

CHAPTER FIFTY-SEVEN

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY AND CREATIVITY: THE NEED FOR DOCUMENTATION OF PRODUCTIONS

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Abstract

This study is a discussion on the need for the cultivation of the habit of literature documentation after productions to encourage innovation in departments of Music and Theatre Arts. The aim is to increase the scanty production works of literature that we have especially in Ethnomusicological creative works. The theoretical framework is hinged on Creativity theory, which explains that creativity is motivational, it helps to bring out innovative ideas for successful planning of productions and it has the potential to generate income and more artistic concepts for future productions. It employed a descriptive research design to analyse 2019 acculturated Christmas Cantata production, produced by the Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Africa, Toru-Orua. The outcomes of the study show that the documentation of productions encourages innovation, preservation and promotion of indigenous theatrical arts. The study recommends that more creative works should be discovered, documented and published to promote creative works, especially from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Keywords: Ethnomusicology, performance, production Christmas Cantata, creativity, documentation.

Introduction

In the spirit of giving honour to whom honour is due, in honour of Professor Young-Sook Onyiuke, the study is a creative and artistic discussion on the need for the documentation of departmental, practical performances either test, examination or productions. For categorisations, we are under the sub-theme of Ethnomusicology and Creativity. The problem that this study wants to solve is that, even though the whole world is so much flooded with documented knowledge, there are still so many creative works that are yet to be processed into print, especially most of the indigenous or acculturated productions in the University of Africa and Niger Delta as a whole. Documentation on its own is an important means of communication, which people use in making the understanding of their works or productions and intentions known to others. As an Ethnomusicologist, it is such a beautiful thing to observe that creativity and other artistic innovations are deeply rooted in every culture and are functional. Therefore, each time we are staging them we should try to document them for references and other academic purposes. Every culture has its traditional either musical or otherwise identity which is functional and used in the celebration of different festivals.

The festival we are discussing in this study is the Christmas Cantata. In 2019, the University community was not left out in such celebrations and the concept was to acculturate the Cantata. University Campus is a cultural collection of different cultures and in celebrations of such festivals, we need to capture to promote indigenous genres too. This study emanated from the

desire to get intellectual joy over doing such creative work, it was not easy to come by such performance, and it took a whole lot of work and sacrifice to come by such an innovative idea. Hornby (2000) defines innovation as, “The introduction of new things ideas, or ways of doing things.” At the end of this study, you may agree with me that, this study involves the organization of information in such a way as to make it available for a specific purpose in a readily usable form. There is a need for continuous update of knowledge of whatsoever we are doing, as knowledge often become obsolete unless it is updated from time to time. The study is qualitative research, to subjectively analyse the selected acculturated Christmas Cantata hosted by the Department of Theatre Arts on Wednesday 18th December 2019. This study is hinged on Creativity Theory by Amabile (1997) which suggested that the componential theory of creativity indicates that every individual can engender at least slight creative work and some factors such as working environment and time may impact creative behaviour level and its frequency. It concludes that there are so many ways of promoting the creative and artistic arts in our tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta and one of such ways is through documentation and publication of works. The study recommends that more creative works should be documented and published to promote creative works of the Niger Delta arts forms.

Theoretical Framework

In our literature review, we will be considering the theoretical framework which is on creativity and operational terms like Ethnomusicology, Documentation and Performance. The study is hinged on Creative theory by Amabile (1997:40). According to Amabile, “The componential theory of creativity indicates that every individual can engender at least slight creative work and some factors such as working environment and time may impact creative behaviour level and its frequency.” Creativity comes in different components, parts, portions, elements, factors, constituents and ingredients. It has to do with creating new ideas and creating can be considered to have the potential to vary from a slight change to total change. According to Mikdashi (1999: 42), “Creativity can be divided into three types and they are: creating something new, combining things, and improving or changing things.” Mikdash statement is enough to accommodate the idea of creativity as it relates to the acculturated production we are promoting, as a key product of human culture and a tool for enriching and promoting culture. Therefore, based on Mikdash explanation, individual creativity consists of three major components, each being necessary for creativity in any situation. Creativity relates to this study in the area of artistic productions of a Christmas Cantata. Let us look at some scholarly definitions of creativity. Using the definition of Creativity according to Amabile is, “the production of a novel, appropriate ideas in any realm of human activity, from science, to the arts, to education, to business, to everyday life” (p.40). A similar definition suggested by Dewett (2007: p.198) termed creativity as, “the production of novel and useful ideas, processes, or products by a person or group”. Judging from the two definitions raised so far, we can see that there is an agreement on the definition of creativity which has to do with something that is both novel and valuable. Creativity has to do with the creation of ideas and the ideas have to be new and appropriate to the occasion or problem that we are trying to address. In this study, we are addressing the issue that every creative work can be published.

This form of creativity has to do with academic writing. Academic writings have to do with the faculty of the expertise knowledge. According to Simonton (2000. P. 234), expertise is considered as, “The basis of creative work, and therefore creative people do not create novel ideas from nothingness, but those new ideas start from domain-relevant knowledge and a set of developed skills.” Expertise in any activity is an essential element for producing new ideas, opposed to existing ideas and that requires preceding knowledge of that activity. The importance of creativity includes its ability to yield novel and proper ideas to solve complex problems and increase efficiencies and enhance overall effectiveness (Diliello& Houghton, 2008).

Conceptual Framework

Ethnomusicology according to facts on file dictionary of music is, “The study of music in relation to the culture that produced it.” From this definition, Music is considered as a cultural product, which is an essentially human activity and almost all areas of musical studies are cultural. Music is a universal art form, which reveals many aspects of human nature, as well as our diverse cultural forms of communication throughout the world. The Christmas Cantata production is one such creative and ethnic artistic art form that can be used to promote and preserve Niger Delta Christmas songs.

Documentation is an important way which people use in making others understand their ideas, works or productions and intentions. It is from the documentation that others can develop creative innovation for productions. Collins' dictionary, defines documentation to “Consist of documents which provide proof or evidence of something, or are a record of something.” According to Collins' dictionary documentation is done to capture important historical moments, to increase awareness and interest in the relationship between past and present and to provide a model for future celebrations. Wikipedia source defined documentation as, “Any communicable material that is used to describe, explain or instruct regarding some attributes of an object, systems of procedure, such as its parts, assembly, installation, maintenance and use.”

Documentation gathering useful resource for its creators as well as for others interested in carrying out similar activities. We write documentation for ourselves. This is the simplest case, as we know our target audience well or so we think. For the most part, we are writing things down so we can repeat them later on, and have a point of reference in the future. This means that we have a pretty good idea of what the prospective reader might expect to find, what they might know about our ideas.

Performance is a kind of canopy that hosts both the creator and the actors' equal rights as creators. According to Christine Ammer (2004) the fact on file dictionary of music, fourth edition:

Performance is a multimedia theatrical production in which the performance itself is more important than any narrative or specific message being conveyed, and in which the artist not only creates in most or all of the different media poetry, dance, music, theatre, film, graphic art, mime, among others. Included in the work but also is the performer. The style of presentation is usually fragmentary and allusive rather than narrative (no “story” as such is told), in effect, a series of images (pp. 307-308).

In this study, we are looking at a musical Christmas festive performance of a Christmas Cantata. It was a live performance; a live performance is necessarily impermanent. Ever-changing, the creator and performer are one. In other words, inside every production are creative components.

DATA PRESENTATION

This study is a step by step narrative on the production of Christmas Cantata using available materials of the 2019 production at the Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Africa, Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Below are some excerpts from the Christmas cantata:

1.Special Number – Samuel UDO (Saxophone)



Mr. Udo is a lecturer in the department of Theatre Arts, University of Africa



1. Song: Mary Did You Know Performance by the Students of the **Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Africa, Toru-Orua.**



1. Feliz Navidad Performance by the Students of the Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Africa, Toru-Orua.



Data Analysis

The data presented had to be fused to the first part of the programme for the Christmas Cantata and the shortened production handbook has ready photo speak a cross-section of events captured in the programme handbook. It was the end of the year, a time to wine and dine after a long period of hardwork, forlorn hopes and shattered expectations. It was time for the whole University and host community to come together to feast. It was also the time for the Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts and Education to showcase their very best stars. The data presented is in picture form of a narrative on the marking of the 2019/2020 academic year Christmas cantata hosted by the Department of Theatre Arts, Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Africa, Toru-Orua, Bayelsa State. The program took place on Wednesday 13th, December 2019, at the Toru-Orua civic centre by 12noon. That year's Christmas cantata happen to be the second edition of the Christmas cantata hosted in the community civic centre. It was that year that the school moved from Bolu-Orua campus to the permanent site of the University at Toru-Orua. To achieve the goals, the school followed an innovative process that is worthy of note.

Processes used to achieve the Production

What people saw on the production day was a finished work of different committees working together to achieve success. The production aspect of everything as a process started as follows:

Meeting

It was the time that the head of the department prof. Barclays Ayakoroma met with the departmental staff to discuss, decide and appoint heads of different committees for the production. The committees were the technical team, finance, decoration, media, medical, security, ushering, protocols, music, drama, dance, publicity and the welfare, among others. It is worthy of note that a good product is not and should not be a one man's affair, nothing should be overlooked. After the departmental meeting, different committees that were set up had their various meeting to deliberate on the way forward.

Audition

The audition was open for students to compete for roles and all committees member were on the ground to do the selection. They auditioned more than a hundred students that were good enough to act in a play, sing and play musical instruments in the creative production. The production was acculturation of Western and indigenous entertainments, therefore, those that can dance traditional dances were auditioned.

Rehearsal Phase

This was the time that everyone practised with their instructors, at different venues. It is important to exercise before working on any production material for mental alertness.

Pre-production Phase/ Technical Rehearsal

The Pre-production phase was the coming together of every actor involved in the big picture at the venue and the whole production will be run from top to bottom before it happens. At this point, the lecturers were on the ground and involved, as it is sometimes like a camp rehearsal till the production. The different costumes were checked and everything was on point. As an addendum, the head of the department, Prof. Barclay Ayakoroma and his squad were on the ground too for supervision and technical support.

The Main Production Phase

It is the public show of the production, the event itself as shown in the data presented above. For the records, this study is capturing only the events that were on the Christmas Cantata programme.

Conclusion

There are so many ways of promoting the creative and artistic arts in our tertiary institutions in the Niger Delta and one of such ways is through documentation and publication of production. Production involves a lot of preparations. Each production varies and there is no one way of perceiving ideas for production. From the literature review, different scholars confirmed that documentation of creative works is important, as it helps us to develop more creative innovation for production. It can also help as reference material for future purposes. The study recommends that more creative works should be discovered, documented and published to promote creative works, especially from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

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