

ALELLUYA JESU FERAN MI
(A Choral with Piano Accompaniment Work)

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Abstract

This study examines the structural and formal features of *Alelluya Jesu Feran Mi*, a choral composition for SATB choir with piano accompaniment by Kayode Olusola, to highlight the artistic, cultural, and musical elements embedded within the work. The research employed a laboratory method, involving a detailed study and analysis of the printed score as the primary data source, supported by a review of relevant literature on Nigerian art music. The findings reveal that the composition is characterised by a polyphonic texture supported by piano accompaniment. Set in a major key, the piece opens with a piano introduction before presenting the main theme, which is subsequently repeated and developed through variation sections featuring responsorial and contrapuntal writing. The work concludes with a return of the main theme. The study further establishes that the composition is a parody of an existing Yoruba Christian song, which the composer reimagines in a rounded binary form through rearrangement and the addition of new textual and harmonic material in the central section.

Keywords: Alelluya, art music, Yoruba, *Jesu Feran Mi*

Introduction

The development of art music in Nigeria has been shaped by a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and sociopolitical forces, particularly the influence of Christian missionary activity and colonial contact. The establishment of Christian missions in the 1840s (Omojola, 1995) marked a significant turning point, introducing Western musical practices that were further disseminated through mission schools, higher education institutions, elite social circles, and military bands. These institutions played a central role in embedding Western classical music within Nigerian musical culture.

According to Sadoh (1998), the Church was instrumental in popularising music as a contemplative art form in Nigeria. This development was advanced by formally trained composers and musicologists who sought to cultivate a modern tradition of Nigerian art music through the adoption and adaptation of Western idioms. Early pioneers such as T. K. E. Phillips in the 1920s and Fela Sowande in the 1940s laid the foundation for subsequent generations of composers. From the 1960s onwards, a growing number of Nigerian composers, many of whom received their initial musical training in church settings before pursuing further studies in Europe or the United States, emerged as significant contributors to the field.

The expansion of music departments in Nigerian tertiary institutions further facilitated the growth of art music composition. Notably, many works by Nigerian composers are written in indigenous languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, Efik, Edo, Isoko, and Urhobo, reflecting the

cultural and linguistic identities of their creators. Nigerian art music thus remains deeply rooted in the cultural heritage and expressive traditions of its composers.

Against this backdrop, the present study analyses the structure and form of *Alelluya Jesu Feran Mi*, a choral composition in full harmony by Kayode Olusola, to illuminate its cultural, artistic, and musical significance.

Analysis of the Song

The analysis encompasses both textual and musical dimensions of the composition.

Textual Analysis

- **Title** : *Alelluya Jesu Feran Mi*
- **Language** : Yoruba
- **Poetic Form** : Long form
- **Textual Structure** : Additive and divisive
- **Poetic Devices** : Chorus and contrapuntal interplay
- **Text Setting** : Predominantly syllabic
- **Theme** : Rejoicing in the love and care of Jesus

The text expresses joy and gratitude for divine love, articulated through a combination of choral refrain and contrapuntal exchanges that reinforce the celebratory tone.

Musical Analysis

- **Key** : G major
- **Time Signature** : Simple quadruple (4/4)
- **Length** : 55 bars
- **Texture** : Polyphonic (SATB)
- **Harmonic Structure** : Parallel responsorial and contrapuntal writing
- **Melodic Contour** : Undulating, with terraced phrasing
- **Musical Structure** : A / A / B / C / A, theme, variation, contrast, and return
- **Piano Accompaniment**: Homophonic, melodic, and chordal styles

The composition is written in open score and begins with a piano introduction (bars 1–4), establishing the tonal centre before the choir enters with the main theme (bars 5–12), which is subsequently repeated.

First Variation (Bars 13–30)

This section adopts a responsorial structure, with Soprano/Alto alternating with Tenor/Bass. The writing remains firmly rooted in the major key, with the piano providing harmonic support.

Second Variation and Contrast (Bars 31–46)

The tenor and bass voices introduce the section in unison (bars 31–36), after which the full choir enters in harmony at bar 38. A contrapuntal passage follows (bar 39), featuring interlocking rhythmic patterns across all vocal parts. The climax occurs in bars 43–44 before the section concludes at bar 46.

Return of Main Theme and Conclusion (Bars 48–55)

A brief piano interlude (bar 46) leads to the reappearance of the main theme at bar 48. The piece concludes with an ascending soprano line (bars 53–54), culminating in a perfect authentic cadence (V7–I) in the upper octave.

Research Findings and Conclusion

The study reveals that *Alelluya Jesu Feran Mi* is characterised by a polyphonic texture supported by piano accompaniment. The composition is firmly rooted in a major key and structured around a recurring main theme that is introduced by the piano and developed through successive variation sections featuring responsorial and contrapuntal writing. The return of the main theme at the end reinforces the rounded binary form of the work.

The analysis concludes that the composition is a parody of an existing Yoruba Christian song, which Olusola reinterprets through structural reorganisation and the addition of new textual and harmonic material in the central section. The work exemplifies the creative synthesis of indigenous Christian expression and Western art music techniques that characterise much of contemporary Nigerian choral composition.

References

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ALELLUYA JESU FERAN MI

Arr. Kayode Olusola

The musical score is arranged for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system shows the vocal staves and piano accompaniment. The second system, starting at measure 5, includes lyrics for the vocal parts: "A - le - lu - yah A - le - lu - yah A - le - llu".

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ALELLUYA JESU FERAN MI

10

S
ya Je - su fe - ran mi O fe mi O fe mi o

A
ya Je - su fe - ran mi O fe mi O fe mi o

T
ya Je - su fe - ran mi O fe ran mi o

B
ya Je - su fe ran mi O fe ran mi o

Pno.

15

S
O fe mi O fe mi o O fe mi O fe mi o o Je - su fe - ran

A
O fe mi O fe mi o O fe mi O fe mi o o Je - su fe - ran

T
A - le - llu - ya A - le - lle - ya Je - su fe - ra

B
A - le - llu - ya A - le - llu - ya Je - su fe - ran

Pno.

ALELLUYA JESU FERAN MI

3

20

S
mi mo du-pe mo mo pe0 - lu-wa fe mi mo du-pe mo mo pe0 - lu-wa fe mi

A
mi mo du-pe mo mo pe0- lu-wa fe mi mo du-pe mo mo pe0- - lu-wa fe mi

T
mi

B
mi

Pno.

25

S
O fe-ran mi o O fe-ran mi O fe-ran mi O fe ran

A
O fe-ran mi o O fe-ran mi O fe-ran mi O fe ran

T
o fe-ran mi o O fe-ran mi O fe-ran mi O fe ran

B
o fe-ran mi o O fe-ran mi O fe-ran mi O fe ran

Pno.

4

ALELLUYA JESU FERAN MI

30

S
mi

A
mi

T
mi Ko se - ni to Fi - fe han mi bi Re E ni ton pe - fal ru rru

B
mi Ko se - ni to Fi - fe han mi bi Re E ni ton pe se fal ru rru

Pno.

35

S
O fe ran

A
O fe ran

T
O fi i - fe Re da mi o ran

B
E O fi i - da mi si o O fe - ran

Pno.

ALELLUYA JESU FERAN MI

5

38

S
mi A - le - llu - ya A - le - llu - ya O fe mi

A
mi gi- didi- di O fe mi

T
mi O fe mi O fe mi o o

B
rni gi- di oi- di fe - ran mi

Pno.

41

S
A/C A/C A- le- llu A-llu- ya! Je- su fe- ran

A
O- lu-wa fe- ran rni O fe mi o Je- su fe- ran

T
O fe mi O fe rni o o O fe mi O fe mi o o Je- su fe- ran

B
O- lu-wa fe- ran mi A- lle- lu - ya! Je- su- fe- ran

Pno.

6

ALELLUYA JESU FERAN MI

46

S
mi A- le llu-

A
mi O fe mi ye - ye A- le llu-

T
mi O fe mi ye - ye A- le llu-

B
mi A- le llu-

Pno.

49

S
ya A- le- llu- ya

A
ya A le- llu yn

T
ya A- le- llu- ya

B
ya A le- llu- ya

Pno.

ALELLUYA JESU FERAN MI

7

52

The musical score is written for Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), Bass (B), and Piano (Pno.). It consists of five staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: 'A le-llu-ya - - - A - le - lu - yah' for Soprano; 'A le-llu ya Je-su fe-ran mi' for Alto; 'A le-llu-ya Je su fe - ran_ mi' for Tenor; and 'A- le-llu- ya A- le- lu ya' for Bass. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

S
A
T
B
Pno.

A le-llu-ya - - - A - le - lu - yah
A le-llu ya Je-su fe-ran mi
A le-llu-ya Je su fe - ran_ mi
A- le-llu- ya A- le- lu ya