

Creative Practice and Consciousness in Juju Music: A Nigerian Musical and Cultural Perspective

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Abstract : This paper investigates the creative practice engaged in Juju music, a Nigerian Neo-traditional genre of the Yoruba, and its influence on the consciousness of societal praxis. It takes a musical and cultural perspective, as representational indices of how the people's religious, social, educational, and political consciousness is expressed in their music. The study adopts the historical cum descriptive design in its methodology, tracing the historical development of Juju music, the appropriation of musical and cultural materials in its creative process, and a descriptive analysis of its musical practice, in order to substantiate the role and function of Juju music and its musicians in the political, philosophical, and social consciousness of Nigeria's pre- and post-independence epoch. Data were collected through oral interviews of selected Juju practitioners, stakeholders, and enthusiasts. It also employed the use of discography of Juju musicians. This paper discusses musical factors such as form, melodic and rhythmic patterns, and thematic materials, while highlighting cultural factors such as linguistic elements, with textual analysis, as a conscious avenue of expression. The study revealed that Juju musicians composed their music by engaging both indigenous and foreign musical materials, as a means of creative practice for musical entertainment, while expressing the people's consciousness of their beliefs, values, and socio-political issues, hence the music functioning as a vehicle for social commentaries. The popularization and commercialization of Juju music brought the musicians national and international accolades, subsequently attracting contributions from contemporary musicians, which led to innovations of new brands, such as 'Afro-Juju', 'Gospel-Juju', 'Hip-Hop-Juju', etc., albeit retaining the basic musical elements of its progenitor, as a conscious music for socio-cultural functions. This study concludes that Juju music and its musicians remain germane in the musical scene of the nation's social, educational, and political terrain, especially in the current Nigerian democratic climate. This paper recommends the promotion and patronage of the Juju music in its original form, to prevent its decline in current times, since it serves as an enrichment of national identity both in Nigeria, and Internationally.

Keywords : appropriation, consciousness, creative practice, national identity, neo-traditional

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