

## **DÙNDÚN Functional Drumming: The Syncopation, Hemiola, and Hocket Improvisatory Technique in Yoruba Land**

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### **Abstract**

Yoruba drummers are prolific in rhythmic creation and interpretation, especially, on dùndún ensemble and the mastery on the instrument is dependent on the ability of the drummer to entertain, educate, or satirize the audience at a performance. The master drummer manipulates his drum based on the available traditional techniques. These techniques are hemiola, syncopation and hocket. Thomas Eliot's (1994) theory of preservation, which sees the product and symbol of a particular civilization as an emissary of the culture it projects, is the theoretical framework for the study. The method of data collection is interviews and non-participatory observation. The objective of the study is to investigate the functions of these ensembles and to reveal the extent of the presence of these three rhythmic techniques in dùndún performance and the variation of their usages in the contemporary dùndún drumming in Yoruba society, South West, Nigeria. The study discovers that hemiola, syncopation and hocket are fundamental in the construction of drum rhythmic patterns and are basically, the essential movement concerning the identified techniques of the layers of the transcribed music and the constituent element of the rhythm. The study concludes that verbal drumming is a patterned and specialized art used in performance to correct some persons in the society whose attitude are bad, commend models in the community whose conducts are good, instruct young drummers and audience on new occurrences in the society, and institute new and dynamic drumming skills for future performances in Yoruba land

**Keywords:** Dùndún-drumming, functions, hemiola, hocket, syncopation

### **Introduction**

One of the major identities of the Yoruba of South West Nigeria that is universally associated with their musical cultures is drumming; unlike other ensembles in the land, dùndún drums have versatile talking capacity and communicate perceptibly within the circles of the custodians of the language holders. It also plays a vigorous rhythmic function in the ensemble. Drumming in Yoruba land has received comprehensive research coverage by seasoned authors but the analysis of *dùndún*-drumming within its functions with regards to their entertainment and abusive performing style has not been properly documented by researchers especially the perspective from which this study views them is remarkably different from previous works. *Dùndún* drumming is indispensable lineage traditions in Yoruba land; not just leisure, and a profession that is nurtured and transmitted orally from older siblings to younger ones (though may now be learned formally at institutions where such training is available). *Dùndún*-drummers are music orators and prolific communicators

of indigenous cultures and sometimes run social commentaries on issues, portraying societal growth, lapses, and depravity among others in satirical ways. Both ensembles according to Omojola, (2012:20) are perhaps the two most visible symbols of an emergent Pan-Yoruba musical culture historically linked to Oyo-Yoruba. *Dùndún*-drummers function as praise singers at kings' palaces and merrymaking events, they also help to check societal ills by rebuking the evildoers. They can be abusive too. Their drums are the medium through which they express themselves in ritualistic, sensitive, and humorous matters. As versatile drummers, they operate at a creative level where their imagination as drummers is brought to the fore. In drumming, several devices are employed, for example, idioms, proverbs, symbolic saying and traditional codes among others. Several techniques of drumming are also incorporated during performances to distinguish between amateurs and master drummers and to intensify and heighten the drummer's spirit at performance to motivate the audience to gain monetary gifts.

The rhythmic procedures of *dùndún* and drumming in Yoruba land have not been sufficiently documented in terms of the perspective from which this author is viewing it, especially the performance improvisatory techniques vis a vis the hemiola, syncopation and hocket style. Rhythmic patterns in *dùndún*-drumming can be simple or complex depending on the nature of performance. *Dùndún* drummers approach performance from simple to complex with regards to the occasion and the personality at the scene. The data collected at outdoors (social events) and indoors (drumming entertainment at home) drumming events was transcribed and notated for scholarly studies only; the practitioners do not depend on the transcribed material at performance rather spontaneous skills prevail. The significance of this study is the detailed accentuation of the rhythms in the notated work to reveal the presence of regular and deliberate obstruction rhythm. These techniques though present in *dùndún*-drumming may not be vividly captured or distinguished orally at performance, hence the transcription of the patterns with examples of the influence of the beats divisions, and the verbal drumming text serve as examples in the study. In *dùndún*-drumming, there is a presence of the onward desire in the performance that inspires the music and creates a decisive rhythmic movement that is danceable. This drumming style does not always follow the normal rhythmic flow; there are moments of departure from regular patterns, for example in a syncopated rhythm where accents are deliberately displaced. In *dùndún* drumming, rhythmic patterns are combined to produce a certain effect, there are sometimes simultaneous usages of three beats of equivalent value in the time usually occupied by two beats; this is generally referred to as hemiola. Hocket technique is also used in *dùndún*-drumming when two master drummers perform; there is a deliberate alternation of pattern that can be played by one drummer but often interplayed by two. This pattern is made possible by the use of silence as well as sounds; the regular interchange of silence in the performance of a drummer and sounds in the performance of the other, running concurrently gives a perfect effect of hocket techniques.

The objective of the study is to identify *Dùndún* music function and the dynamic process of the techniques adopted by the drummer in the sustenance of invaluable traditional bound between drumming and skill intervention. And to examine the position of the hemiola, syncopation and the hocket techniques in drumming. The following research questions will be required to achieve this objective:

How do *dùndún* drummers function at events in South West Nigeria?

What is the significance of syncopation, hemiola, and the hocket techniques in drumming?

### **Methods of Data Collection**

This study is a case study investigation involving qualitative methods of data gathering (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Information's on the study were collected from both primary and secondary

sources. The qualitative data were based on the functional drumming in Yoruba land and the hemiola, syncopation and the hocket technique impact on the genre.

### **One-on-one Interviews**

In order to gather relevant information, one-on-one interview was used as one of the methods of data gathering for the study. Interview is a valued method of data collection since it offers insight into people's opinions, understandings and practices of a given phenomenon and gives in-depth data collection. Unlike focus groups where claimants may feel apprehensive, one-on-one interviews facilitated the respondents to be free and spontaneous in their responses without feeling overwhelmed. However, some disadvantages I experienced was the period of time I took to analyse and obtain useful materials. The one-on-one interview require exhaustive groundwork subsequent to the interview and sometimes a reasonable budget was required. As part of the data collection, Interviews were conducted with some major stakeholders, who are master drummers of great reputation. Interviews were conducted with David Oluwole Fadipe (on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September, 2020) who affirms that the best "method of identifying specifically the techniques adopted by drummers at performance is to collect and transcribed the music and then do a thorough analysis of the collected extract". Oluwole Aro (on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, 2020) a versatile musician and scholar was also available for an interview. The informants were selected on their roles as they aligned with the objectives of the study. This was to find out how *Dùndún* music function through a dynamic process of the techniques adopted by the drummer in the sustenance of invaluable traditional bound between drumming and skill intervention and how the society perceived their roles in the eradication of social vices

The notation used as an extract in this study was collected from Oluwole Aro, and David Oluwole Fadipe, a Master Drummer of the *dùndún* talking drums and a lecturer at the Ibadan Polytechnic.

### **Participant Observation**

In order to make meaningful conclusions about the performance and performance practices of the ensemble drumming, I used participant-observation as another method of data collection to understand the drumming functions and their effects on the society. Participant-observation is when a researcher plays a double role as a researcher and at the same time participate in the group activities as desired. As a scholar in African music, it was very easy for me to blend with the performance by interpreting the concept of drumming and also by participating in the music rendition.

### **Functions of Dùndún drummers at events in South West Nigeria?**

Master drummers and their ensemble members are not only music historians but they are also transitory agents through which indigenous music relocates from past to present thereby reconnecting the people back to their musical practice Idamoyibo (2013). The flexibility with which they perform at events by making selections from their oral repertory is significant to the study. Their vast knowledge of traditional music systems and practice is also commendable. Besides the above-mentioned points, their acquaintance with the stylistic quality of musical tradition is extensive. Master drummer takes the responsibilities of guiding young ensemble members as they make great effort to catch up with the improvisatory lines at performance and occasionally to get some of the rhythms or the stability of the ensemble to work as expected. The performances that serve as data to this work is a collective body of drum genre that could serve the purpose of literature in oral form.

Agawu in his Post-Colonial theory argues that:

African music is best understood not as a finite repertoire but as a potentiality in terms of what now exists and has existed in the past. African music designates those numerous repertoires of songs and instrumental music that originates in specific African communities, and performed regularly as part of play, ritual, and worship and circulates mostly orally, within and across languages... (Agawu, 2003, xiv).

Agawu's definition of African music suits perfectly the performance situation of *dùndún* drummers in this investigation. *Dùndún* drummers perform regularly, not only at music events but even when there are no active social events; they create one at the market square, local parks, and even sometimes along any popular roundabout or bus stops. *Dùndún* drummers play multiple kinds of music-making roles based on the traditionally accepted norms of performance in Yoruba land Idamoyibo (2014). One of these roles is entertainment; the drummers are social agents who take advantage of every merry-making opportunity to create fun irresistibly. Omojola (2012:33) affirms this point when he observes that "*dùndún* drummers create performance opportunities even in the most difficult and unwelcoming circumstances". The majority of these drummers do not have a standing band, meaning they are not as recognized as one would expect, in other words, they hardly get an invitation to perform at events but that does not bother them in any way. They already have a simple solution to this problem which is simply the wisdom and the professionalism with which they create spontaneous music scenes that are skilfully fixed to command the respect of a small group of people they focus on, at a time. They do not engage a large audience because they lack the means to do so; there are always band musicians at such events to cater for that. This makes these drummers gate crashers, for which they have never queried. They know the task before them is to do the obvious that certainly always stun their target thereby motivating them to give monetary gifts. An example of the spontaneous performance piece may be found in figure 1, entitled *Kààbò! Sé dáadáa le dé?* Meaning welcome!

## Data Analysis

**Figure 1:** *Kààbò! Sé dáadáa le dé ?* (Welcome)!



Drum music, especially verbal drumming patterns are usually short and distinct. Figure 1, of the notation, presents a short four bars music in compound duple time from the data collected from Fadipe (an *Iyaalu dùndún* master drummer in an oral interview). The range of this music is just a second above an octave. This is a piece of traditional thematic music and its extension depends on the improvisatory dexterity of the Master drummers and his ensemble members. The drummers are aware that the guest on social occasions are always hasty so they have several repertoires at hand to entertain them. The drummers usually stand at the major entrance of an event venue to welcome guests of different categories by performing all sorts of indigenous entertainment music. The foremost of this entertainment music is *Kààbò! Sé dáadáa le dé?* Meaning welcome! Did you arrive well?

Verbal Drumming Text      English Interpretation

*Káàbò!*

Welcome!

*Sé dáadáa le dé?*

Did you arrive well?

*Káàbò!* is one of the most pleasant words in Yoruba land used to welcome people after a brief or long absence from home. It is also used to welcome guests to special events even when the drummers are paid little attention. While the guests walked majestically to locate their seats the drummers seize the opportunity to praise them for monetary gratification. Some of the guests appreciate the efforts these artistes, who have skilfully put together pleasant drum music to welcome them to the ceremony while others may not bother to give them anything. As earlier expressed, the drummers are a very happy ensemble, whose smiles and enthusiasm for the genre enchants the audience at all times. The phrase *Sé dáadáa le dé?* meaning did you arrive well? is a complementary statement that requires the attention of the guests at the events. Getting the attention of guests at the occasion can be enterprising in the sense that the rich are often rude to drummers who they see as beggars rather than traditional poets and musicians. This misunderstanding has existed beyond comprehension; nevertheless, the artistes are never discouraged. The drummers most often go beyond just welcoming guests to studying their features in terms of colour, height, sex, and endowments among others and spontaneously creating complimentary drum music to inspire them. If the guests are known personalities, they even go to the extent of using their lineage names to sing their praises, sometimes, the names and characters of their wives and children are mentioned in this salutation.

**Figure 2:** *À seè se tún se* (We will have multiple celebrations)

**DRUM RHYTHMS**  
AŞEŞETUNŞE

A-şe - şe-tu - şe      A-şe - şe-tun - şe      Bia ba şe-yi tan a-tu şe'mi si      A-şe - şe-tu - şe

Verbal Drumming Rhythmic Interpretation of “À seè se tún se”

Verbal *Drumming* Text in Yoruba      English Interpretation

*À seè se tún se (E meji)* We will have multiple celebrations 2ce

*Bí a bá sè yi tan* When we finish this event;

*A ó sè mî si*

We will have a cause to celebrate another one.

*À seè se tún se*

We will have multiple celebrations.

The drum music entitled *À seè se tún se* in figure 2 is in simple duple time, and the scope is 8 bars, the accents of the language guided the notation. The subject is multiple celebrations; this does not reveal in totality the entire music that is always motivated by the drummers’ ability to improvise on the given theme. For example, the drummers wish the celebrants more joyous celebrations thus:

A ó sè mû si  
À seè se tún se

We will have a course to celebrate joyously.  
We will have multiple celebrations.

The master drummer presents the verbal drumming with eloquent expertise, while the accompany roles are played by younger drummers. After which they will roam about on their drums a little to make some commentaries and later reinstate the theme. This notation is a very common repertoire at social events that are performed to stimulate the celebrants, to praise the wife or husband of the person, children, and to commend their organizational credibility. The enthusiasm exhibited at such occasions where small ensembles of drummers perform often shows their contentment nature despite their low income. Drum music in Yoruba land is as characteristic as it is as famous for amusement and quality traditional exhibition of oratory and skills.

Figure 3: “*Wo èyìn re wò*” (Look behind you)

## WO ÈYIN RẸ WO



The data in figure 3 is entitled “*Wo èyìn re wò*”, meaning always look behind you to see how others are faring. This drum music is instructive, advises people to be thoughtful and temperate when it comes to the wellbeing of others. This is a short and simple song in compound duple meter of four bars, within an interval of a fourth. It is noted on a bass clef, an indication of the density of a male voice.

The text in Yoruba Interpretation in English

<i>Bò l'òmo ogún,</i>	If you have 20 children,
<i>Bò l'òmo ogún,</i>	Even if you do not have 20 children,
<i>Wo èyìn re wò.</i>	Look behind you.

From the textual transcription above, the first line and the second line of the poetry are the same in Yoruba but have different English translation. The difference in meaning is only obvious in the spoken words because of the drawing of the words in speech. The drum music is a reflective one and it is thought-provoking too. Many people are kind to their children and relatives but unsympathetic towards the welfare of others. This music is a philosophical one, which makes people to be restrained from selfish actions that could cause future embarrassment and rejection. Politicians especially act selfishly after getting the people's mandates, they sometimes fail to deliver the promises made before the elections. When drummers sight such politicians at social gatherings, they perform this music to bring about sober reflection and it has been very effective in redirecting people back to being humane and reliable.

Figure 4: “*Ilé Èkuté*” (Rats House)

## ILE EKUTE





### Drum Music Texts

#### Yoruba Texts

Ilé won náà nùn nì, 2ce  
 Iléàbèrèwò bi iléèkuté.  
 Ilé won náà nùn nì..

#### English Interpretation

Behold their houses, 2ce  
 A short house that can only be entered by bending down  
 Behold their houses,

Figure 4 presents another music that is entitled *Ilé Èkuté* (Rats House), notated in compound duple time, and 8 bars for this study. The music functions as a satire to correct the ills of society. *Ilé Èkuté* (Rats House), is a proverbial saying that is directed at people's character rather than their habitation. It describes the worthlessness of such people vis a vis rats' houses. It forms a high degree of music for ridiculing highly influential and powerful people in the land. The music reduces the worth of such persons and rubbishes their wealth once it is performed. The targets are mostly politicians and wicked people in the community.

Figure 5: Oba To To (A Worthy King)

## ỌBA TO TO

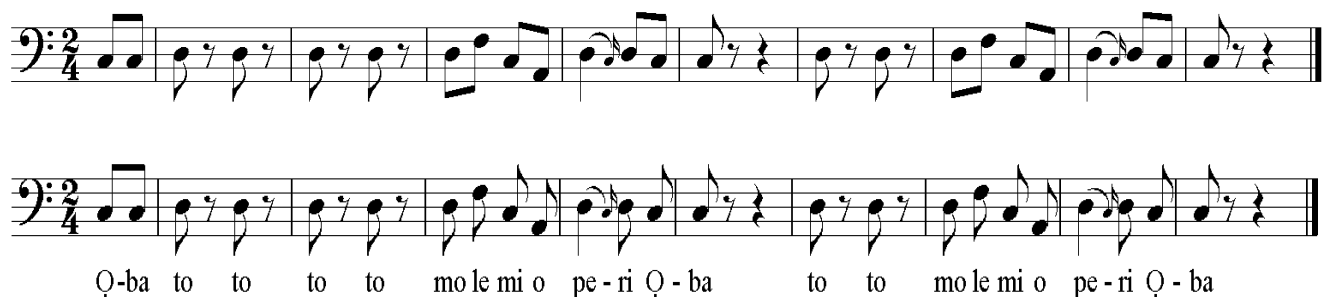


Figure 5

The last music to be described under function is for royalty, it is solely meant for the

The last music to be discussed under function has dual notation; the simple drum notation and the verbal drum notation for the speaker and the non-speaker of Yoruba language. The music is solely meant for the praises of kings and also to express the satisfaction of the people with regards to the pleasant reign. It is notated in simple duple crotchet meter of ten bars. The range is within the interval of a sixth. The notation has a pictorial essence of notes and rest alternation in bars 2,3,6,7, and 10. The notation appears to be anacrusis {an incomplete bar} which is not so in the entire music because this is just an extract.

The text in Yoruba	English Interpretation
Oba to tó to tó,	A worthy king (with emphasis)
Mo l'èmi o pe'rì Oba;	I did not call the king in vain:
Oba tó tó tó tó	A worthy king (with emphasis)

Figure 5 of the drum music transcription is a proven admiration for a thoughtful and selfless king whose consideration for the people has brought development to the land. The master drummer in line with tradition will always progress from this music into the lineage praise names of the king and, thereafter, reinstate this drum music before concluding the performance.

### **The Significance of Syncopation, Hemiola, and the Hocket Techniques in Drumming**

There are three major techniques in drumming that determines the rating of drummers. This rating of drummers is not only in his ability to play the drum but rather in his improvisatory skills. No master drummer may be able to teach younger ones these skills, it is inbuilt and generates from the absorbing consciousness and the willing submission of the learners to emerging musical performance situation. A master drummer varies a theme from simple to complex depending on the calibre of the audience before him, no wonder, the best drumming performance is always recorded at festivals where the audience's expectation of the drummers' performance is always unarguably exceptional. The ability to develop personal variation strategies is also an advantage in productive drumming engagements; this aptitude endears the drummer to the hearts of his audience who would over time engage the service of the former in future outdoor/indoor performances.

One of the best methods of identifying specifically the techniques adopted by drummers at performance is to collect and transcribe the music and then do a thorough analysis of the collected extract. The notation on *À seè se tún se* We will have multiple celebration is a very common repertoire at tradition events. The analysis reveals the following about the rhythmic pattern: The drummer presented the rhythmic pattern first without any verbal communication. A simple duple meter was adopted for transcription and analysis. The entire music is in eight (8) bars, the bass staff was used for the notation to reflect the density of the tone colour. The notation in the key of C major portrays the accent and not the sol-fa of the words associated with the drumming pattern, even though the words are yet to unfold. Strict Western interpretation of the notation without taking cognizance of the accent may be misleading. The minutes' detail of this notation emphasis exerts a subtle implication on the dominance of the word inflection over the bass line, if the word is not guided by the accent, it becomes ambiguous. The notation follows a normal rhythmic flow except for bars six that introduces a triplet which brings an irregular sound pattern into a passage in simple time.

### **Hemiola**

Oxford Dictionary of Music describes hemiola as a “superimposition of three notes in the time of two and vice versa”. This is a horizontal description of the rhythmic pattern that may also be

illustrated vertically. Hemiola is an important traditional drumming trait, a unique rhythmic pattern in Yoruba music. This technique can be briefly adopted as three duple values in place of two triple ones in any drum music performance or may sometimes occur between three instruments as evident in figure 6. The technique is better understood as polyrhythm or cross-rhythm in drumming.

Figure 6: Example 1, Hemiola Technique in Ensemble Performance

HEMIOLA BETWEEN SEKERE, ATELE, AND ISAAJU

From the illustration in Figure 6:1, two drums and a rattle are represented there but the distinct hemiola techniques are evident from bar 1 to 5 of the notation. The notation is in compound duple time that the sekere is characterized effectively while the atele drum signifies the superimposition of the three notes in the time of two for the *sekere* (rattle). The controlling or identifying element in this notation is the Hemiola technique adopted by these two ensemble instruments. This tangible illustration shows how the outwardly repetitive notation is compounded on the third staff and at the same time simplified on the second staff by this usage (6/8 time is a compound time of 2 dotted crotchets in a bar as evident in the third staff of the notation but the simplified version of three crotchets in a bar is a conventional variation of the hemiola). This performance may not be as rigid as it is notated here; this is the background rhythmic lines that are constantly dictated by the systematized resourcefulness of the drummers, a combined notation but when played each instrumentalist focus on his part.

Figure 6: Example 2, Hemiola Technique

EXAMPLE 2

Isaaju drum rhythm in this notation provides space-filler punctuation for *atele* and *sekere* that are laden with hemiola technique. The example in Figure 6, Example 2 is richer in sound quality because of the rhythmic punctuation of the first line. The hemiola pattern is an exact repetition of notated work. In *dùndún* drumming, rhythmic patterns are combined to produce a certain effect, there are sometimes simultaneous usages of three beats of equivalent value in the time usually occupied by two beats; this is generally referred to as hemiola.

example 1.

Figure 6: Example 3, Hemiola Technique



The notation in Figure 6, Example 3 is a complex one, it is not as simplified in sound as Examples 1 and 2, despite this, the superimposition of three notes against two is still reflected on the rhythmic lines of isaaju and atele (These are smaller version of the talking drum). It must be noted here that drum music construction is at the discretion of the drummers who take responsibility for its artistic quality. As long as the conventional rules are observed, the originality of the drummers' inventiveness is always cheered.

## Hocket

This is a technique whereby the constituent notes of a tune, a rhythmic or a tone-pattern, or the constituent notes of a supporting ground-accompaniment, are played at the exactly appropriate point in time by those particular instruments that include them within their compass, or by those particular instruments that provide the required contrast (Nketia, 1986: 44)

The hocket technique in Yoruba music is more visible in drumming than in any other music genre, especially in *dùndún* music. This technique is discussed consequently with particular reference to *omele isaaju* and *omele atele* drum patterns, two complementary drums of the *bata* ensemble. A common quality of this technique among others is the balancing roles it plays in the ensemble. From the notated drum pattern, it is noticeable that the two drums do not play at the same time, the line assigned to *omele Isaaju* and *omele atele* always alternate each other using both hemiola and hocket style (when one is playing, the other is resting and because the tones of the drums are tuned slightly differently by the contraction of the leather trunk, an emerging harmony occur at the performance). This pattern as seen in figure 7 plays continuously at times throughout the

performance. The technique by this alternating function provides an exciting result that enriches the quality of drumming.

Figure 7: Example 1, Hocket Technique

There are eight quavers in figure 7, example 1, the *Isaaju* drum has 3 points of attack of quavers notes while *Atele* has 5 points of attack of quavers notes, both drums shared a rhythmic line that is alternated between them. This is an expression of the hocket technique in a notation. In considering the notation, the staff should be overlooked; it was used purely to reflect the pitches of both drums. As notated *Isaaju* drum is higher in pitch than *Atele*. A simple hocket technique is also used in *dùndún* drumming when two master drummers perform; there is a deliberate alternation of pattern that could have been played by one of the drummers but now interplayed by



Both, this is to create hocket technique in performance. This pattern is made possible by the use of silence as well as sounds; the regular interchange of silence in the performance of a drummer and sounds in the performance of the other, running concurrently gives a perfect effect of simple hocket techniques.

In figure 7, example 2, *Isaaju* shared a rhythmic line in compound duple time with the *Kerikeri*, *Kerikeri* played the first 2 quavers while *Isaaju* played the last 4 quavers in an alternating form. In the hocket technique when an instrument that sharing a rhythmic line with another plays the other must rest, both instruments cannot play at the same time, they must alternate.

### Syncopation

Huron explains syncopation as a “cognitive mechanism that violates metric expectation, a form of temporal irregularity in the music signal” (Huron, 2006, 297). London defines syncopation as an “improper binding of a musical pattern found on a weak metrical position and resulting in a weak-strong rhythmic figure” (London, 2012:107). Both definitions are significant in the understanding of the use of syncopation techniques in drumming. Cognitive alertness is required in the interpretation and usage of this technique in professional performance. The illustration provided in Figure 8 reveals a version of syncopation that was achieved by deliberate obstruction of the meter of the notated music; instead of the notation to be compounded, it was simplified. The technical template of twelve quavers in a bar which leads to a mixture of the strong and weak rhythmic figures is found in the notation. Drumming style does not always follow the normal rhythmic flow; there are moments of departure from regular patterns, and the use of deliberate alternation of rhythmic points. For example, in a “syncopated rhythm accents are deliberately displaced to create an appearance of syncopation in order to present an existing rhythm in an unusual way to motivate the audience at traditional and social events” (Idamoyibo, 2019:256).

In traditional drumming syncopation dominates almost all the rhythmic lines employ by the lead drummers at performances. More so most of the proverbs played by master drummers during improvisation are subject to syncopated rhythmic patterns of traditional drumming. This technique can be easily noticed in any Yoruba instrumental setting where the full complement of the *dùndún* ensemble performs. In *dùndún* drumming, there is a presence of the onward desire in a performance that inspires the music and creates a decisive rhythmic movement that is danceable.

Figure 8: Syncopation

ISAAJU, ATELE, AND IYA-ILU ( SYNCOPATION )

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system includes three staves: ISAAJU 1, ATELE 2, and IYA - ILU 3. The second system includes three staves: ISAAJU, ATELE, and IYA - ILU. All staves are in 12/8 time. The ISAAJU parts feature a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with frequent syncopation. The ATELE parts consist of eighth notes and rests. The IYA - ILU parts feature a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with syncopation. The score illustrates the complex rhythmic interplay characteristic of traditional Yoruba drumming.

The notation in figure 8 there is a breach of a conventional metrical requirement (a substantial characteristic of sound) that requires that regular notation enables the division of the beats in a bar to be separated into two equal parts, especially in simple duple, quadruple and compound duple and quadruple time respectively. In bar 1 of the notation, there is a tie, that links the second beat to the third beat thereby creating a syncopated technique in notation and sound. This is a typical example of syncopation in drum music. The music is in 6 bars, compound quadruple time where *Isaaju* (all the local words here are members of the dundun ensemble) occupies the first line, *Atele* the second line, and *Iyaalu* the third line respectively. The fundamental presence of syncopation is noticeable on the first staff of the music illustration for the *Isaaju* drum, between the second and the third beats. The demarcation between these beats has been bridged by the presence of syncopation at that point.

Figure 9

ANOTHER EXAMLE FROM BATA DRUM

The musical notation is presented in three systems, each with three staves. The first system is labeled 'IYA - ILU', 'OMELE - ABO', and 'OMELE - META'. The second system is labeled '3' and the third system is labeled '5'. The notation includes various drum sounds such as Slap, Mid, Low, and Hi, and is written in 12/8 time. The first staff of each system shows a syncopated rhythm, with a tie between the second and third beats in the first bar.

The last music example is in Figure 9, this is the only pattern from the *bata* ensemble that reflects vividly the syncopation technique within the beats of *omele* meta and runs through the notation circularly and repetitively. The rhythm appears simple but is a bit complex in performance because of the obscurity or irregularity of the syncopated rhythm.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that verbal drumming is a patterned and specialized art used in performance to correct some persons in the society whose attitude are bad, commend models in the community whose conducts are good, instruct young drummers and audience on new occurrences in the society, and institute new and dynamic drumming skills for future performances in Yoruba land. *Dùndún* music is a function of the dynamic process of the techniques adopted by the drummer in the sustenance of invaluable traditional bound between drumming and skill intervention. The study focuses on the function and rhythmic techniques adopted in *dùndún* and drumming performance in Yoruba land. The study shows that the use of syncopation in drumming varies from one drummer to another based on their cognitive alertness and improvisatory ability. It also demonstrates that a single syncopation pattern, when adopted by different drummers, produces creatively alternating drumming style based on the interpretation of the master drummers. It also reveals that the usage of hocket technique in performance is beyond the sharing of a rhythmic line by two drummers; it is actually an opportunity for them to generate an emerging harmony that is purely orally conceived. Hemiola technique is vital in the creation of drum rhythmic patterns and is fundamentally an indispensable movement in respect of the identified procedures of the layers of the transliterated music and the principal elements of the rhythm. An attempt is made to give a comprehensive account of the rhythmic grouping of the transcribed music by revealing the different elements of the notation and the observable skills of the drummers in the variation of the *dùndún* rhythmic patterns at the performance. Despite the roles institutions of higher learning play in the revival, operation, and advancement of traditional music in Yoruba land, southwest Nigeria, the bequest of this music still resides in the collective efforts of traditional drummers and artistes for its survival.

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Oral Interview

Oluwole Fadipe a Master Drummer on the Iyaalu Dùndún was interviewed at Ibadan Polytechnic in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria on Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of September, 2020.

Oluwole Aro a composer, performer, and multi-instrumentalist on both African and Western Instruments was interviewed in Akure, Ekiti State, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of February and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August, 2020.