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Structural Analysis in Ethnomusicological Studies as a Genre- and Culture-Specific Model: The Example of *Uta* Music of the Ibibio, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This article highlights a genre- and culture-specific model in structural analysis. It draws on an ethnomusicological study of *Uta* music among the Ibibio of Nigeria and demonstrates the duality of prescriptive and descriptive inventions embedded in ethnomusicological analysis. Although a similar approach is described by Bruno Nettl as a 'Systematic Approach', it is one approach among the various approaches described by Agawu's *How not to analyze African music*, which illuminates that there are many ways to describe indigenous music under ethnomusicological studies. This model is based on transcriptions from orally transmitted musical genres, and the analytical purview is limited to the *Uta* music of Ibibio, Nigeria; as such, analytical relativity could be applied to other ethnic locales. The article contributes to the importance of musical structure and analysis as the first step toward understanding musical processes and the compositional orientation towards neo-indigenous music in Africa.
Keywords: Ethnomusicology, Analysis, Ibibio, Uta Music, African Music.

INTRODUCTION

Africa-based musical analysis magnifies "certain forms of cultural knowledge, and because it principally rewards the ability to take apart and discover or invent modes of internal relating" (Agawu, 2003, p. 197) in ethnomusicological studies. When Agawu made this profound assertion, he was confronting some institutional autonomy in the division between ethnomusicology and musicology. In the first place, Ethnomusicology as a field of study has been defined as "the study of any music from a comparative perspective, which sees each music as part of a world of musics" (Nettl 2005, p. 60). This definition may seem contrary to Allan Merriam's earlier definition of the field as "the study of music in culture" (Merriam 1964). Whereas the former definition advances a comparative frame of reference in the field, the latter advocates a culture-specific approach. Merriam argues that comparisons are premature until satisfactory or accurate descriptions of musical systems are available (Merriam 1977). Although Nettl notes further that comparison may result in the improper interpretation of similarities and differences, ethnomusicology is, in principle, a comparative field, and there is no doubt that the nature and the role of comparison have all along been central issues. Such comparisons have been conjured from one system to another, from musicology to comparative musicology to ethnomusicology (Nettl 2005). Like Nettle has observed, the concept of comparison or musical analysis is problematic. For example, what is the purpose of the comparison? Is it to make valid conclusions, or simply an adventure or search for similarities and differences? Importantly, within comparative anecdotes, there are issues with parameters, which create complex challenges for comparisons, which supports Agawu's position mentioned earlier, that no approach to musical analysis is without value.

In the current study, a culture-specific approach exists where its modes of ethnomusicological studies intertwine with other analytical methods. This is so because the field of African musicology (or Africanist ethnomusicology, see Agawu 2003; Ekong & Udoh 2018) shares its trajectory (at least in modernity) with the Western musicological system. In this case, its comparative foundation highlights bi-musicality, intertwining African and Western music dialogues. As Nettl (2005, p. 63) explains, "one can compare those elements of a music that are basically alike, each music also has elements so distinct as to make comparison a matter of methodological and conceptual difficulty". This is important because we could confirm the difference between African (oral to written traditions) and Western written components, but at the same time, confirm the comparative techniques that had been established by both African and Western schools of thought to share the structural elements of music—counting tones and intervals in scales, providing typologies of rhythm and rhythmic units, harmonic structure, instrumental components showing the roles and functions of different instruments, and so forth. These aspects identify the musicological dimensions of Alan Merriam's *ethnomusicology* and yet do not exclude the anthropological dimensions. The anthropological dimension shows that "we must also study each music in terms of the theoretical system that its own culture provides for it, whether an explicitly articulated, written system or one that must be derived from interview and analysis; and that one must study musical behavior in terms of the underlying value structure of the culture from which it comes" (Nettl 2005, p. 63).

This essay grows out of the need to speak on analytical expressions in ethnomusicology for young researchers and interested analysts who need to relate their studies to earlier or recent studies. For example, there are models of analysis that are *musicological* and a response to a certain theoretical autonomy in the West (see Kerman 1980). For others, Agawu emphasises the need "to disentangle analysis from theory", towards: "the rhetorical advantages of adopting a strategic and temporary blindness to the theoretical scaffolding on which a given analytical proceeding is based" (Aguwu 2004, p. 269). In other words, despite the complex activity that certain institutional representations allow for analysis, there are localised narratives that bring together both the anthropological and musicological dimensions within a genre- and culture-specific model that is dominant in ethnomusicological studies. Such narratives take their explorations into primary (mostly oral) and secondary sources and draw on an ethnomusicological study. In this case, the focus on *Uta* music among the Ibibio of Nigeria is intentional and demonstrates the duality of descriptive and prescriptive inventions embedded in an ethnomusicological analysis.

This approach is described by Bruno Nettl as a 'Systematic Approach', it is one approach among the various approaches described by Agawu's *How not to analyze African music?* that illuminates many ways to describe Indigenous music under ethnomusicological studies. Its comparative analysis model is based on transcriptions from orally transmitted musical genres, and its analytical purview is limited to selected parameters within the *Uta music* of the Ibibio. The essay aims to contribute to the importance of musical structure and analysis, as this is the first step toward understanding musical processes, compositional orientation, and assessing musicality. The rest of the article is divided into two main sections, the first is the background to a genre- and culture-specific model of analysis. The second is the model of the analysis with examples, then, the concluding remarks.

Building A Genre- and Culture-Specific Model among the Ibibio of Nigeria

Several studies on the music of Ibibio people have been carried out; the most outstanding among them is the pioneering works of Professor Samuel Ekpe Akpabot. As his book, "Form, Function and Style in African Music" confirms, Akpabot was "concerned with looking at the broader issues of formal structure, which can be seen to have a common denominator in the music of African countries, south of the Sahara" (Akpabot 1998, p. 10). He concentrated on general issues in African music rather than the specifics, as exemplified in the Ibibio music, except that he pointed out that it was more rewarding to examine cultural tradition and structure side by side to find out *how* a piece of music is put together and *why* it is so conceived. Thus, his notion of a *side-by-side* narrative coincides with the comparative trajectory highlighted in the opening statements. Moving further, he made a comparative outlook of African music

with the unique attributes of the music of Ibibio, especially in discussing the various anthropological perspectives of *Uta* and other musical practices within the Ibibio culture. As shown in Akpabot's chapters, he highlighted – Points and Counterpoint, Structure and Social Function, Musical Instruments, Scales and Melody, Harmony and Polyphony, Rhythmic patterns, Instrumentation, Tune and Text, Myth and Symbol, and Transcription and Analysis (Akpabot 1998).

Interestingly, no part of this very useful material has discussed the genre-specifics of *Uta* musical practice within the Ibibio culture. However, there are discussions on 'Functions' and 'External structure' which are unparalleled in African musicology. Hence, this current study adopts some specific examples of Akpabot's study, showing specific implications in *Uta* music and cultural changes. In addition, he has made available several examples of musical patterns, social relationships, and stylistic peculiarities within (intra/inter-ethnic) communities and cultures, and these have provided this essay with the road map, particularly towards exploring other possibilities that may lead to a better understanding of Ibibio musical traditions through analysis. Other important contributions relevant to the current study are useful references to Ibibio music and *Uta* music, namely: *Foundation of Nigerian Traditional Music* (1986) and *Ibibio Music in Nigerian Culture* (1975). Whereas these books are general surveys showing the constellation of cultural behaviours and indeed musical traits exhibited by the heterogeneous people within the Nigerian cosmological arena, there are remarkable comparative positions made about the Ibibio culture and tradition.

While commenting on some theories in African Music, Akpabot emphasises the need to foster a closer relationship with the African traditional musicians, and employing structural analysis, born of evidence from primary sources, reassess some of the theories and conclusions commonly associated with African music (Akpabot 1986, p. 79). This submission summarises his approaches to African musicological studies towards embattling earlier Eurocentric ethnomusicological perspectives. He explained further that

> African instrumental melody in many instances derives form, and makes use of, folk tunes; to fully understand the nature of an indigenous instrument melody, it is necessary for us to take another look at the principle of speech and speech rhythm. Many African folk tunes grow out of the melody formed by the speech inflection of the words of a song. This inflection, which corresponds to the high, low and sometimes medium tones of African languages, and the stress placed on certain words in a sentence, control the interval of the notes of a melody and dictates its rhythm (Akpabot 1986, pp. 79-80).

This description situates African melodies in the realm of speech tones and speech rhythm. The assertion further equates African languages with melodic sensibility. Like his 'Form, Function and Style in African Music', Akpabot concentrated on a generalised view and characteristics of the Nigerian musical culture. Nevertheless, his discussions are relevant to the present research on *Uta* Dance music and Ibibio musical practices. Akpabot's anthropological positions become significant to this study, which seeks to provide analytical stances to sonic samples and how such samples can lead to a more elaborate understanding of *Uta* music and the Ibibio musical practices in general.

With this brief review of selected analytical narratives within the Ibibio culture, there are several analytical factors whose interpretation and reinterpretation should guide culture-specific traditions of music, whose analysis and the analytical experiences inherent in indigenous musical practices would aid musical understanding. The search for an appropriate analytical framework or philosophical foundation for analysis in the African/Nigerian idiom, thus, means that certain stylistic features and techniques dominant in indigenous musical practices may be emphasised over others that may be viewed from a pro-Western conjecture. In such a scenario, other possibilities may be or may not be ruled out, not because they have no analytical merit on their own, but because they fall outside the chosen stylistic framework or the kind of meaning the study wishes to achieve. Thus, this article is an analytical narrative of *Uta* music and proposes a genre-specific approach to guide younger researchers into ethnomusicological studies. Hence, Bruno Nettl's "Systematic Approach" signifies an important comparative framework for this approach.

Structural Analysis in Ethnomusicological Studies: A Case of *Uta* Music of the Ibibio

There are many approaches to musical analysis in African musicology, as demonstrated in Agawu's *How not to analyze African music?* However, the "Systematic Approach" shares a model and comparative outlook to the description of musical structure in *Uta* music. As prescribed by Bruno Nettl, one approach to describing music,

> ... is to identify all possible, or many, or for practical purposes, a selected group of aspects of music, and to describe each of these aspects in an individual composition, or in a body of musical composition which, for one reason or another, are assumed to have something in common justifying their description as a unit. The usual procedure in this method is to divide music into a number of so-called elements. ... These are, most frequently, melody, rhythm, meter, form and harmony or polyphony (Nettl, 1964, p. 135).

This approach speaks directly to me, describing the *Uta* music of the Ibibio, as we shall see later. It provides a method by which the parameters or structural elements of the analysis are divided or categorised. Notably, the genre of *Uta* possesses a seemingly complex structure with a complex organisation of time involving the *Uta* (horns or aerophone section), *Ikwọ* (song or vocal section), *Unek* (Dance or body movement), and *Mbiñe* (instrumentation). Each component of the genre interacts with one another: the song (vocal) parts versus the horn's parts, the vocal parts and the instrumental parts, the horn parts versus the accompaniment parts, and culminating into the overall musical sublimeness called *Ntin inu*. The concept of *Ntin Inu*, literally musical sublimeness as exemplified in *Uta* Dance music, is comparable to what Eurocentric views call Orchestral Harmony (see Udoh 2012). The structural analysis of *Uta* music is divided into the rhythmic organisation, the melodic constellation, the harmonic structure, as well as the overall form in *Uta* music performance practice. It is these musical structural elements that constitute a model of the genre- and culture-specific analysis in *Uta* music.

Rhythmic Organisation

Rhythm or rhythmic organisation has received the widest discussion in African music than any other characteristic. Rhythm in African music has been a subject of much interest to ethnomusicologists (Kauffman 1980). Idamoyibo (2005), in support of the assertion, points out that many analytical discussions on rhythm are of a wide range, which in turn have evolved numerous descriptive and analytical terms, some of which have stirred queries and contention (p. 28). Recently, Agawu (2016) in his The *African Imagination in Music* chooses to call it *The Rhythmic Imagination*, where he explores different rhythmic dimensions in African music. Notwithstanding the names and allusions to rhythm in Africa, rhythm shares its sensibility with the Western connotation. Rhythm is an integral part of formal, textural, harmonic and melodic considerations in both musicological and ethnomusicological spaces. In the rhythmic aspects of style, the art form of music and dance are closest, and the influence of dance on music is an important area of African musical discourse and criticism. In *Uta* music, the rhythmic organisation is a determinant of the dance and other stylistic elements embedded in the music. While it would be generally agreed that much has been accomplished in the common effort to explain rhythm, the question arises: how is African rhythm different from rhythm in Western music? To answer this question, it is necessary to note that different individuals tend to interpret African rhythm from their background knowledge of Western music and Western music theory.

Among them, John Chernoff presents this notion as the concept of rhythm, as he quotes Sengor:

> ...that rhythm is the basis of all African art, and regarding music, (Jones writes), "rhythm is to the African what harmony is to the Europeans, and it is in the complex interweaving of contrasting rhythmic patterns that he finds his greatest aesthetic satisfaction" (1979, p. 40).

This explanation gives a comparative outlook on rhythm as a global phenomenon in music. In the *Music of Africa*, Nketia (1974, p. 125), dilating on rhythm from the truly African perspective, remarks,

> African traditions are more uniform in their choice and use of rhythm and rhythmic structures than they are in their selection and use of pitch systems. Since African music is predisposed towards percussion and percussive texture, there is an understandable emphasis on rhythm, for rhythmic interest often compensates for the absence of melody or the lack of melodic sophistication.

This consensus here is the overall effect of rhythmic preponderance in African music. To contextualise this further, we turn to *Uta* music. This is why *Uta* music, as a dance music, possesses a complex rhythmic structure enunciated by different rhythmic sections of the ensemble. Thus, *Uta* music is predominantly danceable because of its rhythmic organisation. Furthermore, the predisposition towards rhythmic organisation and percussive texture provides grounds for other elements in *Uta* music. This is particularly true in viewing the relationship between the sections and individual instruments such as *Eka Ibid* (mother drum), *Akapn Uta* (the lead horn/cantor), and the rest of the ensemble. The analysis of rhythmic organisation becomes a comprehensive structural information that can encompass similarities and differences as components of the whole, the music or Uta music. A deeper probe into the music - involving such detail as the precise beginnings of the lead horn/cantor (*Akpan Uta*) in terms of the rhythmic patterns, possible verbal meanings in subgroups or individual supporting patterns, and dance associations- would have to be made before any trustworthy conclusions could be reached analytically on what rhythmic organizations are specific to *Uta* music.

The next is the issue of unparalleled emphasis on rhythm as a common denominator in African music practices, as different from the Eurocentric structure of music (already discussed in Agawu's *The Rhythmic Imagination,* 2016). Alan Merriam suggests that "probably the most outstanding characteristic of African music is its emphasis on rhythm as well as upon a percussive concept of musical performance" (Merriam, 1959, p. 13). Therefore, my analysis covers rhythm, percussive concept, and other inherent musical symbolism in *Uta* music performances available in the Ibibio culture. For example, in examining the instrumental composition resulting in instrumental rhythms of *Uta* Dance music, they assume specific roles; some are soloistic in function and play leading roles like *Akpan Uta*, while others have subordinate roles and, as such, have supporting functions. To keep the ensemble together, there is yet another role – that of articulating the basic pulse. The part of the music that assumes this function is referred to as the *timeline* and occupies the role known as the common denominator.

Timeline, bell rhythm and phrasing-referent

Timeline is embodied in most African musical practices; thus, its importance cannot be overemphasised. Reacting to this pulse control and time referent, Nketia (1974) reifies that

> Because of the difficulty of keeping subjective metronomic time in this manner, African traditions facilitate this process by externalising the basic pulse. As already noted, this may be shown through hand clapping or through the beats of a simple idiophone. The guideline, which is related to the time span in this manner, has come to be described as *timeline.* Because the timeline is sounded as a part of the music, it is regarded as an accompanying rhythm and means by which rhythmic motion is sustained. Hence, instead of a timeline that represents simple regular beats reflecting the basic pulse, a more complex form may be used (pp. 131-132).

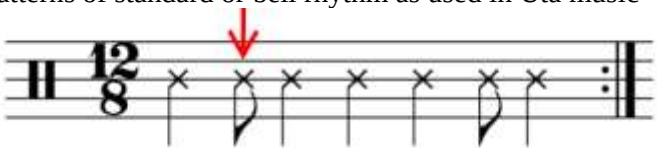
To support this view, Nzewi (1997, p. 35) argues that the rhythmic figure termed "timeline" or "bell pattern" is often not played by the bell in some African ensembles, and sometimes, the bell assumes the role of a master instrument. In addition, Agawu (2003, p. 73) prefers the term *topoi* [or *topos* in plural] to timeline, bell pattern or phrasing referent in describing this "short, distinct and often memorable rhythmic figure of modest duration (about a metric length or a single cycle). It is usually played by the bell or high-pitched instrument in the ensemble, and serves as a point of temporal reference", held as ostinato throughout a performance session. The kind of rhythmic figure often described as a bell pattern or

timeline is played by *ntakrọk* (woodblock), which is high-pitched in *Uta* Dance music of the Ibibio. Akpabot (1975), explaining bell rhythm notes,

> The *bell rhythm* is played throughout Nigeria and other parts of Africa by the gong; but the Ibibio have given this rhythm to the woodblock. Why? This is rather like a European community that tunes its instruments to *C* instead of the traditional *A* (p. 126).

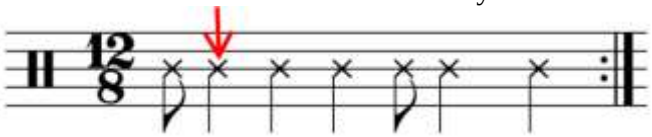
It is worth noting that although the *ntakrọk* is the simplest and most memorable pattern in Uta ensemble organisation, it however does not seem to serve as the phrase referent figure as much as *asanga-ita ibid* (three-in-one drum) does. In the general perception as expressed by *Uta* practitioners, the phrase referent instrument normally begins to establish the base on which other instruments coming after would make reference to their accurate entries. There is a synchronic relationship between the lead instrument (*Akpan Uta*) with its horn parts and the triple drum (*Asanga-ita ibid*) with other accompanying instruments. The following samples (1-7) are bell rhythmic patterns used in *Uta* music to form a cycle of patterns (See Anku 2000). The numbers below each pattern indicate clap patterns while the arrow shows the accent for each succeeding pattern.

Example 1: Recycling Patterns of standard or bell rhythm as used in Uta music

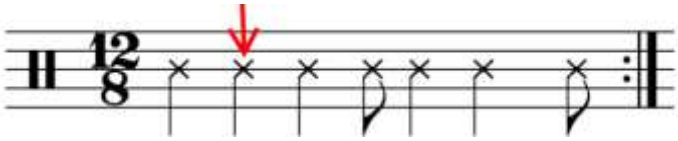


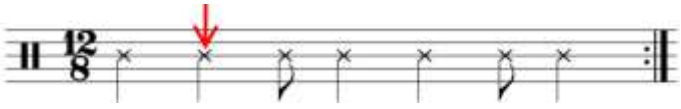
(2122212)

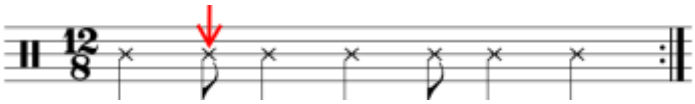
Pattern 2 shows the shift in the accent from the standard or bell rhythm

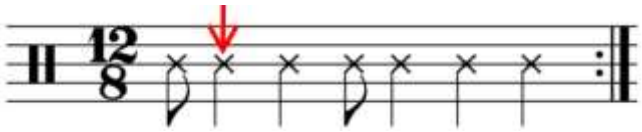


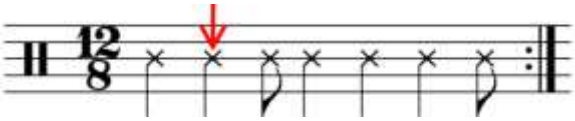
(1222122)

Pattern 3 shows the next shift in the accent from the standard or bell rhythm

(2221221)

Pattern 4 shows another shift in the accent from the standard or bell rhythm

(2212212)

Pattern 5 shows another shift in the accent from the standard or bell rhythm

(2122122)

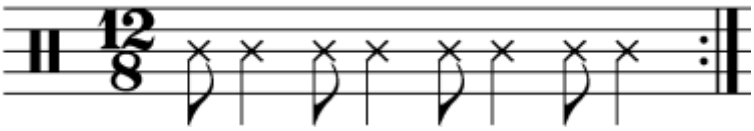
Pattern 6 shows another shift in the accent from the standard or bell rhythm

(1221222)

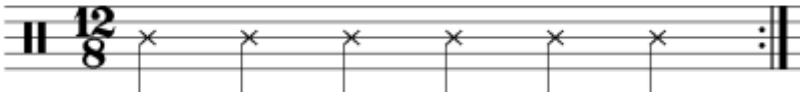
Pattern 7 shows the last shift in the accent from the standard or bell rhythm

(2212221)

The importance of the rhythmic cycles is to describe a specific rhythmic set and its rotational possibilities. This rhythmic set or bell pattern indicates standard or bell rhythm in *Uta* music and can also be identified as the *prime form* (2122212). The shifts or rotational possibilities could form different rhythmic patterns in different performances. The numbering below each transcription identifies two characters: an eighth note (a quaver) is 1, and a quarter note (a crotchet) is 2. The perception of the lists of bell rhythms identified with Ibibio music above is not uniquely peculiar to Uta music as its standard timeline. However, whereas each pattern is a variant of pattern 1, they represent independent modes of expression and could become *prime forms* in another culture. For instance, pattern 7 (2212221) is identified as a standard pattern in Anlo Ewe of Ghana and used in musical types such as agbadza, adzogbo (Anku 2000), yet the same Ewe rhythm (2212221) would be perceived differently by the Yoruba of Nigeria. Even among most Ibibio women's dance groups, different bell patterns are divergent possibilities (see Example 2). Vidal (2005), examining the rhythmic patterns of Agogo, *Gbedu-Oba* and *Aya-ehun* drum music in the Yoruba, argues that "If we examine the three rhythmic patterns carefully, we will discover that there had not changed in the structures or position of the accents of the rhythmic patterns. What had been varied in each pattern was the starting point" (p. 12).

From the above, the major effect and occurrence-recurrence pattern in which case a variation in pattern is insinuated, depends solely and to a large extent on who is playing the pattern while executing the pattern, or from where his aural perception has captured the standard pattern. This also accentuates the position that "there is a difference between the starting point of a rhythmic pattern and its accent point, especially in West African Music" (Vidal, p. 13). Similarly, in West Africa, the beginning of a rhythmic pattern is not necessarily its accent point. Hence, the bar lines do not necessarily indicate accent points. Furthermore, Akpabot (1975, p. 127) suggests that the *Uta* music pattern of standard rhythm, as shown above, has rotational comparison with other standard patterns in Yoruba, Hausa, Ibo, and Kalabari ethnic cultures. In other words, it would be erroneous to speculate as well as generalise on a standard pattern, especially where standard patterns are (more often than not) meant to serve specific purposes in specific musical practices, e.g. between *Uta*, *Ebre*, *Ikon*, and *Ekpo*, within the Ibibio culture. Thus, exceptions occur as

perception changes, where generalisation should emanate from research into all groups, especially in contemporary realities.

Example 2:

(12121212)

Example 3:

(222222)

In this case, Example 2 used in the specific practice of *Uta* music, is common to *Obodom* (slit drum), within a more diversified form but serves as a bell pattern in *Ebre* music. The implication is that there is a more complex experience in terms of bell rhythm or timeline as presented in the musical praxis of the Ibibio people in different communities, especially in the relationship between *ntakrọk* and *nkrọk*: two idiophones with timeline elements creating a resultant complex timeline, which is indicative of inter-rhythm (see Example 2 and 3).

Cross-rhythm and Inter-rhythm

In *African Rhythm and African sensibility*, Chernoff in Udoh (2012) discusses the term cross-rhythm thus:

> In Zhem, a lead dondon and any number of supporting dondons play two independent rhythms, which are interlocked with great precision to make a tight and intriguing combination. Again, one could not try to play either rhythm by counting the music in a single meter: the rhythms do not meet at any point, and the lead dondon gives a feeling of ¾ time, while the supporting dondon plays to a count of four. In such music, the conflicting rhythmic patterns and accents are called *cross-rhythm.* The diverse rhythmic patterns establish themselves in intricate and changing relationships to each other analogously to the way that tones establish harmony in Western music. The effect of polymetric music is as if the different rhythms were competing for attention. No sooner do we grasp one rhythm than we lose track of it and hear another (p. 46).

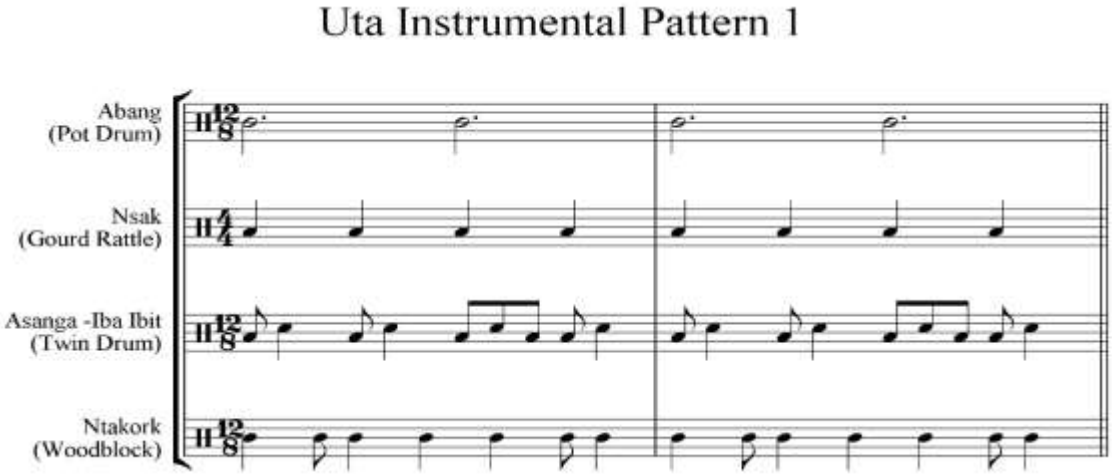
Contending with the issue of cross-rhythm, Nzewi (1997), on the other hand, argues that, in African communal relationships, there exists no cross-purposes, but inter-dependence for the collective achievement of success. He sees the relationship between two or more players who utilise triple motive against other motives as playing inter-rhythm and not cross-rhythm. He stresses that

> From the point of view of enabling a student in African music to develop the right mental perception of the social-creative philosophy and structural principles implicit in African musical thought, we have argued that the term "cross rhythm" is misinforming and therefore inappropriate. What has been termed cross rhythm, hitherto, is an example of the unilineal relationships in African ensemble music structures. We have argued and illustrated elsewhere (1993b) that the theory of cross rhythm is strange to African creative philosophy (Nzewi, 1997, pp. 36, 40).

In Ibibio music, musicians and practitioners do not consider the relationship of drum patterns and singing as meeting at cross purposes. They view what is inherent in their practices as stylistic differences through a cultural approach and 'experiential facts' rather than through precise nomenclature or established 'theoretical facts.' For example, the patterns of the transcription of *Uta* music illustrated in Example 3

illuminate inter-rhythm rather than cross-rhythm. This could be described as the dependence and interdependence of musical instruments in the ensemble.

Example 4:



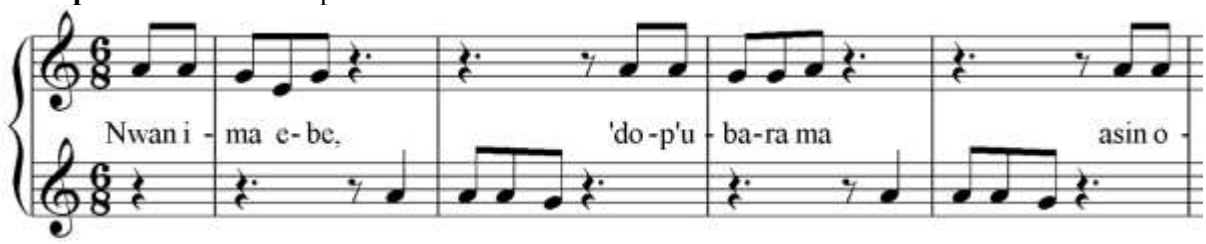
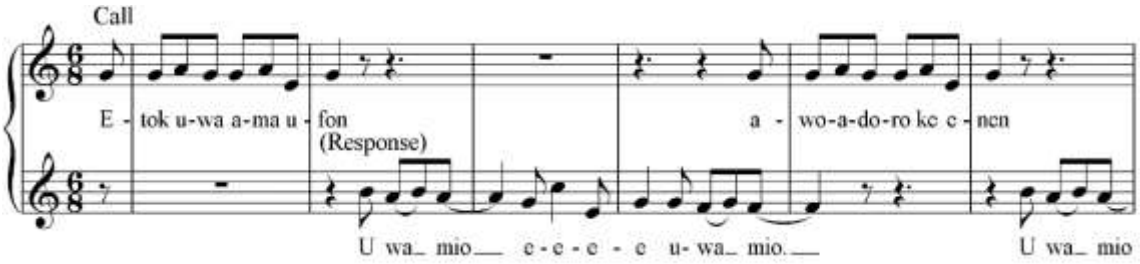
Polyrhythm and syncopation

As shown in Example 3, the dependence and interdependence of musical instruments in the ensemble create another rhythmic concept known as polyrhythm. Apel in Udoh (2012) states that the term polyrhythm is a restricted rhythmic variety of special effect often referred to as "cross rhythm" and described as the use of strikingly contrasting rhythm in simultaneous different parts of a musical fabric, a significant feature in a piece of contrapuntal or polyphonic music. Arom (1991, p. 39) reiterates that polyrhythm is defined as the superimposition of multiple rhythms [different rhythms] in different voice [also instrumental] parts. He further states that:

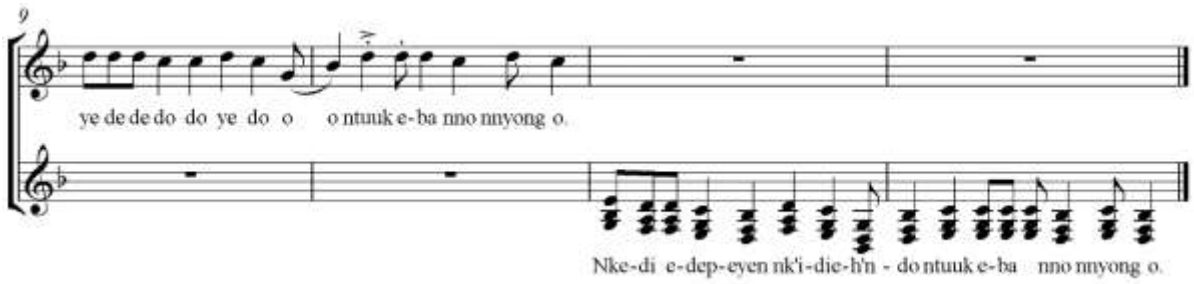
> Rhythmic counterpoint (or polyrhythm) is to unpitched instruments as melodic counterpoint (or polyphony) is to voices and pitched instruments. In Black Africa, this kind of counterpoint is essentially made up of so-called 'cross-rhythm', i.e. of different rhythmic patterns interweaving with each other. This principle of cross-rhythm (a term apparently introduced by Percival Kirby (1934: 54), involves the combination of two or more rhythmic figures in such a way that they cross rather than coincide with one another. There are, nonetheless, moments when the different figures correspond, but the overall ostinato pattern that is created emphasises their points of divergence or their oppositions rather than their points of connection (Ibid: 42).

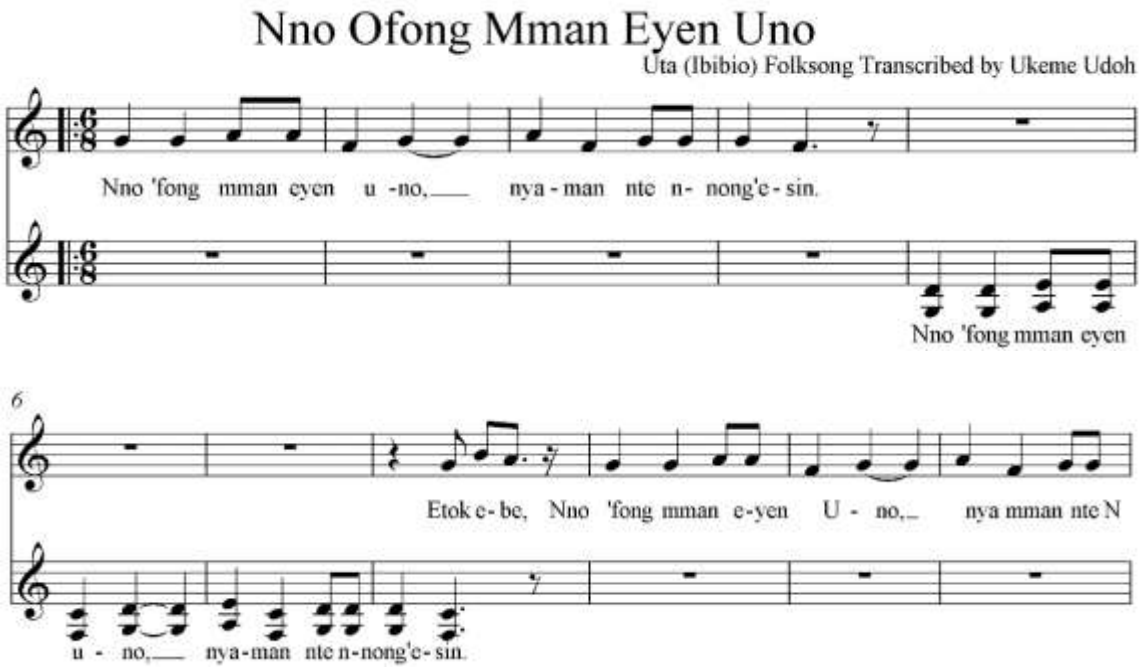
From the above explanation, the term polyrhythm is used almost in the same context as cross-rhythm. They both refer to the notion of multiple rhythmic figures as patterns that play together simultaneously, probably beginning and ending at various points. The contrast or sharp difference is that cross-rhythm is often defined as the interplay of multiple rhythmic patterns that are at cross purposes, or rather unorganized, while polyrhythm is seen as such an inter-play of layers that interweave within the fabric (Idamoyobo 2005). In Ibibio music, melo-rhythmic and 'polyphonic' interplay between instrumentals and singers is not conceived in vertical order as in Western hymns, but rather horizontally, there is this idea of cooperating motives. In addition, the beginning and ending at various points of multiple rhythmic figures lead to various displacements of accents, a term known as syncopation. Generally, syncopation refers to the displacement of either the beat or the normal accent of a piece of music. Syncopation is prominent in the practices of *Uta* music of the Ibibio. It is employed and explored as both a compositional and performance style in diverse forms, including vocal parts, horn parts, and instrumental parts. In Examples

4 and 5, both the call and response segments of the excerpts create syncopation. Depending on the perception of the time, the musical excerpt represents a binary implication of both accented and non-accented.

Example 5: Musical Excerpt – *Nwan Ima Ebe*: Mm. 1-4.

Example 6: Musical Excerpts – *Etok Uwa*: Mm 1 – 6.

Inter-locking rhythm

Strumpf, Anku, Phwandaphwanda and Mnukwana (2003, p. 131) in their discourse on "Oral Composition" describe the co-existence of call and response structure occurring in three dimensions: adjacent relationship, overlapping relationship, and interlocking relationship. The first involves the community response, which follows immediately after the call section. The second involves the call section entering sooner than expected, while the response is still going on, thereby creating an overlapping relationship between the responses and the call section. The third procedure, according to them, occurs where the call-and-response acts as two separate songs sung concurrently. The response is continuous, like a repeated passage, while the call (solo) does a counter passage over it. The call-and-response coexist, resulting in a beautiful interchange. This is an interlocking relationship. The emphasis on the call-and-response pattern here is typical of African indigenous practices and descriptive modules (Agu 1999; 2024). In the specific context of *Uta* Dance music within the Ibibio musical milieu, the three dimensions are of innate characteristics, as in the following excerpts. The first is the adjacent relationship (see Example 7).

Example 7: Musical Excerpt – *Nkedi Adep Eyen*: Mm. 9 – 12

Example 8 illustrates the call-and-response in an overlapping relationship.

Example 8: Musical Excerpt – *Nno Ofong*: Mm. 1 – 11

And lastly, at an interlocking relationship in *Uta* music, the two bell patterns (*ntakrọk* and *nkrok*) have an interlocking relationship. Traditionally, one of the two bells (nkrok) is referred to as the interlocking bell, while *ntakrọk* maintains its timeline/bell pattern. This interlocking effect confirms the close association between the rhythms of these two parts. Together, they produce the resultant shown in Figure 4. The second bell pattern easily integrates with the following relationship, as the two patterns share the same rhythmic motive at a certain point. To maintain the timing relationships correctly between the two instruments, the perception of the resultant, along with the individual bell pattern, is a helpful guide. The next element is the melodic structure.

Melodies and Melodic Structure

African melodies, according to Ekwueme (1973), "have range that are normally less than an octave and seldom extend beyond a tenth" (quoted in Bataye, 2005, p. 59). He adds that an important observation and characteristic of the nature of African melodies is the presence of the central tone. This 'central tone' represents the notion of duality between tonality and modality in African melodies. Tonality here covers the concept of tonicization in Western musicology as applied in African musicological studies. Whereas modality simply explains the concept of finality or terminal notes in melodic progressions (Omojola, 1982, p. 87). Comparatively, melody in the Eurocentric sense is of great importance as a musical feature. Sadie (2001) observes that "Melody should not be underrated as an element of form; it is not a by-product or necessary evil which the musical accepts as a means to higher kinds of statement, nor is it something to be separated from the total form as something better than that. Melody is a prime connective feature in the continuum of audible time, and as such is an important and form-carrying stylistic phenomenon. In this way, melodic styles may be regular, irregular, flowing or spasmodic, motivic or addictive, presentational

or developmental, conjunct or disjunct, vocal or instrumental, ornamental or structural, decorated or simple" (Sadie, 2001, p. 639)[1].

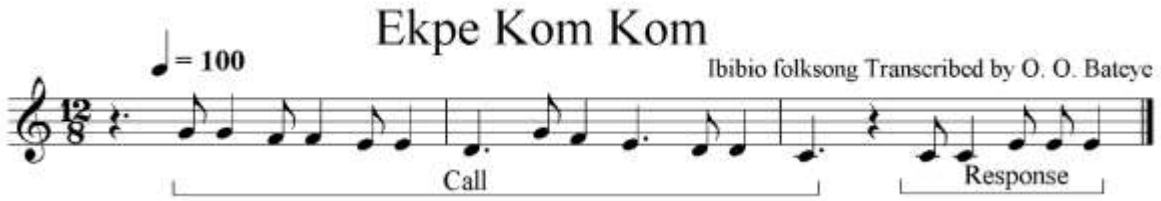
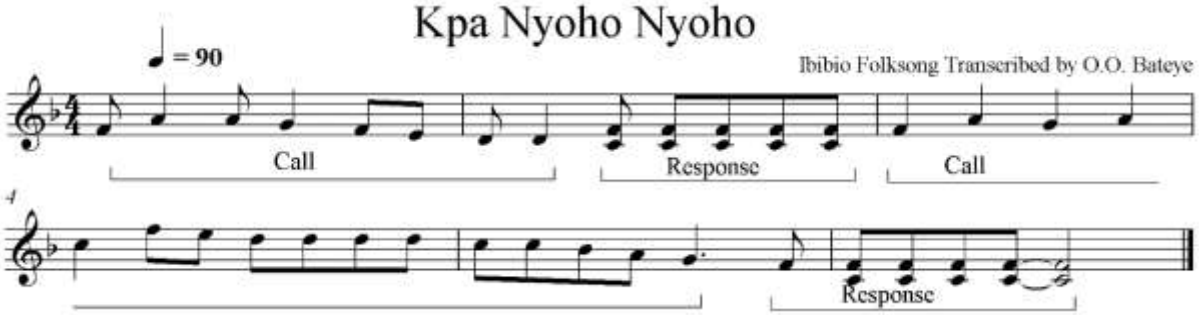
In African music (or ethnomusicological context), there is a strong link between speech tone, speech rhythm, and melody. As in speech, correct tone is essential for conveying the meaning of words. The basic principle is to allow the rhythm and melody of a culturally based composition to grow from the accents and tones of the words. Words affect the relative pitches of the syllables, while the overall sentence shapes affect the musical phrase as a whole (Dargie 1998). Francis Bebey has noted that in Africa, it is impossible to estimate which came first between speech and song. Much of African music is based on speech. The bond between language and music is so intimate that it is possible to tune an instrument so that the music it produces is linguistically comprehensible (Bebbey 1975, p. 119). Generally, the melodic outline is dictated by the semantic tone structure of the language of a particular African language group. In the Ibibio language, there is a tendency towards a constant overall falling throughout each phrase in a sentence. For example, if the first phrase begins on a high pitch and falls towards the end of the phrase, the next phrase begins also in a high tone, but not as high as the previous phrase, but falls at the same progression i.e. beginning at a high tonal level and progressing to a low pitch. This is why the melodies of Ibibio indigenous songs are structured like a succession of teeth in a saw.

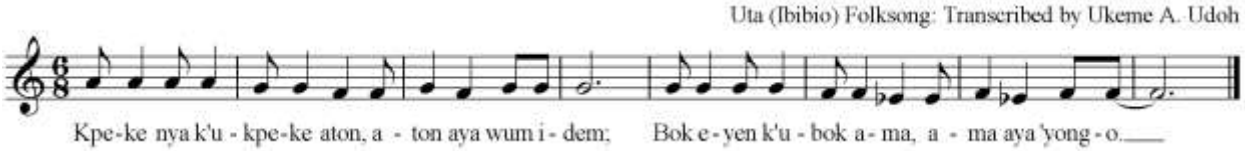
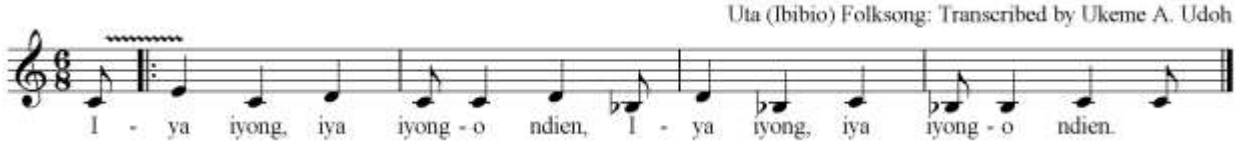
Ibibio melodies are in themselves more conjunct (stepwise) and undulating than otherwise or "tending to move downwards after a start" (Akpabot, 1998, p. 32). In some African societies, and indeed the Ibibio culture, any melodic contradiction between the words in spoken language and the way it is sung is inconceivable. In Uta music, words and song assume the same level of relevance as both are members of the oral repertory and serve their function in communicative agenda, confirming Francis Bebey's notion that "Music thus grows out of the intonations and rhythmic onomatopoeias of speech" (Bebbey 1975, p. 120). It is noteworthy also to posit that Uta melodies represent a microcosm of the melodic patterns and characteristics of the Ibibio songs in oral repertory. To put all these in perspective, let me turn to scales and tonality.

Scale and Tonality

The simplest way to assess the system of scales is to give an account of its pitch inventory. Agu (1999, p. 33) presents the position that "the African scale is widely varied." Similarly, Samuel Akpabot identifies six-scale structures as used in African music: diatonic (two-scale tones), tritonic (three-scale tones), tetratonic (four-scale tones), pentatonic (five-scale tones), hexatonic (six-scale tones), and heptatonic ((seven-scale tones). He adds that all these scales are constructed by ear and not mechanically well-tempered and that the best way to determine the African scale is by ear (Akpabot 1998, p. 27). In Ibibio music, the concept of scale is vague in indigenous usage. For example, the word *ebed-ikwo* meaning ladder of the song may have been borrowed from Western usage, since the local and indigenous musicians do not verbalise the scale as *d r m f s l t* except for the fact that with the ear they can reproduce any of these notes and use them freely both in songs and melo-rhythmic instruments. For them, humming a tune makes more sense than using any of the notes of the Western scale. The scale system constitutes the defining principle for tonality. For example, Joshua Uzoigwe, explains that tonality is "loyalty to a tonic [primary tonic] (or) key scheme of a composition" (Uzoigwe, 2001, p. 162). In other words, the gravitation towards a tonic (*doh* or *lah*) superimposes a contextual identity for tonality. The exception here is a modality, where such gravitational pull is absent, such that we identify such scale by its terminal pitch in the inventory. There are a few examples of some Ibibio songs/melodies, of which two are presented here, showing tonality and modality.

Example 8: Modality on *m* (Phrygian – E F G C D – Pentatonic)

[1] Stanley Sadie, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musician (2nd ed.) New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., Vol. 24. p. 639.

Example 9: Tonality on *d* (Diatonic – F G A Bb C D E). (Examples 8 and 9: Source - Bateye 2005, pp. 71-72).

Other interesting examples in Uta music are specific to Ibibio music. In Examples 10 and 11, a unique modal scale is exemplified.

Example 10: Modal Scale

Example 11: Modal Scale

In the two examples, there are two equal segments in the scale, each having three tones (A, G, F and G, F, Eb; C, E, D, and Bb, D, C). The combination of the two segments shows an inventory of four tones each: A, G, F, Eb, and C, E, D, Bb. These tetrachords become an important harmonic tool for modern composition (art music) because, by utilising their melodic and harmonic potentials, they create a unique identity specific to the Ibibio society.

Harmonic Structure

At the analytical dimension, earlier ethnomusicologists have attempted in different ways to identify the similarity between African harmony and the type of harmony found in much of the polyphonic music of medieval Europe. In their attempts, they have identified an *organum*, a style where a lower part was added to a plainsong melody that duplicated the melody, note for note, at a fourth or a fifth lower. This creation was called parallel or strict organum. Adedeji (2006) notes that harmony is another important subject in musical analysis and musicology. He clarifies further:

> Although it is generally believed that African harmony is not developed as Western, the truth is that African harmony has its peculiar aesthetic and unparalleled richness, though it appears simple but complex in its polyphonic settings. ... In categorizing harmonic types in African music, we shall first consider the Nketia's model, which is the most comprehensive so far. According to Nketia (1974) and Akpabot (1998), harmonic types in Africa could be classified into two broad categories – vocal and instrumental (p. 35).

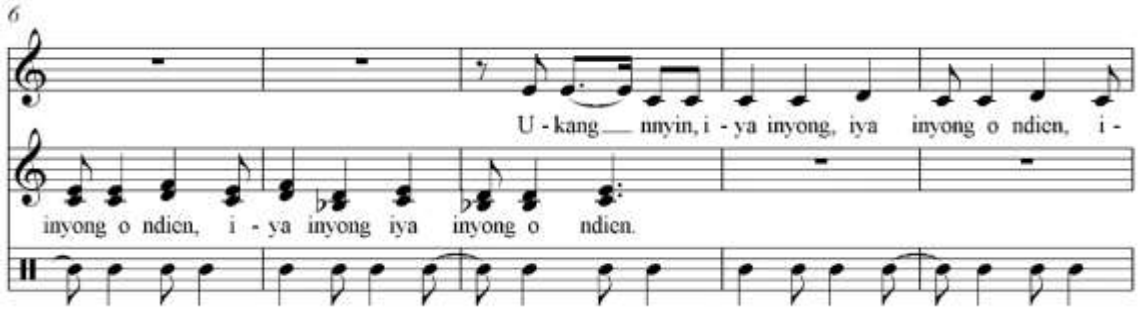
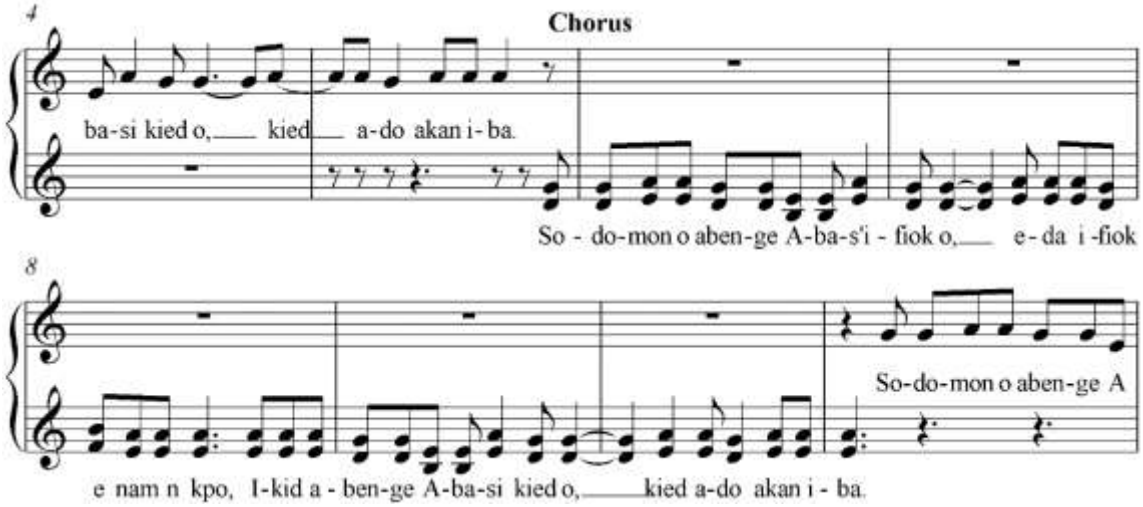
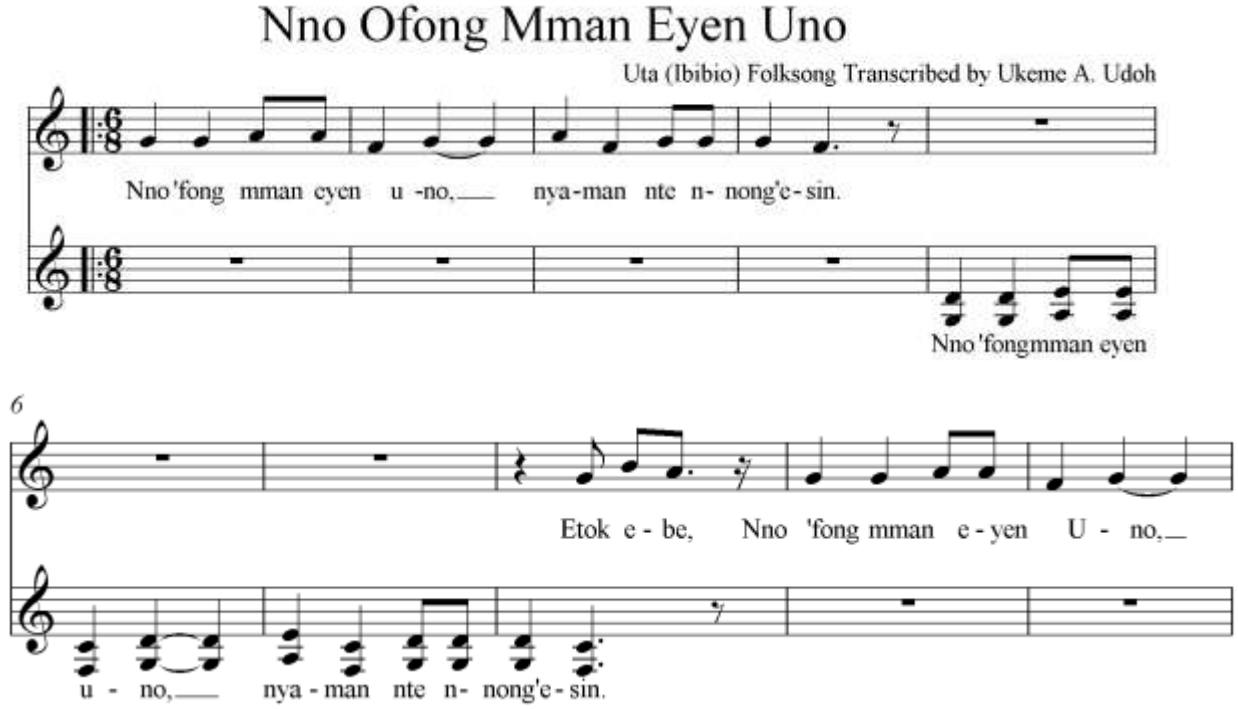
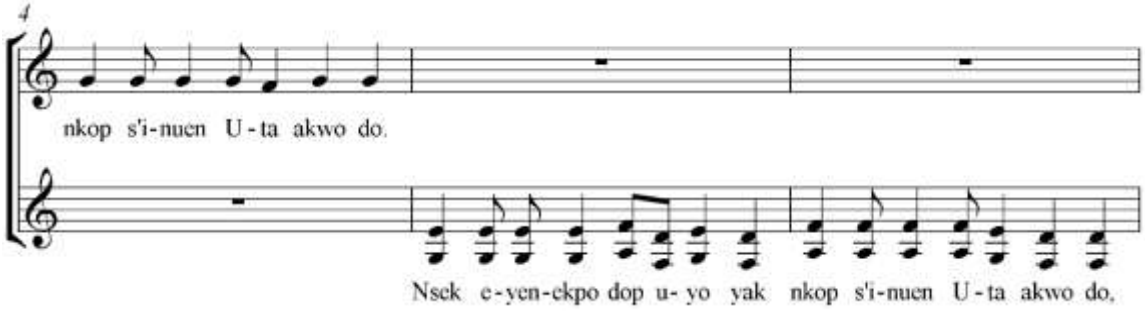
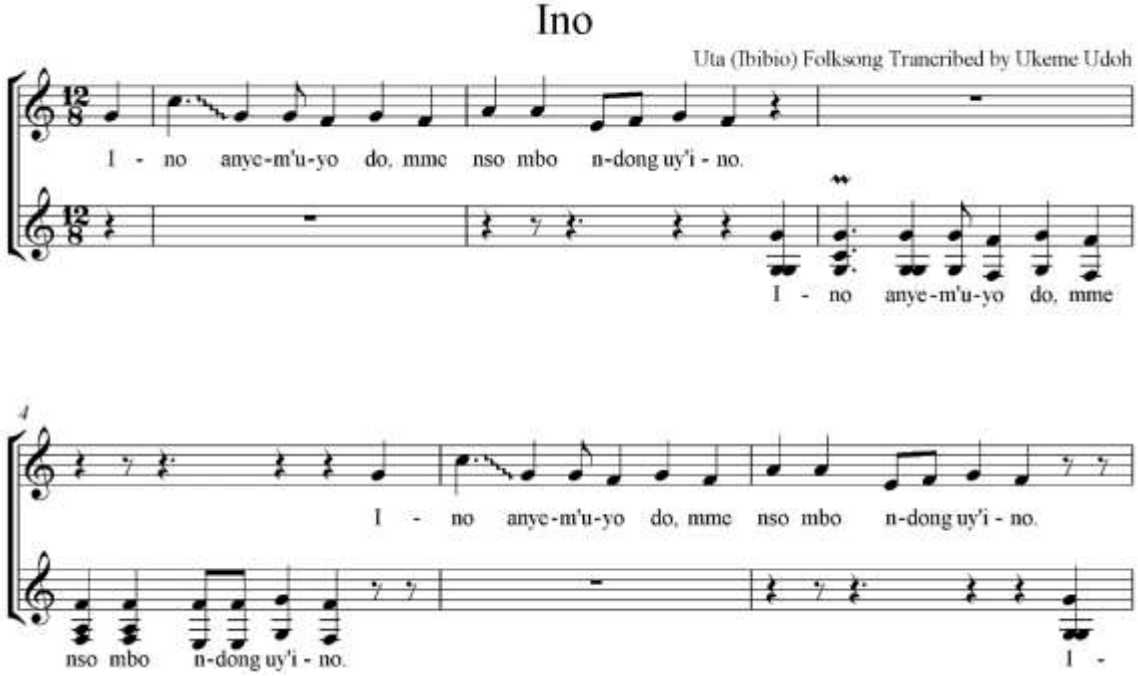
In this assertion, Adedeji categorises harmony in African music into two – vocal and instrumental. There is a need to understand the character of such harmonies and their point of divergence from the Western concept of harmony. Ekwueme (2004), in describing the principle of African harmony, explains that

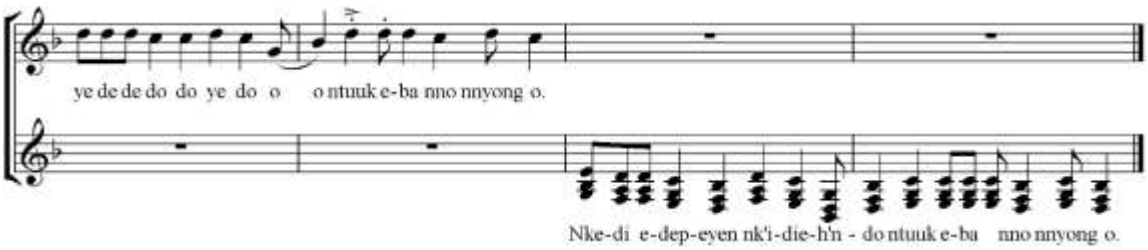
> It is known that many African languages are tonally inflected. For the true meanings of words to be retained when they are sung, the tunes have to follow the rise and fall (in direction, not necessarily in magnitude) of the tones of the words. This melodic shape has to be retained by any part(s) (singing the same words) added above or below the tune. Consequently, parallel (or at least similar) movement amongst the various parts seems to be called for. ...Parallel harmony, therefore, seems to be a regular African system for harmonising tunes. The larger intervals, octaves, fifths, and fourths, tend to be favoured, although quite a number of African peoples employ thirds and sixths either in addition to or in lieu of the perfect intervals (in Udoh, 2012, p. 134).

Jones (1959), speaking in support of this character in African vocal harmony, states that

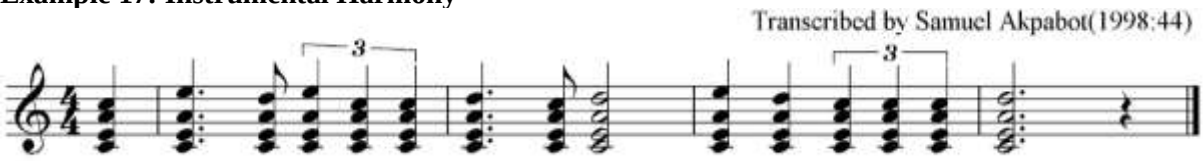
> Generally speaking, all over the continent south of the Sahara, African harmony is in organum and is sung either in parallel fourths, parallel fifths, parallel octaves, or parallel thirds. ... Some tribes sing in parallel thirds. The tribes who sing thus, do so to the total exclusion of any other interval (quoted in Udoh 2012, p. 135).

The consideration of the harmonic principles shows that the concept of parallelism in African vocal music is dominant; however, it is not without limitations. For example, in my analysis of *Uta* music, the concept of parallelism in vocal parts appears in parallel 3rds, parallel 4ths, parallel 5ths, parallel 6ths, and parallel octaves.

Example 11: Harmony in Parallel Thirds (*Iya Iyong* - mm 6 - 10)

Example 12: Harmony in Parallel Fourths (*Sodomon* - mm. 4 – 11)

Example 13: Harmony in Parallel Fifths (*Nno Ofong* - mm 1 - 10).

Example 14: Harmony in Parallel sixths (*Nsek-Eyen Ekpo*; mm. 4- 6)

Example 15: Harmony in Parallel Octaves (*Ino*; mm. 1- 6)

The sample of harmony in parallel octaves shows a slight change in the addition of a miniature third part acting so much as an imitative response to the call section, but in an insignificant manner (mm. 3 – 4). This sample also shows polarity – duplication of melodies in octaves. In Adedeji (2006, p. 36), this is possible especially when males and females or people with low and high tessituras sing together in unison. Other harmonic structures include monophony or unison and occasional heterophony, with homophonic parallelism in 2nds. *Uta's* vocal parts also feature what Ekwueme (2004, p. 105-6) identifies as triadic harmony, as exemplified in Example 16.

Example 16: Triadic Harmony (mm 3-4)

Commenting on Uta Music, Akpabot (1994) illuminates that in African music, you can have two or three instruments sounding contrapuntally but not homophonically, that is, horizontally one after another but not vertically all at once. But in Akwa Ibom State, the *Uta* ensemble is an exception (p. 73). For example, I found that the four pitches produced by the four Uta horns are made to sound rhythmic at once, creating a quasi-four-harmony. This assertion supports Akpabot's notion of an exception where the four notes produced can be concordant or discordant to the notes and do not follow the functional patterns we find in the tertian patterns of Western music. In other words, the concept of harmony in African music,

specifically in the *Uta* music of the Ibibio, creates both similarity and difference when compared with Western music, as shown in instrumental harmony.

Example 17: Instrumental Harmony

Instrumental harmony is an important aspect of analysis that articulates earlier findings, especially those of Kwabena Nketia in *Music of Africa* (1974). Nketia (1974) notes that most of the harmonic styles and techniques identified in vocal music could be found in African instrumental harmony, although with some variations. In *Uta* music, there are other harmonic types associated with instrumental harmony, where the horn section of the ensemble creates polyphony or independent melodic lines that are more contrapuntal. Although the more contrapuntal polyphony employs simultaneous melodies, ostinato figures, interlocking melodies, and improvisatory passages, which are unique to *Uta* ensemble music. Akpabot (1998, p. 11) presents that the Ibibio yodel uses falsetto voice in their singing of free rhythm and polyphony, with florid hocketing. Although this is true in the vocal music of the Ibibio, there is instrumental hocketing.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The possibility of analysis resides in the fact that whatever analytical conclusion one reaches, there are more or other open conversations that are inherent in such interpretations. Thus, no one analysis is completed or closed, nor could such an analysis be seen as irrelevant. For example, what this article has attempted to showcase demonstrates the Ibibio style of ensemble rendition codified in Uta music, where the analysis conjures an aspect of ethnomusicology. This synergy shares its analytical meanings with what Nettl calls the 'Systematic Approach'. Another approach may contain metaphysical explanations since *Uta* music is associated with sounds from the supernatural (spirit) world of the Ibibio universe. The dimension of such analytical expressions may vary or delve into the Ibibio myth, which includes extramundane analysis, whose dimensions are accommodated in the anthropological perspectives of ethnomusicology. While studies in ethnomusicology exploring specific domains need a specific model as demonstrated in this article, the interpretation of analysis sometimes builds on certain comparisons, be it of the past, present or a merger of a sort. But more interestingly, genre- and culture-specific analysis in modern terms is presumably intended to dovetail into a higher level or a 'transformational zone' as Euba call it, where the materials highlighted should serve as compositional resources for neo-art music. At that level, another analytical model accounts for *what* and *how* such explorations have developed.

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