

JOURNAL OF MUSIC COMPOSITION (JOMUSCOM)



A Publication of
SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MUSIC COMPOSERS (SAMCOM)

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A Publication of the Society of African Composers (SACOM)

Preface

An Inaugural Invitation

It is with immense pleasure and a profound sense of occasion that we present this, the maiden edition of the *Journal of Music Composition (JOMUSCOM)*. As the flagship publication of the Society of African Composers (SACOM), this journal represents the culmination of a long-held vision: to establish a dedicated, scholarly platform for the art of music composition, with a particular focus on nurturing and projecting the voices of Nigerian and, indeed, African composers onto the global stage.

The genesis of JOMUSCOM springs from a recognised need. For too long, the rich and diverse tapestry of contemporary art music from Africa has lacked a centralised, formal repository. Composers have often worked in relative isolation, their works disseminated in fragments or remaining within localised circles. This journal aims to rectify that by creating a compendium, a living archive, that not only preserves these works but also provides a critical framework for their understanding and appreciation.

Our mission is twofold. Firstly, we aim to serve as a vital resource for composers at all stages of their careers, offering a prestigious venue to publish their original, well-composed works. Secondly, we seek to engage scholars, performers, and enthusiasts by providing not just the scores but the intellectual context that surrounds them. To this end, each musical work published within these pages, whether a choral piece in various languages, a solo instrumental sonata, an operatic scene, a piano work, or an ensemble piece, is accompanied by a rigorous analytical commentary or a detailed synopsis. This dual presentation of art and analysis is central to our ethos, bridging the gap between creative practice and scholarly insight.

A Note on the Inaugural Volume

This first volume is a testament to the vibrant creativity and scholarly rigour that define our community. The contributions within showcase a remarkable breadth of style, form, and inspiration, reflecting both deep roots in African musical traditions and a confident engagement with global contemporary techniques. We are proud to feature works that are not only technically accomplished but also rich in narrative and emotional depth.

Acknowledgements

A venture of this nature is necessarily a collaborative endeavour, and it is our great privilege to extend our deepest gratitude to those who have made this inaugural issue a reality.

First and foremost, we must acknowledge the unwavering dedication and expertise of the JOMUSCOM Editorial Board. Their scholarly diligence, keen critical eyes, and countless hours of voluntary service have been the bedrock upon which this journal is built. We extend our sincere thanks to:

- Dr. Blessing Amole Amos, Nigeria
- Prof. Olabode Omojola, United States
- Prof. Michael Olutayo Olatunji, Nigeria
- Prof. Olusoji Stephen, Nigeria
- Dr. Albert O. U. Authority, United States
- Prof. Emmanuel Obed, Ghana
- Dr. Louis Ezekiel, Nigeria
- Mr. Chinam Augustine, Nigeria
- Mr. Akinyelu Sunday, Nigeria

Our most profound appreciation is reserved for the composers and authors who have entrusted their work to this new publication. Their creativity is the very lifeblood of JOMUSCOM, and their willingness to contribute to this inaugural volume is a gesture of faith we hold in the highest esteem. It is their original voices that fill these pages with purpose and promise.

We also wish to thank Mr. Ifeoluwa Akintaro, who manages the journals' website and handles all IT-related matters. Our special thank you goes to the wider membership of the Society of African Composers (SACOM) for their steadfast support and encouragement. Finally, we acknowledge the many peer reviewers who provided invaluable feedback, ensuring the scholarly integrity of the analyses presented.

As you explore this volume, we invite you to engage with the music not merely as a listener, but as an active participant in a burgeoning dialogue. It is our fervent hope that JOMUSCOM will become an indispensable resource, a source of inspiration, and a catalyst for new compositions and discourses for years to come. This is more than a journal; it is the beginning of a new chapter in the documentation and celebration of African musical creativity.

Welcome.

The Editors

Journal of Music Composition (JOMUSCOM)
November 2025.

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.

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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...

29

accel.
 $\text{♩} = 120$

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 ta o -
 La-be i-gi La-be i-gi La-be
 ta O-ya ta, te-te ta 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
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

BLESSED BE GOD

[An STAB Work for Flute, Violin, and the Piano]

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A Commentary on Blessed Be God (Benedictus Prayer), set to Music by Roland Ntambang.

Introduction

The composition *Blessed Be God* draws its text from the “Canticle of Zechariah” (Luke 1:68–79), traditionally referred to as the Benedictus. This canticle emerges after the miraculous birth of John the Baptist and the restoration of Zechariah’s voice, forming one of the three principal canticles of Luke’s infancy narrative: the *Magnificat*, the *Benedictus*, and the *Nunc Dimittis*. In Christian liturgy, the Benedictus holds a privileged position as the hymn for Lauds (Morning Prayer) within the Liturgy of the Hours.

While numerous simple and chant-like settings exist for liturgical use, the text has rarely been treated in polyphonic, concert-style settings comparable to those devoted to the *Gloria* or *Credo*. This gap provided both the motivation and creative impetus for my composition. By situating the Benedictus within a larger tradition of grand sacred works, I sought to elevate the prayer text into a formal, celebratory, and stylistically elaborate musical statement.

Earlier settings exist, most notably Charles Villiers Stanford’s Anglican works in his various Morning, Evening, and Communion Services (Opp. 10, 12, 81, 115), but they tend toward liturgical utility rather than concert performance. Thus, *Blessed Be God* consciously positions itself within a dual trajectory: rooted in Western classical sacred traditions, yet expanded with African rhythmic and cultural idioms to reflect both liturgical adaptability and cultural inclusivity.

General Structure

The composition is organized into four interconnected sections, modeled in part after Vivaldi’s *Gloria*. Each ritardando at the end of a section introduces the next, maintaining forward momentum without halting the music. Sustained accompaniment and alternating soli and a cappella parts ensure structural unity across the piece.

Section One: Acclamation of God’s Blessedness

This section serves as a jubilant proclamation, emphasizing God’s fidelity to His promises by raising up “a mighty Savior in the house of David.” Its musical texture underscores divine majesty and fulfillment of prophecy.

Section Two: Covenant Faithfulness and Wonder

Here, the focus shifts to the enduring nature of God's covenant. An interpolated exclamatory "Oh" heightens awe and wonder, musically reflected in shifts of mood and harmonic color.

Section Three: The Child and His Mission

The spotlight turns to John the Baptist, described in lullaby-like rhythms that recall childhood yet foreshadow mission. Contrapuntal writing here is playful and tender, yet dynamically structured to signify divine calling.

Section Four: Light and Peace

The final section reprises the theme of divine visitation, light shining in darkness, and peace. It functions as both theological climax and musical summation, culminating in an expansive "Amen" that unifies the work.

Musical Structure

Dominant formal strategies include aria (with modified da capo form) and duet chorus, interspersed with recitativo accompagnato. Unlike strict Baroque da capo arias, these sections prioritize textual progression and dramatic continuity. Sectional contrasts, intimate soloistic writing versus full choral grandeur—demonstrate dynamic range and thematic unity.

Cultural and Liturgical Setting

The composition is arranged for SATB choir, soloists, organ/piano, violin, and flute. Its stylistic foundation is Western classical, yet it consciously incorporates African rhythmic patterns as a theological and cultural statement.

African influence is evident in the opening rhythmic gestures, which imitate the communal call of a king's herald summoning villagers, here transformed into a summons to praise God. The dialogue of female and male voices mirrors African birth rituals, resonating with the Benedictus' theme of divine promise fulfilled. This fusion embodies the theology of liturgical adaptation, which emphasizes incarnating the liturgy within the cultural milieu of the people to foster active participation and awareness (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 1963; Chupungco, 2006; Arbuckle, 1990; Schineller, 1990).

Instrumentation and Expression

Flute and violin weave antiphonal lines contrasting and blending with organ/piano accompaniment, producing a meditative yet celebratory sonority. Expressive markings align with textual meaning: tempo increases for communal excitement, a cappella passages highlight holiness, and the final "Amen" crescendos from pianissimo to fortissimo, reinforcing the tension between contemplation and jubilation.

Tonal Structure

The tonal plan reflects stability and progression: opening in B-flat major, modulating to G minor, then G major, E-flat major, and finally returning to B major. This tonal journey mirrors the theological progression from covenant promise to fulfillment, mission, and ultimate peace.

Conclusion

Blessed Be God offers a rare concert-style treatment of the Benedictus, combining theological depth, structural rigor, and cultural inclusivity. Through the fusion of Western classical tradition and African rhythmic vitality, the work invites audiences into a shared liturgical and cultural experience—a hymn of ancient praise reimagined for today's generation.

Program Notes

Blessed Be God is a concert-style setting of the “Canticle of Zechariah” (Luke 1:68–79), traditionally known as the Benedictus. Emerging from Zechariah's restored voice after John the Baptist's birth, the text is central to Christian liturgy as the hymn for Lauds. While often sung in simple chant, it has rarely been treated with the grandeur of polyphonic sacred works. This composition elevates the Benedictus into a formal, celebratory musical statement, structured in four sections tracing a theological arc: proclamation, covenant faithfulness, vocation, and eschatological hope. Rooted in Western classical tradition yet enriched with African rhythmic idioms, the work symbolizes cultural inclusivity and liturgical adaptation.

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BLESSED BE GOD

Benedictus Prayer.

Roland Ntambang

Lah is G **Moderato** ♩=100

Flute *mp* *p*

Violin *p*

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Piano/Organ **Moderato** ♩=100 *p*

1

f *pp* *p*

Bles - sed, Bles -

mf *p*

17 **Moderato** ♩=120

sed be the Lord

sed be the Lord

se sed be the Lord

sed be the Lord

Moderato ♩=120

mf

25 **Accapella**

Accapella

mf

Bles sed be the Lord.

mf

Bles sed be the Lord ble - ssed be the Lord

mf

Bles sed be the Lord, Bles sed be the Lord, Bless'd be the

34

the Lord, the God of I - srael Bless'd be the God of I - srael!

God of I - srael, Bless'd be the God of I - srael!

Bless'd be the Lord, the God of I - srael, of I - srael!

Lord God, the God of I - srael Bless'd be the God of I - srael!

43

rit. *Moderato* ♩=100

p

rit. *Moderato* ♩=100

mf

51

Tenor m_i :- : s_i | l_i :- : t_i | l_i :- : s_e | l_i :- : l_i :-

He has vi - si - ted His peo - ple,

p *mf*

59

Sop d :- :r | m :- :f | r :- :d | r :r :-

He has vi - si - ted His peo - ple,

p *mf*



67

mf d :r :m
and re-deem'd

Alto d :- :d | l₁ :- :se₁ | l₁ :- :t₁ | l₁ :l₁ :- | l₁ :t₁ :d
He has vi - si - ted His peo - ple, and re-deem'd

m :f :s
and re-deem'd

l₁ :se₁ :l₁
and re-deem'd

p *mf*

75 *Moderato* ♩=120

them, and re-deem'd them, and re-deem'd them.

them, re-deem'd them, and re-deem'd them.

them, and re-deem'd them, and re-deem'd them.

them, re-deem'd them and re-deem'd them.

Moderato ♩=120



83

p

p

mf Doh is G m : f : s | m : d . d : - .

He has raised up for us

mf d : r : t | s : l . l : - .

He has raised up for us

91

his ser- vant,
his ser- vant.
a migh-ty Sa-viour in the house of Da-vid his ser- vant.



98

as he pro- mised by the lips of ho- ly men, those who were his- pro- phets, his- pro- phets from of
as he pro mised by the lips of ho- ly men, pro- phets from of
pro - mised by the lips of ho- ly men, pro- phets from of
as he pro- mised by the lips of ho- ly men, pro- phets from of

105

old, a Sa- viour who would free us from our foes, from the hands of
 old, a Sa- viour who, would free us from our foes, from the hands of
 old, a Sa- viour who would free us from our foes, from the hands of
 old, who would free us from our foes, from the hands of



113

rit.

2

all who hate us.
 all who hate us.
 all who hate us.
 all who hate us.

120 Adagietto $\text{♩} = 72$

120 Adagietto $\text{♩} = 72$

Lah is, G

Adagietto $\text{♩} = 72$

125

mf

oh,

131

so His love for our fa - thers is ful - filled and His ho - ly co - ve - nant re mem - bered.

So His love for our fa - thers is ful - filled and His co - ve - nant re - mem - bered.

so His love for our fa - thers is ful - filled and His co - ve - nant re - mem - bered.

So His love for our fa - thers is ful - filled and His co - ve - nant re - mem - bered.



135

rit.

Andante ♩=76

rit.

Andante ♩=76

139

mp

mf Sop.:Solo *mf* Alto Solo *mf*

He swore to A-bra-ham our
our

143

mp *mf*

cresc. *cresc.*

fa-ther to grant us, grant
fa-ther to grant us, grant

147

mf *f*

dim. *dim.*

us,
us,

151

Musical score for measures 151-155. The score includes a piano introduction, a Tenor Solo, and a Bass Solo. The lyrics are: "that free from fear and saved... That free from fear,"

156

Musical score for measures 156-160. The score includes a Choir and Accapella section. The lyrics are: "saved from the hands of our foes, of our foes, from, the hands of our foes, of our foes, saved from, the hands of our foes, or our foes, We might serve"

173

sence.
s1
sence.
m
sence.
d
sence.

f *mp*

177 *rit.* *Andante* ♩=76

p *mf*

rit. *Andante* ♩=76

182

f

187

mp

mp

Sop. Solo *mf* | m : d m , r : m , d
As for you lit-tle lit

Baritone Solo *mf* | d : d | : d
As for you

mp



192

mp

s : - , l | s , f : m - r | d : s | : d | t l , d : t l , l | t l : s l | s : m , f | s , f : s , m
tle lit tle lit tle child, you shall be called, be called a pro-phet of God, of God the

t l : d : t l , l | t l : s l | l , t l : d , r | m , r : m , d | s : - , f | s , f : m - r | d : d l | : d
lit tle lit tle child, lit tle child you shall be called be called a pro-phet of

mp

196

Most High. You shall go a-head of the Lord to pre-pare his ways be
 God the Most High. You shall go a-head a-head of the Lord To

200

fore him to make known to his peo-ple their sal-va-tion through for-give-ness of all their sins.
 make known to His peo-ple their sal-va-tion through for-give-ness of all their sins.

204

Choir m : d r | m , r : m , d
 As for you lit-tle lit
 for you lit-tle
 As for you

mp

209

tle lit-tle lit tle child, you shall be called, be called a pro-phet of God, of God the
 child, lit - tle child, you shall be called a pro-phet of God the
 oh lit - tle child, you shall be called, a pro- phet of God,
 lit tle lit-tle child, lit - tle child you shall be called be called a pro - phet of

mp

213

Most High. You shall go a-head of the Lord to pre-pare his ways be
 the Most High. You shall go, a-head of the Lord. To
 God the Most High. You shall go a-head a-head of the Lord To



217

fore him to make known to his peo-ple their sal-va-tion through for-give-ness of all their sins.
 make known to His peo-ple their sal-va-tion through for-give-ness of all their sins.
 make known to His peo-ple their sal-va-tion through for-give-ness of all their sins.
 make known to His peo-ple their sal-va-tion through for-give-ness of all their sins.

221 rit. Moderato ♩=120

rit. Moderato ♩=120

227

And so, the lo-ving kind-ness,
 And so, and so
 And so the lo - ving kind ness,
 And so, and so, lo-ving kind-ness

235

d' : l : d' | t :- : | t : r' : t | d' : s : m *p* | r : m : m | r : m : f :- | m :- :- | m : : | : :
 the lo__ ving kind__ ness of the heart__ of our God__
 m : m :- r :- : | f :- :- | m : d : t | l :- : t | t : l : t | d :- :- | d : : | : :
 the lo - ving kind - ness of the heart of our God__
 s : d' : s | s : l : f | t : s | s : d' : s | l : s | f : r : l | s :- :- | s : : | : :
 the lo__ ving, lo - ving kind__ ness of the heart__ of our God__
 d . d : m : s | s : t : r | s : t : r | d : m : d | f : m : s | r : l : s | d :- :- | d : : | : :
 lo - ving kind - ness of our God of our God, kind__ ness of the heart of our God__

244

: : *mp* | s :- : l | s :- :- | f : f : r | m :- : *mf* | s :- : l | s : d' : r : l : s | d' : r' : t | d' : s : m
 Who vi - sits us like the dawn, who vi - sit us like the dawn from
 r : t : t | d :- : | m : d : l | r : t : s | s : f : r | m :- : d
 us like the dawn, who vi - sit us like the dawn from
 : : | : : | : : | d' : t : l : s | l : f : s | s :- : | : d' : d' | t : t : | s : l : t | l : d' : l
 who vi - sits us like the dawn, who vi - sit us, like the dawn from
 : : | : : | : : | : : | t : r : s | d :- : | : d : l | s : s | :- : | f : s | d : m :-
 us like the dawn, who vi - sit us, like the dawn from

253

on high, He will, give light to those in dark ness

on high, He will give, give light to, those in dark ness

on high, He will, give light to those in dark ness

on high, He will give, give light to, those in dark ness

261

those who dwell in the sha-dow of death, and guide

those who dwell in the sha-dow of death, and guide

those who dwell in the sha-dow of death, and guide

those who dwell in the sha-dow of death, and guide

269

us in to the way of peace. Lah is G : : | : : | : : *f* d . t . i . d . r . m . d | s . : - : - | r : - :

us in to the way of peace... *f* d . t . i . d . r . m . d | s . : f : m | m | : : | t . : - : s | l . : - :

us in to the way of peace... *f* r . t . r . f . s . m | f : m : r

us in to the way of peace... *f* d . t . i . d . r . m . d | s . : - : - | m | : - : | l . s . : l . t . d . s | s . : - : - | r . i . d . i . t . i

278

pp

a men, a men, a men.

a men, a men, a men.

men, a men, a - men, a men, a men.

men, a men, a men, a men.

286 *rall.* *rit.*

S: *mp* di : : | : : | fi : - : - | si : - : - | li : - : - | ti : - : - | *p* d : - : - |
 A: *mp* si : : | : : | ri : - : - | mi : - : - | si : - : - | fi : - : - | *ppp* d : - : - |
 T: *mp* m : : | : : | d : - : - | d : - : - | d : - : - | r : - : - | *ppp* li : - : - |
 B: *mp* di : : | : : | ri : - : - | di : - : - | li : - : - | si : - : - | *ppp* di : - : - |
 A: *mp* A men
 A: *mp* A men
 T: *mp* A men
 B: *mp* A men

S: *mp* di : - : - | *p* di : - : - |
 A: *mp* si : - : - | *p* si : - : - |
 T: *mp* m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | *p* m : - : - |
 B: *mp* di : - : - | *p* di : - : - |
 A: *mp* A men
 A: *mp* A men
 T: *mp* A men
 B: *mp* A men

293 *pp* *Fine!*

S: *pp* di : - : - | *ff* f : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - |
 A: *pp* si : - : - | *ff* li : - : - | d : - : - | d : - : - |
 T: *pp* m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | *ff* fi : - : - | si : - : - | si : - : - |
 B: *pp* di : - : - | *ff* r : - : - | d : - : - | d : - : - |
 A: *pp* A men
 A: *pp* A men
 T: *pp* A men
 B: *pp* A men

S: *pp* di : - : - | *mf* di : - : - | di : - : - | di : - : - |
 A: *pp* si : - : - | *mf* si : - : - | si : - : - | si : - : - |
 T: *pp* m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - | *mf* m : - : - | m : - : - | m : - : - |
 B: *pp* di : - : - | *mf* di : - : - | di : - : - | di : - : - |
 A: *pp* A men
 A: *pp* A men
 T: *pp* A men
 B: *pp* A men

EZIGBO NNE (Good Mother)

[A Composition for Trumpet and Piano/African Instrumental Accompaniments]

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Structural Analysis of “Ezigbo Nne” (Good Mother)

Abstract

This paper explores Ezigbo Nne “Good Mother” by Nwaeke Udochukwu, a contemporary African art music piece that bridges indigenous Igbo musical traditions and Western classical compositional techniques. The study investigates six critical aspects of the work, identification and form, scale and mode, melodic structure, rhythmic organization, text, and expressive dynamics. The analysis reveals how the composer effectively utilises African rhythmic complexity, pentatonic modal flavors, and a layered percussive texture while retaining Western formality and harmonic organization. By doing so, the piece becomes a musical symbol of cultural hybridity, honouring motherhood while emphasising the relevance of African musical identity in contemporary composition. This critical engagement contributes to the documentation and scholarly appreciation of African art music as a distinct, evolving genre. The analysis will be based on identification and forms, scale and mode, melodic structure of the music, rhythmic structure of the music, text of the music and dynamics or expression marks.

Keywords: Analysis, Composition, Tonal harmony, Cultural hybridity.

Introduction

African art music is a genre that has matured significantly through the creative efforts of composers seeking to blend Western classical traditions with African idioms. The genre emerged in the early 20th century and continues to evolve with composers like Joshua Uzoigwe, Akin Euba, and Sam Akpabot making notable contributions. These composers, and their successors, have often drawn on indigenous African elements such as rhythm, scale, instrumentation, and storytelling to create works that are both structurally refined and culturally expressive (Agawu, 2003; Omojola, 1995).

Ezigbo Nne, composed by Nwaeke Udochukwu in 2025, represents a continuation of this compositional tradition. The title, translated as *Good Mother*, immediately situates the work in a cultural context that values familial honour and maternal reverence. The composer employs a range of instruments including trumpet, piano, and a variety of African percussion to convey themes of celebration, introspection, and honour. Through this analysis, we aim to reveal the intricate ways in which African musical characteristics are employed in the piece and how these elements coexist with Western stylistic features.

Composition

There are many perspectives concerning the term *composition*. *Bloomsbury Dictionary of Music* (1992) defines it as “the act or process of creating a work of music,” while *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (2001) states that it is “the activity of creating a musical work, the work thus created.” The term is most often used in contrast to improvisation, implying an activity carried out prior to performance or a work whose features are specified in sufficient detail to retain its essential identity from one performance to another. It is also an act that requires skillful acumen to carry out.

Thus, Uzoigwe (1994) explains:

To compose is to put things together. Composition, therefore, is an art that is highly structured, highly planned, very intellectual, mathematical, and even cold-blooded. What the composer does is to create a blueprint for a tonal house, as an architect creates one for a house of brick, mortar, steel, glass, and cement (p. 157).

Defining a Composer

A composer is traditionally understood as one who creates, structures, and notates music for performance. However, contemporary definitions extend beyond the Western classical paradigm, acknowledging multiple modes of music creation, including oral transmission, improvisation, and digital composition. According to Cook (2018), a composer is not merely a producer of musical scores but also a cultural agent whose works engage with history, identity, and creativity.

In African contexts, composers frequently serve as custodians of tradition while also being innovators. Nzewi (2013) describes African composers as culture bearers who reimagine oral traditions in modern formats, thereby ensuring continuity and renewal of cultural heritage. With the rise of technology, composers are increasingly viewed as interdisciplinary creators, working across music, film, gaming, virtual reality, and digital soundscapes (Williams, 2021).

Moreover, contemporary scholarship emphasizes the blurred line between composer, performer, and improviser. In jazz, hip-hop, and electronic music, the composer may also be the performer, producer, or sound designer (Solis & Nettle, 2020). This suggests that the role of the composer is fluid, context-dependent, and shaped by cultural practices.

Categories of Composers

Composers can be classified in several ways: by historical era, cultural context, function, medium, and stylistic orientation. These categories, while overlapping, provide useful frameworks for understanding diversity in music creation.

- **Historical Categories**
 - Medieval and Renaissance composers (e.g., Hildegard von Bingen, Josquin des Prez) focused on modal structures and sacred polyphony.
 - Baroque composers (e.g., J. S. Bach, Handel) explored counterpoint and functional tonality.
 - Classical and Romantic composers (e.g., Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin) emphasized formal clarity and later, emotional expression.
 - 20th- and 21st-century composers (e.g., Schoenberg, Stravinsky, John Adams, Thomas Adès) expanded the concept of tonality, embracing serialism, minimalism, and multimedia composition (Taruskin, 2019).

- **Functional Categories**

- Sacred composers: Dedicated to religious music (e.g., Palestrina; in Africa, Lazarus Ekwueme).
- Secular composers: Write for opera, theatre, or popular contexts.
- Film, theatre, and media composers: Create soundtracks and incidental music (e.g., Hans Zimmer, Rachel Portman).
- Experimental composers: Redefine musical boundaries through sound art and new media (e.g., John Cage, contemporary digital composers).

- **Cultural and Geographical Categories**

- Western art music composers: Centered on tonal and notated traditions.
- African composers such as Fela Sowande, Akin Euba, and Joshua Uzoigwe integrate indigenous African idioms with Western harmonic systems (Omojola, 2020).
- Asian composers: The likes of Toru Takemitsu, who combine traditional aesthetics with modernist practices.
- Global popular music composers/songwriters such as Bob Dylan or Burna Boy blend performance, composition, and social commentary.

- **Medium-Based Categories**

- Orchestral composers: Specialize in symphonic works (e.g., Brahms, Sibelius).
- Choral composers: Focus on sacred or secular choir works (e.g., Handel, Eric Whitacre, Sam Ojukwu).
- Electronic and digital composers: Innovators in sound manipulation, algorithmic composition, and interactive media (e.g., Brian Eno, Pamela Z).
- Cross-disciplinary composers: Work across film, gaming, and immersive environments, reflecting new 21st-century practices (Wright, 2019).

- **Contemporary Re-categorizations**

Recent scholarship highlights fluid categories, where composers function as hybrid creators (Cook, 2018; Wright, 2019). For instance:

- A contemporary African composer may simultaneously be a performer, teacher, and ethnomusicologist.
- In global pop music, songwriters also act as producers, cultural critics, and entrepreneurs.
- In digital media, composers become sound designers, working at the intersection of music, technology, and performance.

Identification and Form

The composition *Ezigbo Nne* is scored for a small ensemble that combines Western and African instruments: a trumpet in Bb, a piano, and traditional African percussion instruments, including the Okpokolo, Mgbiligba, Ichaka, Igba, and Udu. The piece is marked *Allegro e espressione* at the outset, suggesting a fast and expressive tempo and character.

Structurally, *Ezigbo Nne* does not adhere to classical Western forms such as binary, ternary, or sonata form. Instead, it is through-composed, a form wherein new musical material unfolds continuously without returning to previous sections. While some motives recur with variation, there is no strict repetition of entire sections. This format supports

the work's expressive intent, allowing the music to evolve organically, mirroring oral storytelling traditions in African culture where narratives are fluid and shaped by context (Euba, 1989).

The episodic structure of the piece, including changes in tempo (from *Allegro* to *Allegretto*) and meter (6/8 to 3/4), signals a narrative progression possibly symbolising different emotional or ceremonial phases of celebrating motherhood.

EZIGBO NNE
(Good Mother)

NWAKE UDOCHUKWU
01/09/2025

Allegro e espressione

Allegro e espressione

2

7

Scale and Mode

A striking feature of *Ezigbo Nne* is its modal ambiguity and flexibility. The primary tonal center is G major, established early in the piece through the trumpet and piano lines. However, the frequent use of modal mixture, including flattened scale degrees like F natural, suggests a transition into G mixolydian. This interplay between major and modal inflections is a common feature in African music, where scales are not rigidly fixed but shift according to expressive needs (Agawu, 2003).

mixolydian mode



Additionally, the melodic material hints at pentatonic structure, a five-note scale foundational to many African music traditions. These scales offer flexibility and are often associated with vocal and instrumental music in Igbo and other West African cultures. The blending of pentatonic contours with Western harmonic progressions in the piano part creates a rich harmonic texture that reflects the cross-cultural compositional intent of the work.

Melodic Structure of the Music

The melodic content of *Ezigbo Nne* is predominantly conjunct, meaning it moves in small steps rather than wide leaps. This kind of melodic motion is typical of vocal music and mimics natural speech intonation, a feature prominent in Igbo traditional music (Nzewi, 2007). The trumpet often carries the main melodic line, presenting short motifs that are repeated, sequenced, and rhythmically varied.

These motifs are occasionally interrupted by leaps, such as perfect fourths and fifths, introducing moments of tension or emphasis. The melodic contour is generally descending, especially at phrase endings, a feature that aligns with the “call-and-response” tradition where the leader’s phrase ends with a descent, inviting a response. Moreover, ornamentation through grace notes and triplets adds to the expressive quality, linking the piece to African vocal improvisation traditions. The piano provides harmonic support and at times doubles the melody, while also engaging in counterpoint, thereby enriching the overall texture.

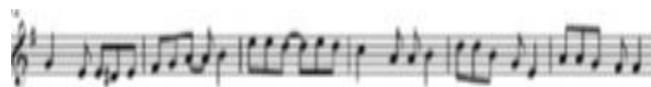


Rhythmic Structure of the Melody

Rhythm is perhaps the most complex and culturally distinct element of *Ezigbo Nne*. The prevailing meter is 6/8, which lends itself to a dance-like, flowing rhythm that mimics the patterns of African drumming and song. In the latter part of the composition, the meter shifts to 3/4, creating a sense of calm and closure. This shift may symbolise a transition from celebration to reflection, consistent with the thematic honoring of motherhood.

The percussion section is particularly vibrant, showcasing African polyrhythms, a simultaneous layering of multiple rhythmic patterns that interact dynamically. Instruments like the *udu* and *ichaka* are used not merely for time-keeping but as expressive tools that dialogue with the melodic instruments.

Syncopation, dotted rhythms, rests, and rhythmic ostinati are used throughout the composition, contributing to a texturally dense and rhythmically propulsive soundscape. These rhythmic choices reinforce the connection to African dance music and ritual ceremonies where rhythm plays a central role in structuring experience (Omojola, 1995).



The Text of the Music

While Ezigbo Nne is instrumental, the title provides insight into its textual meaning. “Good Mother,” is a direct translation from the Igbo language and reflects a cultural norm of revering the maternal figure. In many African societies, the mother is not only a caregiver but also a spiritual and moral anchor. It is therefore likely that the music narrates or dramatises the role of a mother, perhaps her strength, nurturing nature, and enduring presence.

The structure of the piece, from vigorous to subdued, mirrors a life-cycle metaphor, beginning with youthful vigor and ending in quiet reflection. Although the absence of text might make interpretation subjective, the expressive markings and instrumental dialogue create an emotional arc that resonates with the African praise-song tradition (Agawu, 2003).

Dynamics and Expression Marks

Dynamic markings in Ezigbo Nne are used with precision to articulate emotional shifts. The piece begins mezzo forte (mf), signaling strength and balance. Crescendos and forte (f) markings occur at high points of rhythmic or melodic intensity, while ritardandos slow the pace toward reflective moments.

Tempo indications like *Allegro e espressione* and *Allegretto* emphasise both speed and expressive quality. The expressive directives are crucial in guiding performers to balance the energetic African rhythms with the lyrical, reverent tone suggested by the piece’s theme.

Articulations such as staccato, accent marks, tenuto, and slurs further refine the phrasing and expression. The piano and trumpet frequently engage in contrasting articulations, highlighting tension and release, while the percussion maintains a consistent dynamic level, reflective of traditional ensemble practices where drums are played continuously and assertively.

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Ezigbo Nne'. It consists of two main parts: a trumpet part and a piano/percussion part. The trumpet part is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a melodic line that includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, and *ritardando*. The piano/percussion part is written in a single staff with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a rhythmic pattern with dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, and *ritardando*. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, and the tempo marking *Allegretto* is visible at the end of both parts.

Recommendations

Based on the critical analysis of Ezigbo Nne, the following recommendations are proposed for performers, composers, and scholars engaged with African art music:

1. Performers should immerse themselves in Igbo musical traditions to accurately interpret the rhythmic and expressive nuances embedded in the score. Workshops or collaborations with traditional musicians can enhance authenticity.
2. Music educators should include works like *Ezigbo Nne* in African art music curricula to expose students to indigenous compositional idioms within formal music education settings.
3. The composer may consider adding brief program notes or contextual information in the score to guide performers in interpreting cultural and expressive intentions more effectively.
4. Scholars are encouraged to conduct comparative studies of African art music compositions, highlighting similarities and regional differences in instrumentation, form, and melodic language.
5. It is recommended that *Ezigbo Nne* be submitted for publication in academic music journals or included in anthologies of African art music to increase its visibility and impact.
6. Future compositions could explore the integration of other African cultural elements and languages, promoting Pan-African musical dialogues and innovation.

Conclusion

Ezigbo Nne by Nwaeke Udochukwu exemplifies the dynamic possibilities of contemporary African art music. Through its integration of Igbo cultural elements, modal fluidity, rhythmic complexity, and symbolic meaning, the work pays homage to motherhood while affirming the legitimacy of African aesthetic values within modern concert music. This analysis demonstrates that African composers are not only preserving their musical heritage but also advancing it within global art music discourses. *Ezigbo Nne* should be recognised not only as a celebration of a cultural theme but also as a model for innovative African composition that bridges the traditional and the contemporary.

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EZIGBO NNE

(Good Mother)

NWAEKE UDOCHUKWU

01/06/2025

Allegro e espressione

Trumpet in B \flat

Okpokolo
{Wood Block}

Mgbiligba
{School-bell}

Ichaka
{Maracas}

Igba
{Membrane-drum}

Udu
{Bass pot-drum}

Piano
mf

The musical score is written in 6/8 time and consists of six parts. The tempo is 'Allegro e espressione'. The piano part is marked 'mf'. The score shows the first six measures of the piece, with a double bar line and repeat sign at the end of the sixth measure.

7

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

mf

Pno.

12

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

Detailed description: The image shows a page of a musical score for a trumpet and piano. The trumpet part (Tpt.) is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins at measure 12 and consists of a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The piano part (Pno.) is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays chords and single notes, while the left hand plays a steady eighth-note bass line. The score is divided into three measures, each containing a double bar line and a '2' with a slash through it, indicating a two-measure rest for the brass instruments. The piano accompaniment continues throughout.

18

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

24

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

30

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb

Ud.

Pno.

36

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb

Ud.

Pno.

42

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

50

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

57

Tpt. *mf*

Okp. 2

Mgb. 2

Ich. 2

Igb. 2

Ud. 2

Pno. *mf*

63

Tpt. *rit.* **Allegretto**

Okp. 2

Mgb. 2

Ich. 2

Igb. 2

Ud. 2

Pno. *rit.* **Allegretto**

70

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

79

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

87 **Allegro**

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

Allegro

94

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

f

102

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

108

Tpt.

Okp.

Mgb.

Ich.

Igb.

Ud.

Pno.

IMOTOTO

(Cleanliness)

(A Composition for S A T B and Piano)

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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,

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 jaun ju. o le-wu fun i-le-ra wa.

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

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

re, ra la-si-ko, ma jaun 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'

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

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 ko - 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 -

128

1. 2. rit.

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.

The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics. The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The score includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.) marked 'rit.' (ritardando). The lyrics are: 'to ————— Ko le da - ra. ra. Se-'mo-to-to a - ra re.'

IYA (MOTHER)

[A Composition for Solo Voice and Piano]

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Compositional Procedures and Analysis of Iya (Mother)

Title	: Iya (Mother)
Medium	: Solo Voice and Piano
Time signature/ Meter	: 6/8 Compound Duple
Style	: Opera
Form	: Through Composed
Key	: B flat Major
Tempo	: Andante
Mood	: Appreciation/Gratitude
Audience	: A Concert Hall or Church Auditorium
Texture	: Homophonic
Duration	: 2:47 Minutes
Extra-musical Element	: Mothers' Day celebration
Motif	: 
Compositional Devices	: Sequence; Parallel thirds; Syncopation; Tonal shift; Repetition; Counterpoint; Imitation; Hemiola
Melodic range of the voice	: F above middle C to G ²

The Text (Lyrics)

Yoruba

Iya (Mother)

Iya, Iya, Iya mother mi

Iya ooo, Iya oooo, Iya ooo Iya mi

Oloyun mi fosu mesan,

O pon mi fun Odun pupo

Me le sai dupe oore re
 Mowa dupe o Iya gb'ope mi. O fun mi lounje, O fun mi l'aso,
 Iya, Iya mi
 Mo m'oore, mo moore, oore Iya.
 Congratulations Iya mi.

English

Iya (Mother)

Mother, Mother, Mother, My Iya (Mother)
 Mother ooo, Mother ooo, Mother ooo, My Mother
 She was pregnant with me for nine months
 She backed me for many year
 I can't but be appreciative of your kind deeds Or I can't but be grateful for your kind deeds
 I am grateful o, Mother accept my appreciation
 You gave me food as well as clothed me
 Mother, My Mother
 I am grateful, I am grateful, grateful mother Or I am grateful, I am grateful, grateful of mother's kindness
 Ku ori're My Mother!

Analyses of Iya (Mother)

The music "Iya" began with a four-bar introduction played by the piano instrument. This piece, a code mix of Yoruba and English was performed as an Opera in a concert organised by Blessamoss Music School in Owerri, with the theme: "Minstrel sings Mysteries,"

A young man was seen on the stage, prostrating for his mother, eulogising her name – this can be found in bar 5 to bar 28.



He started recounting his mother's kind deeds through different stages of his life- from pregnancy, to birth, infancy, adolescence, and to adulthood. He sincerely appreciated his mother's kindness - this can be found in bar 29 to bar 48.



This young man, who was also the soloist, pronounced “Iya” in a melismatic way from bar 49 to bar 56. He also sang with emotion that led to a partial modulation to minor (G minor) in bar 57 to bar 68. He ended the song by congratulating his mother with a gift, from bar 69 to bar 93.



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Ojadili Publishing.

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IYA

(Mother)

Amole, Blessing Amos

Piano: Chinam Augustine

2023.

Andante

Voice

I-ya i-ya

Piano

Voice

i-ya mother mi, i-ya i-ya i-ya mother mi

Pno.

Voice

ff
i-ya o i-ya o i-ya

Pno.

18 *f*

Voice

o i - ya mi i - ya o i - ya

Pno.

24

Voice

o i - ya o i - ya mi

Pno.

29 *p*

Voice

O lo-yun mi fo-su me - san O pan

Pno.

34

Voice

mi fun o - dun pu - po me le sai du - pe

Pno.

39

Voice

o - re___ Re. mo wa du-pe o i-ya gbo pe_

Pno.

44

Voice

mi O fun mi l'o - unje, O fun mi l'a - so

Pno.

f

49 *mf*

Voice

i_____ ya mi i_____

Pno.

54 *f*

Voice

_____ ya mi mo m'o - re mo m'o - re

Pno.

59

Voice

o - re i - ya mo m'o - re mo m'o - re o - re i -

Pno.

64

Voice

ya mo m'o - re mo m'o - re o - re i - ya

Pno.

69

Voice

ff Con-gra - tu-la-tion i - ya_ mi *f* con - gra - tu-la - tion

Pno.

75

Voice

i - ya_ mi *ff* con - gra - tu-la-tion i - ya_ mi

Pno.

81 *f* *ff*

Voice

con - gra - tu - la - tion i - ya — mi con - gra - tu - la - tion

Pno.

87 *Poco rall...* *f*

Voice

i - ya — mi con - gra -

Pno.

90

Voice

tu - la - tion i - ya — mi

Pno.

JESU TI DE S'AYE

(CHRISTMAS CAROL SONG)

[A Composition for Solo, Mixed Voices and Organ/Piano]

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COMPOSITIONAL PROCEDURES AND ANALYSIS OF THE SONG

Title : Jesu ti de s'aye

Composer : Babalola Seun

Date Composed : 2023.

Medium : Mixed Voices and Organ

Tine Signature : Compound Duple Time

STYLE : Tonal, Diatonic, Melodic, Syncopation, Cross rhythm

Form : Classical form ABCDEA (RONDO)

A	A	B	C	D	E
1- 9	14 – 22	23 - 36	37 - 52	53 - 72	73 - 80

Key : F major

Tempo : Vivace (Lively)

Texture : Homophonic and Polyphonic in Nature

Mood : Story about Jesus

Audience : Large Audience

Motif :

Language : Yoruba

Duration : 2: 57 or 3 mins

Analysis of *Jesu ti de s'aye*

The composition *Jesu Ti De S'aye* draws its inspiration from the biblical narrative of Jesus Christ's birth. It reflects the journey of the three wise men who followed the star to Bethlehem, capturing the joyous essence of the Nativity. The work situates itself within the tradition of Christmas carols, inviting listeners to embrace the message of Christ's coming and to acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior.

Structural Analysis

The piece opens with an organ introduction (bars 1–4), establishing a solemn yet anticipatory atmosphere. A female soloist then enters with the line “*Mo gbo ohun kan*” (“I heard a voice”). By bar 14, the full ensemble joins, sustaining long notes on “*OH*” until bar 22, creating a layered texture distinct from the soloist's line.

At bar 23, a true call-and-response dynamic emerges: the soloist sings “*Emmanuel o*”, while the SATB ensemble responds with “*Oba wa, Baba wa*” (“Our King, Our Father”). This exchange reflects reverence and highlights Yoruba cultural elements of communal dialogue and respect.

A bridge follows at bar 37, during which all vocal parts rest until bar 40. From bar 41, sopranos enter sequentially, while alto, tenor, and bass voices maintain rhythmic support. By bar 52, all voices unite with the sopranos, singing the same text together. This section allows interpretive flexibility, accommodating either a slower, meditative tempo or a faster, celebratory pace.

At bar 53, the female soloist reappears, urging listeners to accept Jesus and proclaiming the blessings of doing so. From bar 60 to 66, the choir sings in unison, reinforcing the message with clarity and strength. Bars 67–72 feature harmonized singing across all voice parts, enriching the texture.

At bar 73, the soprano re-enters, declaring the joy of hearing the proclamation of Christ's birth. The piece concludes after 80 bars, marked by repetitions and a piano bridge that provides structural cohesion.

Key Textual Motifs

- *Mo gbo ohun kan*: I heard a voice
- *Jesu ti de s'aye*: Jesus has come into the world
- *Aye a tu ba*: There will be harmony on earth
- *Oba wa*: Our King
- *Baba wa*: Our Father
- *Araye a yo*: The people will rejoice
- *Gba sinu okan re*: Invite Him into your heart
- *A fun o l'ayo*: He will give you joy
- *A fun o ni isegun*: He will grant you victory
- *Mo ti dalayo*: I am now a happy person

Dynamics

- *P* – Soft
- *F* – Loud
- *FF* – Very Loud
- *At Lib.* – At liberty (performer's discretion)

JESU TI DE 'SAYE

FOR MIXED VOICES (SATB)

BABALOLA, SEUN 2023

vivace *p*

Sop. Solo

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

Organ

Mo gbo hun kan_____

7

mo gbo hun Re_____ mo gbo hun kan O-lu-wa pe Je - su Kris - ti ti de sa

f

13

ye mo gbo hun kan mo gbo hun Re mo gbo hun

p oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh

p oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh

oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh

p

19

kan O-lu-wa pe Je - su Kris - ti ti de sa ye E - ma - nue - li o

oh oh oh oh oh oh oh O ba

oh oh oh oh oh oh oh O ba

oh oh oh oh oh oh oh O ba

oh oh oh oh oh oh oh O ba

p

25

E - ma-nue-li o E - ma-nue-li o a bi Je - su a ye a tu

wa Ba - ba wa O - ba wa a - bi Je - su a - ye a tu

wa Ba - ba wa O - ba wa a - bi Je - su a - ye a tu

wa Ba - ba wa O - ba wa a - bi Je - su a - ye a tu

wa Ba - ba wa O - ba wa a - bi Je - su a - ye a tu

32

ba a - bi Je - su a ra ye e yo

ba a - bi Je - su a ra ye e yo

ba a - bi Je - su a ra ye e yo

ba a - bi Je - su a ra ye e yo

ba a - bi Je - su a ra ye e yo

39

f A - ra a tu ba a - ra a tu ba

f a - ra tu wa a - ra tu wa a - ra tu wa a - ra tu wa

f a - ra tu wa a - ra tu wa a - ra tu wa a - ra tu wa

45

a - ra a tu me ku nu a-tun-ta-ra i - le e ku e - wu

a ra tu wa a - ra tu wa a ra tu wa a ra tu wa e ku e - wu

a ra tu wa a - ra tu wa a ra tu wa a ra tu wa e ku e - wu

a ra tu wa a - ra tu wa a ra tu wa a ra tu wa e ku e - wu

51

Gba si nu o-kan re__ gba a si nu o-kan re__

o - ni-gba -gbo__

o - ni-gba -gbo__

o - ni-gba -gbo__

o - ni-gba -gbo__

57

a fun o'la - yo__ a fun o ni i se gun__ lo - ri a - ye__

63

p Gba si nu o-kan re _____ *f* gba a si nu o-kan re _____ *ff* a fun o la - yo _____

Gba si nu o-kan re _____ gba a si nu o-kan re _____ wa la - yo _____

Gba si nu o-kan re _____ gba a si nu o-kan re _____ wa la - yo _____

Gba si nu o-kan re _____ gba a si nu o-kan re _____ wa la - yo _____

69

ff a fun o ni i -se-gun _____ lo - ri a ye _____ *ff* mo ti da la - yo _____ a la - _____

a fun o ni i -se-gun _____ lo - ri a ye _____ a la - _____

a fun o ni i -se-gun _____ la a ye _____ a la - _____

a fun o ni i -se-gun _____ la a ye _____ a la - _____

75

mo ti da la -yo mo gbo hun kan Je - su de

yo a - yo gbo kan pe Je-su wa de

yo a - yo gbo kan Je - su de

yo a - yo gbo kan Je - su de

yo a - yo gbo kan Je - su de

yo a - yo gbo kan Je - su de

fff

NZA

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The Tale of Nza and Obu: A Folklore for Children and Lessons for All

Abstract

This paper examines *The Tale of Nza and Obu*, a creative composition inspired by Igbo folklore and arranged as a children's choral piece. The work draws upon indigenous storytelling traditions and integrates African musical idioms to communicate enduring lessons on humility, pride, wisdom, and survival. The accompanying score functions as both a pedagogical and cultural bridge, linking oral tradition with contemporary art music. In doing so, it highlights the role of creative composition in preserving cultural identity and fostering moral education. The study encourages composers and educators to explore folklore-based creativity as a means of ensuring cultural continuity and moral formation.

Introduction

Folklore has long served as a powerful medium of education, entertainment, and moral instruction within African societies. Among the Igbo of Nigeria, folktales act as moral compasses and mirrors of communal values (Echeruo, 1998; Okafor, 2005). *The Tale of Nza and Obu* originates from one such folktale, passed down orally to the composer by his mother, and reimagined here as a musical narrative for children's choir.

The work explores tensions between pride and humility, intelligence and brute strength, and smallness and greatness. Rather than a simple retelling, it is a reinterpretation that preserves Igbo oral tradition through choral composition. The music and narrative together affirm the moral insight that greatness is not determined by size or power but by wisdom and resourcefulness (Nzewi, 2007).

The Story: The Tale of Nza and Obu

Within Igbo folklore, the story of Nza, a small but clever bird, and Obu, a large and powerful one, conveys profound lessons about pride, humility, and survival.

The Contest

Nza challenged Obu to a contest: three weeks without food or drink (*izu n'ator*). Obu, proud and overconfident, accepted. The animal kingdom eagerly followed the contest, announced daily by a town crier through rhythmic chants that echoed across the forest.

Pi! Pi! Pi! – Nza

Pi! Pi! Pi! – Nza

Nza n'obu mār' iwu – Nza

Onye erīna ihie – Nza

Onye anūna ihie – Nza

Mbochi izu n'ātọ – Nza

This melodic chant echoed across the forest, keeping the contest alive in the minds of all creatures.

The Decline of Obu

While Nza discreetly ate small insects, Obu, the mighty Senegal Coucal (*Centropus senegalensis*), refused to admit weakness. By the second week, Obu's song weakened, fading from *forte* to *piano* and slowing from *allegro* to *adagio*. Eventually, pride led to its downfall, and Obu perished before the contest ended. The forest rejoiced, celebrating Nza, the Blue Waxbill (*Uraeginthus angolensis*), as victor, whose wisdom and adaptability triumphed over brute strength.

Moral Lessons

1. Humility conquers pride: greatness lies in wisdom, not size.
2. Wisdom ensures survival: resourcefulness secures resilience.
3. Know when to stop: pride blinds, but wisdom discerns limits.
4. Never despise small beginnings: greatness often emerges from unlikely sources.

Analysis of the Creative Work

1. Cultural Context

The story reflects Igbo oral traditions, where symbolic animal narratives encode moral lessons. Birds embody human virtues and flaws: Nza represents humility and cleverness, while Obu symbolizes arrogance and misplaced confidence. By adapting this folklore into a choral composition, the work bridges oral storytelling and modern performance, fostering cultural continuity (Okafor, 2005; Omojola, 2012).

2. Musical Form and Structure

The composition unfolds in sections aligned with the narrative:

- **Introduction (Prologue Chant):** establishes the folktale tone through rhythmic chanting.
- **Contest Theme:** lively call-and-response patterns symbolize dialogue between Nza and Obu.
- **Decline of Obu:** slower tempo and darker harmonies depict Obu's fading strength.
- **Victory and Moral Chorus:** triumphant rhythms and major tonality emphasize resolution.

The tonal language blends African pentatonic modes with Western diatonic harmonies, demonstrating how indigenous idioms coexist with art-music techniques (Nketia, 1974). Rhythmic vitality and percussive accompaniment reflect African performance practice, encouraging communal participation (Nzewi, 2007).

3. Text and Language

The libretto preserves Igbo linguistic flavor and tonal inflection, aligning musical phrasing with spoken prosody. While some refrains are adapted for accessibility, idiomatic expressions remain intact, sustaining cultural authenticity (Echeruo, 1998).

4. Instrumentation and Accompaniment

Traditional instruments such as *udu* (clay pot), *ekwe* (woodblock), and *ogene* (metal gong) are integrated with Western instruments, symbolizing inculturation in contemporary composition. This fusion reflects the Vatican Council II's emphasis on cultural adaptation in liturgy (Vatican Council II, 1963).

5. Educational and Social Values

Designed for children's choral education, the composition transmits moral lessons through participatory singing. It cultivates musical skills, listening, rhythm, coordination—while fostering ethical and cultural awareness. Schools, churches, and cultural centers can employ the work to teach both music and values (Okafor, 2005).

Conclusion

The Tale of Nza and Obu exemplifies African musical storytelling that intertwines morality, culture, and art. It preserves Igbo oral heritage while reinterpreting it for contemporary audiences. Through folklore, choral expression, and African instrumentation, the composition demonstrates how traditional narratives can be revitalized to inspire future generations. The small bird Nza thus symbolizes wisdom and resilience, embodying the enduring voice of African heritage (Nzewi, 2007; Omojola, 2012).

Program Notes: The Tale of Nza and Obu

The Tale of *Nza* and *Obu* is a children's choral work inspired by Igbo folklore, reimagined to teach timeless lessons on humility, pride, wisdom, and survival. The story contrasts *Nza*, a small but clever bird, with *Obu*, a large and powerful one. In a contest of endurance, *Obu*'s pride leads to downfall, while *Nza*'s resourcefulness secures victory, reminding audiences that wisdom often triumphs over strength.

Musically, the piece blends African pentatonic modes with Western diatonic harmonies, employing rhythmic chants, call-and-response textures, and percussive accompaniment to mirror traditional storytelling. The libretto preserves Igbo linguistic flavor, while instruments such as *udu*, *ekwe*, and *ogene* enrich the soundscape.

Designed for children's choir, the work functions as both art and pedagogy, developing musical skills while transmitting cultural identity and moral values. By bridging oral tradition with contemporary composition, The Tale of *Nza* and *Obu* celebrates African heritage and demonstrates how folklore can inspire new generations.

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NZA

(The Tale of Nza and Obu)

Igbo Folklore

Arr Paul Ezeibenne

Moderato **Adante**

Congas

Shaker

Wood Block

Piano

Tenor Solo

Soprano

Bass

ff

Pi pi pil Pi pi pil

N - za N -



9 2 2 2

Congas

Shk.

W.B.

Pno.

T. Solo

S.

B.

N-za n'O-bu ma ri - wu; o-ny'e - ri-la i-hie o- ny'e an-a i-hie m-bQ-ch'i - izu n'a -tQ N-

za N - za N - za N - za N -

17 **Andante**

Congas **2**

Shk.

W.B. **4**

Pno. **Andante Var II**

T. Solo *mf*
za zal - - Pi pi pil

S. *mp*
za zal N-

B.



25 **2**

Congas **2**

Shk.

W.B. **8** **12**

Pno. **Var II**

T. Solo
Pi pi pil N-za n'O-bu ma-r'i -wu; o-ny'e -ri-la i-hie o-ny'e an-a i-hie

S. *mp*
za N-za N-za N-za N-

B.

33 **Vivace**

Congas **2** **2** **2** **2**

Shk.

W.B. 16 20

Pno. **Vivace**

T. Solo **To S. Solo** **Soprano Solo**
 m-bQ-ch'i -izu n'a -tQ N - za

S. *mp*
 za N - za N - za N - za N -

B.



41 **Vivace**

Congas **2** **2** **2** **2**

Shk.

W.B. 24 28

Pno.

S. Solo *f*
 (The big bird has fallen)
 O-bu a laaaaa!!!

S. *mp* *p*
 za N - za N - za N - za N - za N -

B.

49

Congas

Shk.

W.B.

Pno.

S. Solo
 (Silence has fallen)
 O-wu a daaa!!! N-ga-la bu-ru - zo m - mu t'e-kpe-re a zu

S.
 za N - za N -

B.



57

Congas

Shk.

W.B.

Pno.

S. Solo
 Nwa nnem ge... nu mu nti nu r'a -kú-kò m n'a - kò i-ma i-hie ka m mma ka -ri-a i-ke a ka

S.
 za N - za N -

B.

65 **Adante = 60**

Congas

Shk.

W.B.

Pno.

S. Solo

S.

B.



73 **rit.**

Congas

Shk.

W.B.

Pno.

S. Solo

S.

B.

Musical score for measures 81-84. The score includes parts for Congas, Shk., W.B., Pno., S. Solo, S., and B. The Congas part features a 2-measure rest at measures 82 and 84. The Shk. part has a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and rests. The W.B. part has a 64-measure rest at measure 81 and slash marks at measures 82, 83, and 84. The Pno. part shows a piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The S. Solo part has a melodic line starting with the note 'za'. The S. and B. parts have a 64-measure rest at measure 81 and slash marks at measures 82, 83, and 84.



Musical score for measures 85-88. The score includes parts for Congas, Shk., W.B., Pno., S. Solo, S., and B. The Congas part features a 2-measure rest at measures 85, 87, and 88. The Shk. part has a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes and rests. The W.B. part has a 68-measure rest at measure 85 and slash marks at measures 86, 87, and 88. The Pno. part shows a piano accompaniment with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The S. Solo part has a melodic line starting with the note 'za'. The S. and B. parts have a 68-measure rest at measure 85 and slash marks at measures 86, 87, and 88.

THE MAN SPEAKS ROUGHLY TO US

[A Composition for Solo Voice and Piano]

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Introduction

The composition “The Man Speaks Roughly to Us,” is a scene from the opera book, “Joseph and His Brothers,” composed by the author. The dramatic encounter of Joseph’s brothers in Egypt with that of Joseph himself, is narrated in a reporting speech to their father Jacob; and Jacob’s reaction to his son’s narrative is the story of this composition. The text is lifted from the book of Genesis 42:30-38.

Pre-compositional Consideration

Title : The Man Speaks Roughly to Us

Key : G

Time signature : 4/4

Tempo : *Allegretto, Andante Slowly*

Length : 76 bars

Texture : Through Composed

Texture : Monophonic

Media : Voice with Piano Accompaniment

Scale : Diatonic

Mood : Anxiously, Soberly

Dynamic : *f, rit*

Language : English

Audience : Church and Concert Hall

Genre : Opera

Modulation

As the tone of speech changes in this operatic work, modulations are created to reflect the changes in speech. Benward and Saker (2009) discusses modulation as “a process that results in a shift of tonal center. The term applies to those occasions in music when one established tonal center gives way to another” (P. 315). Modulation, is also the process of moving from the home key of a musical composition to establish another key within the piece of music. The modulation moved to the submediant major of the tonic G. This is found in bars 67-60.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled 'Andante'. It features a vocal line for a character named Reuben and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The lyrics for the vocal line are: 'Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee when you give me the child'. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The piano part consists of chords and a melodic line in the right hand, and a bass line in the left hand.

Performance Interpretation: For the optimal performance of this work, the following should be considered.

- A good musical interpretation of the text.
- Good breath control.
- A good articulation of words.
- Proper costume for the composition

Structural Analysis

- Bars 1-42** : Section A: Solo with piano accompaniment
- Bars 43-45** : Prelude
- Bars 46-56** : Section B: Solo with piano accompaniment
- Bars 57-60** : Transition in E major
- Bars 61-77** : Section C: Solo with Piano accompaniment/ piano closing passage.
- Cadences** :
- Section A : Imperfect cadence (vii – I)
- Section B : Imperfect authentic cadence ($V^6_4 - I$)
- Section C : Perfect authentic cadence ($I^6_4 - V^7 - I$)

The image shows a musical notation for a cadence. It consists of two staves. The top staff has a treble clef and the bottom staff has a bass clef. The notation shows a sequence of chords: a dominant chord (V) in the first measure, followed by a subdominant chord (IV) in the second measure, and finally a tonic chord (I) in the third measure. This represents a perfect authentic cadence.

Textual Analysis

The text shows the blindness of envy and jealousy. Joseph, being sold by his brothers recognised his brothers when he saw them. However, despite all of Joseph's interrogations, his brothers could not recognise him. When humans are carried away with envy, hatred, and greed, it clouds their sense of recognition and thoughts.

Cast: Joseph brothers, Jacob and Reuben.

References

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THE MAN SPEAK ROUGHLY TO US

Allegretto *f* Brothers Dr. Evangeline B. Giami

Tenor

Bass

Piano

The man, the lord of the land speak rough-ly to us, and

took us for spies of the coun-try. we say un-to him, we are true men and not

spies, we are twelve bro thers, sons of our fa-ther, and the young - est with our

fa-ther in ca naan land. And the man, the lord of the

coun-try said to us, now shall I know that ye are true... men, leave one of your bro-thers with me here, and take

31

food for your house and be gone, and bring your young-est bro-ther un-to me, then shall I know that

37

ye are not spies, but that ye are true men, so I will de - li - ver your - bro - ther to you.

43

slow

Jacob

Me have ye be-reaved of my chil - dren, Jo-shep is not,

slow

50

Si-meon is not, and ye will take_ Ben-ja-min a way, all these things are a gainst me._____

E

57 **Andante**

Reuben

Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee when you give me the child. My son shall not go with

G Jacob

Andante

62

thee, for his brother is dead, for his brother is death, and he's left a-lone,

67

and he's left a-lone, if mis chief be-fall him by the way as ye go then shall

The image shows a musical score for a solo voice and piano. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef). The vocal line is mostly rests, with the lyrics 'ye bring my gray hair with sor-row to the grave.' written below. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The tempo marking 'rit.' (ritardando) is placed above the piano staff. The second system also has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment is more complex, with chords and moving lines in both hands. The tempo marking 'Allegretto' is placed above the piano staff. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

The Man Speaks Roughly to Us is a composition for solo voice and piano by Giami, Barididum Evangeline. It is drawn from the larger opera *Joseph and His Brothers* and dramatizes the biblical account in Genesis 42:30–38, where Joseph’s brothers recount their encounter with the ruler of Egypt, Joseph himself, though they do not recognize him, to their father Jacob. The work captures Jacob’s anxious response to their testimony, highlighting themes of envy, blindness, and human frailty.

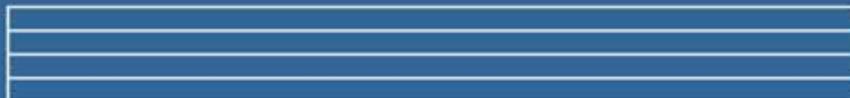
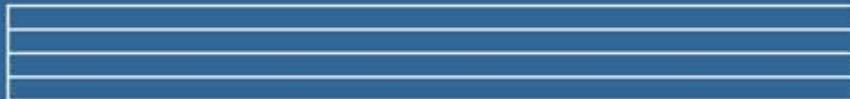
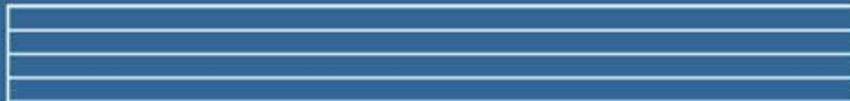
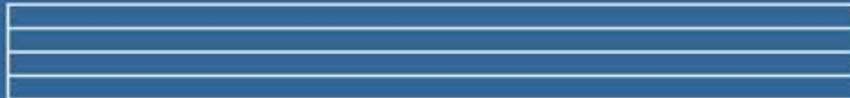
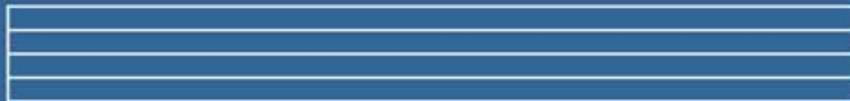
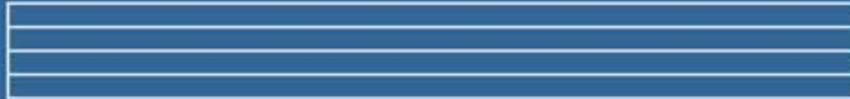
The piece is set in G major, with a 4/4 time signature and alternating tempos of allegretto and andante to reflect shifts in mood. Spanning seventy-six bars, it is through-composed and primarily monophonic, with the piano providing a sober and anxious accompaniment. The texture and tonal language are diatonic, and the dynamic markings range from forte to ritardando, underscoring the tension of the narrative. Intended for both church and concert hall performance, the composition situates itself within the operatic genre while remaining accessible to sacred audiences.

As the tone of speech changes, the music modulates to reflect the evolving drama. In particular, Giami employs a modulation to the submediant major of the tonic G, evident in bars 57–60, to heighten the emotional intensity. Structurally, the work unfolds in three main sections: Section A (bars 1–42) features solo voice with piano accompaniment and closes with an imperfect cadence; Section B (bars 46–56) continues the dialogue with another imperfect authentic cadence; and Section C (bars 61–77) concludes with a perfect authentic cadence, bringing resolution to the dramatic arc. A brief piano prelude (bars 43–45) and transition in E major (bars 57–60) provide contrast and continuity.

The text itself reflects the destructive power of envy and jealousy. Joseph recognizes his brothers, but they fail to recognize him, a blindness symbolizing how hatred and greed can cloud perception and judgment. The cast of characters includes Joseph’s brothers, Jacob, and Reuben, whose voices carry the narrative forward.

For performance, careful interpretation of the text is essential, alongside controlled breath support, clear articulation, and appropriate costuming to enhance the dramatic impact. The work demands sensitivity to both its biblical source and its operatic form, balancing sober reflection with expressive delivery.

Ultimately, *The Man Speaks Roughly to Us* exemplifies Giami’s ability to merge sacred narrative with operatic expression. Through its tonal shifts, cadential design, and textual depth, the composition conveys the tension between recognition and blindness, envy and reconciliation. As part of *Joseph and His Brothers*, it stands as both a devotional reflection and a dramatic musical statement, resonating in sacred and concert contexts alike.



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