

***AYO OLOPON* (Board Game)**

[An SATB Composition Based on the Yoruba board game]


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Analysis

1. **Title** : Ayo Olopon (Board Game)
2. **Medium** : Vocal and Improvised Percussion Instrumentation (It should be acted)
3. **Time Signature** : Compound Quadruple Time (Bar 1 – 28) and
Compound Duple Time 68 (Bar 29 - 128)
4. **Genre** : Traditional Yoruba Style (African)
5. **Formal Structure** : Through Composed (A, B, C)

A	B	C
Measure 1 – 28	Measure 28 – 68	Measure 69 - 128

6. **Keys** : Bb Major (Bar 1 -28) and F Major (Bar 29 – 128)
7. **Tempo** : Lively = 100, Allegro = 100
8. **Texture** : Polyphonic
9. **Mood** : Fun and Lively
10. **Audience** : A Theatre Hall
11. **Motif** : 
12. **Extra-musical Elements:** Musical Theatre Influence
13. **Duration** : 4 minutes 39 seconds

Musical Analysis of *Ayo Olopon* (2024)

Ayo Olopon (Board Game), composed by Ademola Adedoyin Oluwaseun in 2024, is a vocal-instrumental work that celebrates the Yoruba traditional game of *Ayo Olopon*. The composition not only highlights the cultural beauty of the game but also narrates the intellectual contest between players through its rhythmic structures and compositional techniques. As Femi (2021) notes, traditional Nigerian music often functions as a cultural archive, preserving and dramatizing communal practices. Oluwaseun's composition exemplifies this by embedding the dynamics of the game into musical form.

First Movement

The opening movement begins with a brief introduction in bars 1–2, featuring a call by soprano and alto voices answered by the full ensemble. From bars 3–28, tenor and bass voices present a unison call, while soprano and alto voices respond. This section emphasizes the cultural significance of the game within Yoruba society and introduces the two players: *ope* (novice) and *ota* (master). The homophonic texture underscores the clarity of this narrative, aligning with James's (1992) observation that indigenous African music often employs texture to reinforce communal storytelling.

Second Movement

The second movement shifts to a compound meter (6/8), marking a pivotal change in both key and rhythmic character from bars 29–32. Between bars 31–68, the theme develops through contrapuntal techniques, with the soprano line carrying the principal message while other voices interject with varied responses. This interplay mirrors the strategic exchanges of the game, with the faster tempo intensifying the mood. The movement concludes with a dominant chord in F major, symbolizing resolution and balance.

Third Movement

The third movement introduces heightened dynamism and tempo. Beginning at bar 67, the alto voice initiates a strong call that propels contrapuntal exchanges, polytonal techniques, and part exchanges between tenor and alto voices. At bar 97, the soprano sustains a pedal tone until bar 98, layered over counterpoint from other voices. This section represents the climax of the game, dramatizing its tension through loud vocal tones, rapid instrumental rhythms, and Yoruba textual fragments. Such rhythmic intensification reflects James's (1992) emphasis on the role of rhythm in conveying dramatic progression in African musical forms.

Final Section

Resolution arrives at bar 118, where the soprano issues a concluding call. Other voices continue with note-against-note responses until bar 127, before the homophonic texture returns to close the work at bar 129. The conclusion restores unity, symbolizing the communal closure of the game. Importantly, the composition is intended to be accompanied solely by African percussion instruments, reinforcing its cultural authenticity, and it may also be staged as a performative enactment of the game itself (Femi, 2021).

Program Notes: *Ayo Olopon*

Composed by Ademola Adedoyin Oluwaseun, *Ayo Olopon* is a vocal-instrumental work inspired by the Yoruba board game of the same name. The piece dramatizes the intellectual contest between two players, *ope* (novice) and *ota* (master), through layered vocal textures, rhythmic vitality, and traditional African percussion.

The first movement introduces the players with call-and-response exchanges and homophonic textures that highlight the cultural significance of the game. The second movement shifts into 6/8 time, developing contrapuntal interplay that mirrors the strategic exchanges between opponents. A faster tempo builds tension, culminating in a dominant chord resolution.

The third movement intensifies with polytonal techniques, part exchanges, and a climactic pedal tone, symbolizing the height of the contest. The final section restores unity with a return to homophonic texture, closing the work with communal resonance.

Designed to be accompanied only by African percussion, *Ayo Olopon* may also be staged as a performative enactment of the game, blending music, culture, and storytelling into a vivid celebration of Yoruba tradition.

References

- Femi, K. (2021). A brief introduction to traditional music in Nigeria: A case study of the three major ethnic groups. *Academia Letters*, Article 865. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL865>
- James, C. (1992). Melodic and rhythmic aspects of indigenous African music. *South African Journal: Folk Studies*, 3, 15–28.

AYO OLOPON

(Board game)

Doyin Ademola, 2024

Lively ♩ = 100

SOPRANO

A - yo__ a - yo__ wa

ALTO

a - ra e je k'a-ta

TENOR

o - lo-pon a-wa la la yo - wa, a - ra e je k'a-ta

BASS

A - yo__ wa

3

A - yo__ a-wa la la yo__ wa

a - yo__ t'a - wa ni o.

o - lo-pon a-wa la l'a yo, o E - je k'a ta'-yo a - yo i - re!

A - yo__ wa E - je k'a ta'-yo a - yo i - re!

6

A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe,
 A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe,
 e - re, e - re, e-re_ gba-ju-mo, le-re a-yo, e - re, e - re,
 e - re, e - re, e-re_ gba-ju-mo, le-re a-yo, e - re, e - re,

9

A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, A-sa wa ni e-gbe la-ru-ge,
 A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, A-sa wa ni e-gbe la-ru-ge,
 E-re la'-n fo-mo'a-yo se e - re, e - re,
 E-re la'-n fo-mo'a-yo se e - re, e - re,

12

A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, A-sa wa ni e-gbe la-ru-ge, A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe,
 A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, A-sa wa ni e-gbe la-ru-ge, A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe,
 e - re, e - re, e - re, e - re,
 e - re, e - re, e - re, e - re,

15

o-ta n le-nu o-pe n le-nu A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, o-ta n le-nu o-pe n le-nu

o-ta n le-nu o-pe n le-nu A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, o-ta n le-nu o-pe n le-nu

e - re, e - re,

e - re, e - re,

18

A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe. A -t'o-pe a-t'o-ta o d'o-ju o-pon A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe. A-

A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe. A -t'o-pe a-t'o-ta o d'o-ju o-pon A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe. A-

e - re, e - re. A t'o-pe a-t'o-ta o d'o-ju o-pon e - re, e - re. A

e - re, e - re. A -t'o-pe a-t'o-ta o d'o-ju o-pon e - re, e - re. A-

21

t'o-pe a-t'o-ta o d'o-ju o-pon A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe,

t'o-pe a-t'o-ta o d'o-ju o-pon A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe, A-yo o-lo-pon, a-yo a-la-fe,

t'o-pe a-t'o-ta o d'o-ju o-pon e - re, e - re, e - re, e - re,

t'o-pe a-t'o-ta o d'o-ju o-pon e - re, e - re, e - re, e - re,

24

A - yo o - lo - pon, a - yo a - la - fe, A - yo a - yo o - lo - pon, la - yo wa,
 A - yo o - lo - pon, a - yo a - la - fe, A - yo a - yo o - lo - pon, la - yo wa,
 e - re, e - re, A - yo a - yo o - lo - pon, la - yo wa,

27

e - re, e - re, A - yo a - yo o - lo - pon, la - yo wa,
 e - mi a t'a - yo, o - lo - pon e - je k'a - ta yo.
 e - mi a t'a - yo, o - lo - pon e - je k'a - ta yo.
 o - lo - pon e - je k'a - ta yo. a - sa wa ni,
 o - lo - pon e - je k'a - ta yo, O...

accel.
 ♩ = 120

29

e - mi a t'a - yo, o - lo - pon e - je k'a - ta yo. Mo k'o - pe mo k'o - ta,
 e - mi a t'a - yo, o - lo - pon e - je k'a - ta yo.
 o - lo - pon e - je k'a - ta yo.
 o - lo - pon e - je k'a - ta yo.

34

mo k'o-pe mo k'o-ta, mo k'o-pe mo k'o-ta,
 O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o, O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o,
 hnn o-ta n je hnn o-ta n je

38

e-re la n fo-mo a-yo se, a-ni e-re la n fo-mo a-yo se
 O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o, O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o,
 o ka-re o ka-re
 hnn o-ta n je hnn o-ta n je

42

la-be i-gi a-ni la-be i-gi la-be i-gi
 O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o, O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o, O-pe'o gbo-do fo
 o ka-re o ka-re
 hnn o-ta n je hnn o-ta n je hnn

47

ni - ro-le A-yo o-lo-pon hn a-yo o-lo-pon,
 hun o, O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o, O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o,
 o ka-re o ka-re o ka-re
 o-ta n je hnn o-ta n je hnn o-ta n je

52

o - ya ta k'e- mi ta hnn a - yo o - lo-pon
 O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o, O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o,
 o ka-re o ka-re
 hnn o - ta n je hnn o - ta n je

56

o - ya ta k'e- mi ta hnn a - yo o - lo-pon
 O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o, O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o,
 o ka-re o ka-re
 hnn o - ta n je hnn o - ta n je

60

mo k'o-pe mo k'o-ta, mo k'o-pe mo k'o-ta,
 O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o, O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o,
 o ka-re o ka-re
 hnn o-ta n je hnn o-ta n je

64

mo k'o-pe mo k'o-ta, o-pe o gbo-do fo'-hun o
 O-pe'o gbo-do fo hun o, o-pe o gbo-do fo'-hun o La-be
 o ka-re o-pe o gbo-do fo'-hun o
 hnn o-ta n je o-pe o gbo-do fo'-hun o

69 *ff*

O-ya ta, te-te ta
 i-gi La-be i-gi La-be
 O-ya ta te-te ta
 E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se

73

ta ta ta te-te ta te-te ta ta ta

i-gi La-be i-gi La-be i-gi

ta ta ta o - pe te-te ta ta ta

E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n

78

ta O-ya ta, te-te ta ta ta ta o -

La-be i-gi La-be i-gi La-be

ta O-ya ta, te-te ta ta ta ta o -

fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se

83

ta o - ta o - ta

i-gi La-be i-gi La-be i-gi

pe o - pe o - pe

E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n

88

La-be i-gi La-be i-gi La-be

fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se

93

sfz
A e - re

E - re a - la fe

i - gi La-be i-gi La-be i-gi

E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n

98

E-re la n fo-mo a - yo

E-re la n fo-mo a - yo

La-be i - gi La-be i - gi

fo-mo a - yo se E-re la n fo-mo a - yo se E-re la n

102

se A e - re *sfz*

se E-re a-la fe

La-be i-gi La-be i-gi La-be

fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se

107

E-re la n fo- mo a - yo

E-re la n fo- mo a - yo

i-gi La-be i-gi La-be i-gi

E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n

112

se O-ya 1. 2.

se La-be

La-be i-gi O-ya La-be i-gi

fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n

117 *ff*

e-re la n fo-mo e-re la n fo-mo

a -yo se, a -yo

La-be i-gi La-be i-gi a -yo

fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se E-re la n fo-mo a-yo se

122

a -yo o - lo-pon e - re gba -

se, l'a - yo wa

mi l'a - yo wa

E - re la n fo - mo a - yo se E - re la n

125 *ff*

ju-mo E-re la-n fo-mo a - yo se.

t'a-wa ni a -yo o - lo-pon a - yo wa

t'a-wa ni a -yo o - lo-pon a - yo wa

fo-mo a-yo se hnn a - yo a - yo wa