MUSIC AND THE MASS MEDIA IN A DIGITAL AGE

By
Dr. Sunday N. Nnamani
08063960225, 08091144141
sundaynnamani2010@yahoo.com
Dept Of Music, Faculty Of Humanities,
Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-alike Ikwo, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State
&
Rev. Ikechi Nwagu
08061111940. Ikechi001@gmail.com
Dept of Music, Faculty of Humanities,
Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-alike Ikwo, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State

Abstract

The pace at which technology is evolving is ever increasing – and people are eager to embrace it. The digital age has a wide scope. One may have heard of buzz and words like artificial intelligence (AI), automation, big data, insure tech, Internet Of Things (IOT) and cloud. These are some of the streams that come under the digital age. Life in the digital age is truly information driven as data to access the internet is becoming more valuable than other things, hence an average person needs to access social media almost on a daily basis. For the last decade, phenomenal technological advances in digital technologies has enabled the internet to become an efficient medium for accessing music both by streaming or direct downloading, as well as by online acquisition of CDs and cassettes(Graham et al, 2002). Social media platforms such as Whatsapp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Telegram, etc have emerged as agents of information dissemination around the globe. Careful observation shows that music and mass media in the digital age has left the corridors of the traditional owners to the doorstep of the consumers.
Key words: Internet, Facebook, Social Media, Streaming, Download

Introduction

Over the years, music and mass media has continued to play related and complimentary roles in the society. Both have been regarded as great medium of socialization, education, communication, good governance, character formation, information and religious experience. Music and the mass media right from origin, has been growing side by side with technology, and such development had led to the constant improvement of both on a daily basis. The demands of the digital age have left both music and mass media with the option of meeting up with the current trend.

Therefore, in trying to meet up with the demands of the digital age, music and mass media have continued to improve their standards in all ramifications. They do this in order to enhance productivity because the relevance of music and mass media in the society is very high and cannot be over-estimated. Therefore, the use of the internet and social media platforms in the production, distribution and consumption of music is highly necessary.

Definition Of Concepts

Music: As a creative and performing art, the definition of music may vary from one social and cultural context to another. According to Idolor (2002), music is derived from the Greek word "Musicke" which originally meant the art of technique of all cultural endeavours. Jagger in Idolor

(2002) also remarked that "humanity denotes mankind and the characteristics that evolve in the interaction of human beings: music is generally defined as an organised sound, its concept varies from one society to another hence it is necessary to understand what sounds and what kind of behavior different societies regard as musical.

Sociologically, the concept of music is by the society and it is concerned with the organized ways in which people behave towards one another when they listen, produce, and reproduce those sounds which they perceive as music. Ubani (2009) expressed that music is capable of transforming the society in a most logical, convenient and appropriate tool for disseminating and communicating information to the masses that assures retention and serves as a reminder.

Also, music may be defined as "a sacred art". This is so because we use music in holy places of worship – churches, mosques, shrines and temples. Also, music may be seen as "A succession of organized sounds which the ear may interpret as pleasant or pleasing or entertaining or enjoyable" (Anuonye, 2017).

Also, Okpala in Iwu and Anuonye (2009) posited that:

> Music is a social process by which human beings relate to one another through transmission of information, ideas, emotions, thoughts, norms, concepts and feelings among themselves. Music is the centre place of life which gives human life existence worth its value. Being the heart of life, music functions like the centre of life in man… It is music that defines an individual group, people and society in general. It is present in man (from cradle to the grave) being omnipresent and ubiquitous. It permeates all human conditions.

This means that its only through music (as a process of socialization) that human beings relate to themselves and interact with one another, share from one another's problems and enjoyments and organize their environment to make it conducive to living.

Oguoma (2009) opines that music is one language that is universal. Poets interpret the world in verbal configuration, painters depict the world in colour, line and texture while music communicates in varying the vast array of human experiences.

Music is made of sounds, vibrations and silent moments, and it doesn't always have to be pleasant or pretty. It can be used to convey a whole range of experiences, environments and emotions. (https://study.com).

Mass Media

Ubani (2009) defined mass media as "those contrivances artistically employed by communicators to bring about inter-personal relationships among people and between groups and persons on local, nations and international levels". Mass media refers to the technologies used as channels for a small group of people to communicate with a larger number of people. The concept was first addressed during the progressive era of the 1920s, as a response to new opportunities for elites to reach large audiences via the mass media of the time: newspapers, radio, and film. Actually, the three forms of traditional mass media today are still the same: print (newspapers, books, magazines), broadcast (television, radio), and cinema (movies and documentaries).

But in the 1920s, mass media referred not just to the number of people such communication could reach but rather to the uniform consumption, and anonymity of the audiences. Uniformity and anonymity are characters which no longer fit the way people seek out what to consume, and manipulate information into their daily lives. Those new media are referred to as "alternative media" or "mass self-communication".

The two best known types are commercial advertising and political campaigns. Due to technological

development and advancement, the traditional mass media comprising the print, broadcast and cinema are facing numerous challenges. However, new forms are being created and added day by day to fit into the digital age. The internet and social media have altered the nature of mass media thereby creating consumers who control, produce and even create media of their own, and by so doing, they can easily track consumer responses without much stress. Digital age arrives with a set of big communication challenges for traditional mainstream media: new relations with audiences (interactivity), new languages (multimedia) and a new grammar (hypertext).

But this media revolution not only changes the communication landscape for the usual players, most importantly, it opens the mass communication system to a wide range of new players.
As far as enterprises, institutions, administrations, organizations, groups, families and individuals start their own online presence, they become "media" by their own, they also become "sources" for traditional media and in many cases, they produce strong "media criticism".

Digital Age
The digital age, also referred to as the information age, saw the prevalent use of the internet probably shifting from traditional industry to an economy based on information and communication technologies. Around the 1980s with the subsequent introduction of personal computers, individuals were provided with the ability to transfer information freely and quickly through the internet. It is very difficult to discuss the digital age without mentioning the information and communication technology (ICT).

Abdullahi, H. (2013) argues that ICT definition depends on the angle the individual looks at it. According to him, information and communication technology comprises the method and technical means of capturing, storing, processing, retrieving and transmitting both data and information borne by the data. Information and communication technology is an interdisciplinary science primarily concerned with the collection, classification, manipulation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information. Furthermore, he informs that the advent of ICT especially in these modern times has brought effective and efficient information generation, utilization and dissimilation, storage and retrieval. ICT include among others, television, radio broadcasting, audio cassettes and audio cassettes recorders, video cassettes and video cassettes recorders, computers, satellite systems, multimedia approaches, audiovisual utilization, as well as the various services and applications associated with them. These include but not limited to video conferencing and multimedia utilization.

The pace at which technology is evolving is ever increasing and people are eager to embrace it. The digital age has a wide scope too. It's likely that you have heard of buzz words like "artificial intelligence (AI), automation, big data, Insure Tech, Internet of Things (IOT) and "cloud". These are just some of the streams that come under the digital umbrella.

According to Abiodum (2017), the emergence of internet and digital technologies is a global experience that touches every industry. Increasingly, internet-based technologies and its applications are progressively penetrating all areas of business, individual and social facet of everyday life. For every sector, digitalization changes the approach services and products are made, marketed, sold, distributed and how organizations manage competitions. Furthermore, he stated thus "over the last decade, phenomenal technologies advances in digital technologies has enabled the internet to become an efficient medium for accessing music – both by streaming or downloading it directly, and by acquisition of CDs and cassettes from online retailers (Graham et al, 2002). The Nigerian music industry has experienced many technological innovations ranging from cassette

recordings, audio CDs recordings, massive video recordings and digital music. The industry is gradually transiting from over reliance on record companies to a situation where artists can have direct contact with the consumers to reduce bottlenecks and prices in the value chain of their music as well as maximizing profits. This is made possible as a result of the advent of the internet as an efficient medium for communication and marketing of music. Nevertheless, the purpose of this work, music and the mass media in a digital age shall be discussed with regards to its **production, distribution and consumption**.

Production

The digital age has continued to witness serious and constant shift from the traditional way of doing things to computerized form. One of the structures of the traditional music industry structure is music and song creation. Musicians, lyricists, composers and recording artists with creativity and talents create music massively. Olugbenga in Margaret (2017) recorded the progress of recording studios in Nigeria as follows:

Historical Development:

He records that;

> We can identify specific periods in the history of music recording in Nigeria since its inception at the turn of the twentieth century from 1900 which involved mano analogue recording technique. It consisted of holding one or two microphones in the middle of a group of musicians after which it is then transcribed into a wax cylinder.

> Another epoch, witnessed the multi-national recording companies monopolizing the entire music industry in Nigeria and the recording technique was the multi-track stereo analogue recordings. Finally, the digital age witnessed a total withdrawal of the multi-national recording companies, the emergence and proliferation of digital home studios, using multi-track analogue and the digital state of the arts recording technology.

Technology has always been the bedrock of the music industry, and the digital technology has transformed the music industry not only in the way music is consumed but also fundamentally in the way music is recorded and performed. Today, low-cost high-quality recording, processing and mixing solutions have led to affordable studio time being available all over the nation. Studios are no longer the expensive and hallowed domain of a small and exclusive clientele of signed artists. Artists of all colours and hue are using various music websites to build fan base and to sell their music to the public.

Egonu (2009) opines that the use of computer in composition has actually improved the quality of the music we hear today as noted by Gordon Zaft (1996).
He emphasized that;

> Music composition has gone a long way into perfection with the advent of computer technology. Today, people with little or no knowledge of music can come up with creative musical ideas. Professional composers can have a variety of music played in little or no time with the aid of computer software thus enabling them listen to what their music sounds like without having to organize and orchestrate or been performed by a choir. Scores/music sheets are even mass produced with neater and better presentations without the limitation of time and space.

A number of artists and composers have during recent years implemented the context-focused model in the creative production of their musical works. Rather than only making polished recordings for

the audience to experience and enjoy, they created services and practices that involve the audience in the creative process and allow the fans to do things with music; that is to say, encouraging the fans to upload sounds, images and videos of production. Composers and song writers create songs, lyrics and arrangements that are performed live on stage, recorded and distributed to consumers or licensed for some other kind of use, for instance sheet music as background music for other media (advertising, television, radio, etc).

Furthermore, the role of media editors have been reduced also by worldwide publishing without editors but with a close peer review daily process and in most cases open to comments from readers in the nature of social web publishing. As a result of that, the agenda of relevant current affairs goes beyond the established media and now is shared with a wide variety of new sources most of them not media, including social web portals, mailing lists, e-bulletins, search engines, new groups, forum and weblogs with their respective feeds when available. (https://www.ecuaderno.com/culturasdigitales)

Distribution

This could also be referred to as a product of marketing which may include branding, information, distribution/dissemination and community building. Major channels for branding and information dissemination are professional promoters, disk jockeys, DJs/clubs, and media houses such as the television and radio stations. These channels publicize information about new releases and provide samples of music to the fans and consumers. Music normally is stored in portable medium such as CDs and audio cassettes, for sale and preservation. The channels also help to develop communities of music fans with similar tastes.

According to Jayeola and Nwonye (2017), the Compact Disc Read Only Memory (CD – ROM) stores music data such as audio, video, audio – visual and literary documentation on every aspect of music. Information contained in the CD-ROM, which could be on any culture, is widely distributed for global consumption and can be decoded on the screen of the computer by even people from other world cultures. Through the radio, television and the internet, these products are advertized, promoted and marketed for mass orientation and global patronage. Thus producing, reproducing and distribution of music is rapidly becoming cheaper, making it possible for many small and independent record companies to enter the market.

In a digital age, challenges like paper space for the printing of media materials and short time for broadcast media ceased to be the limit to content and now the time of the user in the new scarce resource. The vision of musicians and their fans and music lovers coming together without any limitations of time and space without any interference from meddling record companies is being realized virtually on the internet. Quoting Egonu (2009), he said, we know that "music for the people" is one thing that will without doubt continue to grow. Music for all purposes, radio, public shows, advertisements, relaxation, ceremonial, TV, etc, is composed easily without stress and just in time.

Presently, there is different musical software available in the market which can aid in composition, sound synthesis, song arrangement, harmonization, and even performance of music piece itself. Egonu stressed further that in April 27th, 1996, the First Virtual Concert Hall was launched. It consisted of the musicians of Nova orchestra who gathered at the School of Music and Dance's Hall at one end and dancers of the School at Gittings Dance Theatre at the other end of the campus. The musicians of Orchestra Nova performed two pieces on their Roland A-30 MIDI keyboard

controllers; audio and video from Crowder Hall were fed lives via network to Gittings Dance Hall where the dancers performed to the live music. Crowds in both halls could see and hear the entire performance on large LCD screens hanging from the ceilings.

Consumption

Nowadays, most musical artists and producers go beyond the traditional format of the song and create mobile applications that allow the users to play with music in different ways. According to Blow (2009), the merger of audio technologies with computer technologies converted music into an information product. Digital technologies such as mp3 have become the standard for digital music format. Mp3 is a widely accepted format for music distribution over the internet and being an open standard (not a patented property of a company) and well received by many audio software developers. However, mp3 does not have a provision for a digital signature to identify or stop illegal music download and distribution worldwide which has allowed music consumers to freely download and distribute both legal and pirated music over the internet.

Music consumption in a digital age has become very cheap and affordable that music lovers can enjoy their desired music tract from the comfort of their homes provided there is an internet connection. Among the three kinds of music fans, the vast majority of listeners are those who copy music illegally because it is more convenient than buying the originals. The sales of CDs have continued to fall and paid-for downloads from services like Apple's iTunes have fallen short too where legal services offering free, unlimited streaming of music rather than downloads, are proliferating. The growth and development of technology in the digital age has also affected the mass media in the sense that information is now distributed in many directions and methods, and audiences can vary from one person to many thousands. Mass self-communication can potentially reach a global audience but it is self generated in content, self-directed in its mission and typically focuses on self-related information. Sociologist Alvin Toffler created the now-obsolete term of "prosumers" to describe users who are almost simultaneously consumers and producers – for example, reading and commenting on online content, or reading and replying to twitter post.

Interactions also now cross-media stream such as "social TV, where people use hash tags while watching a sports game or a television program in order to simultaneously read and converse with hundreds of other viewers on social media. The communication process in the actual scenario is user centered: users have the control to choose, to decide, to search, to define and configure, to subscribe or to unsubscribe, to comment and most importantly, to write, talk and film."(https://www.ecuaderno.com/culturadigitales).

Conclusion

The digital age has not only affected music and the mass media but other aspects of human endeavour. Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, telegram, etc. are now agents of information dissemination that can reach anywhere internationally within the shortest possible times. Music and mass media in the digital age has left the corridors of the so-called traditional owners to the door step of consumers giving the consumers rights of making decisions of their own without reliance on any individual or group.

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