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Exploring Pop Music in Nigeria for Sustainable Youth Empowerment and Development: Uniport R'tune Music Show in Perspective

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Abstract

Pop music is popularly referred to or suggested as the most acceptable music genre in contemporary societies around the world today. This perception is common amongst the youths in the contemporary society. In Nigeria, it is everyday music on media. The level of its acceptability has led to a culture of obsession among Nigerian youths, not merely as music to be enjoyed but also as a window to money making venture, job creation opportunity and fame. Although, the categories of popular music in Nigeria include highlife music, Afrobeat, Juju music, jazz, raps, hip pop, reggae, etc. The pop music on this discourse is centred on the new trend of Hip pop music, Rhythm and Blues, Reggae and Rap music as prevalent in the Nigeria pop music scene today. These music genres commonly imbibe the juxtaposition of Nigerian and American pop music style which has become the trend in the twenty-first century Nigerian pop music. However, it has not only put Nigerian pop stars on the face of global pop superstars but, it has also forced most Nigerian youths to search inward for potentials that could transform them into multimillionaires, million-dollar job creators and famous artistes. Therefore, this paper examines pop music in Nigeria beyond its entertainment and

enlightenment motivated, but with emphasis on its role in sustaining youth empowerment and development. Sample materials for the study includes, pop music show business in the University of Port Harcourt and its environs, young pop music artistes who depend on music skill as source of livelihood etc. Data was collected through personal observation, in-depth interviews and literature review. However, this paper observed that among other things, pop music has boosted the entrepreneurial skill for self-reliance and development amongst Nigerian youths. It has played a vital role in nation building via provision of employment, poverty alleviation and contribution to national economy.

Introduction

Pop music has generally been considered as music for the masses, perhaps, because of its popularity and level of acceptance by the general public. Pop is a genre of music that appeals to the mass audience, it is very popular in the media, club houses, shows and other social events. Pop music in Nigeria makes use of simple melodic lines that are easily committed to memory. Its texts are more often rooted in the popular cultural trend of the present society, traditional music and sometimes church music. According to Cambridge Advanced Learners dictionary-3rd Edition, 'pop music (formal popular music) is modern popular music, usually with strong beats, created with electronic or electronic equipment, and easy to listen to and remember'. Pop music in Nigeria usually evokes meanings from incidents or experiences of the society. In return, it gives some slogans and slangs that are used by the general public for the period of that music reign. Pop music is built on the people's ideas and views therefore, it represents and sometime connects with ideas and opinions of the ordinary people who are in most cases, the majority of the national population. In Nigerian case, the production and consumption of pop music is more prevalent amongst the youths, between the ages of 15 and 45 years of age. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2003) characterized pop music as modern music that is popular, especially with young people, and usually consists of simple tunes with strong beats. Onyeji (2002), described it as music that is readily comprehensible to the public. In Hall's view (1994), popular music is produced and is sold to a broad audience who are the main consumers of such products. These implies that pop music is public oriented, it targets at the public and the happening at the time thus, the life span of each pop music released in Nigeria is usually very short. As new release is addressing the issue at hand the previous one slowly leaves the public sphere.

However, pop music genre mutates as the society changes. In Nigeria, pop music has experienced lots of transformation over time both in rhythmic style and performance practices to suit the prevalent development in Nigerian society. As society changes, the popular music follows. The technological advancement with its digital culture has influenced boundary elimination, enhancement of media and social media

interaction, use of digital camera, portable computer and other associated software, have yet introduced a new trend in Nigerian pop music scene. Hence, with the aid of technological equipment, mini music studio could be set up, music show-business is made easy and talented youths enhance their music skills with computer aids. These developments have placed an average Nigeria youths on the verge of believing that he/she possesses some artistic quality especially, in music pop. Seeing the money venture and fame that goes with pop music assists, their folks who are envious of the development are forcing musical skill out of themselves.

Ironically, this music genre that is now the dream of most Nigerian youths was earlier regarded as music for the common, school drop outs and inferior music genre, because it does not need too much of academic musicality as found in Art music and classical or school music. Yet, in present day Nigeria situation, it controls the highest music related business in Nigeria and also around the world, which was why Appadurai (1996) referred to pop music as a worldwide phenomenon. It has taken over the music scene of contemporary Nigeria societies and to some extent the local communities' music too. It accompanies itself with lots of commercial avenues for the empowerment and benefits of common people, especially those with little or no academic qualification. In Nigeria, most pop musicians are not product of high academic's school music. Some pop musicians in Nigeria learn music by rote method, others sprang up from church choirs, while the rest grew out of mere belonging to traditional music group; yet, this music genre encapsulates the better aspect of music business in Nigeria music scene. It has dominated music market both in the virtual and real market, and has also overridden other music genres products in the media. The opportunities presented by pop music have gone a long way in empowering Nigerian youth, helping them to tackle issues of unemployment, as well as poverty alleviation.

The twenty first century Nigerian society has faced the alarming rate of unemployment, even some of those who are already employed are losing their job as computer technology and the internet connectivity takes over their jobs / businesses. Unemployment has become the cancer worm that eats deep into the nation's social and economic stability. Pop music in this same era has not only functioned as a dominant factor for youth economic empowerment and reduction of unemployment but, has massively contributed in building of national economy, political stability and overall socio-cultural well-being of Nigerian societies. This has come to stay for sustainable development of the nation Nigeria and her citizens. Sustainable development according to Modeme (2015) is 'a development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own need' (68).

This development has contributed positively to talented young pop musicians in Nigeria who are neglected due to lack of training and finance. Today children of the elite are sponsored into it by their parent as can be seen in the case of Davido. Davido

is a son of a Billionaire Businessman Dr. Deji Adeleke. He had also gone ahead to train himself through University and came out with first-class honors in Music from Babcock University.



David Adeleke Adeleke Popularly known with artist name Davido

Picture taken from NaijaGists.com

In the same manner lots of graduate and undergraduates in Nigeria are making their living and sponsor their studies via pop music. This implies that pop music development has introduced a behaviour that can sustain it indefinitely into the future. Pop music in Nigeria has come to stay. It may only evolve in style and performance practices. In addition, pop music has succeeded in finding its way into school music and getting the attention of musicologists. Gone are the days when pop music was perceived as negative and inferior music. Presently, the audience and economy it controls have gained the attention of the elites, academic musicians or music scholars and federal government. This demonstrates the steps of sustainability that pop music has delivered to Nigerian community and particularly to young pop stars.

Pop Music in Nigeria

Pop music in Nigeria is known for its unique rhythmic pattern, catchy lyrics and tunes which are usually captivating, luring and most of them are very danceable. Just like every other popular music, Nigerian pop music is purely entertainment and commercially based. Pop music which was regarded as inferior or non-useful music meant for school dropouts and touts has gained strong popularity in the past decade. With Nigerian Pop stars measuring with the global pop musicians particularly

American pop artistes, coupled with the economic controlling power of the profession have caught national audience and attention. The common people, music scholars, elites and particularly the youths have found a covering from unemployment and economic boost in the country. Directly or indirectly, pop music in Nigeria has served as a powerful tool for youth empowerment and national development. These supported the global consensus on musicianship as an entrepreneurial skill which empowers an individual mentally, physically, socially, politically, technologically and economically. This notion is clearly witnessed in the Nigerian pop music scene. Pop music skill equips individual with the skills and knowledge that helps to transform lives and societies. Okafor (2005) opined that,

The development of musicians and continuity of musical arts should be the main thrust of music education. The institutions of education should therefore be equipped to mould the development of music in the society and to make strong input into musical expressions that are fashionable, acceptable and available (p. 347).

This if not taken into consideration can leave Nigeria music practices loose and culturally unidentifiable as a result of influence from global music. The technology revolution which gave birth to digital culture has introduced a new trend of music production and performance practices in Nigeria, dissemination and consumption via media; radio, television, internet, print and mobile phones. This sprang up the new or modern trend of popular music termed pop in the short form. This trend includes disco, rhythm and blues; hip pop, raps etc. They already have their base on the juxtaposition of different cultural music traits and idioms. Omojola (2006) also observed that modern African popular music is quite often a product of two or more distinct streams of cultural influences. In Nigeria, the dual musical cultures mostly prevalent in the pop music scene revolve around borrowing from Nigerian folk / traditional tunes, Nigerian church music and American musical styles. The absorption of American musical style was instigated by media broadcast. Okafor (2005) expressed that,

Formal music education came to Nigeria by way of Western institutions, drawing from the cultural traditions of Western societies. On the other hand, the media and other agencies have brought in other types of music acceptable in Western societies outside academic sectors. Musical and cultural contact has given birth to the contemporary popular music of Nigeria that integrates Nigerian and non-Nigerian elements. With the growth of city life, commerce, industry and communication, this music has grown in popularity, in some cases sweeping every other thing aside. The attendant 'pop phenomenon' also means that cultural intrusion from outside Nigeria has grown more menacing (347).

Nigerian pop music artistes in their quest to compete and measure up with their American contemporaries have evoked assiduousness and industriousness in music business. As a result, the records of Nigerian pop musicians have overtaken African music market both on line (virtual world) and off line (the real world) making Nigeria artistes the most popular and richest pop music stars in West Africa. The aid of technology remains the major contributing factor to this huge success of pop music in Nigeria. Euba (1971) submits that technologies for communications and trade have given way for introduction of new styles of popular music partly European, partly Oriental and partly hybrid of African and Caribbean or western hemispheric music. This view was summarized by Graham (1988) in Oikelome (2008) as thus,

Contemporary African music is also highly diversified, but shares many characteristics of Western popular music in the mid-twentieth-century. Beginning with the advent of recording technology and the development of recording industries, contemporary African music has been heavily influenced by Rhythm and blues (R&B), American soul music, Jamaican Reggae, and other musical forms from America. Even though some styles and idioms of popular are derived from African sources, the technology, styles and performance occasions have changed to reflect the changing world.

However, digital culture and globalization have helped in the reconstruction and improvement on the perception of pop music and musicians in Nigeria. The awareness of music digitalization and improvement on music recording, production, performance, dissemination and particularly its marketability have set a new standard perception and acceptance of pop music amongst the Nigerian youths.

Pop Music as a Source of Economic Empowerment and Development in Nigeria

Pop music in Nigerian has opened up a business venture to highly skilled pop musicians and armatures alike. The invention of digital camera, digitally assisted musical equipment's and instrument have assisted in boosting up the works of pop musicians in Nigeria. The popular music industry in Nigeria holds great economic potentials. This is seen in the increase number of record sales which turned Nigerian artistes into multimillionaires and creation of unstable employments. According to Emielu (2011), the statistics of record sales in Nigeria shows that in 1981, 4.5million records were sold; in 1986 5.5million; in 1991 8.5million and in 1995, 12 million records were sold nationwide. In the year 2000, the World Bank estimate of music sales around the world stood at 6 billion dollars per year. A quarter of this estimate (\$1.5 billion dollars), is said to be derived from African music, especially the popular music genre of which bulk of the artistes are Nigerian pop stars. Because of the huge potential of the music industry in Africa, the World Bank has agreed in principle to divert a substantial part of its annual \$300 million dollars' allocation for culture to six

African countries. There is therefore a huge economic potential in the popular music industry which if fully tapped, can replace crude oil as the mainstay of Nigeria's economy. However, Nigeria can tap into these huge potentials and the economic lifeline provided by the World Bank, which will translate in concrete terms into actual and sustainable empowerment.

Survey of Young Pop-Stars and Their Music Business in Port Harcourt

Port Harcourt is the capital city of River state which is located in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Port Harcourt city is a cosmopolitan society where level of industrialization and urbanization has constituted to the city being regarded as one of the contemporary Nigerian society. Port Harcourt city remains the nerve centre for famous Nigerian oil industry with over ninety industrial concerns, including the Shell Petroleum Development Company of (Nigeria) Limited, AGIP, Texaco, Elf, NPRC, Michelin, West African Glass Industry, Alcan Aluminium, Metaloplastica, Risonpalm, NAFCON, etc. Pop music industries and their related business are the part of the recent industry that is booming in the city of Port Harcourt. The Musical life in Port Harcourt city revolves more around classical music in churches (particularly George Fredrick Handel's musical works) while pop music takes on in the secular society. Therefore, while classical music finds its place in the church choirs, the pop music takes on social music used in clubs, parties and every other social occasions and events.

Pop music life is very vibrant in the city of Port Harcourt and has opened various windows for related jobs. Most of the pop music businesses are taken over by youths. They not only make a living from their pop musical performances but also open doors of opportunities for other musically talented individuals like dancers, rappers, music engineers, singers, event managers, and instrumentalist. Most artistes interviewed for the purpose of this study were born and brought up in Port Harcourt City. They make their living out of their pop music business. Some of them are already sponsoring their university education in preparation for future challenges. These were ascertained from interview and interaction had with some owner of pop music show business and other talented individuals who are moving with the trend, such as the director and artistes of R'tunes pop music show business at the University of Port Harcourt.

- **THE R'TUNE MUSIC**

The R'tunes show is one of Pop music show business that is very popular amongst students at University of Port Harcourt. The R'tunes music show rocks the University of Port Harcourt campus every semester. Below is the handbill of the most recent open door music show held in the first semester of 2014/2015 academic session.



R'TUNE MUSIC SHOW PANFLECT

The R'tunes music show is manned by a young pianist named Okonny, Leroi Monday, popularly called Leroi. He organizes pop music shows within and around the University campus environment every semester. His target audiences are undergraduates and lecturers, as confirmed in an interview,

I try to mix my music to appeal to all ages of life, but it was obvious that young people often constitutes majority of my audience. I have seen professors and lecturers attending my music shows and I try to add some highlife flavor at such occasions. My Main focus actually is on students and young lecturers. I use to play in clubs around town where we mix all sort of music genres to suit the taste of our diverse audience. But now that I am studying, I thought it wise to bring my pop music show business closer to my immediate environment. (Leroi)



Leroi Monday Okonny: The Managing Director of R'tunes Show

Leroi is a native of Abua/ Odua Local Government Area of Rivers State. He was born in Port Harcourt and has lived in Port Harcourt all his life. Leroi was born into a music family; music family in the sense that his father and all his brothers are multi-instrumentalists. Hence, he started developing love for music from childhood. His initial exposure to musical instrument handling and playing made his father to buy a piano and a bass-guitar for him at the age of five. His father also employed pianist who was also a bass-guitar instructor for the purpose of training his five-year-old' Leroi Monday Okonny'.

Church also played a big role in the development of Leroi's musical career. His father was a Double-Bass player in the church, his brothers also played in the church therefore, the first place that Leroi started playing before the public was in the church when he joined the instrumental group in the church. Leroi had played piano for many churches before he drifted to club Jazz player. Borrowing from all these musical experiences and exposures, Leroi did not find it difficult to establish his own musical show where he employs other skilled musicians to spice up his shows. Not for free, every artist that participates in R'tunes music show goes home with his pay. This music business has come to stay in the city of Port Harcourt as many young artists look forward to it every academic semester.

I started with jazz which is the genre of music I love most. Although my foundation was church jazz concerts but I later joined a band called 'Fuse ensemble band'. We have played in clubs around Government Reserved Area (GRA) here in Port Harcourt. I left the band because I want to further my studies and the easiest way I can sustain myself and sponsor my university education is to set up R'tune show. At least me being the boss, nobody will dictate for me. Now, I arrange all my musical shows and concerts to fall in line with my academic calendar in a way that no one disturbs the other. (Leroi)

Leroi is a great pianist and bass guitar player. He is more prominent with the piano. He confirmed that 'though I play guitar, piano and a bit of some other musical instrument, piano is my preferred musical instrument'. He arranges and rearranges most musical works for his concerts. He as well runs a bit of talk show in his concerts. R'tunes music show involves other artistes who use the avenue of the show to display their musical talent and skills, as well as making money from the show.



Leroi playing at his outdoor night show at University of Port Harcourt

R'tunes shows opens a window of money making opportunity for other skilled musicians and related talents who get involved or participate in the show. Other professionals such as singers, dancers, rappers and instrumentalist are invited to perform and they all get paid at the end of every show as confirmed at the interview with Leroi. 'I pay every artiste that performed at my show equally. None goes without

the money and I don't grade one artist higher than the other because we are all talented in different areas. I make money from my shows on campus and all performers are paid equally, after the show'. Below are some artistes that future in the 2014 R'tunes show held at the Delta Park Quadrangle University of Port Harcourt.



Jeffery Jackson and his backup singer performing

Jeffrey Jackson who is presently a year two student at University of Port Harcourt is one of the upcoming pop artists who won the airtel inter-campus music contest. He is presently hosting and performing at different pop music scene within Port Harcourt City and Lagos at the moment. At the intra-campus contest held in 12 tertiary institutions, two contestants from each school were selected. Six winners emerged and Jeffrey Jackson was the winners from South-South region. The winners from each region were rewarded with opportunities to produce a music track with a popular Nigerian music producer and DJ. At the final contest Jeffrey Jackson became the overall winner was presented with the grand prize of a brand new 'Kia Picanto Car'. He was known for performing at music shows but his emerging a winner with airtel contest have landed him the opportunity of signing contracts with bigger music record labels and producers. The airtel Publicity for the contest is seen below;

Airtel One Mic Music Talent Hunt [Uniport Edition] “South South”



Airtel Nigeria has announced the kick-off of the second phase of Airtel One Mic, a music talent-hunt by the telecoms company to discover talents in Nigerian tertiary institutions.



Jeffery Jackson, the winner of Airtel one Mic Music hunt (Uniport Edition) collecting the car key from Airtel official. Standing by his left is the former Vice Chancellor, University of Port Harcourt, Prof. Joseph A. Ajeinka



Chyms the drummer, displaying at R'tunes pop music show

Chimezirim Marvellous Alozie popularly known as Chyms the drummer is a popular and an outstanding drummer who started playing drums in the church at the age of seven (7). His father is a multi-instrumentalist and the general overseer of Glorious Faith Bible Church Port Harcourt. All his siblings are both singers and instrumentalists. Hence, Chyms musical skill was moulded by the church musical

activities. Chimezirim is a native of Ukwa West Local Government Area of Abia State but he was born and bred in Port Harcourt.

However, Chimezirim musical life so far has been within and outside the church. Outside of church Chyms has played for different Bands in Port Harcourt, such band as House of Ephraim band and Anieties Music group. Spending over eight (8) years of his life with different bands had helped him build up drumming heroism. Presently, he has been engaged by many churches as well as clubs as an instructor to train the amateur drummers. Chyms is one of the young contemporary drummers in Port Harcourt that are making living out of there musical skills. Not only is he independent of his parents, he is training upcoming drummers to be financially independent as himself. He strongly believed that pop music has come to stay and it has future for Nigerian youths. He stated that,

I have no other plan for my life other than improving on my musical skill. When I look at my role models and what they have achieved in life with their musical skill, I know that pop music has come to bell us from the chain of poverty and unemployment that is driving many Nigerian youths mad. I have two role models. They are, Calvin Rodgers and Tony Royster both of them are in the United Kingdom.



Ihechi Elizabeth Achom, a singer and a dancer at R'tunes outdoor show doing what she knows best

Ihechi Elizabeth Achom is a super soprano singing who also started sing very early in life. Like other performers, she grew out of church music. She had been a lead

singer of Christ Embassy Church for years. She has featured in many music albums both classical and pop music. Ihechi is presently a final year student of Music Department, University of Port Harcourt. The likes of Ihechi may not bother about job search after graduation because, she has already carved out a business niche with her musical skills which is on high demand in Nigerian contemporary societies such as Port Harcourt city.



Olufumilayo Sarah Masebinu: Another singer on display

Olufumilayo Sarah Masebinu is an alto singer who always takes the role of a backup singer, and sometimes takes part as the lead singer. Her roles in every performance bring out the artistic and creative beauty of the music performed. After every performance, she receives as much pay as every other music artiste who featured in the show. Fumi Grew up in Lagos and speaks Yoruba fluently.

Other major artistes who performed in the R'TUNE show whom time did not permit me to get their details for the sake of this research are seen below. The pictures of their performance at the show and instrument they play at different point both a solo and backups were with them. All of these people make up the young artists of our time whom by virtue of their talents in pop music have exonerate themselves from the poverty and unemployment that is hitting thousands of Nigerian youths today.



Other Instrumentalists that feature in R'tunes out door shoe at University of Port Harcourt

Sustainability of Pop Music in Nigeria

Olumuyiwa Onabanjo when interviewed by BBC (British Broadcasting Commission) his submissions as summarized by Emielu (2013) maintained that African popular music is rooted in the traditional music of African music, he believed that the wealth of rhythmic style in the Nigerian pop music can sustain it for as long as possible. However, this is not the only reason for sustainability of pop music in Nigeria. The financial output of pop music in Nigeria has attracted lots of attention, no wonder Nigerian network owners have bought into this trend of showcase of pop music talent show, as a way of promoting their products amongst the populists as well as empower the Nigerian youths. Almost all network providers in Nigeria are into this pop music business. Etisalat tagged their own music competition television series 'Nigerian Idol', MTN tagged theirs 'Project Fame', Globacom is financing the Nigerian version of the British music reality TV series, 'X-Factor Nigeria', while Airtel company run regional music competition tagged 'Airtel One Mic Music Talent Hunt' and also is the chief sponsor of Airtel Trace *Music Star competition* around African countries. Nigerian Pop music may be justified as a sustainable development considering the wide patronage it is enjoying in the world music space.

Pop stars like Tu face, Psquare, D'banji, Timaya, Flavour, Phyno and so many others who started as vulnerable young stars and now have struggle themselves into the

music lime light and beyond Nigerian shore to global figure. When talk about Wiskid who just came up on the scene of Nigerian pop music in less than a decade and is worth over millions of US dollars. This multimillion dollar business raises a slight feel of envy among Nigerian youths who form the huge fans of these pop stars. Average Nigerian youths now make effort every day to discover pop music skill in them. Emielu (2013) asserts that popular music remains the dominant music in modern industrialised and urbanized societies in most part of the world. In Africa it is the most listened – to category of music in contemporary society and sometimes in rural environments too.

In addition to the above factors which have contributed to the thrive of pop music in Nigeria, so much can also be put in place to aid in the sure sustenance of pop music in Nigeria, such measures as governmental sponsorship of this aspect of entertainment industry. This will go a long way to help in the acquiring more sophisticated equipment and digital musical instrument to aid the production of their music. It will also aid the less privileged individuals who are musically talented to showcase and sell their talents which will not only empower the individual but also contributes to national economy. Another measure in sustenance of pop music in Nigeria can also come by way of Universities and cultural institution imbibing the culture of accommodating and promoting pop music programmes and its performance practices in Nigeria. In that way, the perception of pop music could gain new image as serious music.

On the side of the pop music artistes, the Nigerian music artistes have a lot to do to necessitate the rebuild the image of their music genre. The frequent show of sexuality, nudity, and use of vulgar words in their choice of texts should be checked to enable some degree of integrity and morals in the pop music products. More effort should be taken to ensure that while entertaining, the pop music also have some educational and informative benefit to the listeners which will help to direct the society rightly. This point is very vital because, the persistence of nudity and sexuality in Nigerian pop music has propelled some religious institution to brand pop music and termed it as ‘satanic oriented’. Also some governmental agencies had in some cases banned some pop music as a result of degree of nudity and sexual content in their music.

Conclusion

Prior the advent of new technology and computer assisted machines, the state of pop music in Nigeria was more of school dropouts’ music or sort of tout music meant for only amusement. Such music was hardly thought in the higher institution. Okafor (2005) had earlier cried out that special demands of contemporary popular music in Nigeria receive no attention. Thereby making qualification in music to mean qualification in in western music, classical music with a few credit hours allocated to ethnomusicology. But he admitted that the quality, quantity and genres of popular music available in the society depend, to some extent on the access to technology.

In Nigeria today, pop musicians are among the richest in the country and they are adored by their fans while flaunting their multimillion dollars flashy cars, exuberant buildings and sexy girls in their music albums, which has become the order of the day. The huge impact of pop music in Nigeria and its influence and cultural construct has forced the intelligentsia to begin to drop the idea of pop music as inferior or negative music. The study of pop music is presently creeping steadily into the classroom music learning. This has created rooms for pop musicians to fit into school music while maintaining their life career and genres of music. The present state of pop music in Nigeria has not only changed its perception as fun music but, it has also created jobs both for individual empowerment and for nation building. Consequently, the younger generation cues into pop music performance practices, not only as a mean for famous and entertainment but also for skill acquisition and entrepreneurship. No doubt, pop music may change in style as societies and culture changes but, sustainability is sure in Nigeria

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Oral interview

Chimezirim Marvellous Alozie, The Drummer aged 26

Gavin Ichendu , A studio manager 26 years old

Leroi Monday Okonny , Director of R'tunes Show aged 27

Olufumilayo Sarah Masebinu, A singer 25 years old