

A Pedagogical Model for Creating African-Inspired Piano Compositions: A Conceptual Thought

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Abstract

This paper is a review to establish a pedagogical model aimed at fostering creativity and cultural expression in piano composition through the lens of African musical traditions. As the world of music education embraces diversity and inclusivity, there is a growing need to explore pedagogical approaches that empower students to draw inspiration from their cultural heritage while developing their compositional skills. It is a proposed model that integrates elements of African musical traditions, including rhythms, melodies, and harmonic structures, into the process of piano composition for the various proficiency levels of piano instruction. The pedagogical model seeks to broaden the creative horizons of African compositions for the piano and deepen the understanding of the composers to exhibit cultural expression and inclusivity in music. Through a literature review, the paper births a model that can be leveraged to compose piano works within a certain complexity level at the students' experience. It is envisaged that the developed model can be used by composers for the piano within the concept of African pianism to make a potential impact on students' musical development. The paper contributes immensely to practical insights for educators seeking to inspire creativity and innovation in piano composition instructions.

Keywords: Pedagogical model, African pianism, piano composition, proficiency levels, cultural education

1. Introduction

The period of colonization has left a lasting impact on many aspects of African culture, including its music. One notable consequence of this historical context was the introduction of Western musical instruments, notably the piano, which became integrated into indigenous musical traditions. This fusion of Western and African musical elements resulted in a rich tapestry of styles that not only reflects the complexities of Africa's colonial past but also serves as a vehicle for asserting a reinvigorated African identity. The piano has evolved from its earliest beginning of “stringed keyboard instruments – dulcimer, spinet, virginal, clavichord, and harpsichord, – “(Parakilas, 1999) to its present state. According to Palmer et al. (2016), the origin of the pianoforte dates as far back as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Commentary on the need for the piano indicates that the instrument was invented to “take a full part in the great stylistic revolution of music in the Baroque period” (Parakilas, 1999). Because of its versatility, this new instrument has always demonstrated a special potential to act as a bridge across civilizations. It can

produce a more powerful and complex rhythmic pattern or highly calming and dazzling melodic themes. These unique features of the piano have triggered scholar-compositions in Africa for the instrument.

It is worth saying that in the recent past, there has arisen in African musical circles an interest in compositions for the piano. Unarguably are the compositions and compilations of Nketia, Kafui, and Labi of Ghana, and Euba of Nigeria. These scholar composers have inspired many other composers to write pieces for the piano. Indeed, all these compositions were done according to their personal experience and their proficiencies in handling the piano instrument without necessarily adopting an easy-to-go pedagogical approach that will enable many amateur pianists to be more comfortable handling their pieces. On the contrary, a glance at Western instrumental literature gives a vivid picture of a well-designed and systematic arrangement of materials for the process of acquiring proficiency in a particular instrument.

Again, preliminary interactions with piano students across some Ghanaian Universities offering music programmes, as well as some Senior High School students who prepare for West African Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) indicated how they must put in a lot of time to practice just a one-page African piece for their various practical examinations. Indeed, it is because these pieces were chosen without recourse to the proficiency levels of the students. Indeed, while the efforts of composers creating African piano works are laudable to enrich the repertoire of African instrumental music and foster performances of such pieces, there remains a critical gap in addressing the pedagogical needs essential for mastering African piano repertoire. The current landscape lacks dedicated pieces and instructional strategies tailored to effectively guide both amateur and professional pianists in their journey toward proficiency in this genre.

In essence, the absence of systematically designed pedagogical resources undermines the fundamental assumptions inherent in the process of acquiring skills in playing African piano pieces. Without structured guidance and appropriate educational materials, aspiring pianists may struggle to navigate the intricacies of African pianism, hindering their ability to achieve mastery and fluency in this specialized domain.

Therefore, it is imperative for creators and performers of African piano works to adopt a systematic conceptual framework aimed at facilitating the development and sustainability of African pianism. Addressing these deficiencies is crucial to overcoming barriers to progress and ensuring African piano music's continued growth and vitality as a vibrant artistic tradition.

Proponents of African Pianism did not consider this aspect of the pedagogical process. This study, therefore, addresses this issue and adds to the paucity of the existing literature on African Pianism and design strategies for use by composers of African pieces for music education instruction. A structured and logical sequence of pieces introducing learners to the intricacies of African musical elements is indispensable for the advancement of African pianism. Indeed, this lack of pedagogical and philosophically driven concepts for the creation of African art music for the piano serves as the foundation for this study.

Given the absence of a model for African piano composition, the primary aim of this study is to address this gap by developing a systematic approach tailored specifically to African pianism. By establishing a comprehensive conceptual underpinning and model for African piano composition, this endeavour seeks to provide guidance and support for composers and performers alike, fostering the continued growth and evolution of African piano music as a distinctive and vibrant artistic tradition. The purpose of this paper was therefore to develop a pedagogical African-pianism framework that can be used for creating African piano works considering the various proficiency levels - beginners, intermediate, and advanced. The question that guides this review paper is what pedagogical concept can be developed for the creation of

African Piano works? The paper reviews the literature topically to establish the pedagogical model for creating African piano pieces at various proficiency levels.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Piano

The pianoforte, piano for short, a unique and much-loved musical instrument, comes from a family of keyboard instruments with different shapes and sizes and also has varied ways of producing sound with the aid of either pipes or strings. According to Kirby (1966), there are four keyboard instruments: the various kinds of organs whose tone is produced by wind vibrating in pipes; the clavichord, whose strings are touched by tangents; the harpsichord, whose tone is produced by plucked strings; and, the family of pianos, in which the strings are struck by felt hammers. In his 'Forward' to 'Piano Roles', a book written by Parakilas (1999), Adams stated that "The piano is an instrument of dreams made from wood and ivory and brass and iron and copper and steel and felt". He continued, "It is a gift to us by craftsmen and artists of many generations, many countries" (p. x). This clearly, defines how musicians at the time – composers and performers - reacted to the introduction of this novel instrument into the music.

The present-day pianoforte originated from the handiwork of an Italian by name Bartolommeo Cristofori, as far back as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, precisely 1709, after several stringed keyboard instruments – spinets, virginals clavichords, harpsichords, and so on, (Parakilas (1999) had preceded it. A Significant number of authors (Palmer et al., 2016, Kirby, 1966, Parakilas et al. 1999) have accounted substantially for the beginning of the piano. Palmer et al. (2016) stated that "Cristofori called his piano the *gravicembalo col piano e forte* – literally, a harpsichord with soft and loud – from which we get the word pianoforte" (p. 12). The piano, therefore, succeeded the harpsichord because the latter "was weak in tone and lacked the capacity for light and shade (Raymar, 1951). In other words, the piano was a bit of an enhancement on the harpsichord because it had an improved tone production mechanism capable of mimicking other musical instruments and assuming a kind of a 'universal' status. Commenting on the capabilities of the piano in comparison with its predecessors of which the instrument is preferred, Dearling (1996) believed that "unlike the harpsichord or the clavichord, the piano is an equal temperament instrument in which the strings are struck percussively by rebounding hammers" (p. 118). He continued to aver that graded dynamic contrasts depend on pressure of touch, and that, its importance has been unchallenged for over two hundred years. He explained that no other modern acoustic instrument, apart from the organ, has such a wide frequency response from low to high, nor such expressive capacity, dynamic power, or colouristic possibility. From Cristofori's 'wing-shaped' grands in Italy, it developed into the 'square piano' in Germany and later England in the early eighteenth century. Kirby (1966) gave a vivid description of that development and stated:

Much of the eighteenth-century development of the piano took place in Germany where some important builders were Gottfried Silbermann and Johann Andreas Stein, both of whom were prominent in the construction of harpsichords and clavichords as well. [...] There were two principles followed in these German instruments, which, in the tradition of the clavichord, were small and square. (p. 22)

In furtherance to other centres involved in the growth of the instrument, Kirby again asserted:

Besides Germany, the most important center for the building of pianos in the eighteenth century was London which had the Broadwood firm coming out with a 'different type of piano that was to prove most influential. Its characteristic was a double-action *Stossmechanik* (with escapement) the

so-called English action, and this made possible a heavier instrument with a much stronger tone. (p. 24)

Additionally, changes and new developments occurred in the century that followed as Kirby again reiterated: Further changes were made throughout the nineteenth century. For the most part, these involved increasing the instrument's power using heavier strings and strengthening the case and frame. These were great historical developments for music, and the piano could not have undergone any better and more dynamic changes than what took place in the past centuries. Pianos come in varied sizes and shapes—the grand, the largest of them all and called the 'concert grand' because of the purpose it is used for, has a compass of eight (8) octaves; baby and miniature grands, and the upright (for domestic and teaching purposes) pianos. Kirby (1966) affirmed this and explained:

As with the harpsichord, many other forms of the piano developed, most of which were adaptations to make the instrument more suitable for use in the home. Most important are the various kinds of upright pianos, which have been in existence since the early nineteenth century and which generally have been manufactured by the same firms that made the larger grand pianos. (p. 25)

The definition is also espoused in the Encyclopedia Britannica Student Library (2010) and it states: Although pianos have been made in a variety of shapes in the years since their invention, today there are two standard models—the grand and the upright, each in different sizes. Grand pianos can exceed 9 feet (3 meters) in length but are normally about 6 feet (2 meters) in length. The upright piano, with strings running perpendicularly up from the keyboard, was devised in the late 1700s. Modern uprights sometimes occupy no more space than a small bookcase or can resemble a more substantial console. Experiments—including pianos with double keyboards, tuned-in microtones, and tuning forks in place of strings—are of historical interest but have no practical applications. Although not technically a piano because it is not a stringed instrument, the electric, or electronic piano began to appear in the 1930s. It relied on electroacoustic or digital methods of tone production and was heard through an amplifier and loudspeaker. According to Fletcher (2002), the grand piano of today has an expanded compass of eight (8) octaves with a heavier and muscular action unlike its eighteenth, and Cristofori's prototypes which had only four-and-a-half octaves. "The modern concert piano is a durable, heavyweight, high-tensioned, high-performance, scientifically optimized, individually crafted, voiced, and regulated machine of nearly 12, 000 parts, more than capable of holding its own against an orchestra.



Figure 1. A Grand Piano



Figure 2. An Upright Piano (Side View)



Figure 3. An Upright Piano (Front View)

Source: <https://www.bing.com/search?q=the+piano+image&qs=n&form>

Upright pianos, also known as ‘vertical’ pianos, and or, ‘upright grand’, are smaller grands in nature but have tall frames and they are also up-ended and vertically placed. Their conspicuously tall uppermost rectangular cases on legs are uniquely designed to suit their power and stability. The upright piano is seen to be more domestic-friendly and has been widely used for private purposes. To think of the piano as a unique and imposing instrument that provides pleasure is an understatement. It is not only a gift for ‘impersonating other musical natures,’ as has been exemplified in a lot of African piano pieces, but “Like a movie projector, the piano envelops an audience in its illusion. Played by itself, it puts whole worlds of musical sound at the fingertips of one player. Joining other instruments or voices, it supplies whatever they need to make their illusion complete”. (Parakilas, 1999, p. 7). It is an instrument of prestige and power.

2.2 Piano Pedagogy

Pedagogy has been defined by Webster as, ‘the art, science, or profession of teaching’. Thus, piano pedagogy may be said to be skillfully imparting, or, passing on information or knowledge systematically or methodically, which may include progressive teaching materials. Cobbold et al. (2016) also described Pedagogy as any conscious activity by a person, designed to ensure learning in another person; the act and discourse of teaching; and the application of professional judgments to teaching and learning. The expression, he further explained, alludes to an ability that seeks to transform and adjust to the needs and context of individuals, based on a set of principles or rules.

The acquisition of any instrumental skill requires a comprehensive and systematic approach that can lead the individual to the highest achievement in that instrumental area, hence, the provision of a diversity of

pedagogical practices that will greatly enhance the diversity of learning outcomes (Gemma et al., 2020). Considering this, composers of instrumental music found the need, after the invention of these instruments, to design pieces that would monitor the progress of learners. Composers of piano music, for example, have been very proactive over the years in churning out quite a few compositions, at every point in time, to keep the interest of players and aficionados well alive.

It is worth noting that didactic materials for the piano, which included pieces and technical studies for all levels (primer, beginners, intermediate, and professional) have significantly been made available for the promotion of the teaching and learning, personal development of players as well as exploration of the potential of the instrument.. In light of this, it is worthwhile appreciating the fact that, conscious efforts were made by the colonial masters to promote the teaching and learning of traditional African music in some schools in recognition of the need for their culture to co-exist with ours (Parakilas, 1999).

Kwami (1994) writes about an account that W. E. F. Ward a former history teacher and music master at Achimota College gave his consent to Ephraim Amu teaching activities in traditional African music in the College. Kwami (1994) also tells us how Robert Ashong Kwami and Philip Gbeho carried the tradition further. It was through their pioneering efforts that we can proudly boast of the intercultural music educators our country has produced. Such scholars include J.H. Kwabena Nketia, Daniel Avorgbedor, Komla Amoaku, Willie Anku (late), and Nessio Fiagbedzi.

2.3 The Concept of African Pianism

The growth of Eurocentric influence on African art music compositions dates to the period of the Christian missionaries in the West African countries. It assumed a greater dynamism when Western music gradually found itself in the formal Education established by these missionaries. The European-imported Christian Church and the British political authority in Ghana and other African countries facilitated the growth of European music. In this regard, Omojola (2001) wrote:

European church and classical music were introduced through the Church as well as through Missionary schools. The activities of both the Church and Missionary schools were complemented by the efforts of private philanthropic bodies that organized concerts and various musical and cultural activities especially when raising funds for the establishment of new schools. (p.155)

Omojola (2001) was of the view that churches and missionary schools provided musical training in both the theory and practice of European music. The Christian Church became an important focal point for expressing their discontent. It is worth stating that the trained scholars who had received the Western form of Education in music, because of their nationalistic nature, began to seek ways to replace the Western compositional materials with a more culturally relevant corpus. Some of these early African composers of Church music were Rev. J. B. Anaman, Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquah, E. C. Bilson Snr., J. P. Johnson–Ghana, Ekundayo Phillips, the Reverend Canon J. J. Kuti, F. C. Coker (Nigeria),

The influence of these musicians in their respective countries on the younger generation of composers became evident as a considerable number of works, in which African and European elements were combined, were composed. Most works were composed for the choirs and voices and with few instrumental forms. It is, therefore, prudent that a work situated in this area must look at some of the issues that have culminated in this concept of African Pianism. Following the years, composers started to write such African works for the piano and it attracted scholarly attention. Boamah (2012) described and explained African Pianism:

African Pianism describes the approach of composition that combines African elements and Western elements for the piano. A composition can therefore be based on African traditional vocal music or

instrumental music. The concept also deals with the keyboard music of African art composers. Works by art music composers who are not Africans, but who have learnt to use idioms in African music can be included in African Pianism. (p. 141)

According to Boamah, the piano has some percussive taste and melodic capability that make it stand out when expressing the rhythmic and drum features of African music making. This distinctiveness of the piano establishes a concept that becomes a framework for writing for it.

Furthermore, the term African Pianism was coined by Akin Euba (Boamah, 2012). Euba (1989/1999) dwelt on the techniques used in the performance of African instrumental music in general to establish the African pianistic style. Those techniques such as thematic repetition, direct borrowings of thematic material, as in rhythm and tonal from African traditional sources, and then percussive treatment of the piano were used as the basis. He later added another feature, which is making the piano behave like an African instrument. This concept was corroborated by Nketia (2019) as he provided further insight into the theory of this concept:

African pianism refers to a style of piano music that derives its characteristic idiom from the procedures of African percussion music as exemplified in bell patterns, drumming, xylophones, and mbira music. It may use simple or extended rhythmic motifs or the lyricism of traditional songs and even those of African popular music as the basis of its rhythmic phrases. It is open-ended as far as the use of the tonal materials is concerned, except that it may draw on the modal and cadential characteristics of traditional music. Its harmonic idiom may be tonal, atonal, consonant, or dissonant in whole or in part, depending on the preferences of the composer, and the mood or impressions he wishes to create to heighten or soften the jaggedness of successive percussive attacks. In this respect, the African composer does not have to tie himself down to any school of writing, if his primary aim is to explore the potential of African and tonal usages. (p.1)

Observing critically the definitions and scope of African Pianism, it is palpable that African Pianism goes beyond the application of indigenous idioms in writing a piece for the piano but also the composers must be mindful of the performance practice of African music making. As Agawu (2014) argued, musicians have to be very conversant with rhythm in African music and all other features involved. As much as I agree with this, I want to add that musicians writing for the piano must understand the piano language in its cultural context. They must know the proper functions of the piano, including the pedals. They must understand and appreciate the proficiency level of the players, as well as their disposition towards African musical features, and apply those philosophies in the composition. This way, the concept of African Pianism will be underscored with the cognition and the psychology of its performance.

2.5 Compositional Processes and Creativity

Composers work in different ways to bring out their finished products, and there are elements of unconscious inspiration as well as conscious effort that can be discerned in them all. Wallace (1926) attempted to suggest how those elements might be drawn together in proposing a four-staged theory of the creative process which has been widely quoted. The first stage, 'preparation', involves the collection of information relevant to the problem; this is probably best done in a flexible, open-ended manner. In the second, 'incubation' stage, conscious attention is turned away from the problem, and unconscious processes predominate. 'Illumination', the third and perhaps the most difficult stage to predict, is the 'Eureka' experience in which a specific creative solution is defined: it appears with suddenness and a sense of creativity. The fourth stage is 'verification', and it involves the working out or the formalization of the solution; it is refined, and adapted to meet practical constraints (Hargreaves, 1986)

Sloboda et al. (1985) agree with an anonymous composer who narrowed Wallace's four-stage theory of creativity into two major stages in composition; they are 'inspiration', where a skeletal idea or theme appears in consciousness; and the second one, 'execution', where the idea is subject to a series of more conscious and deliberate processes of extension and transformation. Sloboda et al. (1985) cited an anonymous composer concerning stages in composition:

The first stage in the composer's work is....' inspiration.' the composer 'has an idea'... consisting of definite musical notes and rhythms which will engender for him the momentum with which his musical thoughts proceed. The inspiration may come in a flash, or as sometimes happens it may grow and develop gradually. [In this latter case] the inspiration takes the form...not of a sudden flash of music, but an envisaged impulse towards a certain goal for which the composer was obliged to strive. (p.157)

After inspiration and conception execution follows. The process of execution is first the act of listening inwardly to the music as it shapes itself; allowing the music to grow; following both inspiration and conception wherever they may lead. A phrase, a motif, a rhythm, even a chord, may contain within itself, in the composer's imagination, the energy that stimulates movement. It will lead the composer on, through the forces of its momentum or tension, to other phrases, other motifs, and other chords. Much of what is identified as compositional styles inherit the habitual ways in which composers modify initial thematic material. However, even if a composer is selective in the types of transformation he uses, there is still too much freedom. Undeniably, skilled composers are very hard on themselves, rejecting many permissible developments as unsatisfactory; but just as they are unable to articulate where inspiration comes from, they are very unclear about the criteria by which they choose among the available ways of developing a theme (Sloboda et al., 1985)

However, things are different in the case of the Ghanaian composer because several Ghanaian art composers are subjected to the strict regimental rules imposed on them from the study of Harmony, Melody Writing, Counterpoint, Orchestration, and Compositional Techniques by their teachers, a condition that stifled creativity only a few could stand out. Notwithstanding, other teachers enhance creativity and allow their composition students to be on their own by helping them develop their style by relating to their ideas as well as searching more on their traditional sources (Green, 2017).

Composers are mostly recognized through their musical compositions. The compositions demonstrate how creative a composer is. Collins (2005) defined composition as:

Composition is both an activity of composing and the results of that activity. It involves a process of construction, a creative putting together, a working out, and carrying through of an initial conception or inspiration; a process of creating a new piece of music. (p. 194)

Willgoss (2012) on the other hand explained creativity in two dimensions:

Creativity today is firstly a general term, often colloquial and ill-defined, used ubiquitously to indicate a positive value judgment on any endeavour, mainly personally achieved. Secondly, creativity is an extensively researched scientific term standing for the discovery of ways in which some measure of independence, originality, and efficacy has been achieved. In either usage, the evidence of creativity is dependent on the creative product of the creative person. (pp. 423-424)

He further explained the significant innovations and values of contemporary art music to the creator and listener:

Creativity in contemporary art music composition is often asserted in how music appears to have significant innovation and value to its creator and subsequently to the player or hearer. It is important to note here that musical composers and performers use effective persuasion, often identified as synonymous with being creative, to cause others to be receptive to their works. If effective persuasion is present, it leads to the power to influence and gain recognition from the social grouping within which composers wish to thrive. (p.427)

2.6 Compositional Styles and African Identity

African art music resulted from Africa's interaction with the West particularly during the period of colonial rule. Africa was introduced to music from the West, specifically art music or music from the Baroque, classical, and Romantic periods Sadoh (2010).

Omojola (1987) documents that; the introduction of European culture and Christianity to Nigeria in the second half of the nineteenth century was to lead to changes in the socio-political, economic, and religious features of Nigerian society. Since traditional, pre-colonial, Nigerian music was strongly tied to these features, the introduction of European culture and Christianity also had significant effects on Nigerian musical culture. Nigerian music has always undergone processes of change either internally generated or affected by the influence of a foreign culture. Music is a unit and an aspect of the totality of a people's culture. Since culture is by its nature, a dynamic phenomenon undergoing a constant process of change, it can be rightly ascertained that Nigerian traditional music as we know it today is in every likelihood different from What it was several hundred years ago.

More recent musical changes which have taken place in Africa, through European contact should, therefore, not be described as unauthentic. Rather, they should be seen as part of the evidence of the age-long propensity for African musicians to adapt their musicianship to conform to socio-cultural changes within the society. In this regard, the introduction of Christian missionary activities and the British colonial administration of Nigeria in the middle of the nineteenth century have led to some of the most significant musical changes in the country. In Nigeria today are a significant number of composers, trained in Universities and Conservatoires (Okafor, 1988), both at home and abroad, writing works that are conceived along the lines of European music, but which often employ a considerable degree of African musical elements. The most important objective of these composers is to help create a modern tradition of Nigerian Art music through a fusion of European and African elements.

The most important foundation for the growth of European-derived modern musical idioms in Nigeria, as in many African countries, is, however, the Christian church (Omojola, 1987). As Nketia has observed, the adoption of European culture in Africa was "Encouraged and strengthened by the activities of the Church, which preached against African cultural practices while promoting Western cultural values and usages. It adopted a hostile attitude to African music, especially to drumming, because this was associated with "pagan" practices. Moreover, this music did not appear to be suitable for the form of Christian worship that Westerners were accustomed to. Because indigenous African music could not be used, the substitution of Western music was vigorously pursued" (Omojola, 1995, p.149)

In addition, the church, through its Mission Schools also provided opportunities for the training of students in the theory and practice of European music (a feature which still exists). Omojola in his study classifies written compositions by Nigerian composers who have been influenced by European classical music as Modern Nigerian Art music.

Boamah (2012) referred to African art music as representing the soul of Africa; thus, music represents a people united by language, environment, history, common ideals, and continuity with the past. Though

there are several different languages and environmental situations across the African continent we have similar historic occurrences. Amongst these historical events, our interaction with Europe and the quest to promote the continent's image in many fields of study are what bind us together. Accounts by Sadoh (2010) indicate similarities in the development of an indigenous art musical genre which began with the activities of the missionaries. Although the European culture had some influence on the African culture which compelled Africans to change their way of life, worship, and music (Manning, 2010), it is worth postulating that their influence on African traditional music is something not to regret about but rather, it has improved the African music and has raised it to a higher level.

2.7 Indigenous Compositional Resources for the Piano

As already stated, indigenous resources have been employed in creating musical artifacts for voices and other instruments. These idioms may be simple or extended rhythmic motifs or the lyricism of traditional songs and even those of African popular music as the basis of its rhythmic phrases (Acquah & Boahen, 2017). Some of these materials may be tonal, modal, and cadential characteristics of traditional music. Acquah and Boahen (2017) commented on traditional idioms available within the frame of African Pianism:

Its harmonic idiom may be tonal, atonal, consonant, or dissonant in whole or part, depending on the preferences of the composer, the mood or impressions he wishes to create, or how he chooses to reinforce, heighten, or soften the jaggedness of successive percussive attacks. (p.17)

According to them, the African composer does not have to tie himself down to any particular school of writing if his primary aim is to explore the potential of African rhythmic and tonal usages. This became evident in their musical artifact, *Xylafrique*, a composition for the xylophone. They synthesized the various parts as in text and melody, rhythm, and meter; then texture to bring out the gylid idiom in the composition alongside the Western compositional techniques. The vocal aspect: the text of the music is usually simpler than the accompaniment. It is therefore important that in creating step-by-step compositions for the piano, the melodic progression of the vocal aspect is used more often for both the left and the right hands of the piano.

3. The Developed compositional model for African Piano Works

The compositional model serves as a motivation for African piano students who will be encouraged to progressively move up the proficiency levels systematically and also be methodically exposed to African traditional musical elements. Thus, opening a new chapter and creating a friendly environment for African piano works to thrive. It incorporates a choice of appropriate themes and melodic figures. Writing about Modern African Music, Euba (2005) commented on African pianism:

Africanisms employed in neo-African keyboard music include (a) thematic repetition (b) direct borrowings of thematic material (rhythmical and/or tonal) from African traditional sources (c) the use of rhythmical and/or tonal motifs which, although not borrowed from specific traditional sources, are based on traditional idioms (d) percussive treatment of the piano and (e) making the piano 'behave' like African instruments. (p.8)

From the upshot, a level of proficiency, starting from Beginners moving through Intermediate and finally to Advanced was carefully designed thus, "making haste slowly". The purpose of this is to help the student acquire an in-depth musical understanding and control of African tonal and rhythmic practices as presented in the table below:

Table 1: Suggested Devices and Techniques for creating African Piano works

	Proficiency Level	Harmony	Texture	Melody	Rhythm
1	Beginner	1. Use of tertian harmonic progressions 2. Introduction of various modal sonorities	1. Two-part patterns 2. Simple individual/separate hand movements	1. Introduction of basic five-finger melodic patterns 2. Application of simple melodic lines involving skips and stepwise movements	1. Introduction to half and whole-tone durational units and their sub-divisions 2. Introduction to simple hemiola rhythmic patterns
2	Intermediate	1. Introduction to quartal Harmonies 2. Combination of tonal and atonal sonorities	1. Combination of homophonic and polyphonic progressions 2. Introduction to octave playing	1. Introduction to scaly passages 2. Extension of melodic lines beyond five fingers	1. Rhythms involving various combinations of quaver and semiquaver units 2. Introduction to tied notes and syncopated rhythms, hemiola patterns
3	Advanced	1. More advanced harmonic progressions involving tonal and atonal sonorities	1. Use of dense homophonic texture in both hands 2. More rapid movements in both hands Octave playing	1. Fluid melodic elaborations involving quavers and semi-quavers and their sub-divisions 2. Sophisticated	1. Syncopated and offbeat phrasing. 2. Independent rhythmic contrast. 3. Alterations of three quavers and two dotted quavers

				and complex melodic lines	
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Using four (4) musical concepts, rhythm, melody, harmony, and texture as themes underpinning a musical creation for this model, the creative phase was categorized into levels of complexity – beginner, intermediate, and advanced respectively. The pieces in each level, progressively created, were meant to solve various issues involving rhythm, harmony, melody, texture, and some pianistic challenges in the learning of African piano works. As piano students become familiar and clear with technique and concepts in one particular level they are gradually introduced to more complex concepts involving the same or additional themes. For example, from five-finger melodic patterns and simple melodies involving skips and steps, as well as an introduction to half and whole-tone duration units and divisions the beginner gradually progresses to playing sophisticated and complete melodic lines, with rhythms involving various construction of quaver and semiquaver units, and then to playing in octaves. Then, as the student progresses, more advanced themes are introduced. The student would then be introduced to the use of block chords in both hands, with more rapid movements in both hands. This procedure is more pedagogic, constructive, and progressive, to achieving proficiency in African pianism.

1. The Model

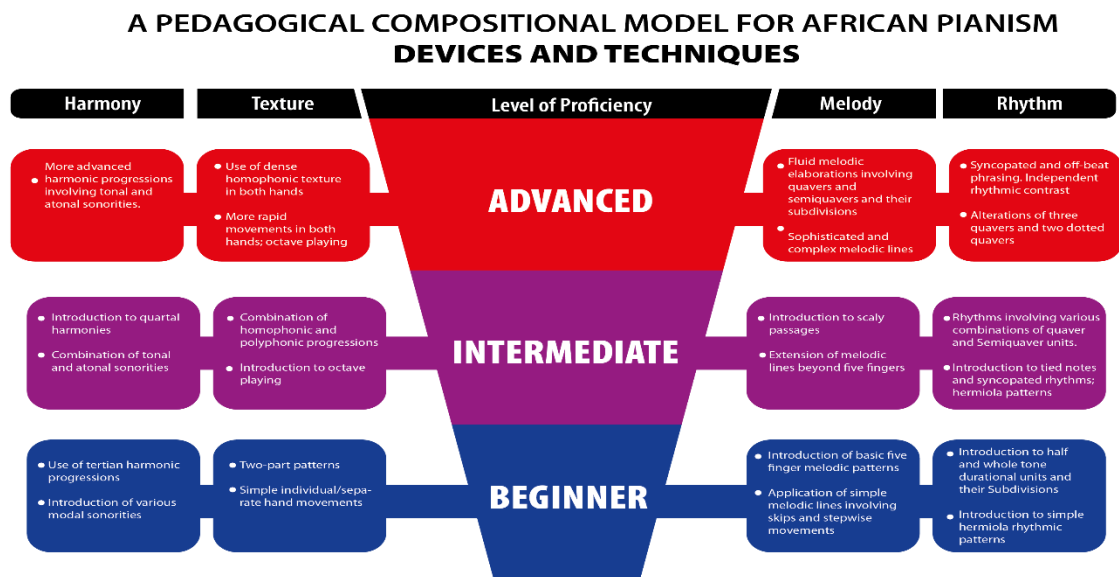


Fig. 1. A Pedagogical Compositional Model for African Pianism by J.F. Annan (2024)

5. Conclusion

The review, thus far, pulls out a model of creating piano works within the theory of African Pianism. It gives a point of reference for composers to come up with a specific category of difficulty for their piano works. It provides a frame that can be referred to in the future and guides composers who wish to direct their compositions towards the creation of musical pieces for the piano, taking into consideration the proficiency level and using African traditional musical idioms for examination and performances. The need to consciously assemble a variety of both traditional and popular musical elements as the underlying principle of an African piano compositional model is required. These could be melodic, harmonic, rhythmic textural, and other musical practices embedded in the tradition. These are then patterned systematically and pedagogically and graded into levels of proficiency. This compositional model will

serve as a motivation for African piano students and composers to create works that progressively move up the proficiency levels systematically and be methodically exposed to African traditional musical elements. Thus, opening a new chapter and creating a friendly environment for African piano works to thrive.

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