

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

MUSIC AND POLITICS, UNDERSTANDING MUSIC AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIO-POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE

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Abstract

Music is an interesting social phenomenon that creates a delightful appeal for all gender, race and age bracket. Music is everywhere and virtually in everything we do. Over the years, music has continued to beam as an indispensable part of human life moving with our civilization. Music and politics have enjoyed a boisterous relationship in the sense that politicians have sought to improve their fame and wider appeal through the services of music and musicians. This qualitative study is an urge to vivify the socio-political sentiments through the instrumentality of music aimed at portraying various avenues in which music serves as a potent instrument of political communication. The study employs survey and literature as its methodology. Based on the findings, it is cryptically clear that music and politics are human activities that are geared towards the singular goal of bettering humanity. The paper concludes by recommending that music being a rallying point for individuals in every society should be used to bridge the divides caused by political interests and foster positive change and socio-political transformation to bring about real integration in Nigeria.

Keywords: Music, Politics, Socio-political transformation and Change.

Introduction

Spencer (1981) opines that music is an expressive tool of self-realization and the self-assertion that equally lends credence to them by their users. Over the years, politicians find better expression and assert definite personality with the use of music before or after their speech, having realized it is effective in calling and keeping the peoples' attention. Garofalo (1992:65) observes that messages embedded in songs can reach places far beyond spaces defined by politics. We, therefore, understand better here, why Music is a veritable tool for helping a government to power or bringing it down from power, and why it is a preferred tool used by politicians in achieving a political objective. As Barber (1997:1) points out, music is the first form of popular culture in Africa which has been noticed and studied outside the African continent in the decades following independence, many African governments used music as a tool for nation-building and development (Nyamnjoh/Fokwang 2005:263). Music is seen as having the greatest appeal to women and the youth and no nation or leader who yearns for true transformation will ignore this since women and young people are the fabric and future of every society.

Music has impacted profoundly on politics and social transformation in Nigeria as political communications have always been facilitated by music as a vehicle. Music is used to communicate infinite messages and experiences in socio-cultural, economic and political spheres. It is also therapeutic hence the reference to it as "the food of the mind." Life would have been too boring without music (Galindo, 2003). Discovering how music and the mind of the

people work, therefore, politicians and leaders have come to exploit this when passing their message or making efforts to swing the bulk of citizenry in their favour. Political messages would bore an audience without music. To this end, the culture of lacing political messages with popular music to create a welcoming appeal began to grow.

Politics like we know defines our society with structure, leadership and order. Politics coincidentally is found virtually in everything we do as well. What is in music that makes it a potent channel of communication? Rousseau (1959) proffers an answer. He calls it “music's energy and the force of its expressions.” It is this energy that appeals widely to people and has attracted some politicians to package messages about themselves or against their opponents in music and songs to fight for a political change.

Music

Music is the art of arranging sounds in time through the elements of melody, harmony, rhythm, and timbre. It is one of the universal cultural aspects of all human societies. In its general form, the activities describing music as an art, form or cultural activity include the creation of works of music (songs, tunes, symphonies, and so on), the criticism of music, the study of the history of music, and the aesthetic examination of music. Ancient Greek and Indian philosophers defined music in two parts: melodies, as tones ordered horizontally, and harmonies as tones ordered vertically. Common sayings such as, 'the harmony of the spheres' and 'it is music to my ears point to the notion that music is often ordered and pleasant to listen to. However, 20th-century composer John Cage thought that any sound can be music, saying, for example, 'There is no noise, only sound.

Politics

Politics is derived from the Greek word, *Politika*, meaning “affairs of the cities”. It is the set of activities that are associated with making decisions in groups, or other forms of power relations between individuals, such as the distribution of resources or status. The branch of social science that studies politics and government is referred to as political science. It may be used positively in the context of a 'political solution' which is compromising and nonviolent, or descriptively as 'the art or science of government'. The concept has been defined in various ways, and different approaches have fundamentally differing views on what politics exactly is. All however are not wrong. Harold Lasswell defines politics as 'he who gets what, when and how. David Easton refers to politics as the 'authoritative allocation of values in a society.

Pre-colonial/Colonial narrative

In the pre-colonial Era, music preceded or accompanied the arrival of leaders to certain assemblies of the people. Such occasions included political gatherings and also particularly when one community was about to engage another in competitive exchange. The arrival and exit of the community leaders were marked by musical demonstrations. Music also played a huge role in social mobilization, when the nationalist movement and call for independence began to grow during the colonial era. This period synchronizes with the era characterized by anti-colonial struggles. The resistance activists also learnt to use music to gather the local people, inspire disaffection and ignite the passion in people for seeking change. Music soon became a powerful tool that was thus instrumental in bringing down colonialism in Nigeria and Africa at large which was the greatest political transformation to berth in Africa (Akpabot in Adeoye, 2013:11). This didn't come without a fight as the colonialists knew that to subdue the people, they would have to strike at the culture of the people to eliminate it and enshrine theirs. Part of that culture that was considered unacceptable was in parts of African music. The African music was an advantage to the local people because the colonial people feared it as it came with its adjudged voodoo display and they didn't understand the language it was also delivered in. They hence went on to fight that

which they feared and didn't understand but to no avail as the African music inspired courage and resilience in the people who sort and eventually gained freedom.

Post-Colonial Narrative

In the post-colonial era, music is widely utilized in political communication in different ways. Among the ordinary people, songs are raised to chant down politicians who are not wanted by the people in socio-political gatherings even to date.

Fayoyin&Nieuwoudt (2017:2) posits that “indications from political and social perspectives have shown the role of music in society as a means to persuade, control or advance social causes”. Music has been harnessed as a tool for social mobilization to engender social change, join in the process of ushering social transformation and change. Consequently, Nigerian musicians like Chinagorom Onuoha (African China), Eedris Abdulkareem and Innocent Idibia have severally used their music to mobilize the populace to social transformation and change (Adebayo, 2017:62). Worthy of note is that these brands of Nigerian musicians were famous for pushing for social-political transformation through protest music. The likes of OnyekaOnwenu, Christie Essien Igbokwe however featured more in musical ideologies that sort a change in citizens' social and political orientation so that all can join hands to engender the transformation we need. In all, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti's use of music as an instrument for advancing the cause of socio-political transformation remains legendary and matchless.

Today's Realities of Music in Politics for Socio-political transformation

Radio jingles, musical videos (relayed on Television) and recorded songs heard through the loudspeakers (fixed to rooftops of campaign vans) have now become a methodology for continuing the relationship between politics and music, to promise social change and political transformation. Olatunji (2013:256) demonstrates that currently in Nigeria, the use of talking drums during political campaigns in several Yoruba communities is now common. This often turns political campaign locations into carnivals, as musical artists entertain potential voters and others, during such rallies. Politicians and their opponents now engage the services of praise singers to eulogize their candidacy and all these give the people something entertaining to look up to in times of election. The message creators for incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan and his challenger, Muhammadu Buhari, crafted music-laden television commercials to convey their manifestos during the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election for example. Overall, most of the political advertisements used in the election were built around music and songs in praise of the candidates or used to tarnish their image. Music in politics has no doubt played a very significant role in influencing ordinary people to gravitate towards a certain political ideology or goal. Wader, Jumare & Imam (2016) argue that the role music and musicians played during the Nigerian election of 2015 was significant in the change of government that ensued. Adeoye 2013: 9), argues that music is a way of life that carries the attributes and values of the culture it represents, and it is a preserver, promoter and transmitting agent of facts, values, norms and various cultural practices of any given society (from one generation to another).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The influence of music in Nigeria's political existence no doubt has remained tremendous and relevant, right from pre-colonization. Just as music remains a tool in social life that provides expression with a well-arranged melody, politics has gained from the utility that music provides to sell/project, enhance political ideas and interests effectively in Nigeria's socio-political environment. These ideas have heralded transformations and changes in Nigerian society over time. Music has also pressured politics to shift grounds and alter determinations. We however attempt here to understand this interesting synergy or marriage as a crucial driver and catalyst for

political transformation. This progressive relationship directs a leading part to social change by direct or indirect influence. In other words, music being a potent instrument of political communication is an instrument of social mobilization and an agent of social and political transformation/change.

This paper, therefore, recommends that the government's fight against corruption and various forms of malpractices can be boosted further by the integration of music and can also partner with musicians to mark out effective music events that will ensure steady platforms for socialization among people and also propagate accepted modes of life and rules of engagement in Nigeria politics in order to realize socio-political transformation and change.

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