

THE IMPACT OF MODERN TREND ON AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC

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Abstract

Before the advent of the colonial masters, music was already in existence in Nigeria. This is our traditional music. It started along with man's existence. It started long ago when man was involved in a number of activities like occupation songs, marriages, initiations, new yam festivals, circumcision and other ceremonies. There exist different kinds of music has been composed and transmitted orally from generation to generation. As a music teacher, where music performance is to be taken as a stress area, one discovers that when the students are called upon to perform the folk music of their ethnic group, the students sing or perform it as if were a church hymn, and they do not put on their traditional costume. In view of this the writer of this paper looks at the impact of the western life style on our traditional folk music.

Introduction

Culture, embraces many aspects of human existence, but in no better way expressed than in Music Arts. African music is the traditional music that has been in existence before due advent of colonial forces. It is the music being handed down to us by our forefathers and transmitted from one generation to another. It is the music that embraces all African's norms and value. It tends to expose the religious, social, political and economic life of the people. It is the medium through which African culture is portrayed to the outside world.

African traditional music has been used in our day-to-day activities. It is used to motivate workers, mothers in most occasion use African traditional music to lure their babies to sleep. Stories, tales in African societies are always followed up with traditional songs and even children learn faster at schools mostly through traditional songs. African music in our society act as a social informer, it tends to expose the ills

of the society. Virtually all sort of human activities and entertainments in African societies are accompanied by traditional music. It is also associated with dance performance. Any society making music in African context without dance or performance is as good as not making music in talking of modern music; we should focus our mind to the present age music.

It is the music that has some adoption of African and western musical element. Its main aim is profit making. It is performed in concert halls, social night clubs etc. the African and western musical instruments are used in this music. This type of music has greatly affected traditional music in many ways: since the arrival of modern music, traditional music has been adulterated because modern music tends 'to follow the western world pattern instead j of African pattern. Any behaviour of any given African society is to an extent influenced by musical concept of the people and these concepts lead to musical behaviour and values and these are reflective of general values. Modern music has exact a great impact on traditional music and this may epitomize the changing conditions and concern of social group. It has greatly distorted African musical institution, in the sense that you will rarely find any traditional music performance without the presents of western instruments, or a performer performing with a financial gain at the back of his mind.

Modern music has also brought some innovation and changes in African traditional music. Academician can now write art music using traditional musical materials and score them following western type of music. There are different types of indigenous music in Nigeria societies which can be called traditional music. It is not very easy to state when this music started in Nigeria. It is a known fact that traditional

music in Nigeria has been in existence before the coming of the colonial masters.

After independence, music was not very much defined in the school curriculum, but presently, music has been given a great prominence in the 6-3-3-4 curriculum of education. The inclusion of music in the present school curriculum has brought some kind of innovation in African traditional music scene. Academicians can now write traditional for performance using traditional and western musical materials and putting them into scores following western type of music. Hence most African traditional music has been acculturated in one way or the other. Several innovation and development has been made to improve or enhance traditional music in Nigeria e.g. the hosting of African festival of Art and Culture (FESTAC 1977). In teaching of African traditional music in schools. The Musicological Association of Nigeria. All these associations help in promoting African traditional music in Nigeria.

According to Balogun (1977), Nigeria Music Review Journal of the department of music, University of Ife Traditional music is that music which is practiced in Nigeria before the advent of the European and their influence. In spite of the influence by the European, African traditional music has remained and survived as the most important type of music in Nigeria till date...

In this case, African traditional music though influenced by western life, but in some part of Nigeria and Africa society, pure traditional African music still exists. Traditional music in Africa is a combination of singing with some form of accompaniment either by hand clapping or by traditional music instruments. As the earliest dawn of history, African had no means of communication; music was then the form for effective passing of information from one community to another, clan to clan. Drums, bells gong and other traditional musical instruments were used in sending our information in the form of speech surrogates.

According to Roberts: Many theories have been put forwards about the origin of music, one of the theories is the theory of early communications in short, and communication and music are interwoven.

According to Robert (1975), in Black music of the world There is an immense amount of music for special purposes, majority of the continent in the world have songs for certain activities especially in African continent.

In Africa, there are songs or traditional lullabies for putting babies to sleep, for domestic chores, communal labour and for relaxation. There are songs for the dead, marriage, birthright, and work songs etc.

African folk song was one of the major forces that helped to shape the society in days gone by. The objective of African traditional music is to fulfill a function, to serve a purpose in the lives of the society hence; it is an important factor in the socio-religious, economic, political life of the African society. African traditional music is a reality and vital integral aspect of culture as well as high indisputable heritage which form part of everyday life from birth to death.

African traditional music is made and consumed by the people of Africa in various forms for different purpose. In fact, African traditional music can be said to be functional. Every music is for a purpose dimmed necessary in the cultural consensus of the society that owns it e.g. we have the talking drums of the Yoruba These drums are beaten in different ways which carries words, phrase and idiomatic expressions differently. The spirits and ancestors are summoned by drum in the Yoruba and Eastern part of Nigeria by their special rhythms. African music now wears a new art dimension in terms of customary, decoration of music or masquerades, decoration of instruments and basic dance motif chorography.

Roberts (1986), rightly say African traditional music changed and became adulterated when Africans started attending churches and singing Christian religious tones,

instead of their African festivals or rituals and ceremonies. This European way of worship and singing overshadowed African traditional music.

The advent of colonization brought in the Christian missionaries and these missionaries came with their religion, music as their musical instrument. They succeeded in covering all forms of African traditional worship and music. All forms of secret societies and ancestral worship were condemned by the missionaries so that their presence could be felt by the Africans. These activities led to the formation of Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches in urban and rural areas. The new converts of these churches were made to burn up all their traditional musical instruments which affected African music and culture a great deal. These instruments were regarded as being satanic by the missionaries, hence, should be burnt and destroyed. New instruments were introduced such as piano, organ and harp etc. as accompanying instruments to hymns and converts.

After the colonization, most African Traditional music both vocal and instrumental has some element of European culture in them. African traditional music no longer appeals to the younger generation, popular music which originated from European culture and highly commercial is now the interest of the young Africans. As a result, most folk-tales and songs are now being written in highlife and reggae following western pattern of music or style to cover a wider audience.

According to Robert, Africans are no longer conversant with the songs of protest in their traditional culture, because there were fed with the Gregorian chant and all the other forms of chant of the Roman Catholic Churches which does not give any room for improvisation, which is one of the characteristics of African traditional music.

Songs act as an accompaniment in African traditional worship or rituals, and these songs are transmitted from one generation to Mother. All these songs have now changed because of the white man's religion and our

songs now changed both in vocal, rhythm, and melodic and instrumental idioms Factors affecting African traditional music

Culture, we know to be a way of thinking, feeling and believing in any society resulting in a behavioural pattern which gives that society an instructive identity.

One method of finding out about the culture of a people is to examine how they conceptualise their music. In a situation where the various African societies exhibit different cultural traits, their musical tradition will also vary from, one culture to another. In fact African traditional music is said to be ethnic-bound, hence none uniform e.g. the music of East Horn of Africa is clearly distinguishable from that of the East-Africa because of the intensity of the Islamic influence, that of West Coast from that of North Coast because of European influence on the West Coast.

As one moves from Eastern part of Nigeria to the Northern part of the same country, one will observe that the Islamic musical influence on the North is greater than in the East, while the influence of the Western form of music is more in the East than in the North.. This variation in musical culture is caused by the contact of African with the Western and Arabic world during the colonisation. This contact made Africans to adopt some foreign musical elements which affected their traditional music greatly. Such musical elements like idioms, instrument, rhythmic pattern and melodic pattern were adapted.

Africans adopted the musical idioms of the foreigners. They now started singing with idioms of the colonial masters, at times mixing it with African languages. On the instruments, Africans adopted the instruments of the colonial masters like the piano, guitar, and organ etc. which they now use for performance in Africa traditional context. The rhythmic melodic pattern of the colonial masters were adopted and or being used in African traditional society, A pure African traditional musical performance goes with some form of rhythmic melodic pattern and

even instrumental resources of the West which they call improvisation or modern traditional performance. All these became a stumbling block to the growth and development of pure African traditional music in Africa.

This variation in African traditional music was caused by some factors of modern tread on Africa traditional music. These factors exert a serious influence on Africa traditional music and they are as follows:

1. Urbanization

Urbanization as the name implies, means an expansion on growth in a population of a particular area due to the concentration of people at that area for industrial, educational, professional and occupational undertaking. Africans make the traditional musical material and instruments from forest materials e.g. hollowed woods were used for making slit drums (AGHIE). A special type of wood is used for making xylophones. Naturally, various African societies occupy different geographical location in the continent. As a result of the expansion and growth in population, industries, markets and institutions, the need for shelter became of a great need. Due to this expansion, most forest were destroyed, wood and animal skins which were of great importance in the production of African traditional musical materials were destroyed. The few available ones are recently built and are made of improvised materials which do not offer the original tone quality of the sound of the original instrument.

Along these urbanisation factor due climatic and vegetation difference. There is also a correspondent difference in natural endowment, cultural and occupational life style of the inhabitant of a particular region. Various musical practices and instruments in African traditional music are caused by vegetation of climatic condition of a particular area.

2. Civilization

Civilization brings modernisation and various aspects of scientific achievements like radio, television, cassette, tape recorder etc. These electronic gadgets provide ready-made music of other lands and culture which mined well with our new way of life and new taste.

With the instruction of colonial administration in Africa, African traditional music was tampered with. Africa traditional music was "regarded as an out-dated, satanic old fashioned type of music by some modern musicians. This is so because the Western musical instrument and music have been introduced to them.

African traditional music composers are now employing the use of European musical pattern and instruments mixed with African traditional musical instruments.

The African Youths are no longer interested in Africa traditional music, instead they now prefer the western type of music and they have even developed a modernised way of dancing the pop music introduced to them by the Europeans. This has affected African traditional music a great deal.

3. Education

Education goes interchangeably with culture. Formal education was introduced by the missionaries. Before the colonial era, the Africans had their own way of educating children which was informal, African traditional music taught to the younger generation in an informal way. The colonial master brought in formal education which resulted in African abandon their own type of education for the white man's own.

During these formal lessons, Africans were made to learn songs that bore no resemblance to their musical culture and life e.g. "London Bridge is falling down" the African had no slightest idea of the position of London, not to talk of the bridge that is falling down. "Brea and Butter which can go, all laid the Queen" all these are songs taught to the Africans by the

Europeans. Africans ignorantly started imbibing the white man's musical culture and western music now became a prominent feature in our school curriculum till date.

Music teachers were employed in school to teach the children how to play piano, organ and guitar, instead of African traditional installments. This resulted in the children giving greater emphasis to these western musical pattern and instruments than their own traditional musical elements and instruments, thus forgetting the techniques of constructing and even playing. Pop music started in this manner and gradually dominated our African music sense.

4. Immigration

Immigration in the movement of people from one part of the country to another or one part of the continent to another. This factor contributed to the change in African traditional music. Various African societies have been able to keep themselves in their individual culture entitled under different forms of geographical units, but In most cases, the modern political boundaries neglect the ancient cultural entities. This said to the coming of people of different cultures under one geographical unit. For instance, when the European came into Nigeria, they came in with their western musical pattern and instruments which influenced most Africans have to abandon the African traditional musical styles and instruments for that of the Europeans.

During the trans-Sahara trade, the Arabian brought in their own kind of music which came with their religion. This type of music was introduced in the Northern part of Nigeria and this has made the style of singing and dancing in the North quite different from the kind of music in the other parts of Nigeria. On the other hand, Nigerian societies are classified into different ethnic groups; we have the Ijaws, Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba etc. These different ethnic groups mover from one place to another in search of jobs, transfer from one place to another place of work, as they move without their

different types of music and musical instruments, This makes them to start learning new types of music from different ethnic groups. This is because the different ethnic groups have their own music and musical instrument. All these factors contribute to the diversity and change as found in African traditional music.

5. Religion

Religion is another factor responsible for change in African traditional music. Certain features found in the traditional music of the Africans today e.g. instruments resulted from the influence of some external factors which border mostly on religion.

Among the factors responsible for diversity in African traditional music, the missionary has perhaps been the most influential in the past. The coming of the European and the imposition of their religion, political and cultural practice on the African traditional society led .to the growth of new musical elements in the musical culture of the various societies. The church was finally entrenched by the missionaries. These missionaries preach against the indigenous musical practice and instruments of the African being demonic. This made the Africans who are now converts to the African burn their traditional musical instruments and embrace the western musical instruments like the piano, organ and singing of hymns.

This resulted acculturation led "to the growth of western modeled musical form like highlife and presently the use of western instrument and idiom in African traditional music.

The effect of Islamic and Arabic culture on African societies, which led to the transformation of the indigenous culture of several Africa societies and their musical pattern, resulted from religious activities in most part of Africa. These areas included the East-ho/n, some area of East and West African sub-region.

These activities led to the adoption of musical practice such as melodic singing, cart illation and musical instrument like the white

reed pipes and trumpet of various sizes. All these made African traditional music to assume a new face and shape instead of the original practice.

Conclusion

Culture embraces many aspects of life and in many ways, expressed them in music and Arts. Modern trend in African traditional music came with the colonial masters who wanted the Africans to imbibe their musical culture by all means. Modern musicians perform with an ensemble which combines African instruments and a mixture of English and local dialects. Moreover, close observation shows that majority of the modern musicians make use of African local dialect and instruments to ensure a perfect communication between them and their listening fans.

The impact of modern trend in African tradition music is sometimes reflected in their costumes to meet the demand of the audience. After considering the compositions of both the African traditional music and modern music, one could see that there are comparative similarities in their compositions. Result has shown that African traditional music has been and is still being affected to a great extent by the modern music.

The effect is so deep rooted that in almost all African traditional music composition, African music has elements of modern music in terms of lyrics, melodic pattern and instrumentations.

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