

GLOBALIZATION IMPACTS ON HIGHLIFE MUSIC IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The extent of our success with the entire continual clamour for pop music globalization has remained food for thought. This paper vividly elucidates the following: globalization, highlife music and the nature of Nigerian highlife music. This evaluation aims at averting biased opinions from jumping to further conclusions tantamount to overstatement on the subject matter. The point raised on the negative and positive effect of globalization on Nigerian highlife music is highlighted here to articulate the percentage of reward derivable from the said music. The enthusiasm for promoting Nigerian highlife music to the advantage of Nigerian masses is a matter of concern in this paper. When this is done, the public will become more familiar with the topic in question. Here, we consider globalization as an evolution systematically restructuring cosmopolitan interaction by frustrating all barriers in fields of human endeavour through communication network in all its ramifications. It is a process of advancing the world by increasingly interconnecting the entire cultural groups across the globes to every form of human affairs. Nigerian highlife music is one composed and performed to a large extent by a Nigerian by birth and enculturation. In summation, in the context of this paper, globalization influence on Nigerian highlife music has exposed the 'good and the ugly' contributions of the former towards the true position of the later. At this juncture, the researcher offers that highlife music artistes should play more central role in increasing artistic values for people oriented global music demand.

Introduction

Music is organized to achieve certain effects, or express some ideas or emotions. Its organization is human objective specific, and is guided by principles for the understanding of the beneficiaries. Music exists in human community to set up code of conducts for societal benefits. It is most accessible to human community to set up code, work and worship, play or war, recreation or reflection. Music is implicated in life, and people go all out to use it to communicate, to move, to express emotions, and ideas, and to mobilize people or rally them for solidarity (Okafor 273). This basic root of music tone, rhythm and pitch is linked to language, syntax, dialect, and idioms in the course of its composition. It is a product of man's activities and ideas, sourced, seasoned and shaped before use. The stage, labour and design therein and its production process dictate musical shape, type, effect and use.

Music is a highly profitable, capitalist enterprise controlled and regulated by performance/composers. Musical culture and its glamorous unattainable standards evoke many feelings, old memories, and create new

ones while satisfying a sense of knowledge, national pride and identity. They aid in identifying a culture, educate countries about other cultures. It is a tool for communication, relaxation and stimulation; a tool for resisting powers, police and parents.

Globalization

In the early era of colonialism, under the cloak of missionary activities in the territory of western coast of Africa, western world immigrants and music scholars progressively executed and propagated their musical ideologies through the following media : air waves, tourism, and most essentially church hymns and choruses . The above commitments can be simply styled 'music globalization'. Globalization should not be expected to come and envelop us rather it is the local genre that goes global. It involves new forms of communication, innovation, multiple forms of sharing work, knowledge and entertainment. It is associated with give and take, adopt, adapt, import, re-export, and innovate relationship. Friedman (2002) affirms that: "Globalization has empowering and disempowering, homogenizing and particularizing, democratizing and authoritarian tendencies all build into it. It is about the global market, but it is also about the internet and google". (510)

From the researcher's point of view, and in line with the vantage point of this paper, globalization is the universal interconnectivity which enhances legitimate cross-border transactions in every facet of human endeavor and invariably provides the avenue for such accomplishment. Globalization has been in existence though in the recent time, it is a catch word in varieties of social communication. In music discipline, it conveys the concept of "universal music", which poses challenge to music practitioners wishing to communicate their career beyond individual immediate environment. However, despite all odds, global music is been realized as a by- product of globalization process. Thus, music hybridization of world intercultural music is inevitably prevalent. Today, in the attainment of a modern musical identity is witnessed the emergence of a myriad of recorded sounds arising from experimental collaborations by music artistes in a bid to achieve an evolution of music acculturation. Globalization has both negative and positive implication in every social environment and of course, business interaction. However, this is strictly traded here under Nigeria highlife music venture. Idolor (2004) also asserts that:

Globalization advertises Nigerian Music within and outside the country. It was first used by Marshal McLuhan in the 1960s when he predicted that the electronic revolution would reduce the world in time and space. The rapid evidence of its growth is now being witnesses. Globalization is the integration (interconnectivity) of the activities of various people irrespective of distance and national boundaries. Through new information, communication, transportation and technological applications,

globalization creates a pool of ideas and opportunities that facilitate understanding, co-operation and interdependence amongst sovereign states. (1)

It is also associated with race and regional exodus, human behaviour, technological advancement as well as commercial activities. Ameliorated communication and information networks, transportation services, politics cum societal co-operation are concomitant factors prevalent in globalization.

Nigerian Highlife Music

Highlife music is the first of the locally produced musical idioms to become a national idiom and is not only known as highlife but also native blues. Its songs are in Pidgin English or local language derived from folk music. Highlife could be viewed as music created by western-oriented black Africa or Africa's blues since it is a synthesis of African and western musical traditions like black music in the New World. As a form of pop music, "highlife is transient, amenable to innovation and alternation. Because it is commercial-oriented, it is ephemeral. Although (this) popular music evolves, it is always establishes its base with cultural current. And because it deals with political and social issues of the moment, it is widely acceptable" (Augu 116).

Smith (1962) correctly observes that "The subjects of these songs are similar to those of the traditional songs which are love songs, songs about death, songs of praise and insults, and songs describing an event or a personage" (11). Highlife represents a creative West African response to the modern world. However, the situation now is very different from the days when it was evolving. Then it was a West African musician copying mostly black Americans' music. Today the music that is being absorbed is mostly black American music that looks forwards to Africa for inspiration. This had a liberating effect on the colonial mentality that has overwhelmed so many African pop musicians. A new attitude has appeared on the West African music scene that is unlocking a huge creative potential within it. Commenting on highlife music, Okafor (1989,) avers: "it is music that deals with familiar themes and issues of the moment. It is understood as a topical reflection of their sentiments and current worldview. Consequently (it) is more subject to change than any other ganre of music". (3)

Typical of Nigerian highlife music are popular songs and dance prevalent, particularly in ethnic groups or tribal communities in the mid fifties. Comparatively highlife music outside Nigerian political boundary towards African sovereignty south of Sahara employed acoustic guitar, bongo and the like, including autophone instruments of non discrete boundaries within their reach. This was prominent especially in the early 1930s. However, the Nigeria genre emanated with modified acoustic effects typified by inter-cultural music instrumentation. Hence, electronophone (assorted guitars with electrical appliances) lead, bass and rhythmic guitars are resorted to in preference to acoustic type. Others include verities of locally made percussive instruments that not only meet with the indigenous/ urban dwellers' musical taste, but also blend with the exotic ones incorporated therein. Above all, Nigerian highlife music is associated with and takes its name from urban

social life and musical idioms. The duple meter, melodic figures and ostinato rhythms that characterize West African highlife music are equally common features identified with it.

Above all, Nigeria highlife music reveals the nature of feelings with a detail and touch that language cannot approach. It breeds ample opportunity for social control investigation and mobilization. Besides, it enhances social awareness as well as facilitates understanding and agreement among them void of formal dialogue. However, Nigerian highlife music lovers react to it as a result of their individual experiences in their various environments rather than as a result of the kinetic power of the music.

Erlmann (1999) is of the view that "Music as global culture lacks the depth of the initial purpose and utility; it is (purely) for entertainment, comparative study or other scholastic endeavors" rather than for extra-musical values." (6) This is the case with Nigerian highlife music. Life-style and its patterns are fused to Nigerian highlife music in relation to the people's language and culture. Music for its own sake is also performed to display phenomenal qualities. In this case, absolute music and musical repertoire conditioned by what obtains in the society are invariably involved to shape performance presentation. Anonymous musical compositions and styled folk music are not isolated from the repertory. Local technology exploits resonant wood and foreign by-product of animals and plants in constructing the instruments. Occasions and environment determine content and duration of performance.

In the Nigerian musical scene, highlife is believed to have reached the apogee of its glory a generation ago and has remained reasonably so ever since. The band could consist of brass, woodwind, drums and guitar. Before it spread to Nigeria, highlife music emanated in Gold Coast now Ghana. It is characterized by African traditional music idioms. Nigerian highlife music pioneers include Bobby Benson, Roy Chicago, Cardinal Jim-Rex Lawson of blessed memory (the best Nigeria highlife music maestro), etc. Some highlife albums are: Baby Pancake by Sahara all Stars, Jolly Papa by Rex Lawson, Taxi Driver by Bobby Benson, etc. Our youths have assimilated fashion and trends from this class of pop music.

The aim of Nigerian highlife musicians is to create growing awareness of African identity in the global market, by using African music to feature our social values or mores. To this end, there is the need to enhance Nigeria's agents of globalization. This is a statement of fact because, communication network is the life wire of global 'inter-communication' and therefore, its development should be embraced. According to Idolor (2004), "This understanding requires the liberalization of the creative process, the adaptation of some sonic music universals, identification and projection of some peculiar African music idioms and the reorganization of performance practice in the light of modern scenic realities and documentary alternatives". (1)

Contacts with foreign musical idioms and rise of nationalism, music renditions organized and staged by black immigrant performers, led to the development of the Nigerian highlife creative music. With globalization

resulted a search for a more meaningful approach to highlife music concerts and entertainment programmes. Experimenting with borrowed music cultural materials (in an attempt to produce an acceptable and genuine Nigerian native highlife number) laid the foundation for our modern Nigerian highlife, which manifests the incorporation of native contents into exotic music culture in the concert and entertainment music. This situation has influenced the type of composition produced and contributed to the non-existence of a musical ideology based on cultural affirmation. In the life of an average Nigerian, highlife presents undeniable assertive social facts and it articulates and communicates their consciousness too. It functions with a communally shared understanding of the role of music but documents situation reports.

Nigerian highlife music is globalized because it “has reached many people in the world through the electronic, print, academic and practical performance media” (Idolor 85). Nigerian highlife musicians imitate and practise European and American music in the market as contemporary trends, which is inimical to the promotion and popularization of the former native musical genres. This is blamed on the lack of financial resources coupled with incompetent technology and ideological willpower with which to boost their musical prowess across nations. Idolor (2005) further asserts that, they (Nigerian highlife) have been coerced to operate to the dictates of stronger powers, who are the initiators, financiers and stakeholders of globalization.... The availability, quality and low cost of European music types encourage high patronage of foreign materials compared to the home-based productions, he concludes. The advantage of satellite initiatives and the like under their control are employed exploitatively as clocks for globalizing highlife music practice in Nigeria (85).

The Origin of Highlife Music

Highlife, the oldest of the Norfolk music in West Africa is among many varieties of syncretic popular styles. It originated in the second-half of 19th century on the Fante Coast when the ports become melting pots of musical influences including the music of local fishermen and farmers, of immigrant ethnic groups, of European sailors, black sailors (Liberian, West Indians and Afro-Americans) and missionaries. Highlife music was carried by people who often gathered around the dancing clubs to watch those couples that could pay the fees enjoying themselves... started as a catch phrase for the indigenous songs played at the clubs by such early dance bands. Onyeji (2002) says that: “Highlife harmonies are often simple diatomic chords and chord progressions mixed with traditional harmonic sense. The tempo is usually moderate. Sometimes, the text is topical. Highlife music is often matured and steady in character, without much 'erratic' use of instruments” (Onyeji in Idolor 31).

The Negative Effects of Globalization on Nigerian Highlife Music

Pathetically globalization with its subsequent technological advancement has laid off many highlife instruments from the business. The reason is that, solo artistes have disengaged some of these instrumentalists and depended on standard electronic keyboard and synthesizers computerized to produce sounds similar in tonal quality, volume and texture to that of any music with live instrumental accompaniment.

It is pertinent to note that globalization is not a contemporary phenomenon. Historically, people and ideas have been mobilized, but immigration policy has grossly crippled the global musical engagements and tours of our highlife artistes in Nigeria. Stringent conditionality's attached to, or imposed on, such across borders visits/traveling at foreign embassies in Nigeria. Visa applicants at times suffer discourtesy and humiliation, and it hurt deeply to experience such mistreatment. Idolor (2004) opines that "Minority and poor countries have been coerced to the dictates of stronger powers that are the initiators, financiers and stakeholders of globalization" and that this has gross negative implication on highlife music in Nigeria. According to him, Africans on music scholarship aboard are exposed to 50% of European music curricula thereby reducing African music image to the underdog's second fiddle role in music curriculum in African schools.

Nigerian sovereignty has been endangered as Nigerian highlife music under the auspices of globalization agents encounters indigenous music exploitation. Another gross experience is the loss of Nigerian music cultural identity, as a result of the exploration and subsequent hybridization of the people's music under imperialism. More so, the terror of westernization has become the order of the day under the cloak of the artists' music acculturation experience on overseas, tours. Besides, the widespread distribution of 'industrialized' music and the loss of music that exemplifies cultural facts cum characteristics have deprived highlife music in Nigeria a sense of national pride and identity. Today we are witnessing the diffusion of cosmopolitan music culture, cultural break down and diversity, which keep on evolving and flourishing with absolute abandon.

In respect of quantitative analysis of global music marketing distribution, seven countries called the **CONGLOMERATE** namely: Japan, the U.S. the Netherlands, Germany, the U.K., etc, are by empirical studies of market concentration in music (1990, 1993), said to have controlled no less than 50-80% of market share in any country where they operated. They collectively influence the music and the media because they run the market, determine which music is to be distributed and to what destination, thereby dictating musical ideas and cultures for the "less privileged" nations to emulate. Summarily, it is evident enough that the stakeholders of globalization in all its ramifications pay the piper and as such have to dictate the tune, and unfortunately, to the detriment of the so-called Third World countries.

The same brains behind globalization syndrome in a bid to reach out to the global communities with their musical repertoires have reduced the cost prize to the barest minimum. These musical albums encompass their western ideologies with which they dominate the world. Thus, the prices attached to foreign markets albums are higher than what obtains in the U.S. market. The undeveloped nations' artistes cannot afford to compete favorably in this gross reduction of albums selling prices and consequently, make few sales. This plight makes it impossible for them to dominate or reach the world in general with their concept of life as his enshrined in their musical albums.

Through music globalization, highlife musicians in Nigeria, especially in their VCD/DVDS, are gradually imitating violence and hatred incorporated into western music numbers. Fights, death, injuries and gunfire are rampant practices. These ugly situations have horrid influence on the teeming population of Nigerian youngsters. America has particularly experienced joy through the promotion of foreign artists' unheard beats and native tongues. There is fear that the aforesaid trend will obliterate Nigerian "local tradition, knowledge, skill, artisan and values" (Barlow, 2001: 32) and convert her music industry to western music embassy with Nigerian personnel serving as music envoys. Artisans have been specifically affected because the product they try to market has been outdated and overrun by the pop stars 'garbage' that has taken over the globe. In a disapproved posture (Nzewi 2) decries this trend, when he says that,

Globalization is diverting contemporary practice of the arts in Africa of such spiritual, healing and humanizing roles. What gets refashioned and exhibited internationally as Africa musical arts are anemic abstraction of the substantial virtues and values of heritage which reflect the flippant Euro-American imaginations as well as proscription of Africa creative integrity

Idolor (2005) confirms this by saying inter alia: "Certainly their relocation hinders the advancement of music in their home country while their output in their new places of abode progressively loses the identities of their home countries" (86). Regrettably, musical adventure abroad has hybridized highlife music in Nigeria. It has exposed the artistes to exotic music repertory, which subsequently underestimate the merit accorded to the Nigerian highlife music.

The Positive Effects of Globalization on Nigerian Highlife Music

Evidence of artistic identity is recorded among Nigerian highlife heroes, who creatively integrate musical concepts of different cultural backgrounds into the indigenous rendition. Nigerian highlife music in terms of sound matrixes, role and receptivity, performance practice, compositional techniques, costumes and musical instruments has been influentially revitalized through globalization effect. The musicians themselves have, through globalization, learnt how to satisfy more than one cultural group musically speaking. For instance, a majority of them merge English and other international languages with native tongue, including Pidgin English. The Internet music supplies have contributed immensely in promoting highlife music in Nigeria. The search, the ordering, the payment and the delivery are conveniently executed within studio radius-courtesy of globalization.

With globalization factors as their bedrock or stepping stone, the highlife artistes accept, adopt and assimilate worthwhile international issues of the moment into native culture. The end result improves inter-societal or racial socialization. Thus, regards respect, reward and recognition are bestowed on highlife maestros

who globally showcase music of other cultures of the world to the advantage of cosmopolitan residents and host of others in the hinterland. According to Ogisi (2004), "Due to changing tasks and values, a music programme cannot be static but must reflect what the society has come to regard as relevant, which includes need, function and use." (9).

Record and fulfillment through highlife music is highly imperative in changing society such as ours. With the advent of global technology, Nigeria highlife can now document happenings in the society by means of electronic gadgets; this invariably uplifts and promotes the said music as a legitimate subject for sociological investigation. Globalization, with its concomitant factors-urbanization, the electronic and print media, film, radio and television broadcasting, rail, roads, airports, and sea transportation systems-has inspired Nigerian highlife music entertainment industry in terms of boosting its career, thereby enabling them meet up with the target audience's demand within time schedule. With global experience in music making, Nigerian highlife musicians have learnt to compose and present on stage, music repertory that represents new life style (driven by social acceptance) for the meditative, contemplating, entertainment and listening needs of most Nigerians. In this direction, Ogisi (2004) concludes that:

The 'global phenomenon' has furthered and heightened the impact of popular music (which includes highlife) in the Nigerian society. Cable broadcasting, web casting, music websites, the CV/VCD renovation have firmly established popular music as the dominant music type in Nigeria. It was this reality that gave rise to the inclusion of outline biographies of popular musicians in the WASC and JAMB syllabi. (8)

Today "popular music challenges the accepted belief in the superiority of 'pure' and 'high' culture and spurns relevance on our face" (Fabian, 1978: 315). Highlife message globally preaches black cultural nationalism, social justice and openly condemns racism in all its ramifications. The philosophical content of its lyrics includes the fusion of both foreign and traditional and exchange of views through music entertainment galore whereby people from all walks of life flock together to fritter away their leisure by watching staged performances.

Highlife music in Nigeria has been globally conditioned to benefit the masses on the bases of its search for truth, social relevance and functionality in boosting economic enterprise. With international musical co-operation, it is now being treated as music in its own right cum its own criteria, values and goals. Seminars, workshops and conferences are now organized to project it to lime light for the amelioration of Nigerian society. Sure, Nigeria stands to gain should her highlife music practitioners explore with their minds, their global musical experience. The effect of globalization on highlife music in Nigeria has opened up possibilities of great importance. The recording and production of highlife music with various sound effects derived from foreign ideologies is now available at all times in music industrial markets. According to Davis (1978), "The musical tastes

and performance of many people, are influenced, or even dictated, by social influences rather than musical ones” (214).

Due to globalization effect on technology, highlife sings no longer crowd around one microphone; sound, no matter how faint, is well recorded by the machine. The creative values of modern instruments introduced into highlife have added advantage on Nigerian highlife musical productivity and this is made possible by globalization. Speaking on the need for musical globalization, Friedman (2002) affirms that:

You have to have a strong culture, but also the openness to adapt and adopt from others. The cultural exclusivists have a real disadvantages... because you start tending to respect people for their talent and abilities... you are dealing with people on the basis of talent-not race or ethnicity and that changes, subtly, overtime your whole view of human beings, if you are in this talent-based and performance-based world rather than the background-based world. (411-422).

Some of us do not accept others' lifestyles but try to impose ours on others. One of the greatest virtues a country or community can have is a culture of tolerance, which is the foundation of innovation and entrepreneurship. Musical culture is not wired into our human DNA. It is a product of the context geographical location, level of education, leadership and the historical experience of any society. Nigerian highlife musical culture matters, but is rested in contexts not genes. As performance contexts and bandleaders change and adapt so too should the musical genre. Thus, foreign cultures, art forms, styles, recipes, literature, videos, and opinion have influenced the local content of Nigerian highlife musical ideology and this, by extension, shapes the political life of Nigerians through highlife lyrical messages. It has yielded powerful appeal to the young who will become the elders and leaders of tomorrow. To this end, Friedman (2002) contends that:

Globalization enables you to take your own local culture and upload it to the world. It means you... can now write your own song, create a broadcast site, and if people like it, it will spread... you can make your own home video with a cheap web cam and Microsoft movie maker that comes bundled with your software and upload that as well (506).

Further Discussion/Concluding Remarks

From the foregoing key issues raised in this paper, we can deduce that music for communal cohesion is typical of Nigerian highlife music. Through its instrumentation and vocals people's interest is awoken on the fabrics of Nigeria's legacy and artistic performance behaviour. With the effect of globalization, its musical

entertainment varieties are abounding with aesthetic and creative values incorporated in them. The artists-singers and dancers, instrumentalities, choreographers and dramatists are engaged on stage, all presenting the realities of life.

In the course of watching other bands on performance outings, highlife music in Nigeria has become well organized and musicians are privileged to display their talents. Social for a are now specially designed to entertain, educate and uplift spiritual well being of the participants. Today European songs are recorded and stabilized on our highlife singers' lips. Their tunes are sung to the artists' taste and wish, altering the musical intervals and beating rhythms to suit them. These tunes are taught and learnt not only by Christians in all denominations of church congregation of our time but also by most vocalists of highlife bands, like Paty Obasi, Dr. Sir Warrior, Godwin Idolor of Okpe Kingdom, among others. Most often, Nigerian highlife musical tunes are blended to suit the tonal pattern of European language. This has conspicuous effect on highlife music vocalization technique because many Christian worshipers constitute Nigerian highlife bands and therefore, invariably introduce and diffuse the aforesaid practice to the global Christian fold. In a similar vein, international cultural festivals in its musical perspective has, in no small measures, conceptually typified and portrayed time and again, mixed musical traits in both concept and approach. Highlife music being a dominant art form in Nigeria, is in this manner, subsequently modified in tandem with this trend in vogue.

In another development, evidences abound that in the field of popular music, the creative response to the forces of acculturation is showing itself in new Nigerian pop music. Today, highlife is West African music primarily in the sense of its regional identity and not always because of its close affinity to the idiom of traditional African music heritage. The usual instrumentation of western popular music is available in this West African class of pop music. Thus, saxophones, trumpets, and at times, maracas, Jazz band and Latin American bongos are more or less employed. The popular music of different West African territories are to some extent linked with regional varieties of the idiom of popular music elsewhere. For instance, stylistically, the West African highlife is akin to the pop music of the Caribbean's, even though this sub-African region never went there 'per se' for any highlife musical orientation. The Congolese pop music (African Jazz) closely relates to American Jazz while South African Jazz and American Jazz are hardly differentiated from each other. To this end, (Nketia 37) opines that:

The African characteristics or elements of traditional music embedded in the form identified with the continent are at present not very pronounced... As these popular forms develop, they will most probably absorb a great deal more of the African idiom while sharing broad features of style with pop music elsewhere.

More so, fine art tradition of Western music as witnessed in concert halls is gradually influencing Nigerian highlife music compositions. Perhaps, this development will dominate Nigerian traditional music heritage with

time. For instance, with skilful performance, traditional tunes derived from drumbeats can accompany words and melody as well as represent the people's tonal inflection. However, the advent of art music, the creative response that emerges from the active encounter of musical cultures, and the interaction between regional and universal trends in music as we know it today can cripple such effort. Globalization of highlife music in Nigeria has somewhat led to the repression of Nigerian highlife musical style heritage, even though it is equally being explored for the development of her music industries. In view of this fact, Idolor (2005:90) suggests that "It is pertinent for Africa to orientate its youths on Africa music identity through formal and non formal education and the development of media infrastructure" in order to resist the aforesaid anomaly.

The influence of news media is in one way or the other not left out in the modification of highlife musical tradition in Nigeria. Evidently, Nigerian's exodus to urban centres to seek white collar jobs has exposed them to European musical culture through radio and phonographs. Besides, the roles of foreign political appointees resident in Nigeria and host of others granted asylum are not ruled out as another fundamental agents instrumental in conditioning Nigerian highlife musical identity. This set of people fritter away their leisure in a chamber music or any musical fete with some Nigerian hosts as audience watching keenly and learning by rote. African social mobilization and co-operation with the Islamic community on their pilgrimage to the Arab word holy land; Mecca in Saudi Arabia along with Indian musical influence is inevitable in this discourse. The ineluctable sound of Islamic musical instruments left Nigeria Hausa on pilgrimage to Mecca more indoctrinated to the Islamic gospel musical culture. References to a definite catalogue on musical instruments in Nigeria, by Echezona (1981:236) epitomize the end product of this mission and experience. A great number of the instruments on the catalogue are of Islamic origin, and some of them are, quasi-essentially employed in Nigeria highlife, especially harps and Ivory horns.

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