

OTAMERE, Osarodion Emmanuel

Classicosas16@gmail.com

&

GABRIEL, A. Simeon

EXAMINING THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC INSTITUTIONS ON TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN BENIN CITY

Abstract

The study delves into the impact of music education on talent development in Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria. The work provides data on how various music institutions such as the Benin Chorale and Philharmonic, Klassique Klob Philharmonic, and X-Factor, among others contribute to the cultivation of musical talents in the city. Through qualitative analysis and case studies, the study explores the methodologies of these music institutions to nurture, foster, and imparts essential skills and knowledge to aspiring musicians. Furthermore, it investigates the capacities of these institutions in providing practical experiences, mentorship, and networking within the musical spectrum of the city. Data is obtained from primary sources such as interviews with industry experts, personal knowledge of the researcher, surveys, observations and Secondary sources such as books, journals, and the internet. The study's findings provide insight into the importance and significance of music education in talent development. It also offers recommendations for enhancing music appreciation and literacy in the city and beyond.

Keywords: *Music Education, Talent Development, Benin City, practical music, educational strategy, performance.*

Introduction

Benin City, the capital of Edo state Nigeria, is home to several choral and instrumental ensembles which serve as a proof that music holds a special place in lives of the inhabitants. It is also an indication of how music reflects the rich cultural heritage of the region. Benin City amongst other reasons is popular for its historical value to Nigeria and Africa at large dating from pre-colonial days to the arrival of the colonial masters. It houses one of the most popular kings in West Africa-‘The Oba of Benin’. The seat of the Oba of Benin serves as both administrative and spiritual purposes. The Oba is seen by his subjects as a god king. In the pre-colonial era, his empire stretched to other parts of southern Nigeria, Ghana and Ivory Coast. At

present, the city is a conglomerate of four local Government areas which includes; Oredo, Ikoba-Okha, Egor, Ovia south-east with Benin language as the predominant language of the people.

Musically, the city has produced notable musicians like Victor Uwaifo, Rema, Shallipopi and Majaek Fashek among others who remain a treasure to the nation at large. The melodies and rhythms that the city produces are not just forms of entertainment but are integral to the social, spiritual, cultural fabric of the people. From folk to contemporary genres, music is interwoven in the daily routine of her people, serving as a means for story-telling, celebration and expression.

The role of music institutions in Benin City has become increasingly important and significant owing to their contribution in talent development. These institutions range from formal music schools to community ensembles, providing a well-structured environment for breeding musical talents. Institutions such as the Benin Chorale and Philharmonic, *Klassique Klob*, Benin City Chorale, Rehearsal House, Nigeria and *Starz* Ensemble have emerged as pivotal platforms for nurturing talents, offering a variety of opportunities for participants to hone their talents. They offer a blend of theoretical and practical experience essential for comprehensive music education.

This paper examines the benefits of music institutions on talent development in Benin City, focusing on appraising the efforts and methodologies of these institutions. Despite the valuable contributions of music institutions, there remains a noticeable gap in structured music education and talent development. Many aspiring musicians still lack access to formal music training, mentorship, and practical experiences, which are essential for their growth and development. The absence of these elements hinders the development of potential talents and limits their opportunities for advancement,

Music institutions in Benin City, such as the Benin Chorale and Philharmonic, *Klassique Klob* Philharmonic, Benin City Chorale are attempting to bridge this divide by providing education, mentorship, and practical experiences that are crucial for the holistic development of musicians. The institutions play vital roles in identifying and nurturing talent from a young age, offering structured curricula, diverse performance opportunities, and access to experienced mentors, thereby creating an environment conducive for learning and growth. While these efforts are commendable, there is a need for a comprehensive appraisal of their methodologies to understand their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

Evaluation of methodologies employed by these institutions, their effectiveness in nurturing and developing musical skills, and potential ways for improvement were carried out through qualitative analysis of case studies. The qualitative analysis pointed out that these institutions provide practical knowledge, mentorship, and networking opportunities within their given capacities. It also highlights the significant contributions of music education to individuals and community development in Benin City. The study offers recommendations for enhancing their impact.

Music Education, Talent Development and Technological Innovation

Music education has long been recognized for its multifaceted benefits, including cognitive, emotional, and social development. Hallam (2010) highlights that engaging in music education

can significantly enhance a range of cognitive skills, including memory, attention, and problem-solving abilities. This cognitive enhancement is linked to the complex processing involved in reading music, playing an instrument, and understanding musical structures. Studies have shown that music education can enhance academic performance, improve language skills, and foster creativity. Schellenberg (2004) demonstrated that children who received music lessons scored higher on IQ tests compared to those who did not, indicating a direct correlation between musical training and intellectual development. Furthermore, musical activities, such as learning to play an instrument or singing in a choir, have been associated with improved linguistic abilities, including phonological awareness and reading skills (Tierney & Kraus, 2013). Music education also provides a fertile ground for creativity, encouraging students to explore and express their ideas in novel ways (Rauscher & Hinton, 2011).

Music education serves as a vital tool for both personal development and the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. Benin City, renowned for its rich cultural history and vibrant artistic traditions, finds in music education a significant means to maintain and celebrate its unique cultural identity. Traditional music and instruments, such as the "*Ema*" drum and "*Egogo*" bell, are integral to the cultural fabric of the region. Through music education, younger generations can learn about their cultural heritage, ensuring that traditional music forms and practices are preserved and passed down.

In addition, music education in Benin City fosters community cohesion and social development. Participating in musical ensembles and performances can build a sense of communal shared purpose, bridging generational and social divides. This communal aspect of music education aligns with the broader social functions of music in many African cultures, where music is often a collective activity embedded in social and ceremonial events (Arom, 2004).

Music Institutions and Talent Development

Globally, music institutions play a pivotal role in nurturing talent by providing structured learning environments, resources, and opportunities for performance. These institutions serve as the backbone of musical education, offering students access to skilled instructors, diverse musical instruments, and facilities that support both individual practice and group collaboration.

According to Okafor (2005), music institutions in Nigeria have been instrumental in developing local talents and promoting cultural exchange. They offer a blend of theoretical and practical training, which is essential for comprehensive musical education. This dual approach ensures that students not only understand the technical aspects of music theory, such as notation, harmony, and music history, but also gain hands-on experience in performance, composition, and improvisation. In addition to providing formal education, music institutions often host workshops, master-classes, and seminars led by renowned musicians and educators. These events expose students to a variety of musical styles and traditions, broadening their musical perspectives and inspiring creativity. They also provide valuable networking opportunities, enabling aspiring musicians to connect with industry professionals and peers.

Music institutions frequently organize concerts, recitals, and competitions, which are crucial for talent development. These performance opportunities allow students to showcase their skills, gain confidence, and receive constructive feedback from audiences and judges. Such experiences are invaluable in preparing students for professional careers in music, as they learn to handle stage presence, performance anxiety, and audience engagement.

In Benin City, music institutions play a crucial role in preserving and promoting the region's rich musical heritage. Institutions like the University of Benin and other local ensembles offer programs that integrate traditional and contemporary music education. This integration ensures that students are well-versed in the diverse musical traditions of Nigeria, from indigenous folk music to modern Afrobeat, thereby fostering a deep appreciation for their cultural roots while equipping them with the skills needed to innovate and adapt in a globalized music industry. These institutions often collaborate with cultural organizations, government agencies, and international bodies to promote cultural exchange and global awareness. Through such collaborations, students have opportunities to participate in exchange programs, international festivals, and cross-cultural research projects, enriching their educational experience and promoting Nigerian music on the global stage.

Methodologies in Music Education

Effective music education methodologies encompass a combination of individual instruction, ensemble performance, and theoretical studies. This multifaceted approach ensures that students develop a comprehensive understanding of music, integrating technical proficiency, collaborative skills, and theoretical knowledge.

Individual instruction is a cornerstone of music education, providing students with personalized attention and tailored feedback. One-on-one lessons allow instructors to focus on each student's specific strengths and areas for improvement, fostering technical skill development and expressive capabilities. This individualized approach is particularly effective for mastering instruments and vocal techniques, as it allows for detailed guidance on posture, finger placement, breath control, and other critical aspects of performance (Lehmann & Davidson, 2002).

Ensemble performance, whether in orchestra, bands, choirs, or smaller chamber groups, is equally crucial. Playing or singing in an ensemble teaches students essential skills such as listening, blending, synchronizing, and leading. It also fosters a sense of community and teamwork, as students must work together to achieve a cohesive and harmonious performance. Ensemble participation enhances musicality, as students learn to interpret and express music collectively, responding to the dynamics and phrasing of their peers (Goolsby, 1997).

Theoretical studies form the backbone of a well-rounded music education. Understanding music theory, history, and analysis enables students to appreciate the structural and contextual aspects of music. Knowledge of scales, chords, harmony, rhythm, and form allows students to comprehend and create music more deeply and analytically. Theoretical studies also include ear training and sight-reading, which are fundamental for developing aural skills and musical literacy (Pembroke, 1991).

The use of modern technology and innovative teaching techniques has been highlighted as crucial in engaging students and enhancing learning outcomes. Technological tools, such as music notation software, digital audio workstations, and interactive apps, provide new avenues for teaching and learning. These tools can facilitate composition, arrangement, recording, and playback, making the learning process more interactive and accessible (Barrett, 2014).

Innovative teaching techniques, such as flipped classrooms, project-based learning, and gamification, also play a significant role. Flipped classrooms, where students learn theoretical content online and apply their knowledge in practical settings during class, can maximize

instructional time and foster deeper understanding. Project-based learning encourages students to undertake comprehensive projects, integrating various aspects of their musical education and promoting creativity and critical thinking (Elliott & Silverman, 2014).

Methodologies

In Benin City, music institutions have adopted diverse approaches to cater for the needs of their students. These institutions blend traditional and contemporary methodologies to create a rich educational environment. For example, the integration of indigenous music practices with modern pedagogical techniques ensures that students receive a holistic education that respects and preserves cultural heritage while embracing innovation. The methodologies employed by music institutions in Benin City are diverse and tailored to meet the needs of individual learners. For instance, the Benin Chorale and Philharmonic focus on choral singing and orchestral performance. The use of modern teaching aids, such as digital music software and online tutorials, has also enhanced the learning experience, while Klassique Klobb Philharmonic choir and orchestra emphasizes solo performances and ensemble work.

Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on the constructivist theory of education as developed by John Dewey in 1938 although originally propounded by Jean Piaget. According to the University of Buffalo (<https://www.buffalo.edu/catt/teach/develop/theory/constructivism.html>), Constructivism is a theory of learning that posits that individuals construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiences and reflection on those experiences. It emphasizes the role of learners in building their own understanding (McLeod 2024). This theory is particularly relevant to music education, where active engagement and experiential learning are crucial for skill acquisition and artistic development. Music education requires more of a student-based approach.

Key Principles of Constructivism

1. **Active Learning:** Constructivism emphasizes that learning is an active process. Learners are encouraged to engage with the materials, ask questions, and apply their knowledge in practical settings. In music education, this translates to active participation in playing instruments, composing music, and performing in front of audiences. Institutions like the Benin Chorale and Philharmonic and Klassique Klob Philharmonic encourage students to actively participate in music-making, from rehearsals to live performances. This hands-on approach helps students develop practical skills and confidence.
2. **Building on Prior Knowledge:** Constructivism suggests that new learning builds on prior knowledge. In music education, students bring their own musical experiences and understanding to the learning process. Educators can connect new concepts to these prior experiences, making learning more meaningful and relevant. In Benin City, directors in these institutions build on students/participants existing knowledge and skills, introducing new concepts that enhance their musical understanding.
3. **Social Interaction:** Constructivist theory holds that social interaction plays a key role in the learning process. Collaboration and discussion with peers and mentors help learners construct

their understanding. Music institutions in Benin City, through ensemble performances, group projects, and mentorship, provide ample opportunities for social learning.

4. Real-World Context: Learning is most effective when it is situated in a real-world context. Music education in Benin City benefits from this principle by offering students opportunities to perform in public, participate in competitions, and engage with the local music community.

5. Reflection: Reflection is a critical component of constructivist learning. Students are encouraged to think about what they have learned, how they have learned it, and how it applies to other contexts. Music students might reflect on their performances, practice sessions, and feedback from instructors to continuously improve their skills.

Constructivist theory supports the idea that talent development in music is a dynamic, ongoing process. By actively engaging with music, building on prior knowledge, collaborating with others, performing in real-world contexts, and reflecting on their experiences, students in Benin City's music institutions can construct a robust foundation for their musical careers. This theoretical framework underscores the importance of providing students with diverse, meaningful, and practical learning experiences that contribute to their overall development as musicians.

Case Studies

Benin Chorale and Philharmonic

The Benin Chorale and Philharmonic is renowned for its rigorous training programs and high standards of performance. Interviews with students revealed that the institution's emphasis on discipline and teamwork has been crucial in developing their musical abilities. The choir's structured rehearsals and frequent performances at state events provide students with practical experience and exposure to large audiences, which are invaluable for their professional growth. This institution also fosters a strong sense of community and collective effort among its members, which is reflected in their cohesive and powerful performances.

Benin City Chorale

The Benin City Chorale focuses on vocal training and choral excellence, offering specialized programs for different vocal ranges and styles. The institution places a strong emphasis on classical and contemporary choral music, providing students with a diverse repertoire. Through regular concerts and competitions, the Benin City Chorale offers its members significant exposure and performance experience. Students have reported that the choir's intensive rehearsal schedules and professional coaching have been instrumental in refining their vocal skills and boosting their confidence.

Klassique Klob Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra

Klassique Klob Philharmonic offers a unique approach to music education, combining traditional methods with modern technology. The institution's focus on individualized instruction and personalized learning plans has been effective in addressing the specific needs of students. Alumni have highlighted the importance of the institution's mentorship programs, which pair students with experienced musicians who provide guidance, support, and career advice. This

mentorship enables students to progress at their own pace and explore a wide range of musical styles and techniques.

Starz Ensemble

Starz Ensemble is notable for its innovative approach to ensemble performance, emphasizing contemporary music and cross-genre collaborations. The institution encourages students to engage in experimental projects, combining traditional African music with modern genres like jazz, and pop. It often incorporates choral music and comedy. This approach not only broadens the musical horizons of the students but also fosters creativity and originality. Starz Ensemble frequently collaborates with local artists and organizes public performances, providing students with ample opportunities to showcase their talents and gain real-world experience.

El Excess Chorale

The institution places a strong emphasis on classical and contemporary choral music, providing students with a diverse repertoire. Through regular state performances, El Excess Chorale offers its members significant exposure and performance experience. Students have reported that the choir's intensive rehearsal schedules and professional coaching have been instrumental in refining their vocal skills and boosting their confidence. They are exposed to cross-genre performances.

XFactor music Enterprise

XFactor is a renowned band in Benin City known for its dynamic performances and innovative music style. The band integrates a variety of music genres, including pop, rock, and Afrobeat, appealing to a wide audience. One unique method used by this ensemble is learning by rote as a way of helping the musicians to develop their aural abilities. Mentorship is a core policy of this ensemble. XFactor serves as a practical learning platform for aspiring musicians in Benin City, offering workshops and master classes led by band members. These sessions focus on live performance techniques, stage presence, and audience engagement. Students benefit from observing and participating in the band's rehearsals and performances, gaining first-hand experience in the music industry.

Findings

Findings of this study indicate that music institutions in Benin City play a vital role in talent development. These institutions provide comprehensive training, practical experiences, and mentorship, which are essential for nurturing musical talents. The rigorous training programs, emphasis on discipline and teamwork, and opportunities for performance and exposure contribute significantly to the students' development.

Additionally, the integration of modern technology in teaching methodologies has enhanced the learning experience, making it more interactive and accessible. The case studies demonstrate that personalized instruction and mentorship are particularly effective in addressing individual needs and fostering professional growth. However, the study also highlights the need for improved funding and infrastructure to further enhance the impact of music education in the city. Increased investment in music institutions would enable the expansion of programs, acquisition of better facilities and instruments, and provision of more opportunities for students. This, in turn, would contribute to the continued development and promotion of musical talent in Benin City.

Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis of music education methodologies and institutions in Benin City reveals the pivotal role these institutions play in nurturing and developing musical talent. Through case studies of the Benin Chorale and Philharmonic, Benin City Chorale, Klassique Klob Philharmonic, Starz Ensemble, El Excess Chorale, and XFactor, it is evident that a combination of rigorous training programs, personalized instruction, and modern technological aids significantly enhances the learning experience and outcomes for students. These institutions provide a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical experience, emphasizing discipline, teamwork, and performance excellence. The integration of digital music software and online tutorials further modernizes the teaching methods, making music education more interactive and accessible. Personalized mentorship and exposure to real-world performance settings have proven to be particularly effective in fostering individual growth and professional development. Enhanced financial support would allow these institutions to expand their programs, improve facilities, and provide more opportunities for students. This would ensure the continued growth and promotion of musical talent in the region. Lastly, music education in Benin City, supported by dedicated institutions and innovative methodologies, not only contributes to individual development but also plays a significant role in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the region. With adequate investment and resources, these institutions can further elevate their impact, nurturing the next generation of musicians and fostering a vibrant cultural landscape in Benin City.

References

- Arom, S. (2004). *African polyphony and polyrhythm: Musical structure and methodology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Euba, A. (1975). Yoruba Drumming: The Dundun Tradition. *Bayreuth African Studies Series*. 21-22. ISSN 0178-00ISSN 0178-0034
- Barrett, J. R. (2014). *The Musical Experience: Rethinking Music Teaching and Learning*. Oxford University Press.
- Barrett, M. S. (2014). *Collaborative Creative Thought and Practice in Music*. Ashgate Publishing.
- Elliott, D. J., & Silverman, M. (2014). *Music Matters: A Philosophy of Music Education*. Oxford University Press.
- Goolsby, T. W. (1997). Assessment in Instrumental Music. *Music Educators Journal*, 84(1), 17-24.
- Hallam, S. (2010). The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people. *International Journal of Music Education*, 28(3), 269-289.
- Lehmann, A. C., & Davidson, J. W. (2002). *The Psychology of Music Performance*. Academic Press.

- Pembroke, R. G. (1991). The Effect of Vocal Models on Pitch-Matching Accuracy of Children in Kindergarten and First Grade. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 39(3), 198-205.
- Ogunrinade, D. O. (2013). Challenges and prospects of music education in Nigerian schools. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 3(2), 127-135.
- Okafor, F. C. (2005). *Music in Nigerian Society*. Enugu: New Generation Books.
- Rauscher, F. H., & Hinton, S. C. (2011). Music instruction and its diverse extra-musical benefits. *Music Perception*, 29(2), 215-226.
- Schellenberg, E. G. (2004). Music lessons enhance IQ. *Psychological Science*, 15(8), 511-514.
- Tierney, A., & Kraus, N. (2013). Music training for the development of reading skills. *Progress in Brain Research*, 207, 209-241.
- University of Buffalo (2024)
(<https://www.buffalo.edu/catt/teach/develop/theory/constructivism.html>),
assessed, 19th June, 2024

Interview

DR. NDIFRKE AKWAOWO (personal interview 16th July 2024)

XFACTOR MUSIC ENTERPRISE

Dr. Ndifreke is the Director of the Xfactor Music Enterprise

. He is also a lecturer at the Department of Music, University of Benin, Benin City.

Mr. Gabriel Simeon (personal interview 27th June 2024)

THE BENIN CHORALE AND PHILHARMONIC

Mr. Gabriel is a violinist at the Benin chorale and Philharmonic. He is also the acting Director of the Benin institute for Musical Arts. (BIMA)