

Evidences and Applications of Proverbs, Parallelism, Fables in Abigbo Musical Structure

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Abstract

This study is situated in Abigbo music of Mbaise, a society of three Local Government Areas with five clans. It is geared to scrutinize the availability of fables, parallelism and proverbs as well as how and why they are conventionally applied in Abigbo as facets of its musical structure. That the aforementioned factors are integrated into the ensemble is evidently a given. This investigation is embarked on with the view to advancing the place of these constituent thrusts of the paper in traditional music setting, using Abigbo as a case study. Besides, the study will give sense of direction aimed at augmenting contemporary approach to the application of these salient subject matter in our vocal music rendition in the face of music innovation continuum. Data were collected from the author's residual knowledge of the subjects of investigation, the print media documented in the library, through interview and privileged participant observation among the key artistes of the ensemble. Findings as highlighted in the paper speak volumes for the inevitability of proverbs parallelisms and fables prevalence in Abigbo music. Their effective application yields music aesthetics, guides against much emphasis on lexical expressions, promotes confidential information dissemination among select few within the audience in the rural but multi-lingual culture.

Keywords: Proverbs, Parallelism, Fables, Abigbo, Musical Structures

Introduction

According to oral literature, Abigbo music originated from Ngwa. Ngwa is separated from the eastern part of Mbaise (Ezinihite) by two rivers. An informant, Emmanuel Nwadonye Njoku said Abigbo was first introduced into Itu, a town very close to the Imo River in Ezinihite clan, in 1932. The people of Itu used to cross the river to sell their palm oil and then buy foodstuff in return. On one of the market days, some of them witnessed the performance of Abigbo in the market square. Njoku, who happens to have been one of the eye witnesses, summoned some of the spectators and discussed with them the necessity and possibility of learning the music from the Ngwa natives. Ngwa people charged them *Ibi okpoochi assa ejemma* i.e two hundred and eighty manillas, the equivalent of the present-day Nigerian fourteen Naira. In addition to the amount paid, a goat was equally presented to them. Food and palm wine were also offered at each practice. Ngwa went to Itu every four days to teach them the music. Having learnt it Itu performed it during the celebration of *oji* Mbaise, a well-known festival in the area. After watching Itu, other towns decided to learn the music. Ife, another town in Ezinihite, was the first to learn it from Itu. They paid Itu one hundred and forty manillas, i.e seven naira. Since Ife is very close to Lorji, a town in Okeuvuru clan, Lorji people felt that it would be easier and cheaper to learn the music from Ife instead of going to Itu, a farther distance. Under the leadership of Elijah Owunna, some Lorji men went to Ife for negotiation. Ife charged them two goats, a cock and a hen. Lorji was going to Ife every four days to practise with them. Through the processes of learning and teaching Abigbo, the music spread in Mbaise.

Musical Structure: Music is a product of man and has structure but its structure cannot have an existence of its own divorced from the behaviour which produces it. In order to understand why a music structure exists as it does, we must also understand how and why the behaviour which produces it is as it is, and how and why the concept which underlie that behaviour is ordered in such a way as to produce the particular desired form of organized sound (Merriam, 1964:7).

Idamoyibo (2002:80) argues that “the study of the overall description of structure of any ensemble involves examining the attributes and connotations, concept, ideas or entities of a musical work”. This means the components of a musical fabric lie on the associated features and underlying qualities considered as products of

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human creativity as well as the prevailing notion thereof, which exist as a facet of composition. Okafor (1999:114) says that “Celestine Ukwu’s musical structure is rooted in the complex call and response between his instrumentalists and singers. The singing is usually solo, but sometimes there are choral answers in the form of text or vowelization that are generally fixed at specific intervals. There are however, incidents of overlapping between them and the soloist”.

However, in the case of Abigbo musical structure it has a strict metre which is not applied as a division into symmetrical lines in verse, but as the arrangement of accented and unaccented syllables symmetrically grouped into musical rhythms. In Abigbo, the short poetic songs are strophic; that is, all the stanzas are sung to the same tune. The music starts with an introductory full bar (of 8 beats) solo recitative voice, alternated with responsorial chorus covering more or less than three bars and coinciding with the soloist’s voice at cadential point. The soloist’s recitative in its continuity has the tendency of overlapping with chorus within a bar interval with resting note usually following suit. Thereafter a whistle is blown and it is identified with note augmentation or sound duration concluded with a rest. Most of the bars are characterized by recitative solo-chorus call and response in alternation. At this juncture, the entire instrumentation remains *tacit*, till singing-proper commences alongside instrumental accompaniment involving all available instruments of the ensemble.

Abigbo Musical Structure and Text

The musical score is organized into systems, each representing a 4-measure phrase. The instruments are Ekwe (Woodblock), Oyo (Rattle), and M.A.A. (Two-in-one Conga). The time signature is 6/8. The score includes various musical notations such as accents, trills (tr), and rolling strokes (tr) in the M.A.A. part. Measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 26, and 31 are indicated at the start of their respective systems.

Fig. 1: The Percussive Instrumentation Dense Organization

Song title: False Pastors; **Source:** An Excerpt from *Abigbo* Music Instrumentation (Transcribed by the Researcher)

Texture is defined by Apel (1973:843) as “The general pattern of sound created by the elements of a work or passage, while the Chamber’s 21stC Dictionary (1999) defines ‘Dense’ as something closely packed or crowded together”. Thus, logically, musical dense texture is a crowded general pattern of sound derived from the elements of a piece of music.

Fig. 2: The Conga Drums Melo-rhythmic Arrangement

The musical score for Conga Drums is presented in a system of staves. It begins at measure 21 with a single drum part (M.A.) and a double drum part (M.A.A.). The double drum part is further divided into O.M.A. (Overhead M.A.A.) and M.A.A. (Melo-rhythmic M.A.A.) parts. The score continues through measures 25, 29, 33, 37, 41, 45, 49, 53, and 57. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, rests, and dynamic markings such as *p* and accents. The overall arrangement shows a complex, layered texture characteristic of traditional Conga drumming.

Song title: The Earth has Spoiled, Kidnappers.

Source: An excerpt from Abigbo Music Instrumentation (Transcribed by the Researcher).

The combined bitonal sounds of the invariable mono pitch bells rhythms are similarly of interest here. The vocalist starts first, followed by the chorus before the bells and all other instruments are played accordingly. The clapper bell sharp tone with those of other autophones is at times, alternatively introduced after every solo vocal verse without the musical structure being distorted. This monotonal rhythmic flow of the clapper bell

consistently endures to the end of the piece without sympathetic deeper tone of the clapperless bell appended to it.

Once in a while, on the verge of rounding off the music, the clapper bell withdraws 3 bars before the clapperless bell. When the clapper bell is rung, the sound of the clapperless bell is noticeably too faint to reckon on. However, whenever the two are played together, their sounds coincide with each other. Apart from later change in dynamic effect, the two bells' rhythmic pattern is strictly maintained and conspicuously played. The clapper bell is slightly rebounded to yield a crushed note effect as it coincided with the clapperless bell. This takes effect immediately after the solo/chorus recited the whole piece a cappella. As the crushed note effect of the clapper bell seizes, all other sonic effects remain the same. There may be disparities in: the rhythmic prelude of the bells starting with the voice at the very outset and continuing to the musical postlude; the sounds of the two bells varying only in tempo or the clapperless bell left unutilised at all towards the end of the piece. The clapper bell may, by the instrumentalists' discretion, start with the second repetition of the chorus voices all alone, leaving behind the clapperless bell all through the postlude. The monotonal rhythm becomes faster as the lead-singer begins to recite the textual lyrics in their entirety with additional neologism. The sound of the clapper bell can be very soft and slow; when it becomes faster, it later resorts to the tone petering out towards the end of the music.

Form, in music, refers to the internal pattern of its organization which gives it peculiar character in movements. Uzoigwe (1986:65) impressionistically considers form an integral salient facet of music. While explaining the main forms in African music, Agu (1999:1) states that "the commonest forms of African vocal music include solo and chorus alternations, solo and chorused refrain and solo and chorus alternations with ostinato accompaniment."

Strophe: This form occurs in short poetic songs where all the stanzas are sung to a similar tune. There also exists occasional overlapping of the chorus lines with the leading voice, while the musical phrasing remains clear and regular. The form is frequent in Abigbo with the two parts of solo and chorus built on different tones altogether.

Antiphon: Antiphony is derived from the Greek word *antiphonia* which literally means counter sound evidence in responsorial chants. This is akin to Roman Catholic Mission mass where the priest liturgically recites a passage and the congregation responds thereafter. This form of singing demands maximum co-operation from performers, if they must achieve a good result. For this reason, the soloist and the chorus work hand in hand to realize a good musical blend in any performance situation. Antiphonal chorus part is routinely fixed and repeatedly sung, as the soloist introduces new ideas while developing the musical theme. The soloist does not have to join the chorus in the response but focuses on the solo section. The researcher's findings corroborate Agu's reports:

One of the vocal techniques is based on antiphonal singing in which the chorus responds to the soloist's call. Another technique is that in which the soloist sings a whole verse of a song before the chorus repeats same exactly as the soloist presented it. In a third technique, the soloist may start with a solo, move on to one form, say call and response or solo and, chorused refrain. The chorus waits patiently, in readiness to take its cue at the appropriate point in time (Agu, 1999:38).

The antiphonal form seems clearly to be a characteristic of Abigbo vocal music; Antiphon in 'solo and chorus alternation' is the commonest form in Abigbo. Some models recorded in this work lack introductory and subsequent verses. Few examples are as follow:

Song No.1: **Onye Muru Nwa Jiwe Nwa Ya.**

Onye muru nwa jiwe nwa ya, Umu nnaa yee!

Onye muru nwa jiwe nwa ya. Abigbo lee!

Umu 'Koleji' a lobuole, Egbe n' ebu Okuko a lobuole.

Egbe n' ebu nwanji A lobuole.

Umu nnaa yee! Ke huru nwanji mara nna,

O jikere kporo jewe n' 'bolu' ji-igba egwu

Ha jeruo n' 'bolu' je-igba egwu, A kpa ya-aka n'ukwu si ya gbawa, Onye gbara 'bolu' ga di ime.

Ndi amala a-ab-ab e-e-e eee! O di na turu O di na muo ya A-ab-ab, e-e-e-eee!

Akwula turu-ime ogwu ya aruola, A-ab-ab, eee!

Those Who Born Children Should Guide Them.

Those who born children should take care of them;
My kinsmen!

Guide your children. Abigbonotifies!

Secondary school students are on holidays; The kites
that carry chicken are available.

The kites that carry female folk are available

My kinsmen! The one that sees a beautiful lady,
He will dress and prepare to take her to the 'hall' for
dance.

When they reach the hall for dance, he will hold her
at the buttocks and ask her to be dancing. The one
that dances in the hall becomes pregnant thereafter.

My traditional people oh! What matters is not being
pregnant but delivery!

If a harlot becomes pregnant her medicine has
failed-o!

Song No. 2: **Eziokwu Bu Ndu**

Ndi Nnata Egwu: *Eziokwu bu ndu uwao-uwao!*

O.A.E.: *Okwuasi n'iji ebute omwu!*

N.N.E.: *Okwuasi n'iji ebute omwu!*

{Nde eluwa esile n'ibi ego uwa ree eziokwu,
Agugu/ Ndi Nnata Egwu
Rechaa eziokwu zuru okwuasi n'iji ebute omwu

O.A.E.: *Onyee obu onye – e?*

N.N.E.: *Ibe kara m obi n'eziokwu*

O.A.E.: *Eziokwu bu okwu Chineke bi n'eligwe*

N.N.E.: *Eziokwu bu okwu Chineke bi n'eligwe*

O.A.E.: *De Joe oma n'iji eri nchi inuna ee?*

N.N.E.: *Onye gwuru n'ala lie eziokwu.*

O.A.E.: *Onye gwuru n'ala lie eziokwu*

N.N.E.: *Mgbe o neruni obu afo ya efuole oo-a-ee!*

Song No. 3: **Kama M Shie Chief Wur' Onye Oshi**

O.A.E.: *Aa-ee!*

· *Ilewe umu okorobia shiwe eshishi,*

ra Lagos je gbuo ozu;

ti gadu Lagos gbuchaa ozu;

Dede lee!

· *Ha lava n'ulo shie eshishi*

Ma juo dede Nnawugwu nne m.

· *Ufodu agawa ulo Church shie eshishi. Ufodu evuru evule*

Anusa gaa n'ulo Church tuo mma-mma.

O.A.E.: *Makpowa nde Abigbo anyi lee!*

· *Ufodu agawa n'amala shie eshishi,*

onye eze bu ucha ego

Ya eshie ba OluoOgbalaga.

Ma kpo nde nwe ala anyi lee!

| |:Unu si anyi kawa ya-o? E-a-ee-e-a-ee! :| |

Truth is Life

Chorus: Truth is life, oh Earth, Earth!

Solo: Lies bring about demise

Chorus: Lies bring about demise

Solo/Chorus: Mankind has sold truth on earth because of avarice.

After selling truth, bought lies that bring about demise.

Solo: Who is that – o?

Chorus: What gives me confidence in truth

Solo: Truth is heavenly father's word

Chorus: Truth is heavenly father's word

Solo: Good elder brother Joe that eats grasscutter have you heard – o?

Chorus: If one digs ground and buries truth

Solo: If one digs ground and burry truth.

Chorus: Before 20 years, it will germinate – o!

Instead of Me to be a Thief with Chieftaincy Title

Solo: What do you mean?

If you see young men conferred with chieftaincy title, some went to Lagos for 419; when they finished with obtain-by-tricks syndrome;

Solo: My elder brother – o!

They come home and are conferred with titles.

Solo: I ask Nnawugo my elder brother.

Some go to church to be honoured with titles. Some take Hausa ram and go to church for thanksgiving.

Solo: I call our *Abigbo* ensemble – o!

Some go to rural area for title conferment, when the royal father catches glimpse of money colour He will crown them “One that Fights & Runs Away”.

I call our community owners!

| |:Do we forge ahead mentioning it?...:| |

This form, in Abigbo, is in form of ‘solo and chorus refrain’ where it presents the chorus after the solo verse. A biblical example is psalm 136 where each verse ends with: “For His mercy endured forever”. The soloist usually joins the chorus after the solo verse. This done, leads to dense texture as explained in part-singing. There are other Abigbo songs listened to but not showcased in this work, which display evidences of solo and chorus refrain with occasional variations of their respective chorus responsorial parts. Thus, Abigbo chorus refrain is not rigidly fixed. Special examples of Abigbo ditties in call and exclamatory response patterns include the introductory verses of the songs. These are noticeable before the third line of their respective solo voices. At times it occurs from the first chorus to the point when the whistle is blown to cue in change in dynamic effect. It can start with solo or chorus and does not rigidly commence and terminate the song. To resort to another structural dimension, the soloist varies his melodic call, while the chorus invariably strictly maintains steady choral responses.

Sketchy antiphons do occur in Abigbo following occasional overlapping of the chorus line with the leading voice. Chorus alternation with ostinato accompaniment also prevails to a large extent, in form of a short repeated instrumental piece, after each subsequent verse of some Abigbo songs. This occurs twice in song No.19 in the 1st – 3rd lead singer's recitation.

1st Lead Singer Recitative: only solo verses are sung from here to the cadential point all through.

Ee! aga m ikwu omu-oo! Lee!

Odi madu ole kpu uka kpa oke abu-ee!?

Onye emegburu abuo gadi ive-ive Mmegbu emegburu umu ogbenye di anyi ive. Anya ukwu emeene ndi party ha alusuo.

Abigbo si unu ejile otu-abu achi anyi ozo. Nde chigha ala unu anunna?

Of course! I will keep quiet – o! You see!

How many people who are talking and still remain healthy?

Somebody cheated twice will have course to be angry. The cheating of the poor makes us unhappy. Greed has brought about loggerheads among partisan politicians.

Abigbo says do not lead us in that manner.

The leaders have you heard?

This takes the entire ensemble back to repeat the music from the 1st chorus to the last chorus for the 1st time. *Mbido Okuku Nkwa Kwuru Onwe Ya . . . Inst'l.* Interlude Commences Here Forthwith...

Ntughari Egwu Nke Abuo Onye Agugu Egwu: A gam I kwu ozo gwekwenu ntio, onye nti ya woro uka ajula muo!

Onye jedi ilu nwanji di ya nwuru anwu, ya buru uzor juo ajuju ibe gburu di nwanji egbukwee ya.

Anyi nwere ezi madu n'ala anyi.

A ndi Nigeria nwere ezi madu kwuo eziokwu. Gharani onye anyi nyere vote chiwanyi-oo-lee!

A tighuo zogbuo akula anyi abia-oo! Amala eziokwu bu ndu lee!

Recitative: I shall say another one, all should listen carefully – o! Whosoever his/her ears fail to hear should not ask me – o! One, who wants to marry a widow, should first ask question so that what kills the widow's late husband should not kill him too. We have good people in our land. Nigerians have good people known for truth. Let the person we voted for be our leader – o! Please! Hit and run has yielded no gain to us! Aboriginal truth is life – o!

Instrumental postlude commences once again before the 3rd & also final solo repetition of the entire music.

Ntughari Egwu Nke Ato Onye Agugu Egwu:

Unu turo m vote ya di mma okwu agwara ndi mmaduol

Anyi atuchaala vote ha gbalaga.

Lee ni uzor siri Owerri gawa Aba, eziokwu m nile ndi piri oha ga ka anyi mma.

Anyi arusiala nu ulo ha-akusia.

3rd Recitative

If you vote for me it shall be well was a statement made to the electorate – o!

We have finished voting they ran away. Look at the road from Owerri to Aba, sincerely speaking those wallowing about in the bush are better than us.

We have finished building houses they demolished them.

Those resident in Abuja are crying.

We have finished building shades they demolished them.

Nobody is giving us job opportunity. They are against the operation of *okada* in Abuja. We therefore begin to ask: democracy have you come?

Government of the people for the people and by the people you are welcome!

Nde bi n'Abuja ga bewe akwa.

Anyi arukwaala shade ha kusia.

ani onye n'enye anyi oru. Anya ha sokwa ihuokada n'Abuja.

Anyi aga juwa:

A si-a democracy abiadunna?

nye kwuo uche ya I bianna!

It ushers in the repetition of the first verse where the solo lines are alternated with those of the choruses. At times the first verse solo/chorus antiphon may be periodically omitted before the emergence of ostinato accompaniment.

Proverbs

On a general note, the advantage in a proverb as a figurative device lies in its main contributions to the entire meaning of the composition in which it is employed. However,

Proverbs can function as devices for completing a verse (*imejuru uka*) or for remembering what you sing (*Ichete ife Ina-agu*). If a person repeatedly employs proverbs, it can only be said that he is putting another kind of

poetry, because, if you want to sing a song, in a straight-forward manner, about the actual deeds of a particular person- if you really want to articulate the facts clearly, from the beginning to the end- you don't need to put extraneous things into it. Excessive use of proverbs is not good; proverbs are essential ingredients of speech but they function effectively only in certain types of discourse.

In historical poetry, where the most essential elements are “the plain facts” proverbs are not really necessary, they merely distort the facts and in the end may result in the production of quite a different type of poetry (Azuonye, 2008:96).

In African general-music situation, Idamoyibo (2012:110-111) argues that “Proverbs usually constitute the treasured heritage of folklore, legend, and general accumulated wisdom that is passed on from generation to generation in a quite poetic medium.” Adding that “In proverbs issues are raised and a multitude of counsel is given in brevity [...] listeners are expected to draw diverse but contextual meanings from proverbs through imagination and deep philosophical reasoning” he concludes. Uzoigwe (1998:68) speaks of proverb as “a term which the Igbo employ as a mode of discourse or communication. Its institutionalization in musical performance, therefore, stems from the fact that it provides the principal soloist with an adequate means of articulating the intense feeling which a given situation generally engenders in the minds of the people”.

On the place of proverbs in Nigerian music making which includes Abigbo music as its microcosm, Akpabot (1986:97 – 98) says: “Sometimes, songs texts incorporate proverbs which are in many cases culture indicators. In this style of singing, the musicians use a singing–speaking voice. In the course of their singing, they can chide, praise, admonish, advice, humour or philosophise.” Proverbs are chosen and applied in native songs with the sole aim of speaking indirectly and confidentially to those who can interpret the inherent meanings or connotations therein. The musician “has a role as a keeper of public conscience and as a man who has his hands on the social control lever. He guides the society, drawing, of course, from the collective wisdom and pool of knowledge and proverbs of his people” (Okafor, 2005:6).

Proverbs as they affect the Abigbo music are quite inevitable. These are called “*Tulu*” or “*Tlu*” in Mbaise local dialect. Some adages recorded in the repertory of Abigbo Mbaise have contextual meanings. Few of them are – *Egbe n'ebu okuko a lobuole* (the kites that carry chicken are present). This contextually features the presence of male students whose theft and harlotry activities in the neighbourhood during holidays can jeopardize the safety and virginity of the girls in the community. Another one is – *Onye gbara 'holu' ga di ime*, which lexically implies that a lady dancing in the hall with a boyfriend is literally risking pregnancy. It further associates students on holidays with other indecent acts involving use of condoms or contraceptives for self-protection. Hence, Abigbo reasons that those who indulge in such acts of irresponsibility are simply put, nothing else but harlots. The musicians conclude that once they become pregnant, their talisman and magical powers to guard against pregnancy have failed woefully. Some may eventually drop out from school and become sex workers in the whoredom business but for sexual satisfaction and economic gains and not for child birth.

In one of Abigbo songs, a victim of circumstance called Okechukwu is proverbially identified as an incorrigible person. His case is like from a frying pan into fire. This is because, he was caught having affairs with his concubine and was subsequently sent to jail (for character reformation) to learn his lesson. However, rather than taking correction at the expiration of his imprisonment, the dog still went back to its vomit and eventually died of sexual malady. Hence the proverb in the song text - *Tegoro n'elu ngwo je kugbuo*, which literally means climbing raffia palm tree and accidentally falling down and died. In this song, his concubine is connotatively likened to the raffia palm tree upon which he climbed. The jail on the other hand stands for punishment imposed on him as a deterrent. The entire song text is quasi-proverbial in meaning. However, the inkling implication is that one should be very meticulous in lieu of being carried away with infatuation while falling in love with the opposite sex. For certain erotic love do end in marriage. Therefore, Abigbo musicians warn that one should not befriend somebody he/she would not be proud enough to call his/her spouse in case of any eventuality. Thus, the song extract so-presented:

Igbo Text

*Onye n' eme oyi mekwee onye di mma,
Maka-olulu-o!*

Another song reflects a proverb of encouragement and assurance of confidence.

gbo Text

*Anyi nwere agu n'ebe mba n'ala-anyi
igu adighi n'egbe o ga ikwu okwu?,
Akara-aka one n'Okwuato,
Oji anu emetu mba abu dike.*

English Translation

If you want a lover fall in love with a worthy person
For the sake of marriage – o!

English Translation

We have people of substance in our land.
Without bullet in the gun will it emit sounds?
No one talented in Okwuato,
When you try society, you know their worth.

“Bullet in the gun” as used in the song refers to “Sources of progress in Mbaise”. Rather than mention the names, the song, with boasting comments, call them bullets in the gun.

Finally, a particular Abigbo song text reads: *Maikelu' lee! Nw' onye - anya mpi N'oji egid' onye obi* (Behold Michael! a blind man that catches a thief). Abigbo uses this adage to castigate imposters and every act of impersonation in Mbaise.

The end result is that one cannot give out what one does not have. No wonder the Longman Dictionary (Gadsby, 2001:1136) states that proverb is “a short well-known statement that contains advice about life generally.”

Some Peculiar Proverbs Identified with 33 Samples of Abigbo Song Text Repertory.

Sn	Igbo Text	English Translation
1.	<i>Song No. (7) – Kirikiri wu ochi onughị utọ.</i>	Salutation is not love.
2.	<i>Song No. (8) – Oji awu akabe obi ya-adohiri.</i>	Evil talk provokes anger.
3.	<i>Song No. (11) – Akpakala amiana akalabo n'ime oha.</i>	The seed of oil bean tree has produced twin in the bush. i.e. Ill company results in a trouble that makes a hungry man an angry man.
4.	<i>Song No. (13) – Edozie ukwu gbaa nkwa ya di mma.</i>	Dance is well done when the waist is well positioned. A good beginning makes a good ending. i.e. Respect is reciprocal; Alike attracts alike.
5.	<i>Okufuru onye ara nkwa onu onye ara.</i>	He who drums for a mad man is equally mad.
6.	<i>Song No. (14) – Abali cheve nwanji ya ga wu onye ako</i>	When night awaits a woman, she learns her lesson. i.e. Once beaten, twice shy.
7.	<i>Song No. (15) – Madu kpawa imume uche akpo n'ugwo</i>	If one's wealth is diverted to benevolence, he/she will end up in debt. i.e. He that goes borrowing goes sorrowing.
8.	<i>Obodo turu ime ibe ya amaranato</i>	If a society is pregnant others are, of course, aware because they know which way the wind blows.
9.	<i>Obodo gbuo agu ibe ya amarana.</i>	If a society kills a lion, others are, of course, aware. i.e. What the heart thinks, the tongue speaks.
10.	<i>Song No. (17) – Ibe-m ji eri aku nwanji o ganu “ngbuhuwe?”</i>	Am I eating the dowry in an ill-mannered way? i.e. Justice delayed is justice denied.
11.	<i>Song No. (18) – Oke ngwere da olulu omarara onye kporo ya ugwu (Metu mara ibe).</i>	When a lizard falls into a pit, it will know its friend. i.e. A friend in need is a friend indeed.
12.	<i>Akwula turu ime ogwu ya aruola.</i>	When a harlot becomes pregnant, her charms have failed. i.e. Every beginning has an end. There is a limit in everything.
13.	<i>Nwa-nunu choje ogu ya lava n'ikpa.</i>	A bird looking for trouble should go to the desert to face it. i.e. Experience teaches best.
14.	<i>Ududu n'agba ama gbara nde muo.</i>	The test of the pudding is in the eating.
15.	<i>Ije anyi mere awa ejiele chi.</i>	Our one-hour journey proposal has ended up at dusk. i.e. You will never know till you have tried.
16.	<i>Oji awu m nuru manya uka aghuwa m onu.</i>	When I drink wine, it motivates me to talk. i.e. There is no smoke without fire (nothing happens by chance).
17.	<i>Onye chi nyere eze onye anana ya.</i>	Whom God has made a king; nobody should deprive him of it. i.e. Give honour to whom honour is due.
18.	<i>Onye ogbede gbudaa agu ibe ya to n'obia.</i>	When a child kills a lion, his peer group hunters remain in the bush. i.e. One good turn deserves another.
19.	<i>Nwanji lie umu ya na-ndu onu arakwaa abu.</i>	When a woman buries her children alive, death becomes easy. i.e. If you follow the river you find the sea.
20.	<i>Nshi nwanji gbudaa nwai onye eberelie akwa.</i>	If a woman dies of venereal disease, nobody should weep for her. i.e. One reaps what he/she sows without pity.
21.	<i>Mgbashi ike nwanji uwa onu n'elu nkwa ma</i>	A widow displays her power when the palm tree is

	<i>ya chaa ike labo.</i>	ripped with two bunches. i.e. Where there is a will, there is a way.
22.	<i>Otele ukwu ga ima ibe omere nwanji mgbe oso suru.</i>	A woman with big buttocks will understand her condition as the need for running arises. i.e. Action speaks louder than voice (word).
23.	<i>A chi abali emedeede m a rukwa m ya odo.</i>	I have learnt my lesson from past experience. i.e. The end justifies the means.
24.	<i>Nwanji si ya mere m odo ye chuo m ura.</i>	A woman claims she favours me, meanwhile she caused me sleepless night.
25.	<i>Oji awu achuo oke o la aghaa.</i>	When the cat is away the mouse rejoices.
26.	<u>Song No.</u> (19) – <i>Onye isi oji agba(ebu)anya?</i>	Does the blind raise eyebrows? i.e. One cannot give what he/she lacks.
27.	<i>Ejidi akwu ugwo odo ma mgbe odi.</i>	We pay for selfless service but whenever it is available. i.e. Advise when most needed is least heeded.
28.	<i>Anyi ekwuchaala inu nkwa okwu agwula.</i>	We have finished mentioning the law of music and that is all. i.e. It is easier said than done.
29.	<i>Isi kote evu ya aghaa ya.</i>	One should reap what one sows or be paid by one's coins.
30.	<u>Song No.</u> (21) – <i>Agalaba nyiri onye mba ogu.</i>	A hard bone to crack. i.e. An unsurmountable problem.
31.	<i>Adi iri eje ogu aturu ka mma.</i>	Ten in number going to war, but sheep are better than them. i.e. Good for nothing. A white elephant project.
32.	<i>Okuko azuchaala ni umu gbara aka.</i>	The hen has finished rearing the chicken, but all in vain. i.e. A fruitless effort.
33.	<u>Song No.</u> (22) – <i>Agbakwuru ibe odii ososonu.</i>	I want to meet up with others is not a running race. i.e. There is no hurry in life; more haste, less speed.
34.	<i>Oke soro ngwere maa mmiri, mmiri gadi ikpo ngwere ikpo oke gadi ira abu.</i>	If rat follows lizard to drench, the lizard will remain warm, but the rat may not survive it. i.e. One man's meat is another man's poison. One imitating others should be careful because destiny differs.
35.	<i>Ihee obu aka n'iji eri mbe?</i>	Can anything good come easy? Is success possible without determination?
36.	<i>Igu adighi n'egbe o ga ikwu okwu?</i>	If there is no bullet in the gun, will it emit sound? i.e. No cross, no crown.
37.	<i>Oji awu emetu mba abu dike.</i>	When you try a society, you know its worth.
38.	<u>Song No.</u> (24) – <i>Ndumodu onye ogbu amarana m ya.</i>	A dumb person's instruction I know it. i.e. Example is better than precept.
39.	<i>Oji awu agbara obi agbara uta.</i>	When people live together, there will be counter blames. i.e. Familiarity breeds contempt.
40.	<i>Ezere ibe ezere onnu</i>	When you avoid neighbours, you eschew demise. Prevention is better than cure.
41.	<i>Akuko okwu onye nsu gwuru m ike.</i>	I am tired of a dumb person's insulting words. i.e. Those who do nothing easily take to shouting.
42.	<u>Song No.</u> (25) – <i>Nso mma obuoria ebile aka.</i>	The law of beauty is lack of sickness. i.e. Beauty subsists when there is no infirmity.
43.	<u>Song No.</u> (26) – <i>Ube kuwe n'efu si onu nku/ Onu okuwe n'efu odii anu onu.</i>	The slit drum is emitting sound in vain, it is a mere firewood, simple and short! The dove is hooting in vain, it is not meat so to say. i.e. an empty bag cannot stand upright. Empty vessel makes the most noise.
44.	<u>Song No.</u> (28) – <i>Akujuo mvoko obi aghaa ya ana.</i>	After a storm comes a calm. i.e. No condition is permanent except change.
45.	<u>Song No.</u> (30) – <i>Uzoma n'iji eriri m ukwu owara./ Anu kwuru uka nanechewe n' ozu.</i>	A spokesman of the people; somebody to reckon with.
46.	<i>Ukwu ejiele agu mgbada abia ya ugwo.</i>	As the lion's leg is broken, the antelope pays it visit to demand for debt. i.e. There is time for everything

		under the sun.
47.	<i>Onye huru okenye eze kpofof ya achila ya ochi, ngwof gburu okpo manya n'ime omu.</i>	Do not laugh at anyone in his predicament because care kills the cat. The pot calls the kettle black. i.e. No smoke without fire.
48.	<i>Alikirija wu igwe anya n'omu.</i>	Set a thief to catch a thief.
49.	<i>Eji-eji mbazuu (nganga) ama ji n'oru.</i>	He that will eat the kernel must crack the nut.
50.	<i>Okorobia naneje oku ga ije obi; ma ya ezubi odo ya ezuru nzu lava.</i>	An idle hand is a devil's workshop. i.e. The strength of a chain is in its weakest part.
51.	<i>Oji avu nwanza rijuo afo ya echere chikere y' aka mba.</i>	When the bird (called <i>nwanza</i>) feeds satisfactorily, it begins to challenge its creator.
52.	<i>Mgbagbu agu naga na ikpuru agu.</i>	A man's enemy is in his household.
53.	<i>Song No. (31) – Nka di na nti.</i>	Old age is in the ear. One over comes problems by heeding instructions.
54.	<i>Akwa nwa egbu n'ebe nne yaz zirin ya</i>	The kid's bleating is learnt from the she-goat. i.e. Like mother like daughter.
55.	<i>Anyi si oha sodi ekete efule ero.</i>	Necessity is the mother of invention.
56.	<i>O rijuru afo dachie uzof ga di mma?</i>	Acquiring wealth today and dying tomorrow, is it good? i.e. Hasty climbers have sudden falls.
57.	<i>Akpara nkvu budi akpara nkvu, eburu ike ya ga wudi obi.</i>	Picking of some palm fruits is excusable, but carrying the bunch is theft. i.e. Excess of everything is bad.
58.	<i>Adoji nga aka kuru adighi mma.</i>	Once bitten, twice shy.
59.	<i>Ara ukwu jidi atu nwanyi di ya luru ofo.</i>	None so blind/deaf as those who will not see/hear.
60.	<i>Oji avu agwuisi kpawa ajof ike ezi ya osisi e jiri pia ya.</i>	If an idol misbehaves, it will be shown the wood from where it is carved out. i.e. Every problem has a solution.
61.	<i>Obara adigi atu ashi</i>	Blood does not lie. i.e. Blood is thicker than water.
62.	<i>Emevof Chi nwayi agwofdaa ya.</i>	If you want peace, prepare for war.
63.	<i>Onye ara eburuleni mma gbaba abia.</i>	A madman has carried a cutlass and run into the market. This implies there is fire on the mountain.
64.	<i>A kuola m isi chere iga nga.</i>	Call a spade a spade (by hitting the nail on the head), not minding whose ox is gored.
65.	<i>Obu anyi-anyi emeena probe enwehi isi.</i>	Ethnic compromise and sentiment have rendered probe null and void.
66.	<i>Ofomena wudi aba oma wukwa ndumofdu</i>	May it not happen again is not only a good name, but also an instructive warning.
67.	<i>Onye maara ibe achogbi ofutu okwu.</i>	A word is enough for the wise.
68.	<i>Song No. (32) – Ibe karia aku omu ya akof.</i>	Speech is silver, silence is golden.
69.	<i>Eyifu onye ara efe of gawunna; Ibe shie nkapi isi no ya n'okpukpu.</i>	If a mad person's cloth is changed, can that bring solution to the insanity? The kiwi's odour is the root of its challenges.
70.	<i>Anyi ga ewuchara unu ulof n'elu mmiri</i>	We shall build houses for you on rivers i.e. An empty promise; promise borne out of selfish interest. To the recipient of such promise, he is simply chasing wind; on a wild goose chase; building castle in the air; relying on a rope of sand.
71.	<i>Uda akilu di iche n'uto ya.</i>	The sound of bitter cola (the benefactor promise) is different from its taste (the fulfillment of the pledge).
72.	<i>Onye nwere okukof nwere ngwa ofe.</i>	He that has roaster has food ingredients i.e. Ideas rule the world. Knowledge is power.
73.	<i>Okpokpo aha n'efe gbu nwa nkita</i>	Big name that kills the dog. Pride goes before a fall. The dog in this context represents impostors, braggarts, impersonators and the like, who in order to satisfy their dubiousness or selfish aggrandizement bear all source of undeserved titles.

74.	<i>Song No. (33) – Tara nusa abughi aba oma.</i>	Chew and spit out is not a good name. i.e. Although fire is a good servant, it is a bad master.
75.	<i>Oka mma na bed.</i>	One only good in bed (sex). i.e. A harlot.
76.	<i>A hapu omu nwoko ya eruchie</i>	A man's beards grow bushy if left unshaved. Time time when time times you.
77.	<i>Onye huru okuko vova nshi, chufuni ya idi ma onye ga ita ukwu ya.</i>	Chase a cock that is marching on faeces because you do not know who will masticate its drumstick. (Cast your loaf upon the water, many days it will come back to you).
78.	<i>Mkpi tara okwuru gburu onwe ya</i>	A he-goat that eats okra kills itself. i.e. The soul that transgresses seeks death.
79.	<i>Onye ishi tachirini obi juni ri, ya tachiekwaba obi mepee anya.</i>	If a blind person refuses to eat out of anger, let him open his/her eyes out of anger (i.e. One bitten more than he/she can chew).
80.	<i>Aturu nyuru odu ya nshi mere onwe ya.</i>	A sheep that defecates on its tail cheats itself. i.e. The evil that one does lives with him/her.
81.	<i>Akibekee mediri ibe ejiri sepuru ya n'aka.</i>	One is the architect of one's misfortune.
82.	<i>Ufodu ji ibu akpa malam zoro shiako.</i>	Some are trying to solve a problem and eventually enter into worse trouble (i.e. From frying pan into fire).
83.	<i>O nawnu agbakata igwe ya ada afo.</i>	The tyre of a bicycle deflates with time. i.e. Old age is a burden.
84.	<i>Onye ara dikwa mma iji kwougwu ozu, ibe di mkpa oga isi n'ama onye?</i>	A mad person is good for settling burial rites, what matters is from whose hamlet will he/she be sacrificed for the purpose? i.e. If fools go to the market, bad wares will be sold but who will bear the brunt? All said and done, who will bail the cat.
85.	<i>Okuko n'ata oka n'ata aja, si a ya enwee eze, ya nwee eze o ga ime gini?</i>	A fowl eats both corn (maize) and sand still complains that it lacks teeth, if it develops teeth what will it do? Life is not how far, (but how well).
86.	<i>Onye nwafuru ukwara ragbue omu, o dighi kwe na ibe ya nwafuru adigbi mma.</i>	A person who spits out sputum and licks his lips is yet to be convinced that what he spits out is undesirable. We live in deeds not years.
87.	<i>Akwula gadi icheta umu n'oge nka.</i>	A harlot will remember children at old age. (What one sows in dry season, one reaps in rainy season).
88.	<i>Anyi si ebi memaa mpi memaa odu ya, ma ejigi mpi ya ghanye mmanya, ewere odu ya chufu ijji.</i>	We say cow take care of its horn and tail. If its horn is not used to collect wine, its tail will be used to chase flies. i.e. All is good that ends well.

Parallelism

This figure of contrast “is only an extended antithesis, a prolonged comparison that brings out the contrast between two persons or things” (Ghosh, 1981:670). Some examples of ‘parallelism’ in speech are, according to Ghosh, (A) “To what extent a little torch throws its beams, so glitters a truth amidst bundle of lies.” (B) “How far the miniature paddle moves the entire canoe, so an excess drop of water sinks a ship.” Jones (1959:218) argues that “Parallelism within the limits of a pentatonic scale would appear to lead naturally to a ‘harmonic’ knowledge of intervals, other than the simplest ones; parallelism within the limits of heptatonic scales such as those used in Europe would appear to delay such knowledge.”

Parallelisms abound in Abigbo songs; one of them is: *Mekwee onye di mma, Onye n'eme oyi mekwee onye di mma* i.e. Fall in love with a worthy person, whoever wants to make a friend do so with a worthy person. This excerpt speaks volumes as its conclusive end result informs us that a piece of meat which a husband bought for his wife led to a welcome song (Sung by the beneficiary to the benefactor). Invariably as concluded in the same song, the absence of meat some days after made the wife regret disappointing a well-to-do man that previously proposed her.

The song further states thus: *Oyooyo di m I lobuola!* Meaning. My good husband, you are welcome! (the day he bought meat), but ended with: *Echetele m Onye gaar' Ilu m ni* that is, I have remembered somebody else who would have married me. This revelation was made by the wife later on because no meat was bought that day. There is parallelism in the expression: “a blind man catches a thief?” as noted in one of the Abigbo songs. The contrast is “blindness” and “sight” because only one who has sight can catch a thief. Another parallelism available

in Abigbo song states: *Onye biara igbo ogo buru ngwa- agha*. i.e. One who came to make peace but carried weapons of war. In this case, the peace move is parallel to weapons of war, which contradicts the peaceful effort. In the next song expression: *Eziokwu bu ndu . . . Okwuasi n'iji ebute omwu* i.e. Truth is life . . . lies bring about demise is parallelism. The second part of the statement (separated with ellipsis) is parallel to the first.

Agwa ojoo emeena agboghobia alula di;O kunna ya ahia ya abanye church ekpere muo nso. i.e. Bad character has prevented a lady from marriage; it did not yield any positive result to her so she joined Holy-Spirit prayer church. Here, the parallelism in the vocal solo line of the verse is that the end result of the lady's misdemeanour is her identification with a living church.

Fables

Fables are not strictly figures of speech; they are all forms of symbolic composition based on resemblance. Wild life and domestic animals are personified, in their habitat through fabulous tales, as if they were human beings. An ancient and a popular example is Aesop's Fables. "A fable is a short story, or allegory, with a morale; in such stories, birds and beasts are made to speak and act like men" (Rapid Result College, 1928:109). Logically speaking fabulous things, creatures or places simply occur in legends or tales and are never facts or realities. In the next song, the expression: *Egbe n'ebu nwanji a lobuole*, meaning: 'The kites that carry chicken are available is a fable.' In this case, the kites and hens are non-human but in this song they refer to male and female students on holidays. The males are allusively considered to be kites that prey on chicken (the females). The holidays being the ample opportunity, the former hold the latter to ransom as captives for intercourse. The aftermath of their erotic love affairs has negative impact majorly on the female partners. In the story, this is expressed in the following texts:

Igbo Text

A kpa ya-aka n'ukwu si ya gbawa,

Onye gbara 'bolu' ga di ime.

English Translation

When held by the waist and asked her to start dancing,

The hall dancer has become pregnant.

The 'hand' that holds her at the waist refers to the male 'genital organ'; 'dancing' refers to 'physical manifestation of emotional reaction to sexual urge' and 'hall' refers to the 'unwholesome coition' that eventually spells doom on the female counterpart who carries an unwanted pregnancy.

Another song extract reads: *Onye ga metere nwa nw'Okwa n'ura? akpiride n'agba nkwa chi agbadaala*. (who awoke the partridge's nestling) i.e. Who is the cause of the trouble? Tailor ant, an expert dancer, it is time. It is so-called because its motion is likened to dance movements. This species of aves (Partridge) is known for its sustainable loud and noisy outcry. Awakening it implicates looking for its disturbance within the environment. Invariably, Abigbo musicians consider tailor ant attitude as an implicit representation of some disgruntled elements in the community, who do things that can spark off loggerheads. By telling them *chi agbadaala*, meaning: it is time, the musicians simply remind them to be ready to bear the eminent brunt after waking the partridge up for no just cause. The subsequent song excerpt: *Anyi nwere agu n'ebe mba n'ala-anyi* i.e. We have people of substance in our land (lion-hearted individuals). *Agu* is the name of a wild carnivorous animal under the cat family. It is distinctively called king of the jungle or popularly known as lion. The soloist uses it fabulously to represent very important persons in the society. The next line of song: *Nwaka baa n'omu oke, oke ama* i.e. A snake enters into a rat's hole, the rat runs away. The serpent as a symbol of danger represents kidnappers, hired assassins, etc. whose presence in Mbaise scares some innocent citizenries, whom Abigbo musicians consider as rats in the midst of foes (Predatory snakes). The hole represents their home town which could no longer accommodate them and so they have to run away to cities. Others include: *Nkita no n'ulo ha rie cha ugwoonwa* i.e. Dogs in their houses are all earning monthly salaries. Dogs as used here include all manners of both skilled and unskilled domestic or official workers, attached to those in the corridor of power, who are in no wise qualified for the job for which they are employed. Notwithstanding this basic fact, they still earn fat salaries at the end of the month. Moral lesson here is that, a hood does not make a monk. Official positions should be respected by those that occupy them. They should live up to expectation by making good their promises or being as good as their pledges. Anything contrary to that mounts to abuse of office and can reduce the supposed officers to laughing stocks. Appointments to white-collar jobs should follow deserved protocols and not at the expense of those who are most qualified to discharge the duty.

Conclusion

The application of proverbs in Abigbo music making is quite purposive. It most essentially offers advice or comments on life situations in the interest of those who understand the hidden meanings so-communicated. A typical African proverb says- the only thing gained from feeding crocodile is a bigger crocodile. Meaning: such a

commitment is likened to a white elephant project. That is, limited value is incurred by spending much with little returns. Proverbial statements are well known expressions (by a lot of people) constituting parts of proverbs. Such are understood, even by non-indigenes when musically employed. Their involvement in song rendition is not culture-bound. A typical general example is –looking for a needle in the ‘proverbial haystack’.

Abigbomusicians use this figure of contrast in conjunction with neologism to amplify some hidden agenda or enviable deeds, irrespective of whose ox is gored. The aim is to publicly draw the audience’s attention to the magnitude of consequences that follow evil deeds, and in the contrary, to encourage welcome developments in the society. Through parallelism the ensemble vocally expresses a thing very similar to another. In this case, such two things are alike in some ways, or are as good as the other. If they make a parallel reference to an event or a situation through songs, it stands to reason that they took place simultaneously. Thus, parallelisms as used in Abigbo are not stereotyped but vary depending on their application value judgement.

The Mbaise people’s patios fable –“*Tkuku ama n’onya*” (breeze cannot be trapped) is a common saying inculcated in virtually all Abigbo vocal renditions. They seem to typify *breeze* as an animate object with magical powers to escape traps. The italicized fable serves dual purposes: first, as an encouragement; secondly, as a warning. The moral lesson to be learnt from the fabulous expression is that the addressee should not be troubled; if indeed he is innocent, he/she will be exonerated from blames because history always vindicates the just. If one has nothing to lose, then one has nothing to fear. Thus, any weapon fashioned against such one cannot prosper. Just like the wind, the ensemble implies that the innocent cannot be permanently entangled. To the culprit, however, he/she is sternly notified to be aware of his/her unwholesome conducts, especially as they affect the innocent ones.

Irrespective of its cultural origin, this consciously composed contour of a musical form named “music structure” is in every type of musical work, ranging from the nursery rhyme to the symphony. Before any musical performance follows suit, it is organized to fix the material in human minds and to satisfy beneficiaries need for its integration into the composition. Equally, it stimulates audience’s excitement as it feeds their love for the very piece of music

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