SIX ORGAN TOCCATAS

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APPROVAL PAGE
This project has been approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a Master in Arts (MA) degree in the department of Music, University of Nigeria

BY

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EXTERNAL EXAMINER

DEDICATION

To God Almighty
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To the following the researcher’s gratitude is warmly expressed: the Almighty God, who has made all things possible for me through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Rev. Dr. A. Kanu Achinivu, for his thorough supervision of this
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ABSTRACT

In the “Six Organ Toccatas” the researcher provides simple but interesting organ pieces for use in practice and performance as secular and sacred voluntaries and as music for enjoyment as classical/art music when played by a good organist and intending organ scholars. The six pieces are arranged by the researcher purely as
materials for organ studies and organ compositions using traditional folk music that is fusing the African with the Western mastery of organ and its techniques. It is the hope of the researcher that the compositions contained in this project report will ultimately serve the purpose of bringing lasting enjoyment of organ music to equipped and intending composer and show in them how African folk tunes and materials around the composer may be used in composition.

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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The growth of art music in Nigeria has shown a gradual development in the forms and styles of instrumental composition. This gives room to a large quantity of compositions and arrangements of instrumental music, which are mostly as a result of the influence of individual personal interest and background of Western musical training. In fact, most compositions are named after the Western musical forms as found in the various historical periods of Western music. Such works are Mass, Cantata, Theme and Variations, Toccata, etc. It is in this organ works musical formation that the Nigerian art composers exhibited creative skills in their musical compositions. These composers, such as Fela Sowande, Sam Akpabot, Ayo Bankole, Akin Euba, and T.K.E Philips are known to have made great musical contributions through their instrumental works. It is, however, sad to observe that despite these works so far produced in the art music scene by the art generations, contemporary music has taken over art music in Nigeria. Consequently, few works are presently written for orchestral and operatic ensembles or even solo instrumental or vocal work are
on the increase as more composers resort to writing simple works for use in church worship, church music festivals and secular music festivals. In fact, it is believed erroneously though, that serious music in the form of large-scale works of contemplative nature does not enjoy a wide audience appreciation in Nigeria. Thus, in spite of efforts of the Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON) Center Lagos, Radio, and the private media outfits that to promote serious music, very few Nigerian art composers have written large-scale instrumental works for their music programmes. In the six organ Toccatas, the composer has attempted, in a very small way to fill the existing vacuum in our Nigeria art music.

1.2 The Meaning of Toccata

According to the Chambers English Dictionary ‘Toccata is a piece of music, usually for piano or organ, that is played very quickly’. The Cambridge English Dictionary gives the meaning as ‘a piece of music for organ or harpsichord which includes difficult passages designed to show the player’s skill’. The Harvard Dictionary of Music explains it as ‘a keyboard (organ, harpsichord) composition in free, idiomatic keyboard style employing full chords and running passages’. The Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians
gives its own meaning of Toccata as ‘a thing touched’. It went further to explain the term as ‘a kind of instrumental composition originating at the beginning of the 17th century’. As the term Sonata is derived from the Latin verb ‘sonare’ which means to sound and may thus be described as a ‘sound piece or German ‘Tonstuck,’ so similarly formed term toccata represents a touch-piece or a composition intended to exhibit the touch and execution of the performer. In this respect, it is almost synonymous with the “prelude” and “fantasia” but it is has its special characteristics so varied as to be difficult to defined it clearly. The most obvious work is a very fast movement in its notes of equal length and homophonic texture, the whole has the air of showy improvisation, usually with good deal of reputation of similar figures.

1.3 Need for the Study

As was stated earlier, only a few instrumental works of this kind are found in the Nigerian art music repertoire (especially composition for the organ). Even such a form as the toccata is not very common in the existing numbers of works. Nigerian composers apparently neglect or lack the fire for such works for organ. However, the situation should not be attributed to the
total lack of interest in such absolute contemplative music on the part of composers. In a way, this work will serve the purpose of reviving the spirit of some Nigerians whose taste for classical music has been scorched by the ongoing endless condition of traditional materials into musical creation. Moreover, like Ayo Bankole’s Toccatas for the organ, this present work exemplifies the possibility of entrenching Nigeria’s events in musical composition, thereby documenting for posterity such experiences, phenomena and other events of historical importance.

Since this work provides materials for the multi-national audience such as the “MUSON” concerts and the use as prelude or postlude in the churches and radio stations the composer/researcher looks forward to the Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON), the Voice of America (VOA), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the International Organization for Folk Art (IOFA), the Voice of Africa (VOA), French Radio International (FRI) and Churches for its premiership as a Nigerian indigenous works.

1.4 Location and Materials
As mentioned earlier, this work, titled “Six Organ Toccatas” reflects the struggles of the composer in memory of his mother the late Ekanem “Asikpo” Ironbar, the motivator of all his works today; his first piano/organ teacher and mentor, the late Bukola Oshotuke Johnson; the third for his two sisters, Mbang Ironbar now Mbang Amzat, and Edem Comfort Ironbar. A composition for his fiancé for her support and advice; the fifth toccata, composed for his supervisor the Rev. Dr. Sir, Achinivu Kanu Achinivu, J.P. for his numerous contributions to his academic work at the undergraduate and postgraduate level and finally, the sixth, to the glory of God Almighty, who has seen him through the many days after the death of his mother.

It is usually said that “experience is the best teacher” one’s personal participation in an event is usually recognized as the best form of learning. The composer’s experience with his church has taught him to take life as a challenge and never to depend on anyone.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

This work aims at education organ scholars by using indigenous folk tunes, which is not very common in Nigeria art music scene today. It is a work which
explores new dimensions of Toccata composition using abstract and purely Nigerian folk musical idioms in portraying non-musical character.

It is believed that this work will be among the things added to the new creative vista in Nigerian art music scene.

It serves as a challenge to Nigerian performers of organ works. This will also increase the numbers of toccatas among of existing literature for organ player, those who wish to go into organ playing and composition, and those already in the practice.

1.6 Definition of Terms

The following terms used in the discussion of work needed. Cadenza: It is a passage occurring towards the end of a major movement in works for solo instrument(s) such as the concerto; toccata, etc. in other meaning it is a passage or section of varying lengths in style of brilliant improvisation, usually inserted near the end of a composition where it serves as retarding elements giving the performer a challenge to exhibit his technical mastery.

Modulation: This is the art of changing from one key to another in the course of musical composition.
Score: A scheme in which the arrangement of the parts of any piece of music is clearly, sequentially and simultaneously shown.

(2) A notation showing all the arranged parts of a musical piece.

Tempo: The rate at which music moves through time.

Toccata: A type of large musical composition for piano or organ mainly to test the skill of the player.

Tonality: Loyalty to a tonic, the use of the particular pitch in any piece of music Prominent or central pitches in piece of music

Accompaniment: is the musical background provided for a principal part.

(2) A back-up to a musical melody or composition.

Arrangement: The adaptation of a composition for a medium different from the original but essentially unchanged.

Folk music/Folk song: The musical repertory and tradition of communities as opposed to their art music, which is the work of the musically
trained composer. It generally develops anonymously, usually among the uneducated classes, and originally was (and may still be) transmitted orally from one generation to another, thereby becoming subject to modifications.

Pedal point: A long held note in the bass usually the tonic or dominant or both notes (double pedal point) sounding of both tonic and the dominant sounding together.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several works has been written on the art of musical composition and the concept, origin of the Toccata as a musical form. Many works on the history and literature of music, such as Giovanni’s works (1557-1612) through more elaborate works were composed by him before his death. There have been other composers like J.S. Bach (185-1750), Robert Schumann (1835-1856) but after these composers the love for the work has reduced drastically period after period. John Stainer composed eleven toccatas for both piano and organ. J.S. Bach wrote over fifty toccatas for the piano and the organ. He composed his toccatas to go with the fugue; usually term as ‘Toccata and fugue’.

In Nigeria, only Ayo Bankole (1935-1976) out of all the art music composers wrote the toccata. He was known to have written five toccatas in C major he made use of chromatic scales, one octave apart, and in another toccata works of his “Toccata in D major”, he made use of chords at the beginning of
the work. Fela Showande (1900-1987) composed several works for the organ, but composed just a toccata.

Other composers of the 18th century were Leon Boellmann (1862-1897), a French composer who had over forty works with eight organ and Robert Schumann (1810-18567) who composed only one toccata but for the piano. Among other composers of are Brahms who composed two toccatas for organ. Felix Mendelssohn also composed nine sonata five toccatas for the organ. Loan Boellmann a French composer, composed more of toccatas for organ, among the very popular organ music of his, is the toccata in C minor. R. Vaughan Williams an English composer composed two toccatas and over a hundred organ music. William Matthias (1987) also an English composer composed more fanfare music for the organ and four toccatas for the organ Louis Lefebure a French composer composed twenty-two pieces for the organ such as much as marches, fanfares, and toccatas.

Giusepper Verdi composed pieces like marches grand marches and fanfare but had no toccata in his composition. Andrew Carter and English composer composed thirty-five pieces for the organ but never composed any of the toccatas for either the paid or organ.
CHAPTER THREE

DESCRIPTIVE AND FORMAL ANALYSIS OF THIS COMPOSITION

“SIX ORGAN TOCCATAS”

In this present generation, the practice immortalizing people is no a new thing. Many present day composers compose for their loved ones. In the Romantic period, composers like Schubert, Schumann, Weber etc. composed dedicated composition to their loved ones, Handel composed the coronation anthem for Kings and Queens of England, and Bach composed one for his wife called Anna Magdalena. These examples inspired the composer’s work Six Organ Toccatas. The composer has to analyze just three out of these pieces. In each of the pieces one can read the influence of these people on the life of composer. The composer has attempted to portray the influence of each of the dedicated on him.

The first piece “Iyani-wura” (p.6) meaning “there is no one like a mother, or one’s mother is not made nor bought from the market”. The
influence of a mother on one’s life cannot be over-emphasized. Going through the melody in the pedal, one would not but see how the composer made a colorful painting of his mother. The piece toccata, Iyaniwura is in the key of C major from bar 1-40, modulated to its domination bar 56-71, went to G minor in bar 76-92, and then to key of C minor in bar 99-114, and returning to its tonic key in bar 117-144. The composer made use of Neapolitan 6th chord in bar 7 resolving it in bar 8. He also uses the German 6th chord in bar 15 resolving it in bar 16. The composer made use of three rhythms this can be found in manual 1 and 2 with triple pedal taking the melody with another rhythm different from the rest.

The second piece “Ope lo ye o” is in the key of D major. The melody can be found in the pedal, using a folk tune as melody modulating to its dominant key in bar 30-40 to the key of D major in bar 102-114 it moves to key of G major. It went back from bar 115 through to the end.

The third piece is in the key of G minor with 6/8 time modulating to G major in bar 21-30 and ending in the key of G minor.

The fourth piece is in the key of E flat major. It was first played as “impromptu” and was recorded as at when played. Later the composer decided to put it into score, dedicating to his supervisor as a postlude at one of
the occasions where he was invited to play at a Christmas as guest
accompanies at Christ Church Chapel, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

The fifth composition is such that one can see what God has done in the life of composer the piece is the key of G major with the melody in the pedal modulating to its dominant in bar 24-32 and returning to the tonic key in bar 41 through to the end.

The sixth piece in key of A major, it is a self-composed piece making use of continuo through to the end. The continuo can be found in the bass manual. The composer made use of two keys (Bilateralism). This can be found in bar manual from bar 65-80 it moves to the key of C major this can be seen on the treble manual while the continuo maintains the key of A major in bar in bar 81, 85  a German 6\(^{th}\) chord is employed resolving in bar 82 and 86. the composer also made use of the dominant 7\(^{th}\) chord in bar 87 and resolving it in 88 and when back to its original key.
CHAPTER FIVE
POSTLUDE AND CONCLUSION

This composition show that a good number of Nigerian composer do not show or exhibit a flair for large-scale instrumental works such as the Toccata. Perhaps, not all of them are invested in opposition of instrumental works such as the toccata.

This work is, therefore, a small attempt to fill the apparent, existing vacuum so as to make such works readily accessible to performers. It is true that the use of the folk tune of any culture in art music composition is a veritable way to capture the spirit of one’s own country. It is also a means of hoisting the flag of one’s own musical culture in today’s world of music. However, am of that such a trend should not only crystallize into mere reproduction of indigenous musical creations in western staff notion but should also be performed. The attitude of hybrids of plagiarism which at the best seems extremely below the nature and standard of the indigenous prototypes,
has led Nigerian scholars from being innovative and creative. It should rather aim at cross-cultural fertilization of our musical creative sensibilities.

The work should be seen as pleasurable as a fascinating complexity of tonal organizations as well as development of indigenous folk tunes. These end products will only increase the Nigerian art music repertory and will also stand the test of the new world of musical repertory. This project work (six organ toccatas) would serve as a literature review to organ scholar and composers who which to look into the toccata as a work.
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