

UNCLASSIFIED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: A GHANAIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The paper sought to identify the musical instruments that have not been classified by music scholars as part of the orchestra. The paper being a qualitative type made use of survey and descriptive approaches. Some of the research instruments used for data collection were interview, observation and questionnaire. Random, purposive and snowball techniques were used to sample the respondents for the study. The study outlined some musical devices that help in production, performance and transmission of music but lack such recognition as musical instruments. The study identified such devices as Combo, Speakers, Amplifiers and Mixers. The rest are Graphic Equalizers, Crossovers, Compressors, Microphones and Tweeters. The study revealed that, all the above instruments help to project musical sounds, fine-tuned, control sound wave and equally help to transmit sound to far and larger audience. The paper therefore recommended that, such instruments be given recognition.

Keywords: Auxiliary, Musical instruments, Orchestra, unclassified.

INTRODUCTION

There are many devices that help in production and transmission of sounds in the music industry. In every human habitation, sound is needed to make life interesting. Sound could manifest through musical performances in everyday life since music making has now become integral part of life hence everywhere there is human settlement, there is bound to be performance of music. According to Ndah (2014), African people for instance employ music in their everyday activities such as worship, as well as life cycle events.

Many scholars have tried to classify and document some of the devices through which music for that matter sound is produced. According to Amuah et al (2002), instruments that make sounds and have foreign orientations are classified as Brass, Woodwind, Strings and Percussive.

Production of sounds is not limited only to the instruments of the Western origin. Before the arrival of European who introduced formal education to many African countries such as Ghana,

the indigenous African themselves had their own way of making music using African instruments.

Observation has however shown that, there are many instruments involve when it comes to music making and transmission. But music scholars and researchers often focus on only those devices that basically make music without considering the transmission aspect; which the researcher in this study would refer to as auxiliary musical instruments.

The focus of this study is therefore to equally bring to light those instruments that have not been classified under the parts of the orchestra and discuss their role in music production as a whole.

Statement of Problem

Many music scholars paid much attention to musical instruments based on their parts in the orchestra. It is an open truth that when the sounds are produced from the instruments, other devices help to transmit them so as to reach much audience. But observation has it that, much attention is not given to the devices that help to transmit the sounds by giving them recognition as being musical instruments under the orchestra. This study therefore sought to acknowledge the roles played by the auxiliary instruments that have not been classified as part of the orchestra and as well explain their importance to production of music in general.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify some musical devices that help in production and transmission of music but are not recognized or classified as part of the orchestra.
2. Discuss the roles or importance of the musical devices that help in production and transmission of music but not classify as part of the orchestra.

Review of Related Literature

Musical Instruments

Music for that matter sound is made through a media. Those media through which music is made could be referred to as musical instruments. According to Kapur (2005), musical instruments are sound- making devices that create music with the use of mechanical parts. He states that, the music making devices are of two origins, namely, Western and African instruments.

Ndah (2018), as well explains musical instruments as media through which sound is produced. He equally agrees with Kapur that, the instruments are grouped based on the objects used in manufacturing the instruments as well as the modes of playing the instruments. According to Doubleday (2008), musical instruments are objects that produce sounds to transform consciousness. She adds that, the instruments are regarded as cultural artifacts and have meanings with the sounds that they produced in a particular society.

Classification of Musical Instruments

Music scholars have consciously grouped the musical instruments using certain criteria; Amuah et al (2003) identified four classes namely: Brass, Woodwind, Strings and Percussive. They explain Brass category as the instruments that produce sounds by blowing air through them and have been made of Brass metal. They cite examples of instruments under this class as Trumpet, Cornet, Trombone, Euphonium and Tuba. They discuss the Woodwinds as those that equally produce sound by way of blowing air into them but are made up of wood or plastic

material. They give examples of some Woodwind instruments as Clarinet, Oboe, Flute, Recorder, and Saxophone. Amuah and his colleagues further explain strings section as those devices that make the sounds through vibration of strings. Some examples under this group are giving as Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Harp, acoustic and electronic guitars. They discuss the percussion section as the percussive; with which instruments add special effects to music as a whole. Examples are given under this section as Drum set, Cymbals, Tubular bells, Tambourine, Xylophone and not forgetting, Timpani. Sakurai (1982) also classifies the musical instruments as follows:

Solid – vibrating instruments, membrane vibrating instruments, reed vibrating instruments and air vibrating instruments. Others are string vibrating, combination vibrating and oscillator – vibrating instruments. He cites examples under this category of instruments to agree with Amuah et al, Ndah and Doubleday.

According to Lokki (2010), musical instruments are classified based on their position in the orchestra. He outlines some of the classes as woodwind; with examples as Flute, Piccolo, and oboe. The rest are clarinet and bassoon. Another class of instruments he identified was brass, with examples as Trumpet, French and English Horns, trombone, euphonium and tuba. He also identifies Percussive class with examples of instruments as Timpani. He opines further with the strings class with instruments as violin, viola, cello and double bass.

The assertion above has been confirmed by other scholars such as (Kapur, Doubleday, 2008 and Ndah 2018).

Auxiliary Musical Instruments

Production of music is a complex phenomenon that involves many processes before it finally gets to the consumer or the audience. According to Ndah (2018), auxiliary musical instruments are those types that do not produce music by themselves but serve as a conduit through which music is produced and transmitted. He explains that, such instruments could equally be referred to as sound boosters. Ndah identifies some of such instruments as Speakers, Combo, and Microphone. The rest are equalizer, mixer and cables for connections of these gadgets.

Carthy Van (2013) equally shares that, there are certain musical devices that help to shape properly sounds produced by other musical instruments. He opines that, devices such as Microphones, loud speakers and amplifiers play a significant role by fine tuning the sounds that primary musical instruments produced. He corroborates further that, devices such as microphones and loud speakers have their own sound color that equally have effect on production of music as a whole in conjunction with those musical that have been classified as part of the orchestra. He is of the view that, microphones and loud speakers have their own sound culture which affects quality of sound that other musical instruments produced. He continues that, in that regard, equal attention must be given to such instruments just like the attention given to such instruments that are classified to be part of the orchestra. He continues that, many brass instruments players are often seen connecting their instruments to a loud speaker. Sakurai (1982) equally opines that, there are some musical instruments that obtain their source of energy for vibration from electric signals (oscillator – vibrating instruments). He cites examples of loud speaker as one of such instruments.

According to Henry (1995) as well, an object may not produce music or sound by their own but the object's involvement in music conceptualization could grant them the status of musical instrument even if they are never played. He argues further that, even if a material cannot produce sound by itself, the human behavior as well as the behavior of the material during

performance of music in general qualifies such material as musical instrument. He emphasizes the point that, musical instruments may not necessarily be made to play music but the relationship that instrument have with sound producing objects and their performers in the musical context qualifies it to be referred to as such.

It could therefore be inferred from the scholars above that, objects that are not played but add to the total musical production and performance are equally regarded as musical production.

Importance of Musical Instruments

Music has become part and parcel of society as it is seen in the everyday activities of people in society. Ndah (2018) again states that, musical instruments through their performance help to entertain society. He cites examples of some personalities who entertained society through their musical instruments as Louis Armstrong (Trumpeter), King Oliver (Cornetist) and John Coltrane (Saxophonist). He discusses that, musical instruments serve as communication devices for some organizations in society. He gives examples of some schools in the Volta Region of Ghana which were using the Talking Drums as means of communicating in the school environment. He adds that, many of the early missionaries who brought Christianity to Ghana introduced the used of the bells as means of calling the congregants for church services. Alisher (2021) equally opines that, musical instruments are used to glorifying human spirituality. He adds that, a nation's pride and values are reflected in their instruments as well as the sounds that the instruments produce. Alisher again shares that, the instruments serve as cultural heritage for a nation which represents both spiritual and material wealth of a state.

According to Ndah (2018) as well, musical instruments are used to accompany singing. He explains further that, in the African setting, musical instruments are used to project the titles of chiefs. He cites an example of the Talking drum (Atumpan) among the Akan people of Ghana and opines that, the drum is use to play appellations of chiefs during durbar. He continues that, the percussive instruments such as bells in African music performance serve as a reference point as well as keeper of time line.

Methodology

The study being a qualitative type made use of survey and descriptive techniques to put the findings of the study across. For the population of the study, the study targeted music teachers, music students, disc jokers, performing artistes and sound engineers. The accessible population and the sampling techniques are thereby presented on table one below:

Table 1: Accessible population and sampling techniques for the study

Target Population	Accessible Population	Sampling technique
Music Teachers	10	Purposive
Music Students	20	Random
Disc Jokers	05	Purposive
Performing Artistes	20	Random
Sound Engineers	10	Snowball

Total Population = 65

The research instruments for the study were questionnaire, interview and observation. And the sampling techniques for the study made use of purposive, random and snowball.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Music teachers, Dick jokers, performing artistes and sound engineers were interviewed whilst music students responded to the questionnaire. The responses are as follows:

When the music teachers were asked about their understanding of musical instruments, all of them thus 100 % agree that, they are devices through which music is produced and transmitted. They identified some of the musical instruments as Brass, Woodwinds, Strings and percussive with their various examples.

In answering on some musical instruments that are not classified to be part of the orchestra, they mentioned devices such as Combo, Mixer, speakers, equalizer and micro phones. They justified their stance that, the above gadgets and many others help to transmit the musical sounds to far and to larger audience. On the roles of the gadgets in production and transmission of sounds, they provided varied responses such as they help to modify the sounds by rising or making them very loud to reach far during performances, also they help to add special effects to music production. They cited examples as tutors fixed in the speakers beautify the sound that are produced and as well add bass to the sound.

Equalizers help to regulate the pitch of the sounds whilst the mixer pinched all the sound at one central point to make control and regulation of instruments easy.

The five disc jokers interviewed equally responded as follows:

They explained that, musical instruments are any devices that help to play music. They identified some of such instruments as drums, organs, saxophone, violin and trumpet. They mentioned others as Speakers, combo, mixer and micro phones together with music box, they add that the instruments mentioned above help in performance of music in generality and for that matter qualify to be referred to as musical instruments.

For the roles of the gadgets identified above, they stated that, speakers, combo, micro phones help to make musical sounds louder so could reach out to much audience during performances. They added as well that, the mixer helps to co- ordinate all the sounds at one central point.

For the performing artistes, they unanimously agreed that, any device that is involved in production and transmission of music is qualified to be called musical instruments. They identified some of the instruments that are classified as part of the orchestra as examples of musical instruments. They agreed that, some devices are not classified as part of the orchestra but could equally be regarded as musical instruments; they stated some of such devices as computers, speakers, combos, microphones, mixers and equalizers. They explained that, the instruments listed above help to project the musical sounds so that they can reach a larger audience.

Their responses of the sound engineers were also in concord with those of the performing artistes.

Twenty music students responded to the questionnaire and their responses as well is discussed below:

As to what is the meaning of musical instruments, they stated that, any device through which music is made or transmitted. In identifying some of the musical instruments, all of them stated instruments from varied sources such as Western and African sources.

On whether Combo, Speakers, Microphones, Mixers and Equalizers should be regarded as musical instruments, all of them responded to YES. In justifying their stance, they explained that, such instruments serve as media for the production of the music and for that matter; they are as well musical instruments.

As to whether the devices identified above are relevant in society, they again unanimously agreed that they are very relevant as such instruments feature during church services, funerals and other life cycle events. They explained that, the overall roles of such devices are to add special musical effects to the sounds and also to project the sounds to reach larger audience as well as to far distance.

The researchers being music educators and performers equally observed that, anytime the musical instruments that are classified as part of the orchestra are connected to the auxiliary devices that are not classified in the orchestra, the holistic sounds from the instruments are fine-tuned and also could reach many audience at the same time within shortest possible because of the amplification of the sounds.

Discussions from the Data

It could therefore be deduced from the responses that, the unclassified devices that help in production and transmission of sounds are equally qualified to be regarded as musical instruments. The study identified some of such auxiliary musical instruments as Speakers, Combo and Amplifiers. The rest are Microphones, Mixers, Equalizers, Crossovers and Compressors.

The above assertion confirms the stance of Ndah (2018), Carthy Van (2013) and Henry (1995) that, any device that helps in the production, performance and transmission of sounds or music whether that gadget can or cannot produce music by itself is equally qualify to be a musical instrument.

The study also revealed the roles of such auxiliary instruments as:

Speakers: they are used to project the sounds that the primary instruments produce. They also help the sounds to be clearer. In addition, the speaker help to decorate the sounds by adding extra bass with the help of tutors and horns fixed unto the speakers. The tutors can also be separated from the speakers. The speakers can equally serve as a monitor for the performers to also listen to the sounds that they produce during performance. Example of Speakers can be seen on figure 1 below:



Figure 1: Speakers, showing their horns and tweeters

Source: Researchers

Combo: this is an integration of Amplifiers, Speakers and Equalizers. The Combo helps to fine – tuned sounds as well as manipulate the sounds to the desired taste of the performers and the audience. Example of Combo is seen on figure 2 below:



Figure 2: A combo

Source: researchers

Graphic Equalizer: they help to stabilize musical frequencies into audible sounds as well as manipulating or fine- tuning of sounds. A picture of an Equalizer is seen on figure 3 below:



Figure 3: An equalizer

Credit: the researchers

Microphones: They pick up raw sound waves through vibration of their diaphragm and transmit them into electrical impulse for the hearing by audience. See microphones on figure 4 below:



Figure 4: Microphones

Source: Ndah (2018)

Mixers: They co-ordinate sounds from all the instruments active during performance. The mixer serves as central point of all sounds as all the instruments and their sounds are regulated from the mixer. See picture of mixers on figure 5 below:



Figure 5: Mixers

Researchers' field data (2022)

Amplifiers: they augment or project musical waves into meaningful sounds. They equally help in the regulation of the sounds to appreciable levels. Figure 6 below shows the picture of an amplifier:



Figure 6: An Amplifier
Researchers' field data (2022)

Crossover: This device separates the sounds into the high and low. It as well tones down intensity of power to avoid break in sound during transmission. Example of Crossover is seen below:



Figure 7: Crossover
Photograph: The researchers

Compressor: it helps to confine sound within a particular area or setting to avoid echo and other extraneous sounds.

Tweeters: helps to give high audio frequencies. It is sometimes refers to as treble speaker. They as well used for fine tuning of sounds. Example of Tweeters is seen below:

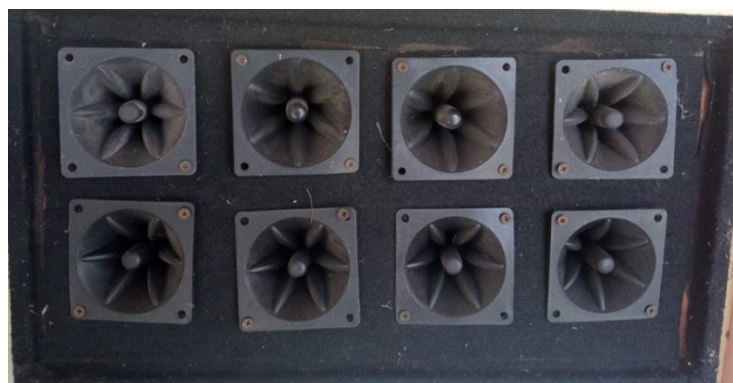


Figure 8: Tweeters
Photograph: Researchers

It could therefore be inferred from the study that, all the primary musical instruments could be connected to the auxiliary and unclassified instruments to enhance better musical experience and performance.

CONCLUSION

The paper sought to identify those musical devices or instruments that are not recognized as being part of the orchestra hence discuss their role in the production and performance of music in general. The study being a qualitative in approach used interview, questionnaire and observation as some of the tools to collect data. The population of the study was sampled using purposive, random as well as snowball sampling techniques.

The study revealed that, there are many musical instruments that help in music production, performance and transmission but have not been classified as being part of the orchestra. The paper outlines some of such instruments Combo, Amplifier and Equalizer. The rest are Microphone, Mixer, Crossover and Compressor. Some of the major roles the above devices play are outlined as:

Speakers help to project sound and transmit same to audience to even far jurisdiction. Equalizers also help to fine-tune the musical sounds. Microphones as well pick sounds change them to electrical impulses so that it can reach out to a larger population. Mixers help to coordinate sounds from all the instruments involve during a performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the study, it is obvious that there are other unclassified musical instruments that help in production and transmission of music in society. It is therefore recommended that

1. Music scholars should write to capture such instruments and give them exposure since they equally contribute to music making in general in society.
2. Curriculum planners in Ghana and elsewhere should acknowledge such instruments into the syllabi so that learners at all levels of education would be familiar with their contribution to production and performance of music.
3. Music scholars and academia should include such instruments as part of the orchestra with the class name auxiliary instruments.
4. Special research funds from the Ghana Central government should be allocated for researchers to publish works about such musical devices so that they could as well take up their rightful recognition in society.

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