

*GBEDU* AS A MUSICAL GENRE IN THE PALACE OF THE  
OBA OF LAGOS

*BY*

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## ABSTRACT

The study examined *gbedu* as an instrumental musical genre, its origin and its functions in all its ramifications in the palace of the *Oba* of Lagos. This was with a view to revealing its significance as a ceremonial music in the palace of the king.

This study relied immensely on oral tradition, observation and participation, as its primary source of information. Three traditional chiefs (Bajulu of Lagos, Obanikoro of Lagos and Ashogbon of Lagos), a retired *gbedu* artiste, two court musicians who played *igbe* and *dundun-sekere* at the palace of the *Oba* of Lagos, and three practicing *gbedu* artistes on Lagos Island were interviewed on the origin and historical background of *gbedu* music. Secondary material on the subject matter was consulted in the library, archives and Internet. Performances of the music were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed, using ethnomusicological theory.

The findings showed that *gbedu* music was brought from Benin to Lagos to symbolized royalty, and could also represent the *Oba* of Lagos just like his staff of office. *Gbedu* played a significant role on ceremonial occasions and was used to welcome important dignitaries and entertain them in the king's courtyard. It also featured in rituals, festivals and celebrations. However, it was not devoted to any god. It was revealed that, in spite of the enormous influence of Western cultural values on the Yoruba way of life, *gbedu* music had been able to maintain its continuous stability and originality as part of the musical heritage in the palace of the *Oba* of Lagos.

The study concluded that *gbedu* music was a vital part of the royal insignia at the palace of the *Oba* of Lagos.