



African Music: A Composition and Analysis of *Nyekwo* Responsorial Psalm Tune for Catholic Liturgical Celebration in Ikot Ekpene Diocese, Nigeria

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Abstract

This work is a vocal African music composition and analysis of a responsorial psalm tune in Efik for the Catholic liturgy in Ikot Ekpene Diocese. The Catholic Church has been using the responsorial psalm in its Liturgy for centuries. These responsorial psalm tunes are either written in Latin or in English in liturgical books such as the Daily Missal. The study is prompted by the fact that there is a dearth of a composition of the responsorial psalm tunes in Efik for use when the liturgy is celebrated. Moreover, it has been observed by these authors that there has not been an in-depth study of a compositional framework that could serve as a guide for composers or researchers on this subject. The descriptive survey and practice-based methods were used for this study. The method of data collection includes oral interviews and internet sources relating to the composition of the responsorial psalms. One psalm tune titled *Nyekwo* (I Will Sing) is drawn from Psalm 89:2.3-4.26 and 28. R.V.2a for Christmas and used as a sample for the study. The psalm tune is text-driven and structure-driven in nature, with the traditional musical instruments used for accompaniment. This research addresses the lack of information on this musical item of the Mass celebrated in Efik in Ikot Ekpene Diocese. Furthermore, it will provide academic material for scholars who would undertake similar research work on the subject in other regions around the world. It was recommended that a responsorial psalm tune should be simple to foster active participation in the liturgy by the choir and the congregation.

Keywords: Church music, Responsorial Psalm Tune, Efik, Catholic Liturgy, Ikot Ekpene Diocese

Introduction

As a Diocese, Ikot Ekpene Catholic Diocese was created from the former Calabar Diocese on 1st March, 1963 by Pope John XXIII (Udondata, 2013, p. 11). It is populated by the Annang people who occupy the Northern part of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Historically, the early

Missionaries arrived Ikot Ekpene Diocese at the close of the 19th Century. Udodata (2013, p. 160) observes that their first contact was with the converts at Ifuho, where the Mass was first celebrated in Latin by Rev. Fr. Kraft on 2nd June, 1918. There is no doubt that a Latin song (at least the *Kyrie*) was used during the celebration of that historic Mass. This is so in part because before the emergence of indigenous compositions, the congregants and the choirs mostly made use of the Latin songs, especially in those parts of the mass known as the ‘commons’ (namely, *Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei* and *Pater Noster* as parts of the mass that do not change).

Furthermore, those who are familiar with the Catholic Church will find clear evidence of the centrality of the composition of Latin and English songs documented in her rites and rubrics of worship during liturgical celebrations globally and in Ikot Ekpene Diocese. Most of these Latin songs were written as Gregorian chants to be used globally in Christendom as “international basis of Roman Catholic Liturgy” (Jacobs, 1981, p.18). This was a claim that obliged Catholic devotees in Ikot Ekpene Diocese to yearn for such chants in line with the prevailing global standard of the time. But this obligation failed to take cognizance of cultural diversities within the Catholic enclave. This lapse was later addressed by Vatican II in permitting the need to incorporate the good elements of other cultures (including language and music) into the liturgy as a form of inculturation (Flannery, 1998, p. 33). For this reason, in matters relating to the composition of the responsorial psalm tunes, some Catholic members of the Ikot Ekpene Diocese prefer the indigenous compositions to the Latin songs during liturgical celebrations (Ukeme Ikpang, Personal communication, 2025). This yearning must be fulfilled by composers who are well-trained in the art of music composition. Findings from the aforementioned communication also reveal that there is no standardized musical setting for the responsorial psalm tunes that are written in Efik to serve as a guide for composers who make compositions of responsorial psalm tunes to be used in the Diocese when the mass is celebrated in Efik. This is a part of the challenges that this work seeks to resolve.

Historically, the responsorial psalm was derived from *Graduale* (Gradual), which was a short psalm verse song in-between the readings. The verses were later expanded to accommodate more psalm verses as we have them today (Grout, 1973, p.12). Although there are isolated cases of the use of the Efik language (which is one of the languages spoken by some people in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria) in the rendering of songs, most of these songs are composed by those (such as the choirmasters) who have not received academic studies in the rudiments of music composition. In his earlier study of liturgical music in Ikot Ekpene Diocese, Akpakpan (2018) lamented the lack of a standardization of compositions in the Diocese. Part of his findings is shown in the following comment:

It was observed that all indigenous composed songs used in the liturgy were written in solfa notation. The pieces under study indicated that their composers are naturally endowed musically despite the numerous flaws which characterized their pieces... it would not be out of place to note that there is a possibility to decipher the level of the musical training of composers by taking a look at their works. In this situation, it is evident that these works were written by composers with no formal music training. (p. 64).

The result of these talented composers’ involvement in compositional works was based on intuition and arbitrary inspiration. This applies to the composition of responsorial psalm tunes,

which are primarily done by individual choirmasters and choristers for their various groups to be used during liturgical celebrations in the Diocese. Similarly, in a related study, Nwankwo (2012) observes that there is a dearth of responsorial psalm manuals in the Nigerian Churches and alluded to the rondo form as a suitable form for the composition of the verses of the psalms. However, other forms (such as the strophic form used in this composition) are also suitable for the composition of the responsorial psalm tunes in Efik.

In spite of the fact that the Gregorian chant still remains in force even in the liturgy as we have it today, the experience of these authors, in recent times, refutes the earlier claim that such chants can further meet the yearnings of the people of Ikot Ekpene Diocese in the liturgy in matters relating to the composition of the responsorial psalm tunes. Rather, the reverse is the case since most members who participate in the liturgical celebrations do not understand the meanings associated with the Latin texts when they are used in the liturgy. Hence, the need for the incorporation of a 'local content' in this work through the composition of the responsorial psalm tune in Efik for the local audience.

In furtherance of this research, the following questions are raised: what composition can serve as a model of a responsorial psalm tune in Efik for Catholic liturgical celebration in Ikot Ekpene Diocese? What accompaniment style(s) would be suitable for the psalm tunes? Based on these research questions, the primary objective of this study is to make a sample composition titled *Nyekwo* as a model of responsorial psalm tune in Efik used at liturgical celebration in Ikot Ekpene Diocese. Other aims are: to make a music score of the vocal and instrumental parts of the psalm tune for analysis and study and to profile these instruments in the context of Catholic liturgical celebration in Ikot Ekpene Diocese.

Literature Review

African music has been described by various writers as music based on African models in terms of tonal idioms and instrumental organology. Proponents of African art music espouse the derivation of materials drawn from the cultural background of African people in the compositions of new African music. They are compositional attempts and styles based on indigenous idioms and paradigms (Onyeji, 2019). To Uzoigwe (1998, p. v), it is the "music that establishes a relationship between the composer's creative behaviour and his socio-cultural environment." In this study, the term 'African music' is used in a collective sense to refer to traditional African music and music compositions that contain African musical traits both in melodies, texts and instrumentation. According to Agu (2024) "the commonest forms of African vocal music include solo and chorus alterations, solo and chorused refrain... The vocal techniques are based on antiphonal exchange between the soloist(s) and the Chorus or Choir (congregation...)" (p.1). In this work, the responsorial psalm is an exchange of the responsorial verse between the soloist and the choir/congregation. The chorus is an exact repetition of the responsorial psalm tune rendered by the soloist while the soloist sings the verses of the psalm as call verses.

In simple terms, the word 'composition means to put together' while liturgical celebration refers to the celebration of the Mass with emphasis on worship. According to Agbo (2021, p. 8), there are three senses of worship: "the cultic, evangelical and celebrative senses" which should be fulfilled by sacred music. As a term commonly used in vocal music, the word composition describes the application of musical notes to words (as in this paper) in order to

create melodies and harmonies in songs. Uzoigwe (1994, p. 157) understands composition as “building a tonal house, an art that is ‘highly structured, highly planned, very intellectual, mathematical, even cold-blooded.’”

Theoretical Framework/Conceptual Framework

This study is guided by Torrance Creativity theory and the Cognitive music theory of Aniruddh Patel. Torrance proposed the theory of Creativity in 1969 to analyze how human intelligence, knowledge and other constructs of human behaviours can relate with an individual’s ability to generate novel ideas creatively. Creativity is not just about ideas but also about developing and refining them (Torrance, 1988). Kaufman and Glaveanu make a review of various creativity ventures based on some fundamental aspects, such as individual creativity and collaborative creativity (Kaufman, 2019). Patel is a cognitive neuroscientist known for his research on the neural basis of music processing, music and language, and the cognitive and neural mechanisms underlying music perception. This implies that music is not just a collection of sounds but a complex cognitive construct (Patel, 2008, p. 27). In this way, composition is a creative human activity in which the perception of musical sounds is put together by the human mind. Such musical sounds are then expressed by the composer in a written form for performance, visualization and appreciation. *Nyekwo* (I Will Sing) responsorial psalm tune has been creatively perceived and composed as a model tune that portrays African tonal idioms in Efik language.

Methodology

The descriptive survey and practice-based methods are used for this study. The psalm tune is drawn from Psalm 89:2.3-4.26 and 28 as ex post facto material for the composition. It takes cognizance of the textual meanings for proper compositional procedures. The final composition was tried out by St. Peter’s Choir in the University of Uyo, Nigeria, on May 23, 2025. The method of data collection includes oral interviews as well as internet sources relating to the composition of the responsorial psalms. Method of data analysis is based on phrasal analyses in the theory, practice, form and analysis of African music. This is a method of analysis that attaches importance to the phrases that characterize the text, tonal inflexions of words/meanings and not merely the chords and cadences of the music (Agu, 2024, pp. 56-57).

The Responsorial Psalm in the Liturgy

The Catholic Church attaches great importance to the use of the responsorial psalm in the liturgy. Part of the reason for this is its potent ability to re-enact the Synagogue experience of the Jews who used the psalms as a medium of praise to God for creation and redemption. The responsorial psalm is an integral part of the liturgy of the word (Grout, 1973). Historically, the responsorial psalm derived from the *graduale*, which formed part of the varied Latin chants collected for the liturgical celebration of the Mass. The term *graduale* stems from the Latin word ‘*gradus*’, which means ‘step.’ This refers to the step (now known as lectern or ambo – a reading stand) from where the responsorial psalm was sung during liturgical celebrations (see Gradual in Wikipedia). This means that it forms part of the readings selected for a particular liturgical celebration in the Catholic Church. It is usually rendered after the first reading as a response to the first reading and a nexus to other readings that follow therefrom.

The responsorial psalm is the people's sung part of the Mass, arranged in a solo-chorused-refrain form. The soloist (or duet) sings the response, which is repeated exactly by the people (congregation) in an AB pattern. 'A' signifies the solo or duet call, while 'B' refers to the chorused refrain. The soloist sings the verses of the responsorial psalm while the congregation repeats the chorused refrain at the end of each of the verses. In his related study of responsorial psalm tunes in the Nigerian Catholic Churches, Nwankwo (2012) made a 'survey of forms' of the responsorial psalm tunes and alluded to the fact that the Rondo Form is suitable for the verses of the psalm tunes. He came up with this conclusion owing to the flexible nature of African languages as tone-languages. However, other musical forms, such as the strophic form (same melody with different texts), also linked to the Call and Chorused Refrain is equally applicable to most psalm tunes composed in the Efik language as encapsulated in the model composition used for this study. The three verses of the psalm tune, written in strophic form, share the same melody as laid down in verse one.

Instrumentation – Accompaniment to Psalm Tunes

Since the work involves the use of instruments, it is apt to make a few statements about instrumentation in music and the various instruments used in this composition. Writing on the synergy between vocal and instrumental music in the African context (Akpabot, 1975) aptly observes:

It is not easy to separate vocal and instrumental music in African culture. As Hornbostel observed a long time ago, 'African music is not conceivable without dancing nor African rhythm without drumming, nor the forms of African song without antiphony'... instrumental music derives much from vocal music in the African experience... (p. 5).

Vocal and choral singing are very prominent in African music ensembles. This same experience is reflected in the present study as the researcher incorporates selected traditional instruments to be used as accompaniments to the psalm tune in order to achieve the African character of the music. It is clear from the findings that the people of this region are greatly influenced by the prescriptions of inculturation. Akpan (2013) gives a graphic account of this development in his discourse on the liturgy of Vatican II in Ikot Ekpene Diocese and beyond:

The pre-Vatican II period was the same in Ikot Ekpene Diocese as it was in the whole of Nigeria. With the coming of Vatican II, the use of vernacular and the use of local instruments were introduced in the liturgy. Dominic Cardinal Ekanem was very much aware that the Church in the Diocese still had close ties with African Traditional religion, and so he resisted any radical departure from the pre-Vatican II Liturgy. However, when he returned from participating in the Vatican II Council, he particularly implemented the theme of "Aggiornamento" of the Council and became very open to inculturation (p. 236).

The following traditional musical instruments are used for the study.

Pot drum



The pot drum (*Abang*) is mostly used by the Catholic Church and mostly played by women in some Parishes in the diocese. It is played with a padded fan-like beater. It is a pulse-marking instrument played on the main beat/accents to upgrade the rhythmic layer of the music. Its 'booming' effect is believed to possess some healing powers.

Wooden slit-drum



The slit-drum (*Ekamba Obodom/Etok Obodom*) is a wooden instrument carved from a log of wood. It has a two-lip opening for the production of sound. It performs a melodic and pulse-marking function as it has the capacity of simulating the tonal and melodic contour of the songs. Apart from serving musical needs, it is also used as a talking drum to convey information.

The Wood-block



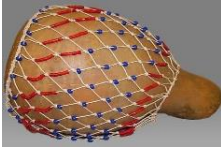
The wood block (*Nkorok*) is a very important instrument in a musical ensemble, including the Christian context. As a time-referent instrument, it directs the tempo of a song. Some people consider it as a master instrument. It is primarily a Catholic-dominated instrument.

The Metal Gong



The metal gong (*Nkwong*) is a conically shaped instrument with an opening rim at the transverse end for the production of sound. It is used as a time-line instrument with a possibility of varied tones depending on the portion of the instrument that is struck.

The rattle



The gourd rattle or tin/concussion rattle (*Nsak*) is an instrument used to enrich and brighten the instrumental layer of the music. In addition, it is used to brighten the instrumental layer of any given type of music, especially when there are heavy drums and other polyrhythmic sounds.

The xylophone



The xylophone (*Ikon*) as used in this composition is a melodic-rhythmic instrument made of slabs of woods for the production of musical sounds. It derives from the Greek words *xulon* (wood) and *phone* (sound) (Collins English Dictionary). As a melo-rhythmic instrument, it can be used to accompany the melody/harmony of a song and also serve as an instrumental accompaniment of the rhythm of the music just as any other musical instrument. The xylophone that is used for worship purposes in the Christian Churches is different from the xylophone used in a traditional African xylophone music ensemble. One outstanding reason for this is that the Church xylophone is tuned with well-tempered keys just like any other keyboard instrument such as the piano while the xylophone used in an African xylophone music ensemble is not well-tempered as could be found among the Pende of Zaire, the Chopi of Mozambique and the Venda of South Africa (Nketia, 1974; Akwawo, 2019).

In the light of the above views, the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music describes the xylophone as a “Percussion instrument consisting of graduated tuned wooden bars, arranged as on a pianoforte keyboard, and played by being struck with small hard or soft hammers held in the hands”. The xylophone is commonly played by one instrumentalist in the church, whereas it can be played by many instrumentalists in the traditional African music ensemble. The xylophone is used in this work as a principal instrument for the tuning of the melodies and provides the direction for other instruments to follow with regard to the instrumental aspect of the composition. Light and few instruments are selected for the accompaniment of the responsorial psalm tunes in order to enhance a clearer perception of the meanings of the texts, which may be drowned by too many and heavy-loaded drums.

Compositional Procedures and Analysis of *Nyekwo*

Title: *Nyekwo*

Medium: Voice and Instruments.

Style: Tonal/ Homophony.

Form: Call (Solo) and Chorused Refrain Pattern (AB).

Scale: Heptatonic.

Form Structure of solo response: a¹ a²

Key: G Major
 Meter/Time Signature: 2_4
 Tempo: Allegro
 Metronome: ♩ = 80
 Texture: Homophonic with instrumental accompaniment
 Length: 84 measures
 Call/ Chorused-Refrain: 15mm
 a¹, 8mm [5+3]
 a², 8mm [5+3]
 Interlude: 5mm
 Call (Verses) 1: a, 7mm
 b,, 7mm
 c¹, 8mm
 c², 8mm
 Interlude/Call: 1m
 Call (Verses) 2 and 3: (Same as Call (Verse) 1)
 Extra-musical Elements: Joy and Praises
 Mood: Cantabile/Happy and dance-like
 Audience: Church Congregation



Sketch: Response/Chorused Refrain (a¹ a²); Call: Verse 1 (a b c¹ c²)

Sketch: Call/Chorused Refrain:



Analysis of Nyekwo

This analysis is a phrasal analysis which focuses on the phrases of the texts. It takes into account the meanings of the texts based on their phrases and not just the melodic or harmonic patterns of the composition. Consequently, the phrases are simply divided into a¹ and a² for the chorus refrain and a, b, c¹, c² for the verses in order to make a concise analysis, which is *ad rem* in African music.

As discussed in Ukpong (2025), *Nyekwo* is a responsorial psalm verse derived from Psalm 89:2.3-4.26 and 28 which is used during the celebration of Christmas Evening Mass on December 24 every year. It is a Psalm that sings the praises and love of God for his mercy and love in sending his Son to take the human flesh and be born as God-man and the long-awaited Messiah. The Psalm is divided into two parts, verses 1-37 and verses 38-51. This work is based on the first part of the psalm. In brief, the psalm is a yearning for the fulfilment of the covenant which God made with David. The fulfilment of this promise is seen in the birth of Christ, commonly known as Christmas.

The Text

Efik

1. *Nyekwo ima Obong Abasi ke nsinsi:
Nyeda inua mi mbuk akpaniko fo ke
ofuri emana.
Koro ndohode nte, ima eyesongo ada
ke nsinsi.
Afo eyewuk akpaniko fo ke idem heaven.*

2. *Mmodiomi ediomu ye owo emi mmekde,
Mmonwongo nno David owo mi,
Mmomum ubong fo nkama ke nsinsi,
Nnyung nnam ebekpo fo osongo ada
ke ofuri emana.*

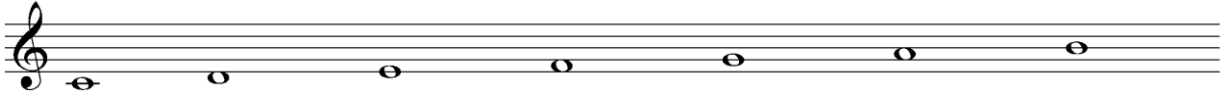
3. *Enye eyeseme okot mi, ete "Afo edi ete mi",
Ye Abasi mi, ye akwa itiat erinyanga mi.
Nyenim ima mi ye enye ke nsinsi,
Ediomi mi evenyung osongo ada ye enye.
Scale: The scale is heptatonic.*

English

I will sing forever of your mercies, O Lord.
Through all ages my mouth will proclaim your
fidelity
I have declared your mercy is established
forever.
Your fidelity stands firm as the heavens.

With my chosen one I have made a covenant,
I have sworn to David my servant:
I will establish your descendants forever,
And set up your throne, through all ages.

He will call out to me, "You are my father".
My God the rock of my salvation.
I will keep my faithful love for him always.
With him my covenant shall last.



Instrumental introduction [Measures 1-16]

The composition begins with an instrumental exposition in which the xylophone plays the entire tune while other instruments provide the accompaniment. This is a full instrumental framework that is maintained in this opening passage of the work. The xylophone makes use of the 3rds and 4ths in playing the tune. It is characterized by a two-note-harmony since the xylophone can only play a combination of two notes simultaneously. The tune is divided into two phrases of equal lengths a^1 (mm1-7) and a^2 (mm9-15). Each of the phrases is marked by a short leading phrase (S.L.P) to indicate a momentary break that prepares for either the next phrase or the vocal call and chorused refrain.



The notes move in the same direction in the form of homophonic parallelism which is a typical feature of African music. The xylophone does not play the exact notes of the text melody but digresses at some points by the use of part crossing styles (mm6-7, 14-15) for variety and interest. In these measures (i.e., mm6-7, 14-15), the xylophone plays the notes and

moves from treble notes to tenor in an overlapping style in order to enrich and strengthen the tonal texture of the tune.

Solo Call (A): [Measures 15 – 31]

The solo call is characterized by syncopations and firm tonal texture. It consists of two phrases (a^1 and a^2) of equal length and has a narrow melodic range with adequate flexibility of intervals 3rds, 4ths and 5ths but without long-range tonal leaps. It begins on the tonic G and moves downwards to the lower B^1 in a zigzag pattern as a preparation for an upward motion to the mediant B in the normal octave. This makes it easy to gather the notes of the main tune within the normal octave range, with the dominant D as the highest note in the melodic range. The first phrase a^1 terminates on the dominant D V^5_3 or V^6_4 (half-close) on the xylophone notes. The second phrase a^2 is an exact repetition of the first phrase except for the last cadence, which terminates on the tonic-G as its full close. The first letter of the word *Nyekwo* (I will sing) is a stressed syllable that lays emphasis on the meaning of the word as an act of affirmative singing. In a performance situation, the treble solo should sing the entire tune as a single melody before the chorus.

Chorused Refrain (B): [Measures 33 – 47]

The Chorused Refrain is a full harmony of the call melody structured in the SATB voice pattern. The voice parts move in the same direction in the form of homophonic parallelism. Like the call melody, it consists of two phrases a^1 and a^2 of equal length in line with the text. Phrase a^1 spans from m33-m40 in line with the words *Nyekwo mfon Obong Abasi, ke nsi nsi* (I will sing forever of God’s mercies), while phrase a^2 , which is a repetition of a^1 phrase, extends from mm41-47 with an intervening Short Leading Phrase (S.L.P) (Agu, 2024) sounded by the tenor and bass parts in m40. The chorused refrain begins on the tonic G in a unison (mm33-34) as the opening passage of a^1 and moves downwards to a low B^1 . It is characterized by a low tonal range between tonic G down to B_1 (GF#EDCB₁) in a low octave. This serves as a preparation for the major leap to the subdominant C (m36). It proceeds to create an imperfect cadence on the Dominant D as a partial close to the first phrase with the chord progression $I^6 - I - V$ in m38-39. The second phrase a^2 is an imitation of phrase a^1 in the opening passage before a digression to establish a full-close (perfect cadence) in mm46 and 47 with the chord formula $V - I$ (D – G). The harmonic progression in root positions and inversion on figured bass is as follows:

$$I - V - I - V - iii$$

Unison mm33-34 and mm41-42: G – D – G – D – B (low octave).

Harmony 1 (mm35-40): $vi^5_3 - V^5_3 - I^5_3 - ii^5_3 - I^6 - I^5_3 - V^5_3$.

Harmony 2 (41-47): $vi^5_3 - V^5_3 - I^5_3 - ii^5_3 - I^5_3 - V^5_3 - I^5_3$

Call Verse 1: [Measures 53 – 84]

There are three verses of the psalm tune as indicated in the texts above. The three verses portray similar traits in the melodic phrases and rhythmic structures. The same melody is used for the three verses due to the tonal conformities of the Efik language. Consequently, their melodic phrases have close intervallic structures that do not conflict with the tonal nature of the Efik language. For example, the syllabic configurations of the first line in verse one conform with those of the first line in verse two with 13 syllables each, as follows: *N-ye-kwo i-ma O-bong A-ba-si ke nsi-nsi and Mmo-dio-mi e-dio-mo ye o-wo e-mi mme-kde*. The verses are

characterized by four related phrases subdivided as a, b, c¹ and c². In this way, the analysis of Call Verse 1 is used to serve as a reference point for the rest of the verses. The ‘a’ phrase extends from m53-m59. It begins on the dominant D and moves in an undulating manner downwards and ends on the tonic B as a long note (m59). The second phrase begins on dominant D (m61) and moves downwards to A (m63) as its supertonic to form an imperfect cadence before cascading to subdominant C (m64) and finally terminates on the tonic G as the end of ‘a’ and b phrases (m67). The third phrase c¹ (m68-73) uses low range notes in a narrow ambit of conjunct intervals of 2nds in ascending and descending patterns for a change of texture and variation of mood.

It ends on the tonic (G), which is closely followed by c². The fourth phrase c² is a repetition of the musical materials drawn from c¹ but deviates in mm82-84 to terminate on tonic G as a full close. The Short Leading Phrase (S.L.P) in m85 is a solo call used to cue in the chorused refrain.

Instrumentation

The same instrumental framework is maintained throughout the song by the different instruments, except the xylophone, which plays the melodies at appropriate points. Generally, the instrumental expression is borrowed from the vocal line of the song. This is so because these instruments play according to the melodic and the rhythmic structure of the song. The fragment below is an excerpt of the instrumental framework of the psalm tune.

A closer look at the instruments above reveals that not all the instruments make their entries at the same time. The instruments make their entries additively. Additive entry of instruments is a common style of African music, which is also applicable to Church music. The various instruments achieve a balance in counterpoints, which is made possible by the

timeline instrument *Nkorok* (wood-block). In terms of the basic structural features, this instrumental pattern is reiterated and retraced systematically to the end without variations. No new themes are employed, but a mere recycling of the previous themes created by each of the instruments. In this way, there is little or no room for extemporization or improvisation, which often leads to uncontrolled emotions during worship.

The melodic structure is seen in the xylophone instrument, which performs the dual functions of melody and rhythm. The xylophone and the woodblock may be interchangeably perceived as the master instruments in this composition. This is so due to the fact that other instruments figure out their rhythmic motif in relation to these two principal instruments. In terms of the harmonic principles and styles, the various instruments are not tuned to the same pitch in a performance situation. However, they still interplay together to blend as a result of the ostinato framework orchestrated by the various instruments as a result of their performance/presentational form. The performance/presentational form has been variously described by Nzewi (1991, p. 24 and 1997, p. 2) as “the overall length, shape or sequence of thematic materials developed into a piece.” It is all about the “structural relationship of instruments within an ensemble” as noted by Agu (2024, p. 68). In this way, we see that the various instruments have different musical themes with varying lengths. Nevertheless, they all sum up to an interrelated and interconnected polyrhythmic whole in this composition. It must be said here that scoring for the instruments does not limit the possibility of improvisation, which is at the basis of African music. It only reduces overdependence on improvisation, which often leads to unspecified instrumental patterns.

Conclusion

The composition, ‘*Nyekwo*’ (I Will Sing), used for this study, is a model composition of a responsorial psalm tune in Efik borne out of the need to address the dearth of a standard compositional style that can guide composers in Ikot Ekpene Catholic Diocese and beyond. The composition was based on psalm verses drawn from Psalm 89:2.3-4.26 and 28. R.V.2a for the Christmas celebration. The tune of the responsorial verse formed the solo as well as the chorused-refrain for the chorus/congregation. The three verses of the psalm made use of the same melodic pattern in a strophic form since they portrayed the same textual traits. This formal structure was preferred to the rondo form because of the tonal flexibility of the Efik language. The music score for voices and instruments is a repository of study material for composers, choirmasters and researchers of African music in the context of Catholic liturgical celebration. It is also a lee way for scholars who may wish to undertake a similar research work on the composition of responsorial psalm tunes in an academic setting.

In its analysis, the song portrays a dance-like mood within a liturgical setting to express the joyful nature of the Christmas season in which Christians sing of the mercies and love of God festooned by the birth of Christ, who is the Messiah and the Saviour of all mankind. Furthermore, the work, which is a pioneering effort by the researchers, reveals inter alia that the various traditional musical instruments used to accompany the text in African music can be notated in line with the song-text in the ambience of the Catholic liturgical celebration. By notating these instruments, the singers and instrumentalists are properly guided to perform according to the specifications given on the music score. This will enhance the solemnity of worship and limit excessive improvisation that often leads to uncontrolled emotions during worship in a Catholic liturgical setting, as exemplified in Ikot Ekpene Diocese.

Recommendations

1. A responsorial psalm tune should exhibit a simple melodic contour with close arrangement of intervals as could be seen in bars 18 – 22.
2. It should not contain difficult tonal leaps to the octaves and intervening disjunctive motions that could hinder smooth melodic flow.
3. There should be a concerted effort by the composers of responsorial psalm tunes in an indigenous language to notate for the traditional musical instruments along with the voice parts to limit excessive improvisation in a liturgical setting.
4. If xylophone and other traditional musical instruments are used to accompany the responsorial psalm tunes set to African music idioms, they should receive more prominence as much as possible with minimal combination of Western musical instruments. This will enable the traditional musical instruments to blend better with the tonal inflexions of the language.
5. Similarly, if the piano and other Western musical instruments are used to accompany the responsorial psalm tunes, they should be used independently of African drums for adequate structural and tonal media.

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NYEKWO MFON OBONG ABASI
Psalm 89:2.3-4.26 and 28. R.V.2a
Christmas Evening Mass: December 24
Year A,B,C

Andante $\text{♩} = 80$

Emmanuel B. Ukpog

The musical score is arranged in a system with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Treble Solo: Treble clef, 2/4 time, 5 measures of rests.
- Choir: Treble and Bass clefs, 2/4 time, 5 measures of rests.
- Ikon: Treble clef, 2/4 time, melodic line with a slur over the first five measures.
- Etok Obodom: Percussion, 2/4 time, rests in measures 1 and 3, rhythmic patterns in measures 2, 4, and 5.
- Ekamba Obodom: Percussion, 2/4 time, rhythmic patterns in measures 1, 2, 4, and 5.
- Nkwong: Percussion, 2/4 time, rhythmic patterns in measures 1, 2, 4, and 5.
- Nkorok: Percussion, 2/4 time, rhythmic patterns in measures 1, 2, 4, and 5.
- Nsak: Percussion, 2/4 time, rhythmic patterns in measures 1, 2, 4, and 5.
- Abang: Percussion, 2/4 time, rests in measures 1 and 3, rhythmic patterns in measures 2, 4, and 5.

6

Tr. Solo

Choir

Ikoni

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

S.L.P

12

Tr. Solo

Choir

Ikoni

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

f

N - ye - kwo

ff

18

Tr. Solo

m-fon O-bong A - ba - si ke nsi nsi ke nsi

Choir

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

23

Tr. Solo

nsi N ye kwo m - fon O-bong A - ba-si

Choir

Ikon

Etok Obodom *ff*

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

28

Tr. Solo

ke nsi nsi ke nai nsi.

Choir

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

33 (Chorused Refrain)

Tr. Solo

N - ye - kwo m - fon O - bong A - ba - si ke nsi nsi

Choir

N - ye - kwo m - fon O - bong A - ba - si ke nsi nsi

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

38

Tr. Solo

ke nsi nsi N ye kwo m - fon O-bong

Choir

ke nsi nsi (Ke nsi nsi) N - ye kwo m - fon O-bong

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

ff

ff

43

Tr. Solo

A - ba-si ke nsi nsi ke nsi nsi.

Choir

A - ba - si ke nsi nsi ke nsi nsi.

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

48

Tr. Solo

Choir

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

53

Tr. Solo

1. N - ye - kwo i - ma O - bong A - ba - si - ke

Choir

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

58

Tr. Solo

nsi n - si. N - ye - da i - nua mi_

Choir

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

63

Tr. Solo

mbuk a-kpa - ni-ko fo k'o - furi e - ma - na.

Choir

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

68

Tr. Solo

Ko-ro ndo - ho - de n - te i - ma e - ye - so - ngo - da

Choir

Ikon

Etok

Obodom

Ekamba

Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

73

Tr. Solo

ke n - si n - si. A - fo e - ye -

Choir

Ikon

Etok

Obodom

Ekamba

Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

78

Tr. Solo

wuk a - kpa - ni-ko fo ke i - dem i -

Choir

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang

83

Tr. Solo

dem_ hea - ven. N - ye- kwo(S.L.P)2.M - mo - dio-mi e - dio-mo

Choir

Ikon

Etok Obodom

Ekamba Obodom

Nkwong

Nkorok

Nsak

Abang