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## Ghanaian Art Music Composers: Sitsofe Kwame Ayi, A Church Music Composer in Perspective

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### Abstract



*From historical roots in the castles, choral art music became entrenched within the fabric of various churches in Ghana, serving as a conduit for early Ghanaian composers to delve into music theory and composition. The significant contributions of these pioneers have inspired subsequent generations of church-based art music composers in Ghana, catalyzing the progressive evolution of the genre. Despite their profound contributions to Ghanaian musical heritage, church music composers like Sitsofe Kwame Ayi often remain overlooked within scholarly discourse and academic research. This underrepresentation diminishes the recognition of their artistic achievements and perpetuates a broader imbalance in the study of Ghanaian music history. In this study, the authors delve into the life and works of composer Sitsofe Kwame Ayi of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Ghana. Through a biographical*

*lens, the study examines four of Ayi's compositions: "Ka Hwe" (Taste and See), "Kyerε Wo Do" (Show Your Love), "Tie Bi" (Listen), and "Suban Pa" (Good Character). Employing a purposive sampling technique, the research centres on interviews and document analysis as primary instruments for data collection. Through analysis of Ayi's selected compositions, the study illuminates the composer's adept navigation of domiciled intercultural influences within his music.*

**Keywords:** Art music, Seventh-day Adventist church, Choral compositions, Church composers

## 1. Introduction

As part of measures to ensure a successful implementation of their purpose of spreading the gospel and trading in the Gold Coast, the Europeans established schools and churches in the castles to train the local people. Wiafe (2021) intimated that "the Europeans established schools in the Elmina, Cape Coast, and Christiansburg Castles with the primary purpose of Christianising the local people, and training them for employment as interpreters" (pp. 2-3). Some natives were trained in areas such as literacy, arithmetic, personal hygiene and music in order to help the Europeans achieve their purpose of coming to the Gold Coast. According to Smith (2012), "the missionary-funded institutions are key to understanding the development of African art music in Ghana, as many composers were influenced by graduates from these institutions or studied there themselves" (p. 33). In fact, the missionaries, as part of their mandate, exposed members to choral art music, especially, hymns, chants, marching songs and anthems. Of course, these vocal musical types became rooted within the liturgical activities of various churches in the Gold Coast, becoming a premise for studies in music theory and composition by early Ghanaian composers.

Undoubtedly, choral art music in Ghana and Africa as a whole has evolved over the years due to the enormous contributions of early composers who, in many ways experimented techniques to enhance the development of African oriented arts music compositions. For instance, whilst Amu begun a crusade in Ghana in the early twentieth century to indigenise all forms of art music in Ghana, his contemporaries in Nigeria also did experiments with compositions of indigenous songs for Christian worship (Dor, 2005; Okafor & Umezina, 2023). Significantly, the early art music composers made it possible for the current generation of students, composers and performers to look up to something, lay hands

on something and experience something. There is no doubt that composers who studied under them were greatly influenced by their works to guide subsequent compositions and performances (Umeugochukwu & Nwamara, 2023). Another major contribution of early Ghanaian art music composers was the training and mentoring of young composers. Through the process of tutorship and mentorship, the tradition of art music in Ghana has been very vibrant. For instance, Ephraim Amu was exposed to music theory, composition and harmonium playing by his teachers, Theodore Ntem and Reverend Allotey-Pappoe respectively. Amu also taught and mentored composers such as Robert Danso, J.H.K Nketia and many others. The mentoring of composers is very necessary since it assists them to improve upon their knowledge and develop their personalities as well as promote their careers (Agawu, 1996; Saranya et al., 2023).

Imperatively, the study of art music composers and their achievements in terms of compositions and contributions toward the growth of art music is very pertinent, particularly in music research. Acquah et al. (2022) have indicated that “over the years, the academic discourse of some Ghanaian composers and their compositions have received wide publication” (p. 83). The works of Akrofi (2001), Boamah (2007), Dor (2005), and Sandler (2019) confirm that Amu and Nketia have received enough scholarships. Of course, there are other composers, especially in the Seventh-Day church, Ghana who are doing extremely well in terms of compositions, education, and research but are not known. It is only significant to bring such composers to the limelight to appreciate their works and extrinsically motivate young composers. Some of these composers are underrepresented and marginalized in music scholarship. By focusing on the life and work of Sitsofe Kwame Ayi, the study can shed light on the rich tradition of Ghanaian church music composition and elevate the voices of composers who have played a pivotal role in shaping the country’s musical heritage. This can help rectify the imbalance in scholarly attention and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Ghanaian music history and culture. The study therefore purposes at identifying the major stylistic tendencies and compositional techniques of such an astute composer, using formal analysis. The study fills a significant gap in scholarly literature, promoting cultural diversity and inclusion in music research, and advocating for the recognition and appreciation of Ghanaian church music composers on a broader scale.

## 2. Theoretical Framework and Related Literature

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

Euba's interculturalism is the underpinning theory of this study. Interculturalism refers to the integration of elements from two or more cultures. In order to understand the theory, Kimberlin and Euba (1995) suggested three levels of intercultural activities as:

Thematic intercultural activity, in which the composer of the music belongs to one of the cultures from which the elements are derived. The second level is the Domicile intercultural activity, in which the composer, writing in an idiom acquired from a culture other than his own, is involved in an intercultural activity, even though the music that he produces is not necessarily intercultural. The third category is at the performance level. In this situation, the performer and the music are from two different cultures. (p. 3)

Imperatively, this theory gives the creative person (composer) a wide range of activities to explore in order to create a novel product. The thematic intercultural activity in particular, enables the integration of musical elements from different cultures to occur. The composer, who belongs to one of the cultures from which the elements were derived, is able to creatively fuse these elements together in one composition without losing both cultural identities. For instance, in his composition titled 'Love and Death', Ebo Taylor employed Western idioms and instrumentations, and fused them with other thematic materials from his indigenous sources such as *Kokomba*, *Ebibindwom* and *kwaw* (Coffie, 2019). The Domicile intercultural activity also gives the composer the prospects to largely explore elements from cultures other than his or her own. Example is when an African composer composes a fugue or a cantata in the style of a Western composer, without utilising African resources. In this case, an intercultural activity has taken place. However, the composition would not necessarily be an intercultural composition. It is therefore not surprising that music scholars such as Agawu, Reimer and Turino believed that folk songs should be given European-derived harmonic and formal techniques to form into lengthy compositions (Bakare, 2023; Omojola, 2001). Furthermore, the performance intercultural activity gives room for a performer to sample compositions from different cultures to be performed. Obviously, the creative person (performer) comes from a different culture whilst the creative product (composition) is from another culture. Significantly, it provides a simple and benign activity through

which one can learn to understand the musical traditions of another culture (Li et al., 2023).

## **2.2 Concept of Analysis**

The analytical study of musical compositions involves a detailed examination of musical structure, encompassing both compositions and performances. This process typically involves breaking down the structure into smaller units and investigating their functions within the broader context of the piece (Jensenius, 2022). Through this approach, analysts aim to unravel the intricacies of musical works, uncovering the interplay between various elements and discerning the underlying organizational principles that govern the composition. By dissecting compositions and performances into their constituent parts, analysts gain deeper insights into the craftsmanship and artistic intent of the composers, shedding light on the expressive nuances and structural complexities inherent in musical works (Hallam & Himonides, 2022). Musical analysis over the years, has been perceived by scholars to be the practical process of examining pieces of music by breaking them into smaller structural elements in order to discover or decide how they work within the bigger structure (Bent, 1987; Cook, 1987). Bent (2001) on the other hand defined analysis as “the resolution of musical structure into relatively simpler constituent elements, and the investigation of the functions of those elements within that structure” (p. 340).

In as much as analysis exposes us to the general overview of a piece of music, the analytical bent unfolds and brings to bare the thoughts of the composer by asking the appropriate questions. There are several different types of analytical bents that ask similar questions to unravel the various structural components that make up a piece of music (Acquah et al., 2022). In this study, however, the writers utilised the formal analysis as the analytical bent for the analysis of the four selected compositions in order to unravel the various structural elements of the compositions as well as the compositional styles of the composer. Imperatively, the study of structures of a musical composition forms the basis of formal analysis in music. It is also recognized that gestural analysis is, in many ways, formal analysis. Instead of relying only on chordal function, several other boundaries of analysis are considered. These may include, vocal ranges, melodic organization, harmony and tonality, non-chord tones, texture and form. Formal analysis reveals deep relationships between these structures and examines how they dramatize the form, and how they may heighten the expressive quality of the work. Consequently, it provides insights into compositional thoughts of the

composer (Annan et al., 2022; Marvel, 2021; Stanley, 2021).

### **2.3 Ghanaian Art Music Composers**

The advent and development of art music in Ghana over the periods can be traced to the activities of European missionaries in the then Gold Coast. According to Omojola (2013), “activities of British colonial administrators, missionaries and teachers helped to introduce and consolidate the practice and consumption of European liturgical Christian music as well as classical music, which provided the foundations for the emergence of modern Ghanaian Art music” (p. 125). Some of the citizens had the opportunity to be trained as teacher-catechists as well as reverend ministers to help the missionaries accomplish their mission of propagating the gospel and trade. As part of their training, these teacher-catechists and reverend ministers had the chance of studying music. In fact, these were the people who also later trained some of the Ghanaians to become musicians, and this has continued to date. These early composers such as Reverend Gaddiel Robert Acquah, Reverend Emmanuel Allotey Pappoe, Charles Graves, Ephraim Amu, Oman Gyan Blankson and others initially wrote many hymn tunes and marching songs. In the quest to neutralise the monotony of the western art music in Ghana, composers started incorporating traditional resources such that new compositions became rooted in history, tradition, and folklore to create variations in musical concepts to reach diverse patrons (Achire, 2014; Maclean & Acquah, 2024).

In an attempt to group Ghanaian art music composers into different categories, Alfred Joshua Amuah, a Ghanaian music scholar developed a generational map. In this map, he indicated how he considered certain criteria such as the age and period within which a group of composers were born and lived as well as teacher and student relationship. In some cases, a teacher and his student or two composers of ten years difference are found in the same generation. He further explained that, this instance was possible due to the floppy nature of the categorisation in terms of the criteria set for the map (Amuah, 2012). It is unfortunate, however, that the map which is made up of four generations, did not capture more composers as at the time it was designed. One of such composers was Sitsofe Kwame Ayi. Of course, because of this case, and the fact that new Ghanaian art music composers have emerged since the map was designed, there is the need to update it in order to meet current discourses. Similarly, art music composers from Egyptian and Ghanaian backgrounds are grouped together on websites namely, Global Interplay and Intercultural

Composers Initiative, and are managed by a German performing organisation known as Musik der Jahrhunderte. The websites present these composers as intercultural composers because their compositions have elements from both African and Western cultures (Smith, 2012). This was an avenue to showcase African composers and their compositions on the international stage. However, the focus was on composers who had studied abroad, and were aware of the fact that they represent their respective African cultures. The implication is that, a lot of African composers who have not studied abroad would not be captured.

Furthermore, as it is required of creative persons, Ghanaian art music composers are creative, versatile, not afraid to experiment, willing to collaborate, and of course, passionate about writing music. Significantly, Amu's pioneering works of cultural integrations and African rhythmic notations exposed subsequent composers to the concept of African art music in general as well as create the avenue for further experimentations and creativity. Ghanaian art music composers over the years have engaged themselves in compositional activities that are interweaving of Western and traditional Ghanaian musical features. Amu in particular utilised four-part voicing, Western harmonic practices and formal procedures as well as the periodic inclusion of piano. These, he fused with Ghanaian languages, strict adherence to text tone and speech rhythm, traditional ensemble singing practices, inclusion of African rhythms, call-and-response, and the use of linguistic metaphors and proverbs (Amuah & Arthur, 2014; Sandler, 2019).

## **2.4 Church Musicians**

Musicians have always engaged themselves in various musical activities to enhance both liturgical and para-liturgical events. Musicians such as Johann Sabastian Bach, George Fredrick Handel, Joseph Haydn and others wrote Motets, Masses, Cantatas and Oratorios to be performed by other musicians in the church to aid the propagation of the gospel (Forney & Machlis, 2007; Kamein, 2011). It is believed that a church musician is expected to draw from the past, what is most valuable, to enliven it with his or her faith, enthusiasm and passion, and then transfer it to the next generation. As part of his or her qualities and responsibilities, the church musician balances on the borderline between secular and ecclesiastical realities, and connects them at the same time because of their close relation. Apparently, he or she often sees and experiences greater difficulties than an average churchgoer. A trained church musician masters relevant techniques and shows aesthetic sensitivity in his or her creative

products as well as respects the spiritual elements of the community (Kierska-Witczak, 2022).

Unequivocally, church musicians of every type, from veterans to those just starting out, can expect to deal with calls for change from every side. Church musicians have always worked with the sounds and musical resources of their respective periods in which they lived. And this is due to the constant trends in musical activities of the church over the years. The trends in musical styles and performances have compelled church musicians to have high scores on self-perception of composing and singing abilities. That is, musicians have been guided over the periods by the changing scenes of the musical space (Rohwer, 2010; Stam & Witvliet, 1998). In spite of the various stylistic trends in compositions and performances, church musicians have contributed immensely for the growth of the church, in terms of musical activities. The worship life, as well as the socio-cultural settings of the Methodists Church of Ghana, for instance, is characterised by extensive use of varied musical styles and instruments in contents and contexts, exposing the congregants, especially the youth to various singing and dancing styles for better appreciation and participation. In fact, the role of composers in the church to modify existing tunes as well as composing original tunes cannot go unappreciated. The church choirs and Singing Bands as well as the contemporary gospel bands have also continued to perform in accordance with the trends in musical activities of the church (Amuah & Arthur, 2013; Brewu et.al, 2024; Ocran, 2019).

## **2.5 Choral Music Practice in Ghana**

Choral music has been practiced in Ghana even before the arrival of the Europeans in the then Gold Coast. Amuah (2013) emphasised that, "in the pre-Christian era, performances of choral music were enormous, and ranged from funeral to other social activities as well as for entertainment" (p. 242). For instance, in traditional ensembles such as *Adzewa*, *Nwomkrɔ* and *Avihawo*, women sung with rattle accompaniments at various social event to either mourn with a deceased family or entertain a gathering. The arrival of the Europeans however brought a new form of choral music in Ghana. The Western hymnody, canticles and anthems were integral part of both the liturgical and para-liturgical activities of churches, becoming the dawn of art music in Ghana. The early Christian converts were exposed to Western hymn singing, and were forbidden to engage in any indigenous musical activity. During this period, indigenes who were found participating in any kind of traditional music and dance activity



were excommunicated by the church. Imperatively, hymn singing remained a powerful means of spreading the Gospel of Christ in Ghana. For instance, the Methodist Mission accomplished its evangelising work through the hymns that the congregation sang (Amuah, 2018; Fiagbedzi, 2017; Mawusi & Klutse, 2023).

Subsequently, the activities of early Ghanaian art music composers revolutionised choral music practices in Ghana. The musical forms at this epochal period utilising both the Western and indigenous musical resources no doubt gave choral music in Ghana a new identity that got assimilated through education in the school system and the propagation of the Christian gospels. Ghanaian choral music therefore became an embodiment of the rich idioms that are of essence in the context of the Ghanaian culture. These musical practices were done predominantly in institutions such as churches, schools, concert halls, tertiary institutions and the security services, and they continuously gain sponsorship, audience support and involvement. Undoubtedly, choral musical activities in African societies including Ghana have been vibrant over the years due to the spread of various choral groups, making the musical art ubiquitous. Ideally, choral music is an avenue to propagate one's cultural and religious values in societal life. It is only amazing to see how composers have given much attention to choral music compositions in Ghana and beyond (Acquah, 2018; Afriyie, 2021; Twum-Barima, 2023). The essence of choral music performances is to make the mind active and develop the logical thinking of individual performers. Of course, choral music develops individuals with positive attitudes, greater sense of responsibility and self-discipline. Furthermore, the effective application of vocal techniques such as breathing before and after each phrase, preventing excessive air through the vocal cords, applying purposeful volume control (dynamics), employing vibrato on long notes and using appropriate resonances for the appropriate registers can serve as a mechanism for measuring and maintaining a sense of wellbeing - physical health, psychological wellbeing, social activeness and cognitive sharpness (Acquah, 2016; Addaquay, 2023a; Amuah & Acquah, 2013).

It is important to also note that choral music practices in Ghana have developed over the period due to the continual performances of choral compositions at various functions – both social and religious. This, however, has motivated many composers to produce more creative works with diverse techniques and styles. The evolution of choral music in Ghana can be traced back to the groundbreaking works of early Ghanaian art music composers who experimented on various models to guide the creation and performances of

Ghanaian oriented art music compositions. According to Adda Quay (2023b), “one could simply state that the number of composers in Ghana have rather increased compared to ancient days, which is also an act of development” (p. 60). Obviously, an increase in number of composers would also translate into an increase in number of compositions. It therefore became necessary to categorise all forms of Ghanaian choral music compositions due to the diverse stylistic trends of compositions over the period. Nketia, who is the original advocate of the typology of choral music identified five main formal models of choral music in 1974 namely, Amu model, Traditional model, Yaa Amponsah (Highlife) model, Later Highlife model and Institutional model. Over the period, there have been suggestions to fine tune Nketia’s categorisation. For instance, Amuah indicated that Misonu sought to merge the Yaa Amponsah and later highlife models because they bear similar characteristics. He, on the other hand proposed two main types of choral music to include Traditional choral styles which have been termed African model alongside the Art choral, and a fourth model under the art choral, the contemporary model which has two variants: the short and the extended forms (Amuah, 2014).

### **3. Methodology**

This study was enthralled in the case study research design to examine Sitsofe Kwame Ayi, and analysed four of his compositions; *Ka Hwe*, *Kyerε Wo Dε*, *Tie Bi* and *Suban Pa*. According to Coombs (2022), “a case study is a methodological research approach used to generate an in-depth understanding of a contemporary issue or phenomenon in a bounded system” (para. 1). A case could be an individual, a role, a small group, an organisation, a community, or even a nation. It is an apt research design to use when one wants to gain concrete, contextual and an in-depth knowledge about a specific issue. It further involves a detailed and intensive analysis of a particular event, situation, organisation or social unit which typically has a defined space and time frame (McCombes, 2023; Miles et al., 2014). Using Sitsofe Kwame Ayi as a single case, appropriate data was collected, discussed, analysed, and meaningful conclusions were drawn. A single case refers to research design that is applied to a study in which one entity is observed over a period of time. It is usually used to compare stages of data for an individual case using measures of a target behaviour. The case in this design refers to the subject under analysis whose effects are systematically documented within an individual (Horner et al., 2005; Ninci, 2023; Onghena, 2005).

Imperatively, the authors used the purposive sampling technique to sample the respondent based on personal judgment to give substantial explanations that were relevant to the objectives of the study. According to Elder (2009), “purposive sample refers to selection of units based on personal judgment rather than randomization” (p. 6). It represents a type of non-probability sampling where researchers choose individuals from the population to take part in their studies using their discretion. Researchers usually rely on the profiles of respondents to sample them accordingly. In fact, they are sure of getting the needed data from the respondents for a specific objective (Elfil & Negida, 2017; Etikan & Bala, 2017; Mulisa, 2022). Also, the four compositions under study were sampled with the simple random sampling technique indicating that all his songs stood the equal chance of being selected for the study. Clearly, Sitsofe Kwame Ayi’s compositions have similar musical structures in terms of melodic organisation, harmonic progression, form and tonality. It therefore became easy to select any of them for analysis. According to Noor et al. (2022), “it is favourable in studies where the population is homogenous and uniformly distributed” (p. 79).

Also, research instruments for data collection included interview and document analysis respectively. The authors utilised the interview instrument to seek for relevant information regarding the academic biography of the composer whilst the document analysis was used to unravel the nuances of his compositions in order to make objective inferences. Hung et al. (2024) defined interview as “a primary data generation strategy to explore lived experiences of a participant” (p. 3). The purpose was to get detailed information that sheds light on an individual’s perspective and the perceived meaning about a particular topic, issue or process. In the quest to elicit a vivid picture of the participant’s perspective on the research topic, the interviewing techniques were chiefly motivated by the desire to learn everything the participant could share about the research topic. Significantly, interviewing is an opportunity to gain insight into how people interpret and order the world through causal explanations (Milena et al., 2008; Rutledge & Hogg, 2020). It is imperative to intimate that the authors focused on using the semi-structured instrument to inquire from the composer his academic biography. Semi-structured interview may be defined as an exploratory interview characterised by its suppleness and malleability to probe a thorough information of a respondent or an entity (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). With this instrument, pertinent questions were asked to obtain a detailed account of his personal life in terms of educational and musical activities in an interview session they had with him on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 at his residence in Kumasi, Ghana. Semi-structured interview is largely perceived to be more

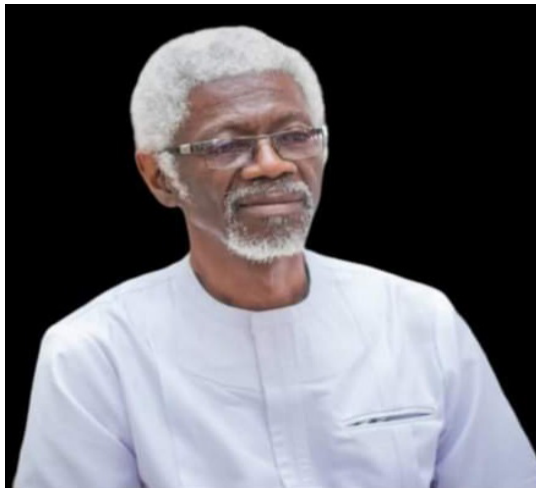
potent than other types of interviews because it is flexible and adaptable as well as gives avenue to acquire in-depth information and evidence from interviewees while seriously considering the focus of the study (Ruslin et al., 2022).

With the document analysis instrument, the authors analysed four compositions from the composer; *Ka Hwε* (Taste and see), *Kyerε Wo Dε* (Show your love), *Tie Bi* (Listen) and *Suban Pa* (Good character) for subsequent analysis. Bowen (2009) defined document analysis as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic material” (p. 27). This instrument was therefore used to critically examine the compositions to uncover the composer’s compositional techniques and styles. It is usually common to find that studies employing qualitative methods such as interviews or participant observation within an interpretive epistemology will also use documentary evidence as an additional source of data when this is both relevant and feasible (Bryman, 2012; Denzin, 2017; Forster, 1994).

## 4. Findings and Discussion of Results

### 4.1 Profile of Sitsofe Kwame Ayi

In this paper, a summary of the vital components of the interview we had with the respondent is presented as his profile to serve as the basis of his life and musical experiences as an appreciation of his memoir.



**Figure 1: Picture of S. K. Ayi**

Sitsofe Kwame Ayi was born on 6th December, 1952 at *Have Etoe* in the Volta Region of Ghana to Mr. Edward Dickson Ayi, an accountant and Mrs. Rose Adzo Ayi, a housewife dedicated to the up-bringing of the children. As a young boy, he attended various schools in different towns due to the work transfers of his father. Commenting further on his educational journey, Sitsofe Ayi asserted:

*I schooled at Ho, Kpando, Botoku, and Have Etoe for my primary education, and had my middle school experience at Asokwa-Amakom L/A and Bremang L/A respectively, in Kumasi. After my basic education, I gained admission to Amaniampong Secondary School from 1968 to 1973 and continued with my Sixth Form education at Bekwai Seventh-Day Adventist Secondary School from 1974 to 1976.*

At the basic education level, the young Sitsofe was exposed to the reading of the tonic-sofa notation. He was also influenced by his music-loving parents who ensured that the family sang at home, performed at church, and occasionally organized family musical performances. Significantly, singing naturally upgrades a child's mental development. S. K. Ayi threw more light on his early musical life and explained:

*My father scarcely missed choral music on radio and television. He usually recorded on tape and later asked us to playback, listen, and transcribe the audio for family rehearsals and performances respectively. Indeed, this was a great source of aural training. The training I had at home enabled me to lead the Amaniampong Secondary School choir from 1971 to 1973, and the Bekwai S.D.A Secondary School Choir from 1975 to 1976.*

It is of great consequence to state that S. K. Ayi had a formal music training (theory and composition) for a year at the secondary school as well as receiving home tuition from his younger brother, Fred Worlanyo Ayi, who graduated from the erstwhile National Academy of Music (NAM) at Winneba. He also did some corresponding music courses and became a music tutor, an organist, and a composer of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. As a music director of the church, S. K. Ayi helped to establish several church choirs and trained a lot of musicians for the growth of music in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in the Ashanti region of Ghana and beyond. He has to his credit, several compositions, out of which he recorded four albums; *Kyerε wo dε* (Show Your Love, 1987), *Metwere Yesu* (I Lean on Jesus, 2002), *Aseda* (Thanksgiving, 2009), and *Komyε*

*mmre nnwom* (Hymns of Meditation, 2017). S. K. Ayi served in various Adventist churches as a song teacher and choirmaster, especially at Amakom (his mother church), where he led the church choir and the Asafo Dawn Broadcast to stage several concerts, attended programmes, and visited homes and hospitals with songs.

## 4.2 Musical Analysis

The study utilised formal analysis as the analytical bent to bring out the structural components of the compositions, focusing on the following as the boundaries of analysis; scale, vocal ranges, melodic organization, harmony and tonality, texture, form, *sss* and text. Formal analysis encompasses the study of formal structures of a musical composition to unravel the relationships between various structural elements and their respective roles in making up the composition (Annan et al., 2022).

### 4.2.1 Scale

Any set of musical notes ordered by a fundamental pitch is a scale, which can be defined as a group of notes that are arranged by ascending or descending order of pitch with an intervallic structure. Of course, the specific intervallic structure determines the type of scale (Farrant, 2023). In the four selected works of the study, the composer used only the major scale. For instance, in *Ka Hwe*, he employed F major and C major scales respectively, whereas in *Kyerε Wo Do*, he used the G major scale. Again, in *Tie Bi* and *Suban Pa*, the composer utilised the E major scale. See illustrations below.

The image displays four musical staves, each representing a different major scale. Each staff is numbered 1 through 4 and includes a treble clef, a key signature, and a series of notes. Staff 1 is labeled 'F major' and has a key signature of one flat (Bb). Staff 2 is labeled 'C major' and has a key signature of no sharps or flats. Staff 3 is labeled 'G major' and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). Staff 4 is labeled 'E flat major' and has a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). Each staff shows the notes of the scale in ascending order, starting from the tonic note.

**Example 1: Scales in different tonalities**

### 4.2.2 Vocal Range

The term vocal range refers to the full spectrum of notes that a singer's voice can produce, starting from the bottommost note and reaching to the uppermost note. It is the array of pitches that the human voice can vocalise (O'Connor, 2024). In this study, however, the composer used vocal ranges that were suitable for the SATB (Soprano, Alto, tenor, and bass). In *Ka Hwe*, for instance, he employed ranges between intervals of eight (8) for soprano, seven (7) for alto, five (5) for tenor, and eleven (11) for bass. See the illustration below.



#### Example 2: Vocal range of *Ka Hwe*

In *Kyere Wo do* however, he employed ranges between the intervals of seven (7) for soprano, seven (7) for alto, seven (7) for tenor and six (6) for bass. See the illustration below.



#### Example 3: Vocal range of *Kyere Wo do*

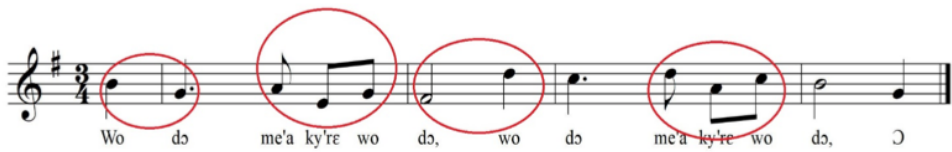
Also, in *Tie Bi*, the composer worked around ranges of eleven (11) for soprano, eight (8) for alto, eight (8) for tenor, and eleven (11) for bass. In *Suban pa* on the other hand, he operated ranges between the intervals of eight (8) for soprano, eight six (6) for alto, five (5) for tenor, and twelve (12) for bass. See the examples below for illustrations.



#### Example 4: Vocal ranges for *Tie bi*







**Example 8: Intervallic structure of a melodic phrase in *Kyerε wo do***

From the examples above, all intervals with either a circle or an oval shape indication are more than a second.

#### 4.2.4 Harmony and Tonality

Harmony is created when two or more notes are sounded simultaneously. In other words, the combination of two or more different pitches creates harmony (Doll, 2013; Laitz, 2003). In the four selected compositions, the composer predominantly utilised primary and secondary chords as well as secondary seventh chords. The use of altered (chromatic) chords are almost non-existent in his harmonic vocabulary. The few altered chords employed in his compositions were purposed for transient modulations. For instance, in *Ka Hwε*, the only chromatic chords used were secondary seventh of four (V7/IV) and secondary seventh of five (V7/V) respectively. Example 9 below is an excerpt.



**Example 9: Chromatic chords in *Ka Hwε***

The musical example above explicitly exhibits the composer's use of few chromatic chords as indicated with oval and square shapes. Apart from these two main chords (V7/IV and V7/V), S.K Ayi predominantly utilised chords such as I, vii7b, IV, IV7, iii, V7, ii, vi and V in *Ka Hwε* in order for his compositions

to be performed with ease. Apparently, He had indicated it in an interview that, "I consciously made my compositions simple so that the choir and the congregation can easily perform them." (Personal Communication, 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2024). In *Kyerε wo do*, he used V7/IV and V/vi as the only chromatic chords whilst in *Suban pa*, he utilised V7/IV, V7/V and V7/ii. In *Tie bi* on the other hand, he used V7/ii and V7/V respectively as the only chromatic chords. As a way of making his compositions simple for easy performances, S.K Ayi avoided multiple tonality even though he occasionally employed transient modulations to either the dominant or the subdominant as well as the relative minor. Significantly, in tonal music, composers organise musical compositions around a given tonic. Tonality in this context can be explained as the system of musical organization that involves the orientation of diatonic triads towards a referential tone, or pitch class. It makes use of the diatonic major and minor scales (Perry, 2011). For instance, in *Tie bi*, the composer systematized the composition around the E flat tonic note. Of course, he worked in the E flat major key. See Example 10 for illustration.

**Example 10: *Tie bi* in E flat major**

#### **4.2.5 Compositional Techniques**

It is always important for an art music composer to use certain approaches to create and structure his or her compositions to achieve unique styles attributed to him or her. Given this, Sitsofe Kwame Ayi predominantly employed techniques such as repetitions, sequences, scaly figures, restatements, and imitations, having acquired such knowledge and skills from his musical experiences over the years (Oludare, 2014). See Example 11 for illustration.

**Example 11: Compositional techniques in *Suban Pa***

In the example above, the melodic theme from bar 1 to bar 4 is predominantly made up of scaly figures, which is restated in bars 9 to 12. Again, in bars 13 and 14 respectively, there are repetitions of E flat, A flat, and D. These techniques, together with those mentioned earlier are found in other melodic themes of the four selected compositions. For instance, in *Kyere wo do*, the composer organized his composition with series of sequences. Example 12 below is an excerpt.

**Example 12: Sequences in *Kyere wo do***

As stated earlier, the excerpt above was developed with sequences. Undoubtedly, the composition was made up of three phrases of sequences. From bar 1 to the first two beats of bar 5 is a sequence while from the last beat of bar 5 to the first two beats of bar 9 is another sequence. The last sequence starts from the last beat of bar 9 to bar 11. It is also worth noting that the composer utilised imitations involving some rhythmic patterns. In *Tie bi*, for example, the rhythmic pattern from bar 1 to the first two and half beats of bar 3 was imitated in subsequent bars whilst the rhythmic patterns in bars 9 to 11 were also imitated in subsequent bars. See Example 13 for illustration.

A-ho-bra - see be-ma w'a-ye o-yere pa. A -ho-bra - see ma wo kun' be-boa wo'o! Nya-me n'a -hye se wo be-bre wo

7  
 ho-a-se, Na hunu se O-ku-nu ne a-wa-ree ti... O-yere pa bia-ra be-bre ne ho'a - se'o; O-yere pa bia-ra be-bre ne ho'a-

13  
 se'o. \_\_\_\_\_ Na Nya - me

**Example 13: Imitations in *Tie bi***

**4.2.6 Form and Text**

Musical form may be said to be the plan, or structure of a composition. In other words, form is the layout of the themes that add up to constitute a piece of music. It is a way of describing the structure or shape of a piece of music in terms of how it has been constructed from various smaller themes or sections (Acquah & Sackey, 2021; Lee, 2023). In the four selected compositions, the composer mostly used the strophic form even though some of them may have two themes. In *Ka hwε*, for instance, one may ordinarily describe the form as a rounded binary since it has a verse and a refrain having a component of the verse. The verse is made up of the first eight bars whilst the refrain starts from bar 9 to bar 16. However, it has four stanzas. See illustration below.

1. Nya - me bo - foɔ bo nsra - ban hyia Nya - me nkrɔ - foɔ ho daa daa,  
 2. A - wu - ra - de a - ni wɔ a - ho - te - foɔ so mm're nyi - naa,  
 3. ɔ - tene - nee - ni'a - ma - neɛ dɔɔ - so, nan - so Nya - me gye no daa,  
 4. Mom - mi yen mmɔm nkɔn - fo Nya - me, ɔ - ye na N'a - dɛɛ dɔɔ - sɔ.

5. ɔ - gye wɔn nkwa, ɔ - hwe wɔn so, nne - pa bia - ra re - mmɔ wɔn.  
 6. ɔ - ye a - so tie wɔn su - fre, na ɔ - ma bo - fo gye wɔn.  
 7. Dɛɛ ɔ - twere no ren - hwe a - se, na n'a - nim ren - gu a - se.  
 8. ɔ - hwe nti - bia, ɔ - hwe nti - pa, ɔ - ye na N'a - dɛɛ dɔɔ - sɔ.

**Refrain**  
 9. Ka hwe, na hun' se Nya - me ye, Ka hwe na hun' se Nya - me ye.

13. Nne pa bia - ra re - mmɔ wɔn a wɔ de wɔn ho twere Ye - su.

**Example 14: The Form of *Ka hwe***

Just like *Ka hwe*, *Suban pa* also has a verse and a refrain with four stanzas. *Kyere wo dɔ* on the other hand has one theme set to six stanzas whilst *Tie bi* has four stanzas.

Significantly, vocal music requires text for both the performer and the audience to comprehend and better appreciate the musical art. Text can be explained as the product of social activity, a consequence of interaction of social practices

and social agents (Acquah & Sackey, 2021; Aleshinskaya, 2013). The composer used the Asante Twi text in all four compositions to put across his thoughts for better understanding. It is also important to say that melodies of the four compositions do not rigidly adhere to the tonal and rhythmic inflections of the Asante Twi text. However, the composer was able to convey his message through the text. For instance, in *Ka hwɛ*, the composer talked about how God protects, saves and guards his people always. The refrain emphasised that we should 'taste and see' the goodness of the Lord. In *Kyere wo dɔ*, he talked about genuine love whilst in *Tie bi*, the composer advised married couple to humble and love themselves in order for peace to reign in their marriage. In *Suban pa*, on the other hand, the composer talked about good character, and stated that; 'take a good friend in order to have a good character because bad character destroys good character'. It is very obvious that the composer's focus was on semantics rather than setting Ghanaian text to melodies.

## 5. Conclusion

The authors have principally discussed a brief profile, and analysed four compositions of Sitsofe Kwame Ayi, bringing to bare, his contributions to music composition, education and performance in Ghana as well as to unravel his compositional techniques and styles. The composer, Sitsofe Kwame Ayi is revered as an iconic composer of the Seventh-day Adventist church, Ghana who over the years has created many compositions, nurtured many musicians and trained many choirs to enhance performance skills for the propagation of the gospel.

Unequivocally, the four compositions explicitly confirm Ayi's domicile intercultural activities even though they were set to Asante Twi texts. Of course, melodies of the compositions did not rigidly adhere to the tonal and rhythmic inflections of the Asante Twi texts used. S.K Ayi consciously made his compositions simple for easy performances. For instance, for his harmonic vocabulary, he predominantly utilised primary and secondary chords, few secondary seventh and secondary dominant seventh chords and tertian harmony as well as parallel sixths progressions. He also explored repetitions, sequences, scaly figures and restatements as his compositional techniques. Indisputably, the composer heavily relied on Western musical elements rather than Ghanaian indigenous materials in his intercultural activities. It is important to indicate that, apart from using the Asante Twi language as text in all the four selected compositions, the composer consciously employed Western structural

elements in terms of melodic organization, form, harmony and tonality to exhibit his creative skills. Considering the cultural background of the composer, it is only appropriate to expect that his compositions would expose musicians and analysts alike to such elements as the rigid adherence to the tonal and rhythmic inflections of the African text, complex rhythms, heptatonic and pentatonic scales, and other elements that would describe his compositions as African art music. However, his compositions largely exhibited Western musical elements. Of course, the domicile intercultural activity enables the composer to explore and utilise elements from other cultures even though engaging in an intercultural activity. We therefore recommend that compositions of Sitsofe Kwame Ayi be used by upcoming composers as guide to aid the creation of domicile intercultural compositions. Importantly, his compositions can be used as educational resources to expand discourses in musical analysis.

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