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ART MUSIC AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL AWARENESS: A TEXUAL ANALYSIS OF DAYO OYEDUN'S "NEPA"

Abstract

This paper explores a contemporary Nigerian art music 'NEPA' composed by Dayo Oyedun through a qualitative research approach. The background of the study highlights the significance of art music in Nigerian culture and its role in communicating social experiences to a wider audience. The research problem focuses on the textual analysis of 'NEPA' to understand its content, purpose, and relevance in contemporary Nigeria. The thrust of the study is to examine the changing state of art music audience and the implications of using art music as a tool for social orientation and critique. The methodology involves ethnomusicology approaches such as unstructured interviews, observations, and literary methods to interpret the lyrics and context of the music. "NEPA" is a satirical choral piece that combines Western and African musical forms to convey the composer's intentions. The results of the text analysis reveal themes of frustration with electricity outages and social commentary on daily life in Nigeria. The study highlights the potential of art music to reach a diverse audience and provoke critical reflection on societal issues.

Keywords: Nigerian art music, 'NEPA', Dayo Oyedun, ethnomusicological social discourse, social critique

Introduction

Many scholars, including Olátúnji (2005), Omójolà (2006), Akpakpan (2010), have written extensively on different aspects of Nigerian art music. Omójolà (2006) did an extensive work on the various aspects of Nigerian art music most especially in the Western part of the country.

Art Music is a music composed for performance by a body of trained musicians, usually performed in an auditorium specially designed for purpose, before a clearly designed audience which by mutual understanding is specifically excluded from joining the performance (Euba,

1977). Art music can be said to be a music composed in a classical tradition and intended as serious art, especially as distinguished from popular or folk music. The church was the main channel by which art music was introduced into the Nigerian musical culture (Owojori, 2016).

Music can be classified into sacred and secular. Sacred music comprises of those music works that are meant for religious purposes and worship of deities while secular bothers on non-religious music for example, entertainment, sport, relaxation, politics and education to mention few (Adeoje, 2016). Blacking (1973:88) stated that 'music is a synthesis of cognitive processes which are present in culture and in human body, the form it takes and effects it has on people are generated by the social experiences of human bodies in different environments". With the foregoing statement, Blacking emphasizes that music is one of the most important elements in the human experience of Africans, as Dr. Oyedun, the composer of NEPA had reflected in his various musical works.

Electricity generation in Nigeria started in Lagos in 1886, with the use of generators but it was the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA)-a Nigerian organization that was saddled with generation and distribution of electricity in the country. It was renamed to the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) in the late 2000s, and privatized in 2013. Later The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) which birth to Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC) and other sectors' distributing power in the various states across Nigeria.

This study is significant as it engages art music which was known to be music of aristocrats to communicate to the masses (lower class people). It shows that art music can be embraced by all and sundry as it speaks to their day-to-day social experiences. Also, it is significant as it functions as an instrument of social orientation, correcting ills of both the government and the populace at large.

This paper focused on the textual analysis of the song titled 'NEPA', composed art music by Dayo Oyedun. The objectives include, examining the content of the music, identifying the purpose and relevance of the music in our contemporary Nigeria and to investigate the changing state of art music audience.

Methodology

Although this qualitative research is based on textual analysis of a musical piece, for the sake of proper findings, the study was carried out through the use of unstructured interview, observation and literary methods. Selected Art music concerts where the music was performed were attended. The researcher interacted with the audience and the composer, made personal observations, translated the lyrics of the piece and interpreted the content in context of current realities in Nigeria.

Electricity Issues

There is a shortage of energy, especially electrical energy. It is absolutely necessary to internalize the problem in trying to promote and facilitate the help and assistance to be applied in a bid to solve the problem. Each country should find ways of resolving the problem as deemed fit. The shortage of electrical energy is a fragment of the point of view of many who use electricity day by day. The advantages of electricity are clear to all, and its lack of use generates

a great number of problems for many individuals. Understanding the necessity of electric energy is important. (Tesfa Michael *et al.*, 2020)

Electricity is a commodity necessary for present society. It is indispensable to human activities. Its lack entails quite serious disadvantages, not only for workers, study, commerce, industry, but all facets of livelihood. Nigeria's problems of generation techniques, distribution, and economic exploitation of electric energy have not been solved, in their essential aspects, though studies have been carried out with intelligence, patience, and resourcefulness. The objective of developing communities is to bring benefits to all, in the best manner possible. It is also very important to note that people cannot do everything by themselves and for themselves. Since most individuals need help and may not possess adequate knowledge and set skills required, it is most likely that a single country would not be able to function by itself owing to inadequate resources and goods to satisfy its citizens' necessities.

Impact on Health

Poor electricity supply is a significant obstacle to the well-being of the general public. In areas where power outages are frequent, life can become incredibly challenging, especially during hot weather when air conditioning is essential. The lack of electricity leads to uncomfortable living conditions, causing people to experience suffocation and skin irritations due to the inability to cool down. Additionally, the absence of electricity hinders the operation of essential medical equipment, putting individuals with health conditions at risk..

Healthcare Services

It is indisputable that a lack of electricity or a poor electricity supply can jeopardize healthcare services. Medical laboratories, health centres, hospitals, and clinics rely heavily on a consistent power supply to function effectively. Without adequate electricity, essential medical equipment may not operate as needed, leading to delays in crucial laboratory tests and medical treatments. The frustration of medical professionals working in dimly lit conditions can be overwhelming, impacting their ability to provide quality care to patients. In critical situations, lives may be lost due to the inability to carry out necessary medical procedures without electricity. The importance of a reliable power supply in the healthcare sector cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts the well-being and safety of patients.

Food Safety and Preservation

Electricity plays a crucial role in ensuring food safety and preservation. Without a doubt, a lack of reliable electricity supply can lead to a significant increase in food and farm produce wastage, whether it be in personal or commercial settings. This wastage not only results in financial losses but also poses a serious health risk to consumers. Spoiled food can become a breeding ground for harmful bacteria and toxins, potentially causing food poisoning and other health issues. Therefore, it is essential to address the issue of poor electricity supply to minimize food wastage and protect public health.

Economic Implications

Poor electricity is not only a shame to a community, it cripples their economy. Without reliable electricity, businesses struggle to function efficiently, leading to a decrease in productivity and profitability. In addition, essential services such as hospitals and schools are severely impacted,

affecting the overall well-being of the community. The lack of electricity also hinders technological advancements and access to information, further widening the gap between developed and underdeveloped areas.

Moreover, the unreliable power supply forces many skilled workers to seek opportunities elsewhere, depriving the community of valuable expertise and talent. Overall, the consequences of poor electricity extend far beyond inconvenience, posing significant challenges to the sustainable development and growth of a community.

Loss of Productivity

Productivity would definitely die a natural death without electricity. Industries and industrious minds are being incapacitated where and when electricity is poor. Where there is low or no productivity, inflation and poverty is unavoidable.

Impact on Small Businesses

Productivity would come to a standstill without the presence of electricity. It is the lifeblood of industries and the driving force behind innovative ideas. In places where electricity is scarce or unreliable, the potential for growth and development is severely limited. Without the power to fuel machines and power up computers, businesses are unable to operate efficiently, leading to a decrease in productivity.

This lack of productivity not only affects individual businesses but also has a ripple effect on the overall economy, leading to inflation and an increase in poverty levels. When industries are unable to function at their full capacity, it results in a vicious cycle of economic downturn and social challenges.

Educational Challenges

Educational sectors flourish well when there is good electricity, especially in this digital age where computers and other digital gadgets are involved in learning facilitation. The lack or epileptic electricity is a big challenge to the growth and efficiency of education in every human society. Without a reliable source of power, schools struggle to provide adequate resources for students, hindering their ability to access quality education. This issue not only affects urban areas but also rural communities, where access to electricity is limited. As a result, students in these areas are at a disadvantage compared to their counterparts in well-electrified regions. The importance of stable electricity in education cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts the overall development and progress of a society.

Social and Communication Barriers

A society can face immense challenges when electricity is unreliable or unavailable. The absence of a steady power supply can hinder progress and development in a community. Communication service providers rely heavily on electricity to operate, and any disruptions in the power supply can result in the inability to connect with others. This lack of communication can isolate individuals and make it difficult for essential information to be shared effectively. In such situations, the entire society can feel the impact of inadequate electricity, leading to a breakdown in essential services and connectivity.

An Overview of Electricity in Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the most populous countries in Africa, with a population of over 100 million people. The country, is blessed with considerable natural resources, is also a major exporting nation. Electricity service is a key component for the economic growth of any nation. This paper is an attempt to review the history of electricity development in Nigeria. The paper also presents some of the problems facing the Nigerian electric power industry and offers some suggestions that can help in alleviating at least a small percentage of the problems as they exist today. Finally, discussions on the recent progress in the Nigerian electric power industry and the role of the government in the industry are included.

The quest for electric power supply in Nigeria began in 1886. A small generating set was installed to serve the then crown colony, Lagos. Since then, a lot of water has passed under the bridge. Installed capacity in the country has increased tremendously, from 0.17 MW in 1896 to 26.3 kW in 1929 when another major boost in capacity occurred with the establishment of a government-controlled public utility called Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN). In 1950, the Nigerian government itself initiated direct investment in power when funds of £5 million were provided to the ECN for the commencement of work on the Niger Dam construction. A contract for the provision of plant and equipment to generate power from the installed capacity was awarded to the two joint venture companies then stronger and in a position to guarantee delivery of the power plants. However, after the award was given, a number of unforeseen technical difficulties were encountered which almost discouraged the Niger Dam project, but for the timely intervention of the Nigerian government. The Niger Dam project was completed in 1968. Now, however, the generating company, called the Nigeria Electricity Supply Company (NESCO), has passed on to the subsequent generation who held to utilize the power service in Nigeria and who will accede to Nigeria the complete utilization of all the social services which the National Project can bring. (Okafor et al., 2021)

Originally belonging to the public utilities, electricity generation, transmission, and distribution rights were however taken over by the British Government after 1896 and were vested in the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN) in 1951 by the Electricity Act of 1945. After 40 years of British rule, Nigeria's electricity system was transferred to the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1950. Consequently, a defined edge to the ECN and the Electricity Supply Company (ESC) in the Western, Eastern, and Northern regions.

Electricity is an essential component of how developed societies function today. Economics, medicine, travel, business, politics, and families - everything relies on electricity for a great deal of how we function. With increasing urbanization and the inexorable march of time, the demand for electricity has been on the increase globally. Nigeria took the lead as the first African country to deliver electricity in 1896, shortly after it was first invented and used in the United States of America in 1879.

Awosope (2014) traced the history of NEPA where he stated that "on 1st of April 1972, ECN and NDA merged to form a unified body known as National Electric Power Authority (NEPA) with the actual merging taking place on the 6th of January 1973 when the first manager was appointed."

Current Challenges in the Electricity Sector

Electricity plays a very important role in the socio-economic and technological development of every nation (Samba *et al.*, 2016; 4). This shows that it should raise a concern to all and sundry. Over the years, the establishment has been changing name but their productivity has not improved, rather it is getting worse. In the recent time, increment in tariff has been a nightmare to both government parastatals and common citizens.

NEPA by Dayo Oyedun

'NEPA' is a Yoruba art music composition of a bi-vocational art music composer, Dr Oladayo Sunday Oyedun. Oyedun. His works have been engaged by music scholars within and outside Nigeria. Aside being a medical practitioner and a scholar in Anatomy, he holds a number of professional certificates in music and he is a versatile musician with outstanding skills in composition, piano, organ and conducting.

'NEPA' is a choral excerpt from the work 'University Cantata' by Dayo Oyedun. It is satirical in nature and set in SATB for choir with piano accompaniment.

The music has been performed by various choirs across the country and beyond. Both western and African forms are engaged in the composition to convey the intention of the composer e.g repetition, call and response, polyphony, homophony, canon etc.

TEXT TRANSLATION OF 'NEPA' by Dayo Oyedun

Text		Translation
•	Ah – eh kini mo fi se Nepa to mu na lo la la le o.	What'd I do to offend Nepa that makes him interrupt power supply every night.
•	E fon n la nla ti fe je mi tan o.	Big big mosquitoes have almost finished me.
•	Lai se le won ni kirikiri o.	When not a prisoner at kirikiri.
•	Eh eh be Nepa to mu na lo la la le o.	Appeal to Nepa that interrupts power supply every night.
•	Ina de e ka so si ta o.	Light is restored bring out your clothes.
•	Da ku da ji ni na.	Nepa's light is unstable.
•	Nepa o – o di pi o o – o di pi ah.	It goes off – off off.
•	E te te sa $-$ lo lo.	Make haste.
•	E ya ra o.	Make haste.
•	A e yi ga.	This is serious.
•	Won m'u na lo.	They interrupted power supply.

• Won m'u na lo.	They interrupted power supply.
Ah Nepa atupa ni sa sa t'on.	NEPA it is a lantern just put it on.
• Jo jo jojo – t'on jo le.	Burn burn burnthat burns house.
A a ra ye e wa gbo mi ye ke.	Everyone come and hear me out.
Ohun to ju mi ri ko se fe nu so.	What my eyes have seen can't be uttered.
• Je je ni mo sun lo ri – be di.	Calmly was I asleep on the bed.
Won ni mo la le jo, ni mo ba yo ju.	I was told I had a visitor, so I came out.
Mo ri ki ni o hun o wole to mi,o ti rin ti rin bi opa a je o.	I saw the thing approaching me, it was as thin as a staff of wealth.
O lo un ni oga Nepa o bere iwe ina mo mu ko, o wa fi ye mi pe mo je wo o.	He said he's Mr. NEPA, he asked for NEPA bill, I gave him and he made it known that I'm owing.
O lo un a ja na o, o wa so fun mi "Settle me Settle me".	He said he would disconnect the light and he said to me "Settle me Settle me".
• E ma fun e ma gba o wo e hin.	Don't give him, don't take bribe.
• E je ka ju mo ko o wo e hin.	Let's unanimously reject bribe.
• E ba mi ki lo fun, e ki lo fun.	Help me warn him, warn him.
Ko ma, ko ma ja na mi.	He shouldn't, he shouldn't disconnect my light.
E kilo fun o so gbo.	Warn him – oh – You hear?
E ba mi ki lo kilo.	Help me warn, warn.
O ri mi le, koko.	My head is strong, very strong.
Ko ma ja na yen.	He shouldn't disconnect that light.
Ori mi le bo ba ja na, a gan pa.	My head is strong, if he disconnects the light, He'll be electrocuted.
Bo gun'o po lo bo ba po lo.	If he climbs the electric pole (ladder).
Bo ba ja na.	If he disconnects the light.
Bo ba ka waye.	If he packs the wire.
E san wo ina de de.	Pay electricity fee regularly.

O re, e lo san wo eh.	Friend, go and pay.
• E san wo ina.	Pay electricity bill.
• E ma se ji bi ti.	Don't be dubious.
E je ka tun Nepa.	Let's restore NEPA.
E je ka tun Nepa se.	Let's restructure NEPA.

The music is satirical in nature. The content of the music addresses both the government of the country and the masses. The musical representation of the music is descriptive. It engages words and musical forms to paint the situation of common men in Nigeria.

What have I done to NEPA that makes them interrupt power supply every night.

The composer expresses his state of frustration and helplessness caused by incessant lack of electricity...This has been the lamentation of the masses in Nigeria for decades. With the use of omniscient point of view, the composer goes further to narrate the experience of the masses any night there is no electricity;

"E fon n la nla ti fe je mi tan o." - Big mosquitoes are everywhere creating havoc.

'Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease caused by the plasmodium parasite, transmitted through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. In Nigeria, malaria is endemic, with transmission occurring year-round, particularly in rural communities'. (Punch Newspaper, July 13, 2024).

This is an unpalatable situation of the masses as described by the composer in the music, Nepa. He further used an indirect comparison to depict the dehumanized situation of the masses as they are being compared to inmates at Kirikiri Correctional Centre (Prison). This shows a state of low self-esteem that poor power supply brings upon the people of the land. This is against the said sustainable goal of vision 2030.

A scenario of epileptic power supply was relayed in the music;

"Ina de e ka so si ta o." - Light is restored, bring out your clothes.

This illustrates the frustration encountered by the masses and dry cleaners. Electricity instability hinders them from irony clothes. Obviously, this poses a challenge on the vision 2030. If poverty will be eradicated by then, electricity must be stable.

Molokwu (2010) in Ogbonyomi (2021) submitted that "Poverty is more than the lack of income and resources. Poverty is a state of not being able to do or get what you desire."

Lack of good and stable electricity does not only make the masses poor, it can also make them look poor.

[&]quot;Ah – eh kini mo fi se Nepa to mu na lo la la le o."

"Je je ni mo sun lo ri – be di. Won ni mo la le jo, ni mo ba yo ju. Mo ri ki ni o hun o wole to mi,o ti rin bi opa a je o."

Calmly was I asleep on the bed. I was told I had a visitor, so I came out. I saw the thing approaching me, it was as thin as a "staff of wealth."

The metaphorical description of NEPA official here speaks to the hatred of the masses to field officers that work with the organization and government. What informed their enmity is carefully described in the music. Cases of epileptic power supply, outrageous bills and demand for bribe that is common with NEPA officials.

Invariably, the music speaks to the moral decadence in Nigeria society. The issue of bribery and corruption is declared forbidden in the philosophy of the composer. This is an element of satire in the music. Nationals are encouraged to take their stand against any official who demands for bribe. The music concludes that citizens should endeavor to pay their NEPA bills regularly or at the appropriate time. This would save them from the harassment of any form of extortions.

"E san wo ina" - "Pay electricity bill"

Social Stratification Shift

There is a general notion that African Art music genre is elitist. However, it appears that Dayo Oyedun seems to have changed the narrative through a change of content. This shift according to Mereni (2012) portends that 'the nature of the value of art music is essentially intellectual'. This piece, 'NEPA' has a content that appeals to both literates and illiterate.

This kind of art music attracts beyond concert audience. The notion expressed by Dayo Oyedun in this piece depicts a deviate from the idea expressed by Euba (1977), where he defined 'art music as music composed for performance by a body of trained musicians, usually in an auditorium' This music can be aired on radio just like any other genre of music because it addresses the social realities of common citizens of Nigeria.

It is the experience of the poor or the mass that Dayo Oyedun used as illustrations in the piece as he narrates the frustration of poor and epileptic electricity power supply, the intimidation of NEPA official on the masses, the issue of hatred due to oppression, strive, bribery and corruption of the public servants, counsel to fulfils one's social obligations by paying electricity bill regularly and at the right time and strong warning to the masses to desist from the dubious attitude of by-passing cable and sorts of unlawful act of cheating the government.

Musical Analysis of Nepa of Dayo Oyedun

Composer and Arranger: Oladayo Sunday Oyedun

Year of composition: November, 2008

Length: 163 bars

Medium: SATB and Piano

Key: F major but ended on Bflat major. In order to change texture and mood, the composer engaged not less than five keys. The order of modulation in the music goes thus;

Bar 1 to 52 - F major

Bar 53 to 103 - Eflat major

Bar 104 to 107 - F major

Bar 108 to 111 - Bflat major

Bar 112 to 115 - Eflat major

Bar 116 to 142 - Aflat major

Bar 143 to 146 - A major

Bar 147 to 163 - Bflat major

Rhythmic Structure

Upon review, it's evident that African music showcases intricate rhythmic patterns encompassing both metrical and non-metrical beats, including syncopated and asymmetrical elements. Notably, the time signature of the metric beats comprises simple quadruple (4/4), compound duple (6/8), and compound quadruple (12/8) structures.

4/4 - Bar 1 to 52

6/8 - Bar 53 to 86

4/4 - Bar 87 to 103

12/8 - Bar 104 to 163

Tempo: Varied tempo is used in the composition to sustain listeners' interest and express the content accurately.

Forms: It is thorough composed music. The composer engaged a number of forms within western and African norms, such as call and response, chorus etc.

Harmony: Four part Choral piece

Texture: Monophony, homophony, polyphony, counterpoint. There is use of functional harmony and chromatic chords.

Style: Art form

Scale: The music is on five of western diatonic major scales; Fmajor, Eflat major, Bfalt major, A major and A flat major. However, it must be noted that the motif of this composition established at the entry of the music by the sopranos is on a pentatonic scale; doh, ray, me, soh and lah.



Figure I: Pentatonic scale;

NEPA

DAYO OYEDUN



compositions, particularly the scales he utilizes. Lo-Bamijoko (1985) and Mereni (2004) suggest that "generally, all African tone systems/scales are modal," classifying four distinct types in African music culture: tetratonic (four-notes), pentatonic (five-notes), hexatonic (six-notes), and heptatonic (seven-note) tone systems/scales. Later, the use of six-scale structures in African music was proposed; these include ditonic (two-tones scale), tritonic (three-tones scale), and the other four mentioned by other authors (Adeoje, 2016).



Melodic contour: the melody is tuneful and simple, except from bar 87 - 87 where he engaged speech melody to depict the scenario of NEPA official demanding bribe. There is a transition to smoothly close this section, thus portraying an abrupt ending of this section.



Summary

This paper examined the contemporary Nigerian art music piece 'NEPA' by Dayo Oyedun using a qualitative research approach. The study highlighted the significance of art music in Nigerian culture and its role in communicating social experiences to a wider audience. The textual analysis of "NEPA" aimed to widen human understanding of the contents, purpose and its relevance in contemporary Nigeria, as well as the implications of using art music as a tool for social orientation and critique.

Art music is a classical form of music composed for performance by trained musicians, usually in an auditorium specially designed for purpose. It can be classified into sacred and secular music, with sacred music being religious and secular music being non-religious. Dr. Oyedun, as a composer has many works to his credit.

This study engaged art music-an elitist music to communicate to the masses, demonstrating that it can be embraced by all sundries as it speaks to their day-to-day social experiences.

The study highlighted the potentials of art music to reach a diverse audience and provoke critical reflection on societal issues. The textual analysis of "NEPA" reveals themes of frustration with electricity outages and social commentary on daily life in Nigeria

Recommendations

Art music, like any other genre of music, has the potential to serve as a powerful instrument for social orientation and awareness. It is essential to recognize this potential. By engaging with art music, individuals and communities can gain a deeper understanding of social issues and realities, leading to increased societal consciousness and progress. One notable example of this approach can be found in the work of Nepa by Dayo Oyedun, where art music is used as a means to explore and reflect upon contemporary social conditions. In order to ensure the continued relevance of art music in today's world, it is crucial that composers draw inspiration from recent social developments and incorporate these themes into their compositions. By doing so, they can not only address pressing societal concerns but also create a vital connection between art music and the world in which we live. Additionally, art music works can further enhance and provide rich and multifaceted exploration of the complexities of human society. In this way, art music composers have the opportunity to not only create beautiful and thought-provoking music but also to contribute meaningfully to the broader social discourse.

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APPENDIX

NEPA

DAYO OYEDUN















Photo 1:Dr Oladayo Sunday Oyedun on Piano