





Photographs © Wayne Irwin

Ariva • Fatai Rolling Dollar Remembers...

And finally, the voice of virtuoso exponent of agidigbo — precursor of juju music-ex-seaman-walking encyclopedia of neo-traditional African music. Fatai traverses, with GR's, Olakunle Tejuoso and Duro Ikujenyo, the crest and trough of West Africa's musical landscape in an attempt to track the sub-continent's rhythmic genealogy

GR: What is the origin of your music? Where did it come from and who were the people behind it?

Fatai: Originally, it evolved from a sound that we called "palm-wine" music and it was played as far back as [between] 1939 to about 1946. By then, it consisted of the palm-wine guitar— (a box guitar),—Yoruba vocals and the sekere.¹ One of the popular players of this music was Tunde King. He once had a problem and went back to

Freetown, Sierra Leone, from where he picked up another idea for the music. On getting back to Lagos, he modified the palm-wine music. But the originator of this music form was a band called *The Jolly Orchestra*, popularly known as *Atari Ajanaku*. It was led by a musician called Harbour Grant. In his band was another musician that left for London where he played in a hotel called Hotel Afrique - Ambrose Campbell. He left Nigeria on a British ship called Empire Ball and made a lot of records while over there. Another originator of the palm-wine music I mustn't forget to mention is Irewole Denge, an Ijebu man. In those days, he would play this four-cornered bass drum and sing the chorus lines in Yoruba all by himself.

GR: Just like the way Kokoro plays the Samba today?

Fatai: No! Kokoro plays in juju style.

GR: Did Kokoro ever form a band?

Fatai: Not at all. Because his songs do not fit into that kind of form. He sings what he likes. For him anything goes.

GR: Where is Kokoro from?

Fatai: He is from Owo. So, after Irewole Denge, Tunde King came on the scene with the popular group *Atari Ajanaku* and, then, later on, Ayinde Bakare.

GR: You mentioned Ambrose Campbell earlier. Where does he fit in?

Fatai: Well, after his involvement with the group *Atari Ajanaku*, he left for London. When they reached London they modified the music with the different instruments there. They made it much more beautiful with all the colonial instruments. It was no more indigenous. Especially with the input of the tenor sax and drums.

GR: Whom did they play for in those days? And on which streets and in what areas of Lagos did they play?

Fatai: In those days they used to play everywhere. Once you played here for a time, you packed up and went to another place again. Any street and anywhere on Lagos Island.

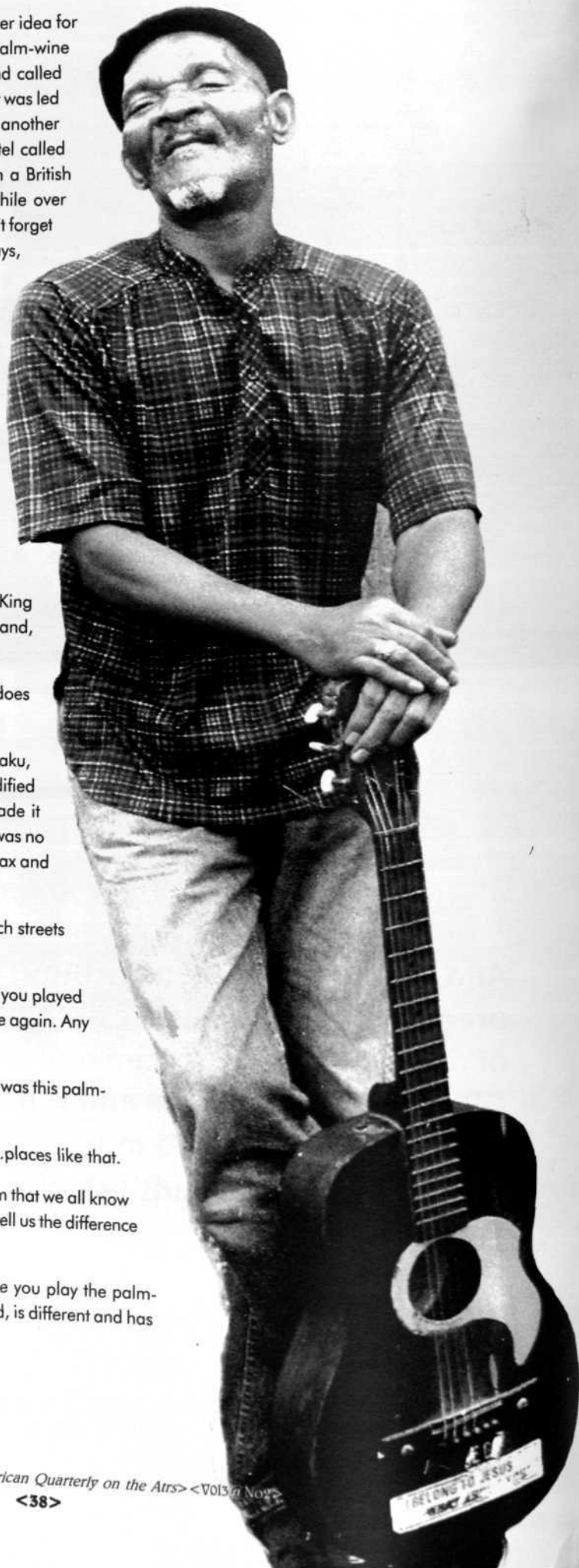
GR: Where were the jumping [vibrant] places and where was this palm-wine music really happening?

Fatai: Mostly Isale Eko, Ita Faaji, Tinubu, Ita Garawu...places like that.

GR: So palm-wine music evolved into another music form that we all know to be juju music with the likes of Ayinde Bakare. Can you tell us the difference in the two styles?

Fatai: They are different because in the palm-wine style you play the palm-wine guitar alone with the sekere. Juju, on the other hand, is different and has a different meaning.

GR: What do you mean?



Fatai: It is called juju because of the tambourine. You understand me? When they used to play it on the street they would shout 'ju so ke'. They would then throw the tambourine up and shake it.... *shukushuku*. That was how juju got its name and not from bad medicine and all that, even though in Saro land the word was taken to mean bad medicine. But here in Lagos our juju meant music. In juju then, we had the guitar, *agidigbo*,² *samba*, *sekere* and at times we used the bottle to give us that clave sound. In fact, white people invented the clave from our bottle sound. That is where they got the idea for it. You see, in those days, palm-wine music was strongly influenced by the Ghanaian musicians that used to come to Lagos. Ghanaians like E.T Mensah and bands like the Ramblers, Black Beat and later on the Uhuru band. Then E.T Mensah used to sing songs in his language. We would go and buy their records and then change the lyrics into Yoruba because the songs all have the same rhythm and in fact this is how highlife with the Brass Band started here in Nigeria.

GR: So the Brass Band and the type of highlife played here developed from palm-wine and juju music?

Fatai: Exactly. Because the content was still African. It's just that everything was packed into it at the same time. So you see, highlife in Nigeria started from Ghana with E.T Mensah. There was also Calypso with Ishola Willy Payne and then later people like Chris Ajilo also came on the scene.

GR: Ayinde Bakare was very popular in those days...

Fatai: Yes! Because of his tone. He was a great singer and really knew how to praise people with his voice.

GR: Does praising come easy for musicians? Or is it a gift from God?

Fatai: Ah! it's a gift O! You do not get a lot of musicians who know how to praise and you cannot teach it to anybody. If the musician sees you he knows exactly how to praise you to make your head go crazy. It's a gift from the almighty and straight away people start *spraying*³ you.

GR: And this is typical of social life in Lagos?

Fatai: Exactly. They will all start spraying. I mean ... if you are a true-born Yoruba and they start praising your *oriki*, your head will swell. I'm telling you, when you hear them digging up your past, the *oriki* of all your great grandfathers... My God!

GR: It seems to me that even with all the modern infusions in our music there is still this strong element of tradition remaining.

Fatai: Juju is '*ibile*' [indigenous], and the words in all our music is *ijinle* [deep] Yoruba. And so are all the movements and actions.

GR: When did you come on the scene?

Fatai: Ayinde Bakare was still playing when I came on but had not expanded in a big way. When I came in we started with the highest man on guitar in Nigeria.

GR: What does that mean — "highest"?

Fatai: This man was a master on guitar. J.O. Araba. The man who knew everything about guitar.

GR: Who taught him guitar and where was he from? How did he develop like that to be the best?

Fatai: Only God knows. He was from Ajashe (Port Novo) but born in Lagos (Lafiaji). An 'Egun' man but you cannot know. Lafiaji, Lagos! He knew how to speak this Yoruba like anything. He was older than I am and he had played with Ishola Willy Payne in those days, and later with Victor Olaiya who used to play highlife in Yoruba.

GR: Where did you buy all your records from? You mentioned earlier how you used to buy Ghanaian music.

Fatai: We used to buy from Jofabro in Lagos and from Badejo, the eldest of all of them. He owned the first indigenous record label.

GR: Where did you play in those days?

Fatai: We played at Island Club and many other places. At Island Club there were very few blacks there. The *Oyinbos* [Europeans] owned the place while the Yoruba owned the Yoruba Tennis Club. The *Oyinbos* controlled Island Club and in those days if you wanted to deal with the government or wanted to make contact with a top gun, you had to go there. I played for men like I.S Adewale "The Boy is Good."

GR: But I thought Island Club was formed by the late Chief Alakija?

Fatai: No. During the time of the *Oyinbos*, he was a member but later took over when they left.

GR: So what was the idea of Yoruba Tennis Club?

Fatai: Well, it was created by the Yoruba elites at the time: for all the big big people.

GR: How did the guitar come to be popular? Who introduced it into Nigeria?

Fatai: The guitar was introduced to us by the Portuguese people when they brought in the Spanish box guitar. They were the ones that built Tinubu Square and the Prison Yard in Lagos.

GR: So they were builders?

Fatai: Yes! There were a lot of them around Lagos in those days. We would sing their songs in Yoruba and keep the same beat and rhythm.

(He demonstrates by translating a song in Portuguese to Yoruba).

So we followed the tune but only changed the language.

GR: Can we go back to J. O. Araba, the master juju guitarist?

Fatai: Ah yes! You see, he was a master in this juju-highlife idiom. He was a blessing from God. Nobody could touch him. I'm telling you. In this world.

GR: You mean he was more advanced than Ayinde Bakare on guitar?

Fatai: You see, Ayinde Bakare could only handle the C cord on guitar. Just the neck.

GR: Unlike Araba?

Fatai: Oh! Araba would play all the scales. He played anything. Oh! Everything. You see, I met Araba at Alakija in 1953. Here at Idiro opposite Western Hotel; although, in those days, that spot was called Mainland Cave Hotel. The

tuned and did not quite rhyme with the music. But Ishola Willie Payne was playing good tenor sax. So we had Araba on guitar, Ishola Willie Payne on tenor saxophone and Seni Tejuoso on agidigbo playing palm-wine sound.

GR: Why was it called palm-wine sound?

Fatai: Because in those days in Lagos you only found good palm-wine where fine faaji [pleasurable] music was played.

GR: So you entered and bought a bottle of beer?

Fatai: Yes! I was hearing the agidigbo but it was not sounding well. The agidigbo acts as a bass, like a bass guitar for the rhythm.

GR: Can it be tuned?

Fatai: Well-tuned, and it has E, F and G. All right, I went up to Ishola Willie Payne after a few minutes and asked him if I could play. He asked if I knew how to play, and if I was sure of myself. I took the agidigbo box and started to jam. Man! You should see what happened that night. All of them

T here in Lagos our juju meant music. In juju then, we had the guitar, *agidigbo*,² *samba*, *sekere* and at times we used the bottle to give us that clave sound. In fact, white people invented the clave from our bottle sound. That is where they got the idea for it

owner was an Egba man. I met him there.

GR: What was this part of Mushin like then?

Fatai: Ah! not like today O! It was all bush. I mean when you stand here—from even here looking down—you will see the railway line right [far] down. In 1953, most of the settlers here were Awori people and most of the railway workers were Egba and Ijebu. Yaba was the last terminus and a real “jungle.” The last of the crazy people were at Yaba.

GR: So, to go back to your story...

Fatai: Yes, as I entered this hotel I heard this sound by Ishola Willie Payne and also the agidigbo.

GR: Who was playing the agidigbo?

Fatai: Ah! Seni “Teje” Tejuoso with Araba on guitar. I met them on the same day. Well! I popped in and bought a bottle. By then, it was only 1 and 9 pence for a bottle.⁴ When I opened it I took a tumbler and started enjoying the sound. I noticed the sound on the agidigbo was not well

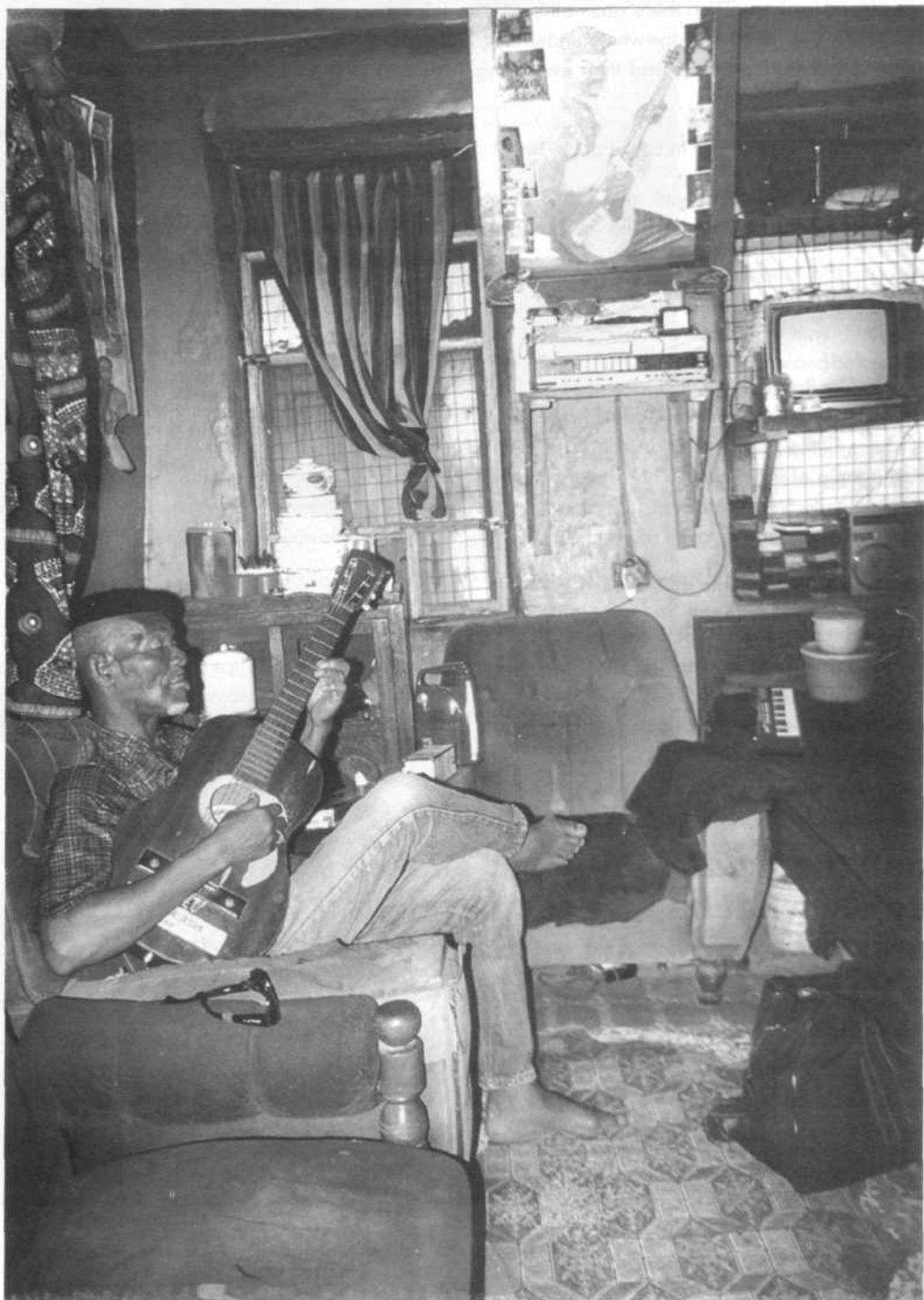
in the club started to spray me with money. That night, Ishola Willie Payne said, “Yeah! This is the man we need.” And after we closed they gave me one pound [sterling]. I thanked them. They asked me where I worked, what I was doing, and so on. I told them that I was a seaman and did not want to go back on my ship.

GR: Was this true?

Fatai: Yeah! I worked with the Palm Line and traveled on a coastal ship up to Congo, Libreville, Luanda, Port Noire and all over the west coast of Africa.

GR: And did you play music in all these places?

Fatai: Yeah! I was playing agidigbo and learning everywhere I went. You know, on the ship were two parts—the after part, and the front part. We played in the after part, that is we black Africans. The whites stayed in the front part. When we finished work at around 4 pm, I would take my agidigbo and play and people would give me Lucky Strike cigarettes, which at that time was the best American cigarette. It cost 5 shillings for a packet.



GR: So, back to the club. The guys gave you money...

Fatai: Eh henh! They gave me one pound that night and I thanked them. Then Araba came up to me and asked where I lived. I said right here. He said he lived at Ebute Meta and said he would like us to form a band together because he liked the way I played *agidigbo*. I said, well, if it is possible, then the better. That was how I moved to his house at Apena Street, Ebute Meta. At his house we sat down, talked and

drank palm wine. And suddenly the guitar came out, the *agidigbo*, the *sekere* and *bang*, the music started to flow! Just like that. At that time we did not play music for money. Whenever we were invited by our friends for naming ceremonies, we would go there to play as long as they could guarantee us plenty of beer and chicken: Star beer, Heineken and BergeDorf.

GR: So you would play for all the beer you could get?

Fatai: Yes, we played for beer. Then there was nothing like an electric fridge. We used a stove fridge where underneath we would pour kerosene, light it up and then everything inside would start to cool.

GR: What was the social scene like in Lagos at the time?

Fatai: Lagos was great. You could walk around the streets at 1'0 clock, 2'0 clock in the night and nothing would happen to you.

GR: Where were the favorite parts for musicians? Where did you like to play?

Fatai: Oh! Places like Broad Street, Ita Garawu where there was this popular hotel. Also Ita Faaji and Aroloya. These were places where all the Yoruba elites and big men used to stay - the rich people of those days. That was the Ikoyi of today, right up to Ajele Street. We even played right up to Sandgrouse where the Aganyin stayed as settlers.

GR: So, Lagos was divided up into different settlements?

Fatai: Yes, we had the Aganyin at Sandgrouse, Lagos and Yaba. Even the name Yaba comes from the Ghanaian language. From Yaaba (wait for me, I'm coming), we changed it to Yaba. When they sold bread and ran out of supply they would then say "Yaaba," that is, wait for me, I'm

Fatai: A lot of things. You see this saw that is used for wood. In those days it was used by Ghanaians to make music. That is how they developed the *kokoma* sound. They used the saw pressed on a nail to produce all types of rhythms. That was how they also made the *Adonkwa* sound. Then it was used like the clave where two bolts were used together. Ah! Ah! even Fela Kuti played *kokoma* in his music now! It is in his sound.

GR: Did you say Fela? What did he know about all this music you are mentioning?

Fatai: Ah! He was a musician now! All musicians do is steal ideas from each other.

GR: So you mean Fela was researching all these styles too?

Fatai: Yes O! He was researching all the time. He used to stay next to me at Olufeyide near where his mum's house got burnt down. He would check me up all the time.

GR: Did Fela know J.O. Araba?

Fatai: Very well! He used to study us all and buy our records all the time and practice on them.. (And may his soul rest in peace). He would always ask questions about the music; we had been around each other for a long time, right from the time he was in school.

I took the *agidigbo* box and started to jam. Man! You should see what happened that night. All of them in the club started to spray me with money. That night, Ishola Willie Payne said, "Yeah! This is the man we need."

coming. So parts of Yaba had Ghanaian settlements.

GR: Ok! I see. That probably explains people like the Ghanaian Viney who set up the zoo a long time ago at Yaba?

Fatai: Yes! And like the Olowogbowo area of Lagos that consisted of Brazilians and Creoles (Saro) from Sierra Leone, the Saro stayed all over the Tinubu area. They would hang out there playing music from cigarette tins (*agolo siga*)

GR: Cigarette tins?

Fatai: Yes, cigarettes were sold in tins then. The Saro would use the top of the tin and create all kinds of rhythms from it. Like the *sekere* sound. Ah! We have music in Africa O! It was great then.

GR: It is a shame, as it seems we have lost so much over the years.

GR: It seems to me, sir, that Ghanaian highlife was quite different from what was played in Lagos. It had a swingy bass line as opposed to ours here that had a more definite bass line...

Fatai: You know formally, they did not use bass in juju music. We used the *agidigbo*. It was introduced later.

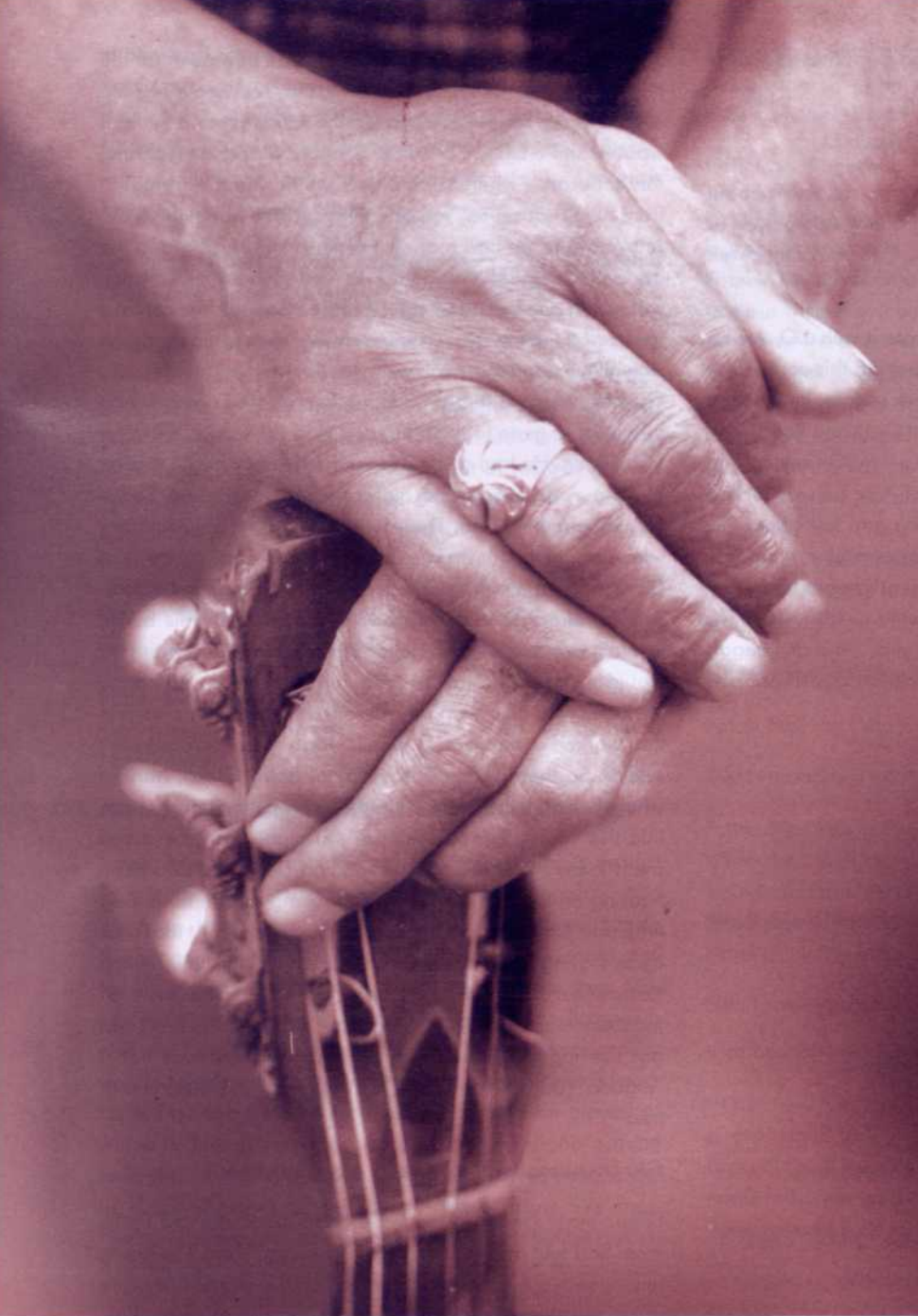
GR: So back to J. O. Araba's time when you played together. Who wrote the compositions and did you have any hits?

Fatai: Oh! We would all sit together. You bring one, I bring one. And we will then join together and form the songs together. That is why we were called J. O. Araba and his Rhythm Blues.

GR: So Araba became the bandleader?

Fatai: Yes, we made him the bandleader.

GR: What happened to Willie Payne?



Fatai: He was the one that first spotted us with J.O. Araba. He was the master of music at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). The head of the music department. We would go there every day and take over whenever another band did not turn up. So, you see, Steve Rhodes liked us a lot because each time he saw us we would have a different tune. He asked us if we had recorded before. And that was how he gave us a note to the Oyinbo of Phillips, the director, who started our recordings. They had just three artists then: our group, Chris Ajilo, and Bobby Benson who recorded his hit *Taxi Driver* there.

GR: Can you mention some hits you had with the Rhythm Blues band?

Fatai: Ah! We had one called *Ranka Dede* made for the late Tafawa Balewa at Independence. A big hit. We had another one *O gba oya ya*.

(He begins to sing)

GR: Was there a difference between the music that Muslims and Christians preferred?

Fatai: No difference. Everybody liked juju.

GR: In developing this your *agidigbo* type juju sound, were you studying the other music forms like *sakara* and *apala*?

Fatai: Oh! He took off to London when he ran into trouble. So we formed our own band. We all owned the copyright and got royalty from the record label. I mean how much was it then? Only 1 and 1/2 pence for each 3 minute record!

GR: Were there albums then?

Fatai: There was nothing like that then. We had 78-rpm vinyl records that went for 3 minutes. And the deal was to record 6 records a year. We originally recorded for Phillips where we would do the master which they would send abroad for pressing, to return for selling.

GR: What role did Steve Rhodes play in all this?

Fatai: Oh! We had by then *Apala* with Haruna Ishola who was very good...and so many other popular forms like "perente" in Ijebuland. Ijebu music... It was from this "perente" that they developed *apala* sound. *Sakara*, on the other hand, was a much older music form which the elder Abibu Oluwa... (You know there were two Abibus who were *sakara* musicians, —Abibu agba and Abibu kekere, both from Ilorin). It was not long after that Joseph Olatunji came up.

GR: You mean Yusuf Olatunji? Was he a Christian?

Fatai: Yes! He was a Christian before converting to Islam at Abeokuta. His original name was Joseph.

GR: Would you say that fuji developed from these sakara/apala forms?

Fatai: No, fuji came from the "were"⁵ sound.

GR: Another important question we want to ask you is about the song *Easy Motion Tourist* that King Sunny Ade played at the banquet held for President Clinton. Can you actually tell us who wrote this song?

Fatai: Ah ah! We own it now! We wrote it with J.O. Araba in those days. In fact there is a story behind this song. One night after we had a jump, we got back so late. By the time we got to Seni (Teje) Tejuoso's house at Old Yaba Road, they had closed the door and he could not get in. On seeing Teje the next day, he narrated the story of how he was locked out. I said, "Ah! We must find something to say about this O!" Because when we started drinking palm wine, words for songs just began to flow like that from our heads. That day as we drank we began to sing. We got to a point where we said to ourselves "Easy motion la wa yi o." And as I began to play the *agidigbo* the words "easy motion tourist" popped out...

"A ba tourist ke le le

Ka ma jiya ka to lo laye

Nitori won tilekun mo'mo onile"

Which was where the Teje incident was shoved in...just like that....

(He bursts out in laughter)

GR: Waah! You will not believe how Clinton danced to it the other day!

Fatai: You mean Clinton danced to it! That Sunny guy is wicked. I am going to find him. (We all start laughing and tell him not to worry about it.) That guy is my son now! Don't you know it is our mechanical work that he is playing with?

GR: Ok. You mean your mechanical rights?

Fatai: Yes, we are the only ones left that can claim it. I was the background of the music. Because without the *agidigbo*, nothing would work. O ga o! [Amazing!] So that is what he played for Clinton?

GR: Now, to go back again. Where does Ebenezer Obey fit in? When did he come on the scene?

Fatai: Very good. When things got so big for us with Araba, a lot of bands got scared of us and would run away from us. They used to wonder how only four people could produce such powerful music and sing like that. Ah! Ah! Even Government would call us then to play for them. The Oyinbo colonial government. We played at the World Student Conference with Empire Rhythm Number One led by E. Arinze

on trumpet. This same Arinze was the lead trumpeter for the NBC. A very hot trumpeter, he used to play real heavy highlife at the Empire Night Club and led the resident band there. It was this same Empire that Fela later converted to his shrine, the Soho area where all the girls would hang out right in front of his house. So, you see, things got so hot at this time. After a while we had money problems with Araba and the band broke up. All the money we had saved at NBC which was about one thousand eight hundred pounds, the contract forms of all the thirty — minute shows we had done, along with all the other materials we owned were in his possession. The next thing we heard on trying to collect this money was that he had gone to take the money to buy an LEDB house for himself. He had packed from the house where we used to do our rehearsals and did not tell anyone of us. So we formed another band. There was this Ijesha man, Ajakaiye, who bought our instruments for us. He used to work at Gottschalk at the time and lived at Sogunle near Oshodi. Five hundred pounds worth of instruments. In this band, again it was four of us: a guitarist, Taiyelolu Igese whom we would pick up in a taxi at Ajegunle in those days; Stormy Weather who also worked at Gottschalk; myself, and Teje that worked at the Town Council. None of us could play the *sekere*. So there was this one day at Baba Olosa, Mushin who after drinking some "oguro" on my way home, I ran into this young fellow, Ebenezer. Straight away, he asked me if I was the same popular Rolling Dollar he had been hearing of. He said he had been looking for me for a long time and did not know how to get to my home. At that time I was staying at 21, Paul Okuntola Street, Mushin. This all happened around 1960, just at about the time of independence. When I got home my wife asked where I had got this jaguda- looking guy from. I said he was not a "jaguda" [burglar] and only wanted to play in the band with me.

GR: Ebenezer must have been very young then?

Fatai: Yeah! He could not have been more than 15 or 16 then. So I told my wife he is not a "jaguda," and was going to play with me. Not long after we had this gig at Abeokuta street, right down this street. I invited him with this other boy, Goke, the younger brother of Samson Ogunlade who later used to play in Ebenezer's band, and now owns the Congo Hotel at Iyana Ipaja. I asked them to come and meet us at the gig and gave the *sekere* to Goke to play first. He played the *sekere* quite well but could not sing with it. After our first set we took a beer and then gave the *sekere* to Ebenezer to try. Now the song we were playing was a bit advanced for him but after he listened once, he would join in with us on second try straight away and get it. Yeah! I told myself this boy is going to be good. And then told Teje that this Ebenezer boy is going to be good for us and that he should let us retain him. We then gave the Goke boy a bottle of beer and money for transport to go. And that was how we employed Ebenezer. He would set up our instruments before we came

to play and after the set he was also the same person that would pack all our instruments to the man at Sogunle with a Bolekaja, all by himself. We played on like this until Teje fell in love with this girl who convinced him to stop playing with us. But I continued to play on with hits like *Sisi Jaiye Jaiye*, *Ojukwu lo bebe*, *Ba Ko Daya*, *Saworo Ma Ro*.

GR: You have been quoted as saying that you are the source of all Obey's non-gospel hits. How far is this true?

Fatai: Yes. I am the one. I have the documents of all the titles of songs right from NBC, Channel 10 and all the contract forms of the records I have done in my life. Nothing is lost. Even the work I did with Shanu Olu Records and so many other recording companies. I did a lot of recordings with Jofabro because I was with him for 8 years where we recorded 6 singles a year. We also recorded for UAC. They came in from Ghana.

GR: So Ebenezer Obey and King Sunny came up with a modified style of your music?

Fatai: Exactly. We were not playing the same thing. They took aspects of mine and fused them with that of Tunde Nightingale.

GR: Why have we not talked about Tunde Nightingale?

Fatai: Take it easy now! We will get there. We have to start from somewhere. They took some of Nightingale's style because they were the ones that suppressed Tunde Nightingale when he went over to London. He went to play for the Nigerians over there. While he was away they now had the chance to move in with this their style, and came up with their own brand of Owambe. Except that the songs they were singing were songs that we had made popular years back. You see, even like the one you said he played at Abuja including this one...*(he sings)*... "*O digba a dupe lowo yin...*" which we used to sing whenever we were about to close a gig in those days. And so many like that. Nightingale's style of songs was similar to ours but his rhythm was different. You know he was from Campos, from Lagos Island. So he understood and played all the Lagos songs. He did not play the notes on his guitar. In those days their guitar was set ready — tuned. They were not trained guitar players. It was more of a show with the real guitar players in the band staying in the background. The leader would then sing on top. But guys like Obey were trained by people like us. I taught Obey the guitar.

GR: Have you seen Obey in recent times?

Fatai: No! I don't want to see him. He is my son and I have so many witnesses that can tell you stories of how I got him into music and all that. Go and see Teje. He'll tell you more, because Obey was the one that will go and call Teje in his father's house whenever we had a gig. Ask him. He just happens to be someone who is not too grateful to God.

That's all. Don't you know that even God has said that if he does [something] for someone that is not grateful, He can take everything back?

GR: Who taught you how to play the guitar?

Fatai: God. After struggling so hard. After real suffering! I learnt how to play. I used to work in the railway for some time. In the days of the riots of "Emerson must go." Emerson was our wicked oyinbo boss at the time. We wanted to send him away. The discrimination was too much and Chief Imoudu led the pack to fight them. I got fired and things became real tough because I had no work for about a year and half. I then had to depend on the agidigbo which I learnt from looking at the Ilajes play. That was their own guitar. Then they lived out in our area, where they would bring dry fish to us at Isale Eko (Oju Olokun). With God's blessings I learnt to even play better than them and I also had a lot of good lyrics. I played the four springs while they played three. You know the agidigbo has five springs in all.

GR: Do you still play the agidigbo?

Fatai: Not like before. The guitar has taken over.

GR: In those days what type of music was called "Owambe"?

Fatai: That was not ours. It was that of Tunde Nightingale. When the ladies danced without beads on their waist, they would ask if the "ileke" [beads] were there: "So wa mbe?" In those days all the ethnic groups would do their own thing. None of all this tribalism stuff.

GR: Thank you sir.

NOTE:

i Sekere is a Yoruba musical instrument that consists of a gourd on which beads or cowrie shells are strung, such that when shaken it rattles.

ii Agidigbo is thumb piano.

iii "Spraying" is a Yoruba term for "appreciating." You are "sprayed" when, in the process of dancing or playing music, for example, people step forward and paste currency notes on your forehead as a gesture of appreciation.

iv That would convert to 1.3/4 of whatever is today's local equivalent of one British shilling.

v "Were" is pronounced "way-ray"ebo (ritual) pots all over the place. We would steal all the money in these ritual bowls when going to school. Spend it all and our prayers would still be answered, as God is the only one who knows who is worshipping him.