African Musicology Online
Vol. 14 No. 2 (2025): ISSN (Online): 1994-7712
DOI: https://doi.org/10.58721/amo.v14i2.1129
From Roots to Reinvention: Evolutionary Trends in the Fuji Music of Wasiu Ayinde

From Roots to Reinvention: Evolutionary Trends in the Fuji Music of Wasiu Ayinde

Tolu Owoaje[1] & Kadupe Sofola[2]
[1]*University of Ibadan, Nigeria*
[2]*Kabarak University, Kenya*

Article History
Received: 2025-03-01
Revised: 2025-06-22
Accepted: 2025-06-28
Published: 2025-07-05

Keywords
Fuji
Innovation
Intercultural
Music
Wasiu Ayinde

How to cite:
Owoaje, T., & Sofola, K. (2025). From Roots to Reinvention: Evolutionary Trends in the Fuji Music of Wasiu Ayinde. *African Musicology Online, 14*(2), 48-58.

Abstract
Fújì music, originally a socio-religious Islamic genre among the Yoruba of south-western Nigeria, has undergone significant transformation since it emerged from wéré performance traditions. While early innovations by pioneers like Alhaji Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister and Kollington Ayinla laid the groundwork, contemporary developments led by artistes like Wasiu Àyìndé (K1 De Ultimate) have introduced diverse musical, linguistic, and stylistic elements that signify a dynamic shift. This paper investigates the evolutionary trends in Àyìndé's fújì music, focusing on his integration of Western instruments, adaptation of multiple musical styles, bridging of religious gap, and strategic use of language to broaden his appeal. Grounded in the theory of cultural dynamism, the study conducts a content analysis of thirteen albums released between 1983 and 2020, uncovering trends of continuity and innovation. It reveals how Àyìndé has managed to retain core traditional elements while responding to changing musical tastes and audience expectations. His fusion of Yorùbá percussion with instruments like the saxophone, guitar, and keyboard, along with his latest collaborations with pop musicians, marks a significant phase in the genre's development. This study contributes to musicological discourse on musical hybridity and expands scholarly understanding of how indigenous music traditions adapt and thrive in contemporary contexts. Creating archives of live performances and studio recordings and integrating the work of innovators like Àyìndé into academic curricula, especially through ensembles, is essential for preserving the dynamic legacy of Nigerian Indigenous music and understanding its place in contemporary popular culture.

Introduction
Although *fújì* remains deeply rooted in Yorùbá socio-cultural and religious practices, it now operates within a broader Nigerian and African popular music ecosystem that includes genres such as afrobeat, apala, jùjú, and highlife. Its evolution, therefore, must be understood in the context of wider trends in African urban music, including the influence of technology, diaspora engagement, and the rise of youth-driven digital music production. *Fújì* music developed from *wéré*, an Islamic-influenced vocal genre which was played by young men during the colonial period, to commemorate Islamic festivals such as 'Id Al-Fitr and 'Id Al-Adha. *Wéré* was also employed as a wake-up call for Islamic adherents during the annual Ramadan fasting. The development of *Fújì* from *wéré* has been attributed to Alhaji Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister, while Alhaji Kollington Ayinla, a contemporary of Barrister, was also an

exponent of the genre. Several other *Fújì* musicians, such as Wasiu Àyìndé, Adewale Ayuba, and Abass Akande Obesere, have since emerged and have continued to develop the genre into various typologies. Among this second generation of *Fújì* musicians, Wasiu Àyìndé stands out as a particularly influential figure, having been mentored by the progenitor of *fújì*, Alhaji Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister. Apart from working closely with Alhaji Àyìndé Barrister, Wasiu Àyìndé has played a vital role in the development, popularisation and hybridisation of *Fújì*, with his introduction of a variety of innovative styles to the genre.

Although studies such as Olaniyan (2007), Klein (2020), Odetade and Fasinu (2021), and Adetayo (2023) have engaged various areas in *Fújì* music, none have explored evolutionary trends in specific *Fújì* musicians. This study, therefore, investigates evolutionary trends in the *Fújì* music of Wasiu Àyìndé, a prominent figure in the performance and development of *Fújì* music, to further expand knowledge of *Fújì*, especially as performed by Wasiu Àyìndé. Primary data are drawn from a selection of ten studio albums and three major live performances by Wasiu Àyìndé, spanning the years 1983 to 2020. These albums wéré purposefully selected based on their musical innovations, popularity, and representation of different phases in his career. The analysis focuses on instrumentation, vocal style, language use, and the blending of genres. Limitations include the unavailability of studio documentation and interviews due to restricted access.

Theorising Cultural Dynamism in the *Fújì* of Wasiu Àyìndé

Cultural dynamism encompasses the various aspects of culture that continually demonstrate elements of change, evolving in response to major external forces in human lives (Johnson, 2020). Fischer (2008) presents culture as an emergent phenomenon, which is influenced by separate systems that typically interact with one another, implying that dynamism in culture occurs as a result of growth and development sparked by innovations. Scholars have employed the theory, otherwise referred to as 'continuity and change', in musicological studies. For instance, Euba (1990) in respect of *dùndún* drumming maintained that traditional performers of *dùndún* combined the stylistic elements they had learned from the older generation, with new elements to which they wéré introduced. Discussing some of the factors responsible for cultural dynamism in *dùndún* drumming, for instance, Samuel (2018) identified social mobility as a key factor contributing to the movement of highly proficient but illiterate master *dùndún* drummers from their rural communities to urban areas in search of better opportunities.

Historically, *Fújì* is one of the oldest popular music genres of the Yorùbá people of South-Western Nigeria. Although it is a hybrid genre which emanated from *wéré*, a socio-religious music performed by young men as wake-up call for Muslims during Ramadan, it initially had local resources in its instrumentation (*dùndún* drum, bell, *agidigbo*, and *sakara* drum), while its vocalisation was shaped by Islamic cantillation. *Fújì* has, however, continued to witness reinvention as technology advances, and its audience grows more appetite for sophistication. Due to the need to align with changing times, popular musical culture, and technological advancements, Wasiu Àyìndé has continued to reinvent his *Fújì* performance to meet the changing needs of his audience. He continues to explore a range of innovative styles to retain his long-standing listeners while appealing to a younger demographic attuned to evolving trends in popular music. His unrelenting innovation, therefore, is aimed at maintaining a balance between his diverse audience. The theory serves not merely as a descriptive tool but as a lens for understanding how musicians such as Wasiu Àyìndé negotiate tradition and innovation. In this context, his musical practice exemplifies what Bhabha (1994, p. 37) terms the "third space", a site of hybridity where new cultural meanings are formed.

A Review of Existing Literature on Fújì Music

Fújì music, as described by Klein (2020), is a dynamic blend of indigenous Yorùbá and Islamic musical traditions. It originated from *wéré*, a vocal genre performed during Ramadan by young Muslim male vocalists. Adegbite (1989) highlights Fújì's strong Islamic roots, noting its early association with Muslim musicians. *Wéré*, meaning "quick," referred to its use in waking believers before dawn (*ajísari*), often accompanied by harmonica, bells, or drums (Klein, 2020). By the 1950s, *wéré* gained popularity through royal-sponsored competitions held at the end of Ramadan. These events, judged by community elders, inspired widespread participation and gave rise to the first generation of Fújì artists (Klein, 2020; Okunade, 2013). Among them was Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister (1948–2010), who named his emerging sound "Fújì" after seeing a poster of Japan's Mount Fújì, interpreting it as a symbol of love and peace. His style merged *wéré* vocals with elements from Yusuf Ọlátúnji's *sákárà* and Ebenezer Obey's highlife-jùjú fusion. Barrister's innovation included the *sákárà* drum, *dùndún* ensemble features, and Islamic-style vocals. As Adesina et al. (2016) note, he had already mastered complex Yorùbá vocal forms by age ten.

Klein (2020) characterises Fújì by its trance-inducing percussion, Yorùbá *oríkì* (praise poetry), and Islamic vocal stylings. Although rooted in Islam, Fújì evolved into a pan-Yorùbá genre, used to express love, political critique, social commentary, and self-praise (Olaniyan, 2007; Ogunrinade, 2016). Barrister's musical rival, Kollington Ayinla, also played a crucial role in popularising Fújì (Klein, 2020). Their influence paved the way for artists like Wasiu Àyìndé, Abass Akande, and Adewale Ayuba, who added synthesisers, guitars, and saxophones to modernise the genre.

A significant body of literature has analysed Fújì music from various academic perspectives. Previous studies have investigated its historical background, evolution, and creative techniques (Olaniyan, 2007), as well as its role in political marketing (Oyedele, 2018) and communication (Fadipe, 2016). Samuel (2016) and Ogunrinola (2018) have also explored the expression of Yorùbá aesthetics. More recently, scholars have turned their attention to the capacity of Fújì to function as a tool for social commentary and national cohesion. Klein (2020) explores, for instance, how Fújì and Islamic allegories wéré used to promote Nigerian unity during the Boko Haram insurgency. Similarly, Adetayo (2023) presents a case study of Wasiu Àyìndé's music as a viable instrument for national integration, while Odetade and Fasinu (2021) examine the music of Saheed Osupa as an agent for socio-reorientation within Yorùbá society. An essential extension of this discourse is the work of Ogungbemi and Bamgbose (2021), who examine the lyrical and visual imagery in Saheed Osupa's music. In that study, particular attention is given to the genre's evolving use of intertextual references, visual storytelling, and ideological critique, especially in Osupa's strategic deployment of religious, political, and moral themes. Stewart's analysis reinforces the argument that Fújì is not merely a musical form but also a performative platform for negotiating contemporary Nigerian realities.

A notable contribution is Samuel's (2016) examination of urban segmentarity in the music of Wasiu Àyìndé. Through lyrical analysis, Samuel argues that Àyìndé's music displays a survival tactic common among post-colonial Nigerian musicians, the strategic use of music to gain financial and political favour from political establishments. This dynamic is contextualised within the broader African tradition of court musicianship, where artists sing the praises of their patrons and leaders. As Samuel (2016, p. 75) puts it, "In many African societies, royal musicians or court musicians are employed to live in the king's palace. Specifically, there are royal musicians in Igbo, Hausa and Yorùbá palaces who sing for their rulers and recount histories of their kingdoms." Samuel further illustrates this by highlighting what he describes as an "antinomy" in Wasiu Àyìndé's career. While Àyìndé used his music to critique the maladministration of the Obasanjo regime (led by the PDP party), he simultaneously belonged to the circle of supporters for Ahmed Bola Tinubu's (Nigeria's current

president) political machinery (of the rival APC party). He was often called upon to perform at their electoral campaigns. This exemplifies the complex interplay between artistic expression, political patronage, and economic survival that characterises the modern Fújì landscape. Àyìndé's use of his song track "Fact" (2005) to critique the Obasanjo regime has also been discussed by Sofola (2020), with Àyìndé serving as a voice of the masses.

The Stylistic Evolution of Fújì: Three Distinct Eras of Transformation

To understand the genre's development, the evolutionary framework proposed by Olaniyan (2007) is particularly instructive. He delineates three distinct eras of transformation, driven by factors such as artistic adventure, market competition, and technological advancement.

The **first era**, spanning from 1965 to the 1980s, was characterised by a predominantly indigenous instrumental palette. Instruments such as the talking drum, bells/agogo, sekere and *sakara* formed the core of the ensemble, with the talking drum assuming the lead melodic role. The rhythm was typically a textual ostinato, its phrasing determined by the lead vocalist's lyrics. Vocal techniques of this period wéré raw and expressive, including recitatives unaccompanied by instruments, as well as throaty, chest-driven, and nasal vocal styles. The **second era**, from the early 1980s to the early 1990s, witnessed a significant paradigm shift with the introduction of Western musical instruments. The trap set, guitar, and keyboard wéré integrated into the Fújì sound, expanding its sonic texture. While the text-influenced ostinato rhythm initially continued, it was later replaced by more melodic and tuneful singing techniques, vocal harmonisation, and narrative vocal styles (Olaniyan, 2007). It was during this period that the new generation of Fújì musicians, including Adewale Ayuba, Abass Akande Obesere, and Wasiu Àyìndé, entered the scene and began to redefine the genre.

Figure 1: Talking drum (apala), bell, agogo, sekere, sakara iya ilu and sakara omele drums (instruments of the first era of Fújì)

The **third era**, running from the 1990s into the 21st century, saw Fújì assume more dynamic and eclectic dimensions. This phase was marked by the use of foreign languages, especially English; the adoption of synthesisers (electronic keyboards); a notable influence from disco music; and the assimilation of instrumental styles from other popular forms such as *jùjú*, *afrobeat*, and reggae (Daramola, 2001; Olaniyan, 2007). Olaniyan's classification provides an invaluable lens through which to analyse the genre's evolution, providing crucial information on the identifiable elements of change and continuity in Fújì. With this insight, he opens up avenues for further scholarly inquiry. For instance, Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister, in *Fújì Garbage* (1988), featured the synthesiser and guitar, and made use of the English language ("Rise up to dance to my new *Fújì* Garbage – Me I go dance with my sweetie o").

A profile of Wasiu Àyìndé

Wasiu Àyìndé Omogbolahan Anifowoshe was born on March 3rd, 1959, at Agarawu, Lagos Island. His father hailed from Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria, while his mother hailed from Ondo State, Nigeria. K1, as he is popularly called, discovered his musical talent at the age of eight. Although his parents initially opposed his music career, he continued to pursue his passion, winning various local

music competitions in Lagos. This must have prompted his parents to give him their full support in pursuing his musical dream. Between 1975 and 1979, Àyìndé worked as a member of Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister's band. He came to the limelight in 1984 with his album *Talazo 84*. This, and several other albums, earned him the title of "King of Fújì Music", which was conferred on him by Alaafin of Oyo, Oba Lamidi Adeyemi, in 1994. Wasiu Àyìndé has received several awards, including the Nigerian Music Award for Best Fújì Artist of 1995. In 1996, he received the Best African Artist award at the WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance) Festival in Reading, England. The title "Olu Omo" (golden child) was conferred on him in May 2001 by the then king of Lagos, Oba Adeyinka Oyekan II. He also received the Headies Hall of Fame award in 2013. Àyìndé is the only *fújì* musician to have performed at Troxy (an Art Deco music venue in London), WOMEX (World Music Expo), and SOB's.

Evolutionary Trends in the *Fújì* Music of Wasiu Àyìndé

Wasiu Àyìndé's 1984 album titled 'Talazo 84' projected him as a promising *fújì* musician whose dynamism gave a new look to instrumental and vocal techniques in *fújì*. This came as a result of his incorporation of Western instruments, such as the keyboard, saxophone, and guitar, into his music, an intercultural approach in the performance of *Fújì*. According to Adedeji (2010), Wasiu Àyìndé's 'brand of *fújì* and his rebranding of his corporate image in the 1990s made him almost a suave and quintessential *fújì* star as opposed to the older generation, with his music now sounding jazzy and sophisticated in songs like *Oko faaji*, *Vivid imagination*, *Show colour*, etc' (p. 89). He further noted that *Fújì* has continued to devise 'diverse formulations to remain relevant, especially now that hip hop has taken over the Nigerian music sphere' (p. 89). Beyond the emulation of jazz and sophistication in instrumentation, Wasiu Àyìndé has collaborated with a number of Nigerian R&B artistes, most especially in his latest album, *Fújì the sound*.

To his credit, Wasiu Àyìndé has released over forty studio albums, as well as about twenty hit live records. The discussion of evolutionary trends in the fújì music of Wasiu Àyìndé is, therefore, situated between 1983 and 2020. In the case of Wasiu Àyìndé, Olaniyan's model of classification cannot be adopted; the reason being that Wasiu Àyìndé has continued to identify with his roots, even as he introduces new styles into his *fújì* music. He has continued to perform in the style he inherited from his mentor, Alhaji Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister. His quest for sophistication and dynamism began in the mid-1980s, with the infusion of Western musical instruments, such as lead and solo guitar, keyboard, and jazz drum, in some of his earliest albums, including *Baby je ka jo* (1983), *Fújì Collection* (1983), and *Alo* (1984). The discussion of evolutionary trends in his *Fújì* music is therefore approached through the introduction of new features, such as instrumentation, language, style, and vocalisations, into his music.

Instrumentation

Fújì combines vocal with instrumental idioms. In his first album, *Baby Je Ka Jo* (1983), Àyìndé employed the use of indigenous musical instruments, including the *agogo* (gong), *sekere* (gourd rattle), *sakara omele*, and *sakara iya ilu*, as well as the snare drum. The *agogo, sekere* and *sakara omele* play an essential role in keeping rhythmic ostinato, upon which *sakara iya ilu* plays varying rhythms and talks. This is the traditional organisation of *fújì* rhythm, as observed in the works of progenitors of fújì, Àyìndé Barrister and Collington Ayinla, who helped popularise it in the 1980s. The infusion of the snare drum in the music of Wasiu Àyìndé at the time was to augment the strength of the ostinato rhythm played by the *sekere, agogo* and the small *sakara*, and also to give interjective variation to the rhythmic ostinato. However, the infusion of more Western instruments featured fully in his second album, *Fújì Collection* (1983). The release of his 1984 *Alo* album showed that Wasiu Àyìndé had now made room for lengthy instrumental introductions, led by Western instruments, wherein the

saxophone and guitars took the solo part, while the keyboard, bass, and lead guitar, along with jazz set, *sekere*, *omele,* and *sakara,* provided rhythmic and chordal background.

Infusion of Western musical instruments and intercultural elements

Wasiu Àyìndé's second album, released in 1983, titled *Fújì Collection*, employed the use of the keyboard, coupled with the drum set. He employed the two in playing the South African national anthem, which he used as an intro to *African leaders*, a track which he used to eulogise freedom fighters across Africa and Nigeria. *The Fújì collection* also featured the use of the *gangan* (talking drum), a small-sized *dùndún* drum employed as the mother drum for most Yorùbá popular music genres. By 1984, Wasiu Àyìndé had infused the saxophone, lead and bass guitars in his music, all of which play a prominent role in his 1984 album titled *Alo*. This is not to overlook his use of the brass section on his 1994 album, *The Message.* Apart from these instruments playing prominent roles in the overall instrumentation of the music, they also played interjectory role.

The saxophone, for instance, in *Alo* (1984) plays the tune of Nico Mbaga's '*sweet mother*', which is used as an introduction to the first track as shown in the excerpt below. It is accompanied by the other instruments, with the bass guitar playing the exact bass line in Mbaga's '*sweet mother*', while the lead guitar continues to imitate the guitar lines from that of Mbaga, but at a faster pace. In all, the track employed Mbaga's *Sweet Mother,* which shares the same melo-rhythm and chord progression with the popular gospel song 'Oh Lord I am very grateful', as an instrumental theme which is used as an instrumental introduction and later as background instrumental for Àyìndé's narrative styled solo singing. All of these instruments continued to feature in subsequent albums and live performances of Wasiu Àyìndé.

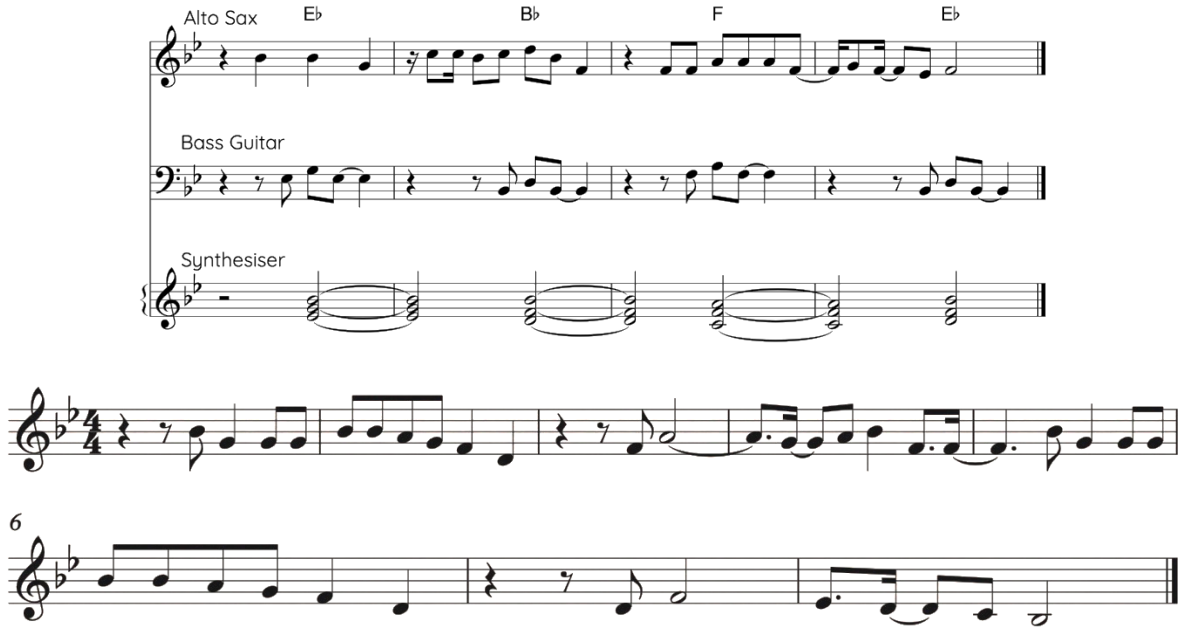


Figure 2: An excerpt from Àyìndé's Alo, showing the use of the saxophone, bass guitar, and synthesiser

A more defining use of Western musical instruments in the *fújì* of Wasiu Àyìndé is evident in his 1994 album *The Message*. The album marked the establishment of an instrumental identity in Wasiu Àyìndé's music. It consists of five tracks, all of which feature the use of intercultural elements through the use of Western musical instruments mentioned above. The first track, for instance, makes use of a

synthetic brass section with the keyboard in setting the chord progression, which is modelled in an I-V pattern. The keyboard plays a melodic representation of the chordal progression, while the brass section responds as a link to the next cycle of the progression as shown below.

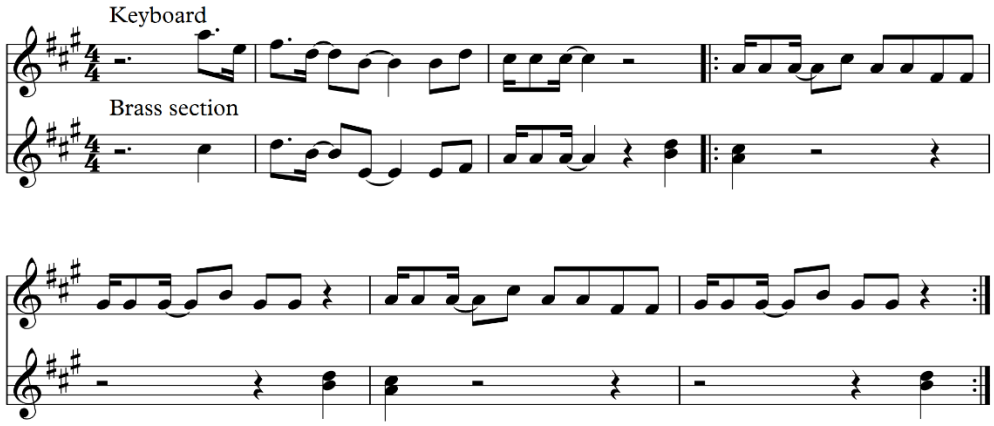


Figure 3: I-V chordal progression in the music of Wasiu Àyìndé

The saxophone interrupts the established progression as Àyìndé continues to sing in his now established narrative style, after which he transitions to the song "*Omo Niger*" alongside his backup singers. The saxophone also fills up the intervals between the various verses of the song, playing interjectory solos in line with the established chord progression. This instrumental accompaniment is included in the album as the second track, titled "*Instrumental*." This time, the alto saxophone, switching with a synthesiser, takes the lead part, providing varied melodic material to the established instrumental ostinato.

The fusion of Western and indigenous musical instruments in Wasiu Àyìndé's music exemplifies the incorporation of intercultural elements in fújì music. Although the use of intercultural elements in Fújì music predates Wasiu Àyìndé's rise to stardom, he, no doubt, has explored more intercultural elements in his Fújì music than any other Fújì musician. Síkírù Àyìndé, barrister, for instance, employed the use of the synthesiser, as well as partial use of the English language in his music. These elements in the Fújì music of Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister wéré used only as embellishments to his music. Another significant intercultural element in Fújì music, as created by Barrister, was the adoption of "fújì" from the name of the Japanese "Mount Fújì (mountain of love and peace)", with which he named his musical creation (Klein, 2017). As a key personality among the transformational generation of Fújì music, Wasiu Àyìndé effectively incorporates a range of intercultural elements into his music, utilising them as major components. The most significant use of intercultural elements in his music, on the one hand, is best exemplified in his instrumentation, which combines music elements from Yorùbá and European cultures. On the other hand, he employs languages other than Yorùbá, which is the indigenous language of fújì. They include English, pidgin, Hausa and Igbo.

Kimberlin and Euba (1995) used the term 'intercultural music' to describe music derived from more than one culture. Although Kimberlin and Euba could not trace the origin of the expression 'intercultural music', Helm (1981), Kartomi (1990) and Baumann (1990) had used it and other terms that wéré related to it to describe the same phenomenon. Expanding further on the intercultural music concept, Kimberlin and Euba (1995) noted that "a composer writing in an idiom acquired from a culture other than his or her own is involved in an intercultural activity, even though the music that he or she produces is not necessarily intercultural. Kimberlin and Euba also posit that a composition

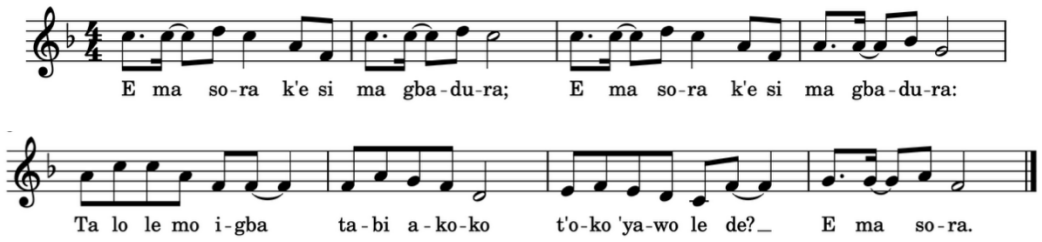
is intercultural if it employs idioms and elements derived from more than one music culture. The introduction of imported western musical instruments, such as the keyboard, bass and lead guitar, drum set and saxophone to fújì music by Wasiu Àyìndé, facilitates intercultural expressions in his music, since they are musical instruments from different cultures, played based on the scale patterns and techniques of the musical culture from which they emanate. Although these instruments are played and blended in fújì performance, it is essential to note that there are several live and recorded stage performances in which Wasiu Àyìndé's instrumentalists play(ed) western styled instrumental opening similar to jazz, and, as well, use same to accompany a narrative style which allows him to perform a musico-narrative technique upon rounds of chordal progression performed in ostinato.

Vocalisation

Although there has been significant improvement in the vocal organisation of Wasiu Àyìndé's music, it is essential to note that he has not abandoned the earliest vocal styles and techniques that he inherited from progenitors like Àyìndé Barrister, as he continues to approach his innovations with the principles of change and continuity. It might be assumed that his early use of Arabic would diminish over time. However, despite his embracing of sophistication, he has continued to sing in this pattern up to today, especially during live performances. The use of harmonisation in his backup singing started with his 1984 album *Alo*. Before this time, backup singing in Àyìndé's music had been unisonous. Eulogy is one prominent feature that characterises his music and has continued to be an essential element of his vocalisation. He eulogises himself in virtually all his musical albums, and also eulogises his loyal fans and patrons while occasionally paying homage to his late mentor, Alhaji Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister. His popular narrative singing style, which he employs in discussions while relying on a continuous cycle of chordal progression played by Western instruments and accompanied by percussion, has also become a prominent feature of his innovative style. This style had become well established in his 1984 album titled *Alo*. He introduces a chorused refrain in intervals, however, to encourage participation by his backup singers and to prevent boredom.

Bridging the religious divide

Despite *fújì* emerging as Islamic-influenced socio-religious music, Àyìndé has continued to incorporate Christian and traditional religious tunes and songs into his music fusion. This practice first appeared on his 1985 album, titled *Consolidation*. In *Consolidation*, Àyìndé performed the *Eyo* song, a traditional song of the *Eyo*, a spirit manifest (masquerade) from the *Isale Eko* area of Lagos. He also dedicated a song track to address issues surrounding religion and promote religious tolerance in his 2005 album, titled *Faze III*. In his 1984 *Talazo system*, a drum instrumental introduction is used, wherein the talking drum (*Sakara*) surrogates a popular Christian song '*E maa so'ra kee si ma gbadura*':



E maa s'ora kee si maa gbadura	Watch and pray
E maa s'ora kee si maa gbadura	Watch and pray
Ta lo le mo igba tabi akoko	For no one knows when the bridegroom comes
T'oko iyawo le de, E maa s'ora	Watch and pray

In the remix of "Awade" in his *Fújì the Sound* (2020) album, Àyìndé recites Deuteronomy 1: 1-10 from the Holy Bible, to buttress his position on the need for one to create an impression at some moment in his lifetime. This aligns with his strategic innovation in the album, which aims to expand his listener base by incorporating R&B and Afro pop styles.

Language

There is no question about the fact that Yorùbá is the primary language of fújì. However, the quest to reach a wider audience has led Wasiu Àyìndé to employ more languages, including English, French, Hausa, and Igbo. His second album, *Fújì Collection*, released in 1983, featured the use of the English language in the first track, titled "*African Leaders*." Although he starts with the English language, he soon switches to pidgin, with which he continues to eulogise remarkable leaders and freedom fighters in Africa and Nigeria in particular. It is also important to note that he has continued to code-mix between various languages for easy communication with his audience. In his 2020 album *Fújì the Sound*, Àyìndé makes use of the French language in one of the tracks, "*I Cannot Stop Thinking About You*." This linguistic fluidity aligns with what Ayeomoni (2006) describes as a common stylistic and functional device in Nigerian popular music, where code-mixing enhances accessibility, humour, and expressiveness across diverse audiences.

Adaptation of other popular musical genres

A significant factor in the evolutionary trends in the music of Wasiu Àyìndé is the constant competition that *fújì,* as a genre, has faced with other indigenous and imported genres, such as *jùjú*, reggae, highlife, apala, R&B, and afro pop. While most of these genres continue to evolve towards sophistication in their music production, it is essential that *Fújì* also remains reinvented to retain its audience while attracting new listeners. Wasiu Àyìndé has continued to incorporate instrumental styles from these genres, which he utilises to enhance his music production further. This is while sharing their fan base. In his 1983 album titled *Fújì collection (part 2)*, Wasiu Àyìndé adopted Ayinla Omo Wura's *apala* style, both in voicing and instrumentation. He also adopted highlife style in "Eyin Ewe Iwoyi" from *Tribute to Barry Wonder (2000)*; Afro-jùjú style in *Legacy* (2003); and funk in *Funky Fújì* (2005). In addition, his music has continued to reflect elements of jazz in its instrumentation, even as he explores styles from various other genres. This kind of stylistic appropriation, such as the integration of Hawaiian guitar by Kollington and the combination of keyboard, bass, and saxophone by Pasuma, is characteristic of contemporary *Fújì*, indicating how artists creatively blend genres to remain relevant and innovative (Ogungbemi & Bamgbose, 2021).

The new era: *Fújì* the sound

The release of *Fújì the sound* in the year 2020, marked a new era in the music of Wasiu Àyìndé. The album contains six song tracks, namely "*Awade*," "*Extended Play*," "*Majo Nisho*," "*Thinking About You*," "*Omo Naija,*" and "*Ade Ori Okin*." The distinguishing factors that make this album stand out include its production, which appears to utilise more virtual instruments in creating the rhythmic framework characteristic of Nigerian afro pop. Although it seems to employ more virtual instruments, it utilises a live guitar. Another important feature of the album is Ayinde's collaboration with two young Nigerian singers: Teni Apata, a Nigerian afro pop singer known for her neo-afro indigenous styles, and Tobiloba Adeyemi, a rising Nigerian dancehall and rhythm & blues singer popularly known as Toby Grey. In addition, the album features elements of blues in its vocal, harmonic and rhythmic organisation. It is also important to note that, apart from the talking drum, which features partially, none of the regular percussive instruments of Wasiu Àyìndé's *fújì are* featured in the six-track album, as the album represents a shift from the regular to the unusual mode of music production. This further supports his recitation of Deuteronomy 1:1-10, signalling a strategic move to gain more ground through innovation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Wasiu Àyìndé's journey with *Fújì* music is a remarkable evolutionary story. He has skilfully walked a tightrope, balancing the deep-rooted traditions he inherited from his mentor, Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister, with a constant drive for innovation. This study reveals that his success lies not in replacing the old with the new, but in artfully weaving the two together to create a variety of evolving sounds. He has firmly retained the soulful core of Fújì, which is evident in the intricate Yorùbá percussion, the Islamic-influenced vocals, and the essential role of praise singing, intact. At the same time, he has wrapped these elements in fresh, contemporary sounds, expanding the borders of possibility in the making of *Fújì* music. By incorporating the jazzy feel of a saxophone, the chordal structures of Western pop, and even direct collaborations with younger Afro pop stars like Teni, he has kept the genre vibrant and relevant. His willingness to cross cultural and religious lines, for instance by quoting the Bible or adopting Christian hymns, shows a strategic mind keen on building the broadest possible audience. The 2020 album, *Fújì the Sound*, represents the boldest step in this direction, fully embracing modern production style in creating a hybrid sound for a new generation. Wasiu Àyìndé's career thus serves as a powerful blueprint for how a traditional art form can not only survive but thrive in a fast-changing world, proving that true cultural preservation often requires courageous transformation.

To add a crucial layer of depth to this analysis, future researchers should seek direct ethnographic engagement, including interviews with *fújì* musicians such as Wasiu Àyìndé, their band members, and the production crew. Gaining first-hand insight into their creative philosophy and studio processes would provide an invaluable qualitative dimension that musical content analysis alone cannot capture. Additionally, a comparative study analysing Wasiu Àyìndé's innovative trajectory against that of his key contemporaries, such as Abass Akande Obesere and Saheed Osupa, would be highly beneficial to the knowledge of *fújì* music. This would illuminate the different strategies and artistic choices made within the genre, offering a more comprehensive map of Fújì's evolution in the post-Barrister era. Lastly, Nigerian cultural institutions and music education departments should implement strategies to document the modern phase of Fújì formally. Creating archives of live performances and studio recordings and integrating the work of innovators like Àyìndé into academic curricula, primarily through ensembles, is essential for preserving the dynamic legacy of Nigerian indigenous music and understanding its place in contemporary popular culture.

References

Adedeji, A. (2010). *Yoruba Culture & its influence on the development of modern popular music in Nigeria* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Sheffield).

Adegbite, A. (1989). The influence of Islam on Yoruba music. *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, *21*(1), 32-43.

Adesina, K., Obalanlege, A., & Katib, I. (2016). African musician as journalist: A study of Ayinde Barrister's works. *New Media and Mass Communication*, *46*, 73-91.

Adetayo, W. T. (2023). Fuji Music as a Viable Tool for National Integration: Wasiu Ayinde Song as a Case Study. *Nigerian Journal of African Studies (NJAS)*, *5*(3), 106-111.

Ayeomoni, M. O. (2006). Code-switching and code-mixing: Style of language use in childhood in Yoruba speech community. *Nordic Journal of African Studies, 15*(1), 90–99.

Baumann, M. P. (editor). *Music in the Dialogue of Cultures: Traditional Music and Cultural Policy* (International Music Studies, Vol. 2). Florian Noetzel Verlag

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge.

Daramola, Y. (2001). Mr. Machine‖: Influence of Modern Technology on Nigeria Popular music‖. *Nigerian Music Review*, *2*, 97-102.

Euba, A. (1990). *Yorùbá drumming: The dùndún tradition*. African Studies Series.

Fadipe, I. A. (2016). Political Communication and Indigenous Popular Music: The Study of Apala and Fuji Music Genres, *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 8(1), 185 – 198.

Fischer, M. (2008). Cultural dynamics: Formal description of cultural processes. *Structure and dynamics*, 3(2). https://doi.org/10.5070/SD932003299n

Harris, C. (2021). *Ayinde kind Wasiu Marshal*. AllMusic. https://www.allmusic.com/artist/ayinde-king-wasiu-marshal-mn0002287645

Helm, A. (1981). *The English mummers' play*. Brewer.

Johnson, B. (2020). Cultural Dynamism in the works of Chinua Achebe, Toni Morrison and Paule Marshall. *1619: Journal of African American studies*. https://sites.ccsu.edu/afamjournal/article-498.html?

Kartomi, M. J. (1990). *On concepts and classifications of musical instruments*. University of Chicago Press.

Kimberlin, C. T., & Euba, A. (Eds.). (1995). *Intercultural Music* (Vol. 1). Bayreuth African Studies Series (BASS No. 29). Music Research Institute/MRI Press.

Klein, D. (2017). 'Fuji: indigenous and Islamic popular music fusions in Nigeria'. In Shepherd, J., and Horn, D. *Bloomsbury Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World* (1-15). Bloomsbury Academic Press.

Klein, D. L. (2020). *Allow Peace to Reign: Musical Genres of Fuji and Islamic Allegorise Nigerian Unity in the Era of Boko Haram*. Yearbook for Traditional Music.

Odetade, T., & Fasinu, O. (2021). Indigenous Yoruba Popular Music as an Agent for Socio-Reorientation: An Examination of Saheed Osupa's Fuji Music. *International Journal of English and Comparative Literary Studies, 2*(4), 1–13.

Ogungbemi, O., & Bamgbose, G. (2021). Imagery in Fuji music: Saheed Osupa as an examplar. *Ihafa: A Journal of African Studies, 12*(1), 154-176.

Ogunrinade, D. O. A. (2015). Contemporary Nigerian Popular Music: A Menace to National Development. *Journal of Arts & Humanities, 5*(1), 54-62.

Okunade, A. (2013). Music education and musical activities in Lagos: then and now. *EJOTMAS: Ekpoma journal of theatre and media arts, 4*(1-2).

Olaniyan, Y. (2007). The evolution and the techniques of creativity in fuji: a Nigerian popular music genre. *African Musicology Online, 1*(2), 22-31.

Oyedele, O. J. (2018) Popular Fuji Musicians as Political Marketers in Nigerian Elections, *Muziki*, *15*(1), 89-108.

Samuel, K. M. (2016). Musical Figuring of Postcolonial Urban Segmentarity in Wasiu Ayinde's Fújì Works. *African Journal of Arts and Humanities, 4*(1), 67-77.

Samuel, K. M. (2018). Gendered space transgressors: A study of two Yorùbá female dùndún drummers. *African Music: Journal of the International Library of African Music, 10*(4), 160–176.

Sofola, K. (2020). Two decades of music activism against bad governance in Nigeria (1999-2021). *Kujua: Journal of the African Studies Students' Association, University of Ibadan, 2*(1), 117-144.