

Gospel and secular music in Nigeria: A marriage of controversy

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Abstract

Delineation between Nigerian gospel and secular music has been a subject of academic debate over the years, the current state of the two genres in the area of performance most times makes it almost impossible to differentiate between the two. In terms of instrumentation, performance practice, mannerism, dance movement and many more, there seems not to be a dividing line between the two even though they are separate genres of music. It is against this backdrop that this paper explores the features of both Nigeria gospel and secular music. This is to determine the boundary line between gospel and secular music. It will also serve as a background and establish a platform to build the argument on the hybridisation of Christian gospel music in Nigeria.

Keywords: Gospel, Secular, marriage and Controversy

Introduction

There are various definitions of gospel music. These definitions rely on the observation and perception of the individual who defines the term. One common ground in all of these definitions most often is that gospel music centre on the life, teachings, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other words, it is the music that centres on the love of God towards mankind. Hence the notion that gospel music is “a brand of Christians music that dwell on telling others especially outsiders the good news in christianity”¹. Secular music on the other hand, is the opposite of sacred (gospel inclusive) music. It is a kind of music composed for non-religious purpose. It has no connection with any religion but occasionally borrows ideas from any religious theme depending on the context of performance though that does not make it sacred. The solemnity and tranquility expected of sacred (gospel) music is not a yardstick to measure secular music because it is not expected to be, for it is temporal in nature with no spiritual affinity. Basically, its function is to excite and entertain the listener even if the excitement is for a while. From the definitions above, it's evident that gospel and secular are different genres of music though with some similarity. It's this similarity at times that has informed the controversy trailing whether a particular music is gospel or secular. Hence, the significant of a study of this nature so that each music can be properly categorized under the genre it belong to.

Features of Gospel Music

Must possess the teaching and life of Christ



The teaching and life of Jesus Christ is *sine qua non* to gospel music. Without this, there cannot be gospel because the “good news about Jesus Christ, His birth, works, atoning death, resurrection and the hope of salvation, healing, deliverance, provision and the after-life provided by Him (Jesus)²” is what gospel is all about. This good news, as Japheth rightly puts it, derives its name from its close “connection with the gospel books of the New Testament. The books of the gospel are St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John, all of which preach... love, salvation, goodness, healing and many more^{3,1} Therefore, these teachings and life of Christ are the ingredients that make up the gospel and even informed the name gospel music. Hence, any music that is devoid of this, directly or indirectly, cannot be categorised as gospel music.

Lyrics must Directly or Indirectly have a Biblical Base

The lyrics of any genre of music are assumed to a large extent to determine the genre of that music and as such should not be ambiguous to the listener so as to decipher the genre of that music. In the same vein, gospel music can only be gospel if the lyrics depict that. Any ambiguity in the lyric which should have been about the teaching of Christ, will be suggestive of something different from the music. Hence, this can only be achieved if the lyrics are directly or indirectly connected to the Bible. The connection of the lyrics to the Bible directly or indirectly will contribute immensely to the potency of the music which is expected to cater for all the needs of the listeners in whatever form it may present itself. This is because lyrics that are biblically based or indirectly connected to the Bible will only exemplify properly the teaching of Christ which is all about the love, goodness, mightiness, awesomeness and greatness of God and thereby drawing the listeners closer to God which is at the centre of the music. Therefore, the lyrics of gospel music or what is regarded as gospel music should be devoid of lyrics of mundane things that have no biblical connection either directly or indirectly which only excite the listeners rather than draw people closer to God and in turn, lead to the upliftment of their souls.

The Singer or Musician must be one that is Living the Life of Christ

Living the life of Christ by the musicians is an indispensable feature of gospel music any musician who want to ply the trade of gospel music. As earlier documented and by the virtue of the nomenclature ‘gospel’ attached to the musician, a gospel musician is “someone who ministers with, or performs ‘gospel music’⁴. By implication, gospel musicians are recognised by² their brand

1 Adedeji, Femi. Definitive and conceptual issues in Nigeria gospel music. Nigeria Music Review 2, (2001). P.46 -55.

3 Japheth, T. Gospel music in the contemporary church. Jos; Tishbeth publisher. (2010).p.1

4 Adedeji, Femi. The making of a gospel musician (Theological and pragmatic perspectives). Ile-Ife: Timade Ventures. (2015) p.2

5. Emielu ,A. I am a music minister and not a musician: Social identity in contemporary African music. Nigerian Music Review no 13. Ile-Ife: Timade Ventures. (2014) p. 116

6. Adedeji, Femi. The making of a gospel musician (Theological and pragmatic perspectives). Ile-Ife: Timade Ventures. (2015) p.4

of music which is expected to be about the gospel of Jesus Christ. If the message of the gospel musician in his music is about Christ then living the life of Christ becomes a must. He or she must be a worthy ambassador of the gospel, as the popular saying goes "you cannot give what you don't have". Therefore, artiste who does not live by the tenets of the Christians faith stands to be criticised if he or she brand the music as gospel music. Some artistes are victims of this phenomenon because the lyrics of their music portrayed that of gospel music but their life is the opposite of the gospel. This type of scenario only attests to the fact that gospel music is beyond the lyrics though that also is equally important but not sufficient to take away or overlook the importance of living the life according to the teachings of Christ which is the gospel in their music. This Emielu confirmed that "it is necessary to state that singing a gospel song does not necessarily make a popular musician a gospel artiste⁵". Adedeji lending credence to the assertion by Emielu, affirmed that, "the unbelievers singing gospel songs are not gospel musicians...only people that are Christians and specialised in gospel music are gospel usicians⁶". This simply sums up our argument that living a life of Christ is one important characteristic of gospel music that cannot be over emphasised.

Gospel Music should create the Proper Mood for the Message

In term of message, gospel music is clear as to the kind of message that should be packaged in the music. Christ who is the gospel is the central message of gospel music. His attributes, the wonders he had wrought, the succor he can provide and his mission to mankind are the messages embedded in gospel music and can be in different forms. These messages as categorised by Adedeji are "Invitation/evangelism, praise/worship, admonition/exhortation, prayer/prophecies, warfare, Christian festival messages, eschatology, socio-political/cultural issues and assorted themes"⁷. For these messages to be properly disseminated then, a proper mood is required, if not, the message will be lost as a result of the mood that is not in consonant with the music. Mood, which is closely connected with emotion, that is, the emotion that is dominant in an individual's mind, prepares such mind for the incoming message whether it will absorb the message or not. Therefore, creating a wrong mood in any work of art (music inclusive) will always make the mind unreceptive to the intended message

Gospel Music should be Inspired by God

Unifying the heart of men through music is only a feat that can be achieved by God's inspiration given to men. Gospel music that has stood the test of time and equally unifies the heart of men then and now has truly confirmed that such music was inspired by or come as a revelation from God.³

This might be difficult to explain scientifically because "revelations are not scientifically explained, at the same time they are not scientifically

⁷ Adedeji, Femi. The making of a gospel musician (Theological and pragmatic perspectives). Ile-Ife: Timade Ventures. (2015) p.23

disapproved...scientific studies might have not been able to discover the mystery of divine revelation but they are experientially indefatigable”⁸.

This brings to bear the theological theory as advocated for by Pass (1989), Strawbridge (2000) and Adedeji (2007). The theory according to Adedeji (2015, p.6) demands that “any sacred music practice and study should be rooted in serious theological philosophy and approach”. Inspirations by God or revelation from God are phrases domiciled in theological theory and this accommodates our argument in the discourse concern. Music that lack inspiration from God therefore cannot be classified as gospel music. Though many gospel musicians claimed to be inspired by God which always result to the waxing of their album but the resultant effect brings to lime light if truly the inspiration is from God or not. There might not be variables to measure what music is inspired by God or not but the Bible which is one of the documents of theological theory documented that” by their fruit ye shall know them”⁹ (Matthew 7 vs 16). Thus, the outcome of the music cum the life of the musicians determines if the music is an inspiration from God or otherwise on whom the whole essence of gospel music resides.

It should be well Packaged and Pleasing to Hear

Good packaging and pleasant sounds (music) to the ear in times past is synonymous to secular music. Recent development shows that some gospel musicians are living up to the expectation that gospel music required.⁴ This is because, they have taken time to learn from their secular counterpart. Early practitioners of the music (though not all), even now are mainly concerned about the message of the music neglecting the fact that pleasant sound is *sine qua non* to music. As long as the nomenclature ‘music’ is attached to the word gospel, then the music should not be relegated to the background because of the message neither should it overshadow the message. The two should be properly synchronised in such a way that it will enhance one another. The music ought to support the message by making it appealing to the listeners and the message should not be in conflict with the music. Thus, this requires good packaging and a well packaged product which is the gospel. Good packaging of a product involves a well, conscious and thoghrouly thought out plan with religious adherence to the rules guiding such product for marketability purposes. This will only become achievable if all the thoughts are put into action or the good packaging of the product will forever remain a pipe dream. Taking a cue from the above statement, if gospel music can be regarded as a product to be marketed to all, then adherence to what determines a good music in terms of composition, instrumentation, harmony, rhythm and other essentials of music with clarity of the message should be the watchword. Gospel music should not be a fluke or a product of laziness under the guise that it is all about the message and nothing more. Music as earlier stated deals with emotion and last longer in man’s memory than spoken words, hence preparing the mind for the

8 Adedeji, Femi. The making of a gospel musician (Theological and pragmatic perspectives). Ile Ife: Timade Ventures. (2015) p.6

9. The Holy Bible. (1972) (King James Version) Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers

message. So, if it is not properly packaged, the listeners stand the risk of not even listening to the music and by extension the message and thereby defeating the whole essence of gospel music which should be for all and sundry.

It should be such that Meet the Needs of the People

The whole essence of gospel music is lost if it fails to meet the spiritual needs of the people. Gospel is about the good news of Jesus Christ which according to the belief of those of the Christian faith, is to save mankind from whatever situation man finds himself. That account for the types of messages such as Invitation/evangelism, praise /worship, admonition /exhortation, prayer/prophesies, warfare, Christians festival messages, eschatology, socio-political/cultural issues and many more that are imbedded in the music which subsumed the needs of man. It then becomes imperative that the music from the gospel should function in this regard and justify why it is called gospel music. This is only possible if the Arrow Head (God) of the music inspires such music or else the goodness of the music will only turn into theatrical activities.

Cut across Tribes, Race, Sex, Age, Generation and Many More

The piece *Hallelujah chorus* in the oratorio *Messiah* by G.F Handel written and composed in the late 18th century (1741) which is a form of church music and by extension gospel piece is a piece that cuts across tribes, race, sex, age and generation. Also, there are gospel songs that are functioning in that capacity. A lot of hymnal songs, native air, canticles, choruses and many more revealed that these songs (gospel songs) transcend and break the barrier of ethnicity, racial discrimination, gender inequality, generational gap and create a common ground for all to worship the Most High God. Thus, this has established the communality that is expected of church music under which gospel music can be subsumed. As it has already been established that, the people are the church, the people in question are not of a particular race, gender, sex or limited to a particular generation, so any type of church music, gospel music inclusive must reflect that. This is to make the music accessible to all thereby making the good news closer to all.

Gospel Music should be Susceptible to Positive and Biblical Changes

As the popular saying goes “the only constant thing in life is change”, change, therefore, is a common factor to everything peculiar to man; be it politics, culture (music inclusive), economy, policies and many more. Gospel music, therefore, is not immuned against change because change is paramount to everything. However every change that is expected in gospel music must be susceptible to positive and biblical changes. It is only when these changes are in line with biblical principles and the tenets of Christian faith that it is acceptable. Hence, even when gospel is not immuned to change, if such change is positive to the music, devoid of controversy and does not contravene the rule guiding the music which is entrenched in the Holy Bible of the Christian faith, then the change is welcome. Below is the diagram that sums up the characteristics of gospel music.

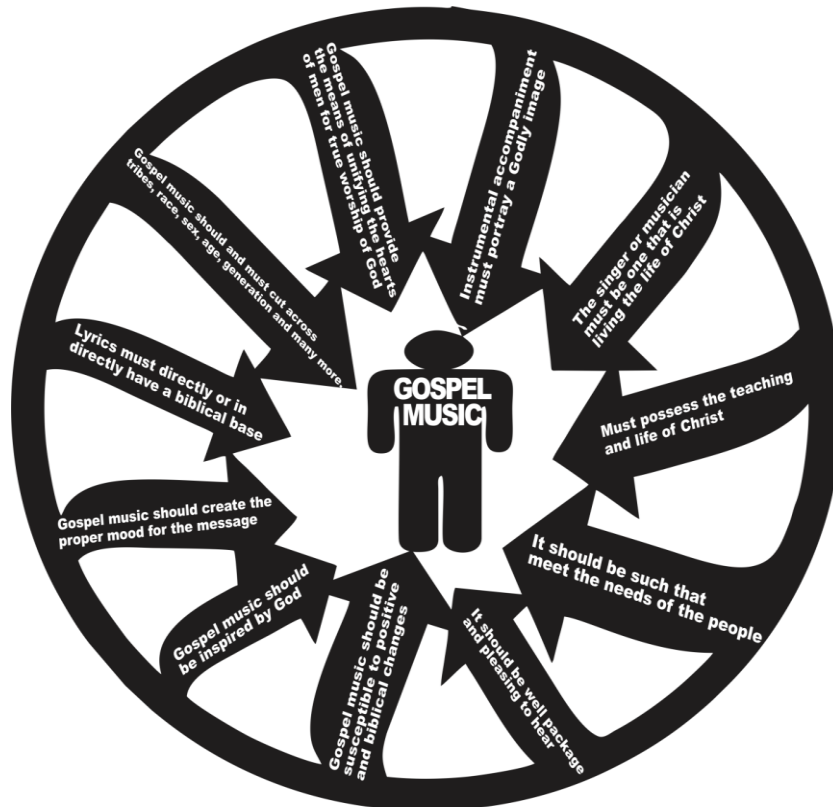


Diagram showing the features of gospel music. Source: Researcher

The diagram above reveals gospel music as man at the centre supported by each feature of the music causing equilibrium in the music. However, any alteration in the feature will create disequilibrium in the music causing the controversies that has been trailing the music as shown below

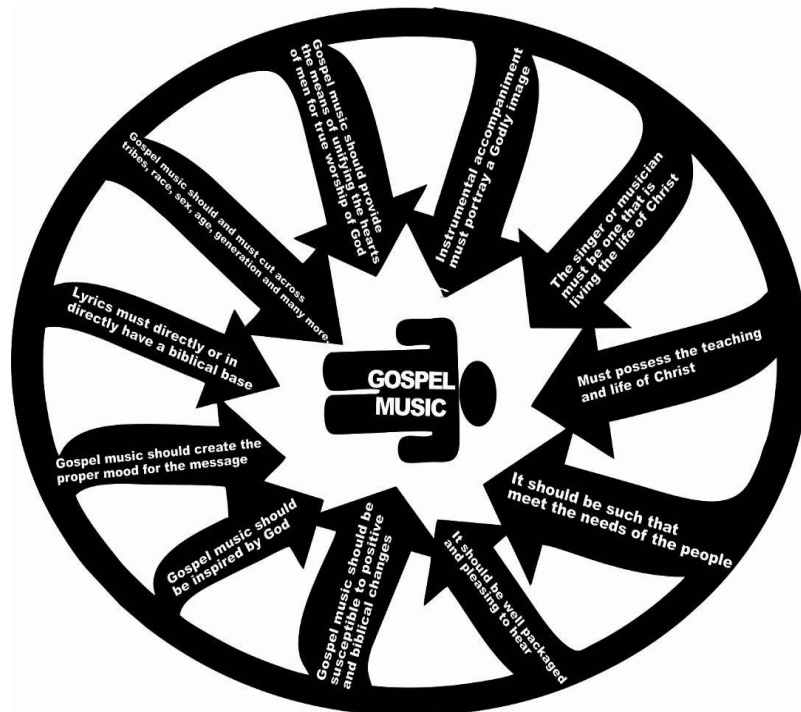


Diagram revealing the imbalance in gospel music (man which represent gospel music is turned horizontally at the centre of the diagram) Source: Researcher

The above diagram reveals the imbalance in gospel music because of the opposing and divergent influences and elements that are strange to the music. The use of lyrics that question whether the music is gospel or not, that is, that does not portray the good news about Jesus which is the gospel of those of the Christian faith, the encroachment of the secular artiste who has no bearing with the Christian faith or are after money and fame hence, the platform of gospel music becomes a platform to carry out their ambition and many more of these divergent and opposing influences is bound to threaten the stability of gospel music.

Features of Secular Music

Some of the features below distinguish secular music from sacred music. This implies that there could be more but the ones below cut across most secular music.

Separate from Religion

One major feature of secular music is that it is different from religious music. It does not necessarily or out of necessity have to reflect the teaching of any religion. It can stand on its own without riding on existing religion. The text or lyrics of the music portray that the lyrics is secular in nature and has no

religious inclination and that has been one major factor in distinguishing secular music from sacred music. Sacred music by nature always reflects the religion of the music through its lyrics be it Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and many more. However, some secular music that are of religious background still reflect such religion in their lyrics by reciting passages from their holy book which serves as a guardian of that religion. This is because the origin of such music stem out of the religion. However, as the music developed a lot was incorporated into the music that makes it lose its sacredness, thus it is now classified as secular music. A vivid example of this is some traditional music such as Fuji, Apala, Wéré and others which were an offshoot of Islamic religion but the musicians of the music have taken the music to a level of secular music. Adebayo (2006, p.152) in his exposition attests to this fact when discussing some of the musicians of this music that “all these musicians are Muslims, they do not sing for Islam. This is not to say that Islam has no impact on their music. Actually, traces of Islamic messages and ideologies are found in their music, yet, their music is not devoid of unislamic sayings and messages”^{10,5}

One can safely infer from the above statement that one religious line or two in a secular music is not enough to make such music a religious music as long as it is filled with amoral and amorus saying. Hence secular music is not bound to any religion. Ironically, some gospel musicians have imported this genre into gospel music.

Thrives on Catchy, Short and Simple Melody

Catchy, short and simple melody is the hallmark of secular music. The more attractive the melody is, the wider the acceptability the music will receive. Thus, making it popular music within the society. These accounts for one of the reasons secular music is interchangeably referred to as popular music. It can therefore be assumed that the reason for this scenario is for the audience to easily identify with the music irrespective of their educational background, status, age, religion and many more. This will help in the spread of the music among the various social classes in the society.

Not Limited to a Particular Audience

Unlike some genres of music that are peculiar to a sect or group in the society, secular music is audience oriented and meant for all. For example, Art music is often described as the music of the elite because of the technicality involved in the composition, the nature of the performance and even the venue of the performance strongly suggest the kind of audience that is expected in such performances. It takes someone that is musically inclined most times to appreciate that genre of music and also can afford it. Agawu affirmed this that “art music which seems easier to define because of its association with elite

10 Adebayo, R.. The utilization of music for the dissemination of Islamic message in Yorubaland. Journal of Religion and African culture (JORAC). 2 (1 & 2). (2006) p.152

culture, its relatively few adherents and its normative insistence on fully notated score..."^{11 6}

Also, some religious music by nature have technically selected their audience. It is only those who practice such religion that tend to patronise such music because they stand to benefit from it. Some other genre of music still fall into this category but that is not the preoccupation of this study. However, that is not the same situation with secular music whose composition and performance practice have been strategically, structurally and consciously meant to appeal and reach out to a larger audience. Secular music is affordable and the society can easily identify with the music because society has been factored in by the artiste. This is because, most times if not always, the artistes of such music are making a living from the music. Hence, their composition is such that accommodates all, irrespective of profession, status, religion, cultural background and the likes. The more their audience, the stronger the artistes capital base and popularity within the society which is their preoccupation from the onset. The artiste from the outset wants to impress and endear the heart of the society to himself through his music. So he does all within his power to make sure his music is appealing to all kinds of audience in the society. This however does not suggest that all members of the society are lovers of or incline to secular music. Some still have their reservation towards the music and that is a study for another time. The emphasis here is that secular music has a stronger fans base because it is open to all kinds of audience.

Dance Oriented

Nothing makes secular music more appealing than the danceable nature of the music. As earlier stated, the preoccupation of the music is to excite and entertain the audience. Excitement and entertainment are incomplete without the dance even if it is the nodding of the head or tapping of the feet on the floor, there will be a movement of the body which will eventually result into dance. Hence, the dances accompany the excitement or the excitement informs the dance. Little wonder why secular music have branded dance step attached to the music. Different dance movement that have evolved overtime on the Nigeria musical scene such as 'fuji gabbage' 'fuji ropopo' 'yahoosay', 'shakitibobo', 'awilo' 'azonto', 'dab' and many more are all products of one secular music or the other. To assume that secular musicians make conscious efforts to create unique dance movements for their music might not be a wrong assumption since the nature of the music is dance oriented. This new dance movement gives them leverage above others. This is not to say every secular musician must of a necessity create a dance step with the music. Some secular music are still contemplative in nature and do not require any specific dance movement. It should be noted that, other genres of music are also danceable but this might not be the preoccupation of such music because of the message such music intend to pass to their listeners. Though the argument that music and dance are inseparable most especially in the African setting is well established by different scholars in that field, which translates to the fact that when there is

11 Agawu, K. Representing African music: Post colonial notes, queries,positions. London. Routledge. (2003). P.123

music there must be dance, this does not take away the fact that some genres of music are more dance oriented than the others. Secular music is one of such, even when the music is not making meaning in terms of lyrics, the dance movement is covering up for the short falls in that area. A secular music that is characterised with nonsensical words but appealing 'dancewise' is guaranteed of audience, no matter the size of the audience. Songs like 'shakitibobo' by Olamide, 'yahoosay' by Olumide Martins, 'Shoki' which was popularised by Lil Kesh, 'Woju o' by Kiss Daniel and many more are full of words that are meaningless but they are danceable and have die-hard audience. The lyrics below will evince the argument better:

Shakitibobo	Meaning
Eyin omo wobe [wobe]2ce wobe/2ce	Smokers , ['smoke-joint]
Mo gbo information [mation]	I got a wind of information
Ninu radio [dio]	Over the radio
Ninu Teli [Teli]	On the television
Won ni e n fa suush [iro o] [lie]	That you smoke suush [cannabis]
E u n fa suush [iro o]	You smoke suush [cannabis] [lie]
Ta lo n fa suush [bo bo]3ce [bobo]3ce	Who smoke suush [cannabis]
Wo bobo, were lo ba de eh eh	Look young man this lead to madness
To get this money today balling every night and day	To get money by toiling day and night
Wo bobo, were lo ba de eheh	Look young man this lead to madness
Zero dulling emi o le naa gere mo laye	And I cannot continue this routine again...

Until now the above lyrics are yet to make meaning to the researcher. The term wobe, shakibobo, soki, and others are either slogans or nonsensical words which are vulgar in the context of use but what is not contestable is the crowd the songs are pulling as a result of the dances that are synonymous to the music and have become so popular even among some Christian youths who would not miss any opportunity to display these dance movements.

However, the dance oriented nature of secular music might not be applicable in some genres of music, gospel music in particular whose focus is the message and not the dance. Even though the genre (gospel music) is not anti-dance

because dance is still used in Christian worship but it is not celebrating dance at the expense of the message which is the primary focus of the music. The music drives home the message and not the dance. That is why it is difficult to hear something like 'gospel dance' because it is not dance oriented.

Unrestrained and Unlimited Musical Styles

The emergency of rock and roll musical style on the gospel scene was greeted with a lot of controversy. Some scholars of the genre termed the style as the devils' music that has found its way into Christian music. *Rhythm riots, and revolution* a book by David Noebel and *The Devil's diversion* by Bob Larson had both established this arguments in these books even though some scholars still disagree with their position tagging Rock and Roll as devil' music because of the nature of the music. This phenomenon cannot be said of secular music which accommodates any kind of musical styles either in existence, evolving or yet to be discovered. All kinds of musical styles are always welcomed under the canopy of secular music without any controversy because it is a non religious music that allows freedom of expression in whatever form or shape it comes, thereby creating a problem of taxonomies. Agawu contributing to the discourse in relation to defining popular secular music submitted that the music "is first and foremost a repertoire, but the diversity of its form...have delayed the emergence of reliable taxonomies"¹². The above statement by Agawu substantiates the researcher's position on the unrestrained and unrestricted musical styles that have characterised secular music which creates a coexistence of different musical style in a single album.

Open to all Musicians

The unrestrained and unlimited musical style has opened up the secular music to any individual who wishes to ply his or trade in the industry. The openness of the genre has attracted different types of character.⁷

Some of noble birth, talented individual striving to show the world how talented they are, opportunists who have nothing to offer, have all troop into the music industry (secular music) because they are taking advantage of the openness of the genre. While some have added value to the genre, others just fade away without any meaningful contribution registered against their name in relation to the music. As they venture into it so also they have rushed out. Secular musician are more like "soldier go, soldier come" because religion, educational background, sex, ethnic differences, culture and many more are no barrier for them especially those that seek to operate on the platform. Be it Christians, Muslims, traditionalists, Buhdists, or of any type of religion, the genre is there to explore for all musicians. The unclosed nature of secular music is the limitation of gospel music in relation to the practitioners of the music. Christian gospel musicians are expected to be 'Born Again' who by necessity must operate and live by the tenets of the Christian faith. Their songs should reflect that, since the music is assumed to be inspired by God who is at the centre of the music. Thus,

¹² Agawu, K. Representing African music: Post colonial notes, queries,positions. London. Routledge. (2003). P.122

this uniqueness of the music is selective of those that perform it. So musicians falling short of this requirement cannot be regarded as gospel musician even if the music is gospel in nature. This disadvantage in quote, as evinced in gospel music is an added advantage to secular music in this regard. This however does not make secular music superior to gospel music or makes gospel music unaccommodating in term of artiste who wishes to express themselves on the platform of gospel music. It is just the nature of the music that differs. Artiste of a different religion apart from Christianity cannot operate on the platform of Christian gospel music but for secular music, religion or what so ever is not a yardstick for those who wish to explore the genre of music.

Exaggerative in Nature

Moderation is a virtue that is so scarce among many secular artistes. The larger than life attitude of some of these artistes account for their lack of modest, in term of dressing, make-up, use of accessories and extravagant life-style. The profligate life style of these artistes might be as a result of the fancy and exaggerative nature of secular music which many have tagged as 'show business' (show biz). The exaggerations employed by some of the artistes in performances, outfit, and interviews are sometimes out of the blues. The simplest scenario is blown out of proportion just to gain attention which is the focus of the music. Their outlook often depicts that of a prostitute or gangster which they are not. Their musical nuances, mannerism, ad-libbing and what have you are to the extreme, calling for attention of the audience who are the consumers of their products. They dress to 'kill', perform to 'lure' and their dance is dramatic. Furthermore, the exaggerative nature of secular music is also glaring in the dance movement triggered by the music. The catchy movement display in their performances is sticking and showy.

It is not Static

Barber as cited in Agawu described popular music as a "fugitive category", migrating up or down conceptually, depending on the context"¹³. Thus, accounting for the instability of the genre. This is highly typical of secular music. Its fugitive nature encourages it to metamorphose into whatever is trending in the society so as to be abreast of innovation rocking the industry. The music keeps changing due to innovations from artistes, effort to meet man's insatiable needs in the area of music and the dynamism in the society.⁸

The society who forms the greater percentage of the audience of the music is not static but dynamic. Musiliu Ishola, one of the traditional secular artistes and son of the exponent of Apala music, Alhaji Haruna Ishola, captured this in one of his albums titled Soyoyo that;

13. 11 Agawu, K. Representing African music: Post colonial notes, queries,positions. London. Routledge. (2003). P.123

Song	Meaning
Taye ban ti n yi	If the world (society) is changing
Ka ma ba won yi	Let us change with it
Opon Apala ti sun finally	Apala has reached a new level
Otikuro nit a ti jo	It is not like before
Ejo wo e ba mi da lu bole	Please drum for me
Alu jo ni ki a mosa	Danceable rhythm at once

The above lyrics clearly demonstrate the chameleon nature of the new Apala music as a secular music most especially in the area of rhythm which is now more complex than the old one. This scenario is typical of other secular music though theirs might not be in rhythm but other areas of the music. Thus, corroborating the assertion by Daramola that “creativity and innovation are pertinent to African music for the ‘art’ is not static”¹⁴. Secular music in the context being discussed can be subsumed under African music and also being an art form is not expected to be static but changing because the consumer of the product are not static too.

It is Well Packaged

One characteristic that is highly noticeable in secular music is the level of ‘packaging’ which is the contemporary slogan in vogue used for proper delivery of goods and services to the end users or beneficiaries of a particular product or service rendered.⁹

Good ‘packaging’ is what gives a product or service delivery edge over others and determines the sustainability of a product or service delivery. Packaging in this regard is the presentation of the product (music) in performance in a manner that is irresistible and appealing to the eyes, ear and body of the lovers of the music. The fans long to see more, eager to hear more and the gimple (inching) in their body cannot prevent the body from dancing due to proper packaging of the music. Many atimes, secular musicians leave no stone unturned just to make their product the preferred one. In an industry that is flooded with all manner of musicians because of the openness of the genre, survival therefore is subject to performance that is more appealing and properly packaged in the area of melody, harmony, instrumentation, costumes, make-up, set and other theatrical elements that will make a performance an aesthetically pleasing performance.

Anything Goes

Nothing distinguishes secular music from sacred than the fact that ‘anything goes’. It is a genre that allows anything ranging from the kind of artistes, lyrics, instrumentation, costumes, and all that makes up the music. There are no rules or regulation guiding the music, for it is a music that all things are permissible. Aptly put, secular or poplar music is negatively defined “in terms of what it is not than what it is” (Barber cited in Agawu, 2003, p.124). This summation by

¹⁴ Daramola, O.M.A. Christian and Islamic music among the Yoruba: The modern trend. Christian-Muslim Encounter in Modern Nigeria. (2002). P.6

Barber best sums up the music because of the ambiguity that characterised the genre. The diagram below exemplified the characteristic of secular music at a glance.

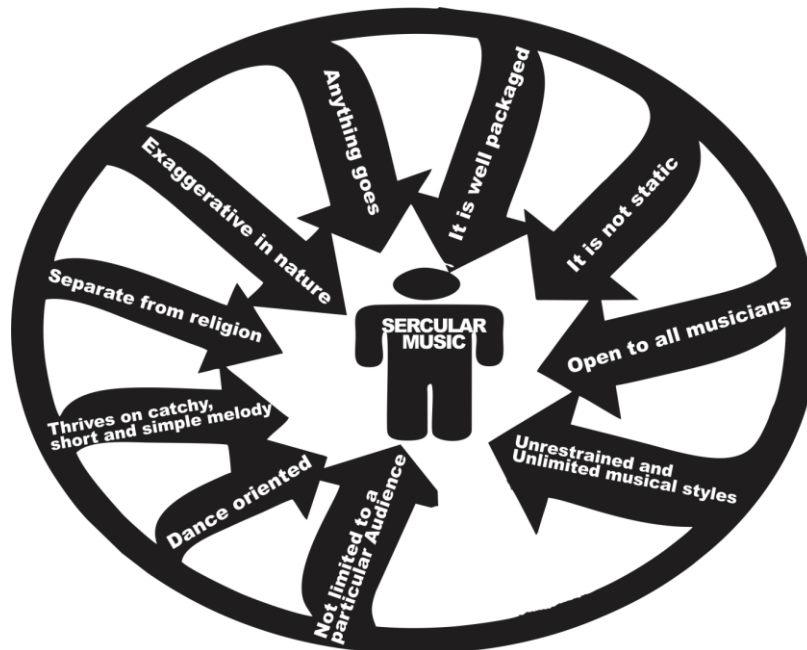


Diagram showing the features of secular music. Source: Researcher

The above diagram is the summary of the features of secular music. Interestingly, external interference to a large extent has no negative effect on the music. Though, it must still be in conformity with the guidelines as spelt out by the censorship board. Nevertheless, the external interference attenuates the peculiar nature of the music which is accommodative in nature and always seeks to meet up with what is trending per time in the society.

Comparative Analysis of the Two Genres

Having interrogated the features of both gospel and secular music, it is imperative to examine their meeting points and points of departure. The meeting point is captured in the table below.

Similarity between the Two Genres

Gospel Music	Secular Music
Gospel music cut across tribes, race, sex, age, generation.	Secular music is not limited to a particular Audience.
The music is well packaged and pleasing to hear.	It is well packaged.
It is susceptible to positive and changes in line with the Christian doctrines.	It is not static.

It meets the spiritual needs of the people.	The music satisfies the temporal desire of the audience.
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The table above clearly exemplified the similarity between gospel and secular music. Both genres are not limited to a particular audience. Gospel music seeks to reach out to those who are of the Christian faith and outside the Faith. While secular is for all, irrespective of your belief system.

Differences between Gospel and Secular Music

Gospel Music	Secular Music
Gospel music is sacred in nature, that is, religious in nature.	Secular music is separate from religion.
Lyrics must directly or indirectly have a biblical base.	The lyrics of the melody is catchy, short and simple and not necessarily related directly or indirectly to the Bible.
The singer or musician must be one that is living the life of Christ and not just professing it.	The music is open to all musicians irrespective of the religion of the musicians.
The music is not borne out of any particular dance movement because dance is still part of Christian worship	The music is dance oriented but not in all cases
Gospel music is not exaggerative in nature	Secular music is exaggerative in nature
The music is inspired by God (Holy Spirit) as claimed by the Christians musicians	The music is not inspired by the Holy Spirit
Moderation of content is required in gospel music	Anything goes in secular music

The above table to the best of our knowledge sums up some of the differences between gospel and secular music. Though, we cannot rule out the fact that, there might be more.

Conclusion.

This study has been able to expound the features of both gospel and secular music. It delved into a comparative analysis of the genres. Worthy of note is that, the features of both genres stated in this study are not exhaustive, there could be more. However, the ones mentioned here are those germane to the discourse which will serve as a pivot to the issues responsible for the hybridisation of Christian gospel music and also douse the problem of genre labeling that has characterized gospel and secular music in Nigeria.

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