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## Contents

Editorial Note	ix
Sunny Ade's Creativity in " <i>Aiye Ogun; Aiye Ote</i> " <i>Isaac Olawale Albert</i>	1
Performance Aesthetics and Narrative Strategies in the Music of King Sunny Ade <i>Bode Omojola and Bolanle Sogunro</i>	11
The Ecumenical King Sunny Ade <i>Kayode M. Samuel</i>	34
Locutions and Cultural Ideology in the Language of King Sunny Ade's Juju Music <i>Akin Odebunmi</i>	47
King Sunny Ade: Liberal Sexuality, Reproductive Health and the Paramour <i>Mofeyisara Oluwatoyin Omobowale, Olayinka Akanle, Abel Akintoye Akintunde, Ayokunle Olumuyiwa Omobowale</i>	64
A Moral and Gender Analysis of King Sunny Ade's Juju Music <i>Sharon A. Omotoso</i>	79
Semiotics of Theatre Design in Sunny Ade's Musical Video "The Way Forward" <i>Adèrèmi Michael Adéoyè</i>	94
<i>Oogun o Ran wa</i> : An Afrocentric Analysis of the Meaning and Efficacy of <i>Oogun</i> in Traditional African Medicine <i>Charles O. Jegede</i>	106
Sunny Ade Performs Sacred-profane in the Ògún Mythosphere <i>Sola Olorunyomi</i>	117

## The Ecumenical King Sunny Ade

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### Introduction

The name King Sunny Ade is readily associated with and indeed, evokes music within and without the African soundscape. This is essentially because he is an accomplished songwriter, poet and vocalist, and singer all wrapped into one. Besides these, his proficiency in his instrument—the guitar—exquisite dance steps and versatile stagecraftmanship earned him the titles 'Master Guitarist' and undisputed 'King' of *juju* music. King Sunny Ade, popularly referred to as KSA, is a man of many parts who represents many things to many people. It will not be out of place to state that KSA is a distinguished personality who needs no formal introduction. As a result, it can be considered rhetorical to ask: who is KSA? Indeed, several works exist on the person of KSA and his works, including his mastery of music, instruments and stagecraftmanship. While it is common to find studies on Sunny Ade's biography, his social credentials and the social relevance of his music (Palmer, 1982; Vanderknyff, 1994; Waterman, 1990; Decker, 1997; Adegbite 1995; Omojola, 2006; Mitter 2009; Shahriari 2011), a major gap in

knowledge is non-investigation of the artist, using the ecumenical lens.

My main objective in this article is to explore the ecumenical stance of KSA by raising the following salient questions:

- a) What is meant by ecumenism?
- b) Are its boundaries strictly defined, or is the term shifting in any way?
- c) What elements determine the ecumenical state of an institution or individual?
- d) How do KSA's life, activities and music combine to confirm his ecumenical status?

Consequently, I argue that King Sunny Ade is indeed ecumenical.

In answering the first question, it is imperative to attempt a conceptual clarification of the term ecumenism. It comes from the Greek word '*oikoumenikos*', or '*oikoumene*' (the inhabited world); the root being '*oikos*', which means house. According to Kelly (1979), the term "ecumenism" refers to the religious changes of some historical and theological complexity; a searching by religious traditions

for a greater measure of cooperation on social issues and, on a theological level, a deeper mutual understanding and respect. It connotes tending to support and encourage unity among the various divisions, particularly of the Christian religion.

### **Genesis of Ecumenism**

The ecumenical movement is a twentieth-century phenomenon which challenged leaders (pastors, priests and ministers) and congregational members of all Christian churches to examine the extent to which their lives, faith, witness and worship conform to the doctrine of a unified assembly. The movement is aimed at promoting as well as encouraging various stakeholders connected with the Christian faith to build bridges (real and artificial) among themselves as enunciated by the teachings of Jesus Christ as recorded in the synoptic gospels in the light of a rapidly changing world. Prior to this transformative move within the first decade of the 20th century, Christians were taught and apparently encouraged to believe that the full Christian truth was exclusively found in their own denomination or confessional family. To this end, it was an era theologically characterised by polemical standpoints. It witnessed a situation where many church leaders practised absolutism (a stance which attacked the beliefs of other churches/denominations and was full of admiration for its own theology and tradition). However, two groups involved in Christian service and the propagation of the gospel, namely, foreign missionaries and laypeople such as the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA), Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), Students Christian

Movement (SCM), Sunday School Associations and Bible Societies rose to challenge the segregationist denominational theology of that period. Consequently, by 1910, the missionaries began a movement marked by the Edinburgh Conference which became the base of ecumenical co-operation in foreign missions by the churches and missionary societies of Europe and North America. The assembly was held in Amsterdam in 1948, with the adoption of the motto: 'ONE WORLD - ONE CHURCH'.

The Vatican however remained adamant against the movement for about three decades, although many priests and theologians within the Roman Catholic Church setting, particularly in Northern Europe, were unrelenting in working for unity across what could be considered the deepest and most difficult division of Western Christianity. After an initial delay lasting about a decade occasioned by World War II, the ecumenical movements in Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Churches were organized into the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948. The assembly had the mission, set as its primal objective, of tackling relations between the churches and organizations of other religions and ideologies. It was reported that during the war itself, the WCC, in process of formation, had already begun its work of reconciliation and providing humanitarian service to refugees.

A few years later, specifically on June 10, 1969, an historic event took place. The head of the Vatican, then Pope His Holiness Paul VI, paid a pleasant visit to the headquarters of the WCC in Geneva. That singular action clearly signified to all and sundry that the wall of separation was beginning to collapse and an

ecumenical progress had gradually begun. What made the event spectacularly historic is the fact that for the first time ever since the Reformation, the head of the Roman Catholic Church set an example to Catholic faithfuls that he recognized the other Christian denomination as part of a single fellowship in one ecumenical movement. Not only did the Pope pray publicly for the first time in a service which he was not himself conducting, also in his address he put on the agenda for discussion and study the question of Roman Catholic membership.

Over the years, the term ecumenism has been used in relation to the Christian faith, so much so that each time the word pops up, it is associated with the movement towards ensuring the universality of one church. The main aim of the Ecumenical Movement was and remains to bring churches of all denominations and affiliated groups, and, ultimately, all other religious organizations together as One Ecumenical Church or World Church. Thus, it became a common term among Christian denominations just as it is frequently understood to indicate a long-term ideal of organizational unity. Ecumenism can, therefore, be seen to be primarily concerned with Church unity. In a nutshell, the message of the ecumenical is basically to seek to understand the creeds of others, respect and accept others in spite of seeming differences each sect/denomination may have, and also engender discussion and positive action, which would promote better understanding and cooperation within the church at large.

### **Locating its boundaries**

As is common in academia, it is not out of place to re-define, deconstruct and re-construct

terms, especially considering the dynamic nature of the world we live in. Thus, a term may be expanded to include some other variables, which have thus far been excluded from the frame. It could also connote new meanings, especially in the light of new findings, realities and experiences. As a result, this article posits that any institution, which may not necessarily be a religious organization, including individuals and living legends, can aptly be described as ecumenical, especially if they exhibit ecumenical traits and attributes one way or another. Against this backdrop, I suggest that ecumenism may not be solely applicable to the Christian religion. In essence, the term could not and should not be restrictive.

First, I begin by identifying three markers (characteristic features) of ecumenism:

- 1) It is non-polemic. At the heart of ecumenism is the notion of building bridges rather than walls of separation or promoting segregation under any guise.
- 2) There is a sense of critical balance and mutual understanding leading to general acceptance, whether others fit into one's own shifting sensibilities, beliefs, creed and so forth or not.
- 3) Desire to undertake practical implementation of joint projects for social activities

The focal lens of this article is directed at an institution by the name KSA, with a view to identifying the foregoing traits, which constitute the principles and practices of ecumenism not only in terms of his life, but also his music as a whole. I argue in this article that King Sunny Ade, as a musical icon, is an embodiment of the ecumenical ethos.

### **Ecumenism and musical forms: A synergistic framework**

Generally speaking, most discussions on the subject of ecumenism are usually anchored to a movement, and since we also speak of movements when identifying musical forms or subjects relating to music, I find it convenient to adopt the term in this article. Movements in music refer to specific large sections of well laid-out musical compositions. They are grouped under the macro structures and characterize musical genres such as sonatas, symphonies, concertos and so on. The first two, comprise four movements each, while the concerto traditionally has three movements. In this same light, I have chosen to examine what I describe as four ecumenical movements of KSA. This is patterned after the four distinctive movements of a standard symphony or sonata. The movements are broken into: allegro, andante, minuet and trio, and finale. As a precursor to itemization of the ecumenical stance of KSA, it may not be out of place to make some general remarks on his background with a view to gaining an insight into what KSA represents and the context in which he operates.

Born on Sunday, September 22, 1946 to a royal family in Ondo town, in present-day Ondo State, Southwestern Nigeria, Sunday Anthony Isola Adeniyi Adegeye (aka King Sunny Ade or KSA) is easily classified as a Nigerian popular musician, noted and well respected for his brand of *juju* music. Scholars, including Odeunmi (1996) and Shahriari (2011) described KSA as a foremost Nigeria-based pop musician who is highly rated for his ambidexterity in language use, choral organization and instrumentation wizardry. Unarguably, ability to compose acceptable music is insufficient for successful

musicianship. An excellent musician is that individual who is proficient in performance as a singer/instrumentalist and also versatile both in dancing and stagecraftmanship. KSA fits into this picture. In many respects, he can simply be described as a king of many parts. The philosophical prowess overlaid in the lyrics of his songs is not only well grounded, but also his sonorous tenor voice coupled with his mastery of the lead guitar, excellent instrumentation as well as his theatrical display on stage in form of dance and dramatic spectacle make him stand out. Added to all the foregoing is the fact that KSA could be described as an astute businessman in all ramifications.

### **An appraisal of Nigeria's socio-musical landscape**

#### *(Roots of Juju music)*

In terms of its history and structure, Nigerian popular music is a confluence of three distinct cultures, the root being traditional Nigerian music and the surface layers being characterized by Arabic, and Western-European traditions, which have both influenced its growth (Omojola, 2006). In musicological parlance, modern popular music refers to musical performances that initially were patronized largely at nightclubs as entertainment music, which later found expression in other more lucrative outlets including social parties and open air mass concerts. They combine commercial and artistic objectives and are largely disseminated through the electronic media and the recording industry.

Other characteristic features of pop music include an extensive use of percussion instruments combined with western European

instruments such as the electric guitar, synthesizer and a variety of wind and brass instruments. As a result, the Nigerian pop idioms are distinguishable by multiple resources of instrumentation, typified by intercultural combinations of Western and African instruments. Its themes range from love and romance to those of politics, cultural beliefs and social conflict. Omojola (2014) further suggests that *juju* music represents a modern re-interpretation of traditional Yoruba musical practices. He traced its emergence to an interaction between social habits and musical concepts as well as the need for social interaction among a group of rascals or area boys in the Old Saro (Olowogbowo) quarter of Lagos. More importantly, *juju* signalled a musical form of cultural nationalism through the retention of the essential musical parameters of traditional music. It became an artistic metaphor for a creative and self-reliant Nigeria and a symbolic consolidation of what an independent nation represents. *Juju* music was initially conceived as a musical correlate of an envisioned political and economic self-sufficiency, though its practitioners' penchant for courting politicians and those in the business class was viewed as negative because this action later glorified corrupt affluent lifestyles rather than making *juju* a musical form of cultural nationalism (Waterman, 1990; and Omojola, 2014).

*Juju* music exhibited similar features with one of its antecedents *ashiko* in that it uses the call-and-response format, short song forms, loosely fitted poetic texts (*asayan oro*) strung together to make a meaningful whole (*esa*). The music is often punctuated by intermittent refrains by both the leader and the chorus of dancers, all performed with the context of a

light, soft entertainment music – *eree faaji ti o pariwo* (Alaja-Browne, 1985).

Two major factors, namely, the Nigerian civil war and the oil boom in the late 1960s and early 70s respectively were responsible for the rise of *juju* music, and both events are tied to the socio-political life of the country. Many prominent Lagos-based highlife musicians, especially of Igbo extraction, were forced to leave Lagos (the biggest cosmopolitan city) for their respective homes in the eastern part of the country, a movement that created a significant musical vacuum. Naturally, the rising *juju* stars of that period, especially those whose unique brand of music represents an interface between highlife and *juju*, quickly stepped in to fill this vacuum. On the other hand, the oil boom created an additional generation of people which Omojola (2014) describes as a generation of petite bourgeoisie consisting mainly of corrupt military officers, politicians and businessmen. One of the fancies of these individuals was to organize parties at the slightest opportunity, and *juju* musicians were often invited to play at such parties. From the early 1970s, *juju* became the most commercially successful popular music in Nigeria with King Sunny Ade and his well-known counterpart, Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi, being the greatest exponents of that era.

An understanding of the socio-musical environment in which KSA sojourned and under which his career budded is central to appreciating his ecumenical deportment. This section, therefore, briefly appraises the highly volatile and conflict-prone environment of the Nigerian popular music scene, especially the *juju* musical genre, wherein a large majority of



musicians were in constant struggle to dominate the scene. In such instances, each music artiste often devised various tactics or adopted some approaches to protect his territorial music space, and by all means prevented incursion from arch-rivals. This meant that they were sometimes fiercely in contention with one another in an effort to ensure constant loyalty and continuous patronage of their listeners and fans. The situation could, thus, best be described more or less as one necessitating a 'survival of the fittest'. Indeed, the pragmatic steps taken by many of the musicians especially those with limited western education can be said to have been motivated largely by Maslow's human needs theory. They clearly understood that their survival depended on their ability to remain afloat on the music scene at all cost.

Closely tied to the foregoing is also the fact that many members of the public, fans, potential and respective patrons, and music enthusiasts did not help matters. Acting on the general worldview of the Yoruba, listeners/audience often provided unsolicited interpretations to simple melodic phrases, harmless coded drum lines or plain instrumental interludes in the music of their favourite artistes by 'decoding and superimposing' unintended meanings. All these formed texts and served as innuendos which became widely circulated among the general public. The texts invariably invoked negative emotions either on the part of the initial innocent composer of the music, his arch-rival or supporters of his perceived opponent(s). We wish to draw attention to Samuel's (2015) quotation of a popular Yoruba adage: '*l'ówe l'ówe là nlù'lù ògìdìgbó, Ologbon lo mi a jo, Omoran ni n mo on*', meaning '*ògìdìgbó* drum is cryptically played like a proverb; It is the wise

that dance to it and informed persons that can discern it'. Listeners, therefore, sometimes form lyrics to melodic phrases and interpret the texts as guided missiles directed to a specific musician considered an arch-rival. Samuel (2015) further avers that musicians in Yoruba society freely adopted proverbs as figurative locutions and as a tool for praise, *imòrán* (advice), *àlàyé* (explanation), *ibáwí* (reproach or rebuke), *ikilo* (warning) or *isírí* (encouragement) to anyone depending on the situation.

Omojola (2014) states that there were reported cases of in-fighting among *juju* musicians. Indeed, KSA and Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey were believed to have tacitly engaged proverbs as an effective arsenal against each other during the period their cold war lasted, in spite of repeated denials by both artistes in the media. For instance, KSA released an album entitled *Oro Agba* (The words of the elders), which contained the following texts: '*bi Sunny Ade ba nkorin, won a ni Obey lo n ba wi, bi Obey ba nko ti re, won a ni Sunny lo n ba wi; oro yi o sele, ko sele rara; oro jatijati o, awa o gbodo gbo mo*'. When translated, we have: 'Whenever Sunny Ade sings, they (rumour-mongers) would claim it is directed at Obey, and vice versa; no such thing happened, such arrant nonsense must not be heard henceforth.' After some time, KSA released an album to debunk rumours making rounds that they were arch-enemies. A section of the music goes thus: '*Awa o ja mo o, Sunny Ade pe l'Ebenesa, ore ni won je*', meaning, 'we are no longer at war, Sunny Ade and Ebenezer (Obey) are friends'. Regardless of the foregoing text, both artistes, after a series of denials, finally admitted that a frosty relationship once existed between the duo. However, as at the

time of the recording and release of the latter album, all forms of aggression were over.

After fifty years on stage, KSA has simply become a phenomenon. His first album, *Alanu L'Oluwa* (The Lord is merciful), was released in 1967 on the African Songs label. The album which was recorded with his former band, the Green Spots, was reported to have been a disaster financially as it sold only 13 copies. However, through Providence, it didn't take long for KSA to become a mega-star in Nigeria. His first single entitled *Challenge cup* was reported to have been a major hit in 1967 with sales of over 500,000 copies. After renaming his group the African Beats in the late 1960s, he released albums regularly such that between 1967 and 1974, he already had 12 albums to his credit. In addition, he was in constant demand for live performance on stage.

After some contractual disputes with African Songs, a label company he signed on to, KSA decided to create his own label known as Sunny Alade Records in 1975. It was about this time that he also opened a *juju* nightclub in Lagos known as *Ariya* which became the main performance venue for the African Beats whenever his group was not on tour. KSA was on a three-month tour of England, performing mostly to expatriate Nigerian audiences at halls and community centres during cultural theme nights in 1975.

Having presented a brief review of how KSA attained his status by rising from obscurity to stardom, I now proceed to discuss the four ecumenical movements of the artiste with relevant examples to support my claims.

### **First movement (allegro): KSA as an African music missionary**

It was earlier mentioned that the root of the ecumenical movement could be traced partly to the efforts of foreign Christian missionaries who worked in Asia and also in Africa. They noted that fellow missionaries from other churches were often closer to them both in belief and practice than were most of the ministers and members of their own denomination. In the same vein, KSA was responsible for taking African music in the form of the genre of *juju* to listeners all over the world. Although he had hit the limelight in Nigeria by the 1960s, KSA became an international star by the early 1980s. Stapleton and May (1987) wrote in *African Rock*, "... in Europe and North America, he (KSA) has been responsible for taking *juju* out of its small cult following and nudging it, slowly but surely, toward the mainstream album market...", while Decker (1997) quoted Pareles as stating that KSA elevated *juju* from street music played by a few instruments into a big-band style that can shimmer and crackle. As KSA put it in an interview "I will just call myself a person, but inasmuch as I have been called a legend by the people, it becomes my responsibility. I am more or less an ambassador. I have the responsibility to keep up the image and the tradition."

King Sunny Ade had hoped to capitalise on the growing interest in African music in the United Kingdom. He, therefore, started what is tagged *African Series of releases* with the Sound d'Afrique compilation album in 1981. Decker (1997) reports that his plans agreed with those of England's Island Records, which was

eager to find a replacement for the tropical music of Bob Marley, who had died in 1980. A contract was, therefore, signed between KSA and the Island Records in 1982 for releases in Europe and North America. Although this contractual agreement ended abruptly after about two releases because the expectations of Island Record in terms of sales target were not met, the support he had received as a result of extensive promotion and media exposure coupled with a dint of hard work all combined to make KSA a worldwide phenomenon.

King Sunny Ade's ability to transcend cultural barriers was also displayed in a concert at London's Lyceum Ballroom in January of 1983. Stapleton and May's (1987) discussion of this concert confirmed his status as an international star: "Raved over without exception by the weekly music press, many of whose critics hailed Adé as one of the emergent dance-music stars of the year, Adé and his band played to a hugely enthusiastic multi-ethnic audience, proving that, in a live context at any rate, *juju's* use of Yoruba rather than English-language lyrics was no barrier to overseas acceptance." He made a successful tour of the Americas in 1987 as well as a performance at the Montreal Jazz Festival in 1992.

### **Second movement (Andante): Promoter of unity among Nigerian musicians**

The cultural activism of KSA is manifest in the fight he led for Nigerian musicians to receive fair compensation in a marketplace crippled by piracy. He was also known to have lobbied the government to lower import taxes on musical instruments, so young musicians don't have to rely on electronics for production of their recording albums. His strong belief in and

efforts at fostering unity among Nigerian musicians are most evident when he and a few other like-minded Nigerian musicians came together to form the Performing Musicians Employers' Association of Nigeria (PMAN), which became the umbrella union of musicians in the country. In 1982, KSA invited some distinguished Nigerian music artistes including Chief Ebenezer Obey, Tee-Mac Omatshola Iseli, Emma Ogosi, Laolu Akins, Funmi Adams, Oby Onyioha, Christy Essien Igbokwe, Sunny Okosuns, Bobby Benson and so forth to his Ariya Nite Club, Jibowu, Yaba in Lagos to form PMAN. The association which has its national headquarters located at 18, Adegbola Street, Anifowoshe, Ikeja, Lagos was registered in 1984. The primary objectives of the group include bringing Nigerian music practitioners together in defence of a common interest that principally bothers on piracy and bootlegging. That initiative led to the election of KSA as the pioneer National President of PMAN, a position he held between 1982 and 1986.

When the association ran into murky waters because of protracted conflicts, especially bordering on rudderless leadership, such that its existence was threatened, major stakeholders again called upon KSA to provide the way out. He obliged and through purposeful leadership was able to forestall any possible shipwreck. Consequently, he remains the only individual that had served as two-term national president of the body. His second coming was between 1999 and 2002. Under the KSA's leadership, PMAN welcomed and encouraged formation of peculiar smaller bodies such as *Juju* Musician Association of Nigeria, Gospel Musician Association of Nigeria and so forth within its organisation. It, therefore, recognised and encouraged the coming together of

members and group of performers of common genres to further promote their distinct interest and realization of their objectives, within the ambit of the larger framework and umbrella provided by PMAN. This was confirmed by KSA during an interview he granted Jason Gross in 1998, and which he corroborated with this author. King Suany Ade served meritoriously as Chairman of the Advisory Council of PMAN as well as the chairman of the Musical Co-operative Society of Nigeria for many years. Besides these, as the Patron of the *Juju* Bandleaders' Association, KSA ensures they all work together at all times towards the progress of their profession.

At present, PMAN has at least 28 functional state chapters across many states and the federal capital city. The body is known to be at the forefront of the crusade against music piracy and bootlegging in the country. In spite of the various challenges facing PMAN, especially the perennial leadership crisis, the gains which have been recorded so far can be attributed directly and indirectly to the vision and ecumenical spirit of KSA.

### **Third movement (Minuet & Trio): Non-discriminatory posture & perfect blending of musical instruments of diverse cultures**

There is no gainsaying that KSA was responsible for blending foreign musical instruments such as the vibraphone, the Hawaiian guitar, maracas, synthesizers and other electronic technology with African traditional musical instruments. This is also one of his traits as an ecumenical musician. In 1976, he added a steel guitar to his instrumental ensemble. As quoted in one of his interviews with Gross:

*I take my time, I don't introduce instruments just like that. You have to look at the music as it was played by the ancestors. When the electric guitar came, I had to let it sound like the kora. The pedal steel responds to the African violin. You look at what the ancestors have done, and you change the instrument, but not the tones.*

In addition, KSA is not known to be discriminatory. He is an individual who relates well with friends, connects with people of diverse cultural backgrounds and often honours invitations to perform at various occasions irrespective of his patrons' religious beliefs or affiliations. To this end, his philosophy and practice are in tandem with the typical Yoruba traditional musician, especially the 'Ayan' who is a friend to all and sundry. KSA is known to have effectively collaborated with major international artistes such as Manu Dibango (WAKAFRIKA) and Stevie Wonder in the past. On the home front, he collaborated with Onyeka Onwenu in 1998 to release a commissioned album entitled: *Wait for Me*. The theme of the song is centred on population control and the project was sponsored by the USAID, Office of Population.

It is also noteworthy that KSA, in conjunction with members of PMAN, embarked on a music project to promote patriotism when he released an album/music video entitled: *The Way Forward* featuring a popular song: *Naijiria yi, ti gbogbo wa ni, ko maa gbodo ba je*, meaning, 'This Nigeria belongs to us all, it must not be destroyed'. To date, the song remains a chart buster and often invokes patriotic feelings in many Nigerian listeners.

Also worthy of mention is his philanthropic gesture. The ecumenical spirit in

KSA led him to establish and run the King Sunny Ade Foundation to assist the under-privileged. In one of his interview sessions with Jason Gross, KSA declared:

*I believe that I can hook the whole world together with this foundation, helping under-privileged people and helping them get work. We have a school of music and a school of drama. That is my aim of what I'm going to do. As it is, we're sending our music around the whole world. I believe that I am one of the pioneers and I know that for any other musicians coming after me, it is going to be easier for them to penetrate (the market) because as you are talking to me, you are aware of where my music comes from and I am. You can quickly say 'oh, this is African music. This music comes from Nigeria. This music comes from Ghana. This music comes from Mali.' It's a great thing.*

From the foregoing narrative, we can see how KSA is further projected as an agency selflessly committed to improving other people's lives through his generous devotion to, and willingness to leave, an enduring legacy, especially to the less privileged.

#### **Fourth movement: (Finale): Ecumenical themes in KSA's music**

This article will be incomplete without a musicological analysis of ecumenical themes in KSA's works, especially since this is a contribution from an ethnomusicologist. The expectation, therefore, would be that music analysis should be the main focus of this presentation. I have deliberately reserved this for the last. To a large extent, a careful examination of selected themes in KSA's music

would further reveal his ecumenical status. Odebumni (2012) observes that Sunny Ade's songs have their meanings anchored to the (remote) social and cultural contexts, which motivate their uses and ideological configurations. This implies that the lyrics and their uses hardly play neutral roles. Many times they connect the socio-cognitive frame of an individual with a group's and, consequently, evoke ideologies as a central issue in the critical discourse they make possible.

Although KSA professes to be an adherent of Christianity; he is well known to have embraced other religious organizations/bodies, including the African Traditional Religion. He clearly states as follows in one of his songs: '*ojo ni wa, a o b'enikan s'ota o, eni eji ri, l'iji npa*', (our position is more or less like the rain that is nobody's enemy; its drops reach all and sundry). KSA employs in song form various themes ranging from praise to the Almighty to incantations and rendition of specific verses from the Ifa corpus. One can also identify in his lyrics issues centring on love, didactic themes or social commentary. He also engages his listeners in songs with popular entertainment and culture-related issues. An attempt will be made to identify some themes which cut across the various religious divides within the socio-cultural milieu of the Yoruba. There are countless examples of his songs which were derived from biblical passages, particularly the Book of Psalms. Songs such as '*Ma l'anu, ma k'orin, ma fi gb'Oluwa ga, F'ibukun f'Oluwa o, iwo okan mi, ko ma se gbagbe ore re lori mi*' and '*Emi yio yin Oluwa, Oba rere t'o s'ike mi*' are clear examples of scriptural texts from the Book of Psalms.

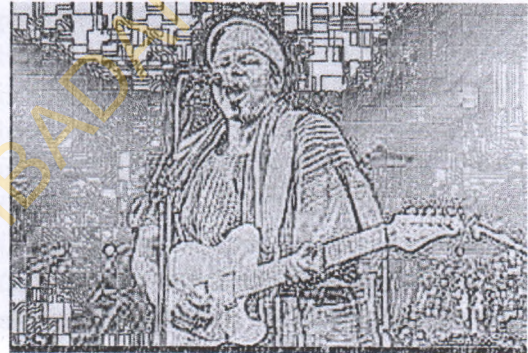
## Ma la nu maa k'orin

KSA

Ma la-nu ma ko-rin ma fi gb'O-lu-wa ga Ma la-nu ma ko-rin ma fi gb'O-lu-wa ga Ma fo-rin yin - ma tun

fo - go fun Je - su,ss mo ro o ti - ti ki ni m ba fi s'o - pe O\_

\_ lu wa ko - ni je\_ bi mo ro - fo bi mo te - ba i - di o - pe mi e ba mi gb'O - lu - wa ga



Silhouette pictures of KSA

There is a general notion that many Yoruba are religious and music-loving people. They naturally enjoy listening to and appreciating music, which more often than not is believed to strengthen their religious beliefs. On most occasions, KSA expresses his confidence in the Almighty God. There is also the notable example of an album, which he released much earlier in his career, containing panegyric themes in honour of Ogun, god of iron and war in the Yoruba pantheon. In addition, he once sang the praise of Osun, and alluded to the long-standing efficacy of Osun's therapeutic

substance, which he observed predated the advent of orthodox western medicine. KSA's compositions with biblical themes are well known to cut across denominational divide, from mainline churches to African indigenous churches such as the Aladura (C&S), up to their Pentecostal counterparts. He also has songs with Islamic themes. His music, thus, is all embracing, and all the foregoing movements go a long way to confirm that KSA is indeed ecumenical.

**Codetta (Short conclusion):**

In concluding this article, it is important to draw the attention of certain institutions, KSA on one hand, and the university administration, through the Institute of African Studies, to some pressing issues.

First, to Otunba KSA, our elders have a saying: “*Agba kii wa l’oja, k’ori omo titun wo*” (An elder cannot be present in the market place while a new born baby’s head is misshapen). The state of PMAN, especially the protracted leadership tussle, which has factionalized the organization, is appalling. The writer hereby seeks permission from KSA to borrow a phrase from one of his songs: “*Ebe la b’eyin agba, ti mbe nidi oro aje, e ba wa daa si*” (We earnestly plead with the elders, who are well versed and experienced to intervene on this knotty issue). As one of PMAN’s founding fathers, its first and two-time national president, an elder statesman and a notable stakeholder, the time has come for KSA to invoke that ecumenical spirit of his to bring about a positive change in the association. The wisdom to call all conflicting parties to order ever resides in the elderly. Now is the time to bring all feuding parties to the negotiation table for constructive dialogue in the interest of the association. In line with the saying of the sages, ‘*agbara ojo, ko l’oun o n’ile wo, Onile ni oni gba fun*’ (torrential rain will not hesitate to bring down the building, it is the house owner’s responsibility to prevent this from happening), it is high time the fortune of PMAN was restored.

To the university administration, it is instructive to note that the Institute of African Studies (IAS), University of Ibadan had had an artist-in-residence at various times. The office has remained vacant for close to two decades,

and still, as at the time of writing this article. We wish to suggest that it will be a great delight to have Otunba KSA appointed to occupy the chair at IAS. There is no gainsaying the fact that in the same ecumenical spirit of ‘*O se fonile, o se falejo*’ (one whose benevolence extends beyond home to visitors; to all and sundry), KSA would not mind a pendulum swing between the University of Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, where he is currently occupying a similar office.

Finally, on the home front, it is important to note that at present, there is no musicological study entirely devoted to KSA in the library of the Institute of African Studies. A comprehensive study of such an icon of KSA’s status is long overdue from the music discipline. The Institute of African Studies through its music unit in conjunction with the national secretariat of the International Centre for African Music and Dance (ICAMD), located within the building of the Institute, is poised and should be more than willing and ready to spearhead this project in collaboration with other interested scholars, departments and units in the University. There is no doubt that the project will be a welcome addition to foster the ecumenical movement with which KSA is associated.

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