The Global Crusade with W.F Kumuyi, Multimedia, Music Composition and Digitalization in the Post-Covid-19 Era

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Abstract

The significance of multiple media infrastructures became more prominent during and after the global 'lock-down' exercise enforced by governments of nations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the outbreak disadvantaged many organizations, religious circles, and businesses, it provided a thriving threshold for multimedia exploration by establishments to segue into virtual spaces thereby experiencing a far-reaching impact on the production, digitalization, and consumption of musical creations. This qualitative study is underpinned by the Connectivism Theory and reviews the role Multimedia plays in advancing the production and digitalization of musical compositions during and after the COVID-19 era. Data is gathered through interview transcripts, videos of performances, interactions, symposia notes, verbal reports, and investigation into the media, choir, orchestra, and the broadcast units of the Global Crusade with W.F. Kumuyi. The study reveals an upsurge in global reliance on multimedia as a critical alternative for the production and digitalization of musical compositions consequently leading to an avalanche of original works and upcoming composers. The information presented in this paper is intended to benefit both medium-sized and mega-sized churches, and theological and other institutions considering a songwriting outlet and a viable virtual presence.

Keywords: Composition, Digitalization, Multimedia, Production.

Introduction

COVID-19 is an infectious disease that is widely believed to have broken out in China. Scientists and governments around the world are still studying the origin of COVID-19. However, it is widely believed that the virus originated from a bat-borne virus and most likely was transmitted to humans via another animal in nature or during wildlife trade such as in food markets (Aguirre, Catherina, Frye, Shelley, 2020). The earliest human cases of SARS-CoV-2 were identified in Wuhan, China, but the index case remains unknown. The spillover event introducing SARS-CoV-2 to humans likely occurred in late 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought huge and unexpected life changes, but it did not bring everything to a halt. While it is true the coronavirus has caused catastrophic health, social, and economic effects, technology on the other hand has advanced such that communication and collaboration have improved tremendously, even though virtually. Although some were initially slow to adjust to the new normal, by the time strict lockdowns were put in place globally, many people and organizations had stepped up and quickly shifted to work-from-home frameworks. Crawford (2021), records:

> The pandemic has shown how internet consumption can change drastically — even overnight. According to our estimates, stay-at-home orders, compounded with increased dependence on digital services for both entertainment (for example, site streaming) and work (for example, videoconferencing), have led to a 20% surge in total internet usage. Vodafone, a European telecommunications company, has recorded as much as a 50% increase in internet traffic. Rising internet consumption has brought about Twitter's #SwitchToStandard initiative to restrain streaming quality and avoid network congestion. Although internet traffic might have declined in urban areas and main business hubs, it has increased disproportionately elsewhere, resulting in widespread internet blackouts across more spread-out residential areas and suburbs. However, even in those areas, internet access sprang back after a short period of downtime.*p.2.*

Worthy of mention is the reality that the dramatic twists in the digitalization of information, communication, and various institutional activities were not restricted to only the secular, educational, or business world. The religious circles were also not left out. Many churches, mosques, and even traditional religious formations swiftly migrated to the digital virtual space where they carried on their activities during the pandemic outbreak, and ever since, most of them have remained virtually active. Qualitative methodology was employed in this research, using different sources of data to understand the topic. Data was gathered through observations, note-taking, interviews, documents, and participant observation. Data sources include interview transcripts, videos of performances, interactions, symposia, notes, and verbal reports, for depth and details, within the chosen context. The study focused on review and investigation into the media, choir, orchestra, drama, and broadcast unite of the global crusade with Kumuyi (GCK) which kickstarted sometime in 2021 with over One Hundred and twenty participating countries of the world.

Theoretical Framework

The pandemic has led to a geometric upsurge in total internet usage resulting from a paradigm shift from absolute reliance on physical or in-person activities to virtual alternatives. Increased demand for videoconferencing and entertainment streaming services is no longer a clandestine reality. The trend of remote working seems to have come to stay which offers positive opportunities when used effectively. The Internet has enabled and accelerated new forms of personal interactions and connections through instant messaging, Internet forums, multiple media platforms, and social networking services. Since the internet is pivotal in connecting people thereby providing opportunities to learn, interact, and communicate, the Connectivism Theory posited in 2005 by two theorists, George Siemens and Stephen Downes becomes the most appropriate theoretical framework for this study. Expounding on connectivism theory, WGU(2021) asserts:

> Connectivism builds on already-established theories to propose that technology is changing what, how, and where we learn. In their research, Siemens and Downes identified eight principles of connectivism. The main principles of connectivism are: (1) Learning and knowledge rests in the diversity of opinions. (2)

> Learning is a process of connecting. (3) Learning may reside in non-human appliances. (4) Learning is more critical than knowing. (5) Nurturing and maintaining connections are needed for continual learning. (6) The ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill. (7) Accurate, up-to-date knowledge is the aim of all connectivist learning. (8) Decision-making is a learning process. What we know today might change tomorrow. While there's a right answer now, it might be wrong tomorrow due to the constantly changing information climate.

Connectivism is a model of learning that acknowledges that change is a constant in a society and that learning is no longer an internal, individualistic activity. Connectivism provides an enabling environment for learners to develop skills and tasks needed to flourish in a digital era (Siemens, 2005). All human activities take place in a connected atmosphere. As we seek growth and development, we consciously and unconsciously connect with the knowledge and information others possess (Lawal,2020). Connectivism ideology should be integrated, referenced, and utilized for a seamless adaptation to the volatile multimedia space.

Background History

The Global Crusade with Pastor (Dr.) William Folorunso Kumuyi otherwise abbreviated as GCK, is an aggressive Gospel outreach, an evangelistic outreach launched in 2021 by the Deeper Christian Life Ministry against the kingdom of darkness in a heroic attempt to save the lost, deliver the oppressed, heal the sick, and set the captives free. Under the leadership of the General Superintendent of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, Pastor (Dr) Williams Folorunso Kumuyi, the GCK began from Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and snowballed through thirty-six states to other nations of the world. Reflecting on the personality of the pioneer founder of this great movement called GCK, Ojeme, Abodunde (2023) records:

> The man William Folorunso Kumuyi, a young Mathematics lecturer at the University of Lagos began a movement whose influence and impact would soon permeate the whole nation. It was the birth of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry DCLM, now, 50 years and counting, and still earnestly contending for the faith.

At 82, Pastor (Dr)Divinity is un-relentless in his passion for evangelism with increasing strength and anointing such that each episode of the monthly GCK program witnesses unprecedented manifestations of the Divinity. While buttressing this assertion on the aged in figures but youth at heart prince of preachers. In one of his messages Pastor Kumuyi said 'When you look at me, you think I am old but, in the mind, where the engine runs, there is a youth in there (Kumuyi, 2023). Writing on the personal life of Pastor (Dr.) W.F. Kumuyi, Moses(2023).narrates:

> The milestones in Kumuyi's personal life right from when he was born to date is not a mystery. The biographical approach of Ojewale et al. (2021) details Kumuyi's life and ministry from 1941 to the year 2020. Kumuyi: Defender of the Faith is targeted at demystifying the life of Kumuyi; his making, motivations, and ministries. Hence the book provides an account of his early life, education, marriage, and career as a mathematics lecturer at the University of Lagos. It also features the small Bible Study group of 15 young students which grew into the DCLM as we know it today. More so, the book tracks the various stages of growth in the DCLM right from scratch and provides insight into how Kumuyi has positively influenced Christianity in Nigeria and beyond. (p.10)

The Deeper Christian Life Ministry at 50, has got its branches in closer a hundred and 150 countries of the world. This covertly suggests that the former University Don, founder, Pastor (Dr) W.F. Kumuyi is not working alone in the achievement of these ministerial feats. Lieutenants and generals are working alongside the man of God. Amongst this workforce are district and location pastors, and overseers of regions, states, nations, and blocs. Also worthy of mention are support ministry.
The impactful success of the GCK hinges on its dogged exploration, adaptation, and inclusive application of various multimedia channels such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, Zoom, Google Meet, Twitter, WhatsApp, Telegram, and many others. While the GCK is usually hosted physically at a rotated location, the rest of the globe connects in real time to participate and follow actively. Praise and worship teams from two or more nations perform in sync with the host choir (alpha location) in such a unique manner that the audience will hardly notice any differences. The introduction of the virtual mass choir and virtual mass orchestra

heralded a novel experience at the GCK, where different choristers/instrumentalists from different countries of the world performed together virtually.

This platform affords indigenous composers within the Deeper Christian Life Ministry to share their original compositions to be performed by these groups. Consistently for close to eighteen months, songs composed by Albert Authority were performed by the global virtual choir arm of the GCK. Different choir formations from states, regions, host (i.e., alpha) locations, and recorded choir videos performed a gamut of songs written by different songwriters in the Deeper Christian Life Ministry (DCLM). Some of these composers are art musicians while a larger number are talented music enthusiasts who have acquired some degrees of compositional skills over time but who have composed songs that have been impactful on the audiences during the GCK. Their compositional abilities vary depending on their environmental influences which either inform or reform their conceptual idiosyncrasy. Contemplating the philosophy of compositional and structural paradigms in creativity, the mood that is painted and the overall structure of the music must reflect the subject matter, the objective of the creation, the socio-cultural implications, and the very many factors influencing the composer and his/her environment (Nwankpa, 2014, p.10).

Multimedia and Composition

Multimedia plays a significant role in music composition. It enables composers to develop musical ideas, try out and refine them using notation or sequencer programmes, and work with new sounds via digital instruments. In addition, multimedia has been used to create a more immersive experience for the audience by synchronizing music with visual elements such as videos, animations, and images.

Prensky (2001) opines:

> Multimedia has also been used to study the effects of music on moods, attention, and learning from infancy through early adulthood. The use of sound effects, non-speech vocalizations, music, and singing in multimedia content has been found to influence children's attention to content by eliciting orienting

> responses and providing modes that children can use to think about and represent the visual and verbal content. (*p1).*

Overall, multimedia has provided composers with new tools for creating music and has enabled them to reach a wider audience by creating more engaging experiences.



Source: DCLM Media Crew Archives.

The 21st century increasingly offers opportunities to navigate the Internet and to make digital productions rather than just consume the productions of others. Most youths are now 'digital natives,' a term coined by Marc Prensky in 2001 to reflect the ease with which they traverse and understand the digital landscape because they have used digital media throughout much of their development (Prensky, 2001). For instance, youth often send information to one another through the Internet. Among teens who use instant messaging, Thirty-One percent reported sending music or video files (Lenhart, Madden, & Hitlin, 2005). Forty-three

percent of online teens also make purchases online, such as music (Lenhart et al., 2005), though many youths also go to sites where they can download music for free, violating copyright laws in the process. Certain kinds of music are integral to adolescent identity expression, reflecting the broader cultural influences in which they live. A study of the social networking site Facebook conducted by Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert (2009), claims:

> More than 64 percent of college students included their favorite music in their profile information, which is the place where people share personal information about themselves. Of the sixty-four percent of students who included their favorite music in their profile information, 65 percent of those students indicated that they did so because it was important information that expressed 'who I am.'

In fact, media preferences were more likely to be reported in user profile information and to be selected as integral to identity than were traditional identity markers such as religion or political views (Erikson, 1963). Technological advances offer opportunities to be more than just consumers of multimedia but to also take part as producers of their digital creations. The multimedia creations of 'digital natives' reflect a remarkable level of 'multimodal literacy.' In an innovative study, Wingstedt, Brändström, and Berg (2008) gave young adolescents (aged 12 to 13 years) some pieces of music and asked them to shape the music to fit three short three-dimensional animated films in real-time, as they viewed the animations. The seven musical parameters the participants were able to control and adapt (using REMUPP software) were instrumentation, tempo, harmonic complexity, rhythmic complexity, register, articulation, and reverberation level. A high level of agreement was found among 23 young adolescents' creations in their use of these parameters to fit the visual scenes, reflecting a shared knowledge of musical narrative and conventions most likely absorbed through exposure to films, music videos, computer games, and other narrative multimedia.



Source: DCLM Media Crew Archives.

For some time now, the world has witnessed a new stage of transformation where corporations and countries are focused on equipping themselves with advanced technologies and new business models to stay relevant and competitive in a fast-changing world due to the Pandemic outbreak. COVID-19 has presented one of the most formidable challenges in recent history to governments, businesses, religious organizations secular or corporate institutions, and society at large. Many consider it to be the ultimate tipping point for the 21st century. The pandemic is a wake-up call for organizations to have a plan to deal with disruptions to ensure business continuity. It is also a watershed moment that will signal the fast-track acceleration process for digitization throughout society. WEF (2021) opines that A successful digital transformation will involve empowering people to work in new ways, including reskilling and upskilling. Cross-sector collaboration will play a pivotal role in allowing us to 'build back better' from the current crisis.



This has necessitated an appreciable upsurge in the composition of ingenious music. Highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on composers, Davies, et al. (2021) opines:

> Over the last year, there have been several important surveys in the field of music, but this is the only one specifically focused on composers. The perspectives and voices of those creating music deserve to be heard. These perspectives raise vital questions about the future of music, who will get to be involved in its creation in years to come, who will be able to continue to compose, and the value that we, as a society, place on their work.

Impacts of Covid-19 on Composers and Compositions

The impact of Covid-19 on GCK and global evangelization was not limited to the religious activities' mechanisms but also the vital organs of those sacred entities such as musicians, composers, music performers and music compositions. Recounting the impact of Covid-19 on composers, David, Eastburn (2021) records:

> On a call together in November 2020, we shared our great concerns about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on composers. Through conversations we'd both been having; we were picking up not only the acute impact of the loss of work (affecting all musicians) but also some specific and very worrying issues unique to composers. (Here, our definition of 'composer' is purposefully broad and

> includes songwriters, improvisers, sound artists, and music creators of any genre and at any career stage.)

To further explain the impact of the pandemic on composers during the GCK and other musicals around the globe, Eastburn, S., et al. (2021) assert:

> As well as the economic impacts, which are easier to quantify, Covid-19 has impacted everyone socially. The lack of physical interaction has made us all reflect on how resilient we are to the pressures and stress that can be damaging to the future of our community. We decided that our two organizations, Sound and Music and The Ivor's Academy, should work together, and made the decision to collaborate on a survey that would draw together further evidence and seek a better understanding of the impact of the pandemic on this subset of musicians.

The global lockdown exercise subtly compelled a reenactment of latent compositional skills as composers were forced to sit at home which provided them with ample time to be creative and to write songs, some of which were used extensively during the GCK by choirs from different nations.



(Lagos Headquarters Choir Performing during the GCK)

Through social media interactions, a lot of indigenous composers emerged and interacted in real-time in an unprecedented manner. Speaking during a GCK global choir symposium held via Zoom, Authority (2022) remarks:

> Never in the history of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry (DLBC) has the church witnessed the discovery of talents in songwriting or music composition as we do presently during these series GCK which is made possible through the digitalization of our operations and activities thereby making body of believers from across the globe interact within a global virtual village. Not only that these composers been discovered but are also given the free platform to develop, nurture, and express themselves freely without any inhibitions or restrictions, although under the tutelage and mentoring of established composers in the ministry. There is a need to continually encourage more talents and provide them with a conducive atmosphere to blossom.

To further corroborate the remarks expounded above, Ojeme (2023) affirms:

> Youths get a platform to showcase their skills and talents in music, tech innovations, entrepreneurship, oratory/spoken word, and leadership. We have witnessed great networking and collaborations, enabling young minds to connect with like-minded peers, mentors, and experts around the world. This fosters the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices, igniting innovative solutions and initiatives.

Still highlighting the role of multimedia is the massive outlet of musical activities and ingenuities, Ojeme (2023) asserts:

> The passion of the Convener of IMPACT is ever burning higher for the younger generation. The passion of the Convener has also led him to launch a community for the attendees of this program - The King's Circle. This community will get a daily dose of power-packed, short, and interactive nuggets from the Convener, Pastor Dr. W.F Kumuyi. The Kings Circle (TKC) is targeted to reach youths of different levels globally through TIKTOK, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp, and a host of other social media platforms.

The pandemic era witnessed an avalanche of musical compositions reflecting hope, encouraging folks across the globe through the GCK platforms to keep hope alive. The composition, production, digitalization, and dissemination of this noble act – sending messages of hope to the world through songs, dramas, playlets, and so on, was brought to fruition through technology employing various multimedia channels such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet, Twitter, and a lot of other accessible platforms.

While the Global Crusade with Kumuyi was ongoing, it was gathered by the researcher that various musical activities in composing, competing, and performing were also taking place in some other regions in Nigeria. Such was an event organized by the National Festival of Arts & Culture, NAFEST, in 2020. The Federal Government of Nigeria leveraged the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic to initiate a national composition and singing competitionthemed ''Post Corona Virus 2020'' which was hosted in Jos, Plateau State. Onochie (2020), records:

> The 2020 NAFEST syllabus was loaded with exciting events for both children and adults in both competitive and non-competitive categories. They include indigenous cuisines, children's indigenous music instrumentation, choral competitions, traditional board game competitions, indigenous fabric and fashion competitions, culture quizzes, and archery, which replaced traditional wrestling.

Out of the Thirty-Six States of the federation that participated, River State's Council for Arts and Culture represented River State and emerged in a tally with Ekiti State in the 2nd position following Bayelsa State who came first in the competition. While reporting on the outcome of the NAFEST 2020 event, Olayemi (2020), states:

> Bayelsa state, 'The Glory of all Lands', has bagged the overall first position at the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFEST) competitive events. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the competitive events were on traditional cuisines, arts and crafts, essay writing, quiz, traditional board game, indigenous fabrics and fashion parades, indigenous music, archery, and coral competitions. Ekiti state and Rivers states emerged in the 2nd

overall position, Plateau state bagged 3rd position, Kano and Enugu states had the fourth position, while Delta, Kaduna states and the Federal Capital Territory bagged the fifth position. This was announced during the closing ceremony of the 33rd edition of NAFEST which was held at the Rwang Pam Township Stadium, Jos, Plateau state.



Source: **Closing Ceremony of NAFEST 2020 at Jos - YouTube** (https://youtu.be/QMLqxyFUdCo?si=TZwbTgz8OncbVqfI)

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic which was ravaging the world at that period, the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC), and the Plateau State Government, took up the challenge to host the ancient festival which has tremendously changed its narratives. Information management, dissemination and assessment of the NAFEST 2020 event was made possible through the various multimedia channels over the internet.

Data Analysis

1. Studies show that the pandemic has led to a surge in total internet usage.
2. This is due to factors such as an increased demand for videoconferencing, live streaming services and critical reliance on multimedia by organizations to retain their relevance.
3. Multimedia provides platforms for more original works to be born and for established and as well as upcoming composers to collaborate in real-time.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed many aspects of people's lives, such as work, education, religion, health, and social interactions. As a result, many people have become more reliant on the Internet to access essential services, information, and entertainment. According to various sources, internet usage has increased significantly during the pandemic, both in terms of the number of users and the amount of data consumed. Fact and Figures, (2021) records:

> One source reports that the number of internet users grew by 782 million to reach 4.9 billion people in 2021, or 63% of the world's population. This represents an increase of 19% since 2019 when there were 4.1 billion users, or 54% of the population. The growth was especially pronounced in developing countries and regions, such as Africa and Asia-Pacific, where internet use jumped by 23% and 24%, respectively.

The pandemic contributed to a modest narrowing of the digital divide between the most and least connected countries. Another source indicates that broadband data usage increased by 47% during the COVID-19 quarantine, compared to the same period in the previous year (Cohen, 2020). This reflects the higher demand for online activities such as video streaming, gaming, video conferencing, religious activities, and teleworking. Some broadband users also upgraded their service to improve the speed, reliability, or quality of their internet connection at home. The pandemic has also changed how people communicate with each other online. The pandemic has led to a surge in total internet usage. This is due to factors such as an increased demand for videoconferencing, live streaming services and critical reliance on multimedia by organizations to retain their relevance. Multimedia provides platforms for more original works to be born and for established and as

well as new composers to collaborate in real-time. As observed from the Global Crusade with Kumuyi' outreach in the post Covid-19 era, many upcoming musicians as well as art composers were discovered and given the stage to express their ingenuity by using their original compositions during the crusade held at various location across the globe. Collaboration becomes easy as the multimedia space enabled interactions to cross lace ideas, vet one another's work and jointly performed these works through virtual choral rehearsals, training, mentoring, and performance of such works. In summary, the pandemic has led to a surge in total internet usage, as more people went online for various purposes such as training, co-mentoring, rehearsing, and performing which led to more consumption of more data. The internet has been a vital resource for many during this challenging time, but it has also posed some challenges and risks for others.

Conclusion

Multimedia now permeates the landscape of artistic creation, production, communication, and digitalization, with rich musical and other attention-getting audio features accompanying and accentuating the visual images and shaping their understanding of the unfolding story music composers tend to disseminate. The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, though might have had some adverse effect on the global live stage, has created a compelling environment for the prolificity of original music works to be birthed, produced in a multimedia version, and digitalized for easy accessibility and usability. Music composers and producers responding to the wake-up-call sequel to the pandemic outbreak, have now embraced, unreservedly, alternative approaches to what ordinarily they would have handled like business as usual- manual methods giving way to digitalization, traditionalism giving way to modernization through the upsurge in technological renaissance. The distinctive paradigm shift is enormous. Distance, time, and location are no longer barriers to musical practices, rehearsals, performances, or productions as the world has become a global village or virtual community through digitalization.

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