PRODUCTION, PROPAGATION AND CONSUMPTION OF NIGERIAN POPULAR MUSIC

Ikenna Emmanuel Onwuegbuna, Ph.D.

Introduction

Reacting, in a revealing spirit, to the economic viability of African music, Kirkegaard (as cited in Onwuegbuna, 2015) writes:

> *The idea that African music can become a global asset is, oddly enough, also continued by a more unexpected ally, i.e. the World Bank. Apart from minerals the music industry is the only area in which Africa, as a continent seems to have an opportunity to make money at present. Because of this the World Bank has launched a programme on commercial music development as it realized that the music, so vibrant and alive in spite of the downfall and economic depression of most African nations, formed a market in which Africa had a potential for making money (p. 5).*

Corroborating the foregoing, Lorenz (2022), in her Nine Dots Prize-winning book, *Soro Soke: The Young Disruptors of an African Megacity*, writes:

> *It is the music industry that is most indicative of how the Soro Soke generation, influenced by life in a vast megacity, is upending and disrupting perceptions of Nigerian culture. According to the Nigerian Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, the country's music industry will generate US$86 million (3.09 billion naira) in revenue in 2021, making it the region's largest. In the past six years, a growing number of new production studios and artists have created a vibrant and self-sustaining industry and produced a string of world-class music that has won awards, fans and acclaim around the globe (p. 35).*

Popular music, as distinct from folk, classical or art, is the totality of that music with diverse styles that have developed from artistic manipulations and fusions of musical activities of distant cultures, times, and practices. Popular music borrows from folk, classical/art, and even musical interpretations of non-musical events like politics, humanities, and science (Frith, 2001; Onwuegbuna, 2006). African popular music of today refers to the corpus of sounds, songs, and dance music crafted by African professional and non-professional musicians, at home and in the Diaspora, in response to the political, economic, spiritual, and social needs of the burgeoning modernity that started in the late nineteenth century and is still in being. A basic characteristic of these 'new' sounds is that they keep adopting musical elements, properties, and instruments from any part of the globe that musicians consider worthy of enhancing their creativity. This flexibility has given birth to today's *World Music* (also known as *World Beat* or *Ethno-pop*). African popular music exists in three sub-categories. They are Ethnic pop, Interethnic pop, and International pop (Agawu, 2003; Onwuegbuna, 2012).

Often, when African popular music is discussed, attention is riveted on those styles with overt elements borrowed from the Euro-American practices; such elements as triadic harmonic principles, diatonic and chromatic scales, as well as foreign musical instruments like the guitar, brass and reed families, keyboard, and trap drums. However, it remains a fact that African popular music existed for ages before the 15th century when the Portuguese seamen forayed into Africa for the prospects of commerce. The known popular music of Africa at the time existed (as it still does) as ethnic entertainment forms, combining songs, dances, drama, visual arts, and oral literature in folk languages and expressions. They include *ifo, ere-ege,* and *rokon fada* of Nigeria; *ngoso, bantowbol,* and *mangambe* of Cameroon; *omutibo, nyatiti,* and *tarabu* of Kenya; *mbube, marabi,* and *maskanda* of South Africa; and *thakt, fiquah,* and *saiyidi* of Egypt.

Culture contacts among different ethnic groups in Africa started with migrations, inter-ethnic trades, and inter-communal wars; and were consolidated by urbanization through the agency of Western colonization. Through these processes, the interethnic popular styles emerged. They are fusions of divergent elements from various ethnic practices. Some forms of this style include *fuji* of Nigeria, *kpanlogo* of Ghana, *taarab* of Tanzania, *sembe* of Angola, and *shaabi* of Algeria. However, those

African popular styles with overt Western influences need little or no introduction; due to their global presence and acceptance, they have been classified as international pop styles of Africa. They include *highlife, soukous, makossa, Zulu jive,* and *rai.*

All the processes involved in musical art disclose at least five major points of creative rationalization: conception, organization, production, presentation and appreciation. Organization involves the formation of the musical outfit. The leader of the group does not just go out to recruit musicians to populate his band because they are musicians; rather, he decides the image and identity of the group before he recruits the musicians whose talents and skills agree with the desired image—musically and behaviorally. The musical production is the stage where pieces are introduced and learned and rehearsals are conducted to ensure that the repertoire is ready for studio recording and live presentation. The producers, managers, audio engineers, music entrepreneurs and bandleaders are the performers whose musicality and creative ingenuity are deployed at this stage (Negus, 1997:82). Presentation is the "live" performance of the musical packages by the musical group or the solo artist before an audience. This is the most popular form of performance because it is the most obvious. Very few people consider musical appreciation as a form of musical performance, yet the success and/or failure of the entire musical activity is determined by the actions and inaction of the buying and listening audience. These consumers of the finished products perform the musical roles that sustain, transform, modify or annihilate musical genres and groups.

The musical production, propagation, and consumption, therefore, is the integration of knowledge and experience to arrive at creative solutions to the musical problems of conception, organization, production and presentation to meet the expected levels of appreciation of the consumers of the musical products.

Production

The procedural steps, the parameters, and the personnel involved in music production find common ground at the sound studio; and in this studio, the audio engineer is the chargé d'affaires between the raw musical sounds and the consumable recorded sounds that come out in the forms of discs, tapes, and vinyl. Such parameters as electronic equipment, musical instruments, power amplifiers,

mixers, compressors, computer hardware and software, and other sophisticated electronic devices; and such personnel as music producers, composer-arrangers, songwriters, artiste and repertoire managers, studio sessions-men, and vocalists all deliver their creative ideas in the form of raw musical sounds in the studio, where the audio engineer sits before the console to manipulate the production processes as he records, edits, mixes, and balances the sounds, which he eventually turns out as a master tape/disc.

Computer technology which saw its modest beginnings in the 1960s, and, within a decade of its development, succeeded in turning the world into a global village, has its impact felt in music production. From the introduction and advancement of music synthesizers and other complementary devices, the once dominating analogue audio recording devices have progressively and dexterously been replaced by digital equivalents (Fuertes, 2006).

Audio engineering, as it concerns music, deals with the conscious and skilful application of scientific and technical know-how in the generation, amplification, alteration, modification, and overall manipulation, production, and recording of musical sound via the appropriate electrical and electronic devices. The raw musical sounds, delivered in the performance booth by the recording musicians, are first presented as sound waves. These waves are then passed through the signal sources made up of microphones, direct injection (DI) boxes, and splitters. The acoustical interpretations of these signals are then passed on to the mixer as pressure waves; these waves, subsequently, pass through various signal processors and interfaces before they reach the power amplifiers (Neve, 2007). The now-processed audio signals are then heard as music sounding through the studio monitors that are connected to the amplifiers. It is when the audio engineer is satisfied with the quality of the sound he hears that he records the sound. The recorded sound is then further processed, mixed, and mastered before it is certified ready for audience consumption.

The audio engineer who, by qualification, has a deep knowledge and understanding of the art and science of sound must also have a mastery of the mechanical and technical components and capabilities of the electronic devices involved in audio production. He first sets up the entire recording gear—ensuring

that the right connectors, polarities, head cams, and effects boxes are in place. He then positions the signal sources and the recording artists in the correct acoustic environment, to shield off, as much as possible, any unwanted sound in the performance booth. Next, the engineer sets the level controls for performance and effects and technically finds the combination of settings that would aid the creation of the desired sounds (Negus, 1997). Now sitting before the console, the audio engineer captures the sound signals from the sources, modifies the sounds, mixes, masters, and records the processed sound while handling the gamut of knobs, buttons, faders, and switches that are intricately arranged on the console. The success of the entire exercise depends on the competence of the audio engineer with a clear understanding of acoustics and real-world analogue and digital applications (Eargle & Foreman, 2010; Fry, 1996).

Sometimes, either before a recording project, in the course of it, or after the project, the audio engineer encounters some technical problems—such as equipment malfunction, loss of signal, sound distortion, voltage aberration, etc. As a technocrat in the field, the audio engineer applies his expertise to diagnose and solve problems as they arise. This he does either by troubleshooting, fixing, repairing, or replacing the faulty parts of the recording devices and appliances. James (2002) authoritatively informs:

> *Almost any problem that manifests itself can have more than one possible cause. And often, as a sound engineer, you will be under pressure to diagnose and cure the fault in a hurry. You may have to trace and scrutinize a perplexing chain of events, systematically and methodically, like a detective solving a complex case—and probably against the clock (p.159).*

The implication is that the enormity and complexity of the responsibilities of the sound engineer require only men and women of expertise in technical know-how and self-discipline in the specialized area of sound engineering. The sound engineer knows, among other things, the science, technology and art of compression. From the threshold, through ratio to make-up gain, he is at home with all of the foundation knowledge regarding the basic compressor controls, and compression techniques for dynamic range control and musical enhancement (Meredith, 2009).

The Analogue

In the field of audio production, the analogue refers to a representation of electrical signals by a continuously varying voltage. In analogue recording, therefore, the musical sound is stored in its original form, but as it passes through various processes, media, and equipment of recording, it does so in the form of repetitive waveforms. These waveforms or oscillators are always susceptible to distortions—evidenced in timbre, tempo, pitch, intensity, and overall fidelity—of the musical signal at the point of playback of the recorded sound. The fidelity of the sound depreciates with each reproduction of the musical sound into other media of storage.

The analogue technology supports the recording of the musical sounds in the now out-moded wax master disc, the multi-track reel, and/or the electromagnetic tape. This system is also referred to as mechanical recording. Salt (2009) concurs:

> *The most common method of sound recording is to use magnetic media such as tape to store the music, speech, or other sound being captured. Using this approach, sound waves are transformed via a microphone into electrical signals which are then used to magnetize a plastic recording tape coated with metal oxide. The magnetization varies with the frequency and intensity of the sound being recorded—so the tape, usually in the form of an audio cassette, carries a permanent record of the sounds that were picked up by the microphone. As sound varies with time, some form of mechanical movement of the recording medium is required to provide a sequenced record that reflects the sequence of the original sound vibrations.*

However, the introduction of computer technology, which made its initial inroads into music via the synthesizer, started a radical turning point in audio production. This turning point has finally eclipsed the analogue system of recording, giving way to the more efficient, real-time, and almost real-life digital system (Loko & Loko, 2008; Moog, 2009; Norman, 2009; Salt, 2009).

The Digital

An audio recording in which the raw sounds emanating from the initial sources are represented by the spacing between pulses (bits) rather than by waves, thereby

making the sounds less susceptible to degradation, is known as a digital recording. In digital recording, computer programmes are used to manipulate the audio data stored in the form of alphanumeric codes. This manipulation is done through mathematical processes (Fuertes, 2006; Machlis & Forney, 1995; Norman, 2009). The process involves "the description of a sound waveform as a sequence of numbers representing the instantaneous amplitudes of the wave over small successive intervals of time" (Moog, 2009). The digital technique is further explained by Salt (2009) thus:

> *In digital recording systems, many of the distortions are removed because the continuously varying sound signal is transformed into a digital signal (a sequence of binary values, or a series of bits), by a process called quantizing or quantization, as soon as it is captured. This enables the stored sound data to be checked and processed so that it can, in theory, be reproduced exactly as it was recorded.*

The basic advantage of digital storage of the musical sound is the ease of processing, analyzing, and manipulation of the data which this method allows the audio engineer (Nwamara, 2006). This flexibility of the digital data has made it a nearly effortless task to create sound effects, enhance quality, and ease the editing of the recorded sound. Also, all the music that is today distributed over the Internet is made possible by digital technology, which reduces such music into MP3 formats. Digital technology is also at the forefront of what Negus (1997:25) has described as "musical dialogues across space and time."

> *Multi-tracking techniques and digital recording, however, have enabled pieces of sound to be added by a different person (or by the same person from a different source) as a musical composition is put together, using a different machine on a different day, or in another part of the world on the same day (p.26).*

Through the technology of digital recording, therefore, space and time are collapsed. In digital multi-tracking, different members of a band who happen to be at different locales of the globe can be accessed from the point of recording, to contribute their parts to the same recording project, via the internet. This musical dialogue across space and time is realized in a near-real-time value, thereby achieving an economy of, not only space and time but also funds.

Digitization

The process of converting analogue signals to digital ones is known as digitization. It is a process that involves the appropriation of sound waveforms from their analogue sources and transforming them into a sequence of numbers that is the digital version of the waveforms. In the words of Fuertes (2006):

> *In the digital recording of acoustic material, acoustic signals are captured by a conventional microphone to produce an equivalent voltage function. This is, in turn, passed on to an analogue-to-digital converter which continuously samples its instantaneous value to produce a regular series of numerical approximations.*

An important term in digitization is sampling. Sampling is the representation of acoustic sounds as a regular succession of discrete numerical approximations. In sampling, analogue waveforms are measured at frequent enough intervals to allow the signals to be simulated in digital equivalents. For such conversion to be effective and realistic, the sampled analogue signal must be captured at least twice the voltage of the original signal (Fuertes, 2006; Salt, 2009). Through this process of sampling, computer software programmers have succeeded in simulating the different timbres of the various musical instruments of the Western world and reducing them to computer music software. Such software as VST, LM, Reason, Hypersonic, etc. is interfaced with synthesizers (electronic keyboard musical instruments) to orchestrate all forms and types of musical ensembles and bands in digital audio production.

The mechanics of sampling are supported by the ingenuity of virtuality in computer technology. A virtual instrument is computer software that is imbued, at the point of programming, with the capability to produce certain effects that are characteristic of the real instrument. Within this computer virtuality are such virtual musical instruments like virtual keyboards, virtual guitars, virtual reeds, virtual bass guitars, virtual strings, virtual brass, etc.

It is in this technical area of digitization that the Nigerian studio engineer has applied his creative ingenuity to 'scratch', sample, and programme the sounds of our traditional regional instruments which, hitherto, were not available in the Western-sourced music software. Most Nigerian audio engineers who operated the

analogue system also demonstrated an enviable positive disposition to change by embracing digital technology. Using a few sets of computer systems available at the time, these engineers virtually taught themselves enough computer applications to be able to manipulate the system to achieve their audio engineering needs on the computer. Applying their wealth of knowledge and experience in audio engineering, they were able to appropriate, from various analogue sources, the recorded sampled sound patterns eclectically performed by some master instrumentalists (even though they may have died a long time ago). These appropriated (otherwise called 'scratched') sounds are mostly those performed on African traditional instruments like *udu* (musical pot), *alo* (metal gong), *ekwe* (wooden slit drum), *ekpili* (pod rattles), *ọja* (notched flute), *gangan* (hourglass tension drum), etc.

In the process of digitizing the analogue (a process that is still in being), the scratched sounds are further sampled—in other words, converted into computer language of alphabets and numbers, measured in intervals and voltages; the resultant converted signals are then written to programmes or music software that are stored in CD forms. By interfacing this software, which are wave samples of recorded sound patterns, with the synthesizer that is connected via MIDI (musical instrument digital interface) to the computer system, it becomes possible to simulate those musical instruments of African culture.

Propagation and Consumption

In negotiating solutions to the problems of enhancing the commercial and aesthetic values of popular music, stakeholders in the Nigerian popular music industry have explored the extremes of felt and feigned emotions, artistic and technological manipulation of space and time, costuming, and stagecraft as sure means of achieving the goals of their vested interests in the musical activity. Investigating the reasons why musicians, sponsors, entrepreneurs, consumers, fans, and critics of Nigerian popular music settle for their varied choices of packaging and delivery of the musical art is significant in understanding the issues in politics of presentation in the arts. The politics of presentation is evident in popular music performances on both the live stage and electronic media.

Musical performance, naturally, is a spontaneous theatrical manipulation of time and space via the media of musical instruments and the human body to generate

some reactions from the audience. The presence of sight and sound in musical performance accounts for Machlis and Forney's (1995) consideration of performance art as a combination of visual stimuli with theatre and music in a multimedia event. The nature of music as a lively art designates its performance as a 'live' presentation of sounds and movements in concerts, orchestras, operas, gigs, shows, recitals and dances to "an active participant who shares in both the responsibilities and the rewards of the achievement of a great performance" (Ferris, 1995: 71). However, electronic technology has necessitated a redefinition of the performance stage to accommodate the television tube, the cinema screen, the internet YouTube, the cell phone screen, and the computer visual display units.

Politics of Presentation

The politics of presentation in the arts (whether performing or visual arts) is all about the choices made concerning how to package and deliver a piece of artwork to achieve most of the desired goals of the artists (see Becker, 2007; Lorkovic, 2012; Rowe, 2012). Costumes, for instance, do not add anything to the dancing skills of a dance group, yet they are a part of the group's politics of presentation, which adds a desired optical illusory effect on the skills of the group that uses them. This enhancement capability can be seen in the same group performing in a myriad of varied and heterogeneous apparel. It has been reported that Aristotle (as cited in Howie, 1968) defined politics of state governance as "the art of planning for effective relationships in a society which affords to all its citizens the opportunity to enrich their lives that is to achieve the distinctive good of man" (p.39). Following this line of definition, the conceptual definition of politics becomes the artful or skilful negotiations, by individuals or groups, geared towards appropriation and maximization of opportunities inherent in the distributions of jointly-owned scarce/competitive amenities or interests (Onwuegbuna, 2009). Politics, as a system of ideas, can be ideological, philosophical, technological, socio-cultural, and even commercial (Cranston, 2011; O'Donnell, 1997). Corroborating politics as a multipronged principle, Lorkovic (2012) writes:

> *The politicality of the social pact lies in its results, not in its pre-conditions; as such, it is also the ground by which to determine whether or not the ostensibly political is actually political, which also means whether or not politics is actually present (p. 71).*

Politics of presentation in popular music, therefore, is about the choices made by all manners of stakeholders (musicians, sponsors, entrepreneurs, consumers, fans, critics, etc.) in the musical activity, and their reasons and arguments for such choices that are directed at achieving the goals of their vested interests in the musical activity. These vested interests are often commercial goals (Frith, 1982).

Often treated as an enterprise, the commercial value of popular music is ensured at the point of production where decisions about ideology, structure, aesthetics, packaging, and presentation are guided by the marketability of the finished product. According to Frith (2001), popular music is "not driven by any significant ambition except profit and commercial reward" and it is "provided from on high (by record companies, radio programmers and concert promoters) rather than being made from below… Pop is not a do-it-yourself music but is professionally produced and packaged" (pp. 95-96). The stakeholders, wielding the aces in the music industry, tend to access technology, explore its potential to the fullest, guide public culture and dominate the commercial gains from the musical performances. In this way they define, dictate, and guide popular culture, using both the live stage and electronic media. The properties and elements employed by producers and performers of popular music in the presentation of the art include costumes, stage props, stagecraft, language, masking, lighting, animation, digital manipulations, make-up, shouting and subdued colours, sex appeal, drama clips, epic settings, impressionistic, expressionistic and cubic art forms, and a host of others. In the application and manipulation of these properties and elements to present the musical activity to the target audience, the producers, over time, succeed in making a strong and enduring psychological imprint on the consumers of their art. This accounts for why the marketing of new audio releases is preceded by promotional performances on live stages and video clips before the audio CDs are sold in the markets.

The Internet Era

In Nigeria, music promotion, distribution and merchandising in the past generally involved printing and pasting of promotional posters and flyers in strategic places, distribution of handbills and then, mass production of the music into cassettes or tapes, vinyl and Compact Disc, together with a massive advertisement

on radio and television programs—a process which in return consumes much more than budgeted.

Noticeably, the introduction of digital music production into the Nigerian music industry is widely accepted by many Nigerian popular music producers, due to its many advantages—from fewer studio appliances or equipment costs to pint-sized production time and charges. The music industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in Nigeria today; this immeasurable success can also be attributed to the role of digital music promotion with its numerous numbers of online platforms. A factor of notable influence is the emergence of the blog.

The paramount reason for the rise of blogs is the introduction of an audio file extension called mp3. This file extension format makes music sharing so easy because of its low byte rate compared to Wav format. This audio format undoubtedly made uploading and downloading of popular music to music blogs by the followers or fans to their various portable devices so easy, combined with the fact that popular music single track duration is usually between 3-5 minutes (which is a product of album unbundling). These portability features no doubt aided the quick transfer of popular songs from one media, device or platform to another within a few minutes to the delight of their adoring fans who download the songs onto their portable devices for their listening pleasure. This simple but mighty audio conversion format has become one of the strengths of music blogging and a major reason for its wild spreading. If the byte is too high which in turn will consume data to download, the fans will be discouraged to continue downloading songs from these music blogs. The mp3 audio format conversion has been a foremost basis that has mired the digital distribution and promotion of other genres of music in Nigeria, not just on music blogs but other digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, SoundCloud, iTunes, Spotify, etc.

Regarding the rapid growth of Nigerian popular music blogs and the unbundling of albums, enabled by their digital format, music consumers now have the option to download any number of favourable singles from an album online instead of having to purchase the entire record as they used to in the past. The unbundling of content has been taking place in every aspect of the media world over the previous years—print, radio, and television. Music unbundling began with the onset of the iTunes

Store, the first online popular music retailer ever to allow consumers to purchase individual songs separately without having to obtain an entire album.

The album unbundling development paved the way and made music downloading easier, which empowered the internet to manifest its sway on the popular music industry by the end of the century by providing a more open atmosphere for music distribution. It was the album unbundling development that propelled digital music promotion and distribution to attain unequalled popularity. Since then, it has continued to grow. There has been snowballing dire shrinkage in CD sales over the years since the development of album unbundling, and digital music sales are rapidly catching up in market shares.

A gradual but significant shift in people's listening habits from owning CDs to online streaming and downloading, as well as the change in purchasing habits from albums to single tracks, the brainchild of album unbundling, led to many other digital innovations in the Nigerian music industry and across the world. These digital modernisms unveiled their positive effects on popular music merchandising in Nigeria. However, the unbundling of albums seems to be compromising aspects of the music business at the moment—such as piracy of the single tracks, Alaba mixtapes, and unauthorized video compilation for artist bestselling tracks. The simplicity of the blogging process and its powerful results could be considered to be the major cause for its popularity and why it has become one of the most preferred platforms for music promotion and distribution.

The initiation of music blogging in Nigeria redesigned popular music distribution and consumption among the wide-ranging Nigerian populace. Before the advent of digital music distribution platforms, CD sales, album launches, tours, and concerts were the prevalent revenues of income for the common artiste. These made ticket sales at their highest peak, and musicians smiled to the bank week in, and week out. Although these events are still in practice today, their patronage has dwindled greatly. Radio and television adverts, as well as newspapers and magazines, were the major means of publicity, with their attendant expensive and demanding production procedures.

Music blogging has become an important platform with which every Nigerian artiste continues to ply their musical trade. Undoubtedly, online social media such as blogs have transformed how consumers make consumption decisions, and the popular music industry is at the forefront of this revolution. The witnessed intensity of popular music publicity in Nigeria is positively associated with the popularity of music blogging among its practitioners and admirers. The technology has given people the prospect to witness and report entertainment news first-hand as it unfolds, devoid of all forms of gatekeeping that typify conventional showbiz news reportage. Blogging plays such a central role in music distribution today, to the extent that is accessible to all and sundry, provided you have at least a mobile phone and internet connection. It is a most convenient medium for artist and repertoire managers, record labels, and promoters who would love to reach out to their fans from the comfort of their homes without having to break the bank to promote or distribute their artists' musical works.

The Nigerian mass media is an endowed media platform that has aided in the cessation of a large gap between artists and fans. Before it was integrated with digital tools and online social media sites, Nigerian popular music artists spent huge sums of money to keep their audience engaged and aware of the artistic happenings; popular music artists in Nigeria perform live in clubs and every available social gathering to help gather greater followers and then release the album in hopes that their loyal fans would buy it. With the turn of the century, the Nigerian digital content of the media continued to establish and expand in the digital revolution. The created sites began to gain huge internet followers within a few months of operation, facilitating the emerging popularity of user-generated content. The rapid success of the internet in Nigeria prompted the introduction of blogging sites into the Nigerian media platform. This concept of incorporating a social aspect into media websites has come to serve as an unmatched resource for many popular artists today in Nigeria.

Popular music marketing in this modern dispensation is not just about getting new fans daily or weekly, today's promotion techniques entail how the artist gets his music across to his fans within minutes. It's about using the right distribution channels to ensure that one's music is in the right places for easy access to existing

and intending fans either through blogs for downloading or other music streaming services (Sen, 2023).

Undoubtedly, computers have played a variety of roles in the music industry for over five decades and with the rapid diffusion of the internet into the music mainstream, new music marketing, and promotion approaches are emerging. Various online tools have emerged and one of them is the blog, whose main attributes are the sharing of documents, pictures, audio, and videos. The blog is one of the latest innovations currently having a great impact on popular music merchandise and distribution in Nigeria. Blogging has become a very popular tool of today's epoch in music promotion and distribution. It has become a trend for Nigerian popular music practitioners to distribute their materials through this medium as against conventional methods of music promotion and distribution in Nigeria. Advancement of blogs paved the way to unification with even newer forms of CMC such as status updates on social networking sites like Facebook and microblogging services such as Twitter (Sen, 2023; Wilkström, 2023).

With the advent of Web 2.0 (also known as Blog), the internet has become truly interactive. The blog as a tool and networking platform is an outstanding example of how ideas, photographs, videos, and general multimedia tools can be shared over a powerful Web 2.0. This innovation offers a realistic, visually compelling, and motivating interactive environment for developing the life skills and knowledge needed for today's globalized, hi-tech environment. More than every other advertising platform or forum, the digital and online advantages of the blog offer independent and new artists a highly effective, comfortable and affordable opportunity to promote and market themselves and their products. Promoting songs through the blog also helps to improve the artiste's content or song rankings in search results which are often used for search engine optimization (SEO) purposes (Kenton, 2023).

In this age of digital overload, hit songs upon hit songs are released online almost every day; what used to pass through many processes before getting into the public domain now goes from the studio straight to the fans, most times with a very short prior notice to the fans and the general populace at large—full of abundant songs, all controlled by the bloggers. The blog is the host where the

intended files are while other social media platforms are used to promote the links to where the files are hosted, acting as gateways to the warehouse (blog). Today, music bloggers are on the rise due to the revenue they rake in with high traffic while promoting music through their blogs. Many of these blogs get millions of visitors daily.

YouTube Monetization

Monetization is one of the most important ways that musicians earn royalties online. The artiste can earn so much money whenever his music is used in a video on YouTube, even if it's used in the background of someone else's video. When a piece of music is sent to content ID, YouTube automatically knows who owns the music and then notifies anyone who uses the music that they are doing so without permission, then a decision will be made whether to monetize the song or block it. Monetization of tracks or songs means that the artist or his management allows other users to use his or her music in exchange for earning advertising royalties. Should the artist choose to block the video maybe for copyright infringement or other reasons, then no one will be able to view the video containing the artist's song. The artist can as well mute the audio in the video, or track the video to see how it performs. The YouTube art tracks are created when music is submitted to YouTube, after which YouTube will create a catalogue of each of the uploaded music. Payments are made depending on the number of streams and subscription revenue of the artist tracks and this may vary monthly. YouTube art track gives the artiste a larger distribution and access to additional income streams (Bloom, 2023; Dunn, 2023; Minnec & Freedman, 2022).

The new digital recording and distribution technologies present numerous prospects for popular music artists to embrace a do-it-yourself approach. In the customary music recording practice and industry, every popular music artist depended on record labels and popular music marketers or promoters for access to music production and distribution capabilities. With the obtainable innovative digital technologies and the Internet, Nigerian popular music artists are now equipped with the ability to produce instrumentals, record their songs and distribute their music without diminutive assistance from music promoters, marketers and record labels (Onwuegbuna, 2019; Walzer, 2016).

The so-called free music downloads provide music consumers or fans with a means to try an artist's music before purchasing and provide the artists with a way to market their image and product which in turn will sell more music and ultimately increase the audience attendance at their concerts or shows. With the newly available digital environment, Nigerian popular music artists have the essential incentives to compete directly with record labels and record producers/promoters through the various digital music distributing platforms. These digital platforms have numerous positive influences on the Nigerian popular music artistes and the upcoming acts have also been leveraging on the digital technology for further gains. Popular music artists in Nigeria can now distribute their music directly to consumers and fans through these digital platforms via the Internet; and with this method of music distribution and merchandising, the artistes bypass intermediaries involved in the production and distribution of physical media. This separability feature of digital music distribution is said to have given many artists new incentives to unbundle full-length albums and focus on producing and promoting singles for publicity and sales. The record labels and physical music retailers are continuously losing more customers to online digital music retailing platforms, except for a few who are incorporating the new system and services to remain relevant in the music distribution business as physical logistics and infrastructure are becoming less important due to the increasing digital music retailing platform growth and popularity.

Conclusion

At the turn of the century, music production progressed from analogue to digital, and electronic generation and manipulation of sound became vogue. This development had put a lot of the power of creative rationalization in the hands of the studio engineer, leaving the musician with little or no chance to control the creative flow of his work. The computer-aided sounds became cleaner, more flexible, more robust, and better articulated in their arrangements and orchestration, but less realistic in timbre—especially of the reed and brass sections. In response to this innovation, the Nigerian studio engineer applied his creative ingenuity to scratch, sample, and programme the sounds of the traditional regional instruments which, hitherto, were not available in the Western-sourced music software—a technological input that resulted in economic gains. However, the Internet, with its digital superpower, has turned the table, using its highly user-friendly social media, to

return the power of creative rationalization and economic supremacy into the hands of musicians and consumers of musical products.

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