

# MUSIC EDUCATION IN LIFE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, IKORODU: RATIONALE, METHODS AND CHALLENGES

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## **Introduction**

Music has made and continues to make dynamic contributions in the furtherance of God's kingdom and interaction with man throughout Christian history. Martin Luther claimed that: "Next after theology, I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor. I would not exchange what little I know of music for something great" (Bainton 1951:346). Music is indeed a sine-qua-non in theological education and it should be seen and treated as such in theological institutions. It is necessary to equip student-pastors with the knowledge of music for more effectiveness in ministry. Also, music students in theological seminaries need basic knowledge of theology in order to compose theologically and biblically balanced music for the church. In all, "one of the primary aims of any educational system should be to nurture thinking skills in order to help individuals realize their full potential" (Karakoc, 2016:81-84). Considering the relevance of faith in Africa, a faith-based perspective should guide the development of educational systems which will value not only sustainable development and critical skills but nurture honesty, integrity and God-fearing spirit. This remains the target of education in LIFE Theological Seminary, Ikorodu from the author's view.

## **Music Education**

According to Werner, D. Esterline, D. Kang, N. and Raja, J. (2010:5-6); *education is the act or process of educating or being educated. To educate, Latin-Educatus, means to bring up, to develop by fostering to varying degrees the growth or expansion of knowledge, skills, wisdom, desirable qualities of mind and character, physical health, moral balance and general competence especially by a course of formal study or instruction.*

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The implication of the definition above is that, if education does not result to expansion of knowledge and skills' leading to better character, education has not taken place. Adeleke (2014:127) expressed that,

*Music education is a field of study associated with the teaching and learning of music with the formality of Western European school concept. More than merely teaching notes and rhythms, music education seeks to develop the whole person. It touches on the development of the affective domain, including music appreciation and sensitivity.*

Theological education according to 'Adetunji,' Ponle G. and Akinbobola, Philip (2012:134-135),

*Implicitly, theological education is the process of preparing for a religious vocation as seen in the ministers of the good news revealed in Christ Jesus. Explicitly, theological education is the process of providing God-called men and women with knowledge, skills, competence or usually desirable qualities of behaviour, character or of being so provided by a formal course of study, instruction or training in a school provided for such. Such schools where such training and moulding of lives are going on are called, "theological seminaries or theological colleges."*

From the definition of theological education above, it can be deduced that it is a process that involves "called" people, focuses on skills and knowledge in a formal study. The author sees theological education as a formal training given to God-called people to equip them for greater impact in ministry. "Christian educators ought to engage students in dialogue, reflection, critical thinking, and action...essential steps which Jesus took with Nicodemus an intellectual, Jesus' disciples who were ignorant fishermen, or the Samaritan woman." (Ango, 2018:108).

### **Brief History of LIFE Theological Seminary/ LIFE School of Music (LSM), Ikorodu**

According to Oni (2012:1), Lighthouse of International Foursquare Evangelism 'LIFE' Theological Seminary, founded by Reverend and Mrs. Harold Curtis of Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria in 1955. LIFE Theological Seminary started as an open-air Bible school for the training of men and women in practical Christian ministry. The school later metamorphosed into a night Bible school shortly after the

B. U. Young: *Music Education in Life Theological Seminary, Ikorodu: Rationale,...* Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria was inaugurated. Day classes were first held at the campus at Ikorodu Campus in 1958 (LIFE Prospectus 2021/22). LIFE is an affiliate of University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria; recognized by LIFE Pacific University, San Demas, California, United States of America. It is accredited by Association for Christian Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) and a member of International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE). It has study centers across Nigeria and two Colleges of Theology in Aba and Abuja.

LIFE Theological Seminary in her desire to meet the divine mandate of producing capable hands in the area of Church music for the church today; in consultation with the Music Ministry of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria, established a Music school to complement and as well upgrade the music ministry and equip the people of God to serve better in Church music. LIFE School of Music (LSM) was established in August 2013 under the leadership of Rev Felix Meduoye and the Provost of LIFE Seminary, Rev Dr. Cletus C. Orgu (LSM Handbook 2013:6). The pioneering Director of LSM was Pastor Stephen Meroyi (2013-2016), later Pastor Mrs. Blessing U. Young took over from 2017 till date. LSM is Interdenominational in her activities and enrolls students from other denominations for learning. The school is equipped with musical instruments and has produced award -winning students in local and international music competitions. LSM started with Certificate in Music Ministry in 2013 and started offering Diploma in Music program since 2017. Another center for part-time Certificate course in Music was opened in 2022 at Ire-Akari Estate Isolo, to encourage working class people.

## **Rationale**

The Seminary discovered a need for music education as many student pastors had no knowledge of church music which created gaps in the music ministries of their churches. To address this need, three areas of music education were introduced in LIFE Theological Seminary, Ikorodu. First, music is offered as one of the compulsory Seminary courses at 100 level Diploma in Theology/Bachelor of Theology Degree and in final year Christian Education Department. Mus 106- Introduction to Music is designed to acquaint student pastors with the knowledge of rudiments and theory of music, techniques of leading songs in the church to enhance qualitative worship. ED413-Church Music is offered at final year by students in Christian Education Department. This course seeks to highlight the

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Second, the Seminary choir called “Voice of LIFE” serves as the choral group of the Seminary and sees to the ministry of songs and hymns at every function of the school, particularly at the weekly Chapel services (LIFE Prospectus: 2021,18). This group is made up of theological students and School of Music students interested in improving their musical skills at the Seminary. They are trained in the art of singing and leading congregational songs among other skills to help improve the standard of music in their various churches.

Lastly, on music education in LIFE School of Music. According to LSM Handbook (2013:6), the objectives of establishing LSM include the following:

1. To help Christian music ministers discover and pursue God- given purpose for their lives.
2. To reduce the acute shortage of qualified musicians in Churches.
3. To research into all ecclesiastical music programmes that will assist the 21<sup>st</sup>Century Church music development.
4. To produce disciplined and well-tutored Christian musicians for the Church.
5. To promote Church music as a tool for Church growth and the fulfillment of the Great Commission.
6. To stand out as an excellent training institution in music education.

The targeted audience or students are choristers and choir leaders from different denominations especially Foursquare members, young graduates, youths, teens and children; music enthusiasts among others. The school offers the following programmes:

1. Diploma in Music:

The program runs for two years (full time) and three years (part time). Applicants for Diploma in Music are expected to have passed NECO, NABTEB, WASSCE or GCE examinations with at least four (4) credits including English Language or have passed through the Certificate in Music Ministry programme or its equivalent. Applicants must have genuine salvation experience with promise of continual spiritual growth and potential for future usefulness in the church and society. Before graduation, students are

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2. Certificate in Music:

This is one-year full time programme designed for Christians who are called into the ministry but due to lack of time or educational requirements cannot fit into regular Diploma programme. Applicants for Certificate in Music Ministry are expected to be able to communicate clearly in English language. A pass in G.C.E, NECO, SSCE examinations or its equivalent with at least three (3) credits is an added advantage. However, consideration will be given to mature students who have lesser qualification but show high proficiency during the auditioning exercise.

3. Single Instrument Training:

This is three months training which runs all through the year. It is meant for applicants who desire to learn an instrument within a short time. It does not require any certificate.

4. Summer Music Classes for Teens and Children:

The school organizes yearly summer music classes for children and teenagers to enhance their musical skills. All candidates for admission must pass auditioning test before being accepted into the school, except those who desire to learn an instrument.

LIFE School of Music organizes “JUST HYMNS” every session in the Seminary. It is community hymn singing which gives room for LSM students, members of Voice of LIFE (VOL) and the congregation to express their musicality. The entire community is musically sensitized through the programme.

### **Purpose of Theological Institutions**

According to Ilori (2012:36-37), the purpose of establishing Theological Institutions in Nigeria is multi-dimensional which include the following:

- a. Help students fulfill their aspiration for theological education.
- b. Serve the common good of their respective church denominations.
- c. Equip the new generation for effective ministerial service.

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- d. Help solve the crisis of Christian leadership which is the greatest threat to an African renaissance.
- e. Serves as a vehicle for addressing the Great Commission's cultural dimensions and develop educational models and partnerships with which to mount such efforts.
- f. To create more places in Christian Education for the youth as church's contribution to the building of society.
- g. Help Christian youth get biblical education in a Christian atmosphere.
- h. Provide an ideal place for vigorous Christian intellectual engagement and character development.
- i. To build upon the solid foundation begun by faithful churches and parents.
- j. Make consistent advances morally, culturally, and theologically in the lives of coming generation.

### **Relevance of Music Education in Theological Education**

King (1990:9.1) gave five major significant functions of music in the training of effective church leadership thus; Music is able to serve as: (1) an effective ministry tool, (2) a worship facilitator (3) a developer of theology, (4) a medium of Christian communication, and (5) an initiator of contextualization. Also, according to National Association for Music Education (1994), cited in Adeleke (2014:128), the objective of music education is to make students think and create music and perform. Others are:

1. To provide students with intensive training in the discipline of music.
2. To acquaint students with the growing scope and substance of music thought and practice.
3. To advance the historical, theoretical, and critical study of music.
4. To equip students with technical, cognitive skills that will enable them to use musical knowledge effectively.
5. To provide an environment in which musical excellence can flourish
6. To foster students' understanding of both the creative process in music and the products of music creation.
7. To prepare students for advanced musical study beyond the college years.
8. To prepare students for a professional career in music.
9. To acquaint students with knowledge and modes of inquiry characteristic of other disciplines.

10. To cultivate in students the desire for continued musical and intellectual growth throughout their lives.
11. To encourage students' active involvement as listeners and performers of music.

### **Research Methodology**

Data from historical sources, interview and personal observation were employed in data collection. Personal experience having taught as full-time lecturer in LSM for over five years, available historical materials from the Seminary Prospectus and LIFE School of Music Students Handbook. In addition, all theological students in 100 level (full-time) and School of Music students (full-time) were interviewed. The 100 level theological students were interviewed because Introduction to Music is taught only in 100 level. Out of 27 students in 100 level, 5 were selected using simple random sampling. The same format was used in selecting 5 students out of 25 students in the School of Music. In reporting, the researcher presents five representative responses as some responses are similar. The following questions were asked as applied to students: what came to your mind when you saw Introduction to Music as a Course in the Seminary class? What can you say about the teaching methods used in Introduction to Music class? What are the challenges you observed in this course? What can be done to improve music education in the school? The questions and the responses are presented in the table below.

#### **Interview Questions and Responses:**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
1.	What came to your mind when you saw Introduction to Music as a Course in the Seminary class?	<p>Student 1: I came to study theology I never knew Music will be involved.</p> <p>Student 2: We applied for theological studies but seeing Music as a compulsory course in the first-year time-table is a surprise. Because of this , some students get discouraged and query the inclusion of music in the Seminary curriculum.</p>

		<p>Student 3: When I saw Music on the board, I went home and asked my Pastor's wife if I am at the right place, she explained that as a new student I must do Music.</p> <p>Student 4: I was excited having music class because I am a chorister looking for such opportunity for long.</p>
2.	What can you say about the teaching methods used in Music class?	<p>Student 1: Though I did not plan for music but the teaching methods are interesting.</p> <p>Student 2: The teaching methods here include contextualization, questioning in a different form, problem solving, research-based method and more of student-facilitator relationship.</p> <p>Student 3: One thing I enjoyed in music is contextualization. Topics in music are contextualized for it to be profitable to students, they bring the teaching to our level. Also, students are grouped to carryout research, more difficult problems are given to individuals or groups of students to do together.</p> <p>Student 4: When students ask questions, straight answers are not provided but questions are thrown back to the questioner, encouraging one to work out the answer.</p> <p>Student 5: There is this mentoring relationship between students and lecturers at LIFE School of Music which makes it unique.</p>
3.	What are the challenges you	<p>Student 1: Identity problem. Many people are interested in learning music but because the music school is in the Seminary, some people withdrew. This</p>



	<p>observed in this course?</p>	<p>may be because they do not want to be called pastors or to be controlled by the school rules as Seminary demands. Seminary activities create less time for music practice; at times after the activities fatigue sets in and rehearsals become less effective.</p> <p>Student 2: Many student pastors find it difficult to combine theological courses and rigorous practices involved in music education.</p> <p>Student 3: Some music students find it difficult to cope with the demands of theological courses.</p> <p>Student 4: Limited time for practice. Music education is very tasking as it requires more time for, practice, rehearsals, private instructions, learning to be skillful and proficient in playing some musical instruments and other related issues.</p> <p>Student 5: Inadequate staffing and inadequate music materials in the library.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>What can be done to improve music education in the school?</p>	<p>Student 1: More time should be provided for music studies.</p> <p>Student 2: More stage performances of musical works to measure one's musical growth.</p> <p>Student 3: The library should be equipped with more music books, journals and materials.</p> <p>Student 4: Music excursion and trips for more exposure.</p> <p>Student 5: Increase the staff strength in Music.</p>

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It should be noted that numbers were used to represent the students' names for confidentiality. The first question is for theological students who offer Introduction to Music.

### **Music Teaching Methods in LIFE Theological Seminary, Ikorodu**

From the interview responses above, the following teaching methods were generated. Generally, there are various teaching methods (lecture, questioning, project, discussion and others) but the way music is taught in the Seminary is quite different (Student 2 in question 2 in the table above). It was observed that this is majorly because of the Seminary setting. Two sets of students are involved-theological students that offer music as a course and LIFE School of Music students. Teaching music to theological students requires extra drive and patience because many of the students are not prepared for music lectures. According to Student (2) in question 1 above, "We applied for theological studies but seeing Music as a compulsory course in the first-year time-table is a surprise. As a result, some students became discouraged and queried the inclusion of music in the Seminary curriculum". So, to teach in this setting requires the facilitator to first of all justify the inclusion of music in the curriculum. The teaching methods from the interview above include:

1. Contextualization. Contextualization is an important teaching method to apply after justifying the place of music in the curriculum. According to Ango (2012:225), "The ultimate purpose of a curriculum that is relevant is to prepare ministers who will meet the needs of people in their context." Student 2 in question 2 above explained that topics in music are contextualized for it to be profitable to students. For example, (a) definition of music as an organized sound, it is explained that as ministers of the gospel, pastors are expected to be organized at home, in the church and in message preparations. (b) Time in music: It can be explained that a pastor should keep to the time allotted to him/her in a program to avoid disruption just the way wrong timing will affect song leading or playing of instruments in the church. Explanations like the ones above motivate and sustain students' interest in learning music.
2. Question. Do African teachers answer questions from students directly, or they ridicule students who asks what the teacher wrongly defines as a "stupid question" (Ango and Rutoro2020:152). It is not so in LSM. Rather, "When students ask questions, straight answers are not provided but questions are

B. U. Young: *Music Education in Life Theological Seminary, Ikorodu: Rationale...* thrown back to the questioner, encouraging one to work out the answer.” (Student 4 in question 2 above). This type of questioning skill helps to develop reasoning ability and brings out the best in students. Ango (2020: 153) et al explained that,

*Questioning is the cornerstone of training in critical thinking because it requires the learner to move beyond memorizing facts supplied by the teacher. By asking questions, the learner is challenged to analyse what is actually going on beneath the surface and develops the ability to assess situations independently.*

3. Problem- solving method. The use of questions naturally leads to use of problem-solving methods as learners are challenged to find their own solutions to particular problems. The researcher observed that challenge is not thrown to students to solve by themselves like that, rather, the facilitator asks the right questions and give good examples so that students gradually learn how to think for themselves, ask the right questions, identify problems, define problems, and design appropriate interventions to solve the problems on their own. Jesus used this method when teaching His disciples. For example, when he saw a large crowd following him, he asked the disciples where they can find bread to feed the people in the book of John 6:5. It was also used when dealing with the woman caught in adultery (John 8:7).
4. Research- based method. As students are exposed to questioning and problem-solving methods, more difficult problems are given to individuals or groups of students to do together (Student 3 in question 2). Ideally, research-based learning help students develop intellectual curiosity and persistence, as well as skills in team work (Dekker and Wolff:2016). “Christian educators ought to engage students in dialogue, reflection, critical thinking, and action...essential steps which Jesus took with Nicodemus an intellectual, Jesus’ disciples who were ignorant fishermen, or the Samaritan woman.” (Ango, 2018:108).
5. Student- facilitator relationship is more important than all the above-mentioned teaching methods. Student 5 in question 2 from the table above expressed, “There is mentoring relationship between students and lecturers at LIFE School of Music which makes it unique.” This is because the Seminary prides itself in balancing spirituality with academic excellence. The students are followed-up, mentored and disciplined by the facilitator to get the best result for the teaching.

## **Music Education Challenges in LIFE Theological Seminary, Ikorodu**

1. Challenge of identity. Music education in theological institutions is faced with challenge of nomenclature. "Are the music students mere music ministers who conduct and administer music ministry in the local churches of assignment or are certain skills of professionalism expected of them?" (Oyeniya, 2019:119). Student 1 in question 3 from the table above, explained that many people are interested in learning music but because the music school is in the Seminary, some people withdraw. This may be because they do not want to be called pastors or to be controlled by the school rules as Seminary demands. Also, some feel that the school may not meet up with music expectations since it is ministry based.
2. Combining theological courses with music performance. According to Etuk (2022) in an interview, opined that many student pastors find it difficult to combine theological courses and rigorous practices involved in music education. Some music students on their part find it difficult to cope with the demands of theological courses. This remains a challenge. Again, theology students are not given proper orientation about music courses, some of them see it as a surprise since they did not apply for music studies.
3. Academic excellence with spiritual robustness. This is another challenge facing music education in the seminary. The author observed that some students who used mercenaries or those who did not do well in WAEC, NECO and other basic examinations needed for admission, find it difficult to cope with academic demands in the school. This leads to statements like, "I came to acquire more knowledge for ministry and not certificate." In agreement, Ishola (2012:31) expressed, "Most students want to pass without corresponding commitment to academic excellence... Theological education, however, calls for the best brains and deep sense of commitment to sound academic discipline." It is also the submission of Pobe (2010:344) that, "Theological education and formation in Africa must be theologically sound and renewing as well as educationally sound and viable. It must be committed to articulating God's self-disclosure in a plural world."
4. Limited time for practice. Student 4 in question 3 above pointed out that music education is very tasking as it requires more time for, practice, rehearsals, private instructions, learning to be skillful and proficient in playing musical instruments and other related issues. "As a general rule, concert pianists

B. U. Young: *Music Education in Life Theological Seminary, Ikorodu: Rationale,...* spend between 3 and 4 hours daily practicing their piano. As they improve and gain experience, concert pianists can practice for up to eight hours a day.” (Mozart project.org). Students still learn other instruments apart from piano.

5. Inadequate funding. Without funds not much can be done in a school no matter the aims, good-will and plans. While the proprietor is appreciated for financial support, more can be done to help the Seminary.
6. Inadequate staffing. Inadequate funding often results to inadequate staffing. This affects learning. The Seminary’s effort to increase the staff strength is yet to be fully actualized.
7. Infrastructure. LIFE Theological Seminary has good administrative blocks, hostels, library building, Chapel, road network, regular power supply but the Music school building needs to be given more attention. Building and other physical structures do constitute an important part of the learning environment. It can make or mar the learning process.
8. Inadequate music materials in the library. The seminary is yet to get more music materials- books, journals, magazines CDs among others to facilitate learning. “The purpose of academic library is to support the academic objectives of the institution particularly in the areas of learning, teaching and research” (Owolabi 2012:155). Owolabi went further to explain that for a library offering bachelor programme (s) the books and journals should cover the following major divisions or disciplines of theological training: General studies, Biblical studies, Theological Studies, Historical, Religious and Missions studies, Educational studies, Practical Ministry studies and Worship/Music Courses. This isa major challenge to Music education at the seminary. It is noteworthy that some of the challenges discussed above are receiving attention.

## **Conclusion**

The study so far, looked at music education in LIFE Theological Seminary, Ikorodu, rationale, methods and challenges. It is obvious that music education is relevant and practiced in the school but it needs to be given more attention. Proper training of musicians from the seminary will bring transformation both in the students’ lives, in the church and the society at large. It will empower them to become godly entrepreneurs, able to impart musical skills on others and influence their generation positively for Christ.

## Recommendations

1. There should be proper orientation for fresh students about music courses at the beginning of the program to prepare their minds.
2. More time should be allotted to Music courses for practice and rehearsals in the seminary.
3. There should be music excursions and trips for students' exposure.
4. There should be more employment to increase the staff strength.
5. The library should be equipped with more music books, journals and materials.
6. The seminary can employ some of the following creative strategies for raising funds; Alumni tracking, database of alumni; Alumni consultancy services, Linkages/ partnership with philanthropists/ donor agencies, collaborative research and development, renting of halls and Guest houses, fee for service parking lots, launderettes, transportation services and more.

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