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Titus, Olusegun Stephen
(Obafemi Awolowo University,
Ile-Ife, Nigeria) **Foyeke
Ajangila and Nneka Egbonu:
Female Musicians and
Activists for Environmental
Justice and Sustainability
in Nigeria**

[session VIIA02]

Scholarship on female Nigerian musicians and activists has tended towards politics and governance. However, little scholarly attention has been directed at the engagement of their popular music with environmental degradation and the need for justice. The central thesis of this paper is that Nigerian female singers have ideas, assumptions, and values about the environment – a form of indigenous ecological knowledge – that they express in music and that they bring to bear on socio-environmental problems related to natural resources extraction and flood disaster control mechanisms. Two of the female Nigerian musicians whose works reflect and form the dominant trends in the environmental humanities of Niger Delta oil and Ibadan city flood include Nneka Egbonu and Foyeke Ajangila. Music as an art of resistance has therefore cemented a synergy between activists and enclaves of extraction in an attempt at creating awareness and promotes environmental sustainability and justice. The paper employs ethnographic research, musical and textual analysis in the context of ecomusicology and radical feminist theories, and the idea of slow violence and environmentalism of the poor. The study concludes that music is a productive tool that connects people emotionally to their environment and helps advocate for justice and sustainability.

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**A Long Journey to the
Future: On the Modalities of
Preserving Tradition through
Songs and Dances from the
City of Vranje ***

[session IIA04]

Traditional songs and dances of the city of Vranje (in southern Serbia), as well as their numerous and diverse artistic stylizations from the beginning of the 20th century until today, present an extraordinary example of a successful affirmation and preservation of original music and dance practices in the 21st century. In this case study I focus on the path that songs and dances from Vranje have travelled, from Borisav Stanković's theater play *Koštana* and its immense popularity since its Belgrade premiere in 1900, through the eponymous opera by *Petar Konjović* – from its first performance in Zagreb in 1931 to the latest revival in 2019 at the Belgrade National Theater. I will pay special attention to the contribution of various media as instruments of the cultural industry: albums with songs from *Koštana*, sound recordings on LP records, film and television productions. No less important role in the process of transmitting and modifying the tradition was played by the dance ensembles of “cultural-artistic societies”, which were powerful agents of domestic and international cultural industry, especially in the socialist Yugoslavia. Songs and dances from Vranje (e.g., *čoček*) owe their well-deserved popularity to their recognizable features, which emerged at the crossroads of Oriental and Slavic influences, mediated by the Roma. Since the Vranje region was at the crossroads of East and West, North and South for centuries, a successful cultural “amalgam” is also visible in the characteristic, colorful and attractive national costumes, which have inspired numerous costume designers. In 2012, urban songs from Vranje were added to the list of intangible cultural heritage of Serbia. As pillars of tradition, of Serbian and Balkan identities, songs from Vranje successfully resisted the “industrial” challenges of the modern age, whilst enriching the musical and choreographic heritage of Europe and the world.

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