

**An arrangement of *Atuak UkQd Mben Inyang* for contemporary
choral expression**

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Abstract

Palm wine tapping and drinking, and the songs that accompany these practices are deeply embedded in Annang society. The popular Annang palm wine folk melody *Atuak UkQd Mben Inyang* was purposively selected, transcribed and explored for this study in contemporary choral arrangement based on variation as compositional technique. The song-text was examined as a subject of cultural metaphor, using qualitative descriptive approach. Anchored on performance theory, the study has wider implications in composition praxis beyond creative addition to indigenous art musical repertoire to critical textual review. The textual analysis of the composition (which focuses on the metaphor of performance and exit), is relevant in today's socio-political and professional contexts. The paper recommends that contemporary indigenous composers should tap into the palm wine music heritage of their respective communities for the production of contemporary musical works, and not to disregard them as merely songs for drunkards.

Keywords: Annang folk melody, choral arrangement, metaphor, palm wine tapping, performance and exit

Introduction

The name ‘Annang’ refers both to the people as a tribe, and the language spoken by the people. The Annang nationality is the second largest tribe in Akwa Ibom State, and it occupies the North-Western area of the State. An account by Essien (2011, p.25), shows that it is situated within the Cross River basin between latitudes 4⁰ 25’ and 7⁰ North and longitude 7⁰. 15’ and 9⁰30’. The north of Annang is bounded by Ini and Ikono Local Government Areas, and by Ikot Abasi Local Government Area in the south. Abia and Rivers States are her western neighbours, while her eastern frontiers are demarcated by Uyo and Mkpato Enin Local Government Areas of the State. Annang covers eight local government areas to the northern and western parts of the State, which are Abak, Ikot Ekpene, Essien Udim, Ika, Obot Akara, Etim Ekpo, OrukAnam and Ukanafun (with Ikot Ekpene as the headquarters).

The folk musical heritage of the Annang people has been characterised by a close interrelationship between music, oral poetry, and dance. Songs have traditionally been performed to accompany rites of passage, festivals, occupational activities, and informal gatherings. Through such performances, historical memory has been preserved, communal morality has been reinforced, and social cohesion has been promoted. The oral nature of these musical traditions has allowed for improvisation, variation, and audience participation, thereby ensuring continuity and relevance across generations. As has been observed by Essien (2010), Annang folk songs encapsulate the philosophies of community livelihood, while simultaneously functioning as hubs of wisdom and creativity.

Among the diverse genres of Annang folk music, palm wine songs are relatively significant. The occupation of palm wine tapping – which, historically, has sustained local economies and social life, has been closely tied to musical expression. As the palm wine tapper ascends and descends the palm tree trunk, songs are often intoned in rhythmic patterns that correspond with the physical movements of climbing, cutting, and collecting. And when palm wine is consumed in communal gatherings, music is performed to evoke humour, provoke reflection, or satire. Rooted in the immediate realities of occupational life, these songs have also been endowed with layers of metaphor and symbolism, thus functioning as means by which cultural philosophies are transported.

The performance of palm wine songs has been observed to combine artistry with functionality. Melodic lines are typically simple, allowing for easy memorisation and collective participation, while textual content is infused with imagery that mirrors everyday realities. Metaphors of ascent and descent, labour and rest, performance and exit, are frequently employed to give the tapper’s task a wider cultural and existential meaning. In this sense, palm wine songs have come to embody more than occupational chants: they have emerged as symbolic narratives of human effort, struggle, and transience. As Okon (2016) has argued, the symbolism embedded in

Annang folk performances extends beyond entertainment to the reinforcement of collective identity and the preservation of cultural memory.

Despite the cultural significance of these musical traditions, scholarly engagement with Annang palm wine songs has remained limited. While research has been devoted to broader Nigerian folk music, systematic structural analysis and metaphorical interpretation of Annang palm wine songs have not been adequately pursued. The song *Atuak UkOd Mben Inyang* provides a representative case in which themes of performance and exit are richly expressed, yet they remain underexplored in academic discourse. The limited arrangement and analysis of palm wine songs for contemporary performance has created a gap that threatens the preservation and appreciation of this artistic heritage. It is within this context that the present study has been undertaken, with the aim of examining the structural and textual features of *Atuak UkOd Mben Inyang*, by interpreting its metaphorical meanings, and arranging it for contemporary choral performance as a means of documentation, preservation, and projection of Annang folk musical heritage.

The notion of Annang traditional music culture

It has long been established that Africans possess a distinctive traditional music culture that is essentially different from Western traditions. Ethnomusicological studies have affirmed that African musical craftsmanship is nurtured from within cultural backgrounds rather than external frameworks. Among the Annang people, as with other African groups, music, culture, and community life are inseparably linked. Musical idioms, drum poetry, and the textual dimensions of songs are shaped primarily by cultural values. The selection of musical instruments and textual formulations are also imbued with meanings that extend far beyond their surface expressions.

Lawson (2020) provides a useful comparative insight, noting that whereas European music is often characterised by deep harmonies and melodic progression, African drumming and musical practices have developed along paths of rhythmic and polyrhythmic complexity. According to him:

The African drum and style has taken an entirely different path to musical evolution and it is based on more complex rhythms and polyrhythms that our students aren't accustomed to. In African culture, the drum represents the 'heartbeat' of mother earth. Therefore, they have deep roots in both nature and spiritualism for the African people. The 'heartbeat' is explored through different rhythms in gatherings and rituals in Africa.

Okafor (2005, p. 88) further emphasises the spiritual vitality of African music, describing it as "the force of a living spirit moving within those who perform it, those who have to use it, those who are its targets and those whose actions and non-actions it dictates, influences or moulds." For him, the music patterns of African communities serve as true indices of behaviour, carriage, personality, and identity.

Within this interpretive frame, African drumming assumes special significance. Drums and their rhythmic patterns represent a high point of African musical creativity, not only accompanying songs but also dramatising vocal lines. Instruments are employed to fulfil both musical and non-musical functions, and the performance of drum-poetry is guided by an inherent spirit of communication. Koch (2023) reinforces this perspective, remarking that:

Traditionally, the drum was the heartbeat, the soul of most African communities. Drums have been an intrinsic part of African life for centuries and for countless generations, an ancient instrument used to celebrate all the aspects of life. In Western culture drumming is, most often about entertainment. In Africa, drums hold a deeper, symbolic and historical significance. They herald political and social events attending ceremonies of birth, death and marriage. They spark courtships, they herald home-coming and going and they accompany religious rites and rituals, calling up ancestral spirits.

While the role of drums has been widely emphasised, word formulation within song-texts is equally symbolic in Annang traditional music. Proverbs and idioms are frequently embedded within performances. A proverbial statement such as “*agwo itahata ikwɔ, ekama enwɔŋ ukɔd*” (literally: people do not chew music but merely use it to drink wine), is illustrative. Although open to various interpretations, the saying suggests that wine is prioritised over music, with music serving as a catalyst for drinking.

Palm wine tapping and *ikwɔ-ukɔd*

Palm wine tapping has traditionally been practised to provide *ukɔd* (local wine) for communal use. The palm wine tapper is required to ascend palm trees in the mornings and evenings so that drinkers may readily obtain the beverage in their homes or at public gatherings, especially during evenings. The preparation of a palm tree for tapping involves cutting young fronds at the crown and treating the trunk with a specially prepared smoky fire (*ikaŋ-ukɔd*) for several weeks. This process enables the tree to yield its sap in sufficient quantity.

The climbing itself is facilitated by a ladder, which is often made of bamboo, or constructed from two dry palm stems that are held together with wooden pegs (*abed-ukɔd*) to provide a firm grip. Wine palms are found both near riverbanks and within cultivated compounds. Unlike the oil palm that produces fruits for oil extraction, the wine palm yields sap for drinking and fermentation for the purpose of distillation. Once mature, the tree produces sap that is collected in a calabash (*abaŋ-ukɔd*) that is attached at the crown. A productive palm may yield wine for three weeks or more before exhaustion. Fresh sap is consumed immediately, or alternatively processed into local gin (*akaikai*).

Because of the arduous nature of palm wine tapping, songs were composed in traditional Annang communities to celebrate and honour the tapper. These songs

often functioned as farewell arias, simultaneously extolling the tapper's skill and recognising his indispensable role in sustaining communal life.

Okon and Johnny (2021), in a study of *Ikwɔ-Ukɔd* (drinking songs) among the Annang of Etim Ekpo, highlight their communal and educational roles. Examples include songs such as *Ñwöng nnö ikó* (Drink and return the gourd to me), *Ké ùsö iki ñwöngö ntôm* (For your father did not drink like this), and *Ikidö ùkà!* (And married your mother!). Although often sung by intoxicated individuals in evening 'joints', however, these songs are not reducible to drunken frivolities.

Annang drinking songs are not just sung for fun. Almost every song signifies and sends a message across to its listeners. These songs not only entertain but they also instruct, and men and women alike participate in their performance. They accompany drinking sessions, relieve fatigue, and offer communal refreshment. In this way, drinking songs are woven into the broader cultural fabric of the Annang society by blending humour, instruction, and solidarity in the communal enjoyment of palm wine.

Theoretical framework: performance theory

Performance Theory, as articulated by Richard Schechner (2002), has been widely applied in the study of music, theatre, and cultural events. Within this framework, performance has been defined not merely as an act of entertainment but as a patterned and repeatable behaviour through which meaning is communicated in society. It has been emphasised that everyday activities, rituals, and even occupational tasks can be interpreted as performances when they are ritualised and endowed with symbolic meaning.

In the case of *Atuak UkQd Mben Inyang*, the occupational activities of the palm-wine tapper have been ritualised through music and presented as a communal performance. Ascending on the palm tree by the tapper, collecting the wine, and descending from the tree, have been framed as a sequence of actions that embody both labour and artistry. Through the folk song, these activities have been dramatised as performative events in which the community's identity, values, and worldview are symbolically expressed. By this theoretical lens, the folk song has been recognised as a performance that extends beyond entertainment to functioning as a cultural enactment.

The act of climbing and performing represents effort, labour, and striving, while the descent or exit symbolises rest, fulfilment, and closure. In the musical construction of the song (where a theme is stated and then developed through variations), an ordered logic has been revealed that reflects how cultural meaning is sustained through structure. Through this framework, the folk song has been situated within the broader discourse of how African communities encode their values and philosophies in patterned artistic forms.

Transcription of the original folk melody

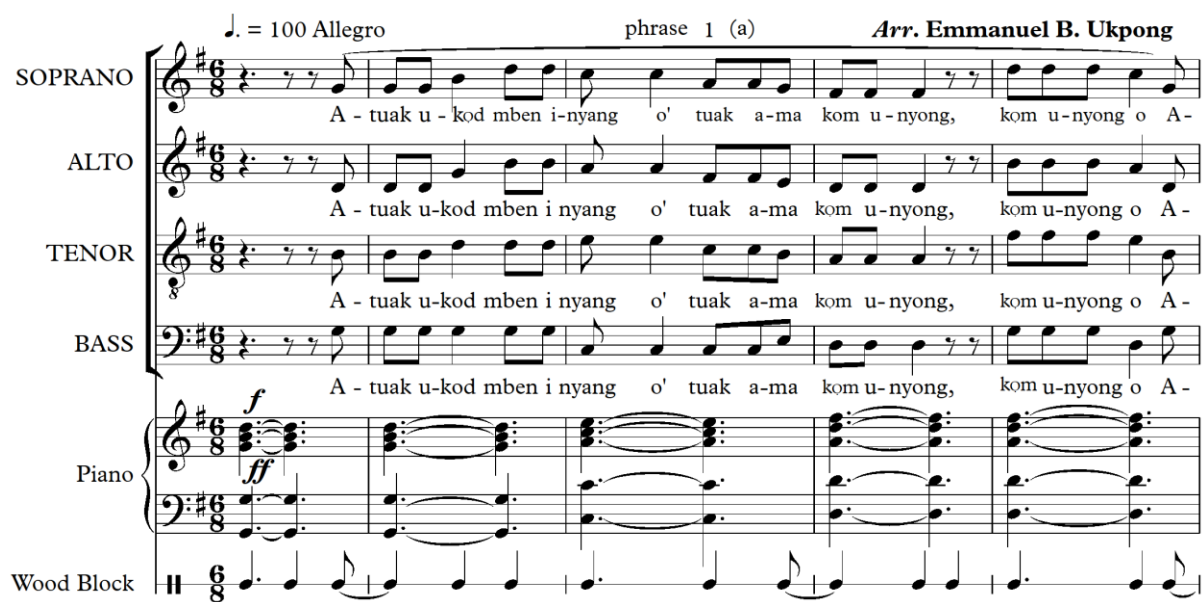
ATUAK UKQD MBEN INYANG



5 A - tuak u - kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a - ma ko-ngo' bang,
kom u-nyong o A tuak u-kod mben i-nyang o' tuak a-ma ko-ngo' bang, kom u-nyong.

ATUAK UKQD MBEN INYANG

$\text{♩} = 100$ Allegro phrase 1 (a) *Arr. Emmanuel B. Ukpong*



SOPRANO A - tuak u - kod mben i-nyang o' tuak a-ma kom u-nyong, kom u-nyong o A -
ALTO A - tuak u-kod mben i nyang o' tuak a-ma kom u-nyong, kom u-nyong o A -
TENOR A - tuak u-kod mben i nyang o' tuak a-ma kom u-nyong, kom u-nyong o A -
BASS A - tuak u-kod mben i nyang o' tuak a-ma kom u-nyong, kom u-nyong o A -
Piano *f* *ff*
Wood Block

6 phrase 2 (b)

tuak u - kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong. A - tuak u - kod mben i -

tuak u - kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong. A - tuak u - kod mben i -

tuak u - kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong. A - tuak u - kod mben i -

tuak u - kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong. A - tuak u - kod mben i -

11

nyang o' tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong o A tuak u - kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a - ma

nyang o' tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong o A tuak u - kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a - ma

nyang o' tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong o A - tuak u - kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a - ma

nyang o' tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong o A - tuak u - kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a - ma

16

kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong.

kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong.

kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong.

kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong.

23

A - tuak u - kod mben i -

30

nyang o' tuak a-ma kong'a - bang, kom u-nyong o, a - tuak u-kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a-ma

35

kongo'_bang kom u-nyong A - tuak u-kod mben i - nyang o' tuak a-ma kong'a-bang,

45

A - tuak u-kod mben i-nyang a - tuaka-ma' kong' a - bang
A - tuak u-kod mben i-nyang a - tuaka- ma' kong' a - bang,
ff A - tuak u-kod mben i-nyang a - tuaka- ma' kong'a - bang,
A - tuak u-kod mben i-nyang a - tuaka-ma' kong'a-bang,

51

kom u-nyong. A - tuak u-kod mben i - nyang, a - tuak u-kod mben i - nyang, a

56

tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - yong, kom u-nyong. kom-u-nyong,

tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong,

tuak a - ma kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong,

tuak a - ma 'kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong, kom u - nyong,

61

kom u-nyong, kom u-nyong, kom u - nyong.

kom u-nyong, kom u-nyong, kom u - nyong.

kom u-nyong, kom u-nyong, kom u - nyong.

kom u-nyong kom u-nyong, kom u - nyong.



Musical analysis of *Atuak UkQd Mben Inyang*

Medium: Choral voices with piano and woodblock accompaniment.

Style: Tonal.

Form: Theme and variation.

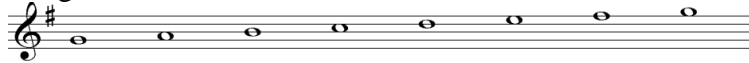
Meter/Time Signature: $\frac{6}{8}$

Key/Mode: G Major.

Metronome: dotted crotchet = 100

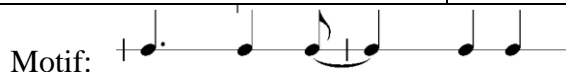
Texture: Homophonic.

Length: 70 measures



Scale: Diatonic

Section	Melodic Themes	Measures
1 (mm 1 – 17)	A (Theme), 5,4,4,4	
2 Interlude (mm 18 – 28)	A 1 (B) Variation 1: 4, 7	17
3 Tenor solo (mm 29 – 44)	A 2 (C): Variation 2: 4, 5,4,4	11
4 Tutti/Chorus (mm 47 – 63)	A 3 (D): Variation : 5, 2, 2,	17
5 Interlude (mm 64 – 70)	2, 6	17
	A 1 (B): Repetition	8



Mood/Character: Dance-like and happy.

Climax: Measure 49.

Extra-musical element: Entertainment.

Theme A (1): [Measures 1 – 17]

The theme is a full presentation of the folk melody as it is usually rendered by the Annang people during folk songs performances. It is harmonised with the conventional four-part structure of soprano, alto, tenor and bass in two phrases ('a' (mm1-5) and 'b' (mm6-9)), with repetitions that are essential elements in Western music construct and African music (Green, 1965, p.96; Agu, 2024, p.47). Harmonic formula is I – IV – V – I. An instrumental accompaniment of the piano and the woodblock furnishes the song with a consistent rhythmic character. The woodblock is a primary instrument in the Annang music culture that is mostly used to accompany songs in social and religious contexts (Ukpong, 2025). Its usage in this study gives the song its Afro-centric and Annang identity. The woodblock is, generally, characterised by syncopated beats with dotted crotchet pulses on the main beats of the song. The melodic theme begins with the tonic chord G, and cascades in the form of arpeggio for the soprano melody (m2), and descends undulatingly downwards from the subdominant C to the leading note F# as its first cadential break (mm3-4).



From an ethnomusicological perspective, the theme unfolds in related phrases as follows: phrase 1 (mm1-5), phrase 2 (mm6-9), with repetitions in measures 10-13 and 14-17. The phrases are subdivided in line with the text in order to conform to the meanings of the words. This is an important aspect of correlation of speech and melody associated with African languages (including the Annang language), which are basically tone languages (Nketia, 1974, p.184; Udondata, 2006, p.34). The voice parts are homophonic (i.e. tonal/rhythmic movements in similar direction) as they rise and fall to depict a unit of homophonic parallelism. Parallel intervals of 3rds, 4ths and others give rise to homophonic parallelism in African music (Nketia, 1974, p. 161). Consequently, the theme contains intervals of 4ths and 3rds in soprano and alto as well as intervals of 3rds and 5ths in tenor and bass. The bass portrays traits of pedal notes (drones) in root positions as exemplified in measures 1-4. The piano harmony employs block chords on the treble while the bass uses polarity (notes in octaves) to accentuate the rhythmic pulses of the song. The theme is closely followed by an instrumental interlude of 11 measures as the first variation of the melody.

Variation 1 (A 1): [Measures 18 – 28]

The first variation is in the form of melodic commentary on the main melody by the piano in harmonic 3rds and block chordal notes for the treble at cadential points as presented in measures 22–28. Instead of playing the interlude of the melody from the tonic G, the arranger decides to digress from the tonic, G, and evoke a sense of a brief development of the theme by stating a fresh variant on the dominant, D, using its harmonic structure with the mediant B (DB). The melodic variant operates in 3rds with a firm bass-line structure I – IV – V – I in root positions, without inversions. The notes of the melodic variant are in similar motion while the bass notes are characterised by oblique motion in octaves.

Variation 2 (A 2): [Measures 29 – 44]

The second variation is a tenor variant of the melodic theme. It is a creative framework used as development technique to strengthen the texture of the song. The instrumental interlude (as the first variant) is used as accompaniment for the tenor variant. There is a change of harmonic structure of this interlude in measures 32 and 40 with an introduction of the C# chord to serve as a partial modulation from the home key, G major, to the dominant, D. The entire variation is repetitive in nature. However, while borrowing textual and tonal materials from the first phrase (mm29 – 35), it terminates on the octave of the tonic, G, in measure 44 as a perfect close to the second variation. This paves the way for the chorus variant leading to the climax of the folk melody in measure 49. Variation 2 is a quasi-question that ushers in the last variant of the song.

Variation 3 (A 3): [Measures 47 – 63]

This is the final variation of this song. It functions as a chorus answer to the tenor variant with new varied thematic materials. It moves from the dominant, D, to a crescendo on the octave of the supertonic, A, to create the climax of the music in measure 49. Its textual structure deviates from the preceding text in order to place it as the last episode. It shows the final exit of the tapper who ends his trade by removing the wine-pot from the wine palm and bids farewell in the words, “*Atuak ukQd mben inyang tuak ama kongo bang, kom unyong*”. In a dramatic way, this variation applies tonal sequences with successional descending of notes from the submediant, E, to dominant, D, then to C (mm52 – 58) to illustrate how the river bank wine tapper descends from the top of the wine palm on his *abed ukQd* (ladder). Finally, the final variation rises in a vertical melodic/harmonic pattern to the octave of the tonic, G, as a grand coda in measure 63. This is a device that establishes an ovation ending to the exit of the river bank wine tapper.

English translation of *Atuak UkQd Mben Inyang*

<i>Atuak ukQd mben inyang o'</i>	The river bank tapper
<i>Tuak ama kom unyong,</i>	Ends tapping,
<i>(kongo bang)</i>	(Takes down the pot)
<i>Kom unyong o:</i>	Bids farewell:
<i>Atuak ukQd mben inyang o'</i>	The river bank tapper
<i>Tuak ama kom unyong,</i>	Ends tapping,
<i>Kom unyong</i>	Bids farewell

Performance and exit in *Atuak Ukod Mben Inyang*

In *Atuak UkQd Mben Inyang*, performance has been presented as both a musical and occupational act. The climbing of the palm tree, the preparation of the fronds, and the collection of wine are typified as the core elements of performance. Each stage of the tapper's activity has been embodied with rhythm, movement, and symbolic meaning that extend beyond mere labour. The performance, therefore, has been

experienced not only as a process of producing palm wine but also as an enactment of communal identity and cultural expression.

Exit, on the other hand, has been understood as the climactic closure of this performance. The descent of the tapper from the tree after the wine has been collected is typified as a moment of fulfilment and triumph. In this symbolic frame, the exit does not signify the end of labour alone but represents a transition into celebration, as the wine becomes available for communal drinking. The performance cycle has, therefore, been completed through an exit that embodies both closure and renewal, ensuring that the labour of the tapper is transformed into social vitality.

The song has thus highlighted how performance and exit are inseparably woven into the cultural logic of the Annang people. Work, music, and social life have been fused in a manner that dramatises human effort and its resolution, giving meaning to both the act and its conclusion.

Implications

The study of *Atuak UkQd Mben Inyang* is seen to carry implications that extend into contemporary composition, performance practice, pedagogy, cultural studies, and wider social realities. In the field of modern Nigerian art music, models for integrating indigenous concepts into new works are provided by the structural and metaphorical framing of performance and exit in this song. Traditional idioms have been recognised as being embedded within art music compositions by composers such as Ayo Bankole and Sam Akpabot (Omojola, 1995). Compositional techniques that highlight contrast, climax, and resolution within orchestral or operatic forms could be inspired by the metaphoric representation of ascent (performance) and descent (exit) in this folk song. By drawing upon such indigenous metaphors, works that resonate with local audiences while contributing to global discourses in music are created by composers.

In performance practice, the importance of closure as a performative act is underscored by the notion of exit as an integral part of the performance. Rather than the conclusion of a performance being viewed as mere cessation, performers and directors are encouraged by the Annang example to treat endings as charged, symbolic, and transformative. Implications are, therefore, held for theatre and music productions in Nigeria, where cultural metaphors of renewal and transition could be consciously infused into the dramaturgy of endings.

In the context of pedagogy and ethnomusicology curricula, the song provides a valuable case study for teaching students about the embedded nature of music in social life. The holistic nature of African traditional music, where art cannot be separated from lived experience, is exemplified by the integration of performance and exit as cultural metaphors. It has been argued by scholars such as Nzewi (1991) that African music education must incorporate indigenous aesthetics if relevance is to be maintained. A curriculum that emphasises not only technique but also cultural

meaning, metaphor and symbolism is, therefore, supported by the analysis of *Atuak UkQd Mben Inyang*.

From the standpoint of cultural studies, new ways of analysing labour, ritual, and social identity are opened up by the metaphor of performance and exit. Exit, in particular, is read as a metaphor for death, transition, or the conclusion of a life's labour, thereby giving the song existential depth. It has been noted by Barber (1997) that African performance traditions are saturated with symbolic meanings through which societal values and cosmologies are reflected. This implies that performance and exit can be extended beyond the palm wine tapper to broader reflections on human effort, mortality, and community continuity in African thought.

More broadly, contemporary social realities are seen to resonate with the metaphor of exit. In contexts of migration, the departure from home communities in search of opportunities abroad is symbolised by exit, with implications for how identity and belonging are negotiated in diasporic life. In professional life, retirement is described as an exit from active service; not simply as the end of labour but as a transition into new forms of social contribution or rest. In politics, the transfer of power has been dramatised as exit, where leadership transitions, whether orderly or contested, are given symbolic weight for national renewal and continuity. In these cases, the Annang folk metaphor demonstrates that exits are never mere endings but reconfigurations of meaning and continuity in social life.

In sum, the need for re-engaging traditional African music not only as heritage but also as a living resource for creativity, scholarship, and social commentary is highlighted by the implications of this study. By examining performance and exit in *Atuak UkQd Mben Inyang*, a pathway is opened for the rethinking of how communal songs can inspire contemporary art music, shape music education, enrich cultural theories, and provide metaphors for understanding transitions in modern African societies.

Conclusion

Annang folk melodies have generally been characterised by metaphors that embody hidden meanings. This feature has been illustrated in the song used in this study. From the analysis, the *atuak ukQd mben inyang* (the river-bank wine tapper) has not been represented as an insignificant personality but rather as a central character through whom important reflections have been communicated. The trade of the tapper has been presented in ordinary terms yet with extraordinary impression, such that the Annang community found it necessary to preserve his significance in a folk melody, and invariably arranged in contemporary choral contexts.

Structured in three related sections, and following variation form, the piece is recognised as a short choral work that is suitable for concert performance and entertainment. In this way, the lessons embodied in the life and performance of the wine tapper can be sustained, not only within the Annang nation, but also as models

for other societies around the globe. The theme has been stated in the A section, while the subsequent parts (A1, A2, and A3) have been devoted to variations of the principal idea.

The entire work has been interpreted as a demonstration of performance and exit, figuratively rendered to communicate lessons to the wider public. Among these lessons is the reminder that individuals in various domains (including socio-cultural, political, or professional contexts), are being observed and judged for the quality of their performances. The example of the wine tapper has, therefore, been advanced as a metaphor for meritorious service whose recognition is best earned through genuine contribution rather than self-promotion. Such acts of service, when rendered with diligence, are capable of provoking widespread praise and communal affirmation. In this sense, the lesson to be learnt is that moments of exit are most dignified when they occur ‘while the ovation is loudest’.

Recommendations

The paper makes the following recommendations.

- i. Contemporary indigenous composers should enrich modern choral and art music compositions by drawing inspiration from palm wine musical heritages of their communities.
- ii. Greater scholarly attention should be given to the structural and metaphorical dimensions of Annang folk songs so that their symbolic and cultural values are not lost to future generations.
- iii. Cultural institutions and performing ensembles are enjoined to adopt arranged versions of indigenous folk songs in order to preserve them as living traditions rather than relegate them to the status of ‘songs for drunkards.’
- iv. Future research should examine how metaphors of performance and exit in indigenous music can inform wider discourses on labour, identity, and transition in African societies.

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