**MUSIC: THE MEDIA AND GUARDIAN-SPIRIT OF HUMANITY**

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**Abstract**

Humanity and music are inseparable and through a deep consciousness of musical mode presentation, music touches people’s deepest feelings and beliefs about life. Humans by their nature are spiritual beings. They are also superstitious and they project their identities and consciousness into nature through music. Music plays an important role as the main form of media entertainment, recreational and sources of pleasure and satisfaction. During ceremonies and festivals, music provides an excellent media of expression by means of interacting and communicating with one another and the ancestors. It is used to summon people to meetings, welcome visitors, praise, warn, signal danger, advertise articles, and announces the death of king or important personality. This study digs deep into the usefulness of music to humanity across human existence from cradle to the grave. The study traces how music has fascinated the people of all culture; Williams Shakespeare, Greek Philosophers, Aristotle and Plato, Romans and Modern science. Music can suggest and affect our state of mind. But the reason for this is very mysterious. The main aspects of music which influence humans are discussed in the characters of the features of music; rhythm and physical movement, melody and emotion, intensity and culture phenomenon. Given the growing internationalism of music and the corresponding imperative for musical knowledge among humanity, this article reflects on the overridden influence of music to man’s spirit and explore the worth and essence of music to humanity.

**Keywords**: Guardian, Humanity, Media, Philosopher, Spiritual.

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Introduction

 Music is a concept design and produce for mankind. Its presence in human societies is an indicator of its valuable roles and functions in our total life patterns. From the beginning of human existence, music has been a natural outlet for the expression of feelings and men of letters have recognized the power of music to control the mind of living creatures. Humans and animals are sensitive to sound in general. Music, in the context of our discussion is simply a ‘structured sound’ with meaning with features such as: pleasing, harmonious, appealing, clear, focus, reflective, penetrating, affective sound with messages. Music is a symbolic expression of inner life, social and cultural experiences of humanity. Within these symbolic expressions are the values, myths, legends and culture of the creators are reflected. Music, being the craftsmanship of expressive thoughts in sound, is the only global phenomenon that cut across race, religion, tribe, language, philosophy, color, age and even environmental circumstances. Creative experiences of musical forms are song, folksongs, myths, orations, chart, incantation, recitation, poetry, dirge and folks lore.

The first stage of ‘MUSICKING’ in humanity is known as music in nature (human nature). Right from the womb human beings have been clowned with music. The years of unconscious ‘musicking’ represent the early year of music in the natural unconscious of man. Human beings passed through stages; from the earliest developmental days of the FOETUS through the POST-NATAL development, and from the lallation stage of the child to the ELEMENTARY school years that music serves as accompaniment. The first stage according to Mereni (2014:9),

The first manifestation of music in humans is the pulsation of the heart. This beat draws the amniotic liquid together at that throbbing spot, in the heart of the mother, where it condenses into the foetus. Thus, the ancient Egyptians legend which talks about the ‘sound constituent’ of man, can now find scientific backing in the facts of ontogenesis, from the development of the primitive encephalon, the neural chords, through to the constitution of the central nervous system.

The above theory, simply put, is the process of human fertilization in which 150 million sperm travel to the Fallopian tube to meet the egg. For instance, the sperm have to complete this race within 12-48 hours of the egg being ovulated, or else they will die. It is interesting that the musical rhythmic sounds (chemical signals) usually accompany the race, and it is the sperm that respond speedily to the ‘rhythm of the music’ that finally reach the egg. Furthermore, the egg will begin to emit an ‘electric signal’ (continuation of musical sound). The electric signal will trigger little sacs that are located just below the egg membrane, cortical granules, to release their contents into the space surrounding the egg. Therefore, an individual has been clowned with music in the womb. The second stage of ‘musicking’ is the music in human activity from childhood to adulthood. An infant is often exposed to a mother’s speech that is musical in nature. The motherly singing allows the child to relax and this lullaby plays a role in identity formation. Most lullabies are sung in vernacular – that is, the language of the people – and many of such songs are vocables, or nonsense syllables, and speak to the child in diminutive or endearing terms. Lullaby has the following traits: they are often repetitive, slow paced, and with a gentle rhythmic motion.

Throughout history, the effects of music have fascinated people of all cultures. For example, William Shakespeare is of the opinion that music has the power to soothe the savage beast. One of Shakespeare’s methods for social commentary was his plays ballads, or popular English street songs. All range of characters – from clowns and rogues to spurned lovers-sang of poisonous concoctions, mesmerizing rituals, political wrongdoings and broken hearts. Songs told of the ‘cunning witches in Macbeth’ or ‘Puck’s love potions gone away in A Midsummer Night Dream’. Some tunes were already well known to Shakespeare audiences, such as the, ‘The Merry Wives of Windsor’ when Falstaff proclaims: ‘Let the sky rain potatoes! Let the thunder to the tune of Greens leaves’.

**Conceptual Framework**

Greek philosophers believed that music could influence ethos, one’s ethical character or way of being and behaving. Because of the Pythagorean view that the same mathematical laws governing music operate throughout the cosmos both in the visible and invisible world, even the human soul was seen as a corporate whose parts were kept in harmony by numerical relationships. Music, then, could penetrate the soul and restore (or shatter) its inner harmony in the same way that ‘harmonia’ determined the orderly motion of the planets.

Closely related to the concept of ethos is Aristotle’s theory of imitation, which explains how music affects behavior. Music, he writes in the Politics (ca330 B.C.E), imitates (that is, represents) the passions or states of the soul, such as gentleness, anger, courage, temperance, and their opposites. Habitual listening to music that stirs up ignoble passions, for example, may warp a person’s character, whereas the right kind of music tends to fashion a person of good character. Aristotle argues, for example, that those being trained to govern should avoid melodies expressing softness and indolence and should listen instead to melodies that imitate courage and similar virtues.

Because music affects the listener emotionally, it has been associated with far-reaching, sometimes magical, powers. The Romans viewed music not as the force that unified the human body and soul but also as an all-pervading force in the universe, whose arithmetical ratios kept the planets in their orbits. Modern scientists continue to study the ‘music of the spheres’, investigating the sounds produced by black holes in the universe and the earth-both emit tones that are inaudible to the human ear but can be measured with scientific equipment. The earth’s constant hum, probably generated by atmospheric pressure and oceanic forces, is detected with seismographs (devices that measures earthquakes). Can listening to Mozart make you smarter? Does music have healing qualities? You may have heard of the ‘Mozart effect’, a phenomenon that has been widely discussed in both the scientific community and the general media. It is based on the observation that participants in several studies improved their scores on spatial-temporal tests after listening to one of Mozart’s piano Sonatas (Listening to the first ten minutes of the Mozart Sonata for Two Pianos in D major; K.. 448) Spatial-temporal reasoning is rather like thinking in pictures and is an important guide to one’s aptitude for solving math problems.

Traditionally, music is usually realized within the context of social events. Traditional music is the music which has been practiced from time immemorial. It is the oldest type of music in African continent. However, musical art itself is a cultural universal; that is; there are no known human cultures in which there cannot be found some form of music and dance. The various social events with which music is most usually associated include religious worship, magic, work, children’ games, sports, war, therapy, installation of chiefs and kings, festivals, marriages, funeral rites and house warming ceremonies. Apart from embellishing social events, music has other important social functions such as: documenting history, information dissimilation, education, life style, philosophy, praise singers, healing process, and funeral dirge, entertainment and farming. There are many types of music in Nigeria and all of them can be heard at one time or the other, at varying degrees of frequency. All these music are classifiable into four groups: the traditional music, the neo-traditional, the pop and the classical/school music.

Two key words are central to this study: Humanity and our Guardian Spirit.Humanity is simply human beings collectively, which is also synonymous to humankind, the human race, mankind, man, or people. The word ‘humanity’ is from the Latin ‘humanitas’ for human nature and kindness. Humanity includes the entire human race on earth or people as a whole.Guardian spirits are Supreme Being or object believed to have special affection for a particular individual; a benevolent spirit and a tutelage being. Guardian spirits are supernatural teachers who guide an individual in every important activity through advice and songs. As a general rule, the role of our guardian spirits is to protect us from evil and danger, and send us inspirations so that we will make correct and informed decisions in the most important phases of our lives. In short, in the context of this study, guardian spirits only refers to ‘affective actions’ (feelings, emotions, and perception and warning inner voice) that occur to us in a different way as a result of music.

**Methodology**

Phenomenology is the philosophical study of the structures of experience and consciousness. As a philosophical movement it was founded in the early years of the 20thcentury by Edmund Hussen. However, Phenomegraphy is a qualitative research approach, within the interpretive paradigm, that investigates the qualitatively different ways in which humanity experience something or thinks about an issue. Description is important because our knowledge of the world is a matter of meaning and of the qualitative similarities and differences as it is experienced by different people. The emphasis on detailed analysis of description follows from an assumption that conceptions are formed from human action and the conditions for it.

Phenomenography allows researcher to use their own experiences as data for phenomenographic analysis. The object of phenomenographic study is not the ‘phenomenon’ per se but the relationship between the actors (in this case humanity) and the phenomenon (in this case ‘music’). The focus is on variation: variation in both the perceptions of the phenomenon, as experienced by the actor, and in the ways of seeing something as experienced by the actor, and in the ways of seeing something as experienced by the researcher.

**Findings/Discussion**

Music and ‘atmosphere’ go together. To condition an ‘environment’, relaxing music is very useful for a quiet romantic dinner; livelier music for physical work or exercise, and for outdoor socializing, heavy sound may be required. It is to be noted that listening to fast music while driving increases the rate of car accidents, for academic excellence cool music-Mozart Effect increase intelligence. Therefore, there is no denying the fact that music can suggest and affect our state of mind. But the reason for this is very mysterious. Why should organized sounds affect us to such an extent that music now becomes ‘guardian spirit of humanity? The main aspects of music which influence us can be summed up in the characters of the features of music; Rhythm and Physical Movement, Melody, and Emotion, Intensity (Volume) and Human Behavior, Cultural Phenomenon.

Rhythm and Physical Movement: Rhythm (from Greek; recurring motion) is the movement marked by the regular succession of strong and weak sound: in music dance, language and poetry. In simple terms, rhythm is the placement of sounds in time, in a regular and repeated pattern, while tempo is how fast or slow a piece of music is performed. Music tends to have a steady tempo to it, often measured in ‘beats per minute’. A simple observation is that most music is in the range of 50-200 beats per minute; the same as the extreme range of our heart beats. In general, the tempo of a piece of music roughly equates with human being heartbeat associated with the corresponding physical state or emotion which the music suggests. Therefore, any music played in the range 50-80 beats per minute is calm and relaxed; less than 60 is often very relaxed, introspective or even depressed. 80-100 is moderately alert and interested. 100 upward is increasingly lively, excited or agitated and, since we crave some degree of excitement from our entertainment, 80-120 is quite a common tempo, and even 120-160 is common in some energetic situations. Music moves in time and there is an absolute correspondence between heartbeat and music tempo, therefore, unconsciously, human associate music with movements made by our bodies while talking, walking, running, dancing, riding or driving a car. In English language metaphors, ‘upbeat’ is happy and positive and ‘downbeat’ is sad and depressed. Rhythm is the most dangerous element of music. The Kabalarian philosophy point to the principle of rhythm and balance as the divine power that represents perfect coordination and cohesion in all forms of life. A healthy person moves rhythmically and should think in some form. Rhythmic thinking helps the complete coordination of the senses and emotions with the ultimate of constructive mental reasoning. Music arouses tendencies and this fulfills the conditions according to arousal effect. Weinberger (1998:23) submitted that:

The primary dimension on which emotion is experienced is in terms of a build-up of tension and release of tension, both within the music and in the listener…the more elaborate the build-up of tension to a certain climax, the more intense emotions will be experienced. When resolution follows, relaxation follows.

Noted above is the complexities of music rhythm that the more complex the rhythm, the more arousal will be the experience. Rhythmic thinking can come only through logic and reason, for unless man’s mind is analytical and logical, his thoughts become confused, incidentals become magnified into great issues and, in time, he loses all sense of proportion and continuity of thoughts. Erratic thinkers are physically uncoordinated and suffer through the emotions and nervous system. The principle of balance in human mind is the key to health and mental progress.

**Melody and Human Emotions**

Melody is the linear sequence of tones; a kind of fluid-like sequence of tonal sound. The connection between melody and human being is that melodies are very similar to sentences that our brains are designed to speak and listen to. In general, human beings prefer melodies where the tones are reasonably close together with a variety of nice harmonious intervals between and a rhythm similar to that of speech. A good melody (even if it does not have words) is often one that we could hum, sing or whistle. Both the tones of language and melody possess the following characters: the tones should not be in an extreme range and should not have large awkward jumps between them; the tones should also have durations which are not too short and not too long (often in the range of 0.1 second to 2 seconds)

Melodies convey different emotions. Emotions of melodies mirror the emotions of speech. Sad people tend to talk in monotone; sad music seems to move in very small intervals within a narrow range. In contrast happy people talk using a greater tonal range, and happy music follows that pattern using larger interval over a wider range. In music composition, chromatic melodies or melodies belonging to a minor scale are often seen as darker than melodies from a major scale. When a composer wishes to express harshness, bitterness and similar things, he will do best to arrange the parts of the composition so that they proceed with movements that are without semitone (small distance of sound), such as those of the whole tone and ditone (major third). But when a composer wishes to express effects of grief and sorrow, he should use movements which proceed through the semitone, the ‘semi-ditone’ (minor third), and similar intervals, often using minor sixths or minor thirteenths above the lowest note of the composition, these being by nature sweet and soft, especially when combined in the right way and with discretion and judgment. If the melody has words, the text lines and the musical phrases will generally coincide. The science of emotion concern human feelings such as love, fear, anger, hatred, excitements and general reactions. According to Sloboda (1991), music can induce intense emotions, and it is accurate to describe musical emotions as mood states, experiences and feelings that are influenced by music listening.

**Intensity and Human Behavior**

Intensity is the degree of loudness or volume of sound of music. Music with high intensity is loud and music with low intensity is soft. Music is important, but if played too loud, it causes permanent and irreversible damage to the hearing. According to Adeoye (2014:10) ‘Music works on the autonomic nervous system … controlling blood pressure, heart beat and the part of the brain that controls feelings and emotions’*.* Too much loudness is not just annoying; it is potentially dangerous, both physically and mentally. In fact, Meremi (2014) described it as a slow agent of death. At what degree is the intensity of music becomes too loud? If people who are only three feet away have to shout to be hard where you are listening to music, then it is too loud. In view of the implication, which music imposes on the autonomic nervous system, it must be controlled. Some negative effects of music are seen in the loud stereos in the name of music in our immediate environment. Behavioral decadence is as a result of the uncontrolled heavy sound in the environment with its attendant deceases such as nervous diseases, high blood pressure and hot temper. The discipline of music permeates all the actions of our life because music relates to us by nature and can ennoble or corrupt the character. This is evident in the various pops and jazz music which intoxicate its practitioners. The relevant question at this juncture is why is it that those exposed to pop and jazz music behave irrationally? In other words, disorder or indiscipline music delight is harsher tones, abusive texts, and played in a variety of confused manners and preserved by indiscipline minds.

**Cultural and Religious Phenomenon**

Culture is a way of life. The practice of music has been associated with humanity from primordial time to the present modern world. Generally, cultural phenomenon and belief system portray music as the guardian spirit of humanity. Blacking (1973:52) argued that, ‘people’s response to music cannot be fully explained without some reference to their experiences in culture’. Culture is the social behavior and norms found in human societies. Culture is considered a central concept in humanity, encompassing the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies. Humanity, religion and music are inseparable. Humanity engaged in religion through functional music to invoke the spirits of gods and goddesses. According to Allan P, Merriam (in Olaniyan 1999), musical sound is the result of human behavioral processes that are shaped by the values, attitudes and beliefs of the people who comprise a particular culture. Through a deep consciousness of musical mode presentation, music touches people’s deepest feelings and beliefs about life, and the sources of human trouble. Man, by his nature, is a spiritual being. He is also superstitious and he projects his identity and consciousness into nature through music. According to Akporobaro (2006:12)

He (humanity) anthropomorphosis and deifies forces and imaginings which he cannot control and which he imaginings bring death, disappointment or success to his anxiety laden life. Many folktales, maths and legends utilize as characters and protagonists spiritual beings, who behave like human beings with wilder infinite powers… No matter how we view mythic spirituals or religious beliefs, these narratives constituted a realm of visions and ontology that was psychologically and artistically and morally satisfying explanations to the primitive man.

On the whole, we may say that musical mode forms provide the traditional mind with an appropriate context for artistic and spiritual expression. In the Islamic faith music has always been employed in a variety of ways. The definition of music is “structure sound”. There is “structure” in many activities surrounding Islamic religion, which possess quality of music. The call to prayer (adhdan) was usually chanted in the streets by the muezzin and minaret of the mosque. Its cantillation (talhi) was at first dirge-like, and later become more melodic. The Koran (Qu’ran), has a cantillation (taghbir) of its own. The assonance of its rhymed prose lends itself to reading (qira’a) in modulated sounds. Alec (1960:72) submits that

From Islam’s earliest days it has always had its purists and the legists who, finding it convenient, to remember only Muhammed’s structures, condemned all music whatever, not only the secular but also the sacred, and a large and controversial literature sprang up on ‘listening to music’. No doubt some actual measures were taken against the singing-girls under the Orthodox Caliphs (632-61) who, following Muhammad’s death, made their capital at al-Medina. And it was here that about the middle of the century, male musicians came to the fore, and Persian influence resulted from the songs of the Persian captives sent to the Hijaz.

In the Nigerian setting, music was used to attain the goals of Islamic religion propagation. Daramola (2008) opined that

The use of music to attain the set goals of these schools (Quranic schools) which was that the converts might be able to read, recite and understand the language of the Quran became very important and expedient. This not only became the practice among the early Muslim clerics among the Yourba, it became a taste by which omo-ile-keu (Quranic school pupils) are attracted and fascinated. From this perspective, it can be deduced that music and musical works that qualify as true objects of cultivated taste are capable of becoming sources of motivation for educational and aesthetic sensibilities.

**Conclusion**

The concept of music as a phenomenon varies from one society to another depending on the role it plays, the people’s degree of exposure to what constitutes its practice and the level of integration with the socio-cultural activities of the people. Omojola (1999) observes that music, as a product of human mind, cannot but reflect other aspects of a people’s thought process. Thus, an understanding of the conception of music among the various communities would have to derive from a combination of factors such as words used by the people to describe music, the contexts of musical performance, the organized procedures associated with music, the nature of musical expression itself and the meaning, intended in a musical performance. In many African societies, music is principally a major human activity. Music making may be organized as incidental or background music for events such as games, wrestling matches, ceremonies, ritual processions and many other feasts. Humanity denotes mankind and the features that evolve in the interaction of human beings. Sociologically, the concept of music is defined by the society and it is concerned with the organized ways in which people behave towards one another when they listen, produce, and reproduce those sounds which they perceive as music. In support of this view, Hugo De Jager (1974:161) states:

Music which sociologically consists of ideas and about certain kinds of sounds does not exist in isolation. These musical ideas are intertwine with non-musical ideas and beliefs with regard to other spheres of life such as religion, work, leisure… morality, human dignity and utility. Music is part of a style of life, of a so-called cultural pattern.

In this vein, if music must serve the purpose of mankind, it is necessary to understand the trend of thoughts, activities, tastes and peculiarities of music structures. According to Allan P. Merriam (in Olaniyan, 1999) musical sound is the result of human behavioral processes that are shaped by the values, attitudes and beliefs of the people who comprise a particular culture. Music sound symbolizes a fundamental and social-psychological pattern common to a given culture. In a similar view Akpabot (1986) opines that complex music reflects a complex society and simple music reflects simple society. Stressing the view further, he asserts that music values are also reflective of general values. With the exploration of music as the guardian spirit of humanity, it is necessary to position same (music) as the vanguard of our society. Vanguard, being the development of new ideas or a lead in position of attack or the forefront in any field, music is hereby positioned as vanguard of intellectual movement for the emancipation of the Nigerian society. Finally, sound is anything that is heard. We hear sound when the waves travel through our outer ears and are converted in our inner ears to neural impulses which are then interpreted by various parts of the brain. Listening to and producing music is fascinating because it involves nearly every cognitive function of the brain.

**Recommendations:**

* Music as media/guardian spirits of humanity should be made compulsory in both primary and secondary school education in Nigeria. This is very necessary to prepare the mind of the young scholars for the challenges ahead.
* To foster an ideal society and to serve as guardians of morality, young people should be restricted from listening to pop music, ragtime, jazz, rock, punk, rap, hip-hop, fuji and all sorts of loud and fast music.
* Societal music should be monitored like drug. Hard music (hard drug) should be restricted for hard activities, war, wrestling or hard labor.
* In limiting the kinds of music they would allow in the ideal society, Plato and Aristotle showed their appreciation of the great power music held over people’s intellectual and emotional well-being. In later centuries, the Church Fathers also warned regularly against certain kinds of music. Hence, churches and all religious societies should do the same in Nigeria.
* Both in the Ancient Greco-Roman World and in Ancient China, as well as ancient African, philosophers of different schools attempted to construct an ideal of a just ruler and a society. Aristotle argues, for example, that those being train to govern should avoid melodies expressing softness and indolence and should listen instead to melodies that imitate courage and similar virtues. In this vein, all to be rulers in Nigeria: Counselors, Commissioners, Governors, Senators, Vice Chancellors, President, Ministers, Judges, should be restricted to music with structure sound.
* To aid mathematical calculation as a school subject, secondary school students should be made to listen to classical music for at least ten minutes. This will aid them in calculation and help to reduce examination malpractices.

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