

Exploring Societal Conformists through Haruna Ishola's 'Ma Fikan Won Wa': A Product of Teaching and Learning

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Abstract: *This study examined Haruna Ishola's personality as a musician with reference to his song, 'Ma fikan Won Wa Ninu Meta' aiming at its philosophical lyrics and musical analysis. It was observed that, some popular musical forms that were striving from the mid 20th century to the end of the century have not enjoyed its deserved attention from music scholars. Apala, Sakara, Awurebe, Sewele and Dadakuada are examples of such musical forms. The negligence contributed to loss of originality in the continuity of the musical practice. More so, the practitioners of Apala include adapted characters of the contemporary popular music to modify Apala music for public acceptance and patronage. Meanwhile, the materialistic interest in the society has dwindled social cultural compliance in the circuit of popular musicians in recent years. Therefore, the contemporary society needed to take useful tradition from the past to combat deviant behaviour. Moreover, there is need to document the song through scoring for archival purpose and further studies. This paper recommended that personalities in conformity with the societal norm should be encouraged in popular music practices. The study took a qualitative approach by relying on discography, bibliography, with interview method for data collection and, the adopted theory for the study is the 'Theory of Unfoldment.'*

Keywords: Career, Conformable Personality, Haruna Ishola and Popular Music.

Introduction

Musicians are role models and their characters are being imitated easily by society members especially, the youths and the children. So, musicians are expected to be endowed in the societal values and norms to avoid promoting deviant behaviour in society. Findings showed that some musical expressions which were trending in the past among the Yoruba people have being forgotten due to laxity in the native archive system. Some of these songs that are being used till date have lost their original identity due to musical adaptation. Apala music was a fusion of some existed musical forms at inception so, any modifications to it ought to attract a new name for originality sake. Perhaps, trends in the society had changed the presumed impressions towards popular musical practice in recent years and, more literates are venturing into the show business. Parents now train or encourage their wards to perform music and probably become successful musicians. In addition, music scholars and non music graduates are also found striving for fame and public acceptance. However, parents are expected to train their children in acquaintance to societal norm, prepare them for future challenges and see them succeed in life. Perhaps, the present societal image did not reflect adequate training of wards in the recent past through decadence in moral values.

Methodology

The adopted methodology involved:

- i. Discography; - This are the recorded music of Haruna Ishola and related reports of his music practices which were cited in the study: - Gani, H. I. (SRPS - 5) 'Ma Fikan Won Wa Ninu Meta'. Gani Haruna Ishola Nigeria Ltd. Ganbad Records Company. Star Records Co. Ltd Yaba Lagos.
- ii. Bibliography; - This are the related literature that has been written by scholars which would be used to authenticate assertions and for references and,
- iii. Interview; - This are the oral interviews conducted with stake holders in the popular music practices for practitioners' view and references.
- iv. Discography: -Gani, H. I. (SRPS - 5) 'Egbe Parker'. Gani Haruna Ishola Nigeria Ltd. Ganbad Records Company. Star Records Co. Ltd Yaba Lagos.

NAMES OF THE PERSONALITIES INTERVIEWED

- i. Victor Abimbola Olaiya (aka Sir. Victor Olaiya) - (2014) An High Life music legend in Nigeria.
- ii. Prince Joseph (aka. Eppifanio Farofaman) - (2020) An Afro music maestro in the South West Nigeria in the 1970s and 1980s.

Theoretical Framework

The adopted theory for this study is the **Theory of Unfoldment** which was brought forward by three philosophers; Jacques Rousseau – French Philosopher, Pestalozzi – Swiss Educational Reformer, and Friedrich Froebel – German Educator and founder of the Kindergartens movement. The Theory opined that, every child learn by unfolding that which nature as endowed him or her. It places more emphasis on child's self growth and development than learning. This theory is appropriate for the study because, gone are the days when musicians sing more of the norms and values in the society which made 'music a product of the society' as noted by Oikelome q(2001). Perhaps, Haruna Ishola's compliance with the societal norm could have enabled him to acquire the needed endowment to compose philosophical songs that remain relevant in the society till date.

Highlight of Popular Music

Entertainment filled with literature, figure of speech, mystical displays, comedy and philosophical messages with inclusion of painting, colour, costume, and crafts is commonly found in the traditional Yoruba society. This form of entertainment is performer and participants presentation where everyone present has a role to play in the show. The entertainment ideas were derived from the society, creatively modified and returned to the society which made it predictable and acceptable by the people. The services of famous music practitioners are often requested to make events memorable. There were musical forms in the society which could be likened to the modern popular music in term of functions before the - colonial era. Omojola, (1995 & 2006) and Vidal, (2012) noted that, 'the interference of external influences like Western culture, Arabian culture and other foreign cultures in the society led to the advent of modern popular music in Nigeria'. These influences were foundations upon which modern popular music in the South West Nigeria was built.

Omojola, (2006), added that "Popular music in Nigeria is a product of two or more distinct streams of cultural influences". The cultural influences are; the traditional, the Western, the Arabian and others. Basically, the modern popular music was 'secular' in nature with less or no religious influence. And, the early stage of popular music in south west Nigeria focuses on societal norms like; morals, hard work, love, money, unity and current affairs. Musicians formed musical bands which varied in forms and of personnel and could be vocally oriented, instrumental or mixed band. The mixed band comprises vocal and instrumentals are more common among Yoruba people. In addition, mixed bands could be gender conscious; - all male band, female band or male and female band. However, gender stereotype afforded the male band dominance at the early stage of the modern popular music. The few female musicians found moving around with male musicians' acts were not approved by the members of the society because; some elites would not be pleased seeing their family members to go into commercial music practice. Ajirire and Alabi (1992), explained that, "Haruna Ishola used to hide his identity whenever his band is performing at events until the day he met a woman that gave them money and food items for the first time".

Male musicians also had difficulties in practicing commercial music due to their family views as being influenced by the societal norm. As such, a good number of the boys at the early stage of popular music practice popular music secretly. Victor Olaiya, (2014 - in an oral interview_ Photo No. 1), explained that 'he started popular music practice secretly and his parents were not aware of his connection with musical practice until his name and picture appeared on pages of news paper'. Traditionally, every community in the Yoruba society was known with particular forms of entertainment which is used for the enjoyment of the people. Such musical forms include; Etiyeri, Ijala, Iwi, Rara, Gelede, Kori, Dundun and Bata entertainment. Modern Popular music in Nigeria as highlighted by Omojola, (2006) emphasized that "during colonial era fusion of various musical ideas from different regions gave birth to the modern popular music in the Southern Nigeria".

Naturally, the advent of popular music gave birth to the pioneer popular musicians such as; Tunde King, Irewole Denge, Ambrose Campbell (1919 – 2006), The Jolly Boys Orchestra led by Sunday Harbour Giant (a.k.a. Atari Ajanaku who plays football for the Harbours XI), Alabi Labilu, Ojo Babajide, J. O. Oyesiku, Julius Araba (formed is band in 1957), Abibu Oluwa, Akanbi Ege, F. K. O. Konkoma Orchestra, and many others (Ogunade, T. (1991), Ajirire and Alabi (1992) and Vidal, (2012)). And among the famous popular musicians that have enjoyed dominance between 1960s to year 2000 are; Bobby Benson, Rex Lawson, Victor Olaiya, Orlando Julius, Roy Chicago, Adeolu Akinsanya, Tunde Nightingale, Ebenezer Obey, Sunny Ade, Orlando Owoh, Dele Abiodun, Sikiru Ayinde, Kolington Ayinla, Haruna Ishola, Ayinla Omowura, Wasiu Ayinde, Shina Peters, Oritz Wiliki and Fela Kuti (Vidal, 2012) Also, Plantazun Boys, The Remedies, Hazadus, Daddy Shokey, Father Uturn, Wasiu Alabi, Saidi Osupa, and many others enjoyed stardom till year 2010.

Presently, Naija Hip Hop has dominated the musical scene and children tends to mentor after the musical artistes irrespective of the musicians' personalities. This indiscriminate acceptance of well cultured musicians with uncultured ones has contributed to the rise in criminal acts. Some of the contemporary Hip Hop musicians are; Adekunle Gold, Davido, Teni, Tiwa Savage, Don Jazzy, Wiz Kid, Olamide, Olamilekan Zah Zuh Zeh, Naira Marley, Saint Janet and many others.

Highlight on Personality

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines career as; "1. The series of jobs that a person has in particular area of work, usually involving more responsibilities as time passes. 2. The period of time that you spend in your life working or doing a particular thing. As such, career is the occupational field at which an individual is relevant in solving one or the other societal problems and being rewarded for the service. Offline Advanced English Dictionary defined conformable as; "Quick to comply, disposed or willing to comply, and in keeping". Also, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defined conformists as "a person who behaves and think in the same way as most other people and who does not want to be different". There is a reciprocal influence between every individual and his or her societal contexts (Hewston and Manstead, (1995) cited in Hargreaves and North, (1998)). Basically, every individual learns through interpersonal relationship with one another and their environment. This interpersonal relationship that exists between the people and their natural environment determines the kind of personality of individual presumed to have in the future.

Personality has been defined by various psychologists such as; W. F. Hartman cited in Chauhan (1989) defined personality as "An integrated organization of all the pervasive characteristics of an individual as it manifests itself in focal distinctiveness to other". Also, Komolafe, Ogunjimi & Adeniyi (2001) noted that, "Personality can be define as a unique pattern of an individual organized behaviour resulting from his interaction of genetic and constitutional factors with forces of socialization and the unique experience of the individual". Summarily, personality is the enduring and unrepentant (unique) way by which an individual behave or respond to the societal stimulus and, which defines him or her from others. So, conformable personalities or conformists are those individuals who complies in their way of reasoning and actions with the societal norms willingly.

Highlight of Haruna Ishola



Ajire and Alabi, (1992 : 46 - 51) explained that, '*Baba n Gani Agba*' as often called by his fans was born at Ijebu Igbo, Ogun State, in 1919 then started playing *Apala* music in the mid 1940s. Haruna Ishola son of *Bello* was an all round musician; composer, singer, instrumentalist, arranger and producer. Ishola went to the '*Were musical competition*' in 1943 at Lagos Island and observed one Ajiwere group from Italgba which won the year competition. He also identified one Mr. Lasisi Layemi a member of the *Were* group who played *Gangan* (talking drum) to *Were* music for the first time. This caught the spectators by surprise because *Were* music as played then has no inclusion of '*Gangan*'. The thrilled audience at Idumota that day named the tune which came from the talking drum *Apala* and that was how the name came to existence. Haruna returned to Ijebu Igbo and informed his colleagues that there was a music tune now called *Apala* in Lagos. It was at this juncture that he began to form his own band.

Also, Haruna Ishola started his musical career by covering his face wherever he performed because, it was believed that anyone singing at occasions (uninvited) could either be a drop out of school or an illiterate beggar. And, this was seen as a ridiculous deed against any reputable family. But after an inspiring advice from one Mama Oshojolemu and gift (some quantity of *Garri*) and one Penny for the first time, Haruna Ishola came out of his shell and took his music practice seriously. As a result of that, he was able to take his music to its peak and was privileged to travel far and wide in the global world. The Islamic influenced music that was formulated out of *Were* music became a world class stage band music in England, U. S. A. and Czechoslovakia among others. He had a weeping record of three hundred (300) albums (including singles, extended and long playing records) to his credit. He was a devout Muslim and performed his *Hajj* in 1975.

And, he had a string of honours which include; *Member of the Order of Niger* (M. O. N.) conferred on him in 1982. Also, he had investment in real estate, recording and the allied industries including Phonodisk Records. Ishola whose first '*Hit*' was in 1947 became so successful that on his demise in 1983, he had already made a landmark for himself both in the usual hustling music circle and in the business world. He was survived by eight (8) wives and thirty (30) children.

Analysis of '*Ma fikan Won Wa Ninu Meta*'

- i. Identification of Form: It is an *Apala* music basically, call and response with refrain.
- ii. Language: Yoruba
- iii. Scale Mode: Pentatonic Minor Scale; 'l d r m (f) s l' with the 5th degree (f) appears too little to reckon with (Table 1)

Scale Mode



- iv. Melodic Structure: It is in Natural minor Scale with pitches in zigzag mode.
- v. Tonal Shift: There is no significant (permanent) tone shift throughout the musical production.
- vi. Medium: Male Voice - Lead vocalist and backups with African traditional musical instruments (accompaniments).
- vii. Range and Tessitura: The voice part was sung on Key E minor (G major) and the range was from D in the Bass clef and E in the Treble Clef. (Fig. 3)

9 Range and Tessitura



- viii. Length: The music lasted for two minutes and fifty three seconds (2:53).
- ix. Rhythm: A simple quadruple time in a moderately low tempo.
- x. Frequency of Tones: Tones that occur most is doh (key A) and the least is fah (key C)

Table 1:

Key	E	G	A	B	C	D	Total
No.of time	137	352	487	131	30	82	1219
% Of Key	11.239	28.876	39.951	10.747	2.460	6.727	100

Idiomatic / Figurative Expression

The lyrics have shown that the composition is full of idiomatic expressions and the track ‘Ma Fikan Won Wa Ninu Meta’ is completely child centered. And, it is obvious that proverbs, figures of speech and idiomatic expressions were embedded in the composition (Appendix II - Lyrics). They were used to disseminate information for more understanding and references substituting insulting (direct) words to beautify the composition without avoiding confrontation from concerned people. Stanzas were rendered continuously without any stoppage with the accompaniment of percussive rhythms from the African instruments which kept the music flowing from the beginning to the end.

Conclusion

Haruna Ishola was a great composer and has made a land mark in the history of Apala music in Nigeria. His music was philosophical and full of wisdom through his creative use of idiomatic expressions with figure of speech and proverbs. His success and fame could be traced to his native education embedded with cultural norms and Western education he acquired from; parents, teachers and guardians through his compliance to the societal norms. Haruna Ishola’s composition reflected his belief and views in the Yoruba society concerning morals and norms. In addition, this study observed that Ishola sang the song consciously by maintaining the same key without pitch switch throughout the recording which is not common among other Apala musicians. It is synonymous with African traditional music to allow some tonal variants in the backup which allow one or two backup singers to move a semitone away from the common pitch and still be accepted as unison. However, all tone shifts of the backup singers were nicely resolved before the end of their phrases.

Sowande’s (1970) view about spirituality of symbol, sound and sex was felt in Ishola’s composition. With analysis of this nature, there is hope that Apala music can be preserved not only through audio recording but also on paper (manuscripts) such as staff notation for on coming generations to read and practice. Creative study of the natural environment can bring problem solving idea or insight which could be helpful to the society. Also, this paper encourages popular musicians to be more acquainted with cultural heritage, societal norm and values which will enhance their composition towards making positive impart to the society.

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APPENDIX I : - LYRICS AND INTERPRETATION

Text;

L. V. Call : Ma fikan won wa ninu meta/2x Alafia, owo pel’omo won dun un ni.

[Don’t deny us of any of the three; peace money and children are good to possess]

Response: Ma fikan won wa ninu meta/2x Alafia, owo pel’omo won dun un ni.

[Don’t deny us of any of the three; peace money and children are good to possess]

L. V. Call : Akoko bia ba ti ni Alafia [Firstly if we have peace]

Response: Owo ade, b’owo de omo ade. [Money will come if money come child will come]

L. V. Call: Bi ‘kan o si ninu meta [If one is missing out of three]

Response: K obo si rara, afi bi meta ba pe [it is not well at all until the three are complete]

L. V. Call: Iru aaye ti kaluku wa, [The type of each position]

Resp: E teti e gbo, ge bi won ti je; [Listen to hear the positions]

L.V. Call: Alafia ni baba agba, [Peace is the grandfather]

Response: To ye ka ko ni k’owo to de, [that we suppose to have before arrival of money]

L. V. Call: Omo l;o s’iketa, [child is the third]

Response: Gbogbo wa lo maa bi’mo ye, [We shall give birth successfully]

Refrain: Mole t’ori omo jijo idunnun odun kan, eni bi’mo ni yo jogub aye ni mo nwi, Ma fikan won wa ninu meta/2x Alafia, owo pel’omo won dun un ni.

[I can dance joyfully because of child for one year, Those that ceas children are going to inherit the world, Don’t deny us of any of the three; peace money and children are good to possess]

L. V. Call: Kosemani l’oruko omo, omo – omoosin, omo l’afe aye, [Child’s name is, indispensable, child is of great value, the pride of living]

Response: Kosemani l'oruko omo, omo – omoosin, omo l'afe aye, [Child's name is, indispensable, child is of great value, the pride of living]

L. V. Call: E jowo bi o s'omo l'ewa, [Please if there is no child in beauty]

Response: Asan ni ki ama puro, [It is vanity, we should not tell lie]

L. V. Call: Omo eni, [One's child]

Response: Ni foto eni [Is his photo]

L. V. Call: Bi a ba ma a ki'ra l'ode, [if we want to greet ourselves in parties]

Response: Won o ni beere pe owo nko? Won o ni beere pea so nko? [They won't ask after money, they won't ask after cloth,] L. V. Call:

Refrain: Awon sanmori won a mi a beere, won a so eipe, se Alafia lo wa? ile nko? Iyawo nko?, se daa daa l;omo mbe nile?Iyen lomu mi ranti pe,

[The elite will ask, that, are you alright? how is your family? How is your wife? Are the children doing fine at home? This made me to remember that,]

L. V. Call: Alaafia l'egbon, [Peace is the most superior]

Response: Ninu meteta, [Out of the three]

L. V. Call: Owo, Owo [Money,]

Response: La fi n t'omo,[We use to raise the child]

L. V. Call: Ni tooto [Truly]

Response: Olomo lo jogun aye, [Those that have children, inherits the world]

Refrain: Kosemani l'oruko omo, omo – omoosin, omo l'afe aye, [Child's name is, indispensable, child is of great value, the pride of living]

L. V. Call: Ma ma je a pasan Oluwa fun wa l'omo ari dunnu la mbebe o, [Don't let us gain nothing give us enviable children, we plead]

Response: Ma ma je a pasan Oluwa fun wa l'omo ari dunnu la mbebe o, [Don't let us gain nothing give us enviable children, we plead]

L. V. Call: Omo ti o kawere College, [Child that will study book to University level]

Response: Ti o d'eniyan nla, ni ki o fun wa bi, [That will become a great person, that's what you should give to us]

L. V. Call: Omo to ma gbe mama niyi, [Child that will make mother proud]

Response: Da baba lola lawa ntoro, a be o Oluwa, nile aye nbi, [honors father, that's what we are pleading for, we beg you oh Lord in this world]

L. V. Call: Omo gba je nsinmi [Naughty child]

Response: E ta'ka s'ori majority, [Reject it everyone,]

Refrain: O di'waju okere gedengbe, Omo buruku ti mama e ma ri yera, ti baba maa ri fa'ti e mejeeji sare, ma gbe kan wa Oluwa oba, fun wa l'omo aridunnu la nbebe o

[That should go far from us, bad child that mother will see and dodge, the one father will see and run swiftly, don't bring such to us
Oh Lord the king, give us enviable children, we plead]

L. V. Call: E sa mi a ba faaji bo, eni balo o lo ba'ku laye nbi, Eje ka jo jijo olomo, lakutu yebe mo gbomo mi jo, [Just continue with the enjoyment towards here, anyone enjoying away follows to death in this world, Let us dance parents of children's dance, with all regards I carry my child to dance]

Response: Eje ka jo jijo olomo, lakutu yebe mo gbomo mi jo, [Let us dance parents of children's dance, with all regards I carry my child to dance]

L. V. Call: E jowo ki laba f'owo ra, [Please, what can we use money to buy]

Response: Ti yoo da bi omo ni'le aye, [That will equate children in this life]

L. V. Call: Omo niyi, [Children are the pride]

Response: Omo ni gbeniga [Children are the ones who promote us]

L. V. Call Haa!

Response: Omo l'eso aye [Children are the jewels of the world]

L. V. Call: Gbogbo eni to ti bi'mo , [those who have children]

Response: K'omo won, ma yanku mo won lowo [May their children not die under their watch]

L. V. Call: Awon obinrin to l'oyun sinu, [The pregnant women]

Response: Ka gb'ohun iya, ka gb'ohun omo [May we hear the voice of mother and child on the day of delivery]

L. V. Call: Awon a mbe'luwa, [Those trusting God for children]

Response: Da won l'ohun so won d'abiyamo,, [Answer them make them mothers]

Refrain: Omo wunmi ju Wura o ju goolu lo, Eje ka jo jijo olomo, lakutu yebe mo gbomo mi jo,

[I prefer children to Gold, Let us dance a parents' dance, with all regards I carry my child in dancing]

L. V. Call: Laye nbi, e dakun ore mi omo ojubanire oni'lu mi f'ilu si, Egbe olomo lawa o se o,

[In this life please my friend,son of Ojubanire my drummer add rhythms to it, we will always join parents' club]

Response: Egbe olomo lawa o se o, [we will always join parents' club]

L. V. Call: Olomo lo laye [Those that have children owns the world]

Response: A o ye, olomo lo l'aye ka jo bi'mo ye o, egbe olomo lawa o se o o o.

[Yes truly, those that have children owns the world, may we have successful child bearing, we will always join parents' club]

APPENDIX II: - SCORES

Ma Fi Kan Won Wa

Adeyemo Timothy (2018)

Haruna Ishola

♩ = 80.099968

Lead Vocal: Ma fi kan won wa ni nu un me

Lead Vocal: ta a la fi a o wo pe lo mo won on dun un

Lead Vocal: ni ma fi kan won wa ni nu un me

Lead Vocal: ta ma fi kan won wa ni nu un me

Backup 1: Ma fi kan won wa ni nu un me

Backup 2: Ma fi kan won wa ni nu un me

Backup 3: Ma fi kan won wa ni nu me

Backup 1: ta ma fi kan won wa ni nu me

Backup 2: ta ma fi kan won wa ni nu un me

Backup 3: ta ma fi kan won wa ni nu un me

Lead Vocal ta, a la fi a wo pe lo mo won on dun un ni ako ko bi a ba ti nia la fi

Backup 1 ta, a la fi a o wo pe lo mo won on dun un ni

Back up 2 ta a la fi a o wo pe lo mo won on dun un ni

Backup 3 ta a la fi a o wo pe lo mo won on dun un ni

Lead Vocal a o wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de, A ko ko bi a ba ti ni a la fi

Backup 1 o wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de

Back up 2 O wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de

Backup 3 O wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de

Lead Vocal a O wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de bi kan o si ni nu un me

Backup 1 O wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de

Back up 2 O wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de

Backup 3 O wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de

Lead Vocal ta si ra rs a fi bi me ta ba pe bi kan ko si ni nu un me

Backup 1 ko bo si ra rs a fi bi me ta ba pe

Back up 2 ko bo si ra ra a fi bi me ta ba pe

Backup 3 ko bo si ra ra a fi bi me ta ba pe

Lead Vocal
 ta ko bo si ra ra a fi bi me ta ba pe, I ru a ye ti ka lu ku

Backup 1
 ko bo si ra ra a fi bi me ta ba pe

Back up 2
 ko bo si ra ra a fi bi me ta ba pe

Backup 3
 ko bo si ra ra a fi bi me ta ba pe

Lead Vocal
 a o wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de, A ko ko bi a ba ti ni a la fi

Backup 1
 o wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de

Back up 2
 O wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de

Backup 3
 O wo a de e bo wo de o mo a de

APPENDIX III: - PICTURES



Fig. 2 *The Researcher, Gbenga Adewusi and Victor Olaiya during an interview session.*

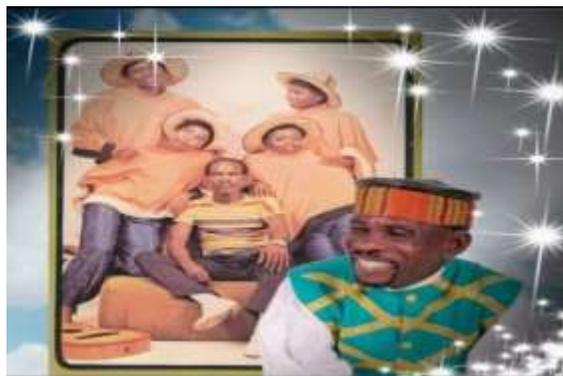


Fig. 2: *Eppifanio the Farofaman and The Farofa Dancers*