

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE TRIANGLE OF RES: A TRINARY MODEL OF BEST PRACTICES
FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF AFRICAN CHORAL MUSIC
IN THE UNITED STATES

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A DOCUMENT APPROVED FOR THE
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Abstract

The religious and educational components of the European colonial enterprise in Africa resulted in the initial manifestations of Western-influenced African music, which is now part of what is considered world music. The United States occupies a distinctive position within world music because of the continuous infusion of global traditions and genres that have influenced its musical environment. Among the many categories of world music, African music's pop genre (Afrobeats) is known globally due to the rise of streaming services, social media, technological advancements, and creative partnerships with worldwide celebrities. Following the model of Afrobeat's popularity, African music's choral genre may attain mainstream recognition through collaborative access to the works of indigenous African composers for performances by American choral directors. Therefore, within this discourse, African music refers to choral music from sub-Saharan Africa rooted in folk tradition and culturally indigenous: created by composers who understand their native African cultures and traditions. A framework of best practices for promoting and ensuring authentic cultural portrayals of African music on the American stage is the Triangle of Res (ToRes). It addresses several performance considerations, such as publishing notated sheet music of indigenous works, production of audio-visual aids, text-pitch negotiations/IPA pronunciation guide, and collaborative interest from American choral conductors. The preparation and performance of two Igbo choral pieces at the University of Oklahoma between 2022 and 2023 will be discussed to evaluate the effectiveness of the ToRes model.

KEYWORDS: African Choral Music, Triangle of Res, Indigenous Composers, Resource, Research, Resolve, International Phonetic Alphabets, Igbo Choral Music.

Chapter 1: Autobiographical Introduction

The Musical Beginnings

In the Name of Sacred Music

Music, an elemental force that transcends cultural boundaries and linguistic barriers, is an intrinsic part of the human experience. At least, this is my reality within Nigeria's ethnically diverse social structure. From the Igbos of eastern Nigeria to the Hausas in the north, to the Yorubas in the south (amongst other minority tribes), the rhythmic beating of hearts and the melodies that stir within the soul of Nigerians is so inherent that one could surmise that music is deeply woven into the fabric of daily living. Extensively, it is a universal phenomenon, capable of expressing a vast spectrum of emotions in ways that words alone might often fail to capture.

Over time, music became an important part of my existence, so much so that it was part of my routine from my rising at dawn to my setting down at dusk. Being born into a Christian family of the Catholic denomination, we had regular family prayers in the morning and night times. These prayers would always begin with worship and praise songs. During the sectional intercessory prayers, my mother would burst out in songs of praise to begin her prayers. This lifestyle imbued in me the consciousness that music was an existential part of personal spirituality. My musical awareness of spiritual events extended to liturgical music too.

The mass is considered the highest form of prayer that a Catholic can engage in, and an intricate part of the mass is liturgical music. My experience with liturgical music began at the very early age of seven when my aunty would take me to choir rehearsals in preparation for the coming Sunday mass. I was exposed to the sacred music of the

Catholic liturgy in Nigeria – plainchant traditions and implied harmonies to songs in the Nigerian Catholic hymn book. Like the monophonic congregational singing of the Gregorian chant, communal-styled singing of indigenous church music was the common practice of the local Nigerian church. Moreover, the Vatican II council regulation regarding sacred music in the indigenous dialects of the people was in place within the Nigerian Catholic Community.

Essentially, music in the local Nigerian languages and dialects began to appear within the liturgy. The mass rites were also translated into the indigenous languages – a thing of localizing the mass for the catechizing of the people. This invariably led to the rise of indigenous composers who had some Western music educational training or had the musical aptitude for coining melodies for sacred text in the indigenous dialects. As time passed, it turned out that singing church songs was a leisurely pastime for my family because we were all church choir members, each representing a voice part: choral music was now an entrenched part of my daily existence.

Between 1996 and 1999, a fascinating aspect of my musical upbringing, which was instrumental to my early ability to read sheet music, was when my father became the choral librarian. He was not just the curator of the sheet music we had in the choir, but he would take upon himself the task of stenciling out every sheet music that was not clear enough or large enough for members to read. The music notation popularly used to score choral music in Nigeria was the tonic-solfa notation. Only a handful of choral musicians could interpret and teach it to the choir members, who would ordinarily learn it by rote and memorizing the sounds.

The Tonic-Solfa Experience

Watching my father recopy sheet music by hand and eventually joining him to recopy other pieces ignited the self-taught experience of articulating meters, rhythms, and pitches. The more I hand-copied sheet music, the more I was exposed to different meters and rhythms. However, a pattern began to emerge as I kept delving into different pieces – the harmonic structures in the voice parts were primarily similar in all the pieces. I had no formal training in Western tonal harmony as contained in the English hymns and anthems that British colonial Christianity passed on to the Nigerian church. I had to develop an application system for the patterns emerging before me.

The idea of triads and chords was still unknown to me, which I would later learn in college, so I called them “harmonies”. Three of these harmonies that started to make sense to me were always very prominent in all the pieces I hand-copied: doh harmony, fah harmony, and soh harmony. The first thing that stuck out to me was that almost every hymn we sang started with the doh harmony and ended with the doh harmony. The second thing that stuck out was that before the end of the piece with the doh harmony, the penultimate harmony would always be the soh harmony, or in some “Amen” cases, it would be the fah harmony.

Table 1. Emergent Harmonic Patterns from Childhood Choral Experience

Voices	Doh Harmony	Fah Harmony	Soh Harmony
<i>Soprano</i>	d	d	t,
<i>Alto</i>	s,	l,	s,
<i>Tenor</i>	m	f	r
<i>Bass</i>	d,	f,	s,

Furthermore, I noticed that one of the voice parts would always repeat the same

note as another; I later learned this was the concept of doubling. In another instance, I would notice that the harmonies had an added note that was not repeated or doubled; I would later learn that this was the concept of sevenths. More into the tonic-solfa experience, I started seeing different kinds of notes that were different from the seven common ones (**d, r, m, f, s, l, t**). These other kinds of notation would have an extra letter added to them, and as different as they looked, so did they sound different. I would later learn these to be accidentals (sharps and flats in staff notation).

Within the practice of tonic-solfa notation, to raise a note by a half-step while going up the scale, the letter “e” would be added in front of the note while going down the scale, adding the letter “a” would indicate lowering the note by a half-step. Later, I would learn that enharmonics are the same accidental pitches with different syllabic names depending on whether the notes are raised or lowered by a half-step.

Table 2. Tonic Solfa Accidentals and Enharmonics

Notes (raised)	d	➡	r	➡	m	f	➡	s	➡	l	➡	t	d'
Enharmonics		de		re		fe		se		le			
		ra		ma		sa		la		ta			
Notes (lowered)	d	⬅	r	⬅	m	f	⬅	s	⬅	l	⬅	t	d'

- L-R: Raised
- R-L: Lowered

What I also realized was that tonic-solfa accidentals are used as interchangeable enharmonics. In staff notation, all the enharmonics are applicable accidentals depending on the key signature and/or the accidental symbol beside the note/pitch. The table above is simply a tonic-solfa expression of the chromatic scale, although the solmization syllables differ depending on the geographical area’s musical practices.

The Choral Conducting Genesis

Within the Nigerian Catholic choral tradition in which I had my musical upbringing, to become a choir member, like any liturgical functionary, required only volunteering to serve in that capacity. There is no expectation of professionalism or proficiency, just the sheer zeal to “serve the Lord”; some talent is enough to become a member. So, one can imagine the feeling that the choir had struck a goldmine when it was discovered that I could read sheet music (in tonic-solfa notation) – my extensive hours of hand-copying music had finally yielded an unexpected dividend. More to the issue of proficiency, I could match pitch and detect with ease when someone was singing tonally off.

This revelation marked the beginning of my journey as a choral conductor. I was only 12 years old at the time, and the church was preparing to hold its annual harvest and bazaar sales – a version for the children and youths of the parish. In preparation for the mass, the liturgical functionaries (including the choir) would consist of the children and youths of the parish. Parents were encouraged to bring their children for rehearsals as ushers, altar servers, lay readers, and the choir. It could be surmised that this was the first time I had any conducting lessons. Being a member of the central choir further lent credence to my selection to be the conductor of the children/youth choir.

While being coached to embody a conductor's gestures, I received informal voice lessons from my mother to be the cantor for the responsorial psalm. I took on both endeavors in stride, resulting in a very splendid musical performance. The post-mass feedback indicated this optimistic view. As a result of the positive impact of my first outing, I became the choirmaster of the central choir a year later because the

parish priest needed to restructure the parish liturgical societies administratively. This new reality thrust me to the fore of choral leadership at a very early age.

The hierarchy of most Catholic church choirs in Nigeria at the time was such that there was an administrative lead (president/chairperson) who worked in conjunction with the musical lead (choirmaster). Nevertheless, the liturgical and performance output of the choir was now my responsibility, which I successfully carried out with the aid of my parents and older siblings. Being a high school pupil at the time, I needed all the guidance possible to navigate the role of choirmaster because of the maturity required to manage people within an ensemble setting, especially when you are the group's youngest member.

Moving on to my college experience, my choral musicianship blossomed even more. While I was a student in the theater arts department, I often attended the music department choral ensemble rehearsals. More so, I was the choirmaster of the Catholic students' choir for three of the four years I was a college student. As the choirmaster of the students' choir, I organized choral events within the student's parish and led the choir to intrastate and national choral conferences and competitions. I tried to maintain the highest musicianship excellence in all these events.

A very poignant part of it all was that I wanted more. My quest for more musical knowledge and professional growth stemmed from my realization that my interest and passion are strongly tied to choral music. I would spend a lot of time and resources at the local cyber café watching and downloading conducting tutorials, ACDA videos, music theory short lectures, and any choral or art music material I deemed valuable. I soon realized I needed a decisive career re-direction to achieve my desired fulfillment.

The Academic Initiative

Age Quod Agis

While in college as an undergraduate theater arts major, I always had intellectual interactions with students from the music department. I admired how they answered questions about tonal harmony and music history and displayed artistic proficiency in instrumental music performance. They would always spout many musical terms as if they were walking glossaries of music. On the other end of the spectrum, I was not always impressed with their choral performances because I felt I could do better. I was a theater arts student, but as a Catholic choirmaster, I had done large choral works and other pieces from prominent composers from eras of Western art music.

More importantly, most of these students had a certain level of condescending attitude toward me – or it could just be that I felt inadequate because I thought I could do better, but I did not know what they knew because I was not a music student. So I thought that if I could learn the pedagogy of music education and pair it with my already gained informal knowledge, maybe I could know more and be more, seeing that I would have the academic certification as an added impetus to my musicianship. It could be argued that my motivation at the time was tunnel-visioned, but in the long run, my personal growth as an art musician with a choral emphasis would be achieved.

Another consideration that motivated me was that in many of the conferences and competitions I attended, the resource persons and judges were primarily lecturers and professors of music. More so, part of my informal music education over the years, since I could read sheet music in tonic-solfa notation and decipher harmonic patterns, is that I gained some recognition as an amateur composer. Some of my indigenous choral

compositions have won gold (1st place) at the deanery, regional, diocesan, and national levels. The first of the two guiding principles I live by is that whatever I set out to do, I will do it well. Therefore, if I was going to change fields to go back to school to study music, I had to be willing to go all out (or all in).

In 2012, I compiled my latest composed mass setting *Missa Laus*, and other sacred music compositions. With these works, I recorded an album with my home parish choir and organized an album launch gala. This was intended as a fundraising event, of which I would use the money from my album support sales to pay for tuition when I begin my music degree. On the suggestion of the music academic advisor at my alma mater, I enrolled for a postgraduate diploma (PGD) – this was required of incoming graduate students who do not have a music undergraduate degree. The goal was to finish the PGD program in 18 months and then pursue a master's degree.

When an academic program meant to take 18 months continues for three years without a possible graduation date, it is time for a new course of action. Per the recommendation and help from my older siblings in the United States, I moved to The University of Louisiana at Lafayette (UL Lafayette) to pursue a master's degree in communication. My application to the music program for choral conducting was not accepted because I did not possess enough academic knowledge (music history and theory) to pursue a graduate program. As it were, my vocal performance and choral conducting audition videos were not the issue. This seemed like a setback, but I did not give up, hence my deferring to a communication program to eventually switch to music.

Nemo dat Quod non Habet

As a student in the postgraduate diploma program at my alma mater, my goal was clear – I wanted to study music to become a choral conductor. I desired to receive pedagogical and performance training in the musical art of conducting. I wanted to hone my conducting skills and become one of the leading Nigerian authorities in choral music. There was one problem or a few: there was no Nigerian music professor whose area of concentration was conducting, and no Nigerian university at the time offered advanced degrees with a specific focus on conducting (choral or instrumental).

Most of the music faculty at my alma mater and other universities concentrated on music history, ethnomusicology, theory, and composition. Others focused on music technology or instrumental music. This reality was a major motivating factor in my seeking my path where I could specifically find it. The delay in my PGD academic timeline only strengthened my resolve to seek greener pastures in the United States. The second of the two guiding principles I live by is that whatever I do not know, I will not claim to know it. This further translates to my expectation of others as I will not expect someone skilled in a different field to offer me training in my desired field.

I firmly believed that if I wanted to study choral conducting and get that performance degree, I should study with a choral conductor who is both a performer and a teacher of the art. So, my goal became much more straightforward as to what I wanted for my future, but I had to take care of the challenge I would face – being able to write and pass a graduate music entrance exam. The music faculty at UL Lafayette were very gracious in developing a plan for a successful admittance into the graduate conducting program. This plan allowed me to audit undergraduate classes in music

history (I and II) and music theory (I, II, and III). I was also part of the UL Chorale, as this was my introductory experience to choral music education in the United States.

True to my guiding principle of doing things well, I audited these classes like I was getting a grade that would reflect in my transcript – I did all the classwork, quizzes, homework, and exams while maintaining full-time status as an international graduate student in the communication program. I was also an active choir member at Our Lady of Wisdom Parish and Catholic Students' Center. Eventually, all my endeavors worked out well because two years later, I graduated with an MS Communication degree, wrote and passed the music graduate entrance exam, and was accepted into the graduate choral conducting program at UL Lafayette.

There is another part to this: I did not only apply to the UL Lafayette graduate music program but also to Louisiana State University, the University of Southern Mississippi, and the University of Oklahoma. I auditioned at all these schools and got their admission offers, but I had to accept only one offer. At the time, the best option was to stay in Lafayette, Louisiana, so I accepted the UL Lafayette admission. Besides, I felt like I owed them somehow, considering that they worked with me and allowed me to attend mop-up classes for what I lacked in academic knowledge. I was excited to begin this phase of my life and looked forward to learning from a choral conductor who could give what they have.

The African Choral Scholar of America

On August 13, 2018, I officially began my academic journey as a choral conducting graduate student. As an international student, I overcame many difficulties, from cultural shock to cultural adaptation. Particularly, I soon realized that choral music and its applied methods in the United States differed from what I was used to. As earlier mentioned, I had auditioned at different universities for graduate admission into their choral programs. Part of that audition experience was a tour of the school of music and other important venues. I had the opportunity to see the choral libraries of these music schools and talked with their current graduate assistants. The outcome of my experience was pertinent to developing my overall academic goal as a choral scholar.

A core purpose of my audition visits was to assess African music's popularity level at these institutions. I was very interested in and conscious of the representation that the music from my part of the world received in this foreign setting (I only found a few choral music by indigenous African composers edited by American musicians). The most popular one I found was a Nigerian carol in Yoruba, titled *Bethelehemu*, with its original music by Babatunde Olatunji (1927 – 2003). There have been arrangements of this music by Dr. Wendell P. Whalum, Barrington Brooks, and Andy Beck, each with their own tonal and lingual issues.

During my music graduate studies, I have encountered situations in which indigenous African folk tunes have been [mis]appropriated by performing their English translations instead of the indigenous text and, in some cases, entirely removing the indigenous text for those tunes. One such work is a popular Christmas piece, *African Noel*, with an original tune from a Liberian folk song, *Banuwa*. Andre Thomas and

Victor C. Johnson are among the American composers who have made arrangements for this tune. There are many other examples of Westernized African choral music that I came across, and more still, I have watched American choirs perform African choral music that did not resonate with me as African.

Therefore, it is highly beneficial to promote increased musical advocacy that encourages and supports indigenous African composers' creation of African choral music. Also, through organizations like the International Federation of Choral Music and events like World Choir Games, choral music stakeholders – composers, choral conductors, ensemble administrators, and music publishers – can engage in networking and resource exchange outreach programs. It is worth noting that there have been efforts to catalog African music into accessible choral music resources to diversify the choral repertoire in the United States.

While I aim to avoid any form of cultural gatekeeping practices, I rely on my substantive years of African linguistic study, indigenous choral musicianship, and advanced music studies in the United States to posit that there is a need for more performance-based research in the presentation of African choral music by American choral ensembles. Also, the importance of having native African composers as the resource persons for the indigenous choral pieces is intricate to their ethnologic semblance. With the continuous immigration of Africans into the United States, the possibility of having more indigenous African composers available increases, thus enriching the African diaspora and the musical diversity of America.

Chapter 2: Review of Topical Narratives

African Music and Globalism

The dispersal of African communities across the globe has led to the formation of vibrant diasporas that actively preserve their unique cultural identities. Music has been pivotal in maintaining the African cultural heritage among the various forms of cultural expression. The connection between music and culture has been characterized as intricate, with music being “a critical site, a soundscape, in the construction of new diasporan and African identities.”¹ The United States has long been recognized as the converging center for diverse cultural identities, vibrantly reflected in its musical landscape.

Speaking of cultural identities, West African pop music, widely known as Afrobeats, has transcended geographical borders to become a global phenomenon. While Afrobeats enjoys significant popularity in the United States and globally, its art music counterpart, especially choral music, does not enjoy the same prominence and influence. Streaming services were pivotal in amplifying Afrobeats' reach, allowing artists to connect with fans across continents. Collaborations with international superstars further propelled indigenous artists to the global stage, garnering them widespread recognition and topping charts internationally.

Combining traditional forms and idioms with contemporary elements highlights African traditional music's enduring communal and social characteristics. This stylistic syncretism of structures illustrates the performance conceptualizations of folk music as

1. Zeleza, Paul Tiyambe. “Dancing to the Beat of the Diaspora: Musical Exchanges between Africa and Its Diasporas.” *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 3, no. 2 (July 2010): 211.

inherently choral within African communities.² Yet, there is the question of the artistic sustainability of African choral music for global performance. Through the collective effort of arrangement and performance, African choral music transcends its original contexts, undergoing a process of repackaging for global audiences without losing its rich cultural essence.³

However, drawing from the global success of Afrobeat, one can argue that the connection between African choral music and the international community has not fully blossomed. Considering that African choral music on the global scene first began with Western musicologists recording and experimentally arranging African folk melodies using Western musical standards,⁴ it is now more pertinent to develop Afrocentric performance best practices that emphasize the centrality of indigenous composers and the necessity for collaborative interest from non-indigenous performers.

Western Ethnomusicology in Africa

The Academic Paradox

Examining African music from a Western ethnomusicological lens uncovers an intricate interplay between cultural anthropology, musical analysis, and educational systems. During the 1950s and 1960s, the examination of African music in several

2. De Beer, Rudolf, and Wilson Shitandi. "Choral Music in Africa: History, Content, and Performance Practice." In *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music*, edited by André De Quadros, 1st ed., (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 185.

3. Nwamara, Alvan-Ikoku O. "Repackaging Igbo Folksongs for Global Acceptance: Towards Reviving and Preserving the Musical Heritage of a Nigerian Community." *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* 14, no. 1–2 (July 3, 2017): 60.

4. Kidula, Jean Ngoya. "Ethnomusicology, the Music Canon, and African Music: Positions, Tensions, and Resolutions in the African Academy." *Africa Today* 52, no. 3 (2006): 100.

African countries was not predominantly located within music departments. Instead, it was integrated into African studies institutions that emphasized ethnographical and cultural anthropological approaches.⁵ For example, Kenyan music, through musical compositional experiments on folk tunes, gained Western recognition in the late 1950s, but it was not until the late 1960s that African music was added to their academic curriculum as a subject deserving serious study.⁶

The inclusion of African music across the African continent as a subject of study in high schools commenced in the 1970s. Subsequently, undergraduate programs incorporated African music studies, which were structured around Western ideas of ethnomusicology and emphasized performance. Nevertheless, the paradox emerged wherein the predominant European "art" music in the university curriculum resulted in a significant separation between students' everyday musical experiences and the music that was formally taught.⁷ The acquisition of musical expertise, especially in European contexts, created a greater barrier for students to fully embrace African musicianship as a viable and prestigious endeavor within academic environments. This frequently resulted in African music being relegated to the status of cultural relics.⁸

The study of African music gained popularity and became more understandable when the social and cultural perspectives taken by ethnomusicology as a field were seen as influencing or shaping the music. This led to a shift in scholarly perspective toward

5. Kidula, 104.

6. Kidula, 104.

7. Kidula, 104.

8. Kidula, 104-105.

African music as the study of African musicology rather than the study of African music's ethnology.⁹ The aforementioned paradigm immensely catalyzed the rigorous examination of African music theories, histories, and methods of performance practices. The compulsory study of music in schools gave rise to an informed audience and an economically sustainable music business. Along with the conventional European canon, the curriculum incorporated African music theory, history, and practice.¹⁰

Contexts and Controversies

Western ethnomusicologists have long been interested in the rich tapestry of African music, drawn by its complexity and cultural significance. Their work, while contributing significantly to the academic discourse and documentation of African musical traditions, has not been without its controversies and criticisms. It is important to highlight the role, influence and challenges Western ethnomusicologists faced in Africa, the responses from African scholars, and the evolving dialogue between different scholarly traditions. Essentially, the history of ethnomusicology in Africa is marked by a tradition of Western scholarship and fieldwork, driven by an impetus to understand and catalog the myriad musical expressions on the continent.

Early compositional application of Western musical concepts to African music oftentimes led to a skewed representation of African musical structures and practices.¹¹ In most cases, what is meant to reflect a cultural exchange may lead to appropriation. Differing perceptions and interpretations of African music by Western musicologists, as

9. Kidula, 105.

10. Kidula, 105.

11. Sadoh, Godwin. "African Musicology: A Bibliographical Guide to Nigerian Art Music (1927–2009)." *Notes* 66, no. 3 (March 2010): 488-89.

opposed to their African counterparts, have sparked debates within the field. On the one hand, Western scholars have been credited for bringing African music to a global audience by applying rigorous academic methodologies to study and promote the understanding of African musical arts. On the other hand, African scholars emphasize the importance of capturing the “independent rhythmic roles and instrumental blend in an ensemble”¹² intrinsic to the cultural context.

African scholars emphasize that the cultural principles, myths, connotations, tonal syntax, semantics, semiotics, and inter-semiotics of African music are vital to its understanding yet are often glossed over by non-African scholars.¹³ Furthermore, Western ethnomusicologists, with their outsider perspective, run the risk of cultural misunderstanding and reductionism. The essential features of "African compositional techniques and performance practices,"¹⁴ which are strongly influenced by inherent historical culture and oral traditions, may be distorted when analyzed from a Western perspective.

With a continuous increase in the African demography of Western-educated music scholars and in response to criticisms of cultural shortsightedness in applying Western standards to African music, there is a need for social consciousness toward more collaborative, respectful, and culturally sensitive approaches to African ethnomusicology. Ultimately, the work of Western ethnomusicologists in documenting

12. Sunday-Kanu, Rita Adaobi, and Samuel Chukwuma Nnodim. “Temporal Issues in the Inherent Rhythmic Expressions of African Indigenous Music Performance Practices.” *African Research Review* 12, no. 3 (September 10, 2018): 110.

13. Sunday-Kanu, and Nnodim, 114.

14. Sunday-Kanu, and Nnodim, 114-115.

and repackaging African musical traditions has both positive and negative implications.

Western scholars are increasingly aware of the importance of immersing themselves in the cultural context and engaging with indigenous methodologies to gain deeper insights into African musical traditions. Therefore, it is essential to approach such work with cultural awareness and acknowledge the potential for misrepresentation and [mis]appropriation while also recognizing the opportunities for international exposure, academic interest, cross-cultural collaborations, and preservation of musical heritage.

African Ethnomusicology by Africans

The Insider Perspective

The paradigm shift from Western musical standards to indigenous African musical insight, especially for global appreciation, is the premise upon which this document is founded. Currently, there is a growing recognition that for a holistic understanding of African music, the perspectives and knowledge of African scholars are indispensable. The authenticity and integrity of African music performed outside Africa by non-Africans is intimately connected to the insights provided by African musicians themselves. An insider perspective is critical in translating the nuances, cultural contexts, and traditional practices that underpin African music.

African musicians' involvement in the composition and direction of music for performance on the western stage is of the utmost importance because it is essential to preserving the music's authenticity and cultural richness. When performed for and by non-indigenous populations, the accurate representation of African music is crucial not only for cultural preservation but also for fostering a nuanced understanding of African

art. African musicians, as cultural insiders, possess an innate understanding of the subtleties embodied in their traditional music, which is often lost when non-Africans approach the creation and/or performance of this music without appropriate guidance.

African musicians bring a wealth of cultural knowledge and context to the indigenous music they compose/arrange by ensuring that the music retains its original intent, emotive power, and cultural significance. To avoid issues centered upon cultural [mis]appropriation by non-indigenous African composers/performers, the African insider perspective aids in artistically translating the oral traditions, social functions, and intricate ceremonial contexts that are inextricable from African music, thus allowing for a more authentic performance.¹⁵ Furthermore, the practice of African composers writing African music, especially at the international level serves the educational purpose of providing non-African performers a guided understanding of the stylistic and rhythmic complexities inherent in African music.¹⁶

Direct culture-bearer participation promotes a deeper appreciation and respect for African cultural and musical expressions while counteracting any plausible superficial interpretation. The inclusion of African musicians in diasporic performances of African music fosters intercultural connections and promotes meaningful exchanges between different communities. Collaboration between African musicians and non-African performers serves to bridge cultural gaps by facilitating intercultural dialogue and exchange. This collaborative process not only enriches the musical experience for

15. Kidula, 110.

16. dummies. "Discovering Jazz History." (2016).
<https://www.dummies.com/article/academics-the-arts/music/general-music/discovering-jazz-history-200475/>.

performers and audiences alike, but also highlights the universal human experiences that music can express, regardless of cultural origin.¹⁷

The Lingual Vista

When considering practical examples of African musicology, especially as it concerns performing African music internationally, the practical initiatives of late Ghanaian ethnomusicologist, J.H. Kwabena Nketia are foundational.¹⁸ Nketia was critical in understanding and disseminating African musical aesthetics to African and Western musicians and scholars. His academically insightful contributions provided some of the earliest practical considerations for performance practice in African music. Nketia applies his linguistics background to his performance rationale of African music. As seen in his seminal text, *The Music of Africa*, Nketia dedicates chapters to explain the relationship between speech and song, highlighting the significance of spoken language in the rhythms and melodic contour in African music.¹⁹

Nketia's work profoundly influences the way African music is taught and performed globally. In African music, the linguistic component is an important variable that intertwines with melody to enhance the meaning and emotional resonance of songs and their performances. Essentially, the music is subservient to the text in the sense that the text is given more importance because the melody is derived from the tonality of the language. Culturally, languages are pillars of African society, deeply marked by orality, which serves to morally and spiritually enrich individuals while illuminating their social

17. Gioia Ted. *The history of jazz*. 2011. <https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB06127537>.

18. Kidula, 111.

19. Kidula, 112.

worldview.²⁰ This perspective is resonant within the context of international performances, where language and text serve not only as a means of communication but also as vital carriers of cultural identity and heritage.

Melo-rhythmic patterns in African music are deeply connected to language. For instance, in Igbo musical practices, the correlation between text pitch and melodic contour facilitates the conveyance of intelligible messages, as rhythm cannot be isolated from language patterns.²¹ This close relationship between text and music ensures that traditional meanings and cultural nuances are preserved, even as the music goes beyond the African stage. The linguistic element in African music is paramount, often taking precedence over the melody in creating a piece's deeper cultural meaning. When appropriately negotiated toward the international stage, African music's textual aspect becomes a poignant symbol of cultural resilience and continuity.

Cross-cultural negotiations allow people to retain a tangible sense of their ancestral origins, thus ensuring that their linguistic and musical traditions remain a dynamic part of their experience despite geographical and generational distances. More importantly, the prominent role of indigenous text underscores the ethnomusicological position that the performance appreciation of African music requires an understanding of its cultural elements. Thus, the symbiosis between indigenous text and ethnocentric melody is essential in projecting musical authenticity and contributes to African music's continued evolution and representation on the global stage.

20. Tchindjang, Mesmin, Athanase Bopda, and Louise Angéline Ngamgne. "Languages and Cultural Identities in Africa." *Museum International* 60, no. 3 (September 2008): 39.

21. Sunday-Kanu, and Nnodim, 110.

African Choral Musicking

In Western choral tradition, the composer often creates music that may not be performed in their presence, leaving interpretation to the performers.²² This separation does not always apply in African music because the composer is often deeply involved in the performance and may not be distinct from the performer. Traditional music performance in African culture is interactive and community-centric, with the roles of composer and performer often overlapping. In African traditions, music composition is intertwined with performance, often improvised and developed in the moment. More so, African music composition may be oral, responding to the dynamics of the surrounding locality and participation. This contrasts with the more solitary and structured process common in Western compositional practices wherein the composer is situated privately to articulate their musical ideas on paper well before they are performed.²³

Many African choral composers still engage in the practice of improvisational on-the-spot compositional technique, even in their already published pieces' teaching and learning process. Improvisation and extemporization are deeply embedded in the pedagogical approaches of African musicianship because they are vital means of fostering musical expression and creativity within ensembles. These additions may result from implied extemporizations and gestures often not written or cannot be scored in the piece. In terms of harmonic structure, most choral works from early African composers reveal a diatonic stylistic construct due to the historical influence of Western

22. Olisaeke, Festus. "The Composer and the Performer in the African Music Interpretation." *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts*, 10 (2014): 100.

23. Olisaeke, 103.

colonial education. Nevertheless, a handful of modern African composers have also ventured beyond diatonic systems of pitch organization, exploring alternative approaches and pushing the boundaries of African music.²⁴

The performance of African choral music in the United States or internationally should inadvertently involve the composer or a culture bearer who possesses knowledge of traditional performance practices and repertoire, sometimes under the leadership of African choral conductors or through collaboration with African choral music specialists.²⁵ When preparing African music, non-indigenous choral ensembles are encouraged to engage in a collaborative cultural experience, especially when the ensemble is predominantly not of the music's cultural demography. This ensures the music's intended theme, emotion, and cultural context are conveyed.

24. Agawu, Kofi. "African Music as Text." *Research in African Literatures* 32, no. 2 (June 2001): 8.

25. Olisaeke, 104.

Chapter 3: The Triangle of Res

Conceptual Framework

The Triangle of Res (ToRes) model was conceptualized drawing from Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs* psychology theory framework. Maslow's theory outlines human motivation in a tiered strata, often depicted as a pyramid. He postulated that the lower levels of the pyramid must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up – it is a progression from basic survival to the pursuit of stability, belonging, esteem, and finally self-realization.²⁶ This imposes a structure of importance that some needs be satisfied before others. While it is a foundational framework for understanding human motivation, the hierarchy of needs has also faced criticism for not being infallible as a tool for predicting human behavior, especially when it comes to want and decision-making.

Critics point out that the pyramid may not always represent the order in which individuals pursue these needs; for instance, some cultures may place a higher emphasis on communal relationships or self-actualization without having completely fulfilled the lower-level needs.²⁷ Additionally, needs are not static; they can be fluid and overlap, reflecting the complexity of human motivation. Like Maslow's theory, the ToRes model is a procedural framework that advocates a step-by-step process to actualizing its end goal. However, unlike Maslow's theory, the trinary framework of the ToRes model is structured to be equally important, with the possibility of one segueing into the other.

26. Chand, Smriti. "Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory of Motivation." *Your Article Library*. (April 2, 2014). <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/human-resources/maslows-need-hierarchy-theory-of-motivation/32382>.

27. Chand, "Maslow's Need Hierarchy Theory of Motivation."

The ToRes Construct



Figure 1. The Triangle of Res Model

The Triangle of Res is an all-encompassing model in which the three steps it involves are titled Resource, Research, and Resolve (Res). These steps are further expanded by synoptic descriptions based on what they mean to the process. These synoptic descriptions are further broken down into actionable activities that spin the wheel of productive progression in the music actualization process. The ToRes model was tailored to cater to producing and performing African art music for and by non-indigenous performers. The best-practice considerations covered by the ToRes model range from the provision of musical material by an indigenous African composer to the preparation and performance of the piece by a non-indigenous ensemble.

Table 3. Descriptive Overview of the ToRes Model

Resource	Research	Resolve
Pedagogical Information	Investigative Evaluation	Inclusive Selection
▪ <i>Scoring/Notation</i> ▪ <i>Translation/Articulation</i> ▪ <i>Publishing/Media</i>	▪ <i>Interpretive [analytical study]</i> ▪ <i>Collaborative [culture bearer]</i>	▪ <i>Commissions</i> ▪ <i>Concerts</i> ▪ <i>Recitals</i>

In the ToRes model, one triangle forms the foundation on which the others rest, thus being the first step in the actualization process of the model. Irrespective of the foundational value of the first little triangle, it is only a transitional tool to get to other parts of the whole triangle. That is, without the realization of the other triangles, the first one can make no meaningful impact. Conversely, without the first triangle, the functions of the other triangles will not be achieved. Overall, the interconnectedness of the entire triangular process makes for a very immersive and personalized experience.

Resource

This is a fundamental aspect of the best-practice considerations toward the performance of African music outside the originating culture. Indigenous musical resources offer pedagogical information and valuable insights into African music, which encompasses a wide range of types and forms, reflecting the rich diversity of African cultures and the influence of migration, particularly within the context of international communities.²⁸ Without a musical resource, there can be no art music because the musical material is structurally put together in a culturally appropriate manner and retrieved from an authentic source: the indigenous composer.

Indigenous musical resources form an essential foundation for African music performance. Exploring indigenous musical resources – from musical styles and instruments to melodic and harmonic structures – reveals a historical dialogue between homeland and diaspora, which is critical to the cultural lifeways of dispersed peoples.²⁹

28. Zeleza, “Dancing to the Beat of the Diaspora...”, 222.

29. Gunderson, Frank D. “The African Diaspora: A Musical Perspective (Review).” *Notes* 61, no. 1 (September 2004): 109.

Regarding the international population of non-African performers, indigenous musical resources articulate thematic relationships to cultural ancestry while negotiating new sociocultural landscapes. Instrumentation serves as a primary vector for this negotiation process, with instruments like the conga or penny-whistle not merely providing soundscapes but also embodying tradition and facilitating a sense of belonging.³⁰

Furthermore, the perpetuation of traditional rhythms and harmonies within new national constructs is not only an act of artistic preservation but also a statement of resistance against cultural homogenization.³¹ African musical compositions written for international performance are vehicles of aesthetic innovation, wherein musicians blend time-honored indigenous resources with contemporary influences, fueling the evolution of new musical expressions and asserting the global relevance of African artistic legacy. Indeed, the increasing number of African musicians in Europe and America indicates the possible reality of cross-cultural exchange on a deeper and more intimate level.

As contemporary African composers continue to navigate the terrains of globalization, the role of indigenous music resources in sustaining cultural narratives remains vital. Ensuring the ongoing collaborative engagement with these indigenous musical resources (human and material) is fundamental for the artistic integrity of international performances and for reinforcing the collective African identity.³² Most indigenous musical resources can be generated through arranging folk tunes or by

30. Zeleza, 225.

31. Vambe, Maurice T. "Diaspora, Music, Identity and Desti/Nations in Southern Africa." *Muziki* 5, no. 2 (November 2008): 284.

32. Agawu, V. Kofi. *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (New York: Routledge, 2003): 205.

developing indigenous original compositions. These composers are best suited to telling their people's stories in a way that authentically captures intricate cultural nuances.

Composer Responsibility

The role of the indigenous African composer stands at a critical intersection of cultural preservation, innovation, and interpretation, especially for music written for international performance. Engaging with a legacy of rich musical traditions, African composers bear a multifaceted responsibility: they act as custodians of cultural heritage, ambassadors of regional sounds, and architects of a contemporary musical language that bridges the gap between disparate worlds. Their compositions often reflect a negotiation between indigenous musical practice and cross-cultural realities, creating works deeply rooted in tradition and responsive to the global tapestry of music.

The African composer's responsibility is dynamic and dialogic when creating music to be performed by non-indigenous populations. They draw upon their indigenous communities' lived experiences, memories, and aspirations to craft works that resonate with their people's immediate and remembered landscapes and pacify any existing cultural inquiry. The composer's work becomes a vehicle for cultural affirmation and exchange, a testament to how the shared heritage of Africa is celebrated, interrogated, and reimagined.³³ It is equally important that the indigenous composer knows how to document their work in the most accessible way.

Scoring/Notation: There are many music notation systems that musicians, especially composers, can use to document their works, mindful of the prevalent musical practices and traditions, academic/artistic intentions, and performers/ensemble proficiency. Scoring

33. Zeleza, 223.

African music using the most common notation system within a given setting facilitates the performance access to such works beyond their geographic origin. For societies where oral tradition is central, notation as documentation safeguards musical heritage against the erosive forces of time and cultural change; indigenous composers' ability to commit the music to paper serves archival purposes.³⁴

Within certain musical traditions, like choral music in the United States, for instance, composing African music using the prevalent Western staff notation allows for convenient performance interpretation of the indigenous composer's work. Even in the rich tapestry of African music, where improvisation and oral transmission play significant roles, staff notation provides a degree of precision and apt replicability that ensures the composer conveys the musical ideas as much as possible.³⁵ Considering that the indigenous composer may not always be reachable for pedagogic edification, notational fidelity is valuable for educational purposes and for maintaining the integrity of the music during performances by diverse ensembles.³⁶

Adopting modern scoring practices by African composers can also stimulate mutually beneficial cross-cultural collaborations. When African works are transcribed into a form readily accessible to musicians trained in Western music traditions, it presents opportunities to engage with African musical syntax and thematic elements,

34. Agawu, Kofi. *The African Imagination in Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 51-52.

35. Campbell, Patricia Shehan. *Teaching Music Globally: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. Global Music Series (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 198.

36. Herbst, Anri, Meki Nzewi, and V. Kofi Agawu, eds. *Musical Arts in Africa: Theory, Practice, and Education*. 1st ed. (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2003): 142.

fostering an exchange of musical ideas and cultural understanding.³⁷ Thus, the opportunity for non-African musicians and ensembles to explore and interpret a vast repertoire of African compositions, which may otherwise have been inaccessible, becomes an achievable reality.³⁸

Translation/Articulation: Translations and International Phonetic Alphabet transcriptions for articulation in African music play an integral role in its study and performance, especially in contexts outside the indigenous culture. Translations convey the meanings of lyrics composed in African languages to non-native speakers, widening the accessibility and potential appreciation of the text's narrative and emotional content.³⁹ The IPA transcriptions, on the other hand, assist performers in accurately articulating the pronunciation of the original language, which is crucial for an authentic rendition of the music.⁴⁰

Translations bridge the linguistic gap by allowing audiences and performers to understand the context, themes, and stories inherent in African music. Understanding the text of a piece can thematically and interpretatively enhance the artistic depth with which musicians approach that piece, fostering a more meaningful connection between

37. De Wilde, Craig. "Out of Africa: Recent Publications on African Music, Culture and the Politics of Music Making." *Musicology Australia* 27, no. 1 (January 2004): 129–30.

38. Lucia, Christine. "Michael Mosoeu Moerane in the Museum." *Fontes Artis Musicae* 67, no. 3 (2020): 188.

39. Bandia, Paul F. "Translation as Culture Transfer: Evidence from African Creative Writing." *TTR : Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction* 6, no. 2 (March 16, 2007): 74.

40. Karna, Duane R., ed. *The Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet in the Choral Rehearsal* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2012): 1.

the performer, the music, and the listeners. Art music, often a sophisticated medium of cultural expression, relies heavily on text to convey complex emotions, cultural values, and philosophical concepts. Thus, translations enable non-native audiences to engage with these elements profoundly.⁴¹

Consequently, indigenous African composers could learn to use and include IPA transcriptions and pronunciation guides for their works because they are particularly valuable for choral directors and vocalists who strive to maintain the authenticity of the music's cultural origins. Given the phonetic specificity of the IPA, singers can produce sounds that closely approximate the nuances of African languages, which may most possibly be unfamiliar and challenging. This practice ensures linguistic accuracy and helps preserve the piece's cultural authenticity.⁴² It is also advisable that, in a situation where the indigenous composer is not versed in using IPA transcriptions, they should seek out and collaborate with phonetic transcription experts.

By highlighting the need for clear translations and precise IPA transcriptions in the study and performance of African music, there is an emphasis on the importance of cultural understanding in the respectful representation of diverse music traditions on the global stage.⁴³ Therefore, employing translations and IPA transcriptions facilitates a

41. Carter-Ényì, Aaron, and Quintina Carter-Ényì. "Melodic Language and Linguistic Melodies: Text Setting in Igbo." *The Society for Music Theory Videocast Journal* 6, no. 5 (August 2020): 2.

42. Nzewi, Meki, and Volker Schütz. *African Music: Theoretical Content and Creative Continuum: The Culture-Exponent's Definitions* (Oldershausen: Inst. für Didaktik Populärer Musik, 1997): 41-42.

43. Euba, Akin. *Essays on Music in Africa. 2: Intercultural Perspectives*. Bayreuth African Studies Series 16 (Lagos: Elékóto Music Centre, 1989): 156-157.

commitment to respecting the origins and intention behind African music, promoting its appreciation and performance within an international framework. This honors the original composers' intentions and promotes a more inclusive understanding of Africa's rich musical heritage.⁴⁴

Publishing/Media: Editing and publishing African music are critical to preserving the musical heritage and facilitating its global dissemination. Accurate representation of African musical elements – such as rhythm, pitch, and timbre – is vital for maintaining the integrity of the music when transcribing it into a notated form.⁴⁵ Thus, the challenge lies in adapting or extending Western staff notation to encapsulate the unique qualities of African music, ensuring that performances remain true to their original cultural context.

Editing and publishing of African music has been a fast-growing process with the establishment of educational resources and journals that focus on the musical arts in Africa.⁴⁶ This institutional support strengthens the scholarly work surrounding African music and provides a platform for its continuous evolution and study. Furthermore, publishers are actively brought into the foray when there is continued study on African music, and these studies are published for dissemination and presentation at forums of intellectual interactions and artistic exchange (seminars, conferences, concerts, and recitals).

Considering the premise above, publishers inadvertently play a pivotal role in

44. Agawu, V., 207.

45. Agawu, V., 208.

46. Kidula, "Ethnomusicology....", 112.

the broader distribution of African music (pedagogical or musical materials alike). This is illustrated by the publication of *Piano Music of Africa and the African Diaspora* by Ghanaian-American composer and pianist William Chapman Nyaho. The publication of his 5-volume anthology by Oxford University Press underscores the importance of contracting with publishers to make scores available to a worldwide audience, thus celebrating the creative achievement of African composers while bridging the gap between African composers and global performers.⁴⁷

In this digital age, the potential for expanding the reach of African music is more significant than ever. Artistic self-publication is a technical and financial possibility in print and multimedia formats. Online platforms enable real-time collaboration, allowing for an exchange of musical ideas that transcend geographical boundaries. This has profound implications not only for the accessibility of African music but also for preserving and promoting its diverse forms. Technological advancements have enabled indigenous composers to navigate the multifaceted and complex challenges of notating, editing, and publishing African music.

The access to and knowledgeable use of music notation software like Dorico, Sibelius, MuseScore, and other digital music/audio recording software by African composers considerably addresses the issues of recording, transcribing, notating, and editing. These music notation software have the user interface to edit notes, text, dynamics, non-musical expressions and generate portable document formats (PDF) of

47. William Chapman Nyaho's *Piano Music of Africa and the African Diaspora* (Vol. 1-5) is a collection of works by composers of African descent that are hard to find or have never been published. Musicians find various musical styles and pieces written for different performance levels within the different volumes.
<https://global.oup.com/academic/search?q=Nyaho&cc=us&lang=en>

notated music for online retention/sharing and offline reproduction.⁴⁸ Affordable web hosting packages are also available to composers to commercially transact the publication of their works to any interested party in any part of the world.

In the area of publicity and marketing, social media and the integrated nature of digital marketing available on the various social media platforms empower artists to narrate their creative journey and directly develop a personal audience relationship.⁴⁹ By leveraging platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and SoundCloud, composers can reach a vast audience without the traditional gatekeeping structures of music publishing.⁵⁰ The storytelling capacity for multimedia publicity through posts, stories, and live sessions effectively showcases musical inspiration and cultural context.

Moreover, these platforms allow for targeted advertising, where composers can reach specific demographics who have shown interest in African music or similar genres. By analyzing engagement metrics, composers can refine their marketing strategies to better connect with potential listeners and collaborators.⁵¹ This connection may also be facilitated by hashtags and online groups centered around African music and culture, thereby building cultural identity and community. Invariably, the choice between self-publication and working with a publishing company is the responsibility

48. LoPresti, Marjorie. "Notation Software In The Music Classroom." February 23, 2022. <https://nfhs.org/articles/notation-software-in-the-music-classroom/>

49. Bisschoff, Lizelle. "The Future Is Digital: An Introduction to African Digital Arts." *Critical African Studies* 9, no. 3 (October 2, 2017): 263.

50. Murphy, Shane. "Music Marketing in the Digital Music Industries – An Autoethnographic Exploration of Opportunities and Challenges for Independent Musicians." *International Journal of Business Research* 9, no. 1 (April 2020): 26-27.

51. Bisschoff, 263-264.

of the indigenous composer, depending on factors such as the composer's access to and control of needed resources, the composer's long-term goals for their music, and their access to potential audiences.

Research

This is the second aspect of the best-practice considerations for the performance of African music by non-indigenous musicians. Considering how essential it is for accurate cultural representation and authentic musical codification that the indigenous African composer develop the resources for African music, it is expected that non-indigenous musicians should conduct proper research to find and gain access to these indigenous musical resources. Notably, the performance of indigenous African music in the United States necessitates meticulous research and understanding due to the intrinsic complexities and cultural specificities embedded within this rich musical tapestry.

In preparing a selected piece of African music, research can be **Interpretive**, **Collaborative**, or a hybrid of both. As such, when researching a piece of African music requires specific areas of consideration:

Cultural Context and Authenticity: Performance practice in African music is deeply intertwined with cultural and social meanings. Therefore, understanding the cultural context and the philosophical underpinnings of a piece is essential.⁵² Operating on the premise of the indigenous composer's authoritative license, it is necessary for musicians from other cultures to delve into the ethnomusicological research of an indigenous work by relying on the program notes and other pedagogical information the composer has provided for interpretive understanding. In essence, non-indigenous performers, choral

52. Agawu, V., 208.

directors, and choral ensembles looking to perform an indigenous African piece should look to collaboratively seeking out the composer or a musically informed culture bearer for appropriate guidance to help them grasp fully the Indigenous concepts and performance practices embedded within the music.

Musical Syntax and Linguistic Elements: The complexity of any indigenous African piece extends to its musical structure and linguistic components. When indigenous African composers adopt familiar notational practices, non-indigenous musicians are introduced to African musical forms and structures, such as call-and-response patterns and cyclical forms, to interpret and perform them accurately.⁵³ Equally important is proficiency in the original languages used in compositions, alongside their idiomatic expressions and nuances. Collaborative research is highly encouraged because this level of linguistic understanding is crucial for non-indigenous musicians, who must often employ IPA (or any other phonetic aid provided) to ensure faithful pronunciation.⁵⁴

Instruments and Technique: Many African pieces utilize indigenous instruments with specific playing techniques that contribute to the music's distinctive sound. Non-indigenous musicians should research these instruments and interpret their rhythmic patterns, especially if they are rare and are notated in the music. Researching playing techniques and the instruments' roles within an ensemble is also essential. When the non-indigenous musicians do not possess the required skills for a particular indigenous musical instrument, searching for and collaborating with experts for said instrument becomes highly advisable. The knowledge of traditional instrumental styles and the

53. Kidula, 108.

54. Karna, 2.

physical characteristics of indigenous musical instruments can further refine the non-indigenous musician's approach to authenticity in performance.⁵⁵

Performance research into an African piece starts interpretively when the resource is available and is equally based on the personal interest of the non-indigenous musician. However, it does require or turns out to be a collaborative venture because the insider perspective of the indigenous musician (or culture bearer) on the research outcomes is quintessential for an informed performance experience. On a broader spectrum, understanding Afro-modernism and internationalism in music can provide a wider perspective on how African music adapts and evolves on a global scale.⁵⁶ Underscoring the cross-cultural impact of African music as it relates to the African continent informs an appreciation of the complex relationship between tradition and innovation.

Resolve

This is the third aspect of the best-practice considerations for African music performance in non-African settings. The art of contemporary programming is akin to the creation of a vibrant assortment, wherein each thread must be carefully selected and woven to illustrate a cohesive, captivating narrative. Often considered one of the most daunting tasks for a conductor or artistic director, the process of performance repertoire selection is not a case of one-shoe-size-fits-all because musical choices and styles differ

55. Matsunobu, Koji. "Instrument-making as music-making: An ethnographic study of shakuhachi students' learning experiences." *International Journal of Music Education* 31 (2013): 196.

56. Erlmann, Veit. *Music in Modern African History*. Edited by John Parker and Richard Reid. Vol. 1. (Oxford University Press, 2013): 462.

from conductor to conductor.⁵⁷ In most parts of the world, diversity is a significant consideration when selecting concert repertoire, and the variety component could be applied to criteria like musical stylism, mood themes, historical era, key centers harmonic relationships, diverse languages, difficulty level, and performing forces.⁵⁸

Considering that the concert-goer/audience population is seldom always one-directional, either by demography or aesthetic taste, care must be taken to craft a repertoire list that caters to diversity and inclusivity. Therefore, inclusivity in musical programming necessitates a conscious firm resolve for meticulous curation, one that ensures broad audience engagement and serves an educational purpose. The inclusion of indigenous African music in concert programming is not merely a nod to authenticity; it is an ethical imperative. Works from indigenous artists bring an inherent authenticity and authority to the performance of their musical traditions, ennobling the concert experience.⁵⁹

In the American musical landscape, choral conductors, vocal performers, and music educators – some of whom have interns or assistants who are still studying – can engage proactively in the propagation of African music within their academic and performance spaces. This can be done through student recitals, benefit concerts, or Sunday service renditions. Moreover, there has been a steady increase in the number

57. Phillips, Kenneth H. *Directing the Choral Music Program* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 147.

58. Webb, Guy B., ed. *Up Front!: Becoming the Complete Choral Conductor* (Boston, Massachusetts: ECS Pub., 1993): 268-69.

59. Gattenhof, Sandra. “First Nations First: Reshaping the Australian Performing Arts Market Through Respectful Engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists and Companies.” *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 49, no. 6 (November 2, 2019): 420–21.

of African musicians studying in the United States. They should be encouraged to source musical materials from their home countries, perform these works at their recitals, and assist in teaching such works to their affiliated American ensembles. Programming a concert of mixed repertoire is vital in fostering cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.

Concert repertoire must engage both aficionados and neophytes of African music practice alike.⁶⁰ Commissioning original works written by indigenous African composers within Africa, the United States, or anywhere in the world further opens the dialogue between tradition and modernity. This adds new repertoires that are easily accessible to non-indigenous musicians on a wider scale, reflecting contemporary experiences while drawing from a wellspring of tradition.⁶¹ The deliberate resolve to commission new works from indigenous African composers facilitates the infusion of authentic African insights into the contemporary milieu. It ensures a living tradition that continues to resonate with current narratives, aligning with the aesthetic and social movements of the times.

Commissioned works in the performance arts are not solitary endeavors. They often involve input and collaboration between the composer, performing artists, and at times, the community.⁶² For African composers, especially those back in Africa, having

60. Schmid, Will. "World Music in the Instrumental Program." *Music Educators Journal* 78, no. 9 (May 1992): 42.

61. Nketia, J. H. Kwabena. "Developing Contemporary Idioms out of Traditional Music." *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 24 (1982): 92-93.

62. Strachan, Jeremy, and Patrick Nickleson. "Doing Long Work: Critical Perspectives on Indigenous-Settler Collaboration in Canadian Art Music." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 87, no. 4 (October 1, 2018): 88.

commissioned projects offers them opportunities for professional development and global exposure.⁶³ For the international community, these compositions serve as the touchstones of cultural fidelity and educational artifacts that transmit heritage to future generations. Such partnerships add to the composition process with diverse viewpoints, leading to more nuanced and culturally rich works.

63. Ewing, Micah. "High-Impact Experiences through Commissioned Works and Composer Residencies." *Music Educators Journal* 105, no. 3 (March 2019): 31.

Chapter 4: Procedural Analysis

Model of Applied Practice

The fundamental context is that the successful actualization of the ToRes model is predicated upon a strong foundation of indigenously composed music. Beyond its application to African music, ToRes may be used as a model of applied practice for any piece of music that is to be programmed and performed outside its geographical origins. However, the two choral works for analyzing the ToRes frameworks as a model of applied practice are both commissioned pieces by Igbo-Nigerian composers: Innocent Okechukwu and Chukwuebuka G. Ezeakacha. The first piece titled ***Egwu Onwa*** was performed at a graduate choral conducting recital by the University of Oklahoma Chamber Choir in the Fall 2022 semester. The second piece titled ***Berna*** was performed by the University of Oklahoma Women's Chorus at the Sutton Concert Series of the Spring 2023 semester. The analyses are based on the personal and documented accounts of the preparation process carried out by this document's author who is also a co-contributor to the creation of the first piece, the arranger of the second piece, and the conductor for both pieces.

EGWU ONWA – Innocent Okechukwu

Background: Originally written as a solo work for countertenor and piano, this expanded arrangement for Tenor Solo, SATB, and Piano captures the rhythmic and interactive nuances of African pianism by exploring the musical interaction between the tenor solo/choral ensemble and the piano. *Egwu Onwa* is a piece that represents the reflective expression of traditional tale-telling, folk songs, and moonlight dance practices in the Igbo tradition. The moonlight play serves a communal role as a bringer

of joy to the adults and an opportunity for the children to play with their peers and learn from the stories told by the adults. The tenor soloist plays the role of the elderly storyteller who regales the community with folktales while reminiscently talking about past events. Themed within Igbo culture, customs, and tradition, this piece explores the idiomatic and folkloric richness of the Igbo people through textual structures. This piece was written to retain, preserve, and sustain intrinsic parts of Igbo storytelling practice within the backdrop of contemporary modernism and globalization.

Resource

Scoring/Notation:

The choral arrangement of *Egwu Onwa* was created to expand the musical borders of the piece. The choral version was written at my behest, for which I was both the editor of the piece and the conductor of the premier. The melodic ideation of the original work for countertenor and piano was so appealing that I could envision choral parts. As a result, I reached out to the composer, who also happens to be my personal friend. Innocent Okechukwu is a masterful composer who started with choral compositions but, over time, extended to instrumental works. Considering his wealth of knowledge and experience in Western art music and his academic training as a composer, I thought it best to work with him on a choral version. Training in Western staff notation made it easy to notate the melodies and harmonies while being technologically savvy with notation software, making it possible to score the music for sharing and printing (see Appendix A for score). The first draft required melodic adjustments in some areas to align with the text-pitch contours. The Igbo language is so tonal that care must be taken when putting music to text.

Translation/Articulation:

As a common practice in Nigeria, when writing a choral piece that is not in English (the country's lingua franca), proper translation is required as an attachment to the piece. The Igbo language is one of Nigeria's most popular indigenous languages, and it often does not require articulation aids for most Nigerian choral ensembles. However, when composing a piece intended for global dissemination, or in this case, targeted for performance in the United States, it is important to include any/every text translation and articulation aid possible.

Part of the advantages of my collaborative enterprise with the composer is that at UL Lafayette, I audited the diction class and took it as an elective as part of my graduate music coursework. I learned to read Italian, German, and French lyric diction and apply their IPA transcriptions to the art songs I have performed in voice lessons and jury. I also have practical experience applying IPA transcriptions to choral music in other languages like Greek, Latin, Latvian, Czech, Norwegian, and Polish. To provide phonetic articulation to the Igbo text of *Egwu Onwa*, I relied on the sound-interactive IPA website linked below to generate the IPA transcriptions of the text.

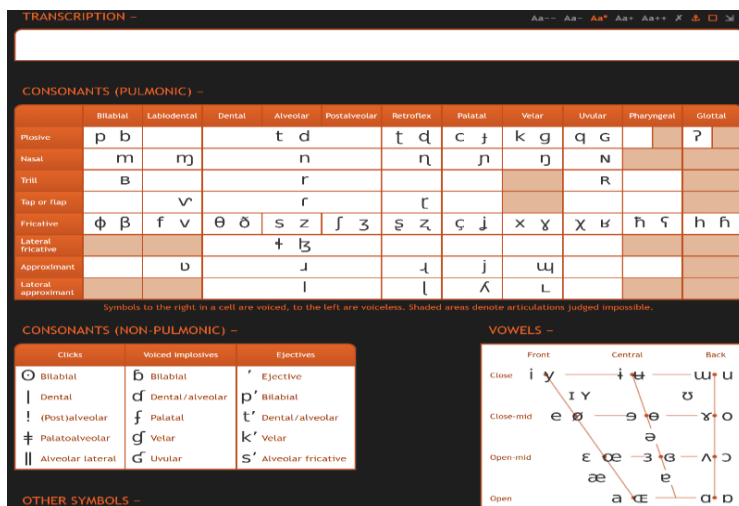


Figure 2.
Sound-Interactive IPA
Website: Transcription
Chart

https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/IPAcharts/inter_chart_2018/IPA_2018.html

▪ *Lexical Rediscovery* – Creating the phonetic transcription for *Egwu Onwa* was my first major attempt at codifying Igbo text for a choral piece using the IPA construct. After creating the IPA transcriptions for *Egwu Onwa*, I used Sibelius notation software to edit them and the translations into the score. My lexical [re]discovery about using diacritical markings with Igbo vowels is essential to the discourse. While working on the transcription, I found eight vowels in the Igbo alphabet, three of which have the bottom-dotted marking. This marking determines phonetic placement and articulations on the vowel chart.

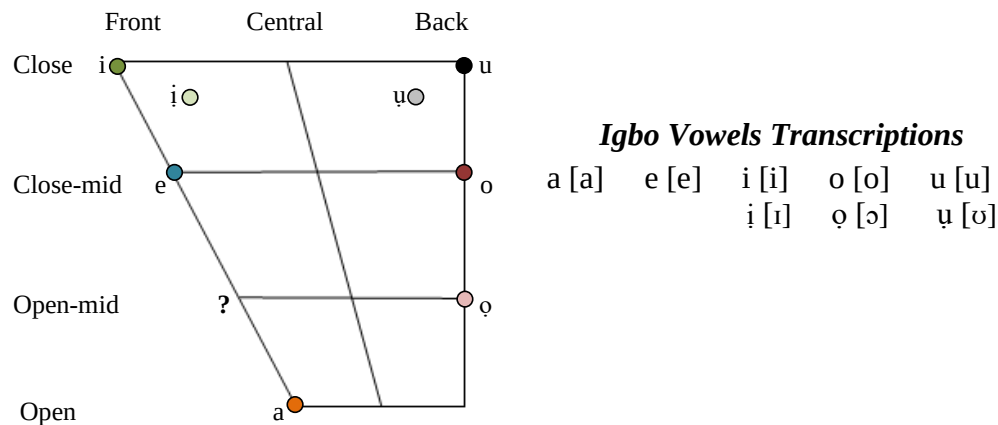


Figure 3. Phonetic Chart for Igbo Vowels: [?]

While observing how the Igbo language is spoken and compared to written Igbo, I realized that there was a vowel used in spoken Igbo that was not accounted for in the written language. Some Igbo words are sounded with the open (mid) ‘e’ vowel articulation: this sound would imply that in the written language, the bottom-dotted diacritical marking goes under the letter ‘ẹ’ and would be articulated as [ɛ]. I argue that this [re]discovery opens up further linguistic possibilities and the potential for future academic importance. The Igbo alphabet does not include this bottom-dotted version of the letter ‘e,’ but I included it in the phonetic chart that I use for Igbo text transcriptions.

Table 4. Phonetic Chart for Igbo Alphabets

A [a]	B [b]	CH [t͡ʃ]	D [d]	E [e]	Ẹ [ɛ]	F [f]
G [g]	GB [ɓ]	GH [ɣ]	GW [ɡ͡w]	H [h]	I [i]	Ị [ɪ]
J [d͡ʒ]	K [k]	KP [k͡p]	KW [k͡w]	L [l]	M [m]	N [n]
Ñ [ɲ]	NW [nw]	NY [ɲ]	O [o]	Ọ [ɔ]	P [p]	R [r]
S [s]	SH [ʃ]	T [t]	U [u]	Ụ [ʊ]	V [v]	W [w]
Y [ʎ]	Z [z]					

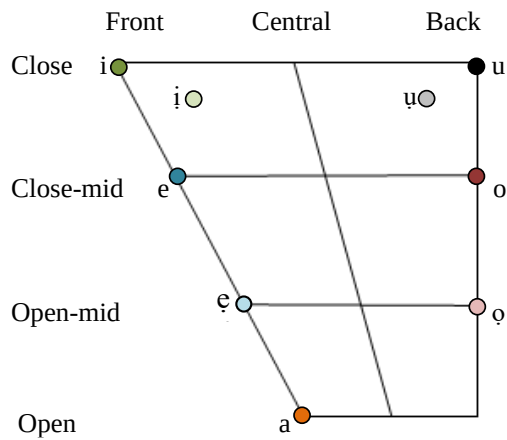


Figure 4. Phonetic Chart for Igbo Vowels: with letter ẹ[ɛ]

Publishing/Media:

The choral arrangement of *Egwu Onwa* was written to be performed as a premiere, so there was no audio or video recording of the piece before its performance. Although a MIDI file was shared with the ensemble to be used as a learning track, the only other media with the same title was a video of the countertenor and piano version. As there were musical and structural adjustments in the choral version, it was unhelpful to use the solo version – the choral ensemble relied on the MIDI file as a media aid. The composer is a self-published musician with an active website and online engagement.

This piece is available as sheet music PDF on his website, and the performance video was later uploaded twice to his Facebook page and twice on his YouTube channel.⁶⁴ The composer can also decide to use the audio from the live performance (or an audio recording of the piece) to create a scrolling score animation video and publish it on his website and YouTube channel as a multimedia aid to the piece. Either way, any choral ensemble wishing to perform *Egwu Onwa* in the future has an available media resource for their learning experience.

Research

Applying this part of the ToRes model to the piece's preparation was already set into motion from the resource aspect. The composer's research process began with the sourcing of the text and his recreation of the piece into an expanded choral version. More to the choral ensemble, the research prerogative rests with the conductor, me, who incidentally doubled as the piece's editor. My research into the piece began with translating the text and creating the phonetic articulation for the text. A major advantage I had in this process was that I am also a native speaker of the Igbo language, and my cultural awareness of Igbo melo-textual nuances further guaranteed positive outcomes. As a co-contributor of the resource process, I had ample insider perspectives that made it possible for the research aspect to be more collaborative than interpretive.

64. *Egwu Onwa* on Okechukwu's website:

Video – <https://innocentokechukwu.com/product/egwu-onwa/>
on Okechukwu's Facebook page:

Teaser – <https://www.facebook.com/Ndubuisi.centisimus/videos/475469401128681>

Full Video – <https://www.facebook.com/Ndubuisi.centisimus/videos/646538516803673>
on Okechukwu's YouTube channel:

Video 1 – <https://youtu.be/Hi0Cmn3smao?si=ELbOyClRyocJrYQL>

Video 2 – <https://youtu.be/Hi0Cmn3smao?si=MrFe7MJ7QLyCocEA>

If it were a non-Igbo (American) choral director, they would only receive the piece after the arrangement had been completed. Expectedly, an interpretive method to research the piece would be the primary method – relying on the musical, textual, and synoptic materials provided. After studying the score and preparing their rehearsal plan, the choral director should most advisably engage in a collaborative research experience for the piece as part of the learning process. This could be a virtual Q&A session or an in-person rehearsal session with the composer (or an art-music-trained culture bearer). This research approach helps understand and answer questions of cultural authenticity, performance context, musical syntax, linguistic articulation, and applicable instrumental techniques. In the case of *Egwu Onwa*, I was able to fill in these gaps for the ensemble.

Resolve

The decision to program an Igbo piece for my first doctoral conducting recital was consciously made because of how intentional I am with the propagation of Igbo art choral music. Beyond my nationalist interests concerning Igbo choral music, I honestly believe that the beauty of the Igbo culture should be shared, and in my capacity, through choral music. I have gradually built a platform as the first Nigerian to earn a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral music with an emphasis on conducting. It has always been my resolve to use my platform as a vehicle for inclusive selection where ensemble members and audiences are active participants in a beautiful cultural experience in the form of Igbo choral music.

The ultimate purpose of my academic journey into music has been clear from the beginning. This clarity extended to how I planned my graduate program of study; every coursework I took was intentional toward my success as a rounded choral artist

and future educator. My academic experiences are tied to my overall career goal, including promoting Igbo choral music wherever I find myself. I also hope to channel my resolve for programming Igbo choral music to form connections with the Igbo, Nigerian, and African diaspora. This stems from the nostalgic need for representation I once felt as a new choral musician in the United States. I later realized how this could translate to a recruitment tool for any institutional affiliations I currently have or may have.

As an Igbo composer/arranger, I could have chosen to propagate my own works, but as a matter of principle, I strive for a collaborative musical experience. Diversifying the composers I program music in the same language is a conscious attempt to represent a balanced approach to repertoire selection. In a situation where the song selection is in the same language, it is best to pick from different composers to ensure a variety of musical styles. Being familiar with the composer's previous choral settings and knowing he was working toward a master's degree in composition, I was even more confident programming his work.

As the assistant conductor of the OU Women's Chorus at the time of my first doctoral rehearsal, I had no Igbo choral piece to suggest, nor was I able to program repertoire for the ensemble. The only platform for such decision-making was for my conducting recital. Thus, making the intentional decision to include an Igbo piece in my recital repertoire list and commissioning the choral arrangement of *Egwu Onwa* was an example of showing resolve toward an inclusive selection process. It is important to note that my recital repertoire list was still subject to approval from my in-house doctoral advisory committee, which they graciously and supportively gave.

BERNA – Chukwuebuka G. Ezeakacha

Background: This SSAA arrangement is an adaptation of an old Nigerian (Igbo) folk song/poem for children's moonlight tales and the village square dances. In Igbo folklore, *Berna* is a song about a happy and free-spirited girl named Bernadette (*Berna*...for short). Based on the lore, *Berna* lives one day at a time, not worried by the world's cares. Consequently, the rhythmic flow of the piece is written in the light-hearted style of Nigeria's Igbo highlife music genre. The harmonic structure is equally indicative of polyphony, which is evident in Igbo's contemporary art music compositions. When put together, all these elements make for a hearty, cheerful piece that elicits gentle body movements from side-to-side sways to full-on dance routines.

Resolve

Commission:

The MLK concert of February 2022, organized by Dr. Richard Zielinski and the Norman Philharmonic in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., saw the programming and performance of choral compositions by The University of Oklahoma graduate conducting alumnus Dr. Andrew Marshall. Part of the events leading up to the performance was a welcome dinner for the composer. As one of the University's graduate conductors at the time, I attended this event and seized the opportunity to meet with one of the illustrious graduates of the OU graduate choral program. The meeting was an exchange of artistic and professional ideas, ultimately resulting in a resolution to commission a Nigerian piece for women's chorus. Naturally, I was inclined to write something in my native Igbo language, and based on the conversation I had with Dr. Marshall, arranging an Igbo folk song was ideal.

Resource

Scoring/Notation:

The folk melody for *Berna* is one of the oldest and most popular tunes that many Igbo children danced to at village square gatherings. I once participated in one such communal gathering, so it was easy to draw on my childhood memories for the melodic material in this arrangement. Furthermore, I contacted my mother to verify the text because she knows Igbo folk melodies. Therefore, notating the melody for *Berna* came almost naturally to me. Still, I was very conscious of maintaining the tonal integrity of the text pitch as I put it to music. I also wanted to create something that would be repetitive but not redundant, a catchy yet audience-friendly piece, an arrangement that encompasses rhythmic vitality but still retains the capacity to elicit aesthetic kinetics from the performers.

In my musical experiences, I had never written any choral piece for a women's chorus. I had only written works for mixed chorus and also performed pieces for male chorus. My inexperience with pieces for women's chorus did not deter me but allowed me to grow my musicianship. Although I was going into uncharted waters by taking on this work, it was a rewarding experience. *Berna* was arranged for Soprano I/II and Alto I/II (SSAA) voices, with each part having the overarching melody at some point in the piece (see Appendix E). I also included solo over ostinato patterns indicative of the relationship between indigenous song leaders and choruses in traditional African music.

The composition started as a paper draft, and the final version was what I entered into sheet music format using Sibelius notation software. The software's playback interface is useful for auditory evaluation.

Translation/Articulation:

Coincidentally, *Berna* was written around the same time as *Egwu Onwa*, so the phonetic chart for the Igbo alphabet I developed came in handy. I also cross-checked the articulations using the IPA website that I previously listed. Creating the phonetic transcription of the text for *Berna* was a straightforward process, more than *Egwu Onwa*. Developing the text translation was an uncomplicated task because of the repetitiveness of the text. However, I also consulted with a few friends who were well-versed in Igbo folklore, some of whom are ethnomusicologists in the United States. As is my practice, I edit and place together the text of the music, the phonetic transcription, and the translation of the text. The piece was commissioned for the Illumina choral ensemble of The Winsor School in Boston, Massachusetts; I deemed it necessary to put the text translation and the IPA phonetic transcriptions in front so that the intended non-indigenous musicians who are to perform this arrangement do not have to look too far for text articulation aids.

Publishing/Media:

As a commissioned piece created to be premiered by the ensemble it was written for, the only available media was the midi files (parts and ensemble) generated from the notation software. Any other form of media to be produced for this piece would have to be separately planned before the learning and premiere, or the piece's premiere would end up as the media file for the piece. That being said, the intended ensemble for which the piece was written no longer performed. In the following semester, I became the assistant conductor of the OU Women's Chorus, and with the encouragement, support, and creative contribution from the ensemble director, Dr. David Howard, the premier of

Berna eventually became a reality.

The resolve to program the piece for the Sutton Concert Series of Fall 2022 resulted in a beneficial collaborative experience. The OU Women's Chorus concert video is the official media file for *Berna* and is published on their YouTube channel, my YouTube channel, and my Facebook platform⁶⁵ All my choral compositions and arrangements are self-published and distributed based on an ensemble's performance need. I only publicize their performance videos, and if a choral ensemble or director wants to perform any of them, we establish communication and continue from there. However, I still intend to commercially publish my works as sheet music PDFs on my website soon.

Research

Research within the ToRes framework caters to non-indigenous choral directors seeking to perform African choral music. As arranger and conductor for *Berna*, the research aspect may not seem as applicable as it would have been if I was not in the aforementioned capacities. However, researching the appropriate musical and textual material for the music was necessary to create the resource. Also, accurate research results are important in developing text translation and phonetic articulation. Regardless of my creator-conductor capacity, some research was still needed because rehearsing the piece to performance readiness required score study and thematic analyses.

65. *Berna* on OU Women's Chorus YouTube channel:
Video – <https://youtu.be/X28N-bBC7QQ?si=Zc9yvJj5rX3C9Jfr>
on Ezeakacha's YouTube channel:
Video – <https://youtu.be/ECdv96asOTU?si=oWx5XDjSWDxW0UFh>
on Ezeakacha's Facebook page:
Video – <https://www.facebook.com/profile/100000403397471/search/?q=berna>

Chapter 5: Summary Evaluation

Feedback Analytics

This document focuses on codifying the elements of the ToRes model into a framework for applied performance practice. The resulting discussion outcomes herein are considered the product of a pioneer study. Therefore, in future studies wherein the ToRes model will be applied, the resultant effect can be evaluated using empirical data collection methods. Such a study could include a framework procedural analysis of a musical case study, pre-performance interviews with ensemble members and/or the conductor, and a focus group post-concert survey for audience experience. However, the evaluation of this document's theoretical discourse is based on the media feedback analytics from the choral performances of the selected pieces.

Egwu Onwa

The choral version of *Egwu Onwa*'s world premiere took place on September 16, 2022, as the concert-closer for my first doctoral conducting recital. The performance video was published twice on the composer's Facebook page as a teaser and a full video and twice on his YouTube channel, with each upload generating different metrics.

Table 5. *Egwu Onwa*'s Metrics from Media Uploads [10/29/2024]

Date	Platform	Format	Views	Likes	Comments	Shares
09/16/2022	Facebook	Teaser	481	90	13	4
09/18/2022	Facebook	Video	1400	193	63	21
09/16/2022	YouTube	Video	254	32	16	N/A
09/18/2022	YouTube	Video	1874	20	4	N/A
TOTAL			4009	335	96	25

In the absence of feedback evaluation from a live audience, sifting through the comment section of the media platforms on which the performance video was published could prove useful. The nature of the comments from the viewers (who are an audience of sorts) provides insight into their perception of the performance's authenticity, their appreciation of the performance (positive or negative), and, on balance, the resultant effect of the ToRes model on African choral music within a cross-cultural milieu. Most of the comments across all published platforms indicate positive feedback concerning the composition (resource), the authenticity of performance (research), and the capacity for an American choral ensemble to perform it (resolve).

Table 6. A Selection of Comments from Okechukwu's Media Platforms

Comments	Source
Alaba Akinselure Akintunde <i>Great Composition!</i>	Facebook (Teaser)
Johnpaul Uchechukwu Nwekwo <i>excellent performance</i>	Facebook (Teaser)
Obi Michael <i>Thank you for representing your background. You are good</i>	Facebook (Teaser)
Ndubuisi Onuike <i>Beautiful. Sounds quite indigenous.</i>	Facebook (Video)
Onyebuchi Onyekachi Charles <i>Wow!!!! Innocent Ndubuisi Okechukwu this is beautiful Chukwuebuka Ezeakacha nice conducting. I love this...can I get the score?</i>	Facebook (Video)
Jude Probity <i>Innocent Ndubuisi Okechukwu nwanne mmadu, keep making us proud back to back.</i>	Facebook (Video)
@shonestarboo <i>Nice composition sir</i>	YouTube (Video I)
@solomonofem3885 <i>I don't even know how to feel... See goosebumps on my skin... Weldon boss</i>	YouTube (Video I)
@eldersconsult4779 <i>Beautiful composition. I enjoyed the ostinato section the most. I look forward to performing it one day. Bravo composer, soloist, conductor, accompanist and choir.</i>	YouTube (Video I)
@ojelipatrick5549 <i>Wow</i>	YouTube (Video II)
@Karma-kz7th <i>I recently bought your musical echoes but Egwu onwa in it is a solo How do I get the satb version. I mean this version</i>	YouTube (Video II)

Berna

The SSAA arrangement of *Berna*'s world premiere took place on March 24, 2023, as one of the OU School of Music Sutton Concert Series selections. The video of the performance was published on the OU Women's Chorus YouTube channel, my YouTube channel, and my Facebook page, with each upload generating different metrics.

Table 7. *Berna*'s Metrics from Media Uploads [10/29/2024]

Date	Platform	Format	Views	Likes	Comments	Shares
03/25/2023	<i>Ezeakacha's Facebook</i>	Video	5900	339	180	93
04/01/2023	<i>Ezeakacha's YouTube</i>	Video	188	18	5	N/A
12/12/2023	<i>OU Women's Chorus YouTube</i>	Video	29	2	0	N/A
TOTAL			6117	359	185	93

Filtering through the comments under the videos justifies the validity of the ToRes model as an applicable framework of best practices for performing African choral music by an American ensemble. Beyond relying on the feedback from the comments section, an anecdotal reference to validate the effectiveness of the ToRes framework is the audience's reaction and participation in chorusing the repeated exclamatory motif of the piece (*Ayaya!*).

This participatory activity was encouraged by the brief introductory monologue and direction I gave before the performance. Although I did not pay attention to the audience's participation, I discovered their echoed "*ayaya*" during my post-concert playback of our performance. The organic triggering of the audience's participation in the performance further supports the Afrocentric ideology of communal musicianship.

Nevertheless, based on the feedback from published platforms (with comments), the positive responses observed on the arranger's Facebook page and YouTube channel indicate the indigenous foundation of the choral arrangement (resource), the familial authenticity of performance (research), and the possibility for performance accessibility for/by an American choral ensemble (resolve).

Table 8. A Selection of Comments from Ezeakacha's Media Platforms

Comments	Source
Ogochukwu Kenlorentz Okoye <i>Amazing piece...Igbo to the world. Good job Ebuka, we are so proud of you.</i>	Facebook
Engr Ifeanyichukwu Eze <i>My brother Ebuka, this is fantastic! You and your choir have made my weekend a memorable one with this classic piece. Thank you so much for all your efforts in projecting our culture and nation to the world. You are already in heaven while on earth. Congratulations bro.</i>	Facebook
Nzelu Emeka Tochukwu <i>Great. Love every bit of the performance.</i>	Facebook
Amanze O'Gil <i>Oyibo Dey sing our children poems too...Igbo to the world</i>	Facebook
Tony Ify Okonkwo <i>The pride I felt listening to this is unquantifiable. Thank you Ebuka for showcasing Igbo greatness. Jisike Nwanne!!!</i>	Facebook
Chibueze Onyekwere <i>Wow....this is lovely...the soloist....she's amazing. Well done Boss.</i>	Facebook
Ike George <i>Thanks for making us proud globally. Wish you more grace</i>	Facebook
Ruthsie Opara <i>Chukwuebuka Ezeakacha the arrangement turned out superb. I remember when you were gathering information to arrange Berna. The choir did so well with the diction. Great job..... Congratulations</i>	Facebook
Emily Nix* <i>Thank you so much! It was a wonderful experience I'll always remember.</i>	Facebook
Qzq Mozio <i>The best piece I have listened to in months. You are a gift to the Igbo race. I appreciate your efforts to project us to the world screen. God bless you</i>	Facebook
@johnpaulchukwunonsoobieze9354 <i>Ebuka, this is beautiful! You have really revolutionised the way I would perceive this music in the future</i>	YouTube
@MunachimsoCM <i>Kudos brother, keep up the good work</i>	YouTube

* Emily Nix (formerly Dierks) was the OU Women's Chorus member who performed the solo for the premiere of *Berna*.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Certain commonalities, such as indigenous language type and music resource expert, may have benefited the application processes of the ToRes model to the selected choral pieces. The purpose of developing this framework is two-pronged: to provide a practical method of best practice that benefits American choral directors who wish to perform African choral music and to promote collaborative interest in the choral works of Indigenous African composers. For a wholesome African music experience, the American stage should exude Indigenous resonance that satisfies cultural sensibilities.

Therefore, proposing a model of performance practice as a material resource is not enough; knowledge of and access to the human resources that provide indigenous musical material is required. A helpful way to offer knowledge and access is to curate a shortlist of indigenous African composers most likely unknown in the United States (see Appendix I).⁶⁶ Some indigenous African pieces have already been published in the United States. The Music Publishers Association of the United States website is a reliable place to start.⁶⁷

American choral directors are also encouraged to explore applying the ToRes model beyond the scope of African music to advance the collaborative process. Vocal performers in the United States may experimentally apply the ToRes model to explore art songs and solo works of indigenous African composers. Based on the performance outcomes of the discussed choral pieces, the ToRes model proves to be a viable tool for successful performance experience in African music.

66. DATABASE: African Composers – <https://www.africancomposers.com/>

67. MUSIC PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION *of the* United States:
<https://www.mpa.org/all-publishers/>

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Appendix A

Egwu Onwa – Innocent Okechukwu (vocal score)

2

Egwu Onwa
(Moonlight Play)

Innocent Okechukwu
March, 2022
USA

Presto
♩ = 172

Tenor Solo

f E-gwu_o-nwa! *mf* E-gwu_o-nwa!

Choir

p E - gwu, *mf* E - gwu_o-nwa!

Piano

f *mp* *ff*

6

ff *rit.* *mp* *p*

T. Solo

E-gwu_o-nwa! E - gwu_o - nwa!

Choir

E-gwu_o-nwa! E - gwu_o - nwa! E gwu_o - nwa!

Pno.

mp *p*

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The musical score is written for Tenor Solo, Choir, and Piano. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Presto' with a quarter note equal to 172 beats per minute. The score begins with a Tenor Solo part, followed by a Choir part, and a Piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'E-gwu_o-nwa!'. The score includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *p* (piano), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *ff* (fortissimo). The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 6. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

15 **Presto**
♩ = 172 3

T. Solo *f*
O - ke-re-ke, O - ke-re - ke:

Pno. *f* *mf*

18

T. Solo *f*
O - ko-ra-for, O - ko-ra - for:

Choir
A: du - du - kem! du-du - kem! du - du - ya! du-du - ya!
T: *f*
B: O - ko-ra-for, O - ko-ra - for:

Pno. *f*

21

T. Solo *f*
I-

Choir
S: uh... uh...
A: uh... uh...

Pno. *ff* *mp* *f*

4 25

T. Solo

ye! Gba-ba-nu e-gwu, ku-ba-nu a-ka, bu-te-nu u-du, e-kwe n'i-cha-ka:

Choir

f se - kem! se - kem!

Pno.

28

T. Solo

I - ye! I - ye! I - ye! O - ke-re-ke, O - ke-re - ke!

Pno.

31

T. Solo

mf Nwan-kwo! Nwo-rie! Nwe-ke! Nwa-for!___

Choir

mf Eh! Eh! Eh! Ah!___

Pno.

mf *f*

35

T. Solo

1st time *f*

2nd time *p*

Nwa-nnu-nu, nwa - nnu-nu nta, i

Choir

1st time *f*

2nd time *p*

tu-ru zam zam, tu-ru zam!

Pno.

38

T. Solo

n'e - be a - hu e mee gi - ni? "A - nam a tu - ru nnem o - se",

Choir

tu-ru zam zam, tu-ru zam!

Pno.

41

T. Solo

1.2.

tu - ke-ne ya, k'a - nyi fu!

Choir

tu-ru zam zam, tu-ru zam!

tu-ru zam zam, tu-ru zam!

Pno.

44 Nwa-nnu-nu o - ma, nwa-nnu-nu o - ma, nwa-nnu-nu o - ma,
Nwa-nnu-nu o - ma, Nwa-nnu-nu o - ma, n - nu-nu o - ma,
Choir Nwa-nnu-nu, nwa-nnu-nu o - ma, n - nu-nu o - ma,
Nwa-nnu-nu o - ma, Nwa-nnu-nu o - ma, n - nu-nu o - ma,
Pno.

47 N-nu-nu o-ma!
Choir
Pno.

51 Ji-ri-nu nwa-yo pu-ta-ba n'o-gbo, bu-te-nu i-gba, e-kwe, o-ge-ne: I-ye! I-ye! I-ye!
T. Solo
Pno.

54

T. Solo

I - ye! I - ye! I - ye! I - ye!—

Choir

I - ye! I - ye! I - ye!—

Pno.

f

Largo

♩ = 40

57

T. Solo

E - gwu_o - nwa!—

Choir

E - gwu_o - nwa! E - gwu_o - nwa!

E - gwu_o - nwa!

E - gwu_o - nwa!

Pno.

Appendix B

Photo Shot from Okechukwu's Facebook Page [Teaser]

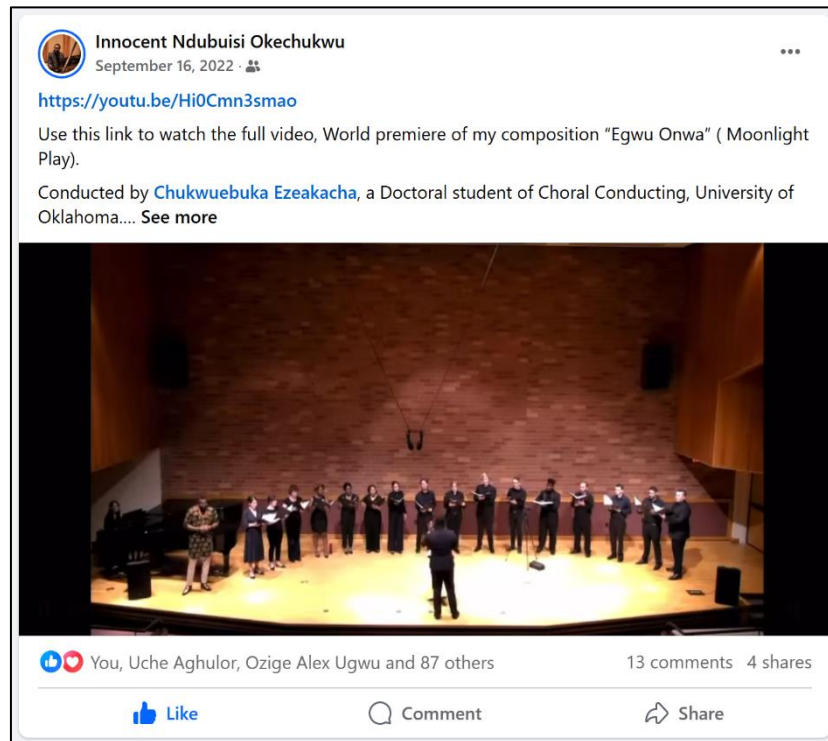


Photo Shot from Okechukwu's Facebook Page [Full Video]



Appendix C

Photo Shot from Okechukwu's YouTube Channel [Video I]

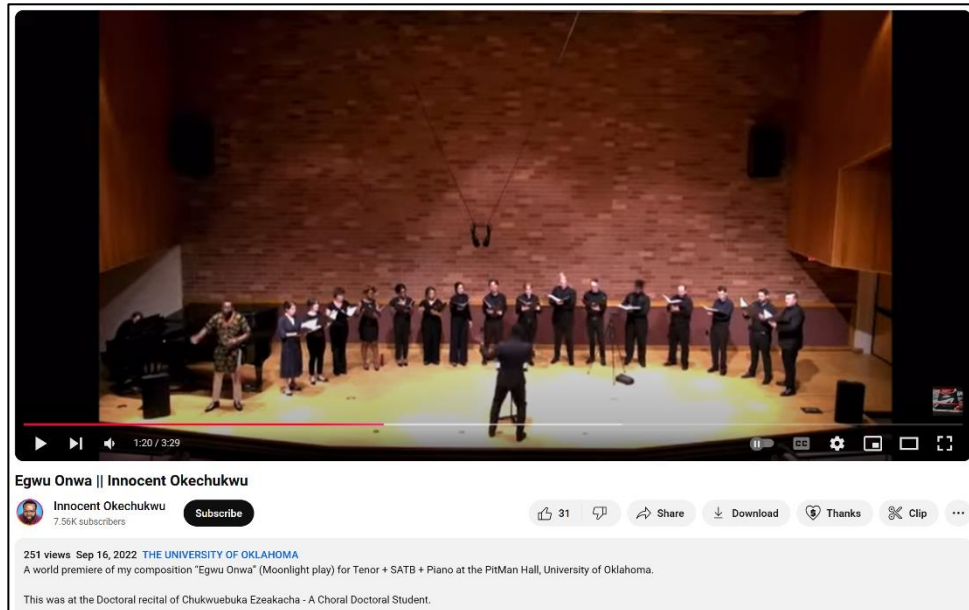
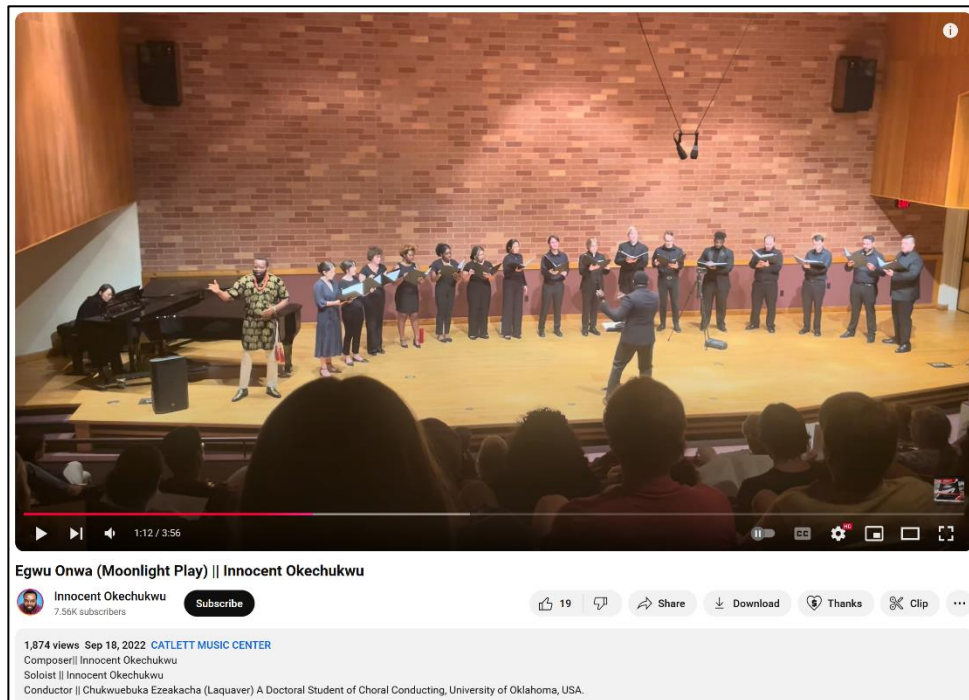


Photo Shot from Okechukwu's YouTube Channel [Video II]



Appendix D

Members of the OU Chamber Choir to perform *Egwu Onwa*

Soprano

Anne Aguayo-Johnson
Rachael Niederhauser
Galina Brauer
Kayla Marshall

Alto

Jazmin Cooper
Jessica Colbert
Evelyn Sorenson

Tenor

Sam Antipov
Christian Knight
Blake Casper
Joshua Stephen Smith
Giovanni Corrodus

Bass

Mikey Morris
Landon Johnson
Ruben Alcala
Dan Boice

Tenor Solo

Innocent Okechukwu

Appendix E

Berna – Chukwuebuka G. Ezeakacha (vocal score)

To Dr. Andrew Marshall and ILLUMINA choral ensemble
of The Winsor School, Boston, Massachusetts.
April 10th, 2022

BERNA (Bernadette)

Igbo, Arranged by
**Chukwuebuka G.
Ezeakacha** (*laQuaver*)

Background

This SSAA arrangement is an adaptation from an old Nigerian (Igbo) folk song/poem used for children's moonlight tales and the village-square dances. In Igbo folklore, **Berna** is a song that tells of the happy and free-spirited girl named Bernadette (Berna...for short). She lives life one day at a time, not worried by the cares of the world. Consequently, the rhythmic flow of the piece is written in the light-hearted style of Igbo highlife music genre of Nigeria. The harmonic structure is equally indicative of polyphony evident in Igbo contemporary art music. When put together, all these elements make for a hearty, cheerful piece that elicits gentle body movements from side-to-side sways to full-on dance routines.

Igbo Text Transcription (IPA) and Translation

The IPA transcriptions and pronunciations for Igbo text (in this piece) are similar to what is obtainable within the Italian IPA transcription and pronunciation:

Berna, Berna, Berna nwanne o.

/bena, bena, bena nwanne o/
[Berna, Berna, Berna my sister o.]

Eb'umunwoke gara, Berna so ha.

/ebumunwoke gara, bena so ha/
[Wherever men go, Berna goes.]

Ebe suwiti gara, Berna so ya.

/ebe suwiti gara, bena so ʌa/
[Wherever sweet goes, Berna goes.]

Eb'umunwanyị gara, Berna so ha.

/ebumunwanyị gara, bena so ha/
[Wherever women go, Berna goes.]

Ebe chingoomu gara, Berna so ya.

/ebe tʃingoo:mu gara, bena so ʌa/
[Wherever chewing gum goes, Berna goes.]

Ayaya!, Ewo!, Eh!

/aʌaʌa/, /ewo/, /e/
[Vocal Exclamations]

Largo
♩ = 65

ff

Soprano 1
Ber - na eh! _____ Ber-na _____ nwa-nnem

Soprano 2
Ber - na eh! _____ Ber-na _____ nwa-nnem

Alto 1
Ber - na eh! _____ Ber-na _____ nwa-nnem

Alto 2
Ber - na eh! _____ Ber-na _____ nwa-nnem

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Moderato
♩ = 89

7

S.1 o! Ber - na! a - ya - ya!

S.2 o! Ber - na! Ber - na! a - ya - ya!

A.1 o! Ber - na! Ber - na! Ber - na! a - ya - ya!

A.2 o! Ber - na! Ber - na! Ber - na! a - ya - ya!

10

1st time: **Soprano 1**
2nd time: **Alto 1**
mf

S.1 Ber-na, Ber na, Ber-na nwa-nnem o, a-ya-ya! E-be su - wii-ti ga-ra, Ber-na

S.2 *mf*
Ber-na

A.1 *mf*
Ber-na, Ber na, Ber-na nwa-nnem o, a-ya-ya!

A.2

13

S.1 so ya, a - ya - ya!

S.2 so ya, a - ya - ya!

A.1 E-be chin-goo-mu ga-ra, Ber-na so ya, a - ya - ya!

A.2 *mf* Ber-na so ya, a - ya - ya!

16

S.1 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! a - ya - ya!_

S.2 a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya! a - ya - ya!_

A.1 Ber na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, Ber-na, Ber-na, Ber-na, Ber-na

A.2 Ber - na, a - ya - ya!_ Ber - na, a - ya - ya!_ eh! a - ya - ya!_

19

S.1
nwa-nnem o, a - ya-ya!

S.2
nwa-nnem o, a - ya-ya! Ber-na nwa-nnem o, a - ya ya!

A.1
nwa-nnem o, a - ya-ya o! Ber-na, Ber - na, Ber-na nwa-nnem o, a - ya ya!

A.2
eh! a - ya-ya o! Ber-na, Ber - na, Ber - na o! a - ya ya!

22

S.1
Ber - na, Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

S.2
Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na nwa-nnem o, a - ya - ya!

A.1
Ber - na, Ber - na, e - wo! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

A.2
Ber - na, Ber - na, e - wo! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

REFRAIN 1:

Alt. 2/
 Alt. 2 & 1/
 Alt. 2 & 1; Sop. 2/
 Alt. 2 & 1; Sop. 2 & 1

24 1-4.

S.1 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

S.2 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

A.1 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

A.2 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! eh! a - ya - ya!

26 1.2.

1st time: *mp*
 *2nd time: *p*

S.1 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

S.2 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

A.1 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

A.2 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! eh! a - ya - ya!

*[To be repeated at *p*, continuously as *Ostinato* for soprano solo]

28 *f*
Sop. Solo Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber-na nwa-nnem o, Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber-na

31
Sop. Solo nwa-nnem o, a - ya - ya! E-b'u-mu nwo-ke ga-ra, Ber-na so ha, a - ya - ya!

34
Sop. Solo E-b'u-mu nwa-nyi ga-ra, Ber-na so ha, eh! Ber - na, Ber-na,

37
Sop. Solo Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber -

39
Sop. Solo na, Ber - na... Ber - na, Ber-na, Ber - na, Ber-na,

42
Sop. Solo Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

mp
S.1 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

mp
S.2 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

mp
A.1 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

mp
A.2 Ber - na, a - ya - ya! eh! a - ya - ya!

REFRAIN 2:

Sop. 1/

Sop. 1 & 2/

Sop. 1 & 2; Alt. 1/

Sop. 1 & 2; Alt. 1 & 2

44 *mf* 1-4.

S.1 Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

S.2 *mf* Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

A.1 *mf* Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

A.2 *mf* Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

46

S.1 Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber-na nwa-nnem o,

S.2 Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber-na nwa-nnem o,

A.1 Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber-na nwa-nnem o,

A.2 Ber - na, Ber - na, Ber-na

48 **Adagio**
♩ = 55

f

S.1 nwa - nnem o,

S.2 nwa - nnem o,

A.1 nwa - nnem o,

A.2 nwa-nnem o, nwa - nnem o,

51 **ff**

S.1 a - ya - ya!

S.2 Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

A.1 Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

A.2 Ber - na, a - ya - ya!

Appendix F

Photo Shot from OU Women's Chorus YouTube Channel

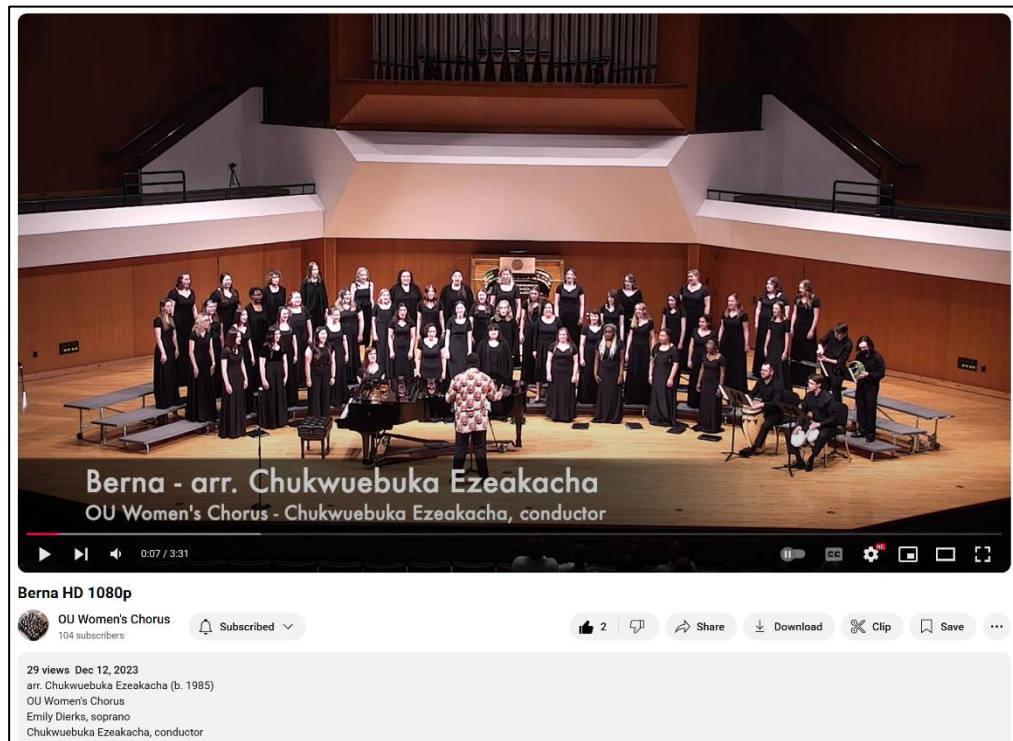
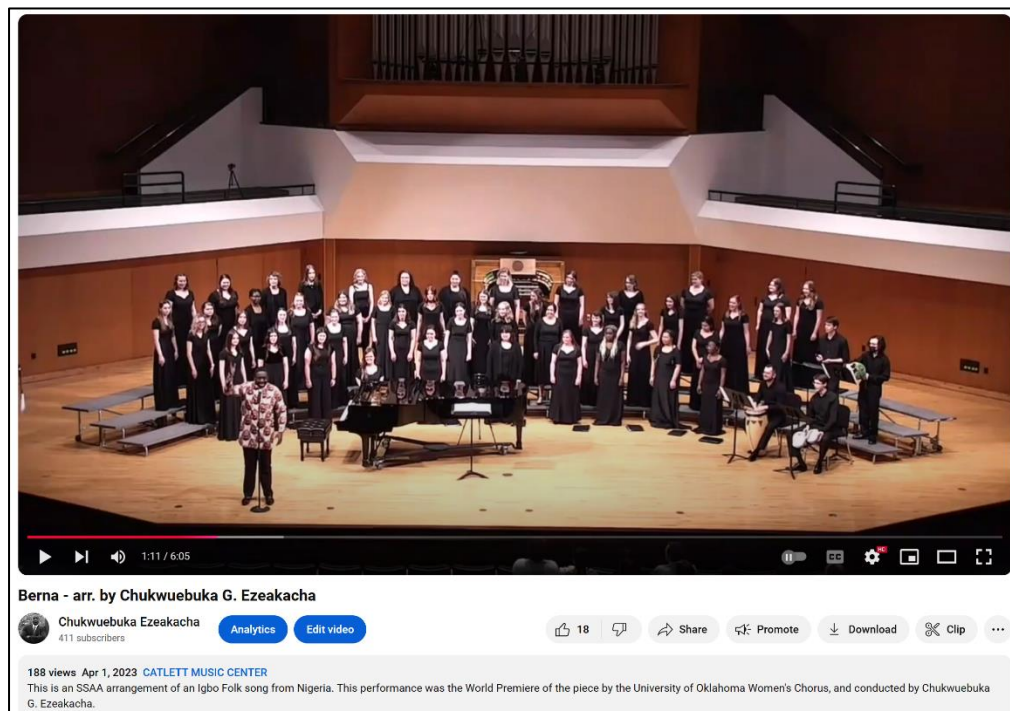


Photo Shot from Ezeakacha's YouTube Channel



Appendix G

Photo Shot from Ezeakacha's Facebook Page

**Chukwuebuka Ezeakacha**
March 25, 2023 · 🌐

About yesterday's concert - BERNA

It was the World Premiere of an Igbo SSAA piece titled "Berna" by yours truly, and performed by the OU Women's Chorus. For some unfathomable reason, this piece stands out specially to me. I sincerely appreciate my teacher and professor, Dr. [David Howard](#) for this opportunity (and more) to not just learn and improve my craft as a conductor, but to also share my culture with the OU Norman community and the world at large.

Kudos to the OU Women's Chorus for their work and dedication to doing proper acoustic justice to this piece. [Emily Dierks](#), you're one in a million, thank you for culturally embodying this piece in your solo...you certainly had me in awe with your dexterity to this piece. Shout to my percussion players [Andrey Cruz Vargas](#), [Tyler Stark](#), Dillon Pavelschack and Ethan Trotter; your professionalism is truly outstanding.

PS: Use ear plugs or a headset to hear the background bass from the audience on "AYAYA" 😊

"Berna, Berna, Berna nwannem o... Ayaya!"

Top Threads by [Olisa Okolue](#) CharlesKolz Couture



 Chinedum Ezeakacha, Giovanni Corrodus and 337 others

180 comments 93 shares

 Like

 Comment

 Share

Appendix H

Members of the OU Women's Chorus to perform *Berna*

Soprano I

Kyra Boydston
Galina Brauer
Kayla Campbell
Rachel Gilliam
Emma Hatfield
Hannah Howard
Allison McGrath
Kiera Menor
Madeline Nesiba
Aubrey McNiel
Lia Patton
Rebekah Peters
Emily Pope
Katelynn Wuest

Alto I

Joyce Atoyebi
Taylor Cassels
Lydia Cawley
Ashley Folds
Addyson Gaillardet
Maggie Hood
Jane-Marie Koutahi
Maddie Magee
Sophie Perry
Victoria Robbins
Ainsley Ross
Emma Salim
Evelyn Sorenson
Alyssa Standley

Soprano II

Elizabeth Crawford
Trinity Flanagan
Jersey Garrett
Grace Gierach
Kelsey Hayes
Abigail Kauten
Stephanie Keegan-Moring
Kendal Mabry
Elena McKenna
Marley McKinley
Dayna Nelson
Kate Snowden
Aliya Zervoudakes

Alto II

Lydia Campbell
Riley Caudillo
Jessica Colbert
Abbi DeWall
Chyna Evans
Lilly Gnam
Kilie Goins
Yeeun Lee

Percussion

Andrey Cruz Vargas (Congas)
Tyler Stark (Bongos)
Dill Pavelschak (Clave)
Ethan Trodder (Shekere)

Soprano Solo

Emily Dierks

Appendix I

A Shortlist of Names of Indigenous African Composers

 African Composers ☆ 🔗 ☁ File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Extensions Help 🔍 Menus 🖨️ 📄 100% 👁 View only		
A41 🔍 Alphonse Igattah		
	A	B
9	COMPOSER NAME	NATIONALITY
10	A. A. Ajibola	Nigeria
11	Abedies B.F.C (Br. Fr.)	
12	Abdullah Ibrahim	South Africa
13	Abel Adeleke	Nigeria
14	Abel Obaje	Nigeria
15	Abdo Dagher	Egypt
16	Abu Bakr Khairat	Egypt
17	Abugu Paschal Chibulke	Nigeria
18	Achinivu Kanu Achinivu	Nigeria
19	Achir Joshua	
20	Adah Ehi Mathew	
21	Adam Fiberesima	
22	Adedoyin Emmanuel Olukayode	Nigeria
23	Adegoke Taiwo Oluwagbemiga	Nigeria
24	Adejoh Idakwo	
25	Ademola Adeosun	Nigeria
26	Adel Kamel	Egypt
27	Adeboye Banjo	Nigeria
28	Ademola Adeosun	Nigeria
29	Adeyeye Adesanya	Nigeria
30	Adnane Matrone	Morocco
31	Adolf Ahantotu	Nigeria
32	Adu Safo	Ghana
33	Aduonum Kwasi	Ghana
34	Ahmed Abdallah	Egypt
35	Akin Euba	Nigeria
36	Alaba Ilesanmi	
37	Alfred Patrick Addaquay	Ghana
38	Ali Osman	Sudan
39	Ali Sugule Egai	
40	Alphonse Kambila	Angola
41	Alphonse Igattah	
42	Amy Crankshaw	South Africa
43	Ameh Markson	
☰ African Composers Operas by African Composers 10 Orchestral Composers		

Appendix I is a cropped first page of an extensive spreadsheet file with over 400 African composers listed. To access the list, click on the *African Composers* website [<https://www.africancomposers.com/>], navigate to *DATABASE*, and select *Complete List* on the dropdown.