

**ANALYTICAL STUDY OF HARUNA ISHOLA'S COMPOSITIONAL TECHNIQUES
IN 'INA RAN'**

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ABSTRACT

Haruna Ishola (1919-1983), an acknowledged singer/composer/performer/arranger/music business mogul is considered to have experimented and brought about revolution in the sound of apala music of the south west Nigeria. Many investigations have been conducted on Haruna Ishola's works, however currently available resources about the stylistic elements in his compositions are minimal. Among Haruna Ishola's compositions, we have selected and scored in staff notation representative 'songs' in the track 'Ina Ran' to highlight the structure, form and compositional techniques of the composer. In addition, the significance of Haruna Ishola's works regarding how we would be able to understand better apala music. Therefore, this paper provides an improved understanding of the compositional style of Haruna Ishola's songs, as well as their connection to other apala musicians.

Keywords: stylistic elements, compositional techniques, Haruna Ishola, Apala music, performance techniques, Agidigbo.

INTRODUCTION

Substantial effort has been geared towards the understanding of socio-cultural implications of African indigenous and popular urban music. In addition, performance techniques of indigenous and African urban music are also reasonably well researched. Several of these efforts and the extracted useful information has attracted attention of musicologists and other allied disciplines such as linguists, cultural anthropologists, and psychologists to mention few

for over a period of time. On the contrary, relatively little transcription and written analysis on their musical content exists. Therefore, a major challenge in the most of these efforts is the apparent scarcity of materials on structural and stylistic components. The need to undertake stylistic studies of African popular music with the view to understanding the fragments that has been intelligently woven together to make the music a unique phenomenon is germane and now mandatory.

Omibiyi (1981); Akpabot (1998); and Adegbite (2001) among other scholars articulated this view by advocating for studies devoted to stylistic study of both indigenous and urban popular music to broaden music scholars' scope of study. These scholars believe that scholarly works on African Music should reflect structurally rather than descriptively. Therefore, scholarly enquiries should also include transcription and analysis of forms, elements of music such as scale, rhythm, melody and styles among others. Achinivu (2003) cited in Okpara (2016) posits that analysis widens musical horizon, the musical architecture of work becomes less technical, makes understanding and appreciation of musical design and content of form more insightful (Onweukwe, 2013).

Transcription involves listening and writing of music on paper, while analysis is the detailed and close examination of a piece of music in its written form to enable better understanding and draw conclusions from the various sections through observation and listening. It involves the separation of a work of music on paper into various components in order to study its contents and to examine the different sections or study the structure of the whole composition. Drawing on LaRue's (1970) assertion cited in Okpara (2016) that analysis enhances perception of composer's richness of imagination, complexity or utter simplicity of materials, skills in organisation and presentation (p. 2), in this paper an attempt is made to

examine HarunaIshola's songs in the titled track 'Ina ran' to facilitate our understanding of *apala* musical content that has attracted very little interest or research.

Analytical models proposed to explain African indigenous and urban popular music are varied and abound. Omojola (2014, 2017); Oikelome (2009) and a few others scholars have employed different models in their studies on indigenous and African urban popular music. Highlights of some recent works on musical analysis for instance the ideas of Oikelome (2009); Okpara (2016); and Omojola (2014, 2017), are applicable in this paper. The work is framed within the context of highlighting one of Africa's greatest musicians of *apala* music- HarunaIshola's compositional prowess. Provided is a brief ethnographic account to reveal salient features on HarunaIshola and *apala* music, also included is the transcribed titled track 'Ina ran' and content analysis premised on analytical models employed by the aforementioned scholars.

HarunaIshola 'Baba GaniAgba'

HarunaIshola the Ijebu Igbo born (1919-1983) *Apala* musician was arguably the most influential in the history of *Apala* music of the south west Nigeria. There have been countless comments on HarunaIshola's accomplishments. He was a prolific composer, releasing more than thirty albums in his two-decade long career. He emerged from the *apala* music scene in the 1940s' and as a result of his success, he began recording *apala* music around 1955, established an indigenous record label (STAR Record) and a recording studio in 1969 and 1982 respectively until his death in 1983. A catalogue of evergreen *apala* music that remains central to *apala* musicians as well as other neo socio-indigenous music in Nigeria and the Diasporas till today was produced by HarunaIshola. He was for more than two decades the recurring decimal in the world of *apala* music. Yonlonfoun, (2010) noted that HarunaIshola did not receive any formal training in music, it was from these black-smithing activities that

he derived his musical arts and indigenous knowledge to form the premise of his latter musical career.

Origin of *Apala* music

There are many traditions concerning the origin of *Apala* music among the Yoruba. One of such tradition suggested Ede as the birth place of *Apala* music in 1938 and was developed from oral poetry. Other traditions indicate that *Apala* music had long started before 1938 in Ilorin and was played as early as 1930 in Ijebu Igbo. Another account posits that it is a percussion based style that developed in the late 1930s, when it was used to wake worshippers after fasting during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. What is certain is that *Apala* music evolved among different Yoruba sub groups that drew their inspirations from popular musical forms at different times. (Yonlonfoun, 2010) posits that there are over three different forms of *Apala* (*Apala san-an*, *Songa*, *Wiro (Musan)*, *Igunnu* and *Olalomi*) as dictated by the frequency of sound production and combination of instruments used at different times. The author further notes that each *apala* musician (Ishola Cole ‘Master’, Haruna Ishola, Ayinla Omoniwura among others) developed his own version among the people of his community based on inspiration, local experiences and creative ingenuity. *Apala* music is laden with historical information, Yoruba proverbs, idioms and Quranic verses (Yonlonfoun, 2010).

INSTRUMENTATION

Apala ensemble consists of a number of drums (*dundun Iyailu*, *gangan*, *akuba*, and *gudugudu*) and idiophones such as *sekere* (rattle) *agogo* (metal gong), *Igba* (calabash) played with ringed fingers and *Agidigbo* (thumb piano).

Analysis

Apala music shares a number of features and characteristics with other African popular music (Yonlonfoun, 2010). Therefore, structural analysis carried out in this paper is done within the context of relevant characteristics and features of African songs (Agu, 1999) cited in Okpara (2016). The following concepts; scale and tonal organisation; pitch and melodic range of songs; vocal techniques; shifting tonality; correlation between speech and melodic contour; harmonic principles and styles; the use of counterpoint; repetition; rhythm; note values; phraseology; the mixed structural forms (Agu, 1999) formed the basis of analysis in this paper:

Title Track:	Ina ran
Genre:	Apala
Key:	F# major (for transcription purpose only)
Tempo:	Moderato
Scale:	Pentatonic/Hexatonic
Time Signature:	Common Time
Form:	Through composed/Mixed structural form (Solo/Responsorial)
Length:	102 bars
Duration:	3 mins 05 secs
Rhythmic Structure:	4/4 regular metre.

The nature of rhythmic activity and the tempo markings in the song were compatible with basic contents and ‘regulative’ beat of mid-tempo *apala* music.

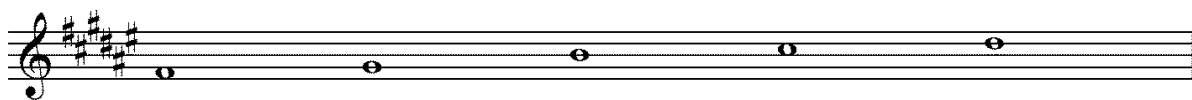
There are both short and long durational notes consisting of semi quavers, quavers crotchets, minims and semibreves. There are a number of syncopated rhythmic notes.



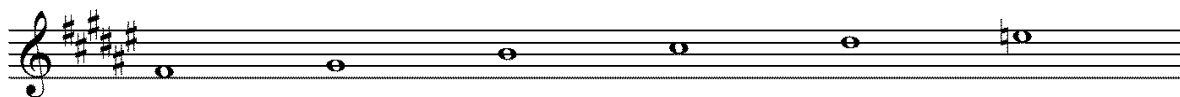
Figure 1. Ina Ran Instrumental accompaniment

Melodic Structure: The melodic structure is quite simple, interestingly tuneful and catchy with ample repetition of notes. No modulation, but implied.

Scale: Pentatonic and Hexatonic, some microtonal/glissando features noticed (Not detectable on diatonic scale).



Pentatonic Scale



Hexatonic Scale

Range: C#1 to E2. The range is a compound minor 3rd. The selected tones are mostly influenced by the texts of the song.

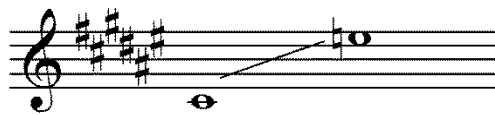


Figure 2. Full Range of the song

Nature of Phrase(s): Irregular phrases of 4 bars & 3 bars respectively.

Frequency of Tone Occurrence: In the melodies, there is the predominant use of the 1st, 4th, 5th and 2nd tones respectively as well occasional hovering around the flattened 6th tone in bars 21-25.



Figure 3a. Main chorus of the song

The melodies are undulating in motion with stepwise movements as well as intervallic leaps of 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th as shown in figures 3a and 3b respectively.



Figure 3b. Opening theme of the song

Table 1. Structural format of the chain of songs in the track ‘Ina ran’ by HarunaIshola

Section	Text/ Musical Themes	Musical Elements	Style	Structural function of section	Overall message
Bar 1-4	Yoruba	Iyailu in	This is based on	Instrumental	Based on the
Bar 5-16 Solo/	proverbial introduction	apala’s	musical	background	socio-cultural
Responsorial	of 4 bars. The soloist is introduced in bar 5	elements. percussive rhythm.	Steady	based on mid tempoapala	nature and mood of the
Bar 16 -21	accompanied by the steady percussive instrumental, and joined by the chorus in unison.	The nature of singing is folkloric.		style. The thematic phraseology is	Nigerian society in the 1970s.
	Interlude: Iyailu& ensemble playing at Tutti the thematic material. The Iyailu provides variety to the thematic presentation			14 bars structure. The melody is based pentatonic scale.	The text is Yoruba
Bar 21 -34	The titled track or main song ‘Ina Ran’ in solo	The chorus singing is done in unison.		The lead voice and the chorus	
Bar 35 -38	/chorus format.			engage in call	
Bar 38 -51	Short interlude of 2 bars			and response	
	Repetition of the titled track or main song in			singing. The melody is based	
Bar 52 -53	solo /chorus format.			hexatonic scale.	
Bar 54 -70	Short interlude of 2 bars	The chorus singing is			

	Presentation of the	done in unison.	
	second sub track of the	The chorus singing is	
Bar 71 -102	main song ‘Sisi wo mi	done in unison.	The melody is
	lo’ ju’ in solo /chorus		based pentatonic
	format.		scale.
	Presentation of third		
	sub-track of the main		
	song ‘B’obirinbadara’		
	repeatedly in solo		
	/chorus format. The		
	fourth sub track a		
	codetta ‘Jaiye, jaiye’ in		
	solo /chorus format		
	rounded up the song.		

The song analysed ‘Ina Ran’ generates web of vocal and instrumental phrases intricately woven together. Sequences of through composed vocal and instrumental narratives are carefully put together, exploring a main theme, three other sub themes and a codetta. The size of HarunaIshola’s ensemble from the recording is made up of 2 or more hourglass drummers (Iyailu and gangan), akuba drummer, Igba and sekere players, the lead singer and several backup singers.

A short prelude of 4 bars is provided by the Iyailu as instrumental opening to the song. The opening vocal (bar 5-16) a sub theme (the first) announced the musician and drew the

audience's attention to his music (Figure 1). The instrumental interlude in bar 17-21 is of interest as it provided the melo-rhythmic 'tune' of the titled track's main theme in bar 21-34.



Figure 4. The main song's theme

Another short interlude of 4 bars is introduced in bar 35-38 comprising of abridged melo-rhythmic thematic 'tune' previously heard in bars 17-21, this is followed by an exact repetition of the previously heard main theme again in bar 38-51. A short interlude of 2 bars is introduced in bar 52-53. The second sub theme 'Sisi wo mi lo'ju' comes up in bar 54-70.

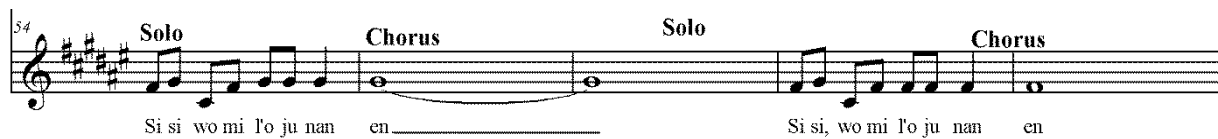


Figure 5(a). The second sub theme

This followed by the third sub theme 'B'obirinbadara' in bar 71-87.



Figure 5(b). The third sub theme

A codetta from bar 87-102, finally rounded up the music.



Figure 5(c). The Codetta fourth sub theme

Five different layers of instruments namely *dundun Iyailu*, *gangan*, *akuba*, *sekere* and *Igbaare* at work simultaneously in the track ‘Ina ran’ together with HarunaIshola’s rich baritone vocal, backed by several supporting vocalists with each contributing significantly to the simple, not complex *apala* sound scape. The vocals are organized to provide musical direction, stimulate the layering technique of Yoruba drum language. While the Yoruba hourglass drums (*Iyailu* and *gangan*) generated occasional punctuations, folkloric preludes and interludes with a view to complement HarunaIshola’s lead singing, other instruments namely *akuba*, *sekere* and *igba* provided steady percussive background to the entire recording.



Olomidakun, dakun, jowo, Sun mo mi dakun, dakun baby mi
Ko Rotate patapata.

Sisi wo mi lo'juna.....hen, 2ce
E wo bo se fine si, bebedi e nso'ro
Dakunka lo wamo 'le mi Ose'reojumokan bi amonamona
Gbogboaranko bi a ju lo, oni mu sinsinkele
Gbogbo boy si , won pa'tewo
Wa, wa, wa, wawa.
B'obirinbadarationi 'wa,
To bagba kobo kan abo mio le fe
B'obirinbadarationi 'wa,
To bagba kobo kan abo mio le fe
B'obirinbani 'wa tutu, botunr'ewa
Mo le fi one thousand fe
B'obirinbani 'wa tutu, botunr'ewa
Mo le fi one thousand fe
Jaiye, jaiye, E bawa jo, E bawayo
Awa la un l'ogbalojo aye gbogbo
Ki'gba ma se lo walaiyekariregba.
Jaiye, jaiye, E sun bata e fi 'jo be
Kosi 'ya were L'ekomo f eke mo
Awonasati won tungbedeni yen
Soyoyoti lo, i mii tuntun la tungbede.

English Translation Ina Ran (The Spark)

I have come with my music, you happening guys 2ce.
When the light enters, darkness must disappear, here is the spark, who will dance.
It has spark off, listen, bend down and dance, the spark, the spark
No one dare touches the fire, the spark, shake your bottom
Put a hand on your head, hold your waist with another hand and continue to dance
Any baby, please, please, please move closer to me, please, my baby
Let it rotate totally.

Lady give me a look.....eh 2ce
See how beautiful she is, her waist is talking
Please come to know my abode, the musician shinning like lighting
All her body is glittering like 'ajulo' with a decorated nose
All boys are clapping 'come, come, come, come, come'.
If a lady is beautiful without character

And her bride price is one and half Kobo, I cannot marry her 2ce
If a lady has good character and is beautiful
I can pay one thousand Naira to marry her
If a lady has good character and is beautiful
I can pay one thousand Naira to marry her
Partying guys, dance with us, rejoice with us
We are reigning, all the time
May we not be impoverished, may we prosper
Partying guys, move your shoes and dance
The insane is motherless in Lagos, please note
These are the new slangs
'Soyoyo' (a previous slang) has gone into extinction,
A new slang has been introduced.

Significance of HarunaIshola' music

The significance of HarunaIshola's work as a composer lies in his ability to weave diverse array of African indigenous elements into what has become acceptable as *apala* music globally-an indigenous form of social music among the Yoruba of South West Nigeria and in the Diaspora. HarunaIshola's use of Yoruba's cultural resources demonstrates vital elements of his *apala* sound-scape. There are peculiar stylistic qualities in the varied instrumental and vocal resources of his *apala* music. Therefore, it is essential to draw attention to several compositional techniques in HarunaIshola's *apala* music, notably, his use of purely African musical instruments in his ensemble, short repetitive and catchy melodies, historical,

political, philosophical and topical socio-cultural lyrics, call-responsorial format, the stylistic use of modal scales particularly the blending of 2 modal scales (pentatonic and hexatonic as seen in 'Ina Ran) in composing his melodies among other compositional devices. His skills in African principles of musical form and composition, instrumentation, improvisation, form an invaluable framework for students seeking to understand indigenous compositional techniques.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined HarunaIshola's track titled 'Inan Ran' (1971), in order to explore how indigenous musical materials attest to his stylistic influences. The track has a series of what we refer to as 'chain songs' usually associated with recorded music during the early 1940s till the late 1970s due to the available recording technology at the time. Particular music-analytical attention is focused on the composer's use of melodic and rhythmic materials, as well as on the ways in which these materials are tightly coordinated in the *apala* sound scape and texture. While his chain of song possesses both simple musical and non-musical elements, his various usages of this framework to create, also enriches a broad range of musical structures. Several commentaries and anecdotal on HarunaIshola by several scholars exists, nonetheless, among his contemporaries HarunaIshola was the most respected incisive singer, composer, performer and arranger of *Apala* music in Nigeria. His firm belief in African culture made him to adapt a strong traditional approach in his instrumental ensemble which from inception was a blend of local musical instruments.

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Discography: HarunaIshola; Ina Ran mp3. [http://www. mp3skull.com](http://www.mp3skull.com) (Assessed 13th
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APPENDIX: Vocal Score

INA RAN

The Spark

Haruna Ishola

Voice

Introduction: 'Iya ilu' & Ensemble Tutti----- Solo Chorus

7 E jo— mo gba re mi de E

11 yin so mo ri o ni fa a jio, E jo— mo gba re mi de E

15 yin so mo ri o ni fa a jio, B'i na ba wo le, o kun kun ni la ti sa lo

Interlude: 'Iya ilu' & Ensemble Tutti----- Solo

22 o I na ran ta lo ma jo. I na ti

Chorus

26 ran e fe' ti si bi E be re E mu' jo i na ran I na ran o k'o mo ti o

29 t'o wo b'e— ru I na ran E ju di mu ke E m'o wo kan s'o ri, E m'o wo

32 kan si be be re i di ki— e mi a jo lo, O lo mi da kun, da kun jo wo,

37 Sun mo mi da kun, da kun ba by mi ko ro ta— te, pa ta pa ta. Short interlude: 'Iya ilu' & Ensemble Tutti

Solo Chorus

42 I na ti ran, E fe ti si bi, E be re, E mu' jo, I na ran I na

45 ran O k'o mo ti o t'o wo be— ru, I na ran, E se di wu ke, E

m'o wo kan so ri, E m'o wo kan si be be re i di ki— e mi a jo lo,

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48 **Chorus**

O lo mi da kun, da kun, j'o wo sun mo mi da kun, da kun, ba-by mi Ko Ro ta-e

51 **Solo** **Chorus**

ti, Pa ta pa ta. **Short Interlude: 'Iya ilu' & Ensemble Tutti** Si si wo mi l'o ju nan hen, _____

57 **Solo** **Chorus** **Solo**

Si si, wo mi l'o ju nan hen, E wo bo' se fine ni, be be di e n so ro,

61

Da kun ka lo wa mo 'le mi o se re o ju o ko bi a mo na mo na Gbo—

64

— gbo a — ra n-ko bia jo lo o ni mu sin sin ke le le gbo gbo boy— si, won pa te wo

68 **Chorus** **Solo**

wa wa wa, wa, wa. B'o bin rin ba da ra ti o' ni

73 **Chorus** **Solo**

wa, To ba gba ko-bo kan-a bo mi o le fe B'o bin rin ba da ra ti o' ni

77 **Chorus** **Solo**

wa, To ba gba ko-bo kan-a bo mi o le fe. B'o bin rin ba ni' wa tu-tu to 'tun re'

81 **Chorus** **Solo**

wa mo-le fi One thou sand fe, — B'o bin rin ba ni' wa tu-tu, to tun re'

85 **Chorus**

wa, mo-le fi One thou-sand fe, Jai ye, jai ye, E ba wa jo, E ba wa

89

yo, A wa, la n lo gba lo 'jo a-ye gbo - gbo, Ki' gba ma se lo wa la-ye, ka ri re

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93 **Chorus**

gba, Jai-ye, j'ai - ye, E mu ba ta, E fi 'jo be Ko si' yaa we-re l'E-ko mo fe ke

97

mo, A won a - sa ti won tun gbe de ni yen So - yo-yo ti lo, I mi i tun

101 *rit.*

tun la tun gbe de.