

The Need for a Paradigm Shift in Philosophy, Music and African Studies: A Trilogical Identification of Three Conceptual Relevancies in State Tertiary Education

Kingston Chukwunonyelum Ani Casimir^{1,2}, Orajaka Sussan Nwakego^{2,3}, Emmanuel Umezina⁴

¹Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

²Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

³Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

⁴Department of Music, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

Email: cepperngo@gmail.com, orajakalinus@gmail.com, emma2000@yahoo.com

Received 1 March 2015; accepted 19 March 2015; published 20 March 2015

Copyright © 2015 by authors and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

The need for a paradigm shift in African development blueprint is also a call for reform of certain critical aspects of education in Africa. In the main stream African studies, this need may be defined as the Africanization of the contents of Africa's inherited modern educational system. Presently, there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift in the study and practice of music as an integral agenda of African studies and African philosophy. Current educational reforms in both African studies and general education have continued to demand for this shift in the curriculum contents of main-stream African studies that have to do with the philosophy of music education. The trilogy of music, philosophy and African studies are the identified three conceptual relevant disciplines where this call should be concentrated and worked out in good time. In essence, this article is a call for state tertiary institutions to "Africanize" music as a discipline, as an art and as a curriculum, using the philosophical analysis derived from the core principles of African studies. Philosophy will help the search for the Africanization of music education by giving it a safe human value base in African philosophy. We have argued in this paper that Western concepts of philosophy and aesthetic education currently taught in the 1950s failed to reflect the human values that are African and this failure and the need to reform their existing content informed the emergence of the centers of African research, renewal and studies known as Institutes of African studies in different Universities in Africa and Europe. Aesthetically speaking, music has a psychological role in culture, arts and the education of indigenous communities in Africa. Aesthetically, musical education based upon Western values alien to Africa has negative implications for the modern musical educational policies,

How to cite this paper: Ani Casimir, K. C., Nwakego, O. S., & Umezina, E. (2015). The Need for a Paradigm Shift in Philosophy, Music and African Studies: A Trilogical Identification of Three Conceptual Relevancies in State Tertiary Education. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5, 135-154. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2015.52016>

curriculum and practice for the modern African state. From the analytical perspectives of both African Philosophy and African studies, we are able to argue and establish what should constitute the dynamics of new musical paradigm shift in Africa and to define the relevancy of music education to the African educational system, using analytical situation drawn from Nigeria examples in the study.

Keywords

Curriculum, Philosophy of Music Education, Content Analysis, African Studies, Cultural Education, African Philosophy, Music Education, Nigeria Education

1. Introduction

Guilford (2004: p. 14) poses the question: Is Africa a lost cause? Has the colonial experience negatively distorted contemporary African development patterns? I would have added to that the question. If we are talking about the need for a paradigm shift in the development affairs in Africa, is it not necessary that we talk about the attitude of the African state towards the finest aspects of development that concern its citizens such as aesthetic and musical development; to know and analyze how state policies of education affect musical education in tertiary institutions in the Continent? I think it is absolutely necessary that we go into that aspect of development that affects the mind and the heart of citizens.

In Nigeria and the rest of Africa, the philosophy and content of the music curriculum is developed and conceived from the background of Western music. As a result, therefore, it yields little or no big value in the learning of African value oriented music education. We have taken special note of the fact that Music is an essential and fundamental part of African cultures and value system. African music manifests core African values as embodied in African philosophy. African music education has varied and largely deviated from these core values and conceptual framework which should have formed and informed the curriculum of studies in Music Departments in state tertiary institutions across the Continent. The vanguard of this new reform of musical education is being spearheaded by philosophy and Institutes of African studies in the new millennium in the state tertiary educational systems. This article is being conceived as an educational development foray into musical educational change especially in the three core related but relevant fields of music, philosophy and African studies. It is not by accident therefore that the scholars who have collaborated in carrying out this research came from Music and philosophy Departments with residency as research Fellows at the Institute of African studies at the University of Nigeria.

The traditional systems of the African society philosophically consider music to be an indispensable part of education and therefore a valuable component of the traditional education of indigenous communities and families before the onset of colonialism and its educational systems. In the pre-colonial days, the traditional content and mode of musical training includes a long period of apprenticeship and exposition of basic African values to the young as a major component and method of the teaching-learning process. Against this background, an examination today of the content and framework of the music curriculum across state tertiary institutions in Africa with its stated philosophy and objectives show a variance from that of the basic cultural notations, philosophy and values. This article seeks to make an exposition of this reality of foreign musical domination and further examines the possibility of replacing most of the repertoire of imposed Western musical tradition with African musical heritage, in order to make it more relevant to the educational challenges and requirements of Africa's educational, psychological and social environment. This conflicting variance between the traditional African music education and the Western dominated musical education in tertiary educational institutions across Africa has been elaborated upon by Ogunrinade (2013: p. 1):

“The importance and role of music in the growth of a child cannot be over-emphasized. The Nigerian child in particular is born and nurtured in music. He grows and learns in the society and he takes his exit from the world with music.” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009). Above represent the first paragraph of the music curriculum by the National Commission for Colleges of Education in Nigeria. Based on the premise that context and environmental setting should be considered in the formulation of an appropriate philosophy, one would expect that an apposite curriculum for such aesthetic form of arts should be culturally embedded in such a way that relate music as a school subject and school work to real life. This however should not be

meant for academic pursuit alone but the contents there—in should enable its product (students) to be self-reliant and contribute their own quota to the economic advancement of the community and the nation at large. The philosophy further stated that music is used at ceremonies and festive occasions to enrich and add colour to them, it serves social, political, historical, economic, religious, communicative and moral functions in a society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009). Conversely, African music practices are first and foremost meant for, and directed by, the community's ideology, economic, social, religious, recreational tendencies and rite of passage rituals. Thus there is an inseparable link between the community way of life and musical practices. Community cultural practices are directed and transacted through music. However, music education curriculum based on Western classical music dominates curriculum content of schools on the African continent especially in Nigeria setting, whilst community musical practices are not equally represented properly (Omibiyi-Obidike, 2001; Okafor, 2005; Vidal, 2012). Despite the fact that the Nigerian child was nurtured and raised from this type of community musical practices, he gets to the institution of higher learning, founded, of course, on the norms of western cultural music that is quite different and eccentric to his cultural music experience.

The variance in musical education has to be corrected by a substitution within the state educational system, policies and institutions especially at the Institute of African studies and Musical Departments. It is the task of changing the musical curriculum and making it to be more relevant to African learners and scholars of music to make modern musical education to reflect the local community's musical practices. It must be appreciated that central to the main goal of substituting the modern musical education is also the twin objectives of embracing contemporary music and achieving the task of balance between music education and community' music in Africa. It is the search for a philosophy of music education for Africa and the determination of the content of the search. This is a trilogical task for Institutes of African Studies, Music and Philosophy Departments. To have an insight into the nature of that search and how we should go about it, Okanfah (2013: p. 2) notes extensively below on a national Conference on music education held in Ghana:

The theme for this year's conference, "In Search of a National Philosophy of Music Education" is long overdue because before any meaningful educational planning and implementation can be undertaken some questions need to be asked. Answers to such questions would guide the whole educational enterprise. Four broad questions guide efforts at curriculum planning: Why?, What?, How? and Who? Taken in that sequence their effective handling would guarantee a great measure of success and profit, especially in educational reforms. Of the four questions, the first "Why?" poses the most challenge, and therefore, is rarely asked, especially in our part of the world. Even when it is asked all relevant and pertinent factors are not patiently and assiduously brought to bear on issues before action is taken. The frustration that results from not asking "why" before taking action, presumably, has driven us to this theme. It's like we started running, and did run for quite a distance. before stopping to ask ourselves where we were going and why. Consequently. the threat to our place ill the curriculum posed by the educational reforms has shocked us into the rude realization that, in fact, "the problem of 'how' music should be taught can be treated meaningfully only after careful consideration has been given to 'why' music should be taught". We are now being forced to "justify our inclusion", and this is where a philosophy becomes necessary. So today, after so long a time in faithfully trying to impart musical knowledge and skills, we have at long last stopped to ask ourselves the questions we should have asked even before we started the race. Answering these queries must of necessity involve a lot of "talking about" music, but unfortunately when issues of this nature arise the reaction from some music educators is "we've been talking a lot. Let's start doing something". I think we've not even talked enough about music and music education yet, or at least we've not been asking the right questions. We are now beginning to do so, This would help us to formulate a philosophy that suits our purposes. Such a philosophy must have its root in African thought and values, and should embrace the beliefs, ideals, meanings, and values relating to music as understood and practiced by us.

2. African Philosophy, African Studies and African Music—The Search for Critical Meaning

The role of music in the growth and proper upbringing of the African child has been noted severally by scholars because of the human values and norms derivable from African communalism that accounted for a peaceful and

stable society. The music curriculum of tertiary institutions in Africa have attempted to recognize this reality, though poorly as observed by Ogunbiyi (2013: p. 12):

Based on the premise that context and environmental setting should be considered in the formulation of an appropriate philosophy, one would expect that an apposite curriculum for such aesthetic form of arts should be culturally embedded in such a way that relate music as a school subject and school work to real life. This however should not be meant for academic pursuit alone but the contents there—in should enable its product (students) to be self reliant and contribute their own quota to the economic advancement of the community and the nation at large. The philosophy further stated that music is used at ceremonies and festive occasions to enrich and add colour to them, it serves social, political, historical, economic, religious, communicative and moral functions in a society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2009). Conversely, African music practices are first and foremost meant for, and directed by, the community's ideology, economic, social, religious, recreational tendencies and rite of passage rituals. Thus there is an inseparable link between the community way of life and musical practices. Community cultural practices are directed and transacted through music. However, music education curriculum based on Western classical music dominates curriculum content of schools on the African continent especially in Nigeria setting, whilst community musical practices are not equally represented properly (Omibiyi-Obidike, 2001; Okafor, 2005; Vid-al, 2012).

Traditionally, the Nigerian Child has been nurtured and raised from a human value community with its unique musical practices only to get a different kind of music at the state tertiary institutional levels. The efforts to identify the difference between this communal music and western music has been intensive:

Like western imperial music theory, appreciation, history and the rest, have a close relation with the musical culture to which it developed and bringing such to another society is like new wine in the old sack, which undeniably will destroys the sack (Mathew, 2000: pp. 159-192). And that is now the situation of Nigerian musical art culture; students coming from specific background peculiar with its own rich musical culture but on getting to the school, eccentric musical culture quite different from their experience are what were placed before them as material of instruction, what an incongruity? Furthermore, the constructivist learning theory also argues that people produce knowledge and form meaning based upon their experiences. This learning theory takes a very different approach toward traditional learning as well; it represents a paradigm shift from education based on behaviorism to education based on cognitive theory (Gagnon, G. & Collay, M., 2012). Kabalevsky in Faseun (2001) succinctly explicates that:

The only way open was to suggest a fundamentally new approach, one that, like the whole of the new concept of music teaching, would arise from and be based on the music that would naturally relate music as a school subject and school work to real life. Music education curriculum at tertiary level should reflect the enriched contemporary music like gospel music, fuji, adamo, highlife, African reggae, hiphop to mention but few in other to captivate and absorb the interest of the learners and for the economic advancement of the lots of its graduates and the nation at large.

2.1. Music: Meaning and Educational Significance in African Traditional Society Historical Development of Music in Nigeria

In traditional Nigerian societies, music is conceived as an object of aesthetic thought and as a socio-cultural occurrence whose importance surpasses musical values. Consequently, in a way to conceiving their works as aesthetic creations, composers and performers of traditional Nigerian music place great premium on the relevance of their works to socio-political issues relating to their daily lives. In very many cases, extra-music considerations constitute the dominant basis for the conception and realisation of musical performances. Therefore, musical performances often reflect the general values of society ranging from day-to-day human activities to fundamental thoughts and beliefs crucial to the derivation of a people's culture. Musical performances also constitute a dynamic forum through which members of a society respond and adapt to new conditions through the retention of relevant elements of existing tradition and assimilation of new ideas. In addition, musical performances provide effective acculturative medium through which new members acquire community-shared skills and values. In this regard, music constitutes an important educational forum through which members of the traditional Nigerian societies learn to live together as well as cope with the ever changing challenges of life. The educational

significance of musical performances in traditional Nigerian societies can therefore not be overemphasised, since “education is the vehicle by means of which the cultural heritage of a given society is transmitted to the younger generation”. This helps to “produce an individual who is co-operative and conforming to the social order of the day” (Fafunwa, 1983). It is important to note that despite colonization and its attendant results on the socio-political and educational life of Nigeria, patterns of pre-colonial musical traditions still exist in great abundance in present-day Nigeria, especially in rural areas, although with less significance on the life of the average Nigerian.

2.2. Music Education in Traditional Nigerian Societies

Curriculum can be broadly defined as sum total of all the experiences a learner undergoes under the guidance of the school or institution. The specific and formal knowledge and skills that the learners or managers will acquire from a course or programme constitute a core curriculum. Curriculum is really the entire programme of the schools’ work. It is the essential means of education. It is everything that the students and their teachers do. Thus, it is two-fold in nature, being made up of activities, the things done, and of the materials with which they are done (Rugg in Adeyinka, 1988). Moreover, Adeyinka (1988) described curriculum as an integrated group of courses and planned activities which students have under the guidance of the school or college and the instruction of a number of teachers. He observed essential components of the curriculum, which should contain four main elements: the objectives or purpose, the content or subject-matter, the method or ways of passing on knowledge, and evaluation or assessment—the procedure for testing whether or not the pupils or students have benefited from the instructions given (Adeyinka, 1988):

Therefore, the syllabus, or content is only one of the several components of curriculum theory which is the major concern of this discussion. Traditional Nigerian musical performances are mass-oriented. Musical performances are usually folk-conceived and folk-owned since they are predominantly communally based. In Yoruba land, for example, a child is, right from his youth, incorporated into the musical tradition of the land. As an ordinary citizen of the community, he takes part in various socio-musical activities which range from non-ritual events such as moonlight games and marriage ceremonies to rites of passage consisting of naming, initiation, marriage and funeral ceremonies. These ceremonies provide the socio-musical occasions during which citizens of the community are introduced to or reminded of important values of the society. It is during such occasions that the intrinsic values of traditional Yoruba music are assimilated by an average citizen. These values include the predominant emphasis on the parameter of rhythm, the logogenic tendency of melodic lines, the use of heterophonic procedures which result from contrapuntal combinations, the sporadic use of cadential harmonies, the frequent use of the call and response pattern and the use of improvisational/extemporisational techniques to generate extensive performances. These are structural features which also have important extra-musical educative messages. For example, instrumental rhythmic phrases which have underlying melo-textual messages have musical and extra musical significances. Rhythmic patterns both in their linear and vertical combinations usually serve as the dominant parameter of interest in musical performances. In other words, in much the same way as tonality constitutes the most important compositional element in conventional European classical music; rhythm is the dominant generative element in Yoruba music. Thus, in Yoruba Gbedu music—a Yoruba royal ensemble—the versatility of the *lya-ilu*. player to create extensive rhythmic improvisations as well as the abilities of the players of *Gudu-gudu*, *Isaaju*, *Ikerin* and *Kerikeri* to provide a dynamic polyrhythmic support, constitute the most important evidence of good musicianship (Euba, 1988). In addition to its musical importance, the total rhythmic texture of the Gbedu ensemble also serves to re-articulate the mythical importance of royalty, in Yoruba land, emphasising the semigod status of kings as well as their historical roles as both the political and divine leaders of the land. The Gbedu drums, like most instrumental ensembles in Yoruba land, thus serve both as a medium of entertainment and enculturation.

Musical performances perform similar functions in Hausa land, Northern Nigeria. As a result of the introduction of Arabic and Islamic culture to Hausa land, as far back as the thirteenth century, that region is today a predominantly Islamic area. Musical practices in the area reflect both the political and social features of an Islamic state. Thus, musical performances are predominantly featured in the palace to entertain the paramount chiefs and his visitors. For example, Hausa ceremonial music *Rok’ on Pada* is performed regularly in front of the Emir’s

palace (King, 1980). In addition to their aesthetic content, such performances provide the appropriate contexts for the Emir to reassert his political authority, while his subjects reaffirm their confidence in and acceptance of his leadership. While Nigerian royal music may be elitist in concept and realisation, most of traditional musical performances are mass-oriented. Religious and social engagements, initiation and funeral rites, naming and marriage ceremonies provide occasions for members of the traditional societies to engage in communal music making and share together a rewarding and satisfying musical experience. Such occasions also provide a means of expressing group solidarity and transmitting traditional norms and beliefs from one generation to another. It is within such contexts that much of the socialisation process which music provides takes place. In this regard, the Igbo tradition is a case in point. As Nzewi (1978) has noted:

The Igbo system and ideological formulations were established on and buttressed by communally binding and viable mythological concepts and covenants. These were periodically validated or regenerated or commemorated in order to ensure a continuing binding compact. Such periodic communions required highly stylized media that would give super-ordinary atmosphere Impact and can dour to the event. These media (which) constituted traditional theatre in all its scope and ramifications, Incorporate the performing arts areas of music dance, drama and mime. Examples of social and religious uses of music in Igbo land include that which accompanies initiation rites into the masquerade cult (Iba mmuo), funeral music (Ekwe diko) and wrestling music (Egwu Mgba). The Egwu Mgba is one of the most popular ensembles in Igbo land. Popular instruments in the ensemble include Ngedegwu (a xylophone made of wooden plants laid on banana tree resonator), Ekwe (a wooden slit drum), Ogene (a metal gong) and Oja (a wooden five-hole flute). This ensemble also provides an example of the use of music as an aid towards an active sports life in traditional societies. The fast, crisp like, poly-textural quality of music played by the Egau Mgba provides an appropriate background for gymnastic displays mounted by the Atilogwu dancers as well as those of the traditional Igbo wrestlers. As the above discussion has shown, traditional musical practices in Nigeria are not judged only in terms of their aesthetic-contemplative viability but also (and especially) in terms of their functional and utilitarian relevance. The conception as well as the understanding of music and the definition of musical tradition, therefore, relies on its usefulness as a viable means of educating and sensitizing the citizenry towards becoming a normal and useful member of the society. It also provides a means by which the individual “develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour of positive value in the society” (Fafunwa, 1983: p. 48).

The introduction of the western system of education in the nineteenth century brought new dimensions to the Nigerian tradition of music education. Of particular significance is the change from the informal nature of the pre-colonial system to a formalized system, typical of the Western tradition. A feature which accompanied this development is the predominant use of Western classical music as resource materials in teaching school pupils. This feature has some negative implications as will be shown later. The predominant emphasis on Western music characterized the programmes of the early Western type (largely British) schools in Nineteenth century Nigeria. An example of such school was the Lagos Grammar School where, in 1872, an entertainment society was formed. In that same year a western-type concert was staged in aid of the school harmonium. Western-type music tuition and concerts were also emphasized at the Church Missionary society (CMS) Female Institute, founded in 1872. The music teacher, Robert Coker, a Saro (a name by which returning ex-slaves were called) maintained a high standard of musical training in the school. Coker was trained initially at the then C.M.S. Institute in Abeokuta before proceeding to England in 1880. He returned to C.M.S. school in Lagos to teach Western music. In addition, he organized annual Western-type concerts with the help of another man, Dr. Nathaniel King, who was then the choirmaster at St. John’s Church, Aroloya, Lagos (Lagos Observer, 1882). The activities in these two schools serve to illustrate the prominence attached to Western-type musical training in nineteenth century Nigerian secondary schools.

2.3. Music in the Nigerian State—A Situational Analysis

2.3.1. Music Education in the Nigerian State—A Review

In contrast to the content and approach to music education in traditional African societies. What happens in the state music educational policy and practice is majorly Western-European-based in its content and curriculum. A critical analysis of the trend in Nigeria will reveal how this is the situation of music education in Africa. Nige-

ria's formal categorization of musical education runs into three levels of Primary, Secondary and Tertiary. When it is allowed to be taught and encouraged in a school, music forms part of the moral and social formation process of the Nigerian child. This is why Ogunrinade makes the following observations in agreement:

Music of Nigerian schools contributes exceedingly towards the traditional education and coherence of Nigerian children into the adult society. Since whatever they learn at this early stage of life is well registered in their spirit mind, music is purposefully utilized in most learned experiences organized for them to help them discover and develop their personality.

On official documents, the Nigerian state encourages the inculcation of music in the traditional education of the child as it is out to encourage aesthetic, creative and musical activities in her educational institutions. A brief peep into the history of this state educational policy position in Nigeria was given by Ogunrinade (2013):

This was formalized in 1981 by recognizing and including music as one of the core subjects to certain level in the school curriculum, which started from Primary School Level. Prior to this provision, the teaching and learning of music at the Primary School level in Nigeria involved non-specialist teachers who functioned without instructional materials and used the music periods for either "making up for deficiencies in other subject areas" or spend them on "singing of hymns and folk songs from different parts of the world (Omi-biyi, 1987). Consequently, no serious considerations were really given to music studies due to the unrealistic and difficult nature of the then curriculum content. But stemming from the provisions of the National policy on Education (1981), the objective is now partly realized in some pre-primary and primary schools through singing of folk songs, recitation of rhymes, playing of songs and rhythmic exploration, telling of folk stories bridged by story songs and producing folk operas. At secondary school level, the study of music terminates at the junior level in most Nigerian secondary schools mainly because it was not a core subject at the senior class and non-provision for the relevant equipment needed for its teaching and learning. The Curriculum consists mainly of rudimentary lessons in Western music.

Music education at the primary and secondary levels in Nigeria is optional and not systematic in content and its studies. At the tertiary level, Nigeria needed to be more organized and show more commitment giving more resources to the study of music. At the tertiary level, music education is un African and Western based. The painful condition has been captured by several scholars such as Ogunrinade:

At tertiary level, more impressive approach to music studies is evident. The government was therefore moved to establish full-fledged departments of music in some institutions of higher learning where music constitutes an enviable academic discipline. Even though Western, rather than African tradition informed the conception of the first Nigerian university Programme in music education. The nation's first Indigenous University, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, pioneered the first music programme in a Nigerian University. That was in 1960 when the "Fela Sowande School of Music" (later renamed The Department of Music) was established. This is not surprising, since the foundation teachers were all products of the Euro-American tradition. They included Dr. W.W.C. Echezona, Nigeria's first Doctor of music, who had studied at Trinity College of Music, London and the Michigan State University, United States of America; Dr. (then Mr) Sam Akpabot who had studied at the Trinity College and later at University of Chicago and Michigan State University; and Dr. Edna Smith—an American lady married at that time, to a Nigerian. These three musicologists and composers constituted the core of the pioneer staff in the Department. The Western orientation of the Nsukka programme is reflected in the course content. Courses such as History of Music, Aura Training, Keyboard Harmony, Harmony and Counterpoint, Twentieth Century Music, Composition, Form and Analysis, Music Appreciation and Musicology are taught with only a very little reference to the African tradition. Products of Nsukka are either re-cycled to teach in secondary schools, producing potential music undergraduates, or posted to initiate new programmes in other tertiary institutions. In addition, most of their programmes, like that of Nsukka, are predominantly Western in conception and realisation. Usually, the teaching of traditional African music is marginal and inconsistent. Thus, while the University recruits teachers both within and outside the country to teach Western music on a regular basis, it does not consider the recruitment of instructors of traditional music as equally important. In addition, music in most of the nation's tertiary institutions is taught as an isolated art rather than as an integral part of a multi-media experience which, as mentioned earlier, is fundamental to the African tradition.

2.3.2. Content Analysis of Music Curriculum of Nigerian Music Education

An examination of the objectives of National College of Education (NCE) Music Curriculum gives a philosophical exposition of the program in Nigeria just as similar to the environment in Ghana. According to the NCE programme, “music is intended to offer courses in African and Western European music; produce well qualified NCE teachers capable of teaching music at the primary and the junior secondary school level; produce teachers for the private sector: churches, mosques, Armed Forces, Media houses, advertising companies; produce NCE teachers who are prepared and are capable of benefiting from further education in music; promote cultural continuity; and make NCE teachers acquire skills in music for self reliance”.

2.3.3. Discussion of the Content

An assessment and description of Nigerian Colleges of Education Music Curriculum revealed the dominance and influence of western music on the curriculum. Nigerian music never had subheading on the face of the course outline, except under the course description, and this is a nation that is endowed with divergent languages, customs and rich musical background that are enormous to form the whole of the curriculum. Olusoji (2013) makes the following disturbing observations concerning the underdevelopment situation of Nigerian music curriculum below:

Conversely, many music educators have, since Nigerian gained her independence, accentuated the need for the study of African music, as a discipline, at all levels of the educational system. The knowledge, understanding and skills needed for an optimum experience of African music are critical to the growth of the child into a fully fledged Nigerian (Omibiyibidike, 1972). Furthermore, a very close observation of the Music Curriculum Contents from 100 - 300 levels in the Nigerian Colleges of Education as shown in the tables above indicates that there is a huge imbalance and disproportion between courses in African and Western/European music. Looking at the first objectives—music is intended to offer courses in African and Western European music; one would think that the content should be more of African in nature, however, the reverse is the case—out of 38 stated courses only four (4) were majorly on African Music—Mus 112: African Music & Appreciation I (1 Credit), Mus 122: African Music & Appreciation II (1 Credit), African Music III (1 Credit), Mus 222 African Music & Appreciation IV (1 Credit) while other thirtyfour (34) courses were western related courses. Therefore, music curriculum for NCE had not followed properly its stated objective. Crucially, the need to rediscover the musical traditions that have been left behind and ignored in our curricula at all levels to reflect the true cultural identity of our nation is highly imperative. Being influenced by childhood musical surroundings is part of the memory system of a human group. The music one hears in childhood will continue to have the effect creating an awareness of a family and group identity. Blacking considers music as a gloss word that can encompass both the enormous range of musics which members of different societies categorize as special symbol systems and kinds of social action; and an innate, species-specific set of cognitive and sensory capacities which human beings are predisposed to use both for communication and to make sense of their environment (Blacking, 1995). Finally the time allotted to the study of African Music is diminutive and should be reviewed to allow some of its objectives such as to promote cultural continuity and make NCE teachers acquire skills in music for self reliance to be actualized in the life of the students.

From the two studies carried out in both Ghana and Nigeria by the duo of Okanfah (2013) and Olusoji (2014) point to the need to redress the cultural anomalies found in the state educational curriculum for music education in Africa. This calls for a paradigm shift led by Philosophy, with the emergence of values of music native to the African indigenous peoples. What should be the identified role by philosophy? Let us use philosophy to search for meaning in music education and African studies using the tools of African philosophy.

3. The Role of Philosophy in the Search for African Philosophy of Music Education

Philosophy gives us the meaning and provides the sense of solutions that help humanity to know why we exist or why do certain activities in life. It gives a strong existential meaning and reasons to be. In our seminal search for the reformation of musical education in Africa to reflect more of African values and curriculum content, the questions have been asked—Why The Need For A Philosophy? Okanfah (2013: p. 2) also poses what he called ancillary questions when he was asked the same question in Ghanaian musical Conference held in 2013: We

may wish to ask other ancillary questions: What is the nature of music in the first place? What is African about African music? What is unique about music? How does music affect the society we live in? How do we decide on what is good and bad music? Some questions require further study: Why do we think music is so important that every child needs music education? What should be taught as music to Ghanaian children so that after they have gone through school we can tell ourselves we have done music education? What is African about African music that makes it different from other musics? Answers to these questions could guide our search for a national philosophy of music education. He went further to philosophize why philosophy is so tangential and relevant to the search below:

As a profession (music) we need a strong sense of why we exist. The purpose of a philosophy is to ask the question “why”: and a philosophy of the curriculum will help to determine what goes into the curriculum. I wish to suggest that what educational planners decide to include in school education is determined by their sense of what is most important both for the child as an individual, and to society as a whole. It stems from what they think education is all about. A philosophy of education thus deals with values: what is important what all students must know; what will make students into whole, all-rounded adults; what is basic to learning; as well as the nature of what is to be learned. These two words, “value” and “nature”, could guide our quest for a national philosophy of music education. In other words, “Why do we think music is so important that every child must have it as part of basic or general education?”: and “what should be taught as music to Ghanaian children so that at the end of the day music educators can say with satisfaction, that they have done music education?”

Values underpin music education and the philosophy of music education must reflect values at the primary, secondary and the tertiary levels. The philosophical content of the search reflects from the dynamic ideas of Professor Bennett Reimer of the Music Education Department of Northwestern University in the USA which is considered by many as reflecting aesthetic education, another alternative umbrella forum of the current Western philosophy of music education. His book, *A Philosophy of Music Education*, is a basic text globally on the subject and presents a view of the purpose of a philosophy of music education. Quoting Reimer (1998) Ogunrinade paints a sketch of content of philosophy of music education as follows:

1) It constitutes a set of beliefs, which can serve to guide the efforts of the profession—a “collective conscience”. Because he argues “the impact the profession can make on society depends, in large degree, on the quality of the profession’s understanding of what it has to offer which might be of value to society” (p. 3).

2) Individuals who make up the profession need a clear notion of what their aims are as professionals and a conviction of the ill porlelllce or those aims. Individuals who have convincing justifications for music education... exhibit in their own lives the inner sense of worth which comes from doing important work in the world (pA).

3) The understanding people have about the value of their profession. Inevitably affects their understanding of the value of their professional lives (pA).

4) Music teachers in preparation need an understanding of the importance of their chosen field. It gives them a sense of purpose a sense of mission, and meaning to their professional lives (pp. A-5).

5) Necessary for the development of self-identity and selfrespect, it will promote and channel commitment and dedication to music education (p. 5).

6) It serves as a guide for daily professional decisions and choices. Without clear understanding, Teachers’ decisions and choices are rather idiosyncratic. The deeper the understanding, the more consistent; the more focused, the more effective the teacher’s choices (p. 7.11).

7) A philosophy helps in the formulation of objectives (p. 11).

8) It also helps to establish the place of music and the other arts as a basic way that humans know themselves and their world: a basic mode of cognition.

Reimer concludes that a philosophy of music education must be able to establish that music offers values unattainable in other subjects and that such values are necessary for all. “A philosophy should articulate a consistent and helpful statement about the nature and value of music and music education” (p. 13). Ogunrinade went further to elaborate on Reimer’s rationalization of philosophy in music education, going ahead to contextualize his observations with African music:

Reimer’s *Philosophy and African Music*—Reimer says music education must be perceived as aesthetic education. That: Music makes meaning in and of itself without necessarily making reference to external

ideas or objects; Such meaning is communicated through the overall import of the conglomerate of its parts—the expressive qualities of music which is the sum total of the elements of music; What music communicates is perceived through an understanding of how music works and is put together; Perception of the expressive qualities of music engenders affective (emotional) response, which enhances the quality of life; Music education exists first and foremost to develop every person’s natural responsiveness (affective response) to the power of the art of music. While the philosophy of aesthetic education could have some useful implications for music education in Ghana and Africa, for that matter, Oehrle (1991), has argued that “an African philosophy of music education should take ‘African modes of thinking and approaches to music making’ into consideration...we need a philosophy that captures the essence and meaning of music to Africans (with an emphasis on Ghanaians) within the context of the role, value and performance practices of music in our culture”. Nketia (1999: p. 8) reiterates the present concern of African music educators to facilitate the establishment of the strong African foundation in music education that is badly needed in our educational system. It can be said that Reimer’s position reflects the Western understanding of the nature and value of music which does not take some aspects of African music into consideration.

3.1. The Musical Dimension to the Search

This has been the simplest and yet most complex question asked about music. The trite answer has been “a combination of sounds which is pleasing to the ears”. An elaborated version would enumerate the various elements of music—melody, harmony, rhythm and so forth. One writer calls music “sounds organized to be expressive” (Reimer, 1989). Sure, music is all the above, but has it ever struck any of you that what might be called music in one culture might sound like noise in another? Susan Langer (1951: p. 27) thinks music is “tonal analogue of emotive life”. That is to say, music expresses and re-presents emotion in the form of sound. Langer does not mean such emotions as joy, sadness, happiness etc., but sentience—not any particular emotion, but the feelingfulness of the general ebb and flow of life as it is vitally felt. She argues that it is not mere expression of feelings, beliefs, or social conditions. So we can see the danger of importing Western concepts and labels without adequate local debate: we Westerners and Africans—could be using the same vocabulary, and yet talking about entirely different things. We need to define what music is in our own terms, which is meaningful to us. Interestingly, even many Western scholars agree that there is a basic difference in what music is and means from one culture to the other. So the axiom that “music is music everywhere” is both true and false. Verrastro (1990) opined that:

Music as we know it in the Western world today exists as a genre significantly different from its equivalent in other cultures. Beyond the obvious differences of tonal structure, instruments, cultural utilizations, styles, and the like, Western music is polyphonic by design. This is not true of many of the musics of non-Western cultures.

In other words, music is “organized sound/silence within cultural context”. The concept of music in an African cultural context encompasses more than patterned expressive sounds analogous to felt life. It is “more than drumming” and dancing. Our definition of music should definitely take into consideration all that can be identified as music being created by Africans. This will include traditional music, art music and popular music. In my opinion calling only traditional music “African music” does not do justice to the issue. Social changes should be taken into consideration because, “how can arts which are organically integrated into a society fail to change with that society?” Some scholars have pointed out this integration of the arts in African social life. Bebey (1975: p. 119) notes, for instance, that “much of African music is based on speech”. Furthermore, he observes that “the bond between language and music is so intimate that it is actually possible to tune an instrument so that the music it produces is linguistically comprehensible”. Note should be taken that for the African, it is not only the tune, which is the music. It is the tune, the words, the philosophical ideas behind them, and the dance steps that go with it, and so forth.

In Africa, the concept of music is an integrated process of singing, dancing, and instrument playing; many African scholars have noted the absence of a single word for music in any African language, ego Kofie (1994: p. 13). Therefore, since the mode of organization of the elements of music, and the phenomena of musical experience/response are culture specific, the description of music will have varied shades of cultural implications and

meanings. The elements of music are universal, but their modes of organization are not, as well as, meanings they are held to convey. Rather interestingly, the Greek word for music, “mousike” is very identical to the African conception of music. Alperson (1987), while admitting that many of the basic terms of reference for Western theoretical reflection about music were based on Greek philosophy, notes that the Greek word, “mousike”, referred primarily to “d variety of practices involving melody, rhythm, words and gestures performed by amateurs, bards and dramatic actors”. This, however, is not to suggest our adoption of this ancient Greek description of music, but if it suits our purposes, why not. Note should also be taken that its Greek origin does not make it more authentic. What would make our definition of music authentic is, if it makes meaning to us.

I guess what Alperson’s philosophical prodding will make us to look further into the concept of meaning in music as a prelude to understanding of the relatedness of the trilogy in our research writing and exposition in this article.

3.2. Meaning in Music

Learning, in the proper sense, is not learning of things, but the meaning of things.s Consequently learning music is not just note values, singing, dancing, histories, biographies, and so forth, but the meaning of organization of sound within a cultural context. Reimer (1989: p. 12) maintains that, music:

“Must be conceived as all the great disciplines of the human mind arc conceived—as a basic subject with its unique characteristics of cognition and intelligence. that must be offered to all children if they are not to be deprived of its values”.

What constitutes meaning in music is an essential aspect of the music educator’s philosophy. It defines for him/her the content of what he/she tries to get across to students—content both in terms of material and characteristics. It determines the “particular material we should use to educate children’s taste and their music culture”. Let me turn my attention briefly to what I consider to be meaning in African music. Writing on “The problem of meaning in African music”. Nketia (1962) queries: “Is meaning to be investigated and stated in terms of Western philosophical or psychological concepts of meaning in music—in terms of the aesthetic positions of formalists, expressionists and referentialists?” Certainly not. Meaning in African music is widely held by many African scholars to be inseparable from “concepts, emotions (both specific and general), and moral qualities”. Drum poetry. For instance, is not just the playing of two musical tones in rhythm as in the case of the Western orchestral timpani, but the articulation of verbal messages—they are talking. Music thus grows out of the intonations and rhythmic onomatopoeias of speech, and in song this must be respected (Bebey, 1975). In that regard, if a particular rhythmic pattern was played on a particular drum in a community, even at random, the hearers would not be thinking of abstract sounds, and their relation to each other, or their expressive import. Their most natural reaction would be to ask, “What is being said”. or even. “What is wrong?” It must be noted that “drumming as a cultural activity has a meaning beyond structure... beyond formal analysis” (Nketia, 1961: p. 3). This represents one dimension of meaning in African music.

Africans view their music as the aspect of their traditional life, which provides repositories of traditional beliefs, ideas, wisdom and feelings. These beliefs, ideas, and wisdom and feelings do not just throw light on the music in the strict referential sense, as enhancing the meaning of music, but they are about a half of what is meant by “the music”. These and other associations in African music are strong and real because they are tied to specific ideational concepts which are known by all persons who are familiar with the culture. Meaning in African music then must be regarded not as involving one statement but a plurality of statements derived from different but mutually related phases of investigation of ethnographic and musical character, and one might more appropriately speak of areas or modes of meaning rather than meaning in general. (Nketia, 1961: p. 5) This explains why music is a strong rallying point in many African societies. But the main point about African music is what is attributed to the late Dr. Amu, that “African music is African meaning and value.” In other words what music means to the African is what music means, and this must be carried into music education. Aesthetic experience in our Ghanaian context will, therefore, be contingent upon the perception and conception of all those inherent meanings. Amu’s compositions are rich not only in melody, harmony, texture etc., but also social, moral and philosophical ideas. So music in the African context is valued, not only because “rhythm and harmony enter the innermost parts of our souls”, but also as they go, they carry a rich component of meanings beyond “organized expressive sounds”. It could even be argued further that the characteristic tonal organizations in African

music carry meaning which is characteristically African. Africans don't make meaning of sounds without their attachments philosophical, social historical implications and so forth. Appreciation of music, in an African sense and "Other aspects or meaning in African music", Nketia (1961: p. 6) emphasizes "are expressed in statements dealing with the interrelations or structure and function, structure and context structure and movement or dancing, while the relationship between music and other aspects or culture provide yet another mode or modes of meaning." And a philosophical/aesthetic position, which could be regarded as authentic to the African cultural situation would have to take all these factors into consideration. The emphasis on African/v Western evident in this paper is not meant to create a dichotomy or opposition, but to point out to that even Western scholars make a distinction between Western and non-Western music) and that Music as language: an analogy to be pursued with caution, Koopman (1997: p. 44) stood by those within the culture:

The idea that we can understand musical products of other cultures in the same way as those who are inside these cultures can be clearly naive. Unless we become thoroughly initiated in the particular musical conventions of a culture we will never be able to experience its music in a way similar to those grown up in the culture.

Similarly, Letts (1997: pp. 22-31) argues emphatically that: "music is not a universal language."

Secondly, there is the need for us to develop independence of thought and identity, which is uniquely African and will help in formulating our philosophy of music education. In spite of this seeming opposition between Western and African music, however, there is what could be termed "universals" in music. These also we ought to identify, and let them come across in our theorizing about and teaching music. It is the responsibility of African scholars to capture and articulate the inner meaning of African music, and let it inform our attempts at crafting a philosophy of music education; a responsibility which is also identified by Western scholars. In our attempt nothing stops us from borrowing ideas from elsewhere, as indeed, all civilizations and cultures have done and continue to do. But it is important that we redefine their meanings, contents and connotations to suit our cultural perspectives.

3.3. Music in Nigerian and Ghanaian Education

3.3.1. Ghana

Music in Ghana's educational system has been going through turbulence for some time now. Flolu (1994) describes the situation as a dilemma. Our classification in the curriculum has shifted from one premise to the other. At one time music was a cultural subject, so intertwined with other disciplines that it needs not stand alone (Cultural Studies Syllabus, 1987). Now it is termed "an activity" which must be provided to children in school to the extent that time and resources allow. What seems to compound the problem is the traditional dichotomy between Arts and Sciences. The latter seems to suggest the "academic", requiring intellectual work, "brain-cracking" and the former only emotional, subjective, not requiring much thought, just a pleasurable activity, certainly not essential or basic to the education of children. But the question is, "Is music only a doing/feeling subject? Is it not also a 'thinking' subject?" It could be argued that music is as much a thinking subject just as it is a feeling and doing subject. Learning has to do with making meaning out of experience, and music, and for that matter the arts, constitute one domain of meaning-making.

3.3.2. Music Education as Cultural Education

Music is an inseparable part of culture an organized way of life that includes knowledge, religions, beliefs, technology, art, morals, laws, customs and other cultural habits acquired by man as a member of society. Culture is also seen as "the state of intellectual development of a people". This implies the process of education whereby knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, and are constantly examined, evaluated, modified and passed on from generation to generation as new insights into life and human existence is gained (Okanfah, p. 8). Education serves and helps to transmit a society's culture and a way of life. This is why Okanfah further noted that:

Thus, culture is the content of education. Culture is also noted to include modes of thinking, acting, and feeling, which are expressed, for instance, in religion, Language, art, and so on (Kneller, 1971); and since art is always in the context of culture, art can be said to promote cultural ways of thinking about life. Music education promotes cultural thinking and expression, often beyond Words. For the development of national culture, therefore, the various aspects of culture need to be studied both as individual disciplines as well as, in integrated fashion. Now, if music is inseparable from culture, and education is a means of perpetuating

culture, how much of our culture are we passing on, if music is made peripheral to formal education?

3.3.3. Contemporary Problems Facing Music Education in Nigeria

This researcher made an attempt to find out the major problems facing the study of music in Nigerian secondary schools and tertiary institutions and the perceptions of the society about Music as school courses (Ekwueme, 2005: pp. 320-351). After completion and collation of the research work by the different scholars (Ekwueme, 2005), Olusoji Stephen (2013) and Adegbite (1999), the responses were analyzed and the frequencies were then used as percentages. Findings from the study (Sowande, 1962: p. 73) showed that:

1) Students had problems convincing their parents about their choice of music as a career. 79% of the population said their parents disliked music as a career for their wards. It was particular visible in the responses of the female respondents whose parents felt it is a profession for men not women, while others had problems drawing lines between music as vocation and avocation.

2) The findings also indicated that most respondents choose music out of frustration of not making the required grades for their first choice courses and their attempt to get admission to the university in any other available courses with a lower requirement. 65% of respondents had positive responses to the question (c) above for Category A respondents.

3) The age-long stigma attached to music is still quite prevalent in contemporary times, as undergraduates still encountered derogatory remarks from the society on their choice of music as a course and profession.

4) As a follow-up to the aforementioned, most of the respondents generally chose pop icons, both local and international, as their role models and would rather chart and pursue their career in popular music because of the immediate financial rewards rather than a career in classical music.

5) Students showed total disappoint regarding the training, facilities, and instructors in most Nigerian institutions. A total of 65% of the respondents were of the opinion that facilities used for instruction were inadequate and obsolete; 35% opined that more competent and well-trained instructors should be employed; and 40% expressed that the curriculum should be broadened to cater for and accommodate different areas of interest of students as some would like to specialize in areas, such as, studio management, entrepreneurial or music business, music therapy, and other specializations that were not currently offered in most Nigerian institutions.

4. Contributions of African Philosophy and Values to the Development of Western Philosophy and Values

Neoplatonism was founded by the Egyptian philosopher Plotinus in the 3rd century and it was a central part of the Hellenistic philosophical tradition that determined Western/Christian values and philosophy. The African philosophical tradition was anchored on the concept of “maat” meaning truth, justice or that which is right’ (Hountondji, 1983). Kenyan philosopher Henry Odera Oruka (1990) has distinguished what he calls four trends in modern African philosophy: ethnophilosophy, philosophical sagacity, nationalistic–ideological philosophy, and professional philosophy. From another perspective, one could say that ethnophilosophy has been used to record the beliefs found in African cultures. Such an approach treats African philosophy as consisting in a set of shared beliefs, values, categories, and assumptions that are implicit in the language, practices, and beliefs of African cultures; in short, the uniquely African worldview. As such, it is seen as an item of communal property rather than an activity for the individual. One proponent of this form, Placide Tempels (1945), argued in *Bantu Philosophy* that the metaphysical categories of the Bantu people are reflected in their linguistic categories. According to this view, African philosophy can be best understood as springing from the fundamental assumptions about reality reflected in the languages of Africa (Wiki, 2013: p. 23). Professional philosophy is usually identified as that produced by African philosophers trained in the Western philosophical tradition, that embraces a universal view of the methods and concerns of philosophy. Those philosophers identified in this category often explicitly reject the assumptions of ethno-philosophy and adopt a universalist worldview of philosophy that requires all philosophy to be accessible and applicable to all peoples and cultures in the world. In African philosophy, ethical values abound as human communal norms that guide and define the African way of life as culture. Musical ethics define a musical system that uses song to control the ethical behavior and character of the African in his society. Although Africa is extremely diverse, there appear to be some shared moral ideas across many ethnic groups. In a number of African cultures, ethics is centered on a person’s character, and saying “he has no morals” translates as something like “he has no character”. A person’s character reflects the accumulation of her deeds and her habits of conduct; hence, it can be changed over a person’s life. In some African cultures, “personhood” refers to

an adult human who exhibits moral virtues, and one who behaves badly is not considered a person, even if he is considered a human. Instead, ethics is humanistic and utilitarian: it focuses on improving social functioning and human flourishing. On the other hand, according to Bodunrin (1985), social welfare is not a mere aggregate of individual welfare; rather, there is a collective “social good” embodying values that everyone wants, like peace and stability. In general, African ethics is social rather than individualistic. Cooperation and altruism are considered crucial. African ethics places more weight on duties of prosocial behavior than on rights per se, in contrast to most of Western ethics.

4.1. African Studies—Philosophy, Values and Research Themes

African studies are not a homogenous study or discipline; it is an institutional embodiment of the core philosophical reflection of the core human values that are indigenous to African people (Omogbe, 1998). This academic institution in a formal sense is established as an Institute for carrying out research works on relevant themes to African way of life as philosophy, as principles of education, as science and as technology. African studies are more than a Departmental organization of core African-related curriculum of research. This article is about the study of the Africa, African people, their philosophy, values and music and in Africa philosophy, all these elements of Africa constitute their philosophy, ontology and cosmology. African studies are the study of Africa, especially the continent’s cultures and societies (as opposed to its geology, geography, zoology, etc.). The field includes the study of Africa’s history (Pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial), demography (ethnic groups), music, culture, politics, economy, languages, and religion (Islam, Christianity, traditional religions). A specialist in African studies is often referred to as an “Africanist”. A key focus of the discipline is to interrogate epistemological approaches, theories and methods in traditional disciplines using a critical lens that inserts African-centred ways of knowing and references (Wiredu, 1980). African studies is a multi-disciplinary academic pursuit of research works and disciplines that relate to the people, history, philosophy, growth and development of Africa and its people in the context of its identified cultures and human values. Components of Modern African studies in tertiary Institutions in both Africa, the diaspora and in Europe where Institutes of African Studies are established today are African philosophy, African Culture, African politics, African Geography and Africa African Development, African Indigenous societies, African History, and African Music and aesthetic (Bodunrin, 1985). Our interest centres around that part of African studies today that has to do with African music and aesthetics. Osuji poses the following questions and gives a deeper insight concerning this aspect of African studies as part of our traditional way of life that is in dissonance with the modern concept of aesthetics education and career in Africa:

From time immemorial, various types of cultural heritage were passed on to the next generation through informal educational methods. One of this is music. In the Pre-Independence years, music education had remained largely informal in Nigeria, it was transmitted through the various traditional media such as traditional festivals, work songs, moonlight plays, lullabies and children nursery rhymes, court music, apprenticeship under a well-known traditional musicians and others (Andrew, 1998; Ekwueme, 1983; Euba, 1982; Nketia, 1974). With the advent of western education, which came through the Christian missionaries in collaboration with the British colonial government, in the early part of twentieth century, the curriculum of the missionaries was geared towards literary education as they focused on the arts including, music, drama, and poetry among others, in their efforts to evangelize to the “natives”. In this way the awareness for formal music education was raised through the inclusion of music in the school curriculum. The media houses also helped to raise the importance of music education through various talks on the theory and historical values of music education. With the awareness brought about by western education, Nigeria has been able to produce well-known music scholars like, Professor Fela Sowande, Ayo Bankole, Lazarus Ekwueme, Akin Euba, and Akpabot Sam, to mention but few. The major questions that are asked in this paper are: 1) What are the roles of music education in the society? 2) Is the stigmatization of traditional musicians as beggars and people of lower status still prevalent today? 3) Why are pupils usually discouraged by their parents from choosing music as a career? 4) What are the major problems confronting music as a subject in the Nigerian educational system? The main focus of this paper is the importance of music education to the Nigerian society.

This subject cannot be adequately discussed without looking at the philosophical and sociological premise of music as an art and its relevance and implications to the society. According to Plato in his book *The Republic*,

speaking of the Old Athenian education about 450 B.C. He said:

Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other because rhythm and harmony find their way into the secret places of the soul, on which they might fasten imparting grace and making the soul graceful of him who is rightly educated. While Reimer (1970) opined that: Until music education understands what it really has to offer, until it is convinced of the facts that it is necessary rather than a peripheral part of human culture, until it “feels in its bones” that its value is a fundamental one it will not have attained the peace of mind which is the mark of maturity (p. 3).

The quotations above emphasized the importance of music as an integral and indispensable part of ancient civilizations and contemporary societies. What then is the place of music and musicians in traditional African society?

4.2. The Role of Music in Traditional African Society

African music, the music of the indigenous peoples of Africa. Sub-Saharan African music has as its distinguishing feature a rhythmic complexity common to no other region. Polyrhythmic counterpoint, wherein two or more locally independent attack patterns are superimposed, is realized by handclaps, xylophones, rattles, and a variety of tuned and non-tuned drums. The remarkable aspect of African polyrhythm is the discernible coherence of the resultant rhythmic pattern. Pitch polyphony exists in the form of parallel intervals (generally thirds, fourths, and fifths), overlapping choral antiphony and solo-choral response, and occasional simultaneous independent melodies. In addition to voice, many wind and string instruments perform melodic functions. Common are bamboo flutes, ivory trumpets, and the one-string ground bow, which uses a hole in the ground as a resonator. During colonial times, European instruments such as saxophones, trumpets, and guitars were adopted by many African musicians; their sounds were integrated into the traditional patterns. Scale systems vary between regions but are generally diatonic. Music is highly functional in ethnic life, accompanying birth, marriage, hunting, and even political activities. Much music exists solely for entertainment, ranging from narrative songs to highly stylized musical theater. Similarities with other cultures, particularly Indian and Middle Eastern, can be ascribed primarily to the Islamic invasion (7th-11th cent.). (A. M. Jones, *Studies in African Music* (2 vol., 1959); R. Brandel, *The Music of Central Africa* (1961); F. Warren, *The Music of Africa* (1970); F. Bebey, *African Music* (1972); W. Bender, *Sweet Mother: Modern African Music* (1991). In Wikipaedia, the observation is driven further home by Blacking:

Music is a product of the behavior of human groups whether formal or informal (Blacking, 1973: p. 58).

The caption above from Blacking aptly sums up the roles and functions of music in any society and this is also true of the African society. “From the cradle to the grave” the African eats, sleeps, and wake-ups with music. It passes on musical art through oral and informal sources either during festivals, gathering in the village square, court music, and so on. Other avenues for showcasing music that could also offer opportunities for tapping musical knowledge are through observation or direct participation in musical activities at home and school. The traditional musicians in some parts of Africa, especially in Nigeria, are treated with disdain, regarded as belonging to the lowest echelon of the society as they are given various derisive tags such as beggars, ne’er do well, and people not to be associated with in the society. Perhaps, these commonly held views of music and musicians had rubbed onto music and its usefulness as a career subject worth studying by pupils. Fafunwa (1971) opined that:

There is much truth in the saying, a cultureless people are a hopeless people. The teaching of music and art in African schools is still considered as a frill by many an educator. Yet there is hardly any other subject through which the artistic and creative genius of a people can be more easily expressed and perpetuated. Art and music touch the spirit and soul of the child and African art and music form the focus of the African culture (pp. 74-75).

The aforementioned excerpt captures the essence of improper propagation of music education in Africa and how music is a spiritual art to the Africans and that it enhanced and developed its artistic and creative mind. However, Vidal (2008) in an analytical review of major problems confronting music education in Nigeria within the last century stated that:

- That formal music education was institutionalized in the schools at the beginning to serve the interests of the

missionaries and colonial administrations.

- That the type of music education introduced was alien to Nigerian culture and traditions.
- That attempts to correct this though, successful with other subject did not yield much success in music, thus making music lag behind other subject such as language, literature, drama in terms of cultural development and orientation.
- That research was not carried out into the contents and teaching methods of the music of cultures and societies of Nigeria.
- That efforts were again made after independence to make education, including music education functional and relevant to the needs of Nigeria and the African child.
- That necessary structures were not put in place to concretize the new ideas on music The African continent is the second largest continent in the world, and its people constitute a 10th of the world's population with about one thousand indigenous languages spoken throughout the continent (Stone, 1998: p. 2). In this context, it is important that a brief history of African music cannot be conclusive with the following notes from its history. No scholar managed to offer a perspective about African culture that has not been contested. Given this history, we can only provide a bird's eye view of African music. African music has a long history that has been orally transmitted from one generation to the other and captured in written form in excerpts found in journals of western explorers. Writings on African music are largely based on western theoretical frameworks, and literature available under categories such as African music; world music, global music and ethnomusicology influences the discussion of African music. Most of the African music history has been surrounded by controversy on representation of African cultural heritage by non-native observers. Dance, music, and story-telling are among the ancient art forms that have flourished for many centuries in Africa. Music and dance are terms that we will use to denote musical practices of African people. Ancient African society did not separate their everyday life activities from their music and other cultural experience.

Stone (1998) attests to the difficulty of separating music from the cultural context as she says:

Honest observers are hard pressed to find single indigenous group in Africa that has a term congruent to the usual western notion of "music." There are terms for more specific acts like singing, playing instruments, and more broadly performing (dance, games, music); but the isolation of musical sound from other arts proves a western abstraction, of which we should be aware when we approach the study of performance in Africa (p. 7).

Music and dance are activities that characterize an African musical expression and play an important part in the lives of the people (Senogan-Zake, 1986). Some African scholars, such as Ndlovu (1991), argue that the shift to writing down African music compromises the performance of African music and dance. Others, who oppose the transcription of African songs, argue that songs tend to be forced to comply with western musical idiom or stylistic writing. I still believe that there is a need to develop modern ways of transcribing African music and dance as modern traditional transcriptions tend to fail to account for some melodic and rhythmic patterns. Dargie (1992), who has studied Xhosa singing style of the Eastern cape of South Africa known as Ukungqokola, has devised an alternative transcription method that accounts for complex rhythmic patterns. This method tries to account for some rhythmic and melodic patterns that fall outside the boundaries of the present music notational systems. Choral music is one of the forms that has promoted the use of Tonic Solfa notation more than staff notation among black composers of Africa descent. In the 20th century, several western-educated African composers have shared their compositions with millions of people. Annual competitions and festivals have become an important facet in the musical life of African countries such as South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania. Celebrated composers of choral music based on the principles of four part singing common in hymns are Ayo Bankole, Rueben Caluza, Lazurus Ekwuene, Akin Euba, Alfred Assegai Kumalo, Joseph Kyagambidwa, Gedeon Mdegella, John Mgandu, Okechukwu Ndubuisi, JH Kwabena Ketia, Mkeki Nzewi an Fela Sowande (*Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001). Indigenous religious practices in Africa have also been influenced by Africa's musical content, meaning and values. Today, Africa can boast of a number of musical styles and instruments that modern Africans play due to this rich religious influence. Other religions, such as African indigenous beliefs, suffered a long history of suppression by colonists (Mamdani, 1996). A number of indigenous songs and instruments have been kept away from western Christian church services until recently. Africans who decided to join Christianity were encouraged to disassociate themselves with the traditional musical practices, while others continued to practice African traditional beliefs in secret. African music and dance

has survived as long as we can remember the existence of humankind. It is from this context that the music of Africa must be seen as dynamic. Impey (1998) asserts that all countries in Africa, with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia, have undergone a period of foreign domination. This has brought the trappings of foreign culture, affecting the economic, political and cultural infrastructures of African society. African popular music market may be fraught with contradictions, but what remains uncontested is the energy and diversity of music creativity in the continent. Today, musical instruments and styles provide the basis of contemporary music. In his work “African Music in Social Context” [Christo van Rensburg \(2013: p. 7\)](#) throws more light on the concept, values and history of African music in a social context:

Authentic African music—the traditional music of the black peoples of Africa—is little known abroad. The non-African listener can find the music strange, difficult, and unattractive; and therefore often concludes that it is not of interest. Both African and non-African music are human inventions and individual notes contain the same elements such as pitch, duration, tone colour and intensity. Music plays a similar role in most societies, as work songs, lullabies, battle songs, religious music, and so on. Generally speaking the same categories of instruments are found in Africa as in Europe, namely stringed instruments, wind instruments, and percussion. The African concept of music is totally different to the Western one though. Traditional African musicians do not seek to combine sounds in a manner pleasing to the ear. Their aim is simply to express life in all of its aspects through the medium of sound. The African musician does not merely attempt to imitate nature by music, but reverses the procedure by taking natural sounds, including spoken language, and incorporate them into the music. To the uninitiated this may result in cacophony, but in fact each sound has a particular meaning. To be meaningful, African music must be studied within the context of African life. Music has an important role in African society. Music is an integral part of the life of every African individual from birth. At a very early stage in life the African child takes an active role in music, making musical instruments by the age of three or four. Musical games played by African children prepare them to participate in all areas of adult activity—including fishing, hunting, farming, grinding maize, attending weddings and funerals and dances. An intimate union forms between man and art in Africa. It amounts to a total communion that is shared by the whole community. This may help explain why some languages in black Africa have no precise noun to define music ([Christo van Rensburg, 2013](#)).

4.3. Recommendation

Having seen the plethora of problems that could be caused in state’s efforts to train and mobilize its citizens for sustainable development and democratic stability through proper citizenship orientation, we have noted that if the present trend of foreign musical domination of music educational curriculum across states in Africa were to continue, it would portend a bad orientation and a source of instability for future citizens of the African state. We have, therefore, deemed valuable to make the following recommendations to remedy the situation and to encourage musical educational reforms across state tertiary institutions in Africa. In the first place, we suggest that the tertiary Musical educational curriculum be properly reformed and modified to achieve the constitutional objectives of citizenship training, orientation and communal commitment in accordance with African philosophical values. Secondly, we recommend that the African studies, Philosophy and Music Departments initiate additional researches and studies to conduct and find out which aspects of the Curriculum should be improved upon, reformed removed or expanded ([Willet, 1975: p. 11](#)). Thirdly, as one of the important objectives for which state tertiary institutions were established across Africa is to create the full appreciation and the awareness of the African indigenous cultural heritage to enhance the building of a peaceful, stable, healthy and virile society, the curriculum and teaching of African music should re-assume the pre-eminent position in state policy not occupy a subservient position. More recommendations were also made by [Osuji \(2013: p. 12\)](#):

Some ways these problems can be adequately tackled are by the tripartite parties of parents-society-government. We recommended that parents should be properly enlightened about the usefulness of music education and should allow gifted pupils to pursue a career in music. We also propose that the mass media should do more to promote music education by offering programs that will show the ideals of music education. Likewise, guidance counselors must double their efforts in giving proper advice to pupils and parents on career choice and paths. The society should be educated on the usefulness of music education and its benefits to the society. Finally, government should not neglect the arts and should do more to fund it for

“art they say is life.” The curriculum planner should also look at the contents of music curriculum and include local content that would make music education more relevant and meaningful to the society.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we have noted that the state, being the major stakeholder and sponsor of educational policies across Africa, is not utilizing musical education and curriculum as a creative, cultural and patriotic tool of building national unity, peace, citizenship and sustainable development in Africa. We have attempted to argue from several perspectives social, philosophical, musical and cultural and aesthetic angles in this article in an attempt to provide critical meaning and food for thought in our search for an African philosophy for music education for Africa. According to scholars such as Okanfah (2009: p. 12), we have seen that, using both the Ghanaian and Nigerian situational analysis that the Western concept of aesthetic education was dominating the curriculum of state tertiary schools across Africa and, since this does not augur well for the value upbringing and training of Africa’s future patriotic citizens, there is an urgent need to review and embed African communal values of African philosophy so that there will not be dangerous variance between the traditional village upbringing of African children and what they receive as undergraduates. This position is adopted since the type of philosophy of music education in tertiary institutions has serious implications for the achievement of the role of music in cultural development of a good and balanced creative citizens (Rensburg Christo van, 2013). Founded upon the agreed African philosophy for Africa grounded upon African thoughts and values, African studies, African philosophy and Music Departments in African must take up the tasks to develop the necessary pedagogical musical concepts, ideas, and notational styles. As against the domination but a harmonious blending of both the foreign and African musical values, the core values drawn from both African philosophy and African Studies should be used to guide the study of African music, music in Africa and the development of a new philosophy of music education by the African state in the millennium. Thus while we do not advocate for a mono-African value oriented curriculum in the philosophy of music education, we have actually called for a blending of the best while not neglecting the core African musical values and philosophy. To get a good idea where the research trajectory is landing, let’s observe the wise notes of Ogunrinade (2012):

Music education as the heart beat of culture has not gained proper and adequate recognition in the educational development of curriculum at all levels in Nigeria and at the NCE level in particular, by not making the curriculum rich of the content from Nigerian Music. The recognition given to it is not connected with its relevance to Nigerian unity and development. Music education should emphasize more on the non-cognitive domains and the socialization of the Nigerian child into a true citizen. If the well intended lofty goals of Music education must be accomplished, Nigerian’s local and contemporary music, the history of Nigerian’s music heroes should be included in the content because they need to be properly comprehended by the students. The curriculum contents must not only mirror western theory and history alone, it must also keep in tune with emergent ideas in and outside the country as highlighted by Faseun, 2005; Okafor, 2005; Omibiyi, 2008.

References

- Adegbite, A. (1999). The Place of Music in Nigerian School Curriculum. *The Performer Ilorin Journal of the Performing Arts, 1*, 60-67.
- Adeyinka, A. A. (1988). Major Trends in Curriculum Development in Nigeria. <http://unilorin.edu.ng/journals/education/ije/sept1988/MAJOR%20TRENDS%2IN%20CURRICULUM%20DEVELOPMENT%20IN%20NIGERIA.pdf>
- Alperson, P. (1987). *Introduction to What Is Music?* Philip Alperson (Ed.), New York: Haven.
- Andrew, H. (1998). The Role of Music in the Society: The Ethnomusicological Perspectives. In A. C. North, & D. J. Harreaves (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Music* (pp. 123-138). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bebey, F. (1975). *Afham Music: A People’s Art* (Bennett, I. tr.). New York: Lawrence Hill & Company.
- Blacking, J. D. (1973). *How Musical Is Man?* London: Faber and Faber.
- Bohunrin, P. O. (1985). *Philosophy in Africa: Trends and Perspectives*. Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press.
- Ekwueme, L. E. N. (2005). Nigerian Music since Independence. *The Economic and Social Development of Nigeria since Independence*, 320-331.

- Euba, A. (1982). Introduction to Music in Africa. In R. Olaniyan (Ed.), *African History and Culture* (pp. 224-236). Lagos: Longman Press.
- Fafunwa, A. B. (1971). *History of Higher Education in Nigeria*. New York: Macmillan and Coy.
- Faseun, F. (2001). Public Perceptions of Music as a School Subject in Contemporary Nigerian Schools. In M. A. Omibiyi-Obidike (Ed.), *African Art Music in Nigeria* (pp. 83-92). Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers (Nig.) Ltd.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2009). National Commission for Colleges of Education, Minimum Standards for NCE Teachers Arts and Social Sciences, 4th Edition. *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion—An Open Access International Journal*.
- Guilford, W. G. M. (2004). Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial African Issues. sel., ed. and with introd. by CT: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.
- Hountondji, P. (1983). *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Hountondji, P. J. (1983). *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Kneller, G. F. (1971). *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York: John Willey and Sons Inc.
- Kofie, N. N. (1994). *Contemporary African Music in World Perspectives*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Koopman, C. (1997). Music as Language: An Analogy to Be Pursued with Caution. *International Journal of Music Education*, 29, 40-46. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/025576149702900106>
- Langer, S. (1951). *Philosophy in a New Key*. New York: Mentor Book Company.
- Letts, R. (1997). Music: Universal Language between All Nations? *International Journal of Music Education*, 29, 22-31. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/025576149702900104>
- Mamdani, M. (1996). Chapter 1 from Mamdani, M., *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary/Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*.
- Nketia, J. H. K. (1962). The Problem of Meaning in African Music. *Ethnomusicology*, 6, 1-7. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/924242>
- Nketia, J. H. K. (1974). *The Music of Africa*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc.
- Nketia, J. H. K. (Ed.) (1999). *A Guide for the Preparation of Primary School African Music Teaching Manuals*. Accra: Afram Publications (Ghana) Limited.
- Oehrle, E. (1991). Emerging Music Education Trends in Africa. *International Journal of Music Education*, 18, 23-29.
- Ogunrinade, D. O. A. (2012). Teacher's Perception on the Incorporation of Indigenous Music Contents into Music Curriculum in Nigerian Schools. *African Journal of Education and Technology (Sacha Journal London)*, 2, 108-118.
- Ogunrinade, D. O. A. (2013). Philosophy of Music Education in Nigeria: Content Analysis of Music Curriculum for Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion—An Open Access International Journal*, 1.
- Ogunrinade, D. O. A., Adeyemi, A. A., & Oluniyi, M. O. (2012). The State of Music Education in Nigerian Secondary School Programme. *Journal of Educational and Social Research (Sapienza University Italy)*, 2, 391-403.
- Okafor, F. C. (2005). *Music in Nigerian Society*. Enugu: New Generation Books.
- Okafor, R. C. (2005). Focus on Music Education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Music Education*, 12, 9-17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/025576148801200102>
- Okanfah, M. (2009). Search of an African Philosophy of Music Education for Ghana; Okanfah(2013:2) Search of an African Philosophy of Music Education for Ghana* Michael O/zene-Okanfah.
- Olusoji, S. (2013). The Relevance of Music Education to the Nigerian Educational System. *African Journal of Teacher Education*, 3.
- Omibiyi-Obidike, M. (2001). African Musical Resources and African Identity in the New African Art Music. In *African Art Music in Nigeria* (pp. 150-160). Ibadan: Starling-Horden Publisher (Nig) Ltd.
- Omibiyi-Obidike, M. A. (2001). Whiter Music Education in Nigeria. An Unpublished Paper, *First National Conference of Nigerian Association of Music Educators*, Awka.
- Omeregbe, J. I. (1998). "African Philosophy: Yesterday and Today" (in Bodunrin; references to reprint in E. C. Eze (Ed.), *African Philosophy: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell).
- Oruka, H. O. (1990). Sage Philosophy. In E. J. Brill (Ed.), *Philosophy of History and Culture* (Vol. 4).
- Reimer, B. (1970). *A Philosophy of Music Education*. Englewood Cliff, NJ: Prentice-Hall International.
- Reimer, B. (1989). *A Philosophy of Music Education* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Sowande, F. (1962). Music Education in Nigerian Schools. *Nigeria Magazine*, 73.
- Tempels, P. (1945). *La philosophie bantoue (Bantu Philosophy)*. Elisabethville: Bantu Philosophy-Centre Aequatoria.

<http://www.aequatoria.be/tempels/FTEnglishTranslation.htm>

van Rensburg, C. (2013). Christo van Rensburg Is a Freelance Writer and Africanist from Australia.

<http://www.editors.org.za/Documents/PEGboard%20July%202013.pdf>

Verrastro, R. (1990). The Aesthetic Foundations of Music Education. *The Canadian Journal of Music*, 31.

Vidal, A. O. (2008). Music Education in Nigeria: Entering the 21st Century with a Pragmatic Philosophy. *Journal of the Association of Nigerian Musicologists*, 1-19.

Vidal, A. O. (2012). *Selected Topics on Nigerian Music*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.

Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia (2014). African Philosophy.

Willet, F. (1975). African Arts and the Future: Decay or Development? In I. Abu-Lughod (Ed.), *African Themes*. Evanston: Northwestern University, Program of African Studies.

Wiredu, K. (1980). *Philosophy and an African*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.