

An Analytical Study of Essilfie's '*Mɔbɔ Me Nsanku Daa*' (I Will Forever Play My Harp)

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ABSTRACT

Art music analysis received great attention over the two decades among scholars in theory and compositions as well as other cognate disciplines. The main focus has been how to increase the paucity of literature in art music analytical studies as well as other paradigms and bents for music analysis. It is also worth noting that, the volume of choral art music in Ghana has grown extensively, unravelling various styles of prolific and ardent composers which are worth documenting for posterity. One of the works which have so many artistic elements but which have not received attention is *Mɔbɔ me Nsanku daa*' (I will forever play my harp), an art music choral composition by George Mensah Essilfie.. Using formal analysis and purposive sampling technique the paper examines some elements and devices that were employed in the composition. It was found out that techniques such as persistent fragmentation of thematic materials, homorhythmic accompaniment against intricate rhythmic decorations, shifted accents, synthesis of speech and song melody, and an introduction of delayed scoop, melodic clash and thematic speech melody, and many other systems, are all substantial features which were used in the creative work to characterize its artistic nature. It is envisaged that such techniques are crucial for use in the academic setting and musical analysis scholarship in general.

Keywords: Delayed scoop, Melodic clash, Mensah Essilfie, me nsanku, my harp

INTRODUCTION

It is largely acknowledged that Ghana is dominated with choral art music as compared to instrumental art music. Amuah (2013 p. 242) notes that "From the rural communities through the districts, regions and the capital cities, churches and schools, workplaces and the radio stations, Ghana is full of choral music performances. Consequently, it is not challenging to identify doyens in Vocal art music in Ghana. Furthermore, "the Ghanaian art choral idiom since the 1930s can be described as a symbiosis of traditional African music and Western art music" (Dor, 2005, p. 442). The establishment of Western hymnody in the nineteenth century by European Christian missionaries, followed by the British colonial apparatus, produced Ghanaian choral music, and this is also peculiar to Nigeria, Zambia and many other sub-saharan African countries (Euba, 1989; Mensah, 1998; Nketia, 1974). Additionally, the study of composers and their compositions, is therefore, very relevant, especially, in music composition research. In the same respect, Acquah, Annan and Sackey (2022) noted that 'Over the years, academic discourse of some African composers and their compositions have received wide publication.' Also, they state categorically that 'This is empirically evidential in the works of Sandler (2019), Boamah (2007), Dor (2005), Akrofi (2001), and Agawu (1987, 1984) that Amu and Nketia of Ghana have received a quantum of scholarships.' Consequently, the intention of this paper to analyze *Mɔbɔ me Nsanku daa* (I will continually play my harp) is never coincidental, but to count up to contribution of knowledge formed by academics; For instance, in recent years, scholars in the field of music such as Dor (2005), Amuah and Acquah (2014) and Addaquay (2022) have all recognized the need to examine works of Ghanaian composers in detail. As part of the motivation for the analytical works by these scholars, Ekwueme (1980) proclaims that he and Jones disagrees with the argument that: "the African is utterly unconscious of any organized theory behind his music. He makes his music quite spontaneously, and it is with interest and the delight of discovery that the

more educated African will listen to a demonstration of the basic principles which underlie his musical practice” (Ekwueme, 1980). Therefore, this diagnostic work is to contend that contribution to existing literature must be considered as imperative as filling in gaps of an existing or non-existing works, depending on the capacity of the contribution. Also, this examination serves as a point of reference to performers and may enable them to appreciate some of the intentions (apart from the difficult sections which may be described as unnecessary in subjectivity) of the composer.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Formal Analysis

As far as analytical work in music is concerned, the perception of an analyst is so much of importance that it is in the right direction to emphasize that ‘Underlying all aspects of analysis as an activity is the fundamental point of contact between mind and musical sound, namely, musical perception’ (Bent 1980, p. 341). For the purpose of an accurate analytical work in music, Debellis (2002) categorizes analysis into three groups.

1. A microstructural analysis which brings out the musical features or fabrics of a piece.
2. The listeners perception and view of the music he/she hears
3. Objects that are not really part of the analytic view of a piece, but something that exists prior to it.

In this regard, this paper focuses on the first category because the technicality in the music requires an elaboration for a purpose. Moreover, the music being examined in this work may sound extremely challenging or unnecessarily intricate if the analysis of the score is not present. Undoubtedly, as far as analysis of music is concerned, both performers and listeners that seize the opportunity to study analysis of a piece to be performed or observed have advantage over others, especially when understanding of the piece is carefully reviewed as done in this paper. In this respect, Agawu (2004) avers that analysis sharpens the listener’s ear, enhances perception and, in the best of cases, deepens appreciation.

Art music and Composers in Ghana

For a period of time, there has been a heightened interest, demonstrated by Ghanaian art music composers in the adoption of compositional techniques that combine western and African musical elements to produce forms of art music. According to Nketia (1979) the development of modern Ghanaian art music could be linked to the activities of British colonial administrators, missionaries and teachers who helped to introduce and consolidate the practice and consumption of European liturgical Christian music as well as European classical music -the two musical genres which provided the foundations for the emergence of modern Ghanaian art music. The Christian church played a critical role and continues to play a role to lead in the propagation of Western musical culture, at least Western vocal art music in Ghana as Nketia (1979) has observed the growth. However, Agawu (2011) makes a claim that ‘If African music includes traditional, popular and art music, then art music is the least prominent of the three.’ In this case, Agawu refers to Art music for advanced analysis as a comparability to the western world. Therefore, it is of essence to the public to have free access to analytical works such as what this paper stands for. Again, after Dor (2005) analysed Ghanaian choral pieces of three great composers (Amu, Blege and Dor), his conclusion was based on the fact that one of his long-standing wishes for the further development of African art choral music styles has been that research publications on African tonal systems would be available to the prospective composer and music theory teacher. As reinforcement to the points above, one cannot dispute the fact that analysis of music helps one to appreciate a particular piece of music or a genre as well as upholding the art in high esteem. It is for this reason that the significance of Ghanaian choral music, has been highlighted by Amuah (2013, 2014), Acquah (2016), Terpening (2017), and many other scholars. Analytical works of Ghanaian

choral composers like Newlove Annan that have been discussed by Amuah and Acquah (2014) have proved that without capturing the understanding of an extended choral work, it becomes challenging to appreciate such works and the music may sound extensive and abstract to a listener. The composition analysed in this paper has the same potential to make people understand the intention of the composer and the meaning therein.

METHODOLOGY

Mobo me nsanku daa was purposefully selected for the analysis. This is because, in the year 2016, there was a deliberate attempt by the national directorate of the Methodist church choirs of Ghana to commission Goerge Mensah Essilfie to compose this work for a national choral festival (a biennial event) amongst Methodist church choirs in Ghana. Furthermore, it is worth stating that the choristers spoke highly of the work. Some revealed the fact that it is a great work, while most of them lamented on the complexity of the work for amateur choirs in the country. These remarks were overheard by both teachers and executors of the work when the learning of the song was taking place by the various choirs. Indeed, most of the choral groups struggled in the singing of the work during the competition and this is the foremost reason that stimulates this paper's curiosity to investigate into the motives for the critique by singers that executed the music. It seems that the practical struggle described by the performers (as discussed) has been overlooked as far as analysis of the music is concerned. It is in this particularity that this paper intends to scrutinize the work in detail and give causes for the difficulty as pronounced by the performers, and introduce few techniques that may be discovered in the process of the analysis, to enable performers and readers understand the concept of the entire work and execute the work with less struggle in the teaching and performance of the piece in the future. In respect to the analysis, the sound of the music which makes the entire composition challenging to perform is so much of essence that the textual analysis of the music is exempted. This is not to mention that there is no account for the text. Because, apart from the fact that the explanation of the text is done in this paper, concepts, and techniques such as stressing the unstressed, word painting, onomatopoeiatic passages, delayed scoop, suggesting of acciaccatura, thematic speech melody and the controversial description are all techniques that are discussed in connection to the text of the music. Yet, textual constructions such as spelling of text, construction of phrases or sentences, the use of punctuations and so on and so forth has not been discussed. This is to say that the parameter in the investigation is limited to the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic sonorities of the music. Also, the entire work is examined by listening to both the audio recording from some choirs, the midi and studying the score analytically. In the quest to understand the music in totality, I took a personal decision to teach my choir and that enabled me to appreciate the piece and detected the challenging sections and reasons why the composer might have introduced specific practices. Lastly, the score, which was made available to me, helped in the sectional analysis and recognizing similar systems which were found in various sections of the music.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

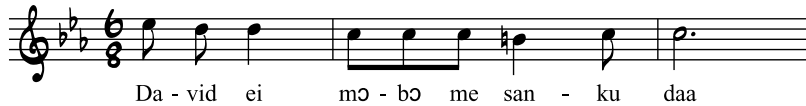
Due to the parameters selected purposely for this formal analysis as mentioned in the methodology, the first result to be discussed here relates to the form of the entire work; The work is organized in a sectional form, structured in 9 sections, that is from section A to I respectively. Another structure that is detected from the score is the impression that the work is a vocal sonata. Schoffman (1979) also recognizes a couple of vocal works by Mozart as vocal sonatas. Therefore, it is not surprising and not the first time to see a choral art piece in the same structure as executed by Goerge Mensah Essilfie. In the case of this vocal sonata, a supported/Assisted exposition is detected. Despite the intricate rhythmic patterns in African music, it is very apparent that the free counterpoint in the whole composition contributes to the complex rhythmic displays. Nevertheless, most rhythmic patterns in African music are so multifaceted that Chernoff (2017) notes that western composers such as Beethoven, Brahms and other twentieth century composers like Stravinsky that apply complex rhythmic patterns in their music were all influenced by African idioms. There is no doubt

that the persistent change in tonal centers, constant change of meters and the use of chromatic tones all contribute to the complexity of the piece. The style of the work as far as the melodic and harmonic sonorities are concerned is structured in the practice of baroque and partly the nineteenth century. Correspondingly, fragmentations and interpolation of rhythms crafted from the thematic rhythmic structure of the piece is very present and effectively manifested. The composer builds the theme of the music on a very short and simple melodic and rhythmic contour. In this respect, it is no wonder that Kim, Chai, Garcia and Vercoe (2000) realizes that aside the fact that melody is an efficient construct, few notes of a tune can fully identify a piece of music. Essilfie's method of stressing the unstressed syllable *daa* which simply means always or continuously (in context) is discussed. Recommendation is made to performers regarding this system. In the harmony, an introduction of melodic clash which is also detected and introduced is discussed as well. Nevertheless, despite the persistent use of chromatic notes as mentioned, there is smooth transition in modulations. The consistent change of keys is probably constructed in the music to create contrast, emotions, or simply give a new direction to the musical rhetoric as Feisthauer, Bigo, Giraud and Levé (2020) suggest as part of the reasons for modulations in music compositions. This is to mention that in the entire work, there are 24 modulations, , one transposition (modified) and, in all, nine tonal centers.. And some of the reasons for this act is what has been described by these scholars. Also, the homorhythmic accompaniment by the choir against the contrast rhythmic configurations by the quartet in the sections C and D is a terrific system that is discovered. Onomatopoeiatic passages in the work are also examined. An introduction to a delayed scoop or portamento and thematic speech melody which are all new practices found in this great composition is reviewed. Apart from these practices mentioned above, other practices such as the introduction of fugato, melodic doubling and shifted accents are all detected in the work. Recommendations and suggestions such as the application of metronomic mark, acciaccatura or scoop and a proper description are made to the composition to enable future generation of composers to take note of such systems for future compositions that could be as prominent or unparallel to *Mɔbɔ me nsanku daa*.

Structure

The structure of this 191-measure composition can be referred to as a work organized in a **sectional form**. Without an introduction (which is usually optional), the music commenced with two subjects (Exposition), advanced the exposition along the line (development), repeated the exposition (recapitulation), and completed the piece in a short two- note coda. Therefore, one may also assess the structure as a vocal sonata. This piece of music involves complexity so far as rhythmic structures are concerned (as cited), with free counterpoints from the beginning to the end. Practitioners and analysts that have studied the rhythmic patterns of *Agbadza* music (performed by the people of Volta region in Ghana) will testify that the presence of the rhythms are very prominent, except for few portions. *Agbadza* is a dance of the Anlo Ewe, which is a funeral dance originating from an older war dance *atripkui* (Anku W. 2009 p 60). Of course, because of the composer's idea to distinguish the art from the traditional, he never stated the original timeline and rhythmic patterns of the music (*Agbadza*) as scored by Anku (2009 p 61). He designed components that are equivalent to that of *Agbadza* music. One of the few components that stimulates the intricacy of the compositions is the different and constant change of tonal centers (for amateur choristers). The composition was structured in the key of C minor. The time signatures used throughout the music are duple, being two dotted crotchet beats in a bar (6/8), and two crotchet beats in a bar interchangeably (2/4). As mentioned above, the music starts in C minor (bars 1 to 10), and moves to the key of C major after repeating the section A. This is to state that the second section (B) begins in C major (bars 13 to 17). In the same section (B), the music moves straight to the key of D minor in two bars (19 to 20), and jumps back to the home key, C minor (from bar 21 to 25). In preparation to the third section which is C, the music hopped to E minor from bars 28 to 33. The stunning way Essilfie jumps to C minor is the use of the key F major in two bars (34 and 35) as the pivot. The music stays in C minor for 20 bars (36 to 56) before it gets back to the home key by two long notes expressed by a fermata for the soprano solo (i.e., A5 to G5) as the pivot note to the new key (C minor) and also serves as transition to the next section. Therefore, the entire section (D) is executed in

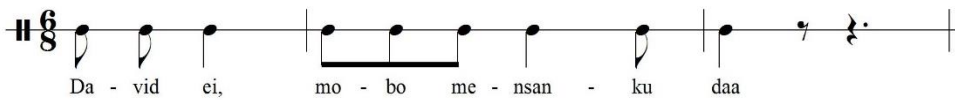
the home Key. Section E is in the key of C major, and drives through to A minor in the circle of fifths from bars 77 to 93. Section F starts with C major (bars 94 to 97) to E flat major and ends on the dominant 7th (third inversion) from bars 98 to 103. Bars 104 to 123 form the last but two section which is G. This bar starts in a fugue which is in the same key E flat major. The subject of the fugue starts from E flat and moves through keys such as B flat (the dominant), back to E flat (home-key) and to B flat. Section G ends in B flat and begins in the same key at Section H. It continues up to the key of C major in three bars (128 to 130) and back to B flat in bar 131. The last and ninth section (I), stays in the key of B flat major. The interrupted cadences may deceive one into thinking that this is in the key G minor. Essilfie uses A flat major in three bars (bars 152 to 155) as a pivot to E flat major which also has some interrupted cadences and some chromatic chords that may make one feel it is in the key of C minor. The beauty here is that the same melodies in B flat major are shifted to E flat major, so one may choose to call it a transposition or, better still, a modified transposition because the music changes slightly (in chromatics) along the line. Therefore, the entire piece moves through 24 modulations, respectively, one transposition (modified) and, in all, nine tonal centers. The music is structured in 9 sections (A B C D E F G H I) respectively. After examining the entire piece, this paper intends to state the techniques, and the various sections or bars they are applied. The music can be referred to as a baroque and partly nineteenth-century work. This is because most of the harmonic structures, including the counterpoints, circle of fifths, and the fugue in section G, are all common practices in the style of the Baroque era. Nineteenth century has also been cited because of the persistent changes in rhythms, mood (musical mood, rather than textual) in many ways; For instance, the immediate change of rhythm and mood from Sections to sections. Of course, the changing meters plays a vital role in the change of mood in few sections such as 8 bars before section C. Another example is the transition from section H to I. The rhythmic patterns changes immediately, even though the two sections are in the same time signature. The introduction of constructions such as constant change of meters (already mentioned) and introduction of few dissonances and chromatic, all contribute to the music sounding in the Nineteenth century. The dynamic markings, which are not present in the music, hides some of the yearned effect of the composer. Though the music has its own variations that create automatic dynamics, dynamic markings could have revealed supplementary presence of nineteenth century music. And again, it will be obvious for one to argue that the composer probably did not intend to create these few dissonances and chromatics; However, the minor modes and change of keys suggested a deliberate use of these notes. Yet, there are shades of Chromatic tones, which exists of much deeper levels of structure as Adams (2009) describes. Performers or analysts that have studied the music of Essilfie will never go unnoticed the use of chromatics in his works. Even at a point when most Ghanaian choirs had problem in singing chromatic notes, he still injected them into his music because of posterity. Today as we speak now, his style of composition is what lot of young choral composers in Ghana would like to emulate for modern groups. For the reason why he will always love to use a lot of chromatic chords in most of his anthems, I cannot tell whether it is branding, signature, or because he is an emotional person in character, and thus it reflects in his compositions. Richard Parks and Gerald Abraham would like to term such chords as altered chords. Same chords or sonorities employed in addition to major triads, that include half and fully diminished seventh chords, dominant seventh sonorities, French augmented sixth sonorities, and a few unusual constructions (Parks 1976, p 212) are what Mensah Essilfie will always like to use in his compositions, and it shows clearly in *Mɔbo me nsanku daa*. Edward Green (2006) will also love to call such chords as 'Chromatic Saturation.' In Green's opinion, there are twelve basic pitches in our tonal system, and saturation, completion occurs when a composer has allowed each of these chromatics to appear even once. This is the reason he calls it 'Chromatic completion. Essilfie crafts these rhythmic themes with different pitches in the music (in the development). One significant characteristic to note is that there are fragmentations in both first and second subjects. This is what William Anku (2000) calls interpolation. While the exposition is scored below, the various ways they are manipulated in pitches will follow correspondingly. The theme of the entire piece is scored below.



Excerpt 1 (Theme of the music)

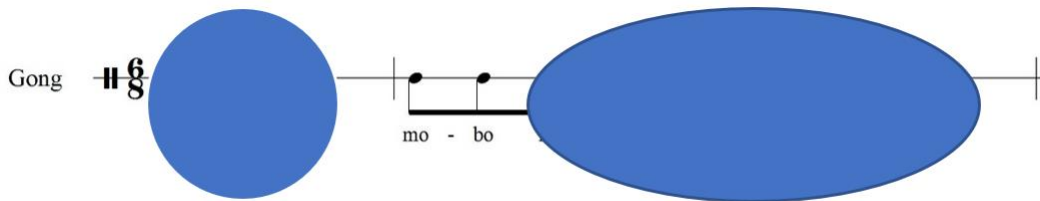
The Thematic Rhythmic Structure

It is so apparent that fragmentations and interpolation of rhythms are so important to the composer. For instance, the first bar in the piece is the fragmentation of the first subject that follows. Rhythms of the first subject has been scored in the second excerpt.



Excerpt 2 (Rhythmic structure of the first subject group)

Out of the same thematic material, he uses the first two notes of the first bar in subject 1, (*Mo-bo*, which has been circled in Figure 3) as fragments. Anku (2000) refers to this as masking, which is the act of covering or resting some rhythmic patterns in a particular motif or bar.

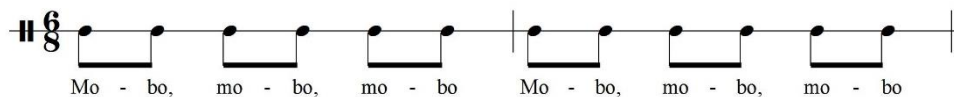


Excerpt 3 (structure of rhythmic fragmentation of first subject group)

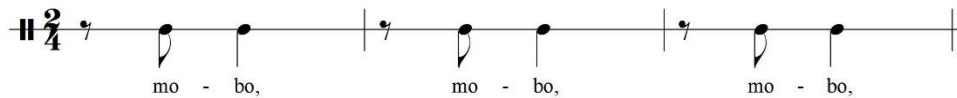
The various ways the composer explores the rhythmic motif (in the development) in figure 3, will follow consequently in the next three set of figures.



Excerpt 4 (rhythmic fragmentation of first subject group)

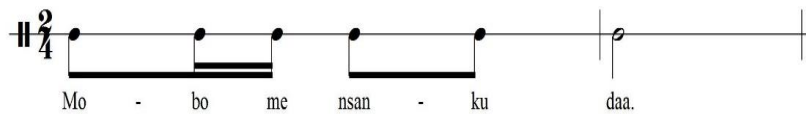


Excerpt 5 (rhythmic fragmentation of first subject group 2)



Excerpt 6 (rhythmic fragmentation of first subject group 3)

Another way he changes the rhythmic pattern, still under the influence of the first subject, and maintains the pitch (in melodic contours) is shown in Figure 7. This rhythmic structure is very popular amongst Baroque composers.



Excerpt 7 (Modification in rhythmic structure of first subject group)

The composer plans the music in such a way that the second theme follows the first immediately. This is to say, the first is stated in Section A, and the second in Section B, respectively. The first half of the section (B) states the second theme, and the next half states fragmentation of the first. The second theme is not developed significantly as the first. This theme is developed once in the entire piece. It is scored below.



Excerpt 8 (Second thematic material)

In the development section of this theme in Figure 8, the time signature changes to two dotted crotchet beats in a bar. To make the comparative study easy to follow, the scoring of the rhythm is executed below, that's same pitches (in contour). The development starts in Bar 77 (the circle of fifths).



Excerpt 9 (Rhythmic development of second thematic material)

Before he develops the second thematic material into different pitches in the circle of fifths, he states both first and second themes together in a very brilliant manner.



Excerpt 10 (statement of 1st and 2nd themes)

Unstressing the Stressed

Depending on the tone, dynamics, and variation, a word may have more than a meaning in the Akan language. This technique is referred to as heteronyms. Johnston (1988) describes heteronyms as words that

are spelled alike but are pronounced differently. He also establishes the difference between Heteronyms and homographs. According to Johnston, homographs are pronounced and spelled the same way, unlike heteronyms. For instance, the word *Daa* (prominent in the composition) can mean every time or forever. The same word, when dropped and stressed, can be referred to as Dad in the Akan language. *Daa Daa*, also means, every time, or forever. Correspondingly, in the Akan language, the word *Dada*, means Dad, or already, depending on the pitch. The same ‘*Dada*’ which can be stated as Dad or already, can also mean long ago. Meanwhile, when repetition of the two letters take place, (*Dadadadada*) it means a very long time, or many years ago. In bar 7, the composer uses the word *Daa* continuously for four consecutive times in the bass part. In this context, the word *Daa* means each and everytime. However, because the four repetitions of the syllable is given to the eighth notes, the meaning changes here. Automatically, when the average choir in Ghana renders the music, the quavers will obviously shorten the stressed (*Daa Daa Daa Daa*) to be an unstressed (*DaDaDaDa*). Hence the paper introduces the title of the technique *unstressing the stress*. Since these four notes are all in upwards conjunct movement, they don’t really have a meaning if we are to follow the principles of speech melody. It is unblemished that the composer does so for a reason. He has already established the accurate length of the word in the music, by stressing about three times. In the same bar discussed here, the word, which is supposed to a stressed one, is simultaneously stressed in the other three parts. In fact, at times he stretches the same syllable for more than 2 to 3 beats in the entire piece. Therefore, why the argument on just one variation of the word? An attention has been drawn to to this bar (7) because the meaning here may be quite difficult to perceive, as small as it is. Since the composition has been established, performers may be advised to make sure the stress is done by applying the use of the Legato and crescendo, to clarify the meaning. It is also suggested in this paper that, despite the attention in the bar may go to the bass part because other parts have a long-stretched duration, the other parts (apart from the bass) could hold the music or better still apply the use of the crescendo, as the bass opens and closes (in dynamics) just to take away a bit of the attention.



Excerpt 11 (stressing the unstressed)

Suggested dynamics



Excerpt 12 (Suggested dynamics to stressing the unstressed).

The Melodic Clash

Throughout the composition, there’s one significant technique which is very easy to overlook it’s presence. Essilfie consciously introduces a clashed note when a part sings a melody while others prolong a note(s). In this case, he does not really mind whether the melody moving clashes with the other parts or not. For this

reason, this particular technique is referred in this paper as a melodic clash.

Bass solo

Excerpt 13(melodic clash)

Excerpt 14 (melodic clash 2)

Smooth Transition in Modulations

Though we all know about shifted tonality (changing a key during a piece without preparation), this music decides to make sure it has a proper pivot to modulate into new keys. For example, in bar 10, Essilfie moves smoothly from C minor to C major by using Tierce de Picardie, which is chord one of C major. Let's observe the this from bar 5, to enable as view the smoothness.

Excerpt 15 (Transition from C min. to C maj)

From observation, the composer wishes to have done a three-step sequence from bars 13 to 18; He employs a two-step sequence and repeats the second to enable him move smoothly from C major to D minor. The pivot used to D minor was the tonic chord of D minor. To continue smoothly from D minor to C minor, he

used the third inversion of the leading note to the new key as the pivot and jumped straight to the second inversion of chord one in C minor. The second time, the music moved again from C minor to C major, using Tierce de Picardie as the pivot. Let us view the score without the text, just to enable us detect the smooth transitions.

Excerpt 16 (smooth transitions in modulation)

In the key of C, Essilfie uses the second inversion of the dominant seventh chord (serving as the first inversion of the submediant chromatic in the new key) to the second inversion of the dominant in B flat major.

Excerpt 17 (smooth transition in modulation 2)

The composer establishes a couple of smooth transitions, and these are to mention a few.

Word Painting

Irving Godt is concerned about word painting taken for granted. He states that, firstly, “text-influence has never been taken seriously as one of the basic responsibilities of any genuinely complete analysis.” Secondly, he presses on that “until we have written the history of text influences on music, we cannot write a truly comprehensive history of musical style. Despite the difficulty and complexity of the music which was composed for an amateur choir to sing with joy, the composer finds his way to express joy in playing the harp to praise his God. Such instances happens from bar 40 when the rhythm changes to the Baroque-

like rhythm. This rhythm has been circled in figure 18. All the parts in the Quartet executes this rhythm accordingly and at appropriate positions. In choral music compositions, Ghana, such rhythms are primarily crafted in marching songs to mount a stage for a choral festival or competition. May we look at how he changes the rhythm beautifully from the time signature of two dotted crotchet beats to two crotchet beats in a bar (all in A minor), just to signify the joy the persona feels in playing his harp.

Sop solo 1
mo-bo,

Alto solo 2

Tenor solo
se me tsea - se'a N'a-dom a. ntsi Mo-bo ne nsan - ku daa.

Bass solo
yew daa._____

Cho
Mo-bo me nsan - ku mo bo'o, daa. Mo-bo me nsan - ku daa. Mo-

S 1
mo-bo, mo-bo, mo-bo me nsn-ku daa._____ na mbo tow a-ye-yi ndwom a-m'E-wura-

S 2

T

B

Pno.
bo, mo - bo. Mo-bo, mo-bo, mo-bo mo-bo,

©



Excerpt 18 (Word painting)

The Homorhythmic Accompaniment

A westerner’s initial response to African music may be ‘it is so repetitive; Repetition is an important formal characteristic contributing to the design and structure of African music (C.L. James, 1992). In section C of this music, the choir (as an accompaniment to the quartet) does lot of repetitions or very similar rhythms in homophony. It happens again in the section D. In the orchestration of Ghanaian traditional music(s), there are sets of supporting drums that repeat specific rhythmic patterns (ostinato), while there is a master drummer that creates variety. This is a very common practice amongst dances of the Akan and Anlo-Ewe of Ghana. The lead drum rhythms are represented by “intelligible words, phrases and sentences... transformed into drum sounds which are then reinterpreted in verbal terms by the listener” (Nketia 1963). The instruments of *Agbaza* are the double bell *gankogui*, the rattle *axatse*, the stick drums *kagan* and *kidi*, and the lead drum *sogo*, played with bare hands (Jeff Pressing, 1983 p4). Also, rarely will you find more than one master drummer creating variety and complex rhythms on top of the supporting ostinato. Maybe very soon, composers or performers of traditional music may think of modifying the idea of only one master drummer and think about more master drummers creating different shades of rhythmic patterns. It is quite

challenging to know exactly what is going through the mind of the composer, whether he tries introducing this art (more than one master drummer) in vocal music (i.e., the Quartet), or he considers all the rhythms as one that can be done by a master drummer in a reduction or better still, thinking about free counterpoints. The ostinato sung by the chorus is in harmony. It must be stated emphatically that Pressing (1983) states again that all the instruments in the *Agbadza* music has at least two distinct tones or states, allowing a rhythmic pattern to be a registral melody. That is the *gankogui* has two bells of different pitch, the *axatse* is struck either against the leg or the hand, and the two stick drums may be struck either against the leg or the hand, and the two stick drums may be struck with either bounce (open) or mute (press) strokes. Therefore, comparing the orchestration in the *Agbadza* music to the Quartet and the choir at that moment doing different shades of rhythms and pitches is not out of context. This idea of supporting drums and the master drummer comes into mind after realizing the Ostinato created by the chorus and the variety of rhythms and fragments of the ostinato done by the Quartet. However, all the rhythms by the Quartet could be summarized and played by a master drummer, as done in Excerpt 19. The master drummer can either pick fragments of the ostinato pattern by the supporting drums, and along the line, create beautiful patterns that may not follow the fragmentation. This is what Essilfie does in this section. Though the supporting drums are always supposed to make the exact rhythmic patterns of a particular music or dance, Mensah creates his own Ostinato, which does not necessarily follow the original rhythmic patterns of *Agbadza* music. The composer's ability to bring out this creation is magnificent. He drums in the fourth section (D). If these rhythms were scored for drummers (for *Agbadza* music) to play, it would have sounded exactly like variations of *Agbadza*. The **rhythmic reduction** has been done in the following figure.



Excerpt 19 (Rhythmic reduction)

The following figure shows how he orchestrates the rhythmic configuration for various parts. To enable listeners enjoy the rhythmic patterns, Essilfie uses the tonic and dominant chords (in C minor) only. Here, the concentration is on the rhythmic displays, and not necessarily the pitches, as other sections.

Sop solo 1

Alto solo 2

Tenor solo

Bass solo

Cho

Mo - bo, mo-bo, me nsan - ku, me bo, me bo, me nsan - ku

Mo - bo nsan - ku daa

mo - bo me nsan - ku daa! mbo - tow

Mo - bo me - nsan - ku Da - vid ei! mbo - tow, mbo - tow a - ye - yi ndwom o

ndwom. e - yi Nya - me'a - yew. Me - kam - fo no a - ber nyi

mo - bo, mo-bo, me nsan - ku mo bo mo bo me nsan - ku mo - bo, mo-bo

Excerpt 20

It is the same way the rhythmic reduction of bars 124 to 134 is scored beneath

Excerpt 21 (Rhythmic reduction 2)

In section E for instance, Altos did same rhythmic patterns (with different pitches) from bars 77 to 93 which can also be termed homorhythmic.

Onomatopoeia

Assaneo, Nichols and Trevisan (2011) describe the term Onomatopoeia as an imitative-driven transformation of a sound of nature into a word. Also, “the strict or narrow kind of onomatopoeia is alleged to occur whenever the sound of a word resembles (or “imitates”) a sound that the word refers to (Hugh Bredin 1996). One of the ways the composer paints the text, is the use of ‘*pa na na nam*’ and the *tonic solfa* as a symbol to signify the act of playing the harp with joy in the whole of the ninth section, which happens to be the last. This technique was used in Ephraim Amu’s ‘*Bonwire K?nt?nwene.*’ Amu used symbolic words like ‘Kro hi kro’ to signify the use of the weaving of Kente. ‘Kro kyia’ in a popular folk song (Akan language of Ghana) also signifies walking. He gives a hint (of the onomatopoeia) in bar 102 for the bass part, which happens to be the last but one bar in section F. He closes the entire section with the technique, and never mentions it till the last section, which I think is a very creative idea.

rit

mo-bo'm nsan - ku daa mo-bo'n daa, daa nyi - naa. pa na na na na na naam!

Excerpt 22 (Hint on the onomatopoeiatic section)

He uses it extensively in the entire section I, which also happens to be the last section.

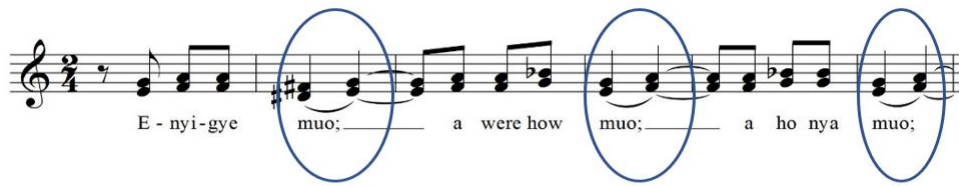
Delayed Scoop

In bar 13, of section A, Essilfie does something striking that I had not encountered before. He decides to delay the scoop. in this context, the emphasis on the scoop has got to do with the text or the language to be specific. The acciacatura (supposed), was changed to an appoggiatura. I will score the way it should have been done to highlight the scoop as we speak in the Fante Dialect.

E - nyi-gye muo; _____ a - were-how muo; _____ a - ho-nya muo;

Excerpt 23 (The accurate scoop)

Therefore, in this sense, Essilfie crafts this in an appoggiatura or suspension. Let’s have a look at the way Essilfie scored it in Figure 24.



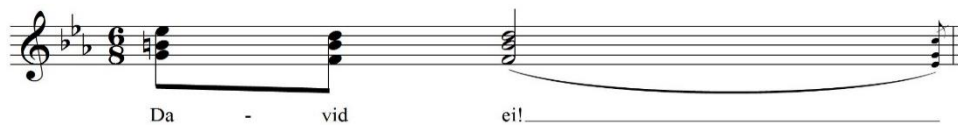
Excerpt 24 (The delayed scoop)

Henceforward the name of the technique a delayed scoop is crafted in this paper.

From bars 77 to 92, Essilfie uses the same melodies (in Figure 20) in the circle of fifths that is very prominent in the Baroque era. The Alto solo in the quartet sings the main melody, while the other parts decorate and harmonize in free counterpoints.

Suggestion of Acciaccatura to the Composer

As this delayed scoop is a very creative idea, the application of the acciaccatura could be more descriptive as far as the expression of text is concerned. Therefore, it is suggested to the composer in few sections of the piece. As Akans, words like 'ei' can't do without a downward glissando. Therefore, it will be recommendable to use these examples to the composer for future works.



Excerpt 25 (Suggested acciaccatura)



Excerpt 26 (Suggested acciaccatura 2)

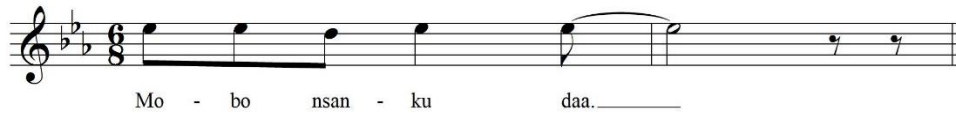
Thematic Speech Melody

Examining works of this the composer critically, there is a realization of a specific exclusivity in his understanding and knowledge of speech melody. He believes that after stating and executing speech melody in a composition, either in the first section, movement or a phrase (depending on the length of the composition), the composer may enjoy the liberty to distort a few or some other tone languages to enable the composer to extend his ideas to a wide range of melodic structures. His skill of interchanging both speech and song melody is very recommendable. In this work, for instance, the first section is right on the point of speech melody.



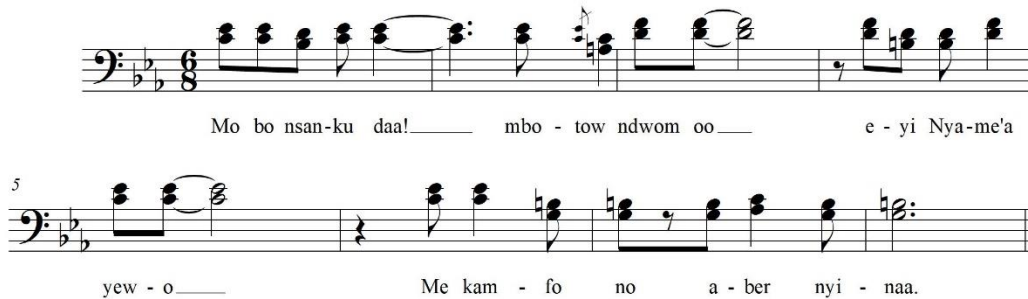
Excerpt 27 (speech melodic contour)

Right after stating it clearly as done in Excerpt 27 above, Essilfie feels that variety could be created in the melodic contours, once it doesn't really change the meaning of the text. Let us look at some of the ways he distorts the speech melodies in the following figures. This time round he decides to distort the rhythm of the first and main thematic material and keeps maintaining the contours of the melody.

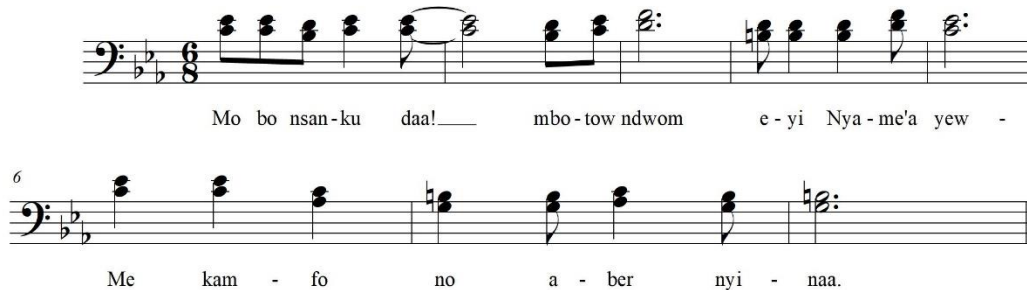


Excerpt 28 (song melody)

Another way he distorts both speech melody is in 62. Both speech melody and rhythm in the Tenor and Bass solos could have been created like the sketch in Figure 24, but he decides to craft it differently on the original score.



Excerpt 29 (song melody 2)



Excerpt 30 (song melody 3)

Introduction of Fugato

In the seventh section (G), the composer introduces a subject in the tonic by the bass, tenors immediately repeats the subject in the dominant, Altos picks it up in the tonic once more, and sopranos move to the dominant after a short six step rising sequence which serves as an episode. The rest of the music is structured in counterpoints (which was reduced in figure 18) and the subject is never stated anymore.

Melodic Doubling

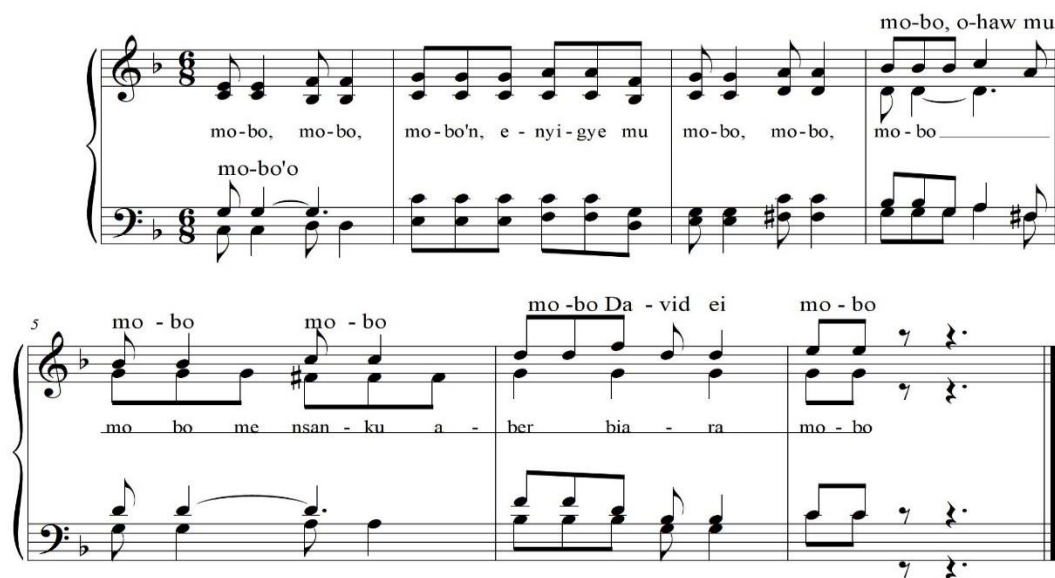
As an African, and a Ghanaian to be precise, melodic doubling (in consecutive intervals) is very essential in harmony. It raises emotions to another level, especially when it is done artistically. For the reason being that, almost all our traditions and cultures harmonize in melodic doubling. Even a traditional work with

different motions have more than 70 percent of melodic doubling. One may think it's because melodic doubling in harmony is very easy to do. Well, that is another argument or twist to the case. However, it has become part and parcel of us in such a way that, as soon as you raise a song, anyone who doesn't know the original harmony (if there is), and a bit musical, will like to harmonize in similar motion in my country. Therefore, composers consciously or unconsciously cannot do without similar motions or melodic doubling. It is indeed rare to find a choral composition in Ghana without consistent or, somehow, partly use of the melodic doubling. Because George Mensah Essilfie is a trained composer, his use of the technique is quite unique, and I think addressing it will not be out of the way. The figures below show a few of the many ways this system was used. In figure 26, altos doubled the melody of soprano, followed by tenors and basses doubling the melody of soprano and alto.



Excerpt 31 (Melodic doubling)

Observe how basses double the melody in soprano, while the inner parts decorate the two melodies simultaneously. This can be found in bar 68 to 73, 74



Excerpt 32

In the entire section H, the Tenor doubles the melody in the bass while the composer makes the soprano and Alto sing contrapuntal passages.

Shifted Accents (syncopation)

The composer's level of thinking in terms of shifted accents, which may also be termed as syncopation, is very high. One would wonder why the composer decides not to place dynamic markings, ornaments, and

accents in such a beautiful composition. In future, he may think of inculcating some ornaments in his music (this is an opinion and suggestion). This opinion is stated because of his constant use of syncopations which were not accented. Therefore, one may think the music has few syncopations, yet there are lot of them in the work which needs to be emphasized. In the scoring of the various sections in the figures below, the syncopations will be shown by marking those notes (marcato) that I think needs the application.

Excerpt 33 (Shifted accents)

Excerpt 34 (Shifted accents 2)

Excerpt 35 (Shifted accents 3)

Metronomic Mark

As much as the music is composed in the style of Baroque and the Nineteenth century, few suggestions will

be addressed here. Though the composer uses few expressions such as *rit*, *atempo*, amongst others, some of the changes in meter require change of metronomic marking. For example, from section A (the first subject) to B (the second subject), the marking could have been slower in Section B. Also, the metronomic marking for section I (the onomatopoeic words/syllables) could have been faster, just to mention a few. This approach could have brought out the variety the composer really needs in the composition.

Controversial Description

Two major issues are considered necessary to be addressed as far as estimation is concerned in this analytical work: the description given to the music by Essilfie. Though the title has been revealed above, the representation given to the music is questioned here, which is '*An Anthem for Quartet & SATB in C minor.*' One may wonder why the composer places emphasis and priority on the Quartet by placing it first before the choir so far as the arrangement of the description is concerned. Upon close evaluation, the music starts with the appearance of the choir. The Quartet joins along the line. It is obvious that in the appearance of the quartet (from bars 28 to 92), the role of the choir changes to that of the accompanist. After a while, the choir takes the music up once more and ends the music. Does this mean in the thoughts of the composer, the appearance of the quartet is essential than the choir because of their role as accompanist when the Quartet shows up? As much as I agree partly with the composer, the description may need more clarification as in who plays the most significant role. Out of 191 bars of music, the Quartet appears in 64, making the prominent role of the choir in 127 bars. In my judgment of the entire composition to an extent, the responsibility of the choir is more critical than that of the Quartet. It is for this reason that I refer to the description as a controversial one, not because the composer is entirely wrong; He is indeed entitled to his opinion since the role of the choir changes to an accompaniment when the Quartet shows up. However, I will recommend that since the choir performs more than the Quartet (both musically and in length), the description could amend to '*An Anthem for SATB and Quartet in C minor.*' Additionally, the subject that catches my attention for a discourse is the quote of expression written under the metronomic mark, '*An expression of joy for what the Lord has done.*' Once again, I wonder this expression is just because of the meaning of the title or the entire text of the music, otherwise, it is the preference of the composer for the performers of the composition to express the music with joy. In case, it is the composer's goal is to hear or see performers accomplish the work in happiness or pleasure, then I have my thoughts. I agree partially with Mead and Ball (2007) and Huron and Davis (2013) if they state that the structure of the minor mode contributes to the evoking, expressing or representation of sadness for listeners encultured to the major scale. Nevertheless, I do not entirely agree, though, because, in Ghana, we are more particular about text in vocal music in such a way that, depending on the mood of the text, we respond, irrespective of the mode. Diana Hopson's '*Agyenkwa Hene*' (1997) in A flat minor is sang by Christians with glee for it's a song of praise. In Hip-life, for instance, we have a couple of minor works such as Stonebwoy's '*Putuu Freestyle*' (2020), also in A minor which is played and enjoyed by the Ghanaian public, especially the youth. Contrarily, Huron and Davis states, when a minor work is intricate or complicated (melodically, harmonically and rhythmically), with chromatic notes, such as the case of this composition, it becomes uneasy performing or listening to such a piece with pleasure. As a performer with some years of experience in Ghana, I'm a bit skeptical about performing a minor work of this sort (with sophisticated rhythms, change of meters that call for extra attention in its performance, difficulty in few pitches, talking about both melodic and harmonic sonorities, use of few chromatics and dissonances, in eight parts acapella, which is not very usual in our part of the world, Ghana, and among others), in joy. To an extent, it may be possible for some professional choirs in the world, but to a very great extent, impossible. As an expressive performer in Art music, the music overrides the message in terms of expression (my opinion). Suppose the composer specifies the expression as a picture of how performers must feel within them as they sing. In that case, I can be sure that the slightest chance the performers get (especially when the notes and rhythms are relieved from complication), will try as much as possible to show joy in the execution. However, one question that can be raised, is it psychological, or I have decided to perform such pieces with carefulness and deep emotions that

the message may not be so much of a big deal for me? Am I alone? One question that can arise in disagreement with this assertion is the application of word painting in the onomatopoeic words/syllables that depicts the sound of the harp played joyfully by the persona. Word painting is discussed extensively so far as this piece of music is concerned. I can state that about 70% of the rhythmic nature of the music is a representation of playing the instrument with great joy. Therefore, one may disagree with me if I stress the difficulty of the music only, to draw conclusion in terms of the quote of expression not being possibly executed by performers. This is to say, the joyful look in the faces of performers, can never be enough to determine the joy they go through in performance. Secondly, the interesting and intricate rhythmic structures can also mean a lot in the expression of joy even if performers are besieged.

CONCLUSION

Observing this analytical work, one may discover the fact that all the techniques or systems used by the composer are worth emulating. This work is indeed a technical composition that needs to be analyzed with extreme care before learning and performance take place. Therefore, a performer, theorist, listener, observers or readers would understand and appreciate what was going on in the cognizance of the composer. This may be of help to performers, specifically chorus masters who would like to teach and perform this work; This is because going through the technicalities involved in the work gives a clear description of some of the thoughts of the composer that might have been challenging for performers to achieve the ambition of executing the work effortlessly. Also, if a research and analysis of George Mensah Essilfie's compositions continues as an ongoing re-examination, the other stylistic development will elucidate a deeper understanding of his music and his contribution to choral music in Ghana to be specific, Africa and the world at large. Again, this study portrays the development of Essilfie's positive self-concept as a composer and his success as a prolific composer within the Ghanaian society and in the West African sub region.

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