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Oriental Brothers International Band: *Guardians of Igbo Highlife, Culture, and Post-War Healing Through Music*

By Chukwunwike Ossai

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ORIENTAL BROTHERS INTERNATIONAL BAND

Oriental Brothers International Band: Guardians of Igbo Highlife, Culture, and Post-War Healing Through Music

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The Oriental Brothers International Band is one of the Biggest and longest-standing highlife music groups that comes from Nigeria. They were founded in the early 1970s, when Nigeria was recovering from a civil war and rediscovering its cultural voice. The band quickly became the face of Igbo highlife music, which combines old Igbo sounds, a guitar groove, and a deep message in their lyrics.

They don't just sing to entertain people, the music helps keep Igbo culture alive, gives people hope, and makes them feel United during times of problems. Let's look into how they started, what makes their sound special, the people behind them, and how relevant they remain to date.

How Everything Started The Oriental Brothers started in 1972, with Christogonous Obinna Mbieri, also known as Sir Warrior. Dan Saych Opara, Akwada Emeka Onwuka, and Nana Love. (Nwachukwu).

They came from Southeastern Nigeria, also known as Igbo Land, which underwent too much suffering during the Biafran War (1967-1970). After the war, things became difficult for the Igbo people, but music became their form of healing therapy. Highlife music started in Ghana but spread to West Africa, which is a good ground for Oriental brothers to blend Igbo culture with modern Instruments. They represent the East (Igbo land), "Brothers" shows how United they are. From small local bar shows, they quickly gathered fans and carried a new sound to the mainstream.

Their Type Of Music And How It Sounds Different The Oriental Brothers carried Igbo culture into highlife music in a way nobody had ever done. Their styles include:

1. Sweet Guitar Play: Two electric guitars- lead and Rhythm are mixed with a special beat that would make one want to dance and also feel it in the soul. 2. Local Instrument Vibes: They do use ekwe (a Wooden drum), ogene (an Iron bell), and Udu (a Clay pot drum), which are part of Igbo tradition. 3. Deep Lyrics: They mostly sing in Igbo, discussing love, societal problems, and life struggles. Songs like “Iheoma” and “Nwa Ada Di Mma” give people energy. 4. Harmony and Chorus: They are skilled with call-and-response choruses and sweet harmonies that remind people of Igbo Community life.

Their music spread to both villages and cities, appealing to old and young people alike. Albums like “Egwu Amala” and “Oriental Brothers Vol. 1” demonstrate their ability to balance both culture and new style.

The People That Made It Happen 1. Sir Warrior (Christogonus Obinna Mbieri): He is the main voice and frontman of the band. His voice is indeed soft, and his lyrics are deep. Some songs, like “Onye Uwa Anuli,” discuss life’s questions, while “Nwanne Ntaram” praises brotherhood.

2. Dan Satch Opara. He’s a Guitar Wizard. The way he uses his fingers on strings for songs like “Uwa Bu Agha” makes highlife guitar work into an art.

3. Akwada Emeka Onwuka. He plays rhythm guitar and sings harmony. His songs are indeed funny and sharp, just like “Okwukwe Na Nchekwube”.

4. Nana Love (Nwachukwu): A found member who plays percussion and helps arrange vocals. He left in the mid-1970s, and that became the band’s biggest challenge.

Problems and Group Split As it often happens in many bands, internal problems later arose. In the late 1970s, the argument over creativity and money separated them: Sir Warrior started his group “The Oriental International Band”. Dan Satch and Akeada Emeka continued as “The Original Oriental Brothers”.

How They Touched People’s Lives. 1. **Healing After War** Their music helped Igbo people heal after the war. Songs like “Biri Ka Mbiri” mean “Live and Let’s Live” – they preach peace and forgiveness.

2. **Inspiration to New Musicians:** They influenced big musicians like Oliver De Coque and Osita Osadebe, as well as young stars like Flavour and Phyno, who use highlife guitar to create sounds in their modern Igbo songs.

3. **Igbo People Based Abroad:** Igbo people who traveled abroad took their music with them. Oriental brothers helped them feel connected.

4. **Awards And Respect:** Regardless of the small awards they received when they were active, they finally began to gain respect, like Sir Warrior, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998.

Some Of Their Best Albums. Egwu Amala (1973). Oriental Brothers Vol.1 (1975). Iheoma (1976). Onye Uwa Anuli (1978). Okwukwe Na Nchekwube (1980)

Sir Warrior died in 1999, and that marked the end of one big chapter. But their music is still very much alive. Igbo weddings, festivals, and radio stations like Orient FM still play their songs.

In 2016, One Concert in Lagos brought the remaining members together to celebrate their journey. This shows that their music is still fresh and strong. The Oriental Brothers are not just musicians- They are culture keepers. They gilded the Igbo people through War, Suffering, and Change. Today, their sounds are still heard in guitar strum, drum beat, and people who have refused to forget their worth.

Like Sir warrior Sing: “ONYE Watara Oji, wearable ndu” “One who brings kolanut; brings life”.

And truly, Oriental Brothers had brought life through music.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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An enthusiast in tech with deep passion for studying and showcasing the vibrant cultural heritage of southern Nigeria . Combining my skill with my obsession towards African history and traditions to create contributions that impacts the digital space.



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