

IMOTOTO

(Cleanliness)

(A Composition for S A T B and Piano)

Ayokunmi, Olaoluwa Marvelous (Ph.D.)

Department of Music,

University of Ibadan,

Ibadan, Nigeria.

+234-7030597017 or +234-8054887741

ayokunmiolaoluwa2016@gmail.com, om.ayokunmi@mail.ui.edu.ng

IMOTOTO by Ayokunmi Olaoluwa

IMOTOTO, composed by Ayokunmi Olaoluwa during the COVID-19 pandemic, is a choral work for SATB voices with piano accompaniment. Conceived as a musical response to public health concerns, the piece seeks to sensitise and orient communities toward preventive practices, presenting hygiene and wellness as collective responsibilities.

The thematic material is drawn from two Yoruba folk songs, *Imoto* and *Ji kororin*, selected both for their cultural resonance and their capacity to communicate urgent health messages in a language accessible to local audiences. The use of Yoruba text grounds the work in indigenous tradition while simultaneously serving a practical, pedagogical purpose.

Tonally, the composition is centered in D major, a bright and resonant key well suited to communal singing. Its harmonic language is predominantly diatonic, built around tonic, subdominant, and dominant functions, with cadential figures providing closure. The piano plays a supportive role, reinforcing rhythm, anchoring tonal stability, and highlighting textual emphases. Stepwise voice leading ensures clarity of diction, particularly important given the density of Yoruba consonant clusters. To sustain interest across its length, the work employs a series of modulations—moving through A major, E major, C# minor, B major, and C major, before returning to D major.

Rhythm and meter are central to the rhetorical force of the piece. Predominantly set in common time, with brief excursions into compound meter, the music mirrors Yoruba prosody through short, speech-like rhythmic patterns. Dotted figures and ostinato repetitions in the piano support the declamation of slogans such as “*I-mo-to-to lo le se gun arun gbogbo*” (“Cleanliness can conquer all diseases”). *Ritardando* markings, particularly in the coda, allow climactic messages to be delivered with heightened emphasis.

Formally, *IMOTOTO* is cyclic, built around a recurring refrain that asserts cleanliness as a weapon against disease. Didactic verses interspersed between refrains outline practical steps: waking and bathing, brushing teeth, washing clothes, cutting nails, eating properly, and avoiding excess. Later sections expand the scope from personal hygiene to communal ethics, warning against the spread of disease and stressing collective responsibility. These verses are often

set in rhythmic homophony for clarity, while call-and-response textures simulate dialogue between leader and community.

The textual setting demonstrates careful attention to Yoruba orality. Devices such as repetition, reduplication (“*sio-sio*,” “*rai-rai*”), and mnemonic sequences (“*ge-da-da gba-da-da*”) transform health instructions into memorable musical hooks. Imperative verbs, *ji* (wake), *we* (bathe), *fo* (wash), *ge* (cut), are stressed on strong beats, turning advice into slogans. Homophonic declamation across all voices ensures intelligibility and reinforces the communal character of the message.

Performance practice considerations are integral to the score. The tempo should remain moderate and buoyant, balancing clarity of diction with a lively pulse. Singers must prioritize vowel purity and crisp articulation of consonant clusters, while maintaining balance among parts, particularly where altos and tenors carry transitional syllables. The piano should be played with rhythmic precision, functioning almost as a percussive guide for the choir.

Beyond its technical features, **IMOTOTO** exemplifies the synthesis of Western and African traditions characteristic of Nigerian art music. While employing Western functional harmony, SATB choral technique, and cadential organization, its driving force lies in Yoruba speech rhythms, call-and-response devices, and communal rhetorical strategies. The result is a work that teaches as it entertains, transforming public health advice into participatory song.

Ultimately, **IMOTOTO** demonstrates how music can serve as social pedagogy. Its refrain-based design, mnemonic text setting, and accessible textures enable even non-specialist audiences to internalize its message. By transmitting hygiene awareness in Yoruba within the framework of Western choral art, Olaoluwa affirms the role of Nigerian art music in addressing urgent social needs while preserving indigenous language and culture. The work thus stands as both an artistic statement and a public health intervention, resonating as a memorable choral ritual of the pandemic era.

Program Notes: **IMOTOTO**

Composed by Ayokunmi Olaoluwa during the COVID-19 pandemic, **IMOTOTO** is a choral work for SATB voices with piano accompaniment. Conceived as a musical response to public health needs, the piece promotes hygiene and wellness as collective responsibilities.

Drawing on two Yoruba folk songs, *Imoto* and *Ji kororin*, the work situates urgent health messages within familiar cultural idioms. Sung in Yoruba, its text transforms everyday hygiene practices into memorable musical slogans, ensuring accessibility for local communities.

Tonally centered in D major, the composition employs diatonic harmony and frequent modulations to sustain interest. Rhythms mirror Yoruba speech patterns, with dotted figures and ostinato repetitions reinforcing key refrains such as “*I-mo-to-to lo le se gun arun gbogbo*” (“Cleanliness can conquer all diseases”). Cyclic in form, the recurring refrain anchors verses that move from personal hygiene to communal ethics, often presented in homophonic clarity or call-and-response textures.

Blending Western choral technique with African rhythmic vitality, **IMOTOTO** embodies Nigerian art music’s dual heritage. More than a concert piece, it is a public health intervention, teaching as it entertains, and turning collective wellness into participatory song.

IMOTOTO

*A musical response to sensitize and orientate everyone
to prevent COVID 19 pandemic & all sorts of unhygienic practices*

Arr. Ayokunmi OlaOluwa

+2347030597017

2020

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Piano

5

I - mo - to - to,

I - mo - to - to,

I - mo - to - to,

I - mo - to - to,

9

I - mo - to - to, I - mo - to - to lo - le se - gun a-run gbo - gbo.

I - mo - to - to, I - mo - to - to lo - le se - gun a-run gbo - gbo.

I - mo - to - to, I - mo - to - to lo - le se - gun a-run gbo - gbo.

I - mo - to - to, I - mo - to - to lo - le se - gun a-run gbo - gbo.

12

I - mo - to - to lo - le

I - mo -

I - mo - to -

15

se - gun a-run gbo- gbo. i - mo-to - to a-ra, i - mo - to - to lo - le
 to - to, gbo- gbo. i - mo-to - to a-ra, i - mo - to - to lo - le
 to, a-run gbo- gbo. I - mo - to - to i - le, i - mo - to - to lo le
 se - gun a-run gbo- gbo. I - mo - to - to i - le, i - mo - to - to lo le

19

se-gun a-run gbo- gbo. I - mo-to - to
 se-gun a-run gbo- gbo. i - mo-to - to i - mo - to -
 se-gun a-run gbo- gbo. I - mo-to - to, i - mo - to -
 se-gun a-run gbo- gbo. I - mo-to - to, i - mo - to -

23

to lo le se-gun a-run gbo - gbo.

to lo le se-gun a-run gbo - gbo.

to lo le se-gun a-run gbo - gbo.

28

Ji ko-ro-rin, we ki-o mo, fo - 'so_ re, ge e-kan-na re,

Ji ko-ro-rin, we ki-o mo, fo - 'so_ re, ge e-kan-na re,

Ji Ji ko-ro-rin, we ki-o mo, fo - 'so_ re, ge e-kan-na

Ji Ji ko-ro-rin, we ki-o mo, fo - 'so_ re, ge e-kan-na

32

jeun t'o da-ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju. o le-wu fun i-le-ra wa.

jeun t'o da-ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju. o le-wu fun i-le-ra wa.

re, ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju. I-wa o-bun ko da-ra, o le-wu fun i-le-ra wa.

re, ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju. I-wa o-bun ko da-ra, o le-wu fun i-le-ra wa.

38

ra-ra o o le-wu fun i-le-ra wa. i-le-ra lo-ro, o-re

ra-ra o o le-wu fun i-le-ra wa. i-le-ra lo-ro, o-re

I - wa o-bun, ko ma da - ra; o - le-wu fun i-le-ra wa. i-le-ra lo-ro, o-re

I - wa o-bun, ko da - ra; o - le-wu fun i-le-ra wa. i-le-ra lo-ro, o-re

43

to-ju a-ra re; ko ma gba - 'ja-ka - le a-run la-ye.

to-ju a-ra re; ko ma gba - 'ja-ka - le a-run la-ye.

to-ju a-ra re; ko ma gba - 'ja-ka - le a-run la-ye. i-le-ra lo-ro, o-re to-ju a-ra re;

to-ju a-ra re; ko ma gba - 'ja-ka - le a-run la-ye. i-le-ra lo-ro, o-re to-ju a-ra re;

tr

48

ma se gba a - ja-ka - le a-run la-ye. Ji ko-ro-'rin Ji ko-ro-'rin

ma se gba a - ja-ka - le a-run la-ye. Ji ko-ro-'rin Ji ko-ro-'rin

ma se gba a - ja-ka - le a-run la-ye. ko-ro-'rin ko-ro-'rin

ma se gba a - ja-ka - le a-run la-ye. ko-ro-'rin ko-ro-'rin

52

Ji ko-ro'-rin ji. Ji ko-ro' rin, we ki o mo,
 Ji ko-ro'-rin ji. Ji o - ji ji
 rin ko-ro'-rin Ma se so -'le ma se yo-
 rin ko-ro'-rin Ji o ji o Ji o ji o

56

ma se do-ti, ge e-kan-na re, jeun to da-ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju.
 o o - re mi' jeun to da-ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju.
 'bun i-wo o - re se o - ti gbo? ma jeun ju.
 Ji o ji o Ji o ji o Ji o ji o ma jeun ju.

60

Ji ko ro'-rin, we ki o mo, ma se do -

Ji ko ro'-rin, we ki o mo, ma se do -

Ji ko ro'-rin, we ki o mo, ma se do - ti,

Ji ko ro'-rin, we ki o mo, ma se do - ti,

63

ti, ge e-kan-na jeun to da-ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju.

ti, ge e-kan-na jeun to da-ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju.

ge e-kan-na re, jeun to da-ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju.

ge e-kan-na re, jeun to da-ra la-si-ko, ma jeun ju.

68

I - mo - to-to lo le se-gun a-run gbo-gbo

I - mo - to-to lo le se-gun a-run gbo-gbo

I - mo - to-to lo le se-gun a-run gbo-gbo

I - mo - to-to lo le se-gun a-run gbo-gbo

72

I - mo - to-to lo le se-gun a-run gbo-gbo I - mo - to-to i - le,

I - mo - to-to lo le se-gun a-run gbo-gbo

I - mo - to-to lo le se-gun a-run gbo-gbo

I - mo - to-to lo le se-gun a-run gbo-gbo

76

I - mo - to-to lo le

i - mo - to on - je, I - mo - to-to lo le

I - mo - to-to a - ra, I - mo - to-to lo le

a - ta - yi - ka - wa; I - mo - to-to lo le

80

se-gun a-run gbo-gbo I - mo - to-to i - le, i - mo - to-to a - ra, i - mo - to-to'n - je,

se-gun a-run gbo-gbo Ehn Ehn Ehn

se-gun a-run gbo-gbo Ehn Ehn Ehn

se-gun a-run gbo-gbo Ehn Ehn Ehn

84

a - ta - yi - ka - wa; I - mo - to - to lo le se - gun a - run gbo - gbo. O - bun sio - sio, o - bun rai rai,
 Ehn, I mo - to - to lo le se - gun a - run gbo - gbo O - bun sio - sio, o - bun rai rai,
 Ehn, I - mo - to - to lo le se - gun a - run gbo - gbo
 Ehn, I - mo - to - to lo le se - gun a - run gbo - gbo

88

lo fo - 'nu, o - bun sio sio, o - bun rai - rai lo - fo - 'so. O - bun sio sio, o - bun rai rai, lo fo 'nu, o - bun sio sio,
 lo fo - 'nu, o - bun sio sio, o - bun rai - rai lo - fo - 'so. O - bun sio sio, o - bun rai rai, lo fo 'nu, o - bun sio sio,
 O - bun sio sio, o - bun rai rai, lo fo 'nu, o - bun sio sio,
 O - bun sio sio, o - bun rai rai, lo fo 'nu, o - bun sio sio,

92

o-bun rai-rai lo-fo 'so.

o-bun rai-rai lo-fo 'so.

o-bun rai-rai lo-fo 'so. O-bun, ko-we, o - fe lo gb'a-bo. O-bun, ko-we,

o-bun rai-rai lo-fo 'so. O-bun, ko-we, o - fe lo gb'a-bo. O-bun, ko-we,

96

O bun sio sio, o bun rai rai, lo fo 'nu, o bun sio sio, o-bun rai rai lo-fo- 'so.

O bun sio sio, o bun rai rai, lo fo 'nu, o bun sio sio, o-bun rai rai lo-fo- 'so.

o-fe lo gb'a bo. O bun sio sio, o bun rai rai, lo fo 'nu, o bun sio sio, o-bun rai rai lo-fo- 'so.

o-fe lo gb'a bo. O bun sio sio, o bun rai rai, lo fo 'nu, o bun sio sio, o-bun rai rai lo-fo- 'so.

100

Ji k'o - we, fo e - nu re,

Ji ko lo fo-nu lo fo-nu lo fo-nu lo fo-nu

Ji ko lo fo-nu lo fo-nu lo fo-nu lo fo-nu

Ji lo fo-nu lo fo-nu lo fo-nu lo fo-nu

104

fo a - so re, ge e-kan-na re

lo fo-so, lo fo-so ge da da ge da da

lo fo-so, lo fo-so ge da da ge da da

lo fo-so, lo fo-so ge da da ge da da

108

gba a-yi-ka re; K'a-la-fi-a le je ti - re. je ti - re.

gba da da, gba da da; K'a-la-fi-a le je ti - re. je ti - re.

gba da da, gba da da; K'a-la-fi-a le je ti - re. je ti - re.

gba da da, gba da da; K'a-la-fi-a le je ti - re. je ti - re.

113

Se 'to-ju a-ra-re, se 'to-ju a-ra-re,

I - mo - to - to, i - mo - to - to, i - mo - to -

I - mo - to - to, i - mo - to - to, i - mo - to -

118

se 'to-ju a-ra re; i - mo-to - to, lo le se - gun. se - 'mo - to -
 lo le se - gun. se - 'mo - to -
 to, i - mo-to - to; lo le se - gun. se - 'mo - to -
 to, i - mo-to - to, lo le se - gun. se - 'mo - to -

124

to, se - 'mo - to - to, se - 'mo - to -
 to, se - 'mo - to - to, se - 'mo - to -
 to, se - 'mo - to - to, se - 'mo - to -
 to, se - 'mo - to - to, se - 'mo - to -

128

to Ko le da - ra. ra. Se-'mo-to-to a - ra re.

to Ko le da - ra. ra. Se-'mo-to-to a - ra re.

to Ko le da - ra. ra. Se-'mo-to-to a - ra re.

to Ko le da - ra. ra. Se-'mo-to-to a - ra re.

to Ko le da - ra. ra. Se-'mo-to-to a - ra re.

rit.