

## A DISCOURSE ON THE CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF STYLES IN *JÙJÙ* MUSIC IN NIGERIA



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### **Abstract**

This is an enquiry and discourse on the historical development of styles in *Jùjù* music with the aim of identifying the different styles and to highlight the contribution of various musicians in the development of various styles over decades. Discography and bibliographic methods are employed in achieving these purposes. The findings show that *Jùjù* music developed among the Yorùbá in the South-West part of Nigeria through the efforts of different musicians' quest to play their *Jùjù* music differently from the conventional style created by Tùndé King. In addition, introduction of different Yorùbá ethnic dialects, Haúsá and Pidgin-English language as well as new musical instruments at different era by different musicians, contribute to the rapid development and patronage of *Jùjù* music both in Nigeria and abroad. The paper concludes that the creativity and efforts of each musician involved at different periods are credited for the development of different *juju* musical styles. It is equally important to note that the role of the Nigerians, especially the Yorùbá popular society in form of response, patronage as well as their direct and indirect involvement on issues concerning *Jùjù* music and the musicians also have great impact on the development of different styles in *Jùjù* music.

**Keywords:** *Jùjù*, Àgídìgbo, Àríyá, Gáangan, Steel guitar.

### **Introduction**

According to Simpson and Oyetade (2008), Nigeria was said to comprise of multifarious ethnic groups with about five hundred spoken languages; making Nigeria the most populous African country and the eighth by world comparison. They further recorded that the groups have diverse cultural

identities and these elements are observable in their dress code, language, food and music.

The Yorùbá people are one of the major ethnic groups that is ethnographically located in the Southwestern part of Nigeria with a language widely spoken in the West African sub-region and with cultural influences spreading across the world to countries like Cuba, the United Kingdom, United States of America and Brazil. The Yoruba are believed to have the largest variety of musical genres in Nigeria. On this, Euba in Adedeji (2006) wrote:

‘Yoruba traditional music is marked by an impressive variety of genres, forms, styles and instruments. While this variety is partly a result of the diverse sub-cultures, much of it is common to Yoruba culture as a whole.’

These genres include music for religious worships, traditional folk, music for social purposes and dance, neo-traditional, popular and others; but a large number of music scholars have tended to rely upon a general division of musical types into traditional, popular, and art music categories. Yet in many ways the boundaries between these categories easily become blurred when put under scrutiny, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, these three categories are intimately intertwined and in conversation with each other. (Matczynski: 2011).

The origin, formation and development of Juju music in Nigeria by various musicians had been examined by some African scholars like Vidal (1983), Alaja-Browne (1985), Ogisi (2010) and others, as well as the roles, which the Yoruba language and culture played in both the traditional and modern popular music. However, these various studies have not taken into cognizance the different Juju styles developed by different musicians at different era in Nigeria.

Within the premise of Historical Musicological theory which contends that music should be studied from the perspective of their past musical forms and culture, and their performance, transmission and reception throughout recorded history to the present day the historical perspective, this paper aims to explore the origin of Juju music and examine the music of different musicians of different eras in order to identify and highlight the

chronological details of styles development in Juju music between 1920s and now. Review of related literature by scholars like Vidal (2012b), Ogisi (2010) Olusola (2018) on the historical background and development of juju music as well as the data collected from discographic data collected during this study are the methods used in achieving this because of the appropriateness.

### **Popular Music in Nigeria**

Euba (1989) described popular musics as those associated with nightclubs or with private parties or other social contexts in which merriment (*àríyá*), leisure and consumption of beverages are prime objectives. These descriptions seem adequate if one looks at popular music as a type that can easily be understood, experienced and enjoyed without having any specialized training in music, which is usually true of popular music.

In harmony with the above assertions, Lucy Ekwueme (2006) described popular music as music that is enjoyed and appreciated by many people. It is social dance music for people across age, sex, class, and ethnic barriers. Similarly, Okafor (2005) on a sharp contrary, describes popular music as socially entertaining and dance music oriented with broad, immediate and implicitly transient appeal, which draws its core clientele from urban dwellers, adding that ‘It is understood and accepted by a lot of people not as a final solution to their problems, but as a tropical of their sentiments and current worldview’ (Okafor 2005:75).

Since the pre-colonial era, the Yorùbá have been playing the vanguard role in influencing the direction of popular music in Nigeria. For instance, *Jùjú* and Highlife forms of popular music, which originated in Lagos in the 1920s and 1950 respectively blends entertainment and Yorùbá aesthetics functions of music as a transmitter and propeller of cultural ethics and values system through their song texts. In addition, the blend of talking drum and other African instruments with Western instruments and technologies in Juju and Fuji have made them represented Nigeria globally through icons like Victor Olaya, Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, Orlando Owoh, king Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey being signed to a major label like Island records in the 1980s. (See Waterman 1995: 38-39, Oikelome 2013:76).

Between 1900 and 1990, Highlife, Juju and Fuji music dominated the popular musical scene in Nigeria especially among the Yoruba, because of the leading roles played by various musicians from this region in the origin, participation and development of these popular genres; which equally led to different forms of fusion and hybridization of other popular styles like the Afro-beat which was created by Fela Anikulapo-Kuti. Other styles include Fuji Calypso and Fuji Reggae by Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, Bata Fuji style by Kollinton Ayinla, Bonsue-Fuji system by Adewale Ayuba, Talazo system and Classical Fuji by King Wasiu Ayinde Marshal, Juju Syncro-system by King Sunny Ade, Juju Miliki system by Ebenezer Obey, Apola style of Juju by Idowu Animashaun, Afro-Juju by Sir Shina Peters, Soko style of Juju by Dayo Kujore and Funky Juju by Dele Taiwo among others. All these styles emanated from Juju, highlife and Fuji musical genres.

### **Origin of Juju Music in Nigeria**

Juju has been described by Vidal as commemorative and panegyric music developed by the Yoruba from Ghanaian-derived 'palm wine' styles popular in Lagos in the 1930s and 1940s to a local variant of the urban West African palm wine guitar tradition (Waterman). Juju music may be considered as a popular dance music genre of the Yoruba. Commenting on origin of the word, Collins (1992) stated that it was 'coined by mandolin player Tunde King in the late 1930s while Vidal (2012) opined that it stemmed from the corruption or mispronunciation of the French "Je Jeu" as "Juju". Aig-Imuokhue (1975) however, noted that it was derived from the name of 'a single-membrane tambourine drum with a . . . frame of hexagonal design'.

Furthermore, there is also the view that the term derives from the manner members of the Salvation Army played the tambourine which interested members of the public who often requested an encore with the Yoruba word 'ju' meaning 'throw it'. Contrary to uninformed opinion that connects the term with fetish, Aig-Imuokhue (1975) and Vidal (1983) stated that there is no such connection. Indeed, the words that refer to fetish is pronounced Ju (/mid-tone) ju (-high tone) while the popular music genre is pronounced Ju (-low) Ju (-high-tone).

Aig-Imuokhue further opined that Juju originated from 'the minstrel tradition and perhaps derived from the need to entertain at drinking places.'

Alaja-Browne (1985) traced its origin to Tunde King and a small group of friends who assembled in the evenings at Till Nelson 'Akamo' David's motor mechanic workshop for music making. However, he was quick to add that:

In its early years (c. 1929-33) it was not known as Juju music, but a kind of “native blues” which centered on reflective songs that are accompanied on the box guitar and struck idiophones, and which provided a means of self-expression and a basis for social interaction among a group of boys...in the area of Lagos known as Saro Town or Olowogbowo (Alaja-Browne, 1986: 1).

According to Omibiyi, (1981), Palm wine music developed from 'an antecedent tradition of indigenous recreational music' that was 'known as Abalabi [which is] a recreational type of music and dance similar to the Agbadza in Ghana and Togo. Azikiwe (1970) remarked that it is certain that Tunde King and his friend played palm wine music that was popular among guitarists in Lagos around 1925. However, they transformed it by composing songs in Yoruba and grafting them to a largely strophic and call-response format, in a narrative song technique, spiced with proverbs, anecdotes from Yoruba culture and accompanying them with the mandolin, banjo, ukulele, guitar, sekere or a combination of them. Hitherto, palm wine songs were in Kru, Fante, and Ewe languages.

According to Vidal (1983), in the 1940s, Juju performances were held in private events and 'the celebration of the events of the life circle such as marriage and death constituted occasions for inviting Juju musicians especially by the Yoruba Christian community in Lagos' who were usually people of means. The context, however limited the clientele and other benefits to the musicians so it was self-evident that the Juju musicians needed to expand their clientele to enable them to subsist by music. Thus, in addition to private events, they began playing for the general public on radio, and made recordings and these assured them of regular income than the indeterminate earnings from irregular and unpredictable private parties.

The airing of Tunde King's records on Radio Lagos in 1932, made his music widely known and thus began his rise to fame. According to Alaja-Browne (1986: 10) 'it was after 1933 that Juju attracted the attention of the influential

and respected members of the Lagos community' who began inviting Tunde King and his group to perform:

During the late evenings in family compounds and drawing rooms, but never in the streets of Lagos and with "TK" as Tunde King was affectionately known, supplying the desired music (*Eree faaji ti o pariwo*) while they (the hosts) enjoyed themselves with their women friends over the game of cards or billiards (Alaja-Browne, 1986: 12).

The development of Juju is presented in terms of the major factors that impinged on it and the changes that occurred in terms of instrumentation, themes, performance context and practice. After World War II, Juju spread outside Lagos but was patronized mostly in the Yoruba speaking areas of south-western Nigeria where most of the musicians were located. However, in 1959, following the competitions organized for Juju bands by the Western Nigeria Television which was won by I.K. Dairo, Juju became widely known across south-western Nigeria. Shortly thereafter, it evolved from a localized to a nationally recognized genre through I.K. Dairo's music.

From palm wine music it took the finger-plucking guitar playing style, from church music, it derived its strophic form and harmonic schemes. Juju is also indebted to minstrelsy tradition. Vidal further explicates the place of minstrelsy in the origin of Juju when he stated that:

'Minstrelsy is not new to Yoruba culture....The minstrel of the forties was usually a one-man vocal band such as the Kokoro and Denge band. The Kokoro band for example, makes use of the tambourine drum with vocaling. Kokoro, who was popularly known as the "blind minstrel", cultivated the habit of parading the streets of Lagos, singing ballades and songs in his powerful metallic voice and accompanying himself with his tambourine....Several of these one-man minstrels paraded the streets of Lagos in the forties' (Vidal, 1983:3).

Alaja-Browne (1985) claimed that Juju also borrowed from Ashiko drumming. In its early years, Juju ensembles consisted of ukulele-banjo, guitar, tambourine, and a sekere. During the 1930s and 1940s, there emerged

more innovative and daring musicians who began to expand the ensemble through the addition of more instruments. For example, Tunde King introduced sekere; Sumbo Jibowu traduced the Banjo after seeing it with sailors on a ship, Kruman Sunday Harbour Giant, alias “Atari Ajanaku”, introduced the samba (a framed drum), the melodica and the tambourine; Akanbi Wright incorporated gangan, the penny whistle, organ and mandolin. King Sunny Ade, in Barlow and Eyre (2015), observed that in the 1950s, more instruments were incorporated into Juju ensembles but the most significant was the electric guitar by Ayinde Bakare in 1950. In 1957, I.K. Dairo introduced the harmonica, the accordion and varieties of traditional drums including Samba. During the mid-1970s, King Sunny Ade introduced Hawaiian Steel Guitar, Electric kick drum and keyboard into his own brand of Juju music while his counterpart, Ebenezer Obey introduced the bass guitar, which he used as a low-pitched drum in generating rhythm while fluctuating between the tonic and the dominant tonal degrees in contrast with its conventional role as a harmonic bass. By the mid-1970s, it had been integrated into the Juju ensemble.

However, it was in the late 1970s that Juju established a standard ensemble format consisting of lead guitar, rhythm guitar, bass guitar, gangan, conga, clave, sekere, and agogo. (<http://www.afropop.org/7552/talking-to-the-king-part-2-an-interview-with-king-sunny-ade/>)

## Styles Development in Juju Music



Tunde King and his Band

(Source: <https://the234project.com>)

Tunde King is widely credited for coining the name ‘*Jùjú*’ and is considered the founder of *Jùjú* music. Alaja-Browne and Watermann in a separate literature, recorded that starting in the mid to late 1920’s, Tunde King and a group of friends would often get together at a mechanic’s shop in the area of Saro Town for “evenings of music making”. Over time, Tunde and his group slowly transitioned from playing palm wine music that was common among guitarists in Lagos to producing songs in Yoruba and converting them into a story-like song in a verse-repeating and audience responsive format.

His rise to fame began once his music was aired on Radio Lagos in 1932 and in 1933, King and his group would start receiving official, solicited invites from the rich and famous elite members of the Lagos community. However, it was not until after Tunde King and his group performed at the funeral ceremony of Dr. Oguntola Odunmbakun Sapara (famous for his spirited campaign against secret societies that were spreading Smallpox) in June 1935 that this music became known as *Jùjú* music. Some of his notable recordings were “Eko Akete”, the definitive “Oba Oyinbo” (White King) and “Sapara ti sajule orun” (Sapara has gone to Heaven). Tunde King passed away sometime in the 1980s. Other musicians at the earliest period are Ojoge Daniel, Irewole Denge and Kokoro the ‘blind minstrel’.



### **One-Man Band Style**

The very first person to create One-man Juju band style in Nigeria was Kokoro the ‘blind minstrel’.



*Kokoro performing in public (Source: <https://the234project.com>)*

He was born into a royal family in Owo town, Ondo State on February 25, 1925, Kokoro started entertaining Lagosians with his inimitable single style and a tin drum and will later on switch his instrument of choice to a tambourine and samba. He started going blind midway through his secondary education at Modern High School in Okitipupa, Ondo State. His musical expedition would take him from Owo to Okitipupa to Ibadan, Oyo State, and eventually to Lagos.

His one-man band style was characterized his lengthy and illustrious music career entertaining in Nigeria and abroad, Kokoro stands alone as the one-man act Lyrist of *Jùjú* music. Armed with his samba and unable to afford stylish musical instruments, Kokoro sang effortlessly in Yoruba language about family issues, poverty, love, societal conflicts and money. It is widely believed that Nigerian Author Cyprian Ekwensi's 1960 novel, *The Drummer Boy*, is based on the life of Kokoro. He passed away on January 25, 2009, at the age of 83.

### **Owambe Style**

The ‘*Owambe*’ Style of Juju music was developed in the early 50s by Ernest Olatunde Thomas popularly known as Tunde Nightingale (1922-1981),



Picture of Tunde Nightingale (Source: <https://the234project.com>)

Nightingale was a nickname which was conferred on him by adulating fans after a high energy performance in which he sang all night (like a Nightingale bird) in his smooth, avian-like singing voice. ‘*Owambe*’ style was initially known as ‘So Wàmbè’ (Is it there?) and later ‘*Owambe*’ (It is there); a racy allusion to the decorative beads worn by women under their clothes to make their dancing more affective. The style is characterized by long play of guitar improvisation using double-stop and strumming techniques.

### **Jelenke Style**

Ayinde Bakare (1921-1972) created ‘*Jelenke*’ style of Juju music in 1954.



Picture of Ayinde Bakare (Source: <https://the234project.com>)

He started his musical career with Tunde King and started recording with a British recording label, His Master’s Voice (HMV), in 1937. He was the first Juju musician to introduce an amplified guitar into Juju music and always determined to ensure that *Jùjú* music never strayed from its traditional origin. ‘Jelenke in Yoruba language means ‘moderately slow’ and this was manifested in the mid and slow tempo adopted in his music and which make it easy for people to dance to. Ayinde Bakare was one of the most patronized Juju musicians by the older people especially among the Ijebu and Remo people of Ogun State. Other musicians that play Jelenke style of Juju music include musicians like Kayode Fashola, Popular Jingo, Honorable Michael Robinson and others.

The style was characterized by sonorous voice production in high pitch and double-stopping techniques playing limited melodic and harmonic range on the guitar with or without capo, a clip used in dividing a guitar into two equal parts. Bakare was quite popular among Lagos and Ibadan socialites in the 1950s and 1960s. Unfortunately, he died under mysterious circumstances on October 1, 1972 in Lagos after a wedding party performance.

### **Agidigbo Style**

The '*Agidigbo*' style of Juju music was created in 1955 by Olayiwola Fatai Olagunju popularly called Fatai Rolling Dollars (1926-1913). He decided to play *Agidigbo* (Thub-Piano) instead of the guitar. Agidigbo is accompanied by other local drums like Sekere Samba and Akuba drums. His music was characterized by its storytelling creative ability blended in form of highlife and Juju music. Agidigbo style is characterized by lyrics in form of storytelling and narration of true-life experience. The use of one lead-guitar with double-stopping technique usually played at the neck part of the guitar was later adopted in Agidigbo style.

Agidigbo style was more patronized by the Lagos indigenes at Isale-Eko part of Lagos State and most of the Eko Carnival songs and the rhythmic accompaniment were structured around the Agidigbo style of Juju music.

### **Sabada Style**

The '*Sabada*' style of Juju music was created in 1959 by Isaiah Kehinde Dairo popularly known as I.K Dairo (1930-1996) with his Blue Spot Band.



Picture of I.K Dairo (Source: <https://the234project.com>)

He was once a barber and a cloth trader, He started with his 'Demure' style of praise singing and he is considered one of Africa's first international music stars and the man who brought *Jùjú* music to a broader audience that included the Nigerian elite. In response to his overwhelming global popularity and his contribution to music, I.K Dairo was awarded a Member

of the British Empire (MBE) in 1963 by Queen Elizabeth. After a successful career spanning five decades, he passed away on February 7, 1996 at the age of 65. The style is characterized by the use of Accordion, Harmonica blend with the traditional rhythms of the Nigerian culture as well as his falsetto singing lyrics with Ijesha-Yoruba dialects and other Nigerian languages into Juju music. This style is also known for use of church hymns and occasional spoken-verses during drum interlude and the rhythmic accompaniments played by local upright drums like ‘Samba’, ‘Akuba’ and ‘Ogido’.

### **Miliki Style**

The ‘*Miliki*’ style of Juju music was created by Ebenezer Remilekun Aremu Olasupo Obey-Fabiyi popularly known as Chief Ebenezer Obey (1942- till date).



Picture of Ebenezer Obey (Source: <https://the234project.com>)

Ebenezer Obey formed his own band, The International Brothers, in 1964 after years of guidance and mentorship under Fatai Rolling Dollar. Starting in the mid-1960s, he got more creative with his music by introducing the bass guitar and multiple Yoruba talking drums in order to generate more rhythm. *Miliki* is a Yoruba word means enjoyment. He named his style of Juju music after the “Miliki Spot” hotel where his band often resided. Miliki style is characterized by Story-telling and Christian gospel lyrics with melo-rhythmic guitar accompaniment and easy dance-step with both hands of the dancer bobbing over the belly while dancing.

### **Syncro System**

‘Syncro-system’ was a style of Juju music created in 1975 by Sunday Adeniyi also known as King Sunny Adé (born in 1946).



King Sunny Ade was musically inventive by integrating the Congolese Guitar into his music in the 1970s and adding synthesizers in the 1980s. His ‘synchronatic’ Juju system which he called ‘Syncro System’ was characterized by fusion of Afro-beat, rock and the lyrics mostly structured around non-equidistant pentatonic scale (d:r:m:s:l). In addition, there is an increase in known juju tempo played with multiple talking-drums and other percussions as well as incorporation of Hawaiian Steel Guitar into Syncro system of Juju music. Live performances of Syncro-system was accompanied by a special dance step, which was uniquely created by King Sunny Ade. This style was later developed into ‘*Apala-syncro*’ style of juju music by the same musician.

### **Kennery Style**

Kennery style of music was created by Orlando Owoh (1937-1997)



He first branded his music as ‘Toye’ style and in early 1960s, he was referred to as ‘King of Toye music’ (which was also Yoruba slang for marijuana) by his fans. Around 1975, after few musical tours to Europe, Orlando Owoh changed his style of music to Kennery style of juju music and he re-named his back-up group ‘His Young Kenneries’ a term that he later changed to ‘His African Kenneries International’. Kenerry style is characterized by the following unique lead-guitar introduction:

Fig 1.



This also include the following unique and profound bass guitar accompaniment that gives the style its identity.



Other musicians who play this style of music include Ade Wesco and His Destiny Dandies, Kunle Owomoyela (Orlando’s son) who took over his

father's band, Femi Water and His Modern Kennery Band, Dele Bravo and His Juju Calypso-Kennery Band among others.

### **Adawa Style**

Adawa style of Juju music was created by a musician known as “The Admiral”, Dele Abiodun



He was born on March 30, 1948 in the old Bendel State in Nigeria. As a young student, he dropped out of school and relocated to Ghana to study music at The Young Pioneers School of Music. His decision was against his father's wishes who wanted him to be a doctor, lawyer or an engineer. The Admiral's type of music, which he would call “Adawa Sound”, is a blend of the *Jùjú* Music of the 60s and the pure highlife music that he picked up while in Ghana. “Adawa” means something rare, unique or autonomous; a point The Admiral wanted to clearly emphasize in pointing out the originality of his music. In 1969, he returned to Lagos from Ghana and shortly thereafter, he established his own band, Sweet Abby & his Top Hitters Band.

Adawa style was characterized by with infusing modern sound elements such as guitar playing with long improvisational verse in Spanish tuning techniques electro-claps and drum machines into *Jùjú* music. He later share his refined Adawa sound with the world with the release of his 1984 album, ‘Its Time for *Jùjú* Music’.



### **Apola Style**

The '*Apola*' style of Juju music was created by Idowu Animasaun, (1938-till date).



He started with his own group, "Idowu Animasaun and His Lisabi Brothers" in 1967. He later changed the band's name to Idowu Animasaun and His Lisabi Brothers International after their 1974 European tour. '*Apola*' style of Juju music is characterized by mid-tempo rhythm and vocal tonality structured on Egba dialectical language.

### **Toy Motion and Easy Motion Style**

Musicians like Julius Araba and J.O Oyesiku (both based in Ibadan, the Yoruba intellectual hub) developed a style called "Toy motion" and 'Easy motion' Juju style, which relied on small formations that had traded in traditional percussions for the modern drum. The song '*Easy motion kelele*' and the creation of mid-tempo easy dance-step with hands and shoulders upward movement one after the other during dance buttressed the creation of the style.

### **Afro-Juju style**

Afro-Juju style was created by Sir Shina Peters in 1988 and popularized through his album titled ‘Ace’ in 1989.



Oluwashina Akanbi Peters was born on May 30, 1958 in Ogun State. He experienced his first taste of *Jùjú* music stardom playing with General Prince Adekunle and would later on form his own band with Segun Adewale. Sir Shina Peters embarked on his solo career in the early 1980s forming his own band, Sir Shina Peters & His International Stars. The music dominated all other styles of juju music that existed during that time.

Afro-Juju style is a potent blend of Afro-beat, *Jùjú* and entertaining and striking Fuji-style beats. It was also characterized by occasional use of lyrics in pidgin language, fusion of both traditional and funky rhythms played by electronic trap-drum and multiple use of talking drums and other local percussions that plays in faster tempo than other juju music, which makes it suitable for the young people to dance. Others styles includes the ‘*Yankee*’ system by Jide Ojo, ‘*Soko Style*’ by Dayo Kujore, ‘*Funky Juju*’ style by Dele Taiwo (Ogisi, 2010).

### **Conclusion**

Juju music as a Yoruba centered popular music was developed in Nigeria through the evolution of different styles by different musicians for over four decades. The creativity and efforts of each musician involved is hereby credited for this. It is equally important to mention the role played by the Nigerians, especially the Yoruba popular society in form of patronage on the

development of juju music for over five decades. The patronage is seen in terms of invitation juju musicians to perform at different social engagements, concerts Television, radio stations as well as other corporate bodies and buying of recorded music.

This study has revealed that Juju music developed among the Yoruba in the South-West part of Nigeria through the efforts of different musicians' quest to play their juju music differently from the conventional style created by Tunde King. Also introduction of different Yoruba ethnic dialects, like Ilesha, Egba, Ekiti dialects as well as other Nigerian Languages like Hausa and Pidgin-English language. The Introduction of different musical instruments at different era by different musicians, contributes to the growth in the size of the band, its relevance to the society and patronage of Juju music both in Nigeria and abroad.

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