

CONTEMPORARY PERIOD OF CHORAL ART MUSIC COMPOSITION IN THE CHURCH OF NIGERIA, ANGLICAN COMMUNION, PROVINCE OF THE NIGER: 1960-2014

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Abstract

Choral Art music composition in the Anglican Communion, Province of the Niger, Nigeria, according to historical records, began with the experimental works of its early composers in 1930s, in their bid to create musical works with African flavour for Christian worship. It has unarguably developed to a world class musical art. However, various researches on Art music in Nigeria took a broader scope, resulting to complete omission or partial capturing of some important events that occur in some areas, hence the limiting of this study to the Anglican Communion, Province of the Niger, Nigeria by the researcher. This paper focuses on the period between 1960 and 2014, which the author termed the Contemporary period. The aim of this study is to identify the characteristic features of contemporary choral Art compositions in the Province of the Niger as well as provide the musical backgrounds of nine selected contemporary composers whose works were prominently used for music festival/competition within the period under study. This work is hinged on the theory of development as freedom, propounded by Sen (1999). The research data was collected through oral interview, observation, active participation, and analytical study of compositions of various contemporary composers of choral Art music in the province of the Niger. This study concludes that with the exposure of the composers to professional study of music as well as modern technologies available within the period under study, choral Art music in the Anglican Communion, Province of the Niger, Nigeria, has developed to a near perfect art. It recommends that further studies on the subject be carried out subsequently in the province of the Niger, other Anglican Provinces as well as other Christian denominations.

Introduction

Choral Art music composition in the Province of the Niger was spurred by the strong desire of its early composers to create music that would satisfy their indigenous musical taste, which the translated hymns and chants brought by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) could not adequately meet. The early converts were meant to abandon everything associated with their indigenous arts, which were tagged devilish by the missionaries. However, the eurhythmic body movements that usually occur either spontaneously or intentionally in response to African songs were deprived by the hymn tunes. Also, the strophic structure of the hymns most times defies the speech rhythm as well as the

tonal inflections of the Igbo texts. "The hymn tunes offered them (the early converts) no opportunity for polyrhythmic improvisation. Repetition, which constitutes a stimulatory factor in Igbo choral music practices was also lacking in the hymns" (Agu, 2022:32).

These consequently led to experimentation with compositions of indigenous songs for Christian worship by the early composers, which according to Agu (2002), started around early 1930's and gained prominence in the Anglican Diocese on the Niger in 1940s. The experimentation began with fixing of religious texts gotten from the translated hymns and canticles to existing Nigerian folk melodies. Subsequently, new texts were created for existing hymn tunes as well as original melodies with new texts.

Conversely, the Contemporary Period in the development of choral Art music composition in the Anglican Communion, Province of the Niger, Nigeria started in the 1960s after the establishment of Music Department of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and some other tertiary institutions which offer music programmes. These institutions provided opportunity for the then young talented composers to study music professionally at tertiary levels.

The Province of Niger

The Province of the Niger is one of the Provinces that make up the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion. It comprises nine Dioceses within Anambra State, namely: Diocese on the Niger, Diocese of Awka, Diocese of Nnewi, Diocese of Aguata, Diocese of Ogbaru, Diocese of Ihiala, Diocese of Niger West, Diocese of Mbamili and Diocese of Amichi.

The Province of the Niger, Anglican Communion, was created in 2002. It was within Province Two of the Church of Nigeria, which was created in 1997, when the Church of Nigeria was divided into three Provinces. Province Two covered the whole South-eastern region of the country before it was split. It is pertinent to note that the various Dioceses that make up Province Two and Niger-Delta Province were a spin-off of the old Niger Diocese. The old Niger Diocese was created in 1920 from the Eastern part of the Diocese of Equatorial West Africa. It was the old Niger Diocese that produced the pioneers of art songs in Igboland.

Theory of Development as Freedom by Sen (1999)

In his 'theory of development as freedom', Sen (1999) explores the relationships between freedom and development, the way in which freedom is a basic constituent of development in itself and enabling key to other aspects. Sen's suggestion focuses on what he calls capabilities - substantive human freedom. Sen, though an economist, did not limit his understanding of poverty to low income rate; however, he viewed poverty from the perspective of deprivation of capabilities. He states that "poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely a lowness of income, which is the standard criterion of identification of poverty" (Sen, 1999, p. 87). Sen explains that development concerns expanding the choices people have, to lead lives that they value, and improving the human condition so that people have the chance to lead full lives. (Sen, 1999)

The missionaries' rejection of the music and musical instruments of the sub-Saharan Africa, in which the Igboland of Nigeria is a part, which they tagged 'works of the devil' could be seen as deprivation of human capability. The missionaries imposed their own music to the converts as the only music acceptable to God. The longing/efforts made by the pioneer composers of church music, on the other hand, marked the beginning of freedom which culminated to the development of contemporary Art music in Igboland. The development was made possible as the pioneer African music scholars started studying, redefining the concept of African music and propounding theories which are more culturally relevant to Africans than the theories evolved by European anthropologists.

Choral Art Music in the Province of the Niger

Art music is a term that refers to a musical tradition implying advanced structural and theoretical considerations and a written musical tradition (Okafor, 2022). It could be vocal (solo or chorus), instrumental or a combination of both. For this study, emphasis is on choral Art music. Agu (2002, 2012), informs that the experimentation of Igbo choral Art music came under experimentation from the 1930's, and gained prominence in the Anglican Communion of the Niger Diocese in 1940s. It has developed over the years to a near perfect art. However, Okafor (2019) identified two historical moments in the development of this genre of music in the Province of the Niger: the Early Period (1930-1960) and the Contemporary Period (1960-2014) but this study focuses on the later. The basis for this classification is on the structural features of the works of composers of both periods.

Structural and Technical Qualities of the Contemporary Period

The contemporary period of choral Art music in the Anglican Communion, Province of the Niger, saw the development of the music genre to high level of sophistication and relative artistic peak. The development in style of music composition in Africa as a whole was brought about by the exposure of the Africans to Western musical concepts, and the systematic study of the music of the Africans. African musicology, broadly defined, encompasses the scientific study of musical expressions in Africa and its diaspora in all its complex manifestation (<http://musicology.ucla.edu>). Adedeji (2014) elucidates thus: Musicology as a field of study in Africa started with the pioneering works of European anthropologists in the nineteenth century... The foundation of what is known as African musicology is laid by Western ethnomusicologists... It entailed the propounding of initial universal theories and methods. On the other hand and at the same time, African musicologists such as T. K. E. Philips (1920s), Fela Sowande (1940s-1970s), Ephraim Amu (1920s-1940s), Nketia (1950s-1970s), Francis Bebey (1960s-1970s), etc. evolved theories that are more culturally relevant to Africa. (pp. 85 & 86)

The story of the Igbo experience in this development saga in music composition could not be comprehensive without making mention of William Wilberforce Echezona, a renowned ethnomusicologist, who was the first Igbo man to study music abroad and the first Nigerian to earn a Doctorate degree in Music. Echezona's effort in encouraging composers, organizing seminars, music competitions during the time he was the music

director of the Diocese on the Niger and his contribution in founding the Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, aroused the interest of the then young talented composers to study music professionally at the university level. Two, out of four of the first set of graduates produced in Music Department of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, were among the leading figures of contemporary art music composition in the Anglican Church, Province of the Niger, Nigeria. They are Sir Sam Ojukwu and Late Felix Nwuba.

These contemporary composers are mainly music graduates. Although there are some non-academically trained contemporary composers, who by dint of hard work developed the art of composition through direct or indirect mentorship by some academically trained composers, this study concentrates on those who are graduates of music. With their exposure to Western and African music concepts in the university/tertiary institutions, they intentionally blend the idioms of the two music cultures in their compositions and took care of the flaws identified with the works of the composers of the early period. They make use of folk music material; derive the texts of their songs from biblical stories, Bible verses, canticles and other religious texts that are liturgically meaningful, and are conscious of the adherence of the melodies of their songs to the inflections and speech rhythm of their chosen texts. They also composed some secular songs which are morally edifying, such as Humphrey Nwafor's *Gini Ka Madu Bu*. The contemporary composers have written works in different Nigerian and other African languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, Efik, Ibibio, Kalabari and others, and also in European/American languages like English, German, Latin and so on. Their works are performed globally. Their works are often used for music festivals/competitions organized by various dioceses in the Province of the Niger and beyond, either as set pieces or choice pieces.

The contemporary composers also develop their music to appreciable lengths (works that could last for about three to ten minutes) by making use of some of the developmental devices in African music such as internal variation technique, sequence and imitation, antiphony and Western musical forms and techniques like binary, ternary, rondo, fugue and so on. They use Western classical harmonic techniques and write modulatory passages. The rhythmic features of the works of the contemporary are purely African: syncopation, cross-rhythm, mixed rhythm and polyrhythm.

More so, the contemporary composers compose pieces for solo voices, duets, and trio; and introduced the use of indigenous instrumental accompaniment. They also write piano/organ lines to accompany the voice(s). They improved on some of the indigenous music instruments to enhance their performances, such as constructing xylophones or ogene phones that are tuned, based on the equal temperament system, or to a particular scale that suits their music.

Furthermore, it is worthy of note that exposure to photocopying machines and awareness of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the mid-1990s and 2000s respectively, have contributed immensely in the documentation and preservation as well

as dissemination of works of the contemporary composers, both nationally and internationally. In spite of the fact that some contemporary composers are still stuck in the analogue system, many of them utilize music notation software such as Sibelius, Finale, Noteworthy Composer and others effectively to enhance their compositions. Apart from making their works look very neat and attractive, these music notation software enable the composers to listen to their works first hand and correct any flaw identified.

Contemporary Composers and Their Musical Background

Rev. David Okongwu

Reverend Okongwu was a native of Nnobi in Idemmili LGA of Anambra State. Born in the mid-20's into a family of musicians, his interest started when he was very young. He was a member of both the school and church choirs. After leaving school, he became a choirmaster and was inspired to read music theory with the aid of the *Smallwood Tutor*, and later by postal tuition from the Trinity College of Music, London. He also received assistance from the then Dr. W. W. C. Echezona, who had then returned from Great Britain. He passed the Higher Local Grade of the Trinity College of Music, London. He composed music almost exclusively for the Church, using larger forms such as anthems. Some of the notable Igbo composers like Felix Nwuba, Sam Ojukwu and Nwokolobia Agu passed through his guidance during their formative years as composers. His Church music was written in both homophonic and polyphonic styles. According to him, the polyphonic style eliminates the problems created by tonality of the Igbo language. A number of his compositions utilize the 'Call and Response' technique, which does not use the same melody for all the verses of a song, because the words and tonal patterns change from one solo part or verse to another. It is because of his style of composition that his music is widely sung by Church choirs.

Rev. Okongwu's contribution to the ecumenical movement is remarkable. Though an ardent Protestant, he composed several hymns and a Mass in Igbo for use in the Roman Catholic Churches. For an example, the St. Patrick's Church Choir, Ogbete, Enugu, was his inspiration for such compositions. Some of his most popular sacred compositions include *Benedicite Ominia* Opera in Igbo; *Jubilate Deo* in Igbo; *Nalu, o Chukwu, achicha na mmanya* (Accept, O God, bread and wine); *Abu Oma 15* (Psalm 15); *K'ayi nye Chineke ekene* (Let us give thanks to God); *Ihunanya Chineke huru uwa* (The love of God to the world); *Bianu ka ayi je Bethlehem* (Come let us go to Bethlehem); *Amulu Kristi* (Christ is born); *Chukwu bu Mwo* (God is a Spirit); *Venite* in Igbo and *Te Deum Laudamus* in Igbo. All these were written in both homophonic and polyphonic styles with a lot of imitative counterpoint. David Okongwu retired from Radio Nigeria, Enugu, before he took to Holy Orders. (Okafor, 2015)

Sir Samuel Nehemiah Ojukwu



Samuel Ojukwu, a native of Uruagu Nnewi in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State, was born on 12th November, 1940 into the musical family of Mr. and Mrs Obumneme Ojukwu. His father, who was a Church Agent (Catechist) in the Anglican Church, owned and played the harmonium and his mother also sang and composed songs for the Women's Guild, mostly for mothering Sundays, hence his early exposure to music.

Sir Sam Ojukwu attended St. George's primary school, Mbawsi, Imo State from 1945 to 1951 and proceeded to Dennis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS), Onitsha for his secondary education. During his secondary school days, he assisted W. W. Echezona as the organist of the All Saints Cathedral, Onitsha. He also attended St. Mark's Teacher Training College, Awka. He studied music at the Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and was among the pioneer graduates of the Music Department in 1965.

Sam Ojukwu is a prolific composer whose works are performed globally. His musical talent was first nurtured by his parents. His father exposed him to keyboard playing in his early days and at the age of eight; he started playing on the harmonium. He inherited composition talent from his mother who sang and wrote songs for the Church women. During his days in DMGS Onitsha, "he was tutored on the piano by British missionaries, Mr. and Dr. Mrs. Povey in 1952. When Mr. and Dr. Mrs. Povey left Nigeria, a German engineer who came as one of the contractors handling the construction of the All Saints Cathedral, Onitsha, gave him further piano tutoring" (Ewulu, 2011, pp. 36 & 37). Ojukwu was mentored in music composition by W. W. Echezona as well as David Okongwu before he proceeded to study music professionally in UNN. His creative prowess is unimaginable. Sometimes, he writes two or more compositions simultaneously using the same text; yet the works bear no semblance with each other but still capture the mood of the text. Ekwueme (2004) rightly describes Sam Ojukwu's style of composition. He informs that Ojukwu prefers vertical harmonic progressions to contrapuntal writing. His regularly employed harmonic vocabulary includes chords of the seventh, ninth, eleventh and thirteenth. He can set the mood of a song in purely harmonic terms. He utilizes call and response pattern, modulation, theme and variation, fugue and other styles. Some of his popular sacred compositions include *Ọburu na Jehova ewughị ulọ* (Except the Lord builds); *Teta gi onye na-araru ura* (Awake, you tha sleeps); *Jehova emeworo anyị ihe uku* (The Lord has done great things for us); *Nyenu Jehova nsopuru na ike* (Ascribe to the Lord honour and power); *Unu ekwela ka unu yie ajo oge a* (Do not conform to this world); *Ma ndị na-ele anya Jehova* (They that wait upon the Lord); *Ọ ga-adikwara gi mma* (It shall be well with you) and so forth.

Felix Chukwuemeka Nwuba

Felix Nwuba was born on the 22nd December, 1932, to the family of chief Matthias and Mrs. Jessie Amogechukwu Uwanuakwa. He was a native of Nkpologwu in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State. His parents who were devout Christians of the Anglican Church trained him to become a committed Christian. Felix had good musical

background because his father was the choirmaster of their home Church choir. He joined the choir when he was eight years old.

Felix had his primary education in Ekwulobia from 1942 to 1950 before heading for a one-year teacher training course at the Teacher Training College, Obosi and St. Paul's College, Awka where he got his Elementary Teacher Certificate in 1954. He later proceeded to St. Mark's Teacher Training College, Nibo-Nise, for his Teacher Grade Two Certificate which he bagged after two years in 1956. He also passed the Grade Eight (8), Final Certificate of the Royal School of Music and Trinity College of Music, both in London by correspondence in 1958. In 1962, he was admitted to study music at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, a three-year study where he obtained a Bachelors Degree in Music in June, 1965, and his Master Degree in Education in 1977.

Nwuba's first teacher in music was the late Prof. W.W.C. Echezona who taught him rudiments. He was also taught by Rev. David Okongwu, Prof. Laz. Ekwueme, Mrs. Hannah Hakoen (a German housewife who taught him Piano), and Major J. G. Allens (who also gave him piano-lessons). Other lecturers of his include George Nutting and Edna Smith who taught him advanced theory and African music respectively at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Felix Nwuba's compositions which include anthems and carols derived their texts from canticles and psalms. Felix is also good in using Igbo native wits in capturing interesting scenes that are seen in daily lives. Nwuba contributed so much to the growth and development of choral Art music, especially, around Eastern Nigeria. His use of counterpoint, sequences, call and response, dynamic contrasts in his compositions made his works outstanding, but has the weakness of melodic and harmonic difference between one piece and the other consequently by his choice of key, tempo and melodic material (Ekwueme, 1974:12). *Gozie Jehova mkpuru obim* (Psalm 103); *Absalom, nwa m* (Absalom, my son); *The Benedictus, Venite, Jubilate Deo*; *Tonu ja* (Praise the Lord); *Psalm 67* (Deus miserateur); *Onyenweanyi bu Onye n'enyere m aka* (The Lord is my helper); *Bilie nwue* (Arise and shine); *Onu Uzo ama*. (Ewulu, 2011).

Prof. Dan. C. C. Agu



Daniel Chikpezie Christian Agu is a professor of ethnomusicology and composition, music director, conductor, performer and organist. He was born on 18th January, 1949, at Iyienu Hospital, Ogidi, Anambra State, to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Agu. He is a native of Obosi in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra state, Nigeria. His father died when he was six months old. He experienced so many difficulties in childhood because of his father's early death but he overcame them through determination and hard work.

Dan Agu joined the St. Andrew's Anglican Church Choir, Obosi, at the age of seven and he did his first composition when he was eleven years old. Onwuekwe (2006b) informs that:

Agu's motivation and inspiration came from within. This is because no musician gave him any foundation or early musical training except the little he got as a chorister. According to him, "My musical talent is inborn. I inherited music from my father who also inherited from his own father and both of them were great musicians popularly acclaimed in the various communities they lived. (p.168)

He attended Central School, Obosi, from 1955-1960, and later gained admission into Ika Grammar School, Agbor. In 1970, he entered the Teachers' Training College Nnewi, where he studied music through self-sponsorship and offered it in the Teachers' Grade II Certificate Examinations. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts in Music from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) from 1973-1977, and his Doctorate Degree in Ethnomusicology at Queen's University of Belfast (Q.U.B) Ireland, United Kingdom, (1982-1984). He came back to Nigeria and taught for many years at the Anambra State College of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, where he gained his professorship in 2003 and retired in January, 2019.

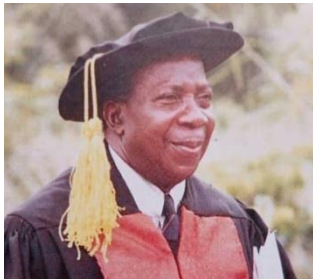
Agu's music career could be seen as a divine call. According to him, two institutions, the University of Ibadan and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) offered him admission the same year, to study *Geology* and *Music* respectively. He preferred studying music to geology as opposed to the wish of his people, who insisted that they would not sponsor him in music. It was a cousin of his who lived in Canada with her husband that encouraged him to pursue his musical career. His first school fee in UNN was paid by his cousin's husband. Though the money was refunded to him when he gained scholarship but his in-law refused to take back the money and asked him (Agu) to take care of other needs of his with the money.

Agu has performed in many parts of the world. He has composed over six hundred and (650) music, and served as a commissioned composer to many bodies and associations. These include the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), London, Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), and churches at various levels, Anambra State Government, film production, and lots of corporate bodies. His works include anthems, solos, keyboard music and religious pop. He also did the composition of all theme and background music in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Nnamdi Azikiwe University Anthem, Nike Diocesan Anthem, Nsukka Diocesan Anthem, Paul's University Anthem, and so on.

Agu's style of composition is a unique one. This makes his compositions easily identifiable whenever they are performed. His works are characterized by dolce melody lines, especially his special treatment to the alto part. His melodies are guided by the speech-tone and rhythm and mood of the text. He utilizes call and response pattern, homophony and counterpoint, as well as complex rhythmic patterns such as syncopation and mixed rhythm, sequence, repetition and modulation. His desire for tonal inflection and for his

works to sound African makes him sometimes write parallel harmony, which defies the Western rule of harmony. He sometimes combines Igbo and English languages in one song. He also employs some elements of pop music in his compositions. Some of his sacred compositions include *Ka anyi na-eto site n'amara Gi* (That we may grow in grace), *I am the Resurrection and Life*, *Nogidenụ nime ihunanya m* (Remain in my love), *Kiribenụ Jesu* (Behold Jesus), *Ndi nwuru nwe ngozi* (Blessed are the dead), *Jehova bu ihe m na nzoputa m* (The Lord is my light and my salvation), *Okwu Gi bu Oriona* (Your Word is a lamp), *Gozienụ Chineke* (Bless God), *Amuworo anyi otu Nwa* (Unto us a child is born), *Chineke nye anyi udo* (God grant us peace), and so forth. Many of his compositions have been documented either in published or recorded forms, and are available for utility of everyone who wishes.

Sir Humphrey Nwafor



Humphrey Nwafor was a music composer, educator, choral director, organologist and a singer. He hailed from Ndikelionwu in Orumba North Local Government Area of Anambra State. He was the second son of his parents from whom his musical talent was inherited. His father, Maazi Nwafor Okpaeti, was a farmer by profession and also a renowned village musician in Umudim, Ndikelionwu. His mother also was the song leader of women in their village and the Church at almost every occasion.

H. C. Nwafor joined the church choir of St. Margaret Anglican Church, Ndikelionwu at an early age. His musical apprenticeship was under Humphrey Ugolo of Ogidi town, Anambra State and Ben. Anegbu of Eziagu, also in Anambra State. In 1957, he was appointed the choirmaster and in the same year he composed his first two works, *Nwamgbe* and *Ozioma* for a singing competition and the CMS Anniversary respectively.

Nwafor attended the Ndike/Ndiowu Central School, Anambra State, from 1951 to 1956, Luke's College Ngwo, Enugu State, 1960-1961, where he received his first formal music lesson from Late Felix Nwuba, who also influenced him greatly during the period he understudied Nwuba. In 1962, he started a postal tuition lesson of the Wolsey College, London. He attended St. Andrew's Teacher Training College, Nnewi, from 1965 to 1966, the Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri (1975 to 1978) and the University of Nigeria Nsukka, where he obtained his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music Education.

Nwafor wrote over two hundred choral music compositions including sacred, secular and quasi sacred music in English, Igbo and other Nigerian languages. Some of his sacred choral compositions include *Onu uzọ ama, bulienụ isi unu elu* (Lift up your heads, O ye gates); *Muọ Onyenweanyi di n'aru m* (The Spirit of the Lord is upon me); *O buru na Chineke diri anyi* (If the Lord be for us); *Lee ka ha si ma mma* (How beautiful are they); *Biakutenụ m* (Come unto me); *Nanurinu onu* (Rejice) and so forth. He immensely contributed to the growth and development of art music in the Anglican Church, Province of the Niger. He handled so many church choirs where he trained many singers, choirmasters and composers. Many of his compositions are homophonic and polyphonic in texture. He introduced his works with one part or solo line and utilised antiphonal technique (call and

response, call and refrain etc.), repetition imitation to develop his work. The melody of his works reflects the tonal inflection of the Igbo text. Sir H. C. Nwafor died on May 1, 2019.

Dr. Ugochukwu Amara Onwuka



Ugochukwu Onwuka was born on May 15, 1951 to the family of Reverend Canon and Mrs Samuel C. Ononobi. He is a native of Oka autonomous community in Isiala-Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State.

Ugochukwu's musical talent is inborn. According to him, the talent was spiritually acquired and graciously endowed by God because none of his parents was musical. He was enrolled in the church choir at the age of four; where he received the rubrics of voice training and also learnt to sing as a choirboy. He attended St. Augustine's Grammar School, Nkwerre, where he started studying music under Mr. S. I. Ikeazota, who also introduced him to the keyboard. In 1967, as the Nigerian Civil War broke out and disrupted his study, Ugo fashioned a dummy keyboard since his father never owned a keyboard, and with this he practised sight-reading and fingering exercises to sustain his musical interest. Later, his father introduced him to Pa N. C. J. Chukwura, a renowned organist and veteran choirmaster, from Onitsha, who was taking refuge at St. Michael's Church, Eziama-Osuh. Pa Chukwura offered great assistance and encouragement to him, which took him to the next level on keyboard playing and choral practice. With his acquired musical knowledge, he began teaching and conducting Church choirs in 1969. It was at this period that Ugo started music composition. He was influenced by the works of Harcourt Whyte.

In 1971, after his secondary education, Ugo proceeded to Bishop Lasbrey Teacher Training College, Irete, where he furthered his musical knowledge under Mr. J. K. Kamalu. While his training lasted, he served as the college organist, and at the end of his studies, in 1973, took his first external examination in music. In the same year, he registered for a correspondence course in rudiments of music with the Royal College of Music, London, and completed its Stage V before gaining admission into the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to study Music in 1975. Luckily, he enjoyed the sponsorship of the Federal Government of Nigeria via its Bursary Award Scheme. Apart from his general music lessons, Ugo particularly learnt to notate African rhythm from Prof. R. C. Okafor, who was then a Junior Fellow; African compositional style from Prof. W. W. C. Echezona and Mr. Okechukwu Ndubuisi. He learnt the American style from Dyll Bonner, while Mr. John Furse gave him a very strong base in theory and harmony of Western music. He graduated in 1979 with a First Class Honours, and emerged the best graduating student both in the Department of Music and in the Faculty of Arts, stressing in Composition. Onwuka acquired his Master's Degree in African Music at the University of Ibadan in 1987, and a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Ethnomusicology from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, in 2011. In 1980, Onwuka joined the services of the Anambra State College of Education, Awka, as a Lecturer III, and by dint of hard work, he rose to become the first Reader in the Department of Music, Nwafor Orizu College of Education.

Dr. Onwuka has composed over two hundred and twenty (220) musical works and arrangements in African as well as mixed idioms, which include sacred and secular songs. Some of his sacred works include *Zite udo Gi* (Bring peace), *Onye dika Gi?* (Who is like You?), *Ihe anya na-ahugh* (What the eyes have not seen), *Na-echenunche* (Do watch), *Amuwooro anyi otu Nwa* (Unto us a child is born), *Jehova za m ekpere* (Lord answer my prayer), *Ekele dirijehova* (Thanks be to God), *Gini ka mmadu ga-eme m* (What can man do to me?), *Eziokwu Jehova* (The truth of the Lord) and numerous others. The melody of his songs adhere to the tonal inflection of the Igbo texts. The harmonies of his compositions are mainly homophonic in texture and less contrapuntal. He employs antiphonal technique and usually applies modulation in most of his works.

Ugo Onwuka has served in the Music Festival Committees of the Dioceses of Awka and Niger West as Secretary and Chairman, respectively. He has also been a regular resource person at the capacity building Seminar Workshops for musicians and choirmasters in the Anglican Dioceses of Aguata, Niger, Amichi Awka, Nnewi and Niger West. Because of his contributions to the growth and development of Church music, he was invested Knight of the order of Saint Christopher.



Dr. Chuma Chukwuka

Dr. Sir Chuma Chukwuka was born on the first day of December, at Ufuma in Orumba North Local Government Area, Anambra State, to the family of Late Reverend and Mrs C. I. N. Chukwuka. He is a native of Nkwelle-Ezunaka in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria.

Chuma had his primary education at Christ Anglican Church Primary School and Saint John's Anglican CMS Primary School Fegge, both in Onitsha 1961-1962 and 1963-1966, respectively. He attended Agulu Boys Grammar School and Christ the King College, Onitsha, from 1967-1973 and 1973-1975, respectively. In 1978, he gained admission to study music at the Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and graduated in 1982. He acquired his Master of Arts (MA) Degree in African Music in 1986 and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D) in Ethnomusicology in 2021 both at the University of Ibadan.

Dr. Chukwuka joined the choir when he was eight years old as a treble singer at Saint John's Anglican Church, Fegge. He took interest in organ and eventually became the assistant chapel organist in his class three in 1971, and later organist of Saint Andrew's Anglican Church, Odoakpu, Onitsha, while yet in secondary school. In the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Chuma did wonderfully well on the piano and was awarded the best graduating piano student by the Department of Music.

Also, Chuma's interest in music composition started growing and yielded him into becoming a prolific composer, for which he is best known. He has composed too many works, both vocal, which include sacred and secular songs in English, Igbo and other Nigerian Languages, and instrumental. He has also coached many church choirs that did so well in music competitions, composers, choirmasters and organists. Some of his sacred

compositions include *M ga-agọzi Jehova mgbe nile* (I will bless the Lord at all times) *Jehova bụ Onye na-azụ m* (Psalm 23); *Dube m, Chineke* (Lead me, God); *Le, gọzienụ Jehova* (Bless the Lord) and many others

Chukwuka's works are in both homophonic and polyphonic textures. He employs African rhythm in his compositions but the melodies of his works are mostly conceived stylistically and instrumentally, thereby not strictly guided by the speech tone and rhythm of the text. Consequently, this has sometimes led to lack of adherence of the melodic lines of his compositions to the tonal inflections of the text, thereby distorting the textual meaning.

Prof. Alvan-Ikoku Nwamara



Prof. Alvan-Ikoku Nwamara, a prodigiously talented composer, performer, music producer, prolific writer and researcher was born on the 30th day of July 1975 at Uzuakoli, to the family of Chief Christian Iheanyichukwu Nwamara (the Ebubedike 1 of Umumba-Nsirimo) and Lolo Emily Uloma Nwamara of Umumba-Nsirimo, Umuahia L.G.A. of Abia State. Young Alvan-Ikoku Nwamara was named after a foremost Nigerian educationist, Late Dr. Alvan Ikoku of blessed memory, who was his father's

English and Latin teacher and Principal, many years ago, at Aggrey Memorial Grammar School, Arochukwu.

He had his primary education at the United Primary School, Nkpor, Anambra State (1982-1987), secondary education at the Dennis Memorial Grammar School Onitsha (1988-1993) and, in 1998, obtained a Diploma in Music Education (Dip. Mus. Ed.) with Distinction, followed by a Bachelor of Arts degree, Music (2nd Class Honours, Upper Division) in 2001, both at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In 2006, he obtained a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Music Theory and Composition at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and, in 2007, obtained another Master of Arts (M.A.) in African Music at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. In 2008, he crowned his academic attainment with a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Music Theory and Composition, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This made him the first Nigerian musicologist to attain this height at the age of thirty three (33) in the history of Nigerian musicology and at the age of forty four (44), in 2019, he became a music professor.

Prof. Nwamara joined the choir of St. Mark's Anglican Church, Nkpor, at a very tender age. He started composing at the age of twelve years and has composed over three hundred music works which include operas, church anthems, solos and duets. He informs that he delved into the world of serious music making as a young chorister, later a band boy and finally advanced into music scholarship where he had the opportunity of being tutored in various aspects of musicology with majors in composition and African music. In the course of his training and work experiences, he had the rare privilege of getting in contact and working with many big names in Nigerian musicological scene such as the late Felix Nwuba, late Okechukwu Ndubisi, late Prof. Richard Okafor and the living Sir

Sam Ojukwu, Prof. Christian Onyeji, Prof. Dan Agu, Prof. Laz Ekwueme and Prof. Meki Nzewi, and so on.

Nwamara's contact with these great masters and his love for pop music has a great influence on his style of choral compositions. Some of his sacred choral compositions include *Mu Onwe M bu Mbilite n'onwu* (I am the resurrection); *Ihe adiwo mma* (Things have become good), *Tonu Ja* (Praise God); *Yoke Nke m* (My yoke); *Akwukwo iwu* (Book of Law); *Nwunye gi ga-adi ka osisi vine* (Your wife shall be as a fruitful vine - composed for his wedding), *Ka m si yoo nna* (dedicated to his son, Kamsiyonna) and numerous others. He is also a commissioned composer for different Anglican Dioceses and organizations in Nigeria, such as Diocese on the Niger, Diocese of Asaba, Diocese of Ndokwa, Emeka Offor Foundation, Anambra State Government, Nigerian Bar Association and numerous schools.

Prof. Alvan is the author of *Soloist's Companion* volumes one and two, and other books. He has numerous academic publications and recorded works to his credit. He has also contributed greatly to the growth and development of Church music by encouraging and mentoring many young talented musicians/composers and performers. He also has been a source of inspiration to the upcoming composers.

More so, Prof. Nwamara is a member of several national and international professional bodies including ANIM - Association of Nigerian Musicologists, CWB - Conductors Without Borders, IFCM - International Federation of Choral Music, MUSON - Musicological Society of Nigeria, SONTA - Society of Nigerian Theatre Artistes, PASMAGE - Pan-African Society for Musical Art Education, COMEN - Conference of Music Educators of Nigeria, ISA - Igbo Studies Association, KAMAE - Kenya Association for Musical Arts Education, SNC - Society of Nigerian Composers, PATAG - Performing Arts Teachers Association of Ghana, among others. His research interest is basically on Ethnomusicological approaches to African Art Music Composition, Theory, Practice and Performance.

Chukwudi Ezeokoli



Chukwudi Ezeokoli was born into the family of Late Herbert Ezeokoli on September 1, 1969. He is a native of Ekwulobia in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State. He had a good musical background, as his father, who was a choirmaster, organist and composer, exposed him to the piano at a very tender age. Some other persons like late Honourable Jonathan Ezeudegbunam (Jecca Whyte), a renowned organist and Sir Gabriel Okafor (Witty), who is also a choirmaster and

composer, motivated him.

Ezeokoli attended Bishop Crowther Junior Seminary, Awka. He became the school organist. There in the seminary he had more musical exposure, as they were subsequently taught music by many great music masters such as Mr. Dan. C. C. Agu, who taught them a

little while before travelling to Ireland for his Doctorate degree programme; Mr. Chukwuemeka Mbanugo (later became a professor), who raised the school orchestra and later left for his postgraduate programme in America and Sir. Humphrey Nwafor (late), who raised their school choir. Others were Mr. Godwin Akpadolu and Mrs. Odukwe. Chukwudi later proceeded to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to study music. He majored in composition, piano and euphonium. He did wonderfully well in his undergraduate days at Nsukka and graduated as the best student of their set. He did his postgraduate studies at the Department of Music, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife.

According to Chukwudi, his compositional talent is inborn. Academics nurtured the talent and made him more theoretically balanced. His music compositions are influenced by the compositional styles of Sir Sam. Ojukwu, Felix Nwuba, Prof. Dan Agu, more especially Agu's sweet melodies. He also employs some elements of pop music in his musical works such as highlife, reggae, disco, and so on, since his father prohibited him from going fully into pop music. A majority of his musical compositions are commissioned works. He prefers writing music for the audience; that is simple music which the audience can easily connect with than one that is so elaborate and technical. Some of his compositions include *Ngọzi nile dīrī Chineke* (All blessings be to God); *Ma ekele dīrī Chineke* (But thanks be to God); *Detunū ire* (O taste and see); *Halleluia! ife ọnū emego* (Hallelujah! Joyful thing has happened) and so on. He also composed numerous chants. Ezeokoli established a music academy, where he trained so many musicians.

Conclusion

Choral Art music composition in the Anglican Communion, Province of the Niger, Nigeria, was borne as a result of the eagerness of its early composers to create music for Christian worship that could elicit desired responses from the Igbo congregation. This is as a result of the inability of the Western hymns and chants to satisfy the indigenous musical needs of the Igbo worshippers. The experimentation of this genre of music in the old Niger diocese began in the 1930s. However, the establishment of the department of music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and other tertiary institutions that offered music programmes in the 1960s and the subsequent advancements in technology revolutionized choral Art music practices in the Province of the Niger from 1960 to 2014. With the exposure of the contemporary composers to academic study of music and modern technology, choral Art music composition in the Province of the Niger from 1960 to 2014 developed to a world class art. The author thereby recommends that further research on this subject be carried out subsequently for update of the information provided in this work. More so, research of this nature could be replicated in other Christian denominations in order to increase the repertoire of historical materials of music in Igbo land.

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