

The real music presenter

By Benson Idonije

The fact that music presentation allows the broadcaster the freedom to operate without the imposition of any set of rules does not make this 'programme format' any less important or inferior to the others. On the other hand, it should be seen as a challenge to his creativity and imagination; an opportunity for self development and the projection of a likeable personality all of which call for a high level of education, intelligence and sense of responsibility.

In order to perform to the right standards, it is important that he is able to define his target audience, and identify the culture of his immediate environment, he should be versed in the language in use so that he can communicate effectively, instead of hiding his basic inabilities under American slangs, with no regard for syntax and the rules English grammar.

One is worried these days should the quality of presentation, the logical sequence of programmes, and the depth of their content. Presentation now opens with all the fanfare imaginable, building up with excitement to heighten the expectation of the listener, only to degenerate sooner or later into an ordinary play-along with transitions derived from chit chats with friends and colleagues 'in the house'

There is nothing wrong with occasionally chatting with somebody to reinforce 'link-continuity' and enrich a programme, but when it is made a mainstay and a regular working habit, it becomes a joke, a hollow lsham that betrays the lack of preparation and planlessness of the presenter, who soon loses the respect of the serious listener.

I tuned to OGBC 2 last Thursday between eleven and twelve noon to listen to one of the station's grassroots programmes in Yoruba, a package of oldies and evergreens. The presenter went to town with some of the best of Adeolu Akinsanya, Ebenezer Obey in the sixties and seventies, among others. He did not say much in terms of transitions, but the little he said had no relevance at all to the matter in hand. It should have been better not to say anything at all.

Sound and Screen has complained about the Sunday afternoon highlife programme on Ray Power 100 FM where the presenter sounds completely out of touch with the culture of the programme, apparently alienating the feelings of his target audience as it were, but nothing has changed, even though the music continues to be refreshing and pleasant to listen to.

What is particularly painful and disappointing about these two is that they are usually promoted and eventually introduced as personality programmes where the presenter should be in professional control, as an authority and master of situations. And besides, these are some of the music programmes that should receive special treatment for the promotion of our culture. My advice is for these programmes to be broadcast strictly as straight forward compilations, without saying a word, if they cannot receive the specialised treatment they deserve.

I feel particularly disturbed by the presentation of "Satz and Jazz" which continues to be treated as a disco-oriented entertainment programme, with the presenter talking in and out

of music at will and generally giving it a casual treatment that undermine the artistic creativity of the musicians.

We all agree that jazz is creative artform, and so its presentation should be done from the perception of appreciating and examining the quality of the music, by discussing, highlighting and analysing the performances; a procedure which is a product of residual knowledge borne out of years of listening experience and personal contact with the exponents.

There are two types of music presenters on our radio today the exciting and seemingly enthusiastic type that wins the hearts of the gullible with 'Sound and fury, signifying nothing and the group that commands respect because they are deep, versatile and articulate; qualities that are required for the successful accomplishment of personality programmes.

However, the like of Jerry Edwards of Radio Nigeria 2, Dennis De Mennis of Ray Power 100 FM and Mablás Apolloma Jnr. of Radio Rivers, have potentials for total accomplishment; and "Rock Radio, Soul to Soiol," "Thank God its Frida," and Guinness Power Jam" possess the markings of personality programmes.

The music presenter is an accomplished broadcaster, versed in presentation, production, current affairs and all; and in the process of entertaining his target audience, he must be able to bring the knowledge of broadcasting in all its ramifications, to play.