GLOCALISATIONINBÍSÁDÉ OLÓGUNDÉ (LÁGBÁJÁ)'S"AFRICANO" ENSEMBLE

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Abstract

The contraction of the world into a 'global village' has made globalisation, and its counter-discourse, glocalisation, unavoidable subjects of enquiry, particularly for indigenous music cultures negotiating uneven access to global visibility. This study examines glocalisation in Bísádé Ológundé (Lágbájá)'s "Africano" ensemble, addressing a gap in existing scholarship on his aesthetics and identity politics. The study adopts descriptive and content-analytic approach to purposively selected recorded works, streamed via Apple Music, YouTube and his official website, and supported by library sources, documentary observation, and archival materials. The study is anchored on Roland Robertson's theory of glocalisation. It finds that Lágbájá's "Africano" style represents a resurgence of refined African music and existential consciousness within the local–global interaction of popular music. The concept itself is rooted in the central role of indigenous Yorùbá drums and rhythms in his groovy fusion. Within this interaction, Lágbájá develops "Africano Manchine", a digital "drag-and-drop" library of Yorùbá grooves, and Elektro Groove Music (EGM), a fusion of traditional Yorùbá music with electronic elements. The study further identifies a recontextualisation of global musical styles in Yorùbá socio-aesthetic terms and a multimedia network of elements generating holistic cultural expression. Creative cultural assimilation, rather than cultural isolation, thus emerges as a defining feature of Lágbájá's music. The study concludes that cultural development does not occur in isolation but through the creative assimilation of progressive aspects of new cultural contact, and recommends that Yorùbá folk-derived popular music leverage the opportunities of the global digital age, through glocalisation, for wider reach, patronage, and cultural sustainability.

Keywords: Africano Ensemble, Glocalisation, Lágbájá, Yorùbá Drums, Yorùbá Popular Music

Introduction

Music is inseparable from the African life, as it is highly functional in social and sacred contexts. Music is an integral aspect of human life from birth to death. It is visible in social, cultural, political, and religious life of Africans. Music reflects the society and cultures in Africa right from inception in its folk and communal nature, prior to foreign culture contact, to the contemporary, technologically driven and globalising age in Africa.

The impact of the contact of foreign culture on African culture cannot be overemphasised, particularly, the European culture from the West and the Islamic/Arabic culture from the East. While the Western European culture penetrated through transatlantic slave trade, the Eastern Arabic culture came through the Trans-Saharan trade route. The effects of the foreign culture contact on African culture are without exception to music as music works as a cultural system in itself (Aboyeji, 2019).

Beginning in the year 2000, the fourth industrial revolution, according to Miller (2016, p. 3) describes a world where individuals move between digital domains and offline reality with the use of connected technology to enable and manage their lives. Use of internet technology, artificial

intelligence, renewable energy marked this industrial revolution. This new and remarkable paradigm shift cuts across all spheres of life even in contemporary Nigeria. Today, the world is now a 'global village' as we are inevitably drawn together in a globally 'connected' world.

Over time, globalisation, as a concept, has been criticised and condemned to be a tool for cultural hegemony, and imperialism of the Western European and American cultures. Hence, as musicians and musicologists alike live in a global village with social and cultural consciousness, music glocalisation became expedient and necessary. Therefore, this study unpacks the glocalisation in and of Yorùbá folk-pop music in Bísádé Ológundé's"Africano" ensemble.

Literature Review

The folk-pop music genre is a stylistic hybrid of the indigenous folk music and the contemporary popular music. It is a folk derived popular music. It is that genre of music which thrives on the pedestal of indigenous folk music but popular in mission, vision and in reach; a form of traditional music which has attained a degree of popularity across ethnic boundaries in modern contexts. It is a product of development where an indigenous music tradition is continually reinvented to reflect contemporary realities. The first strand of the term 'folk-pop' is folk music. Folk music which can sometimes be interchangeably referred to as traditional music or indigenous music is a form which is deeply rooted in the African cultural representation and a form of cultural identity. Ibude (2014, p. 186), sees it as "the material of sound created by Africans resulting in a form and structure that is meaningful and generally acceptable to the people". Jaiyeola (2015, p. 103), defines it as a "term for the traditional music of the indigenous people of the world".

The second strand of this term is the popular music, often referred to as "pop-music". Popular music is a brand of music which generally occupies a large space in the contemporary African music scope. This is because it enjoys the favour and acceptability by the larger populace and it encompasses various styles of music (Adeola, 2000). Onyeji (2002, p. 24) avers that "Popular music is a genre of music, encompassing several styles, that is readily comprehensible to a large proportion of the population; its appreciation requires little or no knowledge of musical theory or technique. It differs in important ways from classical and folk music and from much jazz".

Suffice to say that, folk music is the base for most popular music forms in Nigeria and indeed Africa. Traditional musical heritage cut across popular music genres like Highlife, Juju, Apala, Sakara, Fuji, Afro-beat and others. While articulating the origins of Highlife music in Nigeria, Rhodes (1998, p. 6) asserts that "the people who took up Highlife in Nigeria structured the music from their roots". Jun (2014, p. 458) affirms that "the aesthetic quality of pop music is still a presentation of traditional…and pop music's survival and development is the extension and expansion of folk music; and with pop music becoming mature, it has more and more elements related to folk music".

Without the folk, there would have been no pop. Nigeria's popular music is founded on the principles of inter-culturalisation, mixing of styles and a blend of traditionality and modernity (Adedeji, 2010, p. 40). Unfortunately, the advent of pop to a large extent relegates the place of folk. In his commentary on African music prior to foreign contact, Emielu (2006, p. 29) observes that songs were folk in nature and ownership was communal. The result of this process of foreign cultural influences was a gradual weakening and erosion of traditional music (Vidal, 2012). Ogisi (2010, p. 27) emphasises that the various forms of Western music introduced by the Europeans intermingled with indigenous music and resulted in neo-traditional and syncretic forms of music, including popular music genres.

This syncretic feature became evident in many popular music forms in Nigeria, including the Yorùbá popular music. Omojola (2012, p. 165) notes that "the interaction of Western and African music elements is always a constant feature of Yorùbá popular music". He argues that, Yorùbá popular music displays a natural process of interculturalism. He terms this as, a mode of "organic hybridity". He had earlier stressed that "modern Nigerian popular music, despite its heavy reliance on Western popular music remains essentially Nigerian, demonstrating the creative interrogation of local and global socio-musical perspectives" (Omojola, 2006, as cited in Emielu, 2013, p. 35).

Hence, the Yorùbá folk-pop music is a syncretic marriage of indigenous folk music resources of the Yorùbás as well as borrowings from the features of the contemporary popular music to create a holistic particularising form in a musical work. Agawu (2003, p. 123) argues that "if traditional genres attain such a degree of popularity across ethnic boundaries, they are best thought of as traditional-popular". Itmay be otherwise referred to as indigenous Yorùbá popular music. It is hinged on the *tìlù-tìfọn* concept of music in Yorùbá parlance, which, according to Akangbe and Ilesanmi (2022, p. 127), has *orin* (songs) as its sole tendon and main ingredient while instruments and percussion provide the condiments. Music in the folk-pop genre may have folk music arranged in pop form and vice-versa.The content of folk-pop music is heavy on folk music but its "organic hybridity" with popular music features makes it enjoy unrestricted acceptability, commodification and commercialisation.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Roland Robertson's theory of Glocalisation (1995). The term 'glocal' is a melting pot for global and local. To be glocal is to "think globally and act locally". According to Robertson (1995, p. 28), the term 'glocal' and the process noun 'glocalisation' are 'formed by telescoping global and local to make a blend'. The term was modeled on Japanese word *dochakuka,* which originally meant adapting farming techniques to one's own local condition which simply means "global localisation", a global outlook adapted to local conditions in which the "local in the global" and the "global in the local" cannot be overemphasised within the "particularising" and "universalising" manifestoes (Robertson, 1995, p. 28). In micro-marketing terms, Robertson (1995, p. 28) sees glocalisation as "tailoring and advertising goods and services on a global or near-global basis to increasingly differentiated local and particular market". Adeoye (2018, p. 15) postulates that glocalisation is an attempt by the periphery, oppressed by the Imperial Centre to look inwards through two critical weapons:

i. The weapon of tactical assimilation of progressive aspects of globalisation.
ii. The deliberate effort on the part of the colonised countries to look inward and promote local economy, culture, philosophy, morality, ethics and ethos of their countries, attempting the commodification of culture in the process.

Giuliannoti and Robertson (2006, pp. 173-174) examine the tenets or aesthetics of glocalisation under eight core concepts: Indigenisation, local imagination and creativity, creolisation, vernacularisation, hybridisation, synchronisation of local and global cultures, homogenisation-heterogenisation's praxis, and transcultural constructions.

i. Indigenisation: This refers to the process of making something native or indigenous to a particular place or a particular culture. In indigenisation, local and native knowledge systems are introduced to transform spaces and places.

ii. Local imagination and creativity: These are the unique, innovative ideas, expressions, and solutions that emerge from a specific location or cultural context such as traditional arts, crafts, music, dance, languages, indigenous knowledge and practices, which evolve as homegrown innovations and inventions.
iii. Creolisation: This is a process of cultural, linguistic and social fusion between different groups to form a new, distinct culture. It is a complex process that challenges traditional notions of identity, culture and language.
iv. Vernacularisation: This refers to the adoption and adaptation of formal or specialised languages to fit local cultures, common languages and practices. Vernacularisation aims to preserve local culture and languages while making external knowledge more accessible and relatable to the public.
v. Hybridisation: This refers to a mixture of different cultural, linguistic elements to create a new form of culture and identity towards creativity and innovation. Hybridisation mixes different traditions, beliefs and practises to create new cultural forms.
vi. Synchronisation of local and global cultures: This balances and integrates local cultural practices, values and beliefs with global influences and technologies. This synchronisation aims to preserve local cultural heritage and traditions while embracing global innovations and advancements. This creates a hybrid culture that is locally rooted and globally relevant.
vii. Homogenisation-Heterogenisation's praxis: They are two opposing forces that shape cultural, social and political landscapes. While homogenisation refers to the process of making things uniform, standardising, and assimilating into a dominant culture, heterogenisation celebrates diversity, promotes difference, and acknowledges the complexity of cultures and identities.
viii. Transcultural constructions: This is a process of creating new cultural forms, identities, and meanings by combining and transforming elements from different cultural backgrounds. Transculturality fosters exchange of cultural practises, negotiation of meanings and values, thereby, creating new cultural expressions and identities in the process.

Each of the aforementioned concepts "registers the agency of quotidian social actors in critically engaging with and transforming global cultural phenomena in accordance with perceived local cultural needs as well as values and beliefs" (Giuliannoti and Robertson, 2006, p. 173). Robertson posits earlier that "glocalisation includes the *construction* or the *invention* of local traditions or forms of particularity" (1995, p. 29). He avers that this process is analogous to such conceptions as the 'invention of culture', the 'invention of tradition' or the creation of 'imagined communities' (1995, p. 35).

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative content-analysis design combined with descriptive interpretation. The primary data comprise eight purposively selected songs and four music videos by Bísádé Ológundé (Lágbájá), drawn from five studio albums released between 2000 – 2017, accessed via Apple Music, YouTube, and his official website (www.lágbájá.com).Purposive sampling was guided by three criteria: (i) explicit thematic and lyrical engagement with indigenous Yorùbá cultural practice (drums, language, dress, food); (ii) audible or visible instrumental hybridisation between Yorùbá and Western musical elements; and (iii) sufficient public circulation (streaming/view counts) to support claims about global visibility. Content analysis proceeded in three stages: (1) transcription and translation of Yorùbá lyrics, drum-language phrases, and interview excerpts; (2) open coding of recurring motifs against Giulianotti and Robertson's (2006) eight glocalisation tenets; and (3) thematic clustering of codes into the four analytic categories used in this paper: indigenisation/local creativity, creolisation/vernacularisation, hybridisation/synchronisation, and local–global visibility. Interview data is derived primarily from

a semi-structured interview with Lágbájá in 2024, supplemented by commentary from art musician, Seun Owoaje, independent listeners and fans to mitigate the self-representational bias inherent in artist testimony, and cross-referenced against secondary journalistic sources (Glendora Review, 1995) and prior scholarship (Waterman, 2002; Olaniyan, 2004; Omojola, 2006, 2012). Independent audience commentary is included to contextualise reception.

The Masked Musician - Bísádé Ológundé (Lágbájá)

Bísádé Ológundé, a popular Yorùbá musician is famously known as, Lágbájá. The word "Lágbájá" literally means faceless, nobody, or one whose identity is unknown, in Yorùbá culture. In an interview with the researcher, Lágbájá explains that the name was chosen to capture "the essence of millions of people... without a voice, without a distinct identity". That is, the facelessness of the ordinary citizen (personal communication, 2024).

This conceptual understanding explains the reason why Bísádé Ológundé performs as a masked musician whose real facial identity remains concealed from the public till date. Ologunde wears mask as an iconic symbol of man's facelessness. The mask and the name symbolise the faceless, and the voiceless in the society, particularly in Nigeria and in reference to other parts of Africa.Ologunde often identifies himself as Bísádé Ológundé, the producer, representing Lágbájá, the musician, and refers to Lágbájá and Bísádé Ológundé as co-composers and co-arrangers in his productions, a clear distinction between the public icon, Lágbájá, and the private subject, Bísádé Ológundé (personal communication, 2024).

He formed his first band in 1991 in Lagos, having taught himself how to play the saxophone. *Colours: the colour of rhythm*, his debut album was released in 1992.In 1993, he released the album titled *Lágbájá*. However, Lágbájá's first hit recording was "Coolu Temper", which he released in 1995 (Waterman, 2002). In 2000, he released three albums, *We*, *Me*, and *Abami* (*A Tribute to Fela*) through which he became more popular. A major local influence on his music is Fela Anikulapo Kuti, the Afrobeat pioneer, Yusuf Olatunji, Haruna Ishola, alongside the indigenous forms like àpàlà, fújì, jùjú, sákáràas well as highlife. These indigenous forms coupled with foreign influences from rock, jazz, swing, bepop, as well as musicians like Carlos Santana, Bob James and Earl Klugh (Olaniyan, 2004), influenced what would later become his experimental "Africano" ensemble.

His music stems from an ideological principle of an egalitarian society which believes that a society blossoms when each of its members learns to place the group's interests above his individual interest.This position is what Ikibe (2018) also notes in his discourse on music and social realities in Nigeria.This ideological principle is evident in Lágbájá's musical works.His music company and record label, the Motherlan' music in Lagos, Nigeria handles the production and distribution of his music.

The "Africano" Music Ensemble

In 2005, Lágbájá christened his music "Africano", in allusion to the central role of indigenous Yorùbá drums and rhythms in his groovy fusion. Importantly, "Africano", as a concept was conceived in response to the brewing controversy on Lágbájá's music style which several has either categorised as Afrobeat, Afrojazz, Higherlife or Crossover and many more. This unending controversy from scholars, researchers, journalists and opinion writers led to a search for unique and fundamental niche, which births the "Africano" concept (Omojola, 2006). In his own account, Lágbájá insists he resisted every label pressed on him, holding out for something he considered more fundamental to what the music was doing. As he puts it, "I christen that drum-driven sound

'Africano'" (personal communication, 2024), a naming he frames as decisive rather than merely descriptive, settling a debate that had persisted among critics and commentators for years.

Lágbájá's "Africano"is characterised by extensive use of indigenous Yoruba drums ensembles and their rhythms. Lágbájá's "Africano" is driving a resurgence of interest in refined African music, rich in the traditions of the continent while cosmopolitan in attitude. He experimented the new nomenclature of his style of music through his 1 hour 16-minute album, *"Africano": The mother of groove* (2005) which contains 19 tracks. One distinctive feature of this album is the extensive use of Yorùbá drums with its compelling rhythms and language, with 7 of the 19 tracks being a pure production of Yorùbá drums ensemble including Dùndún, Gángan, Omele, and Sákárà. He notes that "to demonstrate the power of our traditional drums, we have gone back to the basics. As we say in Yorùbá "ká dàá lè ká tún sà" (let us deconstruct and reconstruct). So, the album (*Africano: The mother of groove*) and its twin 'Africano Party' are completely devoid of the Western drum kit".

While the indigenous drums lead the groove, the western instruments like the drums kit, saxophone, bass guitar, keyboard lock in and complement the groove. He is intentional about the promotion and continuity of the appeal that comes with the enchanting and enthralling feel of the African complex rhythms to the global world. Lágbájá's music is a clear synthesis of varying indigenous Yorùbá musical instruments such as bàtá, dùndún, sákárà, ògìdo, sẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ and rattles, as well as Western musical instruments such as the saxophones, guitars, keyboards, violins. Lágbájá's performative map of contemporary Nigerian identity extends down into 'deep' traditions such as bàtá and dùndún drumming, folktales, and proverbs, and outward to incorporate aspects of jazz, soul music, hip-hop, and even klezmer music. This cultural consciousness is complemented by a keen interest in contemporary slang from various regions of Nigeria, and in the archaeology of older cosmopolitan traditions such as palmwine guitar, *àgídìgbo*music, and highlife. Lágbájá freely incorporates grooves, textures, and melodic 'hooks' from *jùjú*, *fújì*, *àpàlà*, and Afro-beat (the genre which his music is most commonly associated by the Nigerian public).In analysing his conceptual framework of the term "Africano" and delimiting it to his roots, the Yorùbá culture, he avers that:

> I simplify matters by using the term "African/Africano" in referring to all these genres of music, drums, grooves in Africa. Although much of the groove and music issues apply to Africa generally, I use my specific roots, the Yorùbá culture to demonstrate and communicate my concept and point of view (personal communication, 2024).

Over the years, his music has continued to appeal and fascinate members of the society through the use of the interplay of traditional Yorùbá musical resources, Western musical instruments as well as the philosophical attributes.

Glocal Trends in Selected Works of Bísádé Ológundé (Lágbájá)

This study interrogates selected works of Bísádé Ológundé (Lágbájá) within the theoretical framework of glocalisation (Robertson, 1995) and the eight tenets therein: indigenisation; local imagination and creativity; creolisation; vernacularisation; hybridisation; synchronisation of local and global cultures; homogenisation-heterogenisation's praxis; and transcultural constructions. These eight tenets are subsumed under four broad categories through which selected works were analysed: indigenisation, local imagination and creativity; creolisation and vernacularisation; hybridisation and synchronisation of Western instruments in a local context; and local products, global visibility.

a. Indigenisation, Local Imagination and Creativity

i. The Mask Concept

The mask concept known with Lágbájá is beyond mere costumes or stage appearance, but an idiosyncratic philosophy and artistic appeal. His masked apparel regularly covers his body in entirety, revealing only his eyes, nose and mouth. He wears a casual sandal as accessories, symbolising the simple lifestyle of the common man whom he represents. The masked apparel is usually designed with combination of different colours of fabric and he wears variety of them. This choice of costume is his signature and symbol of identity.

The appearance of the mask in performance is easily linked to the masquerades ritual performance in Yorùbá culture. Nevertheless, it has nothing to do with the Yorùbá masquerade, Egúngún. My study of his concept of the masked man reveals that there are three reasons behind this artistic choice. First is the philosophical representation of the common man, the voiceless and faceless in the society, using his musical and performative strategies to send social and political messages to all parts of the society, particularly, the leaders and the led. Secondly, it is an easy tool for recollection from audience view and particularising as a unique artist. Lágbájá affirms that "it's difficult to see ten saxophonists play and not remember the guy who was masked" (Glendora Review, 1995). The attention that comes with audience' curiosity on who is the persona behind the mask is in itself a unique music business/marketing strategy. Thirdly, the desire to live a private life devoid of the 'glitz and glamour' that comes with the popular music show business explains the reason why he often identifies himself as "Bísádé Ológundé, representing Lágbájá", and why he refers to "Lágbájá and Bísádé Ológundé" as co-composers and co-arrangers in his productions, a clear distinction between the public icon, Lágbájá, and the private subject, Bísádé Ológundé. Thus, while Egúngún masqueraders traverse the boundary between earth and heaven in Yorùbá cultural belief, Lágbájá employs the technology of masking to transform himself into a kind of negative celebrity, a popular star with no face attached; a private non-star, non-celebrity life.



Plate 1: Picture of Lágbájá in his masked apparel with his saxophone at Motherlan' music, his record label located at Opebi road, Ikeja Lagos. Picture Credit: Bísádé Ológundé.

ii. Yorùbá Drums and Drumming in Bísádé Ológundé's "Africano" Ensemble

Rhythmsin Yorùbá drums culture serve as a tool for driving aesthetics in Yorùbá music. Seun Owoaje notes in his conversation on musical instruments and storytelling that "African instruments

can be made to tell African stories…" (Personal Communication, 2024). The roles the Yorùbá traditional drums ensembles play in Lágbájá's ensemble cannot be overemphasised.

Lágbájá's ensemble draws on five Yorùbá drum families: bàtá, dùndún, gángan, ògìdo, and sákárà, alongside agogo and sẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀. Each follows a broadly similar hierarchy: an ìyá ìlù (mother drum) that leads, dictates rhythm, and mimics speech through proverbs and idioms, supported by omele (backing drums) providing fixed-pitch polyrhythmic texture. The bàtá, a five-drum conical family, and the dùndún, the hourglass "talking drum" whose leather-cord tension modulates pitch are most prominent in Lágbájá's sound. The gángan is a smaller dùndún variant, while the ògìdo (a bass-toned cylindrical drum) and sákárà (a clay-bodied frame drum) supply textural contrast.

Rather than reproduce these ensembles in their traditional form, Lágbájá foregrounds them as the structural core of "Africano," stripping out the Western drum kit entirely on *Africano: The Mother of Groove* (2005) so that Yorùbá rhythm "speaks" unaccompanied. This is a deliberate indigenising strategy that inverts the conventional hierarchy in which African percussion merely accompanies Western instrumentation. The way he privileges indigenous percussion as lead rather than backing texture is itself a glocal statement. It relocates the "local" drum at the centre of a genre otherwise legible through global popular-music idioms such as jazz, soul, hip-hop. This affirms Robertson's (1995) "local in the global." The talking drum's speech-surrogate function further allows Lágbájá to encode Yorùbá proverb and philosophy directly into the groove, making the drums simultaneously rhythmic and discursive agents within the Africano aesthetic.

Lágbájá believes in the compelling power of drum rhythms in different cultures of Africa, particularly his roots, the Yorùbá. Lágbájá notes that "we use the drums in our music, mostly to create grooves and stimulate dance. Intraditional Yorùbá music the drum plays more diverse roles" (personal communication, 2024).Oftentimes, it is common to see and hear the use of the different drums from different families/ensembles together, and some cases, the drums are played as complete ensembles as they are used traditionally in Yorùbá culture. For instance, in "Lùlù fúnwọn" of *Paradise* (2009), the drum performance opens with a dramatic frenzy of the polyrhythmic sounds of the dùndún ensemble before the Ìyá ìlù, the mother drum, calls other drums in the ensemble to a halt, thereby changing rhythm and inviting Lágbájá into an ecstasy of shoulder jerks and waist twirls. The praise singer, Kojo Àyánwọlá, an ìjálá artist consciously invites Lágbájá into a harmony of the bàtá and dùndún ensemble which Lágbájá inevitably joins in the euphoria as the praise singer evokes Lágbájá's emotions with hisoríkì while he sings. The music ends with a chorus of speech rhythm from the bàtá ensemble which Lágbájá responds to with shoulder jerks, waist twirls and swift leg gestures. The different drum ensembles deployed by Lágbájá are used to play variety of rhythmic and poetic sounds, resulting in polyphony, while imitating human voice - a principal characteristic of Yorùbá music. In "Sweet Melody" (2017) for instance, the gángan drums was used as speech surrogate playing "*màá kọrin titun, màá kọrin titun",* which literally means, I will sing a new song; I will sing a new song. Also, in "Ọmọ Jayéjayé" of his 2012 album, ***200 Million Mumu(Truth Is Bitter)***, the ìyá ìlùbàtá played speech surrogacy roles:

Nifàáji lawà	*We are at the relaxation centre*
Majayé orí mi	*I will enjoy my life*
Miò rán Unkú nsẹ́	*I do not care what Uncle feels*
Fa, fa la, fa la la fa la la	*Oh! Exorbitantly!*

It is common to see a flow of communication and action between the drummer(s) and Lágbájá. Sometimes, while still in the euphoria and ecstasy of the drums, Lágbájá acknowledges the drummer by saying:

Osé, àyàn, omodé yìí!	*Thank you my drummer!*
Ọ̀rọ̀ lo sọ, o purọ́	*Your words are true, you have not lied!*

It is also common to hear Lágbájá say "*Oníbàtá yi o káre"* that is, well done my bàtá drummer, or "*osébàtá"*, which means, thank you bàtá drums. The rhythms of the drums are connected significantly to dance. They prompt and dictate the mood for dance. They are inviting and enthralling. The energy and appeal in dance can be seen in Lágbájá's performances through dance accompaniment to the rhythms of the drums and a dance interpretation of the drum's poetic sound. This is evident through verbal and non-verbal communication between Lágbájá and the lead bàtá drummer. This energetic atmosphere of dance, rhythms and drums is what his "Konko below" in *We* (2000) evokes. The music is a descriptive and performative song for the typical indigenous Yorùbá bàtá dance, particularly, the effective use of waist twirls while bending down. Lágbájá describes this particular dance culture as a prominent dance style in Nigeria which is alien to foreigners, particularly, Europeans and Americans. The pulsating and piercing rhythms of the bàtá drums in frenzy invites audience to the dance floor as Lágbájá imitates the rhythms of the drums "*atoto pato, atoto pato pato wọ, atoto pato, ah thunder*". Lágbájá's allusion to "thunder" can be connected to Sàngó, a fiery king and Yorùbá god of thunder, whose worship is associated with the bàtá drums. The fast rhythmic tempo of the bàtá, associated with Sango's fiery and tempestuous nature, is the ecstasy Lágbájá invites his audience to, with particular reference to the aesthetics of the waist twirls associated with indigenous Yorùbá bàtá dance (ìbàdí ni'jó wà).

iii. Yorùbá Traditional Fashion and Costumes

Lágbájá uses his music to promote the traditional fashion, dressing and costumes of Yorùbá people. The contemporary Nigerian society has witnessed a rise in Western-cultured pervasive dressing with a culture of nudity. In contrast, the traditional Yorùbá culture boasts of series of sophisticated dresses, accessories, and wears across different social class, age groups and gender for different events and purposes. While he is known for his masked apparel, his ensemble members regularly appear in different traditional fabrics and styles of the Yorùbá people.

Lágbájá's "Skentele Skontolo" of *Africano: The mother of groove* (2005) is a musical interplay of the sophisticated Yorùbá ceremonial dressing style, with particular emphasis on the traditional female headgear, "*gèlè*", and the traditional male cap, "*fìlà*". The music presents the pan-Yorùbá culture as represented in the Yorùbá ceremonial dressing. He wittily represents the female gender "*gèlè*" styling as the "skentele" and the male gender "*fìlà*" styling as "skontolo". The music opens with a conscious appraisal of the Yorùbá traditional fashion system as a leading cultural style. As he develops the syncretic music with the pulsative rhythms of the Ògìdo drums ensemble, Gángan drums ensemble as well as bass and lead guitars, he proceeds to sing about the appeal, respect and honour that are attached to creative styling in the Yorùbá culture, describing this with flowery use of traditional proverbs and idioms:

Gèlè ò dùn bíi ká mọ̀ọ́ wé	*The beauty of a headgear lies in its styling*
Ká mọ̀ọ́ wé dàbí kò yẹ ni	*Knowing how to style it, is not tantamount to its beauty*

The music ends with a mention of various styles of female headgears such as: "Kọjú sọ́kọ", "Umbrella", "Labalábá", "Ice cream", "Ceiling fan", "Lùkúmọ̀", and "National theatre". Below are sample shots from the music video of "skentele skontolo" which describes some of these popular headgear styles among the Yorùbás.In contemporary Nigeria, this culture of stylish headgear and cap is prevalent in the ówànbẹ̀ ceremonial culture of the Yorùbás. Ówànbẹ̀is a Yorùbá word which translates to "it is there". It is a linguistic description of where social parties, buzzling and entertaining ceremonial events and gatherings are happening in town. These events which include traditional festivals, wedding ceremonies, birthday parties, anniversaries, funerals, housewarmings, graduations, and chieftaincy titles are known for large presence of food, drinks, spray dancing, music, dance, opulence, money, and fascinating dress styles across various social strata. Often times, ówànbẹ̀ parties come with a chosen communal "Asọ-ẹbí" (Uniform dress) fabric ranging from Ankara, Lace, Àdìrẹ, to Asọ-òkè with a matching traditional female headgear, "*gèlè*", and the traditional male cap, "*fìlà*". The Asọ-ẹbí serves as a symbol of identity, unity and acceptance among families, guilds and social groups and classes.



Plate 2: Sample styles ofYorùbá traditional female headgear, "*gèlè*" as demonstrated in "skentele skontolo". Source: "Skentele skontolo" Music Video.

In *Fìlà Yorùbá* (2010), Lágbájá commodifies the traditional Yorùbá male cap. The less than 2-minute production, creatively describes Yorùbá cap as an appealing fashion piece ranging from the "gọ̀bì" cap to the "abetí ajá". He enunciates with punch lines such as "ojúlówófìlà Yorùbá", "fìlàYorùbá tó jẹ ojú ní gbèsè", which translates to authentic Yorùbá cap that is extremely appealing. In Yorùbá belief, a man's outfit is incomplete without a matching fìlà.

b. Creolisation and Vernacularisation

In Lágbájá's ensemble, emphasis is placed on the use and promotion of the Yorùbá language, his mother tongue and its culture. Other languages used are Nigerian pidgin and English language, however with less emphasis. In response to his cultural consciousness since his production of the album, *Africano: The mother of groove* (2005), Lágbájá states that, "though I have used Pidgin English copiously in the past, none of the songs on this album, *Africano: The mother of groove*, is performed fully in Pidgin. From now, my main focus is on my mother tongue, Yorùbá. English and its popular variant, Pidgin, take a back seat" (www.lágbájá.com).

A first hand confirmation of his linguistic consciousness is evident when one attempts to visit his official website. When a visitor types "lagbaja.com" without the diacritic tonal mark which is an acute accent (/), the web page will not open, but the use of the acute accent (/) typed as "lágbájá.com" leads a visitor directly to the homepage. This is a pointer to his intentionality in the

promotion of the indigenous language and culture of the Yorùbá through his art. The track, "vernacular" in *We* (2000) demonstrates Lágbájá's displeasure over the use and adoption of the English language as a standard Nigerian lingua franca, criticising the language as hegemonic while buttressing the dearth of expression in the English language unlike the mother tongues in Nigeria where a native speaker takes control of its usage and expression.

In contemporary Nigerian society, it is common to see people glamorise the use of foreign British English, and ridicule the use and embrace of indigenous languages. Lágbájá emphasises the depth, philosophy and knowledge of culture inherent in indigenous Nigerian languages like the Yorùbá. In a creative superimposed verbal exchange between the Afrobeat musician, Fela Anikulapo Kuti and Lágbájá, Fela criticises the menace of linguistic imperialismin contemporary Nigeria, Lágbájá expresses further that the English language has no standard words or phrases to capture some words or expressions in the indigenous Yorùbá languages, such as "Ẹkúulé o", "ó nyí'mú sí mi", "ó nmọ́ mi lójú" without corrupting the words or changing their meanings and contexts. This is why Fela, in many instances of his music "use Nigerian Pidgin English as a way of maintaining his audience across different social class as some expressions might have not been possible in Queen's English" (Ikibe, 2018, p. 31).

The intentionality of this kind of superimposition of an existing work from one artist by another artist is a part of what Babarinde (2017, p. 144) describes as collaborations and features that are geared towards a "new and larger audience for a constant and readymade (sic) market". In another sync of verbal exchange between a superimposed voice of Fela Anikulapo Kuti in an interview, with that ofLágbájá, "Put am well well" in *Abàmì*(2000) created in traditional Yorùbá market context, chides colonial mentality and the impact of western culture penetration, which results in the denigration of indigenous cultural life. Lágbájá raises consciousness on the beauty of indigenous Yorùbá foods, drawing reference samples from organic foods in Yorùbá communities of Ìjẹ̀bú, Abẹ́òkúta, Èkìtì, Ọ̀yọ́ and Kwara state which many people erroneously categorise as foods of and for the poor, who cannot afford foreign processed and synthetic foods in contemporary Nigeria. He juxtaposes the indigenous Yorùbá "ẹ̀wà and mọ́inmọ́in", "Iyán" with the foreign "bread, butter and sausage". Imageries of indigenous food staples such as "Irú" from Abẹ́òkúta, Gaàrí from Ọ̀yọ́, Ìkọ́kọrẹ́ from Ìjẹ̀bú, Wàrà and ẹ̀kọ from Kwara and many more were created in the music. The market context demonstrates a typical traditional Yorùbá market buzzling with multifaceted flow of goods, services and other economic activities.

This extensive description of foods peculiar to indigenous Yorùbá cultures, celebrates the cultural structure of the Yorùbás and other African descents in the design of nature. Lágbájá's approach to poetic songs create various cultural imageries in the minds of his audience through Yorùbá literary devices, using folktales, proverbs and parables to pass messages with deeper meanings. The use of English Language, in addition to the indigenous Yorùbá language and Nigerian pidgin English is situated within the understanding of the local audience, yet with the ability to communicate his intended message efficiently to the wider heterogeneous population of English speakers. He notes in an interview with Glendora review (1995) that, "I want to make music and communicate my art to the best of my ability and to keep learning from other forms. So, I came up with this new thing now".

c. Hybridisation and Synchronisation of Western Instruments in a Local Context

Lágbájá creates a synchronisation of indigenous and Western musical instruments in music, particularly, bringing global cultures to local context. The bàtá drum and the B ♭ Tenor Saxophone

are the most pronounced musical instruments in his ensemble and a part of his musical identity. Lágbájá localises the global saxophone, to tell indigenous stories. Many of his works bear a cross-cultural medley of musical instruments from his indigenous roots and the Western culture. For instance, the 8-minute audio production of "a ó m'érin j'oba" in *We* (2000), opens with a two-minute instrumental intro. The ìyá ìlùdùndún with its jiggling saworo bells cues the entrance of the omele bàtá which holds the underlying percussive rhythms before the introduction of the B ♭ Tenor Saxophone, B ♭ trumpet, the electric keyboard, electric bass and lead guitar in the key of F major into the mix.

"Never Far Away" in *Africano: The mother of groove* (2005) is a creative hybrid of local and global music, where he experiments global music culture in a local culture context with the localisation of a full Strings family of the Western classical orchestra containing, the violin, viola, cello, double bass and guitars. In the music video, the Western orchestra musicians were made to change from their regular Western suit attire to Àdìrẹand Asọ-òkè.



Plate 3: The strings family in "Never Far Away" consisting violinists, violists, cellist and double bassist in indigenous attires, and local-global context withbàtá, gángan, and ògìdodrums. Source: "Never Far Away" music video.

The introduction of the Western orchestra adds the required emotional flavour to the theme of romance and affection in the folk ballad, "Never Far Away". The syncretic-hybridity was achieved with the blend of the bàtá, gángan, ògìdo ensembles, and the Western Strings family with Lágbájá himself conducting his hybrid musicians in the Western conducting technique while the entire ensemble performs in a remote village square, creating a theatre in the round from the local audience. The music which begins with the thundering and piercing sounds of the bàtá drums criss-crossing soon dovetails into the melancholic tunes of the Western strings family with regular articulations in staccato and legato. While the strings family create the underlying mood and emotions, the traditional Yorùbá drums create the pulsative rhythms driving the music.

Seun Owoaje, an art musician, submits that he also explores this contemporary approach to telling African stories through orchestra composition as he experiments in his musical piece, "Ẹnlẹ́ Àlájà", a waka music style to celebrate the return of Hajj pilgrims through the Western orchestra (personal communication, 2024). In this piece, Owoaje uses the Solo Violin to play the role of Alhaja/Alhaji while the Piano and Orchestra imitates the role of the town's people welcoming the Hajj pilgrim.

"Africalypso", another track in *Africano: The mother of groove* (2005) brings to bear, another syncretic-hybridity of Western and local instruments. The title of the track in itself is a derivative of

"Africa" and "Calypso". The track is a musical retelling of the African musical contact with the foreign European and American cultures through the transatlantic slave trade and how this slavery experience birthed new syncretic African-American music forms such as jazz, soul, rhythm and blues, swing, big band, Bop, hip hop, funk, rap, reggae, raga, calypso and more. Thus, the track's title "Africalypso" is a conscious re-emphasis of ownership of the African-American style, Calypso which has its roots in African music cultures, particularly, syncopated African rhythms and improvisation. The music opens and ends with a local form of hailing among the Yorùbás called "ìkírà", where a group of people shout the syllable "eh!" four times, as in, "eeh…eeh…eeh.,,eeh!", in deference to a respectable figure or persona. In the context of this music, Lágbájá opens with this hailing in acknowledgement of the notable contributions of African music cultures to the development of global music cultures. This hailing sets the tone for the introduction of the medley of Saxophone horns and the gángan drum used as speech surrogate. The gángan drum echoes, "àlá kìí bọmọ lẹ́rù, kó má le rọ, bó bá ti rí ni ẹ wí", which literally means, "say it exactly how it is, no matter how scary it looks". This sets the mood for the sonic documentation of the transatlantic slave trade experience which birthed the global African-American music forms.

Having acknowledged traditional Africans as major contributors to the origin and development of these global African-American forms, he then asks his talking drummer to "show them Africa". The gángan drum responds again in speech surrogacy, saying, "àlá kìí bọmọ lẹ́rù, kó má le rọ, bó bá ti rí ni ẹ wí" (say it exactly how it is, no matter how scary it looks). This was followed with a sequence of rhythmic interplay. The music closes with a reemphasis of abundant presence of music in oral and instrumental forms, as well as dance in African cultures, while the saxophone is localised to chant the praises of Lágbájá and Africa alongside with the band members in Yorùbá language:

In the instance of "gbagádá gbogòdò" (2001), Lágbájá attempts localisation of the B ♭ tenor saxophone in a call and response syncretic interplay with the chorus. Lágbájá's reinvention of the popular Ẹ̀gbá folk song, gbagádá gbogòdò, is a musical retelling of the Àdùbíwar of 1918 between the Ẹ̀gbá natives and the Colonial government, sequel to the taxation system introduced in Abeokuta by the British colonial government. The direct taxes introduced by the colonial government along with existing forced labour obligations culminated in the revolts by the Ẹ̀gbás.The war saw more than thirty thousand Ẹ̀gbá natives in war against the colonial government officials in Abeokuta, destroying railway and telegraph lines in the southern part of the territory. The war which led to death of about six hundred people accounts for the abolition of Abeokuta independence. The folk song which evolved from the experiences of the war and its aftermath documents the impact of war and violence on a society. Lágbájá uses the saxophone to call, while the band responds, repeating the established melodic line from the call in the retelling of the story of Àdùbíwar.

The music portray imagery of a state of confusion and crises caused in chaotic moments of wars, the displacements, and the regrets that come with it as an aftermath of the war. This corroborates the Yoruba adage that "ìbẹ̀rẹ̀ ogun làá sìí rí, ènìyàn e mọ bí ìgbèyin ogun á ti rí" (only the beginning of war is seen, no one knows how the end of the war will be).

d. Local Products, Global Visibility

Since the advent of the global digital technologies, the complexities in production to consumption chain of musical products have reduced significantly. There has been a paradigm shift in the economics of music and cultural products, from production, to distribution and consumption. The

existential experiences of Lágbájá with the foreign culture from his formative years when he had contact with Western education up until his contact with Western music shaped the influence of foreign culture evident in his music. His official website www.lágbájá.com is a medium for artistic and cultural commodification for global audience. The image of the homepage of his official website below is an imprint of the commodification of Yorùbá music and culture through foreign digital technologies.

In a bid to share the grooves of his roots with the rest of the world and make indigenous Yorùbá rhythms understandable and accessible to everyone, Lágbájá develops a digital archive he calls "Africano Manchine" which digitises these Yorùbá grooves. His "Africano Manchine" is a comprehensive digital library of "drag and drop" for Yorùbá grooves. "Africano manchine" which is an artistic marriage of man and machine, works seamlessly with popular Digital Audio Workstations such as Ableton Live and Pro Tools and plays a major role in his Elektro Groove Music (EGM) which he pioneered. This is a fusion of the traditional Yorùbá music and modern electronic music elements, towards creating a unique and energetic sound. The instance of this can be seen in his "Konko below" in *We (2000)* which bears pulsative rhythms from the bàtá drums ensemble, with gángan drums creating the underlying rhythms fused with intensity of the electric lead and bass guitars. He also experiments this with his "Scream" single (2015), which he calls an "Electro Africano", a hybrid of his "Africano" and Dubstep, an electronic dance music that originated in South London in early 2000s which have prominent bass lines and syncopated drum patterns. The website comes with menus and links to his digital library and archive for his musical works and various Yorùbá grooves across the bàtá, dùndún, gángan, ògìdo, and sákárà drums ensemble.



Plate 4: A drop-down menu for access to the "drag and drop" digital archive for Yorùbágrooves. Source: www.lágbájá.com.

The electronic shop (e-shop) tab on the website serves the purpose of merchandise for all his artistic and cultural products ranging from his music, to the traditional male cap, "*filà*" produced by Motherlan' music. He dedicates the 2-minute production of *FìlàYorùbá* (2010) to the marketing of the traditional caps which can be purchased online through the official website: www.lágbájá.com. The cap styles range from "gọ̀bì" to "abetí ajá".

The official website is in addition to his other music streaming platforms, as well as social media networking accounts, particularly, Youtube, Spotify, Apple music and Facebook, which serve as medium for the distribution and consumption of his musical products globally. The various media

of music distribution and consumption foster heterogeneous spread of audience across cultural boundaries in the global space. As at August 2024, his Spotify account receives an average of seventy-eight thousand (78,000) listeners monthly, while his Motherlan' Youtube channel has over five thousand subscribers and over two million views (2,518,271), and his Facebook social networking page with over five hundred thousand followers.

Opinions taken randomly from selected fans prove that Lágbájá's ingenuity in the use of syncretic musical instruments, depth of messages in song texts which are relatable to local problems in the society, as well as overall artistry, is a compelling force that attracts the audience. Olatunde Danisa-Atafo (2024).opines that:

> the tall, handsome and amiable Bísádé Ológundé. A professional and multi-talented instrumentalist, an individual endowed with unparalled musical creativity that made him the favourite of both the old and young generations. His style of meaningful composition of songs, lyrics and melodies embellished with the dance steps reserved for the traditional masquerade called "Eégún" in Yorùbá land, all together made Lágbájá a delight to watch for everyone(personal communication.

In an acknowledgement of why he enjoys listening to Lágbájá, Abimbola Esther states that "I like songs that connect me back to my childhood. In a way, they remind me of the things I wanted to do when I grow up, that's why I listen to Lágbájá, Beautiful Nubia, Asa, and reggae music" (personal communication, 2024). Bella's Bench, a social media influencer (@iambellacruise) expresses that "still listened to "Never far away" like two days ago and kept wondering, how he came up with that orchestra and Afro-fusion" (personal communication, 2024). Queen Maitte submits that Lágbájá is her "one and only great traditional African jazz musician…His rich percussion, socially conscious lyrics and the electric guitar that pulls the dancing strings in your body" (Personal Communication, 2024).

Discussion

The findings extend earlier scholarship on Lágbájá. Where Waterman (2002) situates Lágbájá's masked persona within models of celebrity self-fashioning in Yorùbá popular music, this study's data suggest the mask also functions as a glocal marketing device, a "particularising" strategy, in Robertson's (1995) terms, that renders Lágbájá recognisable within an increasingly saturated global music market. Omojola's (2006, 2012) account of "organic hybridity" in Yorùbá popular music is corroborated by the Africano ensemble's instrumental syncretism, but this study departs from Omojola in identifying a reversal of instrumental hierarchy. Rather than folding indigenous percussion in as texture beneath Western instrumentation, Lágbájá makes Yorùbá drums structurally dominant, with Western instruments synchronising around them. The study suggests a more assertive indigenising practice consistent with Giulianotti and Robertson's (2006) "homogenisation–heterogenisation praxis."

Conclusion

The study concludes that creative cultural assimilation as against cultural isolation is a distinct feature inherent in the music of Bísádé Ológundé (Lágbájá). Lágbájá's "Africano" style of music is a resurgence of refined African music and existential consciousness in the local-global interaction of music. This study therefore deduces that cultural development in contemporary times does not happen in isolation but in creative assimilation of progressive aspects of new cultural contacts. Thus, change over time, especially in cultural and social contexts is sacrosanct, and therefore, inevitable. Consequently, musical traditions that are unable to withstand the forces of change risk

being eradicated and rendered obsolete by the transformative dynamics shaping new cultural paradigms.

Recommendations

Within the realities of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR); a digital world vis-a-vis offline reality marked by use of internet technology, artificial intelligence and renewable energy which has created a new economic dimension to the production, commodification and consumption of music, this study recommends that while globalisation comes with attendant challenges for the indigenous Yorùbá music culture, the realities of the global digital age evidently come with opportunities which can be leveraged on for the Yorùbá folk-derived popular music in terms of reach, patronage, and sustainability of the indigenous culture, through glocalisation, as exemplified in Lágbájá's "Africano" ensemble.

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