

RICHARD CHIJIJOKE OKAFOR'S PHILOSOPHIES AND IDEOLOGIES OF MUSIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

Music education in Nigeria has progressed tremendously from its inception as an optional recreational school activity at the primary school level until it became a substantive stand-alone subject and consequently a programme of study at the level of tertiary education. It can be said that Nigerian Music education has presently attained a recognized and well-established height. This is the result of the enormous works and contributions of the prominent and frontline Nigerian music educators like Tunji Vidal, Meki Nzewi, Akin Euba, Mosúnmólá Omíbíyì - Obidike, Richard Okafor, Dan Agu, Bode Omojola, Young-Sook Onyuike, Femi Adedeji, Onyee Nwakpa, Agatha Onwuekwe, Josphine Mokwunyei, Yomi Daramola, Olusoji Stephen, Albert Oikelome and host of others. This paper sets out to highlight the contributions of Richard Chijioke Okafor, who is a renowned Nigerian music educator and ethnomusicologist. An appraisal of his contributions to the development of music education in Nigeria will be discussed and at the same time, his philosophical principles of music education will be highlighted. Review of existing literature, interview, and observation methods are employed in carrying out this study. The paper concludes that Okafor's ideologies of music education posit that there should be a learning trajectory that progresses from the learner's own culture and graduates gradually to the music of other cultures.

Recommendations were made on how to actualize Okafor's dream in Nigerian music education.

Introduction

Music education in Nigeria has significantly developed over the years from its pre-colonial, colonial era and the present time. In pre-colonial times, not so much could be said about the music of the time. This may not be unconnected to the fact that formal means of documentation that comes with formal education were not in place. One certain thing, based on some available records, was that music was an intrinsic part of the African people's way of life and by extension Nigeria in the pre-colonial era. In corroboration of this assertion, Lander observed that while passing through western and northern parts of Nigeria, "when heard at a distance in the midst of solitary woods, the vocal music (of the indigenes) has a pleasing, palliative effect" (Lander in Onyeji and Onyeji 2.014, p. 102). Also, the fact that the early colonial missionaries condemned the traditional musical forms and the different instruments as being pagan substantiated this assertion that music was present in the pre-colonial era.

In the colonial days of Nigerian education, music was the tool used by the missionaries and the government to propagate their ideals (Onuora-Oguno, 2014). During this (colonial) era, the missionaries deployed music as an instrument of motivation for pupils in the schools, and from there, the mission schools taught chants and hymn singing to students. Chanting and singing were added to the basic school curriculum subjects; Fayose (1995) regarded this as religious studies. The teaching of music was often restricted to the elementary schools and occasionally, some secondary schools when teachers were available (Vidal, 2012).

In post-colonial Nigeria, music education took another dimension. This may not be unconnected with the socio-cultural and self-determination disposition that accompanied post-colonial realities. The emphasis and content of music education began to change to accommodate more indigenous content and focus, in addition to its original purely Western orientation. Some notable music scholars such as Fela Sowande, Dayo Dedeke, T. K. E. Philips and Wilberforce William Chukwudinka Echezona, just to mention a few, became the first set of Nigerians to seek music education abroad when they travelled out of the country to study music. This set of people eventually became what was regarded as the first generation of Nigerian music scholars. Some of them returned to the country after training abroad to establish the first autonomous music department in the University of Nigeria Nsukka. This institution produced its first Baccalaureate degree graduates in the year 1965. This huge success recorded at Nsukka helped in the development of other music programs of study at different levels such as National Diploma (ND), Higher National Diploma (HND), National Certificate in Education (NCE), Bachelor of Arts B.A. in (Music), Master of Arts (Music), up to the Doctorate of Philosophy (Music) at several other institutions across the country.

The department of music at the University of Nigeria (Nsukka) went on to turn out several notable music scholars of repute. Some of these scholars are Meki Nzewi, Sam Ojukwu, Azubuike Ifionu, Felix Nwuba, and Richard Okafor, who is the focus of this paper. Richard ChijSioke Okafor has proven himself as a scholar and educator of repute in the field of Music and Music Education. His contributions to the growth and development of the field of music in Nigeria are noteworthy. This paper sets out to appraise Okafor's contributions and his philosophies of Nigerian music education and educators. His projections and how they affect music education are also discussed.

Music Education

Music education is made up of two different words, music and education. These two words will be discussed separately and together. First of all, we'll attempt to look at 'music' which, in itself, is a universal phenomenon. According to Okafor (2005, p. 120), music can be seen as "a cultural expression which is determined, coloured and moulded by the cultural environment of a people".

Okafor's position on the cultural signification in music is corroborated by Nnanyelogo and Anya Njoku (2015, p.39) who claimed that "music is considered the fundamental component of human cultural existence".

The forgone presents the concept of music as, beyond a mere sonic phenomenon, immaterial immanence of a people's cultural heritage. In line with this position, Adeogun (2012) claims that music can be regarded as

"a product of people and societies. Musical knowledge is a transmittable constellation of enduring socio-musical traits which codify, articulate and validate the unique practice of human groups. Its organisation depends largely on the use of society widely recognised theories of tonality and /or modality, thematic structures, rhythmic patterns, tempo, timbres, use of language and musical instruments in communicating ideas, thoughts, content and meaning to the members of the society"

Adeogun's assertion is an attempt at providing a rather comprehensive description of music in that it considered the peculiarities of African societies where music is not being performed as a pure sonic art but a form of societal cultural art that should be heard, seen and experienced for it to be understood and its signification revealed. This explanation resonates with Onyeji's (2006) submission that "music being a social art, it is intentionally structured to affect the people in certain ways hence, its contribution to the construction of human social

and cultural integrity". This study agrees with and adopts all these aforementioned positions and descriptions, and asserts that music represents a societal cultural art that is universally present in all cultures and races. This enacts or validates the guiding norms, values and beliefs of such a society.

Now, looking at the meaning of education. Learning (both corporate and individual) is key to the development of any society and the concept of education is closely tied to learning. Different people and organisations have made attempts at delineating 'education' at one time or the other. Fafunwa (1974, p. 17) claims that education is "the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviours which are of positive values to the societies in which he lives". According to UNESCO (2000) "education refers to the total process of developing human ability and behaviour". Okafor, (2005, p. 191) sees education as "a process of discipline through training and study in the acquisition of skills and knowledge". These descriptions are apt for this study in that they consider education as what is geared towards the development of a learner's intellect, skills and attitude and which inadvertently help the learner to fit into the society and at the same time contributes meaningfully to the society he/she lives. This study agrees with all these descriptions of education and submits that it is society's approved process of transferring knowledge and skills for positive and desired attitude and behaviour that equips learners to contribute to their society.

From the different submissions above on music and education, music education can therefore be seen as the process through which learners in the society inculcate musical cultures that are essential for them to fit in and make meaningful contributions to their society. Music education is the whole process involved in the inculcation and

dissemination of musical skills and knowledge in an individual or group of individuals (Estes, Edosa and Okeke). Onyeji and Onyeji (2014, p. 2) regard music education as "a process of training and study in the acquisition of skills and knowledge in music theory practice, creativity, appreciation and performance for effective functioning in the society, encompasses broad and diverse socio-cultural and stylistic forms."

Okafor's Philosophies of Music Education in Nigeria

This section provides a look into the contributions of Professor Richard Chijioko Okafor, as a music educator, to the development of music education in Nigeria and Africa. Some of his ideologies and philosophies on music education, which shall be discussed going forward, have been accepted and harnessed by some music schools and music scholars for music education and different educational discussions. Some of these philosophies will be discussed hereafter. Okafor believes that music education in Nigeria, an offshoot of African Music, should be viewed not only as a mere sonic phenomenon; he posits that "music should not be viewed as exclusively a sonic object, but as a sonic fact - a cultural expression" Okafor (Okafor 1988, p. 10). He advocated for music education that considers the experience of its cultural expression. This position, according to Okafor, is essential for an all-inclusive and balanced form of music education. What Okafor refer to as cultural expression, appears conceptually equivalent to what Jones called 'experiential docent' when he (Jones) postulates that "it is not right for a scholar studying African traditional music to theorize about traditional music until one has had practical experience of the related culture" (Jones, 1959, p. 23).

Mokwunyei (2011), Nzewi (2012) and Oladipo (2017) in consonance with Jones point out that the understanding of African music should not be limited to its sonic and auditory properties. They opine that African music should be viewed from other complementary angles which,

according to them, can be observed in the musical performances. They believe that it is appropriate to study African music from both systematic and cultural dimensions for the correctness of views; observation of the dynamics of performance helps in a balanced view of African music as a complete process.

Okafor, (1988) opined that "education is designed to equip the individual not only to earn a living but also for life itself, through the encouragement of socially desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills". This according to him depicts a form of social music education that is culturally based and which is aimed at equipping the learner to be relevant to self and the society that they belong. This can only be achieved with a music educational plan that recognises the importance of one's musical culture as the basis for teaching and learning music in schools. He reiterates this when he submits that "the root of our music education and its relevance must be in our culture and environment. A new scale of emphasis and priorities in this matter needs to be set" Okafor (1991, p. 62). Obasanjo and Mabogunje corroborate Okafor's position when they assert thus:

"...for Nigerian education to be more relevant to the development of its citizenry, it must train the individual for better appreciation of his own cultural traditions whilst at the same time equipping him with the ability to absorb new ideals, new information and new data for resolving the challenging problems of his environment (1991, p. 156)."

Okafor later discussed this when he underscored the benefits of using one's cultural contents in the teaching of music in schools when he posits that "Through song texts, a person learned the moral codes of his land, its chronological and history, and the guiding principles and ethics of his land, language of his people, things his people lived by, and how the society worked.... (Okafor, 1991, p, 60)". Elsewhere, on the use

of cultural music in music education of the learners, Okafor (1989) was specific with folklore and underscores the importance of its use as a device to instil the spirit of patriotism and nationalism in the child and at the same time help in laying a solid musical foundation. These assertions by Okafor on traditional music and folklore appears to be in line with

Omibiyi's (1973/74) position in the phenomenon she referred to as 'locale content'. Omibiyi advocated that the 'local content' should be included in the learner's musical programme of music study to have a point of departure from the known (child's folk songs) to the unknown (musical practices of other cultures), that will be introduced to the learner as learning progresses. Similarly, Olorunsogo (2008) also posited that the music curriculum for a country like Nigeria should show respect for and use Nigerian musical tradition and its cultural bearers as basic resource materials.

Beyond the inclusion of cultural music in music education, he also suggests what could make a complete music education when he submits that "Education for the individual is therefore not complete until that individual knows, to some extent at least the goings-on of other parts of the family." (Okafor, 1988, p. 10). The 'family' here is figuratively used to refer to the music of the other world cultures apart from that of the indigenous one of the learners. This, for him, will help in the appreciation of music from different cultural perspectives and will serve as a way of improving and broadening the learners' understanding of musical knowledge. Elsewhere, Okafor (1991) expressed that music must be studied 'properly' - what he meant by this was explained in that learners must also be made to understand the music of other musical cultures. OmíbíyìObidike (2007) corroborates this (i.e. learner's knowledge of the other musical cultures) as an experience that is important and essential for a balanced and broader understanding of

music. The implication of this, according to Omibiyi, is the attainment of a bi-musical intercultural (a music education programme that will introduce learners to their music before that of another culture) and multicultural (a music education programme that will introduce learners to their music before that of different cultures of the world) music education. This is also in line with what has been advocated by some other African Musicologists such as by Vidal (2012). Okafor (1988) sounded a note of caution against an educational plan whereby an appreciation of other world cultures may draw learners away from their cultural roots. He opines that this will be a bane of the objectives of the appreciation of the music of other world cultures.

Curriculum, Administration and Management

On the curriculum for the teaching and learning of music at the primary school level, Okafor suggested the need to situate music education at this level appropriately so that it can actualise its purpose. Okafor (1989) advocates for music to be taught at every school rather than it being taught occasionally at the discretion of the local school authorities. This opinion by Okafor on Music at the primary educational level accentuates Omibiyi's (1983, p. 124) position which she posits thus, '...music should be taught in primary one through six'. This is a way of laying a strong foundation of musical products for musical training in later years for both specialists and consumers.

At the primary education level, Okafor also advocated for the removal of music from the list of optional subjects and to make it a compulsory subject. The importance of well-trained teachers to teach at this level was also mentioned. This he attributed to laying a good foundation for the future. The teachers are to make use of different materials that are available to them for teaching. This he posits thus:

"...they must employ well-trained teachers, people who have done the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) or people who

Dada, B. O., Dada O. A., & Akere, A. O.: *Richard Chijioko Okafor' Philosophies...*

have done some courses in music not only in the university but also at the Teacher Training Colleges. These people have got to be employed so that they can teach music properly and make use of the mass of the musical materials available - indigenous and non-indigenous in the education of children (Okafor, 1989, p,98)."

Severally, Okafor advocates for a curriculum of music education at the secondary school level that will make music a stand-alone subject, in contrast to the present arrangement where subjects are lumped up under the umbrella of 'Cultural and Creative Arts'. He believes that the subjects (music, visual arts and drama) under the current curriculum are versatile enough to stand alone if truly it will achieve the aim and objectives of teaching music in schools. This, Okafor expressed when he asserts thus:

The present curriculum arrangement for secondary schools needs a review so that music and arts, both very important and twin -subjects, can stand on their own and give budding artists the opportunity to be validly initiated into both. This approach will widen both avenues for studies and economic activities (1988, p.16).

Okafor (1991) decries the position of music as an elective subject in the curriculum. He stresses the importance and benefits of music as a subject, which he attributes to the economic development of a nation and the reason the subject should be made compulsory by the education planning authorities. The time allotted for the subject by the education administrators, according to Okafor, does not reflect a good understanding of the potentials inherent in the subject.

At the tertiary education level, Okafor as a music educator expressed a prescient foresight when he campaigned for the restructuring of the

curriculum of teaching music in different tertiary institutions. Okafor (1988, 1989b, 1991) stressed the need for the curriculum to embrace a needed new radical approach that will accommodate some music that is relevant to the need of the students and the societies they belong to. He mentioned popular music as an example of the music he regarded as relevant and which he suggested should be added to the curriculum of music at the tertiary educational level.

Okafor, (1988, 1991) suggests that courses in popular and light music be introduced and pursued in all music education in the country. This according to him, "...will open more avenues for practical musicianship, and give a tonic to the national economy through a vibrant recording industry, theatre and cinema industry, and electronic media advertising" (1988. P, 15). He reiterates this elsewhere when he asserted that "Popular music should be accepted as being valid music, valid in its own right, and not second-rate to any other. Therefore, the institution of higher learning should find worthy places in their disciplines and curriculum for the study and development of popular music" (Okafor, 1989). The relevance of this suggestion by Okafor can be observed as a new trend being adopted by many institutions of higher learning (both within and outside Nigeria) who now include popular music studies in the curriculum.

Also, at the tertiary educational level, he advised the adoption of a practice where the services of master musicians, as artists-in-residence, will be brought into the curriculum. These musicians who are professionals at traditional musical instrument technology or music performance are to play the role of practical instructors on either a permanent or part-time basis. Okafor opines that this practice will broaden the learning and exposure of the students. This process, according to him, is necessary for the recognition of the traditional culture of the learners in their music education.

Apart from the adequate staffing of these institutions with competent and trained music educators, and traditional master musicians (artists-in-residence) who will engage the curriculum, he further emphasised the need for adequate instructional materials and study aids.

'schools of music should be adequately staffed and equipped with Western and traditional musical instruments, music textbooks and aids. Talented musicians should be motivated by the award of scholarship into institutions of higher learning both in Nigeria and abroad, especially in such specialized areas as Ethnomusicology, Instrumental Technology, and Dance Choreography' (Okafor, 1988, p. 16).

Okafor (1988, 1991) advocates for the establishment of the Inspectorate Division of Music in every Nigerian Ministry of Education. According to him, this organ of implementation and monitoring is essential to ensure that the laid down rules and regulations regarding maintenance of high standards are adhered to in the running of the schools. This Inspectorate, according to him, should be staffed with qualified people to enforce the standards. He regards the establishment of this inspectorate as a means to the way forward in the music education of the country.

Richard Okafor's Philosophy of a Music Educator.

Okafor (1988) explained what he regarded as the essential roles and expectations of a music educator. According to him, a music educator is expected to have received training that qualifies him/her to educate learners in the field of music. He/she must be a master of the subject and be competent enough to discharge the required duties. Apart from this, the educator should be able to understand the roles and the general needs of his/her school or institution and also be abreast of when and how to fit into the different engagements, providing solutions to various challenges that may arise. Okafor discussed these roles further by suggesting the various attributes that a music educator

must possess when he posits that "a music educator should be a superman - that teachers are meant to be dedicated, selfless, uncomplaining, good through and through, people who have the unfailing magic for transferring knowledge to the young and the ignorant, come what may (Okafor, 1988 P. 10)".

He further emphasised that music educators are expected to produce musicians and, at the same time, music educators that will be able to function well in the larger society and its economy. This he explained as a process of making musicians and music educators that can use their knowledge as musicians and music educators to earn a good living and contribute meaningfully to society.

To achieve all of the aforementioned recommendations and expectations, Okafor suggested workshops and re-trainings for music educators; he advocates that this should be arranged for music educators at all levels. The training programme, according to him, should be an aggressive one that will focus on revitalising the music educators for the task of teaching and ensuring standards.

Okafor's Contributions to Music Education

Okafor has made several contributions to the field of music education. These include several articles in both national and international journals, published books on music education from which some of his philosophies are seen, discussed and used as models for music education in Nigeria. He has functioned as team leader and at other times, a member of the National University Commission (NUC) accreditation team to different universities. He has, at different times, served as an external examiner for both Masters and Doctoral programmes in different music departments at different universities across the country.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper presented an exposition on Professor Richard Chijioko Okafor's philosophies and ideologies of Nigerian music education. It is important to note that this is not in any way an exhaustive account of the ideologies of this quintessential scholar. The paper establishes that Richard Okafor is one of the first generation of graduates of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. It further establishes his numerous contributions to the course of music education in Nigeria. It highlights his different philosophies on music education in Nigeria, his expectations of ideal music education and his various contributions to the growth and developments of music programmes in Nigeria in general. It also discusses his vision of what he believes is the ideal Nigerian music education. These ideologies and philosophies can be said to represent and lean toward a transformative and dynamic disposition for Nigerian music education.

In conclusion, the paper recommends that Okafor's philosophies should be more critically considered and adopted in Nigeria's different music education programmes to achieve Okafor's desired results. Also, the inclusion of new perspectives, such as popular music, in the music curriculum of different institutions should be embraced and promoted.

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