



Ozi Ikòrò

AFRICAN HISTORY · CULTURE · INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Oge Ihezue Omee Acrobatic Dancers

By Idenze Ezeme

Ozikoro.com · Cultural Heritage · 3 min read

FEATURE
IMAGE

The Oge Ihezue Omee Acrobatic Dancers, captured in a 1975 photograph taken in the Okwulofia Community, Mmaku. Photo credit: Nneamaka Orji.

Article image · caption retained from the published Ozikoro article

Ozi Ikòrò
OGE IHEZUE OMEE ACROBATIC DANCERS

Oge Ihezue Omee Acrobatic Dancers

By Idenze Ezeme · Cultural Heritage · Ozikoro.com

Oge Ihezue Omee Acrobatic Dancers is a cultural dance group rooted in the rich traditions of the Umumgbede clan in Mmaku, Enugu State, Nigeria. Established in 1974, the group was formed to represent the Okwulofia Community in various cultural events, both locally and beyond. With a unique blend of energetic Atilogwu dance and acrobatic displays, they have become a symbol of artistic excellence and cultural preservation. Over the years, the group has captivated audiences with their performances, keeping the traditions of their ancestors alive while inspiring younger generations to embrace their heritage.

01

Foundation and Purpose

The group was founded in 1974 in Umumgbede, Okwulofia Community, Mmaku, Awgu Local Government Area, which was part of Anambra State at the time but is now in Enugu State, Nigeria. It was established by the elders of the Umumgbede clan as a Youth Dance Group to represent their community in various cultural events within Mmaku Town, Awgu Local Government Area, and beyond.

The primary role of the group was to serve as performing dancers representing the Umumgbede clan and Okwulofia Community during events or special occasions. For example, in 1976, they performed at St. Theresa's Catholic Church, Abakaliki, during the ordination of Reverend Father Aniuзу, the first Catholic priest from Mmaku. Over the years, they have performed in different parts of Mmaku, Awgu,

and Enugu.

02

Music and Performance Style

The group specializes in cultural music, particularly Atilogwu, which is known for its acrobatic displays. The musical instruments used include:

- Three drums of different sizes
- Ogene (gong)
- Flute
- Oryor (Ichaka – a type of rattle)

As an entertainment-focused youth group, they incorporate masquerades, though these are not highly defined. One masquerade has a manly appearance, while the other is feminine. They are designed purely for entertainment and ensure that the performance space remains organized and not overcrowded by spectators.

03

Historical Background

In 1974, the elders of the Umumgbede/Ugwuenwulu clan decided to formally organize a Youth Dance Group. Most members at the time were between 5 and 15 years old, many of whom were still in primary school.

Mazi Ohawa Orjinwangene played a key role as the leader of the group and served as a liaison between the Umumgbede elders and the dance group from Ibite Affam, Mmaku. The Ibite Affam group was hired to train the young dancers in dance techniques, under the leadership of Mazi Philip Ogbaoke. These two leaders maintained

discipline and guided the group through an intensive three-month training program, which contributed to the success and longevity of the group.

Mazi Ohawa Orjinwangene is often remembered as an important figure in the group's history. He can be seen seated on the right, second from the masquerade, in historical photographs of the group.

04

The Masquerades

- Ada Mma Masquerade: Known for its beauty and graceful dance moves.
- Primarily performs during cultural and festival celebrations.
- Often receives money from spectators who appreciate its elegance.
- Has distinctly feminine features and is approachable.
- Masculine Masquerade: Appears during events that require physical or spiritual challenges.
- Women are not allowed to come close due to its believed spiritual potency.
- Represents strength and deeper cultural significance in the community.

Oge Ihezue Omee Acrobatic Dancers remain a vital part of Umumgbede's cultural heritage. Through their performances, they preserve and promote traditional music and dance while maintaining the rich history and values of their community.

Since there are no formal academic articles specifically on the Oge Ihezue Omee Acrobatic Dancers, I will provide references using credible sources related to the Atilogwu dance and Igbo cultural performances.

Chiagoziem, N. O. (2023, June 15). Oge Ihezue Omee Acrobatic Dancers – A Cultural Heritage from Mmaku, Enugu State.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Idenze Ezeme

Nze is an Igbo history and culture enthusiast with an in-depth passion for exploring the rich cultural heritage, traditions, and historical narratives of the Igbo people. His works is mostly focused on pre-colonial Igbo societies, traditional belief systems, leadership systems, and the impact of European colonialism.



Ozi Ikòrò

History worth reading.

African history · culture · indigenous knowledge
