THE EVOLVEMENT OF ORGAN MUSIC IN NIGERIA: FROM FELA SOWANDE TO GODWIN SADOH.

BY

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BEING PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTION NOTES TO MY ORGAN RECITAL,

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CERTIFICATION

This project was prepared and submitted by **ONYENZE, NNAMDI CHUKWUKA** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **BACHELOR OF ARTS (Music)**, under the supervision of Dr. Bayo Ogunyemi and Mr. Akin Olubi as Instrument coach.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the Almighty God

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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God bless you all richly!

OUTLINE

- Appendix II – URL to Performance

Appendix III – Pieces Performed

Appendix IV – CD 1 (Video)

CD 2 (Softcopy of Performance & Production notes)

1.0 Background to the Performance

1.1 The Pipe Organ: The pipe organ has been around since the third century BC. The pipe organ originated from the hydraulic organ (Hy-draulus), whose wind source was created by the pressure of displaced water in a sealed container (Randel, 1968: 583). The invention of the organ is credited to Ctesibius of Alexandria around 246 BCE. He invented the hydraulis, a mechanical flute whose water pressure regulates the wind pressure (West-field, 2000). Since the pipe organ generally produces sounds with the help of pressurized air rushing through pipes, technology has helped aid the process of producing enough wind to get the pipes to produce sound over the centuries and to this day. The pipes are offered in groups termed *ranks*, each of which has a consistent timbre and volume across the keyboard compass because each delivers a single note. The majority of organs include numerous ranks of pipes with various timbres, pitches, and volumes that the player can use separately or in combination by using *stops*.

According to Richard Elliott (2014), before the industrial revolution in the mid-1800s, the two most complicated inventions and products of human engineering were the clock and the pipe organ. The pipe organ being the most complicated of all the music instruments, yet the basic principles whereby it operates were discovered more than two thousand years ago (Christinne Ammer, 2004 : 84). Wolfgang Mozart Amadeus (1756-1791) praised the pipe organ as "The King of Instruments". The basic parts of an organ are its keyboards, consisting of one or more manuals played by hands, and a pedalboard, or set of pedals for the feet, set of wooden and metal pipes.

1.2 The organ in the church: Around 900 CE, the organ began to make its way into churches. Although how and why exactly the organ was first employed for ceremonial purposes is still a mystery, it seems that it was. By the 1400s, cathedrals and monastery churches all over Europe were regularly using organs. On special occasions and alternately with church choirs for

liturgical purposes, large and tiny organs were used. Although the majority of Americans might associate the organ with the church, the instrument existed for more than 1100 years before it was used in a religious setting (Westfield, 2000).

1.3 The Harmonium: The need for the harmonium arose from people wanting an instrument which like the pipe organ but had expressive capabilities and could go louder and quieter (Jonathan Scott, 2018). The earlier pipe organs were known to lack stability in wind supply, causing the sound from the pipes to go sharp or flat, fluctuating in pitch as the wind pressure varied and they were also affected by heat and humidity. This led to invention of the harmonium in 1840 by Alexandre Debain, where a similar mechanism like the organ was adopted. Unlike the pipe organ which produced sound from pressurized air rushing through pipes, the harmonium produced sound from air blown into metal or wooden reeds (tongues), causing it to vibrate and produce a definite pitch. The harmonium produced a more stable pitch sound as the reeds always vibrated consistently no matter the pressure of air, and was not affected by heat or humidity. Another difference between the pipe organ and harmonium is the Pedalboard. The harmonium does not offer its players the luxury of having a pedalboard like the organ does. Rather, the harmonium keeps the feet of its player busy with the pumping of air. The harmonium comes in different variants, the most common being the *foot-pumped* harmonium.

1.4 Mechanical Improvements — Early organ pipes were composed of copper, lead, tin, silver, glass, ivory, and a variety of woods, but studies ultimately determined that tin or wood was the finest material for the job. The early organs lacked chromatic intervals and had roughly twelve pipes, with the largest instruments having three octaves. The pipes were set up in an octave with only three semitones—between E and F, A and B flat, and B and C—in accordance with the order of the tones in the old Church modes (W. J. Baltzell, 1905). Also today, we have electronically blown pipe organs. Electric blowers were required as the pipe organ's ranks grew

in order to provide enough wind pressure to supply and fill hundreds, and in some cases, thousands, of pipes. Some notable pipe organ builders today are; Harrison and Harrison (UK), Abbott and Sieker (US), Fratelli Ruffatt (Italy), Hinsz and Müller (Germany), Schnitger (Netherlands). The Boardwalk Hall Auditorium Organ in Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA, currently has the most pipes of any pipe organ ever built. Between 1929 and 1932, the Midmer-Losh Organ Company constructed it. The organ has 33, 114 pipes, 7 manuals, 337 stops, and 449 ranks (Doering Martin, 2018). According to the number of ranks and physical bulk weight, the Wanamaker Grand Court Organ is the biggest pipe organ in the entire globe. Based on the quantity of pipes, it comes in second place worldwide. The organ is housed at the John Wanamaker department store in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. Between 1914 and 1917, the Wanamaker store Organ department built it. Between 1924 and 1930, more expansion took place. Six manuals, 401 stops, 464 ranks, and 28,750 pipes make up the organ.

1.5 Electronic/Digital organs — Many manufacturers created electronic organs in the 1930s that mimicked the operation and sound of pipe organs. Some manufacturers at the time believed that the most promising approach to pursue in the construction of an electronic organ was to emulate the pipe organ. But not everyone concurred. Over time, a variety of electronic organs have been commercialized, some of which have gained strong reputations in specific niche markets. Some prominent digital organ manufacturers in the world are Johannus (Netherlands), Allen (USA), Copeman Hart (UK), Viscounts (Italy). The need for digital organs arose as the purchase and maintenance of authentic pipe organs became a huge concern as it was expensive to purchase and difficult to keep up with the regular periodic tuning of pipes and maintenance of the various components of the instruments.

1.6 Organ music: Among all musical instruments, the organ is thought to have the oldest and biggest repertory (Owens, 2022). A large amount of the organ repertoire is sacred in nature due to the organ's (or pipe organ's) importance in worship in Western Europe beginning in the

Middle Ages. Some prominent organ music composers in history include; J. S. Bach (1685-1750), Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937), Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), César Franck (1822-1890), Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992). Some of the most famous and widely performed works in the standard organ repertoire include; Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Bach), Symphony no. 5 in F minor (Widor), Prelude and Fugue in C minor (Mendelssohn), Trois Chorale in E major, B minor, A minor (Frank), La Nativité du Seigneur (Messiaen).

1.7 Organ music in Nigeria — Since the advent of Nigerian art music in the 20th century, Nigeria has been blessed with series of virtuoso organists who have left their footprints on the sands of organ music in Nigeria. As much as some of these organists were great performers, they also left behind a reputable portfolio of organ music compositions. Nigeria boasts of composers such as Fela Sowande, Ayo Bankole, T. K. Ekundayo Philips, W. C. Echezona, Kayode Oni, to mention a few. Of all these organists, Fela Sowande and Ayo Bankole stand out as two of the most reputable organists and composers of vocal, choral and instrumental music.

Fortunately, Nigeria still boasts of organists who seek to inherit and surpass the fame of the past legends. Some of them include Akin Olubi, Ayo Oluranti, Godwin Sadoh, Tosin Ajayi, Odedeji Babajide, Tunde Sosan, Adejola Adeosun. These contemporaries have proven in both home and abroad to be competent in organ performance at the international level.

2.0 Statement of Problem

Most Nigerian writers of organ music have not received the finest of patronage. This may be due to so many factors. Therefore, this performance, seeks to bring to prominence Nigeria Organ Music using the works of selected Nigerian composers.

3.0 Aim and Objectives

The project's aim is to raise awareness of organ music in Nigeria. As a result of which, the objectives outlined are;

I. To bring to prominence, through performance, works of Nigerian Organ Music Composers.

II. To, through performance, highlight African music elements in the works of selected Nigerian Organ music composers

III. To highlight similarities and dissimilarities of styles prominence to the selected organ music composers.

4.0 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to three Nigerian organ music composers with contrasting styles and idioms.

- Ka' Mura (Fela Sowande)
- Obangiji (Fela Sowande)
- Toccata I & II (Ayo Bankole)
- Konkonlo (G. S. Sadoh)
- Tribute to Highlife (G. S. Sadoh)
- Ijo Faaji (G. S. Sadoh)
- Ijo Ore (G. S. Sadoh)
- Palongo (G. S. Sadoh)

5.0 Order of Performance

FELA SOWANDE (1905 -1987)

1. *K'a Mura,* 1945 (publisher: Chappell, London)
2. *Obangiji*, 1955 (publisher: Chappell, London)

AYO BANKOLE (1935 – 1976)

1. Toccata I
2. Toccata II

GODWIN SADOH

1. Five African Dances For Solo Organ. (June 2007)
    i. Konkonkolo
    ii. Tribute to Highlife
    iii. Ijo Faaji
    iv. Ijo Ore
    v. Palongo

6.0 PERFORMANCE NOTES

6.1 K'a Mura (Novello, 1945) – Fela Sowande: This piece written to his (Fela Sowande) mother says "K'a mura Egbe onigbagbo o, K'a mura K'a le pade l'oke" which translates to English as "Let us prepare, ye band of christians, to meet above". This piece presents the melody right from the very measure, in form of a thematic material peculiar to the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria.

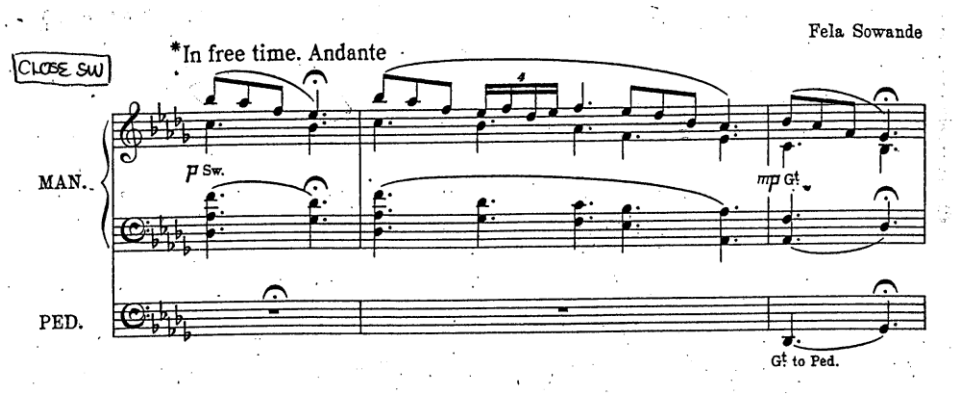


Fig. 1.0 showing m.1 - 3

The above is the opening three measures presenting the theme in the key of D-flat major. This theme is built on pentatonic scale (5-note scale) and harmonised using *functional harmony.* The melody is set at the top initially to be played by the right hand, and then later varied from m.5-8 in where the melody is set in a lower voice to be soloed by the left hand.

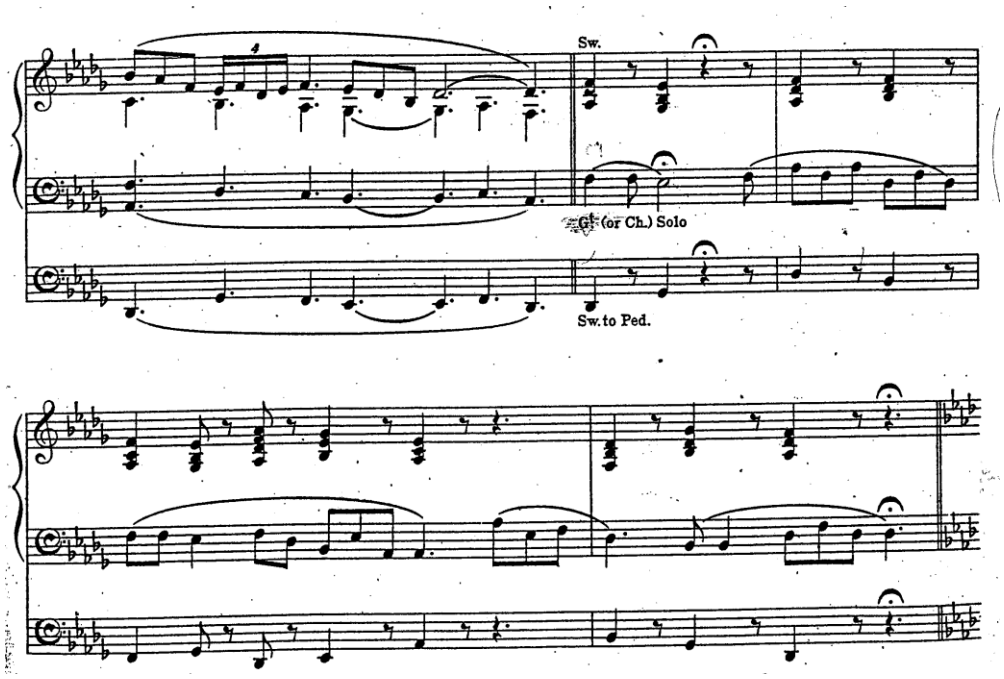


Fig. 1.1 showing m.4 – 8

The above excerpt shows the melody set in the left hand while the harmony sits above it. This creates a clear contrast from the opening four measures. These opening eight measures present the Antecedent and Consequence phrases in equal fractions respectively. Thereafter the music modulates abruptly to the dominant key, A-flat major, where the initial statement as heard in m.1-4 is rebranded in a florid manner, while being harmonised in Baroque style. Fela Sowande's use of pedal-point is also evident in this development of the piece. At mm. 20, the piece modulates to E-major till mm. 36. These 16 measures bare a contrasting mood from the principal theme, but terminates at mm. 36, where the music returns to the principal theme in the A-flat major and then a transition into the coda which restates the initial material as heard in mm. 1, returning to the default key D-flat major. This piece in its entirety is based on the pentatonic scale.

6.2 OBANGIJI "ALMIGHTY GOD" (London: Chappell, 1955) – Fela Sowande: Obangiji, just like K'a mura, is a brilliant illustration of an African thematic material being treated and developed in western classical idiom. This composition also similar to K'a Mura, is based on the African pentatonic scale (5-tone scale). The pieces begin with a fanfare with full organ in a French-symphonic style on the key of G-major from mm. 1-8, while retaining a melodic material native to Yoruba tribe.

Sowande uses repetition in his organ works to communicate with his audience. There are instances when a folksong or rhythmic idea becomes very difficult to identify because it has been enmeshed in the Western harmonic sonority (Godwin Sadoh, 2004 : 63). Kofi Agawu notes the imperialistic imprint of Western harmony on African art music in his book, *Representing African Music*:

> *In terms of the three basic dimensions of European music--melody, rhythm and harmony--we may say that the one with the greatest colonizing power is harmony. . . Of all the musical influences spawned by the colonial encounter, that of tonal functional harmony has been the most pervasive, the most far-reaching, and ultimately the most disastrous.*

Therefore, one of the best ways to audibly recognize the indigenous melody or rhythm in modern compositions by Africans is through the art of repetition and this is evident throughout this piece. From mm. 9-13 is a short canon based on a melody consisting of just five notes.

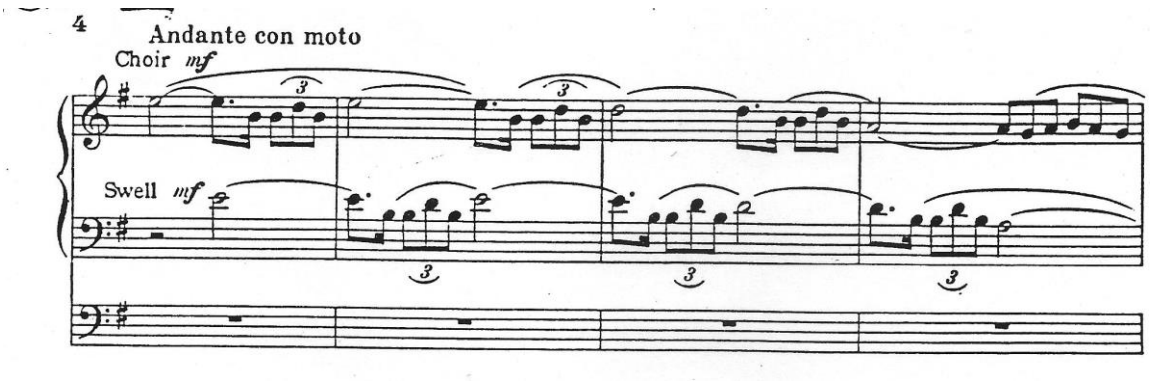


Fig. 2.0 showing mm. 9 – 12.

This section creates a clear contrast from the opening fanfare, as well as exploring the different manuals available to the organist. A 3-manual organ is required to perform this piece as the composer suggests by marking selected passaged to be played on different manuals. This canonic section is to be played with the right on the choir organ (1st manual from below) and the left hand on the Swell organ (3rd manual from below). To better interpret this passage, it is suggested that the performer selects two contracting voices available on each manual, preferably an 8' and 4' flute on one manual, and a solo reed on the other manual. It is of essence that each voice should be clearly heard apart from each other. Fela Sowande uses this canonic passage to usher in the main body of the work. From mm. 14 – 34, the composer introduces an ostinato-rhythm based on a variation of the traditional African bell pattern in the left, while the right bares the melody being harmonized using the Western tonal functional harmony. Mm. 57 sees the piece reach it's sub-climax and then return to the initial fanfare theme (mm. 61) as a coda leading up to it's full climax at mm. 66 where Fela Sowande suggest a full organ with reeds on manuals coupled to pedals, which runs to the final chord at mm. 68/69.

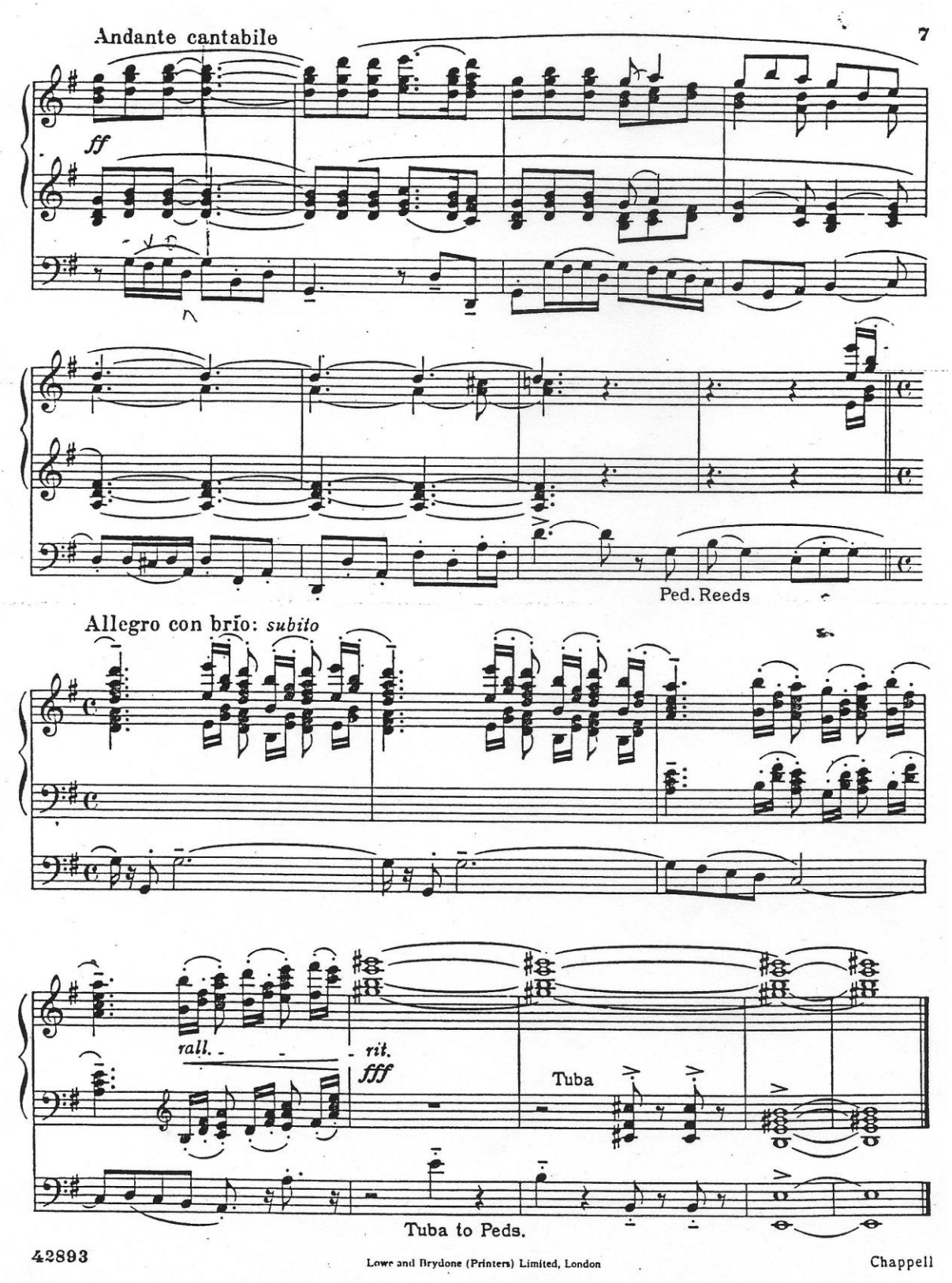


Fig. mm. 57 to the end.

6.3 TOCCATA I – Ayo Bankole: There are controversies surrounding the actual date this collection of *toccatas* were written. Bode Omojola ascerted that the three toccatas were written in 1967 (Omojola, 1995). Toccata I is a work in three-part form. The first part from mm. 1-26 consists of a set of pacey quaver notes, while the left hand and pedal deliver the harmonic material to it. According to Ayo Bankole as stated on the manuscript, this toccata is based on a theme by his father. This theme is evoked by the right hand from mm. 15 through 18. The homophonic middle section, from measures 27 to 39, is devoid of the main theme and has a persistent tremolo in the right hand that emphasizes open thirds and fourths and chordal support in the left. The first section is repeated in the last section as a coda between mm. 39-72, with the main theme harmonized in the left hand with pedal and pacey quaver notes in the right hand. Continual chromatic passages, ostinati on the hands and pedals, repeats, and bitonality make up the majority of this composition.

6.4 TOCCATA II – This toccata is less poetic and more mechanical in style than the prior one. This work clearly makes use of arpeggios and the Alberti bass. This composition, like Toccata I, is based on a theme by the composer's father. This toccata can be broken up into several parts. The first portion of the song begins in the first bar and lasts until the pedal introduces the theme in the 17th bar. The work's ending phrases can be seen in the left hand in Mm. 32–35. The topic is distributed throughout both hands in a polyrhythmic manner in Mm. 40–53. A protracted scherzo, Mm. 54-86 can be thought of as a series of running notes played by the right hand while the left hand stresses the strong beats within the bars. The pedals play a repetitive melody line strongly in the piece's concluding portion (mm. 87–105), while the manuals initially arrange polytonal chords in arpeggios before switching to block strands.

6.5 Five African Dances for Solo Organ – Godwin Sadoh

6.5.1. ***Konkolo*** is based on the well-known West African rhythmic time-line pattern (a short rhythmic cell that is repeated over a period of time to aid the other instrumentalists in the orchestra to keep the beat). Alternatively said, a time-line serves as a metronome or timer during an African musical performance. This song uses a melody that was taken from a well-known Yoruba traditional tune. The pedals at the piece's opening (mm. 1-20) and conclusion state this melody (mm. 57-76). The lyrics to this song are "Baba Mi l'Oloko Ti Nwa Oko," which means "My Father is the Driver of the Car" in English. There is only one original melody in pentatonic scale in the middle section of the manuals (Godwin Sadoh, 2007)

6.5.2. An original piece called ***Tribute to Highlife*** is based on the popular West African dance band music known as "highlife," which was created in Nigeria and Ghana during the colonial era around the middle of the 20th century (Godwin Sadoh, 2007). The composition opens with pedal ostinati in the first four measures, followed by the right hand in the fourth measure and the left hand in the fifth. The ostinati pattern changes in the pedal in mm. 29, and the manuals' chord materials also change (Godwin Sadoh, 2007)

6.5.3. An octatonic scale was used in the piece **Ijo Faaji** (Gentle Dance). This painting has a simple feel to it. The left hand consistently plays an ostinato of three notes, and the right hand provides harmonic material as an accompaniment. This is the only dance in the collection that was specifically written for manuals (Godwin Sadoh, 2007)

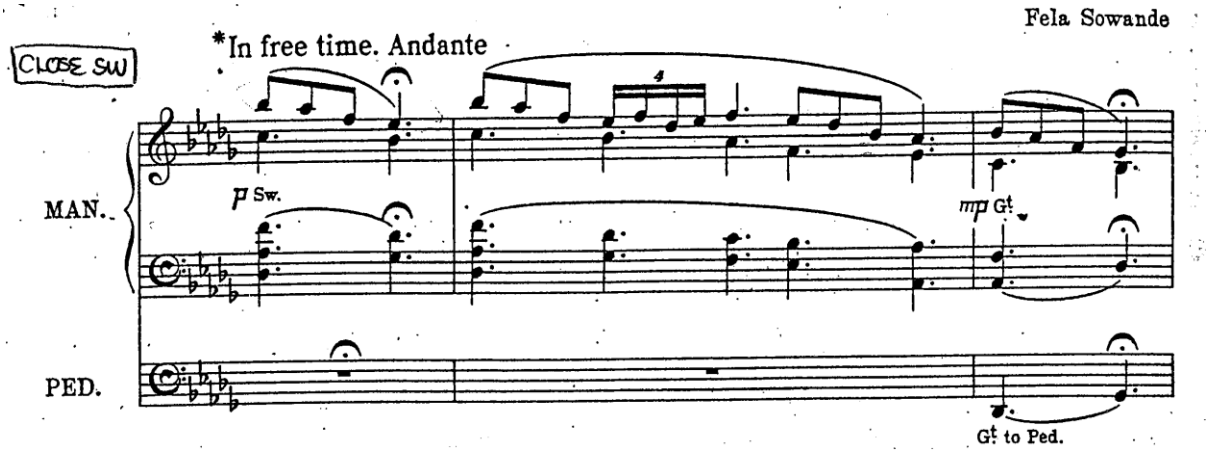
6.5.4. This modest dance called ***Ijo Ore*** (Dance Offering) is based on the Yoruba folk song "Babalawo Mo Wa Bebe," which means "Native Doctor, I Have COme to Ask for Forgiveness" in English. This song was inspired by a folktale about a married man whose wife had been

childless for a very long time. To help his wife become pregnant, he visited the local physician. He was given a mixture by the local doctor to give to his wife, along with a stern warning not to trip or fall and not to put his hands near his mouth as he walked home. However, the man disregarded the advice of the native doctor when he tripped over a tree root and put his hands in his mouth. The man fell pregnant right away. He then returned to the local physician while singing "Babalawo Mo Wa Bebe." This song utilizes a call-and-response format, which is common in Nigerian folk tale songs. While the left hand and pedals play the ostinato accompaniment in this work, the melody is placed in the right-hand manual with an 8' main solo. (Godwin Sadoh, 2007)

6.5.5. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, ***Palongo*** essentially refers to dance music. The right hand of the manual plays the melodic themes while the left hand and pedals provide the ostinato accompaniment in this homophonic work. The piece contains two tunes. The pentatonic scale, one of the most well-liked scales in traditional African music, is used in the opening tune at mm. 5–19. The pedals are not used in the middle half, but they are widely used in the last section. (Godwin Sadoh, 2007)

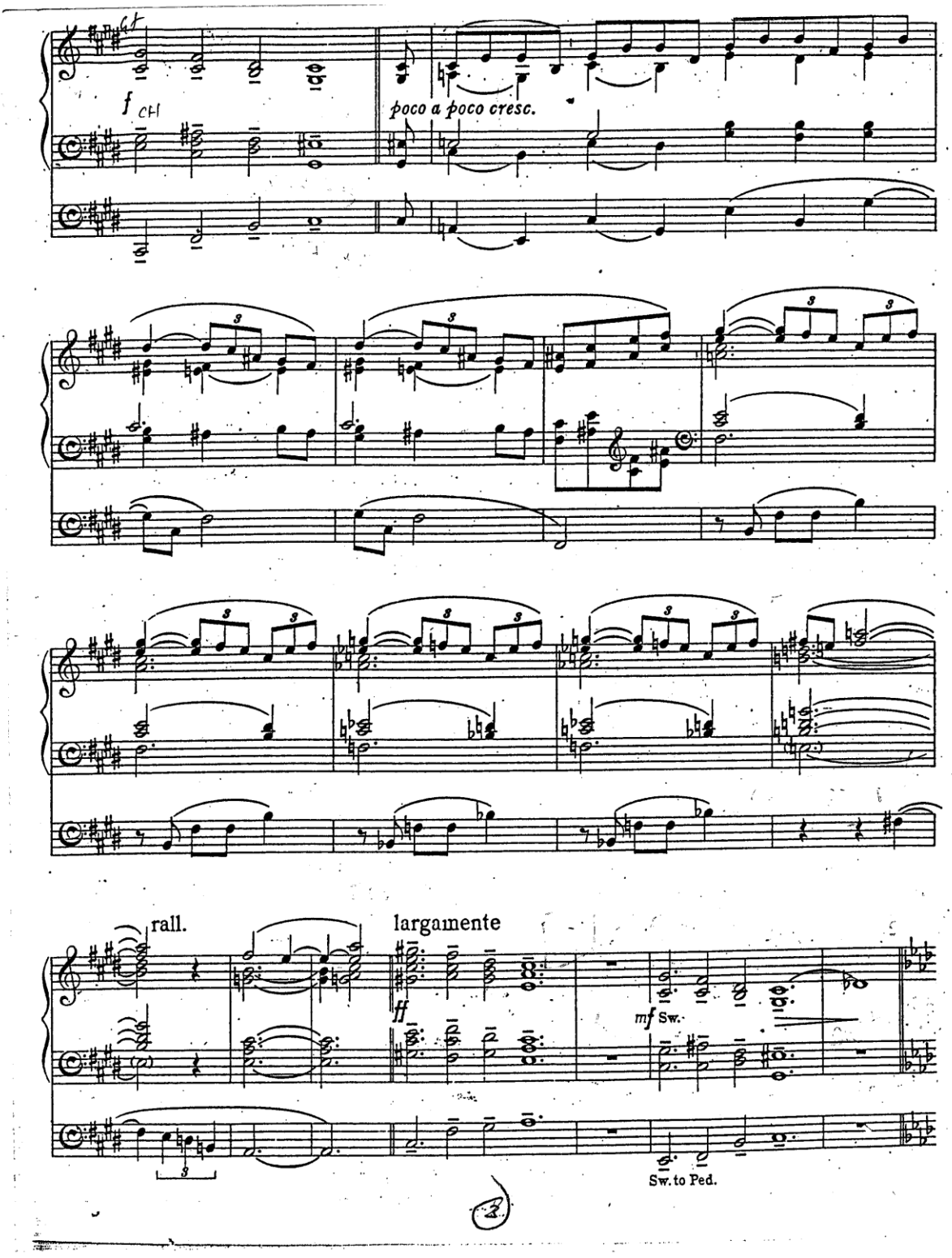
7.0 Production Notes

7.1 Ka mura - This piece poses little or no technical difficulty. It is more like a typical organ improvisation on a given theme. The major challenge I faced while learning this music was keeping a steady timing, as the composer does not provide a regular metre in which the music should be played, leaving it to the discretion of the performer.



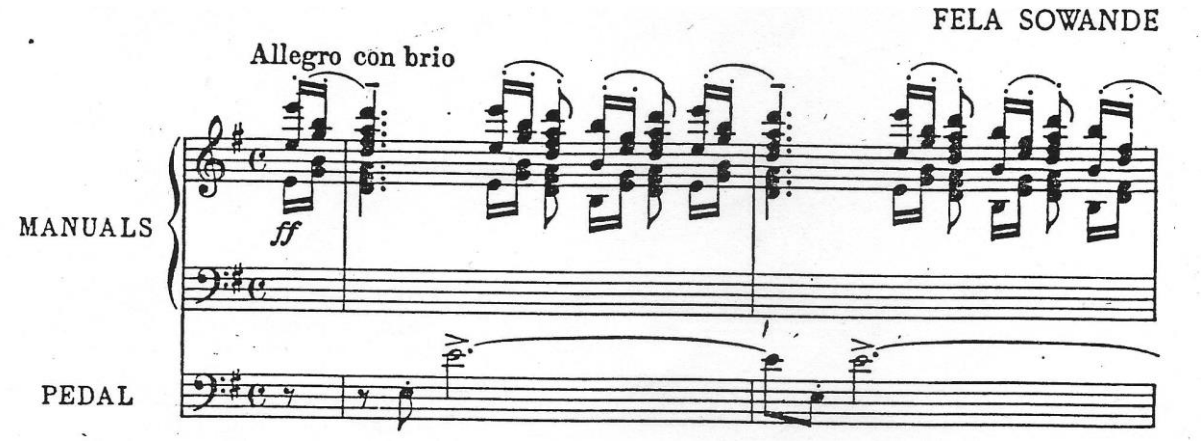
Mm. 1-3

It took me about 4 weeks with regularly practice of two hours per day to completely comprehend this piece in it's entirety. Another little challenge faced was at mm. 27 where the music modulates abruptly to E-flat major from E major. Also, the pedal work from mm. 21 to mm. 30 had to be carefully practiced independently and then in combination with the manuals gradually.



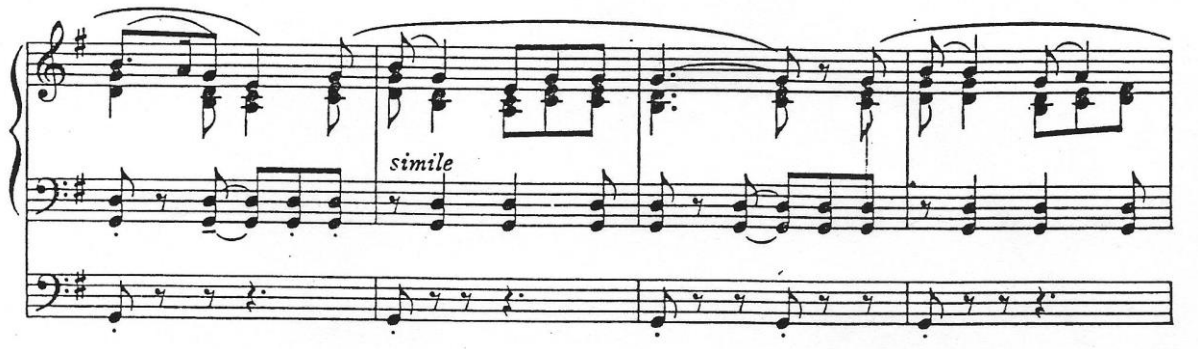
Mm. 20-36

7.2 Obangiji – The major challenge faced in this work was the fanfare intro. This section had to be practiced one hand at a time, due to the delicate articulations placed on the stacks of chords.



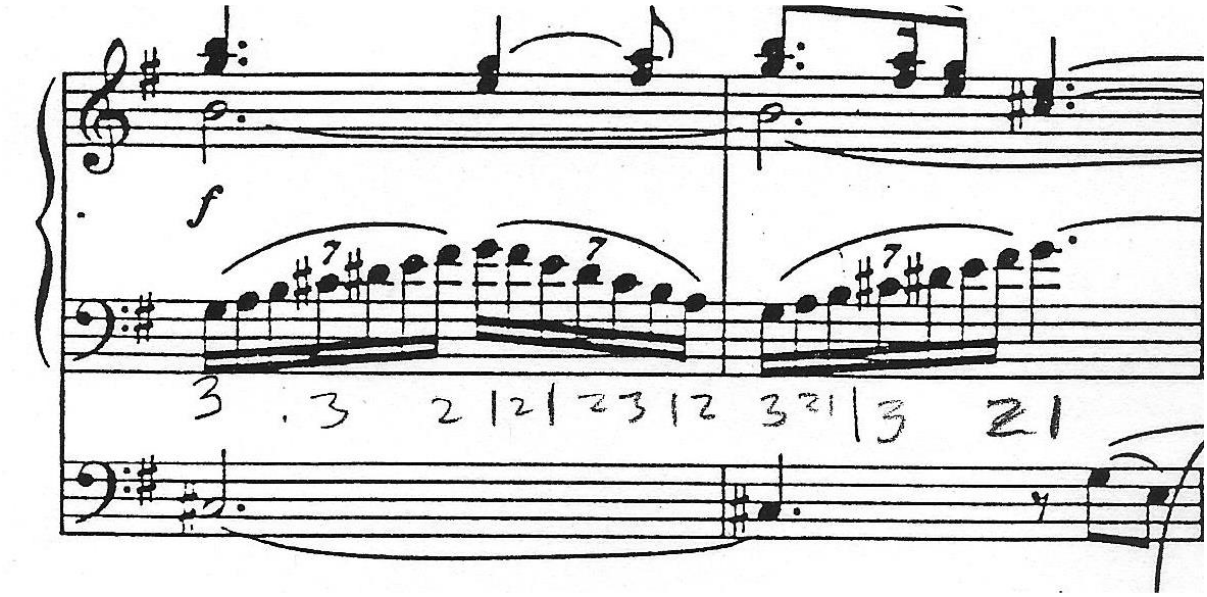
Fanfare intro at mm. 1-2

The pedal solo from mm. 5 had to be meticulously studied as well. The ostinato from mm. 15 in the left hand and pedal had to be practiced independently and worked out gradually incorporating the right hand into it.



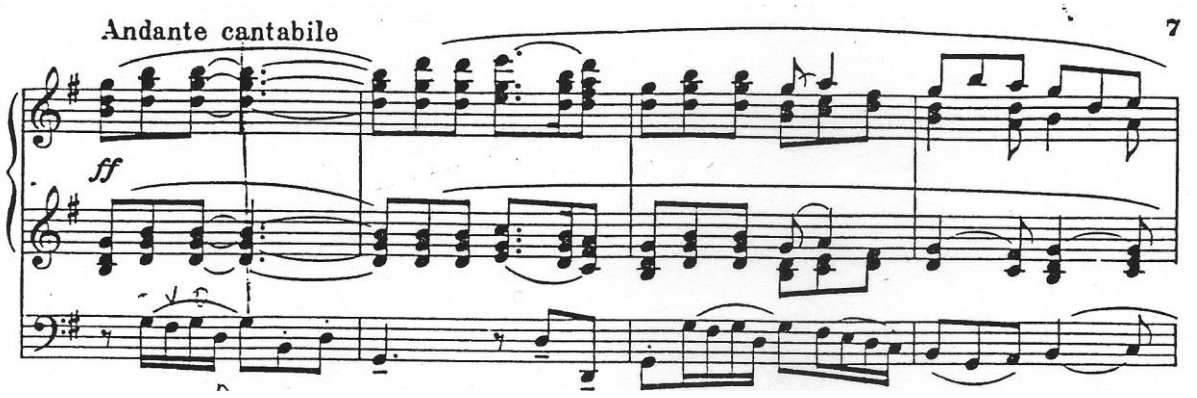
Ostinato rhythm in the left hand and pedal mm.17-20

Mm. 41 and 42 poses difficult as the left hand plays an irregular grouping of sixteenth notes against the melody in the right hand.



mm. 41 -42 showing groupings of septuplets.

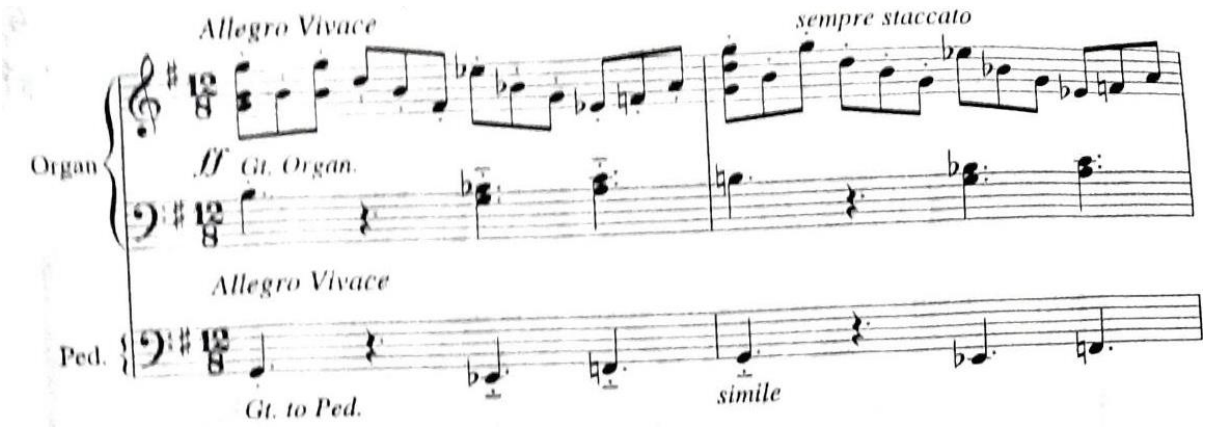
This event also occurs similarly in mm. 45 -46. The climax of the music at mm. 57 presents little difficulty, except for the pedals which had to be practiced independently.



Climax beginning at mm.57

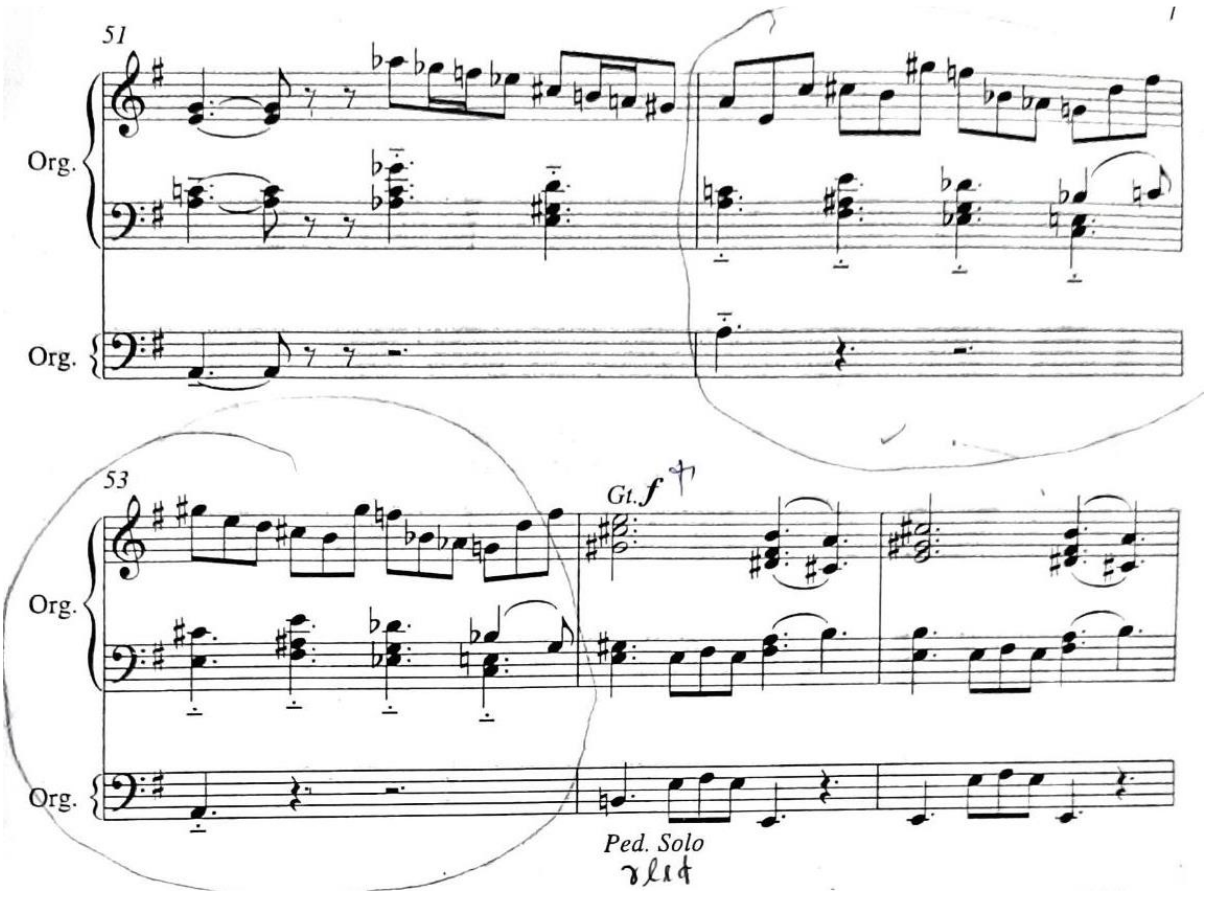
The most challenging aspect in the learning process of the pieces is the frequent change of registrations. Each section of the pieces appears to carry a different mood which must be adequately considered and represented in the registration of these sections appropriately.

7.3 Toccata I: This piece presented a lot of difficulty right from the very beginning. The rapid eighth notes in the right hand articulated with staccatos presented a considerable amount of difficulty. The left hand and pedals appeared more friendly and less difficult to practice.



Opening 2 measures

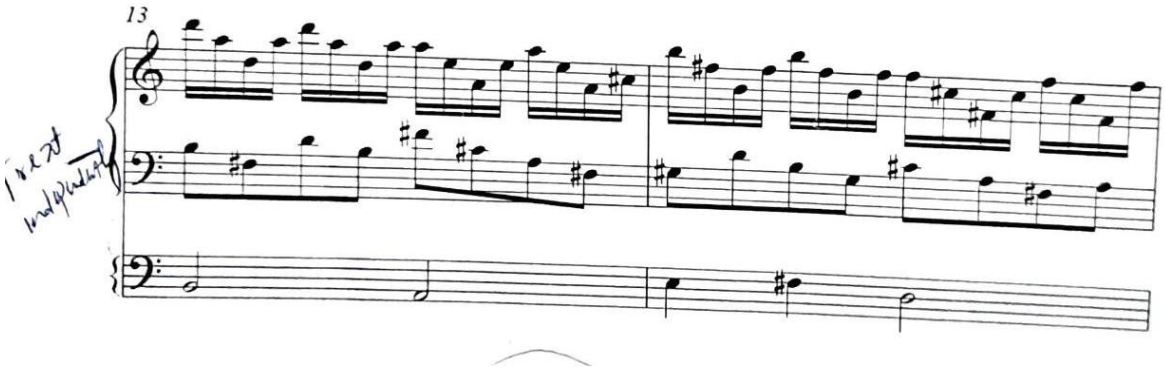
The most difficult aspect of learning this piece is the tonality in which the music is written. The music begins on G major, but keeps changing tonality and till it gets frenzy at. 52 -53.



mm. 51-55

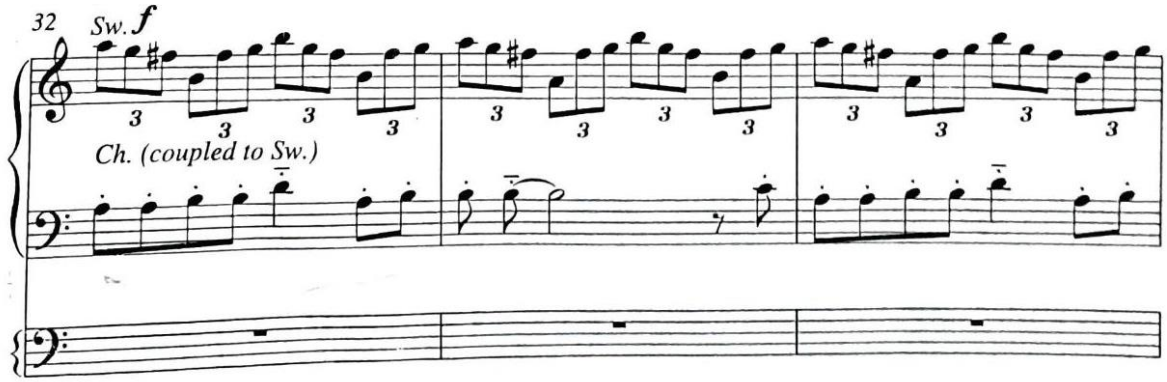
Learning this piece, I had to practice and learn each hand separately for about 3 months, and then gradually began practicing both hands together and then incorporating the pedals in my practice. Another major challenge is the frequent change of dynamics, which requires constant attention to the swell box to alternate the dynamics as the piece demands. The frequent change of manuals too had to be observed as well, although after I had completely grasped the music. Fingerings also were made on the score to better aid my practice sessions and with time I had to alter some fingerings as I gradually found them inconvenient. It took me at least 4 months to practice this piece in preparation for a recital performance.

7.4 Toccata II: Just like the first, this toccata presented lots of difficulty, although not from the beginning. The first difficult section I encountered was at mm. 13, where the rhythm changed in the left hand.

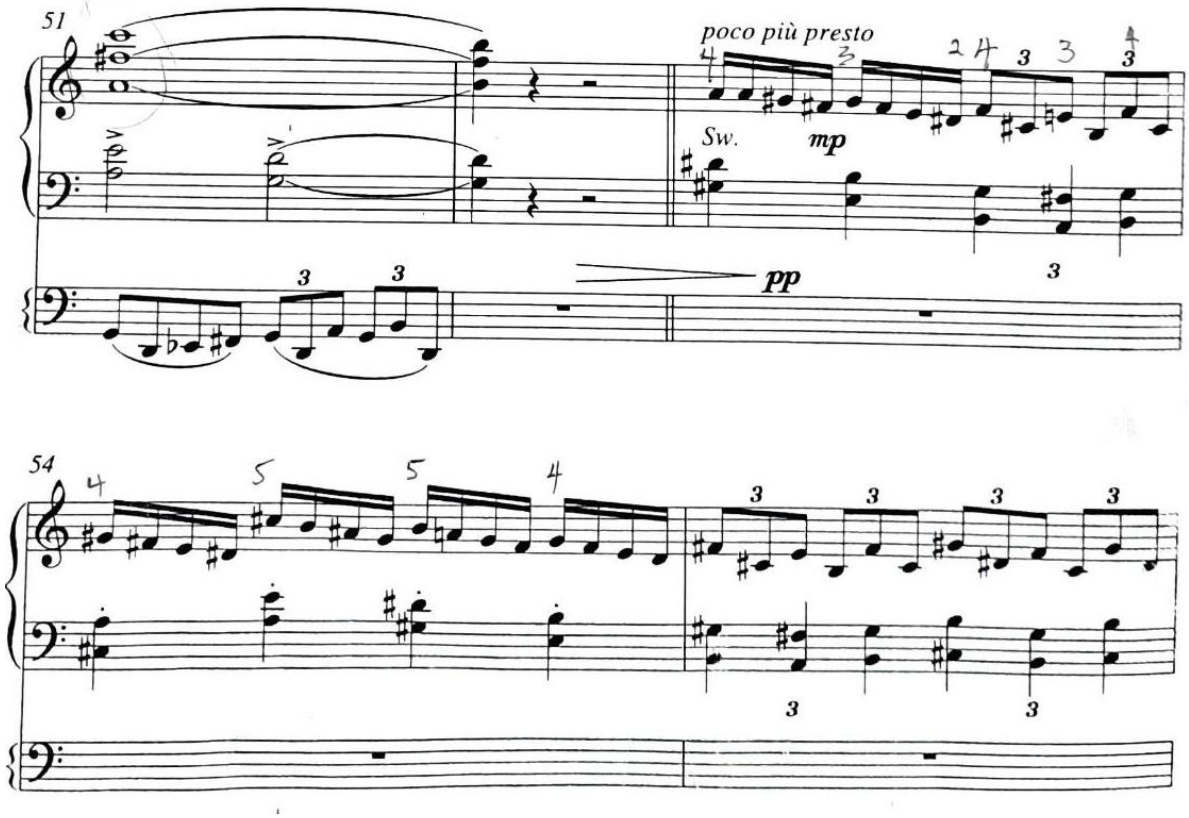


mm. 13-14

I had to treat each hand independently for several weeks, until it was fluent enough to combine with pedals. Mm. 32 appeared difficult initially with polyrhythms split between two different manuals. The left hand plays the melody on the first manual from the bottom (Swell) while the right plays stretch of running notes in triplets, creating a contrast across both hands.



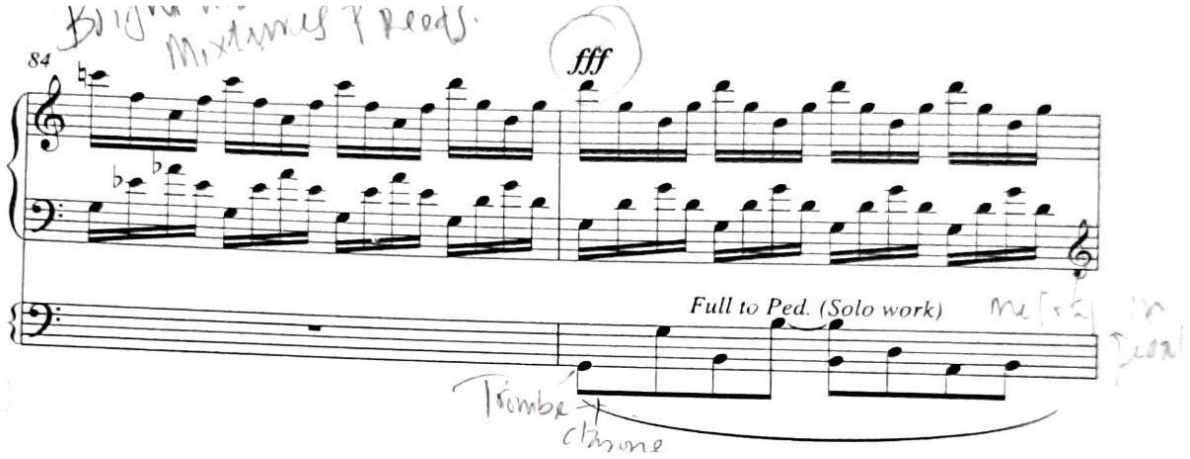
Voicing these two independent lines appeared tricky, as I was tasked with formulating two contrasting colours on both manuals to bare each line clearly. Mm. 53 – 83 presented the greatest difficulty within the piece, the manuals are tasked with a long stretch of homophonic texture.



mm. 51-55

Mm 84 – 105 is my favourite section of the work as the pedals are introduced with a tuneful line while the manuals play polytonal chords in arpeggios and ending in block strands. This

piece took me 2 months of consistent practice to learn and perfect.



7.5 Five African Dances for Solo Organ: These dances required little effort to practice. Initially I was faced with comprehending the African timeline rhythms in combination with the other materials, but it took a couple of minutes to play through each work. With a maximum total of 5 practice sessions spent on these works, I was able and ready to perform them publicly in a recital.

8.0 References

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8.1 Internet Resource

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBT9LP4Fbmo accessed 18th August 2022

https://westfield.org/programs/curious-facts/ accessed 18th August 2022

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accordion accessed 18th August 2022

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN0gfBjZWOc&t=10s accessed 20th August 2022

9.0 APPENDIX I

Figure 1Ayo Bankole playing the piano

Fela Sowande at the Hammond organ

Figure 3 Fela Sowande at a Hammond Organ

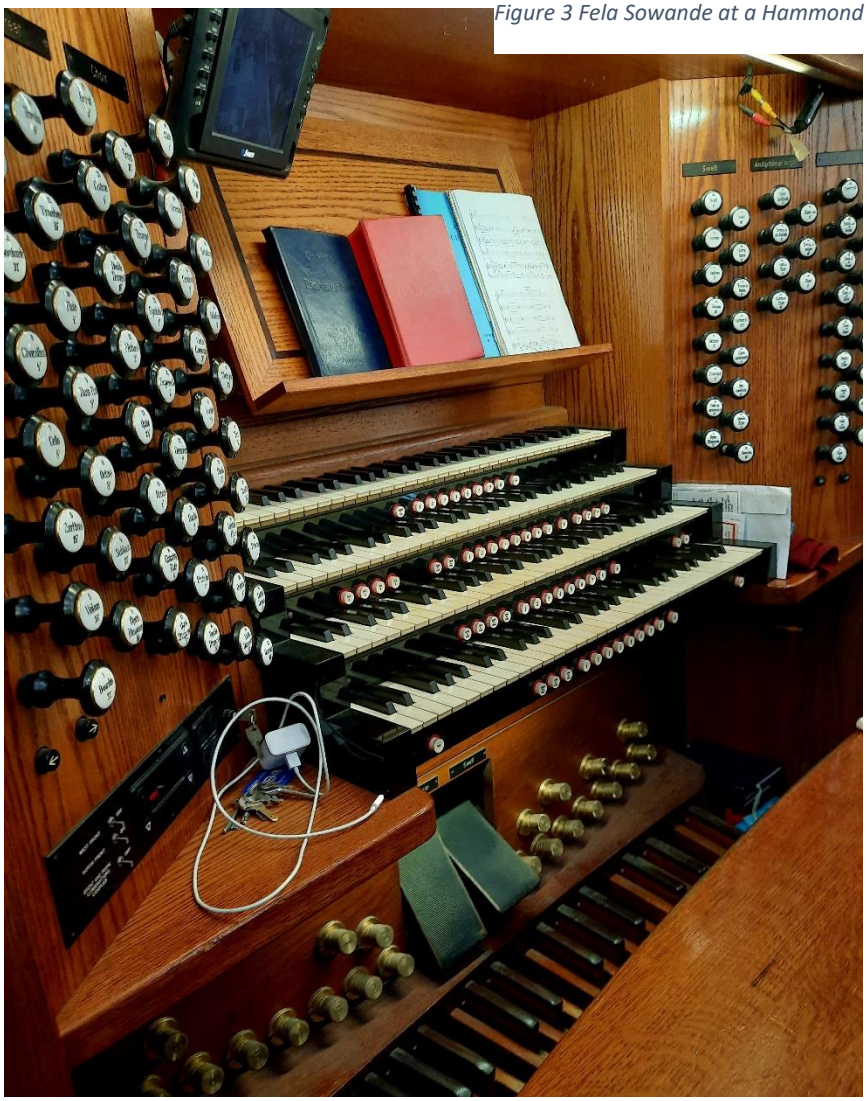

Figure 2 The Pipe Organ at Cathedral Church of Christ, Marina, Lagos

Figure 4 A Harmonium

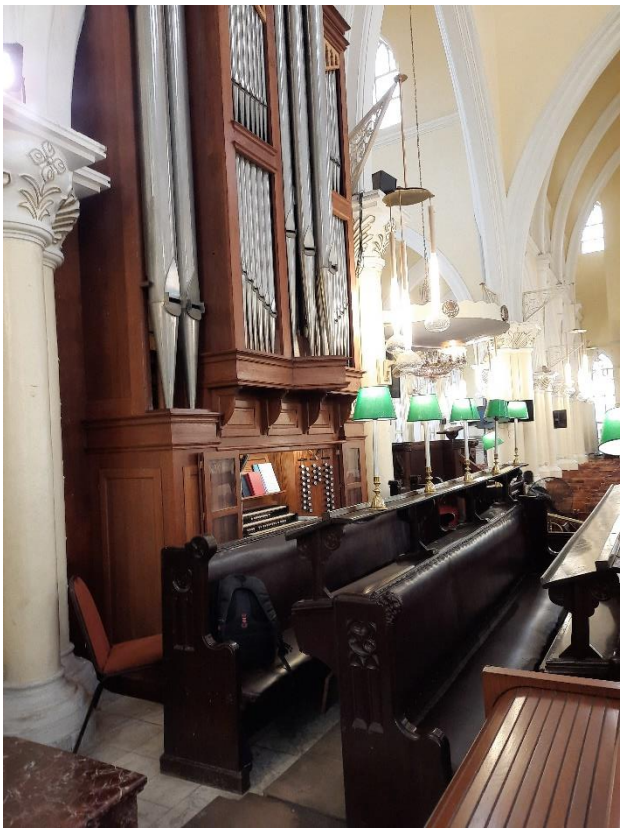

Figure 5 Pipe Organ at Cathedral Church of Christ, Marina, Lagos.

Appendix II

URL to performance:

https://bit.ly/3hOah3U