

# With Jide Chord Juju Regains Its Rhythm

By Benson Idonije

From the era of Shina Peter in 1990, juju music lost its enduring allure in terms of melodic inventiveness to a highly commercialised repetitive version propelled by hi-tech of the electro-rock edge. But the likes of Jide Chord, a London-based exponent, has all the potentials for reversing this trend.

As perhaps the latest rave on the scene and a special rave of the high class type, he is presently performing in Lagos every Thursday night at the Upper Room Bar of Pintos on Allen Avenue to a sophisticated audience of the Big Boys as clientele.

A journalist-turned musician, he was for many years a reporter with Punch Newspaper; a fact which explains his articulate well spoken mien. Blowing his own trumpet as a self identification reach-out, he explains.

"Jide is a songwriter, singer, music producer. I consider myself lucky to be the type of artist that I am, in that I need no hype. People just find me naturally interesting. I am a performing artist, I play juju music but ~I brand my typoe Juju Lamboda.

The CD that I listened to was in the Shina Peters conventiaonally interesting tempo and mood that evoke nortalgia. The entire session is dominated by the influence of Shina Peters Afro juju. The Latin feel which he claims as source of influence does not reflect in the CD that I listened to. All thesame, he lays every claim to it as not just a source of inspiration but a motivating force:

"I have always been intrigued by Latin american music - the guitar riffs, percussion from the Congo-Zairean region of Central Africa. My music is heavily influenced by the Latin-American beat."

Jide Chord was a beneficiary of the French Cultural Centre's Happy Hour Show where he performed for four weeks to an appreciative audience. And it was perhaps the reception he got from the show that encouraged him to establish a home-base at Pintos.

He is an eloquent, well spoken person, perhaps the most articulate juju music exponent to exhibit this trait since Dele Ojo. Whereas the performance of juju music is fundamentally centred around entertainment where the musicians sing praise songs and attract 'spraying', Jide believes in doing a lot of talking to the audience.

His words: "Sixty percent of my concert is devoted to playing music. The remaining forty percent is talk. When you want to get the best out of your audience in a concert you talk to them and explain why you do the things you do. Those things could be other impressions that they have of you from the media. And the kind of feel at the end of the day that they feel

attracted to you as a friend rather than an abstract and distanced person. In pursuance of this, I am working on a T.V programme with LTV 8 where I will show my audience that it's much more than singing and playing music. People kind of think that juju musicians are drop outs and uneducated people."

It sounds rather strange that a performing musician would devote so much time to talk in this environment where audiences are known for complaining even to the point of booing and sometimes through objects against an artist when he engages in talking instead of facing the music. But Jide Chord is perhaps able to manage the situation very well so far.

Notwithstanding, he still believes in the relevance of the music which in fact is what the audience is primarily after.

"My music is a refreshing breath of fresh air. The truth is that I am original. My style of writing, arranging and delivery. My rhythm is heavily Latin-influenced. I'm trying to take Yoruba contemporary music a step ahead - by making it more manageable in international term."

Like Lagbaja, Jide has a commercially oriented