

Abake Okebiyi Songs for Egun

Ethnic group: Nago Yoruba

Language (dialect): Nago Yoruba (Ouidah Nago)

Country: Benin

Recording date: May 11, 2017

Recording location: Ouassa, Benin

Total Recording time: 10:37

Technician: Brian Nowak

Group Members:

Abake Okebiyi – Lead vocals

Kefa Okebiyi – Back-up vocals

Track names -- duration

1) Omo Odje Un Fi Balejo – 5:24

2) Egbe Orimi Comajo – 2:56

3) Olu funfun nyenye omo dein coma begun niyo – 1:23

4) Baila Molagan Bere – 00:54

Group Introduction:

The informal nature of this recording removes the point of describing the artist as a formal group. The two sisters featured here are in a home concession that they share between Ouidah and Cové, just off the paved road along the narrow coast of Benin. The open courtyard with rooms facing inward are typical even for a village highlighting the casual, rural feel of short rests and breaks between household chores. A good-sized living room welcomes visitors with couches made locally by carpenters. A busy kitchen with door opening into the corner of the concession is a central point of activity throughout the day into the night.

Recording Context:

After a random phone call, the Okebiyi sisters were basically in the middle of their standard day as they joined each other on a bench they often relax on to demonstrate songs sung in the casual setting of the home. While at work or resting between chores, songs from different genres from traditional to pop appear spontaneously filling the air with melody carried often by one but also with a friend, or in a very small group. The sisters represent a family level familiarity that adds to the simple tone. Occasionally however, the melody inspires off-camera family members, a neighbor, and a friend to introduce a lyric or rhythms by patting the thigh and chest with an open hand. These songs for the ancestors are perfect for this impromptu recording in the family concession.

