

NIGERIAN ART MUSIC: EXPLORING DAVID AINA'S COMPOSITIONAL STYLES AND TECHNIQUES

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Introduction

African music is a total art form of music that is closely linked to dance, gesture, and dramatization. It permeates African life occurs on daily activities translated to music. African music is also composed for several purposes in the society, such as rituals, entertainment, education purposes, and other social ceremonies. Vidal (2012), states that the introduction of songs is often followed by drumming and dancing. To ascertain this, African music is beyond aesthetic expression. In other words, it involved the totality of an African identity expressed in music. Art music is one of the classification of African music which expresses the functionality of music in African context composed or arranged by a person who have gone to school to study music. According to Collins dictionary (accessed 25th April, 2022), defines art music is a music written by a composer rather than passed by oral traditions. Omojola (1995), notes that Nigerian art music can be traced as a comprehensive works of a modern Nigerian composers who have the European knowledge of music and then exhibit the European knowledge of music to write, compose or document their music on paper through Western musical elements and software's. Abiodun (2018), also opined that, art music in Nigerian context is the composition of Nigerians who have formal music training, and have composed music using Western idioms to express traditional Nigerian music. However, one of these modern Nigerian art composers is David Aina who has composed music for several activities and purposes in Nigeria using African context, been performed at several occasions both in Nigeria and outside Nigeria.

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Moreover, art music could be performed at different occasions within the African context for its targeted purpose such as, to teach moral, educate, entertain, and tell stories of past events and present events. performances of art music differs and sometimes relents on conductor's temperament and expressions which are not written or documented, but added by performers or with conductor's discretion. This modifies the original intention of the composer. Therefore, this paper examined continuity and change in the performance of Nigerian art music with a specific focus on David Aina's compositional techniques and styles.

The paper adopts continuity and change as its theoretical framework. This theory was propounded by Herskovits and Bascom (1959). This theory focuses on how change occurs in the event of life, such as in culture, music, and socio-religious activities. This theory becomes relevant as a premise to gain new insights on the continuity and change in the performance of Nigerian art music. In this study, the ethnographic research method was adopted to elicit some relevant data needed using primary and secondary sources.

Brief History of David Aina

Oludaisi David Aina, is a Nigerian musicologist, composer, organist and scholar from the Yoruba ethnic group from southwestern Nigeria. He was born into the family of Chief Giwa Àiná Akindele Agun and Mrs Felicia Iyalode Àiná on 9th of September 1963 in Akure, Ekiti State. David Àiná attended Ado Grammar School, Ado Ekiti for his secondary education. Subsequently, he proceeded to study music at the Lagos State College of Education, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and the University of Lagos, Akoka, majoring in piano accompaniment, conducting, theory and composition. David Àiná had his first lessons in music when in form one (first year) at Ado Grammar School, Ado Ekiti. Immediately he resumed at Ado Grammar School, Àiná discovered music was on the time table and was so excited about it. David, as a student, used to try his hands in creating some tunes on the Organ to make his own composition.

Consequently, he became a student composer. The most successful trial in composition in his form 4 (year 4) was a song he wrote for his school outgoing students. David's teacher was very impressed that he ordered him to conduct the song. David's parents were oblivious of all of these. Àiná particularly learned the art

E. A. Taiwo & T. O. Popoola: Nigerian Art Music: Exploring David Aina's Comp... of choral conducting under Kweku Acqua Harrison, Emeka Nwokedi and Laz Ekwueme. Furthermore, his compositional skills and style were developed by active and passive studying great composers such as Kweku Acqua Harrison, Laz Ekwueme, N. Z. Nayo, Ayò Bankole and Fela Sowande. He was the accompanist and assistant director of the Lagos City Chorale between 1988 and 1995 and the Laz Ekwueme Chorale between 1991 and 2007. He later established his own Choral group known as Heritage in 1994. The group that has now metamorphosed into Odíderẹ chorus.



Picture 1: Oludaisi David Aina and the Researcher.

In 1989, David Àiná joined the services of All Saints' Anglican Church, Yaba as the Assistant Organist and later become the director of music in March 1995, and till date he still serve in that regards. Mr. David Àiná has worked in so many places as a music teacher, music director, music consultant at different pointi time but presently he is a lecturer at the Department of Theatre Arts and Music, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria.

His Musical Works

David Aina is known as a prolific choral composer. He has composed over one hundred songs which has been performed extensively both in Nigeria and outside Nigeria. Some of his compositions are as follows:

- Ejekajoyo (Let us Rejoice)
- Una hear me so

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- This wedding
- Idahunre(Yourresonse)
- Ekorin Ayo (Sing for Joy)
- Eko (Lagos)
- Tire niOluwa (This is yours o Lord)
- Oba Alase (God of Authority)
- Jesu lo j`ayo lo (Jesus is more than Joy)
- Jesu lo layomi.(Jesus owns my Joy)

Analysis of Some of His Works (Excerpts)

There are common musical elements used in musical composition which includes, pitch, melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, form, dynamics, and textures that are well represented in David Aina's compositions. His compositions usually encompass western elements. However, the African elements and his techniques of composing songs such as repetition, elongation, and syncopation are usually inevitable in African arts music. Moreover, the hemiola and hocket techniques are frequently used by David Aina as seen in one of his compositions titled Obalase.

Easily Flowing ♩ = 72 Reworked in June 2019

Soprano *mf* E-rù ò - ba

Alto *mf* Oo

Tenor *mp* Oo

Bass *mp* Oo

Piano *Easily Flowing ♩ = 72*

Ejekajoyo

Tempo de highlife ♩ = 96

December 1988

The musical score is written for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. It is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Tempo de highlife' with a quarter note equal to 96 beats per minute. The score consists of four staves. The Soprano and Alto parts have lyrics: 'E jé ká jò yò, ka fi - jó si o, a bí O - lù-gbà-là kan fún wa...'. The Tenor and Bass parts have lyrics: 'a bí O - lù-gbà-là kan fún wa...'. Dynamics are marked as *f* (forte) for the first two measures and *mf* (mezzo-forte) for the last two measures. The Soprano and Alto parts have a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes. The Tenor and Bass parts have a simpler melodic line with quarter notes.

Continuity and Change in Art Music

David Aina's compositional styles and techniques continue over the years as most of his compositions contain both western and African systems and elements. These elements have been part of his musical identity and style. Most Nigerian Arts Music encompasses singing with drumming and dancing. This has been a noticeable activity that most, as many arts music is performed on stage alongside with western or African instruments that are not notated in the composition. The fluidity of these elements is also paramount with David Aina's compositions which reflect the significance of his music. But some of these pieces are performed with the addition of musical instruments both western and African that are not notated in the original music.

Èkó

Highlife ♩ = 90

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled 'Èkó' in the Highlife style, with a tempo of 90 beats per minute. The score is written for four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are in Yoruba. The Soprano and Alto parts have identical lyrics: 'E - ko a - ke-te, i - le o-gbon. E - ko a-r'o-mi sa'. The Tenor part has the lyrics: 'E - ko a - ke-te, i - le o-gbon, a-r'o-mi sa _____ le-'. The Bass part has the lyrics: 'E - ko a-ke-te o, a-r'o-mi sa le - gbè o,'.

Frequently, to surface in his composition. This can be seen in the movement of Oba Alase, meanwhile, accompaniment of pieces with western or African instruments that are not notated with the composition now compel conductor's discretion without composer's instruction.

Morounto`jayo: Nigerian art music from the earliest scholars such as Fela Sowande, T.K.E. Phillips, Akin Euba, and Ayo Bankole, promote Yoruba culture through their musical composition, while Ainas' works balance intonation between the western and African language. For instance, looking at his earlier musical composition titled Una hear me so which does not start with piano accompaniment, compare to Ejikajoyo music. But as a result of change and modernization for developmental balancing and universal recognitions, piano introductions and accompaniment prompt with his composition as seen in MorounToJayo, and now notated and printed with conventional music software.

Recommendation and Conclusion

The motif of art musicians is to universally promote traditions, languages, customs and cultures through the use of western knowledge acquired in music.

E. A. Taiwo & T. O. Popoola: Nigerian Art Music: Exploring David Aina’s Comp... This could be expressed through the motive of self-composition or an arrangement for solo, choral and orchestration to promote the organization of African heritage in terms of rhythm, melody and techniques.

Therefore, there is need to improve the mode of compositions by giving notable considerations to African instruments to synchronized African compositions and performances. By so doing, more recognitions would be giving to African musical instruments as regards their mode of skills playing and performances.

For Example:

E JA KA JO YO
(Let Us All Rejoice)

Re-arr. by Taiwo Emmanuel Comp. by David Aina

$\text{♩} = 96$

The musical score is arranged in a system with seven staves. The vocal parts are Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The instrumental parts are Drumset, Congas, Sekere, and Agogo. The lyrics are: "E ja ka jo yo, ka fi - jo si o, a bi O - lu-gba-la kan funwa." The tempo is marked as quarter note = 96. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

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S. e - yin o - ni gba-gbo e - ho e - yo, a bi Je - su O - lu - gba la

A. e - yin 0 - ni gba-gbo e - ho e - yo, a bi Je - su O - lu - gba la

T. a bi Je - su O - lu - gba la

B. a bi Je - su O - lu - gba la

Drs.

Co.

Sek.

Ago.

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Interview

Oludaisi David Aina, 21st February 2022.