

S. N. Nnamani, PhD

Department of Music, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State.

sundaynnamani2010@yahoo.com

Abstract

Music plays prominent roles both in church and training of the young ones in the service of the Lord. It has many angles and facilitates the development and growth of many groups in the church. Music is a sine qua non for the Christian worship and is recommended for each group. This paper brings to limelight the indispensability roles play in the church and among the youths in the church as a whole.

Keywords: Music, Christianity, Music Education, Choir training

Introduction

Music is an art. Paul Ogugua remarks that art is a human act, and it is equally a science as it is a systematic mode of interpreting reality. Although systematic, it does not seem to hold onto systems rigidity and vehemently; just as existentialism is not a philosophy but could be said to be in 'stricto sensu', a style of philosophizing. Art, being an activity entails an association with culture, value, freedom, knowledge, volition etc. he further emphasized that:

Music is a human act, full of activities. Like every human act, in it, there is the interplay of the physical, physiological and at times psychological processes. Music is both an art and a science. Art because it is learnt like every other art and characterized by the creative style of the arts, and a science because it is a systematic method of interpreting reality.

He adds:

Being a human activity entails it has something to do with freedom, knowledge and volition. Music is an organized sound and equally a universal language. Man has for centuries explained the potentials and strength in different objects and elements in the course of producing music.

Music as a rational act of man, is imbued with logic, as, not every sound is musical, little wonder why John Blacking qualified music as humanly organized sound. Music has to do with the manipulative. It has to do with a sort of computations, permutation and organization cum arrangement not just sounds, but even words and language which are dependent on phonic and cultural elements. Ogugua maintains that by way of logical extension, what is musical depends on the society of man, of course within an environment culture and historical period. He still continued by saying that;

As the production of music may involve a *mélange* of various

elements i.e. instruments, costumes and other mythically grounded activities and preparations in some areas, it boils down to the point that these are needed for proper organization and calculation. This calculation is deeper than that of mathematics, for it is initiative natural to handle every kind of configuration that might arise as the sound i.e. amplitude and rhythm will always vary in space-time in the course of harmonization in the bid to produce metarhythms.

He therefore emphasized that,

Without order, there cannot be any product to be rightly called music. What is likely to occur is noise. If there is order, a system of movement or flow, then there is logic. This logic cannot do the same everywhere for the philosophy of music is determined culturally because it arose from a people who are culture-bound. Music is universal but the philosophy, logic of it, its computation and calculation can only be properly evaluated by culture that gave birth to it.

Thus as Nzewi stated;

When all the inputs from conception to the finished product, mental calculations, organizations of manpower and materials as well as application of efforts, energy and skill are aimed solely at the production of the sound of sure type, that is bound to be musical.

Man and Music

Music is a thread in life that makes life. It is life, it has life and is alive in individuals, groups, communities etc especially the spiritual life. Music arises and appeals to all as it applies to human need.

Ogugua asserts:

Music has life, potency and a force energy, this energy is perceived differently by the human mind. It is a gradual, constant and enriching

movement of a systematical, pattern combination, variation of pitches and rhymes on instruments which produce dynamic energy.

By nature in the course of instrumental balance, extended variation, accretion and even fragmentation, juxtapositions, combination music is complex, though, its complexity has no significant relationship with the value of the music in most cases. Music as a harmonious sound should be soothing and at times, it can be designed to be disquieting, to achieve a specific musical intention, evoking of fear, awe and provocative or disturbing emotions etc.

Man is not only a rational animal; he is equally a laughing, singing reasonable being. The structure, complexity and intensity of any piece of music have a way of influencing the listeners.

The Place of Music in Christian Worship

Music serves some special purposes in our lives and especially within the Christian circle and some of them as follows:

Music informs us about the Gospel

One of the most beautiful things about many Christian songs is that they are coined out from the verses of the scriptures. With this we found that not only do we sing Christian music just for listening pleasure but they teach us about Christ and what our faith stands for. Before we hear a portion of the scripture read or preached in a services, we have already taken on the page after page through our singing the teachings of the scripture. So, hymns and other forms of music instruct us of the good news touching our hearts as well as our minds.

Christian Music is a Relationship with God

Music connects us to God in a unique way. There are situations that prayers, fasting and many others do not link us up to God the way praises or music in general does. It allows for a direct relationship with God in ways that sermons cannot.

Christian Music is the Fulfilment of God's Command

There is no greater joy a father has than finding that the Christian is obedient. Throughout the scriptures we are encouraged to sing praises to our God. The psalm in the bible is an expression of this command because it is a book of worship to God. It talks about singing praises to the Lord with the Lyre and making sound of melody.

Music in Christian Worship is an Expression of Love for God

How can one say that he loves God without singing of his praises. The scripture again demands us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our strength. This has to do with both the outer and the inner man. Christian music is one way by which we express our love towards God with our whole being. We engage every part of our body in the expression of this love. The most interesting thing about this is that when we express our love for him in praises, we are changed and transformed, our hearts are drawn closer to God, we are strengthened even in the most difficult moments. Then we are built up, convicted of shortcomings and restored and something godly happens to us.

The Impact of Christian Music to Religious Worship

The impact of Christian music to religious worship includes:

- a. Unity in diversity
- b. Adds life to worship
- c. An expression of religious experience
- d. Provides recreation
- e. Mobilization and empowerment for youths

a. Unity in Diversity

This is one of the most important benefits of Christian music in worship. When Christians gather to worship; they lift their voices and possibly instruments in the worship of God and this is done in one

accord. There are no rooms for barriers, whether from language, tribe, country, sex, class, age etc.

The foregoing reason is why one may find people of a particular language lifting their voices to sing songs from another language during worship. For example, you can find the Igbos sing Yoruba songs, then you can find the Yoruba singing Ghanaian songs among other examples. Music is therefore doing a lot bringing people together in worship at this time that we are emphasizing national unity.

b. Adds Life to Worship

Before now, religious worships were not as interesting as they are today. People were barely allowed to clap, dance, sing or do such praises that satisfies their spiritual thirst. This made the service so stereotyped and lacking in life. The coming of Christians music especially choruses, changed the narratives. Now people can sing, dance, make melody, play instruments and do a whole lot of things during worship. The use of English or European musical instruments has also made certain changes. Music has also added life and free expression to life.

c. An expression of religious experience

For Uche and Agunwa (2011), the religious commitment of people is a religious expression following religious experience in life. They went further to explain that it could refer to the ways adherents of religions actively involve in worship. In most, we see people tell of their walk with God and deeper experiences with sincere heart of worship towards God. This expression could also be a type of prayer.

d. Provides Recreation

Many Christians respond to the appeals and attend rallies because they find them answers to their thirst for scripture reading for singing and dancing emotional satisfaction and their need for concrete and clear answers. When such music as choruses are going on in a Christian gathering, it is a great source of recreative activity. People who do not have

the time or opportunity to do usual exercise seize this as an alternative.

e. Mobilization and Empowerment for Youths

Music has done a lot of good to the various churches in mobilizing their youths. Many of them are no more interested in the scriptures and the word of God. Today, many of the youths learn musical instruments to get money. Chine (2017) explains that music has endowed in the youths great talents and these talents have announced them before kings and princes not only as mere men but as people to be respected. This is a great plus and impact to Christendom at large.

The Role of Music in Christian Youth Education

1. Since basically, the Holy Bible is the Christian Book essential church music (Ojo, 2015) and will be necessary to see the Biblical injunction on Christian education. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace your hearts to the Lord (Colossians, 3:16 - NKJV). Though songs are not the only element of worship, they constitute a very vital element that Christian educators cannot afford to ignore.

Music is used for teaching doctrines and beliefs. Christians probably learn more of their doctrines through music, than any other means. Music communicates not only in melody and rhythm but a message which can change the direction of a person's life.

2. For Moral and Spiritual Development

Music is not only useful in teaching and instruction, but it also helps in moral and spiritual development especially of children. Music to a large extent contributes to the general development of children. Esimone (2013) asserted that "music no doubt is the most simple, easy and best way to inculcate all good knowledge into children, hence it leads to their all development". The Bible also advised "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not

depart from it (Proverbs 22:6). The moral upbringing of children is better achieved through music. Oyeniyi (2016) citing Sample said, through church music, children learn to express feelings of love and adoration to God. Songs of trust and faith, if they are sung with understanding help to reinforce a child's growing commitment to God's care. Children, especially if taught in their class feel free and relaxed to listen and learn. They learn songs like:

- a. Read your Bible pray everyday,
Pray everyday, pray everyday,
Read your Bible pray everyday ,
If you want to grow.
- b. Love your neighbor x2
Love your neighbor as yourself
Love your neighbor x2
Charity begins at home
- c. I have decided to follow Jesus
I have decided to follow Jesus
I have decided to follow Jesus
No turning back, no turning back
- d. Lord I want to be a Christian in my
heart x2
In my heart – in my heart,
Lord I want to be a Christian in my
heart (Favourites No 7, 46 & 49).

3. Communication

Music in christian education play two major roles in communication; a means of speaking to the church. Music is a great tool for worship and it allows the expression of oneself in a way tht words cannot do. It is easier to worship or make a request to God through songs than spoken words. Sometimes, it is difficult to construct words in prayers when one is passing through hard times.

4. Reminder

Music helps us to remember things especially Bible passages that talk about healing, health, wealth, fruitfulness, greatness, success, life and death, the second coming of Christ. Olatona (2005) buttressed this point thus “ if there is a message from God that your congregation finds difficult to understand or adhere to, your musicians should convert it to a song. Teach the people.. .it then means that music is a great asset in reminding people of certain Biblical teachings.

5. Instruction and Correction

Music is very useful for instruction and correction, especially with children. Quoting Olatona (2005), it is a known fact that music is a major means of instructing children in kindergartens. It is used also in correcting some ills in the society and sounding warning to an adamant”. Here is this childhood song is taken from proverbs 29:1. “He who is often reproved, yet stiffens his neck will suddenly be broken beyond healing. Such songs can help in correcting stubborn children.

6. Deliverance

It is obvious from the scriptures that deliverance comes from music as seen in the case of King Saul (I Sam. 16:16). David was skillful but the presence of God in his life made the difference. Paul and Silas also got their deliverance through songs.

7. Music is useful in attracting and retaining the youths in the church. This close to music being the power of God unto salvation. Any church that plays with her music is likely going to have a low turnout of youths because music is the drive for the age. Therefore, church leaders need to evaluate their music and make necessary amendments to avoid losing their members.

Conclusion

Music is an effective arm of teaching and educational ministry of the local church through developing and providing music programmes and experiences. The underlying purposes of music in Christian education is to win (evangelistic function) and to train – educational function. The word of God is taught through hymns and choruses are in the Bible.

References

- Blacking, J. (1976). *How musical is man*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Chine, A. (2017). *The talents within us*. Awka: SCOA Heritage.
- Esimone, C. C. (2013). Music: An incentive in early childhood education. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts (AJRMA)*, 9, 207
- Favorites No 7 (for gospel songs for solos, duets, trios, quartets and group singing; one of the singspiration series).
- Olatona, F. (2005). *Music in Christianity*. Lagos: Goodman inspiration.
- Nzewi, M. (1995). Humanistic of African theatre in perspective, African Humanities
- New King James Version Colo. 3:16, I Sam 16:6, Proverb 29:1
- Ojo, A. (2015). Re-approving church music as a valid tool for nurturing spiritual growth in practical theology. *A Journal of Baptist College Lagos*.
- Oyeniya, G. A. (2016). Christian music ministry as a tool for enrichment series. 325, 6 – 206.
- Ogugua, P. (2003). A psycho and philosophical experience of Man. In *Awka Journal of Research in music and the Arts (AJRMA)*. 1, 113.
- Uche, O. O. C & Ajunwa T. (2011). Nominamlity, spirituality and religious commitments among Christians in Nigeria: Problems and prospects. In P. Enemah and O. O. C. (Eds.) *Standing again on the mouth: A reflection on Christian spirituality in Africa* (33-52), Onitsha: Gucks System Int.