Jimi Solanke and Ebenezer Obey’s Music on Environmental Degradation and Flood Disaster in Ibadan, Nigeria

Olusegun Stephen Titus
Obafemi Awolowo University

Rachel Obonose Titus
Obafemi Awolowo University

Abstract

This paper focuses on the use of music for cultural promotion that enhances environmental sustainability in Ibadan, Nigeria. Songs by Yoruba popular singers amongst whom are Ebenezer Obey and Jimi Solanke on flood disasters in Ibadan are used for the study. Their music continues to provide cultural memories to Ibadan residents who have been devastated by flood disasters. The response of these indigenous Yoruba musicians to environmental degradation and flood disasters in the content of the lyrics is used to educate the populace on the effect of flood disasters in Ibadan and how to prevent this phenomenal tragedy. Through ecomusicological theory, cultural history, and ethnography, this article examines the process through which Ebenezer Obey and Jimi Solanke’s songs became a vehicle for cultural memories and the floods’ devastating effects on people and their livelihoods. The paper further suggests that educating the citizens is more effective through the adoption of local approaches in the form of indigenous songs and popular music of the immediate culture.

Introduction

After the 2011 flood disasters in Lagos, Oyo, Kogi and Bauchi states in Nigeria, questions about the sustainability of the environment and an early awareness and memory of the disasters have been raised. The response by many organizations has been to promote awareness through songs, folktales, riddles, and so on, because these are remembered more effectively (Anton 1990, Idowu 1982). Studies on music, nature, culture and the environment as an evolving area of scholarship are increasing rapidly. Allen (2011, 2011, and 2016), Feld (2012), Guy
among others, have studied the connection between nature, environmental crises, and music. However, none of the studies have looked at ecomusicology and environmental degradation and flood disaster in Ibadan, Nigeria. Thus, a poor appreciation and use of these Yoruba indigenous and popular music could account for unregulated human behaviours that have resulted in an incessant recurrence of disastrous flooding, which often resulted in the destruction of lives and properties.

Ecomusicology, as an aspect of music, social life, and nature is associated with the relationship between music, the environment and environmental disasters such as floods. Music, on the other hand, serves as an agent of social change, advocating against the dumping of refuse in waterways, which results in flooding. Impey (2013, 2008) notes that, “sounds and performances may provide witness to the situation thereby reminding people of a more positive way of living.” Songs by the indigenous popular singers in this paper brought a cultural reminder to Ibadan people on flooding’s causes and cure. Titus (2013, 2015) and Okafor (2002) acknowledge the worldwide popularity and potency of music as a vehicle to carry educational and developmental messages to targeted audiences. But despite this, very little of music’s potential has been used to promote environmental change in Nigeria. Isolated attempts have been made to utilize music as a part of an integrated campaign for communication, to educate viewers and listeners about social issues. Also, Feld (2004) asserts that the concept of acoustemology as sound combined with an awareness of sonic presence constitutes a powerful force in shaping how people interpret and remember their experiences. This is in line with the experience of flood disasters in Ibadan from the early 1950s to 2011. The songs from the musicians selected for this paper present an appreciation of the horrors of flooding to the people of Ibadan, thereby hopefully introducing a positive change to their socio-cultural environment.

Popular music in African discourse, according to Omojola (2006: 5), “must be located within its relevant social and cultural environment. As a genre, popular music interrogates the ever-continuous process of social and human interaction and its associated conflicts and accommodation.” Omojola’s assertion is true of the selected musicians. Though their music is mass produced and commercialized, they also give credence to the issue of environmental crises especially in Ibadan.

This paper therefore argues for the use of indigenously composed Yoruba popular songs as a means of remembrance, since very little has been done in
scholarly research in relation to ecomusicological studies on flood disasters, environmental degradation, and the didactic use of music in Yoruba land, specifically in Ibadan.

Ecomusicological theory informs this study on how music helps in creating a more sustainable environment. Moreover, it elucidates the social changes in terms of human-nonhuman relationships needed to keep the environment clean. The paper describes the historical issues that emanate from the songs as they relate to the flood disasters in Ibadan. The objectives of this paper are to analyse how musicians responded to the flood disasters, to identify various themes in the selected songs, and to examine the efficacy of such performances in changing negative socio-cultural habits that make flooding possible.

Ibadan City and Its Environment

Ibadan is located in southwestern Nigeria. It is the capital of Oyo state and was reputedly once the largest city south of the Sahara. Ibadan was the administrative center for southwestern Nigeria since the days of British colonial rule, until other states such as Ondo, Ogun, and Osun were created within southwestern Nigeria. It is situated 78 miles inland from Lagos and is a prominent transit point between the coastal region and the areas to the north of the country. Ibadan’s population is estimated at around 3,800,000 according to a census conducted in 2000 (Oladapo, 2011) though research shows that the current population in Ibadan may be around ten million people.
Ibadan’s topography makes it suitable for easy drainage of heavy flows of water, as generated by erosion that runs from many of its hills. Mostly, the erosion, with heavy carriage capacity, transports domestic waste generated by the residents who often exploit the carrying capacity of the eroded hills to dispose of their waste (Ajala 2011). As it is often difficult to measure the extent of rainfall that causes the erosion, a sudden stop to the rainfall results in heaps of waste at the foot of those hills and mountains, which constitute the living areas in the city. This, therefore, exposes the city and its inhabitants to the risk of flooding. The hilly terrain also make it difficult to easily access water at the foot of the mountain due to the low-level underground water table (Olayinka 2010: 12). The city’s built-up areas have two main streams, namely, the Ògùnпа and Kúdétì. By 1968, these built-up portions of the city had extended into drainage areas of the Odò-Onà and Ògbèrè streams. The Kudeti stream joined Ogunpa in the southern part of the city. However, both streams and their tributaries serve commercial purposes characterized by open market stalls and popular markets. The consequence of this is a sizeable production of market waste where streams are nothing but sinks into which such waste is dumped as unregulated waste. The practice of willful dumping lacks regular government attention and indeed proper legislative intervention (Ajala 2011).

The above characteristics of Ibadan have on many occasions exposed the city to heavy flooding that accounted for the gross destruction of both lives and properties. Apart from incidents in the 1950s to 1970s, a devastating flood known
as *Omiyale*, literally meaning “water has flooded the house,” occurred in 1980 when the *Ogunpa* stream flowed into the *Ona* stream, both of which overflowed their banks and swept away many inhabitants and their property. Many of the victims had defied local building rules and regulations, and built on or close to the river banks in the city. Since then, flooding of the *Omiyale* has been an annual event across Ibadan, suggesting that the 1980 experience was not enough of a lesson. In 2011, a more devastating flood occurred in Ibadan and its tragedy surpassed earlier ones. In 2011, the Premier University of Ibadan, located in the heart of the city and through whose compound the *Ona* River runs, through *Agbowo*, down to the *Eleyele* dam, had its perimeter fence collapsed by the floods. Many of the animals in its revenue-generating zoological garden were either swept away or killed. In addition, the university lost its fisheries due to the effects of the flooding, and a number of culverts and bridges near the university collapsed. Other areas that recorded much utter devastation due to the 2011 flood were *Apete, Bodija, Agbowo, Odo Ona, Alakia*, and *New Gbagi*, among others. At the end of the day, the National Emergency Management in Nigeria recorded 176 lives lost and damage to properties amounted to one billion naira, approximately $3,154,590.00 U.S. dollars (Ajala 2011).

Guy (2009: 218) explains that scholars have made significant strides in studying race and gender, but environmental degradation has received by far the least attention from scholars in the humanities. This paper agrees with Guy’s assertion and hopes to fill this lacuna in research on popular music and environmental sustainability. In examining popular music in ecomusicology, Guy’s (2009: 222) research into popular music in Taiwan notes that popular music referenced natural phenomena and named places, especially waterways and, in particular, the Tamsui River (Guy 2009: 223). He argues that songs are representations of the once vital and now toxic river. He noted that the Tamsui River has captured the imagination of songwriters for decades and takes the Tamsui songs, whose lyrics reference the Tamsui River, into a green reading of popular music in Taiwan. Furthermore, Guy elucidated how the songs, in referencing the Tamsui River, inform us about a Taiwanese environmental imagination. Likewise, the Yoruba popular songs by these two artists remind us of the floods in Ibadan city and their disastrous impacts, as well as suggest possible ways to prevent the recurrence of these floods. Rehding (2011: 414), while examining the approach that ecomusicology should take, enumerates apocalyptic and nostalgic approaches. He further notes that since the literary arts had mostly
focused on an apocalyptic approach, ecomusicology should appeal instead to the nostalgic mood of love. He notes:

Many in the narrative arts have taken the attention-grabbing apocalyptic route to raise awareness by instilling a sense of acute crisis in its audiences. It is quite possible that the most productive way forward for ecomusicology will be to follow the alternative route (414).

Current studies on floods and environmental sustainability disagree with such an approach. In dealing with flood disasters in Ibadan, both apocalyptic and nostalgic approaches to solving the current environmental crisis were involved. This was achieved through the musicians’ reactions and singing both with a sense of urgency during performances and also by appealing to the memories of the experiences the citizens have enjoyed in the past which have been affected by the flood.

In his landmark research on popular music and the mediation of traditional ecological knowledge in northern Brazil, Silver (2015: 381) examines the work of Luis Gonzaga, a popular musician whose songs were cited by rain prophets, and argues that commercially recorded songs can give traditional ecological knowledge the qualities of comprehensibility, authority, and autochthonism. This paper extends the use of indigenous popular music in creating awareness and a sense of responsibility among community members in Ibadan. The current study, however, differs in that it engages with human responses to the Ogunpa flood disaster in Ibadan city and the process of cultural sustainability that further helps environmental sustainability.

Pedelty’s (2013: 44) assertion that “ecological matters have clear relevance to the world of popular music,” is true of Yoruba popular music and musicians as they engage the community with popular music, trying to prevent flood disasters in Ibadan. Pedelty (2013: 44) encourages a wider discussion and additional scholarship on popular music and environmental matters. He notes that “environmental matters have not been widely discussed in popular music studies and hopefully scholars will see this shortcoming as a new opportunity.” This paper is an answer to Pedelty, as it examines how the traditional popular music of two prominent Yoruba musicians engages environmental degradation among the people of Ibadan. Tailor and Hurley note:
Global change, the impact of human encroachment on waterways, and overpopulation, will demand heightened strategies towards participation in both scientific research and subsequent interventions in growing environmental dilemmas. This is just another stage in how music has always congruently evolved with human needs . . . it occurs to me that one of the best uses of our time as musicians is to find creative ways to listen to some of nature’s changing messages and pass them along to others (Tailor and Hurley 2015: 6).

Tailor and Hurley’s work explains the global problems and specifically enumerates the place of music. The current study extends the discourse on music, nature, and culture. It specifically argues for the use of indigenous popular music, especially Yoruba ethnic music, for the propagation of flood disaster in Yoruba land.

Rees (2016) examines ecological songs that may be termed as original in the wake of modernization in China. In her landmark research on popular music and the mediation of traditional ecological knowledge in northern Brazil, Rees highlights the sudden awareness of ecological songs in China. Rees (2016: 80) references a wealth of current concerns over the environment, social change, and disappearing traditional arts, thereby tapping into a sense of nostalgia for a more locally rooted past. The current study on flood disasters and environmental sustainability in Ibadan extends this discussion by highlighting the cultural remembrance of songs about indigenous cultural practices that were abandoned, which had resulted in flooding disaster.

DeNora (2004) asserts that adding music to the catalogue of cultural materials, contributes a whole new dimension to the focus of human-nonhuman interactions. The popular music of Jimi Solanke and Ebenezer Obey presents a wealth of knowledge and stimulates learning experiences among their audiences, the songs explain the human-nonhuman interactions that suggests that when human activities negatively encroach on the environment it always results in crisis. Music is, therefore, a powerful medium for communication, through which human actions and follies especially in relation to the environment are expressed. It provides a forum for discussing the environment and how it could be sustained, so that members of the public may better understand and learn more about human activities and environmental sustainability.
Popular Music and Environmental Sustainability

There are many singers in Nigeria, especially in Yoruba land, whose songs are about nature. Such performers include Fela Anikulapo. In his song, “Water Everywhere but None to Drink,” he alluded to the fact that we have much water yet people do not have access to good quality water (Olorunyomi 2005). Sikiru Ayinde and Haruna Ishola’s songs deal with natural elements such as birds, animals, and plants, which then become semiotic representations of power struggles between the poor and the elite (Olaosun 2016). Solanke and Ebenezer are two popular Yoruba singers who directly converse with the issue of flood disasters and sustainability in Ibadan.

Olujimi Adeboye Solanke, popularly called Uncle Jimi Solanke, is a popular folk musician, with well over forty albums to his credit. From childhood, Solanke has been noted for his special gifts of storytelling, oratory, and music. He is one of the most popular musicians in Nigeria who responded to the flood in Ibadan and who released an album titled, Total Praise, where the “Omiyale” track was sung. In an interview with Solanke, he explained:

The flood disaster in Ibadan was a tragedy. I was an eyewitness and was lucky that I did not die myself. I saw corpses being pulled out of Ogunpa River. It was a real tragedy. I gave my voice to the happenings, mournfully, for the loss of properties and humans. First, I gave the historic inclination of flood disasters and spoke also of the effects, in terms of the economic loss. We always want our societies to be peaceful and have environmental security. We have discovered also that humans adopt certain unhealthy and unethical ways of living that promote such disasters as floods, and such must be addressed. Musicians, especially those of us involved in popular folk music, have the right message.

Chief Ebenezer Obey is a juju musician born in Ogun State, in Egbado, in 1942, and formed his International Brothers band in 1964. According to Omojola (2006) his early recordings bear strong influences in Dairo and highlife music, notably in the use of tonally directed melodies.

and harmonies as well as in the incorporation of such styles as the Congolese guitar. His record output is over fifty albums. The juju maestro, Obey, composed a song titled, Oro Ogunpa, meaning Ogunpa River. An excerpt of the song is given below:

Ọjọ́ abàmì tórò n’Íbàdàn, ọjọ́ kékéré kó,
Ọjọ́ abàmì tórò n’Íbàdàn, ọjọ́ kékéré kó,
A ọ́rọ̀ Ọgùnпа ọ́rọ̀ Ọgùnпа, Tóbá jéṣẹ́ oba dárí jini,
A ọ́rọ̀ Ọgùnпа, ọ́rọ̀ Ọgùnпа, Tóbá jéṣẹ́ oba dárí jini,

There was a mysterious rain in Ibadan
Oh! Ogunpa flood, Ogunpa flood,
If it is sin please forgive us
Oh! Ogunpa flood, Ogunpa flood,
If it is our sins that caused that
God please forgive us

![Excerpt from Ebenezer Obey’s Song. Scored by the Author](image)

Ebenezer Obey reiterates the spirituality, worship, and need for personal and community cleansing from any evil that brought the tragedy. From a religious background, he notes that superhumans are known for clean environments. For
instance the Hebrew God warned the Israelites when they were moving from Egypt to Canaan land that they must keep their environment clean lest he send plagues upon them. The inability to obey religious rules to keep the environment and rivers clean may result in a flood. Apart from the religious texts Ebenezer also reiterates the socio-economic loss experienced after the flood.

Ójọ́ tó ń gbé mó tóún wólé lulú ọjọ́ kẹkeré kọ,
Ójọ́tó ń gbé mó tóún wólélulú ọjọ́ kẹkeré kọ,
A órö́ Ògùnpa, órö́ Ògùnpa, Tóbá jéjé ọba dárí jini
A órö́ Ògùnpa, órö́ Ògùnpa, Tóbáỳèsẹ̀ ọbađärìjini,
Bójọ́ se ń sù lọjọ́ yì, se sù, bójọ́ se ń rọ̀ lọjọ́ yì ọrò,
Ó sebèbe, ó se gudugudu méje, ó se gudugudu méje yâyàmèfà,

Mysterious rain that destroyed cars, houses
Mysterious rain that destroyed cars and houses
It started raining as usual,
the sky got cloudy, it started raining
the rain was chaotic, destructive and traumatic

From the interviews and the interactions with community members on the impact of the selected flood songs on the people, Sesan Alaba notes, “that the songs have brought the scene of the flood to our memory and we can almost feel the incident now. But more than that, songs now help us take personal and community responsibilities.” In line with this, Impey (2008) explains that the experiences and coping strategies of women in Malawi during the 1949 famine are encoded in their agricultural and food preparation songs. She notes that her research highlights the significance of song lyrics as vital forms of oral testimony, and pays particular attention to the value of a body of songs as evidence of social processes over time. This is equally true of songs on the flood disasters in Ibadan, as song lyrics provide a narrative about the changing experiences of Ibadan dwellers. Likewise, Ebenezer Obey sang about the flood. He reiterates its history and effects in the following text:

Ójọ́ tó ń gbé mó tóún wólé lulú
Ójọ́ kẹkeré kọ,

2. Sesan Alaba, personal communication, August 9, 2016, Ibadan, Nigeria.
A òrò Ògünpa, òrò Ògünpa,
T’óbá jésè oba dàrí jini
Ànú abiyamo semí o t’emíset’Olúwa
Ànú abiyamo semí o t’emí se t’Olúwa
Gbagitari igí dá, gbagidari erín wó
Awon’mo lómo wón ló sòrun àpàpandodo

It is a terrifying sight; the effect of the flood was terrific and horrible
The flood that carried cars and destroyed houses
I pity nursing mothers; the effect of the flood was very bad
It was terrible and disastrous
Many children were lost and many died because of the flood

The song above also recalls the different occurrences of flood disasters in Ibadan and the unquantifiable loss attached to it. An informant, Alabi,³ stated that the song of the artist, when initially released, restrained them from dumping refuse in waterways. But after a while people forgot all about its message and resumed dumping refuse into waterways. He claimed that the authorities saddled with the responsibility of ensuring a clean and healthy environment do too little, and mostly nothing in this regard.

Ebenezer Obey’s song on flooding has three major themes. He recounted the flood as the result of the sins, wickedness, and evil doings of the people; the horrors and losses incurred from the flood, and he listed the names of politicians, heads of government, and individuals that showed concern and provided help through funding or actions. Jimi Solanke reiterates the devastating effects of floods in the text below:

Stanza 1:  Òjótórò sílè e tétí e gbọ,
Ìlú Èkó yàtò sítÈgbá,
Ninú àwọn onísòwò Ìbàdàn,
Kò sénlá tó máa ní kòkàn hun,
Níjó omíyalé,

Chorus: Omíyalé o, omíyalé o,
Ówówná o, Babakáriayè,
Omíyalé o, omíyalé o,

³ Alabi Idowu, interview with the author, August 24, 2106, Ibadan.
Èmiòsave mó o karíayé,

**Stanza 2:** Ọmọ ń wáiyá, iyá ń wáomọ, Ẹgbón ń wá́búròkáàkiri, Ará ilé ń wáojúlùmọ, Wáhálànnínúùomíyalé, Lójó omíyalé,

**Chorus:** Omíyalé o, omíyalé o, Owówọná o, Babakáríayé, Omíyalé o, omíyalé o,

**Stanza 3:** Òṣe dùi lafi ń rántí, Òjójí a ń wíkúròníwásá, Gbogboítélówàlójúodò, Kòsénitómaníkòkànñnun,

**Chorus:** Omíyalé o, omíyalé o, Owówọná o, Babakáríayé, Omíyalé o, omíyalé o,

**Stanza 4:** Sunday August 1980 nimò ń so, Òjó ńre ló bérè kònípé dá, Odò ńgùn pá kún kojá álà, Ò wọ lè ló ó gbé niyàn lọ.

**Stanza 1:** The rain that fell, listen attentively Lagos city is different from Egba city Marketers in Ibadan had terrible experience when flood disaster rampage occurred

**Chorus:** Flood disaster, flood disaster Commercial goods were destroyed Flood disaster, flood disaster Flood disaster, life is not safe any longer in this world

**Stanza 2:** Children were searching for their parents Parents were searching for their children Elderly ones were looking for the younger Household members were searching for one another Troubles everywhere because of the flood

**Chorus:** Flood disaster, flood disaster Commercial goods were destroyed Flood disaster, flood disaster Flood disaster, life is not safe any longer in this world
Stanza 3: the incident occurred for some times now
That is why we are remembering
It was a terrible disaster
All the houses close to the river
Fully experienced the sad stories of the flood

Chorus: Flood disaster, flood disaster
Commercial goods were destroyed
Flood disaster, flood disaster
Flood disaster, life is not safe any longer in this world

Stanza 4: it was on Sunday of August, 1980
The rain started we felt it will soon stop
It was amazing that Ogunpa River over flow its boundary
And lead to death of hundreds of people

Figure 4: Excerpt from Jimi Solanke’s song on flood in Ibadan, scored by the author.

The song above, segmented in four stanzas, describes events during the 1980 flood disaster in Ibadan City. Stanza one describes the torrential rainfall that led to floods. The singer then compares Lagos and Egba in relation to Ibadan’s commercial activities. He concludes in stanza one that marketers in Ibadan, at the time of the flood, felt the negative impact of the flood. Here, the singer notes that commercial losses occur during flooding which sometimes lead to famine and want. Stanza two enumerates the loss of lives as husbands search for their wives,
parents for their children, and relatives for one another. The song captures the tumultuous situation of people fighting for their lives. Stanza three and four conclude that the rain started like any other; however, the downpour was heavier than usual. Mr. Epo Alimi⁴ notes that the song indeed reminds one of the incidents and warns against the neglect of regular sacrifices and rites to the spiritual water beings. The song advocates for humans to stop dumping refuse in waterways. Furthermore, during a conversation Jimi Solanke⁵ explained the motive for the song *Omiyale*, and how people respond to it. He asserts that the song was composed to remind people of past incidents and how they could, through cooperation, avert a future occurrence of the floods.

Dolapo Shola⁶ agrees that “the effects of the songs among the community people are great, especially the older people who experienced the flood of 1980.” She asserts that some of the community members are now responsible. She also explains that some are still not serious with personal environmental issues. Also, inasmuch as people refrain from dumping waste on the water ways, the more we enjoy environmental comforts.

Cultural Background of the Music

The two musicians described above are Yoruba. Their musical practices, compositions, and performances are culturally situated within the Yoruba worldview. Popular music in their experience is music that has been mass produced and disseminated on local radio and television. However, the process of distributing the music to the local community by playing the record in community meetings, during festive times, and over radio and television is very significant. Mostly the music was played on Nigerian television authority and on community radio stations in the state among which the Oyo Radio Broadcasting Corporation is one.

The songs cited in this paper are in the Yoruba language. There are about 26 Yoruba dialects due to their cultural enclaves. The songs are sung in the Oyo Yoruba dialect. Linguistically, Yoruba emerged as a distinct language group from the Kwa group of the Niger-Benue confluence area (Atanda 1996) where the Yoruba speak a common language known as Yoruba. It is believed to have derived

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⁴ Epo Alimi, personal communication, September 12, 2016, Ibadan, Nigeria.
⁵ Jimi Solanke, December 8, 2016, personal communication, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
from the Oyo dialect (Samuel 2009). Yoruba language is tonal; consequently, it interacts with music at an extremely intimate level (Euba 1977, Dosunmu 2005).

Samuel (2009) explains that there is a close-knit relationship between musical sound and meaning. The performers in this study naturally follow the tonal inflections of the Yoruba language in their compositions and performances. Ebenezer Obey and Jimi Solanke employ polyphonic techniques in their music. They both use three-part harmony as well. While Ebenezer Obey employs call-and-response-type of musical forms in some parts of his songs, Jimi Solanke employs through-composed music throughout the performance. Jimi Solanke uses the combination of western and African instruments like the keyboard, the guitar, and a set of drums, as does Ebenezer Obey. Jimi Solanke shows a baritone voice quality, Ebenezer Obey’s music uses tenor.

Conclusion

It has been argued that musicians’ responses to the flood disasters were motivated by the colossal amount of waste and the need to create a sustainable environment. From the above, it is clear that songs about flood disasters had a major role in convincing people to perform their obligations towards keeping waste out of the Ogunpa River. Though several other musicians use elements of nature in their songs, the songs of Jimi Solanke and Ebenezer Obey gave a nostalgia to the effects and prevention of flood disaster in near future. The two selected musicians whose music is strongly influenced by the cultural life of the Yoruba and their musical response to flood disasters in Ibadan was imperative. Songs archive people’s experiences during disasters, just as oral history and mythology may also memorialize such events. Musical documentations after an event are therefore metaphors for contemporary issues, and demonstrate how associated problems can be dealt with. Indigenous music and popular music have indeed been used to educate Ibadan dwellers, and the general public, about the flood disasters experienced in the city. This includes providing information about the meaning of flood disasters, their causes, as well as exposing people to their implications, and what roles the members of the public need to play in the mitigation of climate change. This paper has argued for ecomusicology, not only in the context of music about the environment, but also that the music is an admonishment to people. Here the music is also a reminder to people of how they had abandoned the care of the environment through the throwing of solid waste into the river, and the music is a reminder of how flooding in the past had devastating effects on people.
and their livelihoods. The music draws on indigenous knowledge which had been abandoned and local experiences of flooding which had been ignored or forgotten. The songs connect the past, when indigenous knowledge of keeping the environment clean and a respect for nature, and floods were prevented. It talks of the present where due to the neglect of these cultural practices, flooding became a regular occurrence.

The musical forms of these musicians are culturally situated and imbibe the cultural and environmental styles of the Yoruba people. It was also mentioned that the non-human resides in nature like the river, mountain, and in trees, among other places. Ebenezer Obey’s and Jimi Solanke’s songs, and discussions with those who survived the floods, are evidence that the course of the disaster was made worse by the refuse dumped in the waterways by community members. It was clear that dumping of refuse, building on waterways, inappropriate town planning, and many hours of rainfall were the main causes of the floods experienced in Ibadan. Also, it was noted that illiteracy, poverty, and a lack of awareness among the citizens are the issues that must be addressed through music. The fact that there was an occurrence in 1980 and a reoccurrence in 2011 strengthens, as expressed in the songs, the warning bells. These indigenous popular songs are easily understood in the minds of Ibadan residents, constantly reminding them to avoid a reoccurrence of flood disasters. It is also known that Nigeria, unlike her developed counterparts, lacks the capacity, in terms of expertise and equipment, to predict the tendency for the occurrence of such disasters. If adequate educational and orientation programs and substantial actions are put in place, together with the instrumentality of ecomusicological ideals, flood disasters may be prevented. In this paper the employment of ecomusicological theory as a pathway of looking at flood disaster and environmental sustainability is apt. Since this might be one of the first such approaches focused on Nigeria, it will be a guide for other researchers examining other areas of connecting music and environmental sustainability among the Yoruba and in Nigeria in general.

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Discography
