

**A PIANO RECITAL ON THE APPLICATION OF THE TECHNIQUES FROM  
BAROQUE TO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**BY**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This project was prepared and submitted by **AKINYEMI STEPHEN TOLULOPE**

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Bachelor of Arts in Music,**

Under the supervision of Dr. Bayo Ogunyemi and Mr. Seun Owoaje as my instrument coach

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to the Holy Spirit.

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## Table of Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Certification.....   |    |
| Dedication.....  |    |
| Acknowledgements.....                                      |    |
| Table of Content.....                                      |    |
| 1.0 Background of the Performance.....                     | 7  |
| 2.0 Evolution of the Piano through the Various Ages.....   | 7  |
| 2.1 Clavichord.....  | 7  |
| 2.2 Harpsichord.....                                       | 7  |
| 2.3 Dulcimer.....  | 8  |
| 2.4 Piano in the Baroque era.....                          | 8  |
| 2.5 Bach's Playing Technique.....                          | 8  |
| 2.6 Piano in the Classical era.....                        | 9  |
| 2.7 Beethoven and the Evolving Piano.....                  | 10 |
| 2.8 Tempo Flexibility.....                                 | 10 |
| 2.9 Piano in the Romantic era.....                         | 11 |
| 2.10 Piano in the Modernist era.....                       | 11 |
| 2.11 African Pianism.....                                  | 12 |
| 3.0 Statement of the Problem.....                          | 12 |
| 4.0 Aim and Objectives.....                                | 13 |
| 5.0 Scope of the Study.....                                | 13 |
| 6.0 Performance Note.....                                  | 15 |
| 6.1 The Prelude and Fugue in F Sharp Major: J.S. Bach..... | 15 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 6.2 The Piano Sonata 9 in E Major by: Ludwig Van Beethoven.....         | 16 |
| 6.3 Moments Musicaux, Op 94, No 3: Franz Schubert.....                  | 18 |
| 6.4 Silk Hat and Walking Cane: Florence Price.....                      | 19 |
| 6.5 Nigerian Dance No. 1: Joshua Uzoigwe.....                           | 20 |
| 7.0 Production Note.....  | 22 |
| 7.1 The Prelude and Fugue in F Sharp Major: J.S. Bach.....              | 22 |
| 7.2 The Piano Sonata 9 in E Major by: Ludwig Van Beethoven.....         | 23 |
| 7.3 Moments Musicaux, Op 94, No 3: Franz Schubert.....                  | 24 |
| 7.4 Silk Hat and Walking Cane: Florence Price.....                      | 24 |
| 7.5 Nigerian Dance No. 1: Joshua Uzoigwe.....                           | 25 |
| 8.0 Limitation of Performance.....                                      | 25 |
| 9.0 References.....   | 26 |
| 10.0 Appendix I Copies of Piano Pieces Performed.....                   |    |
| 10.1 Appendix II Pictures of Various Types of Pianos.....               |    |
| 10.2 Appendix III Pictures of Composers Who's Works Were Performed..... |    |
| 10.3 Appendix IV: Link to the performance.....                          |    |
| 10.4 Appendix: Performace CD and VCD.....                               |    |

## **1.0 Background of the Performance**

The piano was invented by Bartolomeo Cristofori around 1700, who was an Italian instrument maker, from Florence. It was initially called "gravicembalo col piano, e forte, (Breitman, 2021, 1) which means a harpsichord with soft and loud. Cristofori had just created had just created the first keyboard instrument that can be played either soft or loud. His piano was not as loud as the modern piano; this led to other musical instrument maker to further work on creating their improved versions. According to (Breitman, 2021, 1) The earliest pianos weighed little more than a harpsichord, about a hundred pounds; a modern concert grand weighs nearly a thousand. The piano grew steadily in range— from four octaves to more than seven—and in string tension, to produce ever more powerful sounds.

## **2.0 Evolvement of the Piano Through the Various Musical Ages**

### **Pre-1700: Clavichord**

**2.1 Clavichord:** Clavichords are one the earliest keyboard instruments in history. They are constructed with bichord strings that are struck by tangents, usually brass, stuck into the end of each key. When a key is depressed, the tangent strikes the strings and remains in contact with them, this acting as a fret. The tangent sets the string in motion at the definite pitch. The clavichord was invented in the early fourteenth century. According to (Howard, 2017) It was popular in the 16th-18th centuries, but mainly flourished in German-speaking lands, Scandinavia and the Iberian Peninsula in the latter period. Clavichords were extremely popular in domestic use for musical entertainment in homes and remained so for 300-400 years.

**2.2 Harpsichord:** The harpsichord is also a keyboard instrument which dates to 1505. It was a popular instrument during the same period as the clavichords, having its own followers.

Harpsichord strings are plucked by a quill or plectrum. The harpsichord could be played at a higher volume than the clavichord, making it more suitable for use in church services.

**2.3 Dulcimer:** The dulcimer is a stringed instrument, a forerunner of the piano, although not having a keyboard. It is a handheld stringed instrument, struck with small padded hammers. Although not commercially popular, yet the invention of the dulcimer provided an important link to the invention of the piano.

#### **2.4 Piano in the Baroque Era (1600 – 1750)**

Johann Sebastian Bach was one person who cannot be neglected in piano history. Although he composed many pieces for the keyboard, Bach himself was not a pianist. (Schoenberg. 1963, 3) He composed music for harpsichord, clavichord and organ. Although the piano was created in his lifetime, the instrument was yet widely accepted by musicians.

Bach's contribution to Western classical music is vast and still appreciated till date; whether it's use of counterpoint in the fugue, his four part chorale or "The Well-Tempered Clavier" which has been dubbed as the "Bible" today's piano students. Bach evidently influenced the composers after him, such as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

#### **2.5 Bach's Playing Technique**

The way he played on the keyboard is very different from the approach of the modern day pianists. (Schoenberg. 1963, 3) It's been described that when he is playing, his fingers are barely off the keyboard. There is minimal movement of hand, gesture and body, like we would see in piano performance in other musical eras. There are only fingers and joints making small



movements, but nothing more than that. There is therefore no need to make big movements and gestures when interpreting Bach's work. (Schonberg. 1963, 3)

## **2.6 Piano in the Classical Era (1750 – 1820)**

After the death of Bach in 1750, and the end of Baroque Era, about the same year, a new style of music began to spread among the royal courts of in Western Europe. It was called - music gallant.

Since the music serves royals, the style of music is more of singing melodies and simplification in writing. It has no difficulty in understanding. Instead, it is easy to listen to, being characterized as "graceful, elegant and tender". The emergence of style Gallant signifies that music shifts from the church to the salon, and from fugue to sonata". (Schoenberg. 1963, 1)

The name Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart stands out boldly when mentioning the composers of the classical era. As a child prodigy, he started composing from the age of five (Schoenberg. 1963, 24) Mozart was an amazing pianist. The way he played the piano is adoptable when interpreting pieces from the classical period. He never overemphasizes emotions or excessive energy into his piano playing. His performance instead very controlled with great modesty.

Therefore when interpreting Mozart, it is important to be "precise and appropriate" (Schoenberg. 25) That means there should be no exaggeration either emotionally or physically.

Ludwig Van Beethoven was also another profound figure in music history. He was the bridge between the classical and romantic period. As a composer, his compositions for piano were ground-breaking. As a pianist, he performed with radiance, just like a burning fire. (Schoenberg. 58) Therefore, when interpreting Beethoven, the pianist needs to elaborate more on the side of emotional expression.

## **2.7 Beethoven and the Evolving Piano**

Pianos changed significantly during the first part of the nineteenth century: one obvious development was the growing range of the keyboard. At the beginning of Beethoven's career Mozart's five-octave range (FF–f3) was still the norm, but the Erard that Beethoven acquired in 1803 had five-and a-half octaves, FF–c4. By 1810 a six-octave range (FF–f4) was common, although by no means standard. Some makers offered a choice: through the 1820s Streicher and Graf made models with either six or six-and-a-half octaves (FF–f4 or CC–f4); g4 is found on some Grafs from the late 1820s but does not appear on Streichers until the mid-1830s. (None of Mendelssohn's works requires the high G; Schumann uses it in a few pieces, including the C major Fantasy.) Many pianos of the 1850s had a seven-octave range, AAA–a4 (eighty-five notes); our familiar eighty-eight only became standard at the end of the nineteenth century. (Breitman, 2021, 66)

## **2.8 Tempo Flexibility**

Old recordings and accounts of Beethoven's playing of his own composition suggest a much relaxed attitude to time, regardless of the tempo, unlike the general practice of today. Here is a note made by Beethoven on the score of the song Nord Oder Süd, composed in 1817: "100 according to Maelzel; but this must be held applicable to only the first measures, for feeling also has its tempo and this cannot entirely be expressed in this figure." (Breitman, 2021, 73)

## **2.9 Piano in the Romantic Era (1800 – 1910)**

In the Romantic Era, there were several well-known composers and pianists. Among them, Frederic Chopin was definitely the most famous one in the piano world.

Chopin's compositions were revolutionary. Although many interesting harmonies could be found, his compositions were much more melody-oriented than harmony oriented. Chopin unraveled the unique sounds that the piano could produce. In brief, Chopin further opened up the possible expressions that can be realized on this instrument. Fu. (2019, 3, 415). Chopin was one pianist that opened up the possibilities of pianistic expressions, while Franz Liszt would definitely be regarded as the one who explored all the possibilities of piano performance, especially from a technical perspective.

Franz Liszt was the one that liberated piano playing in Europe. (Schoenberg. 144) Before him, all the musicians played the piano in a restrained manner. For example, they all played with hands staying close to the keyboard (excluding Beethoven); they all played meticulously with little movements and great elegance. Liszt's performance, on the contrary, was like a thunderstorm. It could be brutal or serene or whatever he felt like. When he plays the piano, he has abundant facial expressions and giant movements in the arms. (Schoenberg. 137) Therefore, his piano compositions require the soloist to possess high technical virtuosity. The most important thing when interpreting Liszt is that the performer should always focus more on the acoustic effects, rather than the preciseness of the notes. (Schoenberg. 154)

## **2.10 Piano in the Modernist Era (1900 – Present)**

In the 20th century, the music became more and more abstract. There were many great composers, such as Messiaen, Schoenberg, Bartok, Shostakovich, and Gershwin, etc. Therefore,

it is quite impossible to write a summary to include all the characteristics of music in the modernist era.

In my opinion, Debussy was one of the most influential figures in this era. He had influenced many composers that were mentioned above. Furthermore, he has sometimes been seen as the first impressionist composer. He was not only composing music, but also experimenting with sounds. The sound of Debussy's music can be very subtle. His compositions show that he catches all the different sounds from the universe and integrates it into his music. (Fu. 2019, 1, 454)

### **2.11 African Pianism**

The piano first appeared in Nigeria in the middle of the nineteenth century and since then has remained popular. (Omojola, 1995, 1) Today, it is one of the most common musical instruments in schools, colleges, universities and in the homes of middle class families. The piano has important qualities similar to Nigerian instruments (such as ngedegwu — Igbo xylophone and dundun — Yoruba talking drum) in its melo-rhythmic and percussive character. This makes it particularly suitable for representing elements of Nigerian music. Ayo Bankole, Akin Euba and Joshua Uzoigwe — have made impressive experiments, using the piano to evoke the texture of African music. (Omojo, 1995, 1).

### **3.0 Statement of the Problem**

The wrong interpolation of piano performance techniques across the various eras is a problem I would like to address with this project work, by showing via performance, the peculiarities of each era's piano music.

#### **4.0 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this project is to sequence the evolvement of piano playing all through the ages to the present age through a piano recital, consequent upon which the following are the specific objectives:

1. To trace the development of piano playing using piano recital and selected piano pieces.
2. To use piano recital in explaining the different piano playing techniques that characterized each of these era
3. To project the African pianism technique as an evolving piano playing technique that is representative of African percussive playing.

#### **5.0 Scope of Study**

In achieving the objective as stated above, a selection of piano pieces have formed the scope of the performance. I shall be performing and analyzing some of the following pieces from the Baroque era to 21<sup>st</sup> Century African Pianism.

##### **Baroque Era**

1. Bach English Suite No. 5. Passepied in E minor: J.S. Bach
2. Prelude 1 in C Major: J.S. Bach
3. Fugue 1 in C Major: J.S. Bach
4. Prelude 12 in F Major: J.S. Bach
5. Prelude 13 in F Sharp Major: J.S. Bach
6. Fugue 13 in F Sharp Major: J.S. Bach

## **Classical Era**

1. Third Movement; Presto of Sonata in E Major: Joseph Haydn
2. First Movement; Piano Sonata 2 in G Major: Wolfgang. A. Mozart
3. Second Movement; Piano Sonata 2 in G Major: Wolfgang. A. Mozart
4. Third Movement; Piano Sonata 2 in G Major: Wolfgang. A. Mozart
5. First Movement; Sonata 9 in E Major: Ludwig.V. Beethoven
6. Second Movement; Sonata 9 in E Major: Ludwig.V. Beethoven
7. Third Movement; Sonata 9 in E Major: Ludwig.V. Beethoven

## **Romantic Era**

1. Bagattelle in G minor Op 119. No 1. Ludwig Van Beethoven
2. Waltz in D flat Major, Op 64. No 1: Federic Chopin
3. Waltz in C sharp minor, Op 64. No 2 : Federic Chopin
4. Nocturne in C Sharp minor: Frederic Chopin
5. Moment Musicaux: F.P. Schubert

## **Modernist Era**

1. Toccata: Franz Reizenstein
2. Willie Wagglestick's Walkabout: Brain Bonsor
8. Silk Hat and Walking Cane: Florence Price

## **African Pianism**

1. Nigerian Dances, no. 1. : Joshua Uzoigwe
2. Volta Fantasy: Joseph. H. K. Nketia

### 3. Sakara: Stephen Olusoji

## 6.0 Performance Note

### 6.1 The Prelude and Fugue in F Sharp Major: J.S. Bach

The prelude and Fugue in F Sharp Major is part of the twenty-four pairs of prelude and fugue, in the Well-Tempered Clavier, book one, composed by J. S. Bach, dated 1722.

**Prelude:** This prelude has Bach's favorite aria ritornello opening, with a character head, sequential tail and a closing idea. He re-runs his motivic idea with expansions, and developments, adapting it to modulate to new keys.

The ritornello runs a total of five times, (bar 6-7 in C sharp major, 2. Bar 12 in D sharp minor, the relative minor of the tonic, 3. Bar15-16 in A sharp minor (relative minor to the dominant) and D sharp minor relative minor to the tonic) creating a binary structure, with the division at bar 15. 4. Bar 18-19 in G sharp minor and A sharp minor

**Fugue:** This fugue is a prime example of Bach's ability to weave felicitous motivic relationship from standard shapes. The opening of the first counter-subject (bar 3, second beat) is a reversion, inversion, and diminution of the end of the subject. (Ledbetter. D, 2002, 196)

The fugue has a tonal answer. The difference between the subject and the answer for the sake of tonality is made from the first note of the second.

The exposition occupies the first seven bars; the subject is followed by a tonal answer from the alto and lastly another tonal answer from the bass to end the exposition.

The subject presents a sequence of descending thirds, (f"♯ , d"♯ , b' , g'♯ ), and the first countersubject emphasizes this, (bb.3–4: e"♯ , c"♯ , a'♯ ), and can create thirds either above or below the subject (see bb.15-16 and 32-3).

The fugue's form is remarkable, with a seven-bar exposition followed by two sections that are each nearly twice as lengthy as the exposition (bb.7–23 and 23–35), while the second is a free contrapuntal inversion of the first. (Specific comparisons between bb.11ff and 28ff) The transition point is identified by the piece's bb.22-3 intermediate rhythm is its most definite cadence.

## **6.2 The Piano Sonata 9 in E Major by: Ludwig Van Beethoven**

The Piano Sonata 9 in E Major, Opus 14, Number 1 is one the early-period compositions by Ludwig Van Beethoven. It was dedicated to one of his patrons at the time, named; Baroness Josefa Von Braun. It was composed in the year 1789 and arranged for string quartet by the composer in 1801.

Beethoven composed this work in Bonn, Germany, few years before he moved to Vienna in 1792.

### **First Movement (Allegro)**

The first movement is in the Sonata Form.

The first subject is introduced in the tonic key of E Major. The first subject starts with a sentence that lasted 4 bars, and upon tonic pedal point. Bar 5 is repeated an octave lower in bar 6, while bar 7 an octave higher in bar 8. Bars 9 to 10 is repeated an octave lower in bars 11-12. This brings the subject to an end and the connecting episode commences.



The connecting episode starts with the first two bars of the first subject. It modulates to the dominant of the second subject (F#), and the connecting episode finally ended on B Major in bar 22.

The two 4-bar phrases which start the second subject, 22-26 and 26-30, are repeated and slightly altered in the bass, bars 30-38. The second subject, in B Major lasted from bar 22 to 51.

The development starts with a recall of the first subject, before an entirely new episode, in C Major was introduced, from bar 66 to 82. Bar 82 to 92 are formed on the 1<sup>st</sup> subject, on the dominant pedal point.

A connecting episode leads into the Coda which is recap of the passage in bars 57-61.

### **Second Movement: Allegretto and Maggiore**

The second movement is in Ternary Form.

The Allegretto is in Simple Binary form. The coda consists of a figure, bars 52-53, taken from the 1<sup>st</sup> subject (bar 12-13), and it is repeated five times on a tonic pedal point. The first part of the “Maggiore” is in Simple Binary form. This episode also is formed upon a pedal point on G (the dominant). The second movement ends at bar 34, followed by 4 bars modulating back to the tonic key of E minor. The movement goes right on again into the coda. Bars 27-38.

### **Third Movement: Allegro Comodo**

The third movement is in Rondo Form, and in the key of E Major. It has three parts.

The 1<sup>st</sup> part starts with the first subject in E Major (bar 1-16) after which an episode (bar 16-23) commences and introduces the second subject in B Major, (bar 23-31). The first subject resurfaces again, (bar 32-40) followed by another episode. (Bar 40-49).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part introduces the third subject in G major and E minor. (Bar 49-85)

The 3<sup>rd</sup> part starts with the first subject again, in the original key, (bar 85-93), then followed by an episode, (93-100). The second subject is introduced now in A major. A variation of the First subject in the original key concludes the work. (bar 104-110).

### **6.3 Moments Musicaux, OP 94, NO 3: Franz Schubert**

In the space of eight years, from 1820 and his death in 1828 aged just 31, Schubert published more than 100 works, including most of his major solo piano music. Among them are the six *Moments musicaux* Op.94 which achieved immediate popularity. (Eales, A, 2019) The *Moments musicaux* is written in a simple ternary form and in the style of popular dances from the time.

The two measures of accompaniment prepare in anticipation the introduction of the first melodic event of the composition, the embellishment of A flat by the grace note B flat (bar 3). This neighbor-note movement is, very much a foreground event, and one with motivic shapes that are basic to the development of the piece. It is right here, at this beginning, that Schubert establishes the grace note figure as a fundamental motive and conditions our ear so to speak, to expect that melodic statements of A flat will follow those of B flat later on. This expectation proves to be the most motivating element and provides the basis for the idea that governs the course of the pieces. Holland, M. (1982, 8).

Bars 3 to 6 thus elaborate Schubert's idea as he arpeggiate and ascended in tones to the F-minor triad. The repeated statements of f2 in bar 7, which continue the tonic's f2 from bar 6, show a pronounced restlessness and a marked tendency to climb still higher, yet it appears that the material.

The middle section (from bar 19) starts with a shift of the melody to A flat major, the relative major of F minor, with A flat2 (tonic) in bass and C5 (third) in the melody. This material was repeated from bar 26, before the dominant and tonic chord of f minor resurfaces again with a forte dynamics ( bar 35), to remind us that the music started on f minor and may return there any time soon.

Soon after, the third section comes in with recapitulation of the first theme and this time, quietly in a pp dynamics. The buildup into the coda starts at bar 59, and ends in f minor, but at the repeat of this connecting episode to the coda, it ends on f Major. The coda therefore firmly settled on f major.

#### **6.4 Silk Hat and Walking Cane: Florence Price**

One of her last pieces of art before she tragically passed away in 1953 was Dances in the Canebrakes. Dances in the Canebrakes is a small piano suite. It comprises three movements: the first movement: Nimble Feet, second movement: Tropical noon and the third movement: Silk Hat and Walking Cane. Burns, A. (2020)

This movement's cakewalk style is inspired by the ballrooms of the late 19th century. During the opening sequence, a glittering melody flows down the keyboard, setting up the movement's central theme. This movement is divided into three distinct pieces, each of which represents a different aspect of ballroom and theatrical dancing.

The first movement introduces the primary theme, which is a folk-like melody and built on a pentatonic scale. A patterned left hand accompaniment provides harmony against running notes in the right hand, as observed from the very first bar. Price explored this characteristic element from Ragtime and Jazz, and the big leaps in the left-hand; such as in (bar 18, 31, 32) is a characteristic element of Stride Piano.

The second movement (from bar 55) introduces a short secondary theme

After a reprise of the opening cascading melody, Silk Hat and Walking Cane comes to its coda.

### **6.5 Nigerian Dance No. 1: Joshua Uzoigwe**

Nigerian Dance No.1 is a characteristic example of Joshua Uzoigwe's use of polyrhythms in his music. He combines different types of rhythmic patterns in each work to give it life and vitality. (Sadoh, 2007, 76).

In this work, Uzoigwe employed his interesting usage of polyrhythms, in the interplay of constant and variable rhythms.

The piece starts with the bass building up its rhythm with perfect 5<sup>th</sup> and perfect 4<sup>th</sup> intervals, happening in succession. In Bars 5 and 6, the rhythmic pattern of the left hand is already fully introduced. And from bar 7, the melody line, having a contrasting rhythm is introduced. The simultaneous interaction of rhythmic variations and repetitions over a period of time makes repetition exciting in his music.

The work is in ternary form. The first subject is 4 bars long (bars 7-10) and was repeated and brought to a close in bar 14. The second subject emerged with different and more contrasting polyrhythms; responsorial, sequential and sounding more argumentative. The melody line prevailed eventually in bar 25, and in bar 26 and 27, a dialogue was possible between the two lines for the first time in this subject, as bass repeated the semiquavers initially stated by the melody.

The third part is a not exact recapitulation of the first subject, as the repetition from bar 33 is done an octave lower. The coda commences with a tempo rubato and a change of time signature, and contrasting dynamics. The coda ends with reversal of the thematic material in the bass, from where the whole music emanated.

## 7.0 PRODUCTION NOTE

### 7.1 The Prelude and Fugue in F Sharp Major: J.S. Bach

**Prelude:** This is the very first piece I started practicing for this project work. I took time to understand and memorize the ritornellos and how it goes from tonic to the dominant and from the relative minor to its dominant. Once I had memorized the different change of keys, it was easy not to mix them up, because it was a common to mix them up and begin playing bars one has not yet gotten to.

**Fugue:** J.S. Bach's fugue in F sharp major is one of the tasking work I did for this project. Highlighting the voices as they go across the three voices was quite a serious work. I spent around 3 to 4 hours daily practicing my pieces. Having previously played the prelude and fugue 1 in C Major, it provided me the experience to take on this piece. In the course of practicing this fugue, bar 14,15 and 31 and bar proved quite difficult to comprehend, because of the upper and lower neighbor notes in the bass. Slow practice and adhering to the fingering suggestions were able to fix these.

The image shows a musical score for the Prelude and Fugue in F Sharp Major by J.S. Bach. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The score is divided into two systems by a vertical bar line.

## 7.2 The Piano Sonata 9 in E Major by: Ludwig Van Beethoven

One of the major technical passages to tackle comes as early as the as in the bar 5 and 6, playing semiquaver notes, in an interval of thirds, multi-octaves with hands crossing.



To effectively play this correctly, I had to engage slow practice, and using the suggested fingering pattern. To play the piece with clarity, I practice it at a moderate tempo, so I am not too fast while approaching the semiquavers.

The third movement has the performance direction “Allegro Comodo”, meaning it should be performed “comfortably quick”. The triplets in the bass against octave crotchets in the melody, requires that I practice at a comfortable pace, else it may be muddled up with mistakes.



At some point, from bar 48, the accompaniment switched from the left to the right hand, leaving me with the task to switch loudness from right hand to the left. I had to practice this slowly and hands separately.



### 7.3 Moments Musicaux, Op 94, No 3: Franz Schubert

Tempo rubato is one of the major characteristics of the romantic era. Pieces do not often come with a marking point to apply the rubato. This is left to the performer's discretion. So for me, at bar 9 and 10, ending with a rubato sounds perfect when bringing the principal theme to a close.



Therefore I had to apply rubato here and the endings of other phrases.

### 7.4 Silk Hat and Walking Cane: Florence Price

The challenge I faced while learning this piece was perfecting the big leaps in the left-hand playing against syncopated rhythm in the melody. This leaps occur in bar 18, 31 and 32.





I had to apply the technique of stretching out my arm to hit the lower bass note, and quickly returning it back to strike corresponding chord that follows it. Isolating this and practicing it separately will enhance accuracy when playing that section of the piece.

### **7.5 Nigerian Dance No. 1: Joshua Uzoigwe**

Having to interpret this piece and bring out the Nigerian dance music in it was quite a work. The interpretation ought to come out with a picture of the both the Nigerian musicians, and perhaps those dancing to the music. I worked on making this interpretation felt, first by me the performer and my audience.

### **8.0 Limitation of Performance**

Generally, I practiced about 3 to 4 hours daily. I would have loved to spend more time on the piano, but other academic assignments will not permit me.

The peculiarity of a Faith Based institution has its role to play in how limited my free time is. Our daily and weekly schedule is well structured, such that we must adhere to them. So one could only practice his instruments within the space of time available for academic works. Another challenge was the issue of power. Poor power supply meant that one could not spend longer time practicing with focus.

## 9.0 References

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## **Appendix I**

### **Copies of Piano Pieces Performed**

## Appendix II

### Pictures of Various Types of Pianos



Pianoforte Of Bartolomeo Cristofori



Square Piano



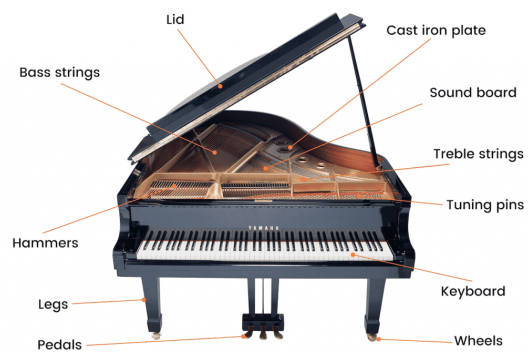
Vogel Grand Piano



The Upright Piano



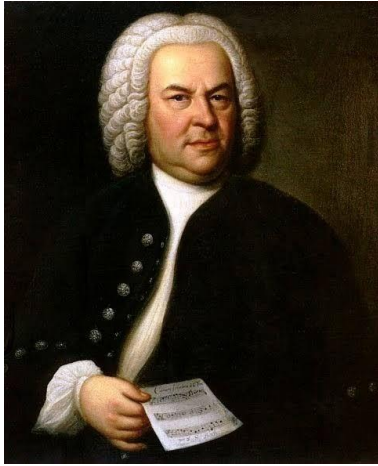
The Erard Piano During  
L.V. Beethoven's Lifetime



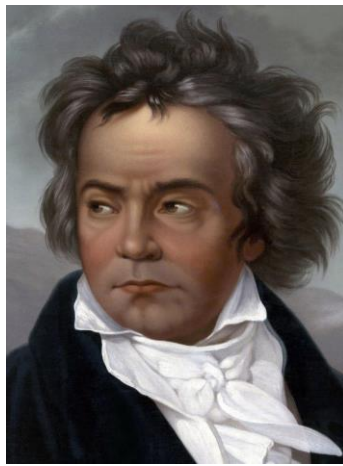
The 21<sup>st</sup> century grand piano

### Appendix III

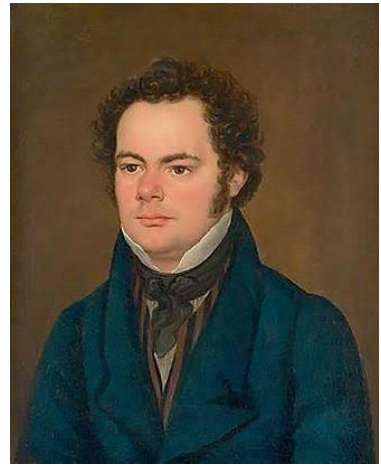
#### Pictures of Composers Who's Works Were Performed



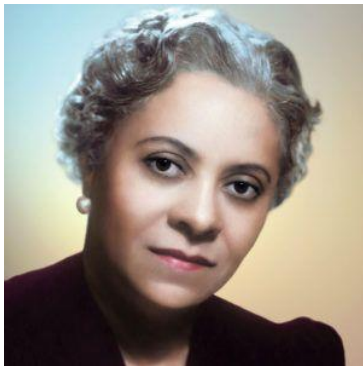
Johan Sebastian Bach



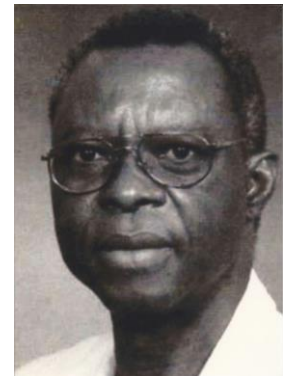
Ludwig Van Beethoven



Franz Peter Schubert



Florence Price



Joshua Uzoigwe