



Social Transformation of Africa through Music: The Nigerian experience

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Abstract

Music has been found to be an instrument used in transforming lives because of its effectiveness as an agent and medium of transmitting information to the populace. It is used to pass crucial information, impart knowledge, soothe emotions, and affect lives. Music affects the ways and manner of its hearers positively and negatively, hence, it is expedient that people get right information through a good channel and medium. Music composers, performers and producers should be careful of what is composed and performed in order to achieve the desired result. This paper seeks to enlighten music composers and producers on the need to judiciously use music as an instrument of transformation in Africa and other world cultures. The use and effect of music on human being was traced from antiquity to date through library sources. It discovers that some of the recent music composition and performance in Nigeria and some other world cultures are not good enough for consumption. It recommends a viable music teacher education that will impart adequate knowledge on the music teacher trainee which will in turn transforms the music consumers.

Keywords: Transformation, Music composers, Music producers, Music consumers, Music teacher education

1. Introduction

Music from time immemorial has been an instrument that is used for influencing the society. This is found in its use for molding people's character and for instruction. It is a universal language in the sense that it is known and understood in every culture of the world, the fact that its manifestation in the various cultures of the world undergoes some environmental influences notwithstanding (Merani, 2007). Music propels cultural continuity and update. It can also promote social change under favorable conditions. The ultimate purpose of music is for enjoyment of the individual, the social group or the community in a variety of contexts in the home and public places, in work situation, in creation, or on social ceremonial and ritual occasions (Adegbite, 2006). Music is a phenomenon linked to mental process, emotions and psychological arousal. It is an intangible product that is consumed like food (Delsaux, 2015).

People consume music for different reasons, some do because music arouses in them some specific emotions while some do because of self-realization or "to construct fantasies and augment

reality" (Delsaux, 2015) The treatment of music as a product has been relatively ignored but researches have been done on music consumers to explore how and why people consume music. It was discovered that consumers have expectations based on previous experience and recommendations given by other listeners (LyraVlos, 2017). On the other hand, characteristics of consumers and characteristics of music may interact to produce purchase and consumption. That means that if the expectation of the music consumer from the music either as a pure entertainment or to arouse certain emotions matches with the composition, there will be purchase of such music and vice versa. This implies that a music composer has the ability to awake some instincts in the consumer. If this is so, then, the composer must be careful and mindful of what his music will arouse in the listener.

The music arena is filled with talented artists that are more of music enthusiasts than music practitioners hence, the influx of diverse styles of music. Since the societal acceptability is what is celebrated, each musician tends to work on being accepted than producing 'good' music. The society on their part too, especially the youths, consumes music that is in vogue, not minding the value. This means that the young people like to be identified with their peers, so this attracts them to music that is preferred by their age groups. Most often, this music, contains meaningless lyrics and rhymes. The effect of these music on the youth and adult alike is worrisome. Most popular music and their lyrics does not pass any valuable information. For example, one lyrics says: 'Ori e o fon ka sibe, O tu ka sibe' Meaning: Your head (brain is scattered)

Another one goes thus: 'Kolomental, O ya, start to dey craze'

This paper is thus written to condemn such worthless music and recommends composition and performance of music that can transform the society.

2. Methodology

This research work adopts the qualitative research method which involves examining past and present events in the context of the present condition to draw conclusion and make prediction about the future. It relies on written documents, oral tradition and musical performances in its approach. The step involves formulating an idea, gathering and collating information and its sources. It allows reflection in order to provide possible answers to current issues and problem It uses library search to source for its data.

3. Concept of Transformation

The word 'transformation ' has been in existence for a long time but the usage of the word was frequent in the early 1990's when it came to be associated with the massive plan to overhaul our nation's education system (Leslie, 2005). Transformation means a process whereby there is a marked change in form, nature or appearance. A paradigm change which could be individual or collective. It is also a radical correction of social ills, a commensurable decrease in crime rates, supernatural blessing on local commerce, healing of the broken hearted and an export of kingdom of righteousness (Leslie, 2005). In this paper, social transformation is used to describe changes of society's systemic characteristics as it relates to cultural values and ideas.

4. The Value of Music from Antiquity

Music has been an indispensable object that was valued across western musical periods. These musical periods ranged from antiquity to the contemporary time. The practice of music in these periods has been found to merge from the flow of time, movements in societies and strain of national and international cultural contacts. But, each of these periods saw the use of music by musicians to reform the society. Tracing music from the antiquity, it was discovered that the early society used music to enhance human personality and to maintain order. The study of ancient sources reveals that in ancient Greece, music was a very important part of people's everyday routine. It was highly regarded and present in all private and public festivities. The term 'music' in the Greek world covered dance, lyrics and the performance of poetry. Music, Asma-the singing and

lyrics- Orchis- group of dancers were features of a highly civilized community as well as factors and indicators of a higher quality of life. Except being an important element in both public and private celebrations, music played an important role on unpleasant occasions and it made daily hardship more tolerable (Hemmingway, 2001).

Music players accompany women while kneading, as well as workers during harvest and soldiers on their way to the battle. The ancient Greeks recognized music literally as a gift from the gods and as a divine instrument to assist in healing both soul and body. It purifies and sooth peoples souls and also help them to relax. Instrumental music and the singing of hymn regularly accompanied everyday activities and formal acts of worship (Cartwright, 2017). Shepherds piped to their flocks, oarsmen and infantry kept time to music and women made music at home. Music was also an important element of Greek education and dramatic performances held in theatres such as plays, recitals and competitions. But at a certain point, there was a change in the way the Greeks perform and consume music. Plato in Lyravlos (2017) complained about the new music thus:

"Our music was once divided into proper forms....it was not permitted to exchange the melodic styles of these established forms and orders. Knowledge and informed judgment penalized disobedience. There were no whistles, unmusical mob noises, or clapping for applause. The rule was to listen and silently learn.....But later, an unmusical anarchy was led by poets who had natural talent, but were ignorant of the laws of music.....Through foolishness they deceived themselves into thinking that there was no right or wrong way in music, that it was to be judged good or bad by the pleasure it gave. By their works and their theories they infected the masses with the presumption to think themselves adequate judges. So our theatres once silent, grew vocal, and aristocracy of music gave way to a pernicious theatrocacy..... the criterion was not music, but a reputation for promiscuous cleverness and a spirit of law breaking."

From this quote, it can be established that there are 'established forms' and 'laws of music' and Plato was complaining about the falling away of such principles into 'spirit of law breaking'. From the description above, we can deduce that music of the ancient Greeks was initially effective, utilitarian, meaningfully controlled and functional. But, overtime it gradually lost its secular role. This, from the narrative, is traceable to the composers.

The Greek philosophers envision music as a paradigm of harmonious order reflecting the cosmos and the human soul. Music was also held to have certain therapeutic benefits, even medicinal powers over physical and mental illnesses (Lyravlos, 2017). They believed music could have a beneficial effect on both the mind and body of the listener. Good music is therefore, expected to stimulate the development of attentiveness, co-operation, relaxed and interactive listening, self-confidence, self-esteem, cultural values, interpersonal relationships, aesthetic sensitivity and aesthetic evaluation. This means that any music that does not enhance any of the listed values is not suitable for consumption. In the classical period which was known as the age of enlightenment, music was used to reflect a taste for structural clarity (Estrella, 2016). This led to changes in the way music was performed. The music thus became lighter, clearer and less complex in texture in comparison to the heavy music of the earlier periods. The power that controls music shifted from the aristocrat and the church to the middle class. This was probably due to changes in the economic order and social structure which also had the effect of altering the balance of availability and quality of musicians (Lumen, 2017). As the age progressed, the nobility became the primary patrons of instrumental music, while public taste increasingly preferred lighter music. Melody tend to be shorter with clear phrases. While vocal music was popular, greater importance was given to instrumental music. The piano was the primary instrument used by the composer of this time and there was appetite for a continual supply of new music. This appetite was sustained by quality music of a refined nature. Just as music was utilitarian in the western world, music does much more than that in Africa. This is because music in Africa is an integral part of their life. It is functional and it permeates an African through his entire day, through all the changes of his life, from the time he came into this world until after he has left it.

5. Music in Africa

African music covers the in-depth, possible range of expression, including spoken dialogue and all manner of natural sounds. Every conceivable sound has its place in African traditional music. African music is organized and performed as part of the process of living together. In the African context, whether in war, in communal development projects or just for summoning people to emergency meetings, appropriate music has been regarded as indispensable in infusing patriotism, challenge, dynamism and animation. In Africa, music provides entertainment and is employed as a means of social interaction. Everyone participates in the process of its performance. Traditional music of Africa is the music of the people composed in traditional idiom. It is the extant folk music being practiced in the African villages. It has very strong links with its exponents. It retains its symbolisms and its psychological effect on its practitioners. The period of the composition and the author of traditional African music may not be known as it is passed on from generation through oral tradition.

African music occurs at several levels in African traditional society. These are predominant ceremonial, social and folkloric music. Ceremonial music is specially bound to special groups e.g. music for worship belongs to gods, goddesses and shrines or the diviners and worshippers. Music here is used to invoke spirits or appease the gods. This worship music welcomes no change in that the gods or goddesses of this music are formed to be very superior. There must be preparation and organization before ceremonial music could take place. It is strictly traditional. Other ceremonial music are: palliative music, (music used to heal the sick) burial music, chieftaincy and initiation music. Music performance in Africa both at the secular (societal) and the sacred (religious) level has been majorly influenced by western music. Though, this action is hinged on acculturation, yet there are some certain fundamental rules that should govern any music that is meant for human consumption. These rules which are both unwritten than written are needed to sanitize the music arena.

6. Transformation and Music

Music has been used by a lot of musician to transform the society. This is done through the use of their song lyrics to correct the erring members of the society and to commend the good members of the same society. In the traditional Africa, before the independence of the countries, music at the social level, was concerned with "four major life – stations of each member of the group, namely birth, puberty, marriage, and death and the moral and social education and integration of young and old members of the group. Here we have those functions at which it is permissible to sing abusive songs about named members of the group whose conduct is deemed unsatisfactory, as well as poetry and wise sayings in which the element of music is very close to the surface; and all other activities that are conducive to the continued moral, mental and social health of the group. According to Onikoyi (2009), right from the early 60's in Nigeria, music has been a veritable tool of transformation by musicians like Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Ebenezer Obey, Sunny Ade, Oliver d' Coque, Victor Uwaifo, Bala Miller etc. Music was used by these musicians to correct erring members of Nigerian society including the government. The lyrics of their songs was targeted at warning, instructing and praising people. The effect of these music was felt by the withdrawal of some government edicts and the change in attitude and character of some prominent Nigerian that was proverbially warned. Music of nowadays is gradually digressing from the task of transforming lives. Onikoyi (2009), further states that:

There is a missing link between contemporary Nigerian music and the grand oldies of the 60's to 70's. Where are those beautiful, elevating, inspiring,soul lifting.....voices of the 70's?... Where are those proverbial songs and sounds filled with gongs and lyrics.....with their word of wisdom...?

This writer asserts that music has lost its value that it has in those early years. He posits further that, ' it is losing those fundamental elements that gave it value at its onset'. Nigerian songs are gradually lacking the power to inspire, as someone recently put it, 'they are more of nuisance

than inspiration which they are meant to be'. Contemporary songs in the Nigerian music world nowadays often lack rhythm, tone, symphony, good voice and soothing words. There is a need to change this, if social music must be relevant to the need of the society.

7. Need for Music Education

The impact of the non-professional musicians are very much felt in the society because they are known to make 'successful and better living' than their trained counterpart (Onikoyi, 2009). Yet, the inadequate training of these so called successful musicians create a big hole that is causing a problem in the music 'arena'. There is need to bridge this gap with a qualitative music education in order to bring about the desired reformation in the way music is performed, produced and consumed. Music education is not only concerned with developing musicianship and musical creativity in the present but also to teach students how to continue developing their musicianship in the future. Music education extend the range of people's expressive and impressive powers by providing them with opportunities to formulate musical expressions of emotions, musical representations of people, places and things and musical expressions of cultural-ideological meanings. When this range of opportunities for musical expression and creativity is combined with the opportunities presented by texts in vocal and choral works, music makers gain numerous ways of giving artistic form to their powers of thinking, knowing, valuing, evaluating, believing and feeling which, in turn, challenge listeners' conscious powers and musical understanding. (Elliot, 2011) The praxial philosophy holds that music has many important values. Self-growth and self-knowledge and the unique emotional experience of musical enjoyment that accompanies these are among the most important values of music and music education.

8. Teacher Training and Improved Music Composition and Consumption

A qualitative and well articulated music teacher training is needed to upgrade the musical knowledge of the society. This is because many factors contribute to the quality of music composition, such as the professional competence of the teacher, which includes music composition knowledge, general musicianship, knowledge of music pedagogy, curricular knowledge, performing experience, and certification status (Aninwene, 2011). Teacher effectiveness depends on how well a teacher performs in the classroom, and this is dependent on how musically competent the teacher is. The level of teacher's music competence depends in turn on the teacher training curriculum, the level of competence of the trainer, and that of the mentor at the school to which the teacher is assigned. If we have quality and well-trained teacher of music right from the pre-primary to the higher classes, the musicians would have had a good musical background that will enhance their musical talent for future music performance. This in turn will guide people's consumption of 'good music' and discard of 'bad music'.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has been able to establish the transformative power of music in the society. It discovered how music was used to establish order in the western and African nations. It also found the use of music from the antiquity to contemporary times to be same. The paper has established the need for a sound music education for the producers and consumers of music Based on these findings, this study recommends that:

1. There is need for a well articulated music teachers education to prepare teachers that will fill the missing gap in today's music composition and performances.
2. Upper basic music curriculum should be reviewed to include more practical musical skills in African and Western music.
3. School authorities should allocate adequate time in the timetable for music practical performance to enable students gain more skills and competencies in music.
4. Music studios should be properly equipped by the Ministry of Education, to facilitate the enhancement of the so desired music psychomotor performance in the junior secondary

- schools; this would improve skill advancement in the country.
5. Inter collegiate music competitions should be a regular exercise in basic schools where music is offered to sharpen and improve musical knowledge, skills and performance.

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