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Three copies of original, unpublished articles should be submitted for external assessment by established scholars in the field. A short abstract is also required. Contributors of publishable articles shall be requested to pay a token fee of SIX THOUSAND NAIRA (N6000) towards production costs. Authors of published articles shall be entitled to one free copy of the journal.

We appeal to all contributors in their and our own interest to return the corrected copy to us as soon as possible. Any delay may cause a replacement of the article.

All correspondence and contributions should be addressed to:

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Editorial Note

We are pleased to present issues 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 of the *Ibadan Journal of European Studies (IJES)* to the public. There are thirty-one articles in this edition. The essays covering different areas like Language, Language Teaching, Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Literary Criticism and Cultural Studies are well researched.

We must apologise for the delay in publication of these issues. It is mainly due to the long peer-review process occasioned by the tight schedule of our reviewers. While assuring you that the next issue will be promptly published, we sincerely believe that you will enjoy the articles which are carefully and meticulously selected for these issues.

L.B. Ayeleru

Professor of French and Applied Linguistics

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Steve Ayorinde's

Of the Classical, Achaism and Context in *Masterpieces*, A Critic's Timeless Report

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Introduction:

The work takes a cue from the conversation of Helen Moraleses' *Classical Mythology*... to engage such over clichéd terms as the triadic concepts above (i.e. the 'classical'), and applies it to the domain of the classical-pop debate in Nigerian music scholarship. The paper finds resonance with Moraleses' reading that "...'Classical', like 'Classics', is also a value-laden term—think of the connotations of 'classical music', 'classic beauty', 'classic cars'. The myths of different cultures have been given different valences by their reception in so-called Western (and non-Western) culture." There are three sections in this journal article. The first section serves as a broad introduction to the incorporation of other musical genres into the corpus that we have come to know as traditional music for so long. And with this, in the second section, we find the valorisation of the external as normative, and sometimes the superior. The last section identifies all this as part of the hegemony-counter hegemony struggle in the cultural sphere, and at the the same time, ...[masking] "the Eurocentrism of this tradition...as... There's a smugness about the word and its pretensions to timeless and effortless superiority." It is in this context that we engage the attempt by Steve Ayorinde to understand this cultural labyrinth in his *Masterpieces: A Critic's Timeless Report*.

Background:

How does one engage a text as Steve Ayorinde's *Masterpieces: A Critic's Timeless Report*? As it stands, *Masterpieces* is itself, a mediation of other forms of texts, at least at two levels: one, at their compositional level and, second, as live performance. Indeed, we can be as adventurous as to suggest a third layer of textual engagement, because the author also attends to the reaction of the audiences across the country, and as we all know, the ultimate textual meaning in performance cannot be reduced to the intrinsic features of the music without reference to its reception.

But I race ahead of my exposition, first things first. *Masterpieces* is set against the backdrop of an ebullient Nigerian musical culture, but often subsumed under the (traditional', with the presumption of excluding the classical form. Even that — the classical — will be attended to in a short while. It may just be apt to commence with an outline of what *Masterpieces* sets out to achieve, and situate this within the tradition of classical music review in Nigeria, after all, we live on the shoulders of those before us, very much as every musical idiom benefits from antecedent forms. We would then proceed to other sub-themes such as the content and style of delivery of the author en-route our conclusion, here captured as continuing dialogue.

Outline of *Masterpieces*

How do we encounter Ayorinde's *Masterpieces*? It is sometimes fair to expect a Nigerian encounter with classical music, and its diverse settings such as The Trenchard Hall of Nigeria's premier University of Ibadan, the holy grounds of the Deeper Life and The Apostolic Faith choirs and orchestras. In addition to this, however, yet another name looms pretty large in the patronage role of classical music in the country, and that is the grounds of the Musical Society of Nigeria - the MUSON Centre. There is a sense in which we really can say that *Masterpieces* chips off a good chunk of the MUSON story, and also fuses MUSON and classical

music in Nigeria in a manner that almost seems seamless and inseparable. MUSON then begins to wear the image of a semiotic overcode, some kind of Zeus of our culture space. But if MUSON looms this large in the unfolding narrative, I guess it is largely the evidence of its patronage of the classical music form, and a critic's adroitness in noting this.

We also encounter the masterpieces, as diverse as they get, straddling creative production from places as far-flung as South and North America, Europe, Asia and Africa. You can also expect an expansive scope of sub-genres ranging the cantata to carols, oratorios to sonata, the symphony etcetera. So also are the shapes of vocal timbre and texture of instruments, from the enthralling to the flute-like soft, something of a nuanced affirmation of contraries! You'd also invariably get inducted to the community of Nigeria's elite grouping, yet there's the pedagogical aspect of MUSON's musical training projects of old and fresh, amateur and professional talents. What Ayorinde also does is to make us have a biographical encounter with a few of the masters, national and international; he also supplies the reader with a modest reference section for technical terms, although he is quite restrained in the deployment of musical terms that we know well enough is more often than not, only a delight for the coterie. Then there is the visual story complement in the photographs of Sam Olusegun, Taiwo Oni, Dare Baloye, Ray Onwuemegbulem and Tunde Ogundeji. This book will definitely find residence in the heart of all who thirst for taste in culture, our libraries, departments in the liberal arts, media stables, professionals and even amateur musicians. Finally, on the masters, here you'd encounter the likes of Beethoven, Haydn and Mozart; they'll be out of the ear shot of their patrons, and there'd be less of complaint on the attitude of their patrons between Vienna, Salzburg or even in Salomon's London, as with Haydn upon being free at last in his late fifties.

The question is, how far have we gone, where do we stand today?

Content and Style in Review Tradition

The pieces here by Ayorinde show that the writer has made an early choice as to the manner in which he is going to do his own brand of music criticism. We do not see that progression or diminution of his powers as may be expected from chronological offerings fetched together from years of newspaper work - something that many a student is warned, or soon finds out, is a thankless job full of drudgery, especially in our society. The author writes with an unfailing confidence as to what would work to capture in one whole package, the essence of the musical events he reports upon. The operative phrase here is 'whole package'.

What do you do to bring to the reader who was there and the reader who was not there your own account of what took place at a music concert? Whose intelligence do you appeal to — is it that of the technical critic or the aficionado's, the intelligence of the lay public's or that of the disinterested reader looking for diversion from the humdrum of news reports and editorials, obituaries and Agony Aunts? Or is it even the intelligence of your arts editor that you address yourself to in a bid to prove that the exotic and expensive fare of classical music is fit for inclusion in the menu of a newspaper whose readership in a society such as ours 'is liable to suffer from a restricted, nay, an impoverished, musical palate?

There are no cheap answers here. The decisions made in this regard are central to the style of the writing, for each configuration of audience demands a rhetorical appeal that combines idiom and content, point of view and critical positionality in a particular pattern and by a particular method. What Ayorinde does is to create a composite picture that captures the event of musical performance in the fullness of its happening, and in spite of the obvious restrictions on Image. For we all know of the kind of preference that is accorded the arts desk in any self-respecting Nigerian newspaper or magazine - I mean the arts desk and not the pretensions that now pose as the real thing in many a Sunday edition or pullout or even entire magazine devoted to fashion,

music, theatre, Nollywood, cuisine, or what have you. The pain of these things is not in the topics they purport to cover in their pages but in the kind of treatment or mistreatment these topics receive at the hands of people who, we would think, should know better. Ayorinde, along with such a writer as Benson Idonije and less than a handful of others, stands in a different league in this regard.

This clearly is evident in the attitude of seriousness and dedication that he enwraps his articles in, in his obvious love for the thing he does, and in his concern for the development of this genre of journalism and the music that is its subject matter. This is the summation that hits the mind after having read him again and again over the years. The effects seep through his very style, for all the subtlety of detachment — sometimes bordering on the coldness of laboratory or surgical work even when he is most enraptured — that characterises much of what he has penned for some of the leading dailies in Nigerian journalism.

In away, herein lies the dilemma of the media art critic. For one, he works in an atmosphere where his desk is, quite often, the least attended to for he does not bring the big story of the political arena or the import of the global economic meltdown. Then in pursuance of this attitude, the desk could be further compromised by the deployment of unrated staff. Now the hodge-podge has to wrestle with such complex challenge that is euphemistically rendered as the 'Arts Editor' when, perhaps, his best stake would have been more amenable to a book review desk while learning by the ropes. What am I getting at? That art editorship is serious business and multi-layered; it admits of a complex ranging not just the traditional book review but also painting, sculpture, music, theatre, cinema, photography, even the digital interface among an increasing number of forms as the technology of cultural production would allow. In specific relation to music, here we find a more complex scenario, it is sometimes like a secret held in the open. We encounter music as a pleasurable past time but at a loss to describe the core of its essence, its workings. It is technical too, and in the context of classical music review tradition, its

experience and pedagogy is not immediate yet demanding of extended training. It is this gap that Ayorinde finds so easy to fill, largely, I think, due to his training and socialisation. However, the sad side of the story is that, owing to a lack of developmental cultural policy, this gap is threatening to be a gulf.

At once he sets the atmosphere of the venue, taking his time to describe in some detail the layout and decor of the hall; he gives us a thimbleful of the character portrait of the singer or player, or conducts a census of the ensemble, enumerating skills as well as instruments; he narrates something about the mood of the audience and their reaction to the performance, the latter presented to the reader in a blow-by-blow account; he does a critique of voice, instrumentation, composition, and interpretation; he says a little something about the career of the composer; and he throws a small tidbit here and there about the context and the effort of the organizers; etc. etc. This is the Pauline dictum: Ayorinde has become all things to all men—narrator in the best tradition of the journalist doing a reportorial; retailer of events; critic of musical performance; chronicler of the growth and development of a certain aspect of our cultural life; and promoter of the individual efforts of the artists, artistes and patrons.

What about the author's narrative strategy? Let's sneak quickly into the book, reading a short excerpt. Obviously something almost Marquezian and as well enchanting in his opening of "A Second Romance With Orpheus." Readers, listen for a second "David Nwara is five feet eight inches tall. But last Sunday at exactly 9pm at the Agip Recital Hall of MUSON Centre, Lagos, he walked around elated, feeling seven feet tall. That was the exact hour the second yearly concert of the Orpheus Music Company-Nwara's brainchild — came to an end in colourful high scores." Shortly after this, the author switches the narrative position, and goes on, "only a week to the concert, Nwamara had been bereaved..." My suggestion is that good writing is also a bait; it lures you midstream, and you don't see an option than to swim across.

He achieves all of these by the style and deployment of his writing, which, as I have said, often aims for a composite picture that embodies the whole package of musical event and performance. This, to me, begins to feel like a description by the Russian writer, Mikail Bakhtin, of the novelistic discourse in terms of its ability to ingest into itself other forms and genres without losing its own essential narrative identity. In more popular parlance I would say that there is something akin here to democracy in a style that envisages a wide readership; yet Ayorinde cannot be accused of dumbing down his writing for the benefit of that chimera-the 'average reader'. The music critic or aficionado will find that there are things to engage or take issues with in this book. The lover of sheer narrative will feel the immediacy of effect in the diary-like entries which the writer has produced in these reports, notwithstanding the instructive fact that the voice is sometimes depersonalised.

What may strike you most about this book is that you go through pages after pages of writing composed in accordance with the same technique of unrelieved employment and even projection in piece after piece. The truth is that it... strangely... works. And the suggestion is that Ayorinde has so mastered the craft of doing this kind of art writing for the columns of a newspaper that he is able to bring it off at the drop of a hat.

The glitter of his hand comes out in those passages where he dilates on the bond between performer and the instrument of performance, be it voice or violin. He also displays a sensitivity for jargon but without the showiness of a pedant. One senses that he is willing to inspire the reader to look up words in a dictionary of music, although he is not in the business of rubbing the face of the uninitiated in a pile of technical verbiage whose rapidity of occurrence and heaviness of presence is a surefire discouragement for those of us who are only interested in reading intelligent *divertissement* but do not wish to be reminded of how musically uninformed we are. That he provides a minimum glossary of terms

at the end of the book is evidence enough of his temperament as a music critic who addresses himself to a public of readers who he knows have varying interests and intelligence about the subject matter. And one may say that if his aims are achieved, then there is hope for this genre of journalism, nay, of literature, and the musical project that it advances in Nigeria.

If Ayorinde, not infrequently, takes us back to the whole notion of "classics", the "classical", even as embedded assumption throughout the MUSON experience, it is because, those term, quite value-laden as we know, have also been a site of constant engagement, not just among the Nigerian elite but also in the popular media. This take will suffice:

Sometime ago, opinion was divided among two experts on music. One said highlife was more popular than classical music. The other expressed an opposite view. Tribune photo parade conducted an investigation among music lovers to get at the root of the question, and the popular opinion is—Highlife 60%, other types of music including classical 40%. So that we can take it—that Nigeria is a land of Highlife. Photograph below was taken at a dance held at University of Ife. (See Endnote, 4.)

And this is a debate that goes back to early sixties Nigerian newspaper cultural experience!

Endnote

1. Helen Morales, 2007: 3, her emphasis; from *Classical Mythology: A Very Short Introduction*: OUP, expatiates on the often overlapping terms 'Classical', like 'Classics', and as also a value-laden term—think of the connotations of

'classical music', 'classic beauty', 'classic cars'. The myths of different cultures have been given different valences by their reception in so-called Western (and non-Western) culture. Those of ancient Greece and Rome have become *the* myths of the Western world. The label 'classical' acknowledges (and reinforces) their cultural supremacy over the myths of, say, ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and India. At the same time, it masks the Eurocentrism of this tradition. There's a smugness about the word and its pretensions to timeless and effortless superiority.

2. Boardman et al. (2003) Eds. *The Oxford History of the Classical World*. Oxford: OUP, provide a very extensive background to the notion and experience of the European classical world, detailing the diachronic development from its archaic antiquity through the more recent and popular knowledge of that world.
3. Cook, Nicholas and Pople Anthony (Eds.) *The Cambridge History of Music*. Cambridge University Press, 2004, it is that actually makes a distinction between the traditional notion of "classics" and the "classical" in European cultural formation from what would eventually become known as "classical" music at the turn of the century before the last. This, indeed, provides a helpful background to coming to terms of how those originary terms have not just come to the self-appropriated by a section of humanity, but aspired towards by the cultural Other; and no less in the use of these terms in Nigerian music and other cultural manifestations.
4. This was taken from Page 3 of the newspaper, Nigerian Tribune, Wednesday March 21, 1962...."Headline: Highlife or Classical?"