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Area Scatter: *Nigeria's First Cross-dresser, Entertainer, Musician and Dibia in Igbo Culture*

By Chuka Odike

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FEATURE
IMAGE

Ugwu Anya Egbulam Musical Group

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AREA SCATTER

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Area Scatter who led the “Ugwu Anya Egbulam musical group” was a unique figure in Igbo cultural history, blending the roles of an entertainer, musician, and dibia (spiritualist). Known for his vibrant personality and gender appearance fluidity, he reportedly underwent a transformative seven-month spiritual retreat in the wilderness following the Nigerian Civil War, reemerging with a new identity. His appearances, often in flamboyant outfits such as a polka-dot skirt paired with a shamanic bone necklace, highlighted his unconventional approach to life and spirituality.

As a performer, Area Scatter played the thumb piano, an instrument adorned with a distinctive skull-and-crossbones motif. His musical talents were showcased during ceremonies, such as playing for His Royal Highness The Queen of England. His performances combined elements of humour, spirituality, and musical mastery, underscoring his multifaceted identity.

Jeremy Marre’s *Beats of the Heart* documentary and accompanying book provide vivid accounts of Area Scatter’s life and performances. His legacy remains a testament to the rich meeting point of music, spirituality, and cultural expression in Igbo society. Despite the societal norms of his time, Area Scatter carved a suitable style of music for himself, leaving a lasting impact on African traditional practices and entertainment.

Likembe. (2007, August). Cross-dressing fun with Area Scatter.

Marre, J. (1985). Beats of the Heart: Konkombe. [Film]. Retrieved from https://youtu.be/7f81_erOkxM

Marre, J. (1985). Beats of the Heart. New York: Pantheon Books.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuka Odiike

I'm a dedicated civil engineer with a passion for infrastructure development and community empowerment. With a strong background in engineering, my work focuses on creating sustainable solutions for urban and rural development projects. Outside of my professional career, I'm deeply interested in Igbo history and culture. I actively explores ways to impact society by using historical lessons to inspire and educate others about the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo people, aiming to bridge tradition and modern development.



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