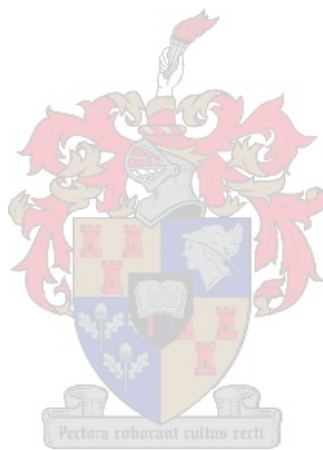


# **Towards a mapping of the marginal Readings of art songs by Nigerian, Ghanaian, Egyptian and South African composers**

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## Declaration

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## Abstract

African art music practices of western origin have oftentimes been excluded from general discourses on western art music practices. In this study, close readings of selected art songs by twentieth and twenty-first century Nigerian, Ghanaian, Egyptian and South African composers serve to ‘map’ this music through challenging existing general discourses on art music composition, and genre-specific discourses on art song composition in Africa. The readings also serve to create new discourses, including ones that promote African cross-regional engagements.

In the first part of this dissertation, the readings take place in the contexts of the selected countries. The second section presents pre-selected discourses and theories as points of departure. Chapter 2 proposes to question how the theory of African vocalism can be expanded, and how animist materialism could serve as an alternative context in which to read the composition of art music in Nigeria and Ghana. Chapter 3 aims to answer which strategies in anti-exotic self-representation have been followed in twentieth-century Egyptian art song. Chapter 4 asks how South African composers of art song have denoted ‘Africa’ in their works, and how these denotations relate to their oeuvres and general stylistic practices. Chapter 5 interrogates how composers have dealt with the requirements of tonal languages in their setting of texts in such languages to music. Chapter 6 probes possible interpretations of composers’ display of the ‘objects’ of cultural affiliation, positing expatriate African composers as diplomats. Chapter 7 asks what the contexts are in which to read specific examples of African intercultural art music, without which the analyst might make an inappropriate (perhaps unethical?) value judgement.

The conclusion presents a comparison of trends and styles in African art song to those in certain western song traditions. A discussion on folk and popular song styles as art is followed by a consideration of African vocalism in the context of the dissertation as a whole. A continuation of an earlier discussion on the compositional denotation of ‘Africa’ leads to a consideration of the ‘duty to denote’ in the context of western modernity.

## Opsomming

Kunsmusiekpraktyke van westerse oorsprong in Afrika is gereeld van algemene diskoerse oor westerse kunsmusiekpraktyke uitgesluit. Stip-lesings van geselekteerde kunsliedere deur Nigeriese, Ghanese, Egiptiese en Suid-Afrikaanse komponiste dien in hierdie studie om die musiek op die ‘kaart te plaas’ deur in gesprek te tree met bestaande algemene diskoerse oor kunsmusiekkomposisie, asook genre-spesifieke diskoerse oor kunsliedkomposisie in Afrika. Die lesings dien ook om nuwe diskoerse te skep, insluitend diskoerse wat gesprekke óór die grense van verskillende streke in Afrika bevorder.

Die lesings in die eerste helfde van die proefskrif vind plaas binne die kontekste van die geselekteerde lande. In die tweede deel word vooraf-geselekteerde diskoerse en teorieë as wegspringpunte gebruik. Hoofstuk 2 stel dit ten doel om te vra hoe die teorie van Afrika-vokalisme (*African vocalism*) uitgebrei kan word, en hoe animistiese realisering (*animist materialism*) as alternatiewe konteks kan dien waarin die komposisie van kunsmusiek in Nigerië en Ghana gelees kan word. In Hoofstuk 3 word gepoog om uit te vind watter strategieë in anti-eksotiese self-uitbeelding gevolg is in twintigste-eeuse Egiptiese kunsliedkomposisie. Die doel van Hoofstuk 5 is om uit te vind hoe komponiste die vereistes van toontale in hul toonsettings van tekste in sulke tale hanteer het. Hoofstuk 6 ondersoek moontlike interpretasies van komponiste se aanbiedings van die ‘objekte’ van kultuuraffiliasie deur die postulering van geëmigreerde komponiste as diplomate. Hoofstuk 7 vra wat die kontekste is waarin spesifieke voorbeelde van interkulturele kunsmusiek uit Afrika gelees kan word, waarsonder die analis ‘n onvanpaste (dalk onetiese?) waardebeoordeling kan maak.

Die slot bied ’n vergelyking van tendense en style in Afrika-kunsliedere met dié in sekere westerse liedtradisies aan. ’n Bespreking van volks- en populêre liedstyle as kuns word gevolg deur ’n oorweging van Afrika-vokalisme in die konteks van die proefskrif as geheel. ’n Voortsetting van ’n vroeëre gesprek oor die komposisionele uitbeelding van ‘Afrika’ lei tot ’n oorweging van die ‘plig om uit te beeld’ in die konteks van westerse moderniteit.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

### I *St. Louis, Missouri, January 2011.*

*Fred Onovwerosuoke's Twelve African songs for solo voice and piano is released on CD.*

Fred Onovwerosuoke adopted the nickname 'FredO' because of the notorious difficulty of pronouncing his family name, but it is actually appropriate that it's hard to say the man's name. That is because it is difficult to put into words his many talents and accomplishments as a composer, conductor, publisher, arts organizer, folklorist and tireless promotor of new and innovative music.

This Ghanaian of Nigerian descent who has made St. Louis his home has a new release on his African Music Publishers imprint that spotlights one of St. Louis' native daughters: the soprano Marliisa Hudson. The CD is titled *Libera* – no, that is not a misprint for 'Liberia' – and like everything else FredO touches, it is not simple to describe.

[...]

Marliisa Hudson, who now lives in Washington, D.C., has a fascinating voice that carries intense emotion at the high end of her range and moody soul on the low end. This is art song, not soul or gospel, so she sings with an intonation and phrasing heard in the concert hall, rather than the church pew. [...]

[...] Indeed, Onovwerosuoke's six compositions provide some of the most exciting and memorable moments on *Libera*. The African ideas translate beautifully into art song, and you can hear the musicians diving into them with joy and delight.

These six songs are taken from Onovwerosuoke's *12 African Songs for Solo Voice and Piano*, which draws from folktales, lullabies, dirges and healing dances from all over the African continent (King, 2011: online).

### II *Accra, Ghana, July 2003.*

*A selection of J.H. Kwabena Nketia's early songs are performed in concert.*

I combined both our traditional principles of 'parallel harmony' and voice separation and those of so-called common practice harmony, or now and then something a little complex when the musical context suggested it. [...]

The application of these and other procedures enabled me to create art songs inspired by the occasion, except that my songs were not designed to be performed in community contexts [...] but as songs which could be transmitted to the public by radio or performed as concert pieces. [...]

When Ensemble Noire [*sic*], a musical group from Canada, performed at the National Theatre in Accra on the National Day of Canada on July 1, 2003, the singer who came with the group sang Akin Euba's arrangement of *Six Yoruba Folk Songs* and excerpts from *Orunmilla's Voices* as well as four of my early songs: [...].

Dawn Padmore, the vocalist, was not a pop singer but an operatic singer who has performed solo with a number of orchestras (Nketia, 2004: 10-11).



### III *Stellenbosch, South Africa, October 1989.*

*A recital with a special focus on the Afrikaans art song is given.*

Mimi Coertze (*sic*) has for long been one of the foremost exponents of the Afrikaans folk-art song. I heard her myself 22 years ago for the first time, singing S. le Roux Marais's 'Heimwee' ('Longing for home'), and have to say that with this song she actually became a part of my musical being. To hear her at her best, like this year with Albie van Schalkwyk at the piano, is an emotionally intense experience. They have a unique relationship on stage which leads to the best in our musical folk heritage. It is unforgivable that every Afrikaner cannot just walk into a record store to buy a copy of their version of Pieter de Villiers's 'Sewe Boerneefliedjies' ('Seven Boerneef songs'). During her performance in the Endler Hall she sang the old songs with a voice that still flowers with sweetness, with all the velvet, the shaded intelligence [...]. Werner Nel, with his noble baritone voice, gave outstanding interpretations of more serious songs. Once again one realized that 'In die stilte van my tuin' ('In the silence of my garden'), Arnold van Wyk's setting of N.P. van Wyk Louw's poem, is one of our best art songs (Du Plessis, 1989: online).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The translation is by the present author. The original Afrikaans is as follows: 'Mimi Coertze [*sic*] is al lank die voorste eksponent van die volkse Afrikaanse kunslied. Ekself het haar 22 jaar gelede vir die eerste keer 'Heimwee' van S. le Roux Marais hoor sing en moet sê dat sy met hierdie lied eintlik 'n deel van my musikale wese geword het. Om haar op haar beste te hoor, soos vanjaar met Albie van Schalkwyk aan die klavier, is 'n intense emosionele ervaring. Hulle het 'n besondere verhouding op die verhoog wat lei tot die beste in ons musikale volksbesit. Dat elke Afrikaner nie 'n platewinkel kan binneloop om 'n opname van hulle weergawe van Pieter de Villiers se 'Sewe Boerneefliedjies' te koop nie, is onvergeeflik. Met haar optrede in die Endler-saal het sy die ou liedjies gesing met 'n stem wat nog altyd blom van soetheid, met al die fluweel, die geskakeerde begrip [...]. Werner Nel met sy edele baritonstem, het meer ernstige liedere gesing met uitstaande interpretasies. Mens het weer besef dat 'In die stilte van my tuin', Arnold van Wyk se toonsetting van N.P. van Wyk Louw se gedig, een van ons beste kunsliedere is' (Du Plessis, 1989: online).

## Background, motivation, aims, demarcation, terminology

Despite the distances in geographical location, broader socio-political context and time between the events recounted above, they have two salient elements in common: the art song genre of western origin, and the continent of Africa.<sup>2</sup> The accounts display certain threads that include a display of pride in the simple ‘folk-like’ having been translated – by multi-skilled composers – into a context that is deemed to be more sophisticated and complex, executed by singers whose western classical training and techniques are specifically referenced. Although these threads are not unique in the art song’s manifestation in Africa, the similarity of certain topoi to associations made to the genre in its original context (in this case *Volkstümlichkeit* and *Kultur*), many years after its international apotheosis, is what first sparked my interest in this topic.<sup>3</sup> This has in turn brought me back to the more basic questions of who in (and from) Africa has composed art songs and where, what are the compositional procedures that have been followed and what are the stylistic results? This is the first meaning of ‘mapping’ in the title of this dissertation. African art music practices of western origin have frequently been excluded from general discourses on western art music practices.<sup>4</sup> The music’s position within international discourse therefore explains my use of the term ‘marginal’ in the title, which should not be mistaken for a lack of confidence in the music’s worth or an indication that I will be studying the songs only in terms of its western points of reference. Stimulating further research on art music composers in Africa, and the more regular inclusion of art songs by African composers into the canon of performed works and in international art music discourse can be seen as further aims of this dissertation. This is the second meaning of ‘mapping’. Further aims are to challenge existing discourses on art music in Africa, and to create new discourses, including ones that promote African cross-regional engagements.

Written composition was established in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa through the process of acculturation caused by colonialism, and was first introduced by Christian missionaries in the form of unaccompanied hymns in churches and schools. African art music composers emerged to compose sacred and secular choral works as a result of this religious western-orientated educative environment. A trend of musicians going abroad (most notably to the United Kingdom, since the late 1930s, and the United States of America, since the 1960s) resulted in music being institutionalized in schools and tertiary institutions upon the return of graduates. Postcolonial times sparked a renewed awareness of non-western cultures in Africa, leading some composers to turn to precolonial music for inspiration and to seek ways

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<sup>2</sup> My use of the terms ‘art song’ and ‘art music’ is explained in the second paragraph on p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> See Taruskin (2005), chapter 35 (‘Volkstümlichkeit’).

<sup>4</sup> Take, for example, the respective conferences of the American Musicological Society and the (American) Society for Ethnomusicology in 2011. Whereas no papers on African-born art music composers or their works were presented at the AMS conference (AMS, 2011), the SEM conference included presentations such as Kimberly Beck Seder’s ‘Africa and the keyboard: The case of African pianism’ and Patrick Smith’s ‘Contemporary art music in Ghana: Engaging with modernity’ (SEM, 2011: 10, 106). The disciplinary approaches in and topics of both these papers could have allowed for its inclusion within the realm of ‘musicology’, but was classified as ‘ethnomusicology’ (most likely by the authors themselves, but in the context of a disciplinary divide between ‘musicology’ and ‘ethnomusicology’ over which they have little control) due to its geographical demarcation as ‘African’.

of blending these and purely western forms (Herbst et al., 2003: 146-149). In Egypt, Napoleon's expedition (1798-1802) led to the country's first contact with western music in the form of a military band. In the 1950s and 60s, government funding indicated a strong favouring of western art music (El-Shawan, 1985: 147). Western music was brought to South Africa by seventeenth-century Dutch settlers in the form military music, folk music and the Genevan Psalter. The first conservatory was already established in the early twentieth century (May, 2013b: online), and the apartheid government strongly supported western art music activities until the end of its rule. The art song of western origin was thus, along with other art music genres of western origin, 'transplanted' into Africa and emerged in both purely western and hybrid forms, incorporating precolonial black African, Arab and other influences.<sup>5</sup>

The choice of this genre as a focus for this study is multi-pronged: the smaller scope of its practice on the continent makes it more suitable for an overview, comparisons, and the development of a genre-composition theory than some other genres that are practiced on a larger scale in Africa (such as choral singing) would allow.<sup>6</sup> The small setting of an art song makes it especially suitable for a comparative study, as explained by Kravitt (1996: vii) where he says (in reference to the fin-de-siècle German lied) that 'Owing to its brevity, the lied reflects a particular trend more easily than do lengthier genres.' One may also be tempted immediately to link the art song of western origin to the centrality of song in precolonial musical practices, and to then take its possibilities as a mediating genre as a point of departure when investigating scores.<sup>7</sup> This may sometimes be fruitful, but often it won't be. One may also wonder if an apparently elitist practice – on a continent where mass choral singing is, for example, the order of the day – can be linked to broader contexts. In some instances it may be possible, but in others not. My approach is therefore simply to look at art song composition in Africa *for what it is*, regardless of social relevance, political agency, style, and imbalances in geographical representation. It should by now be clear that the art song will, in the context of broader discourses on art music composition in Africa, serve as a vehicle to make general assumptions. When it comes to compositional procedures (and in some instances style), it becomes more possible to draw genre-specific conclusions. The focus in this dissertation will be on *composition* only – the study of performance and reception histories falls outside its scope. Although one could argue for the advantages of studying art song in a study such as this one, one could easily run into a wall when trying to argue that it is the *best* choice. (A study of string quartets, symphonies or piano works will undoubtedly produce results not seen in this dissertation.) The selection of art song as the genre for investigation may therefore in part be seen as a purely personal choice. As a composer myself, I have a preference for artistic expression through the intimacy of small settings, the human voice, and for working with texts. As an Afrikaner in post-apartheid

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<sup>5</sup> This brief, generalized history is included here only for introductory purposes. More specific histories are included in each chapter in Section A.

<sup>6</sup> The term 'genre-composition theory' is used here in reference to African vocalism (See Chapter 2, p. 37).

<sup>7</sup> Arab classical music is song by definition (see, for example, Castelo-Branco, 2013: online), and '[t]he close connection between language and music also explains the centrality of song in African modes of expression' (Agawu, 2003: 107).

South Africa, the search for cultural belonging – and by extension a viable means of artistic expression – remains a pertinent issue. The study is therefore also exploratory in a personal sense.

The terms ‘art song’ and ‘art music’ (as used in this dissertation) refer neither to the stylistic character of a composition (as the notion of coherent style could be seen to exclude hybrid forms), nor are they used to pass judgement on the artistic merit of song types of precolonial African origin that they exclude.<sup>8</sup> The term is used as a matter of convenience – as well as for the current lack of a better term – to refer to the genre of western origin referenced by this term. According to this usage, ‘art song’ refers to songs composed for solo voice (trained in the western classical fashion) and most often piano for concert presentation to a non-participant audience, and generally stands in opposition to folk and popular song genres.<sup>9</sup> Where the text is my own words, the term ‘African’ in this dissertation is not used as a synonym for ‘black’. It is used to mean ‘from the continent of Africa’. The term ‘precolonial’ is also preferred above ‘traditional’, as the latter may be seen to imply that only cultural practices that existed before the advent of colonialism in Africa qualify as traditions. ‘Precolonial’ is conveniently used to refer to the period before the advent of *western* colonialism.<sup>10</sup> Where ‘African’ or ‘traditional’ are used in quotation marks (to imply ‘so-called African’, ‘black African’ or ‘so-called traditional’), it should be clear to the reader why the context in which it is used requires it. Neither ‘black’ nor ‘western’ will be capitalized so as to allow for their use as ideologically neutral terms alongside ‘white’.

The demarcation of countries – Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt and South Africa – came about organically through a much wider initial search for scores and literature. These are simply the countries to which I could trace the largest number of collected scores and literary sources that would allow a study like this within the available time frame. The selection conveniently represents different geographic regions on the continent with varying histories of cultural influences on their music. In retrospect, the fact that all of the selected countries have a history of British colonialism turned out not to be insignificant. Pascal Zabana Kongo (2007: 92-92) gives reasons for the separation that developed between Francophone and English-speaking countries in Africa in their approaches to tertiary music education that would explain the larger discourse on, and number of composers active in the field of art music in English-speaking regions. In a comparison between Central and West African countries, for example, he cites the ‘intensive and generalised choir practices’, ‘access to metropolitan distance-learning certificates’, and the ‘relatively more systematic music education, specifically in Western music theory’ in West Africa as reasons for its earlier development in this regard. Although I acknowledge ‘Africa’ as being culturally embedded within the large

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<sup>8</sup> According to Euba (1988: 93-94), it is incorrect to assume that art music – where the term is used to imply music intended for contemplative listening rather than being utilitarian – did not exist in precolonial times: ‘There are some types of African traditional music which are designed purely for listening and which therefore fulfil the same role as art music in western and other cultures. Moreover, African traditional music, even when assigned a utilitarian role, nevertheless possesses aesthetic qualities akin to those found in contemplative music.’

<sup>9</sup> Art songs accompanied by ensemble, orchestra or other solo instruments, such as guitar, are also included in this study.

<sup>10</sup> In other words, it does not refer to the period before the arrival of Islam in certain countries or regions.

foreign-born diaspora, I have only included composers who were born and raised on the African continent (even if they are or were subsequently resident elsewhere) for the purposes of imposing limits on the study. This dissertation is only concerned with art song composition in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

The rest of this introductory chapter consists of a literature review, a problematization of the lack of written histories of art music in Africa, a historical overview of histories of song in the west that are relevant to this study and, in conclusion, a discussion of methods and research questions.

### **A review of the academic literature on art song composition in Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt and South Africa**

There is huge disparity, in terms of the *number* of studies that focus exclusively on art song composition and in terms of the *scope* of these studies, between the literary output on this topic in South Africa and the output in Nigeria, Ghana and Egypt. There is also a heavy emphasis on the Afrikaans art song within the South African body of literature. Due to these disparities, it did not make sense to apply the same criteria in evaluating the entire body of literature. The sources that focus on practices outside South Africa could be discussed in detail, while those on practices within South Africa could at best be discussed in terms of examples and disciplinary trends. Studies on South African composers that do not focus exclusively on art song composition have been referred to only where they include a significant discussion on the topic. Due to the nature of this study (in which the focus is on composition), there is an emphasis – although not exclusively – on matters concerning composition or analysis in this literature review. Only academic literature has been included for review purposes. The division into countries of origin (of the composers on which the studies focus) is deliberate, in order to reflect imbalances. The section on Nigeria partially represents an archival project, where it includes references to rare articles and dissertations that were studied during my visit to the modern African music collection at Iwalewa-Haus, University of Bayreuth, Germany. I have chosen not to present this review in an abbreviated format, in order for it to serve as a reference source beyond the purposes of this dissertation.

#### South Africa

The reader will notice that I highlight certain disciplinary practices in this section, such as analysis according to predetermined categories, non-critical and critical studies. In doing this, it is not my intention to label more positivist-type practices pejoratively, but rather to *place* it historically in terms of disciplinary practice, especially where newer studies display practices that were more common in older studies, or vice versa. According to Hooper (2006: 19), '[t]here is a tendency, in at least some "new" or "critical" musicological writing, to imply that positivism is simply and inherently a "bad thing".' One becomes especially conscious of the importance of positivist studies when doing a study such as this dissertation, for which there is no existing 'catalogue'. It is, for example, Potgieter's (1967) 'ground work' on Rosa Nepgen (collecting, listing, and providing basic analyses) that afforded

Jorritsma (2001) the luxury of re-evaluating certain statements about this composer. The existence of this basic knowledge on Nepgen's compositions also allowed Jorritsma to draw newer discourses, such as gender issues, into her study (see the discussions below). Also, it is in the context of its contemporary theoretical application that I use the word 'critical', since I do not mean to 'imply that other "traditional" approaches are innately un- or non-critical, when arguably all scholarly work is by definition critical in intent [...]' (Hooper, 2006: 9).

Thom (2006: 3-4) highlights common characteristics in theoretical analyses which were characteristic of earlier musicological practices in South Africa. This can be seen in studies containing analyses of, among other works, Arnold van Wyk's Afrikaans art songs:<sup>11</sup>

The most striking of these characteristics is the convention of using the elements of music (usually form, melody, rhythm, harmony and/or counterpoint) as a starting point for the study. [...]

Analysis according to predetermined categories has the danger of undermining the true synthesis of the findings [...], because the underlying coherence between the elements of the music is often not studied satisfactorily.<sup>12</sup>

This analytical practice can be seen in a number of studies on art songs by South African composers (which will be discussed below), in which Thom's conclusion on the problem of synthesis of analytical findings will be shown to be true to a greater or lesser extent in different studies.

Temmingh's master's thesis, '*n Stylkritiese studie van die musiek van Arnold van Wyk* (Temmingh, 1965),<sup>13</sup> contains analyses, according to predetermined categories, of Van Wyk's song cycles *Vier weemoedige liedjies* (*Four sad songs*) and *Van Liefde en Verlatenheid* (*Of love and forsakenness*). Each analysis is followed by a short summary (which leads to the summative findings regarding Van Wyk's style in general in the final chapter), but the underlying synthesis between the different musical parameters is not studied satisfactorily.<sup>14</sup> Potgieter's doctoral dissertation, '*n Analitiese oorsig van die Afrikaanse kunslied met klem op die werke van Nepgen, Gerstman, Van Wyk en Du Plessis* (Potgieter, 1967),<sup>15</sup> constitutes the most extensive manifesto on the Afrikaans art song to date. Besides the more extensive style analyses of the composers mentioned in the title, it contains overview discussions of more than thirty other composers (such as P.J. Lemmer, W.H. Bell and John Joubert) whose art songs had been published since 1900. The analyses take the form as described by Thom above. This leads to generalized conclusions on Afrikaans art song compositional practice that remain within each of the same musical parameters into which the style analyses of specific composers had been divided. Paxinos's article 'Dawid Engela and his songs' (Paxinos, 2003), a reprint of an article that first appeared in 1973, provides a general discussion of the style of this composer's songs, mostly in terms of other

<sup>11</sup> In the context of Thom's thesis, 'earlier' (*destydse*) refers to studies done between 1965 and 1983.

<sup>12</sup> Translated from the original Afrikaans by the present author.

<sup>13</sup> *A style-critical study of the music of Arnold van Wyk*

<sup>14</sup> This conclusion was made by Thom (2006: 4) on the studies that she refers to in general. I have taken this conclusion and have applied it here to Temmingh (1965) specifically.

<sup>15</sup> *An analytical overview of the Afrikaans art song with an emphasis on the works of [Rosa] Nepgen, [Blanche] Gerstman, [Arnold] van Wyk and [Hubert] du Plessis.*

composers' influence on him, his piano writing and the tonality of his songs. Selected extracts from his songs are cited to illustrate examples of specific compositional techniques. This article is forward-looking in disciplinary terms in that it contains critical content and attempts a wider contextualization of Engela's style (within international trends in song composition). Niël Geldenhuys attempts to display 'generally valid laws' (Geldenhuys, 1976: 3) in John Joubert's compositional style through discussions according to analytical categories determined post-analysis (rather than presenting analyses of individual works according to predetermined analytical categories). He does this with special reference to Joubert's vocal works, in his doctoral dissertation entitled *John Joubert se komposisies: 'n Stylkritiese ondersoek met spesiale verwysing na sy vokale werke* (Geldenhuys, 1976).<sup>16</sup> The synthesis of the analytical findings (integrated with biographical information), and critical remarks in the final chapter are insightful. Jolena Geldenhuys focuses exclusively on variation techniques (melodic, rhythmic, harmonic and contrapuntal) in her doctoral dissertation, *Arnold van Wyk (1916- ) se vokale musiek: 'n Stylstudie met spesiale verwysing na variasietegnieke* (Geldenhuys, 1983).<sup>17</sup> This dissertation includes analyses of the song cycles *Vier Weemoedige Liedjies* and *Van Liefde en Verlatenheid*. She attempts to disprove Temmingh's (1965) denial of a 'consistent motivic cell idea' (Geldenhuys, 1983: 12) through her analyses of variation techniques in *Van Liefde en Verlatenheid*. The conclusion, which is divided into sections for the summative findings on melody, rhythm, harmony and counterpoint, contain separate discussions on Van Wyk's solo songs within each of these parameters.<sup>18</sup> Although the analyses and their findings in Van der Merwe's doctoral dissertation, *'n Stylkritiese studie van uitgesoekte sololiedere van Rosa Nepgen (geb. 1909)* (Van der Merwe, 1984),<sup>19</sup> show the same characteristics in construction as seen in, for example, Temmingh (1965) and Potgieter (1967), the attempts in applying the findings are more modern. The author, for example, criticizes Stefans Grové's classification of Nepgen's style as neo-Romantic. Instead he argues for its classification as neo-Classical, based on a theoretical concept integrated with the analytical findings (see Van der Merwe, 1984: 231).<sup>20</sup> Both the analyses and their summative findings in Van der Mescht's doctoral dissertation, *Die liedere van Hubert du Plessis (gebore 1922)* (Van der Mescht, 1987),<sup>21</sup> are presented according to predetermined categories, and do not contain modernizations as seen in Van der Merwe (1984). Van der Spuy's doctoral dissertation, *The compositions of Priaulx Rainier: An annotated catalogue* (Van der Spuy, 1988), includes discussions on each of Rainier's art songs. These discussions contain extracts from the scores, information on its duration, first performance, publishers, dedicatees, by whom it was commissioned and the location of manuscripts, lists of reviews, reproductions of programme notes and historical information on the compositions' origins and performances. The content of reviews are sometimes referred to in the discussions on performances. Rörich, in her article 'Stefans Grové's *Vyf Liedere*' (Rörich, 1989), departs from the analytical procedures discussed earlier, in that her aim is to

<sup>16</sup> *John Joubert's compositions: A style-critical investigation with special reference to his vocal works*

<sup>17</sup> *Arnold van Wyk's (1916- ) vocal music: A style study with special reference to variation techniques*

<sup>18</sup> A new, extensive study on the songs of Arnold van Wyk is forthcoming.

<sup>19</sup> *A style-critical study of selected solo songs by Rosa Nepgen (born 1909)*

<sup>20</sup> Please note that the present author does not necessarily agree with this argument. It is the fact that there is an argument that is of importance here.

<sup>21</sup> *The songs of Hubert du Plessis (born 1922)*

‘get to the essence of each song [...]’ (Rörich, 1989: 30). She achieves this by highlighting characteristics of selected musical parameters where it best serves to illustrate the interpretation of the text. The author precedes the analysis with a discussion of general features of Grové’s vocal style, rather than presenting it as a result of the analysis. In Holzapfel’s doctoral dissertation, *Die lieder van S. le Roux Marais: ‘n Geannoteerde katalogus* (Holzapfel, 1992),<sup>22</sup> the author presents a fairly sober consideration of Marais’s songs by, for example, contextualizing the composer’s style in terms of parallel and earlier international trends and theorizing on the sentimentality of the songs.<sup>23 24</sup> This is done instead of engaging in a detailed analysis admittedly not justified by the simplicity of the songs. Each of the songs is discussed in the catalogue section of the dissertation. These discussions contain extracts from the scores, information on the poet, formal structure of the poem, the date of composition, location of manuscripts, publisher, key and time signature, voice type and range for which the song was composed, and the song type according to which the author has classified it, such as ‘liefdeslied’ (‘love song’) (Holzapfel, 1992: 198) or ‘historiese treurlied’ (‘historical mourning song’) (Holzapfel, 1992: 185). Unlike Van der Spuy’s (1988) dissertation, the catalogue-type information on each song is followed by an analytical discussion – admittedly according to categories that were predetermined – but with the specific aim of highlighting the synthesis between the text and the music (or lack thereof). Also, it is presented in an integrated fashion rather than point-by-point, and contains critical elements. The summary of style characteristics within separate musical parameters (in the concluding chapter) again reminds one of earlier studies. There is also no attempt at integrating the biographical information presented in the second chapter with the analytical findings. In his article, ‘‘n Volledige katalogus van die lieder van Hubert du Plessis’ (Van der Mescht, 1992),<sup>25</sup> Van der Mescht presents a list of Du Plessis’s songs. The songs are listed chronologically, with their opus numbers, dates of composition, places of composition, dates of review (where relevant), poets, the language of each poem, the voice types for which the songs were composed, to whom they were dedicated, the duration of each song, and the names of publishers. The discussion of Rosa Nepgen’s works in Grové’s review of the anthology ‘Liedere-keur/Selected songs’ by Rosa Nepgen (Grové, 1994) still takes place according to predetermined categories, but is modern in its skilful display of critical content and contextualization of stylistic trends in broader terms. Van der Walt’s article, ‘Pieter de Villiers se Boerneef siklusse vir solostem en klavier’ (Van der Walt, 1999)<sup>26</sup> contains a

<sup>22</sup> *The songs of S. le Roux Marais: An annotated catalogue*

<sup>23</sup> The term ‘sober consideration’ is used here in comparison to examples of journalistic hagiography in which this composer is hailed as a pioneer of the Afrikaans art song, without qualification. Such praise usually considers his promotion of Afrikaans culture through the art song, rather than considering the songs themselves. See, for example, ‘Le Roux Marais vereer deur FAK (‘Le Roux Marais honoured by the Federation of Afrikaans Culture Organisations’) (1980: 6).

<sup>24</sup> Holzapfel (1992: 9, 10) calls this sentimentality the *Heimtdialekt*, in reference to the German writer and journalist Gustav Freytag who, in his 1856 essay entitled ‘Siebleben’, made the statement that ‘Erst im Auslande lernt man den Reiz des Heimatdialekts geniessen; erst in der Fremde erkennt man, was das Vaterland ist’ (It is only abroad that one learns to enjoy the charm of the ‘home dialect’; only in the unknown does one acknowledge what the fatherland is.) Holzapfel made this association after attending a concert in Argentina in 1983 during which songs by Marais were sung.

<sup>25</sup> ‘A complete catalogue of the songs of Hubert du Plessis’

<sup>26</sup> ‘Pieter de Villiers’s Boerneef cycles for solo voice and piano’



discussion of compositional methods and style (again, according to predetermined categories), based on information supplied by the composer in interviews. This is done rather than providing conclusions evidenced by analysis. The article contains no critical content and ends with a contextualization of the style of De Villiers's Boerneef songs, by the composer himself, within the history of South African song composition. All of this is preceded by discussions of central themes in the poems chosen for each song cycle, the composer's choices of titles for each cycle and the arrangement of the poems within them, the voice types for which they were composed and the first performance of each cycle. In his article, 'Some aspects of pitch organization in Peter Klatzow's *Songs of exile*' (May, 2000), May focuses exclusively on pitch content and relations in these songs. He sometimes relates motives in these songs to earlier works by Klatzow, but does not explain the significance of the findings in relation to other musical parameters or the text. Roos, in her master's thesis *Hendrik Hofmeyr: Lewe en werk 1957 – 1999* (Roos, 2000),<sup>27</sup> presents a discussion of the song cycle *Alleenstryd*. The discussion includes references to the context in which the cycle was created, the composer's personal motivation and musical reasons for choosing the text, symbolism in the text, and symbolic reasons for choosing certain musical styles, scales, keys and chords. Although the discussion is not critical in nature, biographical information and analytical findings are integrated satisfactorily. Jorritsma attempts to 'shed a different light on Rosa Nepgen's career' (Jorritsma, 2001: 92) by investigating the composer's early style compared to her late style, through the analysis of two songs, 'Salut d'Amour' (1936) and 'Skemer' ('Dusk') (1984) in her discussion on this composer in her master's thesis, *South African 'songprints': The lives and works of Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, Princess Constance Magogo, and Rosa Nepgen* (Jorritsma, 2001). In this process she also 'tests' certain statements regarding Nepgen's style in the literary output on this composer (mainly Potgieter (1967), Van der Merwe (1984) and Grové (1994)). She does not present her analyses, only the results. Jorritsma is possibly the first author to draw gender issues and Afrikaner nationalism into a discussion on Nepgen. Walton takes issues of gender, sexuality and Afrikaner nationalism much further in a book chapter on Rosa Nepgen entitled 'Being Rosa' (Walton, 2005). In it he gives Hubert du Plessis and Arnold van Wyk's homosexuality as the reason for their inability to penetrate 'the inner circle of cultural Afrikanerdom' (Walton, 2005: 69), and this being the reason for their mocking of Nepgen rather than her inferiority to them as composer. Walton also suggests that her 'music's subordination to the text is a reflection of the gender-based hierarchies in her marriage' (2005: 67) to the poet W.E.G. Louw. Most relevant to the present author's study is a discussion on the discrepancy between the 1920s and 1930s Afrikaans poets' ideology for forging an Afrikaans art song tradition akin to the German lied, and the style of the composers of that time (such as Johannes Joubert, P.J. Lemmer and S. le Roux Marais) which was more influenced by the English parlour song than the German lied. The aim of Van der Mescht's article, 'Hendrik Hofmeyr se Afrikaanse kunsliedere' (Van der Mescht, 2007),<sup>28</sup> is to create contexts for the composition of these works through information supplied by the composer in interviews and from the composer's notes on these compositions. An extended general discussion on

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<sup>27</sup> *Hendrik Hofmeyr: Life and work 1957 - 1999*

<sup>28</sup> 'Hendrik Hofmeyr's Afrikaans art songs'

Hofmeyr's choice of Afrikaans texts leads to discussions on selected songs, not in terms of predetermined categories, but (where appropriate) in terms of musical and poetic themes, structure and (again) text choices. The article is not critical in nature. Cupido's doctoral dissertation, *Significant influences in the composition of Hendrik Hofmeyr's song cycle Alleenstryd* (Cupido, 2009), contains a descriptive analysis, done in consultation with the composer, that references the compositional process of, influences on, and symbolism in this cycle. Curiously, this dissertation does not reference Roos's dissertation (2000) that also contains a significant description of this cycle. Brukman raises the Afrikaans art songs of Cromwell Everson from obscurity in his article, 'Aspects of musical modernism: The Afrikaans song cycles of Cromwell Everson'. In it he proposes that Everson's modernist expression enacted a 're-evaluation of existing compositional procedures and musical expressivity' (Brukman, 2011: 19-20) in South Africa at the time of its composition. The author aids his argument with descriptive analyses that focus on aspects of modernism.<sup>29</sup> Forbay, in her doctoral dissertation entitled *Afrikaans art song: A stylistic study and performance guide* (Forbay, 2011), aims to introduce this repertoire to international performers. Appropriately, she includes extensive discussions on diction, grammar, and performance practice.<sup>30</sup> Grové's article, "'Making the Dutchman proud of his language": 'n Honderd jaar van die Afrikaanse kunslied' (Grové, 2011),<sup>31</sup> provides an extensive historical overview of the genre that traces its origins back to the nineteenth century. Muller's article 'Twelve notes, twelve endnotes' (Muller, 2011) includes a descriptive analysis of Stanley Glasser's *Songs of exile*. The author reads Glasser's use of the twelve-tone technique (within the work, and at the point in this technique's history where the composer uses it) in the context of the composer's exile from South Africa. Thom Wium provides an overview of recent research done on Hubert du Plessis, with specific references to research on his songs, in an article entitled 'Hubert du Plessis (1922-2011): An appreciation' (Thom Wium, 2011).<sup>32</sup>

### Nigeria<sup>33</sup>

Alaja-Browne, in her master's thesis *Ayo Bankole: His life and work* (Alaja-Browne, 1981) includes a discussion on Bankole's *Three Yoruba songs* (see Alaja-Browne: 47-48) that includes references to the harmonic style and the text-music relationship. Bankole's 'Adura fun alafia' ('Prayer for peace') for voice and piano (1969) is mentioned briefly (see Alaja-Browne, 1981: 47). The discussion on Bankole's *Three Yoruba songs* in Euba's article 'Ayo

<sup>29</sup> General sources on composers, and works lists that reference art song composition are too numerous to mention. See, for example, the entries and works lists in *The South African Music Encyclopaedia* (Malan, 1980b, Malan 1982b, Malan, 1984d, Malan, 1986), the essays in *Composers in South African today* (Klatzow, 1987), the essays on and complete works list of Stefans Grové in Muller and Walton's (2006) and, more recently, the complete works list of Roelof Temmingh (Franke, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> It is perhaps necessary to mention that Cupido's (2009) and Forbay's (2011) dissertations both take the form of shorter projects that are required in partial fulfilment of the requirements of structured Doctor of Musical Arts (performance) degrees in the United States.

<sup>31</sup> "'Making the Dutchman proud of his language": One hundred years of the Afrikaans art song'

<sup>32</sup> The overview includes discussions of Van der Mescht (2002) and Viljoen, M. and Viljoen, N. (2005).

<sup>33</sup> The reader will notice that I sometimes write Twi, Yoruba, Igbo or Ewe texts (e.g. the names of songs) with diacritics, and sometimes without. A trend exists where text are sometimes written without diacritics. I used what was available to me in the original source: if it was given with diacritics, I used it; if none were given, I rewrote it without diacritics.

Bankole and his music' (Euba, 1986, part 3: 3-4) contains very brief references to the harmonic idiom, melodic line, the meaning of the poem and the text-music relationship. The discussion on 'Ojo ma ro' for voice and piano that follows mostly consists of a translation of the poem and references to why the accompaniment is a good example of African pianism (see Euba, 1986, part 3: 4). Euba briefly mentions Bankole's *Three Yoruba songs* and *Three songs for Diana* in his book *Essays on music in Africa* (Volume 1) (Euba, 1988: 96), in connection with their piano accompaniments. Euba (1988: 104-105) also provides brief discussions of Bankole's *Three Yoruba songs* and 'Ojo ma ro', in which he mostly refers to text-music relationships, rhythm, piano accompaniment and programmatic contents. Omojola and Bankole's article 'Contemporary art music in Nigeria: An introductory note on the works of Ayo Bankole' (Omojola and Bankole, 1994: 536-537) is unique in its slightly more detailed discussion of tonality in Bankole's *Three Yoruba songs*. Omojola, in his book *Nigerian art music: With an introductory study of Ghanaian art music* (Omojola, 1995: 57), refers to 'Ja itanna to'n tan' in reference to its tonality. Sadoh dedicates an entire chapter to Bankole's art songs in his book, *Intercultural dimensions in Ayo Bankole's music* (Sadoh, 2007a: 66-82). In this chapter he provides descriptive analyses of *Three Yoruba songs*, 'Keresimesi tun ma de o' ('Christmas is here again'), 'Ojo ma ro' ('Rain fall'), and 'Adura fun alafia' ('Prayer for peace'), that reference melody, structure, tonality, accompaniment styles, the meaning of the text, and the interpretation of the text in the music. The discussions have a special focus on the precolonial origins of materials.

Riesz, in *Traditionelle und moderne afrikanische Musik am Beispiel des nigerianischen Komponisten Akin Euba* (Riesz, 1988),<sup>34</sup> describes the stylistic influences in the piano accompaniments of 'Agbe' and 'Omo jowo' in *Six Yoruba folk songs* (see Riesz, 1988: 17). Riesz (1988: 36b) further mentions Euba's 'Time passes by' for female voice and piano in connection with its origin as a pop song. A detailed discussion of this cycle is found in Uzoigwe's master's thesis entitled *Akin Euba: An introduction to the life and music of a Nigerian composer* (Uzoigwe, 1978).<sup>35</sup> The original social contexts of the songs are discussed, followed by Uzoigwe's critique in which he counters Euba's claim regarding the non-Africanness of the accompaniment. The rhythmic characteristics of the accompaniment are mentioned, and the latter part of the discussion is on the possible reasons for Euba having chosen the specific texts in question for setting to music (see Uzoigwe, 1978: 56-59). Omibiyi-Obidike, in *The process of education and the search for identity in contemporary African music* (Omibiyi-Obidike, d.u.: 15), briefly mentions the *Six Yoruba folk songs* in connection with their melodies, harmonic structures and texts.

Omojola (1995: 46) refers to Fela Sowande's *Because of you* (for soprano and piano, 1954) in a general discussion on this composer's art songs in a discussion of Fela Sowande's style. Omojola and Sowande, in their article 'Style in modern Nigerian art music: The pioneering works of Fela Sowande' (Omojola and Sowande, 1998: 458) mentions the same song in a similar discussion. According to Sadoh, in his article 'Fela Sowande: The legacy of a Nigerian legend' (Sadoh, 2005: 22), Sowande first introduced the art song genre to the Nigerian art music scene.

<sup>34</sup> *Traditional and modern African music, with the Nigerian composer Akin Euba as example*

<sup>35</sup> This thesis was later published as a book (Uzoigwe, 1992) – my source was, however, the thesis.

Omojola (1995-76-77) mentions Joshua Uzoigwe's orchestral song, *Watermaid*, in connection with rhythmic patterns and orchestration. Sadoh discusses the audience response to Uzoigwe's *Four Igbo Songs* at a performance in Nigeria in 1993 in his article entitled 'Intercultural creativity in Joshua Uzoigwe's music' (Sadoh, 2004). The published score of Uzoigwe's *Six Igbo songs* (Uzoigwe, d.u.) includes detailed analyses of these songs that reference structure, phrasing, rhythmic patterns, melodic and harmonic series, and motivic design.<sup>36</sup> Sowande lists exactly what the title suggests in his *'Operation music one': Tape-recordings and study-scores of original compositions by Nigerian musician-composers with academic training abroad* (Sowande, d.u.). Due to its seminal importance as a rare cataloguing project, the content, where it refers to art songs, is quoted here (Sowande, d.u.: 4, 6-7):

Mr Akin Euba.

3: <i>Six Yoruba Folk Songs.</i>	Female Voice & Piano. [...]
6: <i>Three Yoruba Songs.</i>	Baritone, Piano & Iya Ilu Dundun. [...]
8: 'Emi l'a nse l'oko d'oro'	Female Voice, Piano & 2 Yoruba Drums. [...]

Mr Ayo Bankole.

35: <i>Three Art Songs.</i>	In Yoruba, for Voice & Piano. [...]
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Mr Fela Sowande.

34: 'Enia Yepere'	Voice & Piano. [...]
39: <i>Three Songs of Contemplation.</i>	Tenor & String Orchestra.
i: 'To a Priestess'	Published Chappell: Voice & Piano.
ii: 'Loneliness'	
iii: 'Night in the desert'	
40: 'Because of you'	Voice & Piano. Published: Chappell.
41: 'To Daffodils' (Poem by Herrick)	Voice & Piano.
42: 'Leisure Hour Fragment'	Voice & Piano.
43: 'A Garden for my lover'	Voice & String Orchestra.
44: 'Alone with Thought'	Voice, String Orchestra, Celeste, & Harp: Percussion.
45: 'To a Pupil'	Tenor & String Orchestra.
46: 'My Heart & I'	Baritone & Piano.

Christian Onyeji's article, 'Composing art songs based on Igbo traditional music: Concept and process in contemporary times' (Onyeji, 2005) is a rare instance of a Nigerian study that focuses exclusively on art song composition, and in which he introduces the concept of African vocalism.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> The *Six Igbo songs* include the *Four Igbo songs*, with the addition of 'Okpo' ('The sting') and 'Ive omaka' ('All good things will last') (Uzoigwe, d.u.).

<sup>37</sup> This source is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 (p. 38).

## Ghana

Kofi Agawu's article 'The impact of musical language in Ghana: An introduction to the musical style of Ephraim Amu' (Agawu, 1984: 62-67) includes brief descriptive analyses of Amu's *Three solo songs* for voice and piano. The analytical commentary includes references to melody, rhythm, structure, text-music relationships, matters concerning the music and the linguistic requirements of the Twi text, as well as the role of the piano accompaniment. In George Dor's paper 'Amu's "Bonwere Kentewene": A celebration of Ghanaian traditional knowledge, wisdom and complementary artistry' (Society for Ethnomusicology, 2008: 29), the focus is on 'major factors that informed his [Amu's] inspiration, ingenuity, and agency that yielded this art song', which is the first of the *Three solo songs* mentioned earlier.<sup>38</sup> Nketia, in his book *African art music: The creative potential of African art music in Ghana* (Nketia, 2004), comments on the inspirational origin of a series of laments for voice and piano ('Yaanom montie' and 'Onipa beyee bi') written in 1944. In this he briefly refers to certain compositional procedures followed (see Nketia, 2004: 7-9).<sup>39</sup> Nketia also recounts a performance given in Accra in 2003, during which songs by himself and Akin Euba were performed (see Nketia, 2004: 11-12).

## Egypt

There is a dearth of information on art song composition in Egypt in English-language scholarship. Adel Kamel, in a book chapter entitled 'Egyptian composition in the twentieth century' (Kamel, 1999: -338, 347), lists art songs in the work lists of Hassan Rashid and Gamal Abdel-Rahim. In a conference paper entitled 'Contemporary Egyptian music compositions: Between inheritance and delineation' (Mattar, 2007), Nahla Mattar includes an analysis of Rageh Daoud's 'A dream' for voice, strings, percussion and accordion. This is done with the aim of examining 'how the balance between the music as [a subjective] expression and [the application of so-called 'traditional elements'] as a commodity is reached by contemporary Egyptian composers' (Mattar, 2007: 1) in order not to alienate audiences. Gamal Abdel-Rahim's art songs are mentioned briefly in various places throughout *Festschrift for Gamal Abdel-Rahim* (El-Kholy and Robison, 1993). This is done in the contexts of general discussions, works list, brief references to compositional aspects, and in connection with a performance.

The imbalances and disparities that were mentioned in the introduction have now been demonstrated. The only large studies that focus on South African-born composers who mostly composed art songs in a language other than Afrikaans (Geldenhuis (1976) and Van der Spuy (1988)) are on composers (John Joubert and Priaulx Rainier) who mostly chose English poetry for setting to music. There are no significant studies on art songs by composers who set poetry in South African languages other than English or Afrikaans to

<sup>38</sup> Please note that only an abstract of this paper was available to me.

<sup>39</sup> Nketia provides translations of the song texts as a whole, but not of the song titles (see Chapter 2, pp. 92 to 93).

music. All the South African composers that have been mentioned thus far are white. A vast number of art songs by South African composers from a younger generation (most notably Hendrik Hofmeyr) have received very little attention. Where catalogue-style resources on the older generation of art song composers do exist, further investigation and contemporary re-evaluations have been few.

References to art songs in Nigerian, Ghanaian and Egyptian studies are brief, and mostly contained within larger studies on more general topics. Analyses and references to other matters concerning composition remain few and are, with only a few exceptions, limited in scope. Authors have mostly chosen to not contextualize their analyses in terms of broad western stylistic-historical origins. Most studies focus on the works of an older generation of ‘pioneer’ art music composers, rather than on younger and currently active composers. I have thus far not mentioned the numerous entries on composers from Africa in large referential works such as the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Many of these numerous entries briefly refer to art songs and include them in works lists. This study depends on information that frequently can only be found in these dictionary-type sources (I include websites in this category as well). Where I rely on such sources it should therefore not be seen as an attempt at avoiding the use of more in-depth sources. It rather serves to demonstrate that more extensive and specialized sources do not exist.

The reason for having pointed out a number of gaps in the literature on art song composition in South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana and Egypt has been to show the wide scope for further contributions in certain respects and to situate the present author’s study within existing scholarship. What it does not purport, is to promise that this study will address all these issues.

### **Problematizing the lack of written histories of art music in Africa**

‘Lack’ in the context of written histories of art music in Africa suggests a double meaning. First, the word references the non-existence of written histories, and second, it refers to deficiencies in existing literature. An obvious example of ‘non-existence’ would be the lack of historical and critical editions of compositions by African composers, which would serve important functions in both performance and scholarship. Where histories do exist (and here I address the second ‘lack’) they are often dominated by certain tropes that often reflect its appropriation for political purposes.

In the first part of this section I problematize these issues in the context of political ideology. In the second part I provide a problematization in the context of the material archive, using an ethnography of my visit to the collection of modern African music at Iwalewa-Haus, University of Bayreuth, Germany, as the point of reference.

#### Political ideology

Philips (2005: 39) suggests that ‘The emergence of African history as a field within history coincided with the rise of African nationalist and independence movements. Rathbone (2009: 115) confirms this where he says that ‘They [historians of Africa] established themselves at a time of widespread anticolonial agitation in which histories were

energetically being recruited to serve to legitimate claims for self-determination.’ In Nigeria, for example, writing the history of art music might not have been a priority or a popular thing to do in the wake of decolonization, considering its association with colonialism and ‘a Western educated, African elite [...] who had hoped to gain more political and economic power from their European counterparts’ (Omojola, 1995: 9). In 1950s and 60s Egypt, the post-revolutionary government saw western art music as representing a more advanced level of musical development than Arab musical practices, and thus prioritized its financial support.<sup>40</sup> In the late 1960s, the government started to address this imbalance by increasing its support for other types of music (El-Shawan, 1985: 147). As in Nigeria, art music of western origin in Egypt was associated with the western-educated Egyptian elite (El-Shawan, 1985: 144). In South Africa, it is a well-known fact that the structures of apartheid supported activities in the field of art music (up to the early 1990s), disproportionately so where practiced by white people.<sup>41</sup> Also, Afrikaner nationalism influenced the writings of some, and segregation and sanctions allowed for the avoidance of ‘engagement with critical theory’ and writers to ‘remain untouched by international disciplinary shifts in the humanities and especially in musicology’ (Lucia, 2005: xxxv).

Published discourse reveal selected tropes that reflect the appropriation of written histories for political purposes. Below, each discussion of these tropes is followed by a short discussion of examples (or an example) from the literature on art music in Africa.

#### (a) Contemporary hagiography

The written histories of art music in Africa, especially the writings on composers, often continue to display hagiographic tendencies in contemporary times. The term ‘hagiography’ refers to a lack of critical engagement with the ‘pioneer’ or ‘legend’ status of composers. One may argue that this was common practice before the advent of the ‘new musicology’ and that this lack of criticism towards composers and their works in more recent studies therefore reflect a continuation of an older-style colonial practice. Second, hagiographic practices refer to an unbalanced emphasis on a generation of composers who came to prominence at an important point in political history.

#### Example 1:

‘The contribution of Nigerian composers to classical music literature includes works for orchestra, symphony, chamber ensemble, piano, organ, instrumental solo, vocal solo, chorus and opera. Notable among these modern composers are Thomas King Ekundayo Phillips (1884-1969), Fela Sowande (1905-87), Samuel Akpabot (1932-2000), Ayo Bankole (1935-76), Akin Euba (b.1935), Lazarus Ekwueme (b.1936), Meki Nzewi (b.1938), Joy Nwosu Lo-Bamijoko (b.1940) and Joshua Uzoigwe (1946-2005)’ (Sadoh, 2007: 80).

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 108 to 110 (‘The history of art music in Egypt: An overview’).

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter 4, pp. 139 to 142 (‘The history of art music and art song in South Africa: An overview’).

Example 2:

‘Fela Sowande is now generally acknowledged as the most important twentieth-century West African composer of concert music and performer of jazz’ (Omojola, 2007: 141).

Example 1 is typical of what I have seen in the introductions to numerous overview-type articles: lists of the most important ‘modern’ or ‘contemporary’ composers that do not include anyone born after the 1940s. (Since existing or available information is what I had to rely on, this also explains the strong focus on an older generation of twentieth-century composers in this dissertation.) Example 2 – a fairly harmless statement that may or may not be true – is representative of many other similar statements that are repeated, but which one cannot trace to any evidence base.

(b) The reproduction of a power relation (1): The self-promotion of difference

Depelchin (2005: 5) states the following:

Just as European colonisation was a process of appropriation, repression, exploitation and oppression, most of its history, particularly the one moulded by Africanism, repeated the appropriation process because its practitioners cannot claim, as they tend to do, that they are entirely free from the interfering distortions generated by power relations. Such appropriations when passed off as discoveries do more than produce or reproduce knowledge; more importantly, they produce and reproduce the very power relations which are considered as obstacles to more democratic purposes.

In the literature, such ‘discoveries’ often take the form of authors presenting musical characteristics in music from Africa as uniquely African when it is not. This is not to say that the musical characteristics in question are not also African (in addition to being western, Arab, or whatever the case may be), only that they are not *only* African. Where African authors do this, they are supporting the epistemology of difference on which much of western scholarship of Africa was (and is) founded, thereby reproducing the power relation of western dominance based on difference.<sup>42</sup> Agawu (2003: 95) calls this ‘the denial of nonuniqueness to Africa’. If authors were to present the same information on a piece of music purely as characteristics (not to raise issues of analytical categories and description here), rather than as *unique* characteristics, this criticism would not apply.

Example 1:

‘Music theater and dance theater are more likely to appeal to average Africans than symphonies and string quartets!’ (Akin Euba in Hymes Onovwersuoke, 2008: 17).

Example 2:

‘African elements used [...] include

- a. Polyrhythmic and multi-metre textures

<sup>42</sup> See Agawu’s (2003: 151-171) discussion on difference.



[...]

g. Harmonies [with] modal and heterophonic qualities [...]’ (Omojola, 1995: 165).

### Example 3:

‘This paper theorizes that:

[...]

- in Africa, music and the inspiration to compose it are [...] received from metamusical i.e. metaphysical or spiritual sources.

- there is no way the artistry of an African music composer can be totally separated from his spiritual background and experiences’ (Adedeji, 2008: 60).

Example 1, in the context that it is used, suggests that the opposite is true for the ‘average westerner’, when in fact exactly the same is true. Example 2 suggests that the named characteristics are uniquely ‘African’. Example 3 may be read as suggesting that it is never the case that non-African composers are inspired by metaphysical sources. The second part of the statement declares the ‘Africanness’ in the music to be unanalyzable.

#### (c) The reproduction of a power relation (2): The self-promotion of prescribed Africanization

The use of the terms ‘Africanization’ warrants an elaboration. Hilde Roos argues against the use of the term ‘indigenization’ as an alternative for ‘Africanization’ in her doctoral dissertation, *Opera production in the Western Cape: Strategies in search of indigenization* (Roos, 2010). She states the following in reference to the (so-called ‘coloured’) Eoan opera group:

Eoan felt itself to be a unique South African institution, but in the reconstructed historical narrative presented thus far it is unclear what this understanding was based on. Indigenization in this case had seemingly less to do with the repertoire (that remained static and overwhelmingly Italian), than with all-Coloured casts.

The term ‘indigenization’ in this context can therefore be taken to mean ‘taking ownership of’ a practice, regardless of its characteristics. ‘Africanization’ would then refer to a change in the characteristics of the ‘product’ (opera production, musical composition). Although I would normally argue against the exclusion of, for example, white African, Arab African or Indian African traditions from the term ‘African’ (and therefore ‘Africanization’), it is conveniently used as an umbrella term in reference to precolonial black African cultural traditions.<sup>43</sup>

Timothy Taylor, in his book *Global pop: World music, world markets*, uses the Senegalese musician Youssou N’Dour as an example of someone who faces ‘constant pressure from westerners to remain musically and otherwise premodern [...] because of racism and western demands for authenticity’ (Taylor, 1997: 126). Taylor then refers to an

<sup>43</sup> In other words, I am – only for the purposes of the notion of ‘Africanization’ – contradicting my own definition of ‘African’ given earlier. This highlights a certain problem with terminology that I cannot solve.

article by the ‘world music’ commentator Brooke Wentz (‘Yousou N’Dour: Is he shaking the tree or cutting it down?’) in which N’Dour is accused of ‘sanitizing’ his music to achieve commercial success at the expense of his *mbalax* music (Taylor, 1997: 135). Wentz is thereby acknowledging his expectation of N’Dour to ignore any western influence (be it through contemporary interaction or colonial heritage) he may wish to incorporate into his music. Kidula (2006: 101) explains the same power relation in slightly different terms (in reference to research and scholarship, although it applies to music as well):

[...] Africa’s interaction in contemporary society [is] presented in such terms as imitation, while a similar happening in Europe or America is discussed as a new trend of development, even when borrowed from or imitating the less politically or economically powerful cultures.

Taylor (1997: 135) relates this to views on African cultures as being ‘natural’ (i.e. it can be spoiled by western influences), and western culture as being ‘premised on development, expansion, progress, and artifice’ (i.e. it can be enriched by non-western influences). Although this example concerns cross-cultural influences, the point that I am trying to make is also applicable to compositions by African composers in purely western styles: although an effort in developing a uniquely African aesthetic in art music is essentially a good thing (I am not contesting the merits of Africanization), *prescribing* it is not. Where African scholars do this, it reproduces another power relation: the retention of art music in certain styles as a metropolitan privilege. A single example, without further explanation, should suffice:

#### Example 1:

‘for an authentic tradition of Art music to emerge in Africa, European styles would have to be abandoned for those that lay emphasis on the use of African forms, instruments and performance idioms’ (Bode Omojola in Olatunji, 2012: 442).

My discussion of tropes in the literature on western art music in Africa has been an attempt at categorizing scholarly practices that I believe to bar – mostly unwittingly – development, rather than promote participation in global discourse.

#### The material archive

Art music’s status as a non-priority in the context of negative ideological associations, or its appropriation for ideological purposes, may also account for the state in which the material archive of art music in, or of Africa finds itself. Scholars used to doing research on the likes of Debussy, Stravinsky or Copland may not appreciate the frustrations connected to merely locating and accessing scores for a study such as this one. It is therefore necessary to give examples here: The daughter of a late Egyptian composer advised me to contact the Ivy League American university to which she had donated her father’s scores, who in turn provided me with a catalogue, but warned me that the collection is not sorted and will therefore not be available for public view for some time to come; an important South African archive did not respond to my enquiries for months due to staffing problems, only to then advise me that the electronic retrieval system they use is so out of date that they cannot refine

the search criteria from works for ‘voice’ to works for ‘solo voice’; a colleague in Nigeria kindly offered to post me his book of songs, but warned me that in order for it to arrive here at all, I would have to pay US\$80 in postage (a similar request to a publisher in the US cost me \$35, all included, and arrived within a week); and, a list of contact details for younger composers from Ghana and Egypt, kindly provided to me by a local colleague, resulted in very few responses after numerous attempts (the reader should turn back to the acknowledgements to see examples of where my efforts did pay off and ended up in the dissertation). The list goes on, but my point on locating and accessing materials has been made. The remainder of the discussion on the material archive only concerns the state of one existing collection.

Kofi Agawu provides ‘a critical introduction to the archive of knowledge about African music’ in a chapter called ‘The Archive’ in his book *African music: Postcolonial notes, queries, positions* (Agawu, 2003). It is therefore not my aim to do the same here. Instead I will use my own experience of doing research at an ‘African’ archive outside Africa in order to engage with aspects of this chapter. An account of my own visit to Iwalewa-Haus from 12 to 21 October 2011 will serve as a reference. The first aspect with which I will engage concerns the wealth of resources on Africa available outside this continent, but to which Africa-based scholars have difficulty in getting access: ‘[It is not] clear that the ethnomusicologists and curators who manage these resources are sufficiently exercised by the disparity to want to close the gap’ (Agawu, 2003: 23-24). The second aspect with which I will engage concerns Agawu’s description of possible circumstances at the Archives of Recorded Sound at the Institute of African Studies, Legon, Ghana. The whole collection was copied by Wolfgang Bender (see my introduction to Iwalewa-Haus further on) and taken to the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany:

While it is gratifying to see Mainz build its collection of material on African music for use by scholars from around the world, it is sad to note that, once again, activity on the African continent has been more or less declared impossible. Certainly working in Mainz is from the point of view of creature comforts and accessibility easier than working at Legon, where the archivist may not be seen for days, where the playback equipment, although visibly displayed, does not work, and where a request for a copy of this or that recording may be greeted by the suspicion that the scholar is going to make money with it. [...] It is hard not to feel that the lifting of the Legon materials out of Africa liberates them for more liberal use elsewhere [...].

Iwalewa-Haus was established in 1981 to ‘research, document and teach contemporary African culture with special emphasis on everyday life, art, the media and music’. They aim to present this knowledge to the public in exhibitions, concerts, lectures and performances (Iwalewa-Haus, 2012: online). According to Euba (1993: 3), the archive of modern African music at Iwalewa-Haus was established by Wolfgang Bender, who was his predecessor as the research scholar in charge of music. Euba built on Bender’s work by contributing items collected on field trips to Nigeria and Ghana between 1989 and 1992. The archive specializes in what they call *modern* (rather than precolonial) types of African music, such as popular music, music theatre, Christian and Islamic religious music, neo-traditional music and art music (Euba, 1993: 1, 3). Items that are kept in the archive include musical scores

(manuscripts and published scores), audio resources (CDs, LPs, cassettes and reel-to-reel tapes), visual resources (DVDs and VHS tapes) and literature (such as books, dissertations, scholarly articles and newspaper articles). I went to Bayreuth in search of archival items that would aid my study of the western art song in Africa. My findings on the current state of the collection therefore mostly concern *art music* in the collection, rather than the entire collection of modern African music.

Extracts from field notes of my research visit to Iwalewa-Haus should serve to demonstrate certain points in the findings that follow them:

### *Day 1*

*I decide to bring up the question of taking digital photographs of documents, which I was told by the archivist is not allowed. Perhaps if I ask a different person I would get a different answer – and I do. The archival assistant tells me that she does not see the difference between making a photocopy and taking a photograph.*

*The room in which the music collection is housed is no bigger than a small studio apartment, divided in half by a bookshelf. In the one half, as one enters the room, the archival items and media equipment are found. The other half serves as an office for a PhD student doing research in the field of Angolan popular music. Next to the desk is another bookshelf containing journals, books and published musical scores. Since she is absent, this student's office area is designated as my working space until she returns.*

*The archival assistant goes back to her office, leaving me by myself to browse, to retrieve and put back items from the shelves, and to take documents out of folders to study them as I please. As I start to take folders from the shelves, I notice the state that the room is in: a television, video machine, reel-to-reel tape player, hi-fi with its component cassette and record players, and speakers are arranged haphazardly across the floor and on a nearby desktop. None of them seem to be in working order, with connecting wires strewn across the floor and in a nearby box. Some LPs have not been placed back in the correct order, and musical scores and documents that are too large for the folders that they are in are curling over against the shelf above them.*

*Back in the hotel room I take my findings for the day out of my backpack. I am astounded at what I have found – a stack of scores, some printed and some handwritten – from places as far away from each other as Madagascar and Egypt, although the largest percentage of what I have found by far comes from Nigeria and Ghana.*

### *Day 2*

*The live recordings of African art music concerts that had taken place at Iwalewa-Haus in its early days – which are relevant to my study – are all on reel-to-reel tapes. I am told that the student whose office I am using is the only one who knows how to set up this equipment, and that she will be back after the weekend.*

Day 3

*The front door is locked. I press the intercom button, but there is no answer. A text message from the assistant reveals that she has forgotten to tell me that the Iwalewa-Haus staff is having a meeting on the campus of the University of Bayreuth this morning. [...]*

Day 4 (after the weekend)

*The student has taken ill and has not returned. I may therefore keep using her office, but there will be no one to set up the reel-to-reel tape player for me. [...]*

Day 8

*The director asks whether I have found what I was looking for, and is awestruck when I tell him that most of the items that I have viewed are either not readily available anywhere in Africa, or are not available anywhere else (than Iwalewa-Haus) at all. In the light of his reaction, I pluck up the courage to ask him whether they are keen on setting up a partnership with our university's music archive in Stellenbosch that would, for example, allow us to request scanned – or if not, copied and posted – documents from them. He politely ignores the latter part of my apparently unorthodox suggestion, but says that they are always keen on setting up partnerships that would allow artists and scholars to come and visit Iwalewa-Haus.*

*Just before I close the front door behind me for the last time, the assistant provides me with handfuls of Iwalewa-Haus postcards, leaflets and posters. I am now literally armed to spread the word about (and carry an image of) Africa, from the heart of Bavaria back to the motherland.*

The lack of a music specialist on the staff of Iwalewa-Haus has had a great impact on the state of art music in the collection of modern African music at Iwalewa-Haus, not least in terms of the unexplored state in which the wealth of rare scores has remained for a long time. The only PhD student in music in residence at the time of my visit specialized in popular, rather than art music. Although many art music scores are undated, the collection process seems to have stopped after Akin Euba's residency there in the early 1990s. There is a great emphasis on a very small part of Africa (mostly Nigeria and Ghana) in terms of the art music scores and literature that have been collected. Although the documents are well-catalogued and organized into folders, not enough control is exercised over its handling and storage. This lack of procedure is also apparent in the disorganized state of the storage and work areas (which resulted in lack of access to sound and visual media), and in the conflicting information on the permitted methods of copying given by different members of staff. The digitization project should alleviate some of the problems related to preservation and access. Ironically, this air of casualness – to which the friendly and welcoming stance of the staff towards visitors contributed – allowed me to work through a much larger number of documents in a shorter time than if I had to ask an archivist to retrieve and copy a limited amount of documents at a time on my behalf.

My experiences demonstrate Iwalewa-Haus's incomprehension of the difficulties experienced by Africa-based researchers: the lack of local access to documents from our own continent and the great cost and effort in obtaining them. Although they are not deliberately keeping resources from Africa-based scholars, they are unwittingly retaining their metropolitan agency by – in Agawu's words (2003: 23-24) – not being 'sufficiently exercised by the disparity to want to close the gap.' The reader will have noticed the striking similarities between Agawu's description of what circumstances at the Archives of Recorded Sound in Ghana may look like and my description of circumstances at Iwalewa-Haus (such as the state of the playback equipment and the unannounced absence of staff). This does not disprove the existence of the stereotypes that the Legon/Mainz example suggests, but says that in this specific case the collection of documents is not necessarily better managed and utilized than it would have been in Africa.

My contestation of archival stereotypes thus far seems somewhat ideological – perhaps activist – and theoretical, in the sense that it's based on a comparison of the physical states and management of archives rather than on practicalities in terms of location. If one takes certain practicalities in terms of location into account, the issue of access must be revisited: from South Africa, for example, it is much cheaper and easier to travel to and move around Germany than it is to travel to Ghana. Had such an archive been in South Africa, would it have been easier for a Ghanaian to come here than to go to Germany? I doubt it. The fact that a certain collection of documents from Africa exists only in Europe does not make it more difficult for all Africa-based scholars to access. Therefore, if the wish is to promote and advance African music scholarship as a unitary, continent-wide body, I will argue for first judging archives individually based on good management and the extent to which they are exercised in addressing issues of accessibility to Africa-based scholars, regardless of their location in or outside Africa, *before* addressing issues of archival ownership.

### **Relevant histories of song in the west**

'The history of song is obviously as old as the history of mankind', as Reaney (1960: 15) aptly puts it. It is therefore not possible to trace its history in the west in great detail here. I have instead constructed an overview of selected practices in Europe since the sixteenth century, leading to a more detailed discussion of the nineteenth-century German lied, ending with shorter notes on developments in song composition since in Europe and elsewhere. The purpose of this overview is to enable one to eventually draw comparisons, but not necessarily suggest direct lineages, between the development of art song composition in Africa and certain histories of song in the west. (I am not saying 'lied' or 'art song' in the west, because it will become clear that what came to be known as 'art song' in Africa is comparable to other types of western song as well.) According to Chew (2001: 704), a new attitude towards declamation developed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which tended to make texts more understandable to listeners. The author also refers to 'expressiveness in song [which] has been a constant concern for musicians since the Renaissance.' Putting these two theories together renders one able to judge nearly all post-Renaissance song according to a certain kind of expressiveness and fidelity to declamation that are not relevant to preceding

song repertoires (Chew, 2001: 704). Kramer (1984: 129) confirms the possibility of isolating post-Renaissance song theoretically when he states the following:

The style of classical art song since the Renaissance heightens tension between words and music in two fundamental ways: first, by adopting an intonational manner that presents the voice as a precisely tuned instrument rather than a source of utterance, and second, by opening the possibility of a musical response to the poetry that is complex enough to raise questions of interpretation.

A distinct focus on the nineteenth-century German lied may be justified by the importance assigned to Schubert's lieder (as representing the maturation of art song) and its widespread subsequent influence.<sup>44</sup> Taruskin (2005: 119) warns against superficially comparing the lied with previous forms of accompanied solo song:

[Florentine] monody and [the English lute] ayre descended respectively from the madrigal and the recitation of epic poetry. They were court genres, not domestic ones, and they were both quickly subsumed into the nascent opera. There is no genetic link between them and the lied.

It is with this in mind that I present an overview of selected pre-lied traditions in Europe that do not necessarily provide a straight lineage leading to the lied. Instead it highlights certain crosscurrents, and the constant flux in attitude towards declamation that still existed within the larger shift in focus described above.

Smeed (1987: 108) rightly points out that simply stating the use of certain compositional devices (as I will do below), 'is not apparently to say very much'. Instead he highlights its application in achieving atmosphere and colour (which I can unfortunately not explore in detail here) as being the distinctive trait. However, in the context of a dissertation in which there is a distinct focus on composition, delineating the use of compositional devices in a historical narrative is necessary.

The Italian madrigal was the main form of sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century song in general, in which composers perfected techniques (including word-setting) that constituted the musical language of the time. The English madrigal was largely influenced by the Italian madrigal, but other forms of secular English song, such as the consort song (of which William Byrd was the most prolific composer), evolved from local traditions. The consort song lies at the foundation of the English lute song (Chew, 2001: 710), which was initiated by John Dowland (one of its most representative composers) in 1597. The genre reached its height of popularity by c.1617, when Thomas Campian's fourth book of songs appeared.<sup>45</sup> Lute songs were mostly strophic, displayed an unsettled feeling for key (alternating between a major and minor feeling, and often including chromaticism), and were more often melodically tonal, rather than modal. In contrast to the Italian practice of the same time, the lute song's texture retained the polyphonic character of the preceding period (Ivey, 1970: 142-143).

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<sup>44</sup> Schubert is discussed in more detail on pp. 27 to 28.

<sup>45</sup> According to Chew (2001: 710) the tradition of published English lute songs ended in 1622, with John Attey's *First Booke of Ayres*.

The practice of Italian monody at the beginning of the seventeenth century was led by a group of Florentine composers who wanted to return to the simplicity of Greek music. The accompaniments to these songs consisted of minimal chord sequences (Meister, 1980: 22), instead allowing for vocal liberties, such as changes of tempo, dynamics and the insertion of embellishments. Yet the monodists warned against vocal display as a means unto itself and intended it only as a means to serve the text (Ivey, 1970: 154, 160). The Florentine monodists' influence was widespread, but it didn't last long. Most of what one hears in Italian songs from the latter half of the seventeenth century, such as those by Alessandro Scarlatti, Antonio Lotti, Antonio Caldara and others, was excerpted from long dramatic works such as operas, and contained basso continuo rather than written-out accompaniments (Meister, 1980: 22-24). The German continuo lied, on the other hand, was distinguished from other song types of the same era by its adherence to nonoperatic characteristics, such as an avoidance of the melismatic illustration of individual words or phrases (Ivey, 1970: 164). These strophic songs, of which composers such as Heinrich Albert and Johann Rist were important exponents (Baron, 2001: 666-667), had a simple harmonic background and unspecified melodic figurations (Ivey, 1970: 164). By the 1670s, even the German continuo lied could no longer shy away from the influence of German opera and Italian cantata, which by then had become increasingly popular, and the pendulum once again swung away from the importance of the text (Baron, 2001: 668).

Although an operatic influence was also evident in England, it is only there that the song as a medium of expression independent from larger forms, remained popular throughout the seventeenth century (Ivey, 1970: 171). Towards the end of the century, Henry Purcell – who transplanted the Italian style onto English tradition – was the leading composer of English song, and made a great contribution to the further development of declamation (Chew, 2001: 711). The ground bass, which counted among his favourite devices (Ivey, 1970: 171), was (from the late 1680s) replaced with a preference for large-scale forms, such as the da capo aria (Chew, 2001: 711).

During the eighteenth century, only Germany persisted in the development of a meaningful text-music relationship in song composition (Ivey, 1970: 174). Songs of the Classical era resemble those of the Florentine tradition to a larger extent than those from the high Baroque (Meister, 1992: xiv). This may be connected to a weariness of what was perceived as the Baroque propensity for extravagance (Parsons, 2004a: 10). The so-called First Berlin School's reaction against the florid style then popular, first started in the 1750s. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach was closely associated with this school, and the style of his *Geistliche Oden und Lieder* can be seen as transitional in this regard (Stein, 1971: 29). He wrote approximately two hundred lieder and played an important role in the establishment of this genre (Taruskin, 2005: 119-120). In its early history, lieder were often set strophically – 'a logical consequence of the Affektenlehre, which encouraged the composer to search out the dominating mood of the poem, and to devise a melody to fit this and stick to it throughout all the stanzas' (Smeed, 1987: 12). Smeed (1987: 12-13) also states that figured bass accompaniments for lieder soon disappeared almost entirely (in favour of written-out accompaniments), as is evident in C.P.E. Bach's Gellert settings of 1758, for which he wrote



out the accompaniment in full in fear of insensitive realizations (as stated by himself in the introduction to this collection).

From the beginning the German lied was associated with the apparently conflicting ideas of *Empfindsamkeit* (personal expressivity) and *Volkstümlichkeit* ('folklikeness'), which was seen by German Romanticism as mystically linked. This link (which suggested that there is no 'I' without an implied 'we') was especially promoted by the preacher Johann Gottfried von Herder. The subsequent notion suggested that human difference is as important as human likeness, and was known as either historicism, particularism or relativism. Although it may not have been his intention, aspects of German particularist thinking became universal through Herder, and provided a philosophical foundation for nationalist thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The German lied served to answer the question of national identity, or *Kultur* (Taruskin, 2005: 121, 124). Johann Abraham Peter Schulz's *Lieder im Volkston* (1782) is often cited as the poster child for the rediscovery of the 'folklike', although such influences could already be seen in the decade before its appearance in, for example, the works of Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart (Smeed, 1987: 22), and (more than a decade before the appearance of Schulz's anthology) in Gluck's *Alceste* (1769) (Stein, 1971: 30).<sup>46</sup> It is important to note that besides folksong, the sacred chorale – which has an unbroken tradition in German culture – was another important influence on the development of the lied. This can, for example, be seen in the choral textures of some of C.P.E. Bach's songs.

Schulz was part of the so-called Second Berlin School to which Johann Friedrich Reichardt and Carl Friedrich Zelter also belonged (Taruskin, 2005: 129). Reichardt was an important figure in the development of form, and 'developed vocal lines, harmonic effects, and piano accompaniments that released the song from the limitations imposed on it by the First Berlin School', moving it into terrain closer to Schubert. Zelter represents a more conservative approach, and was known for his close relationship with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (both the man and his poetry) (Stein, 1971: 32, 41-42).

The lied was not a major preoccupation for any of the more famous composers before Schubert who composed in this genre, such as Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven, for their aristocratic support stood for 'cosmopolitan "civilization", not particular *Kultur*' (Taruskin, 2005: 130). According to Taruskin (2005: 130), Haydn composed less than forty lieder with keyboard accompaniment, mostly in the style of the First Berlin School. Mozart's most significant songs were parts of larger works, many of his free-standing songs being unpretentious, with simple piano parts that often double the vocal line (Radcliffe, 1960: 233). Beethoven's lieder, although not as influential as his other works, form a bridge between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in their display of the musician's changed attitude towards the poet (Stein, 1971: 48). His *An die ferne Geliebte*, although not the first song cycle, is the earliest to survive in the active repertoire (Taruskin, 2005: 131).

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<sup>46</sup> The *Lieder im Volkston* appeared in three volumes, published in 1782, 1785 and 1790 respectively (Barr, 2013: online).

In the wake of a philosophical and literary renaissance among German-speaking people towards the end of the eighteenth century (as Napoleon extended his annexed territory), their sense of national identity began to ripen, leaving behind the fervent admiration for French culture that was common in Europe in the first half of the century. The influences of the French Enlightenment were discarded in favour of intuition and basic feelings (over reason), which led to the short but important *Sturm und Drang* movement (Gorrell, 1993: 32, 34, 37) in the 1770s. The larger movement of Romanticism, which had its origins in the transitional *Sturm und Drang* period, arose by the end of the French Revolution (1789-1799) and lasted until c.1830, although its effects lasted throughout the nineteenth century. Features of this movement included an admiration of nature and the mysterious, a preoccupation with spiritual salvation and the longing for death, a revival of interest in the Middle Ages and Antiquity (Stein and Spillmann, 1996: 4, 8, 10, 11-13), a focus on the individual and his isolation from society, and a celebration of romantic love. After the 1848 revolution in France, Realism began to appear in literature as ‘subject matter moved away from the dreamy and the ideal’ (Gorrell, 1993: 42, 29).<sup>47</sup>

The publication history of the lied is seminal to an understanding of the genre. The distribution of the lied repertoire was related to an aggressive publication venture, since this genre had a broad appeal (Kramer, 1994: 4). The social climate in the nineteenth century was ideal for song: well-off middle-class women could afford to buy sheet music and musical instruments, and had the time to learn to sing and play. Being an accomplished amateur musician was seen as a way of improving marital prospects (Gorrell, 1993: 12). By the early nineteenth century, the piano had developed to the point where it was capable of producing a song-like, legato and resonant tone, making it possible to give this instrument a role of equal importance to the voice (Chew, 2001: 712). As the art song grew more complex, moving away in focus from the home and amateur performers to the point where singers with advanced skills were required, it also provided the opportunity for composers to utilize these new possibilities of the piano to a greater extent (Gorrell, 1993: 77).

The date on which Franz Schubert composed *Gretchen am Spinnrade* (19 October 1814) is popularly taken as marking the birth of the German Romantic lied (Sams and Johnson, 2001: 671). Why are Schubert’s lieder deemed so important? Youens (2010: 35), for example, assigns this importance to Schubert’s ‘sophisticated “readings” of poetry [which] constitute[d] nothing less than a new aesthetic of the lied’, while Dahlhaus (in Kramer, 1994: 9) assigns it to his ability ‘to combine strophic and through-composed forms, collapsing what had formerly been a sharp distinction between them.’ Smeed (1987: 108) identifies the areas in which his influence was most revolutionary and far-reaching as ‘harmony, the role of the accompaniment and the development of the song-cycle.’ Whatever the case may be, Schubert clearly did not emerge from nowhere. The importance of his lieder can be ascribed

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<sup>47</sup> According to Frisch (2005), the term ‘Realism’ is virtually interchangeable with ‘Naturalism’ in Germany and Austria towards the end of the nineteenth century, although they can have different nuances. ‘Realism’ in the stricter sense should be reserved for the movement in French painting in the mid-nineteenth century led by Courbet.

to a summary of the above: the way in which he fully realized the potential of all that came before him, and its far-reaching subsequent influence (Smeed, 1987: 108).

Schubert set more than sixty of Goethe's poems to music, as well as poems by other celebrated poets of that era, such as Friedrich Schiller, Ludwig Höltz, Heinrich Heine and Friedrich Rückert. His friendships with many amateur poets led to the setting of numerous poems of a poorer quality to music. His friend Franz von Schober was, for example, the poet of Schubert's 'An die Musik' (Gorrell, 1993: 21). The newly awakened romanticism of the time is evident in his more than six hundred songs: themes of night, death and dreaming are frequent, and especially towards the end of his life, the themes of being lost, loneliness and wanderlust occupied his thoughts. *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise* are, for example, 'filled with the romantic urge to seek in Nature solace for the inability to find fulfilment in the world of real people and things' (Ivey, 1970: 198-191). Recent Schubert studies, such as Kramer (1998), examine Schubert's lieder as shapers of culture ('a medium for [...] reshuffling the basic building blocks of identity and desire, especially sexual desire' (Kramer, 1998: back cover)), rather than as reflections of textbook romanticism.

Certain traits are identifiable in Schubert's songs. Due to many of his songs exceeding the technical demands of his day, Schubert removed the lied from the domain of the amateur musician with demanding piano parts and uncomfortably high tessituras. Highly conventionalized onomatopoeia, never an end unto itself, but always also explicable in purely musical terms, was one of his favourite devices (Youens, 2010: 39-40). Schubert had a gift for creating spontaneously fluid melodies that naturally lent themselves to variation and repetition (Meister, 1980: 63). He incorporated operatic elements into many of his songs: 'Der Morgenkuss', for example, resembles an aria in style, and his two settings of 'Die Sommernacht' are almost entirely in recitative. Throughout Schubert's life there was a constant flux in his musical language between a tonality that is purely Classical in form and function, and one that was visionary for its time. The latter is evident in, for example, sudden semitone shifts (as can be heard in 'Auf dem Flusse' from *Winterreise*), and the practice of ending in a different key from the beginning (which belongs to the later era of Wagner and Liszt). Further characteristics include a predilection for mediant relationships, the use of contrasting parallel major and minor keys (both these devices can be seen in, for example, 'Die Götter Griechenlands'), the frequent use of German and Neapolitan sixth chords, rich pianistic textures, the use of a single unifying figuration in the piano throughout a song, stating the main musical material in the piano introduction, and most importantly, a very close text-music relationship (Youens, 2010: 43-44, 47).

With Schubert, artistic focus had shifted away from the large scale, with the power of his lieder lying in their dramatic expression in economic terms (Sams and Johnson, 2001: 673).

After Schubert, Robert Schumann is most often associated with the German lied. In terms of his choice of poetry, he is 'poised between Romanticism, on the one hand, [...] and Biedermeier materialism, realism and resignation, on the other' (Hallmark, 2010: 92, 96).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> According to Devlin (2008: 111), the period between Romanticism and late nineteenth-century Realism is known in standard histories of literature as the *Biedermeier-Vormärz*. Writers of this period are seen as being

Schumann's lieder can be distinguished from those of other composers by, for example, a certain dominance in the piano part (Hallmark, 2010: 99). He is especially known for his innovations in the structuring of song cycles, such as the two *Liederkreis* cycles, *Frauenliebe- und Leben* and *Dichterliebe* (Daverio, 2010: 372-373). Johannes Brahms has often been criticized for his selection of inferior poetry, and for careless declamation in his songs, the main interest lying in the music itself (Ivey, 1970: 205), particularly in his gifts for invention in melody, rhythm and texture (Radcliffe, 1960: 250, 253). His song output can be divided into folk song settings (such as *Volkskinderlieder*), folklike (*volkstümlich*) songs (such as 'Die Trauernde'), songs in hybrid styles (such as 'Liebestreu') and art songs (*Kunstlieder*) (such as *Lieder und Gesänge*). The *Vier ernste Gesänge*, his last published works, represents a synthesis of Brahms's artistic ideas in vocal music (Hancock, 2010: 147-149, 151, 157, 170-171). Unlike Brahms, but like Schumann, Hugo Wolf's devotion to literature is evident in his choice of high-quality poetry and his meticulous attention to matters concerning prosody (Meister, 1980: 93). Wolf thus returned in a certain sense to the eighteenth-century idea of poetic dominance (Sams and Johnson, 2001: 677). Wagnerian influences have been assigned to Wolf, such as in his treatment of the singing voice as equivalent to the voice of the text ('[Wolf] treats this personified text-voice on the model of Wagnerian music-drama' (Kramer (2010: 240-241)) or in the tonality of his more chromatic songs (Meister (1980: 94-95). Although some of his most important lieder (such as the five *Rückert Lieder*) were originally conceived for voice and piano (Meister, 1980: 104), Gustav Mahler is famous for having mixed the previously separate genres of lied and instrumental music since his First Symphony (1888), this synthesis reaching a climax in *Das Lied von der Erde* (1908) (Hefling, 2010: 273). Richard Strauss's more than two hundred lieder stand at the end of the nineteenth-century tradition of lied composition. Despite having lived until nearly the middle of the twentieth century, he had composed three quarters of his lieder by 1904 (Petersen, 2010: 332). By the time he had composed his *Vier letzte Lieder* in 1948, the parameters had changed so much, that some now view these lieder as representing the end of the genre, as well as the end of German culture as constructed since the eighteenth century (Parsons, 2004a: 3). Showing the influence of Richard Wagner, Strauss's lieder are dramatic, with dense textures, chromatic and florid voice parts, and of extensive range in both the voice and piano parts (Kravitt, 1996: 11).

Other important fin-de-siècle lied composers include Hans Pfitzner, who has been portrayed as an anti-modernist, and Max Reger, who is said to have embraced modernism (Parsons, 2004b: 283), completing his conversion to modernism when he fell under Wagner's influence (Kravitt, 1996: 11). However, this characterization is too simplistic, since the piano parts in Reger's lieder were influenced as much by Brahms (according to Reger himself) as they were by Wagner (Parsons, 2004b: 283), and 'New German aesthetics influenced even the conservative Hans Pfitzner during the years 1894 to 1916, when he wrote some of his

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part of either the 'progressive' *Vormärz* movement leading towards the 1848 Revolutions, or as part of the 'reactionary' *Biedermeier* movement. Mainstream German critics do not characterize *Biedermeier* writers according to anything in their writings, but according to 'the lack of progressive or revolutionary political concerns there' (Devlin, 2008: 111).

finest songs' (Kravitt, 1996: 11).<sup>49</sup> Schoenberg's experimental lieder (such as *Pierrot lunaire*) represent a parting from the standards unifying song composition since the Renaissance (Chew, 2001: 705) in their melodic angularity, as well as their abandonment of tonality (Kravitt, 1996: 15) and established notions of declamation (Chew and Mathiesen, 2001: 714).

Schubert's lieder became known in France from the 1830s and gave rise to the French *mélodie*, of which (for example) Hector Berlioz, Gabriel Fauré and Claude Debussy were important exponents. German influence could also be seen in the art songs of, among others, Bohemia (Antonín Dvořák), Scandinavia (Edvard Grieg), Britain and America (Hubert Parry, Edward MacDowell), with a degree of French influence sometimes being present in the songs from the English-speaking countries (Chew, 2001: 713).

The English drawing-room ballad, with its origins in the London Pleasure Gardens music evenings, developed primarily for domestic performance by amateurs (Bellingham, 2011: online) and was not significantly influenced by the lied developments sketched above. These songs had simple chordal accompaniments, were mainly strophic (Chew, 2001: 712), and often had an insignificant text-music relationship (Banfield, 1982: 3). The French *romance* is comparable to the English drawing-room ballad (Chew, 2001: 713). Scott (1989: 8, 27, 84, 104) distinguished between a number of ballad styles, such as the operatic ballad, the folk ballad, the blackface minstrel ballad and the sacred ballad. After 1870 one needs to distinguish between the drawing-room ballad and other types of domestic song, as the term now referenced an 'artier' genre that was performed in concert halls (Scott, 1989: 141). Banfield (1982: 1, 5) suggests that the distinction between ballads and art song was not always clear, and that ballad composition 'occasionally threw up a respectable work, such as Stanford's *Irish Idyll*.' Ballads imported from England had been popular in America since the late eighteenth century. The period from around 1811 to 1840 was a transitional one during which an increasing amount of popular ballads were composed by composers resident in America (Tawa, 1980: 3, 5).

After 1910, German and French influences, along with indigenous traditions, historical repertoires and twentieth-century innovations, remained the most important to impact on art song traditions outside Germany and France, such as those in Britain (John Ireland, Benjamin Britten), Italy (Alfredo Casella, Luigi Dallapiccola), Spain (Isaac Albéniz, Enrique Granados), Poland (Karol Szymanowski), Russia (Sergei Rachmaninoff) and America (Charles Ives, Aaron Copland) (Chew and Mathiesen, 2001: 713-714).

It is at this point in time – the first half of the twentieth century – where I leave this historical review and begin my study of art song composition in Africa. The development of the genre as such had reached and passed its height by this time. If the purpose of this historical review had been to render one able to draw comparisons between the development of western art

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<sup>49</sup> According to Kravitt (1996: 3) the phrase 'New German' was coined in the mid-nineteenth century to refer to the radical reforms of Liszt and Wagner, and by the turn of the century indicated a general relaxation of formal classical restrictions and the expression of innovation. In vocal music this included '[a concentration] on declamation, vocal characterization, and the use of leitmotifs.' Wolf was seen as the creator of the so-called 'Modern Lied' (Kravitt, 1996: 4).

song composition in general and its manifestation in Africa, it is from this point in time onwards best done retrospectively in terms of selected *general* trends in twentieth and twenty-first century contemporary western art music composition (rather than in reference to the genre itself) where applicable to specific compositions or composers, and only in *addition* to the evaluation of the genre in its own right in Africa.

### **Methods, research questions**

This dissertation should, despite having ‘Africa’ as its topic, not be mistaken for an ethnomusicological project. It contains readings of musical scores – scores by composers who have all had western-style training in composition (like myself), have enjoyed international success, and are perfectly capable of representing themselves. The readings are mine and do not aspire to be unchallengeable truths. Also, it was not an aim of this study to seek new biographical information or composers’ contributions to readings through interviews. (In other words, I neither consider myself as speaking on behalf of a disenfranchised ‘other’, nor do I believe in the primacy of the composer’s intention in readings of scores.) Existing biographical and historical information has been drawn on to provide contexts and to inform the readings.

Having established a very general demarcation of ‘art music’ and ‘art song’ for the purposes of this study, there still remains the issue of how one decides which specific songs count as ‘art’ and which songs do not. This is an issue that is problematized in the course of the dissertation (through the inclusion of, for example, songs with popular and folk origins) and to which I will return in the conclusion. I have tried to stay as neutral as possible in the selection process by letting the discourse make my decisions for me: I have included songs that are called ‘art songs’ in the discourse, and where it is not explicitly called that, they are songs by composers who are known as art music composers. Kofi Agawu (1996: 277) makes an important point regarding the quality of works, which may be seen as relevant here:

It is one of the tragedies of musical composition in Ghana that everything from little student exercises to full-fledged compositions is thrown into the pot of a composer’s *oeuvre*. This unwitting celebration of mediocrity, this failure to separate out genuine works of art from little potboilers, forces on the compositional world an excessively local profile.

The present author takes cognisance of such arguments, but contests that in an exploratory study of this kind (the difficulties of which have been spelled out), this kind of separation is a luxury and not possible in the case of every composer. Agawu (1996: 277) also presents a counter-argument to his statement quoted above (in reference to composer Ephraim Amu’s works), and which should be seen as the stance that I am taking towards the reading of songs in this study:

Should not these juvenilia be separated from the works of Amu’s first maturity in the late 1920s? Judged by ‘European’ standards these early pieces are exercises in composition. A pedantic music master may well insist on pointing out their defects: dissonances are improperly resolved, phrases do not balance out one another, and melodies are contrived and derivative. But is it possible that those

standards are irrelevant? Is it not the case that Amu was writing his own kind of music, which should be judged on its own terms?

The main body of this dissertation is divided into two sections (A and B), each containing a number of chapters. In section A, the chapter divisions are according to the countries from which the songs derive. Nigeria and Ghana were combined just before the writing-up phase of this study, because findings on the music allowed for contributions to the same general conclusions or theories (it was not assumed in advance that this would be the case). The starting point for each chapter in section B was a different discourse or theory. The difference in methodological sequence – which is not necessarily reflected in the presentation – between sections A and B are therefore:

- A: Selection of country → surface readings of scores from the selected country → selection of discourses/theories → in-depth readings of selected scores in the context of the selected discourses/theories.
- B: Surface readings of scores → selection of discourses/theories → selection of scores from any of the countries → in-depth readings of the selected scores.

This study began with my visit to the Archive of Modern African Music at Iwalewa-Haus, University of Bayreuth, Germany, where I accessed original manuscripts and rare secondary sources. Scores were also collected from the Documentation Centre for Music, Stellenbosch University, and from the Manuscripts and Archives division of the University of Cape Town Library. Other than that, I mostly had to rely on the goodwill of the composers themselves, family members of late composers, and strangers who had access to scores who could send me scanned copies of both printed scores and original manuscripts. (This followed a mass score search campaign around the world.) In a few cases scores were available in South African libraries, and in one case it could be ordered online. Inevitably there were cases in which my insistent begging for scores from numerous other archives and individuals did not pay off, and only after about two-and-a-half years did I completely abandon the collection process in order to pay more attention to the other aspects of this project. Long before that it had become clear that my initial aim to make a more ‘complete’ mapping were overly ambitious, and I therefore resorted to a case-study approach. My findings are therefore conditional, and the possibility of their wider application awaits further research.

Due to the disparities between countries in terms of the availability of scores, and the nature and size of the discourses, it did not make sense to exercise the same criteria in the selection of material for case studies. In the case of Nigeria and Ghana, I chose one group of songs or a song cycle by every composer of whose works I had a selection. In many cases I used the single group or cycle in my possession. Where I had to make a choice, I favoured works that are mentioned on works lists or showed up somewhere in the discourse (in other words, somewhere someone gave it a presence or attached some kind of importance to it). For the chapter on Egypt, I used nearly everything I could get hold of, leaving out only a single work that did not form a continuity with the others in terms of the discourse that was eventually chosen to frame that chapter.<sup>50</sup> In the case of South Africa, the larger amount of

<sup>50</sup> The piece in question is Wael Sami Elkholy’s ‘Hand of God’.

material at my disposal prompted me to find gaps in the discourse on art song. This led to the selection of a work by an art song specialist from a younger generation of composers, a work by a young black composer, and other works that have not been discussed in detail before.

The graphic presentation that I placed before each chapter is a creative liberty that I took in an effort to orientate the reader toward the relevant theory or discourse that is informed by the technical descriptions of the music. In other words, it begs for patience with the long sections of descriptive writing that I feel is necessary when working in uncharted territory, and which serve to provide a detailed evidence base for my conclusions. My methodology is what is known in the Anglo-American paradigm of musicology as a *close reading*, rather than *analysis* – in this realm the technical descriptions of the music are not meant to be exhaustive or primarily systematic.<sup>51</sup> A reading of the first movement of Brahms's Third Symphony by Susan McClary, for example, is described by Agawu (1997: 304) as such:

A theorist who argues that McClary's analysis lacks detail may well be making an irrelevant point. There is enough detail to support the specific characterizations that she wishes to make.

This is not meant to imply that I do not describe the music in detail, but only that I do not adhere to a pre-selected list of analytical criteria that one cannot necessarily draw conclusions from in the context of the specific discussion.<sup>52</sup> References to precolonial musics have been drawn into the readings where possible and necessary, but to continuously ask 'but is this scale/rhythm/metre actually used by the Akan/Igbo/Zulu?' is often to miss the point entirely. In many cases questions such as 'can this texture be connected to a popular notion of what people think African music should sound like?', or 'which general sub-Saharan rhythmic qualities have the composer employed in an effort to denote a pan-African sound?' are often the more productive ones to ask. I sometimes discuss a group of songs or a song cycle as a whole, and sometimes I discuss the songs separately. My decisions to do so one way or the other depended entirely on the nature of the material: quite simply, where individual songs in a cycle did not display distinctive identities, I did not discuss them separately.

Most of the translations of the song texts were commissioned specifically for this project. The vast majority were done by anonymous language practitioners recruited by Folio Translation Consultants.<sup>53</sup> In one case I recruited a private language practitioner, and where the original texts were in Afrikaans or where there was a German translation available of the original Arabic, I translated it into English myself. In the few cases where translations were available from secondary sources, I used those.<sup>54</sup> Depending on the nature of the text, it was

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<sup>51</sup> The methodology used in Chapter 5 is not applicable to the dissertation in general, and is therefore described in the introduction to that chapter.

<sup>52</sup> I prefer to not call what I do 'analytical eclecticism', as this implies the combined use of *formal* methods, such as Schenkerian or set theory analysis. In general I have nothing against the use of such methods, but felt that a large percentage of the music selected for this study was not technically complicated to the extent that the use of such methods would have been productive.

<sup>53</sup> See [www.folio-online.co.za](http://www.folio-online.co.za)

<sup>54</sup> The reader will notice that the song texts and translations are in a different font – Arial Unicode MS – than the rest of the text. This is the only font that allows for the use of certain characters that apply to some West



sometimes possible for translators to provide me with a literal line-by-line translation, or an idiomatic line-by-line translation. In many cases line-by-line translation was impossible. For the sake of consistency I have presented each translation as a whole, followed by the original text as a whole (in text boxes). Where I felt it is important for the reader to know the translation of a specific word or line, I refer to it in the discussion of the song in question. Some of the original texts in Arabic script were not available other than with the vocal line on the score (i.e. they were not written out as poems) – in such cases I have not provided the original Arabic text.

Other than the most basic questions outlined at the beginning of this chapter (what are the compositional procedures followed in, and the stylistic results of the works under scrutiny?), I aim to answer a number of other research questions in this dissertation. Chapter 2 proposes to question how the theory of African vocalism can be expanded, and how animist materialism could serve as an alternative context in which to read the composition of art music in Nigeria and Ghana. Chapter 3 aims to answer which strategies in anti-exotic self-representation have been followed in twentieth-century Egyptian art song. Chapter 4 asks how South African composers of art song have denoted ‘Africa’ in their works, and how these denotations relate to their oeuvres and general stylistic practices. Chapter 5 interrogates how composers have dealt with the requirements of tonal languages in their setting of texts in such languages to music. Chapter 6 probes possible interpretations of composers’ display of the ‘objects’ of cultural affiliation, positing expatriate African composers as diplomats. Chapter 7 asks what the contexts are in which to read specific examples of African intercultural art music, without which the analyst might make an inappropriate (perhaps unethical?) value judgement.

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African languages. I have therefore used it for all the song texts and translations throughout the dissertation for the sake of consistency.

## **Section A – Focus on art songs through place**

## Chapter 2 Art song composition in Nigeria and Ghana: African vocalism, animist materialism



**Figure 2.1** *Sango, the Yoruba god of thunder and lightning* (Lambrechts, 2013)

*Sango, the dispenser of thunder and lightning, in an act of philosophical accommodation, now guards over Nigeria's electricity corporation.*

## Introduction

The caption on the previous page references an act of philosophical accommodation. Such a propensity in the context of this chapter is speculatively connected to developments from animist beliefs: the belief in something that embodies something else, the spirit of something taking hold of an inanimate object. My discussions of art songs by Nigerian and Ghanaian composers in this chapter will result in a reading of certain compositional practices – African pianism, African vocalism, and the folk song as art – in the context of animist materialism. In addition, and expanding the concept of African vocalism is an aim in itself, I will draw particular conclusions on each song, cycle or collection, following a general analytical reading thereof, and will – where possible – contextualize it within the biographical and/or historical information that precedes it.

A discussion on African vocalism will be followed by an overview of the history of art music in Nigeria, and discussions on selected art songs by Nigerian composers. This will be followed by an overview of the history of art music in Ghana, and discussions on selected art songs by Ghanaian composers. The conclusion is divided into two sections: the first section concerns African vocalism, as well as more general matters. The second section concerns animist materialism.

### From African pianism to African vocalism

According to Akin Euba (2005: 3), who first introduced the concept of African pianism, his early attempts at defining this concept included references to the application of African percussion playing and polyrhythmic techniques to the piano. His definition also included thematic repetition, direct quoting of rhythmic and/or tonal material from precolonial sources, and the use of such materials that are not direct quotes, but that are based on precolonial sources. African pianism was thoroughly interrogated at the international symposium and festival called ‘Towards an African pianism: Keyboard music of Africa and the diaspora’ at the University of Pittsburgh in 1999, eventually resulting in a publication of the same name (2005). Kofi Agawu (2005: 16) problematizes African pianism by asking the following questions:

And what exactly is African pianism? A repertory, or a style of playing – presumably percussive? If a repertory, is it music written by African composers? What, in any case, is an African composer [...]? Does African pianism embrace compositions that use African idioms, materials, styles and conventions irrespective of the actual origins of the historical composer?

Christine Lucia, for example, provides a more specific problematization of African pianism in her discussion of the South African jazz pianist and composer Abdullah Ibrahim, whose music draws from gospel, Sufi chanting, *marabi*, precolonial African music, western classical and parlour music, and folksong of Dutch-Malay origin (Kimberlin, 2005: 9). Linda Burman-Hall focuses on the performing of Arab-influenced music of North Africa on the piano in her discussion of African pianism, whereas Ed Bland (2005: 69) includes African-

American jazz pianism in his discussion. These discussions leave us with a concept that is open-ended and inclusive.

Christian Onyeji introduces African vocalism, as a concept parallel to that of African pianism, in his article ‘Composing art songs based on Igbo traditional music: Concept and process in contemporary times’ (2005), and identifies it as ‘the distillation and synthesis of identifiable African vocal/choral norms and traditions in the composition of modern art songs that are [an] unmistakable continuum of African traditional music’ (Onyeji, 2005: 30). African vocalism may include performance techniques, vocal timbres and the tonal inflections of African languages. Onyeji (2005: 35), in a discussion of his compositional process for songs, says the following:

[...] the ensemble music simulated on the piano part inspires or enables me to generate melodies [...] after which a matching text is derived for it. The creative sequence would then be from ‘foundation to the top’ in ascending form.

This is unlike the process of text setting traditionally associated with western art song composition, and can potentially be added to the repertoire of what African vocalism may entail.<sup>1</sup> In terms of the voice, his analyses only refer to vocal timbre, and the matter of African vocalism is not theorized any further in the conclusion. I will summarize my findings on this matter, in the context of the works under consideration here, at the end of this chapter.

### **The history of art music in Nigeria: An overview**

Portuguese traders first visited Nigeria in 1472-73 (Lo-Bamijoko, d.u: 2), although their contact remained on a commercial basis (Omojola, 1995: 10). Yoruba ex-slaves from the West Indies (Omojola, 1995: 10) and the U.S.A. returned to Nigeria in 1855. Others had already been rescued by the British from slave ships and repatriated to Sierra Leone, and returned to Nigeria in 1838 (Vidal, d.u.(b): 446). They were called *Saros* by the locals (Omojola, 1995:10). Other former slave ‘returnees’ who returned to Nigeria came from Brazil. European forms of entertainment were brought in by the *Saros*, while the Afro-Brazilians imported traditions fused from African and Latin-American cultures (Omibiyi-Obidike, d.u.(b): 153). European settlement began with the introduction of Christian missionary doctrines in the 1840s (Omojola, 1995: 10). By the 1860s the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Catholic churches had established missions in Nigeria (Omojola, 1995: 11 and Olumide, 1986: 3-4). The first British Consulate was established in Calabar in 1851 (Lo-Bamijoko, d.u: 2). In August 1861, three hundred boys from mission schools, led by missionaries, sang ‘God save the King’ at ceremonies relinquishing the rule of Lagos to Britain (Vidal, d.u.(b): 447). The whole of northern Nigeria came under the control of the Royal Niger Company in the period 1884-1886, with rule passing to the British Crown on 1 January 1900 (Brooks, 1998: 402). The northern and southern territories were merged into a single colony in 1914, which forced long-time rivals – the Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo – becoming part of the same nation. Ethnic rivalries, which were kept in check during the

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<sup>1</sup> Rather than being an ‘African’ technique, this would be a subversion of western norms.

colonial period, broke out again after Nigeria became independent in 1960 ('Nigeria', 2002: 143).

Music education in the western school system was organised by Christian missionaries. The aim was to produce school and church leaders who could read staff notation and play hymns and chants on the harmonium. Given this aim, the syllabus mainly consisted of singing Christian hymns, European folk songs, and songs with vernacular texts that were set to existing English melodies (Omibiyi-Obidike, 1992: 29). Harmoniums were imported as early as 1853, and the first pipe organ was sent to Nigeria by Harrison and Harrison of Great Britain in 1897 (Vidal, d.u.(b): 447-448). The unsuitability of setting vernacular texts to existing melodies (this resulted in changing the meanings of words in tonal languages) eventually led to new, simple compositions being written for use at services. By the late nineteenth century originally composed hymns, canticles, 'native airs', chants and cantatas had been written and were used in churches (Omibiyi-Obidike, d.u.(c): 77).<sup>2</sup> Keyboard instruments (mainly the piano) and western music history were taught in some secondary schools (Omibiyi-Obidike, 1992: 29-30), while correspondence courses and examinations offered by external bodies based in Britain encouraged the systematic study of western music (Nketia, 1986: 219).

The first recorded concert performance of western music in Lagos took place in 1860. Audiences consisted of artisans, students, civil servants and churchmen, and the performers were mostly black immigrants. The emphasis at these concerts fell on western classical music and followed European formats (Omibiyi-Obidike, d.u.(a): 75). Due to their earlier exposure to European music and western education, the *Saros* were among the first Nigerian 'elite' who developed a taste for Victorian concert traditions (Omojola, 1995: 12). The Musical Society for Nigeria (MUSON) (Sadoh, 2009: 80), The Philharmonic, The Brazilian Dramatic Company (Omojola, 1995: 12-13), the Lagos Musical Society and the Ebute-Metta Choral Society were, among others, responsible for organizing concerts. Vidal (d.u.(a): 3-4) quotes a certain Professor Frobenius, who described the new Nigerian elite in a scene on a Sunday night in Lagos in 1910 (a scene apparently common to most English language church services on a Sunday night at that time, although one can imagine a similar scene at art music concerts):

The people pour in and out of numerous buildings like music-halls, glaring with electric light. They come on bicycles, swagger canes in their hands, cigarettes between their lips and top-hats on their heads. They can be seen from outside, sitting in tightly packed crowds singing for hours together. They display all the outward signs of advanced European civilization [...].

Another type of music that emerged in Nigeria during the colonial period was operatic music. Although pre-colonial ceremonial and ritualistic genres existed that employed music and dance, colonial contact led to new forms that were closer in resemblance to European opera and oratoria. Early Nigerian folk operas did not contain any action and were therefore closer

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<sup>2</sup> Nigerian 'breakaway' denominations of Christian churches had started to form since the late nineteenth century, due to the lack of appointment and promotion on Nigerian clergymen, and the requirement of Nigerians to abandon some of their local customs (Omojola, 1995: 17).

in resemblance to oratoria. In the 1940s and 50s, this gave way to the more theatrical forms of opera (Vidal, d.u.(a): 26-28, 30).

The first Nigerian composers to emerge from European traditions, in the 1880s, were Robert Coker and his protégé Herbert Macaulay (Brooks, 1998: 402). Coker was known as the ‘Mozart of West Africa’ (Omibiyi-Obidike, d.u.(a): 76) and studied music in Germany (Nketia, 1986: 219) and England from 1880 (Omojola, 1995: 14). Upon his return from training abroad he was, among other things and in addition to being a composer, the organist and choirmaster of Christ Church Cathedral (Lagos), and producer of the Handel Festival and the annual ‘Coker Concerts’ (Omibiyi-Obidike, d.u.(a): 76). Macaulay studied engineering and music in London, but led a life of political activism upon his return to Nigeria in the 1890s and ‘became the father of Nigerian nationalism’ (Brooks, 1998: 402). These pioneers were followed by T.K.E. Phillips, who Omojola (1995:20) hails as a ‘champion [...] of indigenous hymnody’. He was born in Lagos in 1884 and studied piano, organ and violin at Trinity College of Music in London from 1911 to 1914. His compositions, which included hymns and anthems, were usually short, tonal, and simple, and were exclusively sacred (Sadoh, 2007b: 33).

By the end of the nineteenth century some had already begun to question European political, economic and cultural dominance, and elements of pre-colonial Nigerian music had begun to find their way into the church and concerts. Fela Sowande (1905-1987) is perhaps the best known Nigerian composer internationally, and one of the earliest whose nationalist political and cultural beliefs are evident in his compositions (Omojola, 1995: 16, 40).<sup>3</sup> He studied at Trinity College of Music, London, and the Royal College of Organists, and returned to Nigeria in the 1950s as head of music and music research at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (Alaja-Browne, 1981: 4-5, 7). His *Folk Symphony* was performed at the celebration of Nigeria’s independence on 1 October 1960 (Omojola, 1995: 44). Other Nigerian composers who achieved prominence, but who will not be discussed in this chapter, include Ikoli Harcourt-Whyte (1905-1977), Lazarus Ekwueme (born 1936) (Omojola, 1995: 34, 67), and Okechukwu Ndubuisi (born 1936) (Njoku, 1998: 238).<sup>4</sup>

In this section on Nigeria, I will discuss Ayo Bankole’s *Three Yoruba songs*, Joshua Uzoigwe’s *Watermaid*, Akin Euba’s *Six Yoruba folk songs*, and Christian Onyeji’s *Nka emume (Art for celebration)*.

### **Ayo Bankole’s *Three Yoruba songs***

Ayo Bankole was born in Lagos in 1935. At the age of ten he became a chorister under the directorship of T.K.E. Phillips at Christ Church, Lagos, and started music lessons at the Baptist’s Academy Secondary School, also in Lagos (Omojola and Bankole, 1994: 535). Olumide (1986: 3) recalls his first encounter with Bankole at a competition for young pianists at the Nigerian Festival of Arts in 1951:

<sup>3</sup> According to Alaja-Browne (1981: 10), Sowande was born in 1904.

<sup>4</sup> According to Omojola (1995: 71), Ndubuisi was born in 1939.

Whilst waiting to go on stage for each contestant's performance, we observed that there was another youngster in the room (in the Salvation Army Citadel on Odunlami Street, where the competition was held); a total stranger [...]. We concluded that he did not stand the ghost of a chance, competing with us. How little we knew! [...] This young boy not only won the competition hands down, beating us all hollow, but also earned a standing ovation [...]. Soon we learnt that his grandfather, father and himself were all organists at different churches in Lagos at the same time, a record, I believe, that still stands unbeaten.

He took a position as clerk at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in 1954, where he met Fela Sowande, who gave him advanced organ lessons and whose nationalist works inspired him. Bankole left for London in 1957 to study piano, organ and composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (Omojola and Bankole, 1994: 353). According to Euba (c.1986: 3 (part 1)), Bankole got a special choir together at the Guildhall for which he composed music, a lot of it in Yoruba. In 1961 he was awarded a scholarship to further his organ studies at Clare College, Cambridge, from where he graduated in 1964 (Omojola and Bankole, 1994: 353). Compared to his time at Guildhall, Bankole was less productive as a composer at Cambridge (Euba, c.1986: 5 (part 1)). In 1964 he went to study ethnomusicology at the University of California, Los Angeles (Omojola and Bankole, 1994: 535). During his time there, he took postgraduate seminars in composition with Roy Travis: 'Travis was an ideal teacher for Bankole [...] because he was keenly interested in African music as a source of material for new creative ideas' (Euba, c.1986: 5 (part 1)). He returned to Nigeria in 1966, where he once again joined the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, this time as Senior Music Producer. He lectured at the University of Lagos from 1969, until his death in 1976.

Works such as the *Toccata and fugue* for organ strongly reflect the European classical tradition, while others are often characterized by chromaticism. Works such as *Ethnophony* and *Three part songs*, on the other hand, display the influence of Yoruba drum language or melodies. The *Festac cantata*, for example, displays a fusion of western and Yoruba elements, such as harmonies that remind of Bartók and Debussy, and principles of Yoruba ceremonial and praise music (Omojola and Bankole, 1994: 536, 540).

Bankole wrote the *Three Yoruba songs* for baritone and piano in 1959, during his time at the Guildhall in London. They were written under encouragement of the singer Christopher Oyesiku, who was a student at the Guildhall at the same time as Bankole. According to the composer (Bankole, 1976: 1), he attempted in these songs 'to achieve truly logogenic melodies, without landing in the "square boxes" that typify such folk-type melodies, and to fuse these with meaningful harmonic progressions in the European classical idiom.' According to Omojola and Bankole (1994: 536), the *Three Yoruba songs* serve as an illustration of '[t]he variety of stylistic features [that] underline the eclectic nature of [Bankole's] style [...].' This source further states that the first song, 'Ìyá', stands in contrast to the second and third songs in its display of nineteenth-century European lied characteristics: 'Ìyá' displays diatonic harmonies and repeated accompaniment patterns, while the second and third songs employ 'impressionist-coloured dissonant intervals' (no contrasting characteristic to 'repeated accompaniment patterns' is given) (Omojola and



Bankole, 1994: 537). The most detailed exposition of these songs thus far is given by Sadoh (2007a: 66-71).<sup>5</sup>

My discussion of the *Three Yoruba songs* will serve to provide additional information to the fairly detailed exposition thereof provided by Sadoh, to evaluate some of his statements, and to evaluate and illustrate some of the statements above.

<p style="text-align: center;">‘Mother’ (‘ìyá’)</p> <p>Mother is the most beloved by every child, She watches over me when I am asleep, She carries me when I wake up, When I am hungry, she feeds me.</p> <p>Nobody loves me and knows my needs, There is none who can provide for me like my mother Nobody loves me, May the Lord compensate you, my mother.</p> <p>(Bankole, 1976: 1-4)<sup>6</sup></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">‘ìyá’</p> <p>Ìyá ìyá ìyá ìyá l’olùfẹ̀ jùlo ní ké keré, ìyá Nígba ti mo sùn òun l’ó só mi, Nígba ti mo jí òun l’ó gbé mi; Ní gbà t’é bi ñpa mí òun l’ó bó mi, Òun l’ó bó mi, Òun l’ó bó mi Kò s’èni t’ó fẹ̀ràn mi t’ó mo ài nī mi t’ó sì lẹ̀ pèsè fún mi bí Ìyā mi, ìyā mi, ìyā mi</p> <p>K’ò s’èni t’ó fẹ̀ràn mi, k’ò s’èni t’ó fẹ̀ràn mi, k’ò s’èni t’ó t’ó t’ó fé ràn mi k’ò s’èni t’ó fẹ̀ràn mi t’ó mo àinī mi k’Ólúwa k’ó gbé ó o</p> <p>(Bankole, 1976: 1-4)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">‘Pluck flowers while they are in bloom’ (‘Já ìtàná t’ó ñtàn’)</p> <p>Pluck flowers while they are in bloom, Pluck flowers while they are in bloom, Do not wait until tomorrow, The clock is ticking, t, t, te, te, The clock is ticking, t, t, t, t.</p> <p>Keep on doing your merciful work, Before the day breaks, Keep on doing your merciful work, <i>[continued in the lower opposite text box]</i></p>	<p>Before the day breaks, Do not wait until tomorrow, The clock is ticking, t, t, te, te, The clock is ticking, t, t, t, t.</p> <p>Bankole (1976: 5-9)<sup>7</sup></p>

<sup>5</sup> Refer back to my discussion thereof in the first paragraph on p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> The English translation is taken from Sadoh (2007a: 68). I copied it as it is provided: without all the repetitions in the original text. This is also the case with the translations of the other two songs by Bankole.

<sup>7</sup> The English translation is taken from Sadoh (2007a: 70).

‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’

Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn,  
 Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn,  
 t’ó tutù t’ó sì dára  
 mà dúró, mà dúró mà dúró d’ojó òla  
 Mà dúró mà dúró, mà dùró d’ojó òla,  
 Àkókò òsáré tete tete, t, t, tete  
 Àkókò òsáré tete tete, t, t, tete,  
 Má dùró d’ojó òla,  
 Àkókò òsáré tete t, t, t, t,

Múra sisé ànù re k’ílè òla k’ó tó mó  
 Múra sisé ànù re, múra sisé ànù re,  
 Múra sisé ànù re, k’ílè òla k’ó tó mó,  
 K’ílè òla k’ó tó mó yà  
 Mà dúró, mà dúró, mà dùró d’ojó òla,  
 mà dùró, mà dùró,  
 Mà dúró d’ojó òla;  
 Àkókò òsáré tete tete, t, t, tete.  
 Àkókò òsáré tete t, t, te, te,  
 má dùró d’ojó òla,  
 àkókò òsáré tete,  
 t, t, t, t,  
 Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn  
 t’ó tutù t’ó sì dára,  
 já ìtàná t’ó òtàn  
 t’ó tutù, t’ó sì dára!

(Bankole, 1976: 5-9)

‘The lion’ (‘Kiniún’)

The lion is the king of all the animals in the forest.  
 The lion is the king of all the animals in the forest.

When the lion roars,  
 The whole forest becomes very quiet,  
 The whole forest becomes very quiet.

(Bankole, 1976: 10-14)<sup>8</sup>

‘Kiniún’

Kiniún l’oba eranko níú igbó  
 Kiniún l’oba eranko níú igbó

T’ó bá bù ramúramù!  
 Gbogbo igbó á pa ró nini nini  
 Gbogbo igbó á pa ró nini nini  
 Gbogbo igbó á pa ró nini nini!  
 Gbo igbó á dáké nini nini  
 nini nini nini nini nini nini!

Kiniún l’oba eranko níú igbó  
 Kiniún l’oba eranko níú igbó  
 Kiniún l’oba eranko níú igbó!

(Bankole, 1976: 10-14)

Whereas ‘Ìyá’ is mostly diatonic (it is in Db major), ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ and ‘Kiniún’ display an increased use of chromaticism. In the latter two songs, functional harmony and moments of modality alternate with areas of extreme chromaticism. See, for example, the close chromatic movement in bar 4 of ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ that is followed by a G major chord (figure 2.2). From bars 17 to 18 in the same piece one can see a moment of melodic movement that alludes to the Dorian mode on F#, immediately followed by close chromatic movement (figure 2.3). In bars 1 to 4 of ‘Kiniún’ one can, for example, see the use of a pentatonic scale on F in the left hand of the piano

<sup>8</sup> The English translation is taken from Sadoh (2007a: 71).

accompaniment. From bar 29 the composer employs a whole-tone scale (figure 2.4) up to bar 35, where the music becomes much more chromatic.<sup>9</sup> Despite the tonal characteristics of ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ and ‘Kìniún’ just described, the composer still frames it within a context of conventionality by providing it with key signatures. These also provide the tonal centres from which the songs depart and in which they end (‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ has a G major or e minor key signature – it begins in an E tonal centre from which it quickly departs, and ends on a definitive G major chord; ‘Kìniún’ has an F major key signature – it begins in an F tonal centre, and ends on a definitive F major chord). The eclecticism seen in the use of tonalities by Bankole can also be seen in the textures of his writing for piano. The piano texture at the beginning of ‘Ìyá’, that consists of a melody in the top line with accompanying two or three-voiced chords, is followed by the beginning of a contrapuntal invention in bar 13 that ends as abruptly as it arrives (figure 2.5). This texture is replaced in bar 16 by block chords in the style of a funeral march (figure 2.6). The melody in the voice part here contains the theme of the preceding contrapuntal section, in augmented form. From bar 42 to the end of the song, we find yet another texture in the form of double octaves. ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ and ‘Kìniún’ display similar characteristics in terms of their piano textures, in their alternation between block chords in the right hand against a single-voiced left hand, and areas in which the textures are mostly thinner and often more contrapuntal. The greater structural forms of all three songs are conventional: ‘Ìyá’ is in binary (AB) form, while both ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ and ‘Kìniún’ are in ternary (ABA<sub>1</sub>) form. The melodies in the voice parts are not interval-restricted like those seen in the songs of, for example, J.H. Kwabena Nketia.<sup>10</sup> See the use of sixth and augmented fourth intervals in, for example, bars 18 to 19, and 21 to 22 (respectively) of ‘Ìyá’ (figure 2.7), the use of seventh intervals, of which an example can be seen in bar 20 of ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ (figure 2.8), and large consecutive leaps in, for example, bars 15 to 16 of ‘Kìniún’ (figure 2.9). The consistent indication of triplets in 4/4 time in ‘Ìyá’ may be read as adherence to a linguistic protostructure.<sup>11</sup> Additive rhythms are found in the last few bars of ‘Ìyá’ (figure 2.10). Neither ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ nor ‘Kìniún’ contain any rhythmic characteristics that could be described as being especially ‘African’ in character. Sadoh (2007a: 68-70) points out Bankole’s use of tone painting and the creation of moods that reflect the texts correctly in the last two songs.<sup>12</sup>



**Figure 2.2** Bar 4, ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ (Bankole, 1976: 1)

<sup>9</sup> The harmonization in thirds at the top, however, does not form a whole-tone scale.

<sup>10</sup> Nketia’s *Four Akan solo songs* are discussed in pp. 90 to 97.

<sup>11</sup> This phenomenon is discussed on p. 87 (in the section after the text box).

<sup>12</sup> Sadoh (2007a: 69-70), for example, refers to the imitation of a ticking clock in ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’.

*leggiero*  
À - kó - kò ní - sá - ré te - te  
*pp sempre*

Figure 2.3 Bars 17-18, 'Já ìtánná t'ó òtàn' (Bankole, 1976: 6)

*mp*  
Gbo - gbo i -  
*più cresc.*

Figure 2.4 Bars 29-31, 'Kìniún' (Bankole, 1976: 12)

*più lento*

Figure 2.5 Bars 13-14, 'Ìyá' (piano part) (Bankole, 1976: 2)

*dim.*

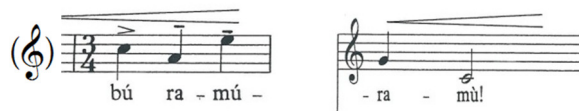
Figure 2.6 Bars 16-17, 'Ìyá' (piano part) (Bankole, 1976: 3)

*press.*  
s'è - ni t'ó fè - ràn mi t'ó  
mọ àì ní mi t'ó sì lè pè - sè

Figure 2.7 Bars 18-22, 'Ìyá' (voice part) (Bankole, 1976: 3)



**Figure 2.8 Bar 20, ‘Já ìtàná t’ó òtàn’ (voice part) (Bankole, 1976: 6)**



**Figure 2.9 Bars 15-16, ‘Kìniún’ (voice part) (Bankole, 1976: 11)**

**Figure 2.10 Bars 43-46, ‘Ìyá’ (Bankole, 1976: 4)**

Although ‘Ìyá’ stands in contrast to the other songs, it cannot be said to contain more lied characteristics than the others, as suggested by Omojola and Bankole (1994: 537) – the tonality is merely more diatonic. In fact, the use of tone painting – typical in western art song – is more apparent in the other two songs, and the more ‘typical African’ rhythmic characteristics only appear in ‘Ìyá’. Bankole’s writing for piano may not be strictly idiomatic, but its apparent ‘Africanness’ is not yet developed to the point where one could call it a clear example of African pianism, as stated by Sadoh (2007a: 69). My investigation confirms that Bankole had succeeded in not landing in the ‘square boxes’ that typify folk-type melodies (the significance of this point will become clearer as the reader progresses through this chapter), and the eclectic nature of his style. Although this is not confirmed by biographical information, the piano writing and tonality in the last two songs strongly suggest the influence of Bartók. Biographical sources suggest that the three songs were written at the same time, and one therefore looks towards the texts for a clue as to why there is a clear difference in style between the first and the last two songs. Possibly it is the references to family and religion in the text in ‘Ìyá’ that prompted the composer to employ rhythmic Africanisms and a more conservative tonality (in reference to his earlier education) in an effort to recreate a *Heimatgefühl*.

## Joshua Uzoigwe's *Watermaid*

Joshua Uzoigwe was born in Nigeria in 1946 (Euba, 2005: 85). According to Sadoh (2004: 638), Uzoigwe's first contact with musical activities in his home village ranged from singing sacred anthems and hymns by Icoli Harcourt Whyte, to being an audience participant in the *mgba* music that accompanied the annual wrestling match.<sup>13</sup> Uzoigwe received his first training in western music theory and history after gaining admission to King's College in Lagos in 1960. He also received private piano lessons at this time (Sadoh, 2004: 639). Sadoh (2004: 639) further states that 'Uzoigwe's involvement in religious and musical activities at King's College played a part in his decision to make music a career.' He studied for a diploma in music at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, from 1970 to 1973, after which he studied piano and composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London from 1973 to 1977. After this he studied ethnomusicology with John Blacking at Queens University, Belfast, where he earned his MA degree in 1978, and a PhD in 1981. From 1979 onwards (Euba, 2005: 85) he held various posts at Nigerian universities (Avorgbedor, 2013f: online). Uzoigwe passed away in 2005 (Euba, 2005: 84).

Uzoigwe's *Four Igbo songs* (later *Six Igbo songs*) are among his most prominent works for solo voice. He also wrote works for choir, solo instruments with accompaniment, wind quartet, orchestra, brass ensemble, and piano (Sadoh, 2004: 658-69). Avorgbedor (2013f: online) highlights the fact that Uzoigwe wrote works exclusively for African instruments, exclusively for western instruments and for combinations of African and western instruments. He also mentions that Uzoigwe was greatly influenced by the creative and theoretical works of Akin Euba (such as Euba's theory of African pianism).

*Watermaid* (1983) is a setting for bass and orchestra on a poem, in English, from a collection entitled *Heavensgate* (1962) by Christopher Okigbo.<sup>14</sup> There are only a few scattered references to this work, such as those in Omojola (1995: 76-77), who states the following:

[...] Uzoigwe provides the *okele* rhythm (gong rhythm) to act as reference pattern for the participating instruments. The use of this reference pattern in [...] works such as *Watermaid* [...] is based on Uzoigwe's belief that it constitutes one of the most important gestures of traditional drumming. [...]

His works *Oja* [...] and *Watermaid* [...] are scored for European instruments. In *Watermaid* for example, both the flute and the clarinet are given melodic lines which are idiomatic of the traditional Igbo flute – *Oja*.

My discussion of *Watermaid* here serves to provide more detailed information on this work and to initiate an academic discourse on it.

<sup>13</sup> According to Sadoh (2004: 638), '[m]gba refers to a particular musical ensemble that accompanies wrestling in the southern part of Igboland. The *mgba* drum row consists of nine tuned membranbe drums and is played by three people.' Sadoh (2004: 638) states that audience participation, however, merely consisted of singing, dancing and hand-clapping.

<sup>14</sup> Omojola (1995: 76) states that this work is for soprano and orchestra. The score in my possession only indicates 'voice', but the voice part is written in the bass clef and employs the range of a bass singer.

'Watermaid'

(I)

EYE OPEN on the sea,  
eyes open, of the prodigal;  
upward to heaven shoot  
where stars will fall from.

Secret I have told into no ear,  
save into a dughole, to hold, not to drown with –  
Secret I have planted into beachsand...

Now breaks  
salt-white surf on the stones and me,  
and lobsters and shells  
in iodine smell –  
maid of the salt-emptiness,  
sophisticreamy [sophisticreamy],  
  
whose secret I have covered up with beachsand...

Shadow of rain over sunbeaten beach,  
shadow of rain over man with woman.

(II)

BRIGHT

with the armpit-dazzle of a lioness,  
she answers [she an-, she ans-, she ans-, she ans-,  
she ans-, she answers,]

wearing white light about her;

and the waves escort her,  
my lioness,  
crowned with moonlight.

*[continued in the opposite text box]*

So brief her presence –  
match-flair in wind's breath –  
so brief with mirrors around me.

Downward...  
the waves distil her;  
gold crop  
sinking ungathered.

Watermaid of the salt-emptiness,  
grown are the ears of the secret.

[The starts have departed.]

(III)

AND I WHO am here abandoned,

count the sand by wavelash abandoned,  
count her blessing, my white queen.

But the spent sea reflects  
from his mirrored visage  
not my queen, a broken shadow.

So I who count in my island the moments,  
count the hour which will bring

my lost with angel's ash in the wind.

(IV)

THE STARS have departed,  
the sky in monocle  
surveys the worldunder.

The starts have departed,  
and I – where am I? [where am I?]

*[continued on the next page]*

Stretch, stretch, O antennae,  
to clutch at this hour, [to clutch at this hour, to clutch at this hour]

fulfilling each moment in a  
broken monody.

(Okigbo, 2008: 21-24)<sup>15</sup>

Before a reading of the composer's musical interpretation of the text, it is necessary to elaborate on matters concerning the poetry. Obumselo (2010: 1) speaks of an occasion in Kampala, Uganda, in June 1962 where Christopher Okigbo was asked

to explain the source of his unusually lyric form, and how he then spoke about 'the great modern composers in the ambiance of whose music he wrote the lyrics of *Heavensgate*.' Obumselo (2010: 1) quotes Okigbo as follows:

[W]hen I was working on *Heavensgate*, I was working under the spell of the impressionist composers Debussy, César Franck, Ravel, and I think that as in the music of these composers who write of a watery, shadowy, nebulous world, with the semitones of dream and the nuances of the rainbow, there isn't any clearly defined outline in my work [...]

Obumselo (2010: 3) also states that from 1962 onwards Okigbo's themes become more intellectual, and that these are stated in entirely symbolic forms. (The latter is evident in *Watermaid*.) The 'Watermaid' in the poem is most probably a reference to what Izevbaye (2011: 20) refers to as 'the Mammy Water or Water Goddess' in Igbo culture. Thus, what we have here is the portrayal of a native myth through a fantasy of western modernity (not to be confused with modernism). This is in line with Suhr-Sytsma's (2012: 45) contextualization of Okigbo and his peers' apparent desires for the literary culture in Nigeria at the time:

The tension evident [...] between modernity as the imposition of European capitalism in Africa and modernity as a condition shaped by Africans' agency is mirrored in the antinomy faced by Okigbo and his university-educated peers in the years after Nigeria's formal independence: they desired, on the one hand, a literary culture coded as 'modern' that had been imported by missionary or colonial education and, on the other hand, distinctively African aesthetic and political forms that would depart from European strictures without renouncing 'the modern'.

This explanation prompts the question of how Uzoigwe's musical interpretation, in comparison, speaks to this tension. The instrumentation of *Watermaid* is as follows:

2 flutes (flute 2 alternates with piccolo), 1 oboe, 2 clarinets in Bb, 2 bassoons; 2 horns in F; timpani, triangle/wood block/tambourine; bass voice; celesta; strings: violin I and II, viola, violoncello, and contrabass

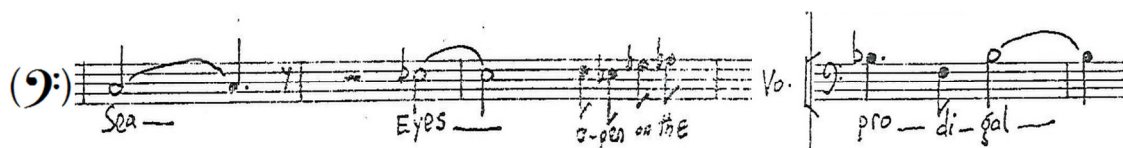
As has been indicated, the work consists of four movements. The divisions are as follows:

<sup>15</sup> Due to a large number of mistakes in the handwritten score, I opted to use Okigbo (2008) as a source for retyping the text. The texts in brackets are additions made by the composer. The numbering is not the poet's – it reflects the division of the text into musical movements by the composer.



- I bars 1 to 64 (moderate)
- II bars 65 to 185 (fast, slow, fast)
- III bars 186 to 225 (slow)
- IV bars 226 to 295 (moderately fast)

No key signature is indicated, and the metre switches between 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4. The vocal line displays an eclectic use of different types of material: Sections utilizing ordinary minor scales (see, for example, movement I, bars 4-8, figure 2.11) are contrasted with modal-like sections (see, for example, the implied Aeolian mode on C in movement I, bars 16 to 19, figure 2.12), and chromatic sections. See, for example, how the chromatic passage mostly features whole tone and semitone movement in movement II, bars 131 to 137 (figure 2.13), or the chromatic passage in movement I, bars 34-38 (figure 2.14), that features especially augmented fourths. The most prevalent type of vocal writing in this work is best described as ‘chant-like’, where it hovers around the same few notes or stays on a single note. See, for example, movement I, bars 74 to 75 (figure 2.15), and movement IV, bars 289 to 292 (figure 2.16). This may be an imitation of a precolonial practice of chanting as much as it may have been influenced by the composer’s background in Christian church music.<sup>16</sup> Spoken text is occasionally employed, as in movement II, bars 154 to 157 (figure 2.17). This may be an imitation of a precolonial practice of storytelling.<sup>17</sup> The rhythmic character of the voice part is declamatory, while rhythmic patterns in the accompanying instruments are often syncopated (as happens in the bassoon part in movement I, bars 4 to 5, figure 2.18 and the flute, oboe and clarinet parts in movement IV, bars 281 to 282, figure 2.19). Rhythmic ostinato patterns are often employed. Here one can point to the cello and double bass parts in movement I, bars 7 to 15 (figure 2.20), movement II, bars 130 to 137 (figure 2.21), and movement IV, bars 278 to 282 (figure 2.22). These ostinatos are most probably what Omojola (1995: 76) refers to as *okele* or gong patterns. I would, however, like to suggest that since they do not appear consistently throughout the work, they do not fulfil their original role as rhythmic references, but are merely momentary spectres of precolonial practices. Other than this, none of the stereotypical rhythmic characteristics associated with Africa (cross-rhythms, polyrhythms, hemiolas, additive rhythms) are employed in this work.<sup>18</sup>



**Figure 2.11 Bars 4-8, movement I, *Watermaid* (voice part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 1-2)**

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Okebalama (1989), regarding Igbo hunting chants.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Azuonye (1999: 36): '[...] *ifo* seems to denote a special gathering of the family circle beside a fire or under the moonlight for storytelling events – a mixed program that includes the singing of songs [...], the telling of riddles [...] and other forms of verbal dueling.

<sup>18</sup> See Nketia (1975: 125-138) regarding these rhythmic characteristics in precolonial African music.



Figure 2.12 Bars 16-19, movement I, *Watermaid* (voice part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 3)



Figure 2.13 Bars 131-137, movement II *Watermaid* (voice part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 17)

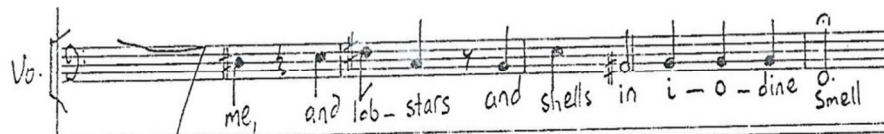


Figure 2.14 Bars 34-38, movement I, *Watermaid* (voice part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 6)



Figure 2.15 Bars 74-75, movement I, *Watermaid* (voice part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 11)



Figure 2.16 Bars 289-292, movement IV, *Watermaid* (voice part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 39)

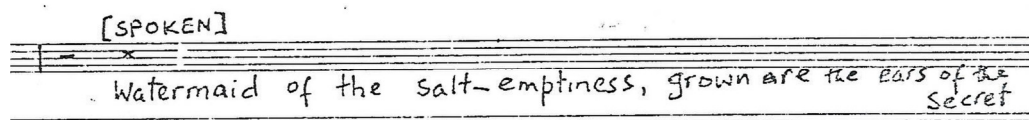


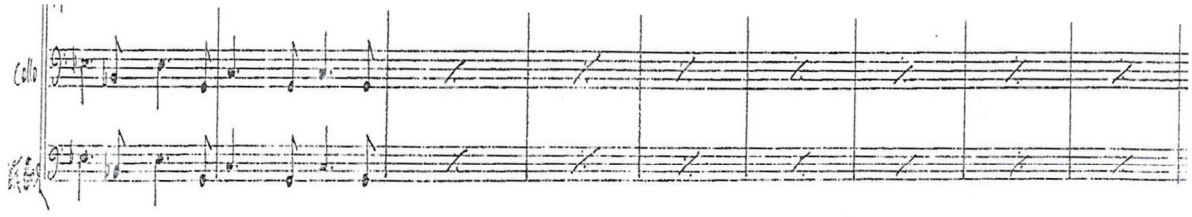
Figure 2.17 Bars 154-157, movement II, *Watermaid* (voice part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 20)



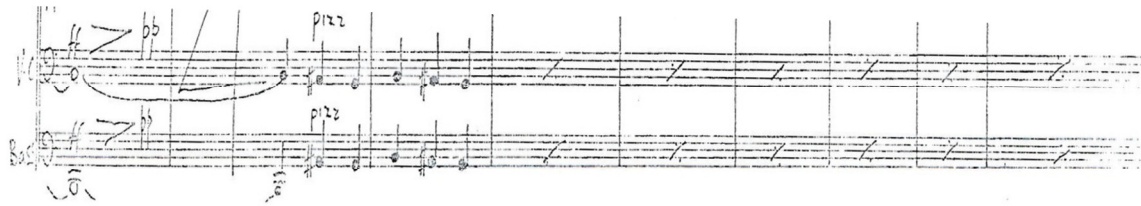
Figure 2.18 Bars 4-5, movement I, *Watermaid* (bassoon part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 1)



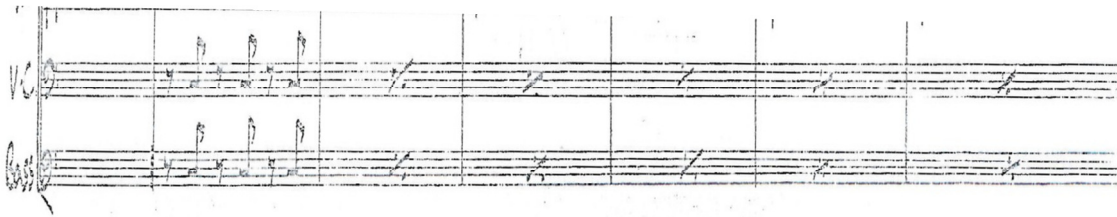
Figure 2.19 Bars 281-282, movement IV, *Watermaid* (flute, oboe and clarinet parts) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 37)



**Figure 2.20** Bars 7-15, movement I, *Watermaid* (cello and double bass parts) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 2)



**Figure 2.21** Bars 130-137, movement II, *Watermaid* (cello and double bass parts) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 17)



**Figure 2.22** Bars 278-282, movement IV, *Watermaid* (cello and double bass parts) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 37)

*Watermaid* is through-composed, and the composer attempts to achieve unity through the recurrence of very general rhythmic, tonal and melodic characteristics (as described), rather than through thematic development. No conventional structure is in evidence, with the work taking the form of a filmic montage with constantly varying textures and instrumental combinations. The rhythmically consistent, homophonic *tutti* playing at the beginning (see movement I, upbeat to bar 2, figure 2.23), stands in stark contrast with, for example, movement III, bars 190 to 192 (figure 2.24) where only four instrumental groups are employed, with the clarinets and horns taking on a melodic role, in counterpoint with each other; or, only a few bars further (movement III, bars 201 to 204, figure 2.25) where the voice is accompanied only by a violin drone and triangle. If Lo-Bamijoko's (1984: 8-11) expositions of typical *oja* passages are taken as evidence, it is not clear to me how the flute and clarinet parts in *Watermaid* are idiomatic of *oja* playing, as Omojola (1995: 77) suggests. Compare, for example, a representative example from Lo-Bamijoko's excerpts (figure 2.26) with the given excerpts of flute and clarinet playing from *Watermaid* (figure 2.27). There are occasional conventional interpretations of the text. See, for example, the thin texture on the

word ‘emptiness’ (movement I, bars 44 to 45, figure 2.28), and the long sustained note on the word ‘bright’ (movement II, bars 69 to 73, figure 2.29).

**Figure 2.23** Upbeat-bar 2, movement I, *Watermaid* (Uzoigwe, 1983: 1)

**Figure 2.24** Bars 190-192, movement III, *Watermaid* (clarinet, horn, cello and double bass) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 24)

This figure shows a page of a musical score for 'Watermaid' (Uzoigwe, 1983: 26), specifically bars 201-204. The score includes parts for Flute 1 and 2, Clarinet, Bassoon, Horns 1 and 2, Trumpets 1 and 2, Percussion, Celeste, and Voice. The vocal line features the lyrics: "count the sand by wave-lash a-ban-doned count her blessing my white-queen". The orchestral parts include a prominent string section with a melodic line in the first violin part.

Figure 2.25 Bars 201-204, movement III, *Watermaid* (Uzoigwe, 1983: 26)

This figure displays two staves of musical notation for 'Oja Okolobia' (Lo-Bamijoko, 1984: 8). Both staves are in treble clef and show a melodic line with various rhythmic values and accents, including a prominent dotted quarter note.

Figure 2.26 'Excerpts from *Oja Okolobia*' (Lo-Bamijoko, 1984: 8)

This figure shows three staves of musical notation for 'Watermaid' (Uzoigwe, 1983: 16, 18), specifically bars 127-128 and 139-142. The top two staves represent the flute and clarinet parts, with markings for 'tr.' (trill) and 'Staccato'. The bottom staff shows a more complex melodic line with the marking '(agitated)'. The notation includes various ornaments and dynamic markings.

Figure 2.27 Bars 127-128 (flute and clarinet parts) and 139-142 (flute part), movement I, *Watermaid* (Uzoigwe, 1983: 16, 18)

Figure 2.28 shows a page of a musical score for movement I of *Watermaid*. It features multiple staves for various instruments: flutes (fl.), oboes (ob.), clarinets (cl.), bassoons (Bsn), strings (Violins I and II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass), and a voice part (Vo.). The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *mp*. The voice part has lyrics: "emp-ti-" and "ness".

**Figure 2.28** Bars 44-45, movement I, *Watermaid* (Uzoigwe, 1983: 6-7)

Figure 2.29 shows a single staff of music for the voice part in movement II of *Watermaid*. It includes a dynamic marking of *mf* and lyrics: "Bri" and "ght with the".

**Figure 2.29** Bars 69-73, movement II, *Watermaid* (voice part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 10)

The montage structure and other eclectic elements (as described), along with the use of certain clichés – such as downward chromatic movement that returns to the same pitch (in the flute part, movement I, bars 22 to 24, figure 2.30), or the *tutti* downward-moving augmented fourth that ends on a fermata (movement I, bars 37 to 38, figure 2.31) – lends to this work the sound and feeling of an ‘epic-style’ Hollywood film score. The imitation of Igbo practices are too submerged to rise above this context. Thus, both Okigbe and Uzoigwe attempt the portrayal of a native myth through a fantasy of western modernity.<sup>19</sup> In the case of Uzoigwe, however, this fantasy has become one that is related to popular culture. Perhaps, by 1983, a point of disillusionment had been reached with regard to the development of an art music culture that would have wider appeal and provide performance opportunities – especially for orchestral works – for its practitioners. The composer may have intended a work such as *Watermaid* as a bridge between two worlds.

Figure 2.30 shows a single staff of music for the flute part in movement I of *Watermaid*. It includes a dynamic marking of *mf* and lyrics: "Bri" and "ght with the".

**Figure 2.30** Bars 22-24, movement I, *Watermaid* (flute part) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 4)

<sup>19</sup> This statement ties together with the discussion on western modernity in Chapter 8 (pp. 262 to 264).

The image shows a musical score for Figure 2.31, covering bars 37-38 of movement I of the piece 'Watermaid'. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system consists of five staves: four empty staves at the top, followed by a bass clef staff containing the lyrics 'i - o - dine smell'. The second system consists of five staves: a treble clef staff with notes, followed by three bass clef staves, and a final bass clef staff at the bottom.

**Figure 2.31 Bars 37-38, movement I, *Watermaid* (timpani, voice and strings) (Uzoigwe, 1983: 6)**

### **Akin Euba's Six Yoruba folk songs**

Akin Euba was born in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1935. He belongs to the Yoruba ethnic group, 'whose culture [had] more or less, for many years, dominated Lagos's social life' (Uzoigwe, 1978: 15). He started taking piano lessons with his father in 1943. In 1948, he started taking private lessons with a British high official in the Lagos Colonial Administration called Major J.G.C. Allen. He also had general music lessons at the school he attended, C.M.S. Grammar School, where he was also the accompanist for hymns sung at the morning assemblies and sang in the school choir. Subsequent to his lessons with Major Allen, Euba also studied with Monsieur Tessier Remi du Cross, who was the French Consul in Lagos at that time. Euba left for the United Kingdom in 1952 (Uzoigwe, 1978: 16-19). He received Fellowship diplomas in piano and composition from the Trinity College of Music, London, B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Ph.D. degree from the University of Ghana, Legon. Euba's ethnomusicology teachers were Mantle Hood, Charles Seeger, J.H. Kwabena Nketia and Klaus Wachsmann (Euba, 1993: 20-21). Eric Taylor, with whom he studied harmony and counterpoint at Trinity College, 'saw much potential in Akin Euba's arrangements of Nigerian folk songs.' His composition teacher at Trinity College was Arnold Cooke, a pupil of Hindemith (Uzoigwe, 1978: 19). His composition teachers in America were Roy Harris and Roy Travis. Euba held posts at the Nigerian Broadcasting

Corporation, the University of Ife, and the University of Lagos. He was a research scholar at the University of Bayreuth, Germany, from 1986 to 1991 (Euba, 1993: 20-21). From 1993 until his retirement in 2011, Euba held a post as Professor in the Department of Music at the University of Pittsburgh. During this time he also led the Centre for Intercultural Musicology at Churchill College, Cambridge University (University of Pittsburgh, 2011: online). Other than African pianism and intercultural musicology, Euba is also especially known for his research in the fields of creative ethnomusicology and Yoruba music (University of Pittsburgh, 2013: online).

Important works by Euba include *The wanderer* (for violin, cello and piano, 1960), *Four pieces* (for African orchestra, 1966), and *Scenes from traditional life* for piano (1970) (Omojola, 1995: 60-61).

It is important to note that the songs under discussion here have been included for a specific reason, namely in order to allow a problematization of the tension between original art songs on the one hand, and ‘art arrangements’ of folk songs on the other. Onyeji (2005: 28) touches on this point when he suggests that the transformation of folk songs into art songs in the western contemplative idiom is ‘[a]n unmistakable feature of modern Nigerian music [...]’. I will refer to this matter in the discussion on animist materialism at the end of this chapter.

The *Six Yoruba folk songs* were written in c. 1959 (Uzoigwe, 1978: 45) and the collection was first published in 1963 as *Six Yoruba songs* before being republished in 1975 as *Six Yoruba folk songs*. In addition to this collection, other solo vocal works by Euba include *Three Yoruba songs* for baritone, piano and iyalu drum (no date is given), ‘Time passes by’ for soprano and piano (premiered in 1985) (Euba, d.u.: 6, 12) and more recently, ‘Below Rusumo Falls’, a setting of a poem by Olusola Oyeleye for soprano, Kayagum (Korean zither), flute, piano, Yoruba dancer and Yoruba drums (2003) (University of Pittsburgh, 2013: online). The *Six Yoruba songs* were, according to Uzoigwe (1978: 22), written as a result of the various kinds of Nigerian music Euba came into contact with during his time as Senior Programme Assistant at the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation from 1957 to 1960. Uzoigwe (1978: 57) further states that ‘the new dimension which has [...] been added by the introduction of a piano part [in *Six Yoruba folk songs*], could still be eliminated without doing any serious damage to the songs.’ Uzoigwe is also of the opinion that the difference between these songs and those of western composers (other than the language of the text) can be seen in the rhymes of the piano accompaniment. This is the exact opposite of what the composer himself says when he states that ‘[t]he piano writing in this work makes no attempt at a Yoruba interpretation and is conceived in terms native to the main pianistic culture’ (Euba, 1975: i). For Omibiyi-Obidike (1992: 35), ‘African and European elements are co-dominant’ in Euba’s *Six Yoruba folk songs*. The melody and text are described as being African, and the harmonic structure and accompaniment as western. Riesz, in *Traditionelle und moderne afrikanische Musik am beispiel des nigerianischen Komponisten Akin Euba* (1988: 17), describes the repetitive rhythm in the piano accompaniment of the fifth song, ‘Agbe’, as having been modelled on African drum accompaniment. She further describes the accompaniment of the fourth song, ‘Omo jowo’, as being reminiscent of Brahms (its repetitiveness however still indicating an African idiom), and the accompaniment



of two of the other songs as being harmonized in an entirely European style. The composer provides the following contexts or meanings for the songs in this collection (Euba, 1975: i):

Some of these songs may be clearly identified with specific social contexts. 'Mo lè j'iyán yó' is a song performed for twins, whose birth is customarily an occasion for special ritual ceremonies. 'Agbe' and 'Mo já 'wé gbégbé' are funeral dirges, while 'Ọmọjòwọ' is a song for [...], in J.P. Clark's description, 'children born to die'.

The remaining two songs show no specific contextual associations. 'Méta méta l'òrè' relates the different virtues of three kinds of friends, while 'Ó ẹ gbé' na is apparently the song of a rake giving reasons for not getting married.

This section serves to provide a more detailed description of this cycle, and to evaluate the discourse it has generated.

'I can eat pounded yam to stupor' ('Mo lè j'iyán yó')

I can satisfy my hunger with pounded yam like the rural man  
Eat yam flower (amala) like the Sango adherent  
I can lap a baby on my back like the twins' nanny  
Your child is your blood  
Taiwo is a part of you  
Kehinde is your blood

(Euba, 1975: 1)<sup>20</sup>

'Mo lè j'iyán yó'

Mo lè j'iyán yó bí ará oko,  
Mo lè j'ámàlà bí oníşàngó,  
Mo lè gb'ómo pòn bí Abéjírè,  
Omo yín o ara yín,  
Táíwò yín o ara yín,  
Kéhinde yín o ara yín.

(Euba, 1975: 1)

In a song where the majority of chords are either major or minor, the use of diminished or chromatic chords in 'Mo lè j'iyán yó' stands out. The first appearance of a diminished chord in bar 5<sup>3</sup> may be seen, together with the first appearance of an augmented fourth interval in the voice part from beats 4 to 5 (figure 2.32), as pointing towards the ominous presence of Sango, the Yoruba god of thunder, in

the text. The diminished chord and the chromatic Eb-F#-A-C# chord (almost a French augmented sixth chord in G) from beats 1 to 2, and on beat 4 in bar 7, together with the only other appearance of an augmented fourth interval in the voice part on the fourth beat (figure 2.33), may be read as an interpretation of the heaviness of carrying twins on your back, as alluded to in the text. The dissonant major seventh interval in the piano accompaniment in bar 11

(figure 2.34) is a rarity that does not invite a clear semantic interpretation. The song ends

<sup>20</sup> The English translations and additional information were provided by Dr Segun Ige (2013). Sango is the Yoruba god of thunder (depicted in the image at the beginning of this chapter). 'Your blood' is literally 'your body' in the text. There is uncertainty about the meaning of the third line. Taiwo is the first twin, and Kehinde the second.

with an unusual minor iv to major I cadence in C. Since it is not possible for me to know to what extent the melodies may have been adapted from the original folk songs, commenting on them is difficult. As can be expected, the vocal range of ‘Mo lè j’iyán yó’ is small (just over an octave, from B<sub>3</sub> to C<sub>4</sub>), and besides the augmented fourths mentioned, do not contain intervals other than seconds, thirds, perfect fourths and perfect fifths. The presence of augmented fourths are the only instance of these intervals in the entire cycle. The piano accompaniment employs parallel chords which could be described as an Africanism, or not.



Figure 2.32 Bar 5, ‘Mo lè j’iyán yó’ (Euba: 1975: 1)



Figure 2.33 Bar 7, ‘Mo lè j’iyán yó’ (Euba, 1975: 1)



Figure 2.34 Bar 11, ‘Mo lè j’iyán yó’ (Euba, 1975: 1)

‘My three friends’ (‘Òré méta’)

My three jolly friends,

My three jolly friends,

The first asked me to lie down (sleep) on the mat,

*[continued on the next page]*

The second in the house,  
 And the third on the chest,  
 Without blinking, I chose the third.  
 I have traversed the great rivers,  
 Ogun, Osa, and Opo, the chief of mighty rivers;  
 Early deforestation denied us great woods,  
 'Ise nkele' (lethargy, inertia, unemployment) stealthily  
 emasculated our men,  
 War destroyed Ibadan through elaborate conspiracy,  
 Nightingale chirps her dirge,  
 Friendship is sometime futile.

(Euba, 1975: 2-3)<sup>21</sup>

'Òré méta'

Méta méta l'òré o e,  
 Méta méta l'òré o e,  
 Òkán ní nwá sùn l'éní e,  
 Òkán ní nwá sùn n'ílè e,  
 Òkán ní nwá sùn l'áiyà e,  
 Mo s'ojú wèrè mo b'áláiyà lo.  
 Mo ti lo m'Ògùn,  
 Mo ti lo m'òsà,  
 Mo ti lo m'òpó bálè odò;  
 Òpe wéwe şe 'kú pa pákó,  
 Isénkélé şe 'kú p'okùnrin,  
 [continued in the opposite text box]

The harmony in this song (in D major) is entirely conventional and very static (see bars 4 to 7, figure 2.35). It never becomes more chromatic than the presence of a few secondary dominant and seventh chords. However, the progressions are sometimes not functional, as can be seen from the vii<sup>o</sup>7/vi chord in bar 14 that does not resolve to vi (figure 2.36). The piano accompaniment is constructed from ballad-like broken chords, although without the use of the *tre corde* pedal it sounds unusually percussive.<sup>22</sup> The range (B<sub>3</sub> to D<sub>5</sub>) and interval restrictions in the voice part are similar to those of the first song in the collection.<sup>23</sup> The sweet, static nature of this song is maintained throughout, which means there is no conventional interpretation of 'war', 'conspiracy', and other such darker elements in the text. This seems ironic rather than naive, and may point to the futility mentioned in the last line of the text. The unexpected cadence in perfect four-part harmony at the end of the song contributes to this sense of the ironic.

Òtè 'Badàn m'ògun wá jà 'lú,  
 Ońderé şe 'kó ye ye,  
 Ye ye o l'òré o e.

(Euba, 1975: 2-3)

<sup>21</sup> The possessive in the title ('my') is understood. 'On the chest' indicates a deeper level of intimacy – in other words, this is the friend that offered the highest degree of hospitality or friendship (Ige, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Scott (1989: 19) describes, for example, Michael William Balfe's accompaniments as 'banal': '[...] they seldom contain any melodic interest and are generally no more than repeated broken-chord patterns.' Another example is Scott's (1989: 66-67) description of Maria Lindsay's 'Excelsior' as being '[...] accompanied by broken-chord patterns of a monotonous and predictable regularity.' (It is not my intention to attach the negativity conveyed through these quotes to the music in question, but merely to confirm it as a style characteristic.)

<sup>23</sup> According to Nketia (1975: 147) 'The structure of melodies [in precolonial sub-Saharan black African vocal music] [...] is based on the controlled use of selected interval sequences.' He cites, for example, structures that limit the melodic line to intervals of fourths, seconds and their inversions, and structures in which conjunct movement is restricted to two major seconds, sequences of thirds are limited to two and the only other possible intervals are octaves, fifths and fourths (Nketia, 1975: 147-149).



Figure 2.35 Bars 4-7, 'Òré méta' (Euba, 1975: 2)

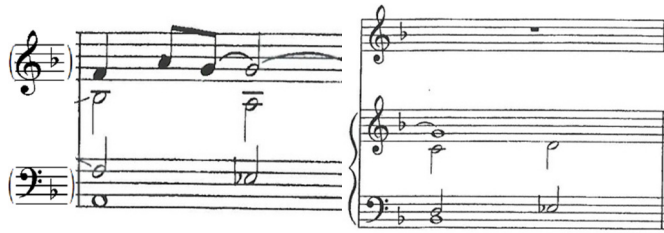


Figure 2.36 Bars 14-15, 'Òré méta' (Euba, 1975: 2-3)

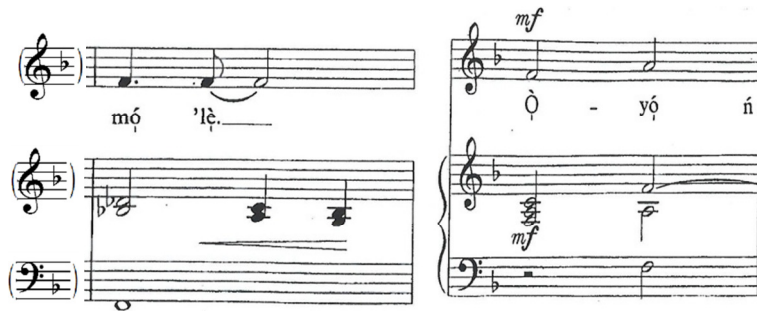
'Plucked the lotus leaf' ('Mo já 'wé gbégbé')	'Mo já 'wé gbégbé'
<p>I plucked the lotus to be forever remembered,                      I have eaten spinach, I shall not be trampled upon.                      As I go out today, let the forces converge in my                      favour,                      No man, though irate, forgets his home.                      There he goes.                      There he goes.</p>	<p>Mo já 'wé gbégbé Kí nwon má gbágbé mi,                      Mo já 'wé oní tètè Kí nwon má tè mí mó 'lè.                      Òyó ñlo K'ó ɣe wá 're,                      Ojú ì pón rokoroko kó gbàgbé ilé.                      Ó mà ñlo ògere,                      Ó mà ñlo ògere.</p>
(Euba, 1975: 4-5) <sup>24</sup>	(Euba, 1975: 4-5)

'Mo já 'wé gbégbé' is in F major for the most part. One notes here the strong dissonances in the first half of the piece, as these do not appear in the second half. See, for example, the chords in bars 3 to 4 (figure 2.37). The lack of this type of dissonance in the second half of the piece may be symbolic of the fact that the spell of victimization and oppression has been broken, as is alluded to in the text. This part of the song is introduced by a typical hymn-like neighbouring 6/4 progression from bars 12 to 13 (figure 2.38), which is perhaps symbolic of spirituality ('forces' in the text). The texture of the piano accompaniment remains chordal throughout. The vocal range in 'Mo já 'wé gbégbé' is somewhat wider (C<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>5</sub>) than those of the previous two songs, but contain the same interval restrictions.

<sup>24</sup> The title should be understood to mean 'on the road to immortality/social importance'. The second line means that the jinx of victimization or oppression has been broken (Ige, 2013).



**Figure 2.37** Bars 3-4, ‘Mo já ’wé gbégbé’ (Euba, 1975: 4)



**Figure 2.38** Bars 12-13, ‘Mo já ’wé gbégbé’ (Euba, 1975: 4-5)

‘Please my baby’ (‘Omo jòwó’)

Be pacified my baby,  
I beg you on my knees,  
Behold the candies,  
And the sweets,  
Please my baby,  
Be pacified my baby.

(Euba, 1975: 6-7)

‘Omo jòwó’

Omo kí o yé jòwó o Omo jòwó,  
Mo kúnlè mo bè ó o omo jòwó,  
Mo f'èkuru bè ó o omo jòwó,  
Mo f'àkàrà bè ó o omo jòwó,  
Kí o yé jòwó o omo jòwó,  
Kí o yé jòwó o omo jòwó.

(Euba, 1975: 6-7)

The seemingly chromatic harmonic language of this song is one with tonal drive, and that can be tripped down to reveal a conventional chord base (see, for example, bars 5 to 6, figure 2.39). (In a very broad sense, perhaps this can be related to elements of an early twentieth-century post-tonal sensibility). One could certainly say that the texture is reminiscent of Brahms (refer back to the introduction to this section), if looking at a specific piece such as no. 11 from the *Variations on a theme of Paganini*. However, as a general statement the application of this comparison by Riesz is a bit broad. As was the case with the first two songs, this song rather suddenly ends on a triadic four-part chord (this time on a D major tonic, as expected from the key signature indication). The harmonic language may be symbolic of the juxtaposition of the crying baby and the constant desire to passify him or her, spoken of in the text. The vocal range (A<sub>3</sub> to D<sub>5</sub>) is about the same as that of ‘Mo já ’wé gbégbé’. For the first time we see the presence of sixth intervals in the voice part, albeit only between the end of a phrase and the beginning of another.

**Figure 2.39** Bars 5-6, ‘Omo jòwó’ (Euba, 1975: 6)

‘Blue Touraco’ (‘Agbe’)

Blue Touraco never ignores its young,  
Neither the prized bird of noble birth,  
We would not pay attention to that man,  
That ignores his son for gold,  
Here is a stupid counsel,  
To exclude Olu from the community of friends (we defy such calls not to play with Olu).

(Euba, 1975: 8-9)

‘Agbe’

Agbe t’ó r’ómo rè d’áró olele,  
Àlùkò t’ó r’ómo rè gosùn o olele,  
Bàbà y’ó kú t’ó r’ómo rè p’agogo ide o,  
Àwa kò lè taro iwònyèn,  
K’á mà b’Ólú s’éré,  
Ìmòràn olele o.

(Euba, 1975: 8-9)

‘Agbe’, which contains mostly triadic harmony and consonance, contain a few chromatic alterations that appear conspicuously out of context. An example is the Cb in bar 7 (figure 2.40). In contrast to some of the previous songs, I have not been able to make clear semantic connotations to these. Long non-harmonic notes in the voice part (see, for example, the F in bar 4, figure 2.41) create the feeling of the voice momentarily floating independently above the accompaniment.<sup>25</sup> Curiously, the song ends with a VI – bVII cadence (see bars 18 to 19, figure 2.42). The vocal range is especially small (Db<sub>4</sub> to Bb<sub>4</sub>) and, as before, contains

no leaps larger than a perfect fifth. The rhythm of the left hand of the piano accompaniment is indeed a simple ostinato (see, for example, the piano part from bars 10 to 12, figure 2.43), but to say that it has been modelled on African drum accompaniment (see Riesz, 1988: 17) is fanciful.

<sup>25</sup> Assigning such intricacies with the symbolism of resistance to the forces of exclusion that the text refers to is perhaps reading too much into it.

— À - lù - kò —

**Figure 2.40** Bar 7, ‘Agbe’ (Euba, 1975: 8)

— t'ó r'ó - mọ rè

**Figure 2.41** Bar 4, ‘Agbe’ (voice part) (Euba, 1975: 8)

o - le - le o. —

**Figure 2.42** Bars 18-19, ‘Agbe’ (Euba, 1975: 9)

**Figure 2.43** Bars 10-12, ‘Agbe’ (piano part) (Euba, 1975: 9)

‘Possible! Is it?’ (‘Ó ẹ̀ gbé na?’)

Possible! Is it?  
 Were it to be,  
 When I ventured,  
 That the high chieftain died, and we had to carry the sack  
*[continued on the next page]*

(of money or goods) to the city,  
 Then upon news of an eminent close relation's death, we  
 carried a large sack to the village.  
 Then we all got caught up in  
 The burial and funeral frenzy.  
 If our primary goals are not achievable,  
 Then we switch to back-up plans.  
 In the absence of a lover, one might consider marrying a  
 first cousin or a close relation.  
 A poor man pleads his case humbly,  
 [...]  
 A man with face marks sounds silently,  
 Ògbónnà.

(Euba, 1975: 10-11)<sup>26</sup>

As this song will be discussed as part of a reapplication of Deleuze and Guatarri's theorization of Kafka's work as a so-called 'minor literature' on certain compositional practices (Chapter 7), it will not be discussed in detail here.<sup>27</sup> For the sake of completeness, it should suffice to say here that the piano writing employs the same chordal texture seen in 'Mo já 'wé gbégbé', and that the voice part shows the same characteristics as those of the other songs in terms of range (F<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>5</sub>) and interval restrictions.

Through my discussion of the text-music relationship, it emerged that the piano accompaniment is not

'Ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ gbé na?'

Ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ gbé na? Kò ẹ̀ ẹ̀ gbé,  
 Ìbá ẹ̀ ẹ̀ gbé ma gbé t'èmi.  
 Àsikò t'ìbá mà ẹ̀ ẹ̀ gbé,  
 Erin kú l'òko a k'ókè wá 'lé  
 Lárinkà kú n'ílé a k'ókè r'oko.  
 Ojú elékun ó ñdanna,  
 Ìrù elékun ó ñjò wèrè,  
 Èkíkán elékun méji abe.  
 B'á ò r'áko ẹ̀ ẹ̀ à fewùrà gúnýán,  
 B'á ò r'èni fé à f'ána eni,  
 B'ó bá ka 'ni à kúnlè wíjò,  
 Bí ò dè ka 'ni à má ẹ̀ ẹ̀ àna lo,  
 Àbàjà ò ró kéké,  
 Ògbónnà.

(Euba, 1975: 10-11)

indispensable, as Uzoigwe (1978: 57) suggests. Although the piano accompaniment may have been conceived 'in terms native to the main pianistic culture', as the composer suggests (Euba, 1975: i), the present author would like to suggest that the occasional use of certain percussive and rhythmic techniques (as has been discussed) may be an early manifestation of what Euba would later call 'African pianism'. Omibiyi-Obidike's (1992: 35) and Riesz's (1988: 17) clear-cut classifications of certain elements as 'African' and others as not, have been shown to be naïve, as they never take into consideration the intricacies pointed out in the subversion of western harmonic conventionalities (a discussion of which is continued in Chapter 7), or the existence of cross-domain African-western similarities. As a whole, *Six Yoruba folk songs* can be described as stylistically eclectic, although the 'styles' themselves are ambiguous. Euba's insistent return to conventionality at the ends of the songs

<sup>26</sup> To understand this song, one has to think along the lines of Murphy's law: if anything can go wrong, it will. This song advises a man who has not been very successful in life to be careful in the way he relates to authoritarian regimes. The third line from the bottom could not be made out clearly, but may be: 'But if they refuse you an audience, simply walk away.' The word in the last line sounds like onomatopoeia, but could also be the name of a town (Ige, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 7, pp. 240 to 247.



may be seen as a Hindemithian principle acquired via Arnold Cooke.<sup>28</sup> His use of folk songs may have been inspired by Roy Harris.<sup>29 30</sup> The writing of this folksong-based cycle on the eve of Nigeria's independence may be interpreted as having been inspired by nationalist sentiments.

### **Christian Onyeji's *Nka emume (Art for celebration)***

Christian Onyeji was born in 1967. He holds a Master of Arts (composition) degree from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and a Doctor of Music degree from the University of Pretoria in South Africa. His specialization is so-called research-composition: 'a modern approach to art music composition that entails the application of ethnomusicological procedures in the composition of modern African art music that is a logical continuum of African traditional music' (Herbst, Zaidel-Rudolph and Onyeji, 2003: 178).<sup>31</sup> Other than the collection that is the topic of this section, Onyeji has written works for symphony orchestra, solo voice and choir, and piano. His piano compositions are described as being 'drummistic' (Onyeji, 2008: back cover). Onyeji was previously a post-doctoral research fellow at North-West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa, and currently lectures at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Christian Onyeji, 2013: online).

The only information on this composer's songs has been provided by himself.<sup>32</sup> The aim of this section is to provide an alternative, more distanced reading that considers a greater number of songs. For practical reasons, my selection of eight songs (from a total of twenty), includes only those that are original compositions by Onyeji, rather than arrangements of existing songs. Also for practical reasons, I have not included songs of which the texts are in the Delta Igbo or Edo languages. The texts of all except three of the songs are in the Igbo language. The exceptions are 'Mbombo', 'Agada giri' and 'Di gam', the texts of which consist of, in the composer's words, 'poetic syllables': 'These are syllables that are structured to simulate melodic and textual essence but do not necessarily convey linguistic meaning' (Onyeji, 2013).

#### 'Inine'

Mother, father, I am going home, inine  
 Oh, my dear father, I am going home, inene.  
 Behold, behold, the indigo with which my mother decorated me,  
 Mother dear, father dear, I am going home, inene.  
*[continued on the next page]*

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Wheterell (2013: online): '[...] Hindemith's anti-serial maxim - 'Music, as long as it exists, will take its departure from the major triad and return to it' - was one to which Cooke adhered.'

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Stehman (2013: online): 'His works reflect [...], through the influence [...] of Anglo-American folktunes [...], convey strong nationalist elements as well.'

<sup>30</sup> Omojola (1995: 61) discusses the influence of Roy Travis on Euba's works.

<sup>31</sup> This appears to be the same thing as 'creative ethnomusicology' (see p. 57, first paragraph).

<sup>32</sup> Refer back to the discussion on African vocalism at the beginning of this chapter (pp. 37 to 38).

The pretty child that glows,  
Glowing, oh, see how my God has beautified me, me the pretty child.  
Oh, inine, inine, you indigo, do you hear,  
The pretty child that glows, oh, see how my God has beautified me, me, the pretty child.  
Mother dear, father dear, I am going home, inine.  
Oh father, I am going home, inine.  
Behold, behold the indigo with which my mother decorated my face,  
Mother dear, father dear, I am going home, inene  
Yes, oh, you dance too.  
Oh, inine.

(Onyeji, 2008: 10-12)<sup>33</sup>

'Inine'

Nne mu Nna mu a lawala m'urio inene.  
Ewo nna mu a lawala m'urio inene.  
Le o le o urine ji cho mum ma n'iru mo,  
Nne mu nna mu a lawala m'urio inine.  
Nwa diogo n'egbuke,  
N'acha le ka chi mu si cho mu mma nwa di mma e.  
O inine inine uri le inugo,  
nwa diogo n'egbuke n'a cha le ka chi mu si cho mu mma nwa di mma o.  
nne mu Nna mu a lwala m'urio inine.  
Ewo nna mu a lawala m'urio inine.  
Leo leo urine ji cho mum ma n'iru mo,  
nne mu nna mu a lawala m'urio inine.  
E gba owe yio.  
O inine.

(Onyeji, 2008: 10-12)

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<sup>33</sup> The English translations of Onyeji's songs were provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013b).

'A lion killed his mother and father' ('Agu  
gburu nne na nna ya')

Ye i ye i ye oha  
ye i ye i ye oha  
a ha a e.  
A lion killed his mother (his father), ate them,  
see  
Ye i ye i ye i o  
See, it was buried in the grave,  
kalamgbomgbo  
It says it is this tomorrow  
kalam gbomgbo kalam gbomgbo kalam  
gbomgbo kalam gbomgbo,  
Ye i ye i ye i o  
Tomorrow is too far for it  
kalam gbomgbo kalam gbomgbo kalam  
gbomgbo kalam gbomgbo,  
ye i ye i ye o a  
ye i ye i ye i o ye i ye i o a ha a ha hei

(Onyeji, 2008: 46-48)

'Agu gburu nne na nna ya'

Ye i ye i ye i oha  
ye i ye i ye i oha  
a ha a e.  
Agu gburu nne a (nna ya) rie ini kala  
Ye i ye i ye i o  
Kala a bara nu ya ini kalamgbomgbo  
osi n'obunu echi ini a e  
kalam gbomgbo kalam gbomgbo kalam  
gbomgbo kalam gbomgbo,  
Ye i ye i ye i o  
echi di ni y'anya ini  
kalam gbomgbo ka lamgbomgbo ka  
lamgbomgbo  
ye i ye i ye i oa  
ye i ye i ye i o ye i ye i o a ha a ha hei

(Onyeji, 2008: 46-48)

'Mbombo'

Mbo mbo mbo mbo mbo mbo mbo mbo  
O ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
O rib o o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
o ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
O ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
ha mbo mbo ha mbo mbo ha mbo mbo  
Ha iye ha e  
ye i ya ho e wo si si swe la lam  
Ha iye ha e  
ye i ya ho e wo si si swe la lam  
ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
O ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo

*[continued in the opposite text box]*

o ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
O ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
ha mbo mbo ha mbo mbo ha mbo mbo ha  
mbo mbo  
ku ku be nini e ku ku be ni ni  
ta ka ma ma yo ho ta ka ma ma o  
ku ku be ni ni e ku ku be ni ni  
ta ka ma ma yo ho ta ka ma ma o  
ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
O ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
o ri bo o ra gba ra mbo mbo  
O ri bo ora gba ra mbo mbo  
ha mbo mbo  
ha mbo mbo

*[continued on the next page]*

ha mbo mbo  
 ha mbo mbo  
 mbo mbo  
 mbo mbo o

(Onyeji, 2008: 49-54)

'Agada giri'

Ga da ga da n go do ti go do,  
 a ga da gi ri,  
 ga da ga da n go do ti go do  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ti ti ti ko ko dam lyom  
 ka lan ko lo ti ti ko ko ko  
 ti ti ti ko ko dam lya  
 he ha a ha a ha a  
 he ha a ha a ha a  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ti it it ko ko dam lyom  
 ka lan ko lo ti ti ko ko dam lya  
 lya  
 ti ko ko ti ti ko ko ti ko lya  
 ti ko ko ti ti ko ko ti ko lya  
 Ga da ga da n go do ti go do,  
 a ga da gi ri,  
 ga da ga da n go do ti go do  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ka lan ko lo 'ti ti ti ko ko dam lyom  
 ka lan ko lo ti ti ko ko ko  
 ti ti ti ti ko ko dam lya  
 he ha a ha a ha a  
 he ha a ha a ha a  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ti it it ko ko dam lyom  
 Ka lan ko lo

*[continued in the opposite text box]*

ti ti ko ko ko  
 ti it ti ti ko ko dam lya.  
 Kre ke ten ke te kre ke ten ke te  
 chi o chi o chi o chi o chi o he l  
 ti ko dam ti ko ti ko dam  
 ti ko dam ti ko ti ko dam  
 chi o chi o chi o chi o chi o he l  
 kre ke ten ke te kre ke ten ke te  
 Ga da ga da n go do ti go do,  
 a ga da gi ri,  
 ga da ga da n go do ti go do  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ti ti ti ko ko dam lyom  
 Ka lan ko lo  
 ti ti ko ko ko  
 ti ti ti ti ko ko dam lya  
 he ha a ha a ha a  
 he ha a ha a ha a  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ka lan ko lo  
 ti it it ko ko dam lyom  
 ka lan ko lo ti ti ko ko ko  
 ti it ti ti ko ko dam lya.

(Onyeji, 2008: 55-60)

'Hi ya'

Hiya,  
 That which I saw and believed,  
 It is God that gives children to the people of the world and  
 He owns the children  
 Show me if this way will fail hiyo ha ya  
 It is a person's Creator who owns him too ha ya  
 It is a person's Creator, please, who owns him too  
 It is a person's Creator who owns him too agada hi yo.

Ha ja,  
 Mother dear, speak on for I am listening  
 hei  
 May father from whom I spring also believes it,  
 It is a person's Creator who owns him in the world,  
 Show me the way,  
 a ga da hi yo.  
 All of you, let me have some peace,  
 Wealth and money, you do know that money,  
 It is with it that one marries a maiden ha ba ha ba  
 Play me the music  
 kon kon ko  
 kon kon kon ko  
 kon kon ko  
 kon kon kon ko  
 hie hei hei  
 iya.

That which I saw and believed,  
 It is God that gives children to the people of the world and  
 He owns the children  
 Show me if this way will fail hiyo ha ya  
 It is the creator of a person that owns him  
 It is a person's Creator, please, who owns him too  
 It is a person's Creator who owns him too agada hi yo,

Ha ja,  
*[continued on the next page]*

'Hi ya'

Hiya,  
 I fem fu lu kwe lu,  
 obu Chin nye n'uwa new ya  
 zi mu zo aga da hiyo ha ya  
 Obu Chimmadu nwe ya ha ya  
 o bu Chimmadu new ya biko  
 o bu Chimadu new y'agada hi yo.

Ha ja,  
 Nne mu n'ekwu kwo,  
 hei  
 Nna mu si puta kwe lu,  
 obu Chimmadu new ya n'uwa,  
 zi m'uzo,  
 a ga da hi yo.  
 Nye nu mu udo,  
 uba n'ego I ma kwa n'ego,  
 ya k'iji ma lu agboghobia ha ba ha ba  
 nye mu egwu  
 kon kon ko  
 kon kon kon ko  
 kon kon ko  
 kon kon kon ko  
 hei hei hei  
 iya.

I fem fu lu kew lu,  
 obu Chin nye n'uwa new ya  
 zi mu zo aga da hiyo ha ya  
 Obu Chimmadu new ya ha ya  
 o bu Chimmadu new ya biko  
 o bu Chimadu new y'agada hi yo.

Ha ja,  
 Nne mu n'ekwu kwo,  
 hei  
*[continued on the next page]*

Mother dear, speak on for I am listening,  
hei  
My father from whom I spring also believes it,  
It is a person's Creator who owns him in the world,  
Show me the way  
a ga da hi yo.  
hi ya chi chi chi chi chiti ti ti ko  
ti ti ti ko

Na m'odo,  
let me be,  
come, go with me,  
aha aha  
heiya aha oh, all of you come and behold  
Come, so you can wait.

That which I saw and believed,  
It is the Creator of each person that owns him  
Show me if this way will fail hiyo ha ya  
It is the Creator of a person that owns him  
It is a person's Creator, please, who owns him too  
It is the Creator of a person that owns him agada hi yo.

Ha ja,  
Mother dear, speak on for I am listening,  
hei  
My father from whom I spring also believes it,  
It is a person's Creator who owns him in the world,  
Show me the way,  
a ga da hi yo.

chi chi chi chi chi chi chi  
aha aha hi ya.

(Onyeji, 2008: 65-71)

Nna mu si puta kwe lu,  
obu Chimmadu new ya n'uwa,  
zi m'uso,  
a ga da hi yo.  
hi ya chi chi chi chi chi chi  
ti ti ti ko

Na m'odo,  
ha pu mu,  
so lu mu la ba,  
aha aha  
heiya aha ewo bianu lere  
bianu kiwere chelu o.

I fem fu lu kwe lu,  
obu Chio nye n'uwa new ya  
zi mu zo aga da hiyo ha ya  
Obu Chimmadu new ya ha ya  
o bu Chimmadu new ya biko  
o bu Chimmadu new y'agada hi yo.

Ha ja,  
Nne mu n'ekwu kwo,  
hei  
Nna mu si puta kwe lu,  
obu Chimmadu new ya n'uwa,  
zi m'uzo,  
a ga da hi yo.

chi chi chi chi chi chi chi  
aha aha hi ya.

(Onyeji, 2008: 65-71)

'I salute' ('Mma mma')

Yes, pretty one,  
 yes, good music,  
 yes, I salute you,  
 you will be the pretty one,  
 you will dance to the good music,  
 you will marry a pretty person  
 hm, I salute,  
 hm, I salute, you will be a pretty person,  
 you will dance to the good music,  
 you will marry a pretty person,  
 hm, I salute,  
 hm, I salute

See how they watched, but see that they see  
 good things,  
 Show them, see them, but see them, look at  
 them, let them see good things  
 Sell good things, they see good things,  
 Pretty one, come see good things with me,  
 ha e pretty one,  
 yes, good music,  
 yes, I salute you,  
 you will be a pretty person,  
 you will dance to good music  
 you will marry a pretty person,  
 hm, I salute,  
 hm, I salute, you will be a pretty person,  
 you will dance to the good music,  
 you will marry a pretty person,  
 hm, I salute, hm, I salute.

Ye y ho I salute hm o ha e I salute.  
 ye a he ho I salute hm o ha e I salute.  
 chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi ya  
 ho

*[cotinued on the next page]*

'Mma mma'

E Ony'oma,  
 e egwuoma,  
 e mmamma,  
 ig'abu on'yoma,  
 ig'agba egwuoma,  
 ig'alu ony'oma,  
 hm mmamma,  
 hm mmma ig'abu ony'oma,  
 ig'agba egwuoma,  
 igalu ony'oma,  
 hm mmamma,  
 hm mmama.

I ya re ya ho si si we le ha ya ma le ka ho iy'oma,  
 zi wa le ka we ma le we le ho ya ma le ka ho  
 iy'oma.  
 (ya re iy'oma, ha e iy'oma,  
 dum le ly'oma,  
 ha e Ony'oma,  
 e egwuoma,  
 e mmamma,  
 ig'abu ony'oma,  
 ig'agba egwuoma,  
 ig'alu ony'oma,  
 hm mmamma,  
 hm mmmama ig'abu ony'oma,  
 ig'agba egwuoma,  
 igalu ony'oma,  
 hm mmamma,  
 hm mmamma.

Ye y ho mmamma hm o ha e mmamma  
 ye a he ho mmamma hm o ha e mmamma.  
 chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi chi ya  
 ho

*[continued on the next page]*

yes, pretty one,  
 yes, good music,  
 yes, I salute you,  
 you will be a pretty person,  
 you will dance to the good music,  
 you will marry a pretty person,  
 hm, I salute,  
 hm, I salute, you will be a pretty person,  
 you will dance to the good music,  
 you will marry a pretty person,  
 hm, I salute,  
 hm, I salute.  
 Ja ja o ja o ja ja ja e

(Onyeji, 2008: 72-77)

e On'yoma,  
 e egwuoma,  
 e mmamma,  
 ig'abu ony'oma,  
 ig'agba egwuoma,  
 ig'alu ony'oma,  
 hm mmamma,  
 hm mmmama ig'abu ony'oma,  
 ig'agba egwuoma,  
 igalu ony'oma,  
 hm mmamma,  
 hm mmamma.  
 Ja ja o ja o ja ja ja e

(Onyeji, 2008: 72-77)

'Di gam'

He di gam di gam di gam  
 ko lo ko lo o to bo to bo  
 ha ha ha ha  
 o chi chi chi chi  
 o chi chi chi chi jam  
 o chi chi chi  
 o o chi chi chi chi  
 o o chi chi  
 o o chi chi  
 o o jam  
 o de de de ku ru dem dem ku ru de  
 ku ru dem dem ku ru di gam di gam di gam  
 ko lo ko lo  
 o to bo o to bo  
 ha ha ha ha e ha  
 di gam di gam di gam  
 ko lo ko lo ko lo  
 o to bo o to bo  
 ha ha ha ha e ha

*[continued in the opposite text box]*

Pra ka sa na wa wa wa na  
 me li lo be ja ja ja ja  
 ti ko ti ko ho ja ja ja  
 ho ya ho ya de de de de  
 ku ru ku ru ha ha ha  
 ja ja ja o  
 ku ru ku ru ha ha ha  
 ja ja ja o.  
 He  
 di gam di gam di gam  
 ko lo ko lo o to bo to bo  
 ha ha  
 de de de ku ru de  
 ku ru dem dem ku ru  
 di gam di gam di gam  
 ko lo ko lo  
 o to bo o to bo  
 ha ha ha ha e ha.

(Onyeji, 2008: 78-82)



'Hi yom'

Hi yom, hi yom,  
 Is it not joy that is greater than enmity  
 hi yom,  
 These, my statements, cause enmity,  
 hiyom, hiyom, hiyom, ti ko lo  
 He that kills, why do you want to live  
 hiyom  
 You want to die  
 Our desire is to be happy  
 hiyom hiyom hiyom,  
 agada kwem  
 mbrrrrrrrrru  
 Respond to that, hiyom,  
 Respond to that, hiyom  
 Respond, all of you, hyio.  
 Amen  
 O we ya hi hi eya we iyo,  
 ti ti ti ko, ti ti ti ko dam hi yom  
 Children of the world, come and hear my voice.  
 All you people come and hear  
 ti ko wi yo ti ko jam,  
 ti ko wi yo to ko jam  
 ti ti ti ko ti ti ti ko hi yom.  
 Hiyom, hiyom  
 Is not joy better than enmity, hi yom,  
 These, my statements, cause enmity,  
 hiyom, hiyom, hiyom, ti ko lo  
 You who kill others, why do you want to live, hi yom  
 You want to die  
 joy, joy is all we want  
 hiyom, hiyom, hiyom,  
 agada kwem  
 mbrrrrrrrrru  
 Respond to that, hiyom,  
*[continued on the next page]*

'Hi yom'

Hi yom, hi yom  
 O kw'anu li ka nu ilo  
 hi yom,  
 Okwu mu wa bu nu ilo,  
 hiyom, hiyom, hiyom, ti ko lo  
 o gbu mma du icholidi  
 hiyom  
 onwu ki n'achokwa,  
 anuli, anuli ka nyi cholu  
 hiyom, hiyom, hiyom,  
 agada kwem  
 mbrrrrrrrrru  
 Kwe nu ya hiyom,  
 kwe kwa ya hiyom  
 kwe nu nu hiyo.  
 Ise  
 O we ya hi hi eya we iyo,  
 ti ti ti ko, ti ti ti ko dam hi yom  
 Um'uwa bia nu ruolu mo.  
 Ora mi le bia nu nu ru  
 ti ko wi yo ti ko jam,  
 ti ko wi yo to ko jam  
 ti ti ti ko ti ti ti ko hi yom.  
 Hiyom, hiyom  
 O kw'anu li ka nu ilo hi yom,  
 Okwu mu wa bu nu ilo,  
 hiyom, hiyom, hiyom, ti ko lo  
 o gbu mma du icholidi hiyom  
 onwu ki n'achokwa,  
 anuli, anuli ka nyi cholu  
 hiyom, hiyom, hiyom,  
 agada kwem  
 mbrrrrrrrrru  
 Kwe nu ya hiyom,  
*[continued on the next page]*

<p>Respond again, hiyom</p> <p>Respond all of you, hiyo.</p> <p>Amen</p> <p>Jam jam jam</p> <p>Jam jam</p> <p>jam jam jam</p> <p>jam jam hiyo</p> <p>You know it is so</p> <p>Great Iroko tree, you are, people respond</p> <p>hiyo, hiyo</p> <p>Great Iroko tree, you are, people respond</p> <p>hiyo, hiyo, hiyo</p> <p>Hiyom, hiyom</p> <p>Is not joy better than enmity, hiyom,</p> <p>These, my statements, cause enmity,</p> <p>hiyom hiyom hiyom, ti ko lo</p> <p>You who kill others, why do you want to live,</p> <p>hiyom</p> <p>You want to die</p> <p>joy, joy is all we want</p> <p>hiyom, hiyom, hiyom,</p> <p>agada kwem</p> <p>mbrrrrrrrrru</p> <p>Respond to that, hiyom</p> <p>Respond, all of you, hiyo.</p> <p>Ise mbrrrrrrrrru</p> <p>Respond, hiyo iha</p> <p>chi chi o chi chi o</p> <p>Respond, hiyo.</p> <p>(Onyeji, 2008: 83-88)</p>	<p>kwe kwa ya hiyom</p> <p>kwe nu nu hiyo.</p> <p>Ise</p> <p>Jam jam jam</p> <p>jam jam</p> <p>jam jam jam</p> <p>jam jam hiyo</p> <p>I ma n'obu</p> <p>oji dike k'i bu ora kwe nu</p> <p>hiyo, hiyo</p> <p>oji dike k'l bu ora kwenu</p> <p>hiyo, hiyo, hiyo</p> <p>Hiyom, hiyom</p> <p>O kw'anu li ka nu ilo hiyom,</p> <p>Okwu mu wa bu nu ilo,</p> <p>hiyom hiyom hiyom, ti ko lo</p> <p>o gbu mma du icholidi hiyom</p> <p>onwu ki n'achokwa,</p> <p>anuli, anuli ka nyi cholu</p> <p>hiyom, hiyom, hiyom,</p> <p>agada kwem</p> <p>mbrrrrrrrrru</p> <p>Kwe nu ya hiyom,</p> <p>kwe kwa ya hiyom</p> <p>kwe nu nu hiyo.</p> <p>Ise mbrrrrrrrrru</p> <p>kwenu hiyo iha</p> <p>chi chi o chi chi o</p> <p>kwenu hiyo.</p> <p>(Onyeji, 2008: 83-88)</p>
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All Onyeji's songs are in either simple or compound quadruple time: 'Agada giri' and 'Di gam' are in 4/4 time, and all the others are in 12/8.<sup>34</sup> Rondo form prevails, with five from the eight songs in question displaying the use of this structure. The songs that are not in this form are 'Inine', which is in a type of binary form (A B A<sub>1</sub> B<sub>1</sub>), and 'Agu gburu nne na nna

<sup>34</sup> See Jones (1959: 3) for a discussion on the 12/8 'signature tune' clap- or bell-patterns and its relation to precolonial African music.

ya' and 'Di gam', both of which are short and do not display any recognizable structural divisions that can be related to western forms. The key signatures that are used (and here I am not yet referring to the tonality of the songs, and will refer to major keys only as a matter of convenience) display a certain relation: in name, they all form part of the chord Bb-Db-F. 'Inine', 'Agu gburu nne na nna ya', 'Agada giri' and 'Di gam' all employ the Bb major key signature, 'Mbombo' and 'Mma mma' employ the Db major key signature, and 'Hi ya' and 'Hi yom' employ the F major key signature. The tonality of the songs is best described as generally consonant, with occasional chromatic alterations. The chord progressions and spacing, however, (see my discussion on texture further on) is not that of common practice harmony. Although Onyeji's piano writing is almost unrelieving in its repetitive, percussive nature, the texture is never exactly the same in any two pieces. In 'Inine', one observes a two or three-voiced 'rocking' accompaniment in the right hand against a moving bass line in octaves in the left (bar 5, figure 2.44, serves as an example), as well as a two-voiced pedal point in the right hand against broken chords consisting of perfect fourths and fifths in the left (such as in bars 14 to 15, figure 2.45). In 'Agu gburu nne na nna ya' we find a pedal point in octaves in the right hand throughout, against either a single-voiced melodic movement or oscillating octaves in the left (see, for example, bar 4, figure 2.46). The texture of the piano writing in 'Mbombo' is similar, except that the pedal point in the right hand now consists of a two-note chord. The right hand pedal point in 'Agada giri' is a combination of that in the previous two pieces, and consists of either a two-note chord or octaves in different sections. The left hand either consists of 'moving' oscillating octaves, or it doubles the right hand where it employs an octave pedal. In 'Hi ya', we see the use of either a single-voiced or two-note pedal point, or oscillating octaves with an added seventh in the right hand. In the left hand, 'moving' oscillating octaves occur, or a melody that is single-voiced or in octaves. The above should suffice as examples of the piano textures employed by Onyeji, and in reference to the remaining pieces, it is perhaps only worth mentioning what has not been seen thus far: the single instances of four-part tertian chords used in 'Mma mma' and 'Hi yom' (such as in bars 1 to 2 of 'Mma mma', figure 2.47), and the Alberti-bass and scale-like movements in 'Hi yom' (bars 48 to 49, figure 2.48 serves as an example).



**Figure 2.44 Bar 5, 'Inine' (piano part)** (Onyeji, 2008: 10)



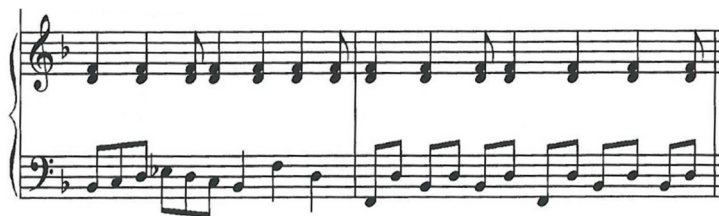
**Figure 2.45 Bars 14-15, 'Inine' (piano part)** (Onyeji, 2008: 11)



**Figure 2.46 Bar 4, 'Agu gburu nne na nna ya' (piano part) (Onyeji, 2008: 46)**



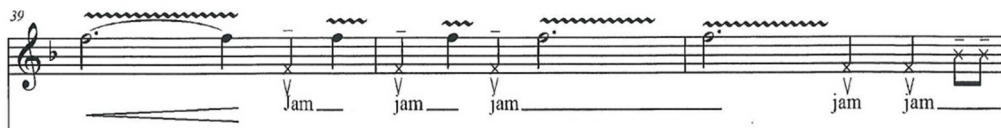
**Figure 2.47 Bars Upbeat-bar 2, 'Mma mma' (piano part) (Onyeji, 2008: 72)**



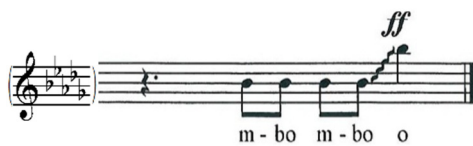
**Figure 2.48 Bars 48-49, 'Hi yom' (piano part) (Onyeji, 2008: 87)**

The voice parts in Onyeji's songs are characterized by interval restrictions: the melodies mostly consist of second, third, perfect fourth and perfect fifth intervals. These restrictions are sometimes supplemented by augmented fourths (such as in 'Inine'), a few instances of sixths (such as in 'Agu gburu nne na nna ya'), sevenths (such as in 'Mma mma'), or octaves (such as in 'Agada giri', 'Mma mma' and 'Di gam'). The voice parts in 'Hi ya' and 'Hi yom' are exceptions to the norm: they contain significantly more triad-forming consecutive leaps, sixth intervals (and in the case of 'Hi yom', seventh intervals), than those of the other songs. These elements lend to those melodies a much more conventional western sound. Although these songs are not designated to be sung by specific voice types, the vocal ranges in five out of the eight songs fall in the 'medium voice' category (either Bb<sub>3</sub> or C<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>5</sub>). The ranges of 'Inine', 'Mbombo' and 'Di gam' (F<sub>4</sub> to Bb<sub>5</sub>) require higher voice types. However, the range is still fairly narrow and the lower register is never utilized. In 'Inine', for example, Bb<sub>4</sub> is indicated as an acceptable alternative to Bb<sub>5</sub>. A few chromatic additions to the indicated key signatures aside, the melodies should not be difficult to pitch. Instances of long, sustained notes, above-the-stave writing, and certain vocal techniques from precolonial Igbo music (especially where they appear in fast succession – see, for example, bars 39 to 41 in 'Hi yom', figure 2.49 – and where the singer is not familiar with such practices) would require above-average technical skill. The latter include non-pitched exclamations (refer back to figure 2.49), large glissandos (see, for example, bar 47 in 'Mbombo', figure 2.50), ululation

(again, refer back to figure 2.49) and fast rolling of the tongue and lips to pitch (see, for example, bar 65 in ‘Hi yom’, figure 2.51). Onyeji also incorporates body percussion (stamps and claps) into the vocal line (see, for example, bar 5 in ‘Agada giri’, figure 2.52). Certain rhythmic characteristics in Onyeji’s writing can be traced throughout the collection of songs discussed here. Hemiola patterns are very common, for example as evidenced in the first two lines of ‘Inine’, and bars 7 to 8 in ‘Mbombo’, figure 2.53. In most of the songs, additive rhythms in one hand of the piano accompaniment against divisive rhythms in the other create a polyrhythmic texture. Only in ‘Mma mma’ do the divisive rhythms in both hands of the accompaniment create a cross-rhythmic texture. Rhythmic patterns are sometimes maintained throughout a song (such as the patterns in the right hand of the piano accompaniment in ‘Agada giri’ and ‘Di gam’), but in most cases rhythmic patterns and textures are varied throughout the course of a song. The rhythms in the voice part sometimes move independently (see, for example, bar 5 in ‘Agu gburu nne na nna ya’, figure 2.54), or it has the same rhythmic grouping as either the left or right hands of the piano accompaniment (see, for example, bars 11 to 13 in ‘Mma mma’, figure 2.55).



**Figure 2.49** Bars 39-41, ‘Hi yom’ (voice part) (Onyeji, 2008: 86)



**Figure 2.50** Bar 47, ‘Mbombo’ (voice part) (Onyeji, 2008: 54)



**Figure 2.51** Bar 65, ‘Hi yom’ (voice part) (Onyeji, 2008: 88)



**Figure 2.52** Bar 5, ‘Agada giri’ (voice part) (Onyeji, 2008: 55)

Moderato

legato *mf* N - ne mu N - na mu a la - wa - la m' u -

Piano *mf* *mp*

4 *mp*

Pno. *mp*

rio i - ni - ne. E - wo n - na mu a la - wa - la m' u - rio i - ni - ne.

Figure 2.53 Bars 1-6, 'Inine' (Onyeji, 2008: 10)

*f* Ye i ye i ye i o - ha

*p*

Figure 2.54 Bar 5, 'Agu gburu nne na nna ya' (Onyeji, 2008: 46)

11

m - mm - ma i - g'a - bu o - ny'o - ma, i - g'a - gba e - gwuo - ma, i - ga - lu

Pno.

Figure 2.55 Bars 11-13, 'Mma mma' (Onyeji, 2008: 73)

There is very little in Onyeji's songs that speak to western ideals of art song: the piano writing (which adheres to definitions of African pianism), rhythm and metre and the voice are all employed to simulate precolonial practices. These are, however, mostly contained within

conventional western structural forms, and the songs are cyclically linked by a conventional triadic relationship. Occasional virtuosic vocal requirements and chromaticism may also be read as western influences. Considering Onyeji's 'foundation to top' compositional process, it is not surprising that there is not much more to the text-music relationship than the suitable interpretation of mood.<sup>35</sup> Where the text consists of poetic syllables – which should give the composer more freedom from the requirements of a tonal language – the melodies are not more complex or more chromatic. In 'Di gam', for example, this freedom has led to an increased use of complex rhythms and other vocal effects. This 'freedom' therefore maintains melodic simplicity, but affords rhythmic complexity, thus fulfilling a trope in the discourse on African music.

### **The history of art music in Ghana: An overview**

According to Omojola (1995: 149), the development of Ghanaian art music followed a very similar trajectory to that of Nigerian art music:

As in Nigeria, the activities of British colonial administrators, missionaries and teachers helped to introduce and consolidate the practice and consumption of European liturgical Christian music as well as European classical music [...] which provided the foundations for the emergence of modern Ghanaian art music.

The building of a castle at Elmina by the Portuguese in 1482 to promote maritime trade, saw the beginning of the longest European contact with Ghana (Mensah, 1966: 20). Although missionaries arrived at that time, they were only active in the coastal forts and did not achieve large-scale conversions until Britain gained control of much of the interior in the middle of the nineteenth century (Smith, 2012: 32). Missions included those from Basel and Bremen, German Protestant organizations, and British Methodists (Smith, 2012: 33). Ghana became a British colony in 1874 and was named the Gold Coast, after its most lucrative export (Ghana, 2002: 94). Missionary-founded institutions, such as the Presbyterian Training College, Akropong (which were founded by the Basel Mission in 1848) were key centres for training musicians. By the early twentieth century, this kind of education included the singing of hymns, instruction in the piano, harmonium and music theory. Churches had begun to incorporate indigenous languages and musical practices before the turn of the century (Smith, 2012: 33-34, 36). By the 1920s, a Presbyterian Seminary Tune book had been published with hymns and western classical tunes set to Twi words, and the first singing band had been established to sing anthems and western hymns in the Fante language (Mensah, 1966: 20). The need eventually arose for the composition of original Ghanaian music to be used in the emerging Ghanaian churches.

Ephraim Amu (1899-1995) is regarded as the first Ghanaian art music composer of prominence (Omojola, 1995: 149-150) and will be discussed below. Nicholas Zinzendorf Nayo (1922-1993) (Avorgbedor, 2013d: online), Ato Turkson (1937-1993) (Avorgbedor, 2013e: online), Emmanuel Gyimah Labi (born 1950) (Avorgbedor, 2013c: online) and

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<sup>35</sup> Refer back to the discussion on African vocalism at the beginning of this chapter (pp. 37 to 38).

Kenneth Kafui (born 1951) (Avorgbedor, 2001b: online) are, among others, Ghanaian composers who have achieved prominence, but who will not be discussed in this chapter.

Institutions such as the University of Ghana and the Ghana National Symphony Orchestra have been, according to Smith (2012: 31) ‘tremendously influential’ on Ghanaian art music composers. The School of Music, Dance and Drama, with J.H. Kwabena Nketia as its director, was established in 1962 as part of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana (Wiggins and Nketia, 2005: 57). The Ghana National Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1965, and still exists today despite a lack of government funding (Smith, 2012: 57).

Ghana achieved independence from Britain on 6 March 1957 (Ghana, 2002: 94). Atta Annan Mensah, in a speech delivered at the First Conference of the Ghana Music Society in 1958 (Mensah, 1958: 28), expressed his wish for the establishment of music professionalism in this country as follows:

In this El Dorado there would be a large body of people performing in orchestras, choirs, Dance Bands, Brass Bands, Military Bands and Chamber music groups, and every night one could visit, at a small fee, large halls packed full with audiences cheering at virtuosos or at the magic world of a Ghanaian opera.

Within the context of Ghana’s newly gained independence, Mensah’s El Dorado strikes one today as an ironically European one that wanted to celebrate establishments of colonial origin and the individualism of the virtuoso. His ‘magic world of Ghanaian opera’ now reads like a fantasy of magical realism that would make hybridity in Ghanaian culture visible – for the elite world that Mensah imagined *did* exist in a much smaller way – and that would disrupt an exclusivist or nativist’s idea of what Ghanaian culture is.<sup>36</sup> Military regimes dominated Ghana from 1966, with the country only finally returning to civilian rule in 1992 (Ghana, 2002: 96).

In this section on Ghana I will discuss Ephraim Amu’s *Three solo songs*, J.H. Kwabena Nketia’s *Four Akan solo songs*, and Atta Annan Mensah’s ‘Adzekyee fofor akye’ (‘A new day dawns’) and ‘Da tuu’ (‘Deep slumber’).

### **Ephraim Amu’s *Three solo songs*<sup>37</sup>**

Ephraim Amu was born in Peki-Avetile in the Volta region of Ghana in 1899. He received his first training in the harmonium and in music theory during his years at middle school. From 1916, he trained as a teacher and catechist at the Basel Mission Seminary in Abetifi.

<sup>36</sup> The reference to magical realism ties together with my discussion on animist materialism (pp. 103 to 105).

<sup>37</sup> A note on Twi texts: The translator of the texts in this language was asked, when retyping the texts from the score, to remove the dashes that divide the words into syllables, and to reassemble the syllables correctly where dashes had been placed incorrectly. The result turned out to be different from the score to the extent that one may doubt the quality of the re-assembled texts. I am therefore including the vocal score of the songs with Twi texts (excluding those whose English translations have been copied from secondary sources) in the Appendix (p. 293) so that the reader can compare the different versions.



Amu began his teaching career in Peki-Blengo in 1920, where he composed choral music, practised the harmonium and taught music for six years (Agawu, 1996: 274). According to Avorgbedor (2013a: online) the works from Amu's early period (c.1923 to 1927) are characterized by homophonic textures and functional harmonies. He was transferred to the Scottish Mission Seminary at Akropong in 1926. Amu began to study precolonial Ghanaian traditions during this time – especially the structure and sound of the Twi language, the rhythms of drum language, and traditional philosophies in prayers, myths and wise-sayings. This practice fed directly into his compositions, of which the most well know stem from his period at Akropong. Amu worked at the Achimota School in Accra after being dismissed from Akropong in 1933, when his undermining of the hegemony of European culture started to be seen as a threat to the church (Agawu, 1996: 274-275). In the works from his middle period (c.1928 to 1940), he emphasized speech-tone contours, triplets and cross-rhythms (Avorgbedor, 2013a: online). He studied at the Royal College of Music in London from 1937 to 1941, where he specialized in music theory. Among his teachers there were Gordon Jacob and Herbert Howells (Omojola, 1995: 151). His study of counterpoint in England had a great influence on his subsequent works (Agawu, 1996: 276). The works from his late period (c.1941 to 1995) also display an increasing reliance on speech tones, the avoidance of modulation and frequent use of the 2/4 time signature (Avorgbedor, 2013a: online).<sup>38</sup> Upon his return to Ghana, Amu went back to teach at Achimota. Amu retired from teaching in 1960 and became a research fellow at the Institute of African Studies at Legon until 1971 (Agawu, 1996: 296). According to Agawu (1996: 277), Amu wrote over one hundred compositions, and '[h]is work of the 1920s and 1930s became the staple musical diet of many young musicians with an interest in composition.' Amu died in 1995 (Avorgbedor, 2013a: online).

From the emphasis on choral works in the discussion on Amu by Omojola (1995: 150-155), one can deduce that Amu's greatest contribution was made in this genre. Choral works cited include 'Biakoye' ('Unity), 'Israel Hene' ('King of Israel)', 'Abibirimma' ('Sons of Africa'), 'Adawura bome' ('Play for me'), and 'Akyede pa mafo' ('Giver of good things'). Works for other instrumentations include *Antenteben prelude* for piano and *atenteben* (a type of flute), and *Agyinamo a wno* (*The demise of the cat*) for bamboo flute ensemble (Omojola, 1995: 153, 155).

According to Amu (Agawu and Amu, 1987: 56-57) the *Three solo songs* (published in 1961) is not a cycle: '[...] they just happened to be the solo songs that I composed.' Kofi Agawu's (1996: 62-67) discussion of this collection is, to my knowledge, the most detailed one in existence. My aim in this section is to contribute to that discussion by focusing on elements that did not feature prominently in Agawu's discussion (although some repetition is inevitable).

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<sup>38</sup> Omojola (1995: 152) suggests the following division into style periods for Amu: early period (1920-1937), middle period (1937-1951) and the third period (from 1952 onwards).

'Bonwerε weaving song' ('Bonwerε kenterwene')

Verse 1

Walking/wandering has enabled me to see things,  
Walking/wandering has enabled me to hear things,  
But I have never seen anything like this Asante Bonwerε kente weaving,  
I have never heard of anything like this Asante bonwerε kente weaving.  
Kwame is skilled; his kente weaving is unparalleled,  
His hands, his feet and his nsɛdua (item used in weaving):

Chorus:

Kro, kro, kro, kro, hi hi hi hi kro hi kro hi kro kro kro hi hi  
kro kro kro hi hi kro hi kro  
has made me glad,  
It's the Bonwerε kente weaving that has given me pleasure, it is unique.

Verse 2

This kente weaving song has really taken over my mind,  
I sing it everywhere I go,  
And everyone who saw me saw that something was experiencing something  
They were amazed and gathered around me.  
An old woman asked me to stay in her home, encouraged me and  
asked me what was going on, and I said:

Spoken text:

He/she said 'My child, what is the matter?' I said: 'Awo, hmm! I am a learner from the Akuropon family and I have heard how the Bonwerε town has become famous for its kente weaving; as they blaze this trail, I have come to see for myself what I heard. As I was about to arrive at the town, I enquired if, and went to see how "The Skilled" Elder Kwame was weaving kente.' Father, as soon as I mentioned "The Skilled" Kwame's kente, the song found its way onto my lips: [Chorus].

Verse 3

The woman who was kind to me never understood me, but she did all she could to stop me from singing,  
She gave me delicious groundnut soup which made me forget, for a brief moment, about my song.  
She gave me a good place to sleep. As soon as it was dark, I found myself singing the Kente weaving song.

Spoken text:

Sympathizers and fellow housemates all got up and came to stand at the entrance to my house, to hear me sing this song. You all know how sweet morning songs are. It really touched them to the extent that when I called out in song, they all replied [Chorus].

Verse 4

I returned home after my short visit to Bonwɛrɛ,  
Many people loved my song and they wanted to hear it,  
I was glad that I returned home with something good,  
And as soon as I got home, I went to the king's palace.  
The young, and old men and women gathered around me to hear and help me sing my song.

Spoken text:

Like I said, you would not believe the crowd that arrived; every house was represented by its deer and antelope. I observed quietly and said: 'Ei (exclamation), what news will be fitting to give such a huge crowd.' I turned to my trusted Bonwɛrɛ kente weaving song. As I sang, the Okyeame (royal announcer) called out and the people responded. So, in that vicinity, if you went left, right, outside, or inside, you heard [chorus].

(Amu, 1961: 2-5)<sup>39</sup>

'Bonwɛrɛ kenterɔwɛnɛ'

Verse 1

Akyinkyin̄ akyinkyin̄ ama mahū nneɛma,  
Akyinkyin̄ akyinkyin̄ ama mate nscmaa,  
Asante Bonwɛrɛ kente ɔwɛnɛ minhūu bi da o,  
Asante Bonwɛrɛ kente ɔwɛnɛ mentee bi da o.  
Kwame Onim adeɛ ɔɔ, ne kente ɔwɛnɛ n'abɔ me gye,  
Ne nsa, ne naŋ ne nseɔɔua, se wogyi gye ni:

*[continued on the next page]*

<sup>39</sup> The English translations and additional information were provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013c). Please note that no translation of the third song, 'Mawue naa 'mɛ, Mawue tea 'mɛ' (in the Ewe language), was available. No comments on the text-music relationship have therefore been made. The 'morning songs' referred to in the spoken text after verse three of 'Bonwɛrɛ kenterɔwɛnɛ', may be a reference to birds singing. The reference to deer and antelope in the spoken text after verse four may be some kind of metaphor, or it may refer to a certain wise saying.

Chorus:

Kro, kro, kro, kro, hi hi hi hi kro hi kro hi kro kro kro hi hi  
kro kro kro hi hi kro hi kro  
n'a ye me de o aye me de o,  
Bonwere kente nwene n'a! Aye me de o, a bo megye.

Verse 2

Kenterwene dwom yi afa madwene denneh,  
Ba biara a mefa, mereto no denneh,  
Na nnipa a wohuu me nyinaa hui se asem da me so  
Na mehõ yee won nwõnwã ma wõbkyeree me so.  
Eno Ohuo ni mmõbõ befaa me koe kosee ne fi, N'õpataa me ara, bisaa me ma nantese:

Spoken text:

Ose: 'Meba, edeben?' Mese: 'Ao, hmm! Meye osuani a mifi Akuropon Asuawekunini no mu, na mate senea Bonwere kurow yi agye diñ wõ kenterwene mu, na wõgyaa yen kwan yi, maba se mehwe nea metee wõ hõ no. Menya miduu kurow no mu pe, ofi a edi kan a miduu hõ mu no metee, na meko hui se Opanyin Kwame Onimadesyo renwene kente.' Agya, Kwame Onimadesyo ne kente diñ a menya meboe pe, na dwom no de nehõ abehye manõ: [Chorus].

Verse 3

Ohuo ni mmõbõ ante mase ara de, Nansõ õbõ mmõden yee hõ biara mãa me,  
Omaa me nkaterkwan pa bi di mee pa ara Na ne de w maa me werẽfii me dwom no kakra.  
Omaa me baabi pa dae odasum pe me bõ dagye, Kenterwene dwom koro yi ara na mereto.

Spoken text:

Eno Ohuonimmõbõ nè nefipamfo nyiaa nyan bae, begyinaa me dan a meda mu no ano, retie me dwom no. Na mo ara munim anadwodwom nè ne de. Ekõ won so ara yiye, maa me gye a mabõ no sanñ won bi, na se mefre dwom no a, na won nyinaa gye so [Chorus].

Verse 4

Mankye Bonwere hõ na mesan mebaa fie,  
Me dwom no ye nnipa pii de na wõpe atie,  
Emaa manigyeei pii se manya bribi pa rekõ,  
Na miduu fie pe meekõ ahenfie anente sebo.  
Mmrante nè mmabaa nè nkwa koraa mmerewa nè mmõfra, Wõbae, beboae Won nyinaara bekyeree me so.

*[continued on the next page]*

Spoken text:

Mise, nnipa nkō ara a εβεβοαα hō, ofi biara mu anka otwe anka adowa. En'na mehwεεε komm na mise: 'Ei, nnipa dōm yi, amanee beη po na wobō wōη a, εβεεε wōη ani?' En'de, edi me Bonwεε Kenteηwene dwom yi ara. Na mede mahyehye so, na okyeame no asom, na amanfo no agye so. Na efi hō, wofa kurow no beηkum anaa nifa, apuei anaa atōe a wobεte: [Chorus].

(Amu, 1961: 2-5)

'A song of welcome and congratulations' ('Akwaabadwom')

Verse 1

Great men, let eyes look up and take in what men have done

Elders, we congratulate you

That which is expected of men is what you have done

Elders, forefathers! We congratulate you

Forefathers! We congratulate you

You were struck with hunger, you endured the rain and the sun scorched you

You struggled to secure us a place to stand/ set us on solid ground, Well done, well done, well done forefathers

Verse 2

Forefathers, great men, freedom custodians

Forefathers! We salute you

Great men deserve freedom

Forefathers, we congratulate you, oh Forefathers

We congratulate you, you searched extensively

You called out, you pushed, you were unrelenting

Because of you we have peace, Well done fathers, well done, well done elders, well done

Well done forefathers, well done.

(Amu, 1961: 2-5)

'Akwaabadwom'

Verse 1

Agyanoε, mmani mma Akōgye asaasefoe aye!

Agyanoε! Yεmā mo akwaaba o,

*[continued on the next page]*

Nea mmarimma beye na mo aye yi o  
 Agya noe! Agya noe! Yema mo akwaaba o  
 Agya noe! Yema mi akwaaba o  
 Okom deemo ara, osuo hwee mo ara, owia hyee mo ara  
 mo bɛɛbɛɛe ara, mo ama yeŋ baabi agyina, Agyanom mo, mo, mo, agyanom mo!

Verse 2

Agyano! Ama mma, akōnya ahōfadifoe  
 Aye, agyano! Yeɔ ma mo akwaaba o  
 Ahōfadi fata a ma mma o, Agyano!  
 Agyano! Yema mo akwaaba o Agyano!  
 Yema mo akwaaba o, mohwehɛɛ ara  
 Mofɛfree ara, mopempemee ara, mopereperee ara,  
 Mo ama yeŋ hōanya adwo yeŋ, Agyanom mo mo mo mo agyanom, mo!  
 Mo agyanom mo!

(Amu, 1961: 2-5)

All three pieces are largely diatonic – ‘Bonwerɛ kenteŋwene’ is in Eb major, ‘Akwabaadwom’ is also in Eb major, and ‘Mawue naa ’mɛ, Mawue teɔ ’mɛ’ is in Db major – and the harmonies are functional. These songs, unlike (for example) Nketia’s *Four Akan solo songs* (see the discussion further on), do not contain momentary ‘deviations’ and are consonant throughout. Although no time signatures are indicated, all three songs are in 2/4 time. Amu’s abundant use of triplets is explained by Agawu (1984: 66) as follows (in reference to ‘Akwabaadwom’):

The word *Agyanom* (elders), for example, is rendered in speech as a short upbeat followed by a triplet: [...]. The fact that the foreground of the song is dominated by various forms of triplet figuration [...] is therefore in keeping with the linguistic protostructure.

Examples of this practice can be seen in, for example, bars 9 to 11 (figure 2.56) and bars 20 to 23 of ‘Mawue naa ’mɛ, Mawue teɔ ’mɛ’. The voice parts in all three pieces employ the same interval-restrictions: only seconds, thirds and perfect fourths are used. All three songs have the same narrow, one-octave vocal range: Eb<sub>4</sub> to Eb<sub>5</sub>. All the songs are strophic, with distinct verse and chorus sections – a characteristic that is reminiscent of folk or popular music. There are some differences in the details of their structural arrangements: The verses of ‘Bonwerɛ kenteŋwene’ and ‘Akwabaadwom’ have an internal chain (A-B-C) structure, whereas that is not the case with ‘Mawue naa ’mɛ, Mawue teɔ ’mɛ’. In the first two songs, the choruses are sung after each verse, and in ‘Mawue naa ’mɛ, Mawue teɔ ’mɛ’ it is sung before each verse. ‘Akwabaadwom’ has an extremely short chorus section, but instead has a long piano interlude between the verses and a long piano coda. In ‘Bonwerɛ kenteŋwene’

there are spoken interludes after each verse (an element not present in any of the other songs) before the chorus is sung.<sup>40</sup> A number of texture types can be identified in the piano accompaniments of *Three solo songs*: ballad-style broken chords and rocking accompaniment (see, for example, bars 1 to 4 in ‘Bonwere kentenwene’, figure 2.58) or arpeggios (see, for example, bars 9 to 10 in ‘Mawue naa ’me, Mawue tea ’me’, figure 2.59), hymn-like block chords (see, for example, 31 to 33 in ‘Akwabaadwom’, figure 2.60), and doubling of the melody in octaves (see, for example, bars 26 to 28 in ‘Akwabaadwom’, figure 2.61). Although the latter is not unknown in music of purely western origin, the frequency with which it occurs in ‘Akwabaadwom’, and the ‘constant triplets’ rhythmic contexts in which it finds itself, suggests a reading of it as the imitation of a precolonial practice. Nketia (1975: 161) calls this ‘polarity’: ‘Some societies emphasize this in their singing when men and women sing together, and others stress it even in separate choruses.’ The tone painting of weaving in ‘Bonwere kentenwene’ has been referred to sufficiently.<sup>41</sup> In ‘Akwabaadom’, the text-music relationship rather takes the form of mood suggestion through the use of certain textures and rhythms. An air of regality – appropriate to the theme of welcoming – is suggested in the introduction through the use of block chords in the right hand of the piano accompaniment against broken-chord octaves in the left hand (see bars 1 to 5, figure 2.62). The dance-like ‘free rhythm style’ section in the same song, of which the rhythm and texture has already been referred to, suggests a celebratory mood. Where the text refers to more serious matters (hunger, enduring the rain), a more solemn mood is suggested by the hymn-like texture and chord progressions (see bars 39 to 44, figure 2.63).

**Figure 2.56** Bars 13-15, ‘Mawue naa ’me, Mawue tea ’me’ (Amu, 1961: 12)

**Figure 2.57** Bars 20-23, ‘Mawue naa ’me, Mawue tea ’me’ (Amu, 1961: 13)

<sup>40</sup> According to Agawu (1984: 63) this ‘closely resembles the genre of storytelling.’

<sup>41</sup> See Agawu (1984:63).



Figure 2.58 Bars 1-4, 'Bonwerε kenteŋwene' (piano part) (Amu, 1961: 2)

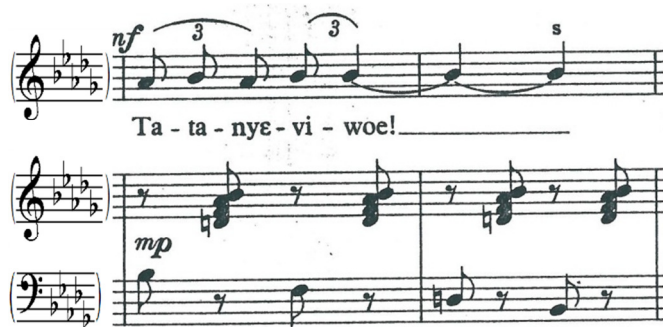


Figure 2.59 Bars 9-10, 'Mawue naa 'mε, Mawue tea 'mε' (piano part) (Amu, 1961: 12)



Figure 2.60 Bars 31-33, 'Akwabaadwom' (piano part) (Amu, 1961: 7)



Figure 2.61 Bars 26-28, 'Akwabaadwom' (Amu, 1961: 7)





**Figure 2.62** Bars 1-5, 'Akwabaadwom' (Amu, 1961: 6)

**Figure 2.63** Bars 39-44, 'Akwabaadwom' (Amu, 1961: 8)

Amu's Christian education is evident in his employment of hymn-style passages. The piano writing is unidiomatic in terms of its narrow range and suggests a strong influence of the composer's early training on the harmonium. Only in the sections where polarity is employed does the piano part hint at an African pianism. This collection, produced roughly in the middle of the later period of his career, is not an example of the influence that counterpoint had on his later works. The text-music relationship adheres to the conventions of art song. The forms, conventional on the surface, contain some innovations that attempt representations of precolonial practices. The voice part is folk-like in character, and Amu's approach to tonality is conservative. A cursory study of works by Howells and Jacob does not suggest strong influences by them in the *Three solo songs*. In conclusion, the employment of 'democratic' elements in this collection – an easy-to-sing folk-like voice part, and easy-to-play piano part with simple, homophic textures, continuous consonance, and cross-cultural topics – may have been an effort in portraying pan-Ghanaian unity and democracy in a country that had only achieved independence a few years before. More research is required, however, before contextualizing these songs within Amu's general 'late period' style will be possible.

### **J.H. Kwabena Nketia's *Four Akan solo songs***

J.H. Kwabena Nketia was born in Mampong, Ghana, in 1921 (Wiggins and Nketia, 2005: 57). From 1937 to 1941 he studied at the Presbyterian Training College in Akropong to become a teacher, and it is here that he also studied the harmonium and western music theory. Upon qualifying, he was appointed at the same institution in 1942 to teach music and Twi

(Akrofi, 2002: 5-6, 8). From 1944 to 1949 he resided in London, where he studied linguistics and social anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and music at Trinity College of Music (Wiggins and Nketia, 2005: 57) and Birkbeck College (DjeDje, 2013: online). He rejoined the staff at the Presbyterian College, Akropong, in 1949 (Wiggins and Nketia, 2005: 57), until his appointment as a Research Fellow in African Studies in the Department of Sociology at the University of the Gold Coast (Akrofi, 2002: 25). As has been mentioned, he was the first director of the new School of Music, Dance and Drama that formed part of the new Institute of African Studies that was established in 1962 at what was to become the University of Ghana in 1963 (Wiggins and Nketia, 2005: 57). According to Wiggins and Nketia (2005: 57) he brought ‘indigenous arts onto a campus where the curriculum and organization were dominated by a colonial heritage.’ Having visited the U.S.A. before on several study and teaching visits, he left the University of Ghana in 1979 to go and teach at the University of California, Los Angeles, and later at the University of Pittsburgh (Akrofi, 2002: 45-47). He returned to Ghana in 1992, where he founded the International Centre for African Music and Dance at the University of Ghana. He has produced more than 200 publications, of which the most widely known is his book, *The music of Africa* (1975) (Wiggins and Nketia, 2005: 58).

Although Nketia composed, it was his scholarly work, according to DjeDje (2013: online), that attracted attention in Europe and North America. Other than in Nketia’s own *The creative potential of African art music in Ghana* (2004) (from which I quote below), very little has been written about his compositions. According to Nketia he had – by 2004 – composed ‘about 55 works for solo instruments and ensembles, 30 *Sankudwom* (art songs for voice and piano) and 20 choral pieces’ (Nketia, 2004: 1).

‘Yaanom montie’, a lament for the late Nana Sir Ofori Ata, was composed on 21 April 1944.<sup>42</sup> Four days later, on 25 April 1944, Nketia wrote ‘Onipa beyεε bi’. This song was also written in honour of Ata, as Nketia had not yet recovered from the shock of his death (Nketia, 2004: 2-8). Due to its importance in this discussion, I will now quote extensively what Nketia (2004: 9-10) says regarding his composition of these songs:

I could have expressed my feelings by just singing an appropriate traditional dirge, but I chose to create my own laments, drawing on well-known proverbs and metaphors and the repetitive style of traditional verse.

[...] [I used] the lilt of *adowa* music defined by its standard bell pattern as the framework of my phrase structures. [...] As the Akan scale is a seven tone scale, I chose the keyboard [to accompany the songs].

[...] My piano part was melodic, rhythmic and percussive. It used [...] call and response, counter melodies, counter rhythms, and fill ups in the style of *seperewa*.

[...] [In terms of harmony] I combined both our traditional principles of ‘parallel harmony’ and voice separation and those of so-called common practice harmony, or now and then something a little more complex when the musical context suggested it. [...] the fact that common practice harmony has been

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<sup>42</sup> Nana Sir Ofori Atta, K.B.E., occupied the ‘Paramount Stool of the tribe of Akim Abuaka’ in the Gold Coast colony from 1912 until his death in 1943 (Frimpong, 1945: 80).

displaced in Europe in contemporary compositions by new usages did not bother me, as my immediate frame of reference was my local communities of taste.

Nketia also indicates that he composed ‘Wonya amane a na wohu wo dfo’ during the period from 1942 to 1944, in the time that he was the music master at the Presbyterian Training College in Akropong. ‘Wo ho te sen’ was composed in the period from 1944 to 1949 while he was studying linguistics at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Nketia wrote the texts for his solo songs himself. The works of Ephraim Amu is named as a point of departure in the development of Nketia’s personal style (Nketia, 2004: 18, 20).

‘Yaanom montie’	‘Yaanom montie’
<p>Listen, Countrymen, a great calamity has fallen over us. The big shade tree on the field has fallen down. Where shall we relax and enjoy the breeze? Countrymen, a great calamity has fallen over us, But we shall not depair. Our Creator lives, we are not afraid. Our Creator lives, why should we mourn? It is God that brushes flies off the tail-less animal. We look up to him.</p> <p>(Nketia, 2004: 7-8)<sup>43</sup></p>	<p>Yaanom Montie Gyama ahia yen ahia yen Gyedia kɛse esi abɔnten na anya atutuo yi, Ehe na yebegye mferɛ o? Yaanom ee, Gyama ahia yen ahia yen Nso enye biribi. Ɔbɔadeɛ wɔ ho yi a, yensuro korakora. Ɔbɔadeɛ wɔ ho yi a, yeresu aye den? Aboa a ɔnni dua Nyame na ɔpra ne ho, Yehwe Ɔno ara.</p> <p>(Nketia, 2004: 7-8)</p>

‘How are you’ (‘Wo ho te sen’)
<p>How are you, how are you, how are you? In the morning, I will also come and see you, at night I will come and see you Is everything well with you? How are you, how are you, how are you, send your regards with someone when they are coming to me Send your regards in the morning, even during times of strong winds At dawn, in the morning and in the evening, send me your regards Send your regards because we are brothers; as we share the same identity <i>[continued on the next page]</i></p>

<sup>43</sup> The English translation is provided by the composer in the the referenced source.

How are you, how are you, how are you

In the morning, I will also come and see you; At night, I will also come and see you

Are you happy with what you received? How are you, how are you, how are you?

When someone is coming to me, send your regards with them

(Nketia, d.u.: 5-8)<sup>44</sup>

'Wo ho te sen'

Wohote sen wohote sen woho te sen

Adekye a, menso mabe hwewo. Onwunudwoa, meso mabehwe wo

Dee ba woho ye? Wo ho te sen woho te sen wo ho te sen obi ba a, kra me

Wonua adek kye a kra me. Wo nua sa ben reti a. wo nua mframa refa o

Sa ben re fie. A dek kyea, kra me oo. Nwunu dwo a, kra me.

Ye a, kra me, ye a kra me, Nipa nua ne 0, nipa n'eyea kra me n'eye a kra me oo

Wo ho te sen wo ho to sen wo ho te sen

Adek kye a me so mabehwe wo, onwunu dwo a me so ma behwe wo

'dek ba wo ho ye? Wo ho te sen wo ho te sen wo ho te sen

obi ba a kra me. Nipa nua ee, nipa nua ee nipa nua ee kra me oo

(Nketia, d.u.: 5-8)

'Onipa beyee bi'

A person does what he can in his lifetime,

And not everything.

And not everything.

Owora accomplished what he can in his lifetime,

And not everything.

Owora, what was beauty to him? (He had it.)

Owora, what what was strength to him? (He had it.)

Owora, what was wisdom to him? (He had it.)

Today we are looking for Owora to talk to him.

We are looking for Owora, where shall we find him?

(Nketia, 2004: 8-9)<sup>45</sup>

'Onipa beyee bi'

Onipa beyee bi na enye ne nyinaa.

Ɔwora ahoofe ne deen?

Ɔwora ahooden ne deen?

Ɔwora sika ne deeben?

Ɔwora nyansa ne deeben?

Enne yere Ɔwora ne no akasa a,

Ehe na yebehu no?

Ɔdomankoma Wuode no ko oo,

Ɔwora dabre ne nseedo.

Ɔwora beyee bi oo.

Ɔwora beyee bi oo.

Onipa beyee bi na enye ne nyinaa.

(Nketia, 2004: 8-9)

<sup>44</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013c).

<sup>45</sup> The English translation is provided by the composer in the referenced source.

'Wonya amane a, na wohu wo dɔfo'	'Wonya amane a, na wohu wo dɔfo'
<p>People, listen to this; good friendship is important.</p> <p>People, listen to this</p> <p>Good friends are hard to come by; when you receive, share with others because without friends, there is sadness</p> <p>Good friendship is a big deal; have good regard for people</p> <p>Fellow Akan, when you are in trouble is when you see who loves you</p> <p>Fellow Akan, It is when you are in trouble that you will realise who loves you</p> <p>(Nketia, d.u.: 12-13)<sup>46</sup></p>	<p>Onipa ee, tie tie no yi yeo yɔnko pa ne asem oo</p> <p>onipa ee, tie no yi ye ɔ</p> <p>yɔnko pa ne asem oo. Wo nya a mane, na ɛka wonko mmɔbrɔ</p> <p>yɔnko pa yɛade kɛse. Ma wo nipa nuae</p> <p>ɔkani asem to wo a, na wohu wo dɔfo</p> <p>ɔkani asem to wo a, na wo hu wo dɔfo oo</p> <p>(Nketia, d.u.: 12-13)</p>

All the pieces in this collection are largely diatonic – ‘Yaanom montie’ is in Db major, ‘Wo ho te sen’ in C major, ‘Onipa beyɛɛ bi’ in D major and ‘Wonya amane a, na wohu wo dɔfo’ also in D major – and the harmonies are functional. Momentary and unexpected dissonances that seem out of place in a largely consonant context, however, sometimes appear: this can be seen in, for example, the G-E-D chord in bar 17 of ‘Wo ho te sen’ (figure 2.64) (in which the dissonance is created by the accented off-beat seventh interval between a passing E<sub>4</sub> and the D<sub>5</sub> fifth of a dominant seventh chord), and the F#-C-natural-F#-B chord in bar 27 of ‘Onipa beyɛɛ bi’ (figure 2.65) (in which dissonance is created by the exposed augmented fourth F#-C-natural and minor fourteenth D-C-natural intervals caused by the lack of an A and F#, respectively, in the piano part, and the major seventh caused by the addition of a B in the dominant seventh chord D-F#-A-C ). The textures of the piano accompaniment in these songs often strongly suggest the influence of a chorale style (although peculiarities in the voice leading and chord doublings should not be read in this context, since one would not expect a piano accompaniment to adhere to the ‘rules’ of chord doublings and voice leading in western four-part harmony). The fairly narrow part of the piano’s range that is employed most of the time, and hymn-like progressions (such as the I-IV 6/4-I plagal cadence in bar 15 of ‘Wo ho te sen’, figure 2.66) reinforce this idea. The piano writing is sometimes percussive (see, for example, the narrow-spaced repeated chords in bar 42 of ‘Onipa beyɛɛ bi’, figure 2.67) and unidiomatic in its thinness (see, for example, bars 5 to 8 in ‘Wo ho te sen’, figure 2.68). Certain Africanisms can be found in the harmonic organization: octave doubling (polarity) (see, for example, bars 1 to 3 of ‘Wo ho te sen’, figure 2.69), and parallelism in

<sup>46</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants.

thirds (see, for example, bars 25 to 28 in ‘Yaanom montie’, figure 2.70).<sup>47</sup> Other Africanisms include allusions to call-and-response traditions (see, for example, the solo vocal utterance, followed by shorter and overlapping alternate utterances of the voice and piano parts from bars 30 to 38 in ‘Onipa beyɛɛ bi’, figure 2.71), and elements of the rhythmic organization. The latter can be seen in hemiola patterns (see, for example, bars 25 to 26 of ‘Yaanom montie’, figure 2.70) and cross-rhythms (see, for example, bar 33 in ‘Wo ho te sɛn’, figure 2.72).

The vocal ranges of all the songs are narrow: Eb<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>5</sub> in ‘Yaanom montie’, B<sub>4</sub> to D<sub>5</sub> in ‘Wo ho te sɛn’, D<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>5</sub> in ‘Onipa beyɛɛ bi’, and D<sub>4</sub> to C<sub>5</sub> in ‘Wonya amane a, na wohu wo dɔfo’. The melodic movement in the voice parts are severely restricted in terms of intervals: only seconds, thirds and perfect fourths are employed in areas of continuous melodic movement. Although the contents of the poetry do not adhere to the requirements of tradition, the structures of ‘Yaanom montie’ and ‘Onipa beyɛɛ bi’ seem to be determined by Akan dirge forms. ‘Yaanom montie’ can be read as a so-called ‘type A’ dirge which, according to Nketia (1954: 52) contains the following sections: (1) an opening, (2) the subject, (3) the insertion or break, (4) the close, and (5) an extension. In the case of ‘Yaanom montie’, one could divide it into sections as follows: (1) bars 1 to 12, (2) bars 13 to 24, (3) bars 24 to 39, (4) bars 40 to 47, and (5) bars 47 to 58. The repetitiveness in the text of ‘Onipa beyɛɛ bi’ suggests the influence of a ‘type C’ Akan dirge (see Nketia, 1954: 64-66), although this form does not suggest clear structural divisions. (‘Wo ho te sɛn’ has a conventional A-B-A structure.)<sup>48</sup>



**Figure 2.64** Bar 17, ‘Wo ho te sɛn’ (Nketia, d.u.: 6)



**Figure 2.65** Bar 27, ‘Onipa beyɛɛ bi’ (Nketia, d.u.: 10)

<sup>47</sup> In this case, specifically, the ‘thirds’ are in fact tenths. According to Nketia, (1975: 161), parallel thirds ‘are characteristic of societies that use a basic heptatonic scale, such as the Akan [...]’

<sup>48</sup> One page from ‘Wonya amane a, na wohu wo dɔfo’ appears to have been lost – I will therefore not attempt to comment on its structure.



Figure 2.66 Bar 15, 'Wo ho te sɛn' (Nketia, d.u.: 5)

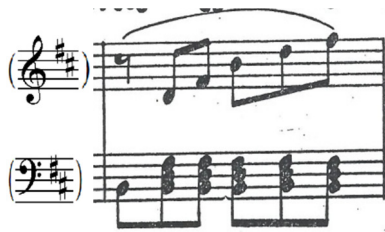


Figure 2.67 Bar 42, 'Onipa beyɛɛ bi' (piano part) (Nketia, d.u.: 11)

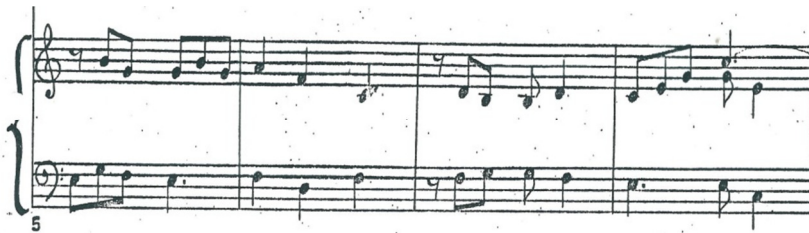


Figure 2.68 Bars 5-8, 'Wo ho te sɛn' (piano part) (Nketia, d.u.: 5)

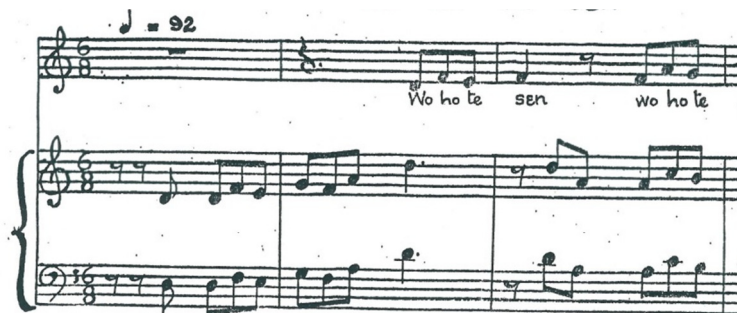


Figure 2.69 Bars 1-3, 'Wo ho te sɛn' (Nketia, d.u.: 5)



Figure 2.70 Bars 25-28, 'Yaanom montie' (Nketia, d.u.: 2)

des ben enne ye pe-wora ne no'a-kasε - he naye behuno.

Ye-pe-wora o-wora, he naye-behuno. o-

**Figure 2.71 Bars 30-38, 'Onipa beyεε bi' (Nketia, d.u.: 10)**

**Figure 2.72 Bar 33, 'Wo ho te sɛn' (piano part) (Nketia, d.u.: 7)**

The 'Four Akan solo songs' are early works and do not represent the mature compositional style of Nketia. The influence of a colonial church-based education is apparent in the songs' conservatism evinced in a largely diatonic tonality and passages where hymn-like progressions and chorale textures are used. Despite these influences, the songs clearly display the search for a Ghanaian (Akan) identity through the characteristics of the vocal line, the rhythms, the use of dirge structures, and occasional Africanisms in the piano writing. The only peculiarity in the text-music relationship (from my western-style educated perception) worth mentioning is the fast tempos and unusual jolliness of the laments for Nana Sir Ofori Ata.

### **Atta Annan Mensah's 'Adzekyee fofor akye' ('A new day dawns') and 'Da tuu' ('Deep slumber')**

Any quick search would reveal that the ethnomusicological writings of Atta Anna Mensah are widely disseminated; the writings *on* him as composer not so.<sup>49</sup> Yet, Omojola (1995: 156) names him – only second to Nketia – as someone who has 'combined a career in

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Mensah's research on Zambian music (such as Mensah, 1970) and Ghanaian music (such as Mensah, 1967).



composition with a strong academic interest in music', and put Mensah's *Divine Presence* (1952) and *Akano Mframa* (1952), both for piano, on his list of selected (and by implication apparently important) works by Ghanaian composers (Omojola, 1995: 164).

Attah Anna Mensah was born in Ghana in 1925. He studied at Achimota College (Ghana) with Ephraim Amu (Agawu, 1996: 276), at Trinity College of Music (London), the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Ghana (Professor Atta Annan Mensah passes away, 2006: online). His first academic position was at Kumasi College of Technology in Ghana in 1951. During his career he held positions at Radio Ghana and at universities in Ghana, Uganda and Nigeria (York University, 2006: online). After retiring in

'A new day dawns' ('Adzekyee fofor akye')

Verse 1

Are you still sleeping? Encourage yourself so you do not slacken  
It's a new day oh, it's still a new day  
Encourage yourself so you do not slacken  
A new day has dawned oh

Verse 2

Are you still slumbering? Wake up and encourage yourself  
It's a new day oh, it's still a new day  
Wake up and encourage yourself  
A new day has dawned oh

Chorus

Cast your eyes (look) around you and look beyond despite all the happenings around you and in the world  
Cast your eyes (look) around you and look beyond despite all the happenings around you and in the world  
Ah! This new/beautiful world has dawned

(Mensah, d.u.(a): 1-2)<sup>50</sup>

1985, he served as visiting professor at York University (Toronto, Canada) and at Central State University (Ohio, U.S.A.), but eventually re-joined the faculty at the University of Ghana. He returned to Toronto in 1993, where he died in 2006 (Professor Atta Annan Mensah passes away, 2006: online). Mensah's obituary on York University's website (York University, 2006: online) states that he 'was equally at home with the music history, theory and compositional and performance practices of the western world and Asia, as well as the musical cultures of the African continent in general.'

From the above it is clear that the information on this composer is limited, and that the focus is on his teaching and research career. This section therefore serves to make a small

contribution to a neglected part of the discourse on Mensah. The two songs under scrutiny in this section are both undated, and the texts of both songs are in the Fante language. The composer wrote the text for 'Da tuu' himself. There is no indication of who wrote the text of 'Azekyee fofor akye'.

<sup>50</sup> The English translations were provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013c).

‘Adzekyee fofor akye’

Verse 1  
 Ana da ho da! Soer kentsen wo ho na annkekyir  
 Adzekyee fofor akye o, adzekyee fofor akye  
 Soer kentsen wo ho na annkekyir  
 Adzekyee fofor akye o

Verse 2  
 Ana da ho bɔm! Soer sa pɛw wo ho na ammpabaa  
 Adzekyee fofor akye o, adzekyee fofor akye  
 Soer sa pɛw wo ho na ammpabaa  
 Adzekyee fofor akye o

Chorus  
 Tow w’enyihwɛ kan hɔ, tow w’enyi hwɛ aporɔw Tow w’enyu  
 hwɛ aporɔw wiadze begya a! wiadze prɔmpɔm  
 Tow w’enyihwɛ kan hɔ, tow w’enyi hwɛ aporɔw Tow w’enyu  
 hwɛ aporɔw wiadze begya a! wiadze prɔmpɔm  
 Ah! Wiadze fofor yi ye fɛ papa bi

(Mensah, d.u.(a): 1-2)

This short song (41 bars in length) is in die key of Bb major. Harmonically, it does not venture beyond the conventions of the common practice period. Where the movement from a French augmented sixth chord to a German augmented sixth chord is presented (from the end of bar 34 to the beginning of bar 35, see figure 2.73), it can be seen as slightly unusual in the given context. The movement from a higher to a lower tension chord may be seen as the only instance in which harmony is used symbolically to interpret the text (i.e. the movement from the high tension of all the happenings around you and in the world, to the lower tension of new/beautiful world). A homophonic texture dominates the piano accompaniment texture, with a one, two or three-voiced right hand against a mostly once-voiced bass line. The ‘broken octave’ movement in the bass line – which often appears as a tonic pedal point – is occasionally replaced with ‘straight’

octaves or single-voiced movement. Pedal points (which can be seen in, for example, bars 1 to 5, figure 2.74) may be seen as portraying sleeping (‘Are you still sleeping?’). The setting is strophic, with clear verse and chorus sections, and a four-bar introduction. A simple four-bar introduction presents material related to, but not repeated exactly, in the song. The time signature is 6/8. Rhythmic groupings are often cross-rhythmic, but not consistently (see, for example, bars 38 to 39, figure 2.75). The vocal range is narrow (from D<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>5</sub>) and the voice part is interval-restricted (within areas of continuous melodic movement, intervals are restricted to seconds, thirds and perfect fourths).

**Figure 2.73** Bars 34-35, ‘Adzekyee fofor akye’ (Mensah, d.u.(a): 2)



Figure 2.74 Bars 1-5, ‘Adzekyee fofor akye’ (piano part) (Mensah, d.u.(a): 1)



Figure 2.75 Bars 38-39, ‘Adzekyee fofor akye’ (Mensah, d.u.(a): 2)

'Deep slumber' ('Da tuu')	'Da tuu'
My sweet child, oh sweet child!	Me ba abema osua abema!
Oh sweet child, my sweet child!	Me ba abema osua abema!
Peaceful slumbers sweet	Edaa asomdwee komm
By now father's safely back to base	Siseyi w'egya nam akin adwe
Good sleep deep sleep	Da tuu da tuu
My sweet child, oh sweet child!	Me ba abema osua abema!
May dreams bear you to your father!	Adaaso mfa wonko w'egya ho
My sweet child, oh sweet child!	Meba abema osua abema
Oh sweet child, my sweet child!	Me ba abema osua abema
Peaceful slumbers sweet	Eda asomdwee komm!
By now your father's safely back to base	Siseyi ofi sa mu aba no tweon wo.
Soft slumbers, child!	Da tuu da tuu
(Mensah, d.u. (b): 1-2)	(Mensah, d.u. (b): 1-2)

This 39-bar song has all the attributes of an African-Baroque *recitativo secco*: vocal and instrumental statements that alternate and eventually meet up (see, for example, bars 18 to 23, figure 2.76),<sup>51</sup> declamatory rhythms and block chords of varying length in the accompaniment that alternate with arpeggios (see bars 29 to 30, figure 2.77). The sweeping

<sup>51</sup> One could also relate this to an African call-and-response choral tradition (see Nketia, 1975: 142-143).

(almost Romantic) ending therefore comes as a surprise (see bars 35 to 39, figure 2.78). As in ‘Adzekyee foror akye’, the piece harmonically adheres to common practice period conventions (it is in Eb major). There is only one hint at modality: the f minor (F-Ab-Bb-C-E-natural) arpeggio in the piano accompaniment in bar 9 (figure 2.79). The consistent triplet indications in 2/4 time is also present in the songs of Ephraim Amu, and may be there for the same reason.<sup>52</sup> The voice part has the same characteristics in terms of intervals restrictions than that of ‘Adzekyee foror akye’, and has a range of only an octave (E<sub>4</sub> to E<sub>5</sub>). The duplication of melodic material in octaves (‘polarity’), as can be seen in bars 10 to 12 (figure 2.80), has also been seen before in, for example Ephraim Amu’s ‘Akwaabadwom’.<sup>53</sup> ‘Da tuu’ is also strophic (with verse and chorus sections), but not as strictly as ‘Adzekyee foror akye’, as numerous adaptations can be seen in both the voice and piano parts of the second verse (compare, for example, both the vocal line and accompaniment in bar 9, figure 2.79, with that in bar 30, figure 2.77). This setting is a conventional interpretation of the text in terms of its mood, but does not contain instances of tone painting or symbolism.

Figure 2.76 Bars 18-23, ‘Da tuu’ (Mensah, d.u.(b): 1-2)

Figure 2.77 Bars 29-30, ‘Da tuu’ (Mensah, d.u.(b): 2)

Figure 2.78 Bars 35-39, ‘Da tuu’ (Mensah, d.u.(b): 2)

<sup>52</sup> Refer back to the discussion on a linguistic protostructure on p. 87 (after the text box).

<sup>53</sup> Refer back to the discussion on polarity on p. 88.

**Figure 2.79** Bar 9, ‘Da tuu’ (Mensah, d.u.(b): 1)

**Figure 2.80** Bars 10-12, ‘Da tuu’ (Mensah, d.u.(b): 1)

The combination of certain characteristics in ‘Adzekyee fofor akye’ (such as its fairly narrow vocal range, consistent conservatism in terms of tonality and harmony, strophic form, and simple accompaniment figures and rhythms) places it in the realm of ‘folk-like’ art song. The Africanisms (in terms of the song’s rhythmic characteristics and melodic construction) that were pointed out are largely absorbed by its western shell. The Africanisms in ‘Da tuu’, despite my general interpretation of this song in terms of a western operatic style, are more externalized than those in ‘Adzekyee fofor akye’ and illustrate a more concerted attempt by the composer to establish an African identity. Where conventionalities and elements of folk song exist (comparable to those in ‘Adzekyee fofor akye’), they do not, in the light of the given context, create a similar effect. Certain similarities to the songs of Amu, Mensah’s first composition teacher, have been pointed out, although they are perhaps too general to be deemed ‘influences’.

## Conclusions

### Contributions to African vocalism thus far, and general matters of interest

Other than the characteristics outlined by Onyeji (2005) and named in the introduction to this theory, my investigations in this chapter have revealed a few other recurring characteristics that could be added to an understanding of African vocalism. The most common among them are the employment of interval restrictions and a restricted vocal range. This occurs not only in imitation of precolonial practices, but also reveals an anti-virtuosic, anti-individualistic approach that is uncommon in western art song. The use of spoken text in between singing in an effort to simulate precolonial storytelling practices was seen in more

than one example. Onyeji's use of so-called 'poetic syllables' rather than a text with linguistic meaning in order to allow certain freedoms, such as the use of unidiomatic (almost instrumental) rhythms, is also worth mentioning in this regard. I will return to this matter in the conclusion (Chapter 8), in my consideration thereof in the context of the dissertation as a whole.

My conclusions to the individual discussions reveal a wide range of approaches to the employment of every element of composition and the denotation of national or ethnic identities that can hardly be theorized into a single conclusion: tonalities range from the strictly diatonic to the modal, chromatic and eclectic; conventional western forms abound with a few innovations extracted from precolonial practices; piano accompaniments often fulfil the definition of African pianism, while others are ballad-like, Romantic or show the influence of a background in Christian church music; other than where 'poetic syllables' are used, text interpretations are mostly conventional, although they do not always fulfil Romantic ideals of text interpretation in art song; rhythm is often employed to denote precolonial practices, but not always; and, it has sometimes been possible to place works in social, political or biographical contexts, but sometimes not. Two recurring themes deserve special emphasis. A fairly conservative approach to tonality can be seen in a large percentage of the songs, and not one of the works discussed does *not* attempt to denote a national or ethnic identity.<sup>54</sup> Again, both these themes may be related to the anti-individualistic approach highlighted above.<sup>55</sup>

#### Animist materialism as an alternative context

Before explaining my use of the term 'animist materialism' in the heading to this section, I will briefly revert to using the original term applied to the concept under discussion: magical realism. 'Magical realism' was first used in the early twentieth century in connection with a style of German painting, and was later applied to Latin American fiction (Faris, 2004: 1). Faris (2004: 1) notes magical realism's importance in postcolonial cultures, which she ascribes to its agency as a decolonizing agent through its modification and replenishment of the dominant mode of realism in the west. She provides the following brief definition: '[M]agical realism combines realism and the fantastic so that the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them (Faris, 2004: 1).' My concern here is with magical realism's manifestation in African literature and film, and its possible remapping onto concepts in African art music. My discussion therefore draws directly from discourse on its African manifestations.

According to Garuba (2003: 272), the term 'magical realism' is insufficient to describe the variety of representational practices in African cultures under the umbrella of what he calls 'animist materialism'. (For the reason provided by Garuba, I therefore use his term.) Garuba (2003: 267) defines this as the belief in objects such as rivers, trees or stones for the reason that animist spirits or gods are embodied in such objects: 'The "locking" of the

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<sup>54</sup> This is significant, because the selection was not made to include this characteristic. This is unlike the selection made for Chapter 4, where I specifically chose songs that would display this characteristic.

<sup>55</sup> This relates to my discussion on western modernity in Chapter 8 (pp. 262 to 264).

spirit within matter or the merger of the material and the metaphorical, which animist logic entails, then appears to be reproduced in the cultural practices of the society.’ Garuba argues that the appropriation of elements of modernity in precolonial culture by a ‘traditional’ elite, or vice versa (the ‘re-traditionalization’ of modern practices by a ‘modern’ elite) should therefore not be seen purely as an act of nationalism but, at a deeper level, as a manifestation of animist beliefs (Garuba, 2003: 253, 264-265). Soyinka (1976: 53-54) suggests that these practices should be seen as demonstrating an attitude of philosophical accommodation, rather than as evidence or orthodox rigidity. The following example of such philosophical accommodation is provided (Garuba, 2003: 261):

In front of the National Electric Power Authority of Nigeria headquarters is a larger-than-life statue of Sango, the Yoruba god of lightning, clad in his traditional outfit, presiding, as it were, over the offices of the major power generation and distribution corporation of the country. Sango, a sixteenth-century ruler of Oyo, is an anthropomorphic deity who was in his lifetime reputed to have had the ability to ‘call down’ lightning to destroy his enemies and burn their houses and homesteads.

Soyinka (1988: 9) explains that the deistic approach of, in the case of this example, the Yoruba, is to absorb and departmentalize new experiences: ‘Thus Sango (Dispenser of Lightning) now chairmans the Electricity Corporation, Ogun (God of Iron), is the primal motor-mechanic.’

African composers who have had training in western music composition can be seen as being part of the ‘modern’ elite that Garuba speaks of, and the act of composition as a cultural practice. Against the background of reading concepts in African art music composition in the context of animist materialism, the concepts of African pianism and African vocalism, and the folk song as art, could be seen as animist representational practices.

Yervasi (2008: 45) tells us why a reading of certain representational practices in contemporary African film in the context of magical realism (she uses the original term) is useful: ‘[...] magical realism undoes the generic classifications put in place by imperial culture, as it retains the elements of local and hybrid cultures that it seeks to make recognizable and relevant for present-day audiences.’ In the case of African pianism and African vocalism, these classifications would be ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’, or ‘western’ and ‘African’. In the case of the African folk song as art, the classifications would be ‘original’ (‘folk-inspired’) and ‘arranged’. African percussion is embodied in the piano, now also African. The grain of the African voice is embodied in the western-trained voice, now also African.<sup>56</sup> The African folk song is embodied in the western concept of art song, now also African. The material elements signify the animist elements that embody them, but the one is not more ‘real’ (read: ‘African’ or ‘original’) than the other. A reading of the named concepts in the context of animist materialism therefore makes it irrelevant to ask which elements of pianism or vocalism belong to which of the named categories (and by implication, which composer is a more ‘loyal’ African than the other), or which song adheres more to a western concept of originality than the other. Yervasi (2008: 54) also states that ‘[m]agical realism makes history and hybridity visible in ways that realism cannot or does not

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<sup>56</sup> This relates to my discussion on Barthes’s ‘grain’ in Chapter 8 (pp. 261 to 262).

want to.’ In the context of this discussion one could say that African pianism, African vocalism, and African folk songs arranged in a western art song setting make history and hybridity visible in ways that an exclusivist’s expectation of what cultural reality is, or what ‘real’ composition is, do not allow for. It also provides an alternative to (but is *not* a replacement of) readings of postcolonial African compositions in the context of nationalism, authenticity and originality. The methodologies applied in this chapter (such as classification, and readings in the contexts of national and personal histories) may be seen as standing in opposition to the theory just presented, and rightly so. My justification for presenting both options is that I believe this theory on animist materialism provides philosophical relief for the postcolonial African art music composer (to practice art music composition, and in any way he wants to), but does not replace historical realities. In other words, it allows the composer to not feel disloyal to precolonial traditions, but does not give the scholar agency to ignore the influences and power relations presented by history.



### Chapter 3 Anti-exotic self-representation in twentieth-century Egyptian art song composition



**Figure 3.1** The Scottish Rite Temple in Mobile, Alabama (Scottish Rite Temple (Mobile, Alabama), 2013: online)

*Two sphinxes guard a fantasy of Egypt next to a parking lot in America.*

## Introduction

The Scottish Rite Temple in Mobile, Alabama, dates from the Egyptian Revivalist architectural movement of the 1920s (The Temple Downtown, 2013: online), as is evident from its pylon-shaped outlines, obelisk towers and the sphinxes guarding the front entrance. According to Curl (1994: 82)

[t]he importance of Freemasonry in the history of the Egyptian Revival is considerable: the ideas of Egypt as the source of all knowledge of architecture and of all wisdom as enshrined in the Hermetic Mysteries was potent.

In the photo, the temple's placement in what could be considered a typical American parking lot – low-hanging wires, spotlights, fire hydrant and 'gas-guzzlers' included – makes it seem all the more like an exotic dead weight that fell from the bright blue Alabama sky. The question that arose from this picture seemed apt for this chapter: how would a practice of western origin that contains an element of the Egyptian 'other' be practiced by this 'other' (now the 'self'), without reproducing the element of exoticism so poignantly shown in this picture? That is, how would this happen *if* the aim is to include a marker of the 'self' – a 'self' that may stand in a binary opposition to, or is aligned with the 'other'. At this point it is useful to establish a working definition of musical exoticism, for which I turn to Jonathan Bellman's 1998 essay collection *The exotic in Western music* (quoted in Locke, 2009: 45):

Musical exoticism [...] may be defined as the borrowing or use of musical materials that evoke distant locales or alien frames of reference [...]. Characteristic and easily recognized musical gestures from the alien culture are assimilated into a more familiar style, giving it an exotic color and suggestiveness.

When one thinks of the practice of art music of western origin in Egypt, the 'exotic' locale and frames of reference are in fact local, whereas the 'familiar style' into which Egyptian musical gestures are assimilated is not exoticized in itself. It is therefore possible that these local 'exotic' effects could still serve the reproduction of exoticism. The representation of the 'self' is often done under the auspices of nationalism, as will be demonstrated in the historical and biographical sections below. At this point it is necessary to take cognisance of Locke's (2009: 72-84) discussion on the differences between (and the difficulties in distinguishing between) exotic and national styles, to which I will return in the conclusion. Locke finds the difference in what he calls the 'will to represent' (the 'other', in the context of his discussion, but the 'self' in this chapter for the reason given above) in the exotic, in contrast with works that are simply "written in" in a distinctive foreign style' (Locke, 2009: 74).

This issue is hardly a new one in musicological research, and it is not the aim of this chapter to challenge or transform existing general discourses or theories on musical exoticism.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the purpose is to articulate *specific* strategies of what I will call 'anti-exotic self-representation' in twentieth-century Egyptian art song. A general overview of the

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Timothy D. Taylor's *Beyond exoticism: Western music and the world* (2007), and Ralph P. Locke's *Musical exoticism: Images and reflections* (2009).

history of western art music in Egypt will be followed by readings of selected art songs by Hassan Rashid, Bahiga Sidqi (Rashid), Kamel Al-Rimali and Gamal Abdel-Rahim.

### **The history of art music in Egypt: An overview**

Napoleon Bonaparte's expedition (1798-1802) led to Egypt's first contact with western music in the form of a military band that accompanied the French army. Shortly after the departure of the French (Castelo-Branco, 2002: 608-609), Mohamed Aly, then governor of Egypt, opened the first military schools of music where brass instruments and the reading of notation were taught by French and Italian tutors (Kamel, 1999: 335). Following a decline under the reign of Aly's immediate successors, training in military music was again strengthened by Khedive Ismail (he, for example, hired Ruggiero Leoncavallo to supervise the military music department of the Egyptian army). After the British invasion in 1882, the training of military musicians was taken over by the British military (Castelo-Branco, 2002: 609). Military bands and music schools had a large influence on western musical activities in Cairo and Alexandria throughout the twentieth century, through their supply of wind players and teachers to orchestras and music institutes (Castelo-Branco, 2013: online).

Ismail (Mohamed Aly's grandson), built the Cairo Opera House to celebrate the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 (Kamel, 1999: 335), where Verdi's *Rigoletto* was performed at the opening. *Aida* was commissioned by Khedive and premiered at this opera house on 24 December 1871 (Castelo-Branco, 2002: 610). Edward Said (1994: 145, 151) gives us insight into the imperialist role of western art music at the time in his description of *Aida* as representing 'an Orientalized Egypt' and as embodying 'the authority of Europe's version of Egypt as a moment in its nineteenth-century history, a history for which Cairo in the years 1869-71 was an extraordinarily suitable site.' The Cairo Opera House was a bastion of western music until its destruction by a fire in 1971 (Castelo-Branco, 2002: 611).

According to Castelo-Branco (2002: 610), the piano occupied an important place among Egyptian cosmopolites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who saw European art music as 'a symbol of social ascension and power.' Until the middle of the twentieth century, according to him, owning and playing the piano was seen as an asset for marriageable women and a repertoire of Arab 'salon music' was developed by a few women composers who had had training in both Arab and western music. From the 1860s to the 1950s, the demand for western music not only came from this western-educated Egyptian elite, but also from the British, Italian and Greek communities in Egypt (Castelo-Branco, 2013: online). Numerous chamber music ensembles consisting of European musicians were active during the first half of the twentieth century. The core of what was to become the Cairo Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1934 within the Egyptian Radio, and consisted of European musicians and Egyptian graduates of military music schools (El-Shawan, 1985: 145). According to Taufiq (2011: online), the nationalist sentiment that arose during the First World War caused Arabs, and Egyptians in particular, to return to their 'musical roots', which had been tainted with western influence ('primarily by way of British colonial policy') since the mid-nineteenth century. This author tells of the first international congress of Arab music which was held in Cairo in 1932, which had the aim of considering the subject of Arab music, and engaging in intercultural dialogue:

Numerous musicians and musicologists from all over the Arab world as well as from Turkey, Persia and Western Europe met here [...].

Important personalities from all over the world were invited: well-known [...] composers like Béla Bartók, Paul Hindemith [...]; musicologists such as Erich Mortiz von Hornbostel [...] or Curt Sachs [...].<sup>2</sup>

Two decades later, after the 1952 revolution which called for both the revival of the Arab musical heritage and the institutionalization of western art music, these aims were made official. The Cairo Conservatory and Cairo Symphony Orchestra were officially founded in 1959, followed by opera and ballet companies (Castelo-Branco, 2002: 611). Foreigners in influential cultural positions were replaced by western-educated Egyptians, but the aim for a balance between Arab and western music was not achieved. Instead, government funding in the 1950s and 1960s suggested a strong favouring of western art music – an issue only addressed by the government in the late 1960s (El-Shawan, 1985: 147). The destruction of the Cairo Opera House in 1971 was responsible for a setback in the dissemination of western art music in Egypt (Castelo-Branco, 2013: online). Economic pressures in the 1970s, which led to many musicians leaving the practice of western music in favour of a more viable career in popular Arab music, and the increase in the questioning of western influence and values at that time, contributed to a decrease in the demand for western music (El-Shawan, 1985: 151). Western art music again became a more prominent part of the musical life in Cairo after the inauguration of the new Cultural and Education Centre and Opera House in 1988 (Castelo-Branco, 2013: online).

Before the academic institutionalization of music in Egypt, composers had to study privately or in Europe – this includes both the first generation of composers (including Youssef Greiss (1899-1961), Hassan Rashid (1896-1969) and Abu Baker Khairat (1910-1963)), as well as the second (including Aziz El Shawan (1916-1993), Rif'at Garrana (born 1924) and Gamal Abdel Rahim (1924-1988)) (Kamel, 1999: 336, 338-340, 342-343, 346). According to El-Shawan (1985: 146), the works of all three these composers of the first generation display similarities in their tonal-harmonic language and formal structures, which were derived from eighteenth and nineteenth-century western music. Their invention apparently lay mostly in their melodic writing, which was inspired by pre-colonial Egyptian music. Despite this predominance of western elements, ‘they did not view their music as “Eastern” or “Western”, but rather as part of an “international” musical language to which all cultures must have equal access’ (El-Shawan, 1985: 146). Composers from the second generation, according to El-Shawan (1985: 150), attempted to create personal styles with an Egyptian character – El-Shawan and Garrana using a mostly tonal language, and Abdel-Rahim using a modal framework with dissonance and a contrapuntal texture. Rageh Daoud (b. 1954) and Mona Ghoneim (b. 1955) (Kamel, 1999: 348-349) are among a third generation of composers who studied with Gamal Abdel Rahim (Castelo-Branco, 2013: online).

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<sup>2</sup> See Bohlman (2002: 47-50) for a longer discussion on this conference.

Castelo-Branco (2002: 612-613) states that, although researchers have noted that cosmopolitanism in Egyptian culture is in decline, this trend has not had a direct impact on western and western-inspired musical activities in Egypt: '[It] continues to receive strong government support and to have a following among a small segment of the educated elite.' More than ten years on – and despite the upheaval caused by the Arab Spring – this situation has not changed, as is evident from the current activities of, among other institutions, the Cairo Opera (Cairo Opera, 2013: online) and the European-Egyptian Contemporary Music Society (EECMS, 2013: online), as well as from the activities of Egyptian composers of a younger generation, such as Nahla Mattar (b. 1971), Ramz Sabry Samy (b. 1973), and Wael Samy Elkholly (Brunel Institute for Contemporary Middle Eastern Music, 2013: online). However, in this chapter the focus is on twentieth-century composers of the first and second generations.

### **Hassan Rashid's 'Time' and 'Long live the homeland'**

Hassan Rashid was born in Cairo in 1896. As a child he played the violin (El-Kholly, 2013: online), the lute, and also excelled in Arabic singing. His wealthy family sent him to England at the age of fourteen to be educated there (Kamel, 1999: 338). After school he finished a degree in agriculture at Durham University, while also singing and composing (El-Kholly, 2013: online). According to Kamel (1999: 338) '[Rashid] was particularly involved in opera composition, for he was blessed with a beautiful operatic baritone voice.' He returned to Egypt in 1918, where he married Bahiga Sidqi (whom I discuss in the next section). In 1942, the Rashids co-founded the Egyptian Amateur Music Association, which promoted new Egyptian and classical western music (El-Kholly, 2013: online). Rashid was known for his ability to write 'beautiful expressive melodies' to Arabic poetry (Kamel, 1999: online), culminating in an opera, *Antony's death*, apparently the first opera with an Arabic text and subject by an Egyptian composer (El-Kholly, 2013: online).

Kamel (1999: 338) lists the songs under discussion in this section as part of the collection named *Songs for youth*. According to El-Kholly (2013: online), this collection included songs by both Rashid and his wife (although it is not clear whether the songs included in the section on her below forms part of *Songs for youth*). El-Kholly (2013: online) names 'Time' as one of the best examples of Rashid's style: '[it has] a piano part that has an essential role in creating atmosphere.' The texts for both songs were written by Kamel Kilani (Rashid, d.u. (a): 1 and Rashid, d.u. (b): 1).

The harmonic-tonal language employed by Rashid in 'Time' is mainly a high-to-late Romantic one: brief moments that remind of a Debussian modality (see, for example, the augmented chords in the first half of bar 7, figure 3.2) are immediately followed by sequences of extended third chords (often chromatically altered) (see the second half of bar 7, and bar 8, figure 3.2). This briefly eases into a moment of classical conventionality (see bar 9, figure 3.2), only to be disrupted by the single-voice chromatic movement in the left hand of the piano accompaniment in combination with open fifth and fourth chords in the right hand, that suggests a later, early twentieth-century style. The latter 'frames' the Romantic body of the song and can be seen in all the interludes between sections, as well as in the

## 'Time'

Cold has arrived, harsh and fierce, filling the spaces during the winter season.

The green part has gone dry, with pale branches and lacking beauty.

Birds said: Oh, winter has come! Cold is tyrannical and frost is fierce.

So good bye, branches, good bye, we shall meet you once spring arrives.

Leaves told the branch: Good bye, branch, winter has come!

We shall meet you once birds come back in the flamboyant spring, singing all over.

Then, time told people: Good bye, I am the most important thing in this existence.

Leaves and birds, they all come back, but wherever I depart, I never return!

(Kilani in Rashid, d.u.(a): 1)<sup>3</sup>

## الوقت

يملء الأجزاء في فصل الشتاء	أقبل البرد شديداً قارساً
ذابل الأضراس مسلوب الرواء	فتدا الأخضر منه يابساً
واستبد البرد واشتد الصقيع	قالت الطير لقد حلّ الشتاء
سوف أتفالك إذا جاء الربيع	فوداعاً أيها العصف وداعاً
أيها العصف فقد حلّ الشتاء	قالت الأوراق للعصف وداعاً
في الربيع الطلق تشدوا بالفناء	سوف أتفالك إذا ما الطير عادت
لمنى آمن شىء في الوجود	ثم قال الوقت للناس وداعاً
وأنا من حيث أمضى لا أعود	ترجع الأوراق والطير جميعاً

(Kilani in Rashid, d.u.(a): 1)

introduction and final bars of the song (see, for example, bars 15 to 18, figure 3.3). Influences of Romantic opera in Rashid's style (mentioned in the brief biography above) can be identified in 'Time': the large, sweeping upward movements, eventually resulting in (multiple) high sustained climaxes, in a largely diatonic melody that suggests the need for legato, *bel canto* singing (see, for example, bars 11-12, figure 3.4, and bars 44 to 51, figure 3.5), and the piano texture that dramatically changes to thicker block-chords in a higher register, sometimes accompanied by tremolos, as it approaches the climaxes (see bars 43 to 51, figure 3.5), is evident of this influence. A study of the text-music relationship suggests that the piano accompaniment plays a somewhat stronger interpretative

role than simply creating atmosphere, as has been stated above: the changes in texture can be read as being symbolic of the changes in season – the bareness of the winter compared to the fullness of spring (compare, for example, the piano accompaniment in figure 3.5 with that in bars 22 to 24, figure 3.6). 'Time' can be read as a developed form of operatic ballad, with a somewhat stronger text-music relationship (although not developed to its full potential), and a more extended and eclectic harmonic language.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d).

<sup>4</sup> For a description of an operatic ballad, see Scott's (1989: 12) discussion on Henry Tucker's (1826-1882) 'Sweet Genevieve': '[...] it has an Italianate quality [...] more reminiscent of an aria, such as Handel's 'Verdi pratti' [...] than an English air.' What I refer to here should not be confused with 'ballad opera', which is a theatrical genre.

فصل في الأرجاء يملأ قارساً شديداً البرد اقبل  
 - ش-لل-فص في ء-جا-أر-أل-ل-يم-سا-ر-قا - دا-دى-ش-د-بر-لل-ب-اق

Figure 3.2 Bars 7 to 9, 'Time' (Rashid, d.u. (a): 2)

منه الأخضر فغدا يابساً  
 - سا-ب-ب-ب-ب-يا - ممن رض-اخ-دل-غ-ف

منه الأخضر فغدا يابساً  
 - سا-ب-ب-ب-ب-يا - ممن رض-اخ-دل-غ-ف

Figure 3.3 Bars 15 to 18, 'Time' (Rashid, d.u. (a): 2)

منه الأخضر فغدا يابساً  
 - سا-ب-ب-ب-ب-يا - ممن رض-اخ-دل-غ-ف

Figure 3.4 Bars 11 to 12, 'Time' (vocal line) (Rashid, d.u. (a): 2)

ترجع الوجود في شيء آمن  
جود - و - فلء شي ن - م - أث - في

أ و عا - - - - - ج - ر - طى - - - - - وط - ق - را - - - - - أو - عل

عود - أ - لا - ضى - أم - ث - حى - من - نا

اعده

ff

rit.

Figure 3.5 Bars 44 to 51, 'Time' (Rashid, d.u. (a): 5)

سوف وداعا الغصن أيها فوداعا الصقيع  
ال - ف - سو - عا - دا - و - ن - غص - هل - ي - اى - عا - دا - و - ف - قيع

f

rit.

Figure 3.6 Bars 22 to 24, 'Time' (Rashid, d.u. (a): 3)



Egypt Day  
'Long live the homeland'

(1)

Today is a day of celebration, a day of celebration and rejoice.  
A celebration of a people who have become free, so it is the crown of celebrations!  
They have recorded a victory, and have become impatient with tyranny.  
Today is a day of celebration, a day of celebration and rejoice.

(2)

Today is a celebration of people who jump towards heights.  
They know not hesitation, and they solve difficulties.  
They would be up for glory for the slightest of reasons.  
They are driven to grace by youth, through reason and righteousness.

(3)

Oh you the dawn of time, what a wonderful constructive youth you have!  
For the most generous of countries, and the most noble of meanings.  
For the most honourable of wishes, for religion and gratitude,  
For justice, charity and the true belief.

The Decision

Long live the homeland, today is the day of Egypt.  
Long live the homeland, today is the day of Egypt.  
Long live the homeland, [unclear].  
Long live the homeland, for it is a hope of a complex nature.

(Kilani in Rashid, d.u.(b): 1)<sup>5</sup>

As befits an explicitly nationalist song in a country where European military music has left a strong mark, 'Long live the homeland' takes the form of a military march.<sup>5</sup> Typically in common time, it starts out with an imitation of a military-style bugle call in the piano accompaniment (see bars 1 to 2, figure 3.7). The text-music relationship remains on the level of 'mood interpretation', and, bar a few exceptions, the accompaniment textures are mostly thin and homophonic (see bars 22 to 25, figure 3.8). Where tremolos serve to fulfil an operatic role in 'Time', their application seems exaggerated and sentimental at the end of 'Long live the homeland' (see bars 39 to 41, figure 3.9). Imputing a military character, the melody moves less flowingly than in 'Time', while the relatively small vocal range suggests functionality. The harmonic-tonal language in this song is less extended than in 'Time' and leans more towards the conventionally 'Classical'. The redeeming artistic quality of 'Long live the homeland' (which perhaps saves it from being filed under the purely functional), is Rashid's subtle subversion of Classical harmony through the employment of very prominent, accented non-harmonic notes. This adds colour that is situated conspicuously outside the musical context. One thinks here, for example, of the

<sup>5</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d). The text most probably references what is now known as 'Revolution Day' in Egypt, a public holiday that commemorates the military coup of July 23, 1952 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013: online).

accented F double-sharp neighbouring note on the second beat in the right hand of the piano accompaniment in bar 3 (figure 3.7), the C double-sharp accented passing note on the second beat in the left hand of the piano accompaniment in bar 4 (figure 3.10), or the accented A# passing note on the first beat in the left hand of the piano accompaniment in bar 36 (figure 3.11).

El-Shawan's (1985: 146) claim that the inventiveness of second generation composers lay mostly in their melodic writing, clearly does not apply to the songs that have been discussed here.

**عيد مصر**  
"عاش الوطن"

( ١ )

اليوم يوم عيد	يوم عيد وابتهاج
عيدُ شعب صارَ حرًا	فهو للأعيادِ تاج
إنه أحرز نصرًا	ضاقَ بالظنَّيانِ صدرا
اليومُ يومُ عيد	يومُ عيدِ وابتهاج

( ٢ )

اليومُ عيدُ شعبٍ	إلى الملا وتتاب
لا يعرفُ التواني	ميدللُ الصِّماب
ينفضُ للمعالي	بأكرم الأسباب
يسمو به شباب	بالرُّشد والصواب

( ٣ )

ياغرة الزمان	نعم الشباب الباني
لأكرم الأوطان	وأنبل المماني
وأشرف الأمان	للدين والمرفان
والعدل والإحسان	وصادق الإيمان

**القرار**

عاشَ الوطن	اليومُ عيدُ مصرَ
عاشَ الوطن	اليومُ عيدُ مصرَ
عاشَ الوطن	رددوا الدعاء
عاشَ الوطن	فهو معقدُ الرجاء

(Kilani in Rashid, d.u.(b): 1)



Figure 3.7 Bars 1 to 2, 'Long live the homeland' (Rashid, d.u. (b): 2)



Figure 3.8 Bars 22 to 25, 'Long live the homeland' (Rashid, d.u. (b): 3)



Figure 3.9 Bars 39 to 41, 'Long live the homeland' (Rashid, d.u. (b): 4)



Figure 3.10 Bar 4, ‘Long live the homeland’ (Rashid, d.u. (b): 2)

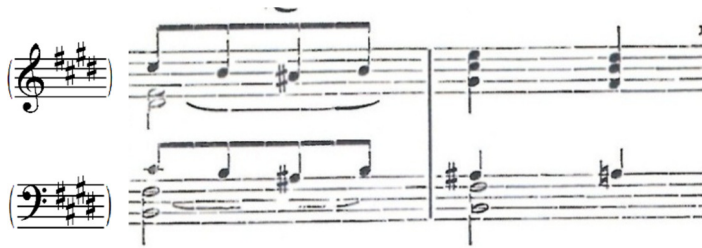


Figure 3.11 Bars 35 to 36, ‘Long live the homeland’ (piano part) (Rashid, d.u. (b): 4)

### Bahiga Sidqi’s ‘Morning salute’ and ‘Secret conversation’

<p>‘Morning salute’</p> <p>Good morning, basil, the spring sun has dawned. Petals opened once the frost went away.</p> <p>The universe was full of light once dawn appeared. And the dew shimmered like diamonds that were decorated with flowers.</p> <p>The field narcissus gazed, so the nightingale sang. And the moist branch became green, and decorated the trees.</p> <p>(Sidqi, d.u.(a): 1)<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>A dearth of information on this composer left the present author with very little context for the songs under discussion. According to El-Kholy (2013: online), Sidqi was a pianist who composed songs for children. Mattar (2007: 3) names her as one of the composers who founded nationalism in music after the 1919 revolution. The text for ‘Morning salute’ was written by the composer</p>
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herself (Sidqi, d.u. (a): 1), and the text for ‘Secret conversation’ was written by Manfour Al-Faqih (Sidqi, d.u. (b): 1).

<sup>6</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d).

**تَحِيَّةُ الصَّبَاحِ**

عَمِ صَبَاحًا يَارِيحَانُ أَشْرَقَتْ شَمْسُ الرِّيعِ  
 وَقَدْ تَفْتَحَتْ الْأَكَامُ عِنْدَ مَا زَالَ الصَّقِيعُ  
 . . . .

عَمَرَ الْكُونَ ضِيَاءَ عِنْدَ مَا لَاحَ الْفَجْرُ  
 وَالطَّلَّ تَلَاؤًا كَمَا سِيَ زَانَةُ الزَّهْرُ  
 . . . .

نَرَجِسُ الْحَقْلِ زَنَا فَأَنْشَدَ الْهَزَارُ  
 وَاخْضَرَ الْعَصْنُ الرَطِيبُ فَازْدَانَتْ بِهِ الْأَشْجَارُ

(Sidqi, d.u.(a): 1)

‘Morning salute’ is a continuation of the English drawing room ballad tradition, as is evident from its uncomplicated mid-range melody, repeated arpeggiated piano figures, the doubling of the vocal line in the right hand of the piano accompaniment (see, for example, bars 17 to 20, figure 3.12), and an insignificant text-music relationship.<sup>7</sup> This song is tonal, and chromatically never ventures beyond the use of secondary dominant or seventh chords. Similar to what we have seen in Hassan Rashid’s ‘Long live the homeland’, one finds a momentary deviation from the given harmonic-

tonal context (albeit, in this case, only once): the B-natural passing note on beat 5 in the left hand of the piano accompaniment in bar 17 (figure 3.12) which, although not rhythmically accented, is registrally prominent. This results in an uncharacteristically dissonant dominant seventh chord with a sharpened seventh. However, the fact that such a moment only occurs once is not strong enough evidence of an aim to subvert and established tonal context.

**Figure 3.12** Bars 17 to 20, ‘Morning salute’ (Sidqi, d.u. (a): 2)

<sup>7</sup> The biographical information provided regarding the Rashids’ involvement in an Amateur Music Society, coupled with the influence of British colonialism and the historical information provided on the importance of the piano and the creation of Arab salon music by women composers who knew both western and Arab music, supports the likeliness of the influence of an English drawing room ballad tradition.

'Secret conversation'

I became happy with your departure, when I heard that your heart was content with it.

Had it not been for your content, I wouldn't have been happy nor would I have ever been able to be patient.

For I view everything that is harmful to me, should it please you, to be quite easy.

(Al Faqih in Sidqi, d.u.(b): 1)<sup>8</sup>

'Secret conversation' presents similar ballad-like characteristics than those in 'Morning salute' in terms of the piano textures, melody and text-music relationship (see, for example, bars 17-20, figure 3.13). However, the melody moves independently from the piano accompaniment more often (but not all of the time), and the textures are slightly more varied. Although the harmonic-tonal language is more extended than in 'Morning salute' (it now includes several instances of extended third chords), it is still decidedly tonal. Also, the non-harmonic notes are not used in a way

that it would change or significantly influence the conventionally tonal context.

نجوى

سُررتُ بهجرِكَ لَمَّا عَدتُ أَنْ تَقْلِبَكَ فِيهِ سُرورا  
 ولولا سُورُوكَ ما سَرَّتني ولا كُنْتُ يَوماً عَلِيه صَبورا  
 لَأَني أَرى كُلَّ ما ساءَني إِذا كانَ يَرضِيكَ سَهلاً يَسيرا

(Al Faqih in Sidqi, d.u.(b): 1)

Figure 3.13 Bars 17 to 20, 'Secret conversation' (Sidqi, d.u. (b): 2)

<sup>8</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d).

## Kamel Al Rimali's 'A thousand and one nights' and 'The morning star'

Other than two short paragraphs in Kamel (1999: 342), the only information on Al-Rimali (in English) is the translation from the original Arabic (commissioned by the present author) of biographical information in the volume that contains the songs under discussion (Al-Rimali, 1999). Due to its seminal importance in English language scholarship, this translation is quoted here in full (Al-Rimali, 1999: 15-16):<sup>9</sup>

### Kamel al-Rimali

- He was born in al-Buhaira governorate, in 1922.
- He started learning the violin, and then the piano, in the city of Alexandria.
- He studied music theory and music composition with a number of distinguished teachers in the city of Alexandria, and he later continued to study in Italy and Germany.
- He won the first prize in music composition in 1948, in Cairo.<sup>10</sup>
- He received a Bachelor's degree in Literature, in the Ancient Egyptian Monuments Department at Alexandria University in 1950.<sup>11</sup>
- He received a scholarship from UNESCO in 1959 to study musical composition in Italy and Germany.
- He received four certificates in music composition from the Santa Cecilia Academy in Rome in 1959.<sup>12</sup>
- He received a Licentiate in music theory from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music in 1973.<sup>13</sup>
- He wrote many works, the most important of which are:
  1. *Three Egyptian dances*
  2. *Rural symphony*
  3. *Two poetic pieces* for piano:
    - 'Memorial'
    - 'Sorrow'
  4. *A lamentation* for electronic keyboard, on a Coptic melody
  5. *Variations on an oriental melody* for piano
  6. *Traditional symphonic variations* for orchestra
  7. *String quartet*, on four quartets by Omar Khayam
  8. *Musical scales symphonic suite*, on oriental scales
  9. *Popular images symphonic suite*, on six Egyptian popular melodies
  10. *Legendary bird symphonic poem*
  11. *Nubia symphonic suite*
  12. *Suez canal overture*
  13. *Fantasy* for oboe and orchestra
  14. A number of songs
  15. *Sonata* for cello and piano

<sup>9</sup> The present author took the liberty of changing parts of the translation idiomatically, where it appeared to be direct. Grammar, spelling and typographical changes have also been made. The translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d).

<sup>10</sup> Despite both Kamel (1999: 342) and this translation mentioning Al-Rimali winning a 'first prize in composition', neither mention the name of the competition.

<sup>11</sup> According to Kamel (1999: 342) this was a 'BA in Archeology'.

<sup>12</sup> According to Kamel (1999: 342) Al-Rimali received 'a certificate in the science of music composition' at this academy in 1959.

<sup>13</sup> When considering the chronological order in which the information has been presented thus far, the given date of 1953 is most likely incorrect. The present author has therefore changed it to 1973, as given in Kamel (1999: 342). Also, the qualification has been changed to 'Licentiate' (also as given in Kamel, 1999: 342) rather than the given 'Bachelor's degree', since the ABRSM has never granted degrees.

16. *African choral songs* for chorus and orchestra
17. He wrote the first Egyptian opera *Hassan al-Basry*, based on the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights*.<sup>14</sup>
18. He wrote a second opera, *Nefertiti, the arriving beauty*, based on the life of Akhenaten and Nefertiti.
19. He wrote a third opera, *The Magician*, based on the famous pharaonic tale *Cheops and the magicians*.

‘A thousand and one nights’

Greetings, oh our nights, to the secret exchange of our encounter!  
 Feelings that danced with us and melodies that went through us!  
 And happiness, whose delights seduce us with what we like!  
 Greetings, oh our nights, to the secret exchange of our encounter!  
 Is life but joyfulness that comes upon us for a few hours?  
 So that every misdemeanour enjoys whatever our hopes wish for!  
 Greetings, oh our nights, to the secret exchange of our encounter!  
 Our nights are scented, our nights are indeed scented!  
 We socialize with them, so they socialize with us; and we revive them, so they revive us!

(Mohsen Al-Johari Al-Rimali, 1999: 6)<sup>15</sup>

The text of ‘A thousand and one nights’ (1950) was written by Mohsen Al-Johari (Al-Rimali, 1999: 1) and the text of ‘The morning star’ (1976) by Fauz Al-Antil (Al-Rimali, 1999: 7). Departures from the main context of common practice harmony and functional progressions in ‘A thousand and one nights’ and a theorization thereof are presented in Chapter 7.<sup>16</sup> The textures and figures in the piano accompaniment – especially the ‘rocking’ broken chords in combination with block chords (see bars 13 to 16, figure 3.14), and the sentimental scale-like upward movements at the end of the song (see bars 64-67, figure 3.15), suggest, like the songs by the previous composers discussed, an English ballad tradition.<sup>17</sup> Again, the text-music relationship remains

on the level of ‘mood-interpretation’. Other than the exceptions discussed in Chapter 7, the harmonic-tonal language is Romantic. Unlike the harmony, the vocal line does not contain ‘exceptions’ to the established musical context, and is entirely diatonic. Despite the melodic movement and rhythms not appearing difficult to execute, the high tessitura (it often reaches G<sub>5</sub>, on which a sustained note is required at the end of the song) suggests that this is not a song for amateurs (see bar 67, figure 3.15). Also, Al-Rimali’s application of structural principles and variation of the returning A-section suggests something more sophisticated than a drawing room ballad: the form, when the variation of the A-material is not taken into consideration, can be reduced to A-B-A-C-B-A-D-A, which reminds of an adapted Rondo

<sup>14</sup> This is the same claim made regarding Hassan Rashid’s opera *Antony’s death*.

<sup>15</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d).

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 7 (pp. 240 to 247) for the discussion of this song as part of a reapplication of Deleuze and Guattari’s theorization of Kafka’s work as a so-called minor literature on certain compositional practices.

<sup>17</sup> Since this song was written in 1950, before the composer’s departure to Italy and Germany to study there, it is more likely that it would display an English influence (of colonial origin).



**ألف ليلة وليلة**

على نجوى تلاقينا	سلام يا ليالينا
وأحسان سرت فينا	أحاسيس بنا رقصت
بما نهواه تغرينا	وأفراح مباحها
على نجوى تلاقينا	سلام يا ليالينا
لساعات تواتينا	هل الدنيا سوى مرح
بما شاعت أمانينا	فتنعم كل جانحة
على نجوى تلاقينا	سلام يا ليالينا
معطرة ليالينا	ليالينا معطرة
ونحيها فتحيينا	نؤانسها فتؤنسنا

(Mohsen Al-Johari Al-Rimali, 1999: 6)

form favoured by Mozart.<sup>18</sup> Compare, for example, the first statement of the A-section material in bars 13 to 16 (figure 3.14), to that in bars 56 to 59 (figure 3.16). In a summative consideration of the characteristics discussed, it is feasible to posit that ‘A thousand and one nights’ is an extension of the post-1870s English concert ballad tradition.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 3.14 Bars 13 to 16, ‘A thousand and one nights’ (Al-Rimali, 1999: 1)

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 6 (pp. 218) for a discussion on a similar occurrence in Fred Onovwerosuoke’s ‘Herero folktales’.

<sup>19</sup> Scott (1989: 141) states the following in this regard: ‘From the 1870s onward a distinction needs to be made between the drawing-room ballad and other forms of bourgeois domestic song. The term now suggests a loftier, artier conception, as befitted its performance by *internationally famous concert artists*’ (my emphasis).

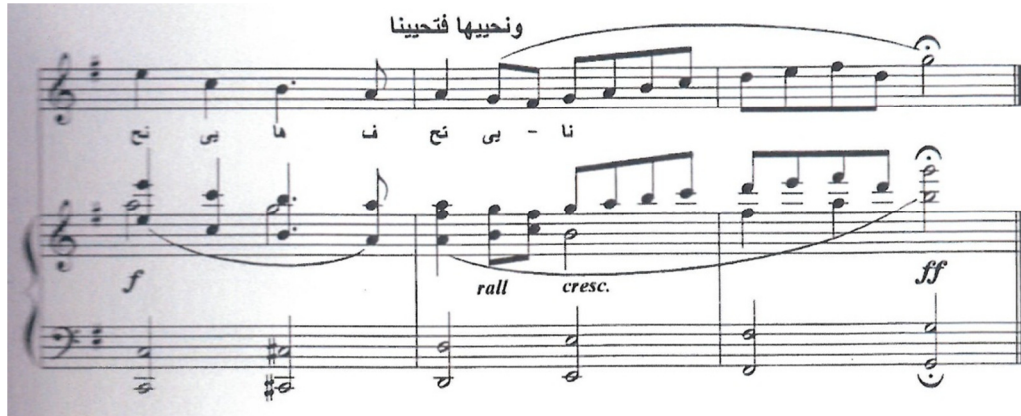


Figure 3.15 Bars 64 to 67, ‘A thousand and one nights’ (Al-Rimali, 1999: 4-5)



Figure 3.16. Bars 56 to 59, ‘A thousand and one nights’ (Al-Rimali, 1999: 4)

‘The Morning Star’

Oh love! Oh love! The morning star has risen from the shackles of clouds.

Oh love! Oh love! The morning star has dangled and bathed in dew.

So come, oh love, let us sing to the spring, let us sing to the spring.

Let us hear the whispering of dawn in the jungles.

Let us dance at the river and sing to the flowers.

We love beauty, we love life.

-----

Let us sing, let us sing like two flying birds, over a ray of silver!

Let us sing, let us sing like two lovers who are travelling without time or a place!

Oh love! Oh love! The morning star has come and bathed in dew.

So come, oh love, let us sing to Life, let us sing to Life.

(Fauzi Al-Antil in Al-Rimali, 1999: 14)<sup>20</sup>

‘The morning star’ contains similar characteristics to those in ‘A thousand and one nights’ that reference a post-1870s English concert ballad tradition (similarities in the text-music relationship and piano accompaniment figures do not warrant a re-discussion here). The voice part is similar to that of ‘A thousand and one nights’ in terms of its lack of chromaticism. However, it is even higher in range (ending on Bb<sub>5</sub>), and much more florid, with

<sup>20</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d).

**نجمة الصبح**

نجمة الصبح أطلت من غلالات السحاب نجمة الصبح تداوت واستحمت بالندى لنغنى للربيع لنغنى للربيع فى الأذغال ونغنى للزهور إننا نهوى الحياه ----- كطائرین محلقيين هيا نغنى ، هيا نغنى هيا نغنى ، هيا نغنى بلا زمان ولا مكان نجمة الصبح أهلت واستحمت بالندى لنغنى للحياه لنغنى للحياه	يا حبيبي يا حبيبي يا حبيبي يا حبيبي فتعالى يا حبيبي هيا نسمع همس الفجر هيا نرقص عند النهر إننا نهوى الجمال هيا نغنى ، هيا نغنى على شعاع من اللجين كعاشقين مسافرين يا حبيبي يا حبيبي فتعالى يا حبيبي لنغنى للحياه
---	---

(Fauzi Al-Antil in Al-Rimali, 1999: 14)

the long, melismatic runs characteristic of traditional Arab melodies (see, for example, bars 104 to 107, figure 3.17).<sup>21</sup> Such runs also appear sporadically in the piano accompaniment (see, for example, bars 7 to 8, figure 3.18). The general harmonic-tonal context references the nineteenth century, and much like the previous examples, the song also displays exceptions to this context. These exceptions take two different forms in this song: exceptions to the western harmonic and rhythmic context (the melody has already been discussed), and exceptions to the general diatonic context. In terms of the former, the

rhythmic basis of this song appears to be the Arab *maqsum* rhythm (figure 3.19). There are a few instances in which one can clearly identify the use of Arabic *maqāmāt*.<sup>22</sup> See, for example, the use of the *maqām suzidil* in both the voice part and piano accompaniment from bars 68 (beat 3) to bar 72 (beat 3) (figures 3.20 and 3.21), and the use of the *maqām farahfaza* (same as the Aeolian mode) – again in both the voice part and piano accompaniment – from bars 40 to 43 (figures 3.22 and 3.23). (Note that, with the addition of F# in bar 44, it changes back to g minor.) There are also sections in which either combinations of different *maqāmāt*, or combinations thereof with western chords (keeping in mind that it is not always possible clearly to distinguish between the latter and the former) are too ambiguous to untangle. An example of an exception to the general diatonic context can be seen in bar 85 (figure 3.24): strong dissonances between G# in the left hand and A in the right hand, and between A in the left hand and Bb in the right hand, exaggerated in the two-voiced texture. It is important to take note that these areas of ‘exception’ are exactly that: the song does not present a fully transformed, hybrid musical language. The frequent changes of texture create a collage effect. The frequent changes between sections that clearly reference an Arab sound, sections that clearly reference nineteenth-century Europe, and more inconsistent sections, further

<sup>21</sup> See Parker (2008: 423) with regard to melodic characteristics of Arab music: ‘[...] rapid melismas filling in larger-than-stepwise intervals abound.’

<sup>22</sup> The word ‘maqām’ (pl. ‘maqāmāt’), one of a few words that reference modes in Arab music, is the word now preferred by younger musicians in Cairo, and writers in the west and the Arab world. These modes are built from two or more tetrachords (most often), (Marcus, 2002: 34, 37), trichords or pentachords called ‘jins’ (pl. ‘ajnas’) (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online). In modern music theory the two-octave Arab fundamental scale (G<sub>3</sub> to G<sub>5</sub>) was reconceptualized as containing twenty-four equal-tempered quarter steps per octave (Marcus, 2002: 35). In traditional use, *maqāmāt* are transposable to only a few other tonics, and sometimes get a new name when they are transposed (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online), although contemporary art music composers do not necessarily adhere to such ‘rules’.

contribute to this effect. In the absence of these collage-creating elements and dissonances that fall outside the general context of diatonicism, one would be tempted to declare that the song clearly still references nineteenth-century Europe and that the Arabic elements appear exotic. However, their presence subverts this idea.

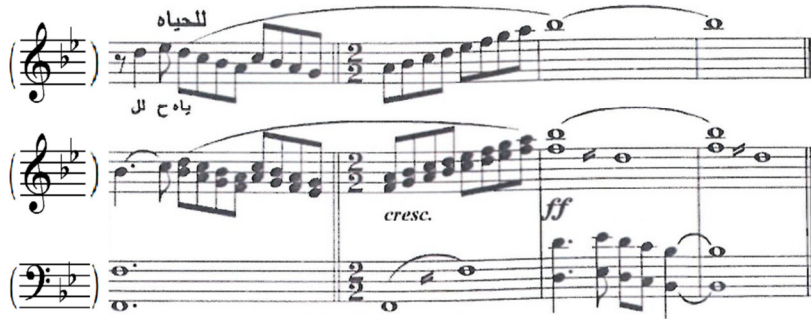


Figure 3.17 Bars 104 to 107, ‘The morning star’ (Al-Rimali, 1999: 13)



Figure 3.18 Bars 7 to 8, ‘The morning star’ (Al-Rimali, 1999: 7)



Figure 3.19 *maqsum* rhythm (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)



Figure 3.20 *maqām suzidil* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)

This figure shows a musical score for 'The morning star' (Al-Rimali, 1999: 11). It consists of three systems of music. The first system has a vocal line with lyrics in Arabic: 'هيا نغنى هيا نغنى كطائرین محلقین > فى ل حل م ن رى نطاك نى غن ن يا هى نى غن ن يا هى'. Below the vocal line is a piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *mp*. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'ش لى ع ن' and the piano accompaniment. The third system shows a continuation of the piano accompaniment.

Figure 3.21 Bars 68 to 72, 'The morning star' (Al-Rimali, 1999: 11)

This figure shows a single line of musical notation for the *maqām farahfaza* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online). It is written on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat and a 7/8 time signature. The melody consists of a sequence of notes: G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

Figure 3.22 *maqām farahfaza* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)

This figure shows a musical score for 'The morning star' (Al-Rimali, 1999: 9). It consists of three systems of music. The first system has a vocal line with lyrics in Arabic: 'فى الأذغال فى الأذغال فى الأذغال > فى الأذغال'. Below the vocal line is a piano accompaniment with dynamic markings of *mf cresc.* and *dim.*. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system shows a continuation of the piano accompaniment.

Figure 3.23 Bars 40 to 43, 'The morning star' (Al-Rimali, 1999: 9)

This figure shows a musical score for 'The morning star' (Al-Rimali, 1999: 12). It consists of three systems of music. The first system shows a treble clef staff with a whole rest. The second system shows a treble clef staff with a melody and a dynamic marking of *cresc.*. The third system shows a bass clef staff with a piano accompaniment.

Figure 3.24 Bar 85, 'The morning star' (Al-Rimali, 1999: 12)

## Gamal Abdel-Rahim's 'Oh God', 'Oh eye, shed tears' and 'Fire and words'

Gamal Abdel-Rahim was born in Cairo in 1924. His early musical contact was with western music, and he studied the piano (Kamel, 1999: 346). He studied history at Cairo University from 1940 to 1944, where he also had the opportunity to study music with local European teachers (Gamal Abdel-Rahim, 2013: online). Abdel-Rahim received a government scholarship to go and study music in Germany in 1950, where he first studied musicology in Heidelberg for two semesters (El-Kholy, 1993a: 23). From 1951 to 1957 he studied composition with Harald Genzmer in Freiburg (Gamal Abdel-Rahim, 2013: online). (Genzmer was a well-known pupil of Hindemith (El-Kholy, 1993a: 23)). After returning home, he started teaching at the Cairo Conservatoire (Gamal Abdel-Rahim, 2013: online), where he founded the composition department at this establishment. He remained the head until his retirement in 1984 (Kamel, 1999: 346) and died in 1988 in Frankfurt, Germany, during a visit to his daughter (El-Kholy, 1993a: 47).

According to Kamel (1999: 346), Abdel-Rahim wrote works for piano, choir, orchestra and chamber ensembles, as well as incidental music. Other than the songs under discussion in this section, he also wrote a song called 'The happy prince' for soprano and contralto (no date is given), and four songs from a musical entitled *The pure and the wicked* for voice and instrumental ensemble or piano (1981) (El-Kholy, 1993a: 53) which can be performed separately, as implied by its separate listing in the works list under the 'vocal works' section in El-Kholy (1993a: 53).

El-Kholy (1993a: 29) states that Abdel-Rahim derived guiding principles from both Stravinsky and Bartók that he could not find in mid-twentieth-century avant garde music, but that it was Bartók's music that exercised a greater influence over his own ideals. After his return to Egypt from Germany, Abdel-Rahim started his search for an individual contemporary Egyptian idiom. He tried to achieve this through, according to Kamel (1999: 346) 'avoid[ing] the alien major-minor system' and showing a preference for 'the modality of his national, traditional and folk music.' Kamel (1999: 346) further states that the intervals of the augmented second (of the *jins hijaz*) and the diminished fourth (of the *jins saba*) abound in Abdel-Rahim's works. In reference to the use of Arabic *maqāmāt*, it is important to note that this composer apparently emancipated himself from working with inherited rules by developing a 'freer modal concept' (El-Kholy, 1993b: 73). According to Abdel-Karim (1993: 145), this composer gained from the influence of Hindemith's chromatic system, which has clear tonal centres. El-Kholy (1993b: 72) includes among the important characteristics of Abdel-Rahim's style the use of irregular rhythmic patterns in combination with variable meters, linear modal polyphony ('a natural extension of Eastern monodic melodism'), and the application of harmonic and contrapuntal systems based on the typical intervals of the modal system. Abdel-Karim (1993: 145) agrees that the harmonies in Abdel-Rahim's works have a specific, characteristic dissonance, due to this composer's employment of 'typical [modal] intervals such as the minor second, the augmented second, the diminished third, the diminished fourth and the augmented fourth.' In reference to vocal works, El-Kholy (1993b: 76) states that its rhythmic characteristics (as described above) serve to fulfil the requirements of clarity and authenticity in the Arabic language by solving the problems of phonetic text setting.

The songs ‘Oh eye! Shed tears’ and ‘Oh God!’, both for mezzo-soprano or contralto, and orchestra or piano, are on texts from Aeschylus’s *The Choephoroi*.<sup>23</sup> The text of ‘Fire and words’ for voice and chamber orchestra or piano is based on a poem by Abdel-Wahab El-Bayyati (El-Kholy, 1993a: 53). In my readings of these songs I will interrogate some of the statements made above, in terms of how *maqāmāt* and other Arab musical elements are applied, and how the music of Bartók and Hindemith (the latter possibly via Genzmer) may have exercised an influence over Abdel-Rahim in his writing of these songs.

‘Oh God!’	‘Oh eye! Shed tears!’
<p>Oh God                      Oh Saviour                      From hardship                      When would the killing and blood stop                      in our house, in the family of misery?                      When would the purple fountain dry                      up                      in our home, and Time would forgive?                      Oh God                      Oh Saviour                      Oh God</p>	<p>Oh eye! Shed the tears of heart plentifully, generously,                      over the grave of the glorious king.                      He disappeared today from amongst us.                      Polluted, the sacrifice polluted with curse the grave of the                      innocent ones,                      so wine ran like blood.                      It brought the gifts of death.                      So wash away, my tears, my curses and the bloods lest                      the stains of blood reach the honourable ones.                      [illegible]                      [illegible]                      [illegible]</p>
<p>(Aeschylus Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(c): 1-3)<sup>24</sup></p>	<p>(Aeschylus in Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(b): 1-4)<sup>25</sup></p>

‘Fire and endearments’

My love awoke in the middle of the night.  
 The snow covered the woods and hid the wider view from me.  
 My heart was longingly murky, like a child anxiously sobbing, like a  
 nightingale in a desolate desert quavering.

Deeply depressed and sad, I found comfort with fire and grass.  
 Whenever the flames danced, I shouted: Give meaning to my life, fire,  
*[continues on the next page]*

<sup>23</sup> The title given by El-Kholy (1993a: 53) is ‘God, the Saviour’. The present author will however use the title provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d).

<sup>24</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d).

<sup>25</sup> The English translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013d). The translator was unable to read the unclear handwriting in which the last three phrases of the text was written.

by lighting up my words.

Words to me are bread, weapon and wing – without them I would be blind.

I shouted in vain – torn apart internally –

however, the snow covered the woods and hid the wider view from me,

than that of my love awaking.

(Al-Bayati, d.u.)<sup>26</sup>

'Feuer und Liebesworte'

Mitten in der Nacht ist meine Liebe erwacht.

Der Schnee bedeckte den Wald und verbarg mir die weitere Sicht.

Mein Herz war sehsüchtig trüb, wie ein Kind ängstlich

Schluchzend, wie die Nachtigall in einer verlassenen Wüste

Trillernd.

Tief bedrückt und traurig fand ich Trost bei Feuer und Gras.

Immer wenn die Flamme tanzte, schrie ich: Feuer, beleuchte

doch meine Worte und verleihe meinem Leben dadurch einen Sinn.

Worte sind mir Brot, Waffe und Flügel – ohne sie wäre ich blind.

Umsonst schrie ich – innerlich zerissen –

doch der Schnee bedeckte den Wald und verbarg mir die weitere

Sicht, als meine Liebe erwachte.

(Al-Bayati, d.u.)

Abdel-Rahim applies *maqāmāt* in two distinct ways in the three songs under discussion. First, *maqāmāt* are used in their entirety (mostly in their original root positions in the given examples) across both the voice and piano parts. See, for example, bars 41 to 42 (figure 3.25) in 'Oh eye, shed tears', in which the *maqām athar kurd* (figure 3.26) is applied (the voice part in these extracts only uses the notes of the *jins nahawand*). Bars 35 to 36 (figure 3.27) in the same song can be seen to consist entirely of the *maqām shawq-afza* on D (figure 3.28).<sup>26</sup> In 'Fire and words', bar 64 (figure 3.29), for example, the *maqām shawq-afza* on Bb (figure 3.30) appears to be employed across both the voice and piano parts. Similarly, a version of the *maqām hijaz kar kurd* (figure 3.31) appears to be applied in the marked area in bar 8 of 'Oh God!' (figure 3.32).

<sup>26</sup> If one accepts that the composer may have used enharmonic equivalents in his notation, i.e. A# instead of Bb.





Figure 3.25 Bars 41 to 42, ‘Oh eye, shed tears’ (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(b): 3)



Figure 3.26 *maqām athar kurd* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)



Figure 3.27 Bars 35 to 36, ‘Oh eye, shed tears’ (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(b): 3)



Figure 3.28 *maqām shawq-afza on D* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)



Figure 3.30 *maqām shawq-afza on Bb* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)



Figure 3.31 *maqām hijaz kar kurd* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)

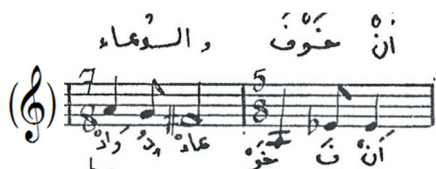


**Figure 3.32** Bar 8, ‘Oh God!’ (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(c): 1)

Second, the composer uses different *maqāmāt* in combination with each other, or in combination with ambiguous modal material.<sup>27</sup> In ‘Oh God!’, for example, the voice part in bars 8 to 9 (figure 3.33) can be read as employing the *maqām athar kurd* (it therefore overlaps with the use of the *maqām hijaz kar kurd* across the voice and piano parts, as explained in the previous paragraph). In bars 36 to 40 of ‘Oh eye, shed tears’ (figure 3.34), for example, the voice part can be seen as consisting of the *maqām shanaz* (figure 3.35). While the use of this *maqām* can also be seen in bars 37 to 38 of the piano accompaniment, the same cannot be said of the piano accompaniment in bars 36, and 39 to 40. The latter appears to be employing ambiguous modal material. In ‘Fire and words’, the following is an example of this combinatory practice: in the marked area from bars 16 to 20 in the bottom voice of the piano accompaniment (figure 3.36), the *maqām saba zamzam* (figure 3.37) appears to be used. The top voice can be read as consisting of the *maqām nahawand* (figure 3.38).<sup>28</sup> The middle voice (without the C<sub>5</sub> and D<sub>5</sub> which can, by virtue of its registral placement, be seen as forming part of the top voice) can be read as a transposition of the *jins zamzama*.



**Figure 3.33** Bars 8 to 9, ‘Oh God!’ (voice part) (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(c): 1)



<sup>27</sup> The term ‘ambiguous modal material’ needs explanation: where *maqāmāt* or *jins* are used, for example, in fragments, not in root position, and all of this in different combinations, it becomes nearly impossible to say with any degree of certainty what the modal origins of the material are, or how modulations are realized.

<sup>28</sup> Bar 16 as a whole can also be read as being in this *maqām*.



Figure 3.34 Bars 36 to 40, ‘Oh eye, shed tears’ (voice part) (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(b): 3)



Figure 3.35 *maqām shanaz* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)

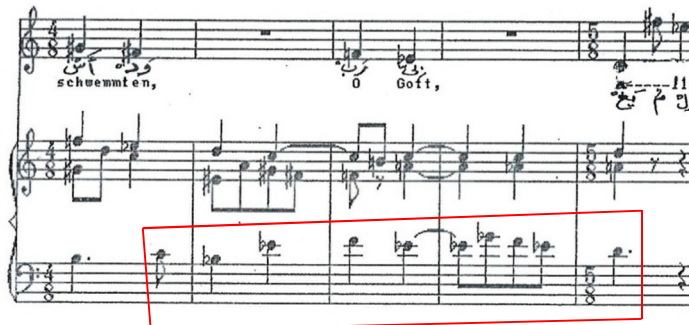


Figure 3.36 ‘Fire and words’, bars 16 to 20 (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(a): 2)



Figure 3.37 *maqām saba zamzam* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)



Figure 3.38 *maqām nahawand* (Farraj and Shumays, 2007: online)

Abdel-Rahim’s frequent use of melodic figures that resemble the *jins zamzama*, albeit transposed, is significant. See, for example, the melodic movements from bars 17 to 18, bars 19 to 20 (figure 3.39), and 30 to 31 (figure 3.40) in the voice part of ‘Oh God!’. Other examples include the right hand of the piano accompaniment in bars 14 to 15 of ‘Oh eye, shed tears’ (figure 3.41), and the marked areas in bars 1 to 2, and bars 3 to 4 in the right hand of the piano accompaniment in ‘Fire and words’ (figure 3.42).

Figure 3.39 Bars 17 to 20, 'Oh God!' (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(c): 2)

Figure 3.40 Bars 30 to 31, 'Oh God!' (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(c): 2)

Figure 3.41 Bars 14 to 15, 'Oh eye, shed tears' (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(b): 2)

Figure 3.42 Bars 1 to 4, 'Fire and words' (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(a): 1)

All twelve notes of the chromatic scale are used in all three songs, but no serial techniques are applied. The harmonic effect achieved through the way in which the modal pitch material is organized is indeed, for the most part, one of extreme dissonance. This dissonance is periodically relieved by moments in which the harmonies are entirely quartal/quintal or triadic. See, for example, the extract from 'Oh God!' below (figure 3.43). In bar 18, a quintal E-B-F# chord resolves to a B-D-F# triad with an added fourth (E); from bars 25 to 26 a F#-A#-C# major chord resolves to C-G-B (an implied dominant seventh chord with a sharpened seventh); the major and minor triads in bar 31 (in sound, if not in notation), resolve to a quartal A-D-G, etc. The use of these more consonant chords seems to be intuitive and display no worked-out pattern, although there is a tendency for them to appear more often in sections between the sung phrases.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece 'Oh God!' by Abdel-Rahim. The score is written on multiple staves, including vocal lines with Arabic lyrics and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Più Lento'. The score shows various chords and melodic lines, with some dissonant intervals and some more consonant triads and quartals. The lyrics are written in Arabic script above the vocal lines. The score is divided into measures, with bar numbers 20, 23, 25, 30, and 31 indicated. The notation includes notes, rests, and chord symbols.

Figure 3.43 Bars 17 to 32, 'Oh God!' (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(c): 2)

The textures in ‘Oh God’ and ‘Oh eye, shed tears’ are mostly homophonic, and the piano writing is most often block-like. A greater variety of textures can be seen in ‘Fire and words’, and lines more often move independently from each other. An independence of lines that would qualify the song as a display of modal linear polyphony is however never achieved.

The vocal lines of the songs under discussion are very chromatic and would require considerable skill to pitch correctly, as can be seen from the excerpts provided above. The vocal ranges of ‘Oh God’ (F#<sub>3</sub> to Db<sub>5</sub>) and ‘Oh eye, shed tears’ (G<sub>3</sub> to C<sub>5</sub>) are appropriate for the designation of contralto voice, and that of ‘Fire and words’ (Bb<sub>3</sub> to G<sub>5</sub>) appears to be appropriate for medium (baritone or mezzo-soprano) voice types. Although the present author cannot judge the level of declamation with authority, one may be able to take El-Kholy’s (1993b: 72, 76) statements regarding irregular rhythmic patterns and variable meters (present in all three songs), and its application in achieving correct Arabic declamation, to be valid here. This characteristic can be seen as a continuation of a characteristic of nineteenth-century German (and subsequently international western) art song. The sombre moods of all three songs reflect the moods of the texts correctly. Only in ‘Fire and words’ does one see a few instances of tone painting, and the symbolic use of texture. See, for example, the upwards melodic movement where the text references a nightingale in bars 43-44, and the sudden thinning out of the piano accompaniment texture from bars 45 to 46 (figure 3.44), where the text references the desolate desert.

The image displays a musical score for the song 'Fire and words' by Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(a): 4, covering bars 43 to 46. The score is presented in three systems. The first system shows the vocal line (treble clef) and piano accompaniment (bass clef). The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'n, wie die Nach-ti-ga-ll-e, schla-gen' and 'in der durr-en'. The piano accompaniment features a block-like texture in the first two systems, which thins out in the third system.

**Figure 3.44** Bars 43 to 46, ‘Fire and words’ (Abdel-Rahim, d.u.(a): 4)

The chromaticism in these songs is framed by clear tonal centres. These centres are established through the melodic movement that steers towards these goals – primarily in the top voice (the vocal line) and the bottom voice (the lowest line in the piano accompaniment)

– rather than through modal modulation.<sup>29</sup> In both ‘Oh God’ and ‘Oh eye, shed tears’, these tonal centres have third relationships (in ‘Oh God’, the centre shifts from Eb to G, and then to E; in ‘Oh eye, shed tears’, it shifts from C# to A). This tendency is not seen in ‘Fire and words’, where the tonal centre shifts from D to C, and then to A, E, and Bb before returning to D. Larger structural divisions are indicated by double bar lines that divide both ‘Oh God’ and ‘Fire and words’ into A and B sections (no such division occurs in ‘Oh eye, shed tears’). All three songs are through-composed and there is very little obvious recurrence of thematic material anywhere that would indicate structural divisions.<sup>30</sup>

In sound, Abdel-Rahim’s songs are unlike those of Bartók or Hindemith. Certain individual characteristics in, or compositional principles that govern the works of these composers, can however be mapped onto those of Abdel-Rahim. It is, for example, not insignificant to note that the ‘non-diatonic mode found in Hungarian peasant music’, and employed by Bartók (Antokoletz, 1984: 205, figure 45), contains characteristics of both the Arabic *jins nahawand* and *jins kurd*. Also, Abdel-Rahim’s beloved *jins zamzama* is essentially a part of the octatonic scale frequently employed by both Bartók and Stravinsky. The use of all twelve notes of the chromatic scale in a non-serial context, and clear tonal centres in a chromatic context are Hindemithian characteristics.<sup>31</sup> The combination of quartal or quintal, and triadic harmonies, and the use of variable meters, can also be seen in works by both Hindemith and Bartók.<sup>32</sup> Interculturality in these songs can therefore be said to be mostly achieved through cross-domain mapping.<sup>33</sup> Abdel-Rahim’s free combination of different *maqāmāt* or *jins* – in their root positions and transposed – and their arrangement to create harmonies that resemble western music can be seen as the composer’s way of emancipating his writing from the rules that govern Arabic modal composition. A summative consideration of the characteristics discussed reveal that Abdel-Rahim’s songs present a closer and more direct continuation of the principles governing western art song composition, unlike the popular song origins of those by composers discussed previously in this chapter.

<sup>29</sup> This is not to say that there is no modal modulation anywhere.

<sup>30</sup> A study of the deeper relations that may lie between the use of *maqāmat* and which may suggest structural divisions fall outside the scope of this study.

<sup>31</sup> Regarding the former, compare, for example, the following statements in Neumeier (1986: 138, 230): ‘Unfortunately the two versions of *Marienleben* became metonyms for Hindemith’s early and mature styles. His post-World War II critics read this in terms of the sharply polarized atonal-tonal debate and *Hindemith’s rejection of serial techniques*’ (my emphasis), and ‘Hindemith’s insistence on the *primacy of the complete chromatic scale*’ (my emphasis). Regarding the latter, I would like to restate Abdel-Karim (1993: 145): ‘Hindemith’s chromatic system [...] has clear tonal centres.’

<sup>32</sup> Variable time signatures can be seen in, for example, Bartók’s *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (Bartók, c.1940c) and *Mikrokosmos no. 140*, and quartal or quintal harmony in, for example, his *Mikrokosmos no. 131*. An example of a composition by Hindemith that display both characteristics is *Symphony Mathis der Maler*.

<sup>33</sup> My use of the term ‘cross-domain mapping’ references a paper by Nicholas Cook (2012) on Debussy’s ‘Pagodes’: ‘[...] what enabled Debussy to assimilate the rhythmic stratification of the gamelan into his normal technique was its similarity in certain key respects to that of species counterpoint, in which Debussy had a thorough grounding at the Paris conservatoire [...].’



**Figure 3.45** ‘Non-diatonic mode found in Hungarian peasant music’ (Antokoletz, 1984: 205)

## Conclusion

The will to represent has been demonstrated in all the works that have been discussed. Where it is not clear from direct references to Egyptian (or Arab) culture in musical elements, it is clear from extramusical elements, including references in biographical sources, the topics of the songs, or simply the fact that the texts are in Arabic.<sup>34</sup> I have found no songs to be exact reproductions of western exoticism, and have demonstrated different anti-exotic strategies in self-representation: in the case of Rashid and Al-Rimali (in both songs discussed), the ‘self’ is made known in an anti-exotic manner through the practice of subverting western styles in different ways, rather than through the inclusion of musical elements that reference Egypt directly. In the case of Abdel-Rahim and again Al-Rimali (specifically in ‘The morning star’), there are direct references to Egyptian culture in the music, but exoticism is again avoided through either cross-domain mapping that allows the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ to be the same, or through the purposeful inconsistency of collage. In the case of Sidqi, I have not been able to prove that the deviation from a western style (in this case, one without exoticisms) is strong enough to suggest subversion. It is therefore possible to conclude that this composer may not have subscribed to any kind of binary opposition between a western ‘other’ and an Egyptian ‘self’ in musical terms, and was promoting equal access for everyone to what she may have deemed an international style. Although I have been able to demonstrate anti-exotic strategies in self-representation, there are not enough strong correlations between the examples studied to suggest a national style in the practice of art music of western origin in Egypt.

Due to power relations and the history of the west in Egypt, perhaps no one would look twice at the presence of architecture like the Scottish Rite Temple of Mobile, Alabama, right in the middle of Cairo. But, the manifestation of the will to represent the ‘self’ that does not resemble this ‘self’ in its former manifestation as the ‘other’ in the west, would then be lost. Political events in Egypt in the twenty-first century have indicated a greater move towards regimes that vindicate an anti-western conservatism. One may wonder how this will impact on the cultural productions of arts practitioners who do not support such regimes. Will subversion be practiced through a move away from self-representation, or will a more subtle strategy in representing the ‘self’ that *does* resemble its former manifestation as the ‘other’ in the west serve this purpose better?

<sup>34</sup> Locke (2009: 74) states that ‘[c]learly, one can seek evidence of the “will to represent” in extra-musical clues.’



## Chapter 4 Art song composition in South Africa: To denote ‘Africa’ (and how), or not



**Figure 4.1 South African landscapes** (starting top left, going clockwise: (1) Hill, 2008: online, (2) Wiersma, 2004: online, (3) Bolar, 2010: online, (4) Van Rhyn, 2013, (5) Rohner, 2008: online, (6) Bruenken, 2005: online)<sup>1</sup>

*Who’s ‘Africa’ to denote?*

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<sup>1</sup> (1) Khayelitsha township (2) Great Constantia (3) Gautrain, O.R. Tambo International Airport (4) Donkey cart, Nieu Bethesda (5) Clifton 4<sup>th</sup> Beach (6) Anysberg, Great Karoo

## Introduction

The collage on the previous page problematizes the issue that forms the core of this chapter: if one wishes to denote ‘Africa’ in a composition, how is this achieved? What if the life that you live, what you consider to be your ‘heritage’, and your musical education has little to do with any popular notion of what ‘Africa’ is? The issue becomes especially pertinent if one understands the composition of a musical work as something that presupposes a reception of one kind or another. There are two reasons for engaging this issue in this chapter specifically: first, it literally brings the issue home to me, which allows me to consider it with greater authority, and second, one cannot deny that the unusually large indigenous white population in South Africa (compared to the rest of the African continent), and the country’s history of white minority rule and privilege have given cultural production in the context of western art music a profile undeniably different to that of any other African country. In this chapter, a general overview of the history of western art music and art song in South Africa will be followed by discussions on Priaulx Rainier’s ‘Dance of the rain’, Stefans Grové’s *Sewe liedere op Boesmanverse*, Hendrik Hofmeyr’s *En skielik is dit aand*, and Andile Khumalo’s *Ekuboleni kunempilo*, with the aim of showing different strategies for denoting ‘Africa’, and to posit how these relate to the composers’ oeuvres and general stylistic practices.

### The history of art music and art song in South Africa: An overview

May (2013b: online) divides the development of art music in South Africa into two distinct periods: ‘the years of colonial rule (1652-c1900), when music was provided mainly by amateur groups, the church and the military, and from 1900 onwards, when South Africa started training its own professional musicians.’ For the purposes of this dissertation, the focus in this overview will be largely on the second period. The first seventeenth-century Dutch settlers at the Cape, employees of the Dutch East India company (VOC), brought western music to South Africa in a number of forms: folk music, the Genevan Psalter and military music (May, 2013b: online). According to Bouws (1982: 6) there were players of the organ, harpsichord, harp, zither and guitar among company musicians, soldiers and seamen. *A cappella* singing remained the norm in church services until the arrival of the first church organ in the Cape, at the Groote Kerk, in 1737 (Bouws, 1982: 8). The first public performance of any kind was given in 1781 (towards the end of Dutch rule), when French mercenary troops gave a performance of Beaumarchais’s *Le barbier de Séville* (May, 2013b: online).<sup>2</sup> In 1832, an amateur company managed to stage Weber’s *Der Freischütz* (Bouws, 1982: 52). The year 1811 saw the first public orchestral performance. Music societies emerged during the first half of the nineteenth century, and church music became more anglicized during the second half (May, 2013b: online). Professional touring companies increasingly visited South Africa during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century. This led to the building of an opera house in Cape Town in 1893 to accommodate the many visits by opera companies from abroad. The local graded music certificate examination system has

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<sup>2</sup> According to Bouws (1982: 43) this event took place in 1783.

been a significant presence in South African music education and, according to May (2013b: online) started as early as 1894.<sup>3</sup>

The first music conservatory, which is now the Music Department at the University of Stellenbosch, was founded in 1905. The South African College of Music at the University of Cape Town was founded in 1935 (May, 2013b: online). Today there are more than ten universities in South Africa with music departments that offer training in different aspects of art music.<sup>4</sup> The Cape Town Municipal Orchestra was the first professional orchestra in South Africa, and gave its first concert in 1914 (May, 2013b: online). This was followed by the establishment of professional orchestras in all the major centres of the country. The only full-time professional orchestras left today are the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra in Cape Town and the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra in Durban. Government invested heavily in the promotion of art music activities during apartheid. The South African Broadcasting Corporation, founded in 1936, played a major role in fostering art music through its commissions to composers and composition competitions, especially during the headship of Anton Hartman from 1960 to 1977 (May, 2013b: online). In 1963 the government established a performing arts council for each of the (then) four provinces of South Africa. Each of these councils had a ballet, drama, opera and music section, as well as a technical department. The government started withdrawing funding for these councils in the late 1990s (May, 2013b: online). Some of the activities of these councils have been privatized, re-emerging as, for example, Cape Town Opera and the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra. According to Pooley (2010/11: 45) ‘[a]rt music composition in South Africa was an increasingly contested artistic and ideological space through the late apartheid period (1980-1994).’ Pooley (2010/11: 45) continues to say that the decline in institutional support for this kind of music ‘threatened activities long associated with white “superiority” and distinctiveness under Afrikaner Nationalism [...].’ According to Lucia (2008: xxii)

[t]he monolithic Europe-driven cultural institutions of twentieth-century South Africa so clouded the view of [the] plurality [of narratives on music in South Africa] for the past 100 years that, until 1994 Western music seemed indeed to constitute a homogenous block, supporting the Nationalist edifice [...].

It is in this context that one could view the exclusion of the few black South African composers who followed the ‘typical’ trajectory of conservatory training in art music, as well as the exclusion of black South African composers of mostly choral music (which has distinctly western origins) who followed different trajectories of musical training, from general twentieth-century discourses on art music in South Africa.<sup>5</sup> Among those who followed the more ‘typical’ trajectory are Michael Moerane (1909-1981), the first black man to obtain a bachelor of music degree in South Africa in 1941 – and Reuben Caluza (1895-1969), who studied in Virginia and New York (Huskisson, 1969: 23-24, 157). Other

<sup>3</sup> This system, administered by the University of South Africa, is modelled on the British system of graded music certificate examinations, such as those awarded by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

<sup>4</sup> See the listing of South African music departments on the website of the Documentation Centre for Music, University of Stellenbosch (Documentation Centre for Music, 2013: online).

<sup>5</sup> No music making or composition by any black person is mentioned in, for example, *Solank daar musiek is: Musiek en musiekmakers in Suid-Afrika (1652-1982) (As long as there is music: Music and musicians in South Africa (1652-1982))* (Bouws, 1982), or in *Composers in South Africa today* (Klatzow, 1987).

prominent black nineteenth and twentieth-century composers in South Africa are John Knox Bokwe (1855-1922) and Benjamin Tyamzashe (1890-1978). Another possible reason why these composers remained excluded from twentieth-century discourses on art music in South Africa could be misinterpretations of the music due to notions of composition ‘that stem from the academy, rather than from the music in question and its contexts’ (Lucia, 2005: 13).<sup>6</sup> Among the older generation of composers who achieved prominence in the twentieth century are Rosa Nepgen (1909-2000), Blanche Gerstman (1910-1973), Arnold van Wyk (1916-1983), Hubert du Plessis (1922-2011), Stanley Glasser (b.1926) and John Joubert (b.1927). Peter Klatzow (b.1945), Roelof Temmingh (1946-2012), Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph (b. 1946), Kevin Volans (b. 1949), and Michael Blake (b.1951) constitute a next, younger generation.<sup>7</sup> Despite the information on art music of western origin in South Africa being relatively detailed in comparison with that which was available for the chapters on other countries (which necessitates the superficial nature of this overview), much remains to be done in the writing and post-apartheid rewriting of histories.<sup>8</sup>

It should be clear from the literature review in Chapter 1 that the Afrikaans art song (*kunslied*) is the only one of its kind in Africa that has been theorized into ‘independence’. In other words, there is a discourse on the *kunslied* that recognizes it as a genre in itself.<sup>9</sup> This ‘independence’ stems from its recognition as a *tour de force* in the promotion of the Afrikaans language, comparable to how the Romantic German *Lied* served the German language.<sup>10</sup> Jan Gysbert Hugo Bosman, who also called himself Bosman di Ravelli and worked as a concert pianist in Europe (Malan, 1980a: 217-218), composed his *Drie liederen* (‘Three songs’) in 1908 (having returned in 1905), and with that became the first composer of Afrikaans art songs. When Bosman returned to Europe in 1910 he had no successors. In order to fulfil the need for art songs with Afrikaans texts, poets of the so-called *Tweede Taalbeweging* (meaning ‘the second movement for Afrikaans’) translated into Afrikaans texts by Goethe, Heine, Eichendorff, Rückert, Hugo and others (Bouws, 1982: 171-173). The next breakthrough came with Stephen Eyssen’s ‘Segelied’ (‘Victory song’) in 1914 which, according to Grové (2011: 673), served as an important musical announcement of the Afrikaner’s freedom ideals at the time. The Flemish people’s understanding of the Afrikaner’s fight for emancipation of their language led to the composition of a number of

<sup>6</sup> Although it refers to the same type of music and the same misconceptions, the context in which Lucia uses these words do not refer to the exclusion of this music from a discourse (as I am using it here). Please consult the original text in this regard.

<sup>7</sup> A number of younger South African composers have started to achieve success locally and internationally. It is really too soon for me to devise criteria for including some on a list and not others (unlike naming older composers on whom there are varying degrees of documented reception), so I will just name a few that come to mind here: Robert Fokkens, Bongani Ndodana-Breen, Andile Khumalo, Martin Watt, Angie Mullins, Clare Loveday, Hannes Taljaard, Mokale Koapeng, Pierre-Henri Wicomb and Sazi Dlamini.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, *Eoan: Our story* (Muller and Roos, 2013), the only recently-written history of a so-called ‘coloured’ performing arts troupe who, among other things, performed Italian opera up to professional standard during the apartheid era.

<sup>9</sup> There are numerous discussions on the *kunslied* that are distinct from general discussions on art music or of a specific composer’s output, which is not the case with art songs in other South African languages or art songs from other countries in this study. One would, for example, not find studies in which ‘the English-South African art song’ is spoken of in a similar manner.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Walton (2005: 65): ‘[...] it is possible that the early Afrikaans poets hoped that the music might provide a means for promoting their new minority language throughout the rest of the ‘cultured’ world much more quickly than would otherwise be possible, [...]’

Afrikaans art songs by Flemish composers, such as those by Emiel Hullebroeck. Important to note is the poet D.J. Opperman's observation that many poems by the so-called *Derigers* (meaning 'poets of the thirties') were specifically written for the purpose being set to music (Grové, 2011: 673-674). Grové (2011: 673) notes that this is also the time during which the Afrikaans art song freed itself from its earlier political motivations. The prolific *kunslied* composer Stephanus le Roux Marais's most productive era was from 1928 to 1945 (Bouws, 1982: 175).<sup>11</sup> A public performance at the Oranjeklub in 1935 introduced two important new Afrikaans art song composers: Arnold van Wyk and Blanche Gerstman (Bouws, 1982: 176).<sup>12</sup> Van Wyk's cycle *Van liefde en verlatenheid* ('Of love and forsakenness') (1953) is seen by Bouws (1982: 179) as a turning point in the development of the genre. Another important *kunslied* composer of the same generation was Hubert du Plessis, who completed his first cycle *Vreemde liefde* ('Strange love') in 1952 (Grové, 2011: 676). Rosa Nepgen wrote nearly three hundred art songs, most of them on Afrikaans texts, between 1929 and her death in 2000 (Jorritsma, 2001: 82, 86, 108-122). Pieter de Villiers, almost exclusively a *kunslied* composer, has since the success of his 1961 cycle *Sewe Boerneef-liedere* ('Seven Boerneef songs'), set more than seventy-five texts by the poet Boerneef to music (Grové, 2011: 677). As elsewhere in the world, the art song genre's popularity has declined and the only contemporary exponent of the *kunslied* who can be considered a specialist is Hendrik Hofmeyr (see the discussion on him later in the chapter). Art songs in English by South African composers are numerous – nearly every composer mentioned thus far has (or had) composed art songs in English, although it's not possible to say that any of them have forged an individual or long-lasting connection with the genre. Among important early exponents of English-language art song in South Africa are William Henry Bell and Percival Kirby.<sup>13</sup> Early examples of art songs in other South African languages (keeping in mind the definition of 'art song' for the purposes of this dissertation) are scarce.<sup>14</sup> No examples are mentioned in, for example, the literature on Moerane and Caluza.<sup>15</sup> Andile Khumalo's *Ekuboleni kunempilo* (also discussed later in this chapter), is a rare contemporary example. Hans Roosenschoon's solo arrangements of Michael Moerane's choral piece 'Barali ba Jersulema' (there are versions for voice and piano, as well as voice and orchestra) on a Sotho text, and Peter Klatzow's arrangement for voice and piano of the Zulu songs of Princess Magogo (after a transcription by Mzilikazi Kumalo), may also be seen as falling under the definition of art song used here.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> He is a major subject in Chapter 7 and will be discussed in more detail in that chapter.

<sup>12</sup> According to Botha (2009: no page number) the Oranjeklub (*Oranje club*) 'was the first Afrikaans culture organisation in Cape Town. Active since 1915, it strove to shape Afrikaner identity and advance Afrikaner art and culture. The main aim of the club was to inspire national sentiment [...].'

<sup>13</sup> See Van der Spuy (1980: 158-160) and Malan (1984a: 126), respectively, for lists of art songs by Bell and Kirby.

<sup>14</sup> A notable exception is Priaulx Rainier's 'Ubunzima' for tenor or soprano, and guitar, on a Zulu text (Van Rhyn, 2011: 30).

<sup>15</sup> See Huskisson (1969: 23-26 and 157-158) and Hansen (1968).

<sup>16</sup> This is not to raise the issue here of whether these songs were art songs *before* they were arranged or not. This issue will be problematized in Chapter 8.

## Priaulx Rainier's 'Dance of the rain'

### 'Dance of the rain'

O the dance of our sister!  
 First she peeps furtively over the mountain top  
 and her movements are fugitive and her eyes shy  
 and she laughs softly.  
 Next, poised on the earth's clear trim she stands  
 motionless  
 and her arms that are so brown, so still,  
 folded over firm small breasts  
 more beautiful by far than cobras coiled in sleep.  
 Then, with one hand she beckons from afar.  
 Her bracelets are aglitter and her beads gleam.  
 Her eyes are gentle, her glance caresses.  
 Softly she calls.  
 And in still enchanted voice,  
 leaning against the broad white shoulder of the wind,  
 she whispers of her happiness and bliss, the dance.  
 And she invites him to the feast for her domain is  
 spacious  
 and it will be a festival of joy and wonder.  
 Over the curved horns of the springboks cascade  
 in brown and gold spirals bright whorls of light.  
 Lost in their ashen dust like rocks in mist  
 the buffalo wheel and converge, then separate again,  
 milling around in the narrow kloof below the krans.  
 Their flanks heave.  
 Their wide nostrils quiver.  
 They gulp down the wind  
 and the stoop down to discover the rains  
 delicate little footsteps in the sand.  
 The little people deep under ground  
 hear how a long way off her bangles jingle,  
*[continued on the next page]*

Priaulx Rainier (1903-1986) spent most of her life and her entire composing career in England. Yet, her place and country of birth (Howick, Natal, South Africa) (Kemp & Van der Spuy, 2013: online) remained a presence in the shaping of the discourse on this composer, and in many of her works.<sup>17</sup> Rainier was mostly an autodidact (she only had formal lessons with Nadia Boulanger for a short period in 1937) (Van der Spuy, 2003: 109), who took up a career as composer after an accident halted her activities as violinist and teacher (Van der Spuy, 1988: 28). She worked as Professor of Harmony at the Royal Academy of Music in London from 1944 (Van der Spuy, 2003: 110) to 1961 (Opie, 1988: 25). Rainier's retirement was spent in St. Ives, Cornwall, where the sculptors Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson lived (and Hepworth continued to live after her divorce from Nicholson) (Gale, 1997: online), and whose works had a great influence on Rainier's music (Kemp & Van der Spuy, 2013: online). Rainier's works attracted high-profile performances during her lifetime, by the likes of Jacqueline du Pré, Yehudi Menuhin, and others (Van der Spuy, 2003: 112), but has (arguably) failed to achieve a fixed position in the repertoire in South Africa and Britain.

John Amis (1955: 354) describes the depth of the African influence in Rainier's works as follows: '[I]t is an influence at a deep level, for Rainier has not studied African music nor ever consciously (so she tells me) tried to write in an African style.' Reviewers have assigned African qualities to a selection of works by Rainier (not

<sup>17</sup> Section 1.1 (pp. 1-11) in the present author's Master's thesis (Van Rhyn, 2010) contains more information on the presence of 'Africa' in the discourse on, and works by Rainier.

the twinkling of her ankles  
 and then the rustling of her feet,  
 the rustling of her feet.  
 And they creep nearer, huddle together and sing softly;  
 'Our sister! You have come, you have come!'  
 Her beads shake.  
 Her necklaces sparkle.  
 Her collars clash and glint  
 and her copper rings flash in the slow sloping of the sun.  
 The crimson plumes of the mountain eagle flutter over her head.  
 She shivers as in ecstasy.  
 She pauses, wavers, sways.  
 Now she advances.  
 She steps down from the heights.  
 She heads up on the plains.  
 With both her arms she spreads out the grey karos.  
 She stamps her foot lightly.  
 Now her dance will begin.  
 The veld birds' song is hushed.  
 All the earth lies waiting, silent under the sun.  
 Even the wind has lost its breath.  
 O the dance of our sister!

(Eugene Marais in *Rainier*, 1947: 1-6)<sup>21</sup>

consistently throughout her oeuvre, and especially in her output from the late 1930s to the early 1950s) such as the *String Quartet* (1939), the *Viola Sonata* (1945), and the *Sinfonia da Camera* (1947).<sup>18</sup> Also, the composer elicited such readings through the use of, for example, titles like *Barbaric dance suite* (for piano, 1949), a Zulu text (in 'Ubunzima' for tenor or soprano and guitar, 1948), and a text on an African myth (in 'Dance of the rain' for tenor or soprano and guitar, 1947).<sup>19</sup> It is in the context of the programmatic denotation of Africa by the composer that the musical content of 'Dance of the rain' is examined in this section.<sup>20</sup>

The D-A-E-B guitar chord with which 'Dance of the rain' opens (see bar 1, figure 4.2) is indicative of the song's main quartal-quintal harmonic context and textural arrangement. The harmonic material for the guitar

accompaniment can be said to be built entirely from a sequence of fifths: F-C-G-D-A-E-B-F#-C#. A largely diatonic sound, as well as the leading quartal-quintal textural arrangement, is interrupted by moments of dissonance created by second, seventh and ninth chords or melodic intervals (see the marked areas in bars 17 to 18, figure 4.3, as well as in bar 32, figure 4.4, and bar 96, figure 4.5). Other exceptions to the quartal-quintal arrangement of chords are the few chords built from thirds (see bars 53 to 54, figure 4.6, and bar 68, figure 4.7), and the instances of single-voice melodic movement between chords. The parallelism seen in the latter example is one of only a few examples of this type of chordal movement (another example can be seen in bar 25, figure 4.8). The indication to play percussion sounds

<sup>18</sup> See the periodization of Rainier's works in Van Rhyn (2010: 12-15).

<sup>19</sup> See Kruger (2009) for a discussion on Rainier's *Barbaric dance suite* and its link to 'Ubunzima'.

<sup>20</sup> See Van der Spuy (1988: 189-192) for more information on the origin, performance and reception of this work.

<sup>21</sup> According to Van der Spuy (1988: 189), the text was 'adapted' by Uys Krige. This probably means that it was also translated by him.

on the guitar may be seen as an effort in denoting an African drum sound (see bars 1 to 3, figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2 Bars 1-3, 'Dance of the rain' (Rainier, 1947: 1)

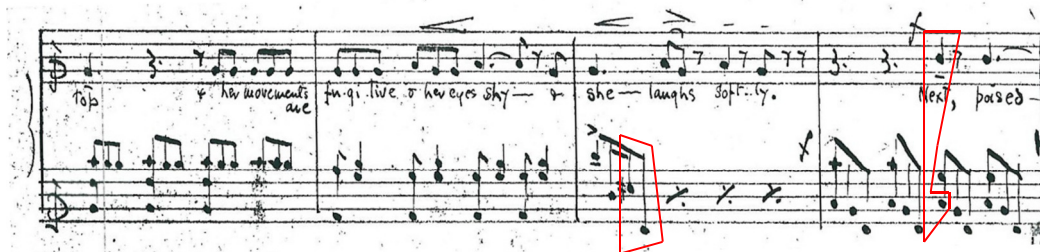


Figure 4.3 Bars 16-19, 'Dance of the rain' (Rainier, 1947: 1)



Figure 4.4 Bar 32, 'Dance of the rain' (Rainier, 1947: 2)



Figure 4.5 Bars 90-96, 'Dance of the rain' (Rainier, 1947: 5-6)



Figure 4.6 Bars 52-56, 'Dance of the rain' (Rainier, 1947: 3)

Figure 4.7 Bar 68, 'Dance of the rain' (Rainier, 1947: 4)

Figure 4.8 Bar 25, 'Dance of the rain' (Rainier, 1947: 2)

The vocal line is reminiscent of precolonial black African music in only one sense: the exclusive use of second, third, fourth and fifth intervals within areas of continuous melodic movement. Other stock African 'requirements', such as downward-sloping phrases, are missing. Rather, one finds – in typical Rainier style – chant-like melodic constructions that centre around a single tone, as well as upward-sloping phrases and long melismas on high notes (see, for example, the vocal phrase starting at the end of bar 52 and ending near the end of bar 56, figure 4.6).<sup>22</sup> There are hints at modality in individual moments: see, for example, the pentatonic movement (G-A-B-D-E) in the voice part in bars 20 to 23 (figure 4.9), and the whole-tone movement (G-A-B-C#) in bar 67 (figure 4.10).

<sup>22</sup> Examples of works by Rainier that show this tendency are *Cycle for declamation* (1953) and *Requiem* (1955/56).

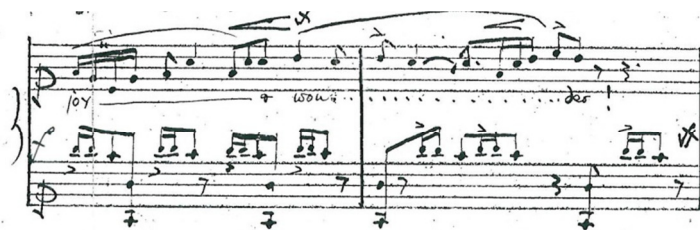
The initial 3/4 time signature (bars 1 to 7) changes to 4/4 in bar 8. From bar 13 onwards – in the words of Akin Euba from another context (2001: 124) – it changes from an “official” 4/4 to a “people’s” 12/8.<sup>23</sup> However, no attempt is made at achieving the regularity or character of ‘African’ rhythmic patterns. Instead, the rhythms of the voice part are largely declamatory, and contain carefully placed tuplets and rests that do not display a regular pattern. Ostinatos in the accompaniment are an illusion, for where they appear they hardly remain for longer than a bar or two before being exchanged for another (see, for example, bars 16 to 19, figure 4.3). The song is through-composed, and the division into three sections (indicated by the tempo markings *Allegro*, *Piu mosso* and *Meno mosso*) fulfills a poetic-textual function rather than being an indication of musical structure. Melodic movements and accompaniment textures occasionally fulfil a conventional semantic interpretive role: see, for example, the thinner texture in the *Meno mosso* section, in which the words ‘hushed’, ‘silent’ and ‘lost’ are used (bars 90 to 95, figure 4.5), or the ecstatic vocal melisma on the word ‘wonder’ from bars 40 to 41 (figure 4.11). However, the generally static nature of the vocal line spurns ample opportunities for such conventional interpretations.



**Figure 4.9** Bars 20-23, ‘Dance of the rain’ (Rainier, 1947: 1)



**Figure 4.10** Bar 67, ‘Dance of the rain’ (Rainier, 1947: 4)



**Figure 4.11** Bars 40-41, ‘Dance of the rain’ (Rainier, 1947: 2)

There is no doubt that ‘Dance of the Rain’ contains musical elements that may hint at precolonial black Africa, when read in combination with the text. However, the unapologetic

<sup>23</sup> The original context of this quote concerns a discussion by Euba (2001: 124) of his own ‘Ismite’s national anthem’ which he composed for Wole Soyinka’s play *Kongi’s harvest*.

switching by the composer between different generic ‘folklike’ elements, between such elements and more personal or conventionally western stylistic characteristics, and the use of ‘micro-elements’ (such as the typical intervals found in certain precolonial black African musics) in a non-‘folklike’ fashion, prompts the conclusion that to read the music as denoting ‘Africa’ is not possible in the absence of the text. What one sees here can be read as a recreation of what is left of the composer’s fantasy of her childhood in Africa – an unapologetic representation of remnants tainted by time, distance and remembered or imagined influences. In the context of Rainier’s larger output, this kind of longing for Africa is an occasional one – a memory conjured up at will where it serves a purpose.<sup>24</sup>

### **Stefans Grové’s *Sewe liedere op Boesmanverse* (*Seven songs on Bushman verses*)**

Stefans Grové (b. 1922) took licentiates in organ and piano performance (and piano teaching), and worked as a church organist and music teacher (Malan, 1982a: 133) before embarking on studies at the University of Cape Town in 1945. In 1953, he became the first South African to receive a Fulbright Scholarship. He subsequently enrolled at Harvard, where he studied musicology and composition with Walter Piston. In 1955 he joined Aaron Copland’s composition master class at the Tanglewood Summer School. Grové took up a position at the Peabody Conservatory in 1957, where he remained for fifteen years (Walton, 2007: 19-20, 22-23). According to Muller (2006a: 4) Grové ‘had to return to South Africa to consolidate his stature as composer’, which he did in 1972. Whereas Grové’s early works easily fit into the international pre-war Schoenberg-Hindemith category, his oeuvre has since 1983/84 attracted attention for its ‘strong renewing African context’ (Grové, 1998: 3). Upon his return to South Africa, Grové took up a position at the University of Pretoria (Walton, 2007: 25), an institution to which he is still affiliated. Other than Hindemith, Grové’s artistic development shows influences of Debussy and Bartók (Muller, 2006a: 3).

*Sewe liedere op Boesmanverse* (*Seven songs on Bushman verses*) was composed in 1990 (Walton, 2006: 127), i.e. after Grové’s ‘stylistic Damascus Road experience’ (Muller, 2006b: 18) that led to a complete transformation to Africanism. In an essay entitled ‘Reflections on the African music of Stefans Grové’, Stephanus Muller (2006b: 25-26) states the following:

[...] it would be fanciful to say that these compositions [Grové’s ‘African series’] *evoke* ‘Africa’ in any sense. Grové’s (possibly disputed) success in *denoting* ‘Africa’ is not immediately (if ever) apparent in or through his soundscapes, but rather through the concurrent structures of titles, fables, dreams, intertexts, narratives and descriptions.

[...]

This music does not metaphorically enact the crossing of two radically opposed worlds, but rather suggests a gesture at interaction between two facets of the same social space.

In this section the present author will interrogate these statements through an investigation that aims to reveal which elements in the music can be connected to ‘Africa’, how these

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<sup>24</sup> Refer back to footnote 17 (p. 143).

elements are placed in the wider musical context of the cycle, and how the composer negotiates interculturality.

'The sorceress'

What becomes of the girl who always stays alone?

She no longer waits for the arrival of the hunters;

she no longer makes the fire from the wood of the blackthorn.

The wind blows past her ears;

she no longer hears the dancing song;

the voice of the story teller is dead.

No one calls her from afar

to say nice words.

She only hears the voice of the wind,

and the wind always mourns

because he is alone.

(Eugene Marais in Grové, 1990: 2-11)<sup>25</sup>

'Die towenares'

Wat word van die meisie wat altyd alleen bly?

Sy wag nie meer vir die kom van die jagters nie;

sy maak nie meer die vuur van swart-doringhout nie.

Die wind waai verby haar ore;

sy hoor nie meer die danslied nie;

die stem van die storieverteller is dood.

Geeneen roep haar van ver nie

om mooi woorde te praat.

Sy hoor net die stem van die wind alleen,

en die wind treur altyd

om hy alleen is.

(Eugene Marais in Grové, 1990: 2-11)

'The desert lark'

Gampta, my plain little sister,

all that I have in this world except my old grandmother!

if you sing up in the sky, you can see all the wonderful things:

where the little rabbit hides and the little steenbok finds its place of rest,

and the girls cannot touch you,

because you are stronger than everyone even though are weaker than me.

Even the mountain lion, that scares us when it roars at night,

cannot touch you.

*[continued on the next page]*

<sup>25</sup> The English translation is by the present author.

I will look after you, my little sister, until all your little ones are grown;  
my plain little sister, Gampta, I hear you!

(Eugene Marais in Grové, 1990: 15-20, 22-26)<sup>26</sup>

‘Die woestynlewerkie’

Gampta, my vaal sussie,  
al wat ek in die wêreld het buiten my ou ouma!  
as jy bo in die lug sing, kan jy al die wonderlike dinge sien:  
waar die hasie wegkruip en die steenbokkie sy lêplek maak,  
en die meide kan jou nie raak nie,  
want jy is sterker as almal al is jy swakker as ek.  
Selfs die bergleeu, wat ons bangmaak as hy snags brul,  
kan jou nie raak nie.  
Ek sal jou oppas my sussie, tot al jou kleintjies groot is;  
my vaal sussie, Gampta, ek hoor jou!

(Eugene Marais in Grové, 1990: 15-20, 22-26)

‘Orphans of the heavenly god’

Orphans of the heavenly god  
roam quietly across the dunes  
looking for a portion of meat  
Hear how they praise the heavens

when they blow on their reeds,  
drum wildly on their *rommelpot*  
and pitter-patter across the floor of the Namib  
faster than the *pontperd*

hear then how they praise the heavens  
for the small portion of meat,  
*[continued on the next page]*

‘Weeskinders van die hemelgod’

Weeskinders van die hemelgod  
swerf stil oor die duine  
op soek na ‘n porsie vleis.  
Hoor hoe hul die hemel prys

wanneer hul op hul riete fluit,  
wild op hul trommelpot tamboer  
en vinniger as die bontperd  
trippel oor die Namib vloer,

hoor dan hoe hul die hemel prys  
vir ‘n kleine porsie vleis,  
*[continued on the next page]*

<sup>26</sup> The English translation is by the present author. The word for ‘girl’ used in the original Afrikaans text, ‘meid’, (originally from Dutch for ‘girl’, which is often used in its diminutive form, ‘meisje’), is normally a derogatory term used to refer to women of colour. In certain contexts, when used by the people themselves (such as the speaker in this poem), it is not meant to be derogatory.

the stamping of their feet roaring across the dunes  
and in the darkness above their heads  
they tear open the sky like a star as big as a flame.

(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 28-37)<sup>27</sup>

hul voetgeklap die duin oordruis  
en bo die donker oor hul hoof  
in vlam-groot ster die lug oopkloof!

(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 28-37)

'Rain leopard'

When the moon  
nods,  
gleaming against the stars

Ghoeroeb will  
slam  
loudly on his tambour the next day

Rain leopard will  
slam ghaisa in the  
Blue land

Then we jump up  
and pick the  
fruit  
of the rain

We chew honey leaves,  
and finches fly in our  
hand.

(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 39-43)<sup>28</sup>

'Reënluiperd'

Wanneer die maan  
glimmend teen die sterre  
knik

Sal Ghoeroeb mōre  
hard op sy tamboere  
slaan

Sal reënluiperd  
ghaisa slaan in die  
Blouland

Dan spring ons op  
en pluk die reën se  
vrug

Kou ons heuningblare,  
en vinke vlieg in ons  
hand.

(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 39-43)

<sup>27</sup> The English translation is by the present author. The formatting was taken from Fouché (1971: 7). 'Orphans of the heavenly god' is the name that the San and Khoi people gave to themselves. A 'rommelpot' (literally 'rumble pot') is a calabash that serves as a tambour. A 'bontperd' (literally 'multicoloured horse') refers to the kwagga (Fouché, 1967: 38-40), an extinct animal closely related to the zebra.

<sup>28</sup> The English translation is by the present author. The formatting was taken from Fouché (1971: 17). Ghoeroeb (or Ghoerob/Garoeb) is the god of thunder. To 'slam ghaisa' means to perform the dance from which the Charleston was derived. The 'blue land' is a reference to the sky (Fouché, 1967: 38-39). (None of the

'Swan song of the crane'

It was a rock splinter as bright as the sun  
that tore inside me when the flame jumped,  
stabbing my body full of holes  
and breaking all my bones.

I call you, Ghoerob,  
I call, call Ghoerob!  
It was darker than night.

(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 45-49)<sup>29</sup>

'Sterwenslied van die kraanvoël'

Dit was a sonblink splinterklip  
wat in my skeur toe die vlam spring,  
my hele lyf vol gate steek  
en my bene in my breek.

Ek roep jou, Ghoerob,  
Ek roep, roep Ghoerob!  
Dit is donker, donkerder as nag.

(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 45-49)

'The absconder'

Flames of lightning jump  
from the furthest cloud...

Ghoeroeb thunders:

'Go back  
to your people!'

I lay curled up  
like a porcupine  
and hear my heart  
walking across the ridges.

Who can stay lying down  
when his heart will not sleep.

Oho – oho my heart, I  
will go walking with you!

(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 51-57)<sup>30</sup>

'Die droster'

Weerligvlamme spring  
uit die verste wolk....

donder Garoeb:

'Gaan terug  
na jou volk!'

Ek lê opgerol  
soos 'n ystervark  
en hoor my hart  
oor die rante stap.

Wie kan nog bly lê  
as sy hart nie wil slaap.

Oho – oho my hart,  
ek gaan saam met jou stap!

(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 51-57)

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consulted sources on the Charleston make the connection that Fouché does. It is probably safer to only say that the dance *resembles* the Charleston.)

<sup>29</sup> The English translation is by the present author. The formatting was taken from Fouché (1971: 25).

<sup>30</sup> The English translation is by the present author. The formatting was taken from Fouché (1971: 19).

'Rainmaking formulas'	'Reënmaakformules'
<p>Sing, my <i>kwabariet</i>, sing,  even if it causes your death, sing  as long as the pretty mudhead  girl moves in a circle around you –  until Toesib brings our water in  his little cloud calabash.</p>	<p>Sing, my kwabariet, sing,  al sou jy sterf, sing  solank die mooi modderkop-  meid om jou kring –  totdat Toesib ons water in  sy wolkkalbassie bring.</p>
<p>Sing until the <i>silwerbos</i> sways its head  across the red desert  nearly reaching our holy</p>	<p>Sing tot die silwerbos kopspeel  oor die rooi woestyneland  tot vlak by ons heilige</p>
<p>Toega:</p>	<p>Toega toe:</p>
<p>Then slam ghaisa,  <i>katbos</i> burn:  smoke Toesib's  white calabash, do it!</p>	<p>Slaan ghaisa dan,  katbos brand:  rook Toesib  se wit kalbas toe!</p>
<p>Until Karee tree and <i>witolien</i>  and little bird dance  above frutang, fat <i>koo</i>  and baroo...</p>	<p>Tot Kareeboom en witolien  en vlerklappertjie dans  oor froetang, vette koo  en baroe...</p>
<p>Then slam ghaisa  <i>katbos</i> burn:  smoke Toesib's  white calabash, do it!</p>	<p>Slaan ghaisa dan  katbos brand:  rook Toesib  se wit kalbas toe!</p>
<p>(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 61-72)<sup>31</sup></p>	<p>(Abraham Fouché in Grové, 1990: 61-72)</p>

<sup>31</sup> The English translation is by the present author. 'Toesib' and 'Toega' are possibly nicknames for another sky deity, Tsui'goab; 'kwabariet' may be the Afrikaans for 'quabarite', a mineral; 'modderkop' ('mud head') may refer to an act of face painting during a ritual; 'Silwerbos' is literally 'silver bush' (bot. *Leucadendron uliginosum*); 'katbos' is short for 'katsoringbos' (literally 'cat thorn bush', bot. *Scutia myrtina*); the 'witolien' is also known as the false olive tree (bot. *Buddleja saligna*); the 'koo' is an edible, caudiciform plant from the *Fockea* family; the baroo is also known as the Cyphia.



*Sewe liedere op Boesmanverse* is a setting for soprano, string quartet and piano. The first two poems by Eugène Marais, and the latter five by Abraham Fouché, all reference the surroundings, traditions and fables of so-called ‘Bushman’ (San and Khoi peoples).<sup>32</sup> Each of the seven settings is preceded by a short piano prelude or interlude.

Before one is able to engage with Muller’s statements regarding Grové’s success in denoting or evoking Africa (or lack thereof), a very pragmatic investigation is needed into which elements in the music can in any way be connected to ‘Africa’ in general, or specifically to San or Khoi musical practices. Already on the first page of the cycle, in the piano prelude to ‘Die townenares’ (figure 4.12), we find the ‘typical’ combination of rhythmic patterns in 5/8 and 7/8 metres. Bars 41 to 42 in ‘Die townenares’ (figure 4.13) is another example of where the same 5/8 + 7/8 ‘African signature tune’ rhythm can be seen.<sup>33</sup> Figure 4.12 also serves as an example of the use of the pentatonic scale, and a display of the generally repetitive character of the music.<sup>34</sup> This repetitiveness sometimes reaches the point of being static, even meditative, as can be seen in the piano part in bars 1 to 5 of ‘Sterwenslied van die kraanvoël’ (figure 4.14), and sometimes takes the form of ostinato patterns for short sections (see the viola and cello parts in bars 41 to 44 of ‘Weeskinders van die hemelgod’, figure 4.15). Also in figure 4.14, the glissandos in the cello part in combination with the *con sordino* playing in the other string parts, strongly remind of certain bow music practices.<sup>35</sup> In bars 1 to 8 of ‘Weeskinders van die hemelgod’ (figure 4.16), the soft pizzicato playing in a fairly high register of the cello appear to be an imitation of the dingo.<sup>36</sup> Thin-textured, non-idiomatic piano writing (refer back to figure 4.12 for an example) can be identified almost throughout the cycle, but especially in the first song, ‘Die townenares’. This writing fulfils the definition of African pianism and can occasionally also be seen in the string parts, as is evident in figure 4.16. Harmonic Africanism can be seen in, for example, the parallelism in the piano part from bars 33 to 36 in ‘Die townenares’ (figure 4.17).<sup>37</sup> Melodic material is sometimes constructed from a sequence of fifths or fourths – see, for example, the right hand in bars 9 to 10 of the piano interlude before ‘Weeskinders van die hemelgod’ (figure 4.18). In answer to Muller’s statement, I would therefore like to propose that Grové *does* denote ‘Africa’ in his soundscape, at least less ambiguously so than in the case of Rainier (this is not to raise the question of whether the music evokes ‘Africa’, which will be dealt with further on). It should be mentioned that the vocal line does not denote ‘Africa’ in any sense. The vocal line in bars 24 to 27 of ‘Reënmaakformules’ (figure 4.19) serves as an example of the type of chromaticism that is characteristic of the vocal line throughout.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Bushman’ is now considered to be an old-fashioned, somewhat derogatory term, comparable to referring to an African-American as a ‘Negro’.

<sup>33</sup> Refer back to Chapter 2, footnote 34 (p. 75) regarding the African ‘signature tune’ rhythm.

<sup>34</sup> According to Kubik (1988: 53), the pentatonic scale is used in San music.

<sup>35</sup> Performances on the Tsungu, Ruguma (Khaga), or !Xali (Kawarangy) (Swarts, 2008: 58-60) serve as examples of this.

<sup>36</sup> In some cultures the dingo is called the mbira (Swarts, 2008: 65).

<sup>37</sup> In the !Kung tonal-harmonic system, for example, fourths, fifths and octaves are the characteristic simultaneous sounds (Kubik, 1988: 39-76).



Figure 4.12 Bars 1-13, '1. Voorspel' (Grové, 1990: 1)



Figure 4.13 Bars 40-41, 'Die townaars' (Grové, 1990: 12)



Figure 4.14 Bars 1-5, 'Sterwenslied van die kraanvoël' (piano part) (Grové, 1990: 45)



Figure 4.15 Bars 41-44, 'Weeskinders van die hemelgod' (viola and cello parts) (Grové, 1990: 34)



Figure 4.16 Bars 1-8, 'Weeskinders van die hemelgod' (viola and cello parts) (Grové, 1990: 28)



Figure 4.17 Bars 33-36, 'Die townares' (piano part) (Grové, 1990: 10)



Figure 4.18 Bars 9-10, '3. Tussenspel' (Grové, 1990: 27)



Figure 4.19 Bars 34-37, 'Reënmaakformules' (voice part) (Grové, 1990: 67)

This brings the discussion to the matter of how the material that denotes Africa functions in the wider musical contexts of the work. I would like to suggest that there are sections in the cycle in which the denotation of 'Africa' is more 'pure' than in the rest of the piece, and that these sections serve to contextualize similar material where it subsequently appears in a more hidden and integrated way. This 'purity' can be described as an influence-stripped 'African' soundscape that informs one's perception as the piece unfolds. These sections are strategically placed as reminders, to momentarily draw the listener back to the landscape supposed to be heard. The prelude to 'Die townares' (described earlier, see figure 4.12) is an example of such a section. Soon after it ends, F# and B are added to the former pentatonic scale. Repetitiveness is continued in the strings section, but in the context of a melodic line in the first violin part now riddled with augmented fourths (see bars 5 to 8 in 'Die townares', figure 4.20). Bars 1 to 8 of 'Weeskinders van die hemelgod' (also described earlier, see

figure 4.16) is the second example in this regard. This material continues undisturbed after the voice part enters in bar 8, placing two types of material against each other rather than placing the ‘pure’ material in the context of something else. The minor theme at the beginning is exchanged in bar 20 for equally ‘pure’ quintal-quartal material. Suddenly, from bar 31 onwards (figure 4.21) we find the rhythmic motive from the beginning of the song (employed in the same sparse texture) in a harmonic context mostly consisting of minor sevenths.

Two of the piano interludes, the one preceding ‘Die woestynlewerkie’ (figure 4.22) and the other preceding ‘Sterwenslied van die kraanvoël’ (figure 4.23) recreate a sound world so blatantly impressionistic, almost dream-like, that it cannot be ignored. It is, however, an impressionism stripped bare of its harmonic insides: in the first example, it is especially the prominence of the augmented fourth (the outline of a whole-tone sequence) and the minor seventh (the outline of a minor seventh chord) that creates this effect. In the second example the effect is again created by the augmented fourth, as well as an array of momentarily-sounding harmonies that outline extended-third chords. The smudging effect of the pedal (heard in the recording, but not indicated in the score) contributes greatly to this effect. This evidence is perhaps a bit too scant to serve as proof of anything, and I will therefore present it in question form: could this serve to provide another context for the Africanisms – one that exposes what follows as a dream, a fantasy?



Figure 4.20 Bars 5-8, ‘Die towenares’ (first violin part) (Grové, 1990: 3)



Figure 4.21 Bars 31-34, ‘Weeskinders van die hemelgod’ (viola and cello parts) (Grové, 1990: 32)





Figure 4.22 '2. Tussenspel' (Grové, 1990: 13)

Figure 4.23 '5. Tussenspel' (Grové, 1990: 44)

The third part of this discussion concerns the mediation between the important western influences on Grové's style – Debussy, Bartók and Hindemith – and the Africanisms that he employed. For this purpose it is useful to refer back to the discussion on Gamal Abdel-Rahim (Chapter 3), who also had to mediate between similar influences and musical elements of another culture. Similarly, I would like to suggest that cross-domain mapping between influences of Debussy, Bartók and Hindemith on the one hand, and the Africanisms on the other, is what allowed Grové successfully to incorporate Africanisms into his 'normal technique'. It is not necessary to repeat the discussion in Chapter 3 in order to draw links between the relevant composers and the listed Africanisms (pentatonic scale, quartal-quintal harmony, varying metres, thin textures, ostinato patterns). In musical terms – and here I play on Muller's words – the compositional elements enact the crossing of two radically opposed worlds through interaction of the same facets of different social spaces.

In conclusion, I would like to return to Muller's statement on the music not *evoking* 'Africa'. I have already shown how the music *denotes* 'Africa' without extra-musical prompts. I would like to argue that the agency for denotation lies with the composer, but not the agency for evocation. If the successful denotation of 'Africa' is taken as a premise in Grové's music, its successful evocation lies in the knowledge, frame of reference and experience of the individual listener: if one knows Debussy, Bartók and Hindemith, one will tend to recognize them; if one knows 'Africa', one will recognize it; if one knows them all, one will hear them all.

## Hendrik Hofmeyr's *En skielik is dit aand*

Hendrik Hofmeyr (b. 1957) studied at the University of Cape Town from 1976 to 1981, where he earned a master's degree in piano performance (his second year of undergraduate study was the only during which he had formal training in composition). This was followed by a ten-year stay in Italy – in part to avoid military service – during which he studied piano, composition and conducting in Florence and Bologna (Roos, 2000: 8-11) and worked as vocal coach (Van der Mescht, 2007: 50). Hofmeyr worked as musicology lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch from 1992 to 1998, and at the University of Cape Town from 1998 (Roos, 2000: 17, 21) to the present. According to May (2013a: online), Hofmeyr's style has developed from diverse influences, 'ranging from the works of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Szymanowski and Van Wyk to African music.' Among the accolades he has been awarded is the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium prize in 1997.

Despite May's listing of 'African music' as a stylistic influence in Hofmeyr's works, it has never been a stylistic imperative of the composer consistently to denote 'Africa' in his works. According to the composer (in Roos, 2000: 38-39) he rejects the requirement of political and social relevance in art (the jump from the inclusion of so-called 'African' elements in (art) music to being politically correct in South Africa is often a very small one).<sup>38</sup> However, this cannot be taken as the composer's reason for excluding such elements from his music. He does indeed use texts and musical material of black African origin selectively, but not for the purpose of political or social relevance.<sup>39</sup>

He uses that which forms part of his own frame of reference as origin for his works, and because he lives in South Africa, it necessarily includes African elements. His purpose is rather to express universal human aspects in his music (Roos, 2000: 39).<sup>40</sup>

Roos (2000: 24) is also of the opinion that the aesthetics of romanticism is an important motivation for Hofmeyr in writing music, finding sources of inspiration and deciding on what material to use. The selection of *En skielik is dit aand* ('*And suddenly night falls*') for discussion in this section stems from its potential to serve as a microcosm of Hofmeyr's general stylistic trends which, among other things, include the occasional direct reference to Africa. This cycle was composed in 2005, and according to the composer

Wilhelm Knobel [the poet] wrote that it was only once he had found beauty in death that he could accept it. This set, which takes its title from Knobel's translation of Quasimodo's famous poem, contains four of his elegies.

<sup>38</sup> Hofmeyr's opera *The land of heart's desire*, which was written for the Grahamstown Arts Festival, was, for example, rejected by the festival committee because it was apparently not relevant to the 'South African surroundings of the 1980s' (Roos, 2000: 39).

<sup>39</sup> Roos (2000: 39) lists, among other works, his opera *Lumukanda*, the song cycle *Alleenstryd*, the choir work *Uqongqot'hwane*, and the piano work *Die dans van die reën* as examples.

<sup>40</sup> The English translation is by the present author. The original Afrikaans is as follows: 'Hy gebruik dit wat deel van sy eie ervaringswêreld is as bron vir sy werke, en omdat hy in Suid-Afrika woon, sluit dit noodwendig seker Afrika-elemente in. Sy doel is eerder om die universele aspekte van die mens in sy musiek uit te druk' (Roos, 2000: 39).

'No ship ever founders on this coast'

[n]o ship ever founders on this coast  
the wind never reaches gale force  
and the tides bring little change to the waves  
the salt from the sea has parched everything  
on land  
and the sea-birds must fly far inland for water  
at times a school of dolphins comes from the  
open sea  
and swims quite close to the beach  
but the absence of life  
quickly causes their interest to wane  
and at night  
when even the screeching of the sea-birds  
falls silent  
an even deeper desolation descends on the  
landscape

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: i)

'Geen skip strand ooit teen hierdie kus nie'

geen skip strand ooit teen hierdie kus nie  
die wind bereik nooit stormsterkte nie  
en die getye bring in die golwe geen groot  
verskil nie  
die sout van die see het alles op die land laat  
verdor  
en die seevoëls moet ver die kus in vlieg vir  
water  
soms kom 'n skool dolfyne vanuit die oop see  
tot digby die strand geswem  
maar die afwesigheid van lewe  
laat hul belangstelling gou verflou  
en snags  
as selfs die gekrys van seevoëls verstom  
sak verlatenheid nog dieper oor die landskap  
toe

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: i)

'Elegy'

Somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean your body was committed to sea  
Not wrapped in any constricting canvas  
it slowly sank through the twilit green  
among colourful little tropical fish that for a moment were startled  
then clustered together again like curious sparrows  
in its wake to discuss the strange event with furtive eagerness  
a concerned dolphin  
accompanied you for a while with more dignity  
your limbs which moved just slightly  
in suggestion of a dance  
made him suspect for a moment that you were alive  
*[continued on the next page]*

and your hair which you wore cropped in life  
moved long and dark in the current  
Somewhere on your journey into the deep  
where twilight turns to darkness  
the vague outline of a shark  
(or two?)  
patiently, mercifully  
waited  
...the images here become less clear  
but in dreams I see already a small heap of bones  
eternal and white fusing with the coral

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: i)

'Elegie'

Êrens in die Atlantiese oseaan is jou liggaam ter see gelaat  
In geen benouende seil gewikkel nie  
het dit stadig deur die skemergroen lig gesak  
tussen kleurige tropiese vissies wat vir 'n oomblik verskrik is  
om dan weer soos mossies nuuskierig byeen te drom  
en die vreemde gebeure gretig maar geheim in die roering te bespreek  
'n besorgde dolfyn  
het jou 'n rukkie meer waardig op jou tog vergesel  
jou ledemate wat net effens  
in suggestie van 'n dans beweeg  
het hom 'n tydjie laat vermoed dat jy leef  
en jou hare wat jy kort geknip gedra het in jou lewe  
het lank en donker in die stroom geroer  
Êrens op jou reis die diepte in  
waar die skemerte oorgaan in donker  
het die vae gestalte van 'n haai  
(of twee?)  
geduldig, genadig  
gewag  
...die beelde hier word minder duidelik  
*[continued on the next page]*



maar in drome sien ek reeds hoe 'n hophie bene  
ewig en wit begin vasgroeï in koraal

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: i)

'Poem for Little Estie'

When God in his great solitude  
was walking in the evening breeze  
he wished to possess beauty  
in the shape of a single flower  
the magnificent rose he passed by  
that with her purple crown and sharp thorns feels  
herself akin  
to his martyred and elevated Son  
also the majestic sword-lily  
with the remembrance of the pierced heart of the  
mother of God  
made him hurry by  
but before the humble hesperanthus  
with bated breath  
he bent down  
plucked the slender stem  
and pressed the spotless candour to his breast

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: ii)

'Gedig vir Klein Estie'

Toe God met skemeraand  
in sy groot alleenheid in die aandwind wandel  
wou hy die skoonheid besit  
in 'n enkele blom  
die swierige roos het hy verbygegaan  
wat met purper kroon en skerp dorings haar  
naverwant voel  
aan sy gefolterde en verhoogde Seun  
ook die vorstelike swaardlelie  
met die herinnering aan die deurboorde hart  
van die moeder van God  
het hom verby laat haas  
maar voor die nederige aandblom het hy  
asemloos  
neergebuig  
die tenger steel gepluk  
en die onbevleete wit aan sy bors gedruk

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: ii)

'On the death of Motau'

the voice calls you, Motau  
the voice calls you  
where you walk 'round the street corner  
with your girl  
there's not much time, Motau  
the voice that calls to be heard  
in your drawings  
calls you  
calls you  
the voice calls you urgently  
*[continues on the next page]*

'By die dood van Motau'

die stem roep jou, Motau  
die stem roep jou  
waar jy om die straat se hoek met jou meisie  
stap  
met jou meisie stap  
daar's nie veel tyd nie, Motau  
die stem wat in jou tekeninge roep  
om gehoor te word  
roep jou  
die stem roep jou dringend  
*[continues on the next page]*

here

where you walk in the street with your girl  
but even before you can answer  
the voice jerks in your spine  
you're silent

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: ii)

hier

waar jy in die straat met jou meisie stap  
maar voor jy nog kan antwoord  
ruk die stem in jou ruggraat  
jy's stil

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: ii)

'Killed on impact'

even before a film covers the cornea  
the soul comes to rest  
and gazes back  
over every step of a completed life  
through the eyes of a dove  
and later  
when a small group forms by an empty grave  
and listens to the farmworkers' singing across  
the yard  
a turtle dove calmly descends  
and settles in the top of the tallest tree  
and even when a gust of wind  
rips through every heart  
she stays there unperturbed  
and presently sings  
of love that lasts for ever  
and a spring that will return

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: ii)<sup>41</sup>

'Op slag gedood'

nog voor 'n film die horingvlies bedek  
kom die siel tot rus  
en tuur  
oor elke stap van 'n afgeronde lewe  
deur die oë van 'n duif terug  
en later  
as 'n groepie vorm om 'n leë graf  
en luister na die sang van volk oor die werf  
kom 'n tortelduif rustig aangevlieg  
en gaan sit in die top van die hoogste boom  
en selfs as 'n windvlaag  
ruk deur elke hart  
bly sit sy onversteurd  
en koer weldra  
van liefde wat vir altyd duur  
en 'n lente wat kom

(Deon Knobel in Hofmeyr, 2005: ii)

The composer states the following regarding 'Geen skip strand ooit teen hierdie kus nie' (Hofmeyr, 2005: i):

The outer sections of the song are accompanied by a repetitive pattern, suggesting the listless waves breaking on the barren coast, while a livelier version of the motif accompanies the appearance of the dolphins.

<sup>41</sup> The English translations are provided by the composer in the referenced source.

The ‘waves’ motif introduces the first section of this song, for which an Ab major key signature is given. Although there are no chromatic deviations from the given key signature in this section, it is fashioned around a C tonal centre, rather than Ab (see bars 1 to 4, figure 4.24). Where the ‘dolphin’ motif enters in the second part of the song, the material adopts an octatonic quality. See, for example, the vocal line from bars 32 to 34 (figure 4.25), which appears to be constructed from the scale D#-E-(F#)-(G)-A-Bb-C in bars 32 and 34 (combined), and from the scale G#-A-B-C-D-(Eb)-(F)-(F#) in bar 33.<sup>42</sup> Where the ‘waves’ motif returns in the last section of the song, the material is more chromatic than in the first section, but again steers towards a tonal goal at the end – an Eb major chord (see bars 55 to 56, figure 4.26).

Figure 4.24 Bars 1-4, ‘Geen skip strand ooit op hierdie kus nie’ (Hofmeyr, 2005: 2)

Figure 4.25 Bars 32-34, ‘Geen skip strand ooit op hierdie kus nie’ (voice part) (Hofmeyr, 2005: 3-4)

Figure 4.26 Bars 55-56, ‘Geen skip strand ooit op hierdie kus nie’ (Hofmeyr, 2005: 5)

<sup>42</sup> Where the present author deducts an octatonic scale from only a few notes (see p. 165), it should be read in the context of the presence of more complete octatonic scales elsewhere.

The composer's introduction to 'Elegie' is as follows (Hofmeyr, 2005: i):

*Elegy* was written when the poet learned of the death of his lecturer in French, Mme Cuenod, aboard a liner returning from Europe. A tenderly ironic French waltz suggests her dance-like descent through the waters.

Unlike the previous song, there is no key signature indication here. The vocal line again suggests an octatonic context. See, for example, the vocal line from bars 9 to 15 (figure 4.27): bars 9 to 12<sup>2</sup> can be read as being constructed from the scale C-Db-(Eb)-(E-natural)-F#-G-A-Bb, bars 12<sup>3</sup> to 13 from (C)-D-(Eb)-F-F#-(G#)-(A)-(B), and bar 13 to 15 from the scale C#-D-(E)-(F)-(G)-(Ab)-Bb-B-natural (enharmonic equivalents aside). The right hand of the piano accompaniment most often serves as a counterpoint to the vocal line (compare figures 4.27 and 4.28), and employs similar material (there are exceptions to this, one of which will be pointed out later in the discussion of text-music relationships). Structural coherence is achieved through more subtle motivic and textural means, rather than through the employment of a more conventionally 'classical' form (such as the clear A-B-A of 'Geen skip strand ooit op hierdie kus nie'). The song drives towards a bitonal goal at the end: B-D-F in the right hand against a F# (following on A# and C# in the preceding bar, which implies a F#-A#-C# major chord) in the left.

Figure 4.27 Bars 9-15, 'Elegie' (voice part) (Hofmeyr, 2005: 6)

Figure 4.28 Bars 75-78, 'Elegie' (piano part) (Hofmeyr, 2005: 9)

The poem, ‘Gedig vir Klein Estie’, ‘was written in reaction to the death of the poet’s young niece’, and ‘[t]he simplicity of the outer sections is contrasted with the more ornate music of the rose and sword-lily’ (Hofmeyr, 2005: ii). The Bb major key signature indication at the beginning suggests a reading of the work in a tonal framework obscured through various means, starting with the implied extended third (Bb)-D-F-(A)-C chord at the beginning that appears without its tonic (see bar 1, figure 4.29) (the tonic appears for the first time in a middle voice in bar 2). This example is indicative of the general harmonic procedures and content in this song: one in which functional chords (often ambiguous in nature) appear in non-functional progressions, in combination with each other, and in combination with more chromatic material. In bars 21 to 24 (figure 4.30), for example, the left hand of the piano accompaniment show triadic chords that appear alongside chromatic chords in the second half of bar 22 and the first half of bar 24, and in combination with chromatic material in the right hand. In the vocal line, melodic movements that have a tonal character also stand in contrast with chromaticism. Compare, for example, the vocal line in bars 12 to 13, to that in bars 14 to 15 (figure 4.31). The introductory material reappears towards the end and thins out towards a single F in the right hand – the left-over of the D-F-A-(C)-E chord implied in the two preceding bars.

Figure 4.29 Bars 1-2, ‘Gedig vir Klein Estie’ (Hofmeyr, 2005: 11)

Figure 4.30 Bars 21-23, ‘Gedig vir Klein Estie’ (Hofmeyr, 2005: 12)

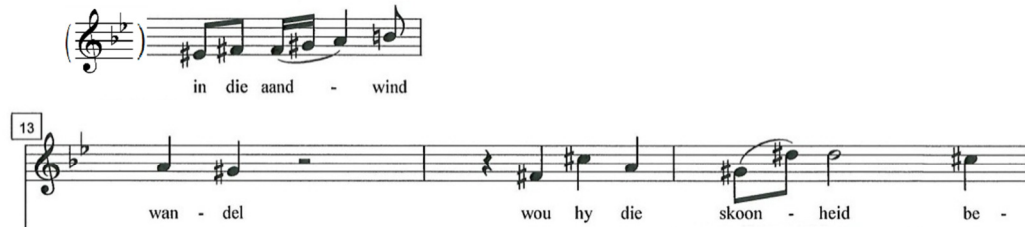


Figure 4.31 Bars 12-15, 'Gedig vir Klein Estie' (voice part) (Hofmeyr, 2005: 11)

Hofmeyr (2005: ii) states the following regarding 'By die dood van Motau':

The poet owned a print of a drawing by Motau, who was gunned down while walking in Soweto. The setting translates the clipped, urgent tone of the poem into a frenzied and percussive African dance.<sup>43</sup>

The composer realizes 'Africa' and 'frenziness' through irregular switching at a fast tempo between a number of time signatures (5/8, 3/4, 3/8, 4/8), all containing quavers in groups of two or three in the left hand of the piano accompaniment throughout most of the piece. The textural arrangement of open fifths and fourths, which sometimes leads to parallelism, could in this context also be read as an Africanism (see, for example, bars 6 to 15, figure 4.32). From bars 1 to 10, no chromatic notes are added to the D major key signature, although the material is fashioned around a C# centre. Bb is added in bar 11, and the material now gravitates around an E centre (refer back to figure 4.32). From bar 17 onwards, numerous chromatic additions appear. Because of the ambiguity created by the thinner texture and the chromaticism that is more prevalent than in, for example, 'Gedig vir klein Estie' (this includes the voice part), it is more difficult to interpret chords and point out conventionalities. However, a feeling of 'centredness' and tonal drive is never lost, through the continued arrangement of material around and movement through clear centres. The song ends on a firm D-A open fifth in the left hand of the piano accompaniment, with a B added for colour in the right hand and voice part.

Figure 4.32 Bars 6-15, 'By die dood van Motau' (Hofmeyr, 2005: 15)

<sup>43</sup> Julian Motau (1948-1967) was a visual artist who was 'hailed as making a new politicisation of township art [...]' (South African History Online, 2013: online).

The composer's note for 'Op slag gedood' is as follows (Hofmeyr, 2005: ii):

This poem was written after the funeral of the poet's father on the family farm. The singing of the farmworkers is evoked through the incorporation of Nearer, my God to Thee into the accompanying texture.

The highly chromatic six-bar introduction to this song (see, for example, bars 4 to 6, figure 4.33) leads to a section that is entirely in Ab major, but in which the chords in the piano accompaniment are mostly quintal-quartal, rather than triadic (see bars 7 to 10, figure 4.33). In the next section (which has a F major key signature indication) the combination of triadic harmony with quintal-quartal chords and chromatic additions, especially in a three-stave arrangement, is reminiscent of Debussy.<sup>44</sup> The parallel quartal chords that lead up to this section contribute to the achievement of this effect (see, for example, bars 14 to 19, figure 4.34). (The quote from the hymn 'Nearer my God to thee' can be seen from bars 18 to 19). The C#-E-G-G#-A chord with which the song opens reappears as an arpeggio in the next short, chromatic section. This leads to a return to Ab major – in which the song ends – and a variation of some material that appeared previously.

Figure 4.33 Bars 4-6, 'Op slag gedood' (Hofmeyr, 2005: 18)

<sup>44</sup> Debussy's *Feuilles mortes*, from the second book of *Preludes*, for example, has a comparable texture.

as 'n groe-pie vorm om 'n le - ë graf en lui - ster na die sang van

**Figure 4.34 Bars 14-19, 'Op slag gedood' (Hofmeyr, 2005: 19)**

The text-music relationship in this song cycle is especially strong – the composer hardly lets any opportunity go by for reflecting the text through melodic, harmonic, textural, durational, rhythmic or articulatory means. In 'Geen skip strand ooit op hierdie kus nie', the word 'verlatenheid' ('*desolateness*') is illustrated through the long sustained D in the voice part from bars 50 to 51, as well as through the single-note texture in the piano accompaniment in bar 51 (figure 4.35). In bar 30 of 'Elegie' there is an accented staccato in both the voice and piano parts on the word 'verskrik' ('*startled*') (figure 4.36), and a staccato on the word 'knip' ('*cut*') in the voice part in bar 64 (figure 4.37). Also in 'Elegie', a downward melodic movement in the voice part occurs from bars 79 to 81 where the text refers to 'skemerte [wat] oorgaan in donker' ('*dusk [that] turns into darkness*') (figure 4.38). The 'more ornate music of the rose and sword-lily' (Hofmeyr, 2005: ii) in 'Gedig vir Klein Estie' previously referred to, includes the following gestures: the description of the rose as 'swierig[e]' ('*elegant*') is illustrated by ornamentation in the right hand of the piano accompaniment from bars 18 to 19 (figure 4.39); 'dorings' ('*thorns*') are illustrated in bar 22 by a chromatic chord in the left hand of the piano accompaniment and an augmented fourth descending jump in the voice part (refer back to figure 4.30); and, the description of the sword-lily as 'vorstelik[e]' ('*majestic*') in bar 27 is accompanied by a march-like rhythm (figure 4.40). In 'Op slag gedood', the words 'windvlaag ruk deur elke hart' ('*gust of wind jerks through every hart*') is accompanied by a sweeping chromatic movement from bars 29 to 32 (figure 4.41).

- la - ten - heid nog

**Figure 4.35 Bars 50-51, 'Geen skip strand ooit op hierdie kus nie' (Hofmeyr, 2005: 5)**



oom - blik ver-skrik

Figure 4.36 Bar 30, 'Elegie' (Hofmeyr, 2005: 7)

kort ge - knip ge -

Figure 4.37 Bar 64, 'Elegie' (voice part) (Hofmeyr, 2005: 9)

die swie - ri - ge

roos het hy ver -

Figure 4.39 Bars 18-19, 'Gedig vir Klein Estie' (Hofmeyr, 2005: 12)

ook die vors - te - li - ke

Figure 4.40 Bar 27, 'Gedig vir Klein Estie' (Hofmeyr, 2005: 13)

**Figure 4.41** Bars 29-32, ‘Op slag gedood’ (Hofmeyr, 2005: 20)

The discussion above highlights an important broad characteristic of this song cycle which could be described as a general characteristic of Hofmeyr’s style: stylistic eclecticism. The cycle ventures seamlessly through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, importing stylistic gestures and tonalities as expressive means where necessary.<sup>45</sup> What we have here is not a lack of style, but eclecticism as a style (or referring back to the discussion on Stefans Grové, eclecticism as *normal technique*). Africa is denoted where the text requires it, and does not form part of an outward-directed or identity-seeking strategy – the level of ambiguity in its denotation is therefore irrelevant. The composer denotes his own, inward-looking Africa – an Africa of which nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe forms a part. This brings to mind the question of whether it is even possible, outside of the Afrikaans text, to denote a white Africa other than an inward-looking one (I will engage with this question in Chapter 8.)<sup>46</sup> Hofmeyr’s *En skielik is dit aand* is in general not Romantic in sound, except in selected individual moments. However, Romantic gestures and principles of art song are important: the writing is inward-looking, and the exceptionally close text-music relationship leaves no musical gesture – which includes sweeping, Romantic piano passages, and a persistent drive towards tonality – meaningless. One might even say that the ‘character’ role of the piano in art song has here been extended to style.

### **Andile Khumalo’s *Ekuboleni kunempilo* (*In death there is life*)**

Andile Khumalo (b. 1978) hails from Durban, where he received his initial training in composition (Khumalo, 2013a: online). He completed a master’s degree at the Musikhochschule Stuttgart, Germany (Wits University, 2013: online), before taking up a position as Faculty Fellow in composition at Columbia University, New York (Khumalo,

<sup>45</sup> This is not to suggest that there isn’t coherence in the work, which there undoubtedly is. Analytical extraction thereof, however, lies at a level beyond the scope of this discussion. Commentary on the level of polystylism within the individual styles also falls outside the boundaries of this discussion.

<sup>46</sup> The question of whether one *must* do this (i.e. have an outward-directed goal) is not one that I’m engaging with here. The question is how to do it if you want to do it.

2013a: online). From 2013 he has been a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits University, 2013: online). Khumalo's works list (Khumalo, 2013b: online) reveals a specialization in smaller settings, and includes works for piano, ensembles, and solos with piano accompaniment. A *curriculum vitae* that includes an impressive list of teachers and worldwide performances (Khumalo, 2013a: online) justifies this discussion of a work by a young composer whose works have yet to enter scholarly discourse.

In the absence of a full catalogue of scores and a discourse, one is tempted to draw conclusions from the single Zulu title (of the song under discussion here) among mostly German and English titles in Khumalo's works list. Africa is denoted only once at the most superficial and immediate of levels: the title. However, this discussion of musical content in *Ekuboleni kunempilo* stands somewhat in isolation and can (for now) not be contextualized within Khumalo's larger output as a whole.

'In death there is life' ('Ekuboleni kunempilo')

(I)

I hear the crying the crying

Of the crestfallen farmers

They've sown sown for for for

In death there is life life life

They've sown

hm hm hm hm hm

Ihhi ihhi ihhi ihhi

Woe! The tears for the seeds scattered

Seeds that don't have the holes weevils bore in seeds, w'out weevils, w'out insects and worms

Hm Forcefully hm forcefully

The soil gives life to farmers

(II)

Hm hm ah! The carpet

I see the carpet spreading out in front of me

I cried it cried, I stopped it stopped

The seed of ancestors wilting dying in that hm field that field

I was lowered in grain basket grain basket

We watered the wilting seed

Let it grow Mbokode Gayisa

Here, I see it, it is growing

*[continued on the next page]*

Which sent the message by the ant

Which said my boy

In death there is life, life, life

(unknown author in Khumalo, 2001: 1-14)<sup>47</sup>

'Ekuboleni kunempilo'

(I)

Ngizwi'sibibithwane isibibithwane

Sabalimi abangxolombisile

Batshalele batshalele ukuba ukuba 'kuba

Ekuboleni kuphile kuphile kuphile kuphile

Ba - babatshalele

hm hm hm hm hm

Ihhi ihhi ihhi ihhi

Hawu izinyembezi zikhala ngembewu eziyihlwanyele

Ingaphehlwe, ingenazindundundu, inganabhu nazihlava

Hm ngezindlozana hm ngezindlozana

Umhlabathi uqhuba abalimi impilo

(II)

Hm hm ah ungwengwe

Ngakhala lwakhala ngathula yathula

Ngibon'ungwengwe lwanabela phambukwami

Imbewu yokhokho bokhokho ibun'ibola kuleyo hm nsimu kuleyonsimu

Ngehliswa ngesilulu ngesilulu

Sanisela sela imbewu ibuna

Qhumiselela oMbokode Gayisa

Nansi ngiyabona ng'neya'milisayo

Yathumeli 'sigijimi intuthwane

S'yathi fana wami

Ekuboleni k'nempilo kunempilo mpilo

(unknown author in Khumalo, 2001: 1-14)

<sup>47</sup> The translation was provided by Folio Translation Consultants (2013a). The 'carpet' refers to white flower tufts that grow on wheat or mealies (corn).

*Ekuboleni Kunempilo* consists of two songs or movements (simply numbered ‘I’ and ‘II’, although I will refer to them as ‘song no. 1’ and ‘song no. 2’ for the sake of clarity). The work is scored for mezzo-soprano, flute and viola. The composer employs all twelve notes of the chromatic scale in the work as a whole. This is also the case when looking at most instrumental or vocal parts individually. Where exceptions to this rule appear, one therefore finds significance in the absence of certain tones. In the vocal part of song no. 1 there is no Eb. The absence of this specific tone is not significant, but the effect to which its absence contributes is: it serves to effect interval restrictions in the melody, which is a characteristic of certain precolonial African singing practices. Only semitones, whole tones, major and minor thirds, and perfect fourths are employed in areas of continuous melodic movement in the melody of the voice part in this song. Despite these restrictions, the melody is still much more chromatic than one would see in any precolonial music. The downward drift in the melodic curve towards the end of phrases in this melody is also a characteristic of certain precolonial musics. This melody serves as an important indicator of tonal centres, which are established by the notes to which the melody drifts towards the end of phrases. See the outline below (the empty note heads refer to firmly established tonal centres, whereas the filled ones refer to ‘passing’ centres):



**Figure 4.42** *Ekuboleni kunempilo* song no. 1, tonal centre outline

Compare the first three notes of the outline to the vocal line of song no. 1 from bars 2 (where it starts) to 13 (figure 4.43).

ngi - - zwi 'si -

bi - bi - thwa ne i - si - bi - bi - thwa

ne sa - ba - li mi a - ba -

ngxo - lo - mbi - si le ba - tsha - le - le



**Figure 4.43 Bars 1-12, ‘I’ (voice part)** (Khumalo, 2001: (I)1-2)

There is no exact recurrence of thematic material anywhere in the voice part. Neither do varied forms of sections of earlier material appear later. Rather, there appears to be intuitive ‘improvisations’ around given melodic shapes through extension, rhythmic variation, part-repetition, and extension and variation of the part-repetitions (refer back to figure 4.43). The alto flute part, which stands in a contrapuntal relationship with the voice part in song no. 1, displays similar characteristics. However, the ‘improvisations’ are much more virtuosic and elaborate (see bar 25, figure 4.44) and follow the voice in terms of thematic material and tonal centres, rather than providing such centres. The viola part in song no. 1 has a much more repetitive character, and serves as the rhythmic base and provider of pedal points for the song. Also, it is the only other part in the entire work, besides the voice part in song no.1, in which the entire chromatic scale is not used. Only nine out of twelve notes are used (B-C-D-E-F-G-G#-A-A#). It is also the material of the viola part that clearly divides the song into A and B sections (A: bars 1 to 28, and B: bars 29 to 58). The A-material can be seen in figure 4.44; compare this with the B-material in, for example, bars 39 to 42 (figure 4.45). The employment of both repetitive and improvisatory elements can be interpreted as contributing to the ‘African’ character of the song. The sound and feeling created by the *sul tasto* (*flautando*) playing on the viola in section A, and the *col legno battuto* playing in section B – both on repetitive patterns – is reminiscent of certain practices of bow playing.<sup>48</sup>

25 *p*  
M.S. hm hm hm  
A. Fl. *p* *ppp* *p*  
Vla. *p*

**Figure 4.44 Bar 25, ‘I’** (Khumalo, 2001: (I)4)

<sup>48</sup> Performances on the *ugubhu* or *umakheweyana* (Joseph, 1987: 90) serve as examples of this.

M.S. *f* *mp* *mf* *mp* *mf* *mp*  
 39 hlwa nye - le i - nga - phe - hli - we i - nge - na - zi - ndu - ndu

A. Fl. *mf* *p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Vla.

**Figure 4.45 Bars 39-42, 'I' (Khumalo, 2001: (I)5)**

The voice part in song no. 2 is less interval-restricted than that of song no. 1 (it includes the use of augmented fourths, perfect fifths, minor and major sixths, and minor sevenths in areas of continuous melodic movement), thereby losing some of its 'Africanness'. However, there is still downward inclination towards the end of phrases, and the voice part still serves as an indicator of tonal centres. When comparing the tonal centre outline of song no. 2 with that of song no.1, one may conclude that in song no. 2 these centres are less often clearly established, due to its rapid movement from one to the other:

**Figure 4.46 Ekuboleni kunempilo song no. 2, tonal centre outline**

The relationship between the voice and alto flute parts is similar to that of song no. 1, but only for the first part of the song (section A: bars 1 to 42). The same improvisatory characteristics that were described in the voice and alto flute parts in song no. 1 are found in song no. 2 as well. In the second part of the song (section B: bars 52 to 78; bars 42 to 51 serves as a bridge), there is a strong alliance between the alto flute and viola parts. The viola part, in section A of song no. 2, plays a stronger thematic role than it did in song no. 1, although the coherence of the material is less obvious (or less strong). Where the alliance between the viola and alto flute parts starts in section B, the viola again takes up its former rhythmic character. A good example is the relationships between parts in, for example, bars 13 to 15 (figure 4.47) to that from bars 58 to 60 (figure 4.48).

**Figure 4.47** Bars 13-15, ‘II’ (Khumalo, 2001: (II)2)

**Figure 4.48** Bars 58-60, ‘II’ (Khumalo, 2001: (II)5)

*Ekuboleni kunempilo* appears to have been conceived largely in linear terms. Therefore, when referring to ‘harmony’ in this work, it is best to talk in broad terms about the interplay between consonance and dissonance. Dissonance rules in both songs, but even more so in song no. 2. Since there is no harmonic drive towards it, the moments of consonance come as a surprise and have a strong effect. See, for example, such moments in the marked areas in bar 24 of song no. 1 (figure 4.49), and bar 61 of song no. 2 (figure 4.50). Metres switch irregularly between 6/8, 9/8, 7/8 and 4/8 in song no. 1, and between 2/4, 3/8, 1/4, 9/8, 6/8 and 4/8 in song no. 2. As has been shown, some regularity can be observed in the rhythmic patterns in the viola parts in song no. 1, and in the viola and alto flute parts in the B-section of song no. 2. Nowhere are there any slavish ostinatos though. There are no consistent patterns that would allow strong claims regarding symbolic relationships between the text and the music. Neither are there clear moments of tone painting. The text-music relationship is therefore largely one of mood-interpretation.

**Figure 4.49** Bar 24, ‘I’ (Khumalo, 2001: (I):3)





**Figure 4.50 Bar 61, 'II'** (Khumalo, 2001: (II):5)

In this discussion of *Ekuboleni kunempilo*, the present author has pointed out several characteristics that can, in isolation, be regarded as relating to practices in certain precolonial African musics, such as interval restrictions in the melodic line of the voice part, downward drift towards the end of phrases in the vocal line, the general improvisatory character of the thematic material, repetitive elements, and playing techniques that may be seen as imitating bow sounds. Extreme chromaticism and dissonance could be interpreted as modernist western characteristics. The use of formal A-B structures may also be considered a western characteristic. When considering the work as a whole, most of the characteristics I have identified as 'African', do not unambiguously appear as such. The voice part in the first song, despite its chromaticism and wide range (which disqualifies it as a 'folk' song) appears distinctly 'African'. However, this is not applicable to the second song where the voice part takes on a character that is less recognizably 'African'. The quicker movement through tonal centres contribute to this effect, as it breaks the illusion of being static engendered by the lingering on tonal centres in the first song. The viola rhythmic base in the first song seems a bit more 'African' in the *col legno battuto* section than elsewhere, as the material is less chromatic, the rhythmic patterns more secure, and the imitation of a bow playing more recognizable. (The role of the viola changes completely in the first half of the second song, as has been pointed out.) The denotation of Africa is therefore both direct and indirect – clear at certain moments, and ambiguous at others. As one can expect in an early work, there are certain technical insecurities, and not all ideas are worked out clearly. The strength in *Ekuboleni kunempilo* lies in its resistance to what Thomas Pooley calls the 'aesthetics of accessibility', which he explains as follows (Pooley, 2010/11: 65):

For several [South African] composers the shift to an Africanist idiom was allied with a move from post-tonal to tonal practice, from abstract high modernism to an 'aesthetics of accessibility'.

The present author does not see the move to such an aesthetic as *wrong* per se. But, perhaps in the case of the work and composer under discussion, it served a young black South African composer well to not reproduce this move, so as to challenge persisting notions of the African as primitive (natural, tonal) compared to the west as modern (universal, abstract). When looking at the other works by Khumalo in my possession (*ISO(R)* for flute, cello and piano (2004), *Ossia* for clarinet and cello (2010) and *Schauf(e)r(n)ster* for piano (2011)), it is clear that Khumalo does not aim to always denote 'Africa' in his works.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to show how the composers under discussion have attempted to denote 'Africa' in their works in musical terms, and how these attempts can be contextualized within their larger outputs or general styles. In the case of Rainier, I have found this denotation to be very ambiguous in absence of the text, and that the memory of Africa is an occasional one in the context of the composer's output as a whole, conjured up at will where it serves an outward-directed purpose. Grové's denotation is certainly not unambiguous, but much less ambiguous than that of Rainier. This is not because the materials are less generically 'African' than those used by Rainier, but because the listener is orientated through the means discussed above, also revealing more consciousness of the ambiguities than in the case of Rainier. As with Gamal Abdel-Rahim (in Chapter 3), I have suggested cross-domain mapping as the technique that has allowed Grové to make a complete transfer to Africanism.<sup>49</sup> In the work by Hofmeyr, Africa is denoted strictly only where the text requires this, in a context of stylistic eclecticism as normal technique. I have also suggested that with Hofmeyr, 'style' has taken on a character role similar to that of the piano in art song. In Khumalo's work, I have found the denotation of 'Africa' to be clear at certain moments and ambiguous at others – one may conclude that this can, to a certain extent, be compared to the way in which Grové orientates his listener and thereby contextualizes his Africanisms aurally. I have also suggested that the resistance of an 'aesthetic of accessibility' in the work by Khumalo may be read as challenging persisting notions of the African as primitive (natural, tonal) compared to the west as modern (universal, abstract). In conclusion, the denotation of 'Africa' appears for these South African composers to be less of a duty and more of an individual choice than for composers from the other countries under scrutiny in this dissertation. (This is also the case with Grové, who chose to walk his Damascus road to complete Africanism fairly late in his career.) Also, I have found that where musical Africanisms are recognizable from an external viewpoint, they are exclusively black African musical Africanisms. These are notions which will be theorized in more detail in the conclusion (Chapter 8), as it is of wider importance than only for this chapter.

The question that I asked at the beginning of this chapter has personal significance: the life that I live, what I consider to be my cultural heritage, and the largest part of my musical education has little to do with popular notions of what 'Africa' is. Should the historical events that allowed for a privileged life in South Africa dictate how I denote my own 'Africa' in composition? Some would say no, based on a philosophy of composition that is based on the primacy of the fulfilment of a personal aesthetic. Others would say yes, based on another philosophy of composition that promulgates the necessity for social commentary and relevance. What remains to be asked is whether there is a duty for artistic productions that presupposes a reception of one kind or another – in a society riddled by unevenness and torn apart by history – to take on a remedial or commentary role, and whether an uncompromised personal aesthetic (where this aesthetic excludes such roles) is a luxury that cannot yet be afforded.

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<sup>49</sup> The reader will by now have noticed that, in both chapters 3 and 4, I suggest cross-domain mapping as a compositional technique, rather than just as a mode of analysis for the works in question.

## **Section B – Focus on discourses and theories through art songs**

## Chapter 5 A brief investigation of tonal language text setting

**‘God has large buttocks’**

[‘God has great powers’]

**‘Go out and dig for palm-kernels,  
ye who are fond of passing  
water’**

[‘O come all ye faithful’]

**Figure 5.1** (Vidal, .d.u.(b): 453)

*Texts in Yoruba and Igbo protesting against English hymn tunes.*

## Introduction

The quotes in large print – translations back to English of excerpts from Igbo and Yoruba texts set to unchanged English hymn melodies by early missionaries in Nigeria – serve as examples of what can happen when tonal inflections are not taken into consideration when setting texts in these languages to music. The quotes in smaller print give the intended meanings (Vidal, d.u.(b): 453). These examples expose a dilemma pertinent to this dissertation, yet one that is not easy to deal with. According to Courtenay (1971: 241) the tonal system of Yoruba, a tonal language, ‘cannot be understood without a fairly extensive knowledge of the language.’ The present author is not a speaker of a tonal language. Also, the scope and intention of this dissertation does not allow for a major problematization of tonal language text setting – a topic that requires specialist linguistic skills. This chapter therefore serves to expose viewpoints on tonal language text setting in selected literature (mainly sources that refer to this issue specifically with regard to *African* tonal languages), and to present case studies of tonal language text setting in selected songs that were previously discussed in this dissertation. A ‘non-speaker’s methodology’ that focuses on surface elements will be employed. A literature review is followed by an explanation of my selection criteria, the basic tonal operations of the languages in question, and my methodology.

Akin Euba, in ‘Text setting in African composition’, (2001) admits that the practice of melodic lines usually following the intonation of spoken text in Yoruba culture is ‘not an invariable condition’, and refers to examples in which melodies ‘depart briefly’ from the corresponding speech intonation (Euba, 2001: 123). J.H. Kwabena Nketia, in ‘Musicology and linguistics: Integrating the phraseology of text and tune in the creative process’ (2002), states that the process wherein a melodic line follows the tonal contours of a text is, from the perspective of phraseology (i.e. its creative potential in the compositional process), not interesting in itself. Rather, what is of interest are the ‘qualitative aspects of the progression resulting from the choices that are made where alternative progressions are open to the song maker [...]’ (Nketia, 2002: 148). Kofi Agawu, in a book chapter entitled ‘African music as text’ (2003), makes strong asserts that the conventional view that words must be sung using the same contours as when they are spoken in order to retain their meaning is ‘demonstrably false [...] because words can be sung any old way without losing their meaning’ (Agawu, 2003: 112). In the next sentence he seems to retract somewhat from this statement by saying that “[w]rong” melodic contours do *not necessarily* give rise to alternative meanings [...]’ (my emphasis) (Agawu, 2003: 112). The example that Agawu provides (one page earlier) is not of a word that has an alternative meaning when the tone is changed (he refers to a one-syllable word), but rather one that doesn’t exist in language when the tone is changed. Agawu interprets this as ‘an implicit critique of language’s ability to convey information about music’, (Agawu, 2003: 111), or an undermining of, ‘without ultimately eliminating’, the correct meaning (Agawu, 2003: 112). In an article that examines the use of precolonial genres in the choral art music of the Ghanaian composers Ephraim Amu, Walter Blege and the author himself, George Dor (2005: 444) describes Amu’s style as one in which the melodies rigidly adhere to the contours of the spoken texts. The solutions that Amu

apparently proposed for solving problems relating to writing music for three or four voices that should all follow the tonal inflections of the text have ‘partly defined the uniqueness of Ghanaian choral style’ (Dor, 2005: 444). In a discussion of a work by Blege, Dor (2005: 461) finds that there are often differences between the contours of melodic and spoken texts, due to the ‘modification of repeated melodic phrases, concerns for specific harmonic idioms, and the composer’s aim at reaching melodic goals but at the same time maintaining comfortable intervals.’ Christian Onyeji, in ‘Composing art songs based on Igbo traditional music: Concept and process in contemporary times’ (2005), agrees that the tonal contours of spoken language can occasionally be ignored for aesthetic purposes, and that melodic settings of texts in tonal languages are not ‘slavishly dependent’ on its tonal inflections (Onyeji, 2005: 32). Murray Schellenberg, in ‘Does language determine music in tone languages?’ (2012), problematizes the issue of comprehension where phonemic divergence occurs. He suggests that, despite such divergences occurring in the example provided by him, the context provided by the text makes the meaning very clear to at least native speakers of the language in question (Schellenberg, 2012: 267). This author also suggests that the proportion of usage of tonal minimal pairs (two words that differ only in terms of a tonal inflection) – which are apparently not that high in number in most tonal languages – in song lyric contexts that could lead to misunderstandings is unlikely to be high, and should therefore only have a minimal effect on the melody of the song (Schellenberg, 2012: 268). In the final conclusion to this article, Schellenberg states that

[w]hile occasional divergence from the speech melody does not significantly impair comprehension, a general free-for-all is not the best choice for a tone language, either. [...]  
 However, when things are not equal, music ‘trumps’ language.

From the above it is clear that there is not a uniform view on the matter of tonal language text setting. Some authors claim the necessity for strict adherence to tonal contours; others either allow for alternative settings in very specific situations, or for a very free approach to this matter. The quote from Schellenberg (2012) above can be viewed as a summary of the views expressed in more recent scholarship, in comparison with the more rigid views or approaches of older scholars and composers.

I have selected three songs in three major tonal languages spoken in West Africa – Twi, Yoruba and Igbo – for investigation. My selections are based on statements made by composers (or about them) in connection with tonal language text setting, as highlighted in the literature review above: Ephraim Amu, who apparently adhered rigidly to the contours of spoken text, Akin Euba, who claims that the need to adhere to such rules are not an invariable condition, and Christian Onyeji, who (similarly) claims that the rules of tonal languages can occasionally be ignored. My investigations therefore aim to test these claims against tonal language text settings by the composers themselves. For this purpose I have selected Ephraim Amu’s ‘Bonwere Kentejwene’ (Twi), Akin Euba’s ‘Mo lè j’iyán yo’ (Yoruba), and Christian Onyeji’s ‘Inine’ (Igbo).<sup>1</sup> Agawu (1984: 64) confirms that that melody of ‘Bonwere

<sup>1</sup> According to Courtenay (1971: 240) ‘[f]or native speakers at least, many African languages can be written

Kenteṅwene’ is best suited to the first stanza. My investigation therefore also serves to test whether the same result is achieved with my methodology.

Yoruba, Igbo and Twi all belong to the Kwa subgroup of the Niger-Congo language family (Barnes, 1996: online, Amadiumi, 1996: online and Akan languages, 2013: online). All three languages have three basic pitch levels or tones: high, mid and low (Courtenay, 1971: 239, Swift, Ahaghotu and Ugorji, 1962: 55, and Redden and Owusu, 1963: x). Also, all three languages are terraced tone languages. This means that pitch levels follow a declining pattern throughout a phrase, according to certain conventionalities. Courtenay (1971: 240) explains it as such, in reference to Yoruba: ‘Terracing refers to an automatic lowering of both high and mid tones after a low tone.’ A graphic representation of this principle may look like this:



Intricacies are numerous, as is evident from elaborations on this practice. In reference to Twi, Redden and Owusu (1963: x), for example, explain that there is no step up when going from mid to high tone. After a low tone, you can only stay on a low tone or go up to a high tone (but not mid tone). After a pause, these are the same possibilities. In reference to Igbo, Swift, Agaghotu and Ugori (1962: 55-56) explain that after mid or high tone there are three possibilities: the same pitch, somewhat lower, and low: ‘Mid tone thus follows either high or mid tone as a step down from the preceding, but does not follow low tone.’ It should now be clear to the reader why the present author had to devise the ‘non-speaker’s methodology’ explained below.

Recordings and computer software were used to create the following graphic representations of the melodic contours of readings of the songs texts, and of the song’s melodies, for the purpose of comparison.<sup>2</sup> I have divided the presentations below into

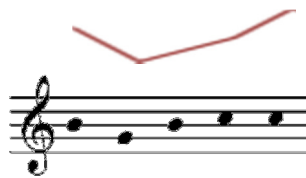
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with tone diacritics omitted without rendering a text unintelligible to the reader.’ The reader will notice that the present author presents the Igbo texts as it was available to him: without diacritics.

<sup>2</sup> Native speakers of the languages in question were asked to read the texts. Recordings of the Yoruba and Twi texts were made in the offices of Folio Translation Consultants, and the Igbo speaker (who was in Limpopo province at the time) made the recording himself. The voice artists were informed of the purpose of the recording, and that they should therefore aim to reflect the speech contours as ‘correctly’ as possible. Digital recordings were provided in .WAV format. The edges were trimmed in Audacity to cut out unnecessary noises at the beginning and end of the recordings. Recordings also had to be amplified and slowed down (without changing the pitch) in order to allow for an analysis that picks up more nuances. The edited recordings were then opened in Sonic Visualizer, and the following sequence was followed: Transform/Analysis by category/Notes/Aubio note tracker/OK/MIDI notes (this transforms the speech into a sequence of corresponding MIDI notes); then View/Show layer summary/Deselect Waveform and Ruler, and finally File/Export image file. The file was then opened in Inkscape, and ‘Draw Bezier curves and straight lines’ was selected. Connectors were then drawn between the MIDI notes, utterance by utterance. This was done while also listening to the recording, because the software analysis was not always 100% accurate (it sometimes picked up irrelevant

‘utterances’. In other words, analytical units were taken to be from the beginning of an utterance of speech until a significant point of silence was reached (where the voice artist, for example, breathed or ended off a phrase). I found this the best way to follow events on the graphic representations of sounds in the software programmes used. The exception to this are verses 2 to 4 in Amu’s ‘Bonwerε Kenteŋwene’, where the analytical units all belong to verse 1. For the purpose of comparing the verses with each other, I aligned the utterances of verse 1 with the corresponding units of text and melodic lines of verses 2 to 4. Where there is either a general correlation in the shape of the speech contour and the melody (i.e. there is some correspondence in the shape, however vague) or, where the speech contour corresponds more clearly to the melodic line, but only for a section of the utterance, I deemed there to be ‘some correlation’. Where the speech contour clearly corresponds to the melodic line for the duration of the utterance, I deemed there to be a ‘strong correlation’. Where I concluded the correspondence between the speech contour and the melodic line to be too weak, I labelled it ‘no correlation’. Where speech utterances corresponded to single notes in the melodic line, I automatically deemed there to be a ‘strong correlation’ where the text has no linguistic meaning and the speech contour could therefore never be ‘wrong’ or, I gave the composer the benefit of the doubt and deemed there to be at least ‘some correlation’ where the text has linguistic meaning, but I did not have the knowledge to judge the ‘correctness’ of the contour of an utterance of a single syllable (the incidence of this is so low that the difference it makes in the overall result is negligible).

### Akin Euba’s ‘Mo lè j’iyán yo’



**Figure 5.2 Utterance 1** ‘Mo lè j’iyán yó’ [strong correlation]



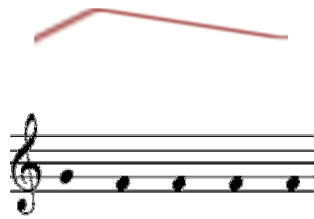
**Figure 5.3 Utterance 2** ‘bí ará oko’ [strong correlation]

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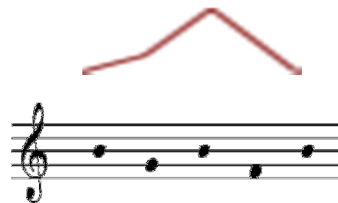
noises or did not pick up utterances at all – in such cases manual adjustments had to be made). After this the original image created in Sonic Visualizer was deleted and what was left was a sequence of speech curves.

<sup>3</sup> The ‘upsweep’ at the beginning of figures 5.3 and 5.4 correspond to the first syllables of the text in each case. The ‘upsweep’ therefore takes place before the corresponding area in the melodic line begins.

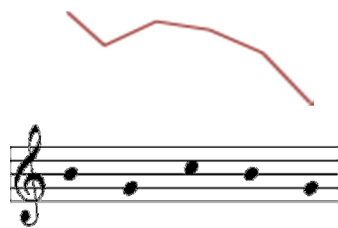




**Figure 5.4 Utterance 3** 'Mo lè j'àmàlà' [strong correlation]



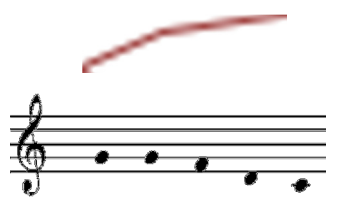
**Figure 5.5 Utterance 4** 'bí oníṣàngó' [some correlation]



**Figure 5.6 Utterance 5** 'Mo lè gb'ómọ pọ̀n' [strong correlation]



**Figure 5.7 Utterance 6** 'bí Abéjiré' [no correlation]



**Figure 5.8 Utterance 7** 'Ọ̀mọ yín o' [no correlation]



Figure 5.9 Utterance 8 'ara yín' [strong correlation]

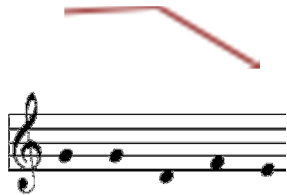


Figure 5.10 Utterance 9 'Táiwò yín' [some correlation]



Figure 5.11 Utterance 10 'o' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.12 Utterance 11 'ara yín' [some correlation]

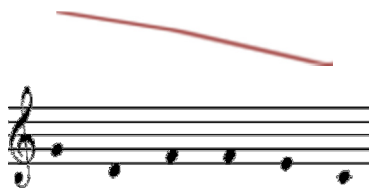
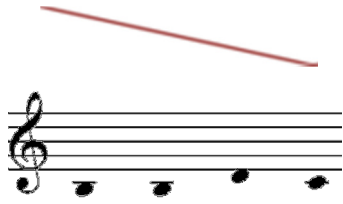


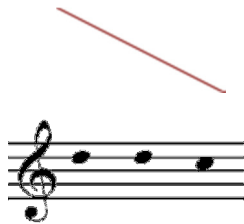
Figure 5.13 Utterance 12 'Kẹ̀hìnde yín o' [some correlation]



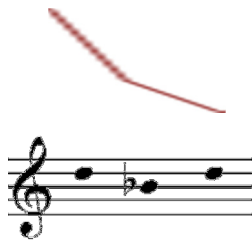
**Figure 5.14 Utterance 13 'ara yin' [some correlation]**

(Text and notes: Euba, 1975: 1)

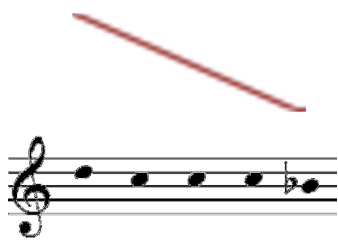
**Christian Onyeji's 'Inine'**



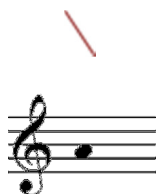
**Figure 5.15 Utterance 1 'Nne mu' [strong correlation]**



**Figure 5.16 Utterance 2 'Nna mu' [some correlation]**



**Figure 5.17 Utterance 3 'a lawala m'u-' [strong correlation]**



**Figure 5.18 Utterance 4 '-rio' [strong correlation]**



Figure 5.19 Utterance 5 'inine' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.20 Utterance 6 'Ewo' [strong correlation]

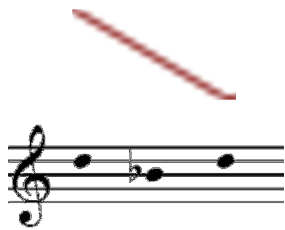


Figure 5.21 Utterance 7 'nna mu' [some correlation]

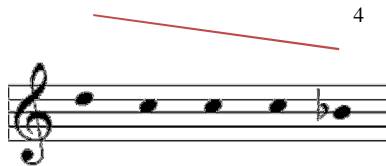


Figure 5.22 Utterance 8 'a lawala m'u-' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.23 Utterance 9 '-rio' [strong correlation]

<sup>4</sup> This shape was adapted manually to reflect the speech contour on the recording correctly, because the computer software did not pick up the downward slope.

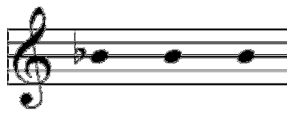


Figure 5.24 Utterance 10 'inine' [strong correlation]

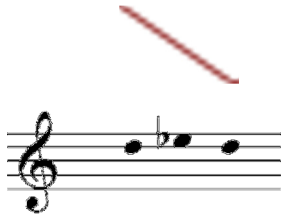


Figure 5.25 Utterance 11 'Le o' [some correlation]

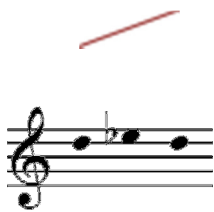


Figure 5.26 Utterance 12 'le o' [some correlation]

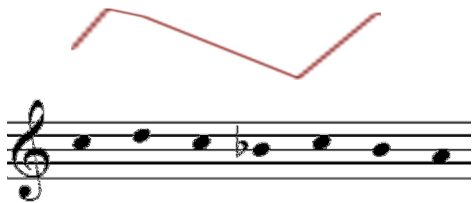


Figure 5.27 Utterance 13 'urinne ji cho mum ma' [some correlation]



Figure 5.28 Utterance 14 'n'iru mo' [some correlation]



Figure 5.29 Utterance 15 'nne mu' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.30 Utterance 16 'nna mu' [some correlation]

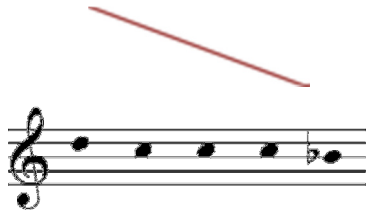


Figure 5.31 Utterance 17 'a lawala m'u-' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.32 Utterance 18 '-rio' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.33 Utterance 19 'inine' [no correlation]



Figure 5.34 Utterance 20 'Nwa diogo' [some correlation]



Figure 5.35 Utterance 21 'n'egbuke' [strong correlation]

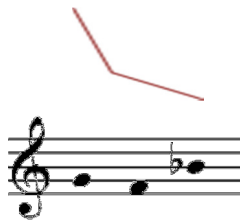


Figure 5.36 Utterance 22 'n'acha' [some correlation]

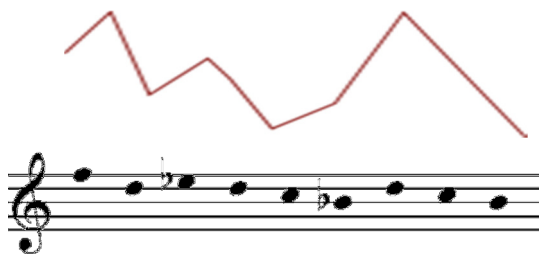


Figure 5.37 Utterance 23 'le ka chi mu si cho mu mma' [strong correlation]

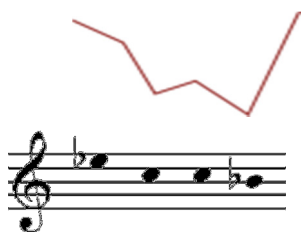


Figure 5.38 Utterance 24 'nwa di mma e' [some correlation]

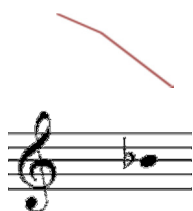


Figure 5.39 Utterance 25 'O' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.40 Utterance 26 'inine' [no correlation]

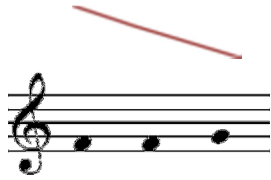


Figure 5.41 Utterance 27 'inine' [no correlation]



Figure 5.42 Utterance 28 'uri le' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.43 Utterance 29 'inugo' [some correlation]



Figure 5.44 Utterance 30 'nwa diogo' [some correlation]



Figure 5.45 Utterance 31 'n'egbuke' [strong correlation]



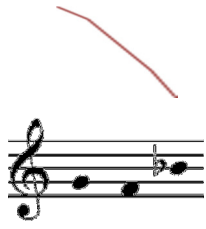


Figure 5.46 Utterance 32 'n'a cha' [some correlation]

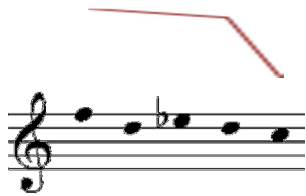


Figure 5.47 Utterance 33 'le ka chi mu' [some correlation]

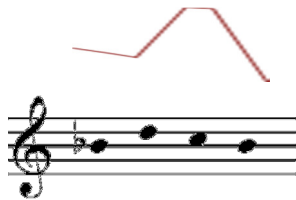


Figure 5.48 Utterance 34 'si cho mu mma' [some correlation]

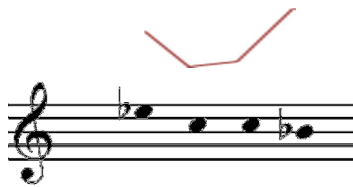


Figure 5.49 Utterance 35 'nwa di mma o' [some correlation]



Figure 5.50 Utterance 36 'Nne mu' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.51 Utterance 37 'Nna mu' [strong correlation]

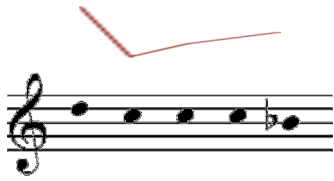


Figure 5.52 Utterance 38 'a lwala m'u-' [some correlation]



Figure 5.53 Utterance 39 '-rio' [strong correlation]

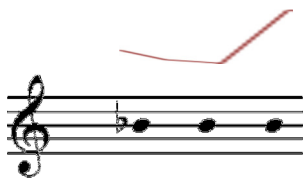


Figure 5.54 Utterance 40 'inine' [no correlation]



Figure 5.55 Utterance 41 'Ewo' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.56 Utterance 42 'nna mu' [some correlation]

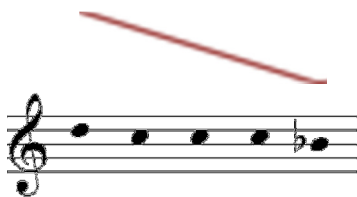


Figure 5.57 Utterance 43 'a lawala m'u-' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.58 Utterance 44 '-rio' [strong correlation]

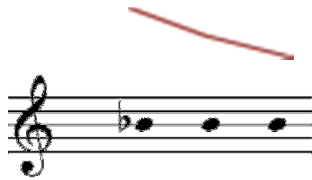


Figure 5.59 Utterance 45 'inine' [no correlation]

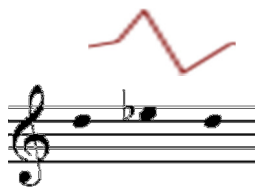


Figure 5.60 Utterance 46 'Le o' [some correlation]



Figure 5.61 Utterance 47 'le o' [some correlation]

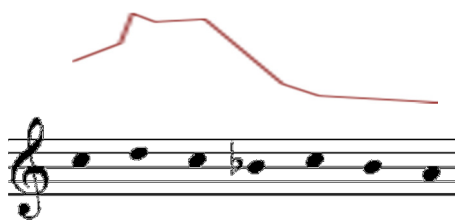


Figure 5.62 Utterance 48 'urinne ji cho mum' [strong correlation]

<sup>5</sup> This shape was copied and pasted from figure 5.60, because the computer software did not pick up the utterance at all. The utterance was indeed identical to 5.60.

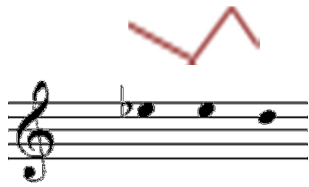


Figure 5.63 Utterance 49 'n'iru mo' [no correlation]



Figure 5.64 Utterance 50 'nne mu' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.65 Utterance 51 'nna mu' [some correlation]



Figure 5.66 Utterance 52 'a lawala m'u-' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.67 Utterance 53 '-rio' [strong correlation]

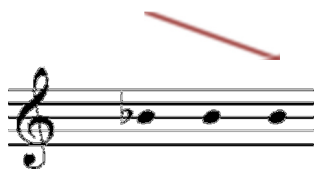


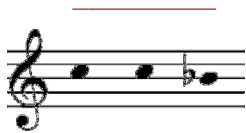
Figure 5.68 Utterance 54 'inine' [no correlation]



**Figure 5.69 Utterance 55 'E'** [strong correlation]



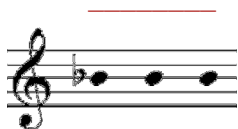
**Figure 5.70 Utterance 56 'gba'** [strong correlation]



**Figure 5.71 Utterance 57 'owe yio'** [some correlation]



**Figure 5.72 Utterance 58 'O'** [strong correlation]



**Figure 5.73 Utterance 59 'inine'** [strong correlation]

(text and notes: Onyeji, 2008: 10-12)

**Ephraim Amu's 'Bonwerε Kentεjwene'**



**Figure 5.74 Utterance 1, verse 1 'Akyinkyin'** [some correlation]



Figure 5.75 Utterance 1, verse 2 'Kenteḡwene dwom yi' [some correlation]

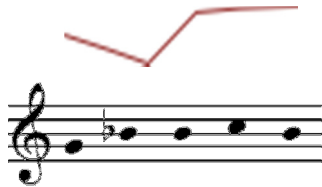


Figure 5.76 Utterance 1, verse 3 'Ohuo ni mmɔbɔ' [some correlation]

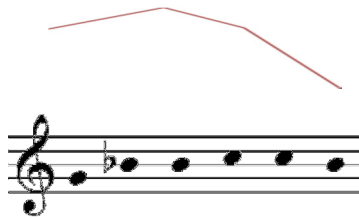


Figure 5.77 Utterance 1, verse 4 'Mankye Bonwere hɔ' [some correlation]

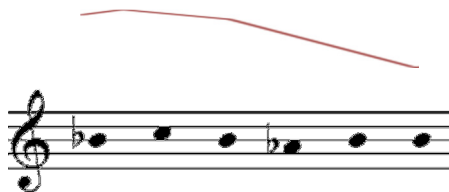


Figure 5.78 Utterance 2, verse 1 'ama mahũ nneɛma' [some correlation]

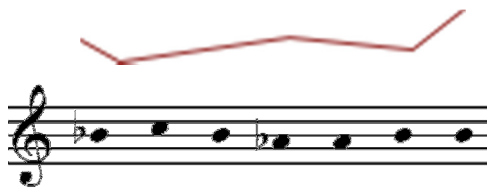


Figure 5.79 Utterance 2, verse 2 'afa madwene denneḡ' [some correlation]

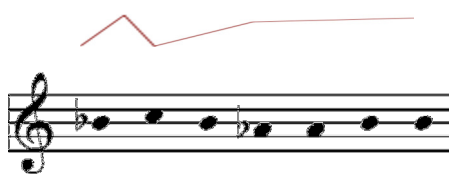


Figure 5.80 Utterance 2, verse 3 'ante mase ara de' [some correlation]

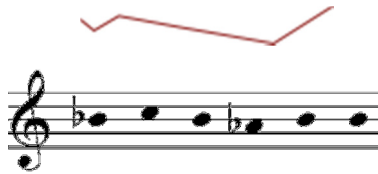


Figure 5.81 Utterance 2, verse 4 'na mesan mebaa fie' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.82 Utterance 3, verse 1 'Akyinkyin akyinkyin' [strong correlation]

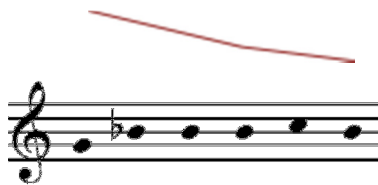


Figure 5.83 Utterance 3, verse 2 'Ba biara a mɛfa' [no correlation]

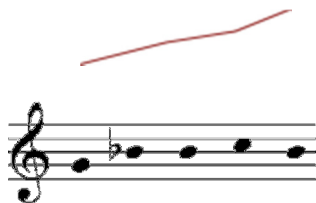


Figure 5.84 Utterance 3, verse 3 'Nansõ ɔbɔɔ mmɔdeŋ' [some correlation]

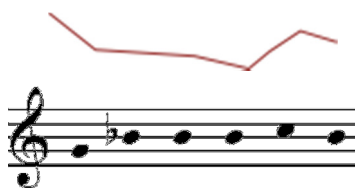


Figure 5.85 Utterance 3, verse 4 'Me dwom no ye nnipa' [some correlation]

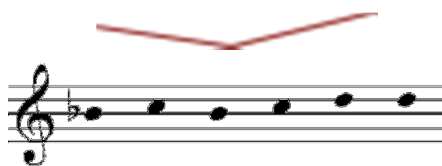


Figure 5.86 Utterance 4, verse 1 'ama mate nɛmaa' [some correlation]



Figure 5.87 Utterance 4, verse 2 ‘mereto no dennen’ [some correlation]

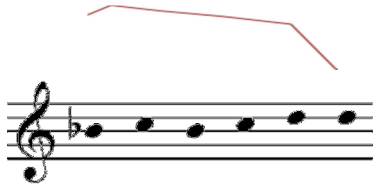


Figure 5.88 Utterance 4, verse 3 ‘γεε hō biara māa me’ [no correlation]

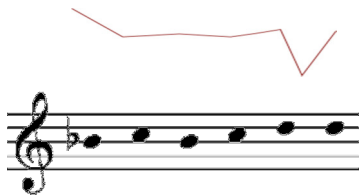


Figure 5.89 Utterance 4, verse 4 ‘pii de na wope atie’ [no correlation]



Figure 5.90 Utterance 5, verse 1 ‘Asante Bonwers kente ηwene’ [strong correlation]

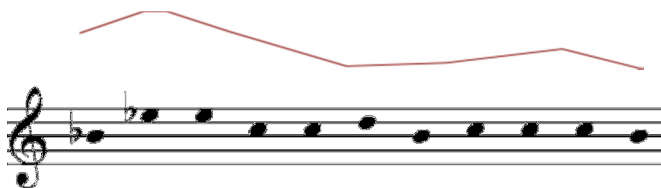


Figure 5.91 Utterance 5, verse 2 ‘Na nnipa a wohūu me nyinaa hūi sē’ [strong correlation]



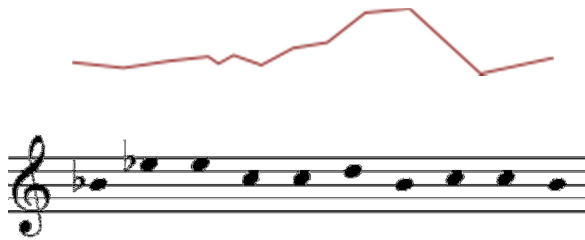


Figure 5.92 Utterance 5, verse 3 ‘Ōmaa me ηkateηkwan pa bi di’ [some correlation]



Figure 5.93 Utterance 5, verse 4 ‘Ēmaa manigyeei pii σε manya’ [strong correlation]



Figure 5.94 Utterance 6, verse 1 ‘minhũu bi da o’ [some correlation]

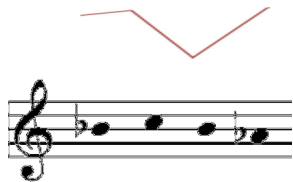


Figure 5.95 Utterance 6, verse 2 ‘asem da me so’ [some correlation]

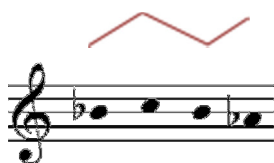


Figure 5.96 Utterance 6, verse 3 ‘mee pa ara’ [some correlation]



Figure 5.97 Utterance 6, verse 4 ‘bribi pa rekɔ’ [strong correlation]

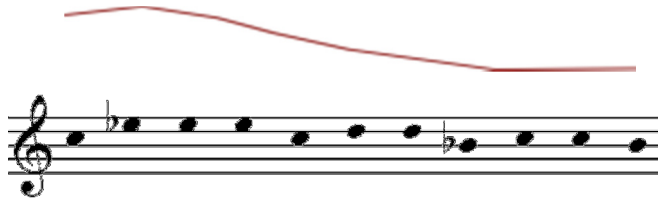


Figure 5.98 Utterance 7, verse 1 'Asante Bonwers kente ηwene' [some correlation]

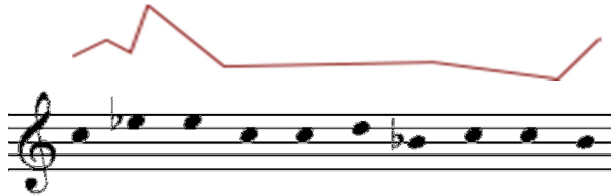


Figure 5.99 Utterance 7, verse 2 'Na mehō γεε wαη ηwōnwā ma wα-' [some correlation]



Figure 5.100 Utterance 7, verse 3 'Na ne dεw maa me werεfii me' [strong correlation]

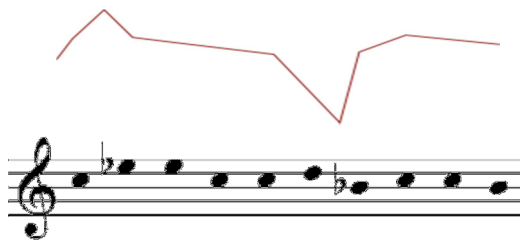


Figure 5.101 Utterance 7, verse 4 'Na miduu fie πε meekω ahenfie' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.102 Utterance 8, verse 1 'mentee bi da o' [some correlation]



Figure 5.103 Utterance 8, verse 2 '-bεkyeree me so' [no correlation]

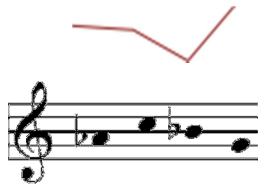


Figure 5.104 Utterance 8, verse 3 ‘dwom no kakra’ [no correlation]



Figure 5.105 Utterance 8, verse 4 ‘anente sebo’ [some correlation]



Figure 5.106 Utterance 9, verse 1 ‘Kwame’ [strong correlation]



Figure 5.107 Utterance 9, verse 2 ‘Eno’ [strong correlation]



Figure 5.108 Utterance 9 verse 3 ‘Omaa me’ [some correlation]



Figure 5.109 Utterance 9, verse 4 ‘Mmrante’ [some correlation]

<sup>6</sup> Refer back to footnote 3 (p. 185) regarding ‘upsweep’.



Figure 5.110 Utterance 10, verse 1 'Onim adeε yɔ' [some correlation]



Figure 5.111 Utterance 10, verse 2 'Ohũo ni mmɔbɔ' [no correlation]



Figure 5.112 Utterance 10, verse 3 'baabi pa daε' [no correlation]

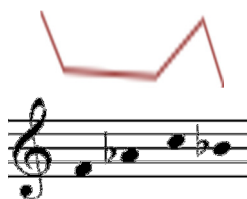


Figure 5.113 Utterance 10, verse 4 'nè mmabaa hè' [some correlation]

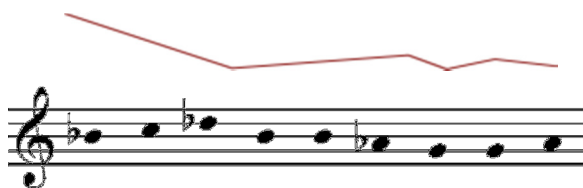


Figure 5.114 Utterance 11, verse 1 'ne kente ηwene n'abɔ me gye' [no correlation]



Figure 5.115 Utterance 11, verse 2 'bεfaa me kɔε kɔsεε ne fi' [no correlation]

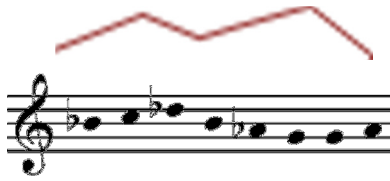


Figure 5.116 Utterance 11, verse 3 'ɔdasum pɛme bɔɔ dagye' [some correlation]



Figure 5.117 Utterance 11, verse 4 'ɲkwa koraa mmerewa nè mmɔfra' [some correlation]



Figure 5.118 Utterance 12, verse 1 'Ne nsa' [strong correlation]

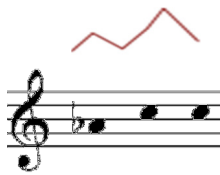


Figure 5.119 Utterance 12, verse 2 'N'ɔpataa' [some correlation]



Figure 5.120 Utterance 12, verse 3 'Kente-' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.121 Utterance 12, verse 4 'Wɔbae' [no correlation]



Figure 5.122 Utterance 13, verse 1 'ne naŋ' [no correlation]



Figure 5.123 Utterance 13, verse 2 'me ara' [no correlation]



Figure 5.124 Utterance 13, verse 3 '-ŋwene dwom' [no correlation]



Figure 5.125 Utterance 13, verse 4 'beboae' [no correlation]



Figure 5.126 Utterance 14, verse 1 'ne nsɛdua' [some correlation]



Figure 5.127 Utterance 14, verse 2 'bisaa me' [no correlation]



Figure 5.128 Utterance 14, verse 3 'koro yi ara' [no correlation]



Figure 5.129 Utterance 14, verse 4 'Woŋ nyinaara' [no correlation]

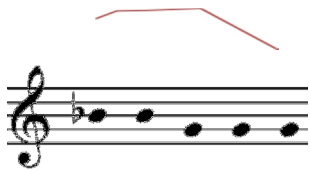


Figure 5.130 Utterance 15, verse 1 'sɛ wogyi gye ni' [some correlation]

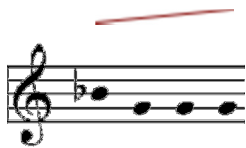


Figure 5.131 Utterance 15, verse 2 'ma nantese' [no correlation]

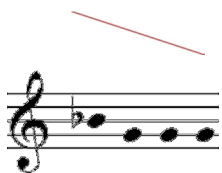


Figure 5.132 Utterance 15, verse 3 'na mereto' [strong correlation]



Figure 5.133 Utterance 15, verse 4 'bɛkyeree me so' [strong correlation]

[text and notes: Amu, d.u.: 2-4)

## Conclusion

In Akin Euba's 'Mo lè j'iyán yo' (Yoruba), I have found there to be a correlation between the speech curve and the melodic curve in almost 85% (11/13) of utterances. In almost 46% (6/13) of the utterances this correlation is strong. In about 15% (2/13) of utterances I did not find a correlation between the speech curve and the melodic curve. In Christian Onyeji's 'Inine' (Igbo), I have found there to be a correlation between the speech curve and the melodic curve in about 88% (52/59) of utterances. In almost 36% (21/59) of utterances this correlation is strong. In about 12% (7/59) of utterances I did not find a correlation between the speech curve and the melodic curve. In Ephraim Amu's 'Bonwerè Kentejwene', when all four verses are taken together, I have found there to be a correlation between the speech curve and the melodic curve in about 68% (41/60) of utterances. In about 23% of cases this correlation is strong. In almost 32% (19/60) of utterances I have found there to be no correlation between the speech curve and the melodic curve. The results for verse 1 are: almost 87% (13/15) correlation; almost 27% (4/15) strong correlation; and about 13% (2/15) no correlation. The results for verse 2 are: about 53% (8/15) correlation; about 13% (2/15) strong correlation; and almost 47% (7/15) no correlation. The results for verse 3 are: almost 67% correlation; 20% (3/15) strong correlation; and about 33% no correlation. The results for verse 4 are: about 73% (11/15) correlation; about 33% (5/15) strong correlation; and almost 27% (4/15) no correlation.

When comparing the results of the Yoruba and Igbo songs, it is safe to say that in both Euba's and Onyeji's pieces, the general correlation percentage is high. In the case of Onyeji's piece, however, the *strong* correlation percentage is lower than in the case of Euba's piece. It may therefore be feasible to posit that Onyeji's piece is more indicative of the 'correct, but not slavish' approach summarized by Schellenberg above, and to which both Euba and Onyeji ascribe. The correlations in Euba's song are, in other words, more often exact. Keeping the statements on Amu in mind, the results of this investigation are surprising. It is perhaps not productive to read too much into the average correlation percentage (which is much lower than for the other songs, as it is dragged down by the low percentages for verses 2 to 4), but to look at verse 1 in the first place: as confirmed by Agawu, the general correlation percentage is much higher than in the other verses, but surprisingly, it is about the same as those in Euba and Onyeji's songs. Most surprising is that the *strong* correlation percentage is the highest in verse 4.

One may conclude that my investigation has served to prove that Euba's and Onyeji's views regarding tonal language text setting correspond with their settings of texts in such languages (in the cases examined). It has further served to point out a difference in the extent to which these composers practice the view on tonal language text setting that they share. In the case of Amu, my investigation has found the setting to adhere less strongly to the contours of speech than the discourse had led me to believe it would. The investigation confirmed my suspicion that the largest percentage of adherence to speech contours would be in verse 1 of the song in question, but surprised me by revealing the largest percentage of strong correlations to be elsewhere. In terms of drawing larger conclusions, this investigation at least confirms that the composers' settings of text in tonal languages are indeed not indifferent to the requirements of speech tone. It may even be considered a *sensibility* – the



sensibility of the mother-tongue tonal language speaker – that may be present in melody beyond the presence of linguistic text. Where it is non-slavish to linguistic requirements but still detectable, this in fact confirms its status as a sensibility. The promotion of the requirement to strongly adhere to the requirements of tonal languages by earlier scholars and composers may be read as an act of activism – the strong assertion of emancipation from western models. I believe that the contemporary claiming of a more ‘mellow’ approach in fact makes a stronger assertion: it claims the right to be both cosmopolitan and local (where the term ‘local’ references a positive connection to a cultural or historical heritage).

## Chapter 6 The African expatriate composer as diplomat



**Figure 6.1** *The Ambassadors* by Hans Holbein (1533) (Wikimedia Commons, 2013: online)

*The diplomat with his grand manner, adorned in proper costume, and displaying gifts and artefacts from foreign lands.*

## Introduction

Mary Hervey's *Holbein's 'Ambassadors'* (1900) established the field for research on this painting (Kenaan, 2002: 63). In the introduction to this work she wrote the following (quoted in Kenaan, 2002: 63):

It is impossible to repress the question, what manner of men were these? Or to resist the desire to know how far the actual circumstances of their lives explain the choice of the many striking objects with which they are seen surrounded.

It is exactly these questions on manner and choice of objects which inspired the readings in this chapter. If the expatriate African composer is seen as a diplomat (in other words, outward-directedness is taken as a premise), how might one interpret their display of the 'objects' of cultural affiliation? In this regard it is important to note that Kenaan (2002: 61), in addition to the collection of emblematic objects in the painting, points out the anamorphic composition that 'disrupts the placidity of the foreground'. I will return to these references to Holbein's painting in due course.

According to Fosler-Lussier (2012: 55), 'diplomatic historians have thoroughly charted the political motivations for carving the channel (why), but until recently they have attended less to the nuanced international relationships created by musicians (how).'<sup>1</sup> In this chapter I will, in broad terms, attempt to contribute to the 'how' through an investigation of contemporary art songs by the African expatriate composers Fred Onovwerosuoke (U.S.A.-Nigeria/Ghana) and Robert Fokkens (U.K.-South Africa). In this introduction, a brief sojourn into general diplomatic theory will be followed by an overview of selected literature on music and diplomacy. Although sources that show how intercultural musical diplomacy is exercised in compositions within the borders of a multicultural country do exist, this aspect of musical diplomacy is not under consideration here.<sup>2</sup>

Hamilton and Langhorne (1995:1) attribute the skills of mediation, negotiation and representation to diplomats. When interpreting these skills as tasks of the expatriate composer, the distinction between mediation and negotiation is somewhat ambiguous. If one considers that the satisfactory negotiation of an identity in this context requires mediation between a composer's 'heritage' and the 'new', the former clearly forms part of the latter. The necessity for mediation is highlighted by Moore (1985: 14), when he says that the third-world diplomat in the first world (his terms) face the dilemma of having to choose between 'adopt[ing] the "grand manner" at the risk of being untrue to his country's condition, or [...] forgo[ing] that manner at the risk of going unnoticed within the host country.' In due course, I will argue that this 'grand manner' – the expected, but at the same time carefully calculated way of the diplomat – is also to be found in the music of the African expatriate composer. Credible representation is, according to Constantinou (1996: 22), the primary function of the diplomat, and also the focus in this chapter. Constantinou continues to say that this credibility

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<sup>1</sup> 'Carving the channel' refers to the act of creating diplomatic relationships.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Aaron Corn's article 'Land, song, constitution: Exploring expressions of ancestral agency, intercultural diplomacy and family legacy in the music of Yothu Yindi with Mandawuy Yunupinu' (2010).

needs to be accredited: ‘Just as ambassadors are required to present their credentials before they can represent, diplomatic representation also needs to be credited itself with establishing a foreign presence’ (Constantinou, 1996: 22). Diplomatic credibility in the chosen compositions, read in the context of this quote, does not rely on the reader of this dissertation’s belief in the representative agency of the choice of musical content that the composer had chosen to establish a foreign presence, but merely on the *possibility* of its power as foreign representation.

In summary, a reading of scores in the context of diplomacy does not tell us how musical identities are formed in the context of displacement or exile, but rather how we perceive those composers to portray an unstable concept of foreignness – being ‘African’ – in nuanced manners that allow acceptance with specific target audiences, and the influence that this may have on those audiences.<sup>3</sup> The premise for the music functioning in this way is the assumption that the making of certain aesthetic choices in an unstable context is a political act (whether implicit or explicit, with the word ‘political’ used in its broadest sense) rather than purely being a matter of taste.<sup>4</sup>

In a *New York Times* article entitled ‘In Trinidad, “calypso diplomacy with a beat”’ (McClane, 1991: p.C3(L)), Daisann McClane recalls when the rebel leader Yasin Abu Bakr attempted a coup in Trinidad and Tobago the previous year (1990) and, among other things, took over the broadcasting studios and let his rebel group Jamaat al Muslimeen play ‘continuous videos of politically aware calypso singers [...]’. She also refers to the lyrics in the calypso music of Cro Cro (‘one of the best lyricists of Trinidad’s younger generation’), as well as his performance rhetoric, that present the other side of the political coin in post-coup society. In Penny M. von Eschen’s *Satchmo blows up the world: Jazz Ambassadors play the cold war* (Von Eschen, 2004), the author looks at the importance of jazz as a propaganda tool of the American government in the cold war era, a time during which the cultural productions of African-Americans were often viewed negatively domestically in the United States (Ford, 2004: 544). Danielle Fosler-Lussier, in her article ‘Music Pushed, Music Pulled: Cultural Diplomacy, Globalization, and Imperialism’ (Fosler-Lussier, 2012), challenges the notion that cultural diplomacy necessarily leads to cultural imperialism by referring to instances where the American government made musical materials available to citizens at their request in countries where such materials were banned or countercultural. The case of western avant-garde music in Eastern Europe in the 1950s and 1960s is, among others, given as an example (Fosler-Lussier, 2012: 60). Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht traces the export of German music to the United States in the nineteenth century, in her book *Sound Diplomacy: Music and emotions in transatlantic relations* (Gienow-Hecht, 2009). In this book she also explores the shared aesthetic ideology that made German music (especially symphonic music) very transferable to the United States, but also how this impacted on America’s link to Germany (Daub, 2011: 154). Joseph L. Jones studies the informal and formal role of hip-hop music in American public diplomacy in his doctoral dissertation *Hegemonic rhythms: The role of hip-hop music in 21<sup>st</sup>-century American public diplomacy* (Jones, 2009: online) through an

<sup>3</sup> See chapter one of Stephanie Vos’s master’s thesis, *Exploring displacement as a theoretical paradigm for understanding John Joubert’s opera Silas Marner* (2009) for a detailed discussion of the discourse on music and displacement/exile.

<sup>4</sup> This statement has been informed by the last paragraph on p.102 in Fokkens, 2004.

interpretation of (non-musical) data analyses. In ‘World music at the BBC World Service, 1942-1948’ (Toynbee and Vis, 2010), Jason Toynbee and Farida Vis examine programming changes at this service during three historical periods, from the Second World War to the present (2010), in order to see how the music broadcasted served to influence international political views. McClane (1991), Von Eschen (2004), Fosler-Lussier (2012), Gienow-Hecht (2009), Jones (2009), and Toynbee and Vis (2010) share a common characteristic in their research: they all refer to specific musical genres, their associations (be it to a nation, race, social class or something else) and the processes through which these exercised political influence.

We now turn our attention to sources that highlight another kind of diplomacy. In a press release by the U.S. State Department (2010: online) in the *States News Service* on an upcoming tour of the Middle East of American country and pop singer-songwriter Kareem Salama (‘U.S. public diplomacy through music: Kareem Salama tours Middle East’), it is stated that this tour, by an American of Middle Eastern heritage, ‘is designed to bring to audiences in the Middle East a rising American talent, representative of America’s diversity of faith and heritage [...]’ In an article in the *New York Times* called ‘Korean music diplomacy’ (Wakin, 2011: p.C3(L)), Daniel J. Wakin reports on the director of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, Myung-whun Chung’s plans for assembling an orchestra of musicians from both North and South Korea, for performances in Seoul and Pyongyang. This model reminds one of Edward Said and Daniel Barenboim’s West-Eastern Divan Orchestra (established in 1999), of which an equal number of Israeli and Arab musicians form the base. According to its website (West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, 2012: online) the orchestra ‘has proved time and again that music can break down barriers previously considered insurmountable.’ The U.S. State Department’s press release (2010), Wakin (2011) and the information given on the website of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra (2012) focus on the diplomacy exercised by the international *role* of musicians of a certain nationality or ethnic origin, rather than on the music that is performed.

From the above it is clear that this discourse has thus far not contemplated how international diplomacy can be exercised through composition (in other words, through a consideration of exact musical content, rather than through general references to genre), nor on ‘developing nation diplomacy’ exercised by musicians who have moved to the ‘centre’ (rather than on cultural imperialism exercised by developed nations). In this chapter, brief biographies of the composers will be followed by discussions on the reasons for selecting the works in question for an interrogation in the context of diplomacy. The composer-specific conclusions that follow the general descriptions of the works will be followed by a short, general conclusion at the end of the chapter.

### **Fred Onovwerosuoke’s *Twelve African songs***

Fred Onovwerosuoke was born in Ghana in 1960 to Nigerian parents (Hymes-Onovwerosuoke, 2008: 20). He grew up in Ghana and Nigeria, and eventually settled in the United States (Onovwerosuoke, 2012a: online). His early musical training was as a primary school choir boy in Ghana. He directed numerous choirs and an orchestra at tertiary institutions in Nigeria from the late 1970s where his concerts included ‘works by the early

masters, including Palestrina, Byrd, Handel, Bach, Haydn, and Mozart alongside works by African composers' (Hymes-Onovwerosuoke, 2007: 16). According to Kirchherr (c.2007: online) Onovwerosuoke went to the United States in 1990, where he founded the St. Louis African Chorus in Missouri in 1994. He graduated with a research PhD from the Union Institute and University in the United States in 2005 (Hymes-Onovwerosuoke, 2007: 17, 60). Despite this composer's versatility (he has written works for numerous settings, from works for solo piano and flute, to works for string quartet, other ensembles and large orchestra (Onovwerosuoke, 2012a: online), most of Onovwerosuoke's compositional output, according to Hymes-Onovwerosuoke (2007: 17), is for choir. He made his Hollywood debut with the inclusion of a choral chant in the 2006 Robert de Niro film *The Good Shepherd* (Kirchherr, c.2007: online). Apart from the collection that is the focus of this discussion, the solo voice is featured prominently in Onovwerosuoke's cantata-like *Meditation for Darfur* for string orchestra, percussion, harp, mezzo-soprano and treble choir (Onovwerosuoke, 2012a: online, Onovwerosuoke, 2012b: online).

The reasons for selecting *Twelve African Songs for Solo Voice and Piano* (a collection, rather than a cycle, and of which only ten are by Onovwerosuoke himself) for consideration in the context of music and diplomacy are to be found in certain claims made about this music by the composer. These include the statement that it was his aim, for the first time in a collection by himself, to present a pan-African musical perspective by 'accentuat[ing] a unique cultural perspective and provid[ing] new insights into the concept of melody, harmony, rhythmic and overall musical organization' in each song (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: v). He continues to say that it was a challenge to present pieces that display a familiar concept of structure and form, but that are also 'uniquely nuanced in new ideas and refreshing rhythms for which much of African-derived music has earned its mark' (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: v). These claims will be commented on in the conclusion to this section. The five works from this collection that are discussed below have been chosen to display both a range of different compositional approaches as well as recurring musical characteristics, without unnecessary repetition.

'Duniya'

Peace be upon you  
Behold, God's universe  
Of God, the Merciful  
God's universe is beyond  
understanding, Merciful God  
Great God  
Grand designs, perpetual,  
and forever

(Onovwerosuoke, 2011: ix)

The composer states the following regarding the traditions whence 'Duniya' derives (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: vi):

*Duniya* taps from the *griot* vocal traditions from the Mali/SeneGambia sub-region of West Africa, and draws accompaniment ideas from the four-string *kontingo* and the robust low drones of the also multi-stringed *kemelangoni*.

As this statement suggests, only four pitches are employed in the left hand of the piano accompaniment: A, C, D and E. No key signature is given and the tonal centre is A. In the accompaniment, the latter is evident from the drone-like duplet figure (in 6/8 time) in the right hand – probably an imitation of the *kemelangoni* – that has A at its centre, as well as from the single-voice left-hand figure that has A as its melodic destination. Other than the addition of the occasional F or G, or octave doubling in the right-hand figure, the accompaniment

‘Duniya’

Alisalam aleka  
 Fa, duni y’Allah  
 Al lah sum l’lahi  
 Fa, duni ya, lon man di  
 Al la sum ilahi  
 Alla, akubar!

E, kuba jama le  
 Tambita wala sum

(Onovwerosuoke, 2011: ix)

is repetitive. The voice part is declamatory in character, as the imitation of griot vocal traditions would require. Grace notes figures serve as ornamentation throughout (see figures 6.2 and 6.3). The vocal range is fairly narrow (D<sub>4</sub> to F#<sub>5</sub>) if one considers the target performer to be a singer trained in the western classical tradition.<sup>5</sup> Augmented fourths stand out as the only melodic dissonance in what is otherwise a diatonic melody that is easy to sing. The vocal material seems to be constructed from the two whole-tone scales C-D-E-F# and Eb-F-G-A-B-C#, sometimes used in combination and the structure is a type of binary form (A-A-B-B). The A-section is repeated exactly, but the repetition of the B-section is varied by, for example, rhythmic changes in the voice part. Also, the second vocal statement from the A-section used in the latter part of the first appearance of the B-section is replaced by new vocal material in the repetition of the B-section in order to facilitate an ending.

Figure 6.2 Bars 5-8, ‘Duniya’ (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 12)

Figure 6.3 Bars 37-40, ‘Duniya’ (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 14)

<sup>5</sup> No voice designation is given in the score (Onovwerosuoke, 2011), although the singer on the recording (Hudson, 2011) is Marliisa Hudson, a soprano trained in the western classical tradition. This will be commented on in the conclusion to this section.

‘Esato’

Are these ripe fruits I see?  
 Eight peaches, juicy ripe  
 Ripe, juicy ripe  
 Eight peaches/fruits  
 Peaches fair and ready/mature  
 What’s stops us from plucking  
 Then comes this one  
 Please let my wish come true  
 Fair/ripe peaches, mature

(Onovwerosuoke, 2011: ix)

‘Esato’

Ogini tchatoro ne lu?  
 Utuisa toeil,  
 Ye ghe, ye ghe  
 Utuisato  
 Utu characha!  
 Ogini nu’o na kpotu no,  
 O bia no chato ko,  
 Chato ko, biko’e,  
 Utu chara cha

(Onovwerosuoke, 2011: ix)

‘Esato’ is based on a whimsical Igbo (Nigerian) lament (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: vi, 15). This song consists of two main sections: a shorter, slow section in common time (see figure 6.4), followed by a longer, fast section in 5/4 time (see figure 6.5). The slow section is reprised, which gives the song a simple A-B-A ternary structure. The slow section is introduced by an exaggerated, operatic tremolo figure in the piano accompaniment, followed by a succession of arpeggiated chords. (Compare this with the description of the piano accompaniment in ‘Luwah’). This, in combination with the declamatory voice part, creates the effect of a recitative. The quintuple accompaniment rhythm in the fast section, famous from The Dave Brubeck Quartet’s 1959 recording of Paul Desmond’s *Take Five*, remains consistent throughout (Gallow, 2012: online). In this section, the whimsical,

mocking character of the song – perhaps literally the playful chasing of the village ladies by the men, as alluded to in the text – is embodied in the melody through large, fast-moving leaps, most often in the form of grace notes.<sup>6</sup> Although the melody only ranges from C<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>5</sub>, the chromaticism and fast-moving leaps make it a considerable challenge to sing. One may consider the monotone figures that move from C<sub>b</sub> to C in bars 43 to 46 to be a tone painting of ripening (see figure 6.5). The key signature is that of A<sub>b</sub> major, with A<sub>b</sub> also the tonal centre suggested by the melodic and harmonic movement in the A-section. Series of extended, chromatically altered tertian chords obscure the suggested tonality and reinforce the jazz character suggested by the rhythmic ostinato in the B-section.



<sup>6</sup> Onovwerosuoke (2011: vi) explains the meaning of the text as follows: ‘It alludes to ripe fruits ready for harvest, but only metaphorically. Of the eight village beauties [...], none is easily accessible, thus a man must find the means to win love or keep daydreaming.’





**Figure 6.4** Bars 1-10, 'Esato' (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 15)



**Figure 6.5** Bars 39-45, 'Esato' (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 17)

'Herero folktales'

The gently galloping horse  
Of the Himba farmer  
Oh, Mother is very ill  
What can we do?  
What to do?  
A little child wanders  
In the mountains  
The hour is late

(Onovwerosuoke, 2011: ix)

In 'Herero folktales', Onovwerosuoke attempts to weave together three folk songs (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: v), presumably all of Herero (Namibian) origin. The larger structural outline of this song (A-B-A-C-B-A) reminds of an adapted Rondo form favoured by Mozart (Rondo [It.], 2003: online). A more detailed outline may look like this:

A-A-A<sub>1</sub>-A<sub>1</sub>- B-B-A<sub>1</sub>-A<sub>3</sub>-C-B-A<sub>1</sub>-A<sub>3</sub>

The key signature is that of F major, and F is also the implied tonal centre. Accidentals in both the voice part and the accompaniment seem to be the seventh in V<sub>7</sub>/ IV in F major, rather than being blues inflections (as in most of the other pieces discussed). The thin-textured piano accompaniment is

## 'Herero folktales'

Itupuka kembep  
 Jomundu Omuhimba  
 Mama uandje'  
 vere tjinene  
 eye uavera, vere tji  
 Okanatje, okatiti,  
 Oketamba Okatiti  
 Kuketamba Mopanaje

(Onovwerosuoke, 2011: ix)

descriptive in its portrayal of the galloping horseman mentioned in the text (see figure 6.6). Series of accented non-harmonic notes in the right hand of the piano accompaniment create an illusion of harmonic independence between the voice part and the accompaniment which lends the music an air of post-tonal modernity. The parallel fourth harmonies in the piano accompaniment in bars 35 and 36, which could be labelled Africanisms, are a rarity (see figure 6.7).<sup>7</sup> Although the given time signature is 2/4, rhythms are notated in triplets throughout most of the piece, which gives to it the feeling of a fast 6/8. The exception to this is the second halves of bars in the B-sections (mostly in the voice part), where the three-against-four grouping creates a cross-rhythmic texture (see figure 6.8). The other exception can be seen in the piano accompaniment in the *molto lento* C-section. This section stands in opposition to the

rest of the piece in terms of its solemn character, and in terms of its texture (block chords in the right hand of the piano accompaniment against a repeating pedal point on F in the left, see figure 6.9). The repetitive, folk-like melody is easy to sing and is, unlike the piano accompaniment, entirely diatonic. The voice part ranges from D<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>5</sub>.

Figure 6.6 Bars 5-9, 'Herero folktales' (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 18)

Figure 6.7 Bars 34-38, 'Herero folktales' (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 19)

<sup>7</sup> According to Nketia (1975: 161) '[i]n addition to polarity, homophonic parallelism in thirds and fourths is used in some African societies.'

91 *A tempo Andante* ♩ = 80 (♩ = ♩.)

*f* Ma-ma uan-dje've re tji - ne - ne Ma-ma uan-dje've-re tji - ne - ne e - ye ua-ve-ra,ve-re tji

*mp*

Figure 6.8 Bars 91-95, 'Herero folktales' (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 22)

72 *molto lento* (♩ = 48)

ka - na - tje, o - ka - ti - ti, O - ke - tam - ba O - ka - ti - ti

*pp*

Figure 6.9 Bars 72-78, 'Herero folktales' (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 21)

<p>'Luwah'</p> <p>Hear my lament I've never cried Like this before Hear my lament This great loss Saddens me And startles me</p> <p>(Onovwerosuoke, 2011: x)</p>
--

'Luwah' is a dirge, with a text based on a Mokpe-Bakweri (Cameroonian) folk tale (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: v, 31). This 3/4 strophic piece is so short that larger structural coherence is not a relevant consideration. The texture of the piano accompaniment is chordal throughout and most chords have an arpeggio indication, which creates the effect of a recitative accompaniment (see figure 6.10). Despite this, the melody is flowing and lyrical. The key – according to the key signature and the tonal centre suggested by the melodic movement – is c minor. However, the leading tone of this key is never sharpened in the vocal line, which lends to it an Aeolian character. The vocal range is very narrow, stretching only from Bb<sub>4</sub> to D<sub>5</sub>, and should be easy to sing. In the accompaniment, the indicated key is obscured by numerous accidentals, all of which can be seen as

forming part of either C or Eb blues scales.

‘Luwah’

Lu wah'e  
Wu laaszre na zhi  
whiyelu we  
Lu wah'e  
E kweli yenga na,  
Na lute ya;  
Nanga na ka ma

(Onovwerosuoke, 2011: x)

‘Ne Nkansu’

Mother Earth owns the herbs  
That feed, heal  
And make whole

(Onovwerosuoke, 2011: x)

‘Ne Nkansu’

Ne'Nkansu dima,  
Weiyo, mameh, paeh  
Ne'Nkansu eh  
Ne kubuko dima  
Ne kubuko eh  
Dima, dima'nsobuela

(Onovwerosuoku, 2011: x)

**Figure 6.10 Bars 1-6, ‘Luwah’** (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 31)

According to the composer, he based ‘Ne Nkansu’ on a Banda (Central African Republic) ‘forest people’ healing dance and chant (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: vi). This chanting quality is realized through a fast, *moto perpetuo* 9/8 rhythm, divided into groupings of 3 + 6 throughout (see figure 6.11). The melodic and harmonic material is mostly repeated, rather than developed, reinforcing the effect of a chant. The piece has an A-B-A structure with an Ab major key signature, to which the material unambiguously adhere. The only accidental to appear in the piano accompaniment is Gb. The voice part contains one Gb and one Cb, the latter in the form of a grace note. These accidentals (the lowered third and seventh scale degrees in Ab major) are all blues inflections. Except for these inflections, the melody is entirely diatonic, small in range (Db<sub>4</sub> to Gb<sub>5</sub>) and easy to sing. The melody is somewhat block-like – there is no over-the-barline writing, as it mostly adheres to the 3 + 6 grouping (see figure 6.12). The *moto perpetuo* rhythmic ostinato, in combination with the Blues inflections, reminds of an African-American Gospel song.

One can make a number of deductions from the descriptions given above. In all the songs described, the mood suggested by the music is an interpretation of the text that is understandable in conventional western terms. The same can be said of the examples of tone painting highlighted in ‘Esato’ and ‘Herero folktales’. (This is not to say that the

relations between semantics and musical conventions in African music are necessarily different; only that in this case it is not purposefully defiant of western norms.) Repetitive figures – with their strong popular connection to precolonial black African musics – are cordoned off by conventional western structural forms. The vocal ranges of the songs are fairly narrow. Most chromatic alterations are found in the piano accompaniments and therefore (with perhaps the exception of ‘Esato’) voice parts should be easy to sing. These

characteristics of the vocal line reinforce the idea of ‘folklikeness’. Conversely, playing the piano parts generally requires considerable skill.

**Figure 6.11** Bars 5-8, ‘Ne Nkansu’ (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 34)

**Figure 6.12** Bars 21-23, ‘Ne Nkansu’ (Onovwerosuoke, 2011: 35)

Although all the songs either have key signatures or clear tonal centres, a diatonic tonality is in most cases obscured through the various harmonic and melodic means described. Chromatic alterations or rhythms often suggest a jazz or Blues character. The textures, rhythms, melodies and tonal materials described suggest the selective application of African pianism and African vocalism, and at varying levels of recognizability.

The composer therefore achieves what he set out to do: He presents pieces that are familiar in western ways, but that are nuanced in African ideas. ‘Africa’ is given a place, but never becomes the main frame of reference. This lends to the collection an air of exoticism that point – in its sensibility if not in terms of style – to other places and/or times: it wears the costume of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century *Volkstümliches Lied* (or sometimes a more Mussorgskyesque declamatory and folk-like sensibility), nineteenth-century Italian opera (or perhaps more accurately, the Victorian operatic ballad), and twentieth-century American popular styles.<sup>8</sup> The Africanisms are, perhaps ironically, relentless in their consistency and apparent adherence to the requirements of ‘tradition’. Yet they are careful never to trespass on the conventional western musical sensibilities. According to Bellman (1998: xii-xiii)

[t]he exotic equation is a balance of familiar and unfamiliar : just enough ‘there’ to spice the ‘here’ but remain comprehensible in making the point. Exoticism is not about the earnest study of foreign cultures; its about drama, effect, and evocation.

<sup>8</sup> Regarding operatic ballad, refer back to Chapter 3, footnote 4 (p. 111).

This purposeful act of comprehensibility through exoticism can be seen as an act of diplomacy aimed at the general American (or western) art music audience. In his application of musical elements from only black African precolonial traditions (and none in a language of colonial heritage) in an effort to portray a pan-African perspective, the composer equates being black with being African. Where the musical elements in question interact with Jazz or Blues, and Gospel – genres that already have strong circular links between black Africa and black America – the idea of a cultural pan-blackness is reinforced. The objects on display are those that the viewer of the ‘painting’ wants to see. I interpret this as an act of diplomacy aimed at the African-American community in the American South in which the composer now finds himself. In both cases the audience I speak of is not the kind you would find in the small, dark alleys of a new music scene – it is the amateur enthusiast, the lover of ‘light’ classical music. The diplomacy I speak of is the democratization of the high.

### **Robert Fokkens’s *Four colonizations***

Robert Fokkens (born 1975) (Deppe, 2012: 43) is known as a ‘South African composer based in the UK’ (Cardiff University, 2010: online). Fokkens studied at the South African College of Music (University of Cape Town), the Royal Academy of Music in London, and at the University of Southampton. He completed his PhD at the latter institution in 2007 under the supervision of Michael Finnissy, and currently teaches composition at Cardiff University (Cardiff University, 2010: online). A few comments made by Fokkens highlights the duality in his relationship with his country of origin (Muller, 2007):

I believe very strongly that in a place like South Africa you have the potential for a far more vibrant cultural scene than you have in a place like England which is culturally very stable in a lot of ways. [...] But the difficulty is that [...] there doesn’t seem to be the infrastructure.

[...]

[...] what seems to be needed [in South Africa is] the building of a culture of culture. [...] you don’t have that culture of listening to music [...]. [...] But I would fear if I was back in South Africa, that one’s energy would be devoted [to] managing that energy, trying to build a culture rather than just actually being creative.

Although Fokkens’s oeuvre includes vocal and instrumental works for both small and large settings, he seems to prefer the intimacy of smaller ensembles. Some are for uncommon settings, such as *Dulce et decorum est* for counter-tenor and four trombones (2002) and *Inyoka Etshanini* for quarter-tone alto flute, violin and cello (2007) (Fokkens, 2012: online). Song composition can be said to play an important role in this composer’s output. Fokkens himself admits to having a special connection to this genre in an interview with Stephanus Muller (2007), where he claims that he says ‘largely more through song than through anything else.’ He ascribes this to the very direct emotional engagement that the voice allows, and continues to say that language plays a secondary role in this relationship. Despite the latter part of this comment, he states in an interview with David Bruce (2009: online) that, after music, text and drama are the media to which he responds most strongly creatively.

Apart from the song cycle that is the focus of this discussion, other songs and song cycles by Fokkens include *Age Unknown* (for soprano and chamber ensemble, 2001), *In times like these* (for tenor and piano, 2005), *Africa* (for soprano and piano, 2007) *Four songs on texts by al-Arabi* (for soprano and bass flute or cello, 2007-2008) (Fokkens, 2012: online) and *Haiku 97 & 98,5* (for soprano and piano, 2011) (Richard Thomas Foundation, 2012: online).

The reasons for selecting *Four colonizations* for a reading in the context of music and diplomacy lie in a few general comments made by the composer regarding his compositions, as well as specific comments that can be indirectly related to this song cycle. First, Fokkens states that he aims for clarity in his music, and that he hopes that his music reflects in some way that he is not European (Bruce, 2009: online). This clarity was evident upon the present writer's first hearing of *Four colonizations*. The link that the composer inadvertently draws between this personal aesthetic ideal and the outward projection of an African identity prompted further investigation. Second, the composer says that 'there are lots of ideas about colonization' in the music that he writes, 'but not purely in a political sense.' He defines colonization in this context as 'the way things interact' in the music (Muller, 2007). (In other words, if it is not purely political, it is at least a little bit political, which confirms the link

'Water is taught by thirst'

Water is taught by thirst;  
Land, by the oceans passed;  
Transport, by throe;  
Peace, by its battles told;  
Love, by memorial mold;  
Birds, by the snow.

(Fokkens, 2005: 1-2)

between his personal aesthetic ideal and the outward projection of an African identity.)

*Four colonizations* (2005) is a song cycle for soprano, clarinet (bass clarinet in the second and fourth songs) and cello. The titles and texts of the songs are presented as they appear in the score (rather than as in the original poems).

The symbolism in Emily Dickinson's poem 'Water, is taught by thirst' (1859) (Dickinson, 1999: 53) is not hard to interpret: You can only know what is good when you've experienced the bad. In other words, suffering allows you to know what

happiness is. I will return to my interpretations of texts in a consideration of the cycle as a whole.

Fokkens's setting of this text is a mere sixteen bars long. The voice part oscillates between two notes (Eb<sub>4</sub> and F<sub>4</sub>) throughout most of the song (see figure 6.13). The only exception to this is a single Db<sub>5</sub>, at the beginning of the last phrase starting in bar 14, on the word 'Birds' (see figure 6.14). This note is approached and left by a minor seventh interval, and represents the only instance in the entire voice part where an interval other than a major second is used. The vocal range in this song is therefore very narrow.

The clarinet part moves rhythmically with the voice part throughout most of the song, while the cello serves as an answering mechanism to the statements made by the other parts. The clarinet part, however, gains more rhythmic independence as the piece progresses. During the first two phrases of the song, the intervals between the voice and clarinet parts are limited to unisons, major thirds, perfect fourths and perfect fifths. Only in the third phrase does a major second appear between these two parts, showing the first sign of increased tension. This intensity increases further with the appearance of, for example, the first minor seventh interval between these two parts in the fourth phrase (although only for the duration

of a quaver), an augmented fourth in the fifth phrase (Eb-A in bar 13, figure 6.14) and finally, in the sixth phrase, a dissonance at the beginning of a phrase and for the duration of a crotchet (C-Db, a minor second, in bar 14, figure 6.14).

The piece begins and ends with the same figure played by the accompanying instruments (see the upbeat in figure 6.13), which is seemingly unrelated to the rhythmic and melodic movement and modality of the rest of the piece. This figure consists of a minor ninth leap downwards from F<sub>5</sub> to E<sub>4</sub> in the clarinet part, indicated as grace notes, followed by a semibreve rest. The cello plays a single Eb<sub>3</sub> grace note against those in the clarinet part, followed by a minor ninth leap upward to a solo E<sub>4</sub> semibreve (played as a harmonic).

No time signature is indicated. The time signatures used, as suggested by bar lines and groupings, are 4/4 (in the first and last bars only), 7/8, 6/8, 5/8, 3/8, 8/8 (only in bar 14, which may be considered a 'bridge' to the climax of the piece in bar 15) and 2/4. The order in which they are used follows no discernible pattern and is applied as required by declamation in the voice part.

No key signature is given, but the melodic structuring in the voice part indicates an Eb tonal centre. The clarinet and cello parts, however, indicate a C tonal centre. Excluding the E-natural which only appears in the figure at the beginning and end of the piece, the scale used is C-Db-Eb-F-G-A-Bb. It is only used in its entirety in the clarinet part. Only Db, Eb and F (the first three notes of the Db major scale) are used in the voice part, and only A Bb C Db (the first four notes of a half tone-whole tone scale on Ab) in the cello part.

Figure 6.13 Bars 1-4, 'Water is taught by thirst' (Fokkens, 2005: 1)

Figure 6.14 Bars 12-15, 'Water is taught by thirst' (Fokkens, 2005: 1)



## 'Eternity'

Eterni, Eterni, Eternity  
is in love with the productions,  
with the productions of time.

(Fokkens, 2005: 3-4)

The text of Fokkens's 'Eternity' comes from William Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell', which in turn comes from a larger work called *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790-3) (Blake, 1926: 15 and Thompson, 1993: 19). By saying that 'eternity is in love with the productions of time', Blake personifies eternity, or time without end, by assigning to it the human abilities to have feelings and to observe. The productions of time include everything that happens within time. In other

words, time without end has positive feelings towards everything – good and bad – that happens within time.

'Eternity', with a length of twenty bars, is only slightly longer than 'Water is taught by thirst'. With the exception of a few leaps of a major third, there is only stepwise melodic movement in the voice part, up to bar 10. Examples of minor seventh leaps occur in bars 11 and 12 (see figure 6.15). Only in the second-last bar (bar 19), where the voice sings a figure previously only seen in the clarinet part, perfect fourth intervals appear (see figure 6.16). Compared to 'Water is taught by thirst', the vocal part in 'Eternity' generally displays longer note values (now also stretching across bar lines) and a larger range ( $A_3$  to  $G_5$ ). The word 'eternity' is twice stated only in part ('eterni') before it is stated in full, together with the rest of the text.

The bass clarinet plays a similar mediating role as the clarinet part in 'Water is taught by thirst', although this time not in terms of the scale used. Rather, it is rhythmically aligned with either the voice or cello parts at different times. Development and variation of thematic material in the clarinet part take the form of subtle differences in note lengths and metric placement. The cello part serves as a pedal, oscillating between the lowest C and D on the instrument (played *col legno*) on a bar-long syncopated rhythm that is repeated throughout without variation or development (see figure 6.15).

A 3/4 time signature is indicated, which does not change for the duration of the piece. Unlike in 'Water is taught by thirst', the intervals between parts do not display any significant patterns. Again, no key signature is indicated, but the cello pedal indicates a C tonal centre. The melodic structuring in both the voice and clarinet parts, however, indicates both D and G tonal centres in different sections. The same scale is used in the voice and clarinet parts: C-D-E-F#-G-A-Bb. In the bass clarinet part, the build-up to the final scale follows this development: C-G-D-A (a sequence of fifths) is first used; F# is then added to form the pentatonic scale C-D-F#-G-A; E is later added to form the first five notes of a D major scale (D-E-F#-G-A); and finally, the entire scale is used. In the voice part, only D-E-F# (the first three notes of the D major scale) is used at first; the entire scale is then used; it then appears again without an E (C-D-F#-G-A-Bb).

Figure 6.15 Bars 10-14, ‘Eternity’ (Fokkens, 2005: 3)

Figure 6.16 Bars 18-20, ‘Eternity’ (Fokkens, 2005: 4)

‘Elegy’

When I am dead my dearest,  
 Sing no sad songs for me;  
 Plant thou no roses at my head,  
 nor shady cypress tree.  
 Be the green grass above me  
 with showers and dewdrops wet;  
 And if thou wilt remember,  
 And if thou wilt forget.

I shall not see the shadows;  
 I shall not feel the rain;  
 I shall not hear the nightingale  
 sing on as if in pain.  
 But dreaming through the twilight  
 that does no rise nor set,  
 Happ’ly I will remember,  
 And happ’ly will forget.

(Fokkens, 2005: 5-7)

In Christina Rossetti’s ‘When I am dead my dearest’ (Shove, 1931: 1, 50), the speaker tells her beloved to not mourn her death. Instead, he who remains behind should live life to the fullest – either in remembrance of her, or not. Since she will have no consciousness of what takes place in the world of the living, it will not matter to her. The narrator indicates that she believes in some kind of life after death, although she acknowledges that it may not take the form of consciousness within time.

At 42 bars in length, ‘Elegy’ is just over twice as long as ‘Eternity’. In the voice part, there is only stepwise (major and minor second) movement in the first phrase (bars 1 to 4, see figure 6.17). Intervals of a perfect fourth and minor sixth are also used in the second phrase, and a minor third in the third phrase. Minor ninths and a major seventh appear in the fourth phrase and intervals of a major ninth and a perfect eleventh occur for the first time in the sixth phrase. The only interval of a fifth in the voice part is in the eighth and final phrase. This is the first song in which an interval of a minor sixth is used in the voice part, as well as short melismas (see bar 33, figure 18 for the latter). The vocal range is the same as that of ‘Eternity’.

The clarinet part is rhythmically independent at first, while the cello part is rhythmically aligned with the voice

part. Later, the clarinet part loses most of its rhythmic independence, and takes on a supporting role to either the voice or cello parts (where these two voices are not rhythmically aligned.) The clarinet part starts out by only employing intervals of a major third before a perfect fourth is introduced. This is the largest interval employed (within areas of continuous melodic movement within phrases), up to the appearance on an augmented ninth. In the cello part, there is only stepwise (major second) movement at first, after which minor thirds are introduced. The first succession of major ninths is employed from bar 30 onwards. The largest interval in the cello part is the augmented sixteenth in bar 33 (see figure 6.18).

As in ‘Water is taught by thirst’, no time signature is given. The time signatures used (again, as suggested by bar lines and groupings) are 6/8, 5/8, 2/4, 3/4, 7/8 and 8/8.

All twelve notes of the chromatic scale are used in this song. Due to the selective use of pitches in different sections, as well as the tonal-like melodic and harmonic organization of pitches, the song cannot be described as atonal. The scale used in the voice part is as follows: In the first phrase, G-A-B $\flat$  (the first three notes of the g minor scale); in the second phrase, G-A-B $\flat$ -C-D (the first five notes of the g minor scale); in the third phrase, the scale is G-A-B-natural-C-D at first, and thereafter the B is flattened again (i.e. the first five notes of the G major scale, as well as the first five notes of the g minor scale); in the fourth phrase the pitches used, when placed in order, form the scale E $\flat$ -E-natural-F $\sharp$ -G-A-B $\flat$  (the first six notes of a half tone-whole tone octatonic scale). From bars 1 to 5, only two notes are used in the clarinet part: A and C (see figure 6.17). Thereafter G, D and B $\flat$  are systematically introduced, expanding the scale to the first five notes of the g minor scale (G-A-B $\flat$ -C-D). All the other notes of the chromatic scale, except F $\sharp$ , are added at different stages, but do not lead to any other modal characteristics in isolated sections. Except perhaps for it taking on the characteristics of C major or A minor at different times, the latter is also true for the cello part. The mode used in the cello part is G-A-B $\flat$ -B-natural-C-D-E $\flat$ -E-natural.

Figure 6.17 Bars 1-5, ‘Elegy’ (Fokkens, 2005: 5)

Figure 6.18 Bars 28-33, ‘Elegy’ (Fokkens, 2005: 6)

'Enough'

You you  
never

You you you you never

you never never

you never

you you you never

you never never

you never never

you you you you never never never never

you never

you you never know never know

you know

you you know

you never know what is what is what

you never what

you never know

you never never never

you know know know what is what is what is

you you never what

you know

you never is what

you know never what what is

you you you you you you you you you know

you know what is

you never know what is what is know what is know know what is

you know what is what is what

you never know what is enough never know

you know what is what

you never

you what is enough know what is

you enough what

you never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough. enough

(Fokkens, 2005: 8-11)

William Blake's text, 'You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough', also from the 'Proverbs of Hell' (Blake, 1926: 16) could be understood to say that only by experiencing excess, can one appreciate what one had in the first place. Rampant ambition does not lead to fulfilment; what one needs resides within.

'Enough' is sixty-three bars in length – the longest song in this cycle. Textual deconstruction, of which we saw the first hints in 'Eternity', is taken to the extreme in 'Enough'. For most of the duration of this piece, the vocal line oscillates between two notes only: D<sub>4</sub> and E<sub>4</sub> (see figure 6.19). For the first time in this cycle, we see intervals of a major sixth and augmented fourth in the voice part. No larger interval is employed in the voice part until the first appearance of the phrase 'is enough', which is set to a D<sub>4</sub> going up a minor ninth interval up to Eb<sub>5</sub>, and then a major ninth interval down to Db<sub>4</sub>. Although the intervals used are not new, the type of close chromatic movement seen in, for example, bar 55 (see figure 6.20) is new. The long melisma on the word 'more' from bars 58 to 59 (see figure 6.21) is the only one of its kind in the entire cycle and its end on an A#<sub>5</sub> constitutes the highest note in the voice part in this song cycle. The bass clarinet plays two different roles, repeating and predicting the voice part. The latter can be seen where it plays the 'enough' theme (as described above) before it is sung (see, for example, its first entry in bar 19, figure 6.19) and the chromatic movements in, for example, bar 54 (see figure 6.20), also before it is sung. The cello does not predict the voice part, but only repeats it.

For the first time in this cycle time signature are indicated, although this may possibly just be as a courtesy to the performers (especially the singer) who have to navigate through fast-moving material that incorporates slight rhythmic changes in its relentless repetition. The time signatures used are 6/8, 5/8, 2/4, 7/8, 10/8 and 3/4. The time signature changes frequently, except from bar 50 to the end of the piece during which the time signature remains 10/8.

Except for F and G, all other notes of the chromatic scale are used in 'Enough': C-Db-D-natural-Eb-E-natural-F#-G#-A-A#-B. Only the voice part employs the entire scale. The notes from this scale that are also used in the bass clarinet part are C, Db, D-natural, E-flat and B. The notes from the complete scale that are not used in the bass clarinet part (F#, G#, A and A#) are all employed in the cello part. In addition to the latter, D and E are also used in the cello part.

Overall, the dissonance in this song is more pronounced than in any of the other songs in this cycle. The generally consonant sound with which the song starts out is first disrupted by the bass clarinet in bar 19, with the first appearance of the 'enough' theme. These 'disruptions' appear three times in close succession in their original form before they are developed, eventually coinciding with the theme's first appearance in the voice part. The dissonance also increases with the clashes caused by the first appearance of close chromatic movement in the voice part, with the cello in close succession. The promise of continuous dissonance is fulfilled by the continuous combination of close chromatic movements, now more often rhythmically coinciding, and the 'enough' theme.

Figure 6.19 shows the musical score for bars 15-19 of the piece 'Enough'. The score is for voice, clarinet (Cl.), and violin (Vc.). The voice part has the lyrics: "you ne-verne - ver you you you you ne-ver ne-ver ne - ver ne-ver you ne-ver you you". The clarinet part is mostly silent, with a few notes in the final bar. The violin part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The tempo/mood is marked *mp poco pesante*.

**Figure 6.19** Bars 15-19, 'Enough' (Fokkens, 2005: 8)

Figure 6.20 shows the musical score for bars 54-55 of 'Enough'. The score is for voice, clarinet (Cl.), and violin (Vc.). The voice part has the lyrics: "is what you ne - ver you what is e - nough know what is you e - nough". The clarinet part has a 4:5 ratio indicated. The violin part provides a harmonic accompaniment.

**Figure 6.20** Bars 54-55, 'Enough' (Fokkens, 2005:11)

Figure 6.21 shows the musical score for bars 58-60 of 'Enough'. The score is for voice, clarinet (Cl.), and violin (Vc.). The voice part has the lyrics: "more... than e - nough." The clarinet part has a 4:5 ratio indicated. The violin part provides a harmonic accompaniment. The tempo/mood is marked *p* and *mp*.

**Figure 6.21** Bars 58-60, 'Enough' (Fokkens, 2005: 11)

As a summary of the descriptions above, I will now consider characteristics of the cycle as a whole. If small deviations are ignored, one can often see certain teleologically directed developments: each song in the cycle is longer than the previous one; the interval sizes in certain melodic lines gradually increase; dissonance in the last song is greater than in any of the others; the vocal range increases from one song to the next; modes are sometimes built up note by note; and, harmonic tension between parts sometimes increase gradually. Deviation from these patterns is a defining characteristic in this cycle. Also, developments are not always gradual, the effect rather depending on the surprise interruption of repetition. Take, for example, the description of the melodic line in the voice part of 'Water is taught by thirst' provided above, which coincides with journalistic descriptions of other works by Fokkens. In his description of *Glimpses of a half-forgotten truth* (for clarinet quartet, 2008), Hall (2009: online) says that 'quarter-tone chords interrupted the minimalist doodling of the main idea to disturbing effect.' Similarly, Ashley (2003: online) describes *Irreconcilable truths* (for violin and piano, 2002) as 'an irresolute duel that alternates flaring violence with timeless

limpidity.’ Metric patterns in this cycle neither develop gradually, nor do they follow the principle just described. Development in this regard takes the form of adding up the preceding block-like variation: first it is varied, then consistent, then varied again, and in the final piece these options are combined. Tonal centres and modes remain ambiguous. Used in part in different sections, modes sometimes take on the characteristics of major, minor, whole tone-half tone, or whole tone scales. The main characteristic of the vocal writing is its instrumental character. This can be seen in, for example, the persistent oscillation, interval-restricted melodic constructions, large, dissonant leaps, and even the literal borrowing of a motif from one of the accompanying instruments. Elements that suggest more idiomatic and lyrical writing for the voice are not carried through the cycle: the longer note values in ‘Eternity’ – some carried over the barline – are not seen in ‘Elegy’. The more flowing melody permitted by the 3/4 time signature in ‘Elegy’ is not heard in ‘Enough’. The few instances of melismatic writing in ‘Elegy’ are only developed through a single outburst at the end of ‘Enough’. The promise held by sixth intervals of melodic constructions that are less restricted in terms of intervals, is never fulfilled. The roles of the accompanying instruments never settle, and vary from simply providing a pedal point, to repeating or predicting the vocal line, and serving as modal or rhythmic mediators or allies. The characteristics described thus far have one thing in common: unsettlement, or the deliberate obscuring of the recognizable (such as patterns and conventional modes).

All four texts speak to this emotional and psychological register: the existence of the good necessitates the existence of the bad or, in other words, good and bad exist in an interdependent equilibrium. One cannot know happiness without having suffered, there has to be death in order for there to be life, and one has to experience excess in order to know what is sufficient. In ‘Water is taught by thirst’, for example, this equilibrium can be found in the static vocal line: water and thirst, or peace and battles are all literally found at the same level. The Db<sub>5</sub> on the word ‘Birds’ is an exception, and a rare instance of tone painting. Another example of tone painting can be seen in the representation of a nightingale singing (‘nightingale sing on’) in the vocal line of ‘Elegy’. The similarly oscillating vocal line (this time on repeated fragments of text) in ‘Enough’, and later the soaring melisma on ‘more’ are deliberately excessive and therefore quite literally ‘more than enough’. Eternity is, for example (in the song with this word as its title), represented by longer note values in the voice part and an ostinato figure in the cello part. The instrumental figure at the beginning and end of ‘Water is taught by thirst’ (described above) is perhaps symbolic of the philosophy that underlines the link between the poems: two elements that seem dissonant and far removed from each other lead to the same level, or equilibrium. There is nothing unconventional about the isolated examples of text interpretation just described. What I did not find in my consideration of the cycle as a whole is a (conventional) symbolic reflection of the underlying philosophy of ‘opposites in equilibrium’ that connects the poems. On the contrary: unsettlement or ‘unsettledness’ predominate on the macro level through the deconstruction of text and in increase in dissonance that reaches an apotheosis in ‘Enough’.

Unlike Onovwerosuoke, there is no explicit emulation of any precolonial African traditions in Fokkens's cycle.<sup>9</sup> Why can this music then be associated with Africa, other than the fact that the composer explicitly states that he is South African? According to Nzewi (1997: 31), 'Incontrovertibly, there is an African (south of the Sahara) field of musical sound.' We can put the questions of how (un)popular such generalizations are in recent scholarship, and how much truth they carry, aside for the moment. We only have to ask whether it is ingrained in the popular mind (yes, I would like to argue), and if so, what it is that is ingrained. For this purpose we can look back at earlier studies, such as A.M. Jones's *Studies in African music* (1959) and J.H. Kwabena Nketia's *The music of Africa* (1975). An 'easy movement from 3/4 to 6/8 time', repetition, the 'African "Signature-tune" which is in fact variations of 7 + 5 (or 5 + 7) rhythmic patterns, (Jones, 1959: 23, 49, 210), and melodic structures that impose certain limitations on the use of intervals (Nketia, 1975: 147-153) can, for example, all be found in *Four colonizations*.

The unsettlement I referred to earlier is not necessarily of the 'African' elements described above. Anything recognizable is obscured, colonized by something else, before it can take hold. This struggle for renewed identity (and here I link general issues of identity in the music with an interpretation of the text) is needed to maintain a larger equilibrium. The shell of the music – the image projected outwards upon a first hearing – is however unmistakably African. This cannot be ascribed to the explicit emulation of specific precolonial black African traditions, but, I posit, represents a more generic kind of white Africanism that never settles for the fear of being discovered, and for the fear of not being discovered. This, to return to the very beginning of the chapter, is the musical equivalent to the anamorphic skull in Holbein's painting: an explicit allusion to a hidden secret. Fokkens's costume is made from African material, but tailored in a metropolitan fashion. Diplomacy is exercised through the music claiming an African identity without recolonizing Africa while constituting a presence in an almost impenetrable foreign space through being a recognizable (but palatable) 'other'. Due to a lack of infrastructure, and not wanting to manage the energy of building a culture in lieu of creating art (see the quotes at the beginning of this section), this composer had to leave South Africa in order to be a South African composer. He had to leave the place of origin of a creative impetus in order to find the clarity that he aims for, inspired by and found in the very same creative impetus. The deduction that one can make from this is that displacement, and not necessarily diplomacy, is for Fokkens a necessary step in the fulfilment of a personal aesthetic.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how diplomacy can be exercised through composition to gain a place and acceptance in certain foreign spaces. My descriptions of the music have highlighted the portrayal of different modes of being African, which should influence how

<sup>9</sup> According to Deppe (2012: 44) *Xhosa* bow music specifically has had an influence on Fokkens's music, but that he has never imitated this music. The *col legno* cello ostinato in 'Eternity' perhaps comes closest to imitating the sound of a mouth bow.

<sup>10</sup> I have not proved a resultant relationship between displacement and diplomacy in this chapter, although it is assumed as a premise in the specific cases examined.



particular audiences could perceive 'Africanness'. Secondary results of the exercising of diplomacy in composition were shown to be the democratization of the high and the claiming of a white African identity that does not recolonize Africa.

I used elements from Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* to illustrate my findings, and by doing so I have placed the composer both *in* the painting, and outside it as *creator* – he is the diplomat in the picture, the chooser and arranger of objects (ambiguously from both inside and outside the painting), as well as the extra-visual placer of an anamorphic clue. This was conveniently done to serve the purposes of different analogies in making individual points, but can perhaps in itself serve to make a final point. The composer always inadvertently 'paints' himself into the composition – he emerges, so to speak, through his choice of costume, objects and clues. This happens because the inexact and fluid nature of 'culture' always necessitates choices. Diplomacy is not correct or incorrect. It is a reflexive mode of critique that does not aim to point out a composer's intent, but rather to ask the composer whether the analyst's perception speaks to his intent. In this chapter I have incidentally been able to show diplomatic intent through the programme notes or interview material on the composers in question available to me. Readings of music in the context of diplomacy do not, however, rely on the availability of such information. The compositions themselves have the agency to exercise diplomacy. Diplomacy provides us with an alternative context in which to read 'foreignness' in composition, other than the existing discourses on the forming of identities in the contexts of exile and displacement.

## Chapter 7 Ethics in the analysis of African intercultural art music

<p>PLEA FROM AFRICA <i>By John Knox Bokwe</i></p>  <p><b>1892: 'Bantu music'</b></p>	<p>PLEA FROM AFRICA <i>By John Knox Bokwe</i></p>  <p><b>2013: 'classical music'</b></p>
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Figure 7.1 John Knox Bokwe's *Plea from Africa* (Okigbo, 2010: 60)

*An act of re-historicization that invites the application of a certain analytical discourse.*

## Introduction

It was a footnote in Kofi Agawu's article, 'How we got out of analysis, and how to get back in again' (2004) that awakened my interest in the topic of ethics in analysis. In this footnote Agawu (2004: 284) states that the 'ethics of music analysis (as distinct from theory or criticism) is a subject awaiting proper discovery and comprehensive discussion by Anglo-American music theorists.' Four years later, Christine Lucia (2008:13) formulated the matter as follows with regard to intercultural art music and the analysis of (black) choral music in post-apartheid South Africa (this follows on from the illustration at the start of the chapter):

The move to classicise choral music in the post-apartheid era – calling it '[s]erious music in an African context' [...] - does historicise it in new ways, which is to be welcomed, but this also brings with it the dangers of a formalist analytical discourse being applied in order to prove this music's (new) status as art music. The danger is that it will be read using paradigms learned through an education system not in harmony with the music, that its musical syntax will be compared to the norms of Western music [...].

What interested me in Lucia's words was not that she viewed formalism as dangerous. Philosophical solutions exist to what I regard as the ethical problem of formalism's so-called malignant qualities (see my discussion below). However, more interesting in this quote was the implied ease with which one can apparently re-historicize, and subsequently misread, the music in question. How does this happen? According to Lucia (2008: 11-12) a number of idioms are assimilated in the repertoire of black choral music in Southern Africa, including 'jazz, dance music, European classical, popular and folk music, African "traditional" music, and church music of various kinds.' It is the extent to which this intercultural music reflects the characteristics of the western genres on which it was originally based – from surface readings – that allows for easy re-historicizing and then possible misreading or misjudgement.

The above serves as a short introduction to a very specific engagement with ethics in music analysis that emerged from a more general discourse on this topic, on which I will elaborate below. Before I develop this argument, there is a need to clarify and delimit terminology. 'Analysis', as used in this chapter, will refer to any reading of music that takes the *score* as its point of departure (but is not necessarily restricted to it). My use of the term is therefore not meant to be restricted to its application in a strictly formalist context. According to Attfield and Gibson (1996: 178), [e]thics is the branch of philosophy which studies the nature and criteria of right and wrong action, obligation, the good life and related principles.' It is important to note that when it comes to right and wrong in music analysis, it is not always a question of ethics. It is sometimes merely a question of which approach is more or less productive for the purpose of the analysis in question. Take the following example: if one decides to apply analytical techniques of western origin to an African composition without taking any culture-specific considerations into account, just to see how the results correspond to those of an analysis of a western piece to which one has applied the same techniques – in other words, producing a kind of translation – is this unethical or unproductive? In my opinion, neither. If one does the same analysis with the aim of coming to grips with the culture-specific origins of certain musical structures in the music, is it

unethical or unproductive? To my mind it is unproductive, but not unethical. What if one were to judge the music's aesthetic value or its value as art based on its non-adherence to western aesthetic or structural principles? That may be considered unethical. And what if one ascribes racial characteristics to music's aesthetic value, determined by analytical systems and processes? That is definitely unethical. The premise for the consideration of ethics in music analysis lies in its power to make value judgements. Bent and Pople (2012: online) state the following in this regard:

[...] analytical writing expresses a critical position, albeit sometimes merely by implication, but often in a sophisticated manner through the multiple connotations of the theories it applies and the comparisons it draws. Even a wordless analysis – which would seem the least capable of doing so – passes a value judgment in asserting that its musical subject is worthy of study and explication.

According to this statement, all analyses imply a value judgement. A value judgement as such is however not necessarily unethical. Also, where it is only implied by association with theories and comparisons, deeming it unethical robs the analyst of tools that are otherwise useful. If the analyst admits to an anti-universalist approach in analysis, an analysis resulting not in an absolute 'truth', one may argue that there can be no misreading. My understanding of an unethical approach in the analysis of African intercultural art music can therefore be articulated as follows: the exercising of an *explicit* (rather than implied) value judgement, based on an uninformed reading of the music. Because I agree with the principle of freedom of interpretation, I would like to propose that the only ethical imperative in analysis is to be as informed as possible about the possible contexts of production, before making an explicit value judgement. The aim of this chapter is therefore to expose possible contexts in which to read specific examples of intercultural art music, without which the analyst might make an inappropriate value judgement. My use of the term 'intercultural music' cannot be made clear from the outset, since I will be arguing for the application of this term to the music presented in this chapter, which may mistakenly be read as purely 'western' in its conception. (The presence of musical structures of western origin in the music presented in this chapter is thereby implied in my use of the term.) To argue for the application of the term 'intercultural' to the music in question is an act of activism that takes its direction from an intellectual position already developed in the late seventies by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978); a position that problematizes cultural classification by the west by means of cultural markers relative to the west. In analysis, this would serve to direct the analyst to different contexts not necessarily invoked by the score.

### **Overview and theorization of the literature on ethics in music analysis**

Agawu (2004: 284) suggests a number of writings that, with one exception, address the topic of ethics in music analysis indirectly.<sup>1</sup> I will present a brief discussion and theorization of selected writings that deal with more direct ethical imperatives in music analysis. My own

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<sup>1</sup> The list includes 'Some instances of parallel voice-leading in Debussy (Lewin, 1987), 'Schenker's theory of music as ethics' (Cook, 1989) (which I discuss further on), and 'Nietzsche, Riemann, Wagner: When music lies' (Blasius, 2001).

definitions of terms and my premises for the study of ethics in analysis do not necessarily apply here.

In a letter to the editor of *Music Analysis*, Richard Taruskin accuses Alan Forte of thinking that ‘by creating a single method [pitch class set theory] that can be applied indiscriminately to all music he has created a means for attaining a truth that passeth all interpretation’, and that despite claiming objectivity in this method, Forte ‘has never succeeded in promulgating properly objective guidelines for “segmentation” [...]’ (Taruskin, 1986: 315-316). In response to the former, Forte (1986: 324) accuses Taruskin of misunderstanding the link between (and movement from) theory to analysis, which ‘requires sensitivity and special awareness to negotiate.’ In response to the matter of segmentation, Forte (1986: 324) says that ‘[i]n practice, it is a dynamic part of analysis and one that is not detached from considerations of idiom or style.’

George Perle, in ‘Pitch class set analysis: An evaluation’ (1990), seems to side with Taruskin in his rejection of Forte’s system, which he bases on the fact that he finds it irrelevant to his discoveries as an analyst, his perceptions as a listener, and his experience as a composer (Perle, 1990: 152).<sup>2</sup>

In his article, ‘Schenker’s theory of music as ethics’ (1989), Nicholas Cook argues that, possibly through Karl Kraus’s influence, Schenker’s conception of music was ethical, rather than aesthetic (Cook, 1989: 435).<sup>3</sup> According to Cook (1989: 424-425), for Kraus the main criterion of value in artistic works was the extent to which the artist had achieved personal integrity: ‘In terms of the creative process this meant that the integration of the intellect and reason on the one hand [the ‘foreground’] with the unconscious sources of fantasy and feeling [the ‘background’] on the other.’ Cook (1989: 426-427) refers to Schenker, who – specifically in reference to Stravinsky’s Piano Concerto – describes this composer’s music as possessing no ‘background’, and that one may therefore conclude that Schenker may have judged this music as ‘irresponsible in an ethical sense.’<sup>4</sup> Cook (1989: 439) concludes this article by saying that today we are justified in applying Schenker’s methods in ways he would not have approved of – such as to analyse Stravinsky’s music – while ignoring his *Meisterwerk* ethics, ‘for the simple reason that Schenker’s methods and insights are useful to us as musicians.’

Pieter van den Toorn, in ‘Politics, feminism, and contemporary music theory’ (1991) accuses Susan McClary of imposing a sexual motive or premise for tonal music as a monopoly, its narrow interpretation ‘hamper[ing] music’s potential’ through its inability to come to grips with the infinite details of musical expression and structure (Van den Toorn, 1991: 290-291). Ruth A. Solie, in ‘What do feminists want? A reply to Pieter van den Toorn’ (1991), answers on behalf of McClary (unofficially). Among many other things, she points

<sup>2</sup> Among other things, Perle (1990: 156, 168) refers to the system’s lack of usefulness in studying tonal music, due to its reduction of the diatonic scale to a pitch class set, and the fact that the connection between z-related sets can only be discovered through analytical scrutiny that has little to do with his intuitive experience as a composer or listener.

<sup>3</sup> Cook (1989: 425) explains it as such: ‘In this way, according to Kraus, the significance of art lay not in the effects it made on the audience – that it to say, in its beauty – but in how far the artist, in creating it, had attained the “origin” and so been true to his vocation.’

<sup>4</sup> Schenker attributes this lack of a ‘background’ to the large scale absence of traditional tonal structures, or the lack of an organic connection between the traces of such structures that *are* present, to the larger context (Cook, 1989: 426-427).

out Van den Toorn's archaic use of the term 'theory' (its practitioners in feminist, cultural and other senses apparently all rejecting the 'formalist and autonomist assumptions that are common in the realm of "music theory"'), and his lack of differentiation between 'analysis' and 'criticism' (Solie, 1991: 402).

Stock (1993) in effect argues against anti-formalism in ethnomusicology in his article, 'The application of Schenkerian analysis to ethnomusicology: Problems and possibilities'. In this he argues for (and demonstrates) a selective application of Schenkerian analysis by using pitch emphasis and related features to find a basic structure unique to each individual example, rather than to look for the same tonal *Urlinie* in different musical structures (Stock: 1993: 236).<sup>5</sup> Martin Scherzinger also argues against anti-formalism in ethnomusicology, albeit in a more comprehensive and explicit fashion than Stock, in 'Negotiating the music-theory/African-music nexus: A political critique of ethnomusicological anti-formalism and a strategic analysis of the harmonic patterning of the Shona mbira song Nyamaropa' (Scherzinger, 2001). The issues he proposes to problematize through his demonstrative analysis of the named song include: '[...] how is the object to be fixed? On whose playing is it to be based? [...] [W]hat angle of vision is implied by this choice? [And] [w]hat are the ethical and political stakes involved in each case?' (Scherzinger, 2001: 6) This brings us back to Agawu, who specifically talks about African music. In his book, *Representing African music: Postcolonial notes, queries, positions* (2003) (published only a year before 'How we got out of analysis, and how to get back in again' (2004)), this author addresses the constituent elements of the topic under discussion (analysis and ethics) in separate chapters: 'How not to analyze African music' (chapter 8) and 'The ethics of representation' (chapter 9). In chapter 8, Agawu defends selected analytical approaches (from the 1920s to the 1990s) to pre-colonial traditional African music, and concludes that there is 'obviously no way not to analyze African music' and that 'any and all ways are acceptable' (Agawu, 2003: 196). This view is a strategic one, asking the analyst to depart from a binary division of western and African knowledge, and momentarily to overlook arguments about authenticity in order to encourage the compilation of an archive of analyses of African compositions. This should level academic playing fields (Agawu, 2003: 196-197). A general discussion of the notion of ethics in music scholarship is presented in chapter 9. References to ethics in analysis are made in terms of the universality of systems of relations, procedures of segmentation, and the propagation of 'unhearable' intramusical relations (Agawu, 2003: 200-201) (all subjects to which I have already referred in this discussion).

The discussion in this chapter serves to expose two broad categories concerning ethics in analysis, valid up to at least (if one takes into account the publication dates of the literature discussed) the early twenty-first century: first, ethics embedded within, or associated with the use of specific methods (regardless of its application) and second, ethics in the application of analytical methods. The ethical imperatives lie within the following: (1) the use of a method that has negative historical connotations; (2) the use of any formal method at the expense of extra-musical considerations; (3) the so-called incorrect or incomplete representation of a piece of music due to the flawed nature of a specific method or, (4) due to a perceived

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<sup>5</sup> Stock (1993: 235) suggests that 'Schenkerian-format reductive analysis should be an attractive tool for the ethnomusicologist working on reiterative, variation-form music or on repertoires based on a common melodic stock.'

cultural difference between the method and the music; (5) the *exclusion* of music from an analytical discourse due to a perceived cultural difference between the methodologies of the analytical discourse and the music.<sup>6</sup> If one accepts that authors have presented plausible arguments that dissolve these dilemmas when considered as ethics (and I do), all that remains to ask is which analyses are more or less productive.<sup>7</sup> One may argue that the strategy behind Agawu's umbrella philosophy of 'any and all ways are acceptable' (Agawu, 2003: 196) when it comes to the analysis of African music in general – i.e. the encouragement of the compilation of an archive of analyses of African compositions which would aid in levelling academic playing fields – is still a valid one, and apply it to African intercultural art music. I have, in chapter 1 of this dissertation, made an argument for the continued compilation of such an archive myself. This in itself prescribes an ethical duty, albeit one that speaks to the choice of repertoire which should be analyzed, and not to the act of analysis itself. It is therefore not considered applicable to the discussion in this chapter.

I will now proceed with my discussion of selected examples of African art music, with the aim of constructing possible contexts, invoked by an application of the term 'intercultural', in which to read this music. Without these contexts, I posit, the analyst might make inappropriate – and therefore possibly unethical – value judgements.

### **A minor literature: Selected twentieth-century art songs by Ghanaian, Nigerian and Egyptian composers**

The songs under discussion in this section have been selected for their display of one common characteristic: momentary, infrequent deviations from the harmonic conventions of the common practice period (from its earliest to its latest conventions), in a context that mainly adheres to the 'rules' thereof. If one accepts that the composers of these songs have been well-schooled in western harmony and that these deviations display no clear technical patterns, a theorization of this practice must take place outside the musical score.<sup>8</sup> A discussion of excerpts from scores is however required before I do this, in order to demonstrate these deviations:

In the excerpt from Akin Euba's 'Ó ẹ̀ gbé na?' (figure 7.2), the composer subtly defies certain expectations of classical western harmonic progression in a few places on this page. The IV<sub>6</sub> chord (in F major) on the second beat in bar 20 is, for example, preceded – rather

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<sup>6</sup> The reader will notice that nos. (3) and (5), for example, present contradictory stances on ethical behaviour. The aim here is not to say which stance is right or wrong, but simply to extract different ethical imperatives from a discourse.

<sup>7</sup> Comparative musicology, ethnomusicology's precursor, for example, has apparently been stripped from its former political baggage and has been making a comeback. According to the website of the study group on this disciplinary initiative, '[t]he time has come to re-establish the field of comparative musicology. This field should not be seen as a replacement for ethnomusicology [...]. In particular, comparative musicology deals with a host of important issues that many ethnomusicologists do not consider, including musical classifications [...], musical universals [...] and biological evolution of music' (Comparative musicology, 2013: online). For an example of the 'dissolving of a dilemma' (as I say above), see Savage, Merrit, Rzeszutek and Brown (2012), 'CantoCore: A new cross-cultural song classification scheme', based on Lomax and Grauer's 'Cantometrics'.

<sup>8</sup> Refer back to the composers' biographies in the preceding chapters.

than by a conventional secondary dominant – by a secondary dominant with a flattened seventh (E-natural). Where a cadential 6/4 would have worked perfectly between the preceding IV<sub>6</sub> and the V<sub>9</sub> that follows, the composer employs instead a I<sub>9</sub> chord in fourth inversion on the first beat of bar 26 (most probably to create a series of rising fourths in the bass). The lack of a seventh in this chord begs to let an uncomfortable dissonance ring in the large, barren space between the G in the bass and the A in the voice above it.

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Ó se gbé na?' by Euba (1975: 11). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in Yoruba. Handwritten annotations in Roman numerals and figured bass notation are present below the piano part of each system.

**System 1 (Bars 15-17):**  
 Lyrics: kí - kán ẹ - lẹ - kún mé - jì a - bẹ. B'á ò r'á - kọ su à  
 Chords: F = I

**System 2 (Bars 18-20):**  
 Lyrics: fe - wù - rà gún - yán, B'á ò r'ẹ - ni fẹ à f'á - na ẹ - ni,  
 Chords: V<sub>7</sub>, I<sub>b</sub>, V<sub>4/3</sub>/IV, IV<sub>6</sub>

**System 3 (Bars 21-23):**  
 Lyrics: B'ó bá ka 'ni à kún - lẹ wí - jọ, Bí ò dẹ ka 'ni  
 Chords: I, V, I<sub>4</sub>, V<sub>6/3</sub>, I<sub>b</sub>, VII<sup>o</sup><sub>4</sub>/V

**System 4 (Bars 24-27):**  
 Lyrics: à má s'á - na lọ, Á - bà - jà ò ró kẹ - kẹ, Ò - gbó - ò - nà.  
 Chords: V<sub>4/3</sub>, I, V<sub>4/3</sub>/IV, IV<sub>6</sub>, I<sub>7/4</sub>, V<sub>11</sub>, I

© Euba Folk Songs

Figure 7.2 Bars 15-27, 'Ó se gbé na?' (Euba, 1975: 11)



ألف ليلة  
(1950)  
للموبرانو والبياتو

موسيقى / كامل الرمالى  
شعر / محسن الجوهري

**Allegretto**

**Figure 7.3 Bars 1-8, 'A thousand and one nights' (Al-Rimali, 1999: 1)**

In 'A thousand and one nights' (figure 7.3), that otherwise reminds of a Victorian ballad, Kamel Al Rimali makes a few exceptions in this stylistic context.<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the progression from the end of bar 4 to the beginning of bar 5: the  $V_{6/5} / ii$  (in G major) chord on the last beat of bar 4, rather than resolving to the expected  $ii$  chord, progresses to what may be interpreted as an  $It_{6+}$  chord in the relative minor (e minor). Rather than moving to the (major) dominant of e minor as expected, it moves to a minor chord (B D F#) on the dominant. A second example in the same piece (figure 7.4) can be seen in the two-voiced section from bars 27 to 30. It is possible to read the entire harmonic progression in this section in G major (or as secondary chords with a dominant function of chords in G major), except for beats 3 and 4 (or beat 3 only, depending on whether one reads it as one or two chords) in bar 29. In G major this chord is  $iv_{7/b3}$  (Separately, they may be read as  $bIV_{\#3}$  followed by  $IV_7$ .) The dissonance of the C B-natural major seventh interval on the second half of beat 4, exaggerated by the thin texture, comes as a shock.

<sup>9</sup> Refer back to my discussion of this work in Chapter 3 (pp. 121 to 123).

على نجوى تلاقينا  
نا - في لا ت وى نج نى

أحاسيس بنا رقصت  
و صتق ر نا ب من سى حا

وأفراح مباحها  
ب ها ج م با ح با ق و نا - فى رت من ن حا ل

بما نهوا تغرينا  
ع نا نى يا ل يا م لا من نا رى نغ و وا نه ما

Handwritten annotations: *mf*, *p cresc. anticipation*, *A Tempo*, *f rall*, *mf*.  
Chord symbols:  $V$ ,  $IV\#3$ ,  $V7$ ,  $Ib$ ,  $V$ .  
Note:  $\rightarrow$  accentuated passing note or  $V4$

Figure 7.4 Bars 17-32, ‘A thousand and one nights’ (Al-Rimali, 1999: 2)

In bar 45 in J.H. Kwabena Nketia’s ‘Onipa beyεε bi’ (figure 7.5), the  $ii_4^6$  chord (in D major) moves to what appears to be a widely spaced  $V_{13}$  – without its root (A) – in first inversion. This causes a dissonance uncharacteristic in an otherwise conventionally western classical context.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The premise for making this observation is that there is no error in the score, which should be acknowledged as a possibility.

de no koo oo. O-wa-ra da bre ne n see - da O-wo-ra a be-ye bi-oo. wo-ra-a-be-ye bi-oo O-ni-pa be yee bi-oo ne nyene nyina ra, o wo-ra ee O-ni-pa be-yee bi-oo ne nyene nyina-ra oo.

**Figure 7.5 Bars 40-53, Onipa beyee bi (Nketia, d.u.: 11)**

In the light of these examples I would like to propose a reapplication of Deleuze and Guatarri's theorization of Kafka's work as a so-called 'minor literature' (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1986) on the music in question. The application of this theory to South African music was first suggested by Jean-Pierre de la Porte, in his reapplication thereof to the music of Michael Moerane (De la Porte, 2010: online).<sup>11</sup> The way in which my reapplication differs from De la Porte's will be discussed in the conclusion to this section.

A reapplication of Deleuze and Guatarri's theory requires extensive quoting. I have placed these quotations in shaded boxes, with an exposition of my reapplication of the characteristic in question following each of the quotations.

'A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language' (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1986: 16).

<sup>11</sup> Refer back to my brief mentioning of Moerane in Chapter 4 (at the bottom of p. 140). De la Porte (2010: online) states the following regarding the application of Deleuze and Guatarri's theory to Moerane: 'In this construction it is possible to begin imagining Moerane not as the composer of a sparse thread in sacred and western orchestral music but as a maker of pieces so resoundingly odd, identical to their host languages but discerningly different as to cast the identity and direction of the host in doubt [...].'

The ‘major language’ in the case of the music I am presenting here refers to harmonic conventions of the common practice period (from its earliest to its latest conventions). The ‘minority constructions’ are the small, infrequent unconventionalities within this major language. This stands in opposition to music that displays consistent, frequent unconventionalities, which would indicate a mutation of the original major language into a new one.

[...] Kafka marks the impasse that bars access to writing for the Jews of Prague and turns their literature into something impossible – the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise. The impossibility of not writing because national consciousness, uncertain or oppressed, necessarily exists by means of literature [...]. The impossibility of writing other than in German is for the Prague Jews a feeling of an irreducible distance from their primitive Czech territoriality. And the impossibility of writing in German is the deterritorialization of the German population itself [...].’ (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1986: 16).

It is impossible for the African art music composer to not compose, because international presence, uncertain or oppressed, necessarily exists by means of producing compositions. This is a mapping of the theory in contemporary terms. When applying this theory to the colonial situation, one can perhaps say that it was ideologically impossible for the colonized African art music composer to not compose, because to claim a space in an elite, colonial tradition could only be achieved through producing compositions.

The impossibility of writing other than in the context of the major language is for the colonial African art music composer this feeling of ‘an irreducible distance’ from a (claimed) ethnic territoriality. The impossibility of writing in the context of the major language without applying the minority constructions is the ‘deterritorialization’ of the colonizer.

In the postcolonial era, this major language is not positioned as before; its centrality has shifted. To write in the context of this major language – now indigenized – is to not fulfil (or to subvert) metropolitan aesthetic ideals and expectations (of, for example, originality and Africanization), and to democratize high art by employing a popular, indigenized language (this is to dissolve the former class association, rather than to seek a space within it). The impossibility of writing other than in the context of the indigenized, archaic major language has, for the contemporary African art music composer who engages in this, the purpose of not creating a distance from his new ethnic territoriality.<sup>12</sup>

‘The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in them is political. In major literatures, in contrast, the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as a mere environment or a background [...]. Minor literature is completely different; its cramped space forces each individual

<sup>12</sup> In the mapping of this theory, one has to make provision for the possibility that the colonial mapping is perhaps still valid in the postcolonial era, in economic and cultural terms.

intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it' (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1986: 17).

In the colonial situation, the employment of a colonial musical language by the colonized – outside its geographical territory of origin and development – necessarily makes a political statement, through the level of subversion in the application of this language. If one can't claim a historical connection to the language, one is necessarily making political statements when using it.

In the post-colony, the continuation of writing in the context of the now archaic major language still makes a political statement – no longer as subversion in its application, but in its subversion of metropolitan expectations (as has been explained above).<sup>13</sup>

'The third characteristic of a minor literature is that in it everything takes on a collective value. Indeed, precisely because talent isn't abundant in a minor literature, there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that "master" and that could be separated from a collective enunciation. Indeed, scarcity of talent is in fact beneficial and allows the conception of something other than a literature of masters; what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren't in agreement. [...] if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another sensibility [...]' (Deleuze and Guatarri, 1986: 17).

When mapping the characteristics of a minor literature described above to the music in question that was composed in the colonial situation, one only needs to replace 'author' with 'composer'. In this situation, the community in question in whose margins the composer of the minor literature finds himself is that of an elite, colonial art music tradition. The employment of 'minority constructions' in the context of the major language is the expression of 'another sensibility', which – in the words of De la Porte (2010: online) – 'cast[s] the identity and direction of the host in doubt [...].'

In the post-colony, the community in question becomes that of the broader world art music tradition of western origin – in this broader context, talent in Africa remains scarce. (The sensibility that is expressed in the continued writing in the context of the now archaic major language has been made clear already.)

Unlike De la Porte, I am not suggesting the reapplication of this theory to a whole body of works by one (or any) composer. Neither am I suggesting its wholesale application to African (intercultural) art music. Instead, I have attempted to abstract it as a compositional technique, consistent in its inconsistent technical nature, and which may be applied consistently or inconsistently within the oeuvre of a composer. The display of inconsistency

<sup>13</sup> 'Archaic' in the context of art music only, at the time the music was written. In the broader world tradition of art music of western origin, one can argue that there is no 'major language' anymore.

in application in fact strengthens the theory, in that it more clearly displays the composers' control over it as a strategy of subversion. I have also offered different interpretations for its use in colonial and postcolonial situations. I have, for now, based my construction of this theory on the element of harmony. (Other elements of the music that I have studied did not display the same consistency in characteristics that could have contributed to the theory.) In conclusion, there exists a potential in analytical readings of this music – which do not acknowledge the interculturality of this music – to view the 'minority constructions' as mistakes.

### **The musically monocultural displaced: Stephanus le Roux Marais and the early Afrikaans art song**

A number of scholars have described the songs by the first exponents of the Afrikaans (art) song – whose earliest songs date from the 1920s and 30s – as comparable to that of the Victorian parlour song or drawing room ballad.<sup>14</sup> If one takes into account the English music education that the composers in question had received, that is not surprising.<sup>15</sup> But for Walton (2005: 66), the literary developments in Afrikaans in the 1930s (which followed this language's official emancipation from Dutch in 1925) is an indication that the poets of that time, remembering the vital relationship between the nineteenth-century German lied and the poetry of Goethe, Eichendorff and the likes (Gorrell, 1993: 10-11), must have dreamt 'of Wolf and Schubert, but what they got was in fact sub-Quilter' (Walton, 2005: 66).<sup>16</sup> In an analysis of these songs, it is not difficult to point out how they are aligned to Victorian popular song styles, for these styles' level of inclusion seems nearly inexhaustible. It would seem as though, as soon as one finds an exception to any of the broader characteristics (that would elevate it into the realm of 'art' in the nineteenth century German sense), it can easily be realigned with an exception. Take, for example, a few excerpts from songs by one of the early Afrikaans art song's most prolific exponents, Stephanus le Roux Marais:<sup>17</sup>

'Mali, die slaaf, se lied' ('*The slave Mali's song*') (figure 7.6), serves as an example of a song that displays 'typical' characteristics of the styles in question, such as a strophic setting with a

<sup>14</sup> Walton (2005: 66), for example, states the following: 'For if one examines the music of the 'pioneers' of Afrikaans song, as the *South African Music Encyclopedia* calls them, such as Johannes Joubert, P.J. Lemmer and S. le Roux Marais, and whose earliest Afrikaans songs date from the late 1920s and early 1930s, one in fact finds them influenced more by the English parlour song than the German *lied*.' Grové (2011: 674) makes a similar statement with regards to S. le Roux Marais: 'Sy Britse opleiding sou 'n neerslag laat deur die styl van die populêre Engelse "drawingroom ballad" as 'n belangrike middel in die bewusmaking van die potensiaal van die gesongte woord in Afrikaans.' (English translation by the present author: *His British education would leave its mark through the style of the drawing room ballad as an important vehicle in the promotion of the potential of the sung word in Afrikaans.*)

<sup>15</sup> Johannes Joubert, the pseudonym of Hayden Matthews (1894-1985), was born in Wales. He studied at the University of Cardiff and at the Royal College of Music in London. At the latter institution he studied composition with Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford (Malan, 1984c: 240). Petrus Johannes Lemmer (1896-1989) studied at the Royal Academy of Music from 1919 to 1923 (Malan, 1984b: 171). Stephanus le Roux Marais studied at the Royal College of Music from 1923 to 1924 (Henning and Malan, 1984: 225).

<sup>16</sup> Afrikaans gained equal status to Dutch when it became an official language of South Africa in 1925 (South African History Online, 2012: Online).

<sup>17</sup> Stephanus le Roux Marais (1896-1979) wrote one hundred and eight songs (Grové, 2011: 674).

melody that is repeated exactly for each verse,<sup>18</sup> a sixteen-bar verse and eight-bar refrain structure,<sup>19</sup> a simple broken-chord accompaniment,<sup>20</sup> and the use of the tonic major in the refrain rather than the relative major.<sup>21</sup>

12

Tempo primo

Vry was ek - waar die lo - tos groei, Vry

waar die Ko - nings blom-me bloei; Waar el - ke mid - dag sag die reen, sy

gloed on - tel - bre - tra - ne ween, Oor a - tap hut en sil - wer - strand, Oor

fyn be - werk - te sa - wa - land; Waar oor die sta - ti - ge vul - kaan, Die

Figure 7.6 Bars 37-52, ‘Mali, die slaaf se lied’ (Marais, 1953a: 12)

When looking at songs such as ‘Rooidag’ (*‘Dawn’*, or literally *‘Red day’*) or ‘As my hart nou wil sing’ (*‘When my heart wants to sing’*), one may wonder whether their technical challenges in performance removes them from the realm of Victorian popular song. In ‘Rooidag’ (figure 7.7), a very agile pianist is required to perform the deceptively difficult *allegro* accompaniment. Similarly, an advanced singer is required to perform the high sustained tones in the voice part.

<sup>18</sup> According to Richards (2001: 342), ‘[t]he majority of drawing-room ballads had strophic settings, with a simple melody that is repeated for each verse and a chorus or refrain.’

<sup>19</sup> In reference to Claribel’s song ‘Janet’s Choice’, Scott (1989: 74) states that ‘[i]t’s a typical ballad of its time, consisting of a sixteen-bar verse and an eight-bar refrain.’

<sup>20</sup> Regarding broken-chords accompaniments in ballads, refer back to Chapter 2, footnote 22 (p. 60).

<sup>21</sup> In a discussion of the songs of Arthur Sullivan, Scott (1989: 141-142) states that ‘[...] in Sullivan’s work, patterns of successful ballads are reused. [...] Use of the tonic major, rather than the conventional relative major, produces a tender and poignant effect, particularly when the tempo slows and the dynamic level falls.’

voel vir my --- So - waar so - waar van-dag kom hy ---

My hart die klop en dit voel vir my, So - waar --- so -

waar --- so - waar van-dag --- van - dag --- kom

hy. ---

Figure 7.7 Bars 12-24, 'Rooidag'

The same can be said of the voice part in 'As my hart nou wil sing': It ranges two octaves (from Bb<sub>3</sub> to Bb<sub>5</sub>), includes *vocalise*-style sections on an open 'ah'-sound that goes up to Bb<sub>5</sub> (figure 7.8), as well as sustained trills on Bb<sub>4</sub>, D<sub>5</sub> and F<sub>5</sub> that require a smoothed-out *passagio* (figure 7.9). Scott (1989: 141) confirms that such developments in the drawing room ballad did not place it outside the realm of Victorian popular song.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 3, footnote 19 (p. 122) regarding post-1870s developments in the drawing room ballad. Similarly, in reference to Michael William Balfe's 'The Dream', Scott (1989: 57) states that '[i]t cannot be argued that he is deliberately catering for the parlour pianist, since solo piano interludes in his songs require a higher level of skill.'



# As my hart nou wil sing

Woorde: I. D. DU PLESSIS

Musiek: S. LE R. MARAIS

Tempo di Valse

Stem

Klavier

*ff*

Con. Ped.

Ah

Ah

*poco rall.* - *ten.*

Figure 7.8 Bars 1-16, 'As my hart nou wil sing' (Marais, 1970: 34)

If one wishes to consider tone painting a wholesale monopoly of art song, this would also be wrong. In 'Geboorte van die lente' ('*Birth of Spring*') (figure 7.10), from bars 20 to 22, a hail storm is depicted by diminished and minor chords in tremolo figures. The intensity of the hail storm (compared to the rain) is depicted by a fifth leap from B<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>5</sub>, followed by a downward movement in duplets.<sup>23</sup> In a comparison with a description of word painting in Brahm's 'The death of Nelson', one realizes however that perhaps its obvious excessiveness disqualifies it from being something lofty: '[...] the receipt of the fatal wound is recorded loudly and sonorously in the depths of the accompaniment' (Scott, 1989: 8).

<sup>23</sup> 'En die Reent word 'n haëlbuie koud uit die Noorde' (Marais, 1953a: 8). English translation by the present author: *And the rain becomes a hail storm, cold from the north.*

As my hart nou wil sing, om die bood-skap te bring — hoe kan ek dan  
 wag om met al-mal te lag — ah — — — ah — — —  
 ah — — —  
 ah — — —  
 As my

Figure 7.9 Bars 84-107, ‘As my hart nou wil sing’ (Marais, 1970: 38)

Neither does being through-composed – such as Marais’s ‘Moeder’ (*‘Mother’*), ‘Salut D’Amour’ and many others – automatically raise a song’s status to that of ‘art’, if one takes into account that [u]ntil the 1870s there were a number of different musical forms which could be found in songs labelled as ‘popular’ or ‘drawing-room ballads’: Shield’s ‘The Wolf’ is a through-composed aria [...]’ (Scott, 1989: 134). What is therefore difficult to say is how this music is *not* aligned to the Victorian popular song styles in question. (What is certain though is that these songs do not contain any ‘minority constructions’ as described in the previous section: there is no attempt at breaking the ‘rules’ of common practice harmony. I will return to this in the conclusion to this section). I would like to argue that Marais’s songs

Figure 7.10 Bars 18-28, 'Geboorte van die Lente' (Marais, 1953a: 8)

do contain examples of subtle tone painting, and the symbolic use of texture and harmony, that momentarily raise the text-music relationship above that of Victorian popular song. I will illustrate this with a few examples:

Note the symbolic use of texture in the *appassionato* section of 'Moeder' ('Mother') (figure 7.11), where hymn-like block chords accompany references to praying and the Lord.<sup>24</sup> (The texture as such is not unusual in this style, but its symbolic application is.) Melodic tone painting can be seen in bars 9 to 10 of 'Geboorte van die Lente' ('Birth of Spring') (figure

<sup>24</sup> [...] ek weet my moeder bid vir my. O Heer sien neer in medely Op moeder, my moeder' (Marais, 1953b: 5). English translation by the present author: *I know my mother is praying for me. O Lord, look down in sympathy on Mother, my mother.*

Appassionato  
*ten.*  
heen mag gaan Daar is maar een wat my ver - staan ——— Dis moe-der, my

*marcato*

*ten.*  
moe-der, ek weet my moe-der bid vir my. O Heer sien neer in me - de - ly — Op

*ten.*  
moe - der, my moe - der.

*colla voce* *rall. e dim.* *pp*

Figure 7.11 Bars 23-34, 'Moeder' (Marais, 1953b: 5)

7.12), where the smaller curve symbolizes a rainbow, which is overarched by a larger curve that follows, depicting the sky that contains the rainbow.<sup>25</sup> In 'Voor jou en my' (*For you and me*), subtle differences can be seen between the melodic line in the second phrase of the first verse (figure 7.13), and where this section is repeated in the second verse (figure 7.14). The differences correspond to the text: both begin with a D and E on the upbeat, but in the first verse this is followed by an arpeggio-like movement from G<sub>4</sub> to G<sub>5</sub>, where the text refers to blossoming trees.<sup>26</sup> In the second verse, the D-E upbeat is followed by a stepwise movement from F<sub>4</sub> to D<sub>5</sub>: the stepwise movement – a slower progress upward than an arpeggio – starts

<sup>25</sup> 'Toe die Reent met die Sonskyn gaan trou het, veelverwig die boog wat die Lug vir 'n troupresent kunstig gebou het' (Marais, 1953a: 6-7). English translation by the present author: *Multi-coloured was the bow, artistically constructed by the air as a wedding gift, when the rain married the sunshine.*

<sup>26</sup> 'al de bloeiende bomen die geuren die geuren voor jou en my' (Marais, 1953a: 2). English translation by the present author: *All the smells, the smells, of the blossoming trees, for you and me.*

on the word ‘wachten’ (‘waiting’), and like a light bulb going on, a raised tone (C#) appears on the second syllable of ‘lichtende’ (‘luminous’).<sup>27</sup>

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Geboorte van die Lente' by Marais (1953a: 7). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are in Afrikaans. The first system is marked 'cresc.' and includes the lyrics 'ver - wig die boog wat die Lug - vir 'n'. The second system includes 'trou pre - sent kun - stig ge - bou het. Ge -'. The third system is marked 'Agitato' and includes 'twis het hul eens op 'n dag - met 'n'. The fourth system includes 'sto - rm ver - wy - ten - de woor - de. Die' and is marked 'cresc.' at the end. The piano accompaniment features arpeggiated chords and moving lines in both hands, with dynamic markings 'mf' and 'm.d.' (mezzo-forte) appearing in the third and fourth systems.

Figure 7.12 Bars 9-17, ‘Geboorte van die Lente’ (Marais, 1953a: 7)

<sup>27</sup> ‘Daar wachten twee lichtende vensters, voor jou en my’ (Marais, 1953a: 4-5). English translation by the present author: *Two luminous windows are waiting there for you and me.*

The image shows a musical score for Figure 7.13, consisting of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and 4/4 time, with lyrics: "al de bloei-en-de bo-men die geu - ren — die". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand.

Figure 7.13 Bars 10-14, 'Voor jou en my' (Marais, 1953a: 2)

The image shows a musical score for Figure 7.14, consisting of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major and 4/4 time, with lyrics: "wo - nen — wy — Daar wach-ten twee lich-ten-de ven - sters,voor". A *cresc.* marking is present above the vocal line. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand.

Figure 7.14 Bars 45-49, 'Voor jou en my' (Marais, 1953a: 4)

The different melodic depictions of laughter, and in one case the chord that accompanies it, in 'Dit is laat in die nag' ('*It is late at night*') (figure 7.15) are worth noting. See, for example, the depiction of abundant laughter in bar 35: a leap from Eb<sub>5</sub> to a *tenuto* G<sub>5</sub> followed by an arpeggio downwards to Eb<sub>5</sub> and C<sub>5</sub>, before returning to the stepwise movement that preceded the depiction. The laughter is empty, because it exists only in the movement: the G<sub>5</sub> is accompanied by a minor seventh chord (C Eb G Bb, but with a B-natural *appoggiatura* on the first half of the beat that increases the dissonance), creating an acute sense of irony that corresponds to the text.<sup>28</sup> In bars 42 to 43, the attempt at laughter is half-hearted compared to the one just described: it only reaches an Eb<sub>5</sub>, finally failing in the downward movement from Ab<sub>4</sub> to G<sub>4</sub> – again, this corresponds to the text.<sup>29</sup>

Walton (2005: 66) is certainly right where he says that the early Afrikaans lied's 'neo-Victorian idiom is a far cry from the German art song and also places them a world apart [...] from the contemporary European and American music of their day.'<sup>30</sup> It is an error, however, to declare these songs 'artless' based on their idiom or stylistic origin, rather than to dig a bit deeper to discover the attempts (however fleeting) at the development of a more significant text-music relationship than could generally be found in Victorian popular song styles. In this sense perhaps these songs are not such a far cry from the developing stages of the

<sup>28</sup> 'En ek hoor iemand lag, iemand lag Maar in my en jou is net berou [...]' (Marais, 1970: 30). English translation by the present author: *And I hear someone laughing, someone laughing, but in you and me there is only remorse.*

<sup>29</sup> 'Kon ek maar lag maar lag so die diep die nag [...]' (Marais, 1970: 30-31). English translation by the present author: *If only I could laugh, could laugh, so deep in the night.*

<sup>30</sup> With 'contemporary European and American music of their day' Walton is most probably referring to art songs by composers such as Britten, Richard Strauss, Ives or Copland.

Figure 7.15 Bars 34-46, 'Dit is laat in die nag' (Marais, 1970: 30-31)

German art song, if one compares it – in intention, rather than in style or its success in execution – to Schubert's early attempts at developing Zumsteeg's German ballad style.<sup>31</sup> History not only required the early Afrikaans art song to have English genetic origins, I would argue, but to have *popular* English genetic origins. A popular style would serve well as a clean slate for the composers, who needed to develop a new art from it (for the newly official language) that was, perhaps ironically, not meant to be aligned with metropolitan

<sup>31</sup> According to Gorrell (1993: 113), '[t]he musical ballads of Johann Zumsteeg (1760-1802) were much admired and carefully studied by Franz Schubert. Many of Schubert's early, sprawling narratives reflect Zumsteeg's influence.'

traditions in art song. Also, developing a new genre from a popular style would allow the speakers of the language *en masse* to feel unity in its newly elevated state as art.

The absence of ‘minority constructions’ in this music may be interpreted as ‘correctness’, a notion which has historically within the broader socio-historical context of African colonization bestowed cultural embeddedness on white settler populations who have viewed themselves as indigenous. Analysis of this kind of music could violate the music in two ways: by looking for ‘minority constructions’ as a signifier of Africanism and, in their absence, to condemn the music as *not of Africa*; and second, to declare the music to be *not of Africa* and then judge its value as art based on its idiom or stylistic origin placed in a world historical context. It is therefore important, from the outset, to view a musically monocultural genre – displaced in history and geography – as intercultural, before attempting analysis.

## Conclusion

This chapter served to provide a specific engagement with ethics in the analysis of African intercultural art music, which stemmed from a more general discourse on this topic. I made a clear distinction between productivity and ethics, and proposed that the only ethical imperative in analysis is to be as informed as possible about the possible contexts of production, before making an explicit value judgement. The aim of my discussions of selected art songs by Nigerian, Ghanaian and Egyptian composers (grouped together by the present author due to certain common musical characteristics), and the Afrikaans art songs of Stephanus le Roux Marais were to equip the analyst with the knowledge of possible contexts in which to read this music, without which an inappropriate value judgement could be made. In the case of the former I proposed a reapplication of Deleuze and Guattari’s theorization of Kafka’s work as a so-called ‘minor literature’ on the music in question, and concluded that there exists a potential in analytical readings of this music to view the ‘minority constructions’ as mistakes. In the latter discussion I argued that Marais’s songs – contrary to implications in some existing readings of this music – do contain examples of subtle tone painting, and the symbolic use of texture and harmony, that momentarily raise the text-music relationship above that of Victorian popular song. Taking my direction from Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), in which he argues for cultural classification through place, I proposed in both discussions the application of the term ‘intercultural’ to the music in question, with the aim of directing the analyst to contexts not necessarily invoked by the score.

Upon reflection it came to my mind that one could easily err in the other direction: assigning value to something that is not deserving of it may be considered patronizing, and even unethical. In the case of the theories presented in this chapter it is not yet possible to say how wide it could be applied and whether I have erred in this direction – further empirical research is required. Could finding a balance between ignorance and overly political correctness in itself be seen as part of an ethical stance towards analysis?



## Chapter 8 Conclusion



**Figure 8.1** Vaudeville star Bert Williams in blackface (Lumiere, 1921: online)

*Can African vocalism be an instruction to perform oral blackface?*

The caption underneath the photo above asks a pertinent question that points to the embodied state of the voice as opposed to that of the piano, or any other instrument for that matter. To answer the proposed question in the affirmative requires specific conditions that I discuss in my conclusion on African vocalism later in this chapter.

In this chapter, a summary of my findings in each of the preceding chapters is followed by a comparison of trends and styles in African art song to those in certain western song traditions. This leads to a discussion on folk and popular song styles as art. My conclusion on African vocalism is followed by a continuation of my discussion on the compositional denotation of 'Africa'. This in turn leads to a consideration of the relation of modernity to the notion of a 'duty to denote' in composition.

A summary of my findings in each chapter serves to remind the reader of how the research questions and aims set out in Chapter 1 have been answered. In Chapter 2 my investigations of Nigerian and Ghanaian art songs led to the exposure of recurring characteristics that can be added to an understanding of African vocalism. The two most pertinent general findings – a conservative approach to tonality, and the fact that there was not one work discussed that did not attempt to denote a national or ethnic identity – were related to an anti-individualistic approach that does not speak to a western ideal in art song composition. Chapter 3 showed that none of the strategies in self-representation in twentieth-century Egyptian art song are exact reproductions of western exoticism. For the South African composers investigated in Chapter 4, the denotation of 'Africa' appeared to be less of a duty and more of an individual choice than for composers from the other countries under scrutiny in this dissertation. I found that where musical Africanisms are recognizable from an external viewpoint, they are exclusively black African musical Africanisms. Chapter 5 served to display how non-speakers of tonal languages may be able to study tonal language text settings. Although the suggested methodology did not allow for the study of detailed intricacies, the analyses at least confirmed that the composers' settings of texts in tonal languages are not indifferent to the requirements of speech tone. In Chapter 6 my interpretations of the 'objects' of cultural affiliation in the compositions of expatriate African composers demonstrated how diplomacy can serve as a reflexive mode of critique that does not aim to point out a composer's intent, but to ask whether perception speaks to intent. In Chapter 7 I made a clear distinction between productivity and ethics, and proposed that the only ethical imperative in analysis is to be as informed as possible about the possible contexts of production, before making explicit value judgements. I took my direction from Said's *Orientalism* where I proposed, in both discussions in that chapter, the application of the term 'intercultural' to the music in question, with the aim of directing the analyst to consider contexts not necessarily invoked by the scores. The discussions in Section A of this dissertation served to engage with existing discourses and to promote new ones in the contexts of individual countries or regions, whereas Section B served to do the same in cross-regional contexts. The technical and stylistic descriptions of the music, the translations, and the biographical and historical information that served as evidence for my contextual readings – although not comprehensive in any sense – could separately be viewed as a contribution to the 'catalogue' of art music in Africa. The questions of who in (and from) Africa composed art songs and where such songs are/were composed, were asked during the empirical research stage of this study and served

to direct the selections made for the dissertation – it is therefore not a question answered *in* the dissertation.

My earlier statement that art song was transplanted into Africa as a concert genre without its preceding histories was, in retrospect, perhaps a bit simplistic. Victorian popular song traditions were practiced to different degrees in all the countries under discussion – in some instances and at certain times parallel to such practices in colonial metropolises. In especially Egypt and South Africa this practice seems to have developed into serious approaches to song writing. This is not unlike a trend seen in English art song of the pre-Britten era. If one is able to say that at least in some cases there is a genetic link between the practice of Victorian popular song traditions and later developments in serious song (in other words, the one led to the other), one cannot say that of folk and church influences. Church and folk music influenced art song, but the one did not lead to the other. Also, trends in church and folk-influenced art song in twentieth century Africa are much more displaced in time than ballad-influenced art song when compared to similar trends in the west. Both C.P.E. Bach's chorale-influenced songs and Schulz's *Lieder im Volkston*, which signalled the start of such trends in Germany, are late eighteenth-century developments. Nationalist sentiments in art song in Africa followed suit, just like it did in the German lied. These trends reveal a time displacement of around a century and more, rather than a complete 'transplant'. The broad-ranging influence of early twentieth-century composers such as Bartók and Debussy may be on account of their appropriation of music from non-western cultures in their works. Postcolonial trends are more often parallel to general developments in art music in the west.

My arguments for a reading of songs in the context of animist materialism (Chapter 2), and for viewing musically monocultural genres displaced in history and geography as intercultural (Chapter 7), have provided solutions for viewing arranged folk songs and songs in popular styles as art songs. It is largely matters of editorial presentation that have led me to believe that I should not view art-arranged folk songs from Nigeria and Ghana in the same light as, for example, those by Benjamin Britten: The rebranding of Akin Euba's *Six Yoruba songs* as *Six Yoruba folk songs* reveals a later change of thought on an initial sensibility; Christian Onyeji's seamless mixed-presentation of new and arranged songs in his *Art for celebration* is clearly meant to blur the lines. One may say that in folk-inspired art songs, the notions of *Volkstümlichkeit* and *Empfindsamkeit* both feature strongly. Where arranged folk songs are presented as art, the notion of *Empfindsamkeit* – although not absent – is of secondary importance. This should not be seen as a deficiency, as will be explained in my discussion on the relation of modernity to the notion of a 'duty' of denotation in composition further on.

Further to my conclusion on African vocalism in Chapter 2, I will now elaborate on how this concept can be extended through my investigations in subsequent chapters.<sup>1</sup> In Andile Khumalo's *Ekuboleni kunempilo* we saw downward drift towards the end of phrases in the voice part. Chapter 5 confirmed a sensibility towards the requirements of speech tone, at

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<sup>1</sup> The focus here is on elements that specifically relate to the use of the voice. I am therefore not referring to more general characteristics that could also be applied to African pianism (or any other 'ism' for that matter), such as repetition, an improvisatory character, scales etc.

least to some degree, as a common characteristic in vocal writing. Fred Onovwerosuoke's 'Duniya' displayed an imitation of griot vocal traditions in terms of melodic and rhythmic characteristics of sung parts. (This is different from simply the use of spoken text in between singing, as mentioned in Chapter 2.) In Robert Fokkens's *Four colonizations* we saw vocal writing of which the main characteristic is that of being instrumental. This is comparable in conception to Onyeji's songs set to 'poetic syllables'. This unidiomatic writing can only be considered an instance of African vocalism if the instrumental writing has qualities that are 'African' in itself. If not, it is simply a subversion of nineteenth-century lied characteristics, which is not unknown in twentieth and twenty-first century art song writing in the west. (Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* is a case in point). There are no consistent characteristics in the text-music relationships of the songs discussed that would indicate a broad, specifically African strategy in this regard. Where songs are strophic, it reminds of the lied in its early history, when composers – as a consequence of the Affektenlehre – searched out the dominating mood of the poem and devised a melody to fit this throughout all the stanzas. This sensibility may also be compared to that seen in the compromises made by composers where they set multiple verses in tonal languages to a single melody. In reference to the songs that have interval-restricted melodies and smaller ranges, one may superficially compare it to a sensibility evident in the First Berlin School's reaction against the florid style which was popular then. Although one may argue for the inclusion of non-black African vocal practices in the concept of African vocalism on the basis of its African contexts of production – as has been done for African pianism – my study has, in purely musical terms (when texts and text-music relationships are left out of the equation), not revealed anything that can make a contribution in this regard. My study has, for example, not confirmed that art songs by Egyptian composers have Arab-influenced musical characteristics not seen elsewhere in the Middle East. This does not mean that further research will not reveal such characteristics.

I will end this section by comparing African pianism with African vocalism in order to point out a certain danger presented by African vocalism not present in its pianistic counterpart. According to McClary (1991: 136), western culture 'has tried throughout much of its history to mask the fact that actual people usually produce the sounds that constitute music' in order to erase 'the physicality involved in both the making and the reception of music.' Playing the piano can, in that sense, be distinguished from the body when so desired. Singing is embodied: it can never be separated from the body. Barthes (1977: 182, 185) distinguishes between the pheno-song and the geno-song or 'grain':

The 'grain' is that: the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue [...].

The *pheno-song* [...] covers all the phenomena, all the features which belong to the structure of the language being sung, the rules of the genre, the coded form of the melisma, the composer's idiolect, the style of the interpretation: in short, everything in the performance which is in the service of communication, representation, expression [...]. The *geno-song* is the volume of the singing and the speaking voice, the space where significations germinate 'from within language and in its very materiality' [...].

The 'grain' of the voice is [...] not merely its timbre.

The latter sentence confirms that Barthes's elusive 'grain' or 'geno-song' at least includes timbre. For the purposes of African pianism a theorization of timbres is merely a theorization of instrumental timbres. In the case of African vocalism, such a theorization of timbre, of the 'geno-song or the 'grain', may amount to something much more uncomfortable. It has the risk of becoming racially bound and thereby exclusivist. An attempt at re-composing the 'grain' may very well be an instruction to perform oral blackface.

Throughout this dissertation, but especially in Chapter 4, I have tried to show how composers denote 'Africa' in their works through certain textures, timbres, rhythms, scales, forms and procedures, as well as through texts in 'non-colonial' African languages and on African topics. The 'African' elements were shown to be either juxtaposed with western characteristics, or to have been placed in a cross-domain African-western mapping. In some cases what I have shown to be 'African' does not have any precolonial cultural origin, but is a subversion of a western practice. In other cases, there is no traceable denotation of 'Africa' that indicates a binary 'self' and 'other', or 'self' and 'other self' (western/African, Arab/African, white/African, modern/traditional). If languages and topics are left out of the equation, my study has shown that only in Egypt is an outward-directed denotation of 'Africa' not the denotation of a (precolonial) black Africa. (The reader must now bear with the generalizations, for theorization depends on it.) For Egyptian composers there appears to be no need to show an 'Africanness' that is any different from being an Arab. It appears not to be so in the case of white South African composers. Egyptian composers have another 'place' to denote that overlaps with Africa: the middle-eastern Arab world. The outward-directed denotation of *place* depends on musical elements of majority cultures, and for Egyptian composers the denotation of *place* and *cultural affiliation* is conveniently the same thing. I specifically say *cultural affiliation* and not *culture*, since I am referring to the denotation of the 'other self' that is not necessarily the everyday 'self' – the modern, cosmopolitan composer with western-style training in composition. The 'other self' is the emotional and recent historical connection to a culture which may or may not form part of the everyday 'self'. For white South African composers the dilemmas are pertinent: there is no other 'place' but Africa to denote, the majority cultures are not theirs, and applying musical elements from majority cultures may be seen as reproducing an old power relation: minority domination, violent acquisition and appropriation. In addition, there is mostly no 'other self'. The 'west' is no place, and Europe is an idea rather than an existential sine quo non. The emotional connection to Africa is in terms of place. A feasible way for the white South African composer to denote place outwardly may therefore be through the use of musical elements that emerge from the extended development of more general theories of black African musics. It is a compromise that does not remove such composers entirely from culture, but perhaps provides enough distance not to reproduce the old power relations.

The following discussion brings together my references to anti-individualist trends, the notion of a 'duty to denote' 'Africa' in composition, and a certain lack of *Empfindsamkeit* in art-arranged folk songs not being a deficiency. I would like to suggest a reading of these notions in the context of the level to which western modernity has or has not taken hold in different

regions of Africa.<sup>2</sup> Barker (2012: 182) defines modernity as the historical period following the Middle Ages: 'It is a post-traditional order marked by change, innovation and dynamism.' As part of his list of the social and cultural characteristics of modernism, he names individualism, differentiation, commodification, urbanization, rationalization and bureaucratization (Barker, 2012: 188). Chaibong (2000: 127) identifies individualism as the defining product of modernity: 'Modern philosophy, political thought, and economic theory all point toward and revolve around the individual.' It is precisely to this characteristic that this discussion on modernity refers. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to explain why western modernity has or has not taken hold to a certain extent in different regions of Africa, but only to highlight existing findings and opinions on this matter and to relate that to the musical aspects under discussion.

In Taiwo's (2010: 5) study on modernity and Anglophone West Africa, the author stresses the need to ask 'why modernity – the essence that modernization processes seek to realize – has not taken hold [...].' His proposition of this question confirms that he assigns a relatively low level of modernity to this region in general. In fact, he suggests this to be true for the whole of the continent – which may be true in a very general sense – although his empirical research is restricted to Anglophone West Africa, and his conclusions are therefore better understood in that context. Also, the author himself makes a clear distinction between South Africa and the rest of the continent where he – in the context of a discussion of how colonialism actually preempted modernity rather than promoted it – states that '[...] had the colonialists meant it, they would have done for Africa what they did for the United States, Australia, Canada and white South Africa' (Taiwo, 2010: 170). Nieder-Heitmann (2003) speaks of both the long history of settler-colonialism, and a united modernist world view in contemporary South Africa that distinguishes it from other countries in Africa:

As a modern state, it emerged out a colonial history of 350 years, as diverse colonial, settler, and indigenous forces vied for hegemony.

Yet, we have of late been going through a transformation of such seismic proportions that it influences all of our life together, as well as our particular cultures. All of society, and not only politics, is now impacted by a hitherto unknown consciousness and desire for freedom. [...] The situation has now been institutionalised because our new democracy is founded on a liberal constitution and one of the most liberal bills of rights in the world to protect the individual.

El-Zant (2011: online) traces the intellectual roots of contemporary antagonistic political rhetoric in Egypt to this country's fraught relationship with modernity, which started with Napoleon's expedition at the end of the eighteenth century. Egypt's liberal civic government of the first half of the twentieth century failed: 'In the second half of the century, Gamal Abdel Nasser's increasingly hostile anti-liberal rhetoric – employed in the context of an ever-stiffening political and cultural struggle with the West – became wildly popular' (El-Zant, 2011: online).

From the above it is clear that modernity has taken a stronger hold in South Africa than anywhere else in Africa. I would like to suggest that this may account for the greater

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<sup>2</sup> I am specifically referring to *western* modernity and not alternative (African) modes of modernity.

influence on individualist thought seen in art music composition in South Africa, as opposed to the characteristics named at the beginning of this discussion, which are more often seen in art music compositions from the other countries under discussion. The denotation of ‘Africa’ is for the South African composer a mechanism for individualization, and does not display the sense of a ‘duty’ to serve a group identity. South Africa has also had its share of nationalisms, but its cultural productions have revealed these to be surface structures underneath which the greater idea of modernity has slowly been moving along. Such a reading serves to relieve us from assigning the musical qualities under discussion to race. I am not suggesting that Nigerian, Ghanaian and Egyptian composers have not been educated in post-Enlightenment thought or that they are ‘pre-modern’. Rather, I am suggesting that where composers have chosen to adopt anti-individualist trends in spite of their modern western education and modern urban environments, this should be seen as an aspect of an alternative mode of modernity.

When Richard Strauss wrote his *Vier letzte Lieder*, it signalled the end of an era for the art song in the west. Yet this was but the early days of its manifestation in Africa. How will it survive beyond a demise predicted as a result of a late-onset western modernity? In an era where excess and unmediated directness in expression are celebrated, one may be inclined to predict an early death for the genre here as well. However, this very same world (and for this very same reason) is increasingly turning inward for salvation from itself. I would like to believe that the possibilities of art song – its intimacy, the inherent democracy of its conditions of existence, its sensibility of infinite variation tied to the body and language – will yet give birth to music from Africa that will change the way we listen. Spiritual need is not its only condition for survival. It also requires the composer to embrace a condition of postmodernism: the collapse of high culture as a binary opposition to low culture.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the art song will only survive as a product of high culture in Africa if high culture is accepted as ‘just one more sub-culture, one more opinion, in our midst’ (Chambers in Barker, 2012: 205). Such a philosophy neither requires aesthetic compromise, nor does it dissolve high culture. It democratizes high culture by philosophically placing it on an equal footing with popular culture, which undoubtedly enjoys a higher status. How such a philosophy – which amounts to a change of thought by the composer – will filter through to mass perception is not a question that I can answer here. Perhaps the compromised conditions in which high art must often be produced and performed in Africa will exactly be what allows for an easy breakdown of the constructs of elitism associated to high art, thereby enacting its democratization.

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<sup>3</sup> See Barker (2012: 205).

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Appendix

# BONWERÈ KENTEJWENE

(Bonwerè Weaving)

Music and words by  
E. AMU

Voice

Introduction

Pianoforte Accompaniment

*mf*

*mf*

*mf*

1. A - kyin - kyin - a - kyin - kyin a - ma ma - hũ  
 2. Ken - te - nwe - ne dwom yi a - fa ma - dwene  
 3. O hũo - ni - mm̃ - b̃o an - te ma - se - a -  
 4. Man - kye Bon - werè ho na me - saŋ me -

nnee - ma, A - kyin - kyin - a - kyin - kyin a - ma ma - te  
 den - nen, Ba - bia - ra a me - fa me - re - to no  
 ra de, Nan - sō - bō mmo - den yēē hō bia - ra  
 baa fie, Me dwom no ye nni - pa pii de na wō -

*Rid.* \* *Rid.* \* *Rid.* \* *Rid.* \*

Verse 1 only

nse - maa, A - san - te Bon - werē ken - te - ηwe - ne miη - hūu bi dāō,  
 den - nen, Na nni - pa a wo - hūu me nyi - naa hūi sē a - sem da me so  
 māa me, Ō - maa me η - ka - te η - kwan pa bi di mee pa a - ra  
 pē a - tie, E - maa ma - ni gyeē - i pii se ma - nya bri - bi pa re - kō,

*Rid.* \*

Verse 1 only

— A - san - te Bon - we - re ken - te - ηwe - ne men - tee bi dāō.  
 — Na me - hō yēē wōη ηwō - ηwā ma wō - be - kyereē me so.  
 — Na ne dew maa me we - re fii me dwom no ka - kra.  
 — Na mi - duu fie pē me - kō a - hen - fie a - nan - te - se - bō.

*Rid.* \* *Rid.* \*

Bonwere Kentenwene

Kwa-me  $\text{\textcircled{O}}$ -nim - a - deē - yo ne ken - te - ṅwe-ne n'a - bo me gye, Ne  
 E - no  $\text{\textcircled{O}}$ -hūo - ni-mmō - bo be - faa me kōe kō - soēē ne fi, N'ō -  
 O-maa me baa - bi pa dāē o - da - sum pē me - bōō da-gye, Ken -  
 Mmran-te nè mmabaa nē ṅ - kwa - ko-raa, mmere-wa nè mmō-fra, Wō -

\* \* \* \* \*

nsa, ne nanj ne n - se - dua, se wo - gi - gye ni:  
 - pa - taa me a - ra, bi - saa me ma - nan - te - se. +  
 - te - ṅwene dwom ko - ro yi a - ra na me - re - to. ☉  
 bae, be - boa - e Wṅ nyinaa-ra be - kyeree me so. ☒

\*

*f*  
 Kro, kro, kro, kro, hī, hī, hī, hī, kro hī kro hī

*mp*

kro kro kro, hī, hī, kro kro kro, hī, hī,

Bonwere Kantenwene

kro hi kro, kro hi kro n'a - ye me dēo, a - ye me dēo,

Bon - we re ken - te - ηwe - ne n'a! A - ye me dēo, a - bo me gye.

**CODA** *mf*

*Spoken.*

+ Ose: “Meba, eδεεβη?” Mese: “Awo, hmm! Meye osuani a mifi Akuropon Asuaekunini no mu, na mate senea Bonwere kurow yi agye dij wo kentejwene mu, na wogyaa yeh kwan yi, maba se mehwe nea metee wo ho no. Menya miduu kurow no mu pe, ofi a edi kan a miduu ho mu no metee, na meko hui se Opanyih Kwame Onimadesyo rejwene kente”. Agya, Kwame Onimadesyo ne kente dij a menya meboe pe, na dwom no de nehō abehye manō: “Kro, Kro, Kro n.a.”

⊙ Eno Ohuonimabō nē nefipamfo nyinaa nyan bae, begyinaa me dan a meda mu no ano, retie me dwom no. Na mo ara munim anadwodwom nē ne de.

Bonwere Kentejwene

Εκὼς wῶη so ara yiye, maa me gye a mabo no sanj wῶη bi, na se mefre dwom no a, na wῶη nyinaa gye so. “Kro, kro, kro n.a.”

☒ Mise, nnipa ηkō ara a ebeboaa ho, ofi biara mu anka otwe anka adowa. En’na mehwee komm na mise: “Ei, nnipa dom yi, amanee bej po na wobō wῶη a, ebesō wῶη ani?” En’de, edi me Bonwere Kentejwene dwom yi ara. Na mede mahyehye so, na okyeame no asom, na amanfo no agye so. Na efi ho, wofa kurow no bejkum anaa nifa, apuei anaa atōe a wobete: “Kro, kro, kro n.a.”

# AKWAABADWOM

(A song of welcome and congratulations)

Music and words by  
E. AMU

**Introduction**  
**Moderately slow**

Pianoforte Accompaniment

*mf*

*f*

*cresc.*

*In free rhythm style*

*f*

A - gya - noe, — mma - ni - mma! A -

*mf*

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It begins with an introduction marked 'Moderately slow' and 'Pianoforte Accompaniment' with a dynamic of *mf*. The piano part features a steady accompaniment with triplets in both hands. The vocal line enters with a melody of eighth notes, also featuring triplets. The piano accompaniment then becomes more active, marked with a dynamic of *f* and a *cresc.* (crescendo) marking. The vocal line continues with the lyrics 'A - gya - noe, — mma - ni - mma! A -'. The final section is marked 'In free rhythm style' and features a more expressive piano accompaniment with a dynamic of *mf*.

- kō-gye - a -saa - se -fo e a -ye! A - gya -noe! — Ye-mā mo a -

kwa - b'o, nea mma -ri -mma be -ye na moā - ye yiō A -

- gya - noe! A - gya -noe! Ye-ma moā - kwa - b'o,

A - gya - noe! Ye-ma moā - kwa - b'o.



*mp*  
 O-kom dee moa - ra, O - suo hwee moa - ra, O - wia hwee moa - ra, mo

*p*

*f*  
 bre - bræe a - ra moa - ma uerj baa - bi a - gyi - na, A-gya-nom mo, mo, mo,

*mp*

*f*  
 mo, ag-ya-nom mo! Ag-ya-nom mo, mo, mo, mo, ag-ya-nom mo!

*mf*

*f*

*cresc.*

*In free rhythm style*

*f*

2. A - gya - noe! a - ma - mma, a - kō - nyaā - hō - fa - di -

*mf*

*In strict time*

- foe! a - ye, A - gya - noe! ye - ma mōa - kwa - b'o. A -

- hō - fa - di fa - ta a - ma - mma o A - gya - noe!

10

A - gya - noe! ye - ma mo'a - kwa - b'o A -

- gya - noe! Ye - ma mo'a - kwa - b'o Mo - hwe - hwee a -

- ra, mo - fre - free a - ra, mo - pem - pem - ee a - ra, mo -

- pe - re - pe - ree a - ra, mo'a - ma yeη hōa - nya a - dwo yeη, A - gya - nom

mo, mo, mo, mo, a-gya-nom mo! A-gya-nom mo, mo, mo,

mo, a-gya-nom mo!

*mf* CODA

The musical score consists of six systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics and two piano accompaniment staves. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system features a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment staff. The fourth system contains a piano accompaniment staff with the marking *mf* CODA. The fifth and sixth systems are piano accompaniment staves. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, dynamics (*f*, *mf*), and repeat signs.

(Amu, 1961: 2-11)

# WO HO TE SEN (J.H. Kwabena Nketia)

$\text{♩} = 92$

Wo ho te sen wo ho te sen wo ho te

sen A- des kye a, me so ma be hwe wo. O- nwunu dwoa, me so

ma be hwe wo 'Dee ba wo ho ye? Wo ho te sen. Wo ho te

sen wo ho te sen o- bi ba a., kra me Wo nua a- dee

5 10 15

kya kra me. Wo nua sa ben re-ti-e. Wo nua mra ma

20

re fa oo. Sa ben re tie. De hye

ba ee — A dee kya, kra me oo. Nwuru dno a,

25

kra me. Ye a, kra me, ye a kra me. Ni pa nua ne o-

30

6

ni-pa ni-yea kra me ni-yea kra me oo

35

Wo ho te sen Wo ho te sen Wo ho te sen. A-

40

dee kyea me so-ma be hwe wo O-nwu nu dwa me so ma be hwe wo

'Dee ba wo ho ye? Wo ho te sen Wo ho te sen Wo ho te

45

7

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are in Xhosa. The first system of music has the following lyrics: "san o bi ba a kra me. Ni-pa nua ee, Ni-pa". The second system of music has the following lyrics: "nua ee Ni-pa nua ee kra me oo." The piano accompaniment includes a treble and bass clef, with various chords and melodic lines. A page number "50" is visible in the piano part of the first system.

san o bi ba a kra me. Ni-pa nua ee, Ni-pa

nua ee Ni-pa nua ee kra me oo.

50



# WONYA AMANE A, NA WOHU WO DOJFO. (J.H. Kwabena Nketia)

*♩ = 108*

o - ni - pa ee

tieno yi - yeo - yon-ko pa nea sem oo o - ni - pa ee tieno yi - yeo -

yonko pa nea-sem oo. Wo-nya a-ma-ne na e-ka wo n-ko mmo-bra.

12 20

Yon-ko pa ye-ede ke-se ma wo ni- pa nu-ae o-kan-ni

a-sem to wo-a, na wo-hu wo do-fo o-kan-ni

a-sem to wo-a, na wo-hu wo do-fo oo

(Nketia, d.u.: 5-8, 12-13)