

No Time to Waste Time: In Memory of Taofeeq Amoo Igisekele (Posted on Facebook on May 28, 2021)

I have been depressed in recent days, not because my amala lifeline is low, but because of the demise of Fuji star Taofeeq Amoo Igisekele, at just 51. In plain words, my research on Fuji has just suffered a major setback with the passing of the most qualified artist to talk about diaspora Fuji. Unlike many diaspora Fuji artists who turned to music because they found a ready market for homeland sound abroad, Igisekele—good-looking fashionista Yoruba-Zaddy—started his career in Nigeria and released notable albums, before relocating to the UK more than a decade ago. He moved to the United States about 3 years ago, and immediately joined the community of African diaspora artists who give glamor to social events through sound and nostalgia of life away from home.

I first contacted Igisekele about interviewing him for my research 2 years ago. Like many artists I have contacted, he didn't respond to my initial request. But I knew how to get his attention. In December 2020, I sent him newspaper cuttings I harvested from the Nigerian Tribune, covering his exploits in the late-1990s. Not only was he happy to learn about my discoveries, he asked for my phone number and called me. He exclaimed: "Saedo Alhaji, nibo lo ti ri awon story yen?" "Saedo Alhaji, where did you get those stories?" I replied, "Alhaji, the newspaper does not forget." My forensic newspaper discovery struck a major chord in his artistic odyssey as he began to contextualize the stories for me. We ended our short telephone conversation with a mutual agreement for a Zoom interview. He was energized and repeatedly said: "Ma worry, ma se interview yen. "Don't worry, I will give you that interview."

But I delayed our conversation because I stupidly thought that he would live forever. It is common for researchers to focus on interviewing older or senior people because of the assumption that they would soon leave us. We have the tendency to sentence senior people to verbal death by thinking they would die before young ones. We paint a mental imagination of death for senior folks, while assuming the young still have "enough" time to live. We rank the urgency to interview older folks higher because we assume that gerontocratic credibility translates to "authentic" story-telling, while minimizing the impact of memory loss on the ability to effectively recount the past. My inability to interview Engineer LAK Adeniran--the sound technician who produced major Fuji albums of the 1990s and gave Rasheed Ayinde his trademark stage name "Merenge"--before his passing at a very ripe age, increased my anxiety to track down old people, first, before turning to "young" ones.

The lesson learned from my failure to interview Igisekele before his death is best captured in a formal transnational English phrase that is gaining street currency in Nigeria at the moment—No time to waste time. Our street intellectuals, including Evangelist Black Camoru, whose physical appearance reminds privileged and "clean-looking" Nigerians of how lucky they are, seems to understand the exigency of time better than many school-educated folks, including Emperor Saedo Okola. The metaphor and practicality of time management and plan execution, as gleaned from, "No Time to Waste Time," are directly linked to the temporariness of temporality.

I had numerous questions for Igisekele. I wanted to understand why a successful Fuji artist would move abroad to continue his art, the difference between musical patronage at home and abroad, the political-economy of global art consumption, and why global circulation of human bodies or migration/movement are directly linked to the proliferation of diverse art form. Or why new forms of diaspora art evolve alongside the expansion of migratory trend. I also thought he would help me understand why global tours shape musical taste, stardom, and fandom on the African continent. All I

have now are memories of missed opportunities and mental imprints of answers to questions never posed.

Yours Sincerely in Fuji,
Emperor Saedo Okola and His International Fuji Lions