since the text is English.

**Harmony:** The chorus normally begins with unison before breaking up into various parts. See bars 17 and 18.

**Range:** A bit wider than an octave (about an octave plus two tones)

**Scale:** Diatonic.

**Time:** $\frac{6}{8}$ time.

**Example IV: NNE MBE**

**Form:** call and response

**Text:** Igbo language (Folklore)
Melody: Both stepwise movements and leaps are observed. The melodic flow is influenced by the tonal inflexion of the Igbo words.

Range: Wider than an octave by four tones.

Scale: Diatonic.

Time: \( \frac{6}{8} \) time.

Plate V: King Professor Obewe in front of his Outing Bus
CHAPTER FIVE

OBEWE’S CONTRIBUTIONS AND INNOVATIONS IN THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF OKAIUGA NKWOEGWU.

5.1. His Contributions and Awards:

Music is one of the fastest and most reliable means of advertising a product or in this case, a peoples’ culture. Obewe has championed and utilized this so much that most people who know his town – Okaiuga Nkwoegwu today, do so as a result of the impact made by Obewe’s music.

Okaiuga Nkwoegwu has become a very popular town in Umuahia North Local Government Area due to the popularity of Obewe’s music. Little wonder that the Abia State Council of Ndieze conferred on him the title – “His Cultural Majesty” Ordained by Eze A. N. Iheoma (Late), Ngwu II of Isingwu. This is in recognition of his efforts towards promoting their culture and that of the Igbo in general, through his music. This did not stop with traditional rulers. Institutions, organisations and various governmental, political and social bodies did not relent in appreciating his efforts and contributions through awards.

Some of these awards include the following:

1. Oko Polytechnic Students’ Union Government Award.
2. Abia State University Students’ Union Award,
3. Great Ohuhu Welfare Union Award,
4. Umuahia North Local Government Area Award,
5. Ugwu Abia Award,
6. Rotary Club of Umuahia Award
7. American Ambassador's Letter of Recognition

In addition to other efforts towards contributing to the cultural development of Okaiuga Nkwoegwu, Obewe has recorded some of his compositions for documentation purposes.
5.2. Obewe’s Recorded Works

As at the time the research was conducted, the group had five recorded albums to their credit which include:

1. Obewe 96
2. *The Adiwo Nma*
3. *Onye Ndidi Nwe Nmeri*
4. *Ikwiikwfi Special*
5. *Carry Go (Based on AIDS)*

Plate VII: Album Sleeve of *The Adiwo Nma*
In these recorded albums are songs (tracks) like:

Ka Anye Lewe Ha, Nne Mbe, Ibu Igbo, Ugbo Odumodu, Ojomba, Expo Girl,
Shikwa Agishi, Ndi Oma, Ibe Adiwo Nina, Ozi Ihunanya, Ada Aku (Ihe oma di n’ihu). Others include; Kpowa Chi Gi, Ugo Akporo Dike, Ihe Nkelele, Onwu bu Ariri, Oyi bu Akum, Somu Ya Aso and finally, those with some religious messages; Chineke bu Onye Obi Ebere, Anyi G’ezigara ha Ozi, Nara Ngozi Nke Igwe, Chineke Mee Kam Dike, China’zam Ekpere, Oge Nmenme, Bia Muo Nso Bia, I Have to Serve My God, Ebe I Guzoro bu Ala Nso, Mmiri Maram (Ebe M na-eso Jisos), Onye Ndidi Nwe Nmeri, etc.

5.3. His Musical Instruments:

Obewe’s innovations in Odumodu music extended to the expansion of its musical instruments. The instruments of Odumodu used to be only four in number, which included one ekpete (medium sized membrane drum), one ekere (wooden bell), one osha (basket rattle) and one udu (pot drum), until Obewe introduced more instruments with heavy amplification equipment and gadgets. This according to him led to the adoption of a new name, ODUMORIGO to replace Odumodu.

The instruments of his Odumorogo music now consist of two large membrane drums, two medium sized membrane drums (ekpete), “osha” (a basket rattle), “ekere” (2) (wooden bell), Ekpiri (rattle), Udu (2) (pot drum) Each of these instruments plays a significant and specific role in the ensemble with the drum playing the role of the master instrument.
5.4. His Dance

A dance can either be stylised or unstylized (free medley). According to Nzewi (1991:113):

In styled formation dance, the dance composition is fixed. All the dancers execute the same sequenced, structured and timed floor as well as spatial patterns of choreography. Nevertheless there is a measure of freedom for individual dancers to extend the range of choreographic structure by adding personal interpretative flairs to standard patterns of movement.

Unstylized dance is the opposite of stylised dance where each individual dancer is free to choose any step and may decide to change the step at will without any restrictions. In unstylized dance, which is always the case in Obewe’s music, there is no sequence or structural pattern of any sort instead free personal interpretative flair is the order. A solo dance performed by the King professor Obewe which he introduced in the new Odumorigo forms part of the innovations made in his new style of music.

5.5 Costume

The costume for Odumorigo music varies from one performance to another but the underlying factor there is that they are entirely African and depict the cultural heritage of the Igbo people in general and Abia people in particular (especially their traditional cap with red, black and white colour design). Obewe’s costume, which is different from those of his players, is glamorous and majestic with all his title symbols making his appearance a good sight to behold. His regalia vary from isagu (chieftaincy attire with lion
head design), velvet and swede to akwette (local fabric), george and so on. His costume is generally beautiful.
5.6. Performance Practice

Obewe's performances have gone beyond the shores of his locality. This was not so during the time of Odumodu. He is now rated as high as other big names in the Nigerian traditional music scene and is invited by the highly placed in the society. His performances are mostly staged during personal or communal socio-cultural or political activities such as marriages, title-taking ceremonies, launchings, funerals, rallies, opening of new buildings etc.

Plate IX: The Researcher with Obewe's Daughters
5.7. The Audience Of Obewe’s *Odumrigo* Music

*Odumrigo* music’s rhythmic renditions generate or motivate body responses and consequently lure its audience to some form of free medley dance steps. No restrictions are attached to this dance; everybody in the audience is qualified to dance to it at will. The audience observes, enjoys and appreciates the performance and participates actively in form of clapping of hands, dancing, shouting in appreciation or criticism, heralding and making monetary gifts to the musicians.
A REVIEW OF OBEWE'S MUSIC IN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC SCENE

In the attempt to analyse Obewe's music in contemporary music scene, one may be tempted to classify it as pop going by Okafor's definition of pop music which according to Okafor (1989:3) is;

Music that deals with familiar themes and issues of the moment. It is understood and accepted by a lot of people not as a final solution to their problems but as a topical reflection of their sentiments and current worldview.

Agu (1990:83) adds that pop music is transient and amenable to innovation and alteration. Since all these are true and evident in Obewe's 'Odumorigo' music, one may suggest that Obewe's music be classified under Pop on the one hand. On the other hand, this assertion may be questioned because the innovations and alterations mentioned above in pop music are generally not regulated or prohibited by tradition and secondly, pop music also relies heavily on Western musical instruments; and these contradict what is obtainable in Obewe's music. Obewe's music ~ Odumorigo, therefore, does not belong to the pop music category but is a sort of akuko na egwu, which is best classified under minstrelsy.

In Nigerian contemporary music scene, minstrelsy (akuko na egwu) has come of age. Popular names under this category include; Prince Morroco Maduka, Chief Peter Mokwugwo (Ozoemena Nsugbe), Akunwafor Ezigbo Obiligbo, Okechukwu Nwatu, Seven-seven, Prophet Afam Ogbuotobo, Pericoma Okoye, Mike Ejeagha, Ugo etc. It is necessary to mention that
minstrelsy (akuko na egwu) originated and is predominantly performed by the Igbo tribe of Nigeria and also within the Igbo speaking states is Abia state, where Obewe hails from.

In recent times, akuko na egwu (minstrelsy) has taken a new shape and dimension with the invention and application of modern musical gadgets and equipment. Amplification of both voices and instruments has raised the level of appreciation of this genre in no low measure. One notable fact about Obewe and his group is the exclusion of western musical instruments in their music as opposed to what is seemingly in vogue today in this genre e.g. Keyboard in Morrocco's music, guitar in Ozoemena's music and so on. In Obewe's case, he makes use of amplification equipment but never any western musical instrument and has consequently succeeded in making his music completely African. Other areas of interest include: his costume that showcases deep sense of "Africanity", and the text of his songs that combines Igbo, Pidgin and English as the combination helps for easy understanding of his messages. This is important as the text harbours the message of the music, which is the main tool the minstrel uses against evil deeds or to promote good deeds since they are, according to Mbanugo (1988: 299) "... mouth piece and the watch-dogs of the societal trends highlighting deviant behaviours from individuals or group of individuals." Obewe has indeed made Igbos, Abians, Umuahians and particularly Okaiuga Nkwoegwu proud through his achievements in the music world. He has also succeeded in bringing some hidden elements of Igbo cultural heritage to limelight.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Many Igbo minstrels are yet to be discovered and have their works and biographies documented. This area of musicology yearns for some serious attention from our indigenous musicologists. It has become necessary for us to put in more efforts towards looking beyond events and the entertainment aspect of music that are associated with them to take further steps into trying to highlight and showcase the musician that provides these music. It has been observed that this aspect of documenting the biographies of our indigenous musicians has not been given its deserved attention by our indigenous researchers in the music profession.

This study on the music of King (Professor) Obewe, is just one of many of its sort. We expect more of its sort, as there are so many virgin lands waiting to be cultivated under the area of musicians' biographies. Okafor (1989) observes that the Igbo cannot do without music and we are aware of the fact that music can never be possible without the musician. It is therefore necessary to have most of these indigenous music and the musicians behind them documented.
References


APPENDIX

Musician's Personal Interview Questions

1. Please may I know your name?
2. When and where were you born?
3. Do tell me about your parents and probably their musical background.
4. Please tell me about your educational background right from your childhood.
5. What motivated you into music?
6. How did your music career start?
7. How was your music career sponsored?
8. How did you manage to get the encouragement and from where?
9. What type of music influenced you and how did you acquire your apprenticeship?
10. When and how did you establish your group?
11. What difficulties did you encounter at the initial stage?
12. When, how and where did you make your first public appearance?
13. What type of music do you play and what is the name it is known with?
14. How many albums do you have to your credit?
15. Which of these albums do you consider the best?
16. Why do you consider it as the best?
17. Which of your numerous albums sold most?
18. Do you consider yourself a successful musician?
19. What makes you think so?
20. Are you a born or self-made artist?
21. Are there other musicians that play this kind of music that you play? If yes, name them and tell me a little about them.
22. Have you influenced any band? If yes, what are their names?
23. Have you got any awards out of music making?
24. What is your philosophy behind music making?
25. How do you recruit your members?
26. How many are they and what are their names?
27. What are the instruments used in your group?
28. Which of these instruments can you play apart from singing?
29. Do you play some of them during your performances?
30. What are the major problems you encounter as a musician?
31. Is their some kind of spirituality attached to your music?
32. Have you been able to train new artists that are now on their own? Who are they?
33. What efforts have you been making to sustain this musical style/genre of yours?
34. How do you preserve your music and how do you market them?
35. How do you compose or create your music? What inspires you?
36. What are your views on music education in Nigeria?
37. What are your views on music performance in Nigeria?
38. Suggest ways through which music can be developed generally in Nigeria.
39. What advice do you have for the younger and prospective musicians in Nigeria?
40. Could you please tell me about your marital status?