

**Teaching and Learning in the Humanities
and Social Sciences:
Perspectives of Competence**

**Teaching and Learning in the
Humanities and Social Sciences:
Perspectives of Competence**

Edited by

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Foreword

I feel privileged to be requested to write the foreword to this book entitled: *Teaching and Learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Perspectives of Competence*, a publication put together by the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. The contributors to this book are seasoned scholars in their various fields with solid academic standing. Each of them has unveiled the most salient points in the emerging issues in multi-dimensional pedagogical perspective.

The three-module book, has been broken down into units, which no doubt provides a clear discussion of each of the topics. Of great interest are the first five units of the first module which engaged critical areas of teaching profession. The second module centres on lesson planning and methodology of teaching courses in Arts and Social sciences. Module three focuses on instructional materials for teaching and learning. This ranges from improvisation to utilisation of materials that could be gainfully used in the teaching of courses in Economics, Theatre Arts, History, Geography and Political science in Nigeria school system.

I wish to commend and congratulate the Dean and her team for coming up with this noble idea and nurturing it to fruition. The quality, readability and language used to convey ideas in this book will appeal to students, educational practitioners and general readers.

I therefore, strongly recommend the book as a special and general text for students at all levels as well as practising teachers in tertiary educational institutions.

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UNIT 4

Teaching Music Composition in Nigerian Tertiary Music Education

Christian ONYEJI Ph.D

Introduction

Music composition is defined simply as the creative assembling of sounds in certain determined order for social and cultural purposes. It is a prominent component of music education in Nigerian institutions. While aspects of creative musical activities are conducted at the lower tiers of learning resulting from the new Cultural and Creative Arts Curriculum, formal teaching of the subject component is prominent only at the tertiary level where the curricula for institutions provide for professional specialization on it. This unit focuses on the current practice, methods, relevance and new directions arising from the subject component, using selected institutions in southern Nigeria. Three major teaching approaches have been identified as generally applied by composition teachers. Historical, descriptive and analytical methods are adopted for the discourse.

Study programmes in music are anchored on the National policy on Education which states that: “In order to encourage aesthetic, creative and musical activities, Government will make staff and facilities available for the teaching of creative arts and crafts and music...” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981). While aspects of composition are taught at the secondary and primary levels as creative activities prescribed by Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) Curriculum (NERDC, 2009), formalized teaching of composition takes place at the tertiary level (Universities, Polytechnics and Teacher Colleges known as Colleges of Education). The CCA curriculum stimulates development of creative talents of learners through

cultural experience and expressions in schools. Learners are engaged from their cultural backgrounds through oral creative activities in music, dance and drama, combined as one subject. Dominance of oral composition process as well as folkloric expressions exists at this level. Composition at the tertiary level, explores various creative ramifications combining written and oral methods. Composition is a stand-alone course in these institutions, but is also integrated into the teaching of other courses such as harmony, form and analysis, history, performance workshops, aural training, etc. The term composition is adopted, accepted, cultivated and formalized for creative processes of music structuring, realization and making in Nigerian institutions. This is in agreement with the creative processes of Western art music and notions of orality in indigenous Nigerian societies where composition is known as *iro egwu* among the Igbo (Onyeji, 2004), for instance. It is unequivocal that written and oral composition processes have their places in the Nigerian schools.

Composition is most often taught as a written art in Nigerian schools in consonance with formal education bequeathed by the West. Teachers employ the tools of literary music for its conceptualization, structuring and execution. This includes various forms of notation (typically staff and tonic solfa) and creative dynamics in the expression of the art. Music drawn from non-literary traditions are assimilated and have become part of formal composition teaching arising from the bi-cultural (Ekwueme, 2004, 155) tradition of music departments in Nigeria. Cultural backgrounds of learners provide potent resources which enrich teaching and learning experiences, resulting in various arrangements of folk music and ensemble works. Thus, teachers and learners deliberately draw from folk music of their communities in their creative engagements.

Laid on the background of musical activities of the Western Missionaries and Schools (Idolor, 2001; Adegbite, 2001 ; Herbst, Rudolph, Onyeji, 2003; Vidal, 2012; Onyeji 2016), composition regularly attracts gifted Nigerians who specialize on it. This accounts

for why many trained Nigerian musicologists are composers. Among them are Fela Sowande, Ayo Bankole, Akin Euba, Lazarus Ekwueme, Meki Nzewi, Felix Nwuba, Okechukwu Ndubisi, Samuel Ojukwu, Daniel Agu, Dorothy Ipere, Joshua Uzoigwe, Bode Omojola, Christian Onyeji, Stephen Olusoji, etc. These Nigerian composers trained as composers in institutions within and outside Nigeria developed very strong capacity for composition while specializing on other areas of music. Quite striking however, is the catalytic role ethnomusicology has played in composition in recent times. The two distinct areas of specialization have been finely knitted such that many of those who specialized on ethnomusicology in Nigeria have drawn extensively from their expert knowledge of indigenous music practice and creativity to develop and push the boundaries of composition teaching, learning and output forward.

Composition in Nigerian music education is tacitly haunted by two schools of thought. On the one hand is the group that believes that composition cannot be taught. They argue that it falls outside of the teachers' boundaries to teach learners their creative instincts and how they surge at given moments. They believe in the power of talent and what nature bequeaths a learner. The second group believes in the possibility of guiding a learner in harnessing his/her given talents through learning of skills, aspects of composition (melody writing for instance), and the technical knowledge required to string sounds, etc. together in a musical composition. Indeed, composition teaching has endured open biases leading to school curricula of some institutions providing little or no guides in the way of specific curricula specifications for the subject. Depending on the leaning of the curriculum planners, composition gets fair attention or the opposite becomes the case. Available indicators show however that composition can be taught as any other music subject. Thus, teaching of composition in Nigerian schools is quite distinct and robust in some instances.

Method

Multiple research methods which included historical, descriptive,

analytical and review of relevant secondary sources were employed in this unit. Data were collected through interviews of selected stakeholders comprising six composition teachers and classroom teachers in Nigerian institutions whose opinion formed the primary data for the arguments and conclusions presented in this study. Additional data were collected from years of experience in the study and teaching of composition in different institutions spanning thirty-five years. This also included personal experience from being external examiner to various institutions, article reviewer, editor of national journals and conferee at national and local conferences. Six universities in the southern part of Nigeria were purposively sampled for this study. This is because formal music education is dominant in the southern part of Nigeria. These are University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State; Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State; University of Uyo, Uyo Akwa Ibom State; Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State; University of Lagos, Lagos State; and Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, Osun State. Curricula provisions of these institutions on composition and the actual teaching processes in the institutions were reviewed for this study.

Current Teaching Practice for Composition at the Different Levels of Study

Composition teaching practices in various institutions in Nigeria is a kind of cocktail, featuring individualized application of teachers' understanding of curricula provisions. Similarly, curricula provisions for composition teaching and learning at the tertiary level lack homogeneity in content and stages of commencement of the study. The autonomy of the subject at this level influenced its form and application from institution to institution. This also impacts specific teaching processes and procedures adopted by the institutions as well as the attitude of learners to the subject component. Examples from three of the selected institutions below show variations in the subject contents, semester of commencement and degree of emphasis on the subject as core or elective course.

MUS 321 Fundamentals of Music Composition 2 Units Elective
Principles of music composition; sources of inspiration; melody and text writing; scansion and syllabification; techniques in writing two-parts, three-part and four-part counterpoints; melodic and chord progressions, resolutions and exceptions; 20th century compositional techniques and innovations; fugue writing and stylistic imitation. Students are required to compose and perform their original works of about 3 minutes minimum. (Delta State University Curriculum provision for Composition as Elective Course in 3rd Year)

MUS 418 20th Century Compositional Techniques and Fugue
3 Units Core

A survey of the various processes of musical composition in the 21st Century will be carried out, using atonality, serialism, 12-tone, chance, electronic and computer techniques among others. Examination of some works of the major composers of this century, such as Bartok, Stravinsky, Schonberg, etc, will be carried out. Application of the techniques of tonal counterpoint to fugal composition; literary and aural tonal analysis of vocal and instrumental compositions; transcription of traditional music; composing for advertising and political campaign; techniques in composition of soundtracks for films. (Delta State University Curriculum provision for Composition as Elective Course in 4th Year)

MUS 382 Composition 3 Units
Music creativity and the techniques of composition for voices and instruments. (University of Uyo Music Curriculum for composition).

MUS 422 20th Century Compositional Technique 3 Units
A survey of the various processes of musical compositions in the present era, using nationality, serialism, 12-tone, chance, electronic and computer techniques, among others. Examination of some works of major composers of the Century, such as Bartok, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, Dallapiccola, etc. (University of Uyo Music Curriculum for 4th Year Composition).

MUS. 313 Composition

2 Credits

Two part writing using original tunes in African and classical idioms. Setting of indigenous and English texts to melodies and providing accompaniment (vocal or instrumental – traditional or western) for same. Writing and Arranging for young voices. Writing and arranging for four voices using own themes in the contemporary Nigerian Choral styles. (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Music Curriculum for Composition).

In Delta State University, composition teaching starts in year three as an elective course in one semester and as a core course in the fourth year for those specializing in composition. They then present their graduation project on composition. University of Uyo, on the other hand, starts composition teaching in year three in one semester but without much detail on the curriculum content. The course is then taken in the fourth year during which students specializing in composition are expected to submit their project in the area. At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, teaching of composition as a core course starts in the second semester of the third year. This is taken in the fourth year for specialization and presentation of project in composition. At the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife, composition studies (MUS 429 and MUS 430) are taught in the fourth year only before composition project (MUS 434) is presented for graduation. There is a general notion among curriculum planners that being a creative area, at the level of synthesis in learning, learners must first acquaint themselves with the basic knowledge of other aspects of music (harmony, theory, form and analysis, aural perception, history, etc.) before engaging in music composition. This thought underlies the notion and insistence on starting composition at a later stage in the learning programme.

In whichever way one looks at the curriculum features, composition teaching practice clearly lacks homogeneity in Nigeria. However, three major teaching processes have emerged over time. These are the in-class creative exercise method, the project method

and the applied cum performance method. With many young lecturers from various institutions teaching composition, there is an increasing mesh of teaching methods and styles emanating from different institutions such that any observer can only attempt a sifting of routine norms. Composition teaching patterns in Nigerian institutions may then be described as fluid and somewhat individualized according to the creative flair and leaning of teachers. While teaching of composition draws from Western classical and traditional music of the various cultural entities of Nigeria, evidence shows that far more attention is paid to concepts and processes from Western music. Due to the general reliance on ubiquitous literature and resources on Western classical music, teachers in Nigeria have noted, with concern, the heavy leaning of music curricula on formal procedures of Western music. This has been argued against by some music pundits in Nigeria such as Nzewi (1988; 1999b; Okafor, 1992), etc. Nigerian scholars, composers and educators (Uzoigwe, 1992; Omojola, 1997; Nzewi, 1997; Nzewi, 1999a; etc.) have variously and in concert raised the concern and need for a best practice for developing Africa-sensitive music education model(s). In one such observation, Okafor (1992) wrote:

An examination of music education in Nigeria presents the observer with an immediate and glaring anomaly. The focus of music education itself appears to be on western music, music transplanted or introduced into the culture of the indigenous Nigeria from an outside culture. The syllabus of the educational system, the curriculum content, and the philosophy and thrusts of the institutions, which teach music place strong emphasis on Western music. Nzewi (1998) also observed that learners' cultural background has been ignored in the approach to music education in Nigeria so far. Advocating for African-based music curriculum, Idolor (2005) submitted that "at the tertiary level, the music curriculum should be established on African music theory and practice, however, with an inclusion of music contents of other cultures of the world". These views evoke Masoga's (2006) position that "it is wise to start with knowledge about the local area which

students are familiar with, and then gradually move to the knowledge about regional, national and global environments”. These conversations and observations prompted a National Conference of Music Educators in Nigeria (COMEN), that held in May 2019, at the University of Port Harcourt, on the theme “Africa-Sensed Music Education in Nigeria”. The conference brought experts and scholars together to deliberate on the issues of curricular contents, nature and focus for music education in Nigeria. Thus, the question of curricula leaning remains a critical issue in Nigerian music education discourse.

A teaching method adopted in composition is the in-classroom creative exercises method. Here the teacher explains and presents samples of components of composition such as melody writing, two-part writing, writing of simple accompaniments for different media (keyboard, African musical instruments, orchestral instruments etc), arranging of music for various media and in different genres, composing for choirs and orchestral instruments (both transposing and non-transposing), composing for African ensemble groups, computer and modern music, etc. Definitions and discourses of various aspects of melody, for instance, are presented to students with different examples. In University of Nigeria, Nsukka, melody writing is approached by discussing the acceptable elements such as judicious mixture of different pitches, note values, stepwise movements and leaps; identifiable cadences, meter, tempo, tonality, medium, climax; avoidance of monotony of an interval or a particular note; proper use of rests and the signs, dynamic marks, voice leading etc. With these explained, the class is ready for practical examples and exercises within the class. Writing of melodic figures, phrases, sentences, etc are discussed with relevant examples. These aspects of melody writing are applied to different musical traditions- Western classical, African traditional music or popular music. Similarly, folk melodies are transcribed and dissected for application in the realization of the above elements in written composition. In some instances, oral composition process may be adopted to enhance the synergy and understanding of the two creative approaches.

The second teaching practice is the project method. This, sometimes, entails recordings of folk music and arranging them for various media. Sometimes also, composition of original works in different genres in groups is done by the students and recorded in music studios. The project method attempts to harness the creative autonomy and decision of individual student, within a group, in creative activities for various results outside the supervision and control of lecturers. This method has yielded unimaginable results along the lines of individual or group interests, peculiarities and creative judgments.

A third method, which is not generally used in all institutions, is the applied method. This entails presentation of composed works for performances in various performance workshop groups for practical assessment of the music and the style through panel consensus evaluation. At the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, student composers are strongly encouraged to present their works for performance according to the various media. This has proven to be a great method in assessing creative outcomes of the teaching and learning processes. The performance exposure of such works enables critical assessment and endorsement of the results by the public. This strengthens students' creative confidence and also points out areas of deficiency to the composition teachers. The method exposes peculiar areas of creative interest/strength and expertise of learners for increased support. In such instances, student composers could be noted as being strong in vocal music or instrumental music composition.

Relevance of Composition Teaching in Nigerian Music Education

Tertiary music education in Nigeria supports composition teaching as a distinct area of specialization. Teaching processes in this area strive to bequeath professional expertise and preparation to learners to enable them to create and make music of different genres and styles not only for performances but as vocation and means of livelihood. In this wise, composition is both vocation and art.

Bestriding theory and practice (performance), composition and the composers are celebrated and acknowledged in the special area which showcases various dimensions and limits of human musical creativity as well as it points to sublime gifts of God to humanity in special sonic combination and management. To a great extent, established Nigerian composers are regarded as people with special creative gifts and or talent not noted in everyday people in the society. The subject of social or spiritual standing of composers in Nigeria requires a dedicated study outside the focus of this study unit.

Composition is central to music education and is directly employed in the teaching of other aspects of music. Elsewhere, it has been described as the substance of music education (Onyeji, 2003).

Nigeria is a highly cultural, religious and entertainment loving people. Music plays central role in these aspects of the life of the people. It is easy therefore to appreciate the relevance attached to music composition in schools. To an average Nigerian, composers are special beings quite revered by the public. They consider it an amazing feat to structure sounds of various lengths and magnitude that strongly affect the emotions of audiences. In some ways, the constant need for music of various types and tastes for different events and ceremonies, rites and observances, points to and strongly supports the relevance of the specialization in institutions. In many respects therefore, there is an unwritten understanding that composition is for students with requisite capacity, talent, creative spark and ability to independently synthesize sounds into different creative works. This is also aggravated by the notion that composition is not taught but is bequeathed to someone by nature. Sunday Ofuani, a composition lecturer in Delta State University, supports this notion when he says: “in the real sense, composition is not taught, but the theories, techniques, and styles” (Personal communication, 14th July, 2020). This perspective has subtly elevated composition and composers to higher pedestal in the hierarchy of musicologists in Nigeria. This notion has been sustained among students of music, distinguishing composition as specialization for

students that can engage in independent processing of sounds in written music form.

Composers abound in Nigeria. Many of them are duly recognized and highly patronized in churches where they have excelled as choral composers. Nigeria's art music space is saturated with various forms and types of choral music. This is because the church formed the nursery for art music development in Nigeria and has maintained an unhidden preference for choral music through the choirs. Group music making is promoted by the churches more than individual presentations, a carryover from Nigerian cultural practices. The marked preference for group aesthetics and story-songs in choral forms (Onyeji and Onyeji, 2013) has impacted composition specializations and output in Nigerian institutions. Dominance of school and church choral music compositions and performances are noticeable in other countries in Africa also (Andoh, 2007; 2008, 2009/2010). The platform provided by the Christian missionary and school activities in Nigeria enabled the construction of a creative bridge from the choral music "nursery" of the missionary era to the present times. While choral music composers find comparative relevance within the church, composers are generally extolled for their special skill and contributions to the musical needs of the people. The broadcasting industries and media created a support base for the popularization of the creative works of Nigerian composers. Media attention to these composers has further strengthened the social and creative standing of the composers in the society, motivating specialization in composition by students.

Nigerian composers have taken their pride of place among their peers in other parts of the world. Teaching composition in Nigerian music education prepared creative Nigerians to strive for global presence and to compete with the rest of the world in the expression of the musical arts of their various nationalities. Providing the requisite skill, capacity, preparations and platform for socialization as a creative personality in music composition has been the driving force in the teaching and learning of composition. Thus, Nigerian art music composers have featured in international concerts and

competitions with excellent results and acknowledgment. Composition, as a product of its teaching in various institutions in Nigeria, is judged to be highly relevant to the composers, the learners and the music public.

New Directions and Developments in Composition in the Nigerian Music Education

Teaching and specialization on composition in Nigeria have led to new creative paradigms and approaches to composition. These resulted from deliberate integration of indigenous resources and Western idioms in new art music forms. I had earlier pointed to this creative marriage between African music and composition as a dominant development in Nigeria since the last century. Available indigenous creative paradigms and resources have been utilized in this quest for new creative forms and genres, leading to identifiable styles discussed here. New musical arts styles emanating from trained Nigerian composers are the Native air, African pianism, Research-composition, Drummistic piano style and African vocalism (specifically from the Nsukka Choral School (NCS)) (Onyeji and Onyeji, 2015). These creative styles are deliberate attempts that draw creative resources from indigenous Nigerian musical arts at various degrees. A summary of these are presented below.

Native air

This choral style explores and combines the vocal idioms of indigenous music of Nigeria and Western music in its delivery of a story song which has been supported and patronized by the Christian churches dominantly. Secular versions are rendered on non-religious occasions while solo versions are also incorporated. For more than fifty years native air has remained a welcome alternative to the Western classical (often in foreign language) choral works (anthems). The musical and textual themes for such works are very often “based on traditional folk songs and folk tales” (Nzewi, 1991, 144), for the secular type and on biblical or religious texts for those meant for religious observances.

50

Sop
Alto. e - bu-be Je-ho - va e - bu-be
Tenor. e - bu-be Je-ho - va
Bass e - bu-be Je-ho - va e - bu-be Je-ho -

kw'e - bu-be a - g'e - kpu-ghe-kw'e - bu-be
small slit drum & rattle.
small pot drum & Bass pot drum.

Je-ho - va, e - bu-be Je-ho - va
e - bu-be Je-ho - va, e - bu-be Je-ho - va
-va, e - bu-be Je-ho - va
e - bu-be Je-ho - va e - bu-be Je-ho -

Example 1: Excerpt from *Aga Ekpughekwa Ebube Jehova* by Dan Agu, A Native Air.

Content analysis of its features and distinctions reveal consistency in the preferential use of native language, fairly long story deemed captivating for a listening audience, strong bass line, contrapuntal and polyphonic lines interspersed with homophonic passages, sometimes on topical issues, strong reliance on tonal inflection, Western chordal material, functionalism of tonal harmony, sometimes retaining indigenous choral norms such as glissandi, parallelism, untranslatable syllables (vocables), vowelisations, etc. The effort however has been to remain within acceptable choral traditions established by the West. To a great extent therefore, such works are “transformations of traditional folk songs into art songs conceived in a European contemplative idiom” (Omojola, 1997). While native air is accepted by the Nigerian audience as a creative alternative, it does not capture in entirety the rich potential of the indigenous instrumental and vocal genres and their performance dynamics as resource for creative idioms in vocal music as was later developed at Nsukka. Collective efforts of older generation of Nigerian composers resulted in the formalization of the vocal music style. Notable composers of Native Air are late Felix Nwuba, Dayo Dedeké, Ransome Kuti, Akin Euba, Nwokolobia Agu, late Rev. David Okongwu, Sir Sam Ojukwu, Sir Prof. Dan Agu and Sir Chuma Chukwuka.

African Pianism

African Pianism is the brain child of late Prof. Akin Euba, who started his teaching career in Nigeria. Euba says that “the concept of African pianism entered my creative consciousness in the early 1960s, during which time I became increasingly occupied with thoughts of an Africa identity in modern composition” (Euba and Kimberlin, 2005).

According to Konye (2005), the term African pianism evolved from Euba’s “approach to using the piano as a medium of expressing African music”. His concept of African Pianism loosely laces together emerging compositional styles for piano on the African continent as well as those of African Diaspora composers that seek to explore idiomatic, inherent features and elements of African traditional

music for art music composition. According to Euba.

One of the concepts arising from the practice of African composers is that which I describe as 'African pianism'. The concept is primarily defined by the keyboard music of African composers but also includes the piano works of non-African composers in which African elements are featured ... Africanisms employed in neo-African keyboard music include (a) thematic repetition (b) direct borrowings of thematic material (rhythmical and/or tonal) from African traditional sources (c) the use of rhythmical and or tonal motifs which, although not borrowed from specific traditional sources, are based on traditional idioms (d) percussive treatment of the piano and (e) making the piano 'behave' like African instruments (1993).

Themes from " CHAKA " for piano

Akin Euba
(1996)

Maestoso ♩ = ca. 80

5 Agitato ♩ = ca. 144

10 cresc mp

15 Strict tempo ♩ = ca. 132

cresc mp

Example 2: Excerpt from *Themes from "Chaka" for Piano* by Akin Euba, an African Pianism Work.

While the above description is rather broad in scope, “The basis of African Pianistic style is the adaptation of performance techniques from instruments like xylophones, thumb pianos, plucked lutes, drum and chimes to the piano” (Anri, Zaidel, Onyeji 2003). The immediate spread and rooting of the new creative concept as well as the acceptance/application across the globe took hold of serious creative minds who responded with enormous musical compositions for the piano from different cultures and creative backgrounds of the African continent (Tse Kimberline and Euba, 2005; Xin and Euba, 2009, etc.). According to Aponte (2000, p. 16), “African pianism then, is a discourse of identity, of difference, of confrontation of the other.” Linda Bauman-Hall (2000) argues that “African pianism should be placed in the international context of ‘Oral-tradition keyboardism’ such as ‘Italian fixed bass keyboardism’, ‘French lute-style keyboardism’, ‘Hungarian pianism’, ‘Spanish folkloric keyboardism’, ‘Burmese pianism’, and ‘New Gamelan pianism’. Significant in the arguments of Aponte and Bauman-Hall is the acceptance of the existence of a distinct mode of pianistic expression that is rooted in the performance idioms and creative norms of African musical instruments which evokes and supports Euba’s aspiration for a distinct pianistic style. Notable Nigerian composers of African Pianism works are late Akin Euba, late Joshua Uzoigwe, Bode Omojola, Nkiru Okoye, Christian Onyeji and Stephen Olusoji.

Research Composition

Research composition approach to composition was developed by Christian Onyeji. The style anchors on in-depth ethnomusicological research on the indigenous music of a given culture which informs the creative and compositional theory of a modern art music composition. The approach seeks a continuum of traditional musical arts of Africa in modern art music form (Onyeji, 2002). It is a compositional process that enables a composer to produce African art music of any length or magnitude by the study and application of creative elements and idioms from identified African musical type or tradition. The procedure entails ethnomusicological study

25

Perc.

Fl. I

Fl. II

Cl.

Hn.

Tpt I

Tpt II

Tbn.

Timp.

Memb. drum

Knck.

Ratt.

Twin bell

Single bell

Brass bell

Bar.

Vln I

Vln II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

Copyright Christian Onyeji

Example 3: Excerpt from *Abigbo for Symphony Orchestra* by Christian Onyeji, A research Composition work.

of identified music type (ethnographic and musicological) which enables the identification of distinctive features of the music type as well as the application of the creative features and idioms in the composition of art music of choice. The essence is to ensure that the art composed music captures the spirit of the indigenous music while at the same time is a transformation of the music in literary form. Research-Composition identifies the distinctions that exist between ethnomusicology and composition as scholarly and creative fields in music but at the same time constructs a bridge from one to the other. This enables closely-knit relationship between the two (Onyeji, 2005 and Onyeji, 2018).

The Drummistic Piano Style

The drummistic piano style is an approach to piano composition and performance that transfers the techniques of African drumming to the piano. “Drummistic piano compositions, basically, transfer the melorhythmic principles and idioms of African drum music to the piano” (Onyeji, 2008). Its basic tenet is synthesizing the creative and performance idioms of traditional African drums (wooden or membrane) in art music composition for the piano. As such, it represents a conscious effort to capture the sonic and idiomatic features of traditional drum music for the piano. The approach entails perceiving, responding and relating to the instruments as one would to normal traditional drums. Ultimately, it entails drumming on the piano. “Ufie”, “Oga”, “Ekele”, “Ekele Diri Chineke”, etc. composed by Onyeji, belong to this sub-category of African Pianism.

African Vocalism

African Vocalism, a creative concept by Christian Onyeji, loosely laces together emerging vocal compositional works within and outside Nigeria that seek to explore idiomatic and inherent features and elements of African indigenous music for an art music composition for the human voice in unique ways that relate to the examples developed at Nsukka. The basis of this vocal style is the adaptation of performance techniques from indigenous vocal and

Example 4: Excerpt from *Ufie (Igbo Dance for Piano)* by Christian Onyeji, a Drummistic Piano Composition

instrumental ensembles and the synthesis of the idioms, performance behaviours and dynamics of such ensembles in the composition of a vocal piece of music. Simulation of Africanism for the voice lays emphasis on elements of rhythm, percussive sound, dance, fragmented melodic style, cyclic motives, thematic repetitions, linear textural organization and tonal organization that

Example 5: Sample African Vocalism Solo Song – *Hi Yom* by Christian Onyeji

characterize most African ensemble music. These manifest in the deployment of tones, melody, rhythm, melo-rhythm and harmonic structures; conscious and polyphonic textures. This element gives the impression of many layers of sound in operation at a given time.

A development from this creative pursuit is the Nsukka Choral School (NCS) of vocal music composition. Akin to *Uli* School of Fine and Applied Arts also developed at Nsukka (Irivwieri, 2010; Smith, 2010), the concept of Nsukka Choral School draws creative resources and energy from the totality of vocal and instrumental idioms, norms and dynamics of indigenous music of Africa. Intensive ethnomusicalogical enquiries on indigenous music by Nzewi and Onyeji provided creative data as well as creative

inspiration for the composition of works that belong to this style of choral music. The two scholar-composers are the exponents of the choral style. While Nzewi provided the inspirational nucleus/model of the creative style, Onyeji provided the creative platform for the blossoming of the style through his compositions and frequent performances of works in this style.

Conclusion

Composition is evidently a significant component of formal music education in Nigeria, being part of the learning processes bequeathed to the country from the contact with the West. Its development and trajectory as a creative process have given rise to spin-offs of new creative approaches and perspectives discussed in this study unit, as contributions from the teaching of the subject in Nigeria. It was highlighted in the study that while aspects of composition are taught as part of CCA at the lower tiers of learning, composition teaching as an autonomous subject is done only at the tertiary level of study. The study revealed the lack of homogeneity of teaching method, institutional structures and curricula contents as well as emphasis laid on the teaching of the subject as core or elective subject in Nigerian institutions. However, three general approaches to the teaching of composition emerged from the study. Evident in the discourse is the high regard for composers and great value placed on composition in Nigeria, not just as art but as vocation and means of livelihood. Composition remains very prominent in Nigerian music education, relevant and attracts the very talented and creative students and practitioners in the study programmes of various institutions. Overall, composition output from Nigerian music education has remained significant, valued and has contributed to the construction of creative identity of African art music in the global music space.

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