

PART

TWO

CHAPTER FOUR

ABIGBO

FOR

ORCHESTRA

4.1 ABIGBO FOR ORCHESTRA: RATIONALIZATION OF THE COMPOSITION

The aim of Abigbo for Orchestra is to capture, in totality, the idiomatic and stylistic distinctions of Abigbo traditional choral-dance music and recombine them with some Western classical compositional procedures in order to achieve a continuum of the traditional Abigbo music in modern art music form. There are deliberate attempts to evoke the essence of the traditional Abigbo music in the work. Unity and variety are maintained in the modern orchestral composition by creating a musical link with the traditional Abigbo music and at the same time, creating points of departure from it. A combination of Western and African musical instruments, compositional theories and principles sustains the intercultural thrust of the modern composition.

In order to maintain a link with the traditional Abigbo music, the following are done:

> There is use of Abigbo harmonic idiom. This features chords used in more or less parallel motions. These chords use harmonic intervals of 4^{ths}, 5^{ths} 6^{ths} and occasionally 3^{rds}. Western functional harmony based on triads is not favoured in this work. This is because the work is not approached as an imitation of Western classical harmony based on the diatonic scale chord progressions.

> Some Abigbo vocal melodies and melorhythms of the instruments are transformed for the orchestral instruments, while attempts are made to

compose original melodies that capture the stylistic distinctions of Abigbo melodies. In this wise, some of the instrumental melodies in the orchestral work bear close affinity with vocal melodies of Abigbo songs.

> The principle of performance composition is employed in the orchestral work in order to ensure that this work offers fresh listening experience at any performance. This creative principle of Igbo music affords performance creative experiences and inputs in the out come of every performance.

The principle of extemporization and improvisation are thus used in the orchestral work. These distinguish Abigbo traditional music.

> The ensemble roles of Abigbo traditional instruments (phrasing referent, pulse maker, action rhythm-instruments and lead singer role) are employed in the orchestral work differently. For instance the role of the phrasing referent instrument, though normatively constant in traditional Abigbo music, is occasionally interrupted in the orchestral work. Also, this role is occasionally given to a string instrument for aesthetic reasons and musical variety. In Abigbo traditional music, the lead singer, and occasionally the cue cantor, takes the call part in all the songs. While this role is maintained in Abigbo for orchestra, deliberate attempt is made to decentralize this role in order to capture the melodic or melorythmic essence of the instruments, create musical variety based on the varying tone colour of such instruments and also maintain structural unity.

> The pervading melodic structures of Abigbo music (call and response, solo statement and chorus statement) are employed in the orchestral work.

> Some Abigbo musical instruments are included in the orchestral work in order to maintain direct link with the traditional music.

> Abigbo performance environment is evoked in the orchestral work. There are deliberate attempts to simulate the visual and aesthetic aspects of Abigbo music presentation in a controlled form.

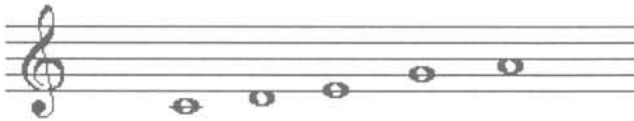
> There is deliberate attempt not to use the Western orchestral musical instruments in the purely classical conventions. The intention is not to explore the classical potentials of these instruments, but to apply them from the intercultural perspective of the work.

> There is a section of the music for male chorus. This section is intended to be a further direct link with the traditional Abigbo music at the same time as it courts the aesthetic appreciation of modern vocal composition in Abigbo style.

> Element of dance is evoked in the modern orchestral Abigbo.

As a departure from Abigbo traditional music, the modern composition for the orchestra shall:

>Use a pentatonic scale. Although Abigbo choral music makes use of diatonic heptatonic scale, pentatonic scale is used in order not to have direct leaning to Western classical diatonic scale and its functional harmony. This is also aimed at creating compositional challenge to the writer. In other words, it is of more compositional challenge and musical interest to use only five notes for orchestral work in three movements. The scale has the following notes.



>The formal structures (Rondo and Ternary) are employed in the work. While rondo and ternary forms are the main forms for the movements, parts of the movements have internal forms.

>The use of Western classical orchestral instruments imposes some Western influences on the work, such as the tone colour as well as the melodic and harmonic out come of the work.

>The first movement of the work constitutes the exposition, while the third movement employs development of the first movement. In this case, certain features of the first movement are deliberately introduced and modified in the third movement. For instance the third movement is a musical transformation of the first movement in a new meter.