

EMPLACING AFRICAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND COUNTER ISSUES

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Introduction

Permit me to start by citing elaborately, an African- American, Julio Finn who posits that:

Drums are held to be the African instruments par excellence - and they are- but not because of the generally held notion that they are the only type of instruments Africans have produced. On the contrary, every type of instrument known to man - strings, woodwinds, brass - exists in an African version. Likewise drums exist everywhere in the world. However, the special role they play in African music and life place them in a privileged category. Each drum has specific function, and in the case of the 'sacred' drum, dwelling place of a deity. All speak the language of the community to which they belong; secular drums are treated with respect and sacred ones with reverence.... It is inseparable from its community and shares its fate (1992:83).

This therefore presupposes that Africa is not only a land of drums but many other musical instruments and that these instruments are versions of what are obtainable in the occidental world. Ever since Nigeria's independence in 1960, there have been renewed interests in the appreciation of the indigenous rather than the foreign. While the political class and several individuals struggled at one end to entrench traditional values in the polity and mores of the people because the few years of colonial rule had threatened drastically the people's lore, the church also was at the fore at the other end seeking a reconnection with the indigenous. For example, the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church was in Latin, and so in December 1962, the need to have suitable songs in local languages of the people for use in worship arose (I suppose the people's songs went with their

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instruments) Austine Flannery (1988:33) talks of this while discussing the Vatican II Council document that:

In certain countries, especially in mission lands, there are people who have their own musical tradition, and this plays a great part of their religious and social life. For this reason their music should be held in proper esteem and a suitable place is to be given to it, not only in forming their religious sense, but also in adapting worship to their native genius....

Even when the move for re-indigenization of worship became apparent, much harm had been done to the sonic space of the people. Vidal (2012:89) remarks that:

The European influences brought about changes in the acoustic environment of performance of music. The traditional 'open space' acoustic environment of performance characteristic of African culture was countered with the 'closed space environment characteristic of the European elite culture.

The resultant effect of this tendency is that traditional music became relegated and the natives saw it as ersatz. In contemporary Nigeria, there is the drive in the arts to embrace the indigenous and this is evident in the evolution of African philosophy, African history, African literature and drama, African traditional religion and African music. In theory, one may think that African music is stringing along with all other subjects mentioned above but in practice, it is still burgeoning. While not sounding judgemental, a temporary abbreviation of this issue at the introductory level is suggested as this idea forms the soul of this presentation.

Definition of Basic Terms in the Presentation

In this segment, we will first define some essential terms that are deemed relevant within the context of this presentation and they are, Musical Instruments, African Musical instruments and Music Education. Musical Instruments: It is a generally held view that musical instruments are artificial sound producing materials. This is so because man that is biologically created by God is a natural creation and so is the sound that comes from him. However, any sound producing materials further created by man has always been seen as artificial. African

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musical instruments therefore are those musical instruments that are synonymous with traditional African cultures and institutions. By this, we mean those indigenous musical instruments that are constructed by Africans for use in their various ensembles within their culture areas. Now we may wish to take a look at music education.

In the opinion of Yudkin (2008:4)

Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music. It touches on all learning domains, including the psychomotor domain (the development of skills), the cognitive domain (the acquisition of knowledge) and in particular and significant ways, the affective domain (the learner's willingness to receive, internalize and share what is learned) including music appreciation and sensitivity.

He posits further that in most nations there is strong involvement because it is considered a fundamental component of human culture and behaviour. Shocking though, while every nation has pride for her own music and musical instruments and as such, works assiduously towards their projection and promotion in their sonic space, not much is being done in Nigeria to encourage the use of traditional musical instruments for didactic purposes.

Traditional Musical Instruments in Nigerian Music Education: The Journey So Far

Music in most cases goes with musical accompaniments. In traditional institutions, African musical instruments are usually used in such accompaniments. Much has been said about traditional musical instruments. Aluede (2000), Aluede & Ekewenu (2003) and Aluede (2006) have examined African musical instruments as signs or symbols of non- Verbal communication, their extra musical functions and their anthropomorphic attributes. These are however from ethnomusicological points of view devoid of pedagogical inputs. Roe (1999), Stalhammar (2006) and McDonalds, Hargreaves & Miell (2009) contend that music is not only important for us all, but that it plays a fundamental role in the development, negotiation and maintenance of our personal identities. This therefore underscores the need for ones music to be found and profusely

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heard in one's nation. And that a nation that takes pride in the arts of other nations is unpatriotic.

There are lessons to learn from the trio, McCollum, Howard & Judah (2014:325) who explain that in South Africa,

South African department of Education and international library of African music heritage project in South Africa teach African music using western musical framework. International library of African music's listen and learn for students 11-14 is unique in teaching curriculum requirements for western music using recordings of traditional African music

The question then is: How is the Nigerian scenario like? How are Nigerian music educators educating Nigerians? What kinds of songs and musical instruments do they often use to teach their musical lessons? In what follows in the next segment, these issues will be interrogated in details.

Issues on the Use of African Musical Instruments for Didactic Purposes in Nigeria

Without doubt, Africa is a vast continent with myriads of rich, ancient, modern and diverse musical instruments spread unequally over the regions. This unequal spread is occasioned by the vegetation inherent in each land and climate. This variable has a major influence on the kind of musical instruments found in a locale and the musical genre within it. John (1988); Graeme and Geoff (1991) opine that the long trumpet was acquired in the thirteenth century from the Saracens, as they were known, in the Holy land, and from the Moors in Spain, even its name of *al nafir* becoming the Spanish *añafil*. The instrument survives today both in Morocco and elsewhere in the Maghreb and among the Muslim communities of West Africa, such as the Hausa of Nigeria, among whom it is known as the *kakaki*. *Kakaki* is still in use today in Nigeria. It has a similar structure of what it was *ab initio*. While examining the origin of the organ, Montagu (2003:1) says:

We know that the organ was invented in Alexandria by a man called Ktesibios around 270 BC. ... Alexandria was, and still is, in Egypt, not Europe, Hellenistic Egypt was really a part of European

Charles O. Aluede: *Emplacing African Musical Instruments in the Development of... culture, so we should, if we were to be strictly accurate, regard the organ as a quasi-European invention.*

Viewed from whichever point, Egypt gave the world the organ. Nothing stops Nigeria from giving the world traditional musical instruments which could be further refined for global use. According to Faseun (1992) Music as taught in Nigerian schools is good enough for Christians. Looking at the same scenario, Omibiyi-Obidike (2001:152) observes that “as we are approaching the end of the twentieth century, we may ask: what has been achieved so far in African music education? Considering the impetus given it in the 1960s and 1970s, what are the results of the several recommendations at conferences and symposia...?”

From the two accounts, we see vividly that till date not much has been achieved in the implementation of recommendations from conferences, symposia and seminars on the use of traditional musical instruments in teaching musical concepts in our Nigerian institutions. This position is confirmed by Agu (2008:218-219) when he observes that:

Most Nigerian music teachers find it more convenient to use English songs for illustrations in the course of a lesson instead of folk, traditional or Nigerian contemporary songs.... Between 1980 and 1990, a survey of Nigerian contemporary music theory, pedagogy and creativity carried out by me in 35 Primary and 20 Secondary Schools in the old Anambra State, revealed that the classroom teachers hardly knew what to teach or how to handle given topics on any aspect of Nigerian music, be it folk, traditional or contemporary.

This position still lingers. Hence Aluede (2009: 82) postulates that:

As we speak right now, the situation of music teaching to incorporate a good dose of traditional music has not been properly executed. Most Nigerian music departments were established on the principle of bi-musicality but the lofty ideas floundered as soon as they were established in favour of Western music teaching. Consequently, we find in our tertiary institutions, Goje, Xylophone, Oja, Shantu, drums of different categories and Agidigbo (thumb pianos) without instructors, players and students.

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The result of this is that these instruments are kept under the stair cases or piled up with unserviceable typewriters and stale examination manuscripts.

Aluede (2009) further states that there was a conspiracy of imperial powers to undermine and overrun our musical culture. In it, he avers that it appears that musical excellence is decided today globally by a cabal in the Commonwealth of Nations who claim superiority over others. These are few countries of small sizes who decide the musical future of all others. Diverse mechanisms are put in place to achieve these imperialistic intents. Some of such tactics are:

1. The donation of records, compact disks and books on western music to some music departments in Nigerian universities.
2. Award of grants and scholarship to study western music overseas.
3. Award of prizes and honorific titles to Nigerian scholars who have grasped the craftsmanship of western music.
4. Awarding fellowship and granting tenured appointments to such scholars as mentioned in category 3 above to perpetually leave in their lands.

It is not every reader who will consider all the issues that are raised above as imperialistic moves. If however you are of such opinion let us consider these other points below.

1. What is wrong if these donor institutions give us equipment to record our music?
2. What is wrong if grants are provided for the composition and recordings of indigenous music?
3. What is wrong if grants are provided Nigerian scholars, researchers and musical educators to periodically organize workshops to redirect the course of traditional music studies in Nigeria.
4. What is wrong if traditional musical ensembles are funded to ensure continuity of their performances?
5. Why do we down price our arts by tying wages to levels of certification so much so that the traditional musician who is a depository and repository of the peoples' records and who is a moving archive and an age-old library is at the best given the job of a mere instructor or message/cleaner- the best he gets for being a virtuoso (Aluede, 2009:84).

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Today the thinking of this researcher has changed. Why do we need to rely on foreign forces or the government to initiate or do that that is needed to be done? There has never been a time that the need for studying all the facets of Nigerian music has not haunted the minds of some Nigerian music scholars. For example, *ab initio*, the music department of the University of Nigeria was founded on the principle of bi-musicality. And while announcing the birth of a new department of music in the then University of Ife, The Nigerian music review of (1977) pointed out six major objectives of the programme as:

1. To study music in its universal dimensions
2. To sustain and promote African traditional music
3. To promote the creative genius of Africans in music.
4. To develop creative performance concept which arise from:
 - (a) The presentation of African traditional music as a contemplative art.
 - (b) The use notation in the composition of music in African idioms.
 - (c) The interaction between African and other musical cultures
5. To develop training method that will enable Africans to play a maximum role in the international world of music
6. To develop techniques of formal music education to supplement the customary oral tradition of Africa.

These selected first generation music departments are not alone in this desire to entrench a good dose of the indigenous in the musicality of our products. Proper review of the current state of affairs is certainly necessary so as to ascertain our degree of compliance or progress.

Counter Issues on the Use of African Musical instruments for Didactic Purposes in Nigeria

How much have we done at the grassroots level? This question has become necessary because a study of the National Conference of Colleges of Education's double major music programme requires the student to take compulsory fifty-six (56) courses. Only four out of the fifty-six courses are in the areas of African music. A fastidious listener to this presentation will quickly ask: What of the ensemble courses? The answer is simply, who teaches it? Is it the teacher who has limited knowledge of the subject matter? Taking a hasty look at the NCEE document, one may think that it is ambidextrous in thinking about the use of

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Western and African musical instruments for classroom instruction. For example while it is very particular about the western instruments, the traditional ones are not spoken of definitively. It recommends that "About half a dozen or more practice cubicles properly sound proofed, each with a piano or portable electronic keyboard for private practices on the piano or any other instruments" in music departments. In its choice of academic staff, it further states that:

A minimum number of 8 -10 lecturers is required to run the programmes effectively and efficiently. A Minimum qualification of a good honours degree in music (B.A Music or B.Music or B.Ed Music) Licentiates, Associateships and Diplomas obtained in Europe, America & Nigeria from accredited music Conservatories, Colleges and Universities shall be recognized and acceptable for appointments. ii) Tutorial Staff Highly skilled instrumentalists on African and Western instruments shall be appointed on permanent or part-time basis as music tutorial staff or instructors. The following qualifications will be acceptable for appointment at this levels: a) B.A/B.ED music below 2nd Class Honours, lower Division (i.e. 2:2), HND, NCE & OND.

Are we saying that beyond the musical craftsmanship of our métier, a good degree, HND, NCE and OND should be in addition?

In a similar dimension, National Universities Commission's Benchmark on Minimum Academic Standards indicates that a department of music should have:

The minimum number of staff necessary to cover the following areas of specialisation is an absolute necessity – (a) Theory b) History (c) Keyboard and Keyboard Harmony (d) Singing (e) African Music Research (f) Musical Instrument Playing - (European and African) – as many as are available. Instructions on practical subjects should be offered only in those instruments for which there are qualified teachers.

How can we find qualified instructors for our indigenous instruments when men with wives and children, men who are superstars in their communities with high measure of patronage are being considered for cleaner/messenger status because he is viewed to be school dropout?

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For example, of the Sixty-nine courses in the NUC BMAS, ten are primarily African music centred and about ninety percent of them are theory based.

The author is aware of the efforts of the talking drum ensembles in ACOED, the OAU African music programme, the Ibadan polytechnic instrument technology experiments and that of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. A lot more can be achieved with a renewed dedication. For instance,

The person who plays the instruments often is the maker. Materials for the instruments are usually from nature, like wood, gourds, turtle shells, animal horns or skin. Other materials might be recycled from man-made objects, like scrap metal from old cars or oil drums. Blacksmiths or artists trained in instrument making create them for important people and groups. They decorate their instruments so that they not only sound good but are so beautiful they are considered works of art. (Internet source)

The excerpt above brings to mind, the need for us not just to be players of instruments alone but makers. To engender continuity in this practice, the ivory tower must be deeply involved.

Lessons for Nigerian Music Educators

While examining what is going on with our musical spirit in a research conducted in America, Steven (2012:2) revealed thus:

2009 poll showed that of those that played an instrument, 95 percent started playing before age fifteen, with 72 percent starting between ages five and eleven. Only 5 percent started playing after age eighteen. There seems to be a pervasive belief that if one didn't start early on, it's too late. ... At some level, we intuitively know that music holds healing benefits in our lives.

In recent times, the most common regret in older adults is not playing a musical instrument. This could be a great companion and company at old age. This idea should not be a recurring apology; Music educators in Nigeria can start redressing these gaps in our musical life.

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Musically speaking, we are where we are because we are complacent that where we are is the best place to be. Under this segment, we shall endeavour to appraise some key issues as they relate to our current musicality. Here we will maintain some positions and make some projections that are thought vital to music education in Nigeria. Today we hear of the Indonesian Gamelan, the Senegalese Kora and the steel band of Trinidad and Tobago. The Yoruba Bata drum which is still in its old state (See the photograph below).



This has been transformed elsewhere. Today, Cuban and Brazilian Bata are the result of an evolution that includes the reconstruction of African instruments (Roriguez and Griffin, 2013).



Need for Progressive Thinking

Nigerian music scholars have been thinking progressively on how to move forward. Faseun (2001:84) notes that "... the formation of National Association of Music Educators (NAME) in 1987, Nigerian Society for Music Education and Research (NSMER) in 1991 and the Musicological Society of Nigeria in 1993" were to address the palpable lapses in music scholarship in Nigeria. Workshops, symposia, concerts and seminars were to be organised periodically to strengthen certain lapses in the schedule of things. Every individual has a thrust of attention from time to time, so are social and academic bodies. For example in China, there are normal universities where different kinds of music is taught but in Shandong University of Technology, Chinese music is primarily taught and this institution attracts all interested in Chinese music on yearly bases. As far back as 1965, Akin Euba had given a preface to Nigerian Musical instruments. The images of the instruments captured by Euba in 1965 are still the same as we speak. Years ago, a researcher on exchange programme to Amhadu Bello University, Dr. Yusef A. Lateef created some instruments for special effects used in *Malam Umaru Ahmed's* play *Amina*. In a very swift dive, this point takes me to Adedeji's theory of Academic imbecility.

Need to Avoid Academic Imbecility

Adedeji (2004) notes that it is a sign of academic imbecility for scholars in the same department to undertake research within the same areas without progressive reference to one another's works indicating lack of technology which makes us work in circles. For example, a plethora of literature abounds on Dundun, its nature, playing techniques etc. But for half a decade now, no exponent of Dundun has presented a workshop which will culminate into a performance for the few meeting days we have always had at ANIM conferences. While in Potchefstroom, Onyeji (2007) in an article on Oja (Igbo Wooden Flute), stated that "its use extends beyond musical vibrations/structures in Igbo culture. It is employed in non-musical events and contexts as talking instruments. As such, it codes significant messages within non-musical contexts" No doubt, this is a great instrument in this culture, is it now learnt in schools? If so, is it played by boys and girls? What kinds of wood are most suitable for their construction? Is the current choice of wood ok? How durable is our current choice of wood? Can there be suitable alternatives? Are there scored music or simple arrangements for

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beginners to learn with? In all, remember that any instrument which is not written for, and not in constant use is heading for extinction.

Need for Human Resources Application

Adodo (2003:58) remarks that: "It is true that many of us studied in Europe and have degrees in courses that seem irrelevant to African situation. But it is no excuse for indifference in the face of issues vital to the mind sets of our people" A field trip to our alma mater will reveal changes occasioned by the realities of time. To ensure functional music teaching and good training for the trainees, traditional music instructors could be employed in a well rated form in terms of remunerations to synergize with music educators in music departments. This will help adjust the ratio which traditional music shares with Western music in terms of curriculum content.

Conclusion

In every segment of this paper, we concernedly attempted to resolve issues that were raised. This leaves us with not doing a traditional conclusion where a summary of ideas and suggestions would have ended the presentation. However, I intend to look forward a little bit by stating the implications of Nigerian present musical state. In the establishment of most music departments in our tertiary institutions, the idea of an amalgam of the indigenous and Western musical components have always been central in the minds of curriculum planners. The indigenous is often easily jettisoned because of some variables:

- Lack of resource materials
- Absence of human resources to teach the expected
- Lack of love for the indigenous to the over appreciation of the foreign
- Lack of drive to take off from a little beginning
- Lack of sustained drive/focus to fully explore the subject of attention.

From a cursory examination of the sub-themes of 2016 Conference of Music Educators in Nigeria (COMEN) conference, one finds twenty items mentioned as follows:

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- **Origin and Historical Development of African Musical Instruments**
- **African Musical Instruments in Culture**
- **Roles of African Musical Instruments in Ensembles**
- **Extra-Musical Functions of African Musical Instruments**
- **African Musical Instruments in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution**
- **African Musical Instruments and Religion**
- **Prospects of African Musical Instruments in Nigeria Music Education**
- **African Musical Instruments in Composition**
- **African Musical Instruments in Pedagogy**
- **Modern Technological Impacts on African Musical Instruments**
- **African Musical Instruments and the Youth**
- **African Musical Instruments Technology**
- **African Musical Instruments and National Development**
- **Organology and Classifications of African Musical Instruments**
- **African Musical Instruments and Therapy**
- **African Musical Instruments and Gender Sensitivity**
- **Psychology of African Musical Instruments**
- **African Musical Instruments and Contemporary Dynamism**
- **African Musical Instruments in Music Business/Entrepreneurship**
- **Continuity and Change in African Musical Instruments**

Five items are of immediate relevance to music educators and they are: African musical instruments in Nigerian music education, African musical instruments in education, African musical instruments in pedagogy, modern technological impacts on African musical instruments and African instruments technology. All said and done, the fact that we have identified a lacuna in our musicality is a sign of progressive thinking which is hoped to open up a new course in our scholarship.

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