

## **Cultural meanings conveyed through song text: Ikerigbele songs of the Abraka people.**

African communities culturally craft songs text to serve cultural and religious purposes. This paper intends to explore the ways in which this is embodied through Ikerigbele songs which is indigenous and performed among the Abraka-Urhobo people of Nigeria. The songs are performed during the annual Ovwuvwe festival. The songs present a body of text that contains a great deal of information about the festival. They express the festival themes and references that need little clarification to understand. This paper aims to discuss the cultural meanings conveyed through the song text. The people's knowledge regarding the songs is vested in the extensive knowledge and experience of the elders in the community since the younger generations have been avoiding traditional practices due to modernization. Hence, this study utilized various data collection methods which included participant observation and interviews. The Ikerigbele songs are the most widespread and frequently performed songs during the festival. These songs have no specific associated dance steps to accompany their performance, but findings revealed that most of the themes of the festival are exhibited through songs and dance which signify the vital role the festival plays within the Abraka community. In recent years, active participation in indigenous African musical arts is diminishing, therefore a concerted effort is needed to ensure that indigenous songs like Ikerigbele are sustained and documented for future generations.

Keywords: Song text; indigenous song; African music; Ikerigbele song; Abraka-Urhobo

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