

‘THE THEORY OF MAXIMIZATION OF MUSIC’

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Abstract

‘The theory of maximization of music’ is a novel theory promulgated by the author in 2024 out of the quest for the sustenance of music in schools, institutions, the musical arts industry, and the society. The theory posits that: Every opportunity for music, in music, and that regards music lends itself to the maximization of the Art. ‘Opportunity for music’ here refers to any window that presents itself for the display of music through performance, staging, media, advertising, movie, carnivals, etc. ‘Opportunities in music’ abound in music teaching, music directing, choreography, composing, music production, music scholarship and research, etc. ‘Opportunities that relate to music’ are such vistas that may not be directly connected to music but have the tendency to relate to music such as event planning and management, educational boards, policy bodies, professional bodies, conferences, etc. The three focal points of the theory appear to interweave, however, the exploitation of vistas of opportunities for the maximization of music remains the thrust of the theory. The significance of the theory awakens and enlightens everyone in the field of music, the music teacher/lecturer, composer, producers and promoters to the responsibility of sustaining the art regardless of bundles of existential challenges in the postmodern era. The scope of the theory shall be limited to the field of music education in the context of the present paper even though it is extendable to other facets of musicology and other fields of human endeavor.

Keywords: Opportunity, maximization of music, window, vista of opportunity

Introduction

The relevance of theories is for the advancement of fields of human endeavor thereto it was propounded or any other field by extension. The field of music education in Nigeria has been fraught with so many challenges with regards to the development, sustenance, and advancement of the art. Those challenges are many such as societal apathy towards music in schools, poor funding for music, high cost of resources for music education, teacher incompetency, etc. Several scholars have also voiced out their concern regarding the situation (Mbanugo, 2005; Onyiuke, 2005 & 2006; Onwuekwe, 1998; Aninwene, 2009; Ekwueme, 2009; Onuora-Oguno, 2009; & Okeke 2023).

It is against this background that the Theory of maximization of Music emerged to interrogate the challenges and also facilitate the resuscitation of music studies in schools. Although the theory is three-pronged: opportunity for music; opportunity in music; and opportunity that pertains to music, this paper shall draw on the second prong which is, ‘opportunity in music’ as the framework of the paper.

School Music Teaching as ‘Opportunity in music’

The privilege of being employed as a music teacher in a school is a unique opportunity every well-meaning person should fully exploit. Music teaching in schools(Nursery/primary/secondary) presents peculiar challenges owing to the burden it places on the teacher, the school, parents and pupils with regards to the peculiar nature of music. Music is a two-dimensional subject with both theoretical and practical facets which must be taken into cognizance for a holistic experience for the learner.

Nevertheless, there are several windows of opportunity available to the enthusiastic music teacher towards the maximization of the art in schools. Those windows have been discovered by the author in his years of engagement with schools and they are highlighted below.

The Nature of Schools and the Peculiar Windows for Music

The Nigerian school system is such that lends itself naturally to music as observed in curricula and extra - curricula programs such as Music as class subject, School Assembly, School PTA meeting, School Music Club Program, School Inter-house sports Program, School graduation Program, Music concert, Music Competition, School cultural fiesta, Easter program, School Christmas Program, etc.

These are wonderful vistas for the maximization of music which the author has explored extensively with great results and which every music teacher should key into also.

The Exploration of Windows for Music Maximization in Schools: Ikedi Okeke's Approach

The author's experience in school music teaching spanning over a period of about twenty-one years (21 years) in several schools in Anambra state, Nigeria is relevant to this discourse and needs to be brought into perspective. A peep at some of the schools and the researcher's years of engagement with them would suffice here:

- Irene Menakya Nursery/primary School, Onitsha (2004- 2007)
- Supreme Knowledge Comprehensive Schools, Nkpor (2007-2012)
- Mount Olive School, Onitsha (2007-2012)
- Helen-Winners International School, Nkpor (2008-2012)
- Supreme Knowledge Comprehensive School, Bida (2010-2011)
- British Spring College, Awka (2011-2017)
- Daystar International School, Awka (2014-2017)
- Divine Mercy International School, Nkpor(2023-2024)
- Prosperity International School, Nkpor(2021- to date)
- Bluepoint School, Awka(2024)
- Springfield Academy, Onitsha (2007- to Date)

My engagements with these respective schools ranged from various positions such as music teacher, music director, music master, School anthems & Special songs composer, music consultant, & etc. Some of the demonstrations and maximizations of music in these schools over the years are captured below:

School Assembly

School Assembly is a regular opening activity in schools when students are inspected, checked, organized, disciplined, tutored, nurtured, informed, and finally guided into the classrooms. It provides several opportunities for music through general assembly singing, Anthems, special songs and renditions, and finally marching- in using the parade band. These are all vistas for maximizing music.



Image 1a. The Researcher on the trumpet performing with Pupils of Mount Olive School during Assembly (2010)



Image 1b. Helen Winners School, Assembly (2009) with the author leading the band with the trumpet

School assemblies endear many students to music as many show interest to join the school band, orchestra, music club, and even become very enthusiastic and attentive during music classes after watching their mates perform majestically at the assembly arena.

2. Classroom Music teaching

The time and space for classroom music teaching is usually a golden opportunity to maximize music in schools. The duration is usually 25 -30 minutes, sometimes less depending on the school and most times held once a week. This may not provide ample time for music compared to other subjects regarded as 'core subjects' but a competent music teacher should be able to manage and maximize the given time effectively.



Image 2a. The Author teaching music in class @ Irene Menakya School, Onitsha(2005)



Image 2b. The Author teaching music @ Helen-Winners International School, Nkpor(2008)



Image 2c. Music Class at Supreme Knowledge Comprehensive schools, Nkpor (2010).

Music Concert

Music concerts present a wonderful window for demonstrating music to the fullest in schools via various performances in voice, instrument, and dance. Concerts may be expensive to host due to rising costs but sourcing for sponsorship, no matter how little, would facilitate the ideals. Another challenge towards organizing a music concert in schools which the researcher discovered in his filed work is time. It is very difficult squeezing out time for music classes, practice, or rehearsals in schools owing to the work load and complete allegiance to the so called ‘core subjects. However, the researcher was able to overcome these inherent challenges to pull a memorable music concert that pulled several schools in Onitsha metropolis in 2008. The tit-bits are presented below:



Image3a. Cross-section of the Concert Facilitators. From left, Dr. Augustine Okigbo(PA to the School Director); Dr. Ikedi okeke(Concert convener); Prof. Alvan-Ikoku Nwamara(Resource Person); Lady (Dr.) Pat. Okeke (School Director/Proprietor).



Image 3b. Little Princess Amaefuna of Irene Menakya school, Onitsha performing at the First Private Schools’ Music Concert Organized by the researcher and held at Supreme Knowledge Comprehensive Schools, Nkpor(2008).



Image 3c. Irene Menakya School Choir at the Private Schools’ Concert of 2008



Image 3d. The famous Zulu Dance of Mount Olive School, Onitsha performing at the concert (2008).



Image 3e. Springfield Academy Choir performing at the concert organized by the author (2008)

School Christmas Program

Christmas programs in schools lend themselves exclusively to music. Christmas carol, a basic feature of the Christmas program, provides the peculiar opportunity to raise a choir, orchestra, soloists, conductor, and a formidable musical team to sustain the entire event. No serious music teacher should trivialize the window of Christmas program in schools.



Image 4a. Christmas Concert @ Supreme Knowledge (2011).



Image 4b. Christmas Program @ British Spring College Awka, 2013. Dr. Ikedi Okeke on the violin performing with Mr. Ikedi Dike (a student of the college) on the piano

School Graduation Program

Graduation window presents several opportunities for maximizing music through welcome songs, farewell songs, sing-songs, anthems, dances, and special musical performances which the music teacher must not allow to slip away.



Image 5a. Bongo dance troupe of Supreme Knowledge Comprehensive Schools, Nkpor during School Graduation Ceremony in 2012



Image 5b. Parade Band of Supreme Knowledge Comprehensive Schools, Nkpor Performing during 2013 Graduation ceremony

Summary

The paper has demonstrated with several pictorial evidences that music can thrive in schools if the several opportunities for music are explored and keenly maximized. Opportunities abound through school assembly, class teaching, and several school programs which the committed music teacher must exploit to the fullest. It has also been proven in the paper that students get provoked and become endeared to music when they watch their mates performing music in diverse musical groups and contexts in the school.

It therefore behooves all music teachers, music educators, music policy makers, and school administrators to tap into these vistas of opportunities in order to secure a fulfilling experience for young learners. The solutions to some of the very many educational problems disparaging schools are not far-fetched; music can excel in schools if the windows are promptly recognized and thoroughly maximized.

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