

Review

Promoting peace and culture in Nigerian higher institutions through the use of music education

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Tracing the history of education in Nigerian higher Institutions presents series of student's unrest, riots, cultism, and violence, vandalism of school's properties in reaction to inadequacies and neglect of certain vital elements needed for the smooth running of educational programmes. Music as an art that attracts students of all ages and levels is a cultural ingredient that can be used to create a calm and quiet state that is free from conflict and violence. This paper examined the concept of peace culture and music education. It also highlighted the roles that music education can play in promoting peace culture in the higher education institutions in Nigeria. The significance of this paper is to justify the efficacy of music in reducing violence in higher institutions in Nigeria and to enlighten the populace on the humanistic and aesthetic quality of music education. This will educate and sensitize curriculum planners towards inclusion of music education in all levels of education. This paper also exposes students to the benefit of skill acquisition and other values that are inherent in music learning which could equip them for future purpose. This work will be of benefit to music educators in alerting them on the significance and importance of their work to the humanity.

Key words: Violence, conflict, peace, peace education, music.

INTRODUCTION

Through the ages human beings are known to react against oppression and denial through violence and force (Olugbuyi, 2006). This attitude has always brought further conflict most of the times. Globally, the world has witnessed human conflicts, widespread violence, proliferation of weapons which has sustained the culture of war and violence. This situation has hampered peace and retarded national development. In Nigeria, the trend is the same. The country has witnessed series of outbreaks of ethnic violence, religious extremism, dehumanization and school violence. The purpose of this paper is therefore to project music education as an asset to curb violence in higher institutions of Nigeria. It also examines the role music education can play in schools to

promote peace.

Violence is defined as violent behaviour that is intended to hurt or kill (Hornby, 2006). School violence which is rampant in the higher institution involves all types of violent and deviant behaviors among students. These include rioting, secret cult activities, vandalism, sexual abuse, alcoholism, drug abuse, etc. The issue of these deviant attitudes has reached an alarming proportion to the extent that organizations (government and private) intervene to prevent or minimize it. Deviant behaviour is a social problem in Nigerian higher institutions which most of the time leads to violence. According to Ajayi (1997), it is common knowledge that most deviant behaviors are at best viewed as a form of rebellion against society's

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acceptable standard. It suffices however, to note that such deviant behaviors could be in form of struggle and even rebellion against injustice and dehumanizing conditions of our educational system. In the search for solutions to these problems, education was considered as a useful tool to combat these problems. But it is unfortunate that crisis and violence also lie at the doorpost of this agency of solution. Consequent upon this, there is a need for urgent approaches to promoting a culture of peace and eradicating social unrest and violence in our institutions of learning. This is the thrust of this paper.

Concept of peace

Peace is a term commonly used to describe a state of being calm and quiet (Hornby, 2006); a state of tranquility, free from argument, conflict, violence and disturbances. It is an avenue permeated with attitudes that allow people of all ages and all levels to co-habit in harmony. It is also considered as the development of behaviour that can prevent the occurrence of conflict. Peace is a quality describing a society or a relationship that is operating harmoniously. This is commonly understood as the absence of hostility, or the existence of healthy or newly-healed, safety in matters of social or economic welfare, the acknowledgment of equality and fairness in political relationships and, in world matters, it is a state of being absent of any war or conflict. Reflection on the nature of peace is also bound up with considerations of the causes for its absence or loss, a reflection of nonviolent lifestyle, which also describes a relationship between any people characterized by an absence of disturbance or agitation. Peace can make the world feel like a home. Peace is a state in human relations that implies a sense of community, support of each other and enables freedom of expression of thought. Peace needs functioning channels for communication among people, which can express all emotions and also aggression by not using violence. This would lead to far less division of humanity. Music education and performance not only bring people together in peace, but the spirit that is created by it can set an example, if not a role model, for peace among humankind.

Culture of peace

In 1992, a document of declaration on the culture of peace was proposed by UNESCO as a contribution to the peace building activities of the United Nation System. It was described as comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people. Since then the concept has been used for prevention of violent conflict in situations where such a

potential exists. Quoting from Article I of the UNESCO declaration, which was adopted in September 1999, a culture of peace is described as “a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life based on ideas like respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation and adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations” (UNESCO, 1999). The UNESCO organization continues to work in accordance with the principles adopted in its 1974 recommendation on education for international understanding, cooperation and peace. These principles include among others, understanding and respect for all people, their cultures, civilization, values and ways of life, including domestic ethnic cultures and cultures of other nations. All of the fields of competence of UNESCO, that is, education, science, culture and communication have been engaged in the organizations’ transdisciplinary approach to the culture of peace.

To achieve this culture of peace, Weis (2001) recommends peace education which is a participatory process that develops critical capacities for solutions to the challenge of war, terrorism, economic and racial violence, gender exploitation, environmental damage to be integral to all schools’ curricular. Peace education involves activities that promote knowledge, skills and social conditions that are conducive to peace. According to Mazer (2002), peace education is still a fairly controversial term because some feel that education in general should automatically imply ‘Peace Education’. However, whatever the focus taken, peace education is needed to educate the populace to embrace a culture of peace, such that the youthful energy can be redirected to improve the condition of the human society using peaceful initiatives. According to Olugbuyi (2006), “Peace loving human beings haunt for peace and are generally inclined to living in peace.” The UNESCO document of declaration on a culture of peace (UNESCO, 1999) says, “since wars begin in the minds of men; it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed”.

WHAT IS MUSIC?

Music means different things to different people. It depends on the perspective with which every individual sees music. Music is a phenomenon which is found in every culture. It is a universal language which all and sundry understands amidst ethnic, linguistic and dialectical differences. It appeals to human emotion and sense of reasoning thus helping to reshape or mould people’s character and behaviour. According to Bebey (1975), music has been given a global recognition as one of the best instruments with which human activities can

be piloted. It is an important aspect of man's life, and the culture that governs man. Music is a socializing weapon that is extensively useful in pursuing national identity from the cultural perspective. Music is a living art. As an art, it is man-made and not a scientific discipline to be taught and studied. This is more especially so in Africa where it is part of the Africans' complete life (Faseun, 2005). The Greek rated music as an art that applies to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of a child. It is a cultural phenomenon that could positively or negatively affect human state of being. Plato in his Republic (Book V) wrote: "Literature, music, art (musical education) have a great influence on character. The aim of "musical" education is to inculcate rhythm, harmony and temperance of the soul, and thus developing good moral character. The individual who possesses harmonious soul in a beautiful body stimulates a noble love in others like himself; thus through love of beauty, harmony is increased" (Abeles et al., 1984).

The Greek doctrine of ethos was established on the assumption of the fact that music affects an individual character and that character could be affected in different ways by different kinds of music. Abeles et al. (1984) said: "Music directly imitates the passions or states of the soul – gentleness, anger, courage, temperance and their opposites and other qualities; hence, when one listens to music that imitates a certain passion, he becomes imbued with the same passion; and if over a long time he habitually listens to the kind of music that arouses ignoble passions his whole character will be shaped to an ignoble form".

Nature and scope of music education

Music education includes all deliberate effort to educate people in music. It also means the transferring of the knowledge of music from one person to the other. Such education takes place in the home (informal or traditional) or in the school (formal or academic). According to Ogunwumi (1985), music education is the action of building upon the psychological, physiological and physical bases of the human organisms' natural response to the forces of music. One of the things that schools teach implicitly is that every question has a right answer. Music is different from the other basic disciplines in that it does not reflect a preoccupation with right answers. It tolerates and accommodates the ambiguities with which life is filled. It teaches us to cope with the subjective. In this respect, music is more like life itself; it brings a balance to the curriculum that can help to offset what might otherwise be a distorted view of problem solving in the real world. This was supported by Faseun (2005b) when he writes that music occupies a vital place in the life of the African in general and Nigerian in particular. Every aspect of his life, ranging from birth till death is accompanied with one type of music or the other.

We are surrounded by music every day. If we are content to wallow indiscriminately in the superficiality and banality of popular culture, then there may be no need to study music. But just beneath the surface layer of trivial music, to which we are involuntarily exposed to on a daily basis, there is a wondrous and incredibly diverse realm of profound and engaging music where, once the barriers of unfamiliarity and bias have been stripped away, exquisite beauty and enjoyment are readily accessible to everyone (Microsoft Encarta, 2005). The formal study of music can unlock this gate. It can increase the satisfaction that students derived from music by enabling them to understand and enjoy more sophisticated and complex music. Anyone can "enjoy" music at a rudimentarily level, but sequential study can sharpen students' perceptions, raise their levels of appreciation, and expand their musical horizons.

Music education helps to mould, form and shape a learner. It also helps to develop an individual physically, socially, morally and mentally. Music education also stresses that students should become actively involved in musical study through the common elements approach, through involvement as performers, listeners, and composers and through educational experiences that require their personal interaction, involvement, discovery and interpretation of music of all times, places and cultures (Madamidola, 1995). Music education is presently offered in Nigeria in all levels of education, that is, the pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education levels. The main objective of music at the lower level of education is to assist the child to learn and to realize his physical, social, emotional aesthetic and intellectual potentialities (Adeogun, 2001). Since children's growth is not void of moving their bodies and reacting to sound; music thus provides opportunities for them to do this in creative ways. As they inquire through the use of their senses, their concept of terms like 'slow', 'fast', 'happy', 'sad', 'high', 'low violent' and host of others are expanded and these become part of their language development, which in turn becomes a vehicle of thought that enhances their learning in all areas.

Leeder and Haynie (1964) emphasize the importance of music in the lives of young children in the following words:

Music offers opportunity for listening; creating, singing, rhythmic responses, and playing instruments. Through these activities the child experiences pleasure, joy and creative expression, develops listening skills and auditory discrimination gain in physical development and use of his body ----- The child grows in his appreciation of music and can learn to be discriminating in his choice.

At the intermediate level that is junior secondary school, the aim of music education is to develop the aesthetic potential of the learner to its highest possible level. This is achieved through the primary musical behaviors:

listening, performing and creating (Nnamani and Odunuga, 2005). At the higher education level which comprises college of education, polytechnic and university, music is taught as a discipline. It is studied as a branch of knowledge and skills that are learnt.

Values of music education

Music is a general phenomenon that is peculiar to every society of the world. It forms an integral part of every culture and culture has to do with ideas, beliefs and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a society. However, the significance of music to every culture makes it a significant art that is worthy to be studied at school levels. The vast and unique ability of music to improve the quality of life has too often been under emphasized or overlooked entirely. Music transforms human experience; it brings joy and pleasure to men, women, and children in every society and culture. It brings solace in the ordinary activities of daily life, and it is an indispensable adjunct to our happiest and our solemn occasion. It represents one of the most basic instincts in human beings. Most important of all, music exalts human spirit and it enhances the quality of life.

Nye and Nye (1996) identified major and miscellaneous purposes of musical services in human life and education. According to them, the major purpose is to understand and appreciate aesthetic quality of instruction, transmit cultural heritage and foster creativity. Its miscellaneous purpose is to teach social education, provide worthy recreation, improve physical and mental health, develop intellectual capabilities and to acquire and utilize musical skills (pg12). Historical value is another function of music education. The documentation of important events in the life of a society and the personality involved in the event are recorded for posterity through songs. Songs remind and repeat what had happened in the past.

The teaching and learning of music education makes the students to be more tolerant and open, allows them to express themselves creatively, promotes individuality, reinforces self-confidence and enhances overall academic performance. Music education that is properly planned and well incorporated into the school curriculum builds a school with a high expectation, discipline and academic conscientiousness. It also strengthens student problem-solving and critical thinking skills, which leads to overall academic achievement and success. Music education associated with dances as a component is vital, both to the health of individual nation and to the creation of peace culture. These include ability to think critically to transcend local loyalties and to approach international problems as a citizen of the world. Participation in plays, songs and dance fills student with happiness that can be carried over into the rest of his education. Putnam (2007) asserts that the significance of choral singing goes

beyond music making, and even beyond the arts. He sees group performing as contributing directly to social trust and reciprocity that is the basic of civic engagement.

THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN PROMOTING PEACE

Olugbuyi (2006) states that the education that is for national reconstruction and development is that which brings national reawakening, humanistic, aesthetic and ethnic values and peace in the family, social life, national life and improved international image. Ekwueme (2001) corroborates this that culture of peace cannot be achieved without education of citizens on the skills of how to resolve conflicts constructively, know how to live together, appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity. Section B9 of the UNESCO declaration (UNESCO, 1999) suggests actions that can foster a culture of peace through education. This includes: "reinvigorating national efforts and international cooperation to promote the goals of education for all with a view to achieving human, social and economic development and for promoting a culture of peace. Ensuring that children, from an early age, benefit from education on the values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life to enable them to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and of tolerance and non – discrimination. Expanding initiatives promoting a culture of peace undertaken by institutions of higher education in various parts of the world." Music is especially suitable for this purpose because it possesses cultural, humanistic and aesthetic qualities. According to Earhart (2007), music brings sensitivity, humaneness, harmony, sweetness, purity, unselfishness, nobility into our living. Music performance fosters growth of cooperation. Group activities in which everybody participates teaches harmonizing unity. Listening to music imparts moral discipline because it has a direct influence on the emotional life. Musical activities such as choirs, ensemble groups, bands, and music clubs are usually organized to enrich students' life. Peace culture can only be promoted with a discipline that guarantees the success of the student both inside and outside the school. Several skills are learned through music as a discipline.

Another factor that promotes peace culture is the emphasis that the discipline of musical study has on group participation which helps students learn to work effectively in the school environment. Music is extremely rich in experience in the sense that it develops emotion and aesthetics. It develops performance skills and individual capabilities. Aesthetic potential can be developed through expressing musical experience in vocal and instrumental performance, listening and composition. Through the use of these experiences, students learn the development of resources for worthwhile use of leisure time, the opportunity to participate with peers in a worthwhile group endeavor, resources for enriched home

and community life and the opportunity to discover unusual talent. Music can also be used to propagate peace in the social and educational community by teaching young people songs that border on peace, harmony, law and order. These songs could be in form of school anthems, national anthems, folk songs, art song, popular song and sacred songs. Music education does promote peace culture because it instills in students the habits of mind that last a lifetime; critical analysis skills, ability to deal with ambiguity and solve problems, perseverance and a drive for excellence. Moreover, the creative skills students develop through music carry them forward to new ideas, experiences and challenges with personal satisfaction which has to do with the intrinsic value of the arts.

Music can also be used to unify people of opposing views in order to encourage peaceful co-existence. An example of this is the Kpanlogo music festival that is organized in Ghana yearly by the Ghana Percussive Arts Society (GPAS). The GPAS is the premier chapter in Africa of the music service organisation which has its headquarters in the USA. The GPAS which has an open membership organizes percussive related events in many Ghanaian institutions and communities as well as hosts annual Days of Percussion in collaboration with a number of local non-profits. These events bring performers, teachers, cultural instructors and drum enthusiasts from all over Ghana and beyond to share the arts, network, inspire creativity. Kpanlogo for Peace Percussion and T.I.P. Conference was a celebration of culture, arts, community awareness, and percussion music of Ghana. A week of explosion of percussive music, powerful choreographed and cultural dances, educational theatre, seminars, street performances and more took place at Mankessim in the Central region of Ghana from 7th to 14th September, 2009.

Kpanlogo for Peace Percussion and T.I.P. Conference was a combination of two separate world class community programmes. It is a joint project of the Ghana Percussive Arts Society and the T.E.A.C.H.E.R.S International Project (USA). T.E.A.C.H.E.R.S is an acronym for Teachers Educating All Communities about Health, Environment, Rights and Security. T.I.P. is an International membership organisation for Teachers and Educators with headquarters in USA. Its mission is to collaborate with local communities to organize conferences and seminars aimed at creating awareness about global issues of concern such as health, security, human rights, and environment. Kpanlogo for Peace, as a title theme was used for the second year in a row, having used it last year to reflect the need for peace during the 2008 general elections in Ghana. Culturally, Kpanlogo is a communal music making and dance activity that brings people of all backgrounds together. Kpanlogo ensemble like other ethnic music suites has the ability of creating unity in communities.

According to Prekese (2009), *as the country is ushering*

itself into a smooth transition in a post-electioneering year, tolerance to opposing views and peaceful dispensation of our democratic practices and development is heavily dependent on peace. Kpanlogo, therefore, is a symbolic representative of all Ghana's cultural groupings and the need for unity.

Speaking about how music relates to peaceful democratic pursuits, he said traditional drumming and dance ensemble teaches Ghanaians certain developmental and human relations concepts. Some of the concepts are community building, responsibility, acceptance, leadership qualities, critical thinking skills, tolerance, peaceful co-existence and citizenry skills. He went to say that in a typical performance of an ensemble, the lead drummer who can be likened to the role of a community leader is the one who directs the choreography. To dance well, dancers have to pay attention and follow directions from the master drummer. Members of an ensemble, like citizens of any country, come from different backgrounds but come together during performance to present quality and sterling show to the public. He said in ensemble, every instrument no matter how small is very important.

IMPLICATION FOR THE MUSIC INSTRUCTORS/ EDUCATORS

Going by the propositions from the Tanglewood Symposium (Abeles et.al., 1984), it is incumbent that music instructors should develop audience as well as performers that extend far beyond the school, touching all age groups and segments of the community. Music educators must become more sensitive to social process and take a more vigorous part in directing social change. Educators should help people, whatever their abilities, to make music in everyday life. If people could more readily participate in music from their own and other cultures there would be far less division of humanity.

The emphasis should be on music education rather than just concert performance. This will help the audiences to know and understand the instruments and the contexts in which the music develop. It will also encourage them to join in the singing and teach them to handle and learn to play the instruments. Ekwueme (2001), suggested part of the content of this curriculum to be:

- Listen to recorded music of other ethnic groups;
- Perform/play musical instruments from different ethnic groups;
- Recreate musical ensembles in communal style;
- Sing and analyze music from other ethnic communities;
- Learn to play challenging musical instruments;
- Learn musical elements from composed music;
- Dance different steps from various ethnic areas;
- Learn and discuss different dances in Nigeria, places of

origin, similarities and differences, history and uses;
- Recreate dance steps.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above discussions, it is hereby recommended that:

There is the need to include music education in all levels of Nigerian education. This is to equip students with knowledge and skills that can reduce crime and develop useful activities.

Music education curriculum should include activities that will enhance student's level of aesthetic appreciation and equip them with appropriate aesthetic experiences.

Students should also be allowed to explore, manipulate and experiment with sound. This will give the students opportunity to express their ideas, feelings, emotions, moods through a variety of musical experiences.

The government and the general public should be thoroughly educated and well-informed about several opportunities that students are missing when music as a subject is not available at all school levels.

Music as a subject should be made available in all the schools of the nation. Both government and private sectors should facilitate the production of required facilities needed for musical instruction.

Thorough and meticulous supervision should be made available to the music teachers working in the schools. Lastly, maximum coverage and balanced presentation of all types of Nigerian music should be made accessible in the school.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is evident that embracing peace culture is a solution to violence, strife and unrest in our higher institutions. Music is an asset that could be used to influence youthful character rightly and to curb violence. The type of music one listens to has a level of influence on one's life. Music is part of the world around us, a part of man's physical, emotional and intellectual growth. It features in every occasion and plays an important role in passing information. The main purpose of music education is to provide an atmosphere where students learn to understand, develop and appreciate all kinds of music and develop a positive attitude towards music and its skills. These skills are to keep them busy because 'an idle mind is the devil workshop'.

Musical group activities foster cooperation and harmony, which are the building blocks of peace. Music education is made significant, when individuals learn to achieve certain behaviors, recognize these experiences in themselves and develop attitudes and attention which promote their occurrence, and to understand these experiences both personally and as communion with others.

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