

MUSIC AS AN AID TO STORY TELLING IN NOLLYWOOD: INTERROGATING HYBRIDIZATION IN SELECTED FILMS

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*[*http://www.ajol.info/index.php/cajtmps.v13.1.2](http://www.ajol.info/index.php/cajtmps.v13.1.2)*

Abstract

*Film music and sound track are designed to add rhythm, tempo, pace, emotional intensity and mood to unfolding actions and understandably, this has been the norm; however, rather than stick to the conventions established by foreign film industries, some Nollywood film makers have evolved a unique style that incorporates African performative and narrative folkloric forms into their plots. Using the qualitative approach to film reading and analysis, this research work explores and exposes the artistic and cultural link between Nollywood music and soundtrack and oral tradition which has produced a hybridized form. Nollywood film music is thus interrogated as an innovational approach to film making which has cultural appeal for local audiences and those in the Diaspora and which has created an African identity for Nigerian films globally. The discourse is framed around two Nollywood films titled **Eye of the King** directed by Ugeze J. Ugeze and **My Love Story** directed by Malachy Ugwoke. In these films, the folkloric content of the music and sound track intermingled with the narrative are presented as precursors of African cultural aesthetics. Hinging the analysis on the concept of Hybridization, the work seeks to prove that the folkloric content of the films constitute a major attraction for both local and international audiences.*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's Nollywood has continued to attract scholarly attention because of many significant developments traceable to the Industry.

One of such developments is the infusion of folkloric music forms into film narratives which has given a unique African identity to the films. Film music and sound track are usually designed to add rhythm, tempo, pace, emotional intensity and mood to unfolding actions and understandably, this has been the norm, however, rather than stick to the conventions established by foreign film industries, some Nollywood film makers have evolved a style that incorporates African performative and folkloric forms into their narratives. The soundtrack and music utilised in these films are created in the African folkloric tradition where songs narrate stories with a didactic bent and explain, pre-empt, comment on, or accompany actions. As the stories of the films evolve and the characters negotiate the terrains of power, love, wealth and social well being, folkloric music is interspersed with the actions to project the interactions and conflicts between agency and agency; between agency and structure; between agency and spiritual/occultic structure; and between human agency and spiritual/supernatural agency. This has given an African identity to the films and in view of the massive patronage being recorded, one can assert that the folkloric renditions are also enhancing the global impact of the films. This is not a novel venture as some notable African music scholars have over the years studied African oral art forms and their adaptability to contemporary forms of storage and usage and utilized them in musical compositions. Meki Nzewi is one such musical scholar who has carried out critical researches into traditional musical art forms and in the process, documented and classified African musical practices. In her review of some of Nzewi's works, Addio observed that "Meki Nzewi is a leading scholar in African musical arts whose work has focused on African indigenous lore and its construction in contemporary scholarship" (156).

Perhaps it is in response to, and in continuation of the work started by these scholars, that Nollywood composers have taken up the task of developing film soundtrack and music from the robust artistic

heritage of African social engagements. Many scholars have noted that Nollywood films are recording huge successes both in

Africa and outside its shores despite the obvious technical deficiencies found in some, though not in all Nollywood films. One of the factors responsible for this wide patronage may be the deep longing for the cultural images evoked by the accompanying music and soundtrack which are usually entrenched in the film narrative. Accordingly, Sylvanus reiterates:

Nollywood film music remains framed within one or more ethnic formations. These formations, which range from the lingual and ethnic musical particularities to practitioners' cultural affiliations and audience tastes, are both fascinating and reassuring, especially given the increasing influences of globalisation on creative and cultural industries across the world. And so, it is fair to state that textured music works, in part, to distinguish Nollywood film music from, say, its Euro-American counterparts (16).

This study is foregrounded on the concept of hybridization within the context of interactivity and the fusion of diverse cultural forms. We thus present the musical form that has emerged in Nollywood as the hybridization or artistic blending of some cultural products; the products being folklore, folk music and indeed all folkloric forms merged with modern lyrics, modern instrumentation and the filmic medium or media. Engaging hybridization as a humanistic construct, Georgette Wang and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh made some critical observations. According to Wang and Yeh;

Hybridization has become part of an ongoing trend in cultural production, with both the globalization and localization of the culture industry (1).

They go further to attempt a classification by taking the concept of hybridization beyond the process and action of blending and mixing; to expose the possibility of the emergence of new forms as well as potentials for newer levels of interconnectedness. This is evident in their submission that

Hybridization, however, is not merely the mixing, blending and synthesizing of different elements that ultimately forms a culturally faceless whole. In the course of hybridization, cultures often generate new forms and make new connections with one another (1).

Thus, in our attempt to examine the folkloric content of Nollywood music or soundtrack, we find it crucial to explore the folkloric realm of performance in African traditional society viz a viz the medium of translation or translocation into modern media expressions- in this case the film medium; to understand the resultant cultural product and its impact on audiences both within and outside the cultural sphere of its birth. Prior to the introduction of Western education in Africa, folklore provided the platform for the transmission of key beliefs, ideas and values of the community to successive generations. Although the dawn of literacy and subsequent pursuit of knowledge, development and technological advancement has almost pushed oral traditional art forms to the brink of extinction, the African's attachment to his traditional past has lingered with the result that some oral traditions are being transferred to modern activities. Nigeria's Film Industry appears to be a melting pot of both oral and visual traditional art forms (music, craft, pottery, sculpture, traditional religious practices, dress culture, language, food and so on.) both in content and form such that as Onuzulike observed:

As a creative and cultural industry, mainstream Nollywood negotiates and expresses aspects of subcultural areas of Nigeria: class, ethnicity, fashion, language, musical arts and modes of worship. Consequently, several of its productions have been presented, perceived and documented as a reflection and representation of Nigerian society (62).

Perhaps as a result of its inception and sustenance by businessmen from the Eastern part of Nigeria, who mostly double as producers and marketers; the storyline, setting and aesthetic composition of many Nollywood films reflect the Igbo socio-cultural sphere. In an attempt to create an African identity by incorporating those art forms that African audiences would easily identify with; some Nollywood composers have deliberately sidelined conventional use of instrumental sound tracks in keeping with or rather in imitation of Hollywood film tradition; and instead, have created their own unique style which leverages on African oral traditions. These composers utilize materials from oral tradition to create folkloric musical accompaniments to film narratives. In his submission, Sylvanus affirms that

Mainstream Nollywood employs Nigerian rap in part because the genre readily lends itself to the infusion of sounds and dialogues of folk music, text, and popular culture. Fundamentally, the genre supports the indigenous vocal inflection of songs using a typical Nigerian vocabulary (105).

What readily comes to mind, when one is discussing the culture specificity of Nollywood music is the distinct identity which Indian traditional music forms and styles have bestowed on Bollywood films and which summatively may constitute one of the major attractions of Zee World films to non Indian audiences especially

Nigerians. Nollywood sound tracks are designed to evoke images of valour, heroic deeds, treachery, didactic tales, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles and other elements of oral tradition in a narrative form with the result that film audiences are easily transported back in time and subsumed in the world of the films. In employing the Folkloric tradition, songs and instrumentation are not only used to accompany the action, they are also used to diffuse suspense. The songs may pre-empt actions, introduce actions, accompany narratives, comment on unfolding events, forewarn about impending occurrences and so on.

Tracie Utoh-Ezeajugh may have identified the link between Nollywood film music accompaniments and the folkloric tradition. In her submission, she explains that

the intermingling of songs, music ... as well as the utilization of metaphor, aphorisms, imagery, symbolisms and other essential elements of African communal aesthetics, become embodiments of the socio-cultural projections and experiences of the Igbo. (Utoh-Ezeajugh 79).

And for Alex Asigbo,

folklore goes beyond mere titillation of naïve curiosity and becomes a narrative resurrection of primeval reality told in satisfaction of religious want, moral cravings, social submission, assertion and practical requirements (5).

This study therefore explores and exposes the artistic and cultural link between Nollywood soundtrack and oral tradition which has produced a hybridized form. Nollywood film music as explored, presents an innovational approach to film making which has cultural appeal for local audiences and which has created an African identity for Nigerian films globally. The discourse is framed around two Nollywood films titled **Eye of the King** directed by

Ugeze J. Ugeze and **My Love Story** directed by Malachy Ugwoke. In these films, the folkloric content of the music and sound track intermingled with the narrative are interrogated as precursors of African cultural aesthetics. Hinging the analysis on the concept of Hybridization, the work seeks to prove that the folkloric content of the films constitute a major attraction for both local and international audiences.

NOLLYWOOD FILMS AND THE USE OF MUSIC/SOUNDTRACK

Nollywood has attracted the attention of scholars and become a subject of critical discourse in recent years. The duo of Jonathan Haynes and Onokome Okome whose academic enquiry into Nollywood in 1994 may have wittingly or unwittingly laid the foundation for the quantum of scholarly attention that the Industry is enjoying today, may well be regarded as the scholarly pace setters. The inception, growth and development of Nollywood appears to have moved along unconventional lines especially taking into cognizance the initial structure in terms of production team, film distribution and marketing outlets as well as the artistic and technical composition of the industry. Over the years, the artistic composition of Nollywood film narratives have benefited from materials and ideas sourced from the Nigerian albeit African people's experiences and world view. These culturally flavoured productions have come to be regarded as the defining models for films produced in the industry. Although many see majority of the Nollywood films as lacking in artistic and technical finesse, one may not toe this popular line considering that the judgement is based on certain standards and conventions established by America's Hollywood, which do not take so many peculiarities of the Nigerian socio-economic environment into consideration. Issues such as lack of adequate funding, low level of technological advancement, the peculiarity of Nigerian social interactions and communal experiences and many others, have no doubt impacted on the end products of Nollywood and therefore, an interrogation based on

the interactions of these factors with the story and the production will produce an evaluation that is within the context of verisimilitude.

It is noteworthy to observe that Nollywood sound tracks are created economically to tell the story and convey the mood. As Olatunbosun opines:

Every good listener can attest to the fact that the lyrics of an average Nigerian movie soundtrack offers a window into the storyline. In fact, it is a sung-storyline. Ideally, the soundtrack is created to accompany the images in the video (Para 5).

In attempting to discuss Nollywood soundtrack, one needs to understand what film soundtracks stand for generally, in order to identify and appreciate the culture -specific peculiarities and the points of departure. Sound track generally refers to recorded music, dialogue and sound effects that are synchronized with visual images during editing, to capture the mood, heighten suspense and enhance the narrative of a film. Sound tracks are usually timed to begin and end at specific points during the film in order to enhance the dramatic narrative and the emotional impact of the scene on the audience. The director often determines the design of the soundtrack based on his ideological leaning and the concept of the production. In the arrangement of the sound composition of soundtracks, one notices that cultural preferences and musical practices become determining factors in the choice of sounds. The dynamism of culture reflects in most art forms especially the film medium which tends to derive its cultural expectations, codes and values from its society of origin.

Alamu makes this observation about Nollywood thus:

The thematic and aesthetic choices of Nollywood are determined to a large extent by the preferences of

its appeal. These themes are based on subjects such as infidelity, treachery, lust, hypocrisy, armed robbery, marital problem, murder, cultism and Occultism, witchcraft, polygamy, and so on. The themes are indeed broad and mirror the Nigerian society. To the filmmaker therefore, Nigerian society is a narrative entity and their (the film makers) films are the agents in this narrative act (166).

Although technically speaking, the film medium is a foreign concept, however, the content of many Nollywood films are built on materials derived from traditional Nigerian albeit African arts and practices. Many Africans have identified with Nollywood films despite the enticing artistic and technical aesthetics of foreign films that they had been exposed to and the reason is not farfetched. African films tell familiar stories in familiar settings with familiar characters using familiar songs and sound track. Accordingly Jonathan Haynes makes this observation:

The most remarkable aspect of the whole phenomenon is the fact that people do choose to watch Nollywood films made on an average budget of something like \$65,000, rather than a Hollywood movie where \$65,000 buys the coffee and donuts on the set. Nollywood films mostly have no advertising. It's all just word of mouth, especially when they're sold outside of Nigeria, in Brooklyn or all of the places in the U.S. or UK or Germany, or all of the places in the world where they're watched. All over the Caribbean, people are fanatical about Nollywood (128).

Nollywood has of course advanced beyond its tottering origins to occupy a pride of place as the second largest film industry in the

world, with many internationally acclaimed films emerging from its stable. Be that as it may, there is no gain saying the fact that films with folkloric musical contents have continued to occupy pride of place of as transmitters of African culture and identity. The folkloric content of some Nollywood music and soundtrack may have contributed to the huge success the films have recorded over the years, since these African oriented musical renditions and soundtracks evoke emotional responses and myriad cultural images from African oral tradition.

UNDERSTANDING AFRICAN FOLKLORE AND FOLKLORIC FORMS

Traditional African society employed the oral form of literary transmission especially the folkloric tradition in recording the people's norms, mores, values and indeed the totality of their world experience. Oral literature has such genres as prose narratives made up of myths, legends, folktales, sayings, proverbs, dialectical speech and folksongs. It also includes riddles, tongue twisters, lullabies, incantations and work songs. Storytelling and other forms of verbal art were popular and widespread forms of entertainment. Oral performance is a popular form of socio-cultural artistic exhibition through which traditional African society teaches, indoctrinates, admonishes and entertains members of the family or community. Oral performance here, defines a body of narratives, usually tales, songs, chants, legends, myths, poetry and proverbs which at some period in history were not recorded but were transmitted orally from story tellers to local audiences or from one artist to the other. Folktale which constitutes an important aspect of the oral performance culture of the African people, utilizes almost all elements of the dramatic medium. Performances could take the audience through different subject matters such as moral obligations; ethnic history; acceptable behaviour patterns; heroes and heroic achievements; domestic harmony; importance of good deeds and virtue; destructive tendencies of evil and so on. Folklore encompasses the entirety of the people's way of life. It is a miniaturized depository of wisdom and knowledge. One can

find songs, music, customs, beliefs, morality and perceptions about the universe and the supernatural as well as other elements incorporated into folk songs and folk tales. The metaphor, ideology and idioms explored in these tales tend to be culture-specific so that the oral performer and his/her audience share a common bond.

Folktales are employed to entertain, educate, re-enforce knowledge, create awareness and guide individuals towards taking culturally acceptable decisions. Folktale contents are often structured in such a way that they are imbued with certain narrative specificities that make them interesting and captivating especially for young minds. This adaptability in folktales enables storytellers to change and alter tales in order to suit their purposes as well as to adapt the stories to suit the aspirations of the local community. In various ways, extended family members find time and avenues to evolve means through which they teach, indoctrinate, admonish and entertain young people born within their families. In this way, children are taught to either adhere to or abstain from certain actions based on the tenets of the society within which they are born. Thus, children are trained to imbibe societal norms and values accordingly in order to avoid being caught in antisocial activities which oftentimes attract specified punishment.

Thus, Utoh- Ezeajugh refers to folktale performers as, custodians of oral history, who continually adapt and reshape the form and content of their stories. Folk tale narration is more than mere storytelling and singing. It is a performance and a performance has to catch and sustain the attention of the audience and this entails using dramatic techniques (82).

It appears that most performances in Africa are deeply rooted in the folkloric tradition which encompasses the indigenous arts and practices that inculcate the shared ideas and values of a particular

group and are passed on through oral performances. Folklore is a composite art form that utilizes narration, music, dance, drama, mime, symbols, call-and-response pattern and other dramatic elements. Folkloric performances utilize these elements to achieve effective characterisation and artistic synergy between the performer and the audience. The approach is always didactic and pedagogical. Asigbo corroborates this view by submitting that,

folklore and oral performance are aspects of culture and tradition which aim to teach morals, expose follies, extol the praiseworthy and create amusement. It equally expounds the mythological beliefs of people especially as it concerns natural phenomena... Storytelling has more social, ethical and aesthetic values which are usually projected through its context, themes and performance techniques. In traditional storytelling, the story teller as a matter of technique indulges in a lot of moralization (5).

Folktale performers are custodians of oral history and continually adapt and reshape the form and content of their stories. Folktale narration is more than mere storytelling and singing. It is a performance and a performance has to catch and sustain the attention of the audience and this entails using dramatic techniques. The illustrative songs which sometimes accompany these tales are more often than not in call and response pattern which enables the audience to be part of the story even as the story teller assumes the peculiar traits and actions of the various characters in the story. The responsorial and antiphonal nature of the songs make the tales not just entertaining but easy to understand and because the atmosphere is jovial and informal, the audience who are usually mostly children learn the hard lessons and morals of life without the constraints of a formal learning environment. In enacting the tales, the performer becomes more than a performer since he/she has to act, narrate and

even stand outside of himself/herself to comment on the events and the development of the story. In the course of dramatization, he/she deftly turns human and non human characters into powerful allegorical figures.

African folklore in its many divergent oral forms existed in many forms and styles with fairly little influence from outside Africa. African oral performance is so participatory in nature that during a performance, the audience are usually active participants who question, criticize and join in the tales, songs and dances. The songs during folktale or folksong performances in most cases function not just as rhythmic accompaniments but also as mediums to bring in fresh information; give exposition to puzzles or riddles arising from developments in the story or make comments on the story. Accordingly Osundare observes:

Traditional oral Africa thrives on the song; every occasion has its lyrics, even trivial incidents provoke a ballad. There are songs which mark the inexorable cycle of human existence- birth, puberty, marriage age and death. There are songs for cursing, songs of abuse....(67).

In folkloric performances, the communal ethos fosters interpersonal exchange and affirmation even while making room for extending the boundaries of what is expressively possible. Despite the sometimes radical changes orchestrated by modern living, many African communities have continued to evoke traditional ethos and engender communal aesthetics through the sustenance of oral performance cultures.

FOLKLORIC MUSIC AS AIDS TO FILM NARRATIVES IN *EYE OF THE KING* DIRECTED BY UGEZU J. UGEZU AND *MY LOVE STORY* DIRECTED BY MALACHY UGWOKE

The Nollywood approach to film music and soundtrack is unique in its incorporation of oral tradition and performance aesthetics. In analysing the soundtrack and music employed in the films- **Eye of the King** and **My Love Story**, it is also pertinent to examine their impact on the dialogue, picture composition and plot development in line with the communal consciousness evoked on the audience, as well as the images from African oral tradition which constitute the *mise en scene*. The film titled **Eye of the King** which was directed by Ugeze J. Ugeze may be classified as a contemporary Epic drama. The film narrative is woven around the attempts of King **Omeise na Ise** to marry another wife after years of being a widower. Unfortunately, his choice is not acceptable to his only daughter who had hitherto been the centre of his world. His daughter princess Chinyere wants him to marry her secondary school "mother" (term used for a senior student who takes up the role of a guardian to a junior student) Millicent, and this is not acceptable to the King either. The music and sound track for the film are created using African traditional instrumental accompaniments, and the songs are in folkloric call and response pattern, with the songs placed at strategic intervals either as comments on the unfolding actions, or as accompaniments to actions, or to pre-empt the actions or as alternative narratives. The songs are rendered in the indigenous language as a way of identifying and connecting with the local audience in the same manner as folk tales are interspersed with songs in the language of the local story teller. Accordingly, in Sylvanus estimation:

Many Nollywood film composers consider and affirm that the local dialect and Nigerian Pidgin English also play a significant role in the pleasures that local audiences derive from their soundtracks

and in making a genuine emotional connection
(104).

The Songs for the film **Eye of the King** are hereby presented in the indigenous language as rendered, and with English translation:

Song: Eze Omeise na lse

Onye Eze nke nwere ego

Onye Eze nke furu uzo

Song: Eze Omeise na lse (The name of the King)

The king that is rich

The king that possesses wisdom

Chorus: lfe Eze furu ofu nfu ekweghi mmadu aghota

Chorus: What the king could perceive at a glance, people are
finding it difficult to comprehend.

Song: Onye onye uno ya egbughi

Ndu ya ga-eto ogologo

Song: A person that is not killed by a close relative

Will live a long life.

Chorus: lfe Eze nere ofu anya wee fuu, ma ghotu ya nke oma

lfe Eze furu ofu nfu ka ana agbanu ya mgba

Chorus: What the King could comprehend at a glance

What the king could understand at once, people are
opposing his stance.

Song: Adighi abu Eze na nkiti

Ha wee gbagba Eze ngbugbaa

ka ha gbagbanu Eze aka

Song: One does not become a king by chance

And yet they were opposing the king

So that they will dispossess the king of his heart desire

The music basically details the travails of the King in his quest to marry Ngozi the lady he desires to make his bride and also

comments on his resolute nature not to succumb to pressure. In the same way that heroic songs are used to extol the qualities and recount the heroic exploits of warriors and notable heroes in traditional society, the composer combined elements from tradition and contemporary life, to produce a hybridized music which establishes an image of a man of valour in the person of the king thus:

Eze Omeise na Ise (The name of the King)
The king that is rich
The king that possesses wisdom

The music also comments on the unsuitability of Millicent as a wife for the king and the fact that the king is toeing the right path in rejecting her. Thus the chant "Ife Eze furu ofu nfu ka ana agbanu ya mgba" (What the King could comprehend at a glance, people are opposing his stance), becomes central to the thematic import of the film. The wordings of the songs are replete with African albeit Igbo traditional idiomatic expressions which aid the actions of the film to drive home the intended message to comprehending audiences; so that even when one is not conversant with the indigenous language in which the songs are composed, the African imagery evoked by the instrumentation, the rhythm and the tonal rendition will aid appreciation. Accordingly, Sylvanus reiterates that "as with many Nollywood films, 'the soundtrack and dialogue more than the camera reveals the story'" (136).

In the same mode, the film titled **My Love Story** which was directed by Malachy Ugwoke utilizes folkloric music and soundtrack steeped in African traditional sound production and rhythmic composition. The epic style film narrates the story of two lovers- Mma and Obinna who swear to remain together forever but are later almost separated by the devices of the scheming Oluchi who wants Obinna by all means. However, despite passing through many travails, their love triumphs at last. The folkloric music employed in the film provides both a commentary on their love story and an

endorsement of their love. The songs and their English translations are presented below:

Mma: Love m oh!

Ihunaya m onye m bu n'obi.

Mma: My love!

My love who occupies a special place in my heart

Obinna: Love m, achalugo enenebe eje oru

Odim n'obi.

Obinna: My love! beautiful gazelle! head turner!

The one who occupies a special place in my heart.

Obinna: Love m oh! (x4)

Onwere ihe ga ekewa anyi?

Obinna: My love! (x4)

Is there anything that can separate us?

Mma: Onwero love m

Mma: Nothing can separate us!

Obinna: Okwa Love m

Obinna: Behold my love!

Mma: (Kissing sound) Love Love m

Mma: (Kissing sound) My love! My love!

Obinna: Ihunaya gi n'egbu m ka mmanya

Obinna: Your love is intoxicating me.

Mma: Obi onye m ji eme onu

Mma: Obi, the man I boast about

Obiora: Eji kwa m gi eme onu

Obiora: I equally boast about you

Mma: Ncheta gi ike adi m

Mma: When I remember you, I am strengthened.

Obiora: Ike n'adikwa m

Obiora: I am also strengthened

Mma: Onwero ihe g'ekewa anyi

Mma: Nothing can ever separate us

Obiora: Love m onwero.

I g'abugide love m ganye n'uwa agwu
Ahukwara m gi n'anya. Love m

Obiora: My love, nothing can separate us
You will remain my love till the end of time.
I love you my love

Mma: Obi m n'obi ihunanya m

Mma: My Obi and my heart of love

In analysing the songs and the soundtrack used in **My Love Story**, one notices that the music does not just aid the narrative, it is also a narrative in its own right because the songs are rendered by the characters themselves thereby substituting dialogue at those critical points. The characters' emotions are brought to bear on the wordings of the songs and in their renditions. The songs are in simple call and response form, making it possible for the audience to pick up the response and join in. An example is:

Obinna: Love m oh! (x4)

Onwere ihe ga ekewa anyi ?

Obinna: My love! (x4)

Is there anything that can separate us?

Mma: Onwero love m

Mma: Nothing can separate us my love!

Mma: Obi onye m ji eme onu

Mma: Obi, the man I boast about

Obiora: Eji kwa m gi eme onu

Obiora: I equally boast about you

The interspersing of actions with songs enabled the director to effectively bridge gaps between actions and achieve intensity in story arrangement, which ultimately aided in advancing the plot. In analysing these songs, one notices that the composer has made attempts to employ important words and phrases from the dialogue and plot of the film, in composing the songs. Words such as "Love m" (My love), and phrases such as "You will remain my love till the end of time", become both song, affirmation and narrative. The implication of this is that the music is intricately

interwoven with the actions thereby establishing it as an integral part of the narrative. Thus the strength of the love between the two characters, Obinna and Mma is captured in the phrases of the songs in a style similar to declarations of love and loyalty in traditional folk music thus:

Mma: My love!

My love who occupies a special place in my heart

Obinna: My love! beautiful gazelle! head turner!

The one who occupies a special place in my heart.

Is there anything that can separate us?

Mma: Nothing can separate us!

The songs are rendered in the indigenous (Igbo) language and the music specifically simulates a traditional setting that is evocative of Igbo folk music and dance. The songs explicitly employ an integration of indigenous musical instruments such as the flute, the twin metal gong, the wooden hand-clappers and traditional drums to achieve an ethno-cultural appeal reminiscent of folktale performances in open spaces on moonlit nights. Nollywood composers have no doubt developed a style that is geared towards harnessing the unique creative artistry of African musical heritage and translating these into modern musical narratives capable of ferrying the appropriate emotions, thoughts, words and actions of film characters across to receptive audiences in Africa and beyond. The songs may pre-empt actions, introduce actions, accompany narratives, comment on unfolding events, forewarn about impending occurrences and so on. The soundtrack and music utilised in these films are created in the African folkloric tradition where songs narrate stories with a didactic bent and explain, pre-empt, comment on, or accompany actions. Folklore is a composite art form that utilizes narration, music, dance, drama, mime, symbols, call-and-response pattern and other dramatic elements. Folkloric performances utilize these elements to achieve effective

characterisation and artistic synergy between the performer and the audience.

CONCLUSION

Film music and sound track are conventionally created to add tempo, rhythm, pace, emotional intensity and mood to film narratives and in the process, aid audience understanding of the unfolding story. Since the inception of the Nigerian Film Industry, Nollywood composers have been facing the challenge of carving out an identity for African film music even in the midst of inherited conventions. In a bid to tackle this challenge, some composers have evolved a style that incorporates African performative and folkloric forms into their narratives by creating a hybridized form of film music and sound track which is unique in content and form and which exemplifies a special blend of African folk music. Nollywood composers have deliberately sidelined conventional use of instrumental sound tracks to create their own unique style which leverages on African oral traditions. These composers utilize materials from oral tradition to create folkloric musical accompaniments to film narratives. This infusion of folkloric music forms into film narratives has given a unique African identity to the films and is proving to be one of the significant attractions for audiences. The Nollywood approach to film music and soundtrack is unique in its incorporation of oral tradition and performance aesthetics and this has gone a long way to satisfy the deep longing for the cultural images evoked by the renditions. Issues discerned from an analysis of the two films used as paradigms in the study, go to buttress the point that the folkloric style hybridized music which has emerged is unique for several reasons- it has provided an identity marker for African films; it has bestowed an aesthetic distinction on the films and it is translating film actions and narratives into ethno-cultural communication capable of mesmerizing both local and international audiences.

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