

FOLK MUSIC IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS' MUSIC PEDAGOGY: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Introduction

Music is an integral part of every Nigerian culture; and a valuable tool in character moulding. Okafor (2013) sees it as humanly organized sound. Music is an important agent that cannot be neglected because of its effect on the social, emotional, moral, physical and economic life of an individual. Okpala (2006) asserts that:

Music is part of living; it has power to awaken in us sensations and emotions of a spiritual kind; music can do many things and have desirable results. It can stimulate or sooth the mind, help towards a wider education, of at least a wider mental perspective. It can gently plough the mind so that it will be more receptive to the seed of learning (p. 1)

Okonkwo (2006) submits that music is part of life and an art that is deeply rooted in human nature. She goes further to state that:

The national commission for collages of education, in its minimum standards, affirms that music has the potential of being one of the most valuable subjects for enhancing human personality, and it becomes very obvious that the study of music is indispensable for the development of Nigeria child, society and the entire nation (p.169).

In other words, music plays prominent roles in the development of human being who is instrumental to the societal reconstruction and nation building. Affirming this Nwankpa in Okpala (2015) posits that music is used for societal reconstruction and character formation. Okafor (2005: 274) discussing "music and nation building" states that:

Ahmed Sekoutouri, the president of Guinea (one of West Africa's poor countries) said during his reign that he laid more stress on the development of human being because, according to him, the bauxite, the manganese and those other minerals will still be there under the ground in his country. But, if he didn't develop human beings, those would be badly used (p.274).

From the above assertion, the development of human being is paramount. Agu (1990) discussing the primacy of music in Igbo traditional religion observed that:

In African societies, all aspect of life, ranging from birth to death, are believed to be integrated with music making. Among the Igbo it is said that music serves not only as a medium for entertainment and social relationship, but as an intricate part of the development of the mind, body and soul it is assumed that the laws of the land are learnt through songs. The history of the tribe is learnt through songs. And the accepted behavioral patterns in the society are all assimilated through music and dance (p.60).

This valuable human activity is being treated with contempt by most Nigerians. A good number of Nigerian parents would not consent to their children or wards choice to study music in tertiary institution, yet, music is a part of human existence on earth.

At secondary school level, before the integration of music, drama, and fine art under the umbrella of CCA, student in upper basic education classes were provided with the option to choose between music and fine art. Studies and the researcher's personal experience showed that 90 percent of students in most schools preferred fine art to music. The response got from some students when they were asked the reason to choose to study fine art rather than music was amazing. Some said that the music teacher was harsh while others complained that the subject is difficult to understand.

Musical Foundation of a Nigerian Child

In Nigerian societies, the musical tradition surrounding the birth of a child begins before the baby is born. There is also special music for the ceremony

celebrating the birth of the baby and even the first time the baby starts to stand on his own; are both honoured in songs and dance. Agu (2011) states that:

Music plays an important role in the life of an Igbo child. It is rather an essential part of every facet of his daily life. Music occupies his entire day's activity from morning till night through all the developmental stage of his life from birth to death (p. 2).

A Nigerian child receives his first music training from his mother. Ubani (2013), assenting to this referred to mothers as the first teachers of music and usually encouraged young children to participate in folklore and stories in songs. As the child advances in age, he joins his peers and siblings in musical games. He learns to sing clap and play complex rhythms by imitating the adults. Emeka in Okpala (2014: 3) noted that "children grow up and play together improving their language and number skills by running errands playing musical and rhythmic games, listening to and participating in the recitation of rhyme."

Music is an inevitable factor in the developmental stage of every Nigerian child. Ime, in Okpala (2014:4) opines that "a child who is deprived of good music training may be missing the much needed education and assistance for balanced development." Children's musical activities instill discipline in them as some of their musical games required strict adherence to the rule of the game. Nketia in Vidal (2012: 289) states that "there are specific songs for the young such as those incorporated into stories and rites of the children and children's games, particularly counting or number games."

Agu in Agu (2011:3) asserts that "right from childhood, the talented are easily identified. They tend to assume leadership roles in their groups and perform outstandingly well too." Vidal (2012: 294) agreeing to this states that "each child is allotted a leadership role in leading one or more songs during the games performance. By this act a child is being prepared for leadership role in adult life."

Nigerian Folk Music and the Philosophy of Education

The philosophy of Nigerian folk music is all encompassing. It deals with every area of man's existence on earth. "The integrity of Nigerian music in Nigerian society is held to a very high esteem because it plays a vital role in all important

stages of the life of Nigerians” (Keke and Obiekwe 2012: 304). “It provides an avenue through which societal values are learnt.” (Ibekwe 2013:130). Music in Nigerian context is not only meant for entertainment, it aims at educating the people on the activities of the environment in which they dwell. Onyeji (2011) states that:

African music is rationalized as a platform for social and cultural education as well as moral negotiation, construction and training for all members of the society. Its subtle and penetrating quality makes it well adapted to all forms of humanizing education. To the African therefore, music must provide some form of moral, social and cultural education as its essential value (p.24).

The above assertion is typical of the Nigerian music because, there are varieties of music types with lyrics that address every situation of life. The lyrics of songs are so strong that they penetrate the heart of the performers and the spectators resulting in a change of attitude towards positive issues. “It inculcates the right behavioral attitude to members of the community. They learn morals and social responsibilities through music.” (Okpala 2015:7).

Variety in Nigerian Music

Music like language is ethically bound. There are different musical variants practiced by various societies in Nigeria. The diversities in musical practices of Nigerian societies are as a result of cultural differences. This is evident in the people's social life, value system, religion and also the musical practices. Despite these cultural differences, no society in Nigeria lives in isolation. People move from their community to other communities; mostly urban areas in search of greener pastures and this encourages cordial relationship between the Nigerian communities. Nketia (1975:6) discussing the musical tradition of Africa affirms that “there was cultural interaction that resulted in the borrowing and adaptation of cultural items, including music.” The situation is not different in Nigeria.

Folk Music an Aid to Effective Teaching and Learning of Music

The teacher is the principal actor in all teaching and learning situations, as a result, much centers on him/her. So the teacher must be competent enough to teach the subject to achieve a desirable result. Affirming this, Nwokenna in Ugo-

Okonkwo (2014) stated that “music teaching in schools cannot be effective if the teachers do not show remarkable competence on the various aspects of general music programme” (p.218). The music teacher should adopt a teaching method which will enhance what Ojukwu and Onyiuke (2014:79) termed learner-centered. In other words the teacher’s primary aim is to impart knowledge on the learner. So, it is left to the teacher to devise a technique that will ensure maximum mastery of what he/she has taught. The teacher of music should be very creative because music is a performance oriented subject that requires creativity.

Every Nigerian child possesses inherent musical traits which he/she acquires as he grows up in community. This should be considered while planning a lesson to be taught. There are topics in music which should be introduced to the students with what they are familiar with. Such topics as rhythm, form, classification of musical instruments to mention but a few are best taught with reference to the folk music of the culture area. The students will understand and assimilate what the teacher has taught if concrete examples are used. The ability of the teacher to plan his lessons in a way that the students will be actively involved will make teaching and learning easy. It will also arouse the interests of the students thereby encouraging a good number of them to further their studies on the subject.

Its Challenges

Basic education gives young people the opportunities necessary to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes; which they need to live happy and productive lives as individuals who have social duties to discharge for the betterment of life in the society. Hence, it is pertinent that the curriculum at this level of education be designed in such a way that it can effectively reflect the needs of individuals in the society as well as the aspirations of a given society when implemented (Ugoo-Okonkwo 2014).

These needs of a society are integrated in their education system. This is done so that the growing generation will assimilate it and become relevant in their societies. The federal Government of Nigeria in a bid to incorporate our cultural arts into Nigerian education introduced Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA); the amalgamation of music, drama and fine art. Aninwene in Okeke (2014) submits that:

Attempts were however made in 1969 by National Curricula conference to change the British colonial heritage on education in Nigeria, in order to make it more responsive to the needs and aspirations of Nigeria and the Nigerian child alike. The conference sought to emphasize Nigerian culture, including Nigerian music, folklore and literature in the education system with emphasis on acquisition of practical skills from primary to tertiary levels (p.24).

The introduction of CCA into Nigerian education curriculum is a welcomed idea to achieve the desires and aspirations of Nigerians. But there are some challenges in the implementation stage. Some of these challenges have been highlighted by some scholars like Ugoo-Okonkwo (2014), Okeke (2014), Ojukwu and Onyiuke (2014), Onuora-Oguno and Okpala (2015). They were unanimously concerned about the incompetence of CCA teachers at this level to teach the subject effectively. Most schools do not have teachers who are specialists in the three subject areas of the CCA. The implication is that a teacher who specializes in drama will also have to teach music and fine art. Definitely, the outcome of such will not be desirable at all. Even where there are music teachers, the question is how competent are these teachers? Music is a creative subject and studies have shown that most of the music teachers at the post primary level are not creative or performance oriented. "Teachers are merely content with teaching lines and spaces and go home leaving a yawning gap in the creativity aspect of music" Onuora-Oguno and Okpala (2015:4). A music teacher who is not creative will never make effective use of folk music in the teaching of music in the teaching of music as folk music is all about performance.

Cultural differences: The variety of languages in Nigerian societies makes it impossible for a teacher from one culture areas serving in another place within the country to teach the people's folk music effectively.

Inadequate time allotment: Interview carried out by the researcher in the course of this study and her personal experience as once a teacher in the post-primary school showed that a maximum of 30-45 minutes per period were allocated for classes . The teacher has 1 to 1½ hours to cover what he/she has in the scheme of work for the week. The scheme of work for the JS classes drawn from the new

curriculum was always over loaded with several topics which are expected to be covered in one week. "Lesson topics are so jam-packed in the new scheme of work (Ugoo-Okonkwo 2014). She goes further to observe that for the topics to be covered by the teacher, he/she must have to superficially teach them that even the students will not comprehend what is being taught. Time factor coupled with over loading of weekly lesson periods with topics makes it difficult for the teacher to do justice to his/her teaching.

Inadequate provision of instructional materials: Most post primary schools do not have basic instructional materials that will aid the use of folk music to inculcate knowledge to the students. Such materials as keyboard instruments and other local music instrument, the use of some electronic gadgets that are necessary for effective teaching and learning are lacking in most schools.

Lack of local terminologies for musical terms: Sometimes, it becomes apt for the teacher to use some local terms for easy understanding of some ideas or actions in the teaching and learning situations. But due to lack of local terms he/she limits his explanation to the conventional terms. This situation is gradually being taken care of as ANIM has compiled first edition of local terminologies from different cultures in Nigeria.

Teaching methods: "A good teacher must cultivate and possess some personal qualities or characteristics that will ender him/her to the learner" (Ojukwu and Onyike 2014:76). One very important character a music teacher must possess is humility. He must humble himself to sing, dance and play musical instruments with the students irrespective of his/her social status in the society or rank in the school. The researcher's interaction with some students on students-teacher relationship disclosed that most students are afraid of their music teachers. Some teachers use abusive words on the students, calling them names because they failed to answer questions correctly in the class. For effective teaching, the teacher must maintain friendly relationship with the students. It is also surprising to note that some music teachers just give notes to students to copy with little or no explanations. The music teacher should employ all the necessary instructional materials available to make sure that he/she achieves his objectives. He/she must

not look up to the school authority to provide him with everything needed for efficient teaching; he must be ready to sacrifice his time and money.

Aims and objectives of education have been discussed under two broad headings:

1. Individual Development
2. Social and national development.

It was gathered that education is expected to enable a human being to attain the greatest possible harmony, internal and external, spiritual and material, for the fullest possible development of human potentialities and capabilities. It should be able to produce effective individuals in the sense that they realize their responsibilities towards the society, since the individual lives in society and has his obligations towards his nation.

It was stated earlier in the introduction of this paper that a West African leader indicated his interest in developing human beings in order to achieve maximum social development. Teaching methods play indispensable role in achieving educational goals which centers on human development.

Music being a performance oriented subject requires active participation of the students during the teaching and learning period. The music teacher must show a high level of competence in administering his lessons. The students must be actively involved. For instance, In teaching of "Rhythm" the teacher will provide few rhythmic instruments and lead the students to play the rhythmic patterns he/she wants them to master. The students are also expected to represent the rhythm by clapping or dancing as lead by the teacher. Knowledge acquired through this method will not be easily forgotten. Ugoo-Okonkwo (2015), in her discussion on Implementation Strategies Employed by Teachers for CCA Curriculum and its Implications to Music Education, cited a Chinese proverb which states: "Tell me, I will forget, show me, I might remember, involve me and I will learn." (p.223). The utmost concern of the teacher should be the strategies to adopt in order to impact learning into the students.

Prospects

The use of folk music as an aid in the teaching of music in Nigerian secondary schools, especially in those topics where it is inevitable, will go a long way to yield

desirable results in the teaching and learning of music. Every Nigerian child is born with traits of some musical skills which develop as he grows. In line with this, Emeka (1994:145) noted that “children grow up and play together improving their language and number skills by running errands playing musical and rhythmic games, listening to and participating in the recitation of rhyme.” Music is part and parcel of the developmental process of every Nigerian child. Agu (2011) in affirmation opines that “music occupies the child’s entire day’s activity from morning to night and through all the developmental stages of his life, from birth to death. The musical tradition surrounding his birth begins as soon as he is born.” (pg.2).

In formal education setting, the child should be taught the planned topics as contained in the scheme of work in line with what he already knows and is able to do. This will enhance systematic learning. His previous knowledge forms the basis on which the new and subsequent ones are built. The use of folk music as an aid to the teaching of music would help in the struggle to prevent our traditional music from total extinction. The students at this level will improve on what they already know; rather than the teacher making references to western music types which sometimes sound abstract to the students. Hopefully, this will increase the students’ interest in the subject as well as encourage them to opt to study music at the senior school certificate examination and probably continue with it at the tertiary institution.

The researcher adopted this method when she served in post primary school. At that time, CCA had not been introduced; the students were given the opportunity to choose between music and fine arts. Before her arrival, the number of students offering fine arts outnumbered those offering music for junior school certificate examination. In a class of seventy-five (75), fifty-four (54) students chose to study fine art while twenty-one (21) was for music. She introduced the use of folk music as an instructional material, bought some local instruments and also led the students to construct some miniature instruments with available materials. She often took the students to the field to do a practical demonstration of what was taught in the class. She made class room teaching as concise as possible and then did elaborate teaching in the field, where the students were actively involved and adequate teaching aids employed. She also motivated the

students by giving little token to encourage the students that made remarkable contributions during classes. She sourced for sponsorship and got a donor for a cash prize of ten thousand naira to the best JS3 student in music at the end of every academic year. She succeeded in making the teaching and learning of music enjoyable to the students. From then till the introduction of CCA, the number of the students that chose music, far much outnumbered those of fine art. Good number of the students opted to continue with music in their senior class but unfortunately for them she left the school.

Summary and Conclusion

Education is all about acquiring knowledge that will bring about positive change in human being. The change will affect him mentally, physically, spiritually and materially. Well equipped with this knowledge, he will effect possessive development even beyond his cultural milieu. In African context, Folk music has been proved beyond every reasonable doubt of being an important aid in ensuring sustainable development in man and his environment. Human development starts from childhood. "Music trains the mental and motor skill of a child " (Okpala 2015:200). This paper stressed the need for teachers of music in Nigerian schools to introduce the use folk music in the teaching of music. It portrayed folk music as the foundation of musical knowledge of every Nigerian Child. This research work also revealed some challenges that hamper the effective teaching and learning of music in our secondary schools. The lumping of the three major creative arts subjects taught in secondary school under the umbrella of CCA posed a very strong challenge in the effective teaching of music at this level.

This paper therefore recommends that orientation courses be organized at close intervals to educate the teachers on the best way to tackle this challenge. The government, both at the state and federal levels should as a matter of fact ensure that they employ at least three teachers that specialize in at least two of the subjects in every school and a music teacher must be inclusive. It also recommends that the curriculum planners should include some aspects of folk music as instructional materials to enhance teaching and learning of music.

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