**CREATIVITY AND INDUSTRY: LIFE AND MUSICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF REVEREND ABRAHAM TAIWO OLAJIDE OLUDE**

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Abstract

This study investigates the life history and musical contributions of Reverend Abraham Taiwo Olajide Olude to the development of church music in Nigeria. This distinguished music scholar, generally called Ola Olude, was one of the pioneers of church music in Nigeria and he experienced the rich folkloric dimensions of Yoruba culture that influenced his musical compositions and his general disposition to Yoruba church music. Reverend Ola Olude was a talented composer and hymnologist of no mean degree: he composed many indigenous songs with melodious tunes which had meaningful words. The paper therefore, gives an historical account of his contributions to development of Yoruba church music. The theoretical framework for the study is anchored on Akin Euba intercultural music model which addresses the phenomenon of musical works deriving from more than one culture. The study makes use of ethno-musicological research design with textual analysis of data. The study therefore contributes to knowledge thus: it fills the gap in knowledge by investigating and documents some of his compositions; the results also serve as the link between the past and the present which also assist in securing the future of liturgical Yoruba church music.

**Keywords**: Music, Church, Liturgy, Intercultural, hymnology,

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**Introduction**

The origin of church music among the Yoruba can be traced to the activities of European missionaries in Lagos and its environs which began in the mid nineteenth century. The immediate result of that endeavor was the establishment of churches and mission schools in the south western Nigeria, particularly, Abeokuta, Badagry, and Lagos (Ajayi, 2001). In Christian religious practice, music constitutes an integral part of worship. All the worship, prayer, and preaching activities of the church are carried out in the modes of speech and music. Vidal (1986) stated that church music was one of the modes through which the various Christian liturgies were handed to believers in Christianity by the various groups of European Missionaries. He added that the exact liturgical music used for divine services in Europe in the form of hymns, chants, canticles, and anthems, was imported by both the Anglican and the Methodist missionaries and introduced to the early Yoruba Christian converts. However, the major musical practice in the early Yoruba churches was singing of Christian hymns because involved congregational participation. But hymn singing constituted a new musical experience for the early Yoruba Christian converts (Vidal, 1986: Euba, 1992). It was in the form of texts of European hymns (commonly in English language) that was translated into Yoruba language and sung to European hymn tunes.

This Europeanized style of singing experienced by early Yoruba Christian converts brought about musical conflict in two areas. First, the singing of Yoruba words to European hymn tunes brought about a clash between the tone of the Yoruba texts and the European hymn melodies. Some scholars like Vidal (1986), Euba (1992), Dosunmu (2005), and Samuel (2009) have observed that Yoruba language is tonal; therefore, the meaning of a Yoruba word depends on the pitch applied to each syllable in the word. Hence, when singing such hymn in Yoruba, there is a change in its textual meaning because of the change in pitch applied to each syllable as dictated by the European melody of the hymn. Euba (1992) and Samuel (2009) explained that the change from the natural pitch of Yoruba words occasioned by the European tune applied did not only distort the meaning of the hymn, but more often than not, gave totally different meaning which is contrary to the intended original meaning of the hymn. This type of music was strange to the early Yoruba Christian converts, and they were not in any way comfortable with this foreign way of singing. Second, early Yoruba Christian had a traditional musical background which usually combined singing, drumming and dancing as a tripartite musical experience. Yoruba traditional music which naturally elicited dancing from its musicians and audience was different from European hymns in which there was no dance. Early European missionaries to Yoruba land like their counterparts in other parts of Africa regarded virtually all aspects of African art forms as devilish. They therefore associated Yoruba traditional practices including music and its vigorous drumming with paganism. Consequently, drumming and dancing were forbidden in churches.

The process of their emergence and activities gained momentum in the early century causing *Yoruba native airs (YNAs)* as an alternative indigenous idiom of church music to spread widely among Yoruba churches. It eventually culminated in the genre attaining the status of a definitive Yoruba church music tradition in the 1950s. The attainment of this distinctive status was particularly signaled by the publication of *M’ayokun* by A.T. Ola Olude, who was then, a Reverend Minister in the Nigerian Methodist Mission. The definitive style of *YNAs* tradition of choral music in Christian liturgy therefore, derives mainly from the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, textual and instrumental accompaniment idiom of Yoruba folk songs in combination with that of elements of European church music. In order to engage a detailed study of the *YNA* tradition of choral music in Christian liturgy, one distinguished generation of *YNA composer was* identified and se1ected in the person of Abraham Taiwo Olajide Olude, and had published a large number of the songs which he composed between 1920 and 1980.

Statement of the Problem

Music scholars, such as Omojola (2001), Vidal (1986), Euba (1977), Jones (1976), Phillips (1953) and others have addressed the discrepancies that ensued in Yoruba church music because of hymn singing that involved the fitting of African words to European hymn-tunes. However, a study of the religious and socio-cultural background that precipitated the *Yoruba native air* choral music in Christian liturgy is yet to receive enough scholarly attention. In the same vein, a detailed and analytical account of the lives and works of prominent composers of the *YNA* tradition of choral music in Christian liturgy is yet to be fully explored. An analytical discussion of the conceptual framework, and the liturgical themes addressed in *YNAs* is therefore necessary to reveal the musical features that characterized the vocal genre.

Earlier studies of Nigerian music (Omojola, 2001, Vidal: 1986, Sowande, 1967) have provided names of some prominent composers of the *YNA* tradition of choral music in Christian liturgy. It has been observed that neither the biographies nor the works of such frontline composers of the tradition have been subjected to in-depth analysis. The demise of most of the early *YNA* practitioners, coupled with insufficient musical documentation has caused the tradition in its original form, to fall into relative disuse. There is therefore, the need for a study such as this that investigates the history and works of *YNA* choral composer between 1920 and 1980 to fill the gap in knowledge.

This study therefore, fills the gap in knowledge by investigating and documenting the history of *YNA* choral music in Christian liturgy and analysing some of the works by one of its frontline exponents. The results derived from this study serves as a link between the past and the present which will also assist in securing the future of Liturgical *Yoruba native air* choral music composition. The primary aim of this study is to provide a historical account of the YNA tradition of choral music in Christian liturgy. In order to do this, the study investigates the religious and socio-cultural circumstances that gave birth to the *YNA* tradition of choral music in Christian liturgy and studies one of the prominent composers of the musical genre in person of Reverend Ola Olude and provides detailed biographical information on his live, and contributions to the *YNA* tradition.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical orientation for this study is anchored on Akin Euba’s intercultural music model which addresses the phenomenon of musical works deriving from more than one culture. Euba broadly defined intercultural music as: … that in which elements from two or more cultures are integrated. The composer of this music usually belongs to one of the cultures from which the elements are derived... (Euba, 1989:116). Kimberlin and Euba (1995) noted that although it is not known when the expression intercultural music was first used, other scholars, notably Helm (1981), Kartomi (1987) and Baumann (1990) have also used it and other terms that were related to it. Further expanded the concept when they explained various dimensions of intercultural activity are Kimberlin and Euba (1995) that;

A composer writing in an Idiom acquired from a culture other than his or her own is involved in an intercultural activity, even though the music that he or she produces is not necessarily intercultural. For example, when an African composer writes a fugue in the style of Bach, in which he or she makes no use of African resources, intercultural activity takes place, but the music itself is not intercultural (Kimberlin and Euba, 1995:2).

He further explained that “intercultural activity does not always imply creativity, but can be determined by performance. In this case, the music and the performer originate from different cultures. The mastery of Western music by Asian artistes (and vice versa) is an example of this category” (Euba, 1989:116). In this vein, Euba identifies a composition as intercultural if it employs idioms and elements derived from more than one music culture. He therefore situates the analyses of such composition within the context of intercultural music. *YNA* tradition of choral music in Christian liturgy is a product of Yoruba and European cultural interaction. Interculturalism, therefore, serves as a viable theoretical framework for this study. The theory of Interculturalism was applied within this study for the analysis of the western and Yoruba traditional musical elements found in the *YNAs* composers.

**Music in Early Yoruba Church and the Rise of Musical Dissatisfaction (1840-1890)**

The introduction of Christianity to Yoruba people by European missionaries dates back to the 1840s (Ajayi, 1965). The concentration of early missionary activities around the coastal towns of Lagos and Badagry as well as the inland area of Abeokuta involved fervent proselyte endeavour through which the monotheistic concept of the Supreme Being as revealed in the Judeo-Christian theology was introduced to the Yoruba (Euba 1989). According to Vidal (1986);

In 1841, the Wesleyan missionaries visited Badagry, and reached Abeokuta in 1846. The Church Missionaries Society (CMS) landed later in Badagry in 1843 with Rev. H. Townsend. The first divine service by the CMS was held in Abeokuta town on January 5, 1853, while the first CMS baptism was held on February 5, 1848. In 1843, Rev. D. Hinderer visited Lagos. Between 1841 and 1902, Euro- Christian religious and cultural influences swept through the southern parts of Nigeria and brought with them the importation of Christian religious music from Europe (Vidal 1986: 70).

The early missionaries used music effectively to promote Christianity in Yorubaland; this is due to the fact that both Christianity and Yoruba traditional religions make good use of music (Euba, 1989:16, 1992:46). These circumstances therefore, provided the environment for the earliest significant form of cross-cultural musical experience of Yoruba Christian converts. The missionaries were able to admonish and counsel converts through interpreters but they still had the problem of how to integrate music into worship in the early Yoruba church. The natural solution to this problem, the missionaries felt, was to translate the texts of English hymns to Yoruba and use the original English hymn tunes to sing these Yoruba texts.

However, two important problems manifested in this use of European music for worship in the Yoruba congregations; to start with, the European music introduced to Yoruba converts as church music was both foreign and strange. It fell short of what the Yoruba converts were familiar with as music for worship based on their experience from their traditional musical background. Secondly, the translated texts became meaningless when sung to these European hymn tunes. Due to the tonality of the Yoruba language, there is an underlying speech in Yoruba melody in Yoruba words which determines the meaning of such words. A conflict therefore ensured between the speech melodies and the melodies of the hymn tunes to the extent that the meanings of the Yoruba words were often distorted and made nonsensical by the application of European melodies to the words. Mbure (1972:6) remarked, “To save Nigerian congregations from this sort of nonsense has been one of the life-long goals of Dr. A.T. Ola Olude, a Nigerian Methodist Minister”.

Furthermore, the traditional musical background of the converts had drumming and dancing as integral parts of music making. This was totally excluded from the type of music which the missionaries introduced with Christianity. In fact, drumming and dancing were not allowed in the early Yoruba churches. Yet, according to Jones; “Drumming is the very heart of African music. In it are exhibited all those features of rhythmic interplay wherein African music differs fundamentally from the music of the West” (1954:39).

The Yoruba converts could not fully relate with the European hymns and chants because they lacked the rhythmic and dance element, and so were confronted with a different way of worship which they found difficult to deal with. While solemnity and sobriety pervaded the worship atmosphere of the church instituted by the early missionaries, rhythmic vibrancy and excitement were frequent features of the music used in Yoruba traditional worship. To the Yoruba, dance in religious context is an act of worship. On the contrary, early Christian missionaries among the Yoruba saw things differently. Hence the atmosphere of worship in the early Yoruba church was totally different from that to which the early converts were accustomed. Their potential for emotional expression was therefore repressed, restricted and constrained by the European expressions of worship. The Yoruba worshippers had to endure this musical condition in which they found themselves for some decades but were naturally poised to seek alternatives. This problem led to musical dissatisfaction among the early Yoruba converts to Christianity. Church men comprising clergymen, teachers, catechists, choirmasters and organists began to react to this dissatisfaction by providing an alternative music that was more amenable to the Yoruba congregations.

**Schism in Mission Churches and the Birth of Independent African Churches (1880-1920)**

Apart from the musical dissatisfaction experienced the early Yoruba Christian converts, the general socio-cultural environment of missionary centres presented other dimensions of dissatisfaction with the colonial establishment. According to Vidal (1977), the socio-cultural environment of the centres of missionary activities particularly Lagos featured a multi-cultural setting consisting of a number of distinct communities:

First were the missionaries and their host of converted Christians who were emulating the new culture ... A second group consisted of the European community itself. A third group was made up of the Brazilian Emancipados (usually Roman Catholics) and the returnees from Sierra-Leone. Members of this group resided around Lagos and Badagry. A fourth group was the Islamic community which by 1861 numbered about eight hundred in a Lagos population of 30,000. The fifth and by far the largest group was the traditional community made up of non-converts who still continued to live in situations where the continuation of traditional practices was made possible. Each community pursued its own religious, political, social and cultural goals. (Vidal, 1977:76).

The Saros, who had had the privilege of western education, were naturally employed into the civil service, mission schools and the church, while the emancipated slaves from Brazil with less exposure to western education were employed generally as artisans. The Saros were already exposed to western music and had developed taste for Victorian concert and theatre traditions.

Members of the indigenous community therefore saw them as a privileged class to which some of them also aspired. However, the indigenous community also saw some of the perceived contradictions in the lives of these new elite. The Saros were neither ‘here nor there’, aspiring as much as possible to behave and be like their European masters and yet were experiencing inequality with their European counterparts. Their expectations of promotion in their places of work were not met. In addition, the European church leaders wanted the African to abandon some of their cultural practices such as polygamy and traditional ritual ceremonies. African ways of life including dressing was accorded low esteem. All traditional performing arts including singing, drumming and dancing were seen as elements of religious ritualistic practices and were therefore prohibited for Yoruba converts. This dissatisfying cultural environment provided the context for the reaction of the African elite within the church, including Yoruba song writers who started to compose Christian songs in Yoruba styles. With regards to this development, Omojola commented that;

Towards the end of the century, for political, economic and cultural reasons, the Black community in Lagos began to question the dominance of the Europeans. European musical activities suffered in this process and traditional Nigerian music began to find its way into the church and onto the concert platform (Omojola, 1995:16).

This was the state of affairs in Lagos and some of the other missionary centres which ultimately culminated in the schism in the mission churches and later gave birth to the Independent African Churches (IAC’s). According to Abodunde (2009: 159), the Yoruba church elite “. . . were gradually realizing themselves and the fact that they should have a say in the affairs that concern them. Omojola (1995) asserted that they were becoming self assured. The result of this self assurance was that they started to demand a more positive approach to traditional African culture from their European counterparts. This led to a movement in cultural nationalism in which the Yoruba converts started to reject European domination as manifested in European dressing, names and other European ways of life as well as European music.

The birth of independent African churches (IAC’s) was to mainly relieve the political, social, and cultural pressures of the day; hence they ended up replicating the liturgy and polity of mission churches in spite of their independence and autonomy (Ayegboyin and Isola, 1997). However, the independence and autonomy created sufficient room for fundamental changes in the music and the mode of worship. Musicians in these new IAC’s now had the independence to create music that was more in tune with the musical worldview of the Yoruba. The brand of music that resulted from this creative process formed the bedrock of *Yoruba native air* tradition in Christian liturgy.

**Early manifestations of Yoruba Native Airs in Christian Liturgy (1890-1930)**

The earliest record of Yoruba music in print was made by Henry Townsend in his 1842. Townsend documented a brief vocabulary and list of personal names with their meanings, three proverbs, two texts of about six sentences each and a song with the words and tune supplied (Hair 1967). The mode b37 which the tune was supplied was not specified. There have been efforts to indigenize church music as early as the mid 1800s. In 1861, a hymnbook containing a collection of hymns composed in the traditional Yoruba style and sung to traditional tunes was printed in Abeokuta. These hymns were composed and employed in services by a congregation in Ota, which had Rev. James White a Sierra Leonean, as Pastor (Hair 1967). James White encouraged his congregation to compose songs according to Yoruba indigenous music sensibilities. Towards the end of the century, in a letter to Moloney, the then Governor of Lagos, James White attested to the success of his experiment in the following words:

The Otas (a sub-ethnic group among the Yoruba) being reported to be famous native poets and musicians and finding a difficulty to teach the new converts to Christianity English tunes, I asked them to compose their own hymns and songs, which they did, subject to my corrections with regard to things unscriptural, and the collection contained in the book is the result. They are used to this day in divine worship. There is nothing like rhyming or metre. The hymns and songs being their own composition, they are intelligibly sung by old and young, and I have no doubt that the use of it has tended to deepen their devotion. (Moloney, 1889:290).

From Hair’s account, it cannot be deduced if the song documented by Townsend was used in church or not. However, the fact that he also documented a brief vocabulary, a list of names and their meaning and proverbs suggests that the document was not necessarily for use in the Yoruba church. However the accounts of Rev. James White’s activities in Ota demonstrated that Yoruba converts had long desired to solve the problems posed by the use of European music in Christian worship in Yoruba churches. Furthermore, the fact that the translated European hymns did not fully satisfy the spiritual yearnings of the Yoruba converts is reflected in the accounts of Moloney to the effect that the songs were intelligibly sung by old and young, and that it tended to deepen their devotion.

According to Lynn (1967), Abeokuta served as a cradle for the development of native entertainment in which European and Yoruba forms of entertainments were presented side by side in the same concert programme. This later influenced a similar development in Lagos. Lynn commented on a spectacular concert given in 1898 by the Abeokuta choral society and conducted by Rev. Olubi of the CMS, in which European and Yoruba culture came together most spectacularly. The concert featured Handel’s “But thou didst not leave my soul in hell” sung in Yoruba, an original composition “*O Ye K’a F’ope F’Olorun*”, a piece played on the harmonium, a Yoruba translation of Evangeline. Similar occasions of fascinating blend of European and Yoruba culture in entertainment took place in the late 1880s into the early 1900s. An example of such took place in 1900 at the Wesleyan Itesi church.

In Lagos, the Ebute Metta Choral Society, under the influence of Emmanuel Sowande who played the harmonium at the 1898 concert of the Abeokuta choral society, began to experiment with the blending of European and Yoruba culture in entertainment, This gives strong indication of the role of Abeokuta as the cradle of these intercultural activities which later culminated in the birth of the YNA tradition in Christian liturgy. The roles of Abeokuta and Lagos in the development of *YNA* is demonstrated by certain key personalities from these two cities whose efforts proved to be foundational to the achievement of the three composers whose lives and works constitute the main subject of this.

**Life and Works of Abraham Taiwo Olajide Olude**

Rev Dr. Abraham Taiwo Olajide Olude was born at Abeokuta on the 16th July, 1908. His parents were Pa Joseph Olude (then, the Odofin of Ikija) and Madam Christiana Bamgbola Olude nee Olymeye. Pa Joseph Olude was instrumental in the conversion of his wife to Christianity. He started his primary education at Ikereku Primary School, Abeokuta and completed it at Agbeni Methodist School, Ibadan. He proceeded to the Wesley College Ibadan where he studied between 1921 and 1925. There he distinguished himself as a bright student, a keen sportsman and a talented musician. It was at Wesley College that Rev. Olude had his first close encounter with the harmonium. Harmonium playing was one of the lessons Wesley college students took under Rev, E.G. Nightingale who was the founder of the Theological department and Father of Sub-Pastors, Wesley College, Ibadan.

Being a talented and naturally creative person, Rev. Olude started composing barely two years after the commencement of his study in Wesley College. From his interview with Rev. Olude, Mbure (1972) reported that Rev. Olude was strengthened by the example of hymn-writing of the Wesley brothers who founded English Methodism in the eighteenth century, Dr. Olude began to compose in 1923 and three years later his songs were being used in churches. He began his marathon tour of Yoruba-land visiting schools, addressing pupils and teachers, urging them to take a keener interest in indigenous music (Mbure, 1972:6). At the college, he passed the junior Cambridge examination and also successfully completed the sub-pastor’s course. He was retained in the college as a tutor while his contemporaries were posted to work in other stations. Rev. Olude re-enrolled in the college as a student in 1932 for the final course which he completed in 1933. He qualified as a minister of religion in 1934, and was ordained as a Methodist Minister in 1938. On the 10th of January 1935, Rev. Olude married Alice Tolulola nee Akintilu at the St. Jude’s Church Ebute Metta. The marriage was blessed with five children namely Emmanuel Oluseye Olude, Nathaniel Olugbolahan Olude, Matthew Kolawole Olude, Dr. Isaac Olusola Olude, and Andrew Oluyemisi Olude (deceased).

**Professional Activities**

Rev Olude worked meritoriously as priest in various capacities moving from one circuit to another. Between 1934 and 1938 he worked in Ikorodu and Ago-Iwoye and later in Badagry between 1938 and 1942. He moved up north to Kaduna and worked there till 1943. He then moved to Jos where he worked till 1946. He was posted back to the south, where he worked at Itesi Trinity Methodist Church, Abeokuta at between 1946 and 1953; Lagos (Olowogbowo Circuit) 1953-1959; Oyo 1959-1963 and back to Lagos (Ereko Circuit) 1963- 1968. At Ereko, he was appointed Chairman of the Western District of the Methodist Church Nigeria. He finally moved back to Ikorodu and remained there from 1970 to 1975, where he retired from active service on the 3 1St of December 1975.

**Musical Compositions**

Growing up in Yoruba land of the early twentieth century, Olude experienced the rich folkloric dimensions of Yoruba culture, which later influenced his compositions and his general disposition to Yoruba church music. As a church minister, he saw indigenous music as an important vehicle for the propagation of the gospel in Nigeria. He was a talented composer and hymnologist of no mean degree; lie composed many indigenous songs with melodious tunes which had meaningful words which according to Rev. Olude, “makes the heart joyful”. This informed the name with which he titled his most popular hymn book, “*M’ayokun*” meaning, provider of full joy, published in 1954.

In 1969, Rev. Ola Olude published a seventy-six page book called “Iwe Orin lye ati Iyin”. This book contains sixty-one songs for use at divine services throughout the Christian calendar year. Like *M’ayokun*, the songs are written in monophonic form with the options of organ accompaniments or a-capella singing. “*Iwe Orin Iye ati Iyin*” contains songs for use at divine services throughout the Christian calendar year. Similar to *M’ayokun*, *Iwe Orin Iye ati Iyin* was written in monophonic form with the options of organ accompaniments or a-capella singing. Other books published by Olude were “*Aiye l‘anse*” which is the story of the prodigal son reduced later to a play, “*So fun Jesu*”. “*Ipin ayo loni*” and “*Ase, l‘oruko Oluwa*” - the last three were prayer books. *M’ayo-kun* and *Iwe Orin Iye ati Iyin* are the two main publications of Olude, which contains songs composed to suit different occasions, times and seasons of the church year.

Olude’s compositions were made popular by many church choirs and especially his singing group which he named the “*M’ayokun* musical party”. M’ayokun musical party was an inter-denominational group with membership ranged from primary school children 70 year olds, thereby representing various classes of the community which Rev. Olude usually used to popularise his new song. He also published two other Hymn books titled Yoruba hymns and caro1s (1964) and Yoruba Wedding music (*A nseye Igbeyawo*), 1968, respectively, in which some harmony were provided through the input of some other musicians whose efforts were acknowledged by Rev. Olude. School pupils were not left out of Rev. Olude’s compositions. In 1940, He composed *M’ewe Yo, Iwe orin Idaraya fun awon Ile-Eko ni ile Yoruba* (Make the chi1dren Joyful, an entertainment song book for pupils in Yorubá land).

**Tour of *M’ayokun* Choral Group**

The period between 1946 and 1953 when Rev. Olude was the Methodist minister at the Itesi Trinity Methodist Church Abeokuta, the M’ayokun musical party was very much in operation. One important member of the M’ayokün musical party during that time is Gilbert Popoola Dopemu. He was the organist of the *M’ayokun* musical party, Pope Dopemu as he is commonly called was circuit organist, Methodist churches, Abeokuta, between 1945 and 1950. He was also organist of Imo Methodist church near Igbein Abeokuta, which was the local church he attended within the circuit. As the organist of M’ayokun musical party, Dopemu closely supported Rev. Olude in the musical activities of the M’ayokun musical party. Concerning the authorship of songs, one of the songs in M’aylc6n titled *Yin Olu Ikore* (Praise the Lord of harvest) acknowledges Dopemu’s name as the composer. However, Pope Dopemu told this researcher that in addition to *Yin Olu Ikore*, he, (Dopemu) was the composer of *Ko Tun Si Ore Bi Jesu* and a few other songs published in *M’ayokun*.

In demonstration of the over-riding passion that Rev. Olude had for the spread of genuine Yoruba music in the churches, the M’ayokun musical party went on tour of churches in several towns and cities in Yoruba land giving renditions of the M’áyç3kiln songs to the admiration of several host congregations. Mr. Seye Olude (Rev. Olude’s first son), recalled the story of the group’s visit to churches like Otapete Methodist church Ilesa, which at that time, had Rev. Bolaji Idowu as the Minister in charge. The group also performed at the St. Paul’s church Breadfruit Lagos. The *M’ayokun* musical party occasionally performed as a socio-cu1tural group for example they performed at the Egbe Orno Oduduwa Conference 1954, held at the centenary hail, Ake, Abeokuta. In addition to these Mbure (1972), also reported that

When the Methodist Church became an autonomous body in Nigeria, Dr. Olude composed and directed his ‘M’AYOKUN’ Choir to sing special tunes which have been collected into a volume. When Nigeria attained her independence, his songs were amplified from Lagos City’s Race Course and Liberty Stadium and broadcast to the whole nation as the fever for freedom reached a climax. His songs for praise, special occasions, marriage, death, festivals, thanksgiving and adoration are constantly played over the radio. (Mbure, 1972:7).

Rev. Olude’s work as a composer was defined by three main features. First and foremost, he was a naturally talented musician. Secondly, as a champion of cultural nationalism, he had a deep quest for developing a culturally relevant body of church music for Yoruba Christians. Finally, he felt a strong need to correct the speech-tone-Song-tune discrepancy of the Yoruba translations of European hymns. These three factors combined to thrust on Olude a self-imposed responsibility of proving that it is possible to compose Yoruba hymns in verse form without creating the speech-tone-Song-tune discrepancies which hitherto had been the practice with European hymns translated to Yoruba and sung to European tunes.

In a way to articulate Rev. Olude’s passion for Yoruba idioms in church music, Mbure (1972), quoting Rev Olude said “We need to develop and perfect our *native airs* and adapt this to our worship, because they convey our intentions better and more vividly than foreign music” (Mbure, 1972:6). By the time of the interview he had faced many obstacles for about fifty years in his self appointed task of promoting indigenous church music. He thereby gave himself the added responsibility of developing a Yoruba hymn book that could be adopted as an alterative to the existing hymn books which consisted mainly of European hymns translated to Yoruba.

Even though he was a largely self motivated and self taught musician, he later came in contact with Fela Sowande, the renowned and distinguished pioneer Yoruba music scholar who encouraged him in his musical endeavours. Rev. Olude composed and collected many Yoruba hymns and distributed them widely among churches in Yorubaland as pamphlets. He later compiled many of these compositions and collection which were published in two main hymnbooks; “*M’ayokun*” (provider of full Joy) and “*lye ati lyin*” (Life and Praise). The foregoing hymns constituted a poetic “tour de force” for, while it is easy to make a tune follow the speech-tones in the first verse, in the succeeding verses, the composer has to think of quite different words which correlated thematically with the first verse, yet when sung, preserve the same sequence of rise and fall in tone as those of the first verse. (Jones 1976:47).

These hymn books, particularly Mayokun became quite popular among various congregations across denominational lines all over Yorubaland and beyond. Two of Rev.

Olude‘s hymns taken from M’ayokün were harmonised and set in staff notation by Fela Sowande have appeared in other co1lectons. Hymn 16, *Ojo oni lo tan* (now the day is over) with English words intended for African schools, while hymn 29, *Ore elese to ku* (friend of sinner who died) was set to repeated Alleluias in the Cambridge Hymnal. Apart from his work as a composer and hymnodist, he also published a play *Aiye l’anse* (we function in the world) in which he dramatised the story of the prodigal son. As a Minister of the Gospel, he also published three prayer books namely, *So fun Jesu* (Tell it to Jesus) *Ipin Ayo loni* (heritage of joy today) and *Ase l‘oruko Oluwa* (Amen, in the Lord’s name). After living an eventful and musically active life, Rev. A.T. Ola Olude took ill briefly and died at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital at about 1.00am on the 30th May 1980.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

*M’ayokun* as a hymn book consists of texts and melodies in tonic *solfa*. It contains no suggestions for harmony whatsoever. The recording of some of *M’ayokun YNAs* downloaded from the British archives were all in unison and all the members of the M’ayokun choral society interviewed in the course of this study stated that they sang only in unison. Rev. Olude’s son, Mr. Seye Olude, also stated categorically that his father advocated unisonous rendition of Yoruba choral songs. Rev. Olude maintained that singing in unison averts the problem of tonal distortion of Yoruba text that might creep into the other voice parts (alto, tenor and bass). He believed that harmonising *YNAs* in the European style is likely to mask or obscure the meaning of the Yoruba speech tone-song-tune pattern in the other parts (alto, tenor and bass). Early composers of the *YNA* such as Rev. J.J. Ransome-Küti avoided multiple parts writing in their compositions. In this regard, Euba (1992) observed that:

The early composers who did not have Phillips’ Western training; avoided vocal polyphony altogether and simply wrote their music in unison. This was consonant with traditional practice; the text of their compositions is usually in the Oyo (standard) Yoruba dialect and the Oyo tradition of vocal music is in unison. (Euba 1992: 52). Rev. Olude inherited this tradition and therefore continued the practice of writing in unison. The harmonic component of Rev. Olude’s compositions was supplied only by organ accompaniment. The recording of *M’ayokun* dubbed from the British archive in which Fela Sowande played the pipe-organ accompaniment testifies to this fact. Sowande’s accompaniment in the recording demonstrated his disposition towards rich chromatic harmonic textures which served as both support and embellishment to the unisonous singing. Rev. Olüdé himself was a proficient organist and he usually utilised the organ (a harmonic instrument) to provide harmonic support for his songs. Hence, we can conclude that the absence of other voice parts in the tonic *solfa* supplied in *M’ayokun* was deliberate therefore, making unisonous singing his harmonic principle.

Finally, this study has contributed to knowledge in the following ways: to know something of a composer’s life, works and character enhances the enjoyment of his music immeasurably, therefore, the information about Ola Olude, no doubt would lead to in- depth appreciation of his works; this study also serves as a link between the past and the present which will also assist in securing the future of liturgical Yoruba church music composition; also information on the origin and development of the Yoruba Native Airs was presented in his historical account of the evolution and development.

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