
AN APPRAISAL OF MUSIC AND DANCE IN YORUBA CONCEPT**Zaccheaus Ojo. J**Department of Theatre Arts
College of education, ikere-Ekiti.**ABSTRACT**

The History of Music and dance until 200 A.D. is shrouded in darkness which is attributed to the fact that there is virtually no extant music because of the inadequacies in early nation system. Both music and dance did not exist as a separate art but used in connection with various functions and most important of those were religious, ritual, festivals and ceremonies especially in the Yoruba setting. It is equally used in war period, opera and other dramatic forms developed oratorio of cantata. Oratorio is a dramatic production on a scale usually without dealing with biblical subjects and produced without step incensing or scenery. Cantata is a musical recitative of most drama in verse without action and with a simple accompaniment of one instrument. Being an historical appraisal the write-up employs narrative method in its analysis. Based on the findings above, the study therefore recommends that the antecedent of music and dance should be taken into cognizance.

KEYWORDS: Music and Dance, Oratorio, Cantata, Yoruba Setting, Performing Arts

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Alade (2006). "Music and dance are two different aspects of the creative and performing arts. Both represent primeval components of culture the world over, being valid throughout the history of mankind right down to our own culture". It is in recognition of the dominant role this subject matter-music and dance-plays in all its ramifications in the socio-political, economic, religious historical and other aspects of human culture that we are poised to examine in this paper. Meanwhile, both music and dance can be defined thus; Matthew (2012) says, the word "music" has been defined by philosophers-musicians in different ways. When we sing, dance or play musical instrument: we are involved in musical activity. Music must be organized, pleasant, enjoyable and even melodious, it must bring out what we call sound. The definition of music has varied through history in different regions and within societies.

Music may be defined according to construction, engagement, universal aspects or family resemblance. Panor (2004) in his own opinion says; dance is the transformation of ordinary functional and expressive movement into extraordinary movement for extraordinary purposes; even a common movement such as walking is performed in dance in a patterned way, perhaps in circle

or to a special rhythm, and it occurs in a special context. Dance may involve a fixed vocabulary or movement that has no meaning in themselves, as in much of ballet and European folkdance, or pantomimic and symbolic gestures may be used, as in many Asia dance forms.

THE CONCEPT OF MUSIC AND DANCE IN YORUBA SETTING

Dance, like all the arts, finds expression on an apparently infinite range of styles, forms and technique. It may satisfy the simplest inner needs for emotional release through motor activity as in children's singing games or the most complex demands of the creative artist on the professional stage, it may be profoundly subjective or philosophical or purely decorative.

Like music, dance may be performed either in solitary, privacy or by groups for their own satisfaction or in a concert of theoretical setting. This pleasure maybe gained either by direct participation or vicariously. As a theatrical act, it goes hand in hand with costume and scenery, music and poetry. What seems to be unique to dance however, is that, it appears never to stand alone but always accompanied by musical sound.

It is therefore essential that musicians understand the character, tempo, rhythmic needs and physical problems of the dances in order to perform the music. The pre-histories of music and dance are more heavily shrouded in mystery than those of other arts for lack of concrete evidence.

Tales of their origins no matter how specific they appears to be lack of corroboration that could prove them true but to flesh out the history of dance and music, much other evidence must be examined. Early iconographic sources, lack of dance and the musical accompaniments. Quite clearly written records like letters, plays, poems, and tales document the place and functions of dance in a society or desirable or considerable attributes in dancing and of instrumental and vocal accompaniment.

These musicals means may be effected by wearing bells, shells by striking sticks, swords or shields by playing tambourines or drums being on the body. Except for the voice these devices are largely percussive in nature providing basic material and rhythmic accompaniments and accurate for the dance.

The term dance and music usually implies strange impulses and rhythmic patterns that are organized into repeated metric grouping synchronizing exactly with those of the dance rhythmic accents and phrases lengths narrowly coincide with those of the dance also as does the mood of the music, it should be pointed out however that significant exceptions to these norms can easily be found which results in dance and music.

In Yoruba setting, dancing plays a prominent role both in private and public lives of people, in ceremonial, ritual, masquerade, group dancing and more often than not by members of the same sex was commonest but solo dancing usually of an expressive or blatantly intensive character developed particularly in connection with the stage, thought also at private entertainment.

The religious attitude towards dancing differs in every land and in every age. There have been abuses of dancing which have led denunciation of it by religious people. The Christian church, in general has not been against dancing as such, particular dances have at different periods allowed the objective of moral and religious people in on ground of sexual provocative dance has often been attached.

ROLES OF DANCE IN GENERAL

Dance as a means of achieving trance has a physiological effect on the brain of performer, and this promote dissociation. Although different other means, such as the use of drugs, the affliction of long lasting fasting periods, very often in conjunction with different rites, etc. leading to exhausting and hallucinations are employed, dance has been the most popularly adopted means at various times the world over. Hyperventilation, exhausting, turning, circular, rotational movements all affect the sense of balance and equilibrium and eventually cause dizziness. It must have been at the background of this knowledge that "the primitive" man discovered the trance- like property of dance if performed in particular circumstance. In this way, the participants were liberated from day-to-day experiences of mind and body.

In the Holy scriptures that king David had danced before the Ark (II Sam 6) in the second century it was declared that angels danced in Heaven (platonian ideas incorporated into the church's philosophy) and it was therefore, very advisable for Christians to include dance in church services.

From the fourth century onwards, the church tried to remove all dancing from its liturgy because in many local countries dance rituals of "pagans" origin were assimilated. The battle continued for many centuries, and even then resulted only in partial success. Still today, traces of dance movement are visible in the liturgies of the Roman Catholic and Greek orthodox churches, as well as the Coptic Christian church of Abyssinia. In some places, Seville, Spain, for example liturgical dances are performed in association with church festivals, and dances are performed in honor of the Virgin Mary in the Basque province.

THE RELEVANCE of DANCE AND MUSIC IN GENERAL

- ❖ Dance can be used as a social and artistic medium of communication (even) by lower animals during courtship.
- ❖ Dancing facilitates the teaching of the Arts and tradition and social living of the people (culture).

- ❖ Dancing at funeral for examples does not necessarily express only sorrow or grief, it may also indicate tribute to the deader group solidarity in the face of crisis.
- ❖ Dance is very important in the education of children, the one's imitate the adults while dancing and disciplines in the dance and society.
- ❖ Dance conveys thought on matters of personal or social importance through choice of movement, postures and facial expressions.
- ❖ Lastly, dance is a good recreational activity.

MUSIC AND ITS FUNCTIONS

- ❖ Music is used for social ceremonies e.g. burial ceremony, naming ceremony, birthday, wedding, graduation and so on.
- ❖ Music serves as source of information and education to humanity.
- ❖ Music can be used to foster unity in the society or among different countries.
- ❖ Music can be used to pet small babies when they are crying (lullaby).
- ❖ Music can be used for advertisement.
- ❖ Music can be used to give warning against bad behavior in the society.

VALUES OF DANCE

Many dance educators are of the view that dances plays a great role in building the personality and creativity towards the society in general. Among them is Magret & Kelvin (1990) who analyses dance values as follows:

- ❖ It serves all individual growth
- ❖ It helps stimulate imagination and challenge the intellect
- ❖ It helps cultivate an expression of beauty
- ❖ It encourages the use of the entire body in free movement
- ❖ It could be instrumental for improving mental, health and physical education.
- ❖ It deepens and refines emotional nature.
- ❖ It also good for warm up exercise.

Furthermore, Herberman and Margret (1996), also believe that "dance has not an intrinsic value for the child not only could it be instrumental for improving mental, health, physical coordination, self but it is an art form which provides a unique exploration into the adventures of life.

Hong and Virginia (1969) says dance, being a creative expression of the human feelings, which unifies the spirit to the physical, helps to discover the uniqueness and value of mankind. It brings satisfaction of

working creativity, expands about the self and interest for the child through experimentation and exploration.

Lastly, Orville Johnson, a choreographer, in a lecture titled dance as art says, dance is a language, a special kind of language. These are no words, the words that dance speaks are more movement phrases expressive of a choreographer's design.

Dance as an art creates movement images, through which we may become sensitive to reality. Dance is an experience that provides enrichment and growth for both the dancer and audience.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF LOCAL DANCES IN YORUBA SETTINGS

Bata dance: Bata dance is a Yoruba dance. The dancing step is very fast and energetic.

Dundu dance: Dundu dance is also a typical dance that involves a style while dancing.

Apala dance: Apala dance is a typical Yoruba dance, it requires energy and as the beats increases the body movement increases.

CONCLUSION

This paper gives an appraisal of music and dance as aspects of Performing Arts in their contributions to the economic, socio-political, religious and historical health of a community; indeed a nation, using Yoruba society as a spring board. It is found that music and dance functions as aesthetic, therapeutic and unifying factor in societal development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Government should take urgent measures to reposition music and curriculum to allow for grassroots appreciation of this important art.
- Introduction of arts and culture in all local government Administration should be of utmost priority to allow for this grassroots development.
- Government, in conjunction with corporate bodies in the country should endeavor to establish Theatre Halls/Civic centers in all local governments in the country to allow for maximum exploitation of the benefits of music and dance in communal relation.
- Experienced choreographers should be employed in all schools to teach music and dance as a major course.
- Government should sponsor relevant and educative music and dance tutors
- Relevant magazines, journals and books should put in place such as libraries for ---- consumption for the general public with seal and interest.

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