DISC JOCKEY, DANCE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Youth development is very paramount in the agenda of most successive governments of Nigeria and the world in global perspective. This is so because the youths are usually energetic and vibrant to do everything conceivable for subsistence include dancing and participation in dance-related activities; music-making, disk jockey (DJ), sound engineer/designer etc. However, when their accrued energies are not put to use social vices becomes the alternative source for the dissipation of energy. Disc Jockey, Dance and Youth Development which is the focus of this paper is out to ventilate another source to which the youth could dissipate their energies for useful venture and this serves as therapy to their minds thus leading to eventful, creative and productive ventures. Supported by the Development Theory of Human Mind and the application of participant-observer methodology of research, the paper finds the following; DJ and dance are social therapeutic tools to keeping the youth engaged and out of trouble, many a youth have found succour in these two genres of performances to liberate themselves from the doldrums of economic aridity and indolence, more creative DJs, dances and steps have found current musicals as outlet to providing relaxations to homes hitherto bedevilled by pensiveness, fatigues, boredoms and

pains, sound design is a profitable business if well harnessed, More to this is the fact that the DJ helps the dancer to realise and articulate his potentials as this dynamics is viable for the development of the youths. The paper suggested as a way of conclusion that; the youth's energy should be deployed to developing themselves in Disc Jockey and the art of dance, the government on its part should design a curriculum for the training of DJ course and dance at all levels of education and in particular, the theatre.

Introduction

Nigerian youths are instruments of destructions in the hands of political gladiators. This situation is escalating due to a high number of graduates with little or no job opportunities in the country. Where jobs are obtainable, they are exclusively reserved for political compensation. The country is blessed with able-bodied youths with lots of certificates from different Institutions across the country yet lack opportunities to showcase their talents and knowledge since everyone is relaying on the government for jobs. As their hopes are dashed, they become frustrated and eager to do everything and anything possible for survival. We also acknowledge the lofty expectations from the society and family demands from them to be able to live up to certain standards, it is not astonishing therefore to see graduates as armed robbers, kidnappers, Internet fraudsters and ritualism to mention but a few. Nigerian youth have turned themselves into willing tools to be used as thugs or machinery to unleash terror to opposition or political opponents and so many vices.

In a time like this, the youths must think out of the box. Creativity must come to play for them to liberate themselves. The land is richly blessed with business opportunities. With a country like this, one must not wait for 'white kola' jobs to survive, hence the need for this article. One of the employers of labour now is the Disc Jockey popularly abbreviated as DJ. The business of disc jockey is not a one man business. A well-established Disc Jockey needs to be assisted by two or more to setup his sound and plan his event as well as a driver. This means that a disc jockey is also an employer. This sector has helped many youth to be meaningfully engaged in entertainment profession across the country.

At the mention of the word Disc Jockey (DJ), what comes to mind is a mental picture of someone who sees music as a hobby, dresses skimpy, likes to party and plays music at the clubs, bars, and entertaining guests at wedding receptions, events centres and so on for little amount of money, food or just for fun. Interestingly, in recent time, disk jockey has become a lucrative business for serious minded individuals with enthusiasm to stand up and secure the career. So many youths are off streets today as it has provided them a means of livelihood. The thrust of this article is to assess the performances of Disc Jockey and Dance profession in the development of the Nigerian youth.

Disc jockey according to Wikipedia 'is a person who plays existing recorded music for a live audience.' The common types of DJs are radio DJs, Club DJs who performs at nightclub and 'turntables' who usually uses turntables to manipulate sounds on phonograph records. The source notices that originally, the disc in the disc jockey referred to the gramophone records but DJ is currently used as all-encompassing term to describe someone who mixes recorded music from any source, including cassettes, CDs or digital files on CDJ or laptop. The title DJ is used by DJs in front of their real names or adopted pseudonyms or stage names.

DJs use sound equipment such as speakers, power amplifiers, sound mixers, crossovers, laptop, turntables and controllers in their work. The laptop, cassettes, CDs, memory cards or flash drives served as warehouses for their music. These give them access to the stored records anytime the need arises.

The Disc Jockey and Theatre Performance

The disc jockey can perform multiple roles in theatre performance, hence should be included as part of Sound Design syllabus or training in the Theatre. First of all the role of a disc jockey is akin to that of an orchestra in a theatre performance. The orchestra give musical interlude to performance to aid the understanding of a play. On their discussion on sound designer to theatre production, Parker, Wolf and Block identify three categories of contributions one of which is, 'commenting on the action' (302). They argue further that this is achieved when sound is used symbolically. It is one of the roles of the orchestra to close missing gaps in

theatre performances. This is not different from the services of a disc jockey. Edwin Wilson notes that:

> The person responsible for arranging and orchestrating all the aural aspects of a production is the sound designer. Like his counterpart in visual design, the sound designer begins by reading the scripts, noting all the places where sound might be needed. (342)

Judging from the above the disc jockey must be present at every rehearsal so as to know when and where sound is needed for the production. For example in a dance performance, he must also study the movements carefully to understand each or every dancer's moves and relate them to his sound chart, noting each cues and what sound effect or music to be used at a point to comment on actions and movements onstage. With a good understanding of a production, he should be able to know the number of speakers, amplifiers and microphones to power a production; music concert, drama or dance theatre. By so doing, he complements the production as a whole.

The Disc Jockey equally creates the mood and tone of the performance. Parker, Wolf and Block affirm further that, 'one familiar way sound can evoke a specific atmosphere or mood is by using environmental sounds in a realistic manner. Such use can establish *locale, environmental conditions, period,* and *time of day*, as well as mood' (302). With the advancement in storage facilities like the computers and laptops the DJ has the advantage of large musical library to play and replay at any point in time. Effects and music from all genres as well as culture can be saved for future references and usage. He can carefully pick music and effects appropriate for the delineation of the mood and tone of the performance. The use of cockcrow and chipping of birds can simply depict dawn. The cry of owl can also be used to signify evil etc. Disc Jockey should be carried along in rehearsal alongside other technical crews and performers. During this period, he sorts his musical library for relevant song for the performance. He can also shop around for song that are lacking or download them if available online.

The Disc Jockey can also be used for scene changes. While the stage hands are busy striking off the set, the Disc Jockey can keep the audience

busy with his intriguing sound to allow for much time needed for the scene change. In so doing, the audience can be actively involved in the performance. Hence, he units the audience to the performance thereby, giving them a sense of involvement in the performance by breaking any gap or obstacle between the audience and the actions onstage. Hence, the Disc Jockey is useful in keeping the audience updated or informed on things that happened or about to unfold thereby reinforcing the actions onstage.

Sound Amplification can also be seen as one of the significant roles of a Disc Jockey in theatre production. Performers with low projections can be effectively heard by the audience from any distance with the help of microphones. With an effective mixing console, more than sixteen (16) microphones can be used at the same time. For this reason, sounds can be distributed to different locations including the backstage in the theatre and activated when necessary. With a specialist mounting the gargets sound would reach the audience at the right time and place. The disc jockey might be relegated to social gathering outside the theatre arena however; they have great impact in theatre performance.

Disc Jockey and the Dancer

The dancer requires sound for the externalisation of his inner feelings through movements. It is said that 'everybody is a dancer, but only a dancer can perform'. In most modern or contemporary dance the convergent and divergent of movement possibilities as an expression is usually facilitated by the dexterity and creativity of the Disc Jockey (DJ). Often times dance performances are motivated by the rhythmic association of sound to the soul of the dancer. Bakare 2007's article *Singing Old Tunes: Critical Comments on Welsh Asante's African Dance* references Pearl Primus's comment on dance training in Africa in this expression:

> There is a distinction between the trained dancer and somebody who just dances...the professional dancer must have been trained from childhood to be a dancer. Having shown special talent and skills, for rhythm and dance language, he is apprenticed to a master dancer who employs whatever methodology he feels is appropriate to take this apprentice through a rigorous dance

training programme (272).

In a spiritual or ritual dance performance, the local sound designer can manipulate a dancer to transcend into trance-like movements. From the position of science, the dancer must have kinaesthetic sense – sound or dance sense required for appropriate movement communication in dance. Kinaesthetic sense allows for proper distribution of muscle articulation in the human body. This is enabled by the DJ's sweet supply of sound. The harmonious sound so supplied contributes to energise the dancer to be more creative and skilful. Thus, Sherbon Elizabeth 1975:

> All artistic expression is based on craft, the technical control of a given instrument of expression... there are two concepts that can be immeasurable value in learning the craft of dance. Probably the most important is the idea of striving continuously for complete efficiency in movement. Use only the amount of energy needed to perform the desired movement. The energy should be exerted in the desired direction and in the sequential order needed to accomplish the wished-for effect. (23)

The DJ is sometimes engaged in the packaging of a dance theatre. The modern socio-street dances and the trendy dances are made possible by the DJ's motivational sounds. As professionals the DJ and the Choreographer in a collaboration of purpose design movements and sounds that are easy to identify and relate with.

Disc Jockey and Youth Development

It is worth noting that when the youths are empowered, the nation is empowered as well. The youths constitute a significant population of the country. Their labour and services are highly needed for the general growth of the country. When the youths are empowered, the country would have less worry trying to curb crimes and other social vices. Hence, they must be encouraged by all sectors of society to remain positive and take absolute control of their lives. Parents, guidance, government, and private sectors must ensure they empower the youths to impact positively on the nation-building. The society should encourage them to explore this venture. One of the ways to give them that encouragement is to

create an enabling environment for them. This can be achieved if the youths are given soft loans to venture into one, the business of Disc Jockey and two, the dancer to form a Dance Troupe business. The money realised in the business can be used to service the loan. With this, the beneficiary is empowered. As the business grows, he would need the services of others to assist in setting up his sound. For this reason, he would need to employ two or more people for that. By so doing, he is creating employment for others.

Conclusion

Sound design is a profitable business if well harnessed. It found itself as an instrument of theatrical exposition in today's world. The Disc Jockey seeks solace in it to entertain the audience and to make a harvest of profits. More to this is the fact that the DJ helps the dancer to realise and articulate his potential in the ability to merge sound with movement and vice versa. This dynamic is viable for the development of the youths. When they are engaged is these skills i.e. Disc Jockey and Dance, they are shielded from social vices and all types of untoward attitude. The aforementioned vocations are useful businesses that can develop the economy of a nation. Disc Jockey has grown and popular in Nigeria with an association spread across Nigeria known as the DJs Association of Nigeria (DJAN) currently located in Abuja. Similarly, for dance we have the Dance Guild of Nigeria (DGN) with its Headquarters in Lagos. The youth's energy should be deployed to developing themselves in Disc Jockey and the art of dance and the government on its part should provide the needed resources and environment for the two arts to strive.

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