

**MUSICIAN AS MESSENGER OF HOPE IN DIFFICULT TIMES:
A REVIEW OF E.C. ARINZE'S ADIAKALU UBOSI**

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Abstract

Over the years, Nigeria has been experiencing difficult times including, economic recession, unemployment, hike in food prices, kidnapping, religious crisis, terrorism, injustice, the COVID-19 pandemic, etc. As a result, depression, terror and many other psychologically related challenges arise leading to hopelessness among Nigerian citizens. Music has been one of the effective channels of communicating optimism and hope to the society despite the prevalent circumstances. This paper appraises E. C. Arinze as one of such messengers of hope whose evergreen music still gives encouragement to those who are discouraged due to life's challenges. This study analyzed one of his compositions - *Adiakalu Ubosi* musically and textually. Data collection was drawn from the library, internet resources, audio files, documentaries and relevant literature. This paper sets out to encourage contemporary musicians and composers (in Nigeria) to imbibe this mindset like E. C. Arinze in becoming a herald of hope and encouragement to Nigerians at large to look forward to a bright future.

Introduction

Every country in the world has been experiencing different dimensions of difficult times including epidemics, economic crisis, unemployment, food scarcity, political crisis, terrorism, etc. Financial crises have also

become a regular feature in the economies of nations all through economic history. Little wonder world leaders keep having economic summits to proffer solutions towards revitalizing the economy of many nations. Nigeria is believed to be Africa's largest economy; however, the fact that most Nigerians languish in poverty and her youths have remained unemployed is a serious source of great concern (Okoye, 2017). Some university graduates also, have resorted to being public transporters and manual laborers just to make ends meet. The salary earner and the entrepreneur also cry about increase in expenditure and tax payments despite stagnancy or decrease in income. The current depressed state of the country's economy has also resulted to inflation and the decimation of many businesses and people's means of livelihood; resulting to high crime rates and in some other cases, suicide. The news and social media are not left out; considering the news on the crumbling economy, increase in tax payments, kidnappings, armed robbery, etc., that make up the rounds daily. With all these disturbing news around us, frustration and depression becomes inevitable unless hope for a brighter tomorrow is continually rekindled.

In Nigeria today, religious clerics, musicians and some other individuals have been agents or messengers of hope to many discouraged citizens. Chris Irekamba and Isaac Taiwo's article (2017) shows the clerics' concern (in their Easter goodwill message to Nigerians) stating thus: "While we sympathize with and must support all who are most hit by the current woes, we must discourage the growing trend of suicide and despair in Nigeria" (p.5). In their appeal to the Nigerian government, they opined thus: "Our leaders should think more about the people they are serving and realize that they are committed to making the electorate happy and live better" (p.6). It is evidently clear that people need or depend on a little push to remain hopeful, strong and motivated; and that is where music can become relevant.

Musician and Message of Hope

Music till date represents a basic part of human existence, arising from the physiological, psychological, and sociological needs of humankind. Over the ages, it has proved to be one of the indispensable arts cultivated by man for the growth, nurture and transfer of values to future generations. It has also been one of the means by which individuals express their emotions, perceptions, thoughts and sentiments (Ogunrinade, 2015). In most cases, musical themes reveal societal issues that manifest in the worldview of the musicians, their audience and the geopolitical environment they find themselves (Ogunrinade, 2016). Music cuts across cultural, social, educational and economic barriers, and can enhance in communicating hope for a brighter future to a hurting nation. In agreement with these opinions, Okafor's study (as cited in Ojukwu, 2017) postulated that "Music is of course very acceptable as an instrument of change because people digest it and consume it as entertainment while it leaves a mark on the psyche that re-directs the person towards a new personality, towards a new activity" (p.102). Thus Nigerian musicians can play an important role by using their compositions as a panacea or a therapeutic means in curing depression, frustration and reviving courage and hope among fellow citizens.

Notable Nigerian Musicians with Messages of Hope

Over the years in Nigeria, several musicians have evolved in response to the failed state of the nation and giving inspiration along the line of encouragement, fundamental human rights, national unity; also revolution, leadership criticism, loss of hope, etc. While some musicians met with stiff resistance from the government due to their criticisms, resulting sometimes in loss of lives, freedom and properties; musicians like Fela Kuti (after performing "Suffering and Smiling", "Authority stealing", "Zombie", etc) weathered the storms and won the admiration of the populace, thereby making it extremely difficult for powers that

be to cow him to submission (Oikelome, 2014). Idris Abdulkareem in his popular track "*Nigeria jaga jaga*" (meaning Nigeria is in shambles) bluntly expressed displeasure with the failed state of the country and loss of hope for the poor man in Nigeria... and the song was banned afterwards. Sunny Okosun in his song "*Which Way Nigeria*" called for the way out of corruption and inefficiency confronting the nation, deeply showing concern and calling for a way to save the country (Channels Television, 2018). In the line of national unity, musicians like Ngozi Okonkwo, who sung an unscripted arrangement titled "*Nigerian Unity*" and Nelly Uchendu who sung "*Be a true Nigerian*" (Ojukwu, 2017) appealed for a positive change in order to instill patriotic and nationalistic instinct in the Nigerian society; Onyeka Onwenu's song - "*One Love Keep Us Together*", among others, emphasized the theme of love and unity in a world of struggle and dreams of staying alive. Some other musicians also toed the line of becoming messengers of hope. One of them was the legendary musician - Celestine Ukwu in his song "*Okwukwe na Nchekwube*"; who encouraged individuals to forgo despair and keep faith and hope alive considering that every situation (crisis) has an ending. Some Nigerian gospel musicians like Preye Odede in his hit track "*Ebezind*" encourages the society not to continue in tears and despair, since challenges are only temporary; he further encouraged hope to be sustained in God who is faithful to bring about a brighter future. Contemporary Nigerian popular musicians have made similar contributions including: 2face in his song "*Nfana Ibagá*", P-Square in "*Bring it on*", Barry Jhay in "*Tomorrow*", etc.

Since music can be used to influence individual and group behaviors in different ways, composers and musicians should maximize this strategy in reaching out to many depressed and impoverished Nigerians to keep hope alive in difficult circumstances. E. C. Arinze, one of the great music legends in Nigeria, happened to be one of those messengers of hope in his day. This paper tries to examine one of his music

Arinze, D. C. & Nwamara, A. O.: *Musician as Messenger of Hope in Difficult Times:...* compositions in the 1960s - "*Adiakalu Ubosi*" as a message of hope to Nigerians of today.

The Man E. C. Arinze

E. C. Arinze (*Ogbueshi* Eleazar Chukwuwetalu Arinze) was one of the founding fathers of what became known as West African brand of highlife music (Homeland news, 2019). His contemporaries at that time include E. T. Mensah (of Ghana), Bobby Benson, Victor Olaiya, Chris Ajilo and Tunde Amuwo. He was born on the 4th of June, 1930 in Ugamuma village, Obosi town, Idemili North L.G.A. of Anambra state. He was the first of five children born to Mr. Nathaniel and Mrs. Esther Arinzechukwu.

His primary education started in St. Mary's Primary School (i.e. Obosi Central School) in his home town and was later transferred to his maternal uncle's missionary station - St. Peter's School, Ogbete in Enugu. While in the latter school, he became a chorister in the school choir and also joined the school marching band where he learned how to play the fluegel horn (Onwuegbuna, 2012). After his maternal uncle's demise, Eleazar was brought back to his home town, Obosi. There, he joined the Obosi Central School band where he learnt the trumpet. He later proceeded to Teachers Training College where he excelled and took up teaching appointment in Obosi Central (Primary) School where he became the school's first bandleader. He was later posted to Central School Onitsha and then Agbor, Delta state as teacher and band master too. He also had a music course by correspondence from Royal Music Academy in Britain, and was able to score any sound he heard.

His Musical Life

E. C. Arinze's musical-career-dream materialized in 1952, when he got a six-year contract with Empire Hotel, Idioro, Lagos. This development led to his immediate resignation from his teaching career and his moving down to Lagos with his group of band boys he associated with in the East as bandmaster. As he progressed in his career in Empire hotel, he later split his band into three more sets/ensembles and fixed Eric Onugha, Stephen Amaechi and Agu Norris to coordinate each set because of the growing demands for their musical services in various events. It was in this band that musicians including late Chief Osita Osadebe (one of his percussionists), played under E. C. Arinze in the 1950's. E. C. Arinze marketed his music at various locations including University College, Ibadan, where he earned a contract with Sigma Club (the biggest club in Ibadan then). He also did same in Abeokuta, Ajengunle, Apapa club, Ijebuode and Ijebuigbo. After the expiration of his contract with Empire hotel, he got a contract with White horse hotel (Abalabi, Lagos), Lido Bar, Ikeja Country Club (formerly European club, Ikeja) and with Ikeja Arms Hotel (now Ikeja Airport Hotel).

Later, E. C. Arinze was contracted to perform at *Kakadu* Hotel/Night Club (popularly called KKD or "The Magic Spot") located at 258 Herbert Macaulay street, Alagomeji bust stop, Yaba, Lagos. This club was his last club of residency in Lagos, where he led one of the most formidable music outfits and attracted many foreign dignitaries, judges, magistrates and other national diplomats to his entertainment. Some of the professional musicians who played under E. C. Arinze in *Kakadu* Night Club include: his alto saxophonist and deputy - Etim Udoh; his guitarists - Peter King, Victor Uwaifo, and Fred Coker (now Lloyd Baker); his bassists - Tunde Oshomide and Charles Ononogbo; and his sidemen/vocalists - Exy Ohunta (who sang, composed and recorded some highlife Yoruba songs under the sponsorship and support of E. C. Arinze).

E. C. Arinze was also a pioneer member and lead trumpeter (in the trumpet section) of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation Dance Orchestra in the 1950s led by Steve Rhodes and later Fela Sowande; his band was also commissioned to perform for some other divisions of government agencies up to Federal level. After an outstanding performance at Federal Palace hotel (in 1960), where Nigeria was hosting President Hamani Diori of Niger republic and his wife, he was officially contracted to perform in all Federal Government events and entertain all their august visitors, from that year till the Nigerian civil war. He was also one of the legendary musicians who performed on the Nigerian's Independence Day celebration; he also performed alongside E. T. Mensah on the day when James Robertson (the outgoing Governor-general) handed over to Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.

As the Nigerian civil war broke out in 1967, E. C. Arinze left Lagos with his family and settled in the East till the war ended. He was later summoned to the state house in Enugu in 1975 by the East Central State Administrator, who contracted E. C. Arinze to become the resident band at the government-owned Premier Garden - Hotel Presidential, Enugu (Onwuegbuna, 2012). After experiencing progress for over a decade, Hotel-Presidential experienced some administrative challenges which led to operational decline, retrenchment of staff, much salary debts, etc. E. C. Arinze's band was also affected since the hotel management could no longer sustain the contract. This led to the contract's termination and his retirement from full-time musicianship in 1989. He handed the band's leadership over to Emma Ikediashi and encouraged them to continue on their own. The band started their new musical adventure as "The Black Tops Highlife Band". Afterwards, he performed in the following event centers (still in Enugu) only on special occasions: Enugu Sports Club (where he was a registered member), ANAMCO Club, O'Neal plaza, Hobbies plaza, Zodiak hotels, Nike Lake Resort Hotel, Golf Club, 82 Division Officers Mess (where he

Arinze, D. C. & Nwamara, A. O.: *Musician as Messenger of Hope in Difficult Times:...* performed with the Nigerian Army Band at their "Happy Hour" and Tombola Nites).

Later on, Benson Idonije (a Nigeria's known music critic, analyst, broadcaster and former manager to Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, who has written several articles about him) engaged E. C. Arinze to perform in Goethe institute's Highlife which took place on 11th December 1999 and 1st April 2000 in Lagos, where he featured alongside other Nigerian music legends including, Chris Ajilo, Tunde Osofisan, Raphael Amarabem, Fatai Rolling Dollar, David Bull, Nelly Uchendu, Yisa Akinibosun, Professional Seagulls dance band etc. He was also a star guest in *Fete de la Musique* - French cultural center music festival, Lagos (same year - June 24th) where he performed alongside other music artistes.

E. C. Arinze waxed on vinyl a total of 20 music albums under the sleeve label of DECCA Record Company Limited, London in the 1950s and 1960s. However, not all his musical works were marketed. His musical works include: *Nike Nike*, *Time for Highlife*, *Ozo Emena*, *Ogbuefi Nnamdi Azikiwe*, *Ife Nkili*, *Sisi Bisi*, *Adiakalu Ubosi*, *Mo Re London*, *Lumumba Calypso*, etc.

E. C. Arinze breathed his last on March 26th, 2015 at his native home, in Ugamuma village, Obosi, and was survived of his wife - Adamma (whom he married eight years after the demise of his first wife - Edith), four sons (from his first wife), a son (the researcher of this study) and daughter from his second wife, and eighteen grandchildren.

Voice (Solo)

ADIAKALU UBOSI

E. C. Arinze
(Notated by David C. Arinze)

Moderato $\text{♩} = 105$

2 10

O bu-lu na chie-ji-ro-nuo a - dia

14

ka-lu- bo-sio nwa-nne-mo O bu-lu na chie- ji-ro a- dia

16

ka-lu- bo sio nwanne-mo I fe-o-nyeo di- ne-me n'u-wa o kao-ji-de-sie n'i-ke nuo

19

I - fe - u wae - si-kai- ke anyi ga-na-nwa-li- li-nu-o o-yo-li-ma

21

A. K. Thomp- son_nwo-ke-mo o-nyeo- ga - di-li_mma

23

I nu-goi fem na-gu-lu i-o anyi ga-na-nwa-li-li-nu-o o-yo-li-ma

8

Voice (Solo)

33

O bul' go-di nao-di n-jo ta-tao_ o ga - ta di mma e-chio

35

I-fe u-wae-si-ka-ni-ke o anyi ga-na-nwa-li-li-nu-o o-yo-li-ma

37

O bu-lu na chie-ji-ro-nuo a - dia - ka-lu- bo-si nwa-nne-mo

39

O bu-lu na chie-ji-ro-nuo anyi ga-na-nwa-li-li-nu-o o-yo-li-ma

41

32 2 2

Analysis of "Adiakalu Ubosi" (Vocal Melody)

- Form:** Strophic
Style: Tonal, in Key E-flat major
Length: 76 Bars
Time Signature: 4_4
Tempo: *Moderato* (105bpm)
Range: Perfect Fourth (1-space D to 2-space G)
Rhythmic structures: 4_4 regular metre with short and long notes e.g. semiquavers, quavers, and crotchets.

Scale Mode:	Diatonic major scale
Tonal Shifts:	Conjunct, Disjunct and Static motions.
Intervals:	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th and 6 th
Structural Analysis:	
The vocal content of this piece is in strophic form as well as a solo.	
Bars 1-12	Instrumental introduction
Bars 13-24	Vocal solo (1 st verse)
Bars 25-32	Instrumentals continue
Bars 33-40	Vocal solo (2 nd verse)
Bars 41-72	Instrumentals continue
Bars 73-76	Instrumental ending

Textual Analysis of "*Adiakalu Ubosi*"

E. C. Arinze having passed through some challenges in life came up with this song of encouragement with the aim of giving hope to the down trodden and those who have been mesmerized by life's challenges. *Adiakalu Ubosi* was recorded under the sleeve label of DECCA Record Company Limited, London in the 1960s.

The Text/Translations:

Table 1 - The lyrics and translation of the first verse of *Adiakalu Ubosi*

<i>Lyrics in Igbo</i>	<i>Translation of the lyrics into English</i>
<i>O bulu na chi ejiro nu o,</i>	If the night is not spent out
<i>Adiakalu ubosi o nwanne m o</i>	Hope is not lost, my brother/sister
<i>O bulu na chi ejiro nu o,</i>	If the night is not spent out
<i>Adiakalu ubosi o nwanne m o</i>	Hope is not lost, my brother/sister
<i>Ife onye odi n'eme n'uwa o</i>	Whatever one finds doing in this world
<i>Ka o jidesie n'ike nu o,</i>	Let him keep up the good work

<i>Ife uwa esika ike</i>	Life issues can be very challenging
<i>Anyi ga na-anwalili nu o, oyolima</i>	We will keep trying our best, my friend
A. K. Thompson <i>nwoke m o</i>	A. K. Thompson my man
<i>Onye o ga-adili mma,</i>	The one it shall be well with
<i>I nugo ife m na-agulu i o</i>	Have you heard what I singing for you
<i>Anyi ga na-anwalili nu o, oyolima</i>	We will keep trying our best, my friend

Table 2 - The lyrics and translation of the second verse of *Adiakalu Ubosi*

<i>Lyrics in Igbo</i>	<i>Translation of the lyrics into English</i>
<i>O bulugodi na o di njo taata o</i>	Even if (situations) get bad today
<i>O ga ta-adimma echi o</i>	It shall be well tomorrow
<i>Ife uwa esika n'ike o</i>	Life issues can be very challenging
<i>Anyi ga na-anwalili nu o, oyolima</i>	We will keep trying our best, my friend
<i>O bulu na chi ejiro nu o,</i>	If the night is not spent out
<i>Adiakalu ubosi o nwanne m o</i>	Hope is not lost, my brother/sister
<i>O bulu na chi ejiro nu o,</i>	If the night is not spent out
<i>Anyi ga na-anwalili nu o, oyolima</i>	Hope is not lost, my brother/sister

Looking at the above lyrical constructions, this song (in no doubt) is a song of encouragement and sends a message of hope to the Nigerian society. He opines that though life is not a bed of roses, courage is required to keep moving on even in the face of life challenges. He also

encourages individuals not to lose hope and quit in bad times, rather hope should be sustained for better times in the future.

This song is very apt considering the current state of Nigeria and the frustration of her many citizens. The critical increase of unemployment has led to more kidnappings, ritual killings, terrorism, malnutrition, children not being able to continue with schooling due to parents' inability to pay school fees, homelessness, etc. Despite these problems, E. C. Arinze's song "*Adiakalu Ubosi*" encourages us not to lose hope but to keep hoping for a better tomorrow.

Summary and Conclusion

Since Nigeria is presently in a situation of increasing conflict and terrorism that calls for change, societal changes can be promoted by musicians when the lyrics of their songs begin to capture issues of socio-cultural, political and economic issues of Nigeria that needs to be turned-around, in order to attain good governance, national security (Ogunrinade, 2016) and economic prosperity in the country. Especially, now that much metamorphosis has also taken place in the highlife genre and has given birth to its various kinds in contemporary times. (Nwamara, 2016)

Having examined and analyzed the melody and lyrics of "*Adiakalu Ubosi*", it can be clearly seen that his music rekindled hope and motivated optimism for a brighter future in his day and till date; thus enlisting him among the music messengers of hope. Nigerians of all classes are indisputably in dire need of this. Therefore, considering the psychological impact and benefits in this urgent call, there is need for all contemporary Nigerian composers and popular musicians to join in this campaign and initiative in becoming heralds of hope and encouragement to the Nigerian society via our music compositions and performances towards a better tomorrow.

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