

A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS AND GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF DANIEL CHRISTIAN  
CHIKPEZIE AGU'S SONG OF PATRIOTISM-ANAMBRA STATE

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**Abstract**

The art of composition is a creative writing which brings out a synthesis of musical ideas, motifs and sonorities, to get at that which originally seems inconceivable and unreachable. African Art Music also known as academic music in the context of this research is that unique, stylized musical arts; formalized kind of music that emerges from the fusion of western musical idioms with that of African traditions of musical concepts and practices. Personal life, friendship, the ups and downs of joy, happiness and depression, play important roles in any compositional output. Many elements come to play in a given composition which serves as a driving force to sending signals in accordance with the intentions of a composer. Many composers through the exploration of vital compositional materials criticize in an attempt to reform while some lauds in praise to showcase pride, dignity, and integrity. The song of patriotism by Agu falls among the latter category. Currently, there have been researches on Agu focusing on his life, music and career. However, no study has focused on a detailed examination through analysis on the song of patriotism as it concerns nation building. This paper, therefore, through analysis aims to show how the composer contributed to the building of the State of Anambra through his efforts in the art of composition. The analysis and general assessment was based on Agu's (1999) criteria for identification and analysis of African songs. The criteria include the form, the basic structural forms, phraseology, performance, presentational form and the text, harmonic principles and styles, the rhythmic structure of the melody and tonal shift and instrumentation.

Keywords: Composition, Structural, Analysis, Patriotism, Assessment, Anambra State.

**Introduction**

**Analysis: A Way of Teaching Music**

Going through the music teaching curricular of many institutions over the world will conceal the meagre importance attached to the teaching of analysis. However, some institutions have in their individual curricular some aspects of teaching and the study of music simply as: analysis, form and analysis, analysis of contemporary/tonal music etc. in this way, learning and teaching as a course is part and parcel of the curricular and thus contributes to the overall growth/ability of music students. Whereas, some institutions go ahead to discourage and underscore the importance they attach to the study of analysis by allotting less time in the teaching of the course in a semester or even session. According to Achinivu (2003), he stated:

Through analysis, the various elements of musical architecture become less cumbersome, technical and less dry to music students. Conversely, by their application of the knowledge they have of musical elements and concepts in the analysis of a piece of music, they obtain greater insight into understanding of musical design and content of form (p.55).

To buttress further on the above, Rich, Noatzsch (1908) in the foreword to his book, *Formenlehre der Klaviermusik* (The Theory of the forms of Pianoforte Music) stated:

The students should not only play well, they should also learn the right way to hear, that is, they should acquire the ability to grasp the form and content of a musical art work in order to be able to enjoy it according to its full worth. Concerning this matter, the knowledge of the different forms which could underlie a composition is, above all, one of the most important requirements (p.1).

On the other hand, Jan Lapuc, in his *Guideline for Style Analysis* (1970), opined that "analysis can enhance our perception of a composer's richness of imagination, his complexity (or utter simplicity) of materials, his skill in organization and presentation (p.2)". With an in-depth appreciation of a composer's skill, a better understanding of his music will be enhanced. Thinking African, Sam Ekpe Akpabot (1998) maintained:

One sure way of successful analysis of African Music is to think African. A good analysis is meant to clarify, not confuse, and one way out of it is to get inside the mind of the composer and not conduct a mere scholarly exercise which in the end might tell you more than the African musician intended (107).

Towing the line of form and analysis in African music as this paper shall attempt, Agu (1999), stated the requirements of a thorough analysis thus:

Guiding the student through the maze of sound and structure cannot be easy. It requires not only a deep understanding of the subject but also entails the ability to correct with those very points that involves elements/materials which puzzle the student, and make him try to avoid both Western and African music analysis classes, if it were possible (p.2).

The aim of this paper is to show through analysis the structural make-ups of the song of patriotism by Dan Agu in relation to nation building.

### **Nation Building**

This is the process whereby a society of people with diverse origin, histories, languages, cultures, and religion come together within boundaries of a sovereign state with a unified constitutional and legal dispensation, a national public education system, an integrated national economy, shared symbols and values, as equals, to work towards eradicating the divisions and injustices of the past, to foster unity; and promote a countrywide conscious sense of being proudly committed to the country and open to the continent of the world (Britannica 2009). It is constructing and structuring of a national identity using the power of a state which aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable. The nation is made up of various components and from one component, one can gradually expand to accommodate every other component that would make up the nation as a whole entity. From the nuclear family to the entire nation, from developing oneself as a unit within

the nation and by transforming an individual, one transforms and builds a nation. Therefore, any part of the nation that is affected through one's efforts is by extension the art of nation building. Citing an example with the Nation of Nigeria, Onwuegbuna (2023) opines:

Today, the capital of Nigeria has shifted to its third (3rd) locale. Anywhere it has been cited, a level of development was reached. In Calabar where it started to Lagos and now Abuja, as they were located from within, they begin to extend to without (Onwuegbuna, Oral Interview, October, 2023).

Onwuegbuna (2023) posits further that the concept of nation building could be seen in five (5) aspects of: infrastructural, intellectual, moral, psychological and mental spheres. He maintained that any abnormal person that finds himself at the corridors of power would eventually build an unhealthy nation, while human beings in their right frame of minds will surely produce healthy nation where political stability, economic development, social cohesion and education act as key factors that determine the interconnectivity in the critical role involved in the art of nation building (Onwuegbuna, Oral Interview, October, 2023).

I as a researcher liken the concept of nation building to the philosophy of "*Aku luo uno*" (investing more in one's homeland or native land, a common idiom in Igboland) which bothers on taking one's wealth home and letting one's kinsmen benefit from the wealth and resources that God has blessed one with. The (2016) Imolites showcase "*Aku ruo ulo*" in Lagos to mark the thirtieth (30th) anniversary of Imo State Towns Development Association (ISTDAL), Ezugha reiterates that "*Aku ruo ulo*" distastes financial recklessness in government, arrogance and visionless leadership in all its ramifications. He urges everyone to imbibe the good virtues of brotherliness, detesting "*oka nma n'ama*" (he who supports others at the detriment/expense of his own kinsmen). He stressed that there is need for all to maintain close affinity with their homeland. Also, at the Mbaise Policy Roundtable, the communiqué issued after the eightieth (8th) Prof. Celestine Onwuliri memorial lecture of December 12, 2020 in Owerri, Imo State, Oparaaji stated:

That the "*Aku ruo ulo*" paradigm should be the subject to raise consciousness of (Igbos) all over the world on the need to think and look homeward for investment, development and expansion of their current businesses, economic and scholarly concerns (2020:4).

Therefore, in the light of the fore-going, I make bold to say that Dan Agu did not only bring home his musical expertise and prowess, rather he also explored so much those core values required of a man that thirsts immensely to seeing his State and Nation better as captured in the Anambra State Song of Patriotism.

### **Composition**

Music is a developmental activity in cultivation of the senses and expression. It is one of the most effective vehicles for the growth and development of customs and traditions of a given area. Music is a universal form of expression that is as old as man and is usually appreciated by people of different cultures. Composition today forms a basic discipline in music study both at the undergraduate and the post-graduate levels. The question here is, "what is composition all about? Attempting to do justice to this pertinent question, Achinivu (1979) quoting Riemann says:

Composition in music is generally an elaborate, notated piece of work, the successful outcome of which presupposes creative musical aptitude and extensive training and

which reckons with live performance for the study of composition. Instruction in the elements of composition, (harmony, counterpoint, twelve-tone-technique, rhythm, metre, form and orchestration/instrumentation is of use. Nevertheless, the composer begins above all, with the work of those masters whom he chooses in certain details and fundamentally) as his models. The composition itself must, in order to be valid, satisfy the requirement of newness, and of originality (p.115).

Borrowing a leaf from the above assertion, Dan Agu stands out because of the thoroughness and elaborate nature of his compositions. Each of his numerous compositions maintains its originality incorporating the necessary elements of music to drive home his moods and emotions upon a particular composition at a given point in time.

To buttress these points on composition more, Achinivu (1979), quoting the encyclopedia music in *Geschichte and Genenwart* states:

According to the present-day usage in the field of music composition, the creative process by which a more or less clearly and permanently fixed and meaning conglomeration of sound (a musical composition) is produced and is, as a rule, recorded in notation whereby a certain degree of originality is presupposed in the product (p. 115).

Expressing her view on music composition, Onwuekwe, (2004:84) says, "Music comes from within in the attempt to express some emotions be it of sadness, of joy or of reverence. Music composition is the art of music writing". Scholes (1977) defined music composition as:

The art of putting words together to make a poem or pieces of prose, it involves the gathering of notes to make a waltz or symphony of details to make a picture. In music the "putting together" consists chiefly in (a) combining successive notes to make melody, (b) combining simultaneous notes to make harmony (c) combining melodies to make counter-point (d) combining phrases to make sentences and sentences to make long passages (e) combining themes and their treatment to make pieces or movement of pieces, (f) combining movements to make a cyclic form (p. 220).

Risset (1994:583) states that: traditionally, composition consists of putting together pre-existing elements; notes as they will be played or sung by the instrument (and or vocalists) from a score where they are assembled. Music composition is of two main categories: vocal or instrumental and it could still be a combination of both. Dan Agu's music falls under these two categories. His compositions are evident for diverse occasions like: marriages, births, burials etc while others such as school anthems, Diocesan anthem, jubilee songs, songs of patriotism and several jingles abound.

### **Who is a Composer?**

According to Echezona in Achinivu (1979), a composer is anyone who writes a piece of music regardless of the length, originality, or artistic achievement of the piece. About a good composer he noted:

... but the world, fortunately, does not admit a lax view. A good composer is expected to show some skill in handling his materials (technique) and some degree of originality. The first of these requirements, technique, may be learnt or acquired, provided the composer has a basic minimum of musical ability. That branch of music is called theory

which includes harmony, counterpoint, orchestration etc. The second, the requirement of originality can scarcely be learnt, though it may be developed and cultivated (p.120). A composer writes an original composition for a specific project. His music is properly written so as to guide the musicians properly in its performance. Idamoyibo (2003) buttressed the above when he asserts that:

What makes a musician to be distinct is the originality of his work as well as his ability to create interest and to arouse emotion in his audience. This can only be achieved through musical competence, creativity and expertise (p.12).

A composer creates his own songs with different fascinating rhythms for both the voice and instruments. Composer makes sure that his music suits his project, as in the case of film scores where the music should help move the story without overpowering the scene. The music a composer writes may be vocal or instrumental. It may be in various styles such as classical, jazz, country, folk and so on. From the traditional/African perspective, Achinivu (1979) explained a composer when he said:

There is nearly always a chorus which every participant joins in. In between this regularly recurring refrain, there is someone (or some people) who sing something that fits, that matches the rhythm and tempo of the prevailing dance form. Usually he does not stop to think about what he is going to sing next, or else the dance will come to a standstill at a time he does not want it. Such a man is, traditionally speaking, a composer (p.117).

Summarily, a composer has fresh ideas, is always creative, and versatile. He is not afraid to experiment; he is willing to collaborate with fellow artistes and explores a wide horizon on his way to creating music.

Although, a road to becoming a good composer may be hard and highly competitive, once one gets his feet in the right door, composing can generate good income; it brings about exposure and the needed experience for one to get along the way (Agu, Oral Interview, September, 2009). The above virtues are evident in Dan Agu's life, works and scholarship hence his contribution to the growth of Igbo choral music as we are going to see further.

### **The Man Daniel Christian Chikpezie Agu**

This section of research deals with the biography of Dan Agu seen in three periods. The researcher's choice of periodic study of Agu's life is informed by the fact that Agu passed through different experiential stages as far as his life and works are concerned. The three periodic stages are characterized and describe as: amateur, tutelage and maturity stages. Periodic representation shows:

Amateur stage - periods 1-2

Tutelage stage-periods 3-4

Maturity stage - periods 5-7

These periodic assessments enrich our understanding of Agu's times, examples, positions held, publications, contributions, awards and the relationship between music and intellectual contexts.

### **Period 1 (1949-1954): Amateur Stage**

Daniel Chikpezie (literally "let God judge") Christian Agu was born on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1949 at the Iyi-Enu Hospital, Ogidi in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Iyi-Enu hospital is

the extension of the Anglican Diocese on the Niger established by the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Dan hails from Obosi, Anambra State where he spent his early childhood. His father, Mazi Samuel Okonkwo Agu of Ugamuma Village, Obosi was a musically talented person. He was a great singer and a well-known dancer. Esther Ochamba Agu, (nee Ikedionwu), his mother of Ire village was also a great dancer and a singer too. Dishearteningly, Dan's father died naturally in March, 1949 when Dan was three (3) months old. His mother Esther nurtured him as the first and only child of the marriage. Dan belongs to the Igbo ethnic group in the Eastern part of Nigeria.

### **Period 2 (1955-60)**

Dan was influenced so much by Church Music such as the Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF) songs, Hymns from the CMS Hymn Book of Common Prayer (Ekpere Na Abu), and the traditional music such as the lullaby, work songs and the moonlight play songs. In the African traditional society, like in other traditional societies, a child is chiefly influenced by the environment or culture in which music in its diverse genres are operative. Nketia (1974) disclosed:

Participation in children's games and stories incorporating songs enables him/her to learn and sing in the style of his/her culture, just as he/she learns to speak its language. This participation enhances the child's flow of mind and character in his/her daily activities that cumulate into his/her future (p.60).

In 1955, Mrs Maduaburochukwu Marchie, Dan's aunt (elder sister to Dan's mother) took Dan to her home. This is because Dan's mother does not have a tangible source of livelihood to sustain her family and per adventure train her only son further in education. Living with his aunt, Dan obtained the First School Leaving Certificate (FLSC) from St. Andrew's Central School, Obosi in 1960 under the sponsorship of his maternal uncle and aunt Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Marchie. Aside pursuant of education, Dan's music making activities as at that time was only at home and church levels. He organizes moonlight plays for his peers and age mates and leads as a soloist in social performances like traditional marriages, child presentation (okunwa) and funerals. At the same time, his home church, St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Obosi, provided a more conducive atmosphere for him to teach the church choir, taking them for festivals and singing competitions at various levels. His initial choral compositions were mainly in Igbo. Having a flashback on those years, Dan stated:

Although my career as a composer has not manifested properly, everything I do drives me towards music, hence my active participation in the church choir and school singing classes, directing and leading my peers for outings are not left out (Agu, Oral Interview, August 2009).

### **Period 3 (1961-63): Tutelage Stage**

At the end of Dan's primary education, his uncle and a younger brother to his mother Mr. B.A Ikedionwu, who was a post-master, took the responsibility of Dan's secondary education. Dan followed him down to Agbor Delta State on securing admission into Ika Grammar School, Agbor. However, Dan did not come across any music teacher both in the primary and the secondary school days as he confirmed:

I could not sit for any examination in music at the West African Examination Council (WAEC) level because I had no music teacher. Also at the Teacher Training College (TTC) level, I had no music teacher. I studied music on my own throughout these levels

to write my examinations, seeking guidance from specialists like Sam Ojukwu, Late Rev. Canon David Okongwu and Late Alphonso Okosa popularly known as Ango (Agu, Oral Interview, August, 2009).

Notwithstanding all these challenges, his quest to know more was not quenched but increased tremendously owing to the result of his self taught manifestations. It was at Ika Grammar school that Dan composed his first ever choral work in 1962, and he added:

God gave me the aptitude. I started singing and dancing at a very tender age. I composed my first choral music at the age of twelve (12). It was a welcome song in honour of the Bishop of then Benin Diocese of the Anglican Communion, Rt. Rev. Agoriwe - on his Episcopal visit to Ika Grammar School (Agu Personal Communication August, 2009).

With the above feat, his scholarship in musicianship -developed the more. Between 1962 and 1965 Dan was the chapel prefect, choirmaster and organist at the same school. He composes for his home church choir. He led the home church choir to as many as six (6) finals of the Niger Diocesan Music Festival at the All Saints Cathedral, Onitsha. Throughout these years, his choir never came below fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) position. The experiences he gathered so far, and while at Ika Grammar School motivated him into deciding to go into music study for a career. His ability to seek counsel from those he considered genius in the field as stated earlier also paved way for him.

#### **Period 4 (1966-70)**

Due to the outbreak of the civil war, Dan took refuge at Umuomaku, a town in Aguata Local Government Area of Anambra State. Throughout this period, he still handles his home church choir, the St. Andrew's church choir Umuomaku and the St. Thomas Church choir, Ibughubu, Umuchu, a neighbouring town to Dan's town of residence Umuomaku. However, he could not concentrate on writing new composition instead he used already existing pieces in form of anthems, hymns, canticles by such composers like David Okongwu, Felix Nwuba and Sam Ojukwu. He relied on such compositions as resource materials for his choirs. He delights in music teaching and directing of choirs especially religious choral music, he added:

Religious choral music influenced me most. My background as a choir boy gave me a lot of experiences and exposure. I also learnt a lot as a choirmaster under the later Rev. Canon David Okongwu and Sam Ojukwu who were the only composers but also my choirmasters at various stages of my musical development (Agu, Oral Interview, August, 2009).

The above speaks much for mentorship. Dan subjected himself and was ready to learn at any point in time and so he was what he is today. Even as colleagues; Agu, Ojukwu and Okongwu adore themselves. Agu met and sang under Sam Ojukwu at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral Uruagu, Nnewi from 1970-1973, while Okongwu was his choirmaster between 1973 and 1974 when Ojukwu left the Cathedral. From the motivation and encouragement Agu got from both Ojukwu and Okongwu, he sees himself as: A prolific composer, a disciplined conductor, experienced director, an articulate music educator, an organist and an erudite scholar (Agu, P. C. September, 2009).

#### **Period 5 (1970-1977): Maturity Stage**

Between 1970 and December 1971, Dan was a first year student at the Teacher Training College (TTC), Nnewi. After his graduation from the TTC, he was posted to St. Mary's Central School, Uruagu, Nnewi as a school teacher. There he combined his teaching work with the work of a choir coordinator for another year. In 1973 precisely, Dan started his first formal music education at the Department of Music, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He was admitted into a four (4) year degree music programme in which he majored in composition in his final year.

As an enthusiastic undergraduate, Dan had so many weekly music programmes (performances) on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Radio Stations in Enugu. His choir and the small groups that he formed namely: the Jubilee Professional Singers and the Obosi Chamber Choir and Orchestra featured in his programmes. About his musical activities, Dan observed:

My life as a young man was full of musical activities. I was fully involved in practical music. I had no problems in my chosen profession. There was however, little resistance from my guardian on my choice of music as a career, but they never made serious attempt to prevent me from going ahead with my chosen career (Agu, Oral Interview, September, 2009).

From October 1973, Dan was employed as a resident music director at the St. Cyprian's Anglican Church, Abakpa-Nike in the then Enugu then Diocese of Enugu, Anglican Communion, but now the Diocesan headquarters of the Anglican Diocese of Nike. At Abakpa-Nike, the choir was full of activities ranging from choir rehearsal to covering of the Sunday services, to organizing of festivals and performing outside of the Diocese. Dan devoted his services to God through church music serving as music director under the following Anglican Dioceses: Enugu Diocese 1973-2009, Nsukka Diocese 1997-2001 and Nike Diocese 2009-2018. Dan's musical activities at the St. Cyprian's Cathedral Abakpa-Nike were full of events. The popularity he got then among his peers was as a result of his efforts and hard work towards the art of music and performance. Dan stated:

To keep myself and the choir busy, I compose anthems based on the liturgical calendar of the church using Sunday lessons, the collect or the psalm for the day to capture the sermon for that particular Sunday. This made the St. Cyprian's choir to be famous in Enugu and its environs (Agu, Oral Interview, September, 2009).

### **Period 6 (1977-1984)**

At the end of his four-year degree course and upon graduation in 1977, Dan was posted to Ilorin, Kwara State, for a one-year National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Programme. He did his primary assignment under the Kwara State Council for Arts and Culture. Between 1977 and 1978, he served there also as the State's Music Director. Dan returned to his state Anambra and became a music tutor at the St. Monica's Teachers Training College, Ogbunike only for nine (9) months. In September 1979, Dan transferred his services to the Anambra State College of Education, Awka. In the same year, he took his lovely wife, Florence Ogechukwu Agu (nee Obiegbu) to the altar. The marriage is blessed with two children: a boy and a girl namely: Amalachukwu Afamefuna Agu and Chiamaka Nwanneka Agu. Fortunately, Afamefuna has taken after his father musically, owing an album titled "ARISE" to his credit.



In 1982, Dan applied and was offered sponsorship by the East Central State and the Federal Government of Nigeria to do his Ph.D. degree course at the Queen's University, Belfast. In 1983 to be precise, Dan was commissioned by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to compose an incidental and instrumental music for the dramatization of Chinua Achebe's novel "Things Fall Apart". While at Belfast, Dan was appointed part-time lecturer in Ethnomusicology for the Masters Programme for the sessions of 1983 and 1984 respectively. Between the year under review, Dan composed and recorded under the sponsorship of the State Government led by Chief Jim Ifeanyichukwu Nwobodo (Governor of Old Anambra State), the Anambra State Song of Patriotism. This is one song out of the numerous compositions of Dan that has given him a sense of identity because of the lyrics, melody and the instrumentation that accompanied the song till date. Around the same time Dan was commissioned to record some other songs as he stated:

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) London commissioned me as one of their composers from 1983-1984. Most of the recordings of the music I did then were done at their London studios (Agu, Oral Interview, October, 2009).

Later on, he had other recordings sponsored by Churches, Corporate bodies, Schools and the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA).

#### **Period 7 (1984-1989)**

In 1984, when Dan had returned to Nigeria, he was appointed the director and conductor of the Old Anambra Choral Contingents at the National Art Festival (NAFEST) held in Bauchi in December, 1989. His group won the NAFEST Gold Gong that year. Also in 1985, Dan was appointed member, Development Advisory Council in the Old Anambra State, and member Sub-Committee on Music in the Old Anambra State Festival of Arts and Culture.

At this period, also, Dan contributed several articles to various Music Journals in which he tried to promote people's awareness and understanding as it concerns both sacred and secular music. In his opinion, he said:

I have attended and presented papers at over twenty-five (25) International and National Conferences, and have published over thirty-five (35) journals articles, book chapters, music compositions in journals of repute and books in my core areas (Agu, Oral Interview, September, 2009).

At this period Dan conclude his amateur, tutelage and maturity endeavours as a composer and director of music in so many places. Early nineties in Dan Agu's life were full of musical activities which were characterized by contracts by mainly churches that employed him as mostly Music Director of their Dioceses. At the tail end of 1992, Dan moved down to Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and stayed there till 1996 because the College of Education where he was working metamorphosed to a University status. Between 1996 and the year 2004, Dan took appointment with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, his Alma matter, as a Lecturer in the Department of Music. He was the Head of Department of Music between 1998 and 2000. He said:

It must be noted that all these years (1960-present), I have been involved in musical activities in various places. I was composing at the rate of two (2) anthems a month, organizing music concerts, performing music at the state houses, public places, concert halls, recordings at Television and Radio stations, producing long playing

records and cassettes etc, in addition to my academic work (Agu, Oral Interview, September, 2009).

Summarily, Agu's creative outputs within the interval of some seven periods were deeply rooted in composition of choral music both sacred and secular. This also included his ten instrumental works, arrangement of songs for children, chants and many other commissioned works in form of anthems by religious bodies, schools, organizations and corporate entities.

### **Anambra State Song**

The song, Anambra State was composed in 1978 on the date the creation of the old Anambra State was announced by the then Military Government. Composed out of joy and inspiration, Agu was filled with the nostalgia of being at home hence he just returned from serving his fatherland. He said:

The joy and inspiration leading to the composition of the song was overwhelming that I composed the entire song within one hour after the announcement of the creation of a new State of Anambra was made. It was the year I completed my National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), and returned back from Ilorin, Kwara State, where I served (Agu, Oral Interview, September, 2023).

Agu was right when he attributed his being able to finish the composition of the song within one hour to inspiration (without intention of writing any song). Of course it was conceived spontaneously. However, most anthems are achieved through commissioning. On inspiration, Nzewi and Nzewi (2007: 19) observed that "some of the best compositions are as a result of intuitive processes". Olisaeke (2015) in the same manner opines that:

Sometimes a composer is pushed by certain forces he does not know; and given a tune or melody he had not made any efforts to create. This may come in his quiet moment when he is alone, or even in a noisy environment such as the market or mechanic workshop. It can also come without any prior notice while asleep, on motion in a car, during domestic activities or in a church service (p.149).

St. Monica's Teachers Training College Choir Ogbunike which doubles as the place of the composition was the first to perform and record the song under the regime of Chief Jim Ifeanyichukwu Nwobodo, the then governor of old Anambra State. The whole morphology of the song got Chief Jim to adopt the song as a State Song. The song was introduced in schools in the state compelling the schools to use it during morning assemblies. Both the state Radio and Television Stations air the song whenever the governor addresses Anambrarians. Throughout Chief Jim's tenure as the governor, there was always a live performance of the song in the State Government House whenever there is a function in the state house. Upon the Governor's commissioning of Professor Dan Agu, the state choir recorded the song at the Willie Onyeabor Recording Studio, Agbani Enugu in 1981. The singles recording was a hit track that many copies were distributed in Nigeria and to Nigerians in the Diasporas.

### **Analysis of the Song**

#### **a) Preliminaries**

- Title - Anambra State
- Composer - Dan. C.C. Agu
- Year of composition - 1978

- Tonality- G Major
- Time Signature -  $\frac{3}{4}$  (Three crochet beats in a measure)
- Medium - Mixed voices of Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass

**b) Text, Harmonic and Rhythm Structures**

Nwobu (2015:7) examining the extracts from the texts comments, "Critical evaluation of the text of the song shows that it is a patriotic song. Agu used his musical values to express and communicate his feelings and thoughts about the State, Anambra". In the song, he calls for unity, progress, and love among the people of Anambra. In the same vein, Ubani (2013) wrote that "Dan Agu's love for his people stimulated him as a true son of the soil to write the patriotic and culturally bound song to identify himself in love and humility (p.7). The text of the song reads:

Anambra State, Anambra State,  
I'm happy to be your child  
I'm happy to be in you  
I'm happy to be associated with all your progress  
May God direct, protect and guide  
And bless all your good intentions  
What shall I do for the progress of my state?  
What shall I offer for the growth of my state?  
Hard work, honesty, diligence, efficiency,  
All these are what I owe my state  
My beautiful home, my pride forever  
Anambra state, my home, my pride  
I am happy to come from you, my Anambra state  
I want your progress  
My beautiful home, I love you so  
What shall I do for the progress of my state?  
What shall I offer for the growth of my state?  
I want your progress  
My beautiful home, my pride for ever,  
My beautiful home, the home of peace,  
My beautiful home, I love you dearly.

The full message of the song is summarized under: a) pride of belonging b) prayer and c) commitment (Okoye 2017:269). Consolidating more on the text of the song, Agu himself has this to say:

Although the words/lyrics of the song were written in English Language, the content and structural patterns were derived from the Igbo patriotic attitude and certain elements of Igbo traditional vocal music. Such patterns include Call and Response, Solo and Chorused Refrain and the Mixed Structural patterns. In doing so, I maintained certain empathy between the song and the Igbo audience, as well as portray evidence of cultural influence and presence of African musical theories in the song. My combination of the Igbo compositional idioms with western harmonic techniques and principles to certain degree, gave credence to the full acceptance and appreciation of the composition by the targeted audience (Agu, Oral Interview, October, 2023).

**c) Form**

The first fifteen (15) bars of the song opens with a piano accompaniment as an introduction followed by the voices at bar sixteen. Agu further shows a discussion between the two main instruments, the piano and the voice in the song in form of Call and Response which is an important characteristic of African Music. The discussion is seen in the first one hundred (100) bars plus the introduction. A four (4) bar piano interlude that closes the first section also marks the beginning of the next section in which a counterpoint is seen at bar one hundred and five (105) starting with the altos while the tenors come in at one hundred and nine (109). Soprano was next at bar one hundred and twelve (112) with the bass capping at bar one hundred and eight (118). There was a shift in tonality in the beginning of this section till bar one hundred and eight (118) with the repetition of the entire section. The last section initiated another discussion again between the main instruments in the form of call and response to cap the music with two strong statements of the text: "My beautiful home, a home of peace; my beautiful home, I love you dearly (bars 141-161).

#### **d) Presentation Form**

The song is recommended to be performed by a good mixed voices or choral group with accompaniment. Some other additional percussive instruments may be good as the rhythm of the song suggests a strong traditional "atiliogwu" dance movements with a two slabs bucket xylophone to keep the time. The music in all its sections has a total of one hundred and sixty-one (161) bars on paper and one hundred and ninety (190) bars in practice.

#### **e) Melody**

Generally, the melody of the song is a very simple one. According to Onwuegbuna (2023), he maintains that "the melody of the song is simple; the tune is good with direct message. Since it is a simple melody, you can memorize it almost inside with its simple message. You do not need to record it to play over and over again for it to magnet in your psyche (Onwuegbuna Personal Communication. Sept. 2023). Samuel Nehemiah 'Bumname Ojukwu, another master in composition of school anthems (and the composer of the University of Nigeria's Anthem), church anthems maintains that "simplicity is a major ingredient in considering a melody of any anthem for schools, organizations, associations, churches, nations and even corporate bodies (Ojukwu, Oral Interview, August, 2018).

#### **f) Instrumentation/Accompaniment**

The main instrument that accompanies Anambra State Song as seen on the score is the Piano. Some other African traditional musical instruments were used during the official recording of the song in 1981 by the State Choir. On his choice of instruments and instrumentation, Agu maintains:

In Igbo culture, socio-cultural implications influence the choice of instruments for specific music type. In this song however, I introduced a variety of indigenous rhythmic instruments, and added the piano to serve as a melo-rhythmic instrument to achieve a desired balance. This combination resulted in a blend which made immediate resonance with both the traditional and modern Igbo musical occasions, as well as appealed to the contemporary African and Western audiences (Agu, Oral Interview, October, 2023).

### **Assessment in Relation to Nation Building**

Nation building according to Britannica (2009) anchors on people coming together to construct and structure national identity that aim at unification of the people. It involves people with diverse origin, histories, languages, cultures and religion coming together to chart a common course for justice, development, unity, equity and progress through various aspects like entrepreneurship, business, priesthood, civil service, teaching at various level (in fact the teachers are the foundation makers of

nation building since they deal with human beings who directly or indirectly effect the course of nation building) at different levels of the state and nation. According to Onwuegbuna (2023), nation building operates within five (5) stages- infrastructural, moral, psychological, mental and intellectual, since each of these when affected by personal efforts positively, a nation is built. This paper therefore, buttresses both moral and intellectual aspects of nation building as seen in Agu's Anambra State Song. Talking about the effect of the song on the people Onwuegbuna (2023) stated, "There was full acceptance of the song by the people of Anambra both young and old. The song came with the creation of the new state and it made us proud to identify it as our own. Going further, he added:

Among all the children I grew up with in the neighbourhood, the song excited in us a spirit of patriotism; it gave us a sense of belonging even as young people, it excited a level of love for the new state that whenever we hear that part of the piano introduction (bars 12-15), what comes to mind is the song: Anambra State and so on (Onwuegbuna, Oral Interview, September, 2023).

He further stated that the song also came with action. He said, "because of the love and acceptance of the song by the people, a certain level of consciousness is raised in the people that if you find anyone going against all the values captured in the song, you have no choice than to fight back because of that level of oneness, unity and identification that come with- I'm happy to be your child, I'm happy to be in you, I'm happy to be associated with all your progress". Therefore, the music arouses the consciousness of belongingness and ownership; this is our own, (*Nke a bu nke anyi*).

### **Conclusion**

This paper has explored scholarly views and came to a conclusion that Dan Agu is a patriot and a nationalist who used his efforts in the area of composition to affect and speak love, peace, commitment, hard work, diligence, honesty and efficiency as vital virtues one must possess to pursue and achieve a healthy state and nations as he captured in the Anambra State Song. However, should there be consciousness of all these virtues in the minds of all the youths, students, workers, artisans, civil servants; there shall be no corruption, there shall be no robbery nor kidnapping, there shall be no insecurity, fraud nor bribery. Upholding these virtues and as the Radio and Television Stations play it every day as before, a certain consciousness would have been raised which shall culminate into having good homes, families, state and our nation would have been built.

### **Recommendation**

The researcher therefore recommends strongly that the authorities of the State Government of Anambra through either the ministry of Education or Information and Culture be reached in a forum to educate them more on the background of the song, the moral values inherent in the song and how it is capable of remolding the consciousness of the people of Anambra. The meeting will pave way for the reintroduction of the song as the original Anambra State Song to the Government, Schools and Ministries. However, this call is in consonance with Olisaeke's (2017:236) comparison on Agu's song and the second anthem that replaced Agu's song. Olisaeke was of the opinion that the new anthem did not meet the requirements, taste and standard of an anthem.

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#### **Oral Interviews**

Agu, Oral Interview, August, 2009

Agu, Oral Interview, September, 2009

Ojukwu, Oral Interview, September, 2009

Agu, Oral Interview, September, 2023

Onwuegbuna, Oral Interview, September, 2023

Agu, Oral Interview, October, 2023

See the Anthology by Agu "Let the Choirs Sing" for the score of the Song of Patriotism (Pp. 237-246).

Britannica 2009: The World Encyclopedia