MUSIC APPRECIATION: ROLES IN CHURCH WORSHIP AND ITS PRACTICES IN A RECESSED ECONOMY

Sunday N. Nnamani Ph.D.

Abstract

Music appreciation is precisely a contemplative form of educational, non-professional musical training designed to develop the ability to listen intelligently and discriminately to serious and different genres of music with the aims of judging rightly the use and quality of the musical elements employed (Ekwueme, 2008). This systematic art involves intellectual and emotional responses and it is the emotional aspect that tends to direct our valued interest in the process of appreciation. This emotional instinct is often referred to as "Affective Experience" which predominates over the cognitive and psychomotor skills. This paper examines the various aspects of musical appreciation; the affective experience is what is actually guiding the emotional effect of music especially in church worship as it appeals to different categories of people performing the diagnostic and therapeutic roles in mental health. In a recessed economy like Nigeria where a lot of people are suffering from psychological and mentally related sicknesses, the appreciation of music (both vocal and orchestral) plays a lot in lowering the blood pressures of a greater number of the citizens. It has been observed that the power of music to create some effects appears, sometimes to be independent of human intellectual effort. There is power behind sound and organization of sound". The paper concluded by offering some suggestions to the problems.

Introduction

Music plays a vital role in human society as it provides entertainment, restrain and emotional releases accompanying activities ranging from dance to religious ceremonies. Music is heard everywhere in auditoriums, studios, churches, homes, elevators, sports arenas and even on the street. Recorded performances have sensational innovation of the twenty first century but thanks to modern technology, living rooms, cars, etc that today function as new kinds of concert halls where we can listen to these types of music.

A listener of music because of the knowledge he had concerning musical instruments or voices may be intrigued by the facets of a certain composition. Perhaps it may be as a result of some attributes of the composer's style of writing, playing, dancing or the qualities of the musical instruments. Music appreciation involves the development of awareness as well as responsiveness to the affective power of various elements inherent in a particular piece of music. Two different persons cannot be exactly the same in appreciating all the elements of a piece of music. There is always maximum appreciation or enjoyment when there is some degree of balance between emotional and intellectual involvement. One definitely needs to be well acquainted with the varieties of musical experiences through active listening, participation in musical performances and observations in order to appreciate music well.

One may therefore appreciate, use, admire or choose to listen to music because of its effect, but music has certain qualities on its own that goes beyond human comprehension. It is like electricity which is simply there under certain rules and conditions and as a result of this super natural power of music, the Greek termed it "The Divine Discovery" (Okafor and Emeka, 1998).

Church Music

Church music can simply be defined as "music composed, adopted or deemed suitable for church use or for Christian worship, prayer,

meditation, thanksgiving or commemoration for public or private use (Udoh 2004, 165). It can also be defined as music that had been composed, adopted or deemed to be suitable for church or Christian worship. It has a distinctive character that differentiates it from secular music. Although it began from Asia, church music predominantly is a European art. As time went on, different sects emerged from the Christian faith which naturally changed the dogmatic tenets of the believers, invariably affecting the work of the creative musicians who are serving the church.

Origin and Development

The original church music that existed about 200AD had no instrumental accompaniment and its types were derived from the plainchant. Its distinctive character differentiated it from the secular music of the period because of the ways it affected or touched the souls of those who had devoted themselves to serve God. It was holy, solemn especially because the lyrics were derived from the Bible and such music was expected to be performed with all amounts of awesomeness and humility.

> *Its nature, its materials and the forms and force it utilized had been peculiarly shaped by theological, historical and cultural factor over two millennia. Christian song (variously referred to as plain song, plainchant, and Gregorian chant) was the principal music of western civilization for approximately a thousand years (Miller, 1973:14).*

From about the beginning of the second millennium of Christian history, the plainchant had been the focus of polyphonic invention in western music as organum and later developed as motet evolving texts and was known as chant. The adaptation of polyphony to plainchant was significant in two ways: it was the ultimate origin of all polyphonic music, liturgical or otherwise, and it witnessed the initial use of chants as the cantus firmus.

Quoting Miller (1973) with the dawn of the medieval era, roughly from the start of the 7th century, church music became for the first time, something more articulate than a generalized traditional hymn tune. Plainchant later became the foundation and a point of departure of the melodic repertory that joined in the chronological succession that assumed names as chorale melody metrical psalter tune, hymn tunes, etc.

As the history of this music in Christendom kept unfolding, various changes were instituted in the practice of the art by the operation of the dogmatic tenets among the different sections of the Christian faith. As vocal writing developed, there was a gradual improvement in the performance of polyphonic music accompanied by a comparable improvement in the use of instrument techniques. The use of musical instruments came later with the embellishment to ecclesiastical melodies.

According to Lewis (1975), the disintegration and reconstruction of polyphony in the Baroque period was evident in church music as it borrowed from the operatic and instrumental surroundings present in recitatives, arias and other instrumental styles. By the end of Baroque (1750), the best church music and the best known music were synonymous (Miller 1973).

Trends in Church Music in Nigeria

Church music was introduced in Nigeria by the European missionaries in the 1840s. The Methodist missionaries arrived Badagry in 1842, the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) in Abeokuta in 1846, the Presbyterians in Calabar in 1846, Baptist at Iyaiye in 1853 and the return of the Roman Catholic Church to Lagos in 1867. These missionaries brought emigrants from West Indies, Brazil, Sierra Leone and Europe into Nigeria.

The arrival of the church in Nigeria with their missionaries did not only expose the people to Western education, but also to music in

general (Omojola, 1995). The missionaries developed a taste for Western European music, especially music concert and theatre music, which they were eager to promote in Nigeria. This was also used as bait in the process of propagating the gospel.

Consequently, several societies, organizations and philanthropic societies were formed by them. By the 1970's, professionalization in church music erupted with the establishment of Christian singing groups in various institutions of learning. In the 1980's, gospel music attracted many gospel artists who introduced modern touch of pop and rock music to the genre (Ajirire and Alabi, 1992). Church music then became commercialized through the music industry promoters, producers and marketers.

Issues in Nigerian Church Music

Church music no doubt had increased the number of Christian fateful in Nigeria and consequently developed the skills and gift of the youths who are attracted to it. It is also seen in the spiritual upliftment of the members of the society and adherents to Christianity. The issues mentioned are nevertheless associated with the popularity with which church music had attained.

These issues came into play in a bid to introduce modernity into church music in order to keep it in line with the current globalization and system of the internet world. The areas affected are in the aspects of performance ethics, style and costumes adapted. Of a fact, one major issue that emanated from the development of church music is the inability to distinguish between the style and lyrics of church and secular music. The relevance hitherto accorded to spiritual songs with moral transmission of the message of Christ to the society is missing completely in recent church music (Daramola, 2013).

Types of Appreciation

Any piece of music we hear is made up of artistically connected sound which may be perceived as ordinary or otherwise by the listener.

Appreciation therefore includes responding to all the expressive elements of music which includes rhythm, harmony, melody, texture, time, tonality, form and phrases. Music is both an art and a science, therefore it must be appreciated emotionally and intellectually as with any other art or science and there are no short cuts to the proficiency of this knowledge. Appreciation brings about intelligent listening or unintelligent listening and is focused on the definite terms of music or otherwise such as harmony, cadences, historical period, prevalent style, etc.

Through music appreciation, one is able to discern the technical devices used in a piece vis-à-vis the structures of the melodies, textures, sequences, diminutions, augmentation, retrogrades (Nnamani, 2009). By listening attentively, the answers to these questions can be arrived at without many problems.

Listening

Listening in music is not mere "hearing of sound waves" but it is seen as an act of making absolute meaning out of a speech or sound one hears.

> *Listening in music is therefore a process that is backed up by the ability to perceive sound sequences and to analyze them as organized melodic or harmonic structures which may be strong or weak, repetitive or contrasting, modulating joyful or moody in nature, etc. (Udensi, 2008)*

Where a listener hears but cannot decode the meaningful information from such sounds, it becomes nothing but mere noise. Therefore, the avenue of hearing leads to the development of precise listening habit, which is the primary skill for music appreciation.

Types of Listening

There are basically four categories:

Passive Listening

According to Kirkpatrick (1995), a passive listener shows no interest, or emotion. This state can therefore be described as when someone is listening to a piece of music via a stereo set, VCD or an ensemble performance but shows no interest. Rather his attention is focused on other activities.

Perceptive Listening

Perceptive listening can be defined as a kind of hearing where a person, though he hears the piece of music, develops little or no interest and therefore does not react to it. It is perhaps necessary to stress here, that such lack of interest may not be credited to the unfamiliarity of the music or a genre that he hates, rather it is a s a result of a more pressing and important activity at that point in time.

Sensuous Listening

This kind of listening is the type that affects one's senses either due to the musical idioms or as a result of the lyrics of the music. If the lyrics of a particular music be it classical or popular music appeals to the members of a society, there is the tendency that the patronage will be very high.

Active Listening

Active listening is the act of listening to a piece of music intelligently. Active listening requires that one should cultivate the habit of developing aural imagination and accuracy of the piece. It should also posses the ability to recall to the mind's ear, the various sounds embedded in the composition. This is necessary in order to become a polished musicologist. Through active listening, the listener is able to identify:

(a) The musical instruments used in the composition
(b) The texture of the music
(c) The form of the music

(d) The technical devices employed in the music
(e) The tonality of the music and;
(f) The type of music, etc.

Role of Music in Worship

Originally, church music or songs were known for their being holy, solemn, quiet, dedicated and of words that uplifts the soul. These draw people's heart to the heavenly palaces and make one to meditate and pray for a long time. This had been the role it plays in church worship. Infact, the Vatican document supports this when it said;

> *Holy Scripture has bestowed praise upon sacred songs (c.f Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)... Therefore sacred music increases in holiness to the degree that is intimately linked with liturgical action, willingly expresses prayerfulness, promotes solidarity and enriches sacred rites with heightened solemnity. The church indeed approves of all forms of true art, and admits them into divine worship when they show appropriate qualities (Vatican II Document on the Sacred Liturgy, ChapterVI, parts 2 and 3, page 171).*

An ardent sensuous and active listener can well appreciate the pure liturgical music with its attendant benefits which are mostly spiritual. But it is unfortunate that today, there seems to be no difference between the music for entertainment and that for sacred ministration. The church allows music for entertainment during socio-religious gatherings, sometimes marked with pomp and pageantry and "spray" of money on the artist at random (Udoh, 2004).

Also the ideology behind church music and entertainment had been grossly misunderstood, misinterpreted and misrepresented by the emergent popular gospel music artists and had generally replaced it with their commercial drive where Christian bands compete with secular musicians. This is noticeable during anniversaries, funerals or occasions that involve eminent personalities who are rich. This has led

to the relegation of the ideology of church music which is for spiritual upliftment and moral transformation to monetary interest.

The most annoying aspect is the physical appearance of most church musician during performances. Many gospel musicians tilt towards dressing crazily like the popular secular musicians who imbibe all kinds of indecent costumes that do not conform to the Christian dress codes nor demonstrate their Christian faith.
From the above analogy the essence, aim and objective of true church worship has been defeated and this is a very big challenge.

Can Music Actually Heal or Reduce Emotional Status?
Music therapy which is employed in the rehabilitation of ex-convicts, drug – addicts and juvenile delinquents has gained steady acclamation and recognition in various capacities as diagnostic medium, as a therapeutic tool for the reduction of emotional stress for various ailments.

Correlating this, McClellan 1988 observes

> *…Music affects our individual bodies through the principle of resonance, but music's primary advantage is that it works with the personal (emotional) level as well as the transpersonal (spiritual) level. The basic premise upon which healing through music operates is that a primary cause of disease is emotional stress and negative mental attitudes that create energy imbalances and blockages (p. 109).*

Nigeria, a Recessed Economy
The world and especially Nigeria, has been undergoing recession in its economic activities for many years now. As a result, there had been tensions spiritually, economically, politically and emotionally, but music can help in many ways through the appreciation of good church music. The affective experience is what is actually guiding the emotional effect of music especially in church worship as it appeals to different

categories of people performing the diagnostic and therapeutic roles in mental health.

In a recessed economy like Nigeria, when a lot of people are suffering from psychological and mentally related sicknesses, the appreciation of music (both vocal and orchestral) will benefit a lot in the lowering of blood pressure of a greater number of the citizens.

Quoting Okafor & Emeka (1998), "the power of music to create some effects appears, sometimes to be independent of human intellectual effort. There is power behind sound and organization of sound.

Suggestions and Conclusion

In view of the above discussions, it is the opinion of the author that there should be a line of demarcation between sacred and secular music especially with respect to the texts, styles of performance, rhythm and costumes. The church and composers of church sacred music should be properly educated and convinced about the dignity and solemnity of church songs which are richly characterized by doctrinal and scriptural values. And finally there is need to maintain the ministerial aspect of such music in the true spirit of worship.

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