



Professionalism and Manpower Development in the Department of Music, University of Uyo: A Historical Perspective

Ime Dan Ukpanah¹, Johnson Akpakpan².

¹ Department of Music, Faculty of Arts, University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria

² Department of Music, Faculty of Arts, University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria

Abstract

It is noteworthy that most educational institutions in Nigeria do not take the process of documentation seriously. Therefore, track records of activities and trends of growth or decline are often lost. Thus, counterproductive to academic progress within the Nigerian context. This study seeks to survey the developmental trends vis-à-vis the Nursery, Perigee, and Apogee (NPA) dispensations in the Department of Music, University of Uyo. It covers a period of forty-five years (1976 to 2021). This is a historical research or historiography. It attempts to rationally recapture complex peculiarities, the people, meanings, events and even ideas of the past activities that have influenced and shaped the present Department of Music, University of Uyo. Findings revealed a robust beginning with respect to students' intake and staffing, a steady decline affecting both factors, and a gradual ascendancy to what may be considered an established Department of Music. It is, therefore, recommended that the historical approach to the development of educational institutions should be taken seriously with a view to ascertaining factors militating against sustainable growth for the improvement of human resources and seeking avenues to curb such factors.

Keywords: Historiography, Professionalism, Human Resources, Growth.

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I. Introduction

In Garvey's[1] words, 'A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots'. Therefore, it is important to cross-examine the history of the Department of Music, University of Uyo. Notably, the Department started over four and half decades ago and has undergone several transformations. Some of these transformational trends can be considered murky and others positive. The anthem[2] of the University of Uyo which reads inter alia... 'Raised from nursery to its apogee, Now stands as a giant in the African Sun...' (Uzoigwe, 1998), is reminiscent of the historical path on the sand of time traced by the Department of Music from inception till date. It may, however, be pertinent to stress from the figure of the anthem that these three focal points: from nursery, to apogee, and now standing as a giant in the African sun took time to materialize in the case of the Department of Music. This was so because from the nursery period, the Department did not immediately metamorphose to its apogee since there were some setbacks in its pathway. It rather dropped to a period of seeming perigee as will be seen later in this study.

Although the study covers a period of four and half decades, it will be helpful to undertake a brief history of the Department from inception to date to further illustrate its growth and appreciate its share in the vicissitude. The history is summarized thus:

The Department of Music, University of Uyo was established in the mid-1970s under the defunct College of Education, Uyo. It operated successfully during those formative years, teaching and producing music teachers at the National Certificate in Education (NCE) level. This programme flourished up to 1983 when the institution metamorphosed into the University of Cross River State. Concurrent with the new status of the College of Education as a full-fledged University, the Department equally became a bachelor degree-awarding unit. However, strictly to save cost, music, theatre, and fine and Industrial Arts were merged into the Department of Creative Arts, each, operating as a separate unit. (Students' Handbook)[3]. From 1991 onward, when the University of Uyo came into existence, a demerger was effected and the various components of the

Creative Arts Department were transitioned into The Departments of Music, Theatre Arts, and Department of Fine and Industrial Arts.

From the 1970s to date, the Department of Music has trained a good number of NCE teachers for schools and colleges and Bachelor of Arts (Music) graduates for employment and services in allied industries. Presently the Department of Music is enjoying some tangible expansion – there are two additional sub-degree programs and recently, three programs are approved at the postgraduate level thus making it a full-fledged department on a tripod stand. The Department is modestly equipped with basic musical instruments, allied equipment, and qualified teaching and non-teaching staff to cater for the needs of the steady rise in students' population and that of the entertainment industry.

As noted in the departmental students' handbook [4], 'the Department's Philosophy, Mission and Vision statements, core values as well as strategic plans are subsets of the operational guidelines of the University of Uyo.' (2014:3). The Department of Music tackled these outlined issues cautiously in light of the perceived advantages of the study music at the tertiary level. This study hereby aims at describing the various experiences and roles played by the Department of Music, University of Uyo in providing leadership in training, research, and community services towards maximizing the benefits of Music as a wholesome profession. The study covers a period of forty-five years (45) from 1976 to 2021 AD. The methods employed include (survey, comparative and correlational and analytical). Critical evaluations are derived and suggestions are tendered to further enhance the emerging professional music practice in Akwa Ibom State to meet the demands of the consumers of music in the secular and ecclesiastical environments.

Brief History of the Department of Music

Developmental trends

Survey of the various epochs in the history of the Department of Music: The survey covers three periods namely; nursery, perigee, and apogee.

Nursery Period (1976 - 1991)

During the nursery days from its inception in AD 1976, the College of Education (1976-1991) and University of Cross River State (1983-1991) enjoyed some good patronage in terms of students' intake and staff strength. At this time, the Department of music had three indigenous lecturers, namely, Dr Samuel Akpaobot, Mr O. O. Bataye, and Mr Azodo. Apart from the indigenous lecturers mentioned above, the Department of Music later had three American Scholars as part of the teaching crew. There were Mrs. Baratx, Mr Boren and Mrs Boren. As the department was growing, Dr Richard Okafor was employed. It could be recalled that this period marked the era of the so-called 'oil boom' in Nigeria and some form of economic recession in Ghana.

This resulted in part in the influx of academic staff and other professionals from Ghana to Nigeria (source). Consequently, the College of Education employed eight lecturers in music from that pool of the Ghanaian professionals who had migrated to Nigeria at that time. They were: Mr. Michael Ammisah, Mr Twerefoo, Mr. Quansah, Mr. Robert Kwami, Mr. G. Kwami, Mr. Peter Mensah, Mr. G. Ayikutu. With the above-mentioned cream of lecturers and who were drawn from diverse cultures and academic backgrounds, the department of music witnessed a flourishing state of budding. With these, there was an upsurge of students who were the pioneer trainees of the Department. The situation at that time in the Department of Music was in consonance with the United Nations [5] documents which read: 'we... recognize that international migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires a coherent and comprehensive response.' (p. 8) Indeed, the Ghanaian music experts contributed immensely to the pedagogical growth of the Department of Music during this period.

During this time, the College of Education had a policy of staff development under which some of the emerging young and outstanding National Certificate of Education graduates with distinctions were retained and sent out for further studies. In the case of the Department of Music, the trio of Mr. Aniedi Ekpa, Mr. Ime D. Ukpanah, and Mrs. Margaret Akpan were retained, employed, and encouraged to proceed with further studies. Consequently, a formidable foundation for music civilization was laid. These, with the other infrastructural developments and evolutionary trends, had sprouted what may be regarded as an enterprising and renowned Music Department in Uyo. Likened to an Agricultural plantation, this marked the zenith of Art Music cultivation in this part of our clime, one of the most prominent in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the Nigeria Certificate in Education programme which trained teachers at the middle-level status to cater to students in secondary schools was perhaps myopically abolished by the authorities of the erstwhile University of Cross River State. As of the late 1980s, the Department was forced into a marriage with other Creative Arts units including Theatre, Fine, and Industrial Arts. Thus, the Department suffered a downward trend. This was at a time when other disciplines were enjoying a steady rise. What was now left of the system was a mere dreg of the cup of success enjoyed during the nursery days.

The Perigee Period (1991 to 2005)

According to University of Uyo[6], the institution ‘was established in October 1991 as a conventional Federal University. It took over the premises, students and other assets and liabilities of the erstwhile University of Cross River State established in 1983.’ The establishment of University of Uyo was also the commencement of the period of perigee understudy.

In 1991 when the University of Cross River State metamorphosed into the Federal University of Uyo, the dreg of success described above was turned into a concentrated poisonous drink. Suffice it to note that this period was also the peak of the disengagement of Ghanaian professionals from Nigeria occasioned by the campaign propaganda of ‘Ghana must go’ which turned out to become a government policy in Nigeria. This policy as noted by Lawal[7] was announced on the 17th day of January 1983. It reads: ‘the Nigerian leader...declare the expulsion of an estimated two million undocumented migrants living in the country. Half of them were Ghanaian.’ Although the Ghanaian lecturers in the Department of Music were documented immigrants, each of them exited at the expiration of his contract. This dealt a serious blow to the population of the academic staff in the Department.

Before this time, the three units of Music, Theatre, and Fine Arts were administered by various experts within their domains. That is to say, an academic musician was the head of the Music Department. The same also applied to the other sister units. Within this period, these three units were fused into a single administrative bloc and tagged, the Department of Creative Arts. On the surface, it could be considered that this fusion was to serve cost but it turned out somehow counterproductive. For example, a Senior Lecturer in Fine Arts headed the three units without a proper definition of the borderline operation of each unit. With the above, the Music Unit was the worst hit. One of the reasons was that the managerial wherewithal of the head of the newly merged Department of Creative Arts was not in consonance with the peculiarities inherent in the administration of a typical department of music. Because of the above and some other reasons, a senior administrator at the University of Uyo in 1993 during a conversation with one of the researchers remarked that the Music Unit was moribund and was marching towards extinction. The irony of this fact was that while other departments were enjoying the proverbial carrots of the Federal Government subventions, the Music Unit was pejoratively reduced to an anthill, and mistletoes were physically seen either planted or growing on the rooftop as a result of neglect and/or hostile policies, the blame of which is not within the scope of this study. Thus, the Music unit did not enjoy any ‘apogee’ as alluded to by the University of Uyo Anthem as the other departments did. What the Music Units suffered seemed to have been a reduction to the rock bottom syndrome likened figuratively to a perigee. Subsequently, a demerger for the three units was sought and the request was granted but the results were still not encouraging. Students’ in-take was very low in the Department of Music. The attrition rate was very high. For example, five students may register for the programme, and two will drop. The Bachelor’s Degree Programme in Music Education was almost dead. As of then, the statistics of the Department were very embarrassing. At a point in time, there were ten (10) students in the programme from years I-IV as against (13) lecturers. The ratio was unacceptable within the University and outside.

Notably and over this period, the number of lecturers was fluctuating, periodically, they were usually new entrants and exits. The thirteen lecturers over the period were Dr. A. O. Ifionu (1989 to 1993), Mr. Ime Eyoh (1991 to 1999), Dr. Aniedi Ekpa (1980-2013), Mr. Emmanuel Oyadiran (1994 to), Mrs. Margaret Akpan (1985 to 1990), Dr. Ime D. Ukpanah (1981 still date), Rev. Sr. Agatha Ozah (1993 to), Miss Joyce Adewumi (1993 to 1999), Prof. Joshua Uzoigwe (1994 to 2005), Miss Grace Ekong (1994 to till date), Mr. Ime S. Ekpo (1994 to till date), Mr. Isaac E. Mr. Udoh (1996 till date), Mr. Isaac Jibuike (1996 to 2000), Miss Clara Ikpe (1999 till 2002), Mr. Johnson Akpakpan (2000 till date) and Mr. Stephen Udoh (2000 till date).

Within this perigee period, apart from the improvement in the number of lecturers employed and the promise of their apparent growth to becoming senior music scholars, the Department of Music witnessed a serious decline with respect to students’ intake as outlined above. In certain sessions, the number of students admitted was as low as three, in some, there was no intake at all. The situation was so bad that in the early-1990s some seemingly ignorant but courageous parents had been visiting the Department of Music to ask staff members cautious questions on the prospects of studying Music by their wards.

This period was concurrent with the hostile Nigerian national policies of education (NPE) which placed too much emphasis on science and technology with some neglect of the arts and humanities. With respect to admissions, a portion of the NPE (2004) [8] reads that ‘Not less than 60% of places shall be allocated to science and science-oriented courses in the conventional universities and not less than 80% in the universities of technology.’ (p. 39). With regard to funding, the NPE (2004) [9] also states that a ‘greater proportion of expenditure on university education shall be devoted to Science and Technology.’ (p.39). The preceding indicated a serious preponderance of studies in the sciences over the humanities. These and other adverse policies in the Nigerian educational system militated against the flourishing of the Department and were the antithesis of the strides recorded during the earlier Nursery Period. Principally, these policies were designed and endorsed by the Federal Ministry of Education without recourse to the negative effects they were to have on some disciplines like music. According to the Federal Ministry of Education [10] (2019), ‘the ministry ‘has the

overall responsibility of formulating national policies and guidelines for the standardization of education at all levels in Nigeria.' (p.12). However, a major policymaker in the sector, the ministry should endeavour to enact policies that are all-embracing and accommodating to every discipline.

The period of Apogee (2006 to 2021)

The tide again turned but now in the positive direction. Certain steps were aggressively taken before positive results were recorded. The steps are described below:

a.

SWOT Analysis was employed: that is, our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats were carefully assessed. We had to buckle up with hope in action. According to Sammut-Bonnici and Galea (2015) [11], SWOT analysis 'evaluates the internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external opportunities and threats in an organization's environment.' It was a university-wide practice but the Department of Music took it more conscientiously on its own. The application of SWOT analysis cannot be overemphasised. According to Namugenyia, Nimmagaddab and Reiners [12], 'many organizations carry out SWOT analysis at a strategic planning stage, try to identify and examine the existing resources, both internally and externally, investigating their trends and patterns that may have either positive or negative impacts.' The Department of Music may have without reference adopted this principle. Thus, with this capability analysis of maximizing the strengths and opportunities, the Department of Music worked assiduously to counter areas of weaknesses and threats.

b.

Core values bordering on moral rectitude and rendering of effective services within and outside the institution were engendered. Prior to this time, some music students were in the habit of mimicking modern-popular musicians (modpop) in their dressing mode as well as other manners of lifestyles. However, the department decided to embark on a dress code that was properly endorsed in the students' constitution. This code stipulated that students should dress like gentlemen and ladies.

c.

The mission and vision statements were carefully articulated. A strategic plan covering a period of ten (10) years in the first instance was designed and that plan is accomplished. The scope of the music programme, with an emphasis on bi-musicality and intercultural coding, was broadened. Branding of Nigerian musical products to make our work indigenous in tone but universal in expressive powers is ongoing. p. 177, (Griffiths) [13]. Expansion of the Music programme to include a one-year certificate and a two-year diploma course in Music. In 2014, the University approved the postgraduate programmes in the Department. Sequel to this and in the 2014/2015 session, the Department commenced the Postgraduate Diploma and the Master of Arts Programmes in music. In the 2020/2021 session and after graduating some sets of master of arts students, the Department commenced the Doctor of Philosophy Programme. Currently, some courses in the programme have assumed the status of standing out as part of entrepreneurial studies for instance an instrument maker in town is engaged in a loose affiliation with the department to nurture the science and art of constructing some musical instruments. Students' interest in this programme is encouraging.

d.

Teaching methods and motivational skills which awaken potential in learners are adapted. Such methods as those of Suzuki, Kodaly, and Carl Orff are employed. Students purchase and own the musical instruments of their choice.

d.

There has been a steady improvement in Infrastructure and teaching materials in recent times. From the mid-2005AD onward, the various administrations seemed to be more music-friendly. The Department enjoyed the purchase of more pianofortes and allied equipment as well as the building of a music chamber and a practice room. Music is one Department in the Faculty of Arts that can boast of dedicated classrooms within its location. Therefore, music students do not move about the campus in search of lecture halls.

e.

Campaigns and counselling on career prospects have been mounted. Music lecturers synergized their efforts by serving as campaign managers in local churches for increased awareness of the cause of music. They equally served as non-stipendiary career counsellors to educate people on the prospects of studying music. Currently, cautious and sceptical questions about the benefit of studying have dropped.

f.

Affiliations and linkages with the town were sought. As the music institution gathered more momentum, entertainment outfits in town provide a welcome market for connoisseurs and academic musicians to exhibit their art. Churches, choral groups, private schools, and government-sponsored music troupes, engage music professionals from the Department. Besides, increased awareness in the tourism and entertainment industry has sprung up. It seemed that what eluded the Department of Music in the 1990s and early 2000s has been recovered steadily. The period of apogee has come to stay.

During this period (2006 to 2021), the Department had an aggregate of twelve (12) lecturers. It is to be noted that this period maintained less mobility of lecturers out of the department. However, with the demise of one of the lecturers in 2013, this number was reduced to eleven (11). Academic staff census between this period of apogee are Dr. Aniedi Ekpa (1980-2013), Dr. Ime D. Ukpanah (1981 till date), Dr. Ime S. Ekpo (1994 to till date), Dr. Grace Ekong (1994 to till date), Dr. Isaac E. Udoh (1996 till date), Dr. Johnson Akpakpan (2000 till date) and Dr. Stephen Udoh (2000 till date). Others are Dr. Sunday S. Udofia (2006 till date), Dr. Ukeme A. Udoh (2008 till date), Dr. Ekaete C. Udok (2012 till date), Mr. Charles M. Asenye (2013 to date), and Mr. Aniedi E. Peter (2014 till date).

As of the time of this study, the Department of Music, University of Uyo is left with only eleven lecturers. Despite this, the profiles of these lecturers have seriously improved. Notably, the department has three associate professors, five senior lecturers, one lecturer I, and two lecturers II. A cursory look at the present staff list in the department will reveal that nine out of the eleven lecturers have their doctorate degrees and the remaining are master's degree holders who have also enrolled for the doctorate programmes.

On the other hand, there has been a remarkable improvement in present-day students' registration. This period was marked by an inclination for change and rebuilding the Department. This inclination is worth emulating by other organisations in Nigeria. As noted by Usang and Ekpo (2014) [14], 'the re-branding image... is significantly influenced by peoples' attitudinal changes.' The Department of Music, therefore, sought to recover from its ailing state during the perigee period with some attitudinal changes by all. Currently, the Department has over three hundred students enrolled in the various programmes vis-à-vis, the sub-degree, degree, and postgraduate studies. With respect to students' enrolment and output, this period has seen the department at its peak even better than the nursery era discussed earlier.

II. Observations

- i. In the department today, there is no more attrition but rather an accretion. Also, students have been changing from other disciplines to enrol in music.
- ii. In today's dispensation, parents are coming with good intentions to seek admission for their wards in the department.
- iii. Intake capacity generally has improved. The current number of students in the Department is over 300. The postgraduate programmes commenced during the 2014/2015 session and have turned several batches of Master of Arts Degree graduates. There was an enrolment candidate in the Doctor Philosophy Programme during 2020/2021 session.
- iv. There has been a quest for skills in reading and writing music due to the demand for classical and contemplative music.
- v. Nowadays, the entertainment industry in Nigeria state has developed to the level of forming amateur/professional orchestral groups. A good percentage of these performers are derived from the students and graduate population from the department.
- vi. Also, there have been positive collaborations between the University Administration and the Department, among the students themselves and the staff members, ensuring quality assurance and optimal service delivery.
- vii. There have been perfectionist demands in the various stress areas of; composition, research in African Music, Music pedagogy, performance, and music technology. These enable the graduate to develop his/her skill to the level of earning a living through the same.
- viii. There is an ongoing development whereby an organized body-tagged Association of Choir Masters and Music Directors in Nigeria enters into some agreement with the Department of Music for the purpose of organizing workshops and seminars for its members. This and similar engagements help to improve the musical content and the level of musicality of the participants.

III. Conclusion

Just as Greiner [15] (1997) postulated 'organizations go back and forth between periods of stability and slow evolution and revolutionary periods of dramatic change', It is worthy of note that the Department of Music,

University of Uyo has undergone three phases of development: the nursery, the perigee, and the Apogee. Each of these phases covered approximately one and half decades. During the first phase, the Department was housed initially in the erstwhile College of Education, Uyo which later metamorphosed into the former University of Cross State. The main focus of the College was to produce middle-level professional teachers in music. With the inception of the University of Cross River State, the National Certificate in Education and the Bachelor of Arts Degree in music were concurrently awarded. At that period, music was a core subject in the secondary school curriculum and graduates from the College and University were readily absorbed.

The perigee period (1991 to 2005) started with the inception of the University of Uyo. The growth witnessed during the nursery era dwindled. The exit of the Ghanaian expatriate lecturers and the ill-fated policies from the government contributed to these negative tendencies. Yet the Department still persisted on the basis of determinism.

However, there was a gradual build-up from the previous dark side of the middle era. In 2005 and after earning full accreditation status from the National Universities Commission (NUC), the Department of Music began to garner support from within and outside the University. Consequently, more students were being admitted into the sub-degree and degree programmes. Strategic plans were dully followed and adequately executed. Today the Department of Music has a firm foundation in the Africa Sun.

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