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Open to Nigerian business owners
I still remember the very first time I heard Nigerian music being played abroad. It was at the Westfield Stratford Shopping Centre in the UK. It was so surreal. These days there’s almost nothing exciting about hearing Nigerian music played abroad. And that’s because it is somewhat expected. Our sound has pushed beyond the shores of Africa and taken centre stage globally, with our artists touring the world and picking up awards on their way. We are at the forefront of the global craze for Afrobeats.

This week, I am particularly excited about this topic, and not only because of the cover personality, Fireboy Dm, who happens to be one of the current leading voices in Afrobeats and a burgeoning global superstar. This is also about Ayo Shonaiya’s documentary, Afrobeats; The Back Story, which chronicles the sweat, tears and blood behind what has eventually turned out to be Nigeria’s biggest export. Don’t know the difference between Afrobeat and Afrobeats? Then you must read his interview with Ayo Lawal.

Still, on the topic of our creatives going global, there’s currently a first it’s kind exhibition tagged ‘Afrika Fashion’ taking place at the Victoria and Albert Museum London, which celebrates the creativity, ingenuity and unstoppable global impact of contemporary African fashions. It is the UK’s most extensive exhibition on African Fashion, and it features a selection of iconic mid-twentieth century African designers, including Nigeria’s very first fashion designer Shade Thomas-Fahm. Also featured are the works of amazing Nigerian fashion designers like Lisa Folawiyo, Orange Culture, Nkwo, Iamisigo, Mai Atafo and fashion photography from the most talented Stephen Tayo. Our creative story is one of grit and resilience, and as such, it is so heartwarming to see our dues finally come to us. From music to fashion, art and entertainment, we are leading the continent and creating a platform for our sister African countries to flourish globally.

As we look to the future, we must pay tribute to the past: the successes and the pioneers who put the movement into play. With that in mind, I ask that you experience this week’s issue with the pride that comes with being Nigerian. We might not be there yet, but we are definitely well on our way.

Konye

EDITOR’S LETTER

Naija to the World

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It was almost an all judiciary atmosphere at Oluwakemi Balogun, SAN son’s wedding, Olamide and his wife Motunrayo (nee) Olaleye, the ceremony had more than 20 senior advocates and other senior judiciary officers under one roof without objection from any corner.

OLAMIDE AND MOTUNRAYO TIE THE KNOT

OYINKAN FETUGA
RAJ GUPTA
RAYMOND MGBEOKWERE
BRIDE’S MOTHER, MRS OLALEYE
GROOM’S MOTHER
ENIOLA BELLO
HRM TAIWO TAIWO
HRM BABATUNDE AJAYI
MR DAGGASH
CHINEDU CHIGBU, IHUOMA CHIGBU, IY A OMONIBEKE, DAKUKU PETERSIDE & DAVID OMONIBEKE
GROOM’S FATHER, KEMI BALOGUN & FOLASHADE BALOGUN
PASTOR IDOWU & SIJU ILUYOMADE
ELPHREDA GIWA & STANLEY UBANI
MR & MRS OLAYINKA FAJI
MR & MRS IBEZIM
MRS AKINLADE & MRS JOSE
ADEYEMO ADEBAYO
MOYOSORE ONIGBANJO & FUNKE ABOY
KUNLE OGUNMEFUN
TOMIWA & TEMISAN SHODIMU & MRS SHODIMU
MR & MRS AYO OLORUNFEMI
LADI SANNI
YEMI SANNI & YEMISI SANNI
ELIZABETH EBI
MR & MRS SHOLA OPALEYE
YODE & FUNLOLA DELANA
PASTOR ADEYEMO ADEBAYO, PASTOR TREVOR & MOTUNRAYO AKINDE
TOMILADE SHODIMU
OLAMIDE & MOTUNRAYO BALOGUN
Sunday, July 24, 2022 Vol. 22, No. 9936

Ten Things This Week

INEC DECLARES PDP’S ADELEKE WINNER OF OSUN STATE ELECTION
The Independent National Electoral Commission has declared Senator Ademola Adeleke of the People’s Democratic Party the winner of the Osun governorship election, with a total of 403,271 votes in a hotly contested race.

NOLLYWOOD SUFFERS A DOUBLE TRAGEDY WITH THE DEATHS OF ADA AMEH AND SOLA ONAYIGA.
The sudden deaths of two actresses — Ada Ameh and Sola Awojobi Onayiga — have thrown their fans into mourning. The death of Ada Ameh, 48, came hours after she ushered her friends into a new week in a social media post. The Bansa-born actress who is known as Emu in the popular family television drama series, The Johnsons, reportedly died in Warri, Delta State, after she collapsed. In a similar development, actress Sola Awojobi Onayiga who was best known for her role as ‘Ireti’ in the TV series ‘Fuji House of Commotion,’ has also been reported dead. Onayiga was said to have been admitted to the ICU unit at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital two weeks ago. The late Onayiga was the Social Democratic Party (SDP) 2015 candidate for Ikorodu Constituency 1 in the Lagos State House of Assembly.

BIDEN APPOINTS RICHARD MILLS JR. AS THE US AMBASSADOR TO NIGERIA
The United States President Joe Biden has appointed Richard Mills Jr. as the US Ambassador to Nigeria. He takes over from Mary Beth Leonard, who was appointed the envoy to Nigeria by President Donald Trump. Richard Mills Jr. currently serves as the US Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations. He is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Minister-Counselor.

NIGERIA’S OLDEST CARRIER, AERO CONTRACTORS, SUSPENDS OPERATIONS DUE TO THE ECONOMIC CRISIS.
Nigeria’s oldest airline, Aero Contractors, has announced the suspension of flight operations. The airline, in a statement, said this was due to a challenging operational environment. “Due to the impact of the challenging operating environment on our daily operations, the management of Aero Contractors Company of Nigeria Ltd. wishes to announce the temporary suspension of its scheduled passenger services operations with effect from Wednesday, July 20, 2022.”

NDLEA BEGINS ABBA KYARI’S TRIAL
The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency has commenced its case of hard drug trafficking charges against the suspended Deputy Commissioner of Police, Abba Kyari, before Justice Emeka Nnadi of a Federal High Court in Abuja. The agency brought a Commander of Narcotics (Forensic Unit), Patrícia Alabi, to testify as its first witness. The witness told the court that part of her job specification involves receiving and conducting forensic analysis on drug exhibits.

I CONTEMPLATED SUICIDE WHILE RECORDING MY ALBUM – OMAM LAY.
Sarney Omah, popularly known as Omah Lay, has spoken out about his battle with depression. In a series of tweets, he revealed that he was struggling emotionally and contemplated suicide due to his breakup with his girlfriend. He wrote, “I wanna spill my heart on this app like this. Boy Aloni might be the last time y’all will hear me cry on a song. On D, I was dead as* down, insecure, scared, depressed, and losing my mind like. I was literally gonna kill myself. My babe served me ‘breakfast’ at midnight. I wanted to go crazy. I felt like I lost it until after I finished recording Boy Aloni. I listened to myself and realized I’m one of the hard-est N*ggas in African music has ever seen!”

OYO STATE APPOINTS ADEBAYO LAWAL AS DEPUTY GOVERNOR AFTER OLANIYAN’S REMOVAL
Following the removal of Rauf Olaniyan due to a series of charges and misconduct, The Oyo State House of Assembly has approved the appointment of Adebayo Lawal as the new Deputy Governor following the removal of Rauf Olaniyan. Before his appointment, Lawal was the Chairman of the State Housing Corporation. He had also served as the state Attorney-General.

“LAST LAST” HAS EARNED ME MORE MONEY THAN ANY OTHER SONG IN MY CAREER” - BURNA BOY.
Dami Ogunbiyi, a.k.a Burana Boy, has revealed that his hit song, Last Last, has earned him more money than any of the songs he’s released. He made this known during an interview on “Shopping for Sneakers.” “I’ve actually made more money from that song than any other song in my whole career. And it’s even a short time. I only dropped it a month or two ago,” Burana Boy said.

YAKUBU MAIKYAU EMERGES NBA NEW PRESIDENT
Senior Advocate of Nigeria. Mr Yakubu Chonoko Makiya, has emerged as the 30th President of the Nigerian Bar Association. He polled a total of 22,342 votes to defeat two other contenders Chairman of the NBA Securities Agencies Relations Committee, Joe-Kyari Gadzama (SAN), and a former General Secretary of the NBA, Jonathan Zaidi. Makiya succeeds Mr Chumode Akpata, who was elected in 2020.

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How Shade Thomas-Fahm pioneered the Nigerian fashion Industry

Decades before the Deola Sagoe and the Ifan Eisiees of the Nigerian fashion industry hit the scene, there was Shade Thomas-Fahm, one of Nigeria’s first modern fashion designers. In her time, she was one of Africa’s most influential designers and a pioneering figure in the Nigerian fashion industry. When Shade Thomas Fahm started her boutique tailoring in Ikoyi, little did she know that she would be someday referred to as Nigeria’s first fashion designer. Or that her towering influence would one day be celebrated at a landmark exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London. Speaking exclusively to Thisday Style on her early years in fashion, she says, “I felt the need to promote fabrics and styles from my part of the world because I loved the way they looked and how they made women look.” Shade’s love for fashion started when she was a child. She would pick bits and pieces from neighbours tailoring stores to make dresses. Not long after, she moved to London with the hope of starting a nursing career, but her passion thought otherwise and led her to the world of modeling and fashion. She then enrolled at St Martin’s School of Art (now Central Saint Martins) to further pursue her chosen career. She would eventually become the first Nigerian woman to achieve a professional qualification in fashion design when she graduated in 1959. In 1960, Shade returned to Lagos, Nigeria, armed with her degree and a desire to put the Nigerian Local fabric on the global map. This desire gave birth to her first fashion shop called “Maison Shadé”, which later became “Shade’s Boutique.” It stocked Nigerian designs and was the first in Lagos to use mannequins just like she had seen in the UK.

“We wanted to make a mark, to apply what we had learned abroad,” she explains. In the beginning, she had a hard time convincing Nigerians to buy local fabrics and designs. But she won eventually won them over and became an influential designer and dressmaker in the Lagos fashion scene. Some of her clients at the time included Hannah Awolowo, the first lady of Nigeria’s old Western Region, and Princess Elizabeth of Toro, a trailblazing model, government minister and Uganda’s first female lawyer. Often using aso-oke, adire, akwete and okene in her designs, she re-imagined traditional Nigerian styles for the modern woman, creating a pre-tied gèlè (headwrap) to make getting dressed easier, and added a zipper to the ìró (wrapper). “It was always putting one style up against the other style. For instance, I would look at the European skirt and then I would put it up against, in my mind, the Yoruba ìró... Both clothe a woman’s lower half and in similar ways but with distinct differences. Both styles had something to learn from the other.”

In the early 2000s, Mrs Thomas-Fahm bowed to competition from the global fashion industry and closed her final boutique in Lagos. By then, the designer says, upper-class Nigerians had pivoted towards Western couture, depriving local brands of clientele. One cannot undermine Shade’s influence and contribution to the Nigerian fashion industry, as her use of the local fabric has influenced her contemporaries and designers from younger generations to date. And it is this same influence that is being celebrated by the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, as a ‘Fashion Vanguard’ years after the Shade boutique.

Big bags are a girl’s best friend. The big bag era isn’t going anywhere. Yes, we have been carrying mini bags lately, but from the look of things, the big bag is still very much around. It is all about supersize.

Get roomy with baggy fit. Great news for women who like more comfort and room to move about in their jeans. Baggy jeans are super-casual and cool, and they send a message that you can combine comfort and chic in one outfit.

GO BIG OR GO HOME

The latest trend is to go big and bold. Not everyone is a risk-taker when it comes to their wardrobe, but it is time to bring out the baggy jeans, oversized tops, and accessories hidden in your closet because oversized is stepping up the fashion chart. These days when it comes it comes to fit, bigger is better.

By Usaiade bioma

Let your accessories do the talking. You need accessories that can stand on their own and not just blend in. Statement accessories will certainly elevate your look.

Pump up the sleeve volume. Oversized sleeves are in. This is one look you should try. Steal that spotlight. A little fuss can be fun sometimes.

Platform heels. Take your feet to new heights with some sky-high platform heels. You can see the ’90s inspiration coming through with chunky block heels. Create a maximalist look by pairing these heels with your favourite wardrobe staple.
Preserving the earth. Impacting lives positively.

As part of our efforts to create a healthier environment and improve quality of lives, we:

- Developed **AccessAfrica**, to facilitate global payments
- Have powered **58 branches** by alternative energy (hybrid)
- Have solar-powered **605 ATMs** nationwide
- Recycle **Waste across 75 business locations**
- Have decreased electricity consumption by **31%**
- Convert **old paper to pencils**

Because we are **#CommittedToGivingMore**

[accessbankplc.com/sustainability](http://accessbankplc.com/sustainability)
Fireboy is a refreshing original musician with style to match. He is achieving heights with his profound voice and his upbeat afro sound, which has caught the attention of many stars, including international artists like Ed Sheeran and Madonna. His hit single “Peru” was a TikTok sensation that took over the world, and even after a year of its release, the song still evokes the same vibe it gave when it was first released.

This week FUNKE BABI-KUFEJI speaks with the gifted crooner about his life, sounds and musical journey thus far.

As a young child growing up, did you know you were musically inclined and did your parents support you in pursuing a musical career full-time?

By the time I was about 11/12 years old, I knew I could sing. I had just started discovering my gifts at the time, so I didn’t pay full attention to it. To me, it was just something I knew I could do, nothing more. I was focused on my other gifts like writing (mainly poetry and articles). 5 years later, when I realized music was what I wanted to do with my life, everything changed for me. It’s crazy how the things purpose can do to a man. It went from obsession to blind devotion—nothing else mattered to me. I didn’t tell my parents until 2016, just before I finished school in 2017, and of course, they were not cool with it at first. Their first-born son had gone from a grade A student to a budding afrobeat artist. It was a transformation they couldn’t process. A year later, I had left school and gone to Lagos, and apparently, I was doing fine on my own as a struggling underground artist. Nothing was making sense yet, but they saw that my resolve was strong, and so they did what any good parent would do and decided to support me instead. Glad it all paid off in the end. For me, it was music or nothing.

What was their reaction to your success, and you will say your biggest supporter is when it comes to taking your career to the next level?

The first sign of real progress was when Olamide signed me up in October 2018. Everyone who knew me went crazy with joy. My parents were the first people I called, and it was an emotional one that day. I could feel the relief in their voices as they prayed for me and congratulated me. Naturally, my family are my biggest supporter. I could name a few people in the mix but having a parent’s support is a strong morale boost for any creative.

You have a unique sound that stands you out from many artists and has allowed you to work with prominent international artists. How will you describe your music with the kaleidoscopes of sounds we have been hearing spring out from Africa and Nigeria especially?

If I’m being honest, I haven’t been able to define or analyze my music or sound properly. I’ve always identified with afrobeat based on my identity, not the sound itself. I am African; I am Yoruba. Those are my roots, and that’s where my music stems from, but that’s it. I have quite a number of proper afrobeat records, but then probably half of my discography stems from pop and R&B. I bring the “afro” into it by connecting with my roots and the things you normally do? My female fans are a core part of my artistry and have allowed you to work with prominent international artists. How will you describe your music with the kaleidoscopes of sounds we have been hearing spring out from Africa and Nigeria especially?

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What is special in your life?

The term “playboy” in this sense doesn’t refer to the loose meaning we are familiar with. Right now, I’m in another entirely different headspace. It’s me willing to come out of my shell to “play”. To stop overthinking things and live my life like the pop star that I am. Not to be careless, but to care less about what others will think and stop brooding over decisions too much. Over the past year, I’ve learned that sometimes it’s okay to do things and watch life unfold. So basically, it’s me telling myself it’s time to come out and have fun, to enjoy the fame I’ve worked so hard for, to experience new things and network with people. “So play”, Playboy.

Speaking of working with international artists, you have worked with a couple of them. D-smoke on your Apollo album “Champion”, Ed Sheeran on the remix of your single “Peru”, and the biggest for me is with Madonna on the remix of her classic song “Frozen”. Tell us how did these collaborations come about, most especially with Madonna?

My global recognition has skyrocketed, of course, but then that’s just a bit of it. As a musician, these collaborations have opened my eyes to so many possibilities and ideas. There’s nothing like having a solid network of creatives at your disposal. I’ve not been that much of a collaborative artist, so collaboration means a lot to me. For me, it’s about building bridges and relationships that will last for years outside of music.

Several Nigerian musicians from the last ten years have cited Wande Coal as their inspiration, yourself included. Apart from him being an inspiration to you, you are also a big fan. What impact has Wande Coal had on your artistry?

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moment for them, and that makes it special for me too.

The way you look is the culture you were born into. Your culture becomes the trend, although tattoos and dreadlocks have always been a thing. I chose dreadlocks because I like to whip them on stage when I perform. It adds a certain kind of energy to my performance. I’ve always needed tattoos because I see them as art. I love to dress differently because when I step into a room, I have to stand out somehow. I don’t consider myself Alte because that is a whole different culture. I wasn’t developed in it all. Dressing different isn’t Alte. That being said, I’m glad that the little details about me can influence pop culture in my generation somehow.

How, then, will you define your style? Reserved, edgy, dark and subtly sensual.

You’re an international rock star. How has travelling all over the world affected you as a person?

Travelling is a lot of work. But it’s also fun and eye-opening. I’ve learned a lot from experiencing different cultures and people, hence increasing my knowledge and exposure. But my core being is still intact, at least for now. Joins aside, I don’t think I’ve made enough money that will change me. Maybe one day in the future, who knows?

It is almost an unwritten rule that successful artists take up protégés to mentor as they grow in their careers. Do you have anyone like that on your team, or are you looking to mentor anyone at the moment?

Call it humility or being modest, but I don’t see myself mentoring anyone just yet. I’ve been fortunate to bless and change a few people’s lives, but then that’s just it. Maybe in a couple more years, I’ll be in that headspace, or perhaps I just haven’t met such a person yet.

What do you do when you are not making music?

I love football. I love watching, playing and talking about it. I also like to read books and play video games to unwind. I’m an indoor guy, so most of my fun things I do at home, except when I step out to play football with the homies.

Lastly, what do you wish you were told when you started that has having all this money and appearances. How do you plan to use this money that will change me.

Change isn’t always a bad thing. Yes, money has changed my lifestyle, way of thinking and the way I handle things. But my core being is still intact, at least for now. Joins aside, I don’t think I’ve made enough money that will change me. Maybe one day in the future, who knows?

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Lastly, what do you wish you were told when you started that you think would help anyone in music starting today?

I wish someone had told me earlier that I needed to first work on finding my sound, and that’s when everything changed. A year later, the breakthrough came. For a budding musician, finding your sound makes up 60% of your becoming a complete artist. The rest, you learn as you go and grow.

It’s July, it’s cold, and the weather is gloomy. It would be great if we could spend the entire day wrapped in blankets, but the bills must be paid. The only thing that helps keep the body warm is to drink lots of hot tea. Not only is it a hot cup of tea soothing, but it can also benefit your health. Teas come in various flavors. Keep reading to choose the best choice for your health and palette.
ONE OF THESE COULD BE YOUR NEXT HOLIDAY DESTINATION

By Funke Babs-Kuku

After a challenging 2020 and 2021, travel is back with a bang in 2022 and a whole host of the best holiday destinations are open to travellers who wish to start exploring again. Not sure where to head off to? Check out our top picks for the best holiday destinations to visit

MAURITIUS
The island of Mauritius stuns with a variety of adventures packed into it. Crystal clear waters, white-sand beaches and luxury resorts are what many rave about the compact island. The quaint fishing villages, hiking in mountain forests and beautiful botanical gardens are some of the best attractions that create a well-rounded experience for visitors.

MONACO
Good things come in small packages. What they don’t tell you about Monaco is how colourful and captivating it is. Still, when you see it with two eyes, it is indeed a sight to behold and, of course, not forgetting the great history filled with barbarians, kings, supercars, movie stars and bags of money. And as the second smallest country in the world, the great history filled with barbarians, kings, supercars, movie stars and bags of money. And as the second smallest country in the world, Monaco makes a cosy holiday destination.

THE MALDIVES
This island country has become the most trending vacation spot in recent times. Iconic water villas and picturesque ocean views are one of the main tourist attractions. The Maldives is one of the best relaxation retreats you can find, and the island is a beauty to behold. Picture-perfect villas suspended over stunning blue waters, snow-white sand beaches and sunsets dipping into the horizon. The islands are popular with honeymooners looking for alone time who want to explore the best attractions that create a well-rounded experience for visitors.

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DUBAI
Dubai is renowned for its entertainment and recreation, luxury stay and shopping and best of world cuisine. It is a hot favourite destination among travellers of all kinds.

SEYCHELLES
Set in the Indian Ocean, the islands of Seychelles is a beautiful archipelago of 115 Island which is synonymous with flawless, smooth white beaches, shimmering coastline, palm-line shores and warm crystal blue waters. It is one of the most beautiful destinations in the world and not a low-budget destination. With the right amount of money, Seychelles offers all the water sports activities you can imagine, such as banana boat rides, parasailing, wind-surfing, jet and water skiing, beach parties, night safaris, and round-the-island boat races and sunset cruises.

MYKONOS
If you are one to party hard like to meet cashed-up A-listers, and like new everything, Mykonos is just the place for you. It is one of the first Greek islands to be considered a holiday destination and has been on the holiday map since the 1960s. There are over 25 beaches in Mykonos, but only a handful are well organized with umbrellas, sunbeds, water sports beach bars and the list. The clear, shallow waters and golden beach sand make the destination ideal for everyone.
In celebration of the ongoing Victoria and Albert museum African fashion exhibition, which appreciates the creativity, ingenuity and unstoppable global impact of contemporary African Fashion, we celebrate five names who, amongst a host of others, have in their own way contributed to the worldwide appreciation of African Fashion.

Mayowa Nicholas, Nigeria
Mayowa Nicholas made her entry into the fashion world when she emerged as a finalist at the annual elite model look competition. She was the first Nigerian model to star in Yves Saint Laurent, Dolce and Gabbana and Calvin Klein campaigns, respectively. She also made a major impression internationally when she finally walked Victoria’s Secret show, being historically among one of the first African women to ever come that far in fashion.

Imane Ayissi, Cameroon
Imane Ayissi is the founder of the eponymous fashion brand “Imane Ayissi”, a France-based haute couture company that specializes in custom-made and luxury ready-to-wear pieces, which are distributed in South Africa, Cameroon and Japan. Imane Ayissi produces high fashion garments that merge the contemporary with the traditional, with a common goal to create the ideal wardrobe for the diverse African. He began his career as a dancer at the National Ballet of Cameroon and then, at some point, went on to fashion designing. Before this, he modelled for some of Fashion’s most prominent names like Dior, Valentino, YSL and Givenchy.

Omoyemi Akerele, Nigeria
Founder and Executive Director of Lagos Fashion Week, and its parent company, Style House Files, Omoyemi Akerele, is one of the leading voices behind the growth of Nigerian Fashion. As one who is passionate about the industry, she has, through various platforms, advocated for young creatives on the continent to gain recognition and compete with their western counterparts on a global scale. This she has done through different projects ranging from the Lagos Fashion and Design Week, Fashion Focus, Fashion Business Series, and the Style House Files Incubator.

Silvia Njoki, Kenya
Silvia Njoki is an award-winning Kenyan fashion journalist, stylist, content creator and the editor of her blog. As a student, she proceeded to find her path into the fashion industry using modelling as her stepping stone. Totally driven, she did quite well and made it a point of duty to learn the ropes of the trade. Eventually identifying with fashion styling as being her preferred profession, Silvia attended Central Saint Martin College of Arts and Design to brush up her skills. She then returned to Kenya to set up her own company named “Style by Silvia”, which has gained a reputation for its exceptional works ever since then.

Roberta Annan, Ghana
Roberta Annan is the co-founder of Impact Fund for African Creatives. This fund invests in creative businesses across Africa, pioneering Africa’s first long-term fund of about $100 million target, strictly for the creative industry. Passionate about developing business opportunities for women in Africa, she also started the African Fashion Fund in 2014 to empower African Agricentric to access the global fashion industry and market.
AYO SHONAIYA

The house lights go off, and the spotlights come on. The composers are playing a hero's tune as Barido da accents from the floating stage above the soldout O2 Arena. The instruments for ‘Aye’ is playing through the speakers - this time at a volume so loud with the Mexican people singing along. Standing in the crowd is Ayo Shonaiya. It was at that moment he decided to give all the films he had done purpose. That's why the hit Netflix documentary ‘Afrobeats: The Backstory’ was born.

“I didn’t even like the name before. I thought it was too close to Felix’s Afrobeat. Over the years, the arguments about ‘Afrobeats’ and ‘Afrobeats’ have grown increasingly intense. Afrobeats, not to be confused with Afrobeat, is a play on the latter.

For a while now, it hasn’t been ‘Afrobeats to the world’ - it’s been the other way around. The success the Nigerian Music industry is enjoying at the moment can be associated with the success and failures of the generations before them. At a time when our local music industry didn’t have the capital pull or world appeal it currently boasts of. Watching this documentary, I see a lot of influence these “OCTs” still have on the industry today.

From Asake’s “Emi o shakomo” line to Ruger’s Baba Frayo-inspired eyepatch. A lover of music myself and working in the entertainment industry, this documentary made me really see everyone started from somewhere. Major players in the music industry today have been a part of the industry for longer than I had ever imagined.

Interview by Ayo Lawal

There is a lot of archival content in this documentary. How did you come into it? Did you always know you wanted to do this? Of course, what most people don’t know about me is I am a documentary filmmaker. I went to film school before heading to Law school. There, my major and specialization was documentary making. I learnt the importance of archiving, keeping archives and using them to tell future stories - well, history stories. When I started filming this, it was conscious of me - well, not completely unconscious. I was actually interested in actually recording video to have a moment of my music journey, which I thought I would only do for about two years. Two years became another two years and ended up becoming five years.

The thing is, I just kept on recording. As my music career got longer, I just kept on recording.

How did you get into the music industry? I love music a lot. At the time I started recording these videos, I was working with King Masiu Ajane - We met in college and he had this plan of him will keep your mouth agape - it’s truly something! However, music management wasn’t something I wanted to do - I never thought I’d end up working in the music industry. I loved and consumed music like every other music lover out there before that.

My Introduction to Baba Keke and D1 was Kennis Music. Watching this documentary, I have a deeper understanding of what they did for the music industry. You talk about them - especially D1 - with so much high life, Funk and Jazz. A collection of all these, plus pop music, a bit of reggae, plus dancehall and hip hop, is what Afrobeats is. It includes a lot of melodious choirs.

How is this different from Afro-Fusion? I mean, Bana Boy calls his music Afro-Fusion - same with Olamide. However, I don’t feel that such should be an umbrella name. Why? It sounds like a question - Fusion with what? There’s a question after Fusion; what are you thinking of? Then you can now start to explain. To me, there is no difference - Fusion is what Afrobeats is.

Afrobeats is bigger than it’s ever been. Who’s next? What can we do to become more than just a passing phase? We should not lose our heads! Let’s not dilute it too much to the point of losing our core.

“Afrobeats: The Backstory” made me realize Video Directing are the unsung heroes of our now thriving industry. Would you agree?

Yes, definitely! These are the people who are documenting the trends and growth in our industry. Music videos are a mirror of what’s happening in our music industry - even society at large. The growing success of the music industry affords even more opportunities for our music videos to be even better. Back in the day, we used to have menus for music videos. Video production companies had fixed prices and options for music videos - and these options were limited. To-day, the possibilities are endless.

From Lagbaja to Rema, from Baba Frayo to Roja, the relationship that exists between fashion and music is a mutually inclusive one. Do you agree?

I never really noticed the Baba Frayo & Ruger eye patch relation until now. Well... Yes, I’d definitely say there’s a relationship between fashion and music. Baba Frayo, for example, knew him for his music, but he delivered in a truly African fashion - accross the runs. Fela always wore African, right down to the shortest. I believe this was intentional. Adekunle Gold is also a true siphon of using fashion as a powerful tool in music. We’ve literally watched him change his style right before our very eyes - as the music followed.

Are you happy with the outcomes of the documentary?

I mean, like every production, there’s something you wish you did differently. Particularly, some clips couldn’t be cleaned, so that we couldn’t air them. However, I’m happy with the response - it’s been fantastic so far. It’s doing exactly what I expected it to do.

We have billboards all across the world with “AFROBEATS” (with an s) all over them. People are reviewing, sharing and talking about Afrobeats. They’re even hearing it for a while now they know the back story. The story doesn’t end there, though - SEASON 2 IS COMING.
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