Indigenisation of orchestral music in Ghana: the Pan-African Orchestra in perspective

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Abstract

This article investigates the indigenisation of Western orchestral music in Ghana by focusing on the Pan-African Orchestra (PAO), founded by Nana Danso Abiam in 1988. The factors that influenced the establishment of the PAO and its approaches to indigenisation are examined. Primary research data consist of interview sessions with Abiam, members of the PAO, its patrons, as well as selected cultural officers of the orchestra. Secondary sources consulted include published and unpublished documents, recordings of performances and relevant sheet music. It is concluded that the PAO's purposeful attempts to combine different indigenous African elements and/or approaches have strengthened notions of the indigenisation of orchestral music in Ghana, which may be linked to the cultural reengineering efforts of Kwame Nkrumah, political revolutionary and former president of Ghana.

Introduction

Orchestral music is one of the colonial legacies that constitutes an integral part of Ghana's art music heritage. According to Arhine (1996), through Kwame Nkrumah's presidential order in 1959, the Ghana National Symphony Orchestra (GNSO) became the first national orchestra in the West African subregion, established at a time during which Nkrumah privileged traditional cultural practices. Agovi (1990) and Nii-Yartey (2011) recount Nkrumah's generous support of cultural practitioners, especially those in the performing arts.

Why would Nkrumah encourage traditional performances while simultaneously adopting a Western-type orchestra as a national cultural institution? As part of his cultural reform agenda, Nkrumah considered the arts an ideological tool to be used as an anti-hegemonic force against Western cultural dominance. He founded his own cultural troupe which he called the Osagyefo Players, for example, and in doing so demonstrated his commitment to the promotion of indigenous cultures. The idea of indigenisation became prominent in the early independence period, during which time Nkrumah encouraged several artists to create works that portray their African identity. J H Kwabena Nketia,

Nicholas Z Nayo, Kenneth Kafui and George W K Dor were among many art music composers who started drawing on traditional elements in their choral compositions (Dor 1992, 2005; Amuah 2014).

In context of these early ventures, how could the adoption of Western practices reflect a sense of indigenisation in the GNSO? Since its establishment, the orchestra had been criticised for its Western outlook in relation to instrumentation, dress code and repertoire (Botwe-Asamoah 2005:172). How (if at all) could the GNSO's focus on Western practices preserve, foster and develop those African cultural traditions which Nkrumah strongly encouraged in the immediate postcolonial period?

Nii-Dortey and Arhine (2010) specifically recall the indigenisation processes that emerged in Ghanaian orchestral music from 1959. According to these authors, Philip Gbeho, the founding director of the GNSO, played a significant role in this process by arranging existing Ghanaian folk tunes for performance and by deploying traditional drums such as the *agbadza* (Ewe)*, kpanlog* (Ga) and *adowa* (Akan) in his arrangements. Gbeho's successors, including Nayo, Kafui and Dor, continued this tradition and expanded the repertoire to include original symphonic compositions that drew from indigenous musical resources (Nii-Dortey 2013). Examples include *Reconciliation* (1976)*, Volta Symphony* (1987), *Fontomfrom Prelude* (1989) and *Accra Symphony* (1990) by Nayo; *Symphony No. 1 in D* (1975), *Kale* (1977) and *Dom Ko Ma Yi* (1982) by Kafui; *Fraternity Symphonic Suite* (1990), *Fantasy on an Adowa Song* (1992) and *Echoes from Nketia and Seth Dor* (1994) by George Dor.

Whereas the deliberate attempt by Ghanaian composers to introduce indigenous musical elements into their orchestral compositions is commendable, musical form and instrumentation remained largely Western. Defending this phenomenon, Dor (2003:47) argues that the GNSO's use of Western instruments is akin to the way that highlife and military bands in Ghana have applied them in their respective African and Western repertoires. In support of Dor's argument, Nii-Dortey and Arhine (2010) assert that the focus on the cultural relevance of orchestral music in Ghana must be shifted away from instrumentation to its use within the Ghanaian context. While these arguments appear valid in relation to the GNSO, the emergence of the Pan-African Orchestra (PAO), which uses African traditional instruments from different cultures, not only offers a contrasting form of orchestral music, but expands the discourse on the processes of indigenisation scrutinised here.

This paper examines the PAO's concept of indigenisation as manifested in Accra, Ghana. It questions whether the PAO intended to challenge the seemingly Western outlook of the GNSO by presenting an African alternative of orchestral music. If so, what other factors prompted the founding of the PAO? What were the PAO's specific indigenisation processes and the corresponding outcomes? The answers to these questions rely on primary data sourced from interviews with Nana Danso Abiam, members of the PAO, its patrons, as well as selected former and currently employed cultural officers of the orchestra. Secondary sources utilised include published and unpublished documents such as articles, papers, journals and theses, recordings of performances by the PAO, relevant music scores and programme notes.

The concept of indigenisation

Postcolonial Africa inspired the need to recreate cultural identities that deconstructed and rejected European cultural hegemony. This led to postcolonial discourses aimed at developing new concepts on and around the problem of global culture and the relationships between indigenous cultures and outside forces. Indigenisation is one of the key concepts that emerged from postcolonial studies (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007). To Shizha (2013:3), the word 'indigenous' generally refers to anything (including belief practices) that can be traced to a particular group of people in a particular society. In relation to music, Dor (2019) considers indigenous music as something that is created by native populations, rather than imported.

Conceptually, indigenisation connotes 'the idea of transforming things to fit' and to 'increase local participation or ownership of one's own culture' (Nii-Dortey 2013:181). According to Huntington (1993), indigenisation is a process whereby non-Western cultures redefine themselves in a response to colonial legacies. Huntington's definition seems to suggest a strict distinction between Western and non-Western cultures, but in fact cultural borrowing may occur between any different cultures. The concept of indigenisation mainly focuses on ownership, cultural relevance and self-determination in order for the resultant cultural product to portray the true identity of the people it represents (Shizha 2013). Consequently, the receiving culture identifies relevant components of the borrowed culture and works to adapt, adjust or modify them to suit the cultural models of indigenous people (Walton & Abo El Nasr 1988). Shizha's point is instructive and provides the foundation for this article's argument. During Ghana's postcolonial cultural reconstruction, the idea of indigenisation was strongly prioritised by Nkrumah, who implored artists to reflect their African identity. In this article, indigenisation refers to a deliberate attempt by the PAO to combine different African traditional music instruments and idioms from mostly Ghanaian cultures for use as an African alternative to Western-type orchestras.

The origin of the Pan-African Orchestra

The PAO was established in 1988 by Nana Danso Abiam (1953–2014), a Ghanaian traditional music practitioner and a Neoclassical composer (Osei-Owusu 2014). According to Abiam, he conceived of the idea in the 1960s and developed it between 1979 and 1984, while working at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon as a research assistant. Abiam documented and submitted a proposal to the Secretary of Education, Mohammed Ben Abdallah,[1] for the creation of an African alternative to the Western symphony orchestra. His vision focused on the synthesis of different regional musical arts of the African continent to realise what Euba (1993:5–7) referred to as 'neo-African art music'.

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1   As the Secretary of Education and Culture in 1983, Ben Abdallah oversaw matters of culture under the government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC).

The overarching goal was to offer an Afrocentric system of orchestral music that relied only on African instruments, and the performance of traditional African music. Apart from promoting Ghanaian indigenous music, Abiam also sought to include musical cultures from other parts of Africa, especially those from West African countries.

In 1986 Ben Abdallah invited Abiam to direct and transform the GNSO, as Abiam himself had proposed. During his short stay with the GNSO, Abiam introduced indigenous instruments to the orchestra and assigned them specific roles. He started by including Ghanaian instruments such as the *gyil* (xylophone), *atenteben* (bamboo flute), *goje* (one-string fiddle) and several percussion instruments as integral parts of the ensemble. Abiam arranged some traditional folk tunes for the GNSO and assigned plucking roles to the Western string instruments to make them sound more like indigenous instruments. Notable among his compositions are *Towards Black Beauty* (1985) and *Zamrama Party* (1985) (Arhine 1996; Nii-Dortey 2013). While it was Abiam's goal to gradually replace the Western instruments that dominated the GNSO, Kafui (2018) confirmed that some of the orchestra's regular composers did not like Abiam's idea,[2] including Kafui himself, who had already written several pieces for the original ensemble. 'Who will perform our compositions if the violins and the trumpets were to be replaced?' Kafui asked. The composer would eventually petition the Ministry of Culture to permit Abiam to establish a different orchestra that consisted only of African instruments. Following much opposition and coupled with other administrative issues, Abiam vacated his post as the director of the GNSO to form the PAO in 1988.

Before establishing the PAO, Abiam had spent considerable time traversing various regions in Ghana to research different traditional musical forms and to engage with performers during festivals and other social functions. He also held auditions for the musicians who would later convene at his residence in Kokomlemle, Accra for regular rehearsal sessions. Some of these musicians included Thomas Segkura and Grumah Mahama on *gyil* and *gonje*, respectively. According to Abiam, his objectives were to develop:

- An Afrocentric system of symphonic music utilising traditional and neo-traditional sound sources and musical concepts as a framework of reference;
- A new style of symphonic music from the wealth of raw musical material bequeathed to Africa through tradition;
- A conservatory that focused on African music composition and performance, as well as the standardisation, mass production and quality control of African musical instruments; and
- An African music library housing audio, visual and printed materials.

The PAO was formerly inaugurated on Saturday 22 April 1989 at the W E B Du Bois Memorial Centre in Accra, enjoying local and global support from various individuals

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2   Kafui (1951–2020) was a prominent Ghanaian art music composer known for his use of indigenous elements. He also taught music theory and composition at the Department of Music, University of Ghana, Legon.

and institutions. The PNDC's culture administrators, who themselves attempted to reintegrate and sustain traditional musical arts and culture through their policies, endorsed Abiam's pan-African vision for the orchestra and its music. The PNDC endeavoured to integrate indigenous music and dance forms through the national reconstruction process as per the Ghana National Theatre Act <Theatre Act 1991>. Ben Abdallah in particular supported the establishment of the PAO and gave the orchestra a rehearsal space at the National Theatre of Ghana. The PAO released its first album entitled *Opus 1* in 1995, co-produced by Andy Summers at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios in England. The CD, which consisted of nine popular tracks from their full concert programme, topped the international new world music charts for six weeks.

PAO membership since 1989

European orchestra members usually possess a high level of formal music education and the ability to read notated music. In contrast, the founding members of the PAO were recruited from traditional societies where music knowledge is transferred orally and learned by rote. As Nketia (1974:21–35) argues, musical performances in Africa are often identified along the lines of ethnicity or nationality for their seeming uniqueness. These groups of people and musicians may also be bound by their political and ideological needs more than by their cultural traditions. According to Abiam (1993), most of the founding members of the PAO, including Baba Ayombila, Tensu Kakraba Lobi, Grumah Mahamah and Thomas Segkura, were virtuoso instrumentalists. Other members were traditional performers from various folkloric groups in Accra. The PAO originally consisted of about 30 members, including its director and technical crew. This number increased over time as more musicians were recruited. According to Dela Botri (2019), one of the *atenteben* players who had joined the PAO in 1995, almost none of the musicians had formal music education or could read staff notation. The German violinist Thomas Woernle, who played the *goje*, was the only non-African member of the PAO.[3] According to Woernle (2018), Abiam invited him to join the ensemble and assist in teaching its members to read notated music.

In 2009, after nearly twenty years of existence, the PAO decided to take a break from performance. John Ayisi (2018) and Botri (2019), both key members of the orchestra, state that this was due to a lack of financial support for the group's management. Rehearsals and performances ceased ever since then, with many members pursuing different business ventures for financial gain or relocating to places outside Accra. Some musicians, like Botri, joined other performing groups in the Accra entertainment sphere. Furthermore, Abiam died in a motor accident in 2014, leaving the PAO's future in doubt. The PAO's vision has, however, been preserved by Kwaku Kwakye, one of Abiam's sons, who is currently the director of the Pan-African Youth Orchestra, established by Abiam as a youth wing of the PAO in 1995.

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3   Woernle is currently the principal violinist of the Ghana National Symphony Orchestra.

Areas of indigenisation

Instrumentation

The instrumentation of the PAO consisted of a variety of traditional instruments from diverse African (mostly Ghanaian) cultures and included the *atenteben*, *gyil*, *prenprensua* (hand piano) and several African traditional percussion instruments. Abiam (1993) wanted to integrate various African traditional instruments to create music representative of a national culture. At the core of the ensemble were the *atenteben* flute,[4] which evokes emotions and a sorrowful mood through its smooth sound palette. Another key and regularly featured instrument was the *gyil,* a traditional instrument found among the Dagaara people of Northern Ghana. The *gyil* is a type of xylophone made up of wooden blocks with gourd resonators underneath them. Its pitches are traditionally tuned to a pentatonic scale, a general characteristic of Dagaara music.

Other instruments utilised include *wia* (notched flutes) and the *mmenson*, a horn septet of hollowed elephant tusks traditionally associated with the courts of Akan kings or chiefs. The *mmenson* is used to invoke ancestral spirits in a ceremonial fanfare in most Akan societies, especially the Ashantis. According to Abiam, *mmenson* players of the PAO usually poured a libation of schnapps on the ground before performance. These practical demonstrations supported the ideological basis of Nkrumah's pan–African cultural reengineering efforts: to promote an indigenous culture that could compete with other traditions. In a *mmenson* ensemble a lead instrumentalist blows three notes, echoed by a harmonic chorus of supporting horns each sounding distinct individual notes. One of the PAO's unique features is the way in which it successfully combined different instruments that traditionally never played together.

Standardisation of indigenous instruments

After several years of research, Abiam created a system of tuning which allowed instruments from diverse cultures to play in an ensemble. He made conscious attempts to reconstruct and standardise the PAO's core instruments, the *gyil* and *atenteben*. In collaboration with PAO members such as Thomas Segkura, he created *gyils* that were tuned to specific keys, a first attempt in the standardisation of the instrument's tuning. To standardise the *atenteben*, Abiam developed not only a comprehensive playing method but also a pedagogical manual for tutors (1993). It is common in modern *atenteben* music to encounter melodic structures that are theoretically outside the ambit of the folk version. Whereas traditional *atenteben* music would only privilege tones of the diatonic scale, occasionally with an added flattened seventh degree in the major scale, it can now be performed in keys with several raised or lowered scale degrees.

It is important to note that standardising African traditional instruments is not indicative

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4   The *atenteben* was invented by Ephraim Amu based on his knowledge of the Western flute.

of a deviation from or lack of authenticity, but rather a revolutionary change to make contemporary African music more appealing on a global scale. This is akin to Boehm's development of woodwind instruments, which was designed to facilitate ease in fingering techniques and performance.

Repertoire

The repertoire of the PAO consisted of carefully selected African (mostly Ghanaian) folk tunes from different cultures, described by Abiam as 're-composed' African tunes. Traditional musical themes were sourced from indigenous African peoples and cultures, and then reworked and expanded into Neoclassical pieces. This included *Adawura Kasa* (1995), for example, an introductory prayer in the context of African traditional libation that precedes social and public functions and with which Abiam usually made his entrance. From July 1987 Abiam started to explore the works of African pop musicians such as the Nigerian Afrobeat icon Fela Anikulapo Kuti. He began with Fela's album *No Agreement* (1977) and soon broadened his effort into an 'exploration of highlife structures'. This entailed the composition of a medley of contemporary popular music with Senegalese and Gambian idioms as well as the rhythms and melodies of Ghanaian highlife. Some of the PAO's most notable and frequently performed works with indigenous elements include *Box Dream* (1988), *Mmenson* (1988), *Sisala Sebrew* (1988), *Yaa Yaa Kolé* (1988), *Wia Concerto No. 1* (1989), *Akan Drumming* (1995) and *Explorations: Ewe 6/8 Rhythms* (1995). The *Yaa Asantewaa Symphony* (2002), commissioned by the Arts Council England, Adzido and the Pan African Dance Ensemble (UK), are representative of later compositions included in the PAO's repertoire.

Costume

Unlike many musicians of Western orchestras usually dressed in formal attire with white shirts, bow ties and tailcoats, their counterparts in the PAO always performed in costumes made from materials with African prints.[5] The *batakari,* a traditional smock dress from Northern Ghana, was sometimes featured. On such occasions, musicians wore different kinds of *batakari,* over black trousers for the men and over black skirts for the women. PAO musicians also appeared wearing traditional African beads around their wrists and necks, which according to Abiam added an African visual aesthetic to their appearance.

Performance practice

Depending on the nature of the piece, the PAO's performances ranged from solemn to thrilling. In his analysis of the PAO's inaugural performance, Avorgbedor (1989)

[5] Refer to video recordings of performances <Pan-African Orchestra 2009, 2011a, 2011b> for an illustration of costumes, performances practice and mode of conducting.

reports that the orchestra presented the music as a conventional European art form rather than as dance music in its traditional context. Mundundu (2005) argues that the presentation of African music in this new context does not only reflect a change of physical venue, but also, and more so, deeper issues of re-contextualisation and reinterpretation of indigenous performances (see also Nketia 2016:9). The PAO incorporated traditional belief practices into their performances. During the orchestra's inaugural performance, for example, Avorgbedor (1989) observed that Nii Amafio II (the chief traditional priest of the Ga community), together with his priestesses, offered prayers for the PAO to succeed in its immediate and long-term goals. The performance of this traditional rite on the occasion was (and still is) instructive in the promotion of African cultures and belief systems through orchestral music. By involving Nii Amafio II, the orchestra validated and exhibited a sense of national prestige and gained support for its cause.

There is a clear separation between audience and performers during the PAO's performances, which is somewhat contrary to African traditional performance contexts wherein audiences are free to participate (Nketia 1974). This implies that although the PAO attempted to contest Western cultural hegemony in orchestral music, they did not totally ignore Western performance practices such as the reading of music scores, seating arrangements, and the separation of audience and ensemble.

Mode of conducting

Abiam stood in front of the PAO, conducting with either a 'flywhisk' or two pairs of stringed *asratoa* shakers, both derived from Ghanaian traditional practice. According to Abiam (1993), the *asratoa* shakers are preferred for their musical value as their constant sound and rhythmic motion replicate the role of a metronome while simultaneously reinforcing the timeline. Abiam occasionally used a flywhisk in place of the more conventional baton used predominantly by Western conductors. The flywhisk is not only a symbol of status, but also a ritualised object that is often carried by traditional rulers and ritual experts to indicate their power and authority in society. This association with leadership and power is illustrated by some African heads of state, especially President Nyerere who never appeared in public without it. The convenience of conducting with the flywhisk as an extension of the body is akin to the function of a baton. The use of either the *asratoa* or flywhisk in place of a baton is again indicative of the indigenous artistic direction of the PAO. While the conventional role and techniques of a conductor are maintained in the PAO, the use of indigenous elements creates a new cultural and aesthetic ambience, which is necessary for proper articulation and communication of this new musical perspective and its embedded ideology.

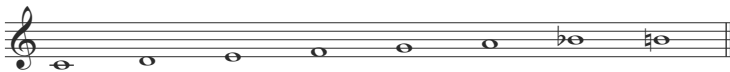## Compositional and creative processes

The music played by the PAO was mostly traditional folk tunes transcribed, arranged and orchestrated by Abiam. He did not only draw on pre-existing folk tunes, but also

upon playing techniques and other musical resources from ethnic groups such as the Akan, Dagaara, Ga and Ewe people of Ghana. Some of Abiam's compositions were influenced by the compositional techniques of Fela Kuti. Describing his composition and orchestration processes for the PAO, Abiam reports having visited traditional instrument players to learn the inherent creative processes of their music. He opted to study and play some of the instruments himself in some cases to better understand their fundamentally distinctive ostinato cycles. Abiam employed several compositional procedures in the orchestration of traditional folk tunes, such as the implementation of call-and-response patterns for the main and secondary thematic materials; the fragmentation of these materials to build repetitive and imitative passages; the use of rhythmic passages rooted in African traditional music; the harmonic use of parallel thirds and counter-melodic materials; and the application of ostinato cycles as the principal material for thematic development.

Tonal organisation

Since Abiam's themes usually relied on pre-existing Ghanaian folk tunes, they often maintained the tonal structures of these traditions. He used the major pentatonic and heptatonic scales in most of his compositions. In the major heptatonic scale, however, Abiam sometimes made use of both the major and minor seventh as evident in his transcription of the Akan dirge *Kuse Kuse*. According to Amuah (2012), the major heptatonic scale with an added minor seventh (Example 1) can be liked to Akan and Northern Ewe traditional melodies.

Example 1: Major heptatonic scale with added minor seventh

Abiam arranged pitches within an appreciable range for each instrument in his orchestrations. The melodic organisation and structures differ from one piece to another, depending on the cultures or ethnic groups to which these traditional music and dance types belong. The range and melodic structure of *Kuse Kuse* (Example 2) suggest an underlying text that has been organised according to the tonal inflections of the Akan.

Example 2: The principal theme of the Akan dirge *Kuse Kuse*

Abiam's interest in pentatonic music was spurred by Dagaara *gyil* music from Northern Ghana. According to Cooke (1970), *gyil* music is primarily based on a pentatonic scale. Example 3 illustrates the major pentatonic scale, which corresponds to the major heptatonic scale often used in Western art music, but with an omitted fourth and seventh scale degree.

Example 3: G major pentatonic scale

Yaa Yaa Kolé was one of Abiam's early pentatonic compositions with which the PAO experimented and which subsequently became one of the ensemble's most renowned pieces, performed in several major local and international concerts (see Pan-African Orchestra 2011a). It was included along with eight other tracks on the PAO's first major album, *Opus 1* (1995). *Yaa Yaa Kolé* is reflective of a *bawa* folk song traditionally performed at the harvest festival among the Dagaara people of the upper west region of Ghana. To understand the compositional structure in Dagaara *gyil* music, Abiam consulted Thomas Segkura to teach him the musical characteristics and instrumental techniques. Abiam then transcribed the music using Western staff notation (Examples 4, 5 and 6).

Example 4: Melodic transcription of *Yaa Yaa Kolé*

Example 5: Introductory instrumental section of the *Yaa Yaa Kolé* transcription

Ostinato cycles

By developing and expanding the thematic materials borrowed directly from indigenous sources, Abiam used repetitions and short motifs within ostinato cycles, resulting in brief and repetitive orchestral compositions (Nii-Dortey 2013). In *Yaa Yaa Kolé* he maintained the original theme as performed by the Dagaara people, but extended it using different ostinato cycles inherent to the *gyil*: 'I listen to the various ostinato cycles including the ones that may not be so obvious when you listen to the music for the first time, and use them to expand the main themes of the piece'. A comparison of the folk and orchestrated versions of *Yaa Yaa Kolé* reveals a relatively simple ostinato passage that provides a counter-rhythmic foundation for more elaborate vertical permutations, as well as an essential signature that re-emerges horizontally in alternation with the improvised ornamented segments. In orchestrating and extending the main theme for the flute parts, Abiam employed the same cycles of melodies that are not directly apparent as a basic ostinato. He also applied them melodically in other instruments, and added harmonies based on the functional tonality of the music (Example 6).

Example 6: Ostinato cycle in the transcription of *Yaa Yaa Kolé*

Although *Yaa Yaa Kolé* is performed on the Dagaara *gyil* in its traditional context, Abiam orchestrated it for 16 *atenteben*, 2 *gyil* and a *dawurunta* (bell). In this orchestration, the *atenteben* simulated the sonority of the *gyil* by playing its rhythmic and melodic patterns. This process stays true to the authentic traditional timbre of the music, while also creating a new related sonority that is somewhat similar (Lwanga 2012). Apart from *Yaa Yaa Kolé*, Abiam wrote several *gyil* pieces in which the same approach is employed, believing that it is untenable to say that *gyil* music should not be performed out of its original context (Abiam 2012).

Harmonic language

Abiam harmonised most of his pieces in parallel thirds, an approach that is very common in African vocal music (Nketia 1974; Amuah 2012). Both the melodic and harmonic parts then often move up and down in the same direction, maintaining a third interval (Example 7).

Example 7: Parallel thirds between flute parts in the transcription of *Yaa Yaa Kolé*

Abiam used consecutive thirds and quartal harmonies in his harmonisations based on the pentatonic scale. He states that the harmonies in *Yaa Yaa Kolé* suggest a chordal progression that differs from conventional Western art music progressions such as I–IV–V. The pentatonic triads consisting of stacked third and fourth intervals frequently used in his pentatonic pieces are illustrated on the scale degrees of G major pentatonic in Example 8.

Example 8: Pentatonic triads often used by Abiam

Most pentatonic vocal music of this tradition is sung in unison with only a few sections harmonised. As noted in *Yaa Yaa Kolé*, however, Abiam often used pentatonic chord structures in his harmonisation and transcription of pieces.

Texture, rhythm and dynamics

Abiam's orchestrations for the PAO employed a varying number of parts (unison, duet, ensemble) in monophonic, homophonic and polyphonic textures. He also utilised some of the hocket techniques and polyrhythmic patterns found in traditional African musics. His compositions generally maintained the same dynamics and tempi throughout, an element that corresponds with many African traditional performances in which strict dynamic changes or tempo marks are not incorporated (Nketia 1974; Konye 2007). Only occasionally does the composer use a few dynamic marks to vary the loudness, depending on the nature of the piece.

Conclusion

This paper focused on the PAO and its contributions to the indigenisation of orchestral music in Ghana. Although some Ghanaian art music practitioners made attempts to

indigenise orchestral music by incorporating indigenous musical elements into their compositions and performances, the PAO, under its founding director Nana Danso Abiam, further advanced this indigenisation. The PAO offered an African alternative of orchestral music that subsists in the postcolonial cultural reconstruction initiatives of Nkrumah. Although Abiam adopted a Western notation system in his compositions and arrangements, his creative processes were strongly informed by traditional and local preferences such as the reliance on pre-existing folk tunes, call-and-response techniques, parallel thirds, ostinato cycles and the tonal structures of Ghanaian folk music. The music of the PAO not only fulfils contemplative functions (Euba 1993), but also and more so highlights local efforts to indigenise the Western symphonic orchestra.

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