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The Egedege Dance: *A Traditional Dance from Unubi*

By Idenze Ezeme

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The Egedege Dance: A Traditional Dance from Unubi

By Idenze Ezeme · Cultural Heritage · Ozikoro.com

The Egedege dance is an important traditional dance from Unubi, a town in Anambra State, Nigeria. It is known for its beauty and rich meaning. The dance reflects the culture and history of the people of Unubi, as well as their royal traditions. It is not just a performance; it is a symbol of people's values, beliefs, and social lives. This article will explain the history, costumes, music, and role of Queen Theresa Onuorah in keeping the dance alive.

01

History of the Egedege Dance

The Egedege dance comes from the Unubi community in the Nnewi Local Government Area of Anambra State. In the past, it was performed during special events for wealthy families and royalty. The dance was a way to celebrate important occasions, like festivals and weddings, and to show respect for the community's leaders. The dance has been part of Unubi's tradition for many years and has been passed down through generations.



Egedege Dance of Unubi

02

Costumes and Symbols in the Dance

One of the essential parts of the Egedege dance is the costumes. The lead dancer, known as the “queen,” wears a special outfit that shows her royal status. The queen wears a large crown made of beads, cowries, ostrich feathers, and raffia. The crown is a symbol of her importance in the performance. She also wears a beautiful robe, waist beads, and a staff made of bronze. The queen’s clothes are colourful and elaborate, making her stand out during the dance.

The remaining dancers also wear similar costumes, such as bead necklaces, raffia waistbands, anklets, and armlets. The costumes are made to be the same so that all the dancers look synchronized while performing. They showcase the dance’s beauty and oneness and

respect the tradition.

03

The Music and Dance Steps

The Egedege dance is performed with traditional Igbo music using instruments like drums such as the Egede, Ekwe slit drum, and udu pot drum. Other instruments are the ogene gong, olu gong, okpola woodblock, ichaka and oja flutes.

The Royal Drums of Ubulu: How Music Brought People Together

The music provides the appropriate mood for the performance, and the dancers dance to the rhythm of the instruments. The dance involves both quick and slow steps, displaying the talent of the dancers and the narrative of the performance.

The flutes welcome the dancers before the performance, which indicates that the dance has started. The queen supervises the dance and guides the other dancers. The dance narrates a story, and the music brings it to life. The dance steps exhibit the beauty, strength, and grace of the Unubi people.

04

Queen Theresa Onuorah and the Modernization of Egedege



Queen Theresa Onuorah

One of the most significant people in Egedege dance history is Queen Theresa Onuorah. She is a renowned musician and performer who helped make the dance popular among more individuals. Queen Theresa Onuorah brought modernization to the traditional dance, and it gained popularity in Nigeria and the world at large. She created a group called the “ Egedege Dance Troupe of Africa,” which performs the dance and carries on the tradition to this day.

Queen Onuorah contributed by transforming the dance into something suitable for the modern day. She combined traditional music and steps in a new style, which helped the youth fall in love with and understand the dance. Due to her contribution, the Egedege dance remains part of Igbo culture.

Women’s Title-Taking: The Iyom (Otu Odu) Title in Igbo Culture

Cultural Importance and Modern-Day Performances

The Egedege dance is more than just a show. It is a celebration of the Unubi people's heritage and history. The dance is performed during special events, like festivals, weddings, and other significant events. It is a celebration of the community's culture and the preservation of its traditions.

The Egedege dance is highly sought after nowadays. Nigerians and foreigners alike travel from far and wide to witness the performances. It is a vital aspect of the Igbo heritage and is used to present the world with the beauty of their culture.

The Egedege dance is a unique and beautiful tradition from Unubi, Nigeria. It shares the culture, royal history, and values of the Unubi people. The dance's colourful costumes, music, and movements show the richness of Igbo culture. Thanks to Queen Theresa Onuorah, the Egedege dance is still loved and enjoyed today. It will continue to inspire future generations as a symbol of pride and heritage. Egedege Dance Performance. By Queen Chioma Onuorah

Egedege Cultural Dance Performance. By UNESCO YOD

Egedege of Unubi live Performance by Tunner Entertainment

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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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.



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