



Contemporary Musical Arts for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how Contemporary Musical Arts have and can impact the society for Sustainable development. It will delve into the challenges Musical Arts has and the opportunities that can and have been created to push the SDG Agenda 'Transforming our World' and help in achieving the goals, specifically number 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Key words: Sustainable Development, Music, Arts, Culture, Heritage, SDG Agenda 2030, Performance, Singing

Introduction

Musical Arts play an integral role in the cohesion and subsequent development of our society. Music is ubiquitous in today's globalized world even though it often has a modest position in school curricula and national cultural policies, if any at all (Knudsen, 2010). The cumulative civilization of a people and a nation is not without diversity in abilities thus making it a melting pot of ideas, strengths and weaknesses. However, Culture and Development is an indissoluble binomial (Lisboa, 2018) and thus their interdependency leads one to believe that culture, creative industries and Musical heritage in this case contribute to development not only in quantitative economic growth but also qualitatively in terms of equity and security of a society (Bandarin, Hosagahar & Albernaz, 2011).

With the world gearing itself up to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030, as stated in the Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General assembly, it is important to investigate how the creative industry, especially Contemporary Musical Arts impact the society, the challenges and opportunities created to ensure that we refocus Musical arts for Sustainable Development.

The aim of this paper is to seek to identify Contemporary Musical Arts that provide the aesthetic values that define different Cultures, styles and genres of Music for Sustainable Development through performance, specifically in line with SDG numbers 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education) and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

This objective can be broken down into the following: Contemporary Musical Arts that define different cultures, styles and genres through performance.

How these Musical Arts can be instrumental in the road to achieving the SDG #1 (No Poverty), #4 (Quality Education) and #8 (Decent Work and Economic growth).

Literature Review

Contemporary Musical Arts falls into two broad categories that intertwine with each other and still fall under the umbrella term Performing Arts. This is because one cannot completely isolate data on the performing arts sector from any other cultural sector (Barker, 2006) These categories are audio visual activities and live performances and they inform policies and assist in strategy making for sustainable future for future generations



Cultures, Genres and Styles of Music

Culture, genres and styles of Music have been known to define a society and assist in the preservation and conservation of its communities. However, with globalization and new technologies, some of these cultures and genres are fused with others and create a whole new sub culture and sub-genres or styles of music. The culture of Sampling and digital distribution of Music as well as borrowings and Cultural exchanges due to blurred boundaries (Gilroy,1993) have led to Music being a more universal language and the Cultural landscape substantially altered over the years. Using these modern genres and styles of music and cultures of learning and listening patterns of individuals, it is quite possible to say that communities can be influenced to enact social change.

By tapping into the emotional role that Music and Musical Arts play, one can communicate pertinent issues to the diverse communities that make up our society. None the less, emotional views on an issue or object can be expressed by individuals from that society or any other thus using the creatives in the society. In addition, artistic expressions can depict complexity in a comprehensible way (Shrivastava et al., 2012). Consequently, the different scopes of Sustainable Development can be assimilated in to an art-based medium thereby using artistic expressions and causing wealth creation, civil engagement and advancing quality education.

Sustainability and Sustainable Development

To fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for a more peaceful, sustainable and prosperous world, it is pertinent to use all resources available in the society. Contemporary Musical Arts can evolve in a dynamic world thus making it a sustainable sector. In line with the Youth 2030: The United Nations Youth Strategy that calls for quality Education, training and employment for an ever-growing population, the Sustainable Development Goals can be enhanced using Musical Arts. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are independent and interdependent and thus the progress of one means the progress of all the others. This study specifically investigates SDG #1 (No Poverty) #4 (Quality Education) and #8 (Decent Work and Economic growth).

Suggestions by Shrivastava et al. (2012) and Lozano (2014) state that, art is naturally seen as a medium to reveal emotions and passions. Creative expressions can portray the intricacies of Sustainable Development in a comprehensible way (Shrivastava et al., 2012). Regarding participatory imperatives of Sustainable Development, Musical Artists, Educators and other enthusiasts can use their skills, methods and tools in a way that can ensure that the SDGs are met. Poverty can essentially be reduced through creating awareness and civic education. Concurrently, decent work will have been provided to both the educators and trainers as well as the trainees and economic growth felt.

The number of scholars who consider Musical Arts as an approach to facilitate organizational change and development is increasing (e.g. Meisiek & Barry, 2014; Shrivastava et al., 2012; Strati, 2010). The understanding of this can enhance the fulfilment of SDG #4 by ensuring that quality education and training, whether formal, informal or non-formal, is established in our communities. Furthermore, the quality of individuals who will now take up the mantle of ensuring sustainable cities and communities will have a solid foundation, causing the Butterfly Effect.

Methodology

The purpose of research is to enhance knowledge (King & Horrocks, 2010) and essentially the approach taken towards setting up a strategy to the collection and analysis of data should work towards advancing knowledge. Some of the dimensions as identified by Pidgeon and Henwood (1997, p. 250) that play a role in the way knowledge is produced are firstly the researcher's interpretation and secondly cultural meaning systems which inform the participants' and the researcher's understanding



among others. This non-empirical study relates to objective 1a and 1b as stated below and in the previous sections of this paper.

Non-empirical methods and secondary sources were used in the collection of data for this paper. This study looked at journal articles and papers presented in seminars concerning this topic; past interviews, festivals and documentaries of musicians, educators and enthusiasts in specific areas of expertise in the selected performances.

This study looked at performances in festivals and concerts that primarily had as their theme in line with SDGs specifically #1, 4 and 8. These performances were not restricted to a region, but the parameters that governed the research were the SDGs and related key words such as poverty, education and work.

Papers and presentations at conferences and seminars provided the bulk of information for this paper as the topics were specifically geared towards SDG, Performing arts or Musical Arts, Culture and Heritage.

Results

Many a times Musical Arts have been put in the back burner of many government policies and education curricula. The importance of music and other performing arts has been watered down and has only been termed as “hobbies” and not as a developmental tool. This study reveals that even though challenges of funding, marketing and mixed skills, in addition to new technology and globalization, the underlying factor that music and Musical Arts can depict complexity in an understandable way (Shrivastava et al., 2012) by using emotion and artistic expressions is a sure way of integrating the dimensions of Sustainable development that will ensure the Sustainability of the Musical Arts Sector and a sustainable future for future generations through the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As a relatively new area of study, the dissemination of information concerning the Musical Arts equally lies on both the practical and theoretical. For Music to be expressed, expressive, effective and affective, the practical dimensions must be put into play and thus the emotional effect can occur. Performances in festivals, concerts, forums and schools as well as oral presentations can create awareness, lead to civic engagement, strengthen national unity promote global diversity. On the theoretical front, articles, papers and journals can be used to inform government policies to intentionally create room for the Arts sector in the fulfilment of SDGs.

Recommendations and Areas for further study

This project is still under development and therefore may not have touched on many of the issues that are concerned with Sustainable development and the Arts. Furthermore, it is important to note that change is the only constant and therefore different Musical traditions will continue to be adapted purposes of recording or education.

Conclusion

This study from the onset, represents the ability of Contemporary Musical Arts to affect the development of a society and its communities and cities through wealth creation and social development for a sustainable growth for future generations. This will be achieved through performances, skill advancement, civic engagement and government policies. It will essentially open more room for further investigation and contribution to this area of expertise in Arts for Sustainable Development.



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