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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE FUGING TECHNIQUE ON ARRANGEMENT AND ADAPTATION OF SELECTED LUHYA FOLK SONGS

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the suitability of using the Western Fugal Techniques in arranging traditional Luhya folk songs. The study, which forms the basis of this paper, involved carrying out interviews with composers to establish their background in music and their approach to arrangement of Luhya tunes. The findings indicated that the use of Western techniques, in the case of this study, a figure, on arrangement of African tunes distorted them. This called for the need to use original African Contrapuntal Techniques to arrange the Luhya traditional folk tunes and to help avert the misconstructions brought about by entirely using the Western Fugal Techniques.

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INTRODUCTION

The Fugue: Euro-centric Point of View

Fugal technique is a western contrapuntal style of composition, which employs the use of two or more similar melodies, which imitate each other at given intervals in the arrangement. Most fugues have a similar subject. Many Kenyan musicians have arranged various Luhya songs using this fugal technique. This has resulted in the confliction of the text since different words are being spoken at the same time by different voices. On the other hand, the harmonies created when the fugal technique is used may not be compatible with Luhya musical aesthetics. Therefore, the harmony produced is completely new and belongs to neither of the two cultures wholly, due to the ideas from the two sources. In the past, in an effort to develop Luhya music, many composers have incorporated the western fugal technique in arrangement of Luhya folk songs. Since some of the composers lacked the clear understanding of the technique, they ended up with distorted arrangements of the music. The term fugue, according to Bauer (1975), was derived from a Latin word 'fuga' meaning 'flight'. It is a contrapuntal form whose development is traced mainly in instrumental music. In this form, a theme (subject) is presented in one voice, others alternately and then developed. The one theme ricercar was the forerunner of the fugue. In the monothematic ricercar, after the statement of themes, first, in one voice and then imitated in

other voices, the composition was developed by means of variations and augmentations, diminution and ornamental figurations. Sweanlink and Frescobalsi are major contributors to the development of the fugue in late 16th century, and early 17th century. Their pupils (Germans) perfected the form as it was used by its greatest master Johann Sebastian Bach. The term fugue was first used by the German organist composers, such as Froberger, Reinken, Buxtehude and Dane, who lived in Germany. The fugue is in ternary form having exposition, development and partial recapitulation or summarizing a climax. Bach's fugues are in two, three, four and occasionally five parts or voices. The exposition of the fugue consists of subject entries in keys of the tonic and dominant. The principal theme is stated alone in any voice (soprano, alto, tenor or bass) in four-part fugue. The subject must be rhythmically interesting and varied. The answer is made in a complimentary voice (in the dominant key). The form of the answer depends on the type of fugue, whether it is real or tonal.

Against the first answer is the counter subject, a combination with the voice carrying the subject. The counter subject must be made to fit in double counterpoint (may be used either above or below the answer or by transposition above or below the subject). The exposition ends when all the voices have made an entry. The development of the fugue consists of a series of modulating episodes interrupted by the re-entrance of the subject, called a middle entry. The keys are usually closely related to the tonic (original key), which is not supposed to

appear in the development. The material is suggested by the subject, counter subject and codetta, or the development may contain new material. Its length depends on composer's ingenuity sense of proportion and good taste. Augmentation, diminution, intervallic inversion, double counter point, the use of stretto and other devices of composition, may appear in this section of the fugue. In his fugues, Bach used sequence and double counterpoint; he also introduced free material (new material). It is not a must to maintain all voices in the development. An important device in the fugue is the 'stretto', a new entry of the subject before it has been completed in another voice, i.e. an overlapping of statements, repeated in different keys, in canonical fashion. A stretto is like a canon only that it uses a very small part of a subject, and it may involve only two voices although it may include three or more. Sometimes stretto appears in the last section or a little before. The closing section is marked by a return to the original key and the subject or a part of it, emphasized by a tonic or dominant pedal or point. This is usually the climax of the fugue and is usually worked up dynamically and musically to an effective close. A double fugue has two subjects. In one type, the two subjects are announced at the same time, and treated in combination throughout. The other type, the subject, is treated independently and finally combined, usually with dramatic effect at the close.

African Contrapuntal Technique

Arom (1991) classifies African polyphonies as follows:

1)   Multi-part, homophonic procedures.
2)   Polyphony and polyrhythmic definitions.
3)   Polyphony and polyrhythmic procedures in Central
4)   African Republic.

He also assesses previous studies alongside the present state of the subject. He then goes further to look at technical tasks, methods of recording polyphonic music for transcription. He briefly surveys western rhythmic and terminological ambiguity that goes with it (182). He notes that most traditional African music lacks definite/regular accents. This is supported by Harcourt (1924), Jones (1934, 1954, 1958, 1959), Nketia (1963), Cestreicher (1964), Kubira (1964) and Belinga (1965). Therefore all terms, implying a contrast between strong and weak beats, should thus be excluded from the vocabulary applied to such music. He dismisses the use of such terms as Metric, meter, measure, strong and weak beats main beat, weight, heavy, light, isometric syncopation, hetero-metric additive and divisive rhythms. He instead suggests the use of the following: Rhythm or rhythmic, accent, contra-tempo, beat, pulsation, or clap isorhythmic, heterorhythmic, polyrhythmic and pattern. He also analyses some structural principles and their application, e.g. under typology, he looks at:

1)   Strict polyrhythmics.
2)   Hocket polyphony.
3)   Polyphony produced by melodic instruments.
4)   Vocal polyphony.

He looks at polyrhythmics as a way to polyphony with reference to Hocket technique. He uses the Banda-linda horn orchestra and analyses its musical structure in terms of instrumental Hocket and the relationship between instrumental hocket and vocal 'music. He also defines and outlines the general characteristics of polyphony produced by melodic instruments, focusing on the xylophone, the sanza and harp. He then analyses the association of polyphony and polyrhythmics.

Hocketing Technique

Arom (1991) defines hocket polyphony based on the interweaving, interlocking and overlapping of several rhythmic figures, which are tiered on different pitch heights in a fully defined scalar system. In central Africa, such polyphony is obtained from several wind instruments (horns or whistles) each of which can only produce a single note played in groups (5-20). Each is assigned one of the notes on the same enharmonic pentatonic scale. Melody is thus obtained only from the ensemble; the individual instruments merely perform rhythmic figures confined to a given pitch. The assignment of pitch heights to rhythmic figures places the hocket technique on the very boundary between strict Polyrhythmic and polyphony.

Polyphony Produced by Melodic Instruments

Some melodic instruments (produce pitches on a specific scale) are played two handed to reduce melodically and rhythmically different parts simultaneously. The super position of these parts yields a polyphonic lattice. Such polyphonic instruments include sanza, harps and xylophones. *Vocal Polyphony.* Arom (1991) defines vocal polyphony as the super position of two or more melodically divergent lines with different rhythmic articulations. This technique is used in central Africa by the pigmies. In its most frequent form, it is provided with poly rhythmic support by percussion instruments. Percussion parts are limited to simple isochronous handclaps. The vocal polyphony may be enriched by a strict ostinato by two whistles. It is in rare instances performed accapella. Within Banda ethnic group, while the principal governing this particular kind of multi-part type of music is same in each case (horn orchestra hocket), both the repertoires and the morphology of the instruments differ noticeably, as the communities perpetuate, in this as in other ways, their own particular ancestral tradition. As much as the music performed is exclusively instrumental, it is linked in close and subtle ways to traditional Banda-linda real vocal music.

Studies in Afro-classics Composition/Arrangement

According to Ogalo (1995), Afro-classics are compositions or arrangements of African tunes using western music elements. A number of researches conducted in this area have revealed distortions that arise in the meaning of the African tunes. However, the effect of the fugal technique has not been fully considered. Ogalo (1995) discusses the distortions brought about by merging elements of western music with those of Luo music. Musungu (1999) collected and analyzed Samia folksongs. He adapted and arranged them in order to produce a creative work using western technique. He also composed a piece of music with Samia rhythm and dialect using western notation and then analyzed the two creative works. Both (Ogalo and Musungu) encourage arrangement of folk tunes using western ideas taking note of the traditional musical components such as speech intonation, melodic flow

placement of accents in the syllables and words of ethnic community, local dialects and speech rhythms. In both studies the effect of the fugal technique is not emphasized and their analysis does not include it fully. Rieth (1997) looks at compositional styles of Kenya's contemporary choral variety from pieces drawn on western European musical elements to those based solely on indigenous traditions. His focus is on 1990's generation of choral composers. He analyzes, structurally and stylistically, music selected from five distinct genres of Kenyan choral music. He then carries out an assessment of current developments in Kenyan choral music and a discussion of historical issues and acculturation, a synchronic case study of Luo traditional music and a review of government policies and the social climate for future Kenyan choral music. This indicates a clear interest in the indigenous music and its development as opposed to the emphasis on western musical elements, but he stops at the analysis level. This view is further supported by Agu (2000) who says:

> …African enharmonics are contrapuntal in nature. Many of its [*sic*] melodies are made up to fit a harmonic framework, while a good number of harmonic lines, are melodically conceived. Counterpoint is commonly found in songs in the call and refrain or call response patterns, where overlapping is outstandingly effectively used. When counterpoint occurs in songs in solo and chorused refrains, the structure differs in that the lower part or parts may start and move together throughout the length of the song.

Agu here describes counterpoint from Mensah (1998), who sheds more light on African polyphony when he describes a polyphonic composition 'Hombe' by Ekwueme where he gives freer reign to four-mixed voices accompanying a frolicsome alto solo. To allow the alto to be heard clearly all the time, he keeps to a few plain chords in progressions of transparent harmony. Mensah adds:

> …Ekwueme was well schooled in western harmony and counterpoint but works towards the preservation of the integrity of African traditions of tune making and pitch-line combination.

In most of the Afro-classic compositions, the components from the local communities and western cultures merged include rhythm, intervals, melodic lines, note values, rests, pitch names, key signatures, note groupings and harmony.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Snowball and purposive sampling methods were employed to obtain the respondents. The study was basically aimed at selected composers and instrumentalists who have arranged Luhya traditional melodies, their music scripts and where possible recordings of the same. Data was collected through use of:

1)   Interview for composers.
2)   Participant observation of the performances and recording them using tape recorder.

Information relevant to the topic of the study was obtained from Kenyatta University library, Kenya Music Festival office, Kenya Institute of Education, University of Nairobi's Institute of African studies library and Kenya National Archives. Reference to and reviews of the following documents were made:

Books and dissertations related to the research topic.
Relevant journals and periodicals.
Audio visual materials.
Music scores and scripts from the composers.

The study employed descriptive and statistical research methods. This involved analysis of information and data from first hand observation. The information collected was organized in descriptive and analytical styles. Recordings of the music from the field were transcribed in staff notation; accompanied texts were also transcribed. The transcribed music was then analyzed to get answers to the objectives. Any other unique characteristics in the performance were observed recorded and later examined to answer research questions. Data collected from the questionnaires was coded in order to establish any common aspects from the respondents. The coded data was then analyzed through the use of percentages and tabular representations. The interviews were transcribed and the responses to the questions coded to determine the emerging patterns that helped answer the research questions. All recorded music (including music scores) was transcribed and analyzed to identify the unique contrapuntal technique applied and their effect on the songs.

RESULTS

The aim of the study was to establish the suitability of the Western fugal technique in arrangement of Luhya folk songs. The study was also out to investigate whether the authentic Luhya harmony is employed or not when fugal technique is used in arranging the Luhya folk songs. Furthermore, the study aimed at establishing the extent to which the rhythmic motif of the Luhya folk song is compromised when fugal technique is used in arranging it.

The results were arrived at through:

Analysis of the open-ended questions.
Transcription and analysis of contrapuntal techniques in selected authentic Luhya folk songs.
Analysis of contrapuntal techniques identified in selecting Luhya arrangements.

Acquisition of Arranging Techniques

The study revealed that majority (50%) of the arrangers acquired the knowledge of arranging through friends and relatives. 35% were taught at school and colleges while 15% claimed to have learned on their own. All the musicians had arranged a number of Luhya tunes in the past.

Purpose/Aim of Arranging

75% arranged mainly for functions like music festivals and other occasions, while only 25% arranged without necessarily having a function or festival in mind. The data further revealed that most of the arrangers were drawn to the harmonic element more, followed by melody then rhythm.

Approaches to Arrangement

and then fit in the text later. 40% beuin with the text. This means there is more emphasis on the tunes. 60% of the arrangers used the existing words arranging while the remaining 40% put new words to the existing melodies. A few created new tunes and put existing words. The study also revealed that the majority of the arrangers 60% took one week to complete arranging a tune fully. Only 40% took a little longer. For them to remember the tunes to be arranged later, 70% of the composers transcribed while 30% recorded the tunes. This was so because most of the time they came across the tunes, they did not have recording equipment for. This left them with the only option of transcribing which might not have been accurate in most cases. When these arrangers begun on creating the structure, form and beauty in their arrangements, 80% were guided by the function or occasion arranged for and only 20% were guided by the structure of the melody they begun with. The study further revealed that most composers based on theoretical approach (Western music theory) when constructing their harmonic structure, thus considering very little of counterpoint linear or horizontal aspects and the traditional fitting of words based on text intonation. This may in turn lead to alteration of the original melody and harmony. 60% of the arrangers were influenced by their feelings at the time they arranged. 40% claimed they could arrange anytime and their feelings did not affect the quality of the arrangements. From the interviews, only 20% of the musicians were sure of their understanding of the characteristics of the type/style of composition/arrangement musically and functionally, including instrumentation, voicing, range, movement, tempo and mood. The rest - 80% - were not sure. 70% of the arrangers arranged with the choir or soloist in mind and in all cases, expect perfection in the execution of the arrangement in performance. As concerns the fuging techniques, 70% of arrangers were not aware of any African contrapuntal technique other than the western ones learned at school/college and from friends - private tutors, only. 30% were aware of their existence but were unable to describe them confidently and were also not sure if they employ them in their arrangement. Contrapuntal Technique/Styles Identified in Selected Luhya Folk Songs

Among the Luhya folk tunes collected, the researcher identified quite some prevalent contrapuntal techniques. There was clear evidence of their presence in a cross section of the folk tunes. The purpose of the study was to establish the suitability of the western fugal technique in arrangement of Luhya folk songs. It also aimed at revealing shortcomings of the western fugal technique when applied to African music and suggest the development of an African counterpoint theory or technique that can be used in arranging Luhya folk songs. In line with the purpose of the study, information pertaining to the research objectives was collected and analyzed.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that the arrangers acquired the knowledge of arranging through friends and relatives, which may not be adequate. The musicians also arranged for functions and occasions and not from their own, will in most cases, thus they were not prolific arrangers. In their

to that given to melody and rhythm.
The study also identified that most arrangers begun with the tunes then inserted in the words, which many times ended up having misplaced information. It was also noted that the arrangers spend a short time to arrange and this compromised the quality of their arrangements. The study further revealed that the musicians arranged the tunes basing on the European theoretical approach and gave little attention to traditional aspects of fitting words based on text intonation. It was also realised that many of the arrangers were not sure of their understanding of the characteristics of the type/style of composition/arrangement musically and functionally. The results also showed that most of the arrangers were not aware of any African contrapuntal technique other than the western ones learnt at School/College and from friends. From the Luhya folk tunes analysed, the study concluded that there was a variety of contrapuntal techniques in our authentic Luhya folk tunes which can be adopted comfortably in arranging the Luhya tunes. On the other hand, analysis of the contrapuntal/fugal techniques used by the arrangers altered the rhythm and text of the Luhya folk songs and to a large extent, the authentic Luhya harmony was negatively affected.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusion was arrived at in order to serve as basis for repetition, variation and extemporization: Most Luhya songs are characterized by short melodic motifs; longer melodic motifs may appear occasionally. The shortness of the melodies makes it possible for them to be orally transmitted and thus easily committed to memory. From the study, Western Europe has had a lot of influence on our music and further to the arrangement of African tunes.

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