

SCREENED MUSIC IN A GLOBALISED WORLD: ITS IMPLICATIONS ON POP MUSICAL ARTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Screened music has become the order of the day in the developed, developing and even underdeveloped countries of the world. This has constituted some level of acculturated musical arts in different nations including Africa. This dispensation of high technological revolution and its invention of internet have left mixed cultural musical arts as the trend of 21st century. It has consequently, resulted to the borrowing, and adoption of other world musical arts. This have recently dominated the African musical arts and its expression. This study investigated the height and influence of screened music on the Nigerian pop music scene, its application and implication to Nigerian pop musical arts. However, findings proved that this trend has resulted to multi-cultural musical art form that is noticeably in Nigerian pop music scene. The related arts such as; texts, phonetics, dance steps, arrangements, settings, paintings, rhythmic progressions, styles applied, costumes and drama reflect these influences. This development left Nigerian pop stars on the verge of being considered neither Nigerian nor Western in their musical art forms and expressions. Data collection was drawn from historical records, personal observation, oral interviews and review of related literature.

Introduction

Music is part of virtually every culture of the world; music showcases the identity of a people, their norms, values and believe system. This is why music varies widely among cultures in style and structure. The music of a people articulates the concepts, principles and their life experiences. Therefore, symbolic meanings or visual literacy are embodied in art expression and musical instrument involved in the music performance of any culture. The texts of the music are primarily use to relate experiences, criticise, evaluate opinions, thought and formulate of public opinion. Although popular music has been perceived as music for the masses which gears toward entertainment of the people and commercial purposes, but that does not deprive pop music of a people from relating their immediate environment and culture for proper acceptance and appreciation in their society. Before now, the early popular musicians endeavour to portray the socio-cultural integrity of the Nigerian people. As a result of global boundary elimination and great consumption of Western music and culture via new technology, Nigerian people and their musical art expression has been significantly influenced. Nigeria pop musical art expression has deviated from being people's voice on contemporary issues and experiences. Recently, pop musical art expression in Nigeria appears too foreign to even society. What Nigerians culturally consider immoral and indecent forms the bulk of the texts and related art expressions of pop musical art.

For instance, projection of nude girls and their sexually aroused gestures dominating Nigeria pop scene today does not articulate Nigerian ethics and integrity. The pop stars are basically carried away by American musical culture which does not in any way integrate Nigeria cultural values. Ojakovo (2010:105), expressed that the early contemporary popular music like Fuji, Urhobo disco, Highlife, Afro beat, Apala, Waka, Juju and Afro juju fused traditional music and the

Western musical idioms together to satisfy the present Nigerian citizens.

They were propagating cultures of various ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. Okafor (2005:1), opined that music should be cultural expressed, determined, moulded, interpreted and addressed or colored by the culture and the cultural environment of the people. Music is part of creative arts form and therefore, does not go in isolation from people's perspective of life and experiences. This applies to every other form of arts that goes with the music, such as, the performance style, cartoons, drama, painting and costume. All these turmoil in Nigeria Pop music scene came as a result of screened music in this technological era. Screened music in this context is referred to musical works that are displayed on the monitor for both audio and visual consumption. This enables musicians to enrich their work and seek inspiration from other musicians and composers from within and outside their culture. To non musicians the combination of other related arts in the music on screen helps them in their enjoyment of music, understanding and appreciation of musical work beyond mere listening.

Nigerian Pop Musical Arts in 21st Century

Musical art culture and expressions changes over time and age due to some factors, such as socio-cultural, economical, political and technological revolution. For instance, the 21st century pop music performance styles, production, dissemination and consumption in Nigeria, have received great influence from globalization, late modernism, technological revolution and general global socio-cultural restructuring. These have lately, altered and interfered with pop musical art form in Nigeria. Thereby, making it difficult to come in contact with unadulterated or unmodified art musical form and identity as portrayed in Nigerian popular music culture. Hence, cross fertilization of musical arts was boosted up by the advancement of

information technology, resulting to mix socio-cultural phenomenon which have constructed a new framework of art expression in the Nigerian pop musical arts practices.

Drawing from historical account, this influence became wildly notice as a result of screened music. Screened music gave room to great consumption of Western pop musical culture as a result of advancement in technological revolution as thus, from Cinema to Television, to Video Home System (VHS), Video Compact Disk (VCD), Digital Video Disk or Digital Versatile Disk (DVD) and now the internet which has become more prominent with its use via the laptop, palm top and mobile phones has gone beyond mere transformation of pop music in Nigerian but, also has posed a socio-cultural phenomenon. Presently, massive dissemination of music product through Bluetooth device both on personal computers and on cell phones have allow sharing of all sorts of musical arts products amongst nations of divers culture. The internet has made it generally easy for every one to access all sort of musical product from anywhere in the world, with it elimination of boundaries in the virtual world. Consequently, the lingering fear of losing the real touch of Nigerian art form in the pop music scene is the great challenge this trend has posed to future Nigerians.

Nigerian Pop Music in the New World

The technological revolution at its invention of computer system and network increasingly enhanced global anxiety over new media with its connectivity, boundary elimination and personal computer practices, which exposed the society to a new trend of digital music consumption culture. This obviously influenced the behavioral attitude and imaginations of the Nigerian pop stars, especially, in the way they think, the models they set for themselves, the standard they measure with, perception, acceptance and representation of themselves as depicts in today's Nigeria pop musical arts and expressions. These

therefore, contributed lots of cultural tendencies, even to the majority of Nigerian youths who are the primary consumers of pop music. What is happening in Nigeria today may be described as purely cross-fertilization and fusion of musical arts and culture. Music created and performed using foreign languages or combination of English and Nigerian Pidgin-English, Western dance and African dance form, Western musical instruments and intonation, computer voicing and effects backups, have become a key expression of 21st century Nigerian pop music.

This is probably because, many people now have access to creative digital music tools through the widespread dissemination of portable computing technology, the internet and software applications which enables music creation, dissemination and reception from various parts of the world and culture. Consequently, the 21st century pop stars in Nigeria have expressed immense exchange of musical arts and culture in pop music scene. Butler 2006 expressed that,

During the 20th century, most music has become accessible worldwide through a technological revolution that has produced high-quality sound and video recording, radio and television, and computers. It is difficult to overstate the importance of these innovations on musical cultures around the world. It has become possible to record music of the many musical cultures in the world, including music that has traditionally been learned and passed on orally or aurally. On the other hand, the boundary lines among many cultures, and between subcultures, have shifted dramatically and in some cases have disappeared. There has always been some cross-fertilization among musical cultures, and this is often a sign of healthy cultural and artistic growth. One well-known example is the musical mixture of Hispanic and Germanic cultures in the American Southwest during the 19th century, which produced the *conjunto* or Tex-Mex style still popular in the region today. (Counted, 2011).

However, while some scholars worry that cross-fertilization amongst musical art cultures will eventually drift towards a single global music that is weak, lacks creativity and unvaried, others on the other hand, mostly conservative scholars argued that this development implies a growing counter movement to preserve the diversity of cultural heritages, including Nigerian traditional music arts and expressions. This new trend of assisted internet music consumption culture has introduced a new aesthetics and culture amongst our pop star. Considering recent albums of some Nigerian pop stars like, Psquare, TuFace Idibia, Dibanji and so many others, one can hardly place their expressions, dance steps, drama, costume and even their setting to depict Nigerian arts and expression. Rather what we see on stage end up resulting to Americanized Nigerian pop stars. This appears too difficult to control due to the advancement of technology today. On the provision of good digital storage devise with capabilities of storing both audio and visual music performance for personal use and consumption, the quest for Nigerian pop stars to imitate, compete and measure up with their counterparts in the Western world increased. This expedition by Nigerian pop stars denies the room for expression of Nigeria popular music culture. This will continue to facilitate new approaches to Nigerian pop musical arts because, the adoption and borrowing of new arts forms from other culture's musical arts may never let our pop musical practices to run in the core of Nigerian notion, rather, it will continue to follows a string of change that is not just a simple fashion but a truly deep sociological phenomenon that has important socio-cultural, moral and economic implication. In view of this, Robson confirmed that,

The global culture is producing a musical multiculturalism that takes a number of forms — it only has a trivial string of its root; there is no folk-level trace anymore. These are often framed with neo-traditional nametags. Hybrid musical forms cross the boundaries between classical, contemporary R&B and Hip pop and folk or afro musical forms within the various cultures they bridge. (Robson: 2009).

Western Pop Stars on Nigerian Screen; Its Pressure on Pop Musical Art in Nigeria

Quite unlike in traditional Nigerian societies, where music making and consumption are generally organized as a social event while music performance and consumption takes on occasion when members of the community come together for an event of ceremony, rite or recreational activities and those who get together in such social event generally belong to one ethnic and language group (Odunuga, 2009. 74). Nigerian pop star in recent days are under pressure to be like their counterpart from the United States of American. Their quest to Americanize both them selves and the musical arts are often raised by their fans who seems to patronize Western pop stars more than they do to local pop musicians here n Nigeria. Thus instead of Nigerian pop scene taking on Nigeria traditional mode of production, performance and dissemination, they chose to imitate and copy the Western traits of musical arts via internet, television, cinema etc. Most of them now go to the extent of setting their musical albums in foreign environment as well as, co-producing with popular American artist. Thus, losing every trait of Nigerian musical arts in their productions; their dance steps takes after Western dance style as can be seen in P-square's album titled 'Personally'. The entire dance steps used here was likened to that of late Michael Jackson, who was the acclaimed king of pop in the United States of American.

However, this trend is not in tune with the production and performance musical arts in Nigeria where music production in its framework often assumes multiple roles within the community and at the same time serves as an opportunity for sharing in creative experience. Historically, music (instrumentals), song (vocal), dance and story-telling are among the ancient art forms that have flourished for many centuries in Nigeria. And they characterized Nigerian musical expression which plays very important roles in the lives of the people. In fact, it is impossible for any Nigerian community to exist and

function well without music and its related arts forms. Such musical arts have served both functional and aesthetic purposes.

Nevertheless, early historical accounts of music and dance among Nigerians can be found in oral literature that took different forms such as folk tales, myths, epics, praise poems and historical accounts on rituals. The utilitarian function involves the use of music in everyday activities, including music at birth, child's naming ceremonies, child rearing practices, initiation rights, agricultural activities, national ceremonies, war times, religious ceremonies, death etc. In other words, Nigerians traditionally have a very rich oral tradition that insures the transfer of musical art practices from one generation to another. It is good to mention that the reception and consumption style of Nigerian musical performances have been very important skills that contributed to perfected oral traditional practices, even though, in this 21st century, only very few musical arts and dances are still transmitted in oral forms only. This is probably as a result of technology that has swallowed every facet of musical practices. Thus, musical arts of Nigerians today, just like every other art forms reflects the widespread system of cultural and technological evolution. Coming from the oral transmission of musical arts from one generation to another, to people tuning to radio FMs and later to television stations just to listen to and watch current music and dance. Presently, internet and music software revolution have brought about new trend of online sites streaming music, for less cost and wider accessible to different worlds music, of which some are more or less free of charge. This has made it that users can stick to their own choice of music rather than waiting for whatever piece of music that the radio/ television presenter chooses play for them or worst still, waiting for communal musical practices before they will enjoy the music they like.

Consequently, the motive of traditional Nigerian musical arts and culture which conditions the desire to join and improve communal living is gradually being murdered by this new technological /digital

drift. Many people now use uTube as a music player, having both the video clips with the music they desire listening to. A number of people also use the music service iTunes (usually in conjunction with iPods) to acquire their music. They often download musical products to enable them listen to them at their convenient time, more so, as most phones and personal computers have Bluetooth support and Bluetooth is free in dissemination of musical product, so they utilizes its features to send and receive music clips, videos clips and pictures from friends. Nevertheless, the invention of various computer music based tools and their application in music creativity, performance, dissemination and consumption have lasted for several decades and now it is an integral part of our every day life, it has eating deep into our society so much that it actually dictate the direction, tone and pace of Nigerian pop musical arts. (Robson: 2009).

Conclusion / Summary

Integration of Western musical arts styles and forms into the context of Nigerian pop musical art expression have initiated an unprecedented revolution in the musical art idiom in Nigeria. This inclination is prevalent mostly amongst Nigerian young pop stars. As a result, music production, performance, dissemination and even consumption have significantly introduced a whole new era of multicultural musical arts expression and culture in our society. This trend has made it very difficult for Nigerian popular musician to stick to their own language, even when they are addressing audiences within their linguistic territory. This has therefore offered a new framework of thinking and behavior; amongst Nigerian youths who are the major consumers of such music. However, the reception of pop music in Nigeria today is purely for entertainment, no cultural integrity attached, and it has embraced the new media as a means for mass dissemination and consumption. Consequently, pop music and other genres of musical art expression in Nigeria are sustained by

media industries. But, the impact of these sonic materials and borrowed musical idiom and expressive arts can be said to have more than contribute to the loss of Nigeria identity, norms, values, cultural ethos and beliefs.

This trend of mixed cultural heritage in Nigerian pop musical arts has succeeded in preventing cultural transmission in Nigerian society. Originally, African musical arts and expressions have been found to be more effective in cultural transmission where there are close links to believe, language, aesthetic, artistic values and cultural ethics or within a particular community, geographic location and age etc. Nevertheless, this new mode of musical expressions, and reception sites like internet mediated, public spaces and personal audio systems have made it almost impossible for the past few decades to find a folk-level musical culture within which listeners are exposed to only the music of their own culture and no other. Consequently, the implication of screened music and globalization in the contemporary Nigeria pop music scene, has posed challenges on the guarantee of retention and relevance of Nigerian values, ethics and moral in their pop musical art expression.

Recommendation

Measures should be put in place by the ministry of Arts and Culture to check the degree of external cultures and values to be allowed in Nigeria pop music scene. Scholars of ethnomusicology and related field of study may assist by means of projecting Nigerian musical culture, traditions, values and aesthetics via internet media for history purposes. These to some extent may help to resolve and retain reasonable degree of Nigeria musical culture and identity in this new world.

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