

THE ROLE OF MUSIC AS A SOCIAL ADJUDICATOR

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Abstract

The paper examined the role of music as a social adjudicator. The role of an adjudicator is to give judgment or to serve as a mediator between two parties. Music as social adjudicator in this context plays so many roles in the society. Music has served different functions in the society which houses individuals and institutions of various sectors in a colony. Music has been used as an optical lens in wedging into societal issues. To achieve the objectives of the paper, secondary source of information and internet including observation methods were used to validate evidences. Some selected song texts were used as illustration. Since music plays the role of an adjudicator, it is therefore necessary for music makers of all climes to carefully and thoughtfully craft music and texts that would benefit the society in no small measure.

Keywords: Role, Music, Social, Adjudicator

Introduction:

Music is as old as man; man is a social being; man as a social being is associated with music from birth to death in one form of activity or the other. Substantiating the claim that 'music is as old as man' Osele and Obiesie (2019:126,128) uphold that music is central to the cultural life and therefore is often perceived as central to social life; that, music has been in existence from time immemorial, and has been a natural phenomenon to mankind. They also added that music can be played and sung in diverse ways. From the pre-literate, literate and to more civilized societies, each culture develops its own style of music/singing as well as its own type of musical instruments.

The adjudicating nature of music apart from the sound matrix can really be felt from the texts associated with each type, style and genre of music of all ages. The texts seal the type of message being communicated. Music as societal adjudicator plays the abstract role of a judge, a juror, a mediator, intermediary etc in the society in order to praise, encourage, discourage, warn, and criticize positively, plead-with and also advice members of the society in order to influence positive changes. Thus, musicians and music composers/song writer uses music matrix and texts/lyrics to hold accountable individuals or government in the society. Music is used to adjudge the society in vary ways - music adjudicates as the society's lens; music adjudicates as society's prophet; music

adjudicates as the society's right advocate; music adjudicates as the society's influencer. Omuku (2019: 161) affirm that music is a dynamic force that by its very nature results or supports cultural memory and highlights power structures within society and can ultimately transform individuals and communities' perceptions. In connection with Omuku's assertion, music in sound and texts can influence man's decision greatly negatively or positively. Music's text associated with sound adjudicates as the society's mirror. Okafor (2020:249) citing Walter (1996) in Okwilagwe (2002:105) affirms that music has been one of the important and expressive human activities in all cultures around the world for thousands of years. Music has been effectively coupled with words in chants and songs, and vocal music has been an important accompaniment to worship, work, recreation, and a broad spectrum of other activities. A major advantage of music is that it can reflect and enhance human moods, emotions and activities, even though it cannot communicate specific ideas or though without the help of words. But music with or without words has shown itself to be capable of providing specific and direct comment on the people and cultures from which it came.

The society provides music and music shape the society. The society provides the template with which musical evidence is drawn; musical arguments made, musical conclusion written and given. The society in turn reflects and relies on musical conclusions to make and take informed decisions either to abide by or deviate from. Music in the context of the discus is seen as the judge, the jury and the society including humans and social structures as the competing space and or competitors.

Conceptualizing the term 'Social'

The word/term 'social' comes from the Latin word '*socius*' meaning 'friend'. The term is a broad and ambiguous term. It can have several meanings depending on the context of usage. Social means interacting and communicating with people. The term social can be related to society or its organization; for instance, social structure or individuals' interaction with one another within a community or group. The term social can also relate to activities in which people spend time talking to each other for example communicating with one another (source: quora.com). In summary, the term social refers to anything that involves social structure, interactions, relationships or activities among people within a community or society.

Conceptualizing the term 'Adjudicator'

Adjudicator is a term related to the field of law. An adjudicator is a person or group that makes an official decision about something especially about who is right in a disagreement. The term is also related to people who analyze and judge (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org>). An adjudicator is also seen as a person who studies and settles conflicts and disputes (<https://www.vocabulary.com>). An adjudicator is responsible for reviewing the facts of the case which may include pieces of hard evidence, personal statements, and the legal arguments of each side's lawyers. Based on the relevant information, the adjudicator makes decision and a legally-acceptable judgment (<https://www.ziprecruiter.com>). Finally, according to Hornby (2001:11) adjudicate (of law or court) means to give judgment or decision upon. It also means to sit in judgment in order to decide on a question or to declare somebody to be.

Conceptualizing the term 'Music'

According to William and Timothy (2010:6), music is not a singular phenomenon and hence, not captured by one definition. Music can be conceptualized as both an object and activity. Okafor

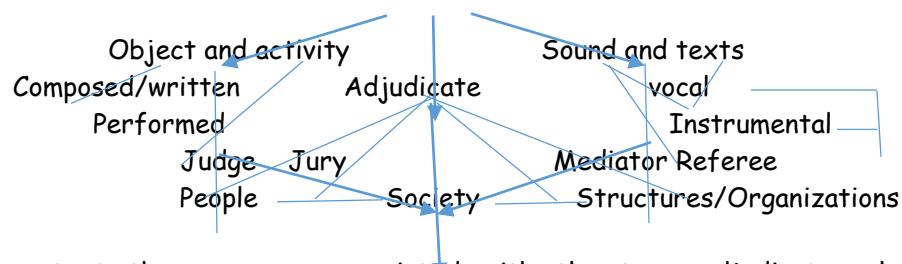
(2020:247), affirm that music is a worldwide phenomenon practiced all over the world. Though not easy to define, yet historically most people have recognized the concept of music as generally agreed on whether or not a given sound is musical. That music is seen as being the art of arranging and manipulating tones melodically, rhythmically and harmonically in a systematic succession of notes in concord and discord, antecedent and consequent, conjunct and disjunct motions sequentially or in fragmentations including the inclusion of other musical elements such as duration, pitch dynamics and expression techniques, tone colour, texture and structure, texts and performance medium as inspired by the composer which when sung or played (vocally or instrumentally or both) appeal to the hears/listeners. Here, Okafor elucidate music as an object.

To Onyekwelu (2012:293), music plays vital role in virtually every culture of the world. It is essentially a human activity denoting or expressing human emotions and the relationship of the emotions to the environment or to life. Not only is it a human activity in its truest sense, it cannot exist without man. And so, man recognizes or seems to hear music in nature not only because the sound of nature appends to have close similarity with sound that man consciously organizes to express his ideas. Here, Onyekwelu explicate music as both an activity and object; music as performed by man either with written texts or as instrumental and or both and music as composed by man applying music elements and techniques. Omuku (2019: 168) citing from freemuse (2001) said that music is a free expression of the ideas, traditions and emotions of individuals and of peoples. It may express musician's hopes and aspirations, in their joys and sorrows, their very identity as a culture. Okafor (2005:190) state that music is one of the principal aspects of human cultures. According to Okechukwu, Ahanotu and Ekezie (2019:174), music has a special language of its own with unique and outstanding attributes set specifically to disseminate and spread information through songs, instruments and dance performances.

Music as a Social Adjudicator

Synonyms related to the term adjudicator include referee, judge, umpire, arbitrator, negotiator, arbiter, moderator, magistrate, jurist, mediator, intermediary, conciliator, justice, intermediate, peacemaker, reconciler, troubleshooter, decider and go-between (<https://www.merriam-webster.com>), for example in a musical competition there is a judge who gives verdict.

Music



In the above context the synonyms associated with the term adjudicator shall be used interchangeably when necessary. Music plays the role of a referee, a judge, an umpire, an arbitrator, a negotiator, an arbiter, a moderator, a magistrate, a jurist, a mediator, an intermediary, a conciliator, a justice transmitter, a peacemaker, a reconciler, a troubleshooter, a decider and a go-between in almost all activities engaged in by social beings or human beings. Idamoyibo (2021) affirm that over the years, music has played very important roles in the society. Still on the role music plays in the society, music is implicated with the life of people. According to Osele et al (2019:131) Music reflects and creates social conditions including the factors that either facilitate or impede social change. Music can influence our purchasing behaviour in subtle ways in a range of environments and can impact

on groups of people in social settings. For instance, Redemption Song by Bob Marley; Equal Rights and Justice by Peter Tosh are music that calls for social change and advocacy for equity for all.

Song Title - Redemption Song by Bob Marley

Old pirates, yes, they rob I
Sold I to the merchant ships
Minutes after they took I
From the bottomless pit
But my hand was made strong
By the hand of the Almighty
We forward in this generation
Triumphantly
Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have
Redemption songs
Redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
'Cause none of them can stop the time
How long shall they kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look? Ooh!
Some say it's just a part of it
We've got to fulfill the book

Song Title - Equal Rights and Justice by Peter Tosh

Everyone is crying out for peace
None is crying out for justice
I said, "if the one is crying out for peace"
I said, "none is crying out for justice"
But there will be no peace
'Till men get equal rights
Equal rights and justice
Equal rights
Equal rights and justice
Equal rights
Equal rights and justice
Equal rights
Equal rights and justice
Everybody want to go up to heaven
I say, "hell, nobody want to die" (and visits the Jesus)
Everybody want to go up to heaven
I say, "hey, but none of them want to die"

I don't know why
But ain't gonna be no peace
'Till men get the equal rights

Ohwofasa (2003:86a) state that songs of social control play an important part in stabilizing the community. This could be done through direct warning to erring member of the society. It could also be designed to be instructive, calling attention to propriety and impropriety. For instance Yellow Fever by Fela Anikulapo Kuti adjudicates social norms by advising African women about the danger of skin bleaching.

Yellow Fever by Fela Anikulapo Kuti (an excerpt)

Different fever na him dey
Different fever na him dey
Different fever na him dey
Different fever na him dey
Different fever na him dey
Malaria fever nko? (He dey!)
Jaundice fever nko? (He dey!)
Hay fever nko? (He dey!)
Influenza fever nko? (He dey!)
Inflation fever nko? (He dey!)
Freedom fever nko? (He dey !)
Yellow fever nko? (He dey!)
Na him dey bring the matter now he dey
Yellow fever nko? (He dey!)
Na him dey bring the matter now he dey

I say tell them, make them hear (you say)
All fever na sickness (you hear)
Original sickness (you say)
Hay fever na sickness (you say)
Original sickness (you say)
Malaria na sickness (you say)
Original sickness (you say)
Jaundice na sickness (you say)
Original sickness (you say)
Influenza na sickness (you say)
Original sickness (you say)
Inflation na sickness (you say)
Original sickness (you say)
Freedom na sickness (you say)
Original sickness (you say)

Yellow fever nko? (you say)
Original and artificial, he dey

Yellow fever nko? (you say)
One more
Original and artificial, he dey
Bom. Bom bom, tell me now

Original catch you
Your eye go yellow
Your yansh go yellow
Your face go yellow
Your body go weak
I say but later if you no die inside
The yellow go fade away

Artificial catch you
You be man or woman
Na you go catch am yourself
Na your money go do am for you
You go yellow pass, yellow
You go catch moustache for face
You go get you double colour
You yansh go black like coal
You self go think say you dey fine
Who say you fine?
Na lie, you no fine at all
At all, na lie
My sister, who sa you fine?
Na lie, you no fine al all
At all, na lie

Yellow fever
You dey bleach, o you dey bleach
You dey bleach, o you dey bleach
African mother
You dey bleach, o you dey bleach
Sissi wey dey go
Yellow fever
Stupid thing
Yeye thing
Fucking thing
Ugly thing
Yellow fever
You dey bleach, o you dey bleach
You dey bleach, o you dey bleach
African mother

You dey bleach, o you dey bleach
Sissi wey dey go
Yellow fever

Onyeji (2016:23) states that music in Africa is a certified agent valued for its role in the maintenance of social and political order. It is also valued as the last resort of tackling difficult social situations in a community. Its value as a policing agent in African societies finds great usage when addressing the high and mighty in the society. He also point out that when dialogue fails to bring solution to a social situation music becomes the last resort. Corroborating Onyeji (2016), Idamoyibo (2021) clearly outlined the adjudicating role of music in the society thus:

The relevance of music is seen in the general functioning of the society. Many musicians present issues of the moment and provide stimulus to re-thinking about behaviours that are inimical and contrary to the norms of the society and such vices that could even be dangerous to those who indulge in them and the society. They prompt members of society to examine and address facts about reality. They deal with frank issues of life. Igoru musicians warn and counsel their audiences against some wanton attitude and practices that could result in painful experiences. Some of this criticism, warnings and counsel are directed to individuals, communities, leaders and the entire nation (p.26, 28).

In addition, he said that Igoru musicians believe that everything that any human being does requires moderation, and even if it is permissible within the ethos of the land, they make efforts through their compositions and performances to criticize, correct some excesses of some community members and leaders. Some title examples include 'Time Na Money', 'Take my Advice', 'ECN We Yono We ki Ru', 'Blessed is the Hand', 'Message to the Youth', 'Wian' etc. Below is Lucky Dube's 'Blessed Is the Hand' addresses addressing the rich in the society; Edna Ogholie's 'Message to the Youth' advising youths to i. stand for their right and ii. Shun violence and stay focus; and Enoch J. Okafor's *Wian* (Work) encouraging self-reliance. Below are the texts of the songs.

Blessed Is the Hand by Lucky Dube

I say what a rich man are you
Who doesn't care about poor people?
What type of a rich man are you
Who doesn't care about the helpless people?
I say what a rich man are you
Who doesn't care about poor people?
What type of a rich man are you
Who doesn't care about the helpless people?
They're reading the Bible and understand what it says
It says
Blessed is the hand that giveth
Than the hand that taketh
Blessed is the hand that giveth
Than the hand that taketh
Blessed is the hand that giveth
Than the hand that taketh
Are you feeling the pain?
When you see another man suffering

Does it not make you feel pain, baby?
To see another man starving
Does it not make you feel pain, baby
To see another man with no food

Message to the Youth by Edna Ogholie (an excerpt)

This is my
Message to the youth
This is my
Message to the youth
Stand for your right
And be careful in what you do
Don't forget, whatever we do today
We will gain or lose tomorrow
Let us rise

Stop the fight
You may lose your life
Stop the fight
You may lose your life
Come, drop that stick
You will injure your classmate
Your father and mother all at home
Praying for your success and your safe journey home
Children of today are tomorrow's leader
So let us not make the mistakes of yesteryears
Don't go to the city, its too full of people
Life is hard too much of godfatherism

Wian (Work) by Enoch J. Okafor

Wian, Wian, Wian, Wian, ku wo mre re
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat
Wian, Wian, Wian, Wian, ku wo mre re
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat
Wian, Wian, Wian, Wian, ku wo mre re
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat
Emu e rho vwo ko'vwiere rhe
There is no food for a lazy man
Wian, Wian, Wian, Wian, ku wo mre re
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat
Wian, Wian, Wian, Wian, ku wo mre re
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat
Wian, Wian, Wian, Wian, ku wo mre re
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat
Emu e rho vwo ko'vwiere rhe
There is no food for a lazy man

Wian, Wian, Wian, Wian, ku wo mre re
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat
Emu e rho vwo ko'vwiere rhe
There is no food for a lazy man
Wian omo me ku wo mre re
Work my child and you'll have to eat
Wian oniovo ku wo mre re
Work my brother you'll have to eat
Emu e rho vwo ko'vwiere rhe,
There is no food for a lazy man
Emu e rho vwo ko'vwiere rhe
There is no food for a lazy man
Emu e rho vwo ko'vwiere rhe,
There is no food for an idle man
Emu e rho vwo ko'vwiere rhe,
There is no food for an idle
Wian, Wian, Wian, Wian, ku wo mre re
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat
Emu e rho vwo ko'vwiere rhe
There is no food for a lazy man

Ohwofasa (2003:86b), write that music, whether in songs or instrumental can convey messages to all and sundry irrespective of colour, race or creed. Music can be employed as a medium of communication, in enforcing social norms, transmitting values and stabilizing cultures. Taking a cue from Ohwofasa's affirmations, music as social adjudicator has in so many ways influence actions of positivity or negativity due to its communicativeness. Information are retained and or fixed firmly to the brain also due to the use of repetition techniques often employed by music writers; musical concepts and contexts (both sound and texts) which are affixed on the tabula rasa of individuals' mind at the receiving end of the communication chain and process. For instance the song texts 'There Comes a Time' by Sir Bob Geldorf was a song that gained global reception due its texts and musical expressions.

There Comes a Time by Sir Bob Geldorf

There comes a time
When we hear a certain call
When the world must come together as one
There are people dying, oh and it's time to lend a hand, to life,
The precious gift of all.....
We can't go on, pretending day by day,
That someone somewhere will soon make a change,
We are all a part of, God's great big family
And the truth, we know, love is all we need

Chorus: We are the world, we are the children
We are the ones to make a better change

So lets start giving
There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
It's true, we make a better day
Just you and me

Oh, send them your heart
So they'll know that someone care
And their lives will be stronger and free
As God has shown us
By turning stone to bread
And the truth, we, love is all we need
And when you are you're down and out,
There seems no hope at all.....
But if you just believe, there's no way we can fall
Ooh, ooh, ooh, let us realize
That a change will surely come
When we, stand together as one.....

Music has been at the forefront of almost every major social change in recent history. You can't have change without awareness, and music has served as a platform to express the thought and feelings of artists and communities when other forms of communication are neglected or not available (quora.com). The above statement reiterates Onyeji's (2016) assertion previously cited that, music in Africa is a 'certified agent' valued for its role in the 'maintenance of social and political order' and that its value as a 'policing agent' in African societies finds great usage when addressing the high and mighty in the society. Secondly, that music is valued as the 'last resort' of tackling difficult social situations in a community when dialogue fails to bring solution to a social situation. This form of music's role as a social adjudicator is pictured in *Egbobo-Yen-Ozighi* by Sir Lucky Ogharisi;

***Egbobo-Yen-Ozighi* Translation Put Violence Away**

Urhobo we biko, we se gbe'ghwo-o
Urhobo people please, do not be angry
O bo re rhueme, oye rhuemu
What should be done properly should be done properly
Ta'kpo ga re, ta'kpo ga re-e
Whether things/life is difficult or not
Erauwevwe ke se dio'kidiagbarha re
Rat cannot be a chairperson in the
Erharen re onogbo
Presence of pussy-cat
Na ye obo re etiyevwa
That is how it is
Ke'mu ke'mu ro ghwe ozighi cha evu'rhobo na Ebiko, ejea gbe obo na ye
Whatsoever that is bringing fight or problem to Urhoboland, please let us desist from it

Kidie, ra vwa babaye ose me ve oni me vwo vwie Ria'kpo na mi ni rim re uwevwi re ozighi borhe-
e

Ever since I was born into this world by my mother and father, I have not seen a house built
by fighting/trouble

K'oye sorho, me vwo vwu'ne na na

That is the reason, I am singing this song

Ahwrerhe, siene e gbo'bo no'zighi

Let us settle, so that we will leave fighting or trouble

Suggestions

Since music has the capacity to troubleshoot as one of the synonyms of an adjudicator, it is therefore necessary for:

1. Music makers whether composers/song writers to diligently and carefully craft music that would be beneficial to all
2. Music makers should keep doing the duty of an adjudicator to have a sane society
3. Music makers should avoid unjust and negative judgment/criticism of people and institutions but rather gear towards positive criticism
4. Music makers should avoid being perceived as enemies of the society rather with the lucid weapon of music subdue unhealthy vices in the society
5. Music makers should use the tool of music to continue rousing and adjudicating for justice, equity, equality and productivity in the society.

Conclusion

The role of music as a social adjudicator has been succinctly highlighted; the paper reiterate that music most especially texts/sound like an authority has voice in the society by acting as a judge, a jury, a mediator, an arbiter and an umpire of the society. The duty of an adjudicator is a tough one because balanced judgment is of essence in every case scenario - the society here being the case-scenario. Since it has been established that 'music' 'personified' in both sound and texts interacts and communicate messages to people, institutions, and organizations within the society, it is therefore very important that music makers using music to adjudicate the society should prudently use and provide germane information to the building and development of the society - "words are marbles".

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