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Abstract

This study examines King Sunny Ade's 2024 Ekimogun Day's live concert performance in Ondo state. It analyses the band's performance practice and use of artificial intelligence enhanced lighting techniques for the concert. This study employs participatory observation and videography as primary sources of data collection. The secondary source involves review of literature from books, journals and monographs among others. Findings reveal that Sunny Ade's live stage performance is full of artistic and dramatic displays as a unique practice. This is displayed by the mode of entrance of the band members and the use of instrumental sequences at the beginning, middle and last session during his performances on stage. Another is the cultural aesthetics creation in which the scenery and lighting designer employed the artificial intelligence enhanced lighting equipment in the interpretation of the performance. This provided technical insight, artistic elements and aesthetics to the stage during the performing. It is also worthy to acknowledge the significance of human factor, vis-a-vis the creativity of the light-designer/engineer who manipulated the AI aided lighting equipment to achieve the desired scenery on the stage.

Key words: Lighting Technique, Artificial Intelligence, Performance Practice.

Introduction

Music has always been a common practice among the peoples of Africa. Music is an art that involves everybody living in a society, irrespective of age, status and gender, because it covers day to day activities of the people in a particular society. In any African society, there are different types of music for different purposes. The people of Africa have music for ritual, burial, social ceremonies, rites, war, royal coronation, festivals, music for traditional cults and others. There are different popular music genres which are found in different countries, and in different languages depending on their geographical locations. These genres include Reggae, Hip-pop, Highlife, Makossa, Traditional pop and Afro-beats among others. These genres dominate the social life musical scene among the people. These genres play important roles in social ceremonies, recreation as well as other form of entertainment among the people.

Juju music is a popular musical genre that originated among the Yoruba people of South-west of Nigeria. Juju music dominated the popular music scene among the Yoruba State like Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Kwara, Osun, part of Kogi, Ekiti, Ondo and Lagos State because it is predominantly rendered in Yoruba language. Also, Juju music is a genre known for praise-singing, eulogy or panegyric for those who patronizes the juju musicians. Some of the most prominent Juju musicians that dominated the juju music scene in Nigeria from the 1940s to early 1970s includes, Ojoge Daniel, Adeolu Akinsaya, (Baba-Eto), Fatai Rolling Dollar, I.K Dairo, Ayinde Bakare, Popular Jingo, Kayode Fashola, Ebenezer Obey Sunny Ade, Orlando Owoh, Emperor Pick Peters, Dele Abiodun, Segun Adewale, Idowu Animashaun, Sir Shina Peters among others. These musicians were at one time or the other engaged in both studio recording sessions and live performances in musical concerts or out-door social engagements.

This study specially focuses on the live performance of King Sunny Ade one of the most popular juju musicians in order to highlight his performance setting and the use of artificial intelligence enhanced lighting techniques during the Ekimogun Day Concert in Nigeria in 2024. This study contributes to the existing knowledge on performance aesthetics of live-band performance in Nigeria and Africa at large.

Theoretical Framework

This study relies on the Claudia's (2021) aesthetic theory in musicology. This theory stresses that the beauty and taste and movement of music and its techniques to evoke a particular emotion or pleasing to the eyes and hears if it appears beautiful. Therefore, the aesthetic of a live-band performance could be determined by its performance practice, stage settings, costumes, dance as well lighting techniques used for the stage.

Set up of sound system for a concert performance and the architectural design of a venue plays significant role in its acoustic properties. Forsyth (1985) explores the relationship between architectural design and acoustics, emphasizing the need for collaboration between architects and acoustic engineers from the early stages of design. Forsyth's work underscores the importance of considering acoustic principles in the overall architectural plan to avoid costly modifications later. Rossing (2007) discusses how architectural features such as ceiling height, room shape, and surface materials influence sound propagation and distribution. Rossing's research provides practical guidelines for designing acoustically favorable spaces, highlighting the need for customized solutions based on the specific use of the venue.

Sound isolation and noise control are essential considerations in indoor venues to prevent external noise from interfering with the performance and to contain sound within the space. Everest and Pohlmann (2009) discuss techniques for sound isolation, including the use of barrier materials, decoupling structures, and sealing gaps. Their work provides strategies for minimizing noise transmission and improving sound isolation (Everest & Pohlmann, 2009).

Biography of Sunny Ade

King Sunny Adé (Sunday Adeniyi, born 1946) is by far the most popular performer of Nigerian Jùjú music. With his band, King Sunny Ade and His African Beats, King Sunny Ade became an international star across Africa during the mid-1980s, touring and gaining significant audience in the United States and Europe as well. He is known as the Minister of Enjoyment. Born to a Nigerian royal family in Ondo, Ade left grammar school to pursue his career, which began with Moses Olaiya's Federal Rhythm Dandies, a highlife band. He left to form The Green Spots in 1967. He formed a record label in 1974, fed up with being exploited by a major label. Beginning with Juju Music, Ade began gaining a wide following as Mango Records, a subsidiary of Island Records, released his albums. He was billed as the African Bob

Marley, and headlined concerts in the US. Soon after, Nigerian imports (mostly pirated copies) of his massive back catalog began flooding the Western market. Island, concerned about sales and Adé's refusal to include more English in his repertoire, cut him loose after his third LP, 1984's *Aura*.

King Sunny Ade was musically inventive by integrating the Congolese Guitar into his music in the 1970s and adding synthesizers in the 1980s. 'Syncro-system' was a style of Juju music created in 1975. His 'synchronomatic' Juju system which he called 'Syncro System' was characterized by fusion of Afro-beat, rock and the lyrics mostly structured around non-equidistant pentatonic scale (d:r:m:s:l). Also, there is an increase in known juju tempo played with multiple talking-drums and other percussions as well as incorporation of Keyboard synthesizer and Steel Guitar (Hawaiian guitar) into Syncro system of Juju music. Live performances of Syncro-system were accompanied by a special dance step which is uniquely created by King Sunny Ade. This style was later developed into 'Apala-syncro' style of juju music by this same musician. King Sunny Ade's star began to dim by the end of the 1980s, and his albums sold less, though he continued to garner critical acclaim and widespread popularity in Africa. 1998's *Odu*, a collection of traditional Yoruba songs, was nominated for a Grammy Award. He became one of the most powerful people in Nigeria, running multiple companies in several industries.

His contributions have not only left an indelible mark on the Nigerian Music Industry but have also shaped the country's cultural landscape. By aligning with the objectives of preserving and promoting Nigerian cultural heritage, King Sunny Ade's legacy affirms his status as a musical icon whose influence extends beyond music into the realms of cultural diplomacy and identity preservation.

Performance Settings of King Sunny Ade during the Ekimogun day's Concert

King Sunny Ade's live concert performances are known for their uniqueness in stage settings. During live stage performances, the technical crew usually get to the venue to do the setting of stage platform, lighting gadgets, and all other forms of decoration of the stage. However, there are other important settings peculiar to King Sunny Ade handled by his group of sound engineers.



Photo I: King Sunny Ade's group of sound engineers.

Sound Equipment Settings

At Ekimogun Day's concert, the sound engineer for the band was housed in a cubicle directly opposite the stage where all the electronic sound equipment were stationed and fixed. This is in order for the sound engineer to monitor the quality, intensity and balance in sounds. The speaker systems are located at strategic places where the sounds will be audible for both audience and dancers, while monitor-speakers are placed on the stage at the back of the band, while others are placed on the stage for the band. The microphones are fixed on the microphone-stand and placed in front of the singers and the drummers.

Standing Arrangement on Stage

The standing arrangement of King Sunny Ade's band on stage is in a semi-circle form. The talking drummers were at the left side of the stage while the trap drummer is placed on a higher platform at the back middle of where he can see all the other members of the band on the stage. The conga drummer and other percussionist are placed at the right side of the stage. The guitarists are placed at the center on a higher pavilion for them to be visible to the audience. Sunny Ade as the main focus being the lead-vocalist was at the center-front of the stage and as well the chorus singers respectively. As the main artiste, Sunny-Ade occasionally move and

dance to the front-edge and round the stage to entertain his audience and motivate his band members.

The Organized Dancers on Stage

The bands' costumed 'special' dancers were placed at strategic places by the two sides or the frontage of the band on the stage. They danced in a free-style manner and in a choreographic style. The dancers sometimes move down the stage to dance in front of selected audience before coming back to their locations on the stage.



PhotoII: King Sunny Ade on Stage

AI Enhanced Lighting Design and Aesthetic in Ekimogun Day Live Music Concert.

Designing lighting for musical concert performance has changed massively in the last few years. In many ways it has been as big a change since the inspection of artificial intelligence aided automated lighting equipment into the industry to alter the old methods of designing and manipulating lighting. It should be noted that, no matter how a producer plans a concert, talk show, theatrical productions, or talent hunts a well-designed stage lighting design can help engage the audience, set the tone for the event, and leave an impression since however, the first contact between the audience and performance is the visual aspect of lighting takes prominent of it.

Lighting does more than simply illuminate the singers or dancers on stage, lights visualized the process of ideas, words, actions, emotional subtext, tone, and all other aspects of nonverbal communication. The technique of lighting design for live performances refers to the

entire set of methods and techniques used to add layers of meaning and subtext to the performance "content "the actors, sets, dialog, dance, songs and action. The tools, techniques, and variations are broad in scope. According to Ganslandt and Hofmann (1992) posited thus:

‘Task lighting in particular was examined in detail to establish how great an influence illuminance and the kind of lighting applied had on productivity. The result of these perceptual physiological investigations was a comprehensive work of reference that contained the illuminance levels required for certain visual tasks plus minimum colour rendering qualities and glare

limitation

requirements. (P.22)

Given the above statement, stage lighting influences the type of lighting technology to be used on musicians, dancers and on the concert production designer’s perception. In musical concert, light levels and uniformity are important, because its aims at creating different scenes and moods for the audience, rather than highlighting the stage or technical equipment. Light alone can create the impression of different times of day, weather, and atmospheres, such as fear or romance just as witnessed in Sunny Ade’s 2024 Ekimogun day’s live concert performance.



Photo III: Lighting effect on the audience floor

Stage lighting has extended beyond the goals of functioning has just visibility, but rather aiming at create illusions rather than simply making real structures visible. In the photo III the

lighting designer used the artificial intelligence enhanced lighting equipment to depict a valuable reference for identification, offering insights into techniques for achieving varied lighting effects through colours wheel that produces different aesthetical in the same environment, which gives lighting designers and audience a sense of belonging.

In giving this, it is not surprising that stage lighting played crucial role in making powerful interpretation, given film production, concerts, and even immersive digital experiences. Stage lighting is an essential element of music concert production, contributing significantly to the audience's experience by shaping the mood, enhancing message, groove and audience attention. Many renowned lighting designers have their origins in theatre lighting. They create a stage for an event necessitates a platform that is both functional and visually appealing.

When designing the stage for Sunny Ade's performance at Ekimogun day's concert, it was observed that the executing these steps demands both creativity and aesthetics creation.

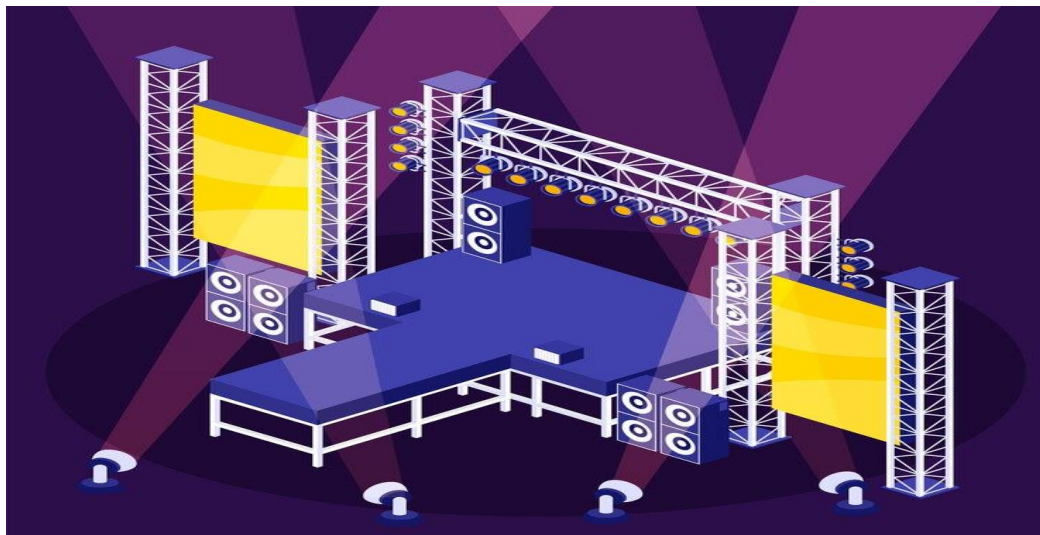


Photo IV: Ground plan of the design for 2024 Ekimogun Day live Concert performance

AI aided lighting equipment deployed for the 2024 Ekimogun day live concert performance

Chips on board Light (COB) were used to flood the stage; Front of House Lights (FOH) with its specification at 100 watts each, 10 was rigged on the truss for (FOH) on the stage for visibility and clarity to enable the audience to see clearly what is happening on the stage during

the performance, while another 5 was rigged on another set of trusses to take care of the audience and for the effective of camera view .It should be noted that, the 15 set of COBs rigged are basically to provide illumination and as well as to fade the shadows away from the stage.



Photo V: COB light on stage and in the audience function as identification and visibility

Light Emitting Diode (LED) 24 watts were rigged on the truss at the back and on both sides of the stage, they were used as a back and fill lights to give a proper view of the stage and at same time create aesthetic through the colour dissemination for the camera and beauty of the

stage- one the most important stage lighting when it comes to lighting design for musical concert, the back and fill lights play different and significant roles in a live musical concert.



Photo VI: LED lights creating beautiful atmosphere during the performance with use of green and blue colours

Several other AI aided automated lighting equipment were deployed throughout the performance, such as: Haze machine (2500 watts) Avolite mini pearl, colour changer (Backlights lights) and low fog remote controller, and lighting equipment accessories like 2.5mm cable for connections, cable ties for cable dressing and others were used to create effect with combination of Moving head led 230 wash and LED Mega Screen in both sides of hall, Moving head Shaupy (250 watts) and 32 channel Generic light. 54 b.

Other sophisticated AI aided lighting equipment such as Dimmer Boards: Two main Dimmer Boards. Each has 1 number of 12 channels, and the other four Numbers of 16 channels both computerized. Both were engaged to feed all the lanterns and the automated lighting fixtures. DMX controller system with 3 USB cables connected to the two dimmers and to the laptop. ii) Cable connection: the sockets were placed nearer to the dimmers, from where both lighting equipment and the sound/music equipment were connected while the Socapex cables were run from each of the lanterns and generic lights to the dimmers. The cables and sockets are durable for the connections, distribution of electricity round the cables from dimmers and electrical

appliances that were used during the production the imported Socapex cables was needed for the added generic lights.

Conclusion

The performance of Sunny Ade at the 2024 Ekimogun Day Concert in Ondo was a remarkable experience to both the performers, audience as well as the organizers. This is as a result of the creativity displayed by Sunny Ade in form of dance-steps, guitar improvisation and his usual praise-singing. Also, the AI enhanced lighting techniques used provided the desired aesthetic scenery to the stage settings, performance and the audience dancing in the hall.

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) aided lighting equipment, stage lighting is more than just a functional aspect of any musical concert, it is an important artistic and technical element that influences the overall experience of the performance. As new technologies aided by AI emerge, stage lighting's ability to enhance musical performance and create immersive environments will also increase, ensuring its long-term relevance in the world of design and entertainment. However, apart from Sunny Ade's musical creativity, which was manifested in both his mastery of high performing skills and stage and artificial intelligence enhanced lighting settings, it is equally worthy to acknowledge the significance of human factor, that is, the creativity of the light-designer/engineer who manipulated the AI aided lighting equipment to achieve the desired scenery on the stage.

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