

**‘Persuasive Worship’: Mediating Religious Emotions in Nigerian Pentecostal Music****Toyin Samuel Ajose (PhD)**

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samuelajose@gmail.com<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0875-2624>**Abstract**

This study explores the intersection between music, religion and affective experiences in Nigerian Pentecostal Christianity. Specifically, it discusses how Pentecostals including musicians utilize oral modes of songs, testimonies and personal experiences to engender and frame religious emotions. The study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach. Two music videos by a Nigerian Pentecostal music minister and other archival resources provided data for the study. Data were textually and structurally analysed. Through the conceptual framework of Meyer’s aesthetics of persuasion, the study demonstrates how music serves as the rhetorical and sonic conduit for appealing to the senses and invoking religious emotions among Pentecostal believers. This article concludes that religious emotions are not only religiously facilitated but are also socially shaped through the agency of people, oration and musical sounds in Pentecostal Christianity.

Keywords: Dunsin Oyekan, gospel music, religious emotions, Nigerian Pentecostal music

Introduction

The intersection of emotion and religion is gaining traction among scholars. (Corrigan 2007; Riss and Woodheads 2010; Dulin 2011; Adedeji 2012; Myrick 2021). Corrigan’s and other scholarly explorations of religion and emotion suggest that religious experiences may not be adequately understood if emotional dimensions in and of religion are not interrogated. To study emotion and religion is to situate the latter within the realm of humanity which mobilizes everyday felt experiences of people in their interactions with humans and other than humans (Corrigan 2007). In Christianity, worship facilitates spiritual connection and also engenders emotional responses that are circulated and shared by the worshipping community. Packiam (2015) provides a critical appraisal of the role that emotion plays in modern Christian worship. The author maintains that worship shapes emotions which ultimately forms the believer’s mode of being and becoming in appropriate and inappropriate ways. Nelson (1996) describes how liturgical discourses and practices including singing, preaching, and confessions evoke different emotional experiences in Christian worship. The study shows that these practices constitute diverse feelings that are expressed in words and actions. In the introduction of a special edition on *Worship and Emotion*, Philip (2021) suggests ways whereby both worship and

emotion intersect, shape and signal each other. The author explains that worship expresses, evokes and forms emotions which consequently motivates religious behaviour. These lived and embodied behaviours which further animates emotions in religious communities (Nelson 1996) have sustained the debate on the fundamental role of emotion in Christian worship (Miller and Strongman 2002; Myrick 2021). Packiam writes that the ambivalence of emotion is the reason why “people love and hate its role in contemporary Christian worship” (2015, p. 2). Interestingly, Micklethwait and Woolridge (2009) observed that emotionally ‘hot’ forms of religions appeal to the heart more than the intellect of people which is evident in the large followership in such religions.

Central to the conversation about emotion in Christian worship is the place of music. Generally, music is recognised for its innate characteristic to elicit different emotions in people. For example, upon hearing certain music some individuals may break into tears or jump and dance for joy. Like other expressive forms, music can serve as a tool to comprehend people’s emotions. Few studies have examined how music intersects emotions in Christian worship. Packiam (2015) notes that music not only embodies but also engenders emotion in Christian worship. The work points out that through bodily manifestations such as vocalization and gesture (a point I will expatiate upon later), music represents emotion. The author asserts that music offers people a ‘voice’ to articulate their emotions in silent and visible ways. In their study on music, emotion, and religious experience, Miller and Strongman (2002) found that music aids worshippers in focusing on their mind, body, and emotions. Music also educates worshippers on ways to emote, that is how they could and ought to feel (Packiam 2015). Speaking more on the nexus between music and emotion in worship, Begbie (2011) posits that music offers the appropriate vehicle for emotional renewal and formation. The author maintains that for worshippers to constitute the right kind of emotion, the right kind of music should be engaged. Despite this submission, the questions of how Christian and Pentecostal music and sounds shape worshippers' emotions still demand in-depth examination. This is particularly necessary for scholarly understanding given that emotions expressed in Christian worship are not just spiritually conditioned they are also socially mediated. Hence, making worship inescapably social (Riis and Woodhead, 2010; Myrick, 2021). The concept of emotion is multi-layered hence making its definition problematic. Scherer (2005) suggests a conceptual and operational explanation of the term with a specific context in an attempt to achieve a productive discourse. Following this suggestion, I elect to engage the definition of emotion in the context of religion and Pentecostal Christianity in particular.

Roberts (2007) describes emotion as a concern-based perception thus suggesting that emotion must be concerned with something and someone. In a similar explanation, Nelson (1996) considers emotion as an experience that is attached to an object or person based on a specific reason – ground. For instance, people demonstrate an emotion of praise or awe to God because of the benevolence He has extended to them – the premise for emotional expression. The attachment to and the reason for such attachment in how people emote foregrounds the discussions by scholars on cognition in emotion. Contributing to the discourse on emotion and religion, Riis and Woodhead offer a conceptual model known as religious emotions to explain emotions that are connected to symbols, persons and practices within the context of religious regimes. The authors opine that “religious emotions should be characterised in relation to the social context in which it arises and which confirms, reinforces, and sanctions it, and in relation to the symbols that inspire it and to which it relates” (2010: 57). Notwithstanding their insightful conceptual framework, how music constitutes

sonic symbols and practices which inspires, produces and endorses religious emotions is yet to be fully explored.

Much of what is known from extant literature is that emotions are embodied and engendered among other things through musical components framed by lyrics and collective religious practices (Ward 2005; Packiam 2006). However, how other verbal components of worship including praying, preaching and testimony intersect with musical sounds to create religious emotion in Christian worship demands exploration. Tonsing's (2020) analysis of emotional encounters among Lutheran worshippers offers insightful musicological perspectives on the nexus between music and emotions. The study remarks, though briefly, that the history of the authors or composers of hymns and songs plays significant roles in shaping the emotions of individuals. With a focus on Christian music and agency, this current article discusses how personal experiences of Pentecostal musicians impact the ways worshippers emote. By contributing to studies on the parallels between religion, emotion, and music, this study offers fresh perspectives for understanding the significance of Christian music in facilitating emotions among believers. Since Pentecostal Christianity is described as an 'emotionally hot' religion which appeals to the heart rather than the intellect (Micklethwait and Woolridge, 2009), this work illuminates how musical and extra-musical practices are deployed by Pentecostal musicians to appeal to worshippers' emotions beyond cognition. Furthermore, given that scholars of Christian music and worship have alerted on the emotional manipulations of worshippers by Christian songwriters (Adejube 2020), worship leaders and preachers, this study reflects on the controlling potentiality of music on people's emotions in contemporary Pentecostal Christianity in local and global settings.

This article adopts a qualitative content analysis approach. Data were generated from two music videos by Dusin Oyekan, a popular Nigerian Pentecostal musician. The music videos for the songs "I'll Be Here" and "The Anthem" were recorded in 2019 and 2020 respectively. I purposively selected the songs because they capture specific religious emotions generated through textual and sonic approaches. In addition, the song's lyrics and the performers' personal experiences and testimonies are laden with emotion-framed expressions and rhetoric. Unlike audio performances, the selected music videos provide visual imagery that can inspire religious emotions in addition to music and sounds. Posts and comments on the YouTube page provided additional information for the study. These online engagements helped to present nuanced perspectives of religious emotions even in non-performance settings. Both videos were structurally and textually analysed to describe, explain and interpret the approaches – musical and linguistic – adopted by Pentecostal musicians in shaping and evoking emotions in worship.

Theoretical Framework

This work draws on the conceptual framework of Birgit Meyer's aesthetics of persuasion. For Meyer (2010), religion offers a kind of aesthetics through which believers embody the divine through various sensational modes. Meyer submits that the aesthetics of persuasion itself works within religious structures of repetition and addresses religious subjects with certain desires and doubts through sensational forms. By connecting the nexus between emotion and religion, Meyer suggests that since rhetoric is the effective use of particular styles that appeal to the senses and invoke emotions, then rhetoric embodies various sensational forms that seek to persuade. Simply put, religious sensational

forms are persuasive. Meyer calls attention to the notion of aesthetics of persuasion to the study of Pentecostalism given its rich material culture and experiential modes of worship. This framework foregrounds the current study by illuminating how popular Christian music as a mode of worship embodies the aesthetic of persuasion by appealing to the senses and emotions of worshippers. In this case, Dunsin Oyekan, as a music minister, uses music as an expressive art to facilitate spirituality while doing the work of religious persuasion. I used this theory to demonstrate ways whereby Pentecostal musicians negotiate their credibility as 'ministers' and employ persuasive devices through music, dance, glossolalia—of speaking in tongues—and sermon to present religious realities and truths to their audience on one hand and evoke some kinds of emotions in their listeners on the other hand.

Persuasive Worship: Dunsin Oyekan's experience

Dunsin Oyekan, an Industrial Chemist, was born on November 5, 1984, in Ilorin, Kwara State, North-central Nigeria, to the family of Reverend Gbadebo Oyekan. Rev. Oyekan was a Baptist Clergy and singer who later left the Baptist Church and founded the Evangelical Baptist Church. Encouraged by his father, Dunsin learnt to play the guitar at the age of ten. As a skilled keyboard, bass guitar player, and renowned songwriter, he served as the Music Director of the Commonwealth of Zion Assembly (COZA) in Abuja— a church known for its sophisticated musical performances in Nigeria's Pentecostal music space. Dunsin, fondly referred to as "The Eagle", believes that his music—sound is bestowed to him by the Holy Spirit and that his passion is to worship and lead worshippers closer to Jesus through music. "Dunsin desires to fill the atmosphere with the heart of God, witness God, and stir revival platformed on the power and wisdom of God" (www.dusinoyekan.com). His desire and passion to worship and point people to God is not only a matter of spiritual labour but an act that is reflexive of his Yoruba and Christian background. In Yoruba, Dunsin a shortened form of "Oluwadunsin" or "Jesudunsin" means 'it is pleasurable or exciting to worship God/ or Jesus. We can infer that Dunsin embodies his name both in the religious and cultural sense.

Dunsin has over thirteen gospel albums to his credit and has performed on national and international stages alongside renowned music ministers including Don Moen, Donnie McClurkin, and Tasha Cobbs, amongst others. His music continues to "fill the atmosphere" through various media and gains high patronage, especially among Pentecostal Christians in Nigeria and beyond. An in-depth analysis of his music—sound and songs shows how he utilizes rhetoric of persuasion to enhance worship and communicate his messages. In the following section, I show how Dunsin employed the 'persuasive components'—of repetitiveness, multi-layers of communication of elements of music (melody, rhythm, lyrics, harmony) and the experiential connection of himself— the performer to that of his listeners thus engendering religious emotions.

Worship Through Pains: "I'll Be Here"

The song "I'll Be Here" was composed by Dunsin Oyekan in 2019. The 3-stanza song stresses the composer's decision to tarry in the place of worship of God for as long as he lives whether in good and/or bad moments. The song says:

I'll be here worshipping
All of the days of my life.
I'll be here worshipping
All of the days of my life.

I'll be here lifting hands
Even when it isn't easy.
I'll be here lifting hands
Even when it isn't easy.

I'll be here bowing down
All of the days of my life.
I'll be here bowing down
All of the days of my life.

It is insightful to provide the context in which the song was written. The composer claims to have divinely received the song following the death of his wife, Adedoyin Oyekan. In an online video performance, he recalls,

...this song came in pain. I lost my wife almost two years ago. And in the middle of tears, in the middle of pain, the only person I could run to was God. And I said to God one of the days, I'll be here lifting hands, even when it isn't easy.... And the Lord said to me, if you focus on the pain of transition, you will miss its purpose. In pain I see purpose, in grief, I find grace (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYY3Hnfh-U8>).

The practice of Christian preachers and singers using their personal experience to appeal to the emotions of their audience to drive home their messages is very common, particularly, among charismatic preachers and musicians. In the narrative above, Dunsin employed the story of his wife's death to persuade his audience not to be discouraged but to remain resolute in the worship of God regardless of the circumstances they find themselves. Also, the use of related Bible passages by music ministers to further affirm their personal experiences or testimonies to their audience is a notable practice. Dunsin used Romans 8:35– “Who shall separate from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?”—to further persuade his listeners that nothing can separate him from the love of God not even the death of his wife. This again shows the craft of persuasion in Pentecostal oral and sonic practices to create emotions and affect among worshippers.

By invoking the kind of emotions which come with the loss of a loved one, Dunsin also successfully employed the persuasive framework of repetition in emphasising his message of endurance and hope in God. The intentional use of repetition in communication is a powerful tool to make an audience savour words, understand a point, or believe in a cause. It is believed that the rightful use of repetition strengthens the power of persuasion, adds musicality to a piece of text and makes it more pleasing to listen to (<https://www.masterclass.com>). Beyond signalling intentions, repetition especially, when used in music, has the potential to invoke emotions. As Margulis (2014, p. 2) argues, “repetition in music, like repetition in ritual, then, can serve to signal intentionality, and this recognition of intentionality might facilitate the capacity to engage with sounds as emotionally communicative”.



Figure 1: Dunsin Oyekan (standing in the centre) performing “I’ll be here”
(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ISi13wruf4>)

As noticed in the song text above, the phrases: ‘I’ll be here worshipping/bowing down’... ‘even when it isn’t easy’ were repeated hence showing the intention of the composer and consequently invoking certain emotions among the audience–listeners. Here, our reading of Dunsin’s song above further affirms Birgit Meyer’s framework that aesthetics of persuasion operate within religious structures of repetition and that it addresses religious subjects with certain desires and doubts through sensational forms. Using repeated lines, Dunsin effectively addresses his audience–worshippers who may have certain desires and doubts in life to continue to hope in God no matter how long or difficult the situation may be. As shown in Figure 1, worshippers responded through sensational forms of bodily gestures–bowing of heads, lifting hands, crying and whooping to the message contained in the music. The emotional responses created through persuasion transcend the physical performance space into the virtual space. These affective dispositions are captured by some comments on YouTube:

youtube.com/watch?v=2ISi13wruf4

373 likes 17 replies

@adomaabeatrice594 4 years ago
The words of your song always encourages me, cause I could remember sometime ago when I felt like nothing was there for me in this world so I choose to commit suicide but I couldn't cause I heard your song playing in my neighbour's room and that made me to stop everything...
Read more
443 likes 26 replies

@porshanne7296 2 years ago
This is the song that kept ringing in my spirit a week to the release of my WASSCE result, i only need to do well in Maths but no.. I did very well in all the subjects except Maths again.. It's my third time writing.. I'm broken. i just remembered this song ringing in my spirit and just got the reason... I feel like given up but thank God for Dunsin Oyekan.. I will ..
Read more
197 likes 19 replies

@stellamwadime5749 3 years ago
This song speaks to me...aft 9yrs of losing my hubby thru cancer was bitter with God...its nt a song it's my msg frm throne room.cnt describe how bt it has spoken to me...i stop focusing on pain n grief bt on Gods purpose n grace. I'll be here...bless u sir...u healing grieved souls.
81 likes 5 replies

@dianabasiwe2414 3 years ago
Am a Total orphan but guess what I will be here lifting hands even when it's not easy!!!!
16 likes 16 replies

@DrKen01 4 years ago (edited)
Dunsin Oyekan!!!
What is it na???
Making someone cry from back to back
Read more

Figure 2: Comments from YouTube (Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ISi13wruf4)

The comments above point our attention to the value of Christian music not only in mediating religious experiences but also in negotiating the everyday life of the believer such as coping with depression, ill-health and academic failure amongst others. Music especially among Nigerian Pentecostals offers a kind of connection between their religious values and orientations and their everyday experiences by “shaping the believer’s action and behaviour at an embodied and conscious level” (Brennan 2018, 80). In an ethnography among the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, one of the earliest indigenous Pentecostal churches in Southwest Nigeria, Brennan found that members of the church use religious mediated materials specifically, recordings as a devotional practice to cope with various life occurrences. The author notes, “stress, anxiety, or worry on the one hand, and relief, happiness, or success on the other, could be dealt with by listening to a song that reminded one of God’s presence, or that allowed one to express thanks to God for what he has done for them” (2018, 80). To return to Dunsin’s tragic experience, music–song offered him a kind of coping mechanism. Similarly, his audience–live or virtual–found music as a very effective tool in dealing with their everyday experiences–joyful or painful.

There is a sense in which spaces and built environments create a mood of awe, piety and emotional conditioning. Through material properties like architecture, objects, pictures, and costumes certain religious emotions can be engendered. We can bring the performance venue of the music under analysis to the fore to explain how music and built environments shape and impact believers' emotions and felt experiences. Dunsin’s video recordings are often done in church settings but the video under examination was recorded outside the church. A closer observation of the space suggests that the recording took place in a hall. The appropriation of secular spaces for Christian worship is a common practice in Pentecostal Christianity. Both Meyer (2002) and Adeboye (2012) have explored the spatial dynamics among Pentecostals in Africa. Beyond widening their audience base, I considered the use of a hall for the recording as a strategic move by Pentecostal creatives such as Dunsin to create a visual and sonic ambience that will provide the desired aesthetics and inspire religious emotions.

As encountered in the video recording of Dunsin Oyekan, the venue of the performance presents a remodelled space to give a sense of the sacred with some kind of aesthetics required for a high-quality recording. The room, which is lit with high-resolution lighting, projects an all-round white ambience including the wall drapes and chairs. This, arguably, can be associated with Dunsin’s preference for white colours which is evident in his attires (see Figure 1). The colour ‘white’ is symbolic in many religious traditions including Christianity. For Christians and Pentecostal believers, it signals holiness and purity of life on one hand, while it invokes a sense of awe and transcendence on the other. Here, I argue that Pentecostal ministers and musicians, beyond linguistic rhetoric, subtly employed material culture of lighting, costumes and media to facilitate religious and emotional experiences. Towards the end of the music, he requested the audience to “ask the Lord for something... no one comes here and goes back the same way”. This transforming experience which Dunsin assures his worshippers suggests that religious music serves as a kind of infrastructure that is capable of engendering a change both in the religious and social circumstances of the people. With the foregoing, I affirm that Nigerian Pentecostal musicians deploy music and song as symbolic and performative means to shape worship experience and religious emotions (Ajose 2020, Brennan 2018).

***“The Anthem”*: What God cannot do does not exist**

This song was written in 2020 by Dunsin Oyekan who reported that he was inspired by God through a conversation with Pastor Jerry Eze whom he featured in the recording of the music. Pastor Jerry Eze is well known in the Nigerian Pentecostal space through his online daily morning prayer programme – New Season Prophetic Prayers and Declaration (NSPPD). The programme which is broadcast on YouTube attracts millions of participants within and outside Nigeria. I remember attending an academic conference at the University of Legon in Ghana where I encountered a Ghanaian woman selling local fabric near the conference venue. During my transaction, she explained to me how her regular participation in NSPPD has helped her to ‘overcome’ her business rivals in her market in Ghana. The popular slogan in NSPPD is ‘what God cannot do does not exist’. “The Anthem” is based on Hebrew 11 verse 6 which encourages Christian believers that what God cannot do does not exist provided they demonstrate their faith in God. The song echoes:

We know you are a rewarder
Of those who diligently seek Your face
All power is in Your hands
With you, nothing is impossible to do

This is the confidence that when we come to you
What you cannot fix
What you cannot do
What you cannot solve does not exist

In the YouTube video, shortly after establishing the song, Dunsin invited Pastor Jerry Eze to share some testimonies. Jerry Eze narrated two different testimonies to buttress the song and to persuade the audience and worshippers to believe in the divine powers of God to human challenges including health problems. First, he recounted the testimony of a lady whose mother had been “confirmed clinically dead” and was brought back to life by divine instruction. He explained how God told him during an online morning prayer broadcast that “someone was beside a dead woman”. He recalled how the spirit of God prompted him to “tell the person (beside the dead woman) to increase the volume of the phone (connected to NSPPD morning programme) and place it right beside the dead woman”. The lady acted accordingly while the online prayers continued. After praying for so long and the situation seems hopeless as the dead woman did not come back to life, Pastor Eze hinted that the lady began to doubt the prophetic words concerning her mother but “five minutes later, five minutes later, [spoke in tongues and recited few scriptures], the woman came back to life”.¹

In Nigerian Pentecostal churches, testimony is an integral part of worship as it affords worshippers to publicly testify God’s goodness in their lives (Adelakun 2022). Pentecostal preachers more often than not share testimonies to affirm their sermons while making references to the miraculous hence persuading their audience to believe the ‘word’. Cummins and Stille

¹ My interpolation of the narrative is presented here. For the full testimony, watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBCYOy7UoEA> from 6’22 – 13’30

(2021) interrogate the particularities of sermons or preaching in facilitating religious emotions. They note that “the specificity of religious emotions is convincingly explored by approaches that define religious emotions as possessing particularly religious intentionalities or references” (2021, p. 8). I spotlight the use of testimonies during worship rituals as a kind of religious intention to demonstrate how Pentecostals perform power and identity which they “unceasingly mobilise both as social and spiritual imaginaries to generate the range of acts that will challenge the social order and confirm their identity (Adelakun 2022, p. 237).

To reiterate how Pentecostals demonstrate the ‘power’ which heals, saves and delivers, Pastor Eze relays another testimony of a woman whose husband had brain surgery for cancer. She was told her husband would not gain consciousness for many hours and may not be able to walk until after a year. The woman replied to the doctor, “What God cannot does not exist”. A few hours after the surgery, the woman went to where her husband was lying and said to God, “You are too faithful to fail, I trust You too much”. Later, the man gained consciousness to the amazement of everyone. When it was time for the man to be wheeled from the ICU to the out-patient ward, it was reported that the door was not wide enough to allow the stretcher, so they needed to move him through the window. While they struggled to move him through the window the man stood up on his feet. Pastor Eze explained, “the woman kept screaming what God cannot do does not exist!”²

The work that religious testimony does is worth noting as it provides a kind of persuasive framework for Christian musicking as well as evangelism. As earlier explained, Pentecostal musicians draw from their personal or other people’s socio-religious experiences to achieve the religious appeal of pathos. Testimony sharing is a crucial aspect of Christian worship, particularly, among Pentecostals as it “links the understanding of one’s faith and the configuration of divine intervention” (Faimau 2017, p. 3). As a discursive practice, religious testimonies present layers of meaning for the self, others and religious institutions (Faimau 2017). Hence, the foregoing testimonies by Pastor Eze combined with the music of Dunsin illuminate how Pentecostals—preachers and musicians—use sounds, orature and music to facilitate religious experiences and provoke emotions during worship whether in live or recorded settings.



Figure 3: Dunsin (in white) beside Pastor Jerry Eze in “The Anthem”
(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBCYOy7UoEA>)

² See the link above from 13’20 – 13’30

By reminding the audience that “what God cannot do/fix does not exist”, Dunsin and Pastor Eze creatively deployed their artistic and oratory skills as preachers and musicians to evoke emotions in their listeners. For example, they used varied vocal textures and bodily gesticulations to create imagery and actions in the narrative. As the story builds up so does their vocal intensity. Relevant Bible verses were used to interject the story line thus creating a sustained interest in the audience. In addition, speaking in tongues was heard in between the testimonies—a practice that is common among Pentecostal preachers and musicians. During one of the testimonies, the instrumentalists use musical themes from the song intro as background. In the performance, we see people listening to the testimony and responding with different embodied actions and perceived emotions – praying, crying, shaking bodies, lifting hands, clapping, and heads bowed or raised. These responses are not only observed among Nigerian Pentecostal worship but elsewhere such as in Kenyan Pentecostal/Charismatic settings where Parsitau (2006, p. 3) remarks that “it is common to see people crying, falling and displaying strange feelings and pneumatic phenomena during worship services”. How Christian worshippers labour to facilitate transcendental experiences has been examined by scholars including Brennan (2018) and Shelley (2019). These works discuss the role of the congregation in turning expressions into experiences through the agency of Christian popular music. Shelley (2019, 185) notes, “as singers, conductors, and instrumentalists work to shape sound into music, congregants labour to bring these expressions into consciousness” and that this “collective engagement with music grants these believers transcendent access to times, places, and subjects outside their material world”.

Musical Analysis

An important layer in understanding the intersection between religion, emotion, music and rhetoric of persuasion is to discuss how Nigerian Pentecostal music ministers including Dunsin Oyekan employ the multi-layers of communication of elements of music (melody, rhythm, lyrics, harmony). As earlier mentioned, an in-depth analysis of structural and textual components of music helps in understanding the rhetorical essence of such creative works. Dunsin’s sound and music—melody, rhythm, lyrics, harmony and instrumentation—are exotic within the broader Pentecostal sound space in Nigeria. It is observed that both songs employ a short melodic range (see musical examples 1 and 3). As in example 1, the melody is built on five tones with an interval of perfect 5th (occurred twice), major 2nd and minor 2nd employing more stepwise movements. The Anthem (example 3) was built on a diatonic scale. In both songs, the composer employed repeated pitches – a rhetorical strategy – in the entire melody to show his resolve to remain ‘here’ – in God’s presence (example 1) and his conviction that “what You [God] cannot do does not exist” (example 3, bars 19-21). With specific reference to “I’ll Be Here” the use of a simple rhythmic pattern in the melody with the shortest rhythmic value as quaver (half beat) and the longest as semibreve (four beats) is worth noting. The minim beats on ‘here’ (example 1, bars 2 and 6) and semibreve on ‘pping’ (in bars 3 and 7) are used to interpret the notion of place and space while the quaver notes in bars 3 and 7 emphasize the concept of time.

I'll be here

— I'll be here wor shi - pping all of the days of my life_

Musical example 1: "I'll Be Here" by Dunsin Oyekan (Transcription: Author)

Dunsin songs are based on 3-part harmony which is typical of many popular Christian and Pentecostal/Charismatic singing groups. Largely, parallel harmony is used with third and sixth intervals between voices (musical example 2). This kind of harmonic framework is common in contemporary pop gospel music. The vocal arrangement of Dunsin does not always follow the common structure which has the soprano sing the melody while other voice parts provide the harmony. In many of Dunsin's vocal arrangements, the melody is first established before breaking into harmony where we then hear voices swapping parts. With this compositional technique also known as (swap) switching parts, we hear voices singing melodic lines that would have been rendered by another part. For example, in the recording and as represented in musical example 2, we hear that the melody is sung by a tenor singer while the soprano and alto singers provide the harmony.

here wor - shi - pping all of the days_ of my life_

Musical example 2: *I'll Be Here* in 3-part harmony (Transcription: Author)

Beyond the harmonic colouration and freshness, it provides, part swapping also allows the stretching of the singers' voices. With heavy use of Western musical instruments including keyboards, guitars and drums as well as other digitally-generated sounds, Dunsin's music represents the American Pentecostal/gospel sounds—music. This is traceable to his musical background and exposure to the American-Pentecostal Christian musical styles, first in his father's church and later at COZA. These experiences I posit, have shaped his musical taste and preference which are evident in his sounds and music.

The Anthem Dusin Oyekan

0 We know that You are Re war- der of those who di - li gent - ly seek your face All

7 power is in Your hands. With You no - thing is im - po - ssi - ble to do Refrain do

14 This is the con - fi - dence that when we call to you What you can_ not_ fix

20 What you_ can_ not_ do What you_ can_ not_ solve does not e - xist___

Musical example 3: *The Anthem* (Transcription: Author)

A typical instrumental design in Dunsin’s musical performances includes 2-3 keyboards for piano, strings and other pads, a solo guitar with intense use of guitar effects, a bass guitar and the drum sections as well as other synthesized instruments. These instruments were successfully combined with song text to create and sustain various emotional appeals among the worshippers. In the video performance, one of the keyboardists uses a piano ‘voice’ to emphasise the melody of the song with harmonic support in arpeggiated and scalic passages as fill-ins while the second keyboardist uses strings to supply sustained chord progressions while doubling the melody an octave higher. The practice of using strings on keyboards is a popular practice among keyboard players in Pentecostal worship–music settings as it is used to replicate the string section of the orchestra. Two guitars–acoustic and electronic provided rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment to the music with the latter improvising on the melody of the song with various guitar effects. Like in many of Dunsin’s performances, the guitar featured prominently especially, at interludes while he engages the audience in various activities including dancing, praying and other bodily expressions in worship. In the video, the guitar improvised on the music as Dunsin instructed the worshippers to all bow down. The use of reprises – repeating a section of the same song –a verse, chorus, or often the additional vamp chorus is encountered in “The Anthem”. Reprises, Legg and Philpott (2015) argue, are deployed by gospel musicians to “reinforce the perceived emotional and psycho-spiritual state of the “community” – performers and audience/ congregation together – that has found expression in the particular performance” of their song. (p. 216). By vamping the words ‘we know’ Dunsin maintained the emotional space which had been ‘designed’ through the testimony of Pastor Jerry Eze. (See the video from 13’31). I reiterate that this oratory/vocal technique is reflective of the many ways through which Pentecostals – preachers, singers and musicians – engender and sustain religious affect and emotion in worship confirming Legg and Philpott’s (2015, p. 216) observations: ...singers and instrumentalists perform an improvisational song “in the spirit” to heighten emotional and psycho-spiritual state that can precede the immediate reprise”.

Conclusion

The study explores how Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians particularly musicians and preachers draw on the affordances of music and sound to shape affect in Christian worship. Through storytelling based on known biblical narratives and personal experiences through testimonies, Nigerian Pentecostal musicians create a kind of mood and emotion that appeals to the sensations of their audiences. Since these frameworks are considered artistic tools in public oratory, Pentecostal musicians craftily deploy these tools in fulfilling their responsibilities as worship leaders through persuasive praise. Meyer (2010) suggests that the notion of aesthetic persuasion is germane to the study of Pentecostalism given its rich material culture and experiential modes of worship. This current article brings to the fore the multiple ways Pentecostals evoke religious emotions through artistic and aesthetic practices. The analytical discussion in this text helps to answer the questions of how Pentecostal music, songs, sounds and oral communications – preaching and testimony impact worshippers' affect and emotions in conscious and unconscious ways. To conclude, my analysis shows that religious emotions are both religiously engendered and musically shaped.

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