

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

CONTEMPORARY TRADITIONAL MUSIC OF NEW DAWN ENTERTAINERS AND ITS ROLES IN COMMUNITY BUILDING IN UYO, AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

The weightiness of Contemporary Traditional Music in Ibibio society cannot be overemphasized. Suffice it to say that activities ranging from birth to death are inter-fused with music-making. Therefore, the thrust of this paper is to look into the positive contributions of New Dawn Entertainers as well as textual analysis of the selected songs towards building a viable community, possible implications in the social, economic, educational and moral development for community building. It is worthy of note that despite these benefits associated with music's positive contribution to community building. However, this present age does not embrace these potentials and opportunities as it ought to be. In eliciting data for this study, library sources, oral interviews and participant observation methods were employed. To have a proper understanding of the cultural group: New dawn entertainers, the researcher made both video and audio recordings and their procedures in contributing towards community building. The theoretical framework was developed to guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation. For this study, the Theory propounded by Bikeway in 2009 in the Journal of Humanities and social sciences States that “The growth and development of any nation depend to a large extent on the ability of its citizens to harness its naturally imbued resources as well as putting into good use other man-made features, skills, and talents. This study reveals that if these potentials are well grasped by people, this, to a certain extent, will significantly help in community development.

Keywords: Contemporary, Traditional Music, Community Building and Textual Analysis.

Introduction

Music is one of the arts that play essential roles in the culture of any society. Among the Africans, it constitutes a vital aspect of their day to day life. Traditional music has been in existence from time immemorial. And it was found to entail the following practices: singing, dancing, and drumming. In support of this view, Jayeola 2015, said: “African music is one of the cultural indices that make Africans, African. It is a cultural identity that has to do with singing, playing of instruments, dancing and use of various artefacts” (p.102). The term Contemporary is marked by features of the present period. Although some characteristics of traditional music have been fused into contemporary music, it is also important to note that contemporary, traditional music derive their roots from a variety of traditional music performed by different cultures. Colwell and Richardson (2002), Davidson 2013 and Geertz (2003) in Mauwa (2020) concede that:

The traditional song contains a powerful potential that enhances its

adaptation to modern conditions of perception creating a foundation for the development and modernisation of new forms of musical culture. Therefore, due to the performances and replications of some aspects of traditional music in some modern genres, people's traditional music is taught uniquely. Thus, they will learn their culture and identity through music. It is crucial to appreciate that traditional music has a great place in modern genres because it teaches, promotes and preserves a people's culture (p.7).

Also, Mauwa further stated the place of traditional music in the modern genre "through traditional music of different cultures. Each culture teaches distinguished lessons to its people by disseminating different music. Currently, in different parts of the world, modern genres have proved to be popular, and the good thing is that they have emulated certain cultural traits from the different traditional music of the world (p. 5). The very essence of contemporary, traditional music is not just to entertain but to develop humans and make them better people in society. As rightly put by Idamoyibo (2021), "Human development is central to nation-building. When we build infrastructure and develop policies and programmes for the development of our nation, we need to consider the development of the human beings who will manage and use them appropriately" (p.33). He also went forward to attest to the relevance of music to humans as thus: Music has served the human race effectively in identity symbolism, social, ritual, recreational, mental, moral, political, kinetic, therapeutic and religious spheres. It has functioned so much as entertainment while providing education, counselling, enlightenment, and bringing corrigenda into correctitude in the society through generations. (p.16). Any society that neglects its music has lost optimism about building a viable future because music can imbue valuable acts.

This study aims to:

- I. Shed some light on the value and function of contemporary traditional music in the Ibibio culture;
- II. Look into the positive contributions of New Dawn Entertainers and textual analysis of the selected songs towards building a viable community; and,
- BI. Elucidate the possible implications of contemporary traditional music in the social, economic, educational and moral development in the Ibibio society.

Statement of the Problem

It is worthy of note that despite these benefits associated with music's positive contribution to community building. However, this present age does not embrace these potentials and opportunities as it ought to be. Cultural infiltration has also led to the relegation of traditional music to the background. This study seeks to examine traditional music, hoping that it will enlighten people from all and sundry on the need to embrace it in its pure and aesthetic forms for nation-building.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted a theory propounded in the year 2009 in the Journal of humanities and social sciences in 2015. The Theory states: "The growth and development of any nation depend to a large extent on the ability of its citizens to harness its naturally imbued resources as well as putting into good use other man-made features, skills, and talents." The thrust of this theory is focused on how citizens could put into good use the naturally imbued resources, of which music is one of them. Realistically, it is believed that any society that deserts its music has lost hope in building a sustainable future because, in the aspect of children's upbringing, traditional music plays a prominent role for behaviours and minds to be shaped. The Theory stresses that if the

value and function of contemporary traditional music in the society and culture of the Ibibio is well-propagated, harmony, cohesion, peacebuilding, economy, moral, social, cultural and educational domains will become a reality for nation-building. Furthermore, the Theory affirms the importance of collective consciousness in utilising natural imbued resources by the government, institutions, religious bodies and communities for nation-building.

Research has shown that music has been known to affect people's attitudes and minds directly. By just listening to music, a change of attitude and mind may be established from negative to positive. Research has also shown that one of the best ways of communication or transmission is through songs. By song, this does not infer only the systematic sound uttered by mouth but also involves the textual context. In a song, one has the willpower of expressing deep feelings and messages which ordinarily would not have been uttered verbally. Therefore, consciousness on how to use music as a tool for nation-building should be enhanced.

Research Methodology

The qualitative method was considered most appropriate for this study. This research is concerned with the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behaviour. Research in such a situation is a function of the researcher's insights and impression. Therefore, this method leads to a more in-depth and proper understanding of this study from different angles. Mishra (2008) said that the qualitative methodology might be viewed as:

a collage of ethnographic or anthropological fieldwork techniques, including case study designs, unstructured interviews and non-mathematical data analysis techniques. The methodology involves direct observation of action in its natural context, clinical interviews to elicit the multiple meanings of participating subjects and the collection of documents (p. 33).

From the above views, the data collection method for this study involved interviews and field observation. In addition, the New dawn entertainer's songs were collected, analysed and translated into the English Language. Secondary sources of data came from Libraries, other archives, and the internet.

The Group

The name of the Musical group is New Dawn Entertainers. The group comprises forty-eight (48) old and twelve (12) new members currently under training, making sixty (60) members in all. The group constitutes both adolescents and adults. The adolescents usually feature on children's related function like 27th May. In contrast, the adults feature during marriages, coronations, funerals, and electioneering campaigns. The number of members featuring in a particular function depends on the demand of the host or client. He or she may request a Twenty-man performance including dances, singers and instrumentalists. The number of public performances of the group depends on the number of invitations received from their clients. There are months with seven (7), five (5), or two (2) performances. But rarely do they have months without any performance.

Origin of the Group

According to Mr. Imeobong Monday Paul, the chief executive officer of New Dawn Entertainer who is from Ikot Odon, OtoroAbak, Abak L.G.A. On the 31st of December, 2005, he gathered some groups of dancers, singers and drummers from the council of Art and Culture to thank God for preserving their lives. He noted that they celebrated, won and dining after that, asked

themselves if they could form a music performance group that would showcase their talents and cultural heritage? Mr. Imeobong Monday Paul continues that the proposal was made unanimously, and they set up some goals to achieve, started some intensive rehearsals, and assigned different duties to members. A rehearsal venue was selected, a compound space hidden from public view was preferred, and schedules for rehearsals were also fixed.

During rehearsals, as noted by Mr. Imeobong Paul (The CEO), he directed the other members on what to play, sing and dance, and the group made special preparations to have a public presentation for the first time. According to him, their 'first performance was held at Ikom in Cross River at a traditional marriage' and from 'the outset, they did not have a customised costume'. The CEO puts it that they 'could not buy wrapper materials for all the dancers and instrumentalists. However, 'they displayed their very best; visitors who were invited to the traditional marriage and other host community members were well entertained by their performances. He continues that 'It was there; they received lots of presents from the members of the audience who admired their performances'. Also, at that outing, they received recognition and invitations to perform at other places. As Mr Paul puts it:

From the fund generated from this first public exhibition, they were able to sew their first customised costume. Little by little the group has now metamorphosed into a full fresh group with a strong managerial structure, capable artists to continue to excel. Presently, the group has won so many awards and laurels.

Rationale for forming the Group

The New Dawn Entertainer is a group that aids in grooming young and vibrant artists to sensitise them on the need to explore the rich cultural heritage of the Akwa Ibom people by propagating, preserving and presenting them to the world at large, using the musical arts to communicate or inculcate norms, values, beliefs, and civic virtues to the succeeding generations. Also the rationale is to entertain the public for some payments, recognition and mere amusement. The group has significantly impacted both the country and beyond. The group achieves these through cultural songs and dances display. Dances like Asian Uboikpa, Coconut, Aboikpa Idoho Nkemba, Ase Atip Udua and Awak Uto..

Instrumental Resources and Usage

The New Dawn Entertainers' performances are usually accompanied by different musical instruments, including "ibid" (drum), "Nsak" (rattle), "Obodom", (Slit wooden drum), and "Ntakrok" (wooden gong). Also, "ikoneto" (Xylophone), "oduk" (Horn), and "ifiom" (whistle) are used. These instruments are always shaped or designed according to the desired sounds and performance situations. The sizes of these instruments determine or dictate the scale of sounds and required sound effects. Thus, the smaller the size, the less the volume of the sounds produced and vice versa. In addition, hands and other parts of the performers' bodies and voices are synchronised to create a gamut of uniquely woven and admirable Contemporary Traditional Music.

Costumes

Outfits used by the New Dawn Entertainer usually create the appearance characteristic of a particular occasion and period of a given outing. These costumes are typically made up of beads and raffia.

Sustaining the Group/Sourcing of Funds for Maintenance

Part of the funds realised from outings is usually kept back to sustain the group and for musical instrument repairs. However, the only source of generating funds is through their public performances.

Roles of the Group to the Community

Economical Role

Economically, the New dawn Entertainers has generated job opportunities for theatre arts graduates and students of music, NCE holders, and SSCE holders. There are singers, dancers and drummers. According to their responses from the interview, they said they have benefitted in varieties of ways from engaging in traditional music practices. Here in this group, salaries are paid monthly to the dancers, singers and musicians. According to Paul, “We pay salaries based on the total income of the month. Not certain, some months, we pay based on the overall income we make from performances monthly. We sometimes pay 20,000 or 40,000 depending on the income realised in that particular month. Workers are also entitled to some gifts at Christmas and Easters periods. Also, through our proceeds, we have been able to empower some youths by purchasing tricycles and minibuses” In supporting this, Okafor (2005) avers that:

Economically, the entertainment industry, of which music is a very strong element, is one of the most vital, viable, and rich in the world. Musicians are among the high earners all over the world. They can circulate money in society, and music provides plentiful opportunities for the young to engage in self-enterprise and self-management. Even when they don't get employed, a good record release in the market will pay its dividends. And then, it goes on building other things in the society in which money is really generated and not merely circulated (P. 276)

Okafor, 2005 also went further to say that music is the most widely practised and accessible of all the arts. It is so readily available and associated with entertainment and relaxation that some people hardly pause to ponder its implication in the social and economic development of a country. And yet, some countries earn a lot of revenue through cultural nationalism and musical tourism (p.269). In the vane, Adedeji (2018) states that

The popular music entertainment industry has positively created means of livelihood for individuals in the society who naturally would not have been able to fend for themselves... The popular musicians who earn high in the music industry have a way of reinvesting in the society, buying properties in choice locations like Lekki and Victory Garden city(VGC), Lagos and important parts of Abuja, amongst others. Some build institutions, establish foundations and invest in charity through which many other citizens are brought out of poverty (p.174). Furthermore, Idamoyibo, 2021 asserts that:

Music has remarkable relevance in national development as it contributes significantly to the economy. With a population of about 180 million people, most of whom are music lovers, Nigeria has the biggest entertainment market in Africa and one of the biggest in the world. As the musicians, producers and investors produce and market music products, huge profit is made, which enhances the economy of the nation. (p.42)

Judging from the above prepositions by Okafor, Adedeji and Idamoyibo, music has contributed to the country's national growth.

Social/Moral Roles

Music is a constitutive part of a culture that can help in character formation and bind group members together to accomplish their mission; the New Dawn Entertainer says it is an indispensable tool for any community building. Through the group, many youths who would have been problematic to the society are reformed, earned a living, and are full of activities, making their minds not be bare for any evil thought. Their Song texts play an outsized role; their peaceful messages speak against war, social injustice, gender-based violence, incessant killing, kidnapping, robbery, idleness, sexual abuse, examination malpractice, hatred and rancour. Songs that persuade, inspire and encourage values like patience, decency, respect for authorities, tranquility, decorum, self-control and open-mindedness are advocated for nation-building. Realistically, music is seen as one of the best ways of communication; the textual content of the music has the power to express deep feelings and send out explicit messages which generally could not have been uttered verbally. Okunade (2011) also reaffirms this by stating that “One of the means of transmitting norms, ethics and virtues to members of the society is through the text of songs used within the community” (p.143) In support of this, Odogbor (2008) states that:

Socio-culturally, traditional music helps promote group sentiments and the people's ideals. During traditional festivals and other social gatherings, for example, music generates an atmosphere of conviviality where boundaries based on sex, age, status, etc., are blurred into insignificance, and everybody celebrates as an entity. This is capable of providing a forum for mending broken relations and providing common ground for development. (p.69). Okafor (2005) posits that music is the most imitative of all the arts; agreed that music can imitate virile, orderly, and noble things, which would not only turn him into a good citizen but also assist him in freeing himself of his pent up feelings (p.279)

For a viable community to be built, musicians and different ensembles, as seen in the New Dawn Entertainer, must prioritise inculcating values in children, youth, and adults through songs to become responsible citizens of good character and integrity. By so doing, a viable community will be achieved. Ibekwe (2008) also emphasised the social implication of Music for community building as thus:” Obviously Music plays a significant role on the societal life's style. Through music, people's behaviour and mode of conduct are shaped. In other words, music is a character moulder. It condemns as well as appraises good morals. (p.37).

Cultural Preservation of Music for Community Building

It is worth mentioning that many outdated cultural dances in the past have been brought back to life through this noble group, dances such as Asian Uboikpa, Ekoombi, Coconut, Awak, and so on. They also traced their historical perspectives, dancing patterns, and various songs used in each of the dance types. They perform them at traditional marriages, coronations and festivals both in the state and outside the state; they also possess good documentaries for posterity.

Ibekwe (2011) asserts that traditional music is such a practice that reflects the people's tradition without the influence of other cultures. It encapsulates virtually all indigenous practices, which are integral to people's lives within a given culture. By implication, traditional music is the people's way of life –expressed in verbal and physical activity through sound combination processes” (p.79). In line with the above, Ibekwe (2008) pointed out that: Music advocates discipline in the community. By belonging to one common music association, there is every

tendency that the community's values, beliefs, norms and entire way of life will be integrated into the association's code of conduct. Therefore, it becomes evident that whenever a group comes together in a performance of any activity of common interest such as dance, there must be a bye-law that must be obeyed and adhered to to ensure discipline (p.40). In the same vein, Agu (2017) affirms that:

Music-making is universal and communal among Nigerian ethnic societies. Each ethnic group has provided adequate musical activities and training for its community. Consequently, the lives of the people are surrounded by music-making. The established musical traditions across the ethnic societies provide adequate knowledge, promote the acquisition of musical skills and competence as well as educate the young on those values, behaviours, attitudes, speech, actions and traditions that are character-moulding considered absolutely necessary for the constitution of a complete human being (p.20).

Educational Roles

According to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the New Dawn Entertainer, when asked to mention possible ways the group has contributed positively to the building of the community in the educational aspect. During the election of 2019, his group went as far as educating the rural people on how to cast their votes by presenting dance-drama performances in the following Local Government Areas: Eket, OronIbesikpo, Itu, Ibiono, Abak, EtimEkpo, EssienUdim and others. And this was sponsored by the state government. He also assists in the Theatre art department, University of Uyo, teaching indigenous dance styles and steps. These, he said, are ways of building community through education. To attest to the educational implication of music Okafor in Nwankpa (2013) states that education is:

The transmission of dynamic culture and since music is a cultural expression, then culture and education must converge in the same meaning, i.e., the art of teaching people what they don't know, or the transmission of knowledge or culture from those who know to those who don't (p.27).

From the above definition, it can be deduced that education teaches and persuades, convinces, or positively influences an individual. To attest to this, Nzewi, M.&Nzewi, O. (2007) had this to say African indigenous education systems, although very formal, did not operate classroom-type schools, and the learning of civic duties; morals and communal ethics and ethos were basic. Life-grooming camps, termed initiation schools in literature, are examples of the overtly organised education strategies structured into the upbringing of a culturally knowledgeable person. But a session lasts for a brief period in a citizen's lifetime. Instructions in life-grooming camps concentrated on preparing initiates for manhood and womanhood roles. Manly and womanly virtues as well as conduct, with the communal responsibilities appertaining, were also inculcated systematically. The musical arts served as a specialized agency for transmitting, in scheduled sites and contexts, specialized knowledge on civic duties, cultural history and general societal norms that permeated purposeful living in human society. Furthermore, social services such as mass information, social conscientisation and communal recreation programme were conceptually transacted by musical arts formulations and presentation. The text became a very important feature of socially applied music when essential social values were transmitted through sung or declaimed principles. (p.92. Still on the educational implication of music, Odunuga (2013) said that:

Children are considered most vulnerable as their psycho-social values are influenced and shaped by the social relationships that exist in their environment. Thus, the persistence of violence compromises their moral and ethical development and the future development of their societies. Therefore, in a bid to have a society where children are nurtured with love, respect for life, tolerance for differences and understanding of others; where they grow up with their self-esteem intact and their full potential cultivated, music should be included in their education (p. 707).

To attest to this, in the olden days' the norms of society were taught to children via folksongs. Reference is made to children here because the bulk of everything inherent in the future resides in them. Also, they are those to be developed for a viable community. The International Society of Music Education (ISME) in Nwakpa (2007) states that:

We believe that everyone has the right and ability to make, create, and enjoy their music. We believe that active music-making should be encouraged and supported at all ages and at all levels of society. Community music activities do more than involve participants in music-making; they provide opportunities to construct personal and communal expressions of artistic, social, political, and cultural concerns. Community music activities do more than pursue musical excellence and innovation; they can contribute to the development of economic regeneration and can enhance the quality of life for communities. Community music activities encourage and empower participants to become agents for extending and developing music in their communities. In all these ways, community music activities can complement, interface with, and extend formal music education structures. (p.5)

Presentation and Analysis of Selected Songtexts

1. *O yak nnyinidianakiet O
yak idianakimalbopobionnyin*

English Translation

O let us unite together
O let us unite together to build Our nation.

Implication

In this present age, that culture is changing far more commonly than ever before; songs with messages that declare hope, joy, love, good behaviours and good values should be encouraged for nation-building.

Ibibio

2. *Ebonoimaima, imaadeanimooo
Ebonoimaima, imaadeanimoooo*

English Translation

Let live in peace and love, it is good
Let live in peace and love, it is good

Implication

Messages sent across here advocate peace and love for social justice and peace for community building.

Ibibio

3. *Ebe mi ananamnkari ye ami*
Abenekpadokukakenimkeufokufan
Abennkanaekpadedinimkeufok mmi

English Translation

My husband deceives me,
He took the bag full of money, kept it in his friend's house, and returned an empty bag.

Implication

Here, women frown at their husbands' insincerity on issues concerning money. This song persuades them to imbibe the quality of being honest in all their dealings as this would bring peace, unity and oneness in the community.

Ibibio

4. *Eyarangungu Udoumoren Ekpo*
Ndonoudonoebeesin
Idem afonebeakodidap

English Translation

An energetic man called Udoumoren Ekpo.
The wife was sick and was rejected by the husband.
When the wife recovered, he requested that she goes to bed with him.

Implication

In this song, a woman shows her dissatisfaction with her current relationship with her husband. When she was sick, she was abandoned by her husband. When she later recovered, she was then fit to play a wife's role. Women sing this to seek justice and peace in the family and community. Also, to breed peace and understanding in the family for nation-building, a sick wife or husband should be well cared for by the husband or wife, respectively.

Ibibio

5. *Ebeekenombiarai kot*
Akpakpaifono, ikonefereifono

English Translation

My husband gave me an infertile portion of land.
My corn is not growing well, and the pumpkin.

Implication

This song expresses the hatred, maltreatment and disregard given to the wife by the husband. The women sing this to show their disapproval and annoyance in public. Any husband who does not want people to know his wife's ill-treatment would be forced to change his behaviour and treat the wife better. In the short run, this will bring peace to the family. And when different families are in peace, the entire community is bound to witness growth and development.

6. *Ekpesin wire keusonanen*
Ekpemumanieebeakanakpara
Uwo o o, akpa-amumanieebeikanakpara.

English Translator

If a trap made from a wire loop was set at the junction,
 it would have caught more married women than spinsters.
 O it would have caught more married women than spinsters.

Implication

The song expresses Ibibio's view about wayward women (adulterers) that it is a marriage risk for she is a trouble-maker and therefore unable to settle down to look after her marital home. The song also teaches them that it is morally wrong to defile one's marital bed. The song also encourages abstention from extramarital affairs.

Findings

The Study reveals that music has the power to culturally, morally, economically and educationally impact our society positively. The study has also revealed that New dawn entertainers have made remarkable efforts and positive contributions to building viable communities through contemporary traditional music. The group's passion for the culture of AkwaIbom State has made it famous both in the country and in the diaspora. Also, its strong desire in propagating, preserve, and present our dying cultural heritage has won the group many laurels.

Conclusion

This paper highlighted the social, economic, and educational benefits derived through engagement with music and concluded that Music has the power to culturally, morally, and academic influence our society. It tends to unite people, forming a strong bond that might not exist otherwise—connecting different cultures together, promoting diversity and growth. Music encourages creative thinking, discipline, leadership and problem-solving. Also, music can yield valuable character-building lessons for youths who would have been problematic. Finally, music encourages teamwork, self-discipline, and improved self-esteem. All these attributes of music could help in nation-building.

For a viable community to be built, Musicians and different ensemble groups, as seen in The New Dawn Entertainer, must prioritise inculcating values in children, youth, and adults through songs to become responsible citizens of good character and integrity. Also, consciousness on how to use music as a tool for nation-building should be enhanced. By so doing, a viable community will be achieved.

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