

1st Print: 30/4/1991

## **OF MUSIC AND THE JUNK VIRUS** -Olayinka Okeola

Without doubt, music is ingrained in all human cultures. In all societies, civilized or primitive, music cannot be denied of its social, psychological, political and economic importance. It is a powerful instrumental to the creation or erasure of certain feelings, moods or spirit in individual or society as a whole. It is an art as well as a social scientific tool. Hence it has been, and is being, used from time to time to heal and move people in different ways.

But most importantly, music is a culture. The cultural history of people is not complete without a consideration of its music. The music of a people reflects its level of understanding, progress and development. And like all other aspect of culture, music is living, dynamic: not static. For it to be static denies it of any relevance to culture. Because culture in its total self should be a changing phenomenon. The direction and magnitude of the change in culture depend on such things as the directions and magnitudes of education, external influence, relevance technology and so on.

As a result of dynamic essence of culture, it becomes necessary for us to seriously appraise the current trend of Nigeria music scene. Before the arrival of the "newbreed" music and musicians, music no doubt played serious roles in the life of Nigerians as individuals and as groups. Musician then gave us melodious entertaining and educating music. What is now left of our music industry is to say the least, ill-meaning. The junk virus seem to have finally arrived and settled in musical art to the extent, moreover, that many old breed artistes have been caught by it. Infact old breed musicians are kind of shameless and energetically struggling to "out-junk" the newbreeds. The situation is that sorry.

But what is junk music? Junk music is bad music. Cheap, useless music. It is music devoid of all reasonableness that does not appeal to the moral intellect of man but rather touches and appeal to the baser human instincts. In order words, it is a kind of music that is afflicted by a kind of virus whose likeness is HIV-AIDS VIRUS. Because of this affliction, junk music could not (and is not expected to) serve traditional, well-meaning roles and values.

Take a serious look at the kind of music (especially fuji and juju) being dished out by our so called musicians and what you get is revulsion unless you are completely debauched or nearly so. Or what do you think of the kind of music that propagates debasement of womanhood, materialistic worship, abuse of national and foreign currency, greed and that extols drunkenness.

What our musicians should ask themselves is that: for music to be acceptable, does it have to be vulgar, pornographic, noisy, satanic and devoid of any moral appeal? Why must music be denied of sanity when musicians are supposed to guide their listeners to sanity? Why must a musician in his right sense believe that without an element of vulgarity and unculturedness in his output, it will not appeal to the society? Is the society that bad? Even if our musicians believe that the society has gone that bad, must they encourage its degeneracy!?

It is necessary at this point for us to tackle this problem in the interest of society well-being. Music is too sensitive to be entirely left in the hands of musician some whom have been seized by the junk-virus, and unfortunately these groups seem to be the majority. A body to monitor the activities and output of our musician more than ever before necessary. Like we have Standard Organization of Nigeria, why not have a similar body for our music industry. Organising public lectures and seminar by the government and private organization for the artistes and public as a whole will be of help.

Our artistes should be reminded or made to know that they should only play positive roles in the society. Instead of wasting money giving out noisy award each year PMAN could start educating its member. Or at least create an award for serious and positive efforts toward the social and political advancement of our society. Really much has been said about the current trend in the Nigeria music industry, this writer believe there is no harm in laying more emphasis.