**EXPLORATION OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THE POPULAR MUSIC COMPOSITION ADMIST COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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**Abstract**

Popular music plays prominent role in information dissemination in a given society. It is a weapon that is generally acceptable and enjoyed by both the young and the old for difference purposes. Pop music, being an appealed phenomenon, serves as a means of reaching a large audience within a short time and a natural means of education in a larger society. This fact was brought to fore during COVID-19 pandemic, when the world was in need of information for combating the pandemic. Music being a weapon of information dissemination bridged the gap as a means passing necessary information to the people. Therefore, this paper examines the pop music compositions that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. It discusses the various genres of pop music and the nature, style and impact it has in the society. The methodological approach to this study encompasses random selection of few albums for analysis. Findings elicit harmonic and melodic principles of pop music.

**Keywords:** Popular music, Pop, COVID-19, Pandemic, Music compositions,

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**Introduction**

 This paper explores the opportunities of music composition by popular music exponents during the COVID–19 pandemic. Generally, music is a multipurpose genre that serves various purposes, both in good and the bad times. There are various types of music which are usually employed in a given society such as pop music, traditional music, gospel music, instrumental music, sacred music, secular music and western classical music. Out of the aforementioned types of music, pop music is the most popular that usually pervade the society. Pop music is an abbreviation of popular music however; this in itself does not take the meaning of the word a great deal further. If we were to compare the music that was popular a hundred years ago, there will be a wide gap difference between the two although they exist in parallel. Though the sales of pop music have steadily been on the rise in the Nigeria, the numbers of records sold, for example, outstrip any other genre of music in the Nigerian society. This rapid sale of pop music in Nigeria is directly connected with the characteristics of it popularity among the youths. Therefore, characteristics of pop music tend to orientate around the genre of music that sells the most. Most importantly, the spontaneous characters of pop music posit the genre for a quick song arrangement and record waxing within the possible shortest time.

 This paper takes a critical analysis of some emergence-songs that were composed during the sudden appearance of COVID-19 in the world. The spread of COVID-19 is traceable to the three researchers from China at the Wuhan Institute of Virology who became sick in November 2019; however, scientists are still investigating the emergence and origin of COVID-19. As many early cases were linked to the Huanan market in Wuhan, its zoonotic source of transmission to human is still under investigation. However, the spread of the pandemic among human beings is a source of worry and concern to the entire world. The pandemic is so deadly that it kills within a short time and for the world to combat it spread are both scientific and extra-scientific method adoption. Therefore, this study focused on one of the major strategic weapon of awareness to prevent human to human transmission. Awareness through educational information is a major criterion for human survival on the faces of the planet earth, and music has been adjudged to be one of weapon of information dissemination in every given society. It has also been discovered that there are no nations, people or religion without music. Therefore, this paper takes a voyage into the world of pop songs that were composed during the sudden appearance of COVID-19 pandemic. The methodological approach to this study encompasses random selection of few albums for analysis. Several albums were released by pop musicians during the COVID-19 pandemic however; the level of acceptance by the public differs. The selection of albums that was analyzed was based on the most popular among the several songs. Secondary data were generated through the library and internet research, although most of the songs were yet to be notated on tonic solfa.

**Music Compositions during COVID-19**

Popular music is naturally created to generate revenue for the leading artist and his retinue of backup singers and the record companies. Some would argue that much of the music that is produced today is lacking in individuality and craftsmanship, where technology has replaced skill. There are many popular tracks that do appear to be carbon copies of many existing tracks out on the market but for the more discerning listener there are also many emerging artists that can offer a little respite from the predictable, money-spinning tracks, and it is fact that it is in these artists that the characteristics of popular music will be developed and renewed. At the appearance of COVID-19, so many strategic plans were proposed by the various institutions of government all over world. Health institutions were the first to roll out combative strategies to conquer the pandemic. Public awareness was considered as a non-qua-non for the education of the masses and brings to their door steps the methods to avert the pandemic. Popular music, being an important mode of information dissemination in any given society, was adopted to propagate the message. As Nigeria and the rest of the world continue to fight the corona virus pandemic, some artistes have released and recorded corona virus-theme songs to educate the public and inspire hope in people, include Cobhams Asuquo, K1 de Ultimate (Corona virus No Be Play), Pasuma (Stay Safe- COVID-19), Adewale Ayuba (Bye Bye Corona- God is Able), Esther Igbekele (Just One Plague), Mega 99 and Shola Allyson. The singer, songwriter and music producer, Cobhams Asuquo, took to his social media page to announce his new song, ‘We Go Win’. The song is dedicated to enlightening people on the right precautionary measures to take in order to prevent contracting the disease.An excerpt of the lyrics goes, ‘Use soap and water to wage war. Let’s show this thing who we are. If we hear word and obey laws and exercise discipline, wash your hands, love each other; we go win’.

**WE GO WIN O (CORONA) by COBHAMS ASUQUO**

My brother, my sister, papa, mama and pikin
Corona no big pass us, we go fight am we go win
As long as we remember to always do the right thing
Wash your hands, love each other, we go win o
Corona na the virus wey dey worry human being
E no get leg o but e dey waka from pesin to pesin
But we fit beat am, we fit stop am
If we maintain good hygiene
And practice social distancing
We go win o

No shaking hands with your neighbor
Blow them a kiss from afar
Use soap and water to wage war
Let’s show this thing who we are
We are special, we’re courageous
We are awesome human beings
We dey super, we get power
We can conquer anything
If we hear word and obey laws
And exercise discipline
Wash your hands love each other
We go win o

If e be like say you no well like e something dey do you
And you feel say, you believe say, e get as e do you
An your body no gree soji like something dey do you
No let panic finish you
You go win o, Self-isolate for the sake of…
All the people wey you love ooo
Don’t go around spreading rumors
Cos fake news won’t help anyone
You are special, you’re courageous
You’re a kajad human being
You too much o, you get power
You can conquer anything, Only if you hear word and obey laws
And exercise discipline
Wash your hands, love one another
We go win o

My brother, my sister, papa, mama and pikin
Covid-19 no big pass we, we go fight am we go win
Just as long as we remember to always do the right thing
Wash your hands, love each other, we go win o

Beside*,* fuji singer, Abass Akande, aka Obesere, has also joined the league of artistes who have composed songs to fight the pandemic.In the song titled, ‘Corona virus’, the self-proclaimed ‘Omo rapala’ sends a note of warning to COVID-19 not to enter Nigeria because his brother, ebola, perished in the country. The‘Azaman’ singer, Slimcase, also released a new song titled, ‘Jokosile’ (Stay at Home). The singer collaborated with budding singer, Vicki Samdave, and the duo created a track which harps on the importance of social distancing, staying at home, using hand sanitizers and maintaining proper hygiene.Slimcase also incorporated a social media challenge with the aim of harping on the message of the song.

Furthermore, the Rapper-turned-singer, Eedris Abdulkareem, also teamed up with a former Fela protégé, Dede Mabiaku, and Myke Pam, to record a song titled, ‘Corona Virus’. The objective of the sensitization song is for social reorientation on the corona virus pandemic. The lyrics focus on the world that is being ravaged by Corona virus and it behooves mankind to tackle and defeat the virus by observing and totally abiding by the laid down procedures as announced by the health authorities and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control for the main purpose of togetherness and to bring back the good times by doing the needful.” The Gospel singer and music producer, Akinwunmi Akinremi, better known as Florocka, in collaboration with Ayo Vincent, Folabi Manuel and others, has also released a COVID-19-themed song titled, ‘We Will Rise Again’. Sharing the inspiration behind the song, Florocka wrote on his social media page that, he has never been one to create a song based on a particular season but on this occasion. He felt the need to remind God’s people that this too will pass away. According to the singer, that he know for certain that God is able to carry us through this pandemic as he has always done before. So, submitted that he reached out to a number of his people, just before the lockdown, and sat down for a few hours to write a song that would bless people this season.

Gospel music is another very important aspect of Nigerian populace. Many religious adherent and Christians naturally listened and enjoy gospel albums. These opportunity was seized by the Photographer and singer, Ty Bello, who joined vocals with rising gospel singer, Tomi Favoured, to compose a song titled ‘Pass over’. The song which already has more than 200,000 views on YouTube is delivered in English, Yoruba and Hausa. On how the song came about, TY Bello wrote on Instagram page that, he has watched in disbelief as corona virus has literally shut nations down and he cannot sit in silence hoping for it to just go away. The song talks about taken necessary precautions as directed by the authorities to curb the spread of the virus. Secondly and even more importantly, we must use our words of prayer because everything responds to it. The album also discusses the importance communal prayers and declarations.

The pop singers Brent Cobb and Rob Snyder also wrote new song on April 14, 2020 to combat the Corona Virus pandemic titled "Six Feet Apart." The song is about the current times and the world that is looking forward to the day all of this will be over. The song is available on: [https://lc.lnk.to/sfa](https://www.youtube.com/redirect?v=6d9XjnV2iKA&event=video_description&q=https%3A%2F%2Flc.lnk.to%2Fsfa&redir_token=QUFFLUhqblkxSERFQVZPVkU5M1E4TlNhZEFfYS1Ra21SQXxBQ3Jtc0tsT1M3WWk5OVRMNzkxekpJaUtoLXJvd0s4dFYzU0dUUkFVUG40ZW5kSGFoRlpTLXc2cWd0eVZKWU1HMGFEcFA2bkxITTh5QnZqbHVlei1mSzM2RWJ2R0lsOWoxLTliWTM5cC13eU82NDF3UG8xNUd5VQ%3D%3D) with such lyrics as follow:

When the dogwoods start to bloom

And the crickets hum their tune

It’s usually about the time

That I feel most alive

But the news has all been bad

And the world just seems so sad

I ain’t had much else going on

So I sat down and wrote this song

I miss my mom, I miss my dad I miss the road,

I miss my band giving hugs and shaking hands

It’s a mystery I suppose

Just how long this thing goes

But there’ll be crowds and there’ll be shows

And there will be light after dark

Some day when we aren’t six feet apart

First thing that I’m gonna do is slide on in some corner booth

Take the whole damn family out

And buy my buddies all around

Pay some extra on the tab

Catch a movie, catch a cab

Watch a ballgame from the stands

Well there will be light after dark

Some day when we aren’t six feet apart

Another interesting album released during COVID – 19 is titled ‘Do What You Can’ written by Jon Bon Jovi. The interesting pop music document the period the world authority’s shutdown their borders. The lyric is as follows;

Tonight they’re shutting down the borders

And they boarded up the schools

Small towns are rolling up their sidewalks

One last paychecks coming through

 I know you’re feeling kind of nervous

We’re all a little bit confused

Nothing’s the same

This ain’t a game

We got to make it through

When you can’t do what you do

You do what you can

This ain’t my prayer it’s just a thought

I want to send round here we bend but don’t break

Down here we all understand

When you can’t do what you do

You do what you can

As we wave outside the window

Older loved ones stay inside

Moms and babies blowing kisses

Maybe saving someone’s life

They had to cancel graduation

It ain’t fair to Skype the prom

Our kids sit home in isolation

TV news is always on

When you can’t do what you do

You do what you can

They built a hospital on East Meadow

In Central Park last night

Doctors, nurses, truckers, grocery store clerks

Manning the front lines

I saw a Red Cross on the Hudson

They turned off the Broadway lights

Another ambulance screams by

There by the grace of God go I So love yourself

And love your family

Love your neighbor and your friend

Ain’t it time we loved a stranger

They’re just a friend you ain’t met yet

We’re gonna get through this together

Until I see you once again

When you can’t do what you do

You do what you can

This ain’t my prayer

It’s just a thought

In another instance, unity and togetherness was the focus of a group of 10 major African artists that use their song lyrics to campaign and release a music track calling for the world to join in solidarity to fight COVID-19. In partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation and MTV base, “Stand Together” is a solidarity anthem featuring some of Africa’s biggest music stars: 2Baba, Ahmed Soultan, Ben Pol, Teni, Yemi Alade, Amanda Black, Stanley Enow, Gigi La Mayne, Prodigio and Betty G. The song has been produced by Nigerian and African Artists to promote unity. They represent multiple parts of the continent, including Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Cameroon, Angola, Ethiopia, and Morocco. The song launched during the Nelson Mandela Annual lecture 2020 and featured remarks from UN Secretary-General António Guterres around the theme of tackling inequality during COVID-19.

**Nature of Pop Music**

There are certain elements of popular songs that distinguished it from large majority of other genre of music. The structure of many popular songs is that of a verse and a chorus, the chorus serving as the portion of the track that is designed to stick in the ear through simple repetition both musically and lyrically. The lyrics parts are frequently written in a way to be sing able by most people and therefore more memorable. The chorus is often where the music builds towards and is often preceded by ‘the drop’. This generates anticipation for the chorus that has an even greater impact and appeal to the youths, though the verse-chorus formula is prominent in popular music, there are always variations on the basic structure. These can include introductions, bridge passages that ‘fill the gap’ between verses and choruses, instrumental sections and accompanied with various musical jargons. Many popular songs include ‘hooks’ or ‘riffs’; these are musical devices that are a short repetitive collection of notes that are composed to draw you into the music and keep you listening. This is especially true for hooks that are designed to stick in your ears hours after you have stopped listening to the song.

Harmonically, many popular songs follow quite a prescribed formulaic selection of chords that have been tried and proven to be successful. The reason these patterns of chords work is that they contain an ideal blend of both traditional known chords that appeal to the ear and offer almost endless melodic possibilities. You can more readily notice these chords in the chorus sections of popular songs where their repletion and use have the most lasting effect. Whilst the choruses have the limelight in songs, the verses of popular songs commonly take the narrative of a song and are really of equal importance. Chord patterns that support the melody are often simpler than the chorus, sometimes containing as few as two chords with the rhythmic emphasis less dominant. The mix of the verses is also less complex, thinned out deliberately to allow the impact of the chorus to be greater when it arrives.

One aspect of popular music that varies considerably is that of speed or tempo. Some more lyrical tracks are written at a slow speed whereas some techno tracks have a heart-pounding tempo of up to 160 beats per minute. This is where the popular music genre begins to subdivide in a way and differentiates itself between music that is for listening or dancing. There is a whole range of popular music in between these two polar opposites that can account for a vast array of tracks within the genre. It may seem like stating the obvious, but a vital and enduring element of popular music is the voice. Whether male or female, it is the voice and the unique sound or timbre of that voice that features in all pop songs. This not only includes lead vocals but in many tracks backing vocals too. In the case of many pop bands, the individual sound that the layered backing vocals created became a major characteristic of the group’s sound. These together with the unparalleled talents of the lead singer, backup singers, instrumentals and the youthful gangs that enjoy pop music.

Conclusion

 From the foregoing, one can easily see that musicians have a pride of place in the broadcasting industry. And, awake to the fact that a musician is a man of many souls, one can appreciate why Plato recommended Music and Gymnastics in the right proportion as the desirable curriculum in education. Well-trained music practitioners of diverse specializations have many job opportunities where they contributes to the advancement of virtue, culture, and the Nigerian society, Often, pop music is cherished by all, however nobody seems to care much about documenting the music and preserve it for the unborn generation. This is necessary as a legacy of our generation to the next.

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