

INFLUENCE, STYLES AND WAYS OF CHORAL MUSIC IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF IBIBIO MUSIC

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Abstract

Music in Nigeria is a very significant aspect of life of any group of people. It is embedded in the cultural life of the people as expressed in their norms and values in terms of their culture, social, and moral values. Choral music amongst the Ibibio is socially controlled and normally associated with important social, religious or political events. The music is unique in styles ranging from the voice texture, traditional make-up of the attire, musical instruments, dance and also themes. This styles and moods bring about communication link between the singers and the listeners (audience). The writer in this paper discusses some styles and ways of choral music, its influence on different eras, and Nigeria; as well as some elements and patterns in Ibibio choral music.

Introduction

Choral music is one of the several musical genres subject to misunderstanding because of false historical perspectives and misinterpretation cause by the confusion endangered by unresolved semantics problems. Choral, Chorale, Choir, and Chorus are all related to one another and are in some aspects used interchangeably; and also written with two or more different parts. The parts, though equally important are usually independent from one another, and mesh together during performance. Choral music comprises basically four parts and they are: the Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. These parts are often written in either open or close score during composition. Some of the types of choral music are - Anthems, Oratorio, Motet, Cantata, and A Capella to mention a few.

Choral Music

The origin of choral music which can be traced back over a thousand years, has its popularity soared during the Renaissance period of the 1500s, and has remained a popular style of music ever since. It is one of the forms that have promoted the use of Tonic Solfa Notation more than Staff Notation among black composers of African descendants. Several western educated African composers have shared their compositions with millions of people through annual competitions and festivals which has become an important facet in the musical life of several African countries like - South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and so on. The music has interested a number of African musicians trained in western classical music institutions. Some celebrated composers of choral music based on the principles of four part singing common in hymns are - Ayo Bankole, Rueben Caluza, Lazarus Ekwueme, Akin Euba, Alfred Assegai Kumalo, Joseph Kyagambididwa, Gideon Mdelgella, John Mgandu, Okechukwu Ndubuisi, J. H Kwabena Nketia, Mbeki Nzewi and Fela Showande (*Groves Dictionary of Music and Musician, 2001*). Choral music is a popular traditional form that has interested a number of young African student to study music formally at colleges and universities. It has also

made it easier for Africans to relate to western art music, especially compositions of the Baroque and the Romantic periods; with choral parts. Choral works of foreign composers such as: Handel, Mandelson, Braham and Schumann's, just to mention a few, are the most commonly sung works by African choirs; as a number of choral composers have also learned staff notation too. Many still continue to write in tonic solfa as most individuals who participate in church and communal choirs are school children and uneducated parents who have not mastered staff notation. While debate on the suitability of staff notation for musical idioms continues, tonic solfa remains the most widely used and understood notational medium for many Africans who are music enthusiasts. Traditional music and dance in Africa are the media that have remained immunized to the Western notational debates, they are largely taught and transmitted from one person to the other orally.

Influence of Choral Music of the Different Eras

- Antiquity

The origin of choral music is found in traditional music, as singing in the big groups is extremely widely spread in traditional cultures (both singing in one part or in unison, like in Ancient Greece, as well as singing in parts, or in harmony, like in contemporary European choral music). The oldest unambiguously choral repertory that survives is that of ancient Greece of which the 2nd century BC Delphic hymns and the 2nd century AD hymns of Mesomedes are the most complete. The original Greek chorus sang its part in Greek drama and fragments of work by Euripides (*Orestes*) and Sophocles (*Ajax*) are known from papyri. The *Sei kilos* Epitaph (2nd century BC) is a complete song (although possibly for solo voices). One of the latest examples - *Oxyrhynchus* hymn (3rd century) is also of interest as the earliest Christian music of the Roman drama's music a single line of Terence surfaced in the 18th century. However, musicologist Thomas J. Mathieson comments that it is no longer believed to be authenticated.

- Medieval Era

The earliest notated music of Western Europe is Gregorian chant, along with a few other types of chants which were later subsumed by the Catholic Church. This tradition of unison choir singing lasted from sometime between the times of St. Ambrose (4th century) and Gregory the Great (6th century) up to the present. During the later middle-ages, a new type of singing involving multiple melodic parts called organum became predominant for certain functions, but initially polyphony was only sung by soloist. Further developments of this technique included *Clausulae*, *Conductus* and *Motet* (most notably the isorhythmic motet, which unlike the Renaissance motet describes a composition with different texts sung simultaneously in different voices. The first evidence of polyphony, with more than one singer per part, comes in the Old Hall Manuscript (1420, though containing music from the late 14th century) in which there are apparent *divisi*, one part dividing into two simultaneously sounding notes.

- Renaissance Era

During the Renaissance, sacred choral music was the principal type of formally notated music in Western Europe. Throughout the era, hundreds of masses and motets (as well

as various other forms) were composed for a cappella choir, though there were some disputes over the role of instruments during certain periods and certain areas. Some of the better-known composers of this time include - Guillaume Dufay, Josquin Des Prez, Giovanni Pierluigi Da Palestrina and William Byrd; the glories of Renaissance polyphony were choral, sung by choirs of great skill and distinction all over Europe. Choral music from this period continues to be popular with many choirs throughout the world today. The Madrigal, a part of song conceived for amateurs to sing in a chamber setting originated at this period. Although madrigals were initially dramatic settings of unrequited love poetry or mythological stories in Italy, they were imported into England and merged with the more dancelike Balletto, celebrating carefree songs of the seasons or eating and drinking. To most English speakers, the word *Madrigal* now refers to the latter, rather than madrigals proper which refers to a poetic form of lines consisting of seven and eleven syllables each. The interaction of sung voices in Renaissance polyphony influenced Western music for centuries. Composers are routinely trained in the 'Palestrina style' to this day, especially as codified by the 18th century music theorist - Joseph Fux. Composers of the early 20th century also wrote in Renaissance style and inspires styles. Herbert Howells wrote a *Mass in Dorian mode*, entirely in strict Renaissance style and Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G minor* is an extension of this style. Anton Von Webern wrote his dissertation on the *Choralis Constantinus* of Heinrich Issac and the contrapuntal techniques of his serial music may be informed by his study.

- Baroque Era

Around 1600 of the *figures Bass* was said to be associated with the Baroque period in music, it came with the dramatic implications in the realm of solo vocal music such as the monodies of the Florentine Camerata and opera. This innovation was in fact an extension of established practice of accompanying choral music on the organ either from a skeletal reduced score (from which otherwise lost pieces can sometimes be reconstructed) or from a *Basso Seguinte*, a part on a single staff containing the lowest sounding part. A new genre was the vocal concertato, combining voices and instruments; its origins may be sought in the polychoral music of the Venetian school. Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) brought it to perfection with his vespers and his English book of Madrigals, which calls for great virtuosity on the part of singers and instrument alike. His pupil - Heinrich Schutz (1585-1672), who had earlier studied with Giovanni Gabrieli, introduced the new style to Germany alongside the new music of the *seconda pratica*. Contrapuntal motets in the *stile antico* or old style continued to be written well into the 19th century. It should be remembered that choirs at this time were usually quite small that singers could be classified as suited to church or to chamber singing. Monteverdi himself, a singer, is documented as taking part in performances of his Magnificat with one voice per part. Independent instrumental accompaniment opened up new possibilities for choral music. Verse anthems alternated accompanies solos with choral sections; the best-known composers of this genre were Orlando Gibbons and Henry Purcell. Grand motets (such as those of Lully and Delalande) separated these sections into separate movements. Oratorio, pioneered by Giacomo Carissimi, extended this concept into concert length work, usually loosely based on Biblical stories. The pinnacle of the oratorio is found in George Fredrick Handel's works, notably *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*. While the modern

chorus, hundreds had to await the growth of choral societies and his centennial commemoration concert; Handel was found already using a variety of performing forces, from the soloist of the Chandos Anthems to larger groups (whose proportion are still different from modern orchestra choruses). More accessible styles of choral music include - Benjamin Britten, his *War Requiem*, *Five Flower Songs* and *Rejoice in the Lamb*; Francis Pauline's motets *pour te temps de noel*, *Gloria* and *Mass in G* are often performed. A primitive approach is exemplified by Carl Orff's widely performed *Carmina Burana*. In the United States - Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber and Randall Thompson wrote signature American pieces; in Eastern Europe - Bela Bartok and Zoltan Kodaly wrote a small amount of music for choirs. Frank Martin's mass for double choir combines modality and allusion to Medieval and Renaissance forms with a distinctly modern harmonic language and has become the composer's most performed work.

- Classical Era

At the turn of the 21st century, choral music has received a resurgence of interest partly due to a renewed interest in accessible choral idioms. Multi-cultural influences were found in Osvaldo Golijov's *St. Mark passion*, which melds the Bach's style passion form with Latin American street music, and Chen Yi's *Chinese Myths Cantata* melds atonal idioms with traditional Chinese melodies played on traditional Chinese instruments. Some composers began to earn their reputation based foremost, on their choral output including the highly popular John Rutter and Eric Whitacre. The large-scale dramatic works of Karl Jenkins seem to harken back to the theatricality of Orff, and the music of James MacMillan continues the tradition of boundary-pushing choral works from the United Kingdom begun by Britten, Walton and Leighton. Meanwhile, primarily media music composers such as John Williams and Kentaro Sato and prominent concert orchestra composers such as Augusta Read Thomas, Sofia Gubaidulina, Aaron Jay Kernis and Thomas Ades also contribute vital addition to the choral repertoire. A number of traditions originating outside of classical concert music have enriched the choral repertoire as well as provided new outlets to composers:

- At the end of the 19th century, male voice choir became popular with the coal miners of the South Wales and numerous choirs were established including the Treorchy Male Choir, Morriston Orpheus Choir and Cor Meibion Pontoporiid Male Voice Choirs. Although, the mining communities which gave rise to these choirs largely died out in the 1970s and 1980s with the decline of the Welsh coal industry, many of these choirs continue and are seen as a traditional part of Welsh culture and performed worldwide. Not all of these choirs were based on coal, some started in the rugby clubs such as Cardiff Arms Park Male Choir and Morriston Rugby Choir, while others such as Pantagruelian Male Choir were formed out of a youth choir.

- Black Spirituals entered the concert repertoire with the tours of the Fisk College Jubilee Singers and arrangements of such spirituals are now part of the standard choral repertoire. Notable composers and arrangers of choral music in this tradition include: William Dawson, Jester Hairston and Moses Hogan.

- During the mid-20th century, Barbershop Quarters began experimenting with combining larger ensembles together into choruses which sung barbershop music in four

(4) parts, often with staging, choreography and costumes. The first international barbershop chorus contest was held in 1953 and continues to this day.

- African and African American choirs have a distinct and passionate sound. They incorporate their culture into the music with a more upbeat tempo and make use of traditional instruments. They are also very good at singing slow and soulful renditions.

Styles and Ways of Choral Music

- Hymn Style

Hymn style is a type of song that is usually religious, specifically written for the purpose of praise, adoration and prayer. The word 'hymn' is derived from Greek, which means - a song of praise. One definition of hymn is, 'a lyric poem, reverently and devotionally conceived, which is designed to be sung and which expresses the worshipper's attitude toward God or God's purpose in human life'. It is usually simple and metrical in form, genuinely emotional, poetic and literary in style, spiritual in quality and in its ideas so direct and so immediately apparent as to unify a congregation while singing it. The collections of hymns are known as Hymnals. Its origin includes ancient hymns composed by Pharaoh Akhenaten. The western tradition of hymnody began with the Homeric Hymns, a collection of ancient Greek hymns, the oldest of which were written in the 17th century BC, praising deities of the ancient Greek religion. Surviving from the 3rd century BC is a collection of six literary hymns by the Alexandrian poet Callimachus. The meter indicates the number of syllables for the lines of each stanza of a hymn. This provides a means of matching the hymn's text with an appropriate hymn tune for singing. In practice, many hymns conform to one of a relatively small number of meters (syllable count and stress pattern). Care must be taken, however, to ensure that not only the meter of words are tune match, but also the stresses on the words in each line. Technically speaking an iambic tune for instance, cannot be used with words of, say, trochaic meter. The meter is often denoted by a row of figures besides the name of the tune, such as "87.87.87", which would inform the reader that each verse has six lines, and that the first line has eight syllables, the second has seven, the third line eight, etc. the meter can also be described by initials; L.M., which indicates - long meter, which is 88.88 (four lines, each eight syllables long); S.M., which indicates a - short meter (66.86); C.M. which indicates - common meter (86.86); while D.L.M., D.S.M., and D.C.M., (the D, stands for 'double'), are all similar to their respective single meters except that they have eight lines in a verse instead of four. Today, except for choirs, more musically inclined congregation hymns are typically sung in unison. While in some cases, complementary full settings for organ are also published, hence organists and other accompanists are expected to transcribe the four-part vocal score for their instrument of choice. Some of the composers of hymn style were: Thomas Aquinas, Isaac Watts, Martin Luther, Charles Wesley just to mention a few.

- Anthem Style

The word - 'Anthem', is commonly used to describe a celebratory song or composition for a distinct group, as in the term 'nation anthem'. Generally, composition of celebration is usually acting as a symbol for a distinct group of people. It often refers to any short sacred choral work presented during the course of a worship service. Many anthems have

been composed since this time, generally by organist rather than professional composers and often in a conservative style. Major composers have usually composed anthems in response to commissions and for special occasions. An example of such composition is - Edward Elgar's 'Great is the Lord' (1922) and 'Give unto the Lord' (1914), both with orchestra accompaniment; Benjamin's 'Rejoice in the Lamb' (1943), a modern example of a multi-movement anthem but today, it is heard mainly as a concert piece. And Ralph Vaughan Williams's 'O taste and see' (1952), written for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

- Neo-Palestinian Style

Palestrina came of age as a musician under the influence of the northern European style of polyphony, which owed its dominance in Italy primarily to two influential Netherlandish composers; which are - Guillaume Dufay and Josquin des Prez, who had spent significant portions of their careers there. Italy itself had yet to produce anyone of comparable fame or skill in polyphony. Palestrina's style arises from several technical sources. His music was vocal, no parts are written specifically for instruments. All the voice parts have a similar character, producing a homogeneous sound. The music is almost always contrapuntal, with simultaneously sounding equally important melodic lines. Although Palestrina used only a few chords in any one composition, he altered the manner in which the individual tones of each chord were spaced among the various voice parts. He thus achieved subtle changes while maintaining a general feeling of constancy. In rhythm, he avoided the feeling of a strong pulse by allowing each voice part to have its own accent patterns independent of the other parts. He created a subtle pulse by confining dissonant, or unstable tones to weak beats within a measure and always placing consonant, or stable tones on strong beats. Finally, his melodic lines unfold in long, subtly curved in which any large leaps upward or downward are balanced by a return to the center of the curve.

- Neo-Madrigalism Style

Madrigalism was the common Renaissance practice of using 'word painting' (that is, altering mood and tone). In madrigals, a musical form where the accompaniment is designed to highlight the poetic verses. Madrigal is a secular vocal music composition, usually a part song of the Renaissance and early Baroque eras. Traditionally, polyphonic madrigals are unaccompanied, and the number of voices varies from two to eight and most frequently from three to six. It originated in Italy during the 1520s. Unlike many strophic forms of the time, most madrigals were through-composed. In madrigal, the composer attempts to express the emotion contained in each line, and sometimes individual words of a celebrated poem. It also originated in part from the frottola, and in part from the resurgence in interest in vernacular Italian poetry; and also from the influence of the French chanson and polyphonic style of the motet as written by the Franco-Flemish composers who had naturalized in Italy during the period. A frottola generally would consist of music set to stanzas of text, while madrigal, while madrigals were through-composed. However, some of the same poems were used for both frottola and madrigals.

- Neo-Folklorism Style

Folk music are traditional songs passed from one generation to another. It is the music of a people within a particular ethnic group with common language sharing the same dialect and cultural norms and values. These songs are usually learnt by hearing and through performance, considering the simplicity involved which is embedded in their spoken dialect. Folk music is majorly influenced by language, dressing, culture, and geographical location of the group. It is generally simpler and much more compact and distinct in style compared to classical or art music because it exists in different forms and under a variety of social and cultural conditions. They are invariably cast in verse-repeating forms, in which a single melody is used again and again as the setting for each of a number of stanzas of verse.

Influence of Choral Music in Nigerian

Choral music being a popular traditional form of music has remained the pedestal of Nigerian cultural identification. The music has been in existence from the emergence of the nation and is still upheld by its practitioners as well as the chief custodian and conduit of Nigerian cultural heritage. In a nutshell, traditional music encapsulates the worldview, philosophy, aspiration, religion, history, lineage, social, economic and political systems of the nation. Music in Nigeria has never been static, but has consistently been undergoing a process of metamorphosis through a continued exposure to diverse musical styles from foreign cultures. This process of assimilation and integration has left a long trail of musical synthesis between Nigeria and musical idioms from countries such as America, Brazil, Cuba, Europe and other African nations. The root of the new idiomatic expressions could be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century with the arrival of American and European missionaries, and the centenary reign of the colonial administration. These two imperial forces were responsible for the introduction of western classical music to Nigerian indigenes through churches, mission and colonial schools established during this era. Nigerians were exposed to western musical instrument such as - the piano, harmonium and organ. They were also taught how to read and notate music, while in addition, indigenous composers/performers received private lessons in music theory, piano and organ at homes of European musicians and from the organists and choirmasters at their local churches. These efforts eventually led to the emergence of "Neo-African School of Music" that ultimately produced some of the finest modern Nigerian composers. Prominent Ibibio composer of such is Samuel Akpabot.

Some Elements and Patterns in Ibibio Choral Music

- Structure

The way Ibibio songs are organized is dependent on the context performers and also, the interpretation given to it by the same performers. It allows individual composer to share different methods other than the given musical constructions. The music just as other African music is flexible and not rigid as it is passed down orally. It is arranged so as to afford a focus on the expression of individual composer within the context of a given tradition. In Ibibio music, a call and response organization are one of the most

common in the music structures, a form which is typically designed for a lead singer or a group of lead singers, and a chorus (response). In African music there are three standard processes used in responsorial singing: The first and simplest method is one in which the lead singer sings the entire verse and the chorus, repeats the same material immediately and exactly. The second call and response structure has clearly defined sections for the lead singer and the chorus. For example, each portion of the songs consist of a single phrase sung by the lead singer and answered by the chorus with a set of response. The choral responses may be similar to the lead phrase in melodic and rhythmic form or it may be a continuation of it. Either section of the song, the call and response, may be sung in parts, often using simple chordal harmonies. The lead singer may sometimes overlap with the choral response. The overlapping allows the lead singer to select a convenient point before the end of response phrase on order to introduce a new call, while the chorus will then respond in the correct phrase. The call and response are usually rounded off by a concluding section or a refrain sung by both the lead and the chorus. The third arrangement of call and response singing incorporates a third element for a slightly more elaborate form. Often times, in Ibibio music ostinato is employed in addition to or as a substitute for drumming. The ostinato element, coupled with the call and response form magnifies the response the structural shifts pattern; and the addition of vocal repetition is used to reveal rhythmic complexity in the musical structure. Each note making up the scales of the melody are not of equal temperament, as correlation of speech tone and melodic leap in tonal languages retains as much as possible, the linguistic implication or meaning of the text.

Similarly, in African music, especially in singing, the formal structure may really not be the property of any individual though the process of individual expression within a communal activity is important.

- Forms

The forms are usually antiphonal (music sung in alternating parts) in structure which often times it is in ABA with the elements of repetition, variations, and contrast or in through-compose; which is simply emphasized in patterns. Ibibio music usually features solo, duet, and chorus with the lengths of phrase varying from one song to another. The form of vocal music in Ibibio music is in consonance with pathogenic and melogenic concepts which are the melodies common with a non-ritualistic music, and it is also emotion-borne. The style and concepts are influenced by Ibibio folklore. Abraham and Foss (1976) defined folklore as being: orientated more strongly towards the continuity of a tradition. In the same vein, Amos (1971) posits that: folklore is a 'communicative process'. Given all the aforementioned definitions, the oral tradition of Ibibio music is a custom, opinion or belief handed down for posterity hence, its oral poetry is found in the song text, as language and music are interrelated.

- Tonality

Ibibio music is tonal, meaning that the language and text are interrelated. They influence the pitch and rhythmic elements of the songs to a large extent. Agu (1999) states that: a word can mean more than one meaning depending on its intonation and of course, its function in a sentence.

Just like other ethnic music, there are three primary levels of tone in Ibibio language - low; medium; and high. Hugh (1963) observed that: measuring the incidence of and the distance between pitches of African scales without prematurely attempting to generalize, is difficult. This is especially the case when compared to western measuring criteria. Within any African scale, typically having from 4 to 7 pitches. One may find a greater tolerance of pitch variation for specific steps of the step, let alone equal temperament. It is believed that any assertion that African melodies are exclusively pentatonic is inaccurate. A more accurate description of most African melodic structure is that they are based on the controlled use of selected interval sequences. Thus, it is more effective to think of Ibibio music in terms of reoccurring sequences of interval as opposed to scales when examining the melodic constructs. The Ibibio music maintains a distinct tonal system and it is often constructed on heptatonic scale (7 tones). The inflectionary nature of African language and the presence of percussive instruments have been found to be more effective in the formation of melodic and rhythmic pattern in African music. The rhythm of a song is governed by the inflection of the words whose rise and fall results to melodic and speech rhythm. The standard pattern played by instruments in a hocket or ostinato manner which is most times imitated by the voice parts give rise to the percussive rhythm.

- Melody

The melodic and rhythmic components of the lead singer's call and the chorus response sometimes include variations, especially if there are significant changes in text. For example, the lead singer may alter the call but the choral response remains the same, resulting in an A-B-C-B form. Other songs have a different response to each call, resulting from A-B-C-D, where A and C are sung by the lead singer, and B and D by the chorus. The lead singer may even improvise above the choral responses. Variations on the call and response structure most times generate uneven phrase structures providing long sections for either the lead singer or the chorus. The melodies are sometimes, also short and repetitive; and not rigidly structured on one syllable like other ethnic music. Ibibio melodic form also make use of the dynamic qualities from the rhythmic framework already used to organize their sound materials as their melodic lines are guided by words (lyrics). It be noted here that in Ibibio music changing the pitch of a syllable to fit a melodic contour will alter the meaning of the word. This also have a great effect on percussion section of Ibibio rhythmic patterns. Most importantly, on the Eka Ibibio song (drum), and this cannot be over emphasized. The melodic patterns are also restricted to phrases because the Ibibio music, in a general phenomenal are controlled either by speech pattern or by their traditional instruments because of the limited ranges of the instruments, and is often combined (that is the melody and instruments), so as to allow for a portion of the entire melody be felt. The process is known as - Hocket Technique. All these processes are in no way different from what is generally obtained in African music as a whole, except for the melodic patterns and also Ibibio contours embedded within its song texts; it can also be compared to the western music in terms of the use of basso-ostinato, which controls the harmonic shape of western music. But in African music, it creates alternative harmonies along its contrapuntal movements despite the series of changes. The harmonies are basically in seconds, thirds, sometimes in fourths

and fifths because the music is a speech pattern inflection. The style which is often a call and response between the cantor and the chorus is sometimes without accompaniment.

- Speech-Tone

Ibibio music is naturally phrased from the spoken Ibibio language with emphasis placed on words; so also, the music of Africa. Speech and register relationship are of Ibibio native language which influences the musical form of Ibibio songs. The interrelation of melody and language is further complicated by the function of speech-tones within native African languages. Ibibio speech-tones also known as tone language, assign each syllable to its own pitch, intensity and duration beyond the vowel and consonant. In Ibibio music, attention is usually given to the intonation of the text and not sound. This is because when texts in tone languages are sung, the relationship between higher and lower intonations is maintained in the contour of the melody. The relationship between music and language facilitates composition and performance appropriate to the community context. The manner in which a specific text is treated evolves not only from the phonemic features of the language, but is inspired by the importance of the song as an avenue to for verbal communication. African rhythms are generally governed by the syllable length and stress placement of the text in much the same way melodic intervals are influenced by speech-tones.

- Song-Text

In Ibibio music, the voice parts maintain the meaning of each word of the song text by imitating the melodic leaps of the first voice strictly, as a derivation; and other parts singing two different things. It always employs the use of counterpoints, a style of singing which is most common among the Ibibio, Igbo and Ijaw ethnics of Nigeria. Each voice part is conceive to have independent existence and also, it is conceptually linear but supports the vertical unity and intervallic concords of the parts. Some of these attributes are intuitively acquired. In essence, the harmonic texture of Ibibio music is a combination of heterophonic, polyphonic and homophonic, and it sometimes uses unison for variation purposes with strictly Ibibio idioms. The song text is a medium for creative verbal expressions that reflects both personal and social experiences. Akpabot (1998), in looking at style and content of Yoruba and Hausa music states that: Ibibio oral poetry is most commonly found in song texts and invocations during ritual or non-ritual ceremonies. Furthermore, he also highlighted 14 categories of song texts easily recognizable in African music, and they are - historical, communication, social, insult, obsessed, praise, children, funeral, work, war, humorous, women, philosophical, and ritual. All which he said can be grouped under three main headings: Praise Songs; Songs of Insult; and Songs for Entertainment.

- Rhythmic Structure

Generally, the rhythmic structure of Ibibio music is often slow and danceable reflecting their culture, idioms, and concepts. The rhythm of the Ibibio music is a natural rhythm phrased from the spoken Ibibio language with emphasis placed on some words like - /ɔŋ/ as 'orng', as in (isɔŋ) as (isong). This simply means that Ibibio music is built on speech

rhythm of a compound time. The distortions of syllabic length and offbeat, which is described as a form of syncopation, placement characterizes much of Africa's songs including that of the Ibibio. This offbeat phrasing of melodic and textual accents is used to give the impression of a natural speech rhythms. Other voices enter independently with contrasting rhythmic phrases thus, creating cross-rhythmic relationships. The rhythmic interest of African songs lies in the cross-rhythms created by vocal offbeat phrasing and any repetitive, underlying pulse. Usually, slight changes in the rhythmic repetition typically coincide with changes in the text of Ibibio music. The complexity of the rhythmic structures is reaffirmed through repetition because the participants and audience are encouraged to listen to and respond to each layer of the rhythmic relationship. The tension of African cross-rhythms is not only captured by repetition, it is magnified. A careful selection of rhythm by controlling the duration of a rhythm, and by timing the introduction of discontinuity, the musicians are in command of the tension and the resolution. Indeed, it is the quality of these rhythmic relationships and the tensions they generate that represent stylistic African cross-rhythms. Creative and unique progressions of rhythmic relationships are considered pleasing and serve to enhance the occasion. Akpabot (1975) observed that: the drum is the foundation of most African music ensemble and it fits into both the percussive and the melodic rhythm. The rhythm of a song is governed by the inflection of the words whose rise and fall results into melodic and speech rhythm. While the standard patterns played by traditional instruments in a hocket or ostinato manner sometimes, imitated by the voice, gives rise to the percussive rhythm. The percussive and rhythmic instruments also contribute extensively to the song as they function collectively as member of an ensemble providing a standard rhythm in the music, as the rhythm generally is free. Akpabot (1967) affirms this statement when he said: All the rhythmic patterns found in African music can be classified primarily under three headings - Percussive Rhythm; Melodic Rhythm, and Speech Rhythm.

- The percussive rhythm is provided by idiophone (self-struck) instruments and membranophone (hand-stricken) instruments
- The melodic rhythm is provided by aerophone (air-blown) instruments, chordophone (stringed) instruments and tuned idiophones.
- The speech rhythm is provided by the syllabic cadences of human speech like the rhythm from the words of a song

Conclusion

This paper has literarily discussed some related styles and ways starting from the origin in relation to its influence of the different eras which are inexhaustible. Ranging from the non-Africans to the Africans, and then Nigeria and of course Ibibio, whose culture and idioms have influenced the styles and ways of Ibibio music. Choral music in Ibibio is essentially built on their language and speech-pattern, and it is often reflected in their tonal inflections during composition. The traditional make-up of the Ibibio music compared to other tribes in Africa are similar in terms of styles and ways, which consist of song-text, melody, structure, rhythm, form, tonality and all the various style available in choral music especially as peculiar to the Ibibio.

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Profile

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