



Contributions of Maltina Dance Reality Show to Dance Practice in Nigeria

OLUWAFEMI A. JACOB

Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract. Dance involves the totality and living experience of man from the prehistoric times till date. It was part of all his daily activities such as his work, communication and even in his worship of the gods and ancestors (Nigeria inclusive). To this extent, the Nigeria dance practice has developed greatly even in the face of multi ethnicity as it has given birth to various indigenous dances. These indigenous dances have also been the raw materials to every form of contemporary dances that has emerged over the years. Diverse platforms have also surfaced to help sustain Nigerian dances such as National Arts Festival (NAFEST), Nigeria University Theatre Arts Festival (NUTAF) and the trend of dance reality shows that has been the order of the day within recent times in Nigeria. An undoubted reality television show that has done greatly in the sustainability of Nigerian dances is Maltina Family Dance All Reality Television Show. The functionalist theory of dance is used to unveil the reality show which has been able to adjust to bridge the gap between the prehistoric era and the contemporary or modern era by using technological advances to keep the dance practice in shape. This research will examine Maltina Family Dance All Reality Television Show within the context of dance praxis and the immense contributions to dance practice and sustainability in Nigeria with a view to how it has put Nigeria indigenous dances to practice since the inception till date in the face of globalization and industrialization. It will conclude that the dance reality show has provided dance practitioners both with dance repertoires and engagement with diverse indigenous dances as well as rewards both as individuals and as professionals.

Keywords: Dance, Dance Reality Show, Dance Art / Practice, Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show.

1. Introduction

In African continent, dance is an integral aspect of daily life. It is a vibrant and multi-functional living art which serves various purposes such as worship, recreation, communal edification and many others. Ceremonial activities are bound in traditional African societies and indeed Nigerian inclusive. These ceremonies are mostly expressed with lots of music and dances. Tosin Tume (62) submits that “dance is a universal non-verbal language through which culture is expressed, interpreted, transmitted and nurtured. If well employed, dance could reveal all the traits and characteristics of a given culture or people like their cuisine, clothing, and way of dressing, norms, beliefs and occupation”. This statement as submitted by Tosin elaborates African dance as an all-encompassing art within the African world view or cosmology. One basic truth is that Nigeria as a country in African continent also shares this dance ideology and an historical study of dance is of utmost necessity be traced to its origin.

The major concern of dance history is to acknowledge the development and changes that have surfaced and occurred with time. However, there have been different events that necessitate such changes as they occur. Traditionally, every culture within the Africa context shared the experiences of dancing in diverse ways. While many uses dance as a mode of worship, some others view it as an expression of culture thereby becoming a platform for preservation and documentation of cultural heritage. To this extent, the African traditional society also saw the essence of the communicative potentials embedded in dance thereby regarding dance a form of non-verbal medium of communication. According to Bakary Traore (13), “the African theatre is in communion with the gods” and Chris Ugolo (42) submits that “dance as a non-verbal medium of communication which needs clarity and precision”. Thereby affirming dance as a

communicative medium. Therefore, dance being a unique art has played diverse and important roles in the transformation of every society in African. It has helped different ethnic groups in building a recognizable identity that distinguishes them from each other within the African cosmology.

2. Brief History of Dance Art/Practice in Nigeria

Nigeria is said to have up to two hundred and fifty (250) different ethnic groups and as many languages. With each of these ethnic groups comes a distinct cultural practice, one of which is dancing. In traditional Nigeria society it is believed that dance has innate ability in man. The evolution of dance art in Nigeria started with different ceremonies such as festivals, ritual or religious activities across the different ethnic groups and in corroboration, Chris Ugolo (41) explains that

Nigeria dance art form has its root in the numerous traditional festivals across the country. Examples include the Igue festival of the Benins, Ogun and Egungun festivals of the Yorubas, Ekine festival of the Kalabaris, Ijele and Ekpe festivals of the Igbos, Sharo festival of the Fulanis, Rawan Sarauta in Sokoto and Ngarda festival in Gombe to mention a few.

These festivals are what have emanated or transformed into carnivals presently in Nigeria. This has been as a result of westernization, urbanization, globalization, development and all forms of new acceptance of other people's practices. The researcher in this context about the history of dance in Nigeria deem it fit to limit this history within the confine of his knowledge because many scholars before him such as Ahmed Yerima, Chris Ugolo, Jeleel Olasukanmi, Ojo Rasaki, Asabe Iyeh and many other dance scholars in Nigeria have covered historical emergence of the dance practice in Nigeria.

However, with the influx of modernization, there have been a recreation and edification of daily life in the country thereby making dance a multifunctional art. Corroborating this view, Tosin Tume (62) submits that "it has been established that in African cosmos, dance is a vibrant and multi-functional living art, serving the purposes of worship, recreation, communal edification and daily life emoticon". With the achievement of independence in 1960, different groups emerge or surfaced in many urban centers or cities to take care of the interest of the people from the same ethnic group. This act of development helped them to relive their culture in the cities which were basically considered as alien from their original

environment. This, to a large extent paved way for the emergence of new forms of dance practices in Nigeria. Explaining further, Chris Ugolo (44) submits that "the Hubert Ogunde Dance Company formed in 1960, Kola Ogumola, Duro Ladipo theatre outfit are worthy example of this trend which stretched to the seventies and eighties". At this point, Nigerian dances in its developmental function transcend its aesthetic role of entertaining people. Within the context of globalization, there is no doubt that socio-interaction which is the order of the day becomes a necessity. The realities of modern pressure and social relations have set in thereby giving birth to new platform for the dance art.

Over the years, Nigeria dances have grown beyond the borders of traditional festivals, ceremonial activities such as opening and closing of governmental functions etc. This has been possible because people have accepted and embraced new ways to life which has brought urbanization and globalization as the world is now a global village. Stressing further, Casmir and Oluwafemi (80) explains that "as societies advance, they borrow from others to enhance or reshape some of its ideologies and world view and try to discard or diffuse some into the already existing ones. Nigerian dances are the encapsulations of its rich traditions and cultural heritage. It remained a vital and dynamic art form as it serves as a vehicle for solidarity and cultural continuity". This continuity has thereby given birth to various dances both from the songs of musicians to many street developed dances in Nigeria such as galala dance which was a creation of the ghetto lifestyle popularly performed in the music of Daddy Showkey. According to Isioma Williams (2023), "I spoke to the Ajegunle boys who created the dance and found out that they did it out of their boxing experience" (Personal Interview). Other dances that have in one way or the other filter through the dance platforms in Nigeria are Makossa, Yahoozee, Alanta, Swuo, Azonto, Shaku Shaku, Etighi, Shoki, Shaku shaku, Zanku (leg walk/gbese), which has been an outburst recently. Some other dances ever existed, though might not hit the society the way some others have created a sociological influence. This act of musicians producing dances to their kind of music started around the late 1990s and has developed over time till date thereby showing the acceptability to new dance fronts.

On another hand also, FESTAC 77 gave birth to many cultural centres and state dance troupes as Ahmed Yerima (120) explains that:

"...the major fallout of the FESTAC 77 festival was the immediate packaging of a collection of dances under the name of the Nigerian Cultural Troupe from

September to October 1977 for a foreign tour of nine countries". Furthermore, he stressed that *"another development was after FESTAC 77 festival then the need to establish a troupe of dancers solely for dance performances was re-emphasized"*.

The popular NAFEST festival too was not an exemption in any way as it was a yearly event where all kinds of dances were performed thereby showing the different kind of dances that exists within the purview of Nigeria. It will not be out of place to say that the festivals of the past have been transformed into the modern-day carnivals as this was basically a quest and urge of dance survival in the face of development. Justifying this, Ahmed Yerima (217) submits that "the need for dance to survive could not be overemphasized for dance as a tool for communal unity formed the integral part of culture". However, the acceptance of dance globally project or gave birth to the multi-functional role that dance can play in the face of tremendous development. This basically transport dance into an art that can bring about a flexible civil society thereby establishing a marriage between dance and screen. This marriage of dance and screen is what has given birth to dance reality television shows which also help to sustain the bond between teenagers, youths and families at large in the face of global development. In this view, Heather Yuille (3) says that dance "is an art form that has deep historic root, it has experienced highs and lows in terms of public perception and has experienced a strong resurgence recently within the realm of reality television". This explains the relationship that dances shares with reality television shows not just here in Nigeria but across the globe in general. It is in line with the principles of the functionalist theory that this study has chosen to adopt it and apply its argument considering the functionality of Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show as a platform that contributes to both individuals and groups toward the attainment of social goals, providing goods and means of diverse rewards from the society; and above all, its contributions to the overall integration of the society through entertainment.

3. Emergence of Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show

have been many dance reality television shows that have surfaced over the years in Nigeria. These dance reality shows include: *Celebrity Takes Two, Malta Guinness Street Dance, GLO Dance with Peter, Two Can Dance, Close-up Dance Challenge, Maltina Dance All Family* and *Dance with the Stars* etc. All these dance reality television shows have in one way or the other have their ways and contributions both to

dance practice and the citizenry of Nigeria in general. They have also in their various capacities contributed immensely to the society within the context of a civil society and giving back to the society in their capacity. Onwuekwe Ijeoma (180) acknowledges that "every society has her own characteristic dancing culture. The physical and psychological effects of dance enable it to serve many functions". The importance of dance in any society with close reference to Nigeria cannot be overemphasized as it is an agent of bringing people together thereby establishing social interaction and socialization amongst both its participants, sponsors or organizers and viewers.

Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show debuted in Nigeria in the year 2006. It was a competitive dance platform and a reality television show that spreads across the six (6) geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Many families from different ethnic groups participated at one point or the other as there is always a selection stage before one can make it to the final ten families for the academy. Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show was no surprise as it made instant success. It was fresh and geared towards uniting families together. Oluwafemi Jacob (197) explains that dance "has brought together a lot of people that have passion for dance... dance can provide an avenue from different age-grades or groups in Nigeria to come together". This sustains and establishes the continuity of dance just like the traditional festival dances where dance is also regarded as a socializing force.

However, Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show has been in existence in Nigeria for the past eleven (11) years. There have been many different dances that have been performed by the participants during the course of the competition. These dances range from the Bata dance of the Yorubas to the Atilogwu dance of the Igbos, Sharo dance of the Fulani herdsmen and milk maids, Ekombi dance of the Efik people from Cross River and many other indigenous dances from different ethnic groups in Nigeria. Stressing further, Damilare Aiki (5) submits that:

the race officially kicked off on Sunday 2nd September 2012 with ten (10) families, however, five (5) families were unable to survive the various dance styles that were introduced in the Maltina Dance All Academy including the Wazobia (Contemporary Nigerian dancing), Salsa, Pantomime, Gumboot, Hip-Hop and Contemporary African dance styles.

It is of utmost benefit also that Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show also absorbs all

dance styles both the ones that emanated here in Nigeria and the wonderful dances of other countries. Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show has indeed made its mark within the purview of dance practice in Nigeria. It has sustained itself under the sponsorship of the Maltina Brand and speaking on the Maltina brand and the dance reality show, Ngozi Nkwoji (2) said:

...they undertook the journey because the brand's story has always been the story of sharing happiness within the Nigerian family and beyond with emphasis in the values of friendship, trust, togetherness and faithfulness. It is all about bringing the entire family together in an atmosphere of friendship and bonding with other families so that as units they can share common problems and ideas effectively throughout their time at the Academy and beyond. We are very passionate about the family institution and we will do the little we can as a responsible corporate entity to ensure that the institution continues to remain relevant because a healthy and sound family system will resonate on the nation as a whole; the family unit is the bedrock of any society. Maltina is interested in equipping both parents and their children that come to the Academy to be relevant to the society they are moving into. Our motive is to equip them effectively to confront and proffer solutions to some of the everyday challenges we face in life and for them to use what they garner in the Academy to help other families in the society and what better way to do it than through dance which is a concept that transcends tribe, religion, culture and what have you. Dancing has the capacity of drawing people together.

With the above statement, it is clear that just as in the early societies where dance has the capacity to pull people together for a unified essence; same is still very much applicable despite the urbanization and globalizations of present day. This further justifies the functional and important role dance can play in any society irrespective of period or era.

4. Contributions of Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show in Nigeria

The emergence of Maltina Dance All Family Reality Television Show in Nigeria has in various ways had its positive impacts or contributions to dance practice and her practitioners. This is in no doubt measured or regarded as another platform for its practice to further develop in all facets of the arts. It is against this background that this study will address some areas in which this reality show has contributed to dance practice in Nigeria which are as follows:

Financial Income/Monetary Rewards: This is one major area that both theatre artists and dance practitioners across the globe have at one time or the other been marginalized amongst their other professionals especially within the entertainment industry as a whole. This can be said to have been the situation for many years but there is still a glimpse of hope and that is why the dance practitioners have survived across the ages. This is explained as Hans Abbing (106) submits that “the average income of dance artists and other entertainers turns out to be five times higher than that of the athletes. It should be noted however, that the income gap between dance artists and athletes was larger 10 years ago and may well eventually disappear in the years to come”. This means that dancers and its practitioners started earning some good amount of money from their art. However, this was also not left out in the case of Maltina Family Dance Reality Show as dance practitioners who were instructors and choreographers were paid throughout the duration their services were needed during the competition. Explaining further, Princewill Abapkoro (2023) submits that “from the financial angle, it has contributed to the dancers and choreographers as it provides funds for them economically” (personal interview).

Social Bonding and Connection: Maltina Dance all serves as a form of social bonding and connection, bringing people together for shared experiences and celebrations. Social dances, such as cultural dance, Hip hop, Contemporary dance e.t.c. It provides opportunities for individuals to engage in coordinated movements, fostering a sense of unity and collective participation. Dancing at their free time, enabling individuals to connect with one another on a deeper level and break down social barriers.

Increases Profile of Participants: Maltina Dance all in Nigeria has a profound influence on dancers' careers and professional opportunities, serving as a stepping stone for success in the entertainment industry. Participating in Maltina Dance all provides dancers with increased visibility and recognition. This show attracts a wide audience and generates significant media attention, allowing dancers to showcase their skills to a large viewership. This exposure can lead to opportunities for collaborations with renowned choreographers, artists, and production companies. Being associated with successful choreographers can boost the dancers' credibility and can open doors to various professional opportunities within the industry.

Upholding Moral Standard and Values: Reality shows like Maltina Dance all has paved ways for dancers on the street to pursue careers as instructors, choreographers, or performers. The rigorous training, passion and experience gained through competition dance provide a solid foundation for dancers to transition into teaching roles. Many successful competition dancers go on to establish their own dance studios or become sought-after instructors in prestigious dance academies. Additionally, competition dance like Maltina dance all offers opportunities for dancers to showcase their choreographic skills, leading to potential career paths as choreographers in the entertainment industry.

Self-Confidence and Development: Reality dance show like Maltina Dance all provides a platform for self-expression and boosts dancers' self-confidence. By performing in front of an audience and receiving recognition for their talent, which allows the dancer gain a sense of accomplishment and validation This enhanced self-confidence can positively impact their overall self-esteem and self-perception. However, the intense training and performance pressures associated with reality dance shows can have negative implications for dancers' well-being. The pursuit of technical excellence and the desire to meet high standards may lead to physical injuries and overuse syndromes. Dancers are at risk of musculoskeletal injuries, such as sprains, strains, and stress fractures, due to repetitive movements and demanding physical routines. These injuries can have long-term consequences for dancers' physical well-being and may require significant recovery time. Maltina Dance all has become an integral part of reality shows, captivating audiences within Nigeria and worldwide in general with its power, grace and entertainment value. This section explores the role of dance in reality TV programs and its impact on both the participants and viewers. The inclusion of dance in reality shows provides aspiring dancers with a platform to showcase their talent, while also contributing it positively those who has the passion for dance.

5. Conclusion

This research examines Maltina Dance All Reality Television Show as a platform for development to practices that has been in place over the years and also sees the reality show as a contemporary rejuvenation to some aspect of the dance practice within the context of dance and screen. It paid attention to some benefits as being very important to dance practice since the inception of the reality television show. Dance artist and practitioners have

been playing active role since the emergence of Maltina Dance All Reality Television Show. It has dished out many unquantifiable financial rewards to as many dance practitioners who have either been choreographers, instructors and judges during each season of Maltina Dance All Reality Television Show. However, the study evaluates the place of reality shows in a developing society and what it contributes to dance practitioners of which are participants, audience and society at large. Many developed countries such as United States of America uses reality shows of various kinds to engage her citizens and ensure that there are rewards that comes with either participation and otherwise. Therefore, it is of importance that our country Nigeria seeks to follow this path in the push for so much socio-economic advancement of her citizens within the dance and entertainment sector.

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