

The Essence of Music in Political Campaigns in Nigeria: The Igbo Ethnic Group

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Abstract: Music in Nigeria essentially derives its origin and versatility from the oral tradition or folklore of the different ethnic groups that make up the Nigerian nation. The varying musical styles may be observed within the large culturally diverse groups of people in Nigeria and the variety among the cultures are truly enormous, rich and exciting. These are different musical styles for the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba tribes. Politically, music had been a handmaid of politics from early times. This strong tie is based on the grounds of the value of music in political education and engineering processes. No political programme can succeed without effective education made possible with music as the propagandist's vehicle. Thus Bebey[18, p-2] concluded this when he said that "it would be hard to find a head of state in Africa who cannot claim that his governmental programme has been set to music, sung or danced.

Keywords: Music, Politics, Political Campaign, Dance.

INTRODUCTION

Music is sound arranged into pleasing or interesting patterns that forms an important part of many cultural and social activities. People use music to express feelings and ideas. It also serves to entertain and relax [1, p-27]. In the world's view, conversely, music cannot be defined outside cultural implications as it is in itself a culture indicator. Therefore, Blacking [2, p-89] states that;

Music is a synthesis of cognitive processes which are present in culture and in human body: the form it takes and effects it has on people, are generated by the social experiences of human bodies in different cultural environments. Because music is a humanly organized sound, it expresses aspects of the existence of individuals in society.

Bergethan[3, p-16] admitted that "music is a force within our daily lives and is part of our heritage that provides means of aesthetic expressions". Ordinarily, music be it popular, religious art or folk is a product of a creative process that takes place in man on daily basis and simply dictated by events measured in time, circumstance and place. Later on, Omideyi [4, p-7] referred to it not just as a combination of sounds, but a mysterious force, which throughout the ages exerted a powerful influence on man.

Political Campaigns

A series of planned activities that are intended to achieve a particular social, commercial or political aim.

Music in Contemporary Nigeria

Following the advent and the influx of many religious formations and groups into Nigeria dating from the colonial days, Nigerian music which hitherto was traditionally oriented and functional got different varieties. However, the result was positively felt as the society then started to witness various forms of music types vis-à-vis the indigenous. These influences came from the western world, Christianity and Islam. Their roles rather than reduce music usage in our day to day life had made it more vibrant [5, p-20]. Added to this is the stronger influence of Western education and urbanization which Merriam[6, p-34] stated that "the general urban movements in Africa as a whole present many opportunities for exchange of musical ideas and probably tend gradually to blur sharp tribal stylistic lines where they exist". Thus, along the process of acculturation that ensued as a result of the above movements and influences, Nigerians now enjoy various types, styles and forms of music which include popular music, religious or gospel music.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in this paper is an in depth description of the different music genres that had formed the primary sources of music for various

political campaigns. These include popular, religious and traditional music types.

DISCUSSION

The three types mentioned above are discussed hereunder.

Popular Music

Going by its name and commonality of appreciation, popular music is indeed created for the masses no matter the class one belongs. It is this type that takes the lead in political campaigns. Okafor [7, p-3-4] defined it as;

Music that deals with familiar themes and issues of the moment. It is understood and accepted by a lot of people not as a final solution to their problems but as a topical reflection of their sentiments and current world view. Consequently, popular music is more subject to change than any other genre of music... Popular music is therefore music with broad, immediate and implicitly transient appeal. It is also social entertainment and dance-oriented and draws its core clientele from urban dwellers.

Expressing her own view about popular music, Omibiyi-Obidike [8, p-1] said “the one that enjoys the greatest patron among all Nigerians is popular music given its heterogeneity, general acceptance, high frequency of performance and high volume of sales, Nigerian Popular music has emerged as an important National Idiom”.

Its importance is overriding as it is a handy tool for the propagation of effective socio-political and economic messages in all languages used in the country. The various types include Highlife, Afro-rock, Rock’n’Roll, Jazz, Reggae, Calypso, Afro-juju, Blues, Apala, Fuji, etc.

Religious (Gospel) Music

Fundamentally, this music type is exclusively for the worship of the Almighty God. Due to the fact that it grew out of the church, the forum for performance was restricted therein, and this spanned quite for a long time before sophistication in style, content, rhythm and instrumentation started to threaten its base and operationality. Omibiyi-Obidike [8, p-6] further confirmed that;

Gospel music originally was used in the church and was performed at special festivals such as harvests, thanksgiving and so forth. However, with the electronic technology and the need for youths to have the type of music that caters for their social interest, gospel music was taken out of the confines of the church. The truth remains that the foundation for a progressive society depends on the level of its moral life which can always

ensure peace, love, sincerity, healthy ambition in all the frontiers of policy-making and execution. The varieties include songs for supplication, devotion and in fact songs for every aspect of life. Gospel music and musicians in Nigeria have been fulfilling this mission ever since. Gospel music ranks second in its use during campaigns as simple choruses meant for devotional worship are adapted to suit the whims and caprices of the political class. The lower and middle class also follow suit.

Traditional / Indigenous Music

This is another type that had provided the local musician with the words and tunes which are very much liked by the common man. According to Nketia[9, p-4], “there is no community in Africa that has no music: Such a community without music would be considered dead”. In this era of grass-root politics and rural development initiatives, there is no better organ of information dissemination that does convince the rural populace than government programme put to music. These compositions achieve better results when they are sung in the local dialect of the community in question.

Supporting the above assertion by Nketia[9- p-3] said;

All ethnic groups in Nigeria have their various traditional music and musicians and where the government has an information in its lingua franca, the indigenous traditional musician draws the nationalistic message... to interpret in the local idiom for instant appreciation and response.

The ethnicity in Nigeria is so varied that there is no definition of a Nigerian beyond that of someone who lives within the borders of the country [10, p-4]. But these musicians do a lot of cleaning and purification assignments with their compositions as they preach good morals and ethics of good citizenship.

Music in Politics

In Nigeria, political movements and activities have provided many a singer of popular music with some of his richest songs. He has been able to say or mirror the people’s mind, but may dish it out in a mild form for fear of criticism and sanctions by the ruling class. The themes consists of topic on “internal struggles, the gap between the rich and the poor” evils perpetuated by unpatriotic elements, rumour mongering, drug addiction, get rich-quick syndrome etc[11, p-225]. Specifically, Ubani [12, p-37] supported the above when he said that,

The creative activity in music as part of the strategy in political party election campaigns involves a wide spectrum of meaningful musical experience with sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, analysis and coherent organization

of musical ideas employed in communicating party slogans and proposals to the electorates.

Such songs are short, repetitive and rhythmical, very melodious and easily remembered. Sometimes the music is in form of jingles/slogans or even composed in such a way that it will have a comprehensive information on the party and the particular individual to be voted for. At times, it may even carry some negative information about the opposing party thereby warning people not to waste their votes on such party or persons.

The role of the musician in political matters had continued to exist, the political changes and radical transformations notwithstanding. In many instances he is the true voice of the people because he can speak their mind without fearing the wrath of the political class. Some regimes are usually not comfortable with him as they use machinery of the state to launch oppressive counter measures against him. In many instances, the more the authorities try to oppress the musician, the more he acquires an elevated status of a martyr for the truth. Such musicians include Sonny Okosun, who used his music to challenge and fight against the Apartheid Regime of South Africa. In his *Papa's Land* [13] he says: "We want to know who owns the land, my papa's land". The same composer on turning to Nigeria is demanding for a constructive change for everybody. His "Which way Nigeria?" is a master piece in that category and it reads

Refrain: Which way Nigeria? (2ce),

The two examples below are those of religious choruses adapted for political party campaigns.

Winner o-o-o- winner
Winner o-o-o- winner
PDP don win o, winner
I say you go win again o Winner.

Igbo

Ebee ka anyi ga abianye aka
Ebe e sere umbrella
Ma nwoke, ma nwanyi
Ebe e sere umbrella

English

Where shall we thumbprint
Where umbrella is drawn
Both man and woman
Where umbrella is drawn.

The Igbo Ethnic Group

In southeastern Nigeria today, comprising of five states of Enugu, Anambra, Imo, Abia and Ebonyi, the kingdom of Nri of the Igbo people flourished from the controversial date of around the 10th century until 1911, making it the oldest kingdom in Nigeria. The Nri kingdom was ruled by the Eze Nri. The city of Nri is considered to be the foundation of Igbo culture. Nri and Aguleri, where the Igbo creation myth originates, are in the territory of the Umeuri clan, who trace their lineages back to the patriarchal king-figure, Eri [15].

In Africa, music plays important roles in the lives of people. Its major characteristic is that it has a

Which way to go?
I love my fatherland;
I want to know
Which way Nigeria is heading to?

Another was Fela Anikulapo – Kuti of blessed memory. He was a thorn in the flesh of the ruling class. Fela was outspoken, fearless, tough and uncompromising in his denunciation of the violence and hypocrisy emblematic of the Nigeria government since the country's independence from her British colonists on October 1, 1960 [14]. His works include *Lady, Zombie, Yellow Fever, Authority stealing, Original Suffer head, Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense, Big Blind Country, Equalization of trouser and pant, Beasts of No Nation and VIP (Vagabonds in Power)*.

The other is Wole Soyinka who used his immense literary prowess to focus attention on the Nigerian politics of the 1980's for which he said that there were no equal treatments for all tribes and people. In 1983 he released two numbers – *Unlimited Liability Company and Elike Revo Wetin?* Here he criticized the government's ethical revolution programme.

Definitely, it will be wrong to conclude that musicians are always finding faults with those in authority. They also help in instilling patriotism and nationalism in the citizenry. Nelly Uchendu's "Be a true Nigerian" and "Make a new Nigeria" are typical examples.

function, a cultural expression of man in his culture and environment and since it has to do with its cultural gene, it is easily understood and this in turn changes one's mode. African music according to Nzewi (1997) in Ukpama [16]is;

Feeling communal therapy, a humanizing communion, a showing in human beingness. African cultural music, wisdom and principles of musical practice have intense potentials and relevance to any stiff human world person. The genuine interpretations of its therapy, performance and humanistic values have urgent relevance to world knowledge about

music, also to world societies, be they African or not.

Music defines the social status in every society and generally speaking, it is an essential part of every facet of the daily life of an African. This is more so in life of Nigerians.

Igbo music according to Umezina[17, p-42]) Is the music of the people living in the south-east of Nigeria, who are known as the Igbo. They have a unique variety of music and instruments used which is associated with them and belongs to them as an integral part of their culture. The music has its own identity, which is derived from its essence.

Igbo music is unique and stands out for recognition. It expresses in all unity in diversity as it is used to unify, stabilize and integrate Igbo citizens especially during social gatherings and in times of crisis. The Igbo identity is revealed in the musical instruments used for accompaniment. They vary in sizes, shapes and types and produce different rhythms.

Some of the composers of Igbo literary music include Sam Ojukwu, David Okongwu, Goddy Okeke, Ishmael Nwangene and Ikoli Harcourt Whyte. These men endowed with great talents, had the interest and

Some examples are shown below;

Igbo

1. Ojukwu bu eze Biafra,
E mere ya na Aburi,
Awolowo, Yakubu Gowon,
Unu enweghi ike imeri Biafra,
Biafra win the war,
Amodu car, shelling machine,
Fighter, Bomba
Ogbunigwe gegbu unu dum.
2. Ije uwa bu mbe mbe,
Ife uwa bu a na-eme,
O dika a da eme.
3. Nzogbu nzogbu (2 times)
Enyi mba enyi
Zogbu nwoke
Zogbu nwanyi
Enyi mba enyi

Dance and Costumes in Politics

The dance steps are unique and captivating that during political campaigns, some dancers display these steps. Some members of the audience usually join them in singing and dancing. In the same way due to the attractive nature of their costumes, some members follow them back for several kilometers admiring them and chanting their slogans. As a result of these, one can

worked very hard that their contributions added immensely to the repertoire of Igbo music. They were able to create new texts for existing folk tunes, and in other cases new tunes for new texts or even new tunes for existing lyrics.

Some of the composers mentioned above tried as much as possible to create a link or relationship between their music and the moral and social lives of the people. At other times, the ruling class were advised to maintain equilibrium by distributing the resources of the state equitably between the citizens. This, the politicians tagged “the dividends of democracy”.

Language

Its language use is characterized by its linguistic components that include the story line itself, dialects, tonal variations, idioms, proverbs and music is like the English recitative of the Baroque period. The philosophy and rhythm that is expressed in different moments of singing and dancing as well as instrumentation, all constitute the beauty of the music. Today, central Igbo dominate as the perfect common Igbo dialect to be used. Other composers not mentioned above include Sunny Okosun, Dorathy Ipere, Mike Ejeagha, Bright Chimezie (Okoro Junior) Sunny Oti, Adolf Ahnotu, Onyeka Onwenu, Osita Osadebe, etc.

English

Ojukwu is the king of Biafra
It was agreed in Aburi
Awolowo, Yakubu Gowon,
You can't defeat Biafra
Biafra win the war,
armored car, shelling machine,
Fighter, Bomber
Multiple killers will kill all of you.

Life's journey is step by step
when you are trying
It seems you are doing nothing

Trample, Trample (2 times)
Tiger city, Tiger
Trample a man
Trample a woman
Tiger city, Tiger.

always hear children, passersby and labourers working in their farms chanting the slogans which they learnt during the political campaigns. It is believed that this will influence their voting patterns but presently there is no empirical evidence.

CONCLUSION

It has been established in this paper that music is the handmaid of political and no political programme can succeed without the use of music as propaganda machinery. Also the dance displays and costumes worn by the dancers help in imprinting the political party slogans in their minds. Finally because the politicians had discovered the relationship between music and politics, some of them always resort to placing these slogans in radio and television stations in order that their political objectives may be realized.

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