

Elements of Folkism in “Banuso” song by Olawale Ashimi

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Abstract

The use of didactic lyrics accompanied by folklore to convey different cultural norms to the audience is a common feature in the music of some Nigerian music artists. This accounts for different interpretations and concepts based on the socio, economic and political realities of the society that consumes the music. The use of proverbs, oral poetry, and traditional musical instruments has been identified with musicians like Hubert Ogunde, Jimi Solanke, Tunji Oyelana, and in recent times with popular musicians like Bisade Ologunde popularly known as “Lagbaja”, Seun Kuti, Olusegun Akilolu popularly known as “Beautiful Nubia and many more.

Some scholars argue that the use of intricate language in popular music elevates its artistic value, while others believe it alienates certain audiences. Consequently, joining the discourse, this study examines the features of folkism in Banuso, a song by Olawale Ashimi.

This study adopts the qualitative research method via the instrument of descriptive and content analyses, as well as the instrument of interview. By analytical approach, the song, Banuso by Olawale Ashimi is subjected to detailed examination of the tenets of folkism while descriptive approach is used to carefully inspect and explain how Olawale Ashimi employs folkism in his music. To gather pertinent information, interview with two Ifa priests, Ifatoye Ramoni and Ifatunde Adebisi was conducted. The study adopts Karolina Kizinka's (1995) socio-musicology theory to foreground its discourse. Academic materials such as books, journal articles, and internet sources serve as our secondary source of data.

The song Banuso by Olawale Ashimi can be described as a contemporary folk music. Consequently, this study reveals different tenets of folkism such as oracular poetry, use of proverbs, use of indigenous language and appropriate use of traditional musical instruments in the production of the song Banuso. It is also discovered that the use of these elements aim at bringing music and society into an alignment demonstrating how music and society converge and influence each other in social, historical, and political contexts.

This study concludes that the impact of musicians in the preservation of cultural artifacts and values cannot be underestimated. The artist should be held in high esteem as an agent who influence society and rapidly produce the change society desperately craves. This paper recommends that music artists should not neglect the aspects of philosophy and folk traditions in order to connect more with their audience and make positive social impacts. Also, critics should not be shy about calling out musicians that are not contributing to the values of society, while the government and musical bodies should pay more attention to what is released into the mainstream in the aspect of music.

Introduction

In modern times, the performing arts have become a strong tool for tutelage. Music, dance, and drama play indelible roles in shaping the society. Music holds immense importance as it serves as a powerful medium of expression, connection and social commentary. It has the ability to transcend language barriers and reach people on a deep emotional level. It has the potential to shape existing cultural traditions, norms, challenge societal constructs and bring about positive change through melodic and rhythmic patterns. If music has such an explicit and powerful influence on shaping the emotional and psychological state of people, could it not then be used perhaps as a tool and vehicle for societal interrogation and check?

It is in the light of this question that music artists in Nigeria and elsewhere have at various times used music to interrogate societal happenings in order to effect social change. Aside its socializing function, music, through its capacity to drive emotions has been used for its emotional inducing function by many artists such as Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Olusegun Akinlolu (Beautiful Nubia), Augustine Okechukwu (Tekno), Olawale Ashimi (Brymo), Bukola Elemide (Asa), and Martins Okechukwu Justice (J-Martins) among others to showcase and question societal happenings with the view to creating awareness and change in the society.

Music and society are inseparable. Where there is no society, there is no music. John Blacking (1973, p.60) describes music as an organized sound into a socially acceptable pattern. This simply means that music revolves around human activity and existence. Each society defines what music means to it and how it affects its people. Whatever form of rhythm or sound that does not conform to people's way of life or social pattern will not be identified by such people as music. In essence, music is like a voice that carries the pattern of life that a people identify with. It is a voice that speaks people's moral values, educational system, government, economy, religion among others.

Music also possesses a strong relationship with the language of the society. It has to be conveyed through a particular medium (language) of communication which people understand. However, music itself is a language, it looks at the way people cannot express themselves through spoken and written word and makes up for the lapse. Music can in fact be seen as a deeper extension of language itself, filling in the gaps and reaching to points where the spoken word fails to. It transports a deeper fuse of emotions to the mental faculty of the listener. At the heart of music and society is the artist. The artist is the singer, composer or producer who creates songs and presents to the society. Thus, music, society, and the artist, have become inseparable because without the artist, society will be void of music, and without the society, there will be no artist, or the artist will be void of a platform to present his/her music. Music is the working tool of the musical artist. It is a means by which the artist conveys carved out messages and ideals to the society, with the hope that the people will truly listen, and as a result, come together and bring about social, political, economic or religious change.

Culture on the other hand distinguishes the pattern of life in which people live the world from each other. Hence, there are different networks of values, attitudes, norm, beliefs, myths, behavioral pattern that define the way of life and world in which human beings act, decide, reason and employ various techniques and method to solve problem and secure a livelihood as required in every human society. These achievements make up the different elements of culture

as cultures varies between different locales such as the nonmaterial culture. Worthy of note is the components of culture such as values and beliefs, norms, symbols, language and rituals.

The inseparability of music from culture, and culture from music often necessitate the mention or discourse of one in the other, and as such the duality of existence and complementarity of both are realities coming to the fore in this discourse. Folkism rooted in the African culture finds expression in music as a social product in the Nigerian context as portrayed in the song *Banuso* which can be described as a contemporary folk music by Olawale Ashimi. Consequently, this study reveals different features/tenets of folkism such as oracular poetry, use of proverbs, use of indigenous language and appropriate use of traditional musical instruments in the production of the song *Banuso* bringing music and society into an alignment demonstrating how music and society converge and influence each other in social, historical, and political contexts.

Literature Review

Music is a form of art that uses sound to communicate emotions, ideas and stories. It is a broad term that encompasses different genres and styles of music such as folk, classical, popular, martial, art music which can be created using a variety of instruments such as percussion, wind, strings or using electronic devices. Music can be performed by soloists or through an ensemble which can be enjoyed live or recorded. Regardless of its form, music has the ability to move and inspire change, make us behave in a certain manner which is an important part of our cultural heritage. This is in sync with the assertion of Alan (1992, p.12) who defines music as "the art by which a composer through a performer as an intermediary communicates to a listener certain ideas, feelings or state of mind"

Directly or indirectly, music is literally an influence carrier that has shaped cultures and societies around the world which are passed down from generation to generation. It is a vital sustainer of life and it mirrors the society. All these hinge on the impact it has on the society which include the emotional, moral, cultural impacts respectively. This account for why Huang (2015, p.99) in his article opines that:

As musicians, we are carriers of influence, whether or not we are aware of it and whether or not we intend to be. The sound and messages we release through our art form, directly impact our listeners in powerful ways. This is especially true of the youth and adolescents of our society, who are still extremely malleable to the world around them.

He goes further to evaluate how these social impacts play vital roles in the areas of culture, moral and emotions. Culturally, music reflects our daily culture through lyrics and sounds which evolve rapidly reflecting a specific generation's fingerprint. Music conveys positive messages such as hope, joy, triumphant over weakness morally and emotionally, music influences our behavior and culture which make deep positive impacts in the society we live in.

Music as a cultural expression is a social force that helps to shape music's explicit purpose of being a socialization agent. From this short description, three explicit functions are decipherable. They include musical performances which create an avenue for a relationship with others outside its cultural context, it disseminates information which serves as an agent of

socialization and a means of transmitting and enhancing knowledge.

However, we cannot underestimate the role of music in therapy, as well as entertainment. It is therefore a fair assumption that music communicates with us directly and can influence us in the course of our lives. This can be further assumed that its effect on society as a whole is the same. The music of the present defines the current status of the social collective. According to Plato, "any musical innovation, is full of danger to the whole state, and ought to be prohibited." When modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the state always change with them.

This statement is defined by the control of music that Plato suggests. He recognized that music can alter the social consciousness and his statement points to the negative effect that this can lead to. Blacking (1973, p.10) also argues that music can be a "product of behavior of human groups, whether formal or informal; it is humanly organized sound." Blacking's side of the phrase "humanly organized sound" denotes a sense of music beyond an international or random sound event but as a process that is purposefully engaged in by the members of a particular society albeit in ways which align with dominants or accepted socio-cultural norms.

Quindag (2025) building on Blacking's submission transformed Blacking's book title "How musical is Man?" into a transcendent research question and ask, "How musical is God?" Spring boarding of four of Blacking's principles, she answers this question from the perspective of a Christian and music educator who believes the Bible is the foundation of truth. She explores the mystery of God, humans, and music by referring to the account of the creation in Genesis 1 and 2 and other related verses in the Bible. The exploration encompasses the sonic order wisely created by God, the cognitive system that reflects humans as God's image bearers, how music is structured reality for things unseen and necessary for faith, and beauty as a God-ordained component for rest.

Nketia (1974, p. 4) asserts that:

To be human is to make music and the music we make says a great deal about who we are or at least who we think we are. That is why music is not just humanity's way of banishing eternal and terrifying silence in the universe. It is also the way in which each piece of humanity lays claim to its own particular character.

Maybury-Lewis (1996, p.55) corroborates Nketia and states that:

Music is profoundly ambiguous. It unites all of human kind for there are no people who do not make music, yet, it also separates people, for it is so often an important way of defining the identity of groups and distinguishing them from others.

To people in many cultures, music, inextricably intertwines into their way of life. The role of music is equally not restricted to a particular set of people or tribe rather to the world at large. This attests to Nketia (1982) cited by Ikibe (2010, p. 70) who confirms the importance of music to the socio-cultural development of people. "A community that does not have a vigorous musical life is regarded as a dead community. A social group that doesn't renew its bonds through collective activity of music and dance does not thrive (develop)..." Hence, through music a group can express their inner life and their determination to remain alive even under

conditions of extreme hardship and suffering. That is why Wilson (2003, p. 2) notes the vital force feature of music in every society. Here, music stands as a social binder and source of unity as a result of participation, the people become united as it binds them socially and foster peace.

Outside of religious engagement, more often than not the motive behind music is entertainment. Transcending this, music also plays extensive functions which are vivid in its way of educating informing, empowering, enlightenment, among other numerous attributes. To scholarly validate the above, Ikibe (2001, p. 69) explains that “music is primarily concerned with the entertainment of people much more than giving pleasure, however, the study and practice of music is highly scientific, technological, and vocational”. Especially from a secular point of view, the place of music has primarily been saddled with the responsibility of entertainment is upheld, but there are as well interminable positive functions that the study and use of music offers.

Adewoyin (2010, p. 59) states that, “Nigerian music industry has produced many talents from different parts of the country. There have been various artistes who have been the voices of the masses through their lyrics, while also speaking against corruption and bad governance”. In line with Adewoyin's thought, one could observe that Brymo among other artistes in the Nigerian circle have indeed used their musical tool to influence societal change. It is safe to conclude that behaviors associated with music cannot be isolated from the social and cultural context in which such behaviors take place because it is within this space that music has a purpose and its assigned meaning.

A society is a group of individuals involved in persistent social interaction or a large social group sharing the same social territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Societies are characterized by patterns of relationships (social relations) between individuals who share a distinctive culture and institutions. I.e a society can be described as the sum total of such relationships among its constituent members

It can be described as a group of people living together in a specific geographical territory, who interact with one another and share many elements of a common culture, as well suited to these lifestyles. A society is a kind of collective entity bounded together by custom and culture. Rawl (1971, p.4) says society are marked by conflict as well as shared interest.

Societies construct roles and other patterns of behavior by deeming certain actions or concepts acceptable or unacceptable. These expectations around behavior within a given society are known as societal norms which govern the activities of a people in an environment which can be transmitted through various art forms such as music, dance, symbols, craft and cultural traditions.

Having tried to examine extensively the notion of music, culture and society, this paper further delves into socio-musicology theory in examining the tenets of folkism and its effective use in Brymo's *Banuso* song.

Theoretical Framework

Socio-musicology theory was originally developed by the British ethnomusicologist, Simon

Frith in 1970s and 1980s, where he was of the opinion that "music can be used to construct and express social identities and also to reinforce social divisions". Frith argues that popular music should be understood as a cultural form, and that it is shaped by a complex set of social and economic factors.

This study adopts polish musicologist Karolina Kizinska's socio-musicological Theory (1995, p.63). The theory gives profound attention to the understanding of music which focuses on the social aspects of musical behavior and role of music in the society. Kizinska believed that a socio-musicological analysis can provide a more complete understanding of music than traditional musicological approaches. She argued that by examining the social, historical, and political factors that influence music, one can gain a deeper understanding of how music reflects and shapes human experience. In addition, she believed that this approach can help to identify and address issues of social inequality and injustice.

Kizinska (1995, p.63) opines that "socio-musicology is an approach to study music that focus on its social and cultural context". She argued that music can only be fully understood by examining it in relation to its historical, political and social environment. According to her, a socio-musicological analysis should consider factors such as the role of music in social life, the social class of the creator and the consumers and its role in political struggles.

Socio-musicological theory sometimes referred to as sociomusicology or sociology of music, refers to both an academic subfield of sociology that is concerned with music (often in combination with other arts), as well as a subfield of musicology that focuses on social aspects of musical behavior and the role of music in society. It is a subfield of musicology that examines the relationship between music and society. It explores how music reflects and is shaped by social, cultural and political contexts, and how it can be used to understand and interpret the world around us". That is to say, the theory considers how music shapes and is shaped by social identities, gender, class, race, and ethnicity. It also examines how music can be used to communicate and express emotions, and how it is used in various social settings and for different purposes.

Socio-musicology explores the ways in which music is shaped by and reflects the social and cultural context in which it is produced and consumed. This approach examines music as a social practice that is deeply embedded in the culture and society in which it is created. It solely considers how music can be used to convey meaning, express identity/race and shape social relationship for a holistic purpose. The theory aims at bringing an alignment between music and society and seeks to study how they (music and society) influences each other.

Features of Socio-musicology Theory

Kizinska (1974, p.63) outlined three interdependencies that should be considered in a socio-musicological analysis. These are:

- i) Historical context:- This is the extent to which historical circumstances determine the creation and reception of music(Kizinska, p.63)
- ii) Social Context: the extent to which music is embedded in social and cultural norms and how it is used to express identity and cultural exchange (Kizinska, p.63)
- iii) Political Context: This is the extent in which music influences, reflect or add commentary on

political issues within its lyrics. (Kizinska, p.63)

Socio-musicological theory therefore can be illustrated with the below diagram;



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Biography of Olawale Ibrahim Ashimi

Olawale Ibrahim Ashimi Olofooro popularly known as Brymo who was born May 9, 1986, is a Nigerian singer, songwriter, sonic artist, actor and author who was born and raised in Okokomaiko, a suburb in Lagos State to an Awori carpenter and an Egun trader, his parents' only child. Ashimi grew up in a multi-faith household and learned to recite the entire Qur'an after being enrolled into an Islamic School. Ashimi attended Aganju Aka Primary School and later enrolled at Japual Primary School.

Ashimi was initially interested in playing football after graduating from secondary school and while in school in 1999, Ashimi recorded his first song and titled it "Future". In 2002, Ashimi and some of his friends formed a group called The Aliens; they were active between 2004 and 2005, and disbanded in 2005. Ashimi was inspired to create music after listening to his mother singing fuji songs. Ashimi gained admission to Lagos State University (LASU), where he studied zoology, but after his second year he left to pursue a career in music. He is married to Esse Kakada, with whom he has a son, Waju Olofooro.

Musical Career

Brymo started recording music in 1999 and while in secondary school, he signed a recording contract Chocolate City label in 2010 but was accused of breaching his contract in 2013. Brymo released his debut studio album *Brymstone* in 2007. His second studio album *The Son of a Kapenta* was released in 2012, and was supported by the singles "Ara", "GoodMorning" and "Go Hard". Consequently, his third studio album titled *Merchants, Dealers&Slaves* was released on 20 October 2013, received positive reviews from music critics and was supported by the singles "Down" and "Eko".

In October 2014, Brymo released his fourth studio album *Tabula Rasa*. His eight-track compilation album *Trance* was released on 8 December 2015. It was primarily targeted at audiences in the U.S., and includes songs from *Merchants, Dealers & Slaves* and *Tabula Rasa*. Brymo released his fifth studio album named *Klítóris* on 9 May 2016 which was nominated for Best R&B/Pop Album at The Headies 2016 and for Album of the Year at The Headies 2018. In March 2018, Brymo released his sixth studio album named *Oşó*, which includes a mixture of alternative folk and Yoruba music, and was supported by the singles "Heya!" and "Bánúşo".

Brymo's seventh studio album *Yellow* was released on 1 April 2020 which was also nominated for Best Alternative Album and Album of the Year at The Headies 2020. Brymo released his debut EP *Libel* on 5 November 2020. In September 2021, he released *9: Èsan and 9: Harmattan & Winter* as his eighth and ninth studio albums, respectively. His tenth studio album *Theta* was released on 27 May 2022. Brymo exhibited *Mansa*, his eleventh studio album and debut as a sonic artist at KAP Hub in March 2023. He as an author had published books like *Oriri's Plight* (2018), *Verses* (2020) and *The Bad Tooth* (2022). Brymo also starred in films like *Price of Admission* (2021) and *Elesin Oba, The King's Horseman* (2022).

Influence and Style of Olawale Ashimi Music

Olawale Ashimi's in an interview with Echooroom Show says his music is influenced by a variety of different genres and artists. Firstly, he is influenced by Yoruba folk music which is the traditional music of his home region (Awori) and its environment. In addition, he is influenced by artists all over the world in likes of Bob Marley, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, King Sunny Ade, John Mayer, Frank Sinatra, Yusuf Dove, Beautiful Nubia, Asa among many others who also incorporated elements of folk music into their own works. Consequently, Olawale Ashimi draws inspirations from the sounds of R&B which is vivid and can be heard in his use of vocal harmonies and soulful melodies. (Brymo, 2023)

His music can be termed to be eclectic because he combines element of jazz, R & B and traditional music. However, his music also incorporates elements of hip-hop and mix of genres which makes his music unique and dynamic drawing on a variety of influences to create a unique sound. Olawale Ashimi's music can also be described as soulful, emotive and intricate. He uses a variety of vocal techniques such as falsetto, vibrato and melisma. His lyrics are poetic and evocative often expressing complex emotions and ideas while his melodies are always catchy with a distinctive flavor.

Analysis of the song *Banuso*

Banuso is a single from the album *Oso* released in 2018. It touches on the importance of "communing with one's heart alone and not with others". The song is a proverbial thought-provoking song by Brymo that delves into a deeply introspective exploration of themes such as discretion, corruption, social injustice, political and the need for change. With its haunting melody and evocative lyrics, *Banuso* captures the attention of listeners through the use of proverbs and storytelling narrative in order to highlight the importance of being discrete or confidential about one's plan over various prevailing issues in the society.

BANUSO

SONG TRANSLATION

Abéré á lo	The needle will pass
Abéré á lo	The needle will pass

K'ó nà okùn ó tó dí ò	Before the thread tangles
A ò ní dé bá won	We won't meet them
A ò ní dé bá won	We won't meet them
Ení bá ní a mǎa de ò	Whoever says we won't return
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Má b'enìyan só	Talk to no one
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Bá'núso	Keep to oneself
Má b'enìyan só	Talk to no one
Omijé á gbe	Tears will dry up
Omijé á gbe	Tears will dry up
Ìbànújé á dèrin ò	Sadness will turn to laughter
Eniafé	Whoever we love
Eniafé lamò o	Whoever we love, we know
A ò mo'ni tó fé ni ò	We don't know who loves us
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Má b'enìyan só	Talk to no one
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Má b'enìyan só	Talk to no one
Ení bá ma b'èsù jeun	Whoever that wants to dine with the devil
Síbíi rè á gùn gan	His spoon must be very long
Eni ò mò wáwù	He that does not know how to behave
Óma tee	Will be disgraced
Òsèlú mà ló layé ò	Politics is the order of the day
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Má b'enìyan só	Talk to no one
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Má b'enìyan só	Talk to no one
Èyin ará	Fellow brethren
Ewá gbó òò	Come and hear
Òrò kan se ùrùn ùrùn nínú iii	A word is rumbling inside me
Sé kín só	Should I say it?
Kín só	I should say it?
Ká bá'núso	I will talk to myself
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Un o ní b'enìyan só	I won't talk to anyone
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Má b'enìyan só	Talk to no one
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself
Bá'núso	Keep to yourself

Brymo has however not undermine the power of oral poetry in the song *Banuso* among many of his songs. The artist through the use of evocative language uses the song title itself "*Banuso*" to encapsulate an introspective idea which meaning is beyond the literal phase. The song *Banuso* uses Yoruba language in a creative and expressive way to convey his ideas and emotions through a soulful melodic pattern. He also used lot of figurative expressions such as metaphors, imagery and proverbs in line with repetition and storytelling narrative to convey his message to his audience yet communicating to them in ways they can relate with.

The artiste used his sonorous voice to tell the happenings in our society where the people do not consider the consequences of their actions before taking a plan or implementing policies which may be dangerous to them or the economy at large. Thus, the artiste uses the song to bottle, conjunct, reflect on the societal issues such as greediness, secrecy, diplomacy, lack of visible planning and implementation by leader in powers.

Folk Tenents in Olawale Ashimi's *Banuso*

Folklore studies also known as folkloristics is the study of the expression of culture particularly the practices and product of a society. When folkloristics emerged as an academic discipline in the West, it primarily worked for the purpose of documenting Western folklore. Documentation of folklore from other parts of the world was done occasionally by a few missionaries, travelers, and anthropologists. Primarily, they used to collect a few samples of oral texts through on-site fieldwork, participant observations, and on the spot interviews. On some occasions, to augment their folklore databases, some secondary means as sources of folkloric materials (e.g archives, diaries, autobiographies, letters, photographs, music etc.) was relied upon.

In recent years, however, the scenario is changing quite rapidly with new studies about the importance of folkloric materials. The attention of collectors is being diverted towards the collection of folkloric materials of almost all indigenous languages and cultures across the world. We can see this happening in Nigeria too as in the last few decades, we have been observing a growing interest in folklore studies especially vis-a-vis music done in indigenous language and patterns as the case of Olawale Ashimi (Brymo).

In the context of music, folk music refers to a music that is passed down from generation to generation through an oral tradition. It is often associated with the specific culture and is usually played or accompanied by traditional instruments. The songs tell stories of common experiences such as love, betrayal, politics, nature, loss, hopes and fears. And in most cases the lyrics are written in a language that is peculiar to a specific tribe or ethnic region. Thus, folk music serves as a means of preserving a culture's history and traditions.

Folk tenets meanwhile are the moral, philosophical, and social principles passed down through generations, often preserved through folklore, oral traditions, music, proverbs, and myths. Across cultures, these tenets reflect the values and wisdom of the community, providing insights into how people relate to nature, society, and the metaphysical world. Despite cultural variations, world folk tenets share common themes that bind humanity through shared experiences and collective wisdom.

Folk tenets in Olawale Ashimi's *Banuso* refers to the incorporation of

traditional elements into his musical style such as the use of traditional instruments like the talking drum, shekere, etc as well as the incorporation of indigenous languages through his lyrics. It reflect oral tradition which conveys deep narratives and cultural messages through the use of proverbs and idiomatic expressions. From the above, it is observed that the element of folkism is in tandem with the features of socio-musicology which is an approach to study music that focus on its historical, political and social context.

Elements of Folkism in the Song *Banuso*

i) Historical Context: - The use of oral poetry was used as a basis to run through the song *Banuso* which explores the socio-cultural embodiment of traditions derived communally from the people (folk). Folklore are traditional stories, songs and beliefs that are passed down orally from generation to generation which is strongly rooted in the culture and traditions of a people or ethnic group. They include stories about local heroes, supernatural beings or supernatural events.

Brymo uses the narrative of oracular poetry seen in Yoruba cosmology as the historical context through which the song *Banuso* was composed with. Oracular poetry simply means a dramatic repertoire which involves invocation of gods, supplication and divination (Ibrahim, p33-34). In tandem to Kizinska theory, the song *Banuso* had been traced to have emerged from the Yoruba proverb "Banuso, maa b'eniyan so" meaning to be "discreet with one's plan without telling a fellow man". During this study, it was discovered that the word "Banuso" was first used in Ifa Corpus verse called "Otuurupon Irosun" chapter 12vs5.

Ifatoye Ramoni in one of his response to the interview question from the researcher held on 2nd Dec, 2023 narrates how the proverb "banuso," came into being in Yoruba culture saying:

Mr Ifatoye: Banuso, maa b'eniyan so is one of the proverbs used in Yoruba culture which can be seen in Ifa verse called Otuurupon Irosun, chapter 12vs5. It is through this Ifa verse that our forefathers coined the proverb 'banuso, maa b'eniyan so'. It is recited as follow:

YORUBA

Atiooro yo enu sita sofofo
Ewure wole, o mu n mi agbada
Oje oka egbeefa
Adi'a fun Orunmila baba ma fi owo leran
Baba maa wo ise omo araiye
Ebo ni won ni kose
O gbebo nile o tubo
Oni nje a oo fowo leran, a oo banuso

A o maa wo ise won
A o ma wo ise ika,

A o banuso, a o maa wo se won
A o maa wo ise ika,

TRANSLATION

The Allied Hornbill stuck out its mouth to gossips
The Goat entered and drank all the water in the drum
He ate one thousand two corns
This makes Orunmila to keep watch
Orunmila monitors the deeds of mankind
Then asked him to offer a sacrifice
He offered the sacrifice
He said we will keep watching while we keep
to ourselves
We will keep watching their deeds
We will keep watching the deeds of the wicked,
watching gossipers
We will keep to ourselves and be observing them
We will keep watching the deeds of the wicked

A o maa woo ise won

We will keep observing them (Ifatoye, 2023)

From the above response, it is evident that Brymo drew out his inspiration from an existing oral poetry otherwise known as oracular poetry peculiar in Yoruba culture (the society) which was effective in correcting the society which he draws the inspiration from successfully. With this, he is able to teach the younger generation about forgotten origins of some oral tradition and use of proverbs in the Yoruba culture which can as well serve as a check and balance for the societal ills if used appropriately

ii) Social Structures: The various societal norms and element available in the culture of a people constitute as tools through which music is used to influence the society positively or negatively. Brymo used the social structures such as proverbs, idioms, traditional musical instrument, and folklore in the production of his song to bring out an awareness on the theme of confidentiality and discretion which his song tends to relay to his listeners. The artist uses traditional instrument in the production of the song such as Shekere(rattle), Agogo(gong), Gangan (Talking Drum) and his deep sonorous voice through the use of his indigenous language

a) Use of Idioms and Proverbs: Idioms are a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individuals' words. The African culture is generally the richest in proverbs which form part of oral poetry in Yoruba culture which forms some of the social structures inherent in a culture. Proverbs according to Binta (2008, p.30) are poetic lines that make use of concentrated language which are pregnant with meanings. Proverbs are mostly used by the elders of the society to address political and family matters which enrich their language and drive home loaded messages that would have needed wordy explanations. Brymo uses appropriate proverbs to convey his message throughout the song. For instance, we have the following idioms and proverbs in the lyrics of the song:

Abeere a lo, kona okun to di The needle will pass before the thread tangles (Idiom)

Eni ba maa b'esu jeun, sibi re a gun gan You need a long spoon to dine with the devil

Banuso, maa b'eninyan so Keep to yourself (Proverb)

The idiom "Abeere a lo, ko na okun ko to di" in the song (the needle will pass before the thread tangles) connotes that one will escaped before danger comes. Also, the proverb "eni ba maa b'esu jeun, sibi re a gun" (you need a long spoon to dine with the devil) in a deeper context means that one has to be careful when dealing with a dangerous person. Mr Ifatoye explained this proverb to mean that anyone who has the audacity to dine with the devil definitely must have had a cordial relationship before he/she can ever think of taking a spoon to eat with him (devil). He explained that the proverb simply means that there is always a consequence attached to the decision we make either good or bad, though such a consequence can take a very long time before it surfaces.

It is no more a news that each society has its own norm, poetics and oral traditions which the people use in persuading, advising, entertaining and enlightening themselves. Although similarities may occur across societies in the pattern in which this oral poetry (folktales) are been transferred or passed on to the younger generation.

Brymo uses all these proverbs in cautioning the society to be careful with their decisions which may make or mar them as the aftermath of their decisions/plan might be brutal and irreversible. Consequently, the repetitive use of the word 'banuso, maa b'eninyan so' in the

song which means "Talk to yourself" literally simply means that "been discrete is golden, don't reveal your plan to human beings". This mirrors that it is when people know your plan(s), that they can alter it for evil, delay it for longer time or cause you death with it, thus if one keeps his/her plan within his/herself or does not easily divulge vital information to the public, there is every tendency that such a plan will work out eventually this is because one is the architect of his/her fortune or misfortune.

b) Use of Traditional Musical Instrument: Hornby (2006, p.967) defines musical instrument as "an object used for producing musical sounds". The human body is a source of music, especially the voice. Thus the human voice is considered a living musical instrument. In the light of the foregoing, a musical instrument can be said to be any living or non-living source from which musical sounds are produced.

The use of traditional musical instruments by the artiste perform a number of function such as they provide accompaniment to singing, and rhythmic incentives for dance or movement. In addition, the Gangan (talking drum) function as speech surrogates where their rhythms or tones are imitative of spoken statements. In this manner, variety is created, thus enhancing the overall aesthetics of the song. Furthermore, the use of agogo (gong) provide cues, basic pulse while the shekere (rattle) perform the role of master instruments in the production of the song. All these traditional musical instruments are made from materials gotten from the society (such as gourds, animal skin, metals) who produces and uses them as a means of musical instrument for entertainment.

c) Language: Another important feature is the use of pure indigenous Yoruba language in expressing himself to his audience. He unapologetically composed the song *Banuso* in Yoruba language which gives a sense of authenticity and ingenuity to his culture. Brymo utilises *YorubaAjumoolo* (common Yoruba) throughout the rendition of the song mix with his indelible sonorous voice that carries power of emotions. Also, he made use of other nuances inherent in his culture such as proverbs and lot of idiomatic expressions which originally cannot be understood by someone who is not rooted in Yoruba culture. Through the narrative of storytelling, he describes the present situation of our country to his audience without sounding harsh or demeaning.

iii) Political Context: *Banuso* is a song that is more philosophical in nature which politics itself is embedded in philosophy. Tracing the origin of politics to Greece, we have great philosophers as leaders due to their ability to think exceptionally in order to birth a better ideology which will benefit the populace as a whole. The song *Banuso* shows that anyone in the position of a leader must be discrete in whatever plans he/she wants to execute when in office. The lyrics "O se lu maa lo laiye o" in the song portrays that politicians rule the world. Thus, politicians rule the world by being discrete with their plans and playing their cards close to the vest because that's where their strength lies.

While Nigeria operates democracy as a system of government, politicians only allow the execution of their plans to prevail on other spheres of operation in the country aside the propaganda they might have disclosed while campaigning during elections. Hence, the true leaders who bluntly discloses their genuine intentions most times do not have the privilege to

win such positions in order for the deeds of their predecessors not to be probed or investigated.

Therefore, discretion in this context is about praxis according to Freire (1968, p.216) which he defines as "reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed" which means an introspection before an action is taken or executed on which can be seen all through the whole song lyrics.

Findings

This study finds the song *Banuso* by Olawale Ashimi can be described as a contemporary folk music. Consequently, this study reveals different tenets of folkism such as oracular poetry, use of proverbs, use of indigenous language and appropriate use of traditional musical instruments in the production of the song *Banuso*. Thus, this element aims at bringing music and society into an alignment that seeks to study how society and music converge and influence each other through social, historical, and political context.

This study also finds that some proverbs used in Yoruba culture has its roots embedded in Oracular poetry which has its historical origin in Ifa cosmology whether directly or indirectly. During this study, it was discovered that the word "Banuso" was first used in Ifa Corpus verse called "Otuurupon Irosun" in chapter 12vs5. Also for oracular poetry and oral traditions not to go into extinction, there must be an act of transferring information from one generation to another through the use of indigenous language either through music or any art form.

Further findings made during this study shows that every elements (such as musical instruments, themes, narrative) of a musical production is been influenced by the society in which it is been produced. That is, the society has a powerful influence on the music been produced from it whether positively or negatively.

Recommendation

This study recommends that music artistes should not neglect the aspect of philosophy and folk traditions in order to connect more with the audience and make impacts. Also, critics should not be shy to call out musicians that are not contributing to the values and morals of the society and both government and musical bodies should pay more attention to what is been released into the mainstream in aspect of music.

In addition, this research work recommends that there should be an online platform (website or social media platforms) which will educate the younger generations on the origin, meaning and usage of Oral traditions (proverbs, oral poetry, language, etiquette etc.) thus reducing the tendency of some of these traditions going into extinction.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the impact of music artistes cannot be under estimated in ensuring the preservation of cultural artifacts and values. The place and position of the artist, as proven by history is crucial and should not be neglected. The artist should thus be held in high esteem as the power he/she wields can influence society and rapidly produce the change that many societies so desperately crave for. An artist is therefore meant to be not merely an entertainer, but also a vanguard in society who acts as an armless police, fighting without guns and ammunitions and fostering the front line of positive change through his songs.

The explicit impacts of the society on music cannot be quantified, hence, the therapeutic

index of the Nigeria popular songs has dialectically engaged the unfolding of narratives be it social happenings of its populace, questioning the economic stabilization for the interest of the common man, exposing the selfishness and nepotism of political leaders, which is being perpetrated based on kinship and selfish political policies and preserving oral traditions from extinction.

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Interviews

A one on one interview with Mr. Ifatoye Ramoni on the 2nd of December, 2024.

A one on one interview with Mr. Ifatunde Adebisi on the 4th of January, 2025.