

Media Services and The Use of Music on The Plateau: A Critical Assessment

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Abstract

From the early times in the annals of human development, man's association with music and music-related media has been enormous. A cursory review of the dominant presence and place of music in cultures around the world speaks volume of its usefulness and utility in such societies. With the ever vibrant and elastic socio-economic and industrial growth and allied conflicts around the world, the traditional modus operandi of creating, performing, sale, and outlets for partaking in music conviviality has witnessed several modifications. Substantial industrial and scientific breakthrough around the world has foisted on the rest of the developing states, a scientific and technology compliant status usually expressed in digitization and globalization. National and cultural boundaries have become fluid and nearly nonexistent in cyber space. Electronic media such as computers, Internet, television, phones, sound and music storing devices such as CD, DVD, among others, are the major conduit pipes of this

new technology. The changing dynamics in composite societies relatively in terms of work ethics, space and work environment, has increasingly presented scientists and engineers, challenges of satisfying consumers new and inventive lifestyles. Media services thus provide lovers and users of music ample opportunities to source, view, sell, buy and store music of wide ranging genre on the global platform. This work studies the nature of media services and the use of music on the Plateau, taking in stride its benefits and demerits if any. Methodology, is anchored on empirical field survey and review of existing literature in the field of enquiry. The study has established a relationship between music use and the need to track its user's social habits with its cultural, social-economic and development implications on youth and the State.

Keywords: Music, Media services, and use of music

Introduction

The evolution of music and its immense suffrage within the human spheres of operations continue to widen beyond human imagination and expectations. The allure and blissful social fraternity that music has created within the social space and beyond continue to expand as new media related platforms are created. Given the specter of creativity that develops from the new high-tech driven media, one would expect that the new style media transacts were inevitable. That the scope of entertainment, especially music based performances and its adjunct arts such as dance, drama and film arts has blossom not only as a response to new social push in societies, but as it

represents the freedom of participation beyond the physical geo-boundary phenomena.

The upsurge in global world information and entertainment coverage via the electronic media had steadily widened the scope of music entertainment demands thus rendering the traditional and conventional media outlets inept and inadequate. Several factors continue to favour the refocusing and regeneration of interests of the big multilateral and the small scale business interests in pursuit of stress free opportunities for accessing entertainment on a global scale.

The composite challenges that set alight the new social ideologue are multi faceted. On the development scale, Nations with a great infrastructure deficit, especially in the areas of regular electricity supply to their citizens, are on the increase. Nation states in Africa and Asia are worst affected. The traditional domain cum main stream channels of entertainment communication and interactions as in television and desktops are

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increasingly difficult to run due to constant power outages.

On the other end of the economic divide, many people in developed and industrialized nations of the world are increasingly having their work cut-out owing to new economic opportunities on the one hand and work and social pressures on the other extreme. For these categories of individuals, a sedentary work status which allows for context and localized-based viewing media as television sets, desktops computers, trunk/land phones is apparently becoming difficult. The emergence of new entertainment genre and high-tech music media has significantly eased transaction of information dissemination, communication and entertainment business among other activities.

Nature of the New Music Media

A media service provider is an organization that complements its regular business services by adding a set of media services: access to the internet, access to music and video and other streaming media, access to value-added only available at the point of business. Several categories readily come to mind including and not limited to music token animation, frequency modulated music band radio(fm), music books, classical music radio, music themed comics, folk music media, Heavy Metal Media, Jazz Radio, among others.

Any discourse on information dissemination strategy in Africa traditional system will not be complete without recourse to the contribution of music information media. The process entails the packaging of relevant information in the form of songs, music and the use of surrogate musical instruments such as the talking drum for public information dissemination (Amodu115).

Music media and the bases for the new tech media is principled on computer programming and networking. Computer interconnectivity heralded the world-wide-web, a virtual computer artificial intelligence programming capable of driving all manners of communication and entertainment mechanism. The new cell-phone technology, intercontinental ground and marine communication cable connectivity, and the placement of space satellite in orbit around the earth gave impetus to high-tech experiments in the developed and developing economies of the world. Of strategic

importance to music media development is the invention of compact storage devices, which ultimately enhanced music downloads, music storage and music sharing among other transactions.

Electronic Media and the Use of Music

A study indicated that by 1990, all electronic music involved the use of computers. Many composers regularly used electronic means to listen to and modify pieces as they wrote them. Computer software offered additive subtractive synthesis and made it easier to create electronic sounds or transform them. Filters used in subtractive synthesis, for example could be used to accentuate specific pitches or harmonies, to stretch sound in time, or to raise and lower their pitch. The Internet enabled composers and musicians to freely exchange computer music programs and even record sounds. Many composers worked in collaboration with other media- such as video, film, or dance. Similarly, electronic music by the year 2000 was no longer a separate branch of modern music, but part of the mainstream (Waterman n.p).

Video Recording

Several digital video formats have been developed to produce, transmit and view video recording in personal computers and over the internet. Web casting and Pad casting tech means that video recording from virtually any source can be available through a computer connected to the Internet and then for downloading or for immediate viewing using streaming video (video sent as small digital packets of data). Websites that allow individuals to post home video materials have become very popular. Television broadcasting over the Internet, known as Internet protocol television IPTV, allows users to select programs for viewing on request making shifting video recording unnecessary.

Media Services and Music-Personal Media Devices

The creation of new devices with the capacity for multi sensory multimedia connectivity status precipitated the creation of media apparatus and platforms to provide internet-related music services.

‘One solution to this problem has been the

creation of online services such as Apple' Tunes, Microsoft Zune Music store, or Amazon's MP3, that provide downloading of music files or other copyrights materials over the Internet for a fee or on a subscription basis. These purchased files may contain special coding called Digital Rights Management (DRM), which proceeds to prevent additional copying or renders the files unplayable after certain amount of time or on different kinds of digital devices. Other familiar labels include but are not restricted to the following: Grove Music; ventured into music services with its Zune brand. The Zune music market place included 11 multi tracks. Others are Mood Media Corporation by Fluid Music Canada Inc. in 2010. It is an internet in-store provider of music, the same brand as the Digital Music Media Player. (Molan).

Yahoo, owned by Yahoo, offers a variety of music services such as Internet Radio, Music Video, news, artist information, official screening and coverage and other services such as Yahoo Jukebox, subscription services and downloads. However, some music download services/recording companies have dropped the anti copying protection feature, allowing consumers make a copy of the legally purchased music file to any device they wish and even to copy the file into a recordable CD or DVD Media such as digital music, plays, videos and they should not be confused with portable media players (mobile media players).

Mass Media: It 'offers' a variety of outlets, and the broadcast media transmits information electronically via such media as film, radio, recorded music or television (Apple).

Media Services and Music in Jos

Jos, the capital of Plateau State, has mass music media services such as television and radio stations. The broadcast media includes the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), and Plateau Radio and Television (PRTV), which incorporates both radio and television. Furthermore, there is the Silverbird Radio and Television network, which provides television and radio services, the Highland Radio, Unity FM, Ice FM, Jos FM (JFM), Nigeria Film Corporation (NFC), and its film media study unit, National Film Institute (NFI). The full essence of communication media to national development is often grossly underrated. However, Udomisor

citing Sinha posits that

communication and development have existed side by side since the dawn of civilization. This explains more the significant place of communication in man's efforts to conquer the forces of nature in order to make the universe a better place for all human habitation. (175).

Given their various orientations and design, the mode of operations is diverse and quite distinct. The television unique advantages of audio and visual components are attractive to many and thus possess dual impartation capacity and strength. Radio, on the other hand, has the advantage of wide coverage, mobility, and affordability, which makes it a popular music media companion to many. Of significance and relevance are the multiple regulated wave and band capacity of the radio signals. The strength and stress domain of radio is polarized in accordance with the vision and mission of the owners and regulating body.

In furtherance of the target mission, radio service signals are usually available at the Amplitude Modulated Frequency (AM), and Frequency Modulated frequency (FM). Going by the mass media practices in Jos and elsewhere, the AM band provides multifaceted mass media functions and responsibilities. The responsibilities span all facets of culture of the people, including the orthodox media responsibility of information dissemination and the airing of music. The FM band is usually a dedicated music frequency channel with about 80% airtime, dedicated to music performance.

Television and Radio media services do have a point of convergence and relatedness in terms of media music practices. The differences and/or similarities are informed by the philosophy of the music media station, scope, size and nature of its client and publics. The ultimate music media posturing is indicated and amplified by the program field, via programming schedule. However, there are common levels of music application which include and are not limited to station opening/closing, theme and program music, interval music, music interlude, specialized music (anthems), station theme music, musical background during

broadcast, among others.

In broad terms, music on radio can be categorized in three levels as follows: (i) music integral to a work or broadcast: (a) interlude music or music played at specific moments within a broadcast (b) musical curtain or background music as a program runs or unfolds (c) incidental music mostly exists as part of a dramatic presentation; action and mood music are in this category (ii) music associated with a broadcast: (a) signature tune (b) martial music (c) jingles-sales advertorial music (iii) music stands out as part of a station programming. Music in this category usually is intended to serve several needs of the station and its publics. Of paramount importance in this regard is information, entertainment and education (Amodu 93).

Television Media

Television media services in Jos are provided by three stations. While one of the stations, Plateau Radio and Television (PRTV), self generates and sources about 80% of its broadcast content, the other two stations are mostly network centers. The Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Federal Government of Nigeria-owned broadcast media, and Silver Bird Television stations in Jos are substantially network centers of the parent body of the same name and identity. They provide dedicated music programs on a variety of genre of music from traditional, secular and non secular, popular and its variety: Jazz, hip-hop, reggae, highlife among others.

Silver Bird Television is renowned for anchoring and producing beauty pageant contests, such as the most beautiful girl in Nigeria (MBGN), Miss Nigeria and Mister Nigeria pageants. The media station has an enviable status of providing opportunity for young talented artists to develop. Many local and international music artistes feature in the pageants and music shows organized by the network. Artistessuch as 2face Idibia, Bank KW, Weird MC, and Sammy Okposo have featured in many of the television music programs.

Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and PRTV both in Jos air special programmes especially

on Sunday that covers social events such as weddings, birthday celebrations, festivals, and other cultural events on their social diary programme platform. The programmes have a substantial musical content that focuses on the entertainment needs of their publics, youth as well as adults. The stations also present to viewers music videos as part of the daily programming schedules and as fillers when scheduled programs fail to come on air due to human and technical challenges.

Radio Media

Radio media services on the Plateau sustain a huge interest and remarkable followership. It enjoys a domineering percentage of music media services on the Plateau for several advantages it holds over and above television. The development and arrival of the transistor radio about a century ago greatly revolutionized access to information and entertainment on a wider global scale. For its miniature nature, hence its durability and utility, it is the favourite music media in Jos and beyond. In some instances, radio signals transcend state, political and cultural boundary. Unlike television, the signals go farther in terms of overall compass and hence it commands a wider and bigger audience. For instance a small broad band transistor radio can readily and easily access signals in far off places in Europe and Asia in Jos at no additional financial cost aside the cost of the radio.

The focal point of radio music broadcast and use has been greatly enhanced on the frequency modulated band/frequency channel, FM. Each of the six FM radio transmitting stations in Jos has in their employ, seasoned professionally trained Disc Jockeys who present and spice-up the various genres of music. The wide spectrum and array of genres on their stable endears some of the radio stations to their teeming listeners. Through strategic programming schedules, listeners know what to expect and watch out for in days of the week. For instance, lovers of the Western music tradition (classical music) are entertained to their listening delight every Sunday between 9pm to 10 pm on Peace FM on frequency 90.5.

Besides the enarmored capacity and disposition of music to gratify human emotions and facilitate a myriad of social and cultural sensibilities within the human organism, music promotes stability and

enhances positive conviviality in the society. The stabilizing force and chemistry within music firmament probably accounts for the drive to investing huge financial and human resources on the FM music stations in Jos and other cities in Nigeria. Many listeners tune to the FM music media because of the sustainable balancing effects it has on them on daily basis. Besides all of these, Okiyi, citing Izuora, reflects on the immense advantages of radio as an effective music communication media, 'the radio is faster and grassroots oriented. Many homes in Nigeria now have radio sets and program planners in radio stations produce 24hours news (music), local and international...and the broadcast media undertakes functions that engender development' (Okiyi 124).

Music download on the FM platform is common with the youth and adolescents on the Plateau. People engaged in FM music download are enthused and guided by the principle and notion that they are at liberty to record and playback at their convenience music that meets their fancy at no costs at all. Music genre that attracts downloads include Pop music (old school), Reggae, Jazz, R&B, Country, Highlife, among others. While some people download for personal and private use, several others repackage music downloads for sale to the public.

Radio thrives and survives mainly on proceeds from adverts. The taxonomy of advertisement revolves around and engages the music idiom as its agent proximate. It can be argued or contested that the wings that carry and transport the advertorial rest on the musical voyage. The professional and scholarship interests and services of music composers therefore become necessary at this point. Since music that drives some adverts is expected to be of admirable high standard, adequate and professional artifice is required. Specialized musical knowledge and skills are engaged in the process of composition, instrumentation, orchestration, scoring, performance, recording, and production.

Film media since the successful transition from the silent movie era to the era of Talkies has not been the same. This is obvious when considered from the revolutionary trend in the industry in form of filmic softwares has had tremendous impact and influence on film concept globally. The presence of

film on the Plateau dates back to the colonial era in Nigeria's political journey to sovereign nationhood.

For several decades, the presence of film viewing venues and influx of foreign (European and Asian) films into Jos and environs were something considered trendy with its associated 'civilizing' influence on all and sundry. The venues expanded and contracted in numbers depending on prevailing socio-political and economic realities of the moment. From the early 1990 to 2005, and thereabout, a few of the popular ones were still operational. They include Kwararafa, Scala, and Rex, all in Jos metropolis and Mogambo in Bukuru. All of them have ceased to function as cinema houses due to low patronage, socio-political uncertainty, among other reasons.

The coming on stream of the National Film Corporation (NFC) in Jos has had a booster effect on film and the film establishment in Nigeria. The strategic location of NFC in Jos and the clement weather, and topography has made it a hub for film makers in Nigeria and beyond. The National Film Institute (NFI), a subsidiary of NFC, is a training institute responsible for producing qualified and trained manpower for the film industry in Nigeria.

While the Hindi films continue to be popular, their Chinese counterpart has largely fallen out of favour. Musical components in film, especially Hindi movies, were and are still a major factor in the interest it generated in the genre of film. One feature aiding patronage is commonality of cultural space and experiences of Nigerian viewers and the Indians. From the storyline to the music and more, African viewers see a lot of similarities and thus readily empathize and find relevance in the unfolding spectacle. An observation on the musical structure, instrumentation, and style of delivery of Hindi film music and the highly percussive and rhythmic dynamism of African music counterpart gives the viewers much desired satisfaction after viewing and listening to the music.

Hindi music is still in high demand among the youth, especially the Hausa and Fulani. The religious under currents in some of the films may also be responsible for this interest. Those who listen to the music maintain that it helps them to relax and reflect because of its mellifluous, melodious, and calming nature on their psyche.

Digital Internet Connectivity

The hub for the new digital music experience on the Plateau, curiously, revolves around urban and suburban settlements. The main centers of operation are Jos, Bukuru and few localized outlets elsewhere. In Jos, the epicenter of the technology is located in Ahmadu Bello and Rwang Pam streets. Aside these are others that are strategically located around public social facilities such as hospitals, schools, banks among others because of the potential clients that do business around those areas.

One major and important player on the Plateau is the University of Jos. Situated on the northern fringes of the city of Jos, along Bauchi road, the ICT facility in the institution offers the students and visitors to the citadel of learning value added internet experience as far as music media services are concerned. What the institution offers in terms of media services is complemented by private ICT service providers that do business around the vicinity of the university.

Nature of Media Services Provided

Media services provided are varied and multifaceted. This depends on the user and the special needs and taste of the individual. On a broad perspective, this maybe segmented and classified as music download and music uploads. On a scale of regular and indulgent access to music media, music download platform witness an upbeat attention than the music media uploads.

Music Media downloads is the favourite among the youth and the adolescents. The music on offer includes live video streaming of global pop music, trending musical concerts, recordings and awards. Reviews and artistic profiles are some of the many driving and motivating factors. Music downloads continue to be a source of illegal and criminal breach of artistes' rights to full monetary benefits and other added values from their creative enterprise.

Music upload on the Plateau is relatively a new venture and thus insignificant in terms of volume of transaction. Unsubstantiated claims suggest that several upcoming musicians subscribe to certain internet sites for a fee to have their works get international viewing and exposure. This singular interest is enough motivating factor for the new

generation musicians and singers as well. Whenever, this venture becomes credible with affirmed indices of its viability, music upload on the Plateau will increase by leaps.

New technology that facilitates multiple and accelerated download (music and film) and duplication of same has become common sight around Jos business districts. A considerable percentage of those engaged in music and film download go on to duplicate and sell at a cheap price. Traders that engage in such illicit ventures do so with no hold barred unperturbed. Dealers in illegal duplication and on duplicated artistic creative works, although aware of the consequences, are careless on the position of the law because of inadequate enforcement of such laws. One of the consequences is that piracy of artistic works, both local and foreign, has steadily become a lucrative business venture on the Plateau.

On a corporate scale, the motivating factors for music downloads are totally different. Within academia: schools and colleges, music downloads that support learning and scholarship is substantial. The reason is because local access to the requisite teaching and study materials is not readily available.

Music in this category includes but is not restricted to the following: (a) Music of other African cultures (b) Music of non African cultures: Asia, Europe, Middle East, North and South America (c) specialized genre of music such as classical and avant-garde music traditions.

Newspaper Media

Newspapers, also fondly called tabloid, have immensely advanced the nature and access to music related information on a grand scale. Television and android tablets with their three dimension 3D imaging technique have reduced attraction for newspapers early dominance of music coverage. Although its clout as a leading force in music entertainment has suffered a huge decline, its potency and viability remain intact. The only notable newspaper produced on the Plateau, the *Nigeria Standard*, has since fallen on hard times and has been ineffectual in giving valuable and enough coverage to the avalanche of music-related activities on the Plateau.

However, several leading national newspapers provide the necessary and needed music

entertainment value chain on the Plateau. Music and associated entertainment information is usually provided on and not restricted to inner pages of some of the papers. Information provided include artist profiles, top selling albums, billboard countdown, artist red-carpet bits, music awards, artist collaboration, artist social life, and many more.

Multi Media Benefits

The benefits cut across the various music media. The internet connectivity: 'It allows one to build one's online audience and extend one's reach by distance and content to viewers on Phones, tablets and all other digital devices. It also allows for linear programming; Catch up TV, and Video on Demand VOD'. Music media has generally raised the public attention, appreciation of music and music artist in particular. Public awareness has gone up several notches leading to increase participation, patronage, to the rise and development of new artistic image.

The boost has had a spiraling effect on the youth new interest in music and music media; music infrastructure such as music studios has increased in number in Jos, new music instruments sales outlets, and increasing number of people studying music and others learning how to play music instruments. It is a wining window of opportunity for several participants in the music business and entertainment in general.

Music Media and Health Concerns

The lightweight ear buds commonly used with the MP3 players, gaming devices, and other hand held electronics fit into the ear. Some evidences indicate that loud volumes or listening for extended periods can damage the hearing. Such studies suggest micro waves energy broadcast by cell phone could affect brain cells and other tissues in the head.

Adjunct to the health concern above are several inimical habits that have adverse social and economic implications on the user and the environment. On the social level, it is common to see users of some of the new technology especially the listening devices have them on and connected to their persons at odd moments. Randomly, you find students in higher institutions of learning have listening devices in their ears while lecture is on,

among motorbike riders as they navigate between vehicles on a congested highway, and among pedestrian on busy city center and highway showing little or no concern for their own safety. There are several other instances where commuters and users of these devices put themselves at risk in what some observers may describe as a reckless social habit.

Summary

Music has been an asset to humans in the quest to interrogate the environment and within the context of their fears, challenges and expectations in their cosmic existence and beyond. Thus music is an outlet, vehicle and media for ventilating the ingrained mythical views, and of establishing a cultural and ethnic order in society. When the structure and ordering in music of a culture suffers distortions and misuse, the cultural ethos and values go into a decline.

The recognition of a culturally patterned diversity around the world is a semblance of the prevalence of this order and ordering in cultures worldwide. New world music order which suggests the disintegration of cultural borders is in this direction an antithesis to cultural definitiveness. Distinctiveness in music in cross cultural terms underlies the musical effervescence which the music media represents. The more diverse and distinct the music styles, the more attraction it holds for the audience. Thus the myriad of music genre in the music media and the wide and far reaching affectations it generates is responsible for its increasing acceptance and patronage among the youth. In Juntunen and Westerlund view, 'music has several values and tasks in education. He maintained that music is the most powerful means of education and can strengthen the communication between the senses, muscles (body) and the mind'.

A national policy which regulates the functioning of the music media will not be amiss. The premise for intervention is founded on two fronts: to regulate the establishment and polarization of music media platforms, and to regulate content of music materials. A careful selection and placement of the technical staff, with requisite professional music background can help to avert some of the common errors for which the

public express loath and aversion. For instance, lewd lyrical content, nudity and dance posturing that are suggestively erotic in nature is common place in the media.

With the upbeat and high reckoning and high pedestal that music occupies within the context of present social realities, music continues to have a near strange hold on the social segment of the society in more ways that are considered nauseating rather than in positive light hitherto expected. (Amodu 149).

The media, in whatever form, is indeed involved in the art of molding ideas and using information to transform the society. When the media, particularly Community Radio, is closed to the people, it opens wider avenues for the people at the grassroots to be involved in the tasks of collating, processing and disseminating ideas and knowledge about their situation and the environment around them (Balogun 31).

There is no gainsaying, that the music media has on the whole enhanced and emphasized in varying degrees the capacity of music to entertain, inform, educate, rejuvenate frail nerves and minds, energize and embolden the weak, as a therapy to the afflicted in mind and body, as an elixir and franchise for meditation and contemplation of man's universe. Therefore, there are boundless opportunities to be explored, using and utilizing the music media in the pursuit of man's common good and wellbeing.

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