

## **THE ROLE OF THE MUSIC EDUCATOR IN NATION BUILDING**

### **Abstract**

Music continues to be used for extra-musical purposes, and as music educators we continue to be exhorted to use music to support other ideas, such as nationalism, citizenship and religion. Speculation about the role of music in the evolution of culture supports the view that the capacity for music was expressed early within each individual in every culture of the world and this is a consequence of its usefulness in behavior and inter-generational transmission that exploits its potential given the manner in which modern human societies conduct themselves. This study examines the roles of the music educator in building a nation worthy of emulation as well as its significant implication for the way we educate our young, both informally in the home and in the more formal setting of school.

### **Introduction**

#### **Objectives of the study**

Over the years, a lot have been written about the roles of music in the development of a nation, its function in moving a society forward have also been discussed amongst music scholars. If the world could be taught the art of civilization through educators, philosophers, historians it means then that the personnel through which music education is taught to people (the music educator) could help in teaching the world the many benefits embedded in music education. Mereni in a (Manuscript) on “The Origin of Classical Music Theory in the Antiquity- the Primacy of African [Egypt]” (2016) quoted Plutarch, the great historian and philosopher of the early late antiquity wrote that before the coming of the Pharaoh’s (king of the Egyptian empire), Egypt was ruled by gods. One of the earliest [if not the first] by name Oasiris was recorded as teaching the world the art of civilization with his music and fine discovery. Just like the National Policy on Education (1998) emphasizes the importance of music education which is to inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, arts and playing with toys. Music has the capacity for emotional expression, entertainment, communication, enforcing attitudinal changes, group cohesion and social integration.

Specifically, the roles being played by the music educator in nation building is however germane to this present study. This study therefore examines as part of its objective the roles of education as well as music education and the function of music from the perspective of the music educator is also discussed. Furthermore, **the methodology** used is an opinion-based paper supported by literature gotten from the library.

Music is one of the important manifestations of any society’s cultural heritage providing an outlet for creativity, self-expression of noble thoughts and feelings. Fisher (1964) states that for music, to be acceptable as a factor in the traditional sense, it cannot afford to abdicate its position as part of culture in order that it may be enthroned as entertainment, it is in this sense that Ihekweazu (1985:15) in Nosiri (77) posits that the purpose of music is to enable man understand his past and contribute to the shaping of the present and the future; Ihekweazu, maintains that man expresses and documents himself, his feelings, hopes, aspirations, disappointments, sufferings and joys through the various

media of the arts, such as music. Hence, music should not be isolated in any culture of the world that strives for some kind of development.

However, there is a strong connection between music and education, hence, their impact on nationbuilding, plans, policies and programmes cannot be overemphasized. Music and education constitute a highway for exploring the emotional and practical dimensions of any society. Referring to education in general, Molnyar advocates that "one should never lose sight of the interests and possibilities of true education whose task is, and always will be, the perfecting of the intellect, and the acquisition of genuine culture." Darvey (1966:10) maintains that education is the process of transforming the quality of experience to enable the individual to partake in the interests, purposes and ideal prevalent in the social group. If education is necessary for the achievement of intellect, then one should be able to relate the past to the present bringing out the benefits embedded in tradition, which is exactly what music is most capable of achieving when taken seriously in educational context. Further -more, Onwuka (1975: 102) views education as the process of relating the individual to society, so as to secure the development of personality and social welfare. Durkhem (1995: 19) describes that education is nothing but 'organizing the individual self and social self, the 'I and We', into a disciplined, stable and meaningful unity'. It concerns itself with what makes a man live and function i.e. all round development of man. Education is also seen as the modification of human behavioral patterns to integrate themselves into the existing code of conduct as integral part of the total system of ideas, knowledge, law, philosophy, values, moral and belief system that constitute the cultural content of the society they belong to. Eya (2000) defines education as the major pivot on which the orbit of any society rotates, it is seen as the sum total of processes by which a community or a group of people whether small or great transmits its acquired power and aims with a view to securing its continuous existence or growth.

In furtherance to this, Ozongwu (1999) sees education as the process of making the learner share in the evolved pattern of his culture; a formal process by which the elders or rulers select and transmit patterns of behavior of their choice. Onyiuke (2011) reasons that education remains a human creation for human purpose; hence the relevance for music education in human development cannot be overemphasized. With this in mind, Onyiuke itemize four basic senses for the term music education with regards to David Elliot (2009a: 32). That education in music involves the learning of music making and music listening; education about music involves teaching and learning formal knowledge about music. For example, music making, music listening, music history and music theory; education for music may be taken in two ways- either teaching and learning as preparation for a career as performer, composer, historian, critic, researcher or teacher; and education by means of music overlaps with the first three senses each can be carried out in direct or indirect relation to goals such as improving one's health, mind and soul. These four senses according to Onyiuke are the nature of music education, primary values of teaching, and the learning process of music education.

To support this view, Ajewole (2011:169) explains what music education is in the work of Schwardron (1967:5), which states that music education is when succeeding generations are assisted in becoming critically intelligent about musical styles and forms, about the organization and design of

sound and about the social, emotional, and physical phenomena which characterize music as an art form. Music is categorically seen as an indispensable national phenomenon, an important part of all human beings.

Ifemesia (1987) adds that music education has been flourishing by direct and indirect instructional situations which mainly depend on practical teaching and learning by doing or listening by doing, observation and participation, as by oral transmission, listening and reproduction. Fisher (1963) explains that culture can be transmitted through education, stating also that "Education and culture are meaningless if teachers and students do not assert their convictions by advocating philosophies, artistic forms, and lines of research that are based on dedicated interest. And within the framework of rationality, they must oppose other systems, styles, or methods. Education and culture are not supermarkets where everything may be bought. One must always be suspicious of those who insist on embracing the whole world, who have no criteria for discrimination, who 'sell' education with the advertising slogan "You name it, we teach it." The coda which Molnyar (1962) attaches to his observation is in a footnote attributed to Hutchins of Chicago: "Educators do things that the public wants in order to get support of the public. They do little to explain to the public why it should not want the things it does."

#### **Statement of Problems:**

As a conclusion this excurs on education, I would add that each discipline has its education. This, we talk about arts education, science education etc. We also have music education about which personnel the paper discusses. No paper has highlighted in Nigeria what the music educator should do; there is no known prescriptive study on what the music educator should do in terms of helping to build the nation. Some authors in music have revealed the importance of music education which this study itemized. The definition of the role of music educator is lacking.

#### **Function of the Music Educator**

Music education is an area in musicology that is in high demand. It is actually meant for those who love the teaching profession most especially the teaching of music; it is a quite rewarding profession. Music education has been one of the noblest professions over the years, as nearly every professional musician of all time has been taught by an educator. Just think about every single, commercial, member of an entire symphonic orchestra, and even the so called rock band you have ever encountered: somewhere along the path of that musician who made the music you are encountering was a thoughtful music educator who helped that musician get to where he or she is now. Although you could make an argument that there are dozens of types of music educators, and that many choir directors, instrumental clinicians, and administrators are also music educators.

It is the function of the music educator , that is the one who provides education through music to ensure that music serves the purpose not just of entertaining us or teaching music, but also of building a nation that is worthy of emulation and part of the function of music which the music educator enforces is revealed in the works of Merriam (1964) which states that music is a universal human behavior, a defining trait of man having the following functions; emotional expression, Aesthetic enjoyment, entertainment, communication, symbolic representation, physical response, enforcing

conformity, validation of social institutions and religious rituals, contribution to the continuity and stability of cultures, as well as contribution to the integration of the society.

Gaston (1968) supports Merriam and also gives a list of eight fundamental considerations of the musical experience namely: the need for aesthetic expression and experience, the cultural matrix determine the mode of expression, music and religion are integrally related, music is communication, music is structured reality, music is derived from the tender emotions, music is a source of gratification and the potency of music is greatest in the group. If music education is to mean anything, the music educator has a task or he or she is obliged to make the pupils sensitive to the beauty that resides in the great art of the past, to make the pupils musically literate so that they may discriminate in the present, and to inspire them that they may perform, or hear, or create the music of the future. At the same time, the responsibility lies on the music educator to fight the glacial encroachment of commercialism, exploitation, and despoliation that threatens to engulf the music profession (fisher, 1963).

If it is necessary for us to sugar-coat pills with which we maintain the good health of our classes, let us make sure that we do not feed the sugar diabetics we find in them. I take it that education is not only an act of conservation but also a process of exploration ever searching for wider and wider mental horizons. AmeCessaire, in the work of Nosiri (81), explains that education is living thing and spontaneous if it is inspired by cultural foundation of the people who it seeks to serve. In the work of Olusoji (2013), Plato was quoted in his book *'The Republic'*, speaking of the Old Athenian education about 450 B.C'. He said:

Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other because rhythm and harmony find their way into the secret places of the soul, on which they might fasten imparting grace and making the soul graceful of him who is rightly educated.

The crucial word in Plato's postulation to the end of music education is "rightly" (in "rightly educated") for Plato in his republic or laws prescribed what he believed to be the right type of music for the educand. This kind of music is appreciated in Nigeria, as contained in the National policy of education earlier mentioned. The curriculum also emphasizes need for each child in the nation to have a good knowledge of music.

While Reimer (1970) opined that:

Until music education understands what it really has to offer, until it is convinced of the facts that it is necessary rather than a peripheral part of human culture, until it "feels in its bones" that its value is a fundamental one it will not have attained the peace of mind which is the mark of maturity (p. 3).

Olusoji (2013) therefore emphasized the importance of music as an integral and indispensable part of ancient civilizations and contemporary societies.

### **Function of Music in a given society for nation building**

Dewey is of the view that the child is not, educationally speaking to be led through the epoch's of the past, but is said to be led by them to resolve complex culture into simple factors, and understand the

forces which have produced the present (op.cit.1966: 241). In a study conducted by Heller and Athanasulis (2002), Wendrich (1981) explained that the development of the human brain in the first few months after birth is illuminating; that the three to six-month-old infants could perceive differences in sung pitches but they lost this ability by age three if no specific practice took place in the intervening times. Nash (1997) added that, if synapses that are developed for music are not used they atrophy. The importance of consistent and repeated preschool and primary school music activities is strengthened by Nash's report that "the numbers of synapses (microscopic connections) between nerve fibres continue to form throughout life, but they reach their highest average densities at around the age of two and remained at that level until the age of ten and eleven. What wires the brain is repeated experience."

To further support this assertion, Begley in Heller and Athanasulis (2002) stated that when children exercise cortical neurons by listening to classical music, they are strengthening circuits used for Mathematics. Hence, the essence of music in the life of a child does not only help in developing musical skills alone, but other subjects that are taken by the child in the school, it is no wonder, Ndubuisi and Nweke (2015) reveals that music has since ages been recognized in the didactic programme in the world. Since the pharonic Egypt (in our own Africa) and through Greece: in fact in Ancient Rome, the Minister for education and culture – Martianus Cappella – issued a Ministerial order decreeing music as one of the quadrivial (four) Mathematical subjects (disciplines). The quadrivial subjects comprised music, mathematics, physics and geometry: These four disciplines were obligatory in all institutions of higher learning. All the men of science and letters – philosophers, physicists, mathematicians – not omitting the musicians themselves – since the era of the Egyptian Pharaohs in the B.C years, through Greece and Rome, through the middle ages till the beginning years of our own 20<sup>th</sup> century, enjoyed and benefited, to varying degrees, from music education. Music is still recognized in the curriculum of studies till today. And as a discipline of study, it has the same dignity as that implicitly recognized for linguistics, science, history, geography and the social sciences.

Some government of the world recognizes the importance of music so much that Zell Miller the former lieutenant governor of Georgia understood the importance of classical music for children's mental development, he ordered that each school in the state should give every child at the primary school level a daily dosage of this music as well as the distribution of a CD of Mozart's music to every baby born in Georgia and the formage of a cottage industry of music recordings designed to make infants smarter were enjoyed by the citizens. Presumably, the underlying rationale was that if the short-term exposure to music in infancy- when the brain plasticity is greatest it might facilitate neural connections that could have long-term impact, hereby producing individuals who in return will strengthen her nation economic output.

To corroborate these assertions, the Government of Nigeria made appropriate recommendations for the inclusion of the Arts in the school curriculum and Music is part of that Art, here, the music educator exposes the different types of music in Nigeria. Basically, there are two types of music in Nigeria; the first is the School/Art/Classical music: this includes the learning of music theory that

helps a child to understand all the patterns, forms and styles used in music writing. Secondly, the Indigenous music: these consist of the cultural music and traditional folk music. The cultural music is used in serious cultural traditions, like swearing oaths, performing rituals, festivals and other religious activity for spiritual growth. The traditional folk music are used for social feasts and not festivals, this type of music was developed into the folk music and the neo-traditional music which is known as the popular music such as highlife, reggae, rap, gospel and the whole lots that were influenced by the Americans. From all these forms of music, the music educator is in a better place to expose the benefits embedded in this music. This will lead to kind of development that the nation desires.

Talking about the concept of nation building, Onyike (2011:108) explains it as the ability of a country to improve the social welfare of the people, by providing social amenities like quality education, pipe-borne water, adequate security, food, life and finances. The increase in the general welfare of the people which ranges from cultural and spiritual attainments to personal dignity and national esteem are fulfilled when a nation is being built gradually. Music has been seen to serve as a yardstick through which development are attained in a nation. In the work of Adeogun (2009) reveals that no culture who has reached its peak is without music in whatever form the music is. Ajewole in the work of Adesokan (1997:1) states that music enriches the intellect, helps in skills acquisition and competence, helps in the development of values, attitudes and the repair of the human minds. Through music the nation is able to control certain groups with the nation. Music regulates, sustains and preserves the various institutions within the nation (Ajewole, 2011: 169).

Conclusively, the relevance of music to nation building is further underscored by the emergence of numerous music societies, recording industries, music broadcasting, night clubs, hotels and the consequent vocationalization of musical practices thus promoting social integration and cultural tolerance (Idolor, 2002 in Nosiri 77).

The music educator helps the masses get information that can help develop her nation through dishing out the many roles of music in the development of a nation through music, this deals with philosophical and sometimes mystic reflections on life and nature, with organized and well-arranged language; it dishes out incisive comments ranging from praises and criticism, invocation and incantation, to satirize and laments about the good, the bad, and the ugly events in the society. The music of FelaAnikulapokuti an Afrobeat music maestro used his music to print to the glaring ills that had characterized the military rule of former president OlusegunObasanjo, Ibrahim GbadamosiBabangida and others. Fela's message through his 'ZOMBI' and 'DEMOCRAZY' added to the surge of the public opinion that saw the military packing back to their barracks. The music of late Sunny Okosun of the OZZIDI fame will at any time be mentioned as a worthy treasure to the Nigerian music archives, relating what could have been an avoidable war that lasted for months in Nigeria (1967-1970). 'We don't want wars any more'.

More so, many songs were sung at the international level in mobilizing public opinion against racism and other forms of discrimination and segregation in South Africa and other parts of the world. Olusoji (2013) recalls that the media houses also helped to raise the importance of music education through various talks on the theory and historical values of music education. With the awareness

brought about by western education, Nigeria has been able to produce well-known music scholars like, Professor FelaSowande, Ayo Bankole, Lazarus Ekwueme, Akin Euba, and Akpabot Sam, to mention but a few.

Dating back to what the present age will term primitive, music is said to have existed since time immemorial, as a matter of fact, and the elders in an ethnic group transmit their culture through music to the younger generation. Since education involves a person's culture and music is part of that culture, music education as defined by Okafor (1991) starts before the coming of the missionaries, it started with folklore, which begins from childhood. Children learnt through the folksongs the norms and mores of their environment. They learnt game songs, complicated subjects, numeracy or numerology; they form words and use their mother tongue. It is on this premise that Nwanneri (2001) expresses that traditional music education exists in different dimensions namely: the informal aspect- this occurs through the mother's unintentional and incidental exposition of the child to musical activities, followed with peer groups, age grades. While the formal, highly organized and well-structured aspect, which commences at maturity during which time the learner, is capable of active participation in musical activities through careful observations and imitations.

Today, the informal music education is still in existence, it has been overtaken by the formal music education. Music education before civilization was passed down through oral transmission, information also came out informally from mouth to mouth, Odunuga (2002) observes that even though there was no curriculum, yet teaching and learning take place through apprenticeship, imitation and observation. The music educator sensitizes the masses through music, for instance, during electoral campaigns; music is used to gather people for either political rally or electoral campaign. According to Abiodun (2003) all political parties in Nigeria have songs which are heavily worded to get the support of admirers. These songs help the political leaders to gain support and popularity as the message is passed deep into the ears of the electorates. Bebey (1973) points out that no electoral campaign is completed without active support of music.

Music being used as National Anthem, many countries such as Nigeria, used their national anthems to establish the ethos of their countries, for instance: in Nigeria- the labour of our heroes past shall never be in vain... Britain- Grant her victorious, long live to reign over us, frustrate her enemies, and confound her politics... France- shall hateful tyrants, mischief making affright and desolates the land, while peace and liberty lie bleeding... America- does the star spangled banner still wave o'er the land of the brave and the land of the free....Music is often used to mobilize people and generate sympathy and activity in the society.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Music in an important tool in the life of any people in a nation, hence all stakeholders should be involved in the implementation of a music curriculum that will teach children the values in the society as well as train their mind to have all round development. Hence, music that does not promote sanity, that is those music whose languages are vulgar should be stopped from the society, hence sanctions should be given to defaulters.

Music should be a core subject in the schools and teachers should be trained and encouraged to teach music well. The school curriculum should ensure music is given a better part in the curriculum and not a joint subject with theatre arts or visual arts, because for one to be grounded in music there is need to learn all the basic forms and patterns in music.

## References

- Abiodun, F. (2003). *Restructuring Nigerian Priorities: Efforts of Nigerian Musicians. A Paper Presented at the 2003 National Conference of the National Association for the Promotion of Studies in Arts and Social Sciences (NAPSASS), held at NnamdiAzikwe University, Awka. Pp 1-10.*
- Adeogun, A.O. (2009). *Music, Education and National Development. Being a Lead Paper presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> National Conference on Music Education and National Development, AlvanIkokuw Federal College of Education, Owerri.*
- Ajewole, J. (2011). "Functional Role of Music Educator in Nation Building". *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts (AJRMA), UNIZIK. 8, 169-176.*
- Dewey, J. (1966). *Education and Democracy.* New York: New York Press.
- Durkhem, E. (1956). *Sociology, Cultural Diversity in a Changing World.* New York: Harper & Row.
- Eya, L.O. (2000). "Achieving National unity and Development through the National Education Philosophy" *SOSTAN 3 (1): 142-146*
- Fisher, W.A. (1963). "The Obligations of a Music Educator" *Music Educators Journal, Sage Pub. Inc. Vol. 49, No. 6:55-56.*
- Ifemesia, C. (1987). "Music Education on the Move" *An address delivered by the Provost Anambra State College of Education, Awka. On the Occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> National conference of the Nigeria Association of Music Education.*
- Molnyar, T. "The Future of Education". *Canadian Music Educator, CMEA journal. Canada* in Fisher, W.A. (1963). "The Obligations of a Music Educator" *Music Educators Journal, Sage Pub. Inc. Vol. 49, No. 6:55-56.*
- Monroe, P. (1957), *A Textbook in the History of Education.* NY: Macmillan.
- Ndubuisi, C. & F.E. Nweke (2015) "Creative Arts, A Vital Part of the Society and Economy, Focusing on Music and Visual Arts." *Journal of Arts, Culture and Politics. Federal University, Uyo.*
- Nosiri, U. (2010) "Language, Music, education and National Development" *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts (AJRMA), UNIZIK. 7, 77-88.*
- Nwanneri, C.M. (2001). "the Place of Music education in Nation Building" *A paper Presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the national Association of Curriculum theorists (NACT) held at ESUT, Enugu State.*
- Odunuga, A.F. (2002). "Formal music Educatioon in Nigeria: An Historical Perspective" *A paper Presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Conference of music Education, Okene.*
- Okafor, R.C (1991). "Music in Nigeria education" *Bulletin: Council for Research in Music Education. 180, 56-68.*
- Onyiuke, Y-S. (11). "Music Education, Music Curriculum and National Development". *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts (AJRMA), UNIZIK. 8, 101-114.*
- Ozongwu, U (1999). "Art is Basic in Education" *Journal of Education for National Development and International Co-operation (JEDIC) 3 (1): 82-92.*
- Reimer, B. (1970). *A Philosophy of Music Education.* Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall International. In O. Stephen (2013) "The Relevance of Music Education to the Nigerian Educational System" [3 \(1\)](#). *African Journal of Teacher education (AJOTE).* Creative Common Attribution, 3.0 License
- Stephen, O.O (2013). "The Relevance of Music Education to the Nigerian Educational System" [3 \(1\)](#). *African Journal of Teacher education (AJOTE).* Creative Common Attribution, 3.0 License.