Abstract

This paper portrays Colonel Josef Adeboyejo Olubobokun (rtd.) as a foremost Nigerian military musician. It also beams a searchlight into his family and educational background as well as his contributions and achievements in the area of military music in Nigeria. The field aspect of this research was conducted through interviews with Olubobokun himself and other serving and retired band officers in the Nigerian armed forces and the police. In addition, scores of some of his military band instrumental and vocal music were collected, categorized and analyzed in order to determine to what extent these have conformed to the musician’s assertions – especially in the area of indigenization of military music in Nigeria. It was revealed, among other things, that Col. Olubobokun was the first Nigerian to be commissioned in the Nigerian Army Band Corps. This also made him the first Nigerian band officer to ascend the position of the Director of Music of the Nigerian Army. Moreover, he contributed in no small measure towards the establishment of the Nigerian Army School of Music (NASM) as well as to the music training of many of the prominent Nigerian military band officers that later came on the scene. The paper concludes that, in order to come out with a theory on the European-styled military music on African soil, research should be carried out on more military composers of diverse nationalities in Africa.

Résumé

Cette communication présente le Colonel Josef Adeboyejo Olubobokun (retraité.) comme premier musicien militaire dans l'armée nigériane. La communication fait la lumière sur sa famille et sur sa formation aussi bien que sur ses contributions et ses réussites dans le domaine de la musique militaire au Nigéria. Les enquêtes de terrain de cette recherche ont été réalisées par le biais des entretiens avec Olubobokun lui-même aussi bien qu’avec d'autres officiers en service et d’autres retraités de la bande des forces armées et de la police nigérianes. En plus des entretiens, quelques-unes de ses musiques instrumentales et vocales de la bande militaire ont été collectionnées, catégorisées et analysées pour déterminer à quel point elles sont conformes aux assertions du musicien - surtout dans le contexte d'indigénisation de la musique militaire au Nigéria. L’enquête a montré, entre autres que le Colonel J. A. Olubobokun (retraité.), était le premier musicien nigérian promu au grade de commissaire dans la bande armée Nigériane. Par cette promotion, il devient aussi le premier officier de la bande nigériane a occupé le poste du directeur de musique dans l'Armée Nigériane. De plus, il a contribué énormément à l'établissement de l’école musicale de l’armée nigériane (NASM). Il a également contribué à la formation de la plupart des officiers célèbres de la bande militaire, qui plus tard, ont fait leur apparition sur la scène musicale. Cette communication, dans sa conclusion, nous propose de mener des enquêtes sur les compositeurs militaires de diverses
Introduction

In many countries of the world, composers have emerged at one time or the other who have sought inspiration from the traditional music of their countries for the creation of a written (art) music that would represent both local and international sources. Among European musicians whose musical outlook portrayed this ideology are Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten of Great Britain, and Zoltan Kodaly and Bela Bartok of Hungary. It could be rightly said that the love of the land and people which spurred these composers was largely an extension of the same kind of motive that influenced the likes of Smetana and Dvorak of the former Czechoslovakia, Mussorgsky, Borodin, Rimski-Kosakov and Stravinsky of Russia in the late 19th and early 20th century Europe.

Vidal (2002: 11) noted that nationalism in the area of music in Nigeria started with the secessionist independent Native African churches in the later part of the 19th century – themselves linked with the early Nigerian nationalist movement groups led by the likes of Herbert Macaulay, John Payne Jackson (who later became Mojola Agbebi), C.C. Adeniyi-Jones and A.K. Ajisafe. The collective efforts by these individuals resulted in the use of traditional melodies characteristic of the ethnic communities, which became known as “Native Airs” as substitute for the “English Airs”. The three sources of the latter, employed by the emerging African composers at that time, were traditional African festivals, folksongs, and original (new) compositions. Two prominent names among the composers who pioneered the use of native airs in Nigerian churches include A.K. Ajisafe, and Ebun Ogunmefun.

This cultural re-awakening is epitomized through the use of “native airs” that later spread to the orthodox churches. Some of the musicians who made an impact in this area were: Rev. (Canon) J.J. Ransome-Kuti, Emmanuel Sowande (father of Fela Sowande), W.W.C. Echezona, A.K. Ajibola, Ikoli Harcourt-Whyte and T.K.E. Phillips (who is usually considered as both a Church and Art musician). The efforts of these church musicians laid a foundation for the Nigerian art music composers such as Fela Sowande, Ayo Bankole, Samuel Ekpe Akpabot and Akin Euba who “nationalized” their compositions with the use of folk motifs.

Looking specifically into the military music in Nigeria, a band officer could be classified in the "romantic nationalist" category of musicians mentioned above, i.e. he uses folk tunes and local instruments to portray Nigerian musical culture at the international level, albeit belonging to a later generation, namely Col. Josef Adeboyejo Olubobokun (rtd.), now a Reverend, who became the first Nigerian Director of Music of the Nigerian Army in 1965.

It is very important to state that this study agrees with the ideological school that emphasizes the inherent danger of generalization. For example, Coleman (1958) states *inter alia*, “generalization is a difficult art at any time, but particularly when dealing with group character” (such as the military, for instance). Therefore, in an effort to avoid any form of generalization in the area of indigenization of military music in Nigeria, several retired military band officers were interviewed, especially those who joined the military in the 1960s. In addition, other forms of data collection were carried out such as archival and bibliographic documents.

In December 2001, when I conducted an interview with Major G. J. McDonalds (rtd.) at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (where he is presently employed as Senior Technical Officer), he said *inter alia* “Olubobokun brought the idea of indigenization into the Nigerian military music, both in theory and practice. I strongly suggest you see him”. Also, when I contacted the immediate past Director of Music of the Nigerian Army, Lt. Col. Sati Hayi (rtd.), he also confirmed McDonalds’
assertion by saying that “Olubobokun gave many of us our first music lesson and, at the same time, encouraged us to supply him with folk tunes from our towns and villages”.\textsuperscript{1} Cdr. A. A. Adefenwa (rtd.), a former Director of Music, Nigerian Navy, in a personal interview (January 2004), said \textit{inter alia;}

\begin{quote}
…When he (Olubobokun) started to bring instruments like dundun, bata, batakoto, African xylophone and the like on the parade ground to form a kind of static orchestra to accompany his folk tune arrangements, we thought it was a crazy idea. But we were later proved wrong…
\end{quote}

Several other officers such as Lt. Cols. A. B. Popoola, O. Lafenwa, L. O. Amaechi (the incumbent Director of Music, Nigerian Army), Mr. Ben Odiase (the first Nigerian Director of Music, Nigeria Police Force), Lt. Cdrs. Tony Chiafor and O. Carew (the incumbent Director of Music, Nigerian Navy), have all testified to the fact that Olubobokun has contributed to the growth of indigenization in Nigeria – a venture that has now become a prominent phenomenon in the Nigerian contemporary music scene. These encomiums and accolades are poured on Olubobokun by the above-mentioned musicians because of his music arrangements and his contributions in the establishment of the Nigerian Army School of Music (NASM) and Nigerian Army Steel Band as well as his experimentation with Nigerian musical instruments for military concert music.

Based on the testimonies of all the above mentioned military band officers and several others, it is therefore considered germane to this study to probe into the biography of this much acclaimed indigenizer of European-styled military music in Nigeria, so that we may be able to appreciate those factors responsible for his immense contributions in this area.

\textbf{Historical Background of Col. J. A. Olubobokun}\textsuperscript{2}

Josef Adeboyejo Olubobokun was born in Iyin Ekiti, Ekiti State of Nigeria on 8\textsuperscript{th} June 1930 to the family of late Chief John Arojojoye and late Madam Comfort Ajayi Olubobokun. His father was a religious man who served as a lay-reader at Emmanuel Anglican Church (now Cathedral), Ado-Ekiti for thirty years. However, before he retired from the public service, Chief Arojojoye was invited to take over the chieftaincy title of the \textit{Odofin} Oke Laoye in Iyin Ekiti after the demise of his own father. Arojojoye accepted to ascend the throne, but on the condition that he would not partake in any idol worship associated with the office of the \textit{Odofin} Oke Laoye. The members of the community eventually agreed to this request.

Col. Olubobokun can boldly say that he inherited both his musical and evangelical traits from his parents. The young Josef became a choirboy in the Church at a very tender age. In 1948, he went to Christ’s School, Ado-Ekiti, where he taught for two years.

\textbf{Educational and Professional Background}

In 1951, Josef Olubobokun went to St. Andrew’s Teacher’s Training College, Oyo, where he learnt the harmonium. He passed out with credit in Music Education. As a matter of fact, he became the first Nigerian student to receive the Grade II Teacher’s (then called Elementary Teacher’s)

\textsuperscript{1} Interview with Lt. Col. Sati-Hayi (rtd.), the immediate past DOMA in November 2003
\textsuperscript{2} This information was obtained from Olubobokun himself during a 3-day interview conducted with him in his Adeniyi-Jones, Ikeja residence in January 11 – 13, 2004.

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Certificate with credit in Music. According to him, there was a Federal Government Gazette to that effect.

This brilliant performance aroused his thirst for a higher musical education in the university. Unfortunately, the only university in Nigeria at that time (University College, Ibadan) did not offer music. Therefore, he had to travel to Ghana for his higher musical education. In 1958 Josef enrolled as a student at Kumasi College of Technology to study Music. The school had other courses such as Fine Arts, Physical and Health Education, and Sciences. At the end of that year, the College was relocated to Winneba where it became Winneba Training College. Olubobokun could recall that at this time he had the opportunity to listen to some of Ephraim Amu’s compositions, albeit he never had the opportunity of meeting the renowned Ghanaian composer in person. However, this encounter with Amu’s music was to have a great impact on Olubobokun’s efforts at indigenizing the military music in Nigeria.

He would have completed his studies in 1960 but for his preparations for the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) London examinations in both theory and practical (in piano and clarinet). In order for Josef to have access to a more conducive examination atmosphere, his piano teacher, who was a product of the Royal College of Music (RCM), Manchester (England), encouraged Josef to go to Manchester for the examinations. After he had sent his credentials to the School, he was offered enrollment as a student at the RCM, Manchester in September 1960. He had to communicate this new development to the authorities of the Winneba College in Ghana. The latter then sought the permission of the Nigerian Ministry of Education, on whose scholarship Josef was in Ghana. The Nigerian Government granted an extension of Josef’s scholarship period from three to seven years (that is, a four-year extension).

After his first year he became a peripatetic music teacher and taught in four primary schools. He spent three years at the RCM in Manchester after which he was made an Associate of the Royal College of Music, Manchester (ARCM), a professional qualification that afforded him the opportunity to cover many areas of specialization in School Music such as Orchestration and Choral/Band/Orchestral Conducting, and Performance.

Josef Olubobokun was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Nigerian Army in October 1964. He was appointed the Director of Music, Nigerian Army, with effect from that date. He took over the mantle of Directorship from Capt. J.A. Cooper, an expatriate officer, when the latter was posted back to the United Kingdom. Hence, Olubobokun became the first Nigerian to ascend to that office.

In March 1965, Olubobokun was sent to the Royal Artillery Brigade School of Music, Woolwich in the United Kingdom on a six-month orientation course on Military Music. While in the U.K., he was attached to the Band of the Brigade in order to acquaint himself with both the performance practices and ethics of the military band and musicians. His urge to indigenize the European style of military music led him to experiment with the idea of writing a military march for the first time in his life, using the Yoruba tune *Iwe Kiko* as his melodic line. This particular music took him about a week to orchestrate for the band, and he was highly delighted when the tune was played by the Royal Artillery Brigade Band – with all precision and accuracy.

When Olubobokun returned to Nigeria in August 1965, the urge to carry on with writing and arranging indigenous folk tunes for military music repertoires led him to immediately start arranging several Yoruba and Hausa folk tunes. Still not satisfied with the number of the tunes he had collected, he expanded his repertoire by encouraging the Nigerian Army bandsmen to supply him with tunes from their towns and villages. When he wanted more local music than he had got from them, he decided to pay the men some amount of money for each tune they brought to him. This gesture spurred the men to supply him with folk tunes from all the different ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Olubobokun thus became satisfied with the rate at which folk tunes, which served as raw materials for his military band music arrangements, were brought to him. His next line of action was to create a class of Bandsmen competent in teaching the rudiments of music, by teaching and
encouraging the men to write and arrange music. Within a short period, the brilliant ones among them had started to write and arrange music of their choice, which they brought to him for corrections and guidance. He could vividly remember the likes of Sati Hayi (now a retired Lt. Col.), John McDonalds, B. Akahan, F. Oviawe (who are now retired Majors), and several others.

It was not only the folk melodies that were brought to Olubobokun by the military bandsmen; some other tunes from traditional martial and religious musical forms were also included. Olubobokun could recount that whenever the men brought him a particular tune which they intended to arrange, he would ask the would-be arranger this question: “for what instruments?, that is, was it for a wind instrument and piano?, or a duet, trio, quartet, or was it to be a full band arrangement?”

The next problem to tackle was that of form. That is, whether the musical form was going to be a March or a Selection – for a regimental military or military concert band respectively. Olubobokun would then guide the young bandsman to orchestrate for the selected instruments. This idea encouraged the bandsmen to achieve much in terms of harmony and orchestration because, according to him, the best thing that can happen to any musician is to hear his musical idea realized either by instrumentalists or vocalists or both.

Another problem that had to be solved was that of ignorance on the part of most senior officers of the Nigerian Army concerning adequate band preparations before a performance. It took a long time before Olubobokun could convince the Nigerian Army authority that the band needed to have adequate rehearsals for it to perform reasonably well. Many officers of other professional branches in the Nigerian Army were so ignorant about music that they thought that a live performance was like recorded music. That is, anytime one needs music, one only had to gather the musicians to play – even at the shortest notice. Olubobokun eventually corrected all that, albeit gradually.

Olubobokun recalls that he never encountered a negative reaction from any quarter in connection with his indigenization idea. Rather, according to him, the idea earned him more promotions and commendations in the Nigerian Army, Defence headquarters and even at the Dodan Barracks which was the seat of the Federal Government. As a matter of fact, the then Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, commended Olubobokun for this lofty idea and his innovations.

Incidentally, Olubobokun recollects that in 1964, Gowon (then a Major) was the chairman of the Nigerian Army Selection Board that recommended Olubobokun’s commission and appointment. The latter was therefore very proud of Olubobokun’s achievements. Other senior Army officers who were always commending Olubobokun’s efforts were the late Major General Maman Vatsa and Major Generals Alani Akinrinade, O. O. Oluleye, and Brig. Benjamin Adekunle, to mention just a few.-

During the Blacks’ Festival of Arts and Culture, Festac ’77, Col. Olubobokun compiled and published all his numerous indigenous Nigerian folk tunes for voices and military band instruments. These were performed by the Nigerian Army concert band throughout the Festival.

Col. Olubobokun provided an interactive atmosphere with the Directors of the other Military Bands, namely Navy Capt. Wole Bucknor of the Nigerian Navy and Mr. Ben Odiase of the Nigeria Police Force. The latter, on many occasions, came to Albati Barracks, watched the rehearsals of the Army Concert and dance bands and offered some professionally useful suggestions to the Army Director of Music. This gesture was usually reciprocated by Olubobokun. The two also exchanged music on several occasions.

Col. J.A. Olubobokun retired from the Nigerian Army on 16th January 1984. He is presently a full-time priest of the Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion.

**Contributions to the Growth of Military Music in Nigeria**

a) *The Experiment with Nigerian Musical Instruments by Military Concert Band*
During the preparation for the 2nd All Africa Games in 1973, the Nigerian Army Band, under the leadership of Olubobokun, requested the Cultural Centres throughout the country to bring Nigerian musical instruments in their areas to Abalti Barracks, Yaba (that is, the headquarters of the Nigerian Army Band Corps). Several instruments were brought from the various states. These included percussive instruments such as the \textit{bata} and \textit{dundun} sets, \textit{sekere} and \textit{sato} drums from the South-western part of Nigeria; native xylophone, slit drum, clay drums, from the South-east; and the \textit{kalangu} (a double-faced hour-glass drum) and \textit{kotso} (a single-faced hour-glass drum, played with the fingers of both hands but never with a stick) from the Northern part of the country.\(^3\)

These instruments were incorporated into an orchestra of indigenous musical instruments that gave a rich percussive background to the selections that the band played both at the National stadium, Surulere, and in the Nigerian Army Officer’s Mess at Marina in Lagos.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{b) Establishment of the Nigerian Army School of Music}
\end{itemize}

The precursor of the indigenous military training institutions in Nigeria was the now defunct Nigerian Military Forces Training College (NMTC), Kaduna. Established in 1960 as a substitute to the former West African Command Training School, in Teshie in Ghana, the NMTC had the same objectives as the latter, that is, to prepare cadets for further overseas military training especially at Sandhurst and Surrey in the United Kingdom. This was later replaced by the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) in 1964.

Since then, there has been a concerted effort in the establishment of several other military training institutions of both the combatant arms as well as the supporting services of Nigerian military. For example, the Nigerian Army Medical School was established in 1967, Nigerian Army Engineering School in 1971, Nigerian Army Ordnance School in 1975, the Command and Staff College in 1976, Nigerian Army School of Music in 1980, to mention just a few.

The year 1978 was very significant in the historical development of the Nigerian military music. It was the year that the Nigerian Army Headquarters (then in Lagos) formally gave the approval for the establishment of the Nigerian Army School of Music (NASM). However, prior to this time, there had already been some music training going on at the Abalti Barracks Headquarters of the Nigerian Army Band Corps (NABC). Soldiers were sent there from different battalions of the Nigerian Army for training in the rudiments of music, military band instruments and Corps of Drums courses.\(^4\)

Prior to the establishment of the NASM, battalions of the Nigerian Army sent personnel to the NABC according to their capability, some sending eight men, others six, others seven and so forth. The NABC headquarters would then merge all these soldiers into a band and organize a training programme for them. At the end of the training period, a senior officer would be sent from the Army Headquarters, at the instance of the Chief of Training, to review the passing-out-parade of that particular set. About one month later, another set of soldiers would resume training. This pattern continued until a School of Music (NNSM) was formally established.

In order to ensure systematic and progressive training for its bandsmen, it became very imperative for the Nigerian Army Band Corps to establish its own training school. Olubobokun, who was the Director of Music, had always discussed this issue with the past Army Chiefs but none seemed to show any interest. However, there was a turning point when Brig Gen. George Innih (later Maj. Gen.) became the Quartermaster General of the Nigerian Army. Because of the latter’s interest

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{Interview with Olubobokun.}
  \item \footnote{Interview with Lt. Col. T. Eru (rtd.), a former DOMA, in January 2004.}
\end{itemize}
in music, it was not difficult for Olubobokun to convince him of the need to set up a School of Music for the service.\footnote{Interview with Olubobokun.}

Without much delay, George Innih secured the approval of Lt. Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (then Chief of the Army Staff) on the matter. Thereafter, there was much pressure resulting from personal interest of some senior officers at the Army headquarters who wanted the school to be sited in their States of origin. It became rather difficult to choose a specific site for the School from the long list of such as Jos, Minna, Kaduna, and Enugu, suggested by the senior military officers.

However, Olubobokun was very resolute on siting the school in the Lagos area. In his write-up to the Army Headquarters, he stated that he would not want the Army to spend money to purchase instruments for the take-off of the School and to spend money again for the repairs of damages done to these instruments before anyone would use them. As a matter of fact, this he foresaw was going to happen if the instruments were transported to the premises of the School, should the School be sited in any of the above-mentioned towns other than Lagos. With this ‘superior argument’ Olubobokun was able to deflate all other arguments on the choice of site for the School of Music. The Army headquarters then resolved that the Nigerian Army School of Music be sited in the premises of the Military Cantonment at Ojo in Lagos State.

The Nigerian Army School of Music (NASM) was officially commissioned at its location in April 1980. Some infrastructures put in place were the Administrative Block which comprises of the offices of the Commandant, Director of Instruction/Deputy Commandant, and other officers who are teaching and other administrative staff members of the School. Other facilities were the School library, classrooms, practice rooms, rehearsal hall, the Parade ground, and sports centre.\footnote{This information was obtained from the Library of the Nigerian Army School of Music (NASM), Ojo in Lagos.}

Most officers and men who had received university education in Nigeria as well as those trained at the Military Schools of Music abroad usually form the nucleus of the instructors in the School. Basically, there are eight categories of courses available in the School.\footnote{The Programme was obtained from the Library of the NASM, Ojo.} These include:

(i) Band Young Officer’s Course with a duration of three months. This covers the orientation programme for the newly commissioned officers in the Band.

(ii) Band Master’s Course for both university graduates and non-graduates (but experienced) bandsmen. It covers all the theoretical and practical training required of the Bandmaster. The duration is one calendar year.

(iii) Music Instructor’s Course: for future instructors of the School and various Corps of the Band. The duration is six months.

(iv) Beginner’s Course for the recruits just coming to the Department of Music from the Army Ordinance School after their military training. A Board of experienced instructors in the school is responsible for the screening and assigning specific military concert or dance band or steel drum instrument to each of the trainees. The latter will then begin to receive basic instruction on their individual instruments for a period of one calendar year. They are also trained in the theory and rudiments of music. At the last quarter of their training, the trainees are expected to be professionally competent to form a band that would play the bandmasters’ final music arrangements.

(v) Military Band Intermediate Course: This is a continuation of the Beginners’ Course. The duration is three months.

(vi) Military Band Advanced Course: This is also a continuation of the Intermediate Course where the trainees are expected to reach the peak of their instrumental proficiency both in techniques and styles. The duration is three months.

(vii) Instrument Technician Course: This covers all the aspects of repairs and maintenance of the entire musical instruments and training materials of the Band.
(viii) **Organ/Piano Course:** This is designed to prepare soldiers for attachment to Churches in the Nigerian Army establishments and Barracks as organists.

The Nigerian Army Band Corps (NABC) headquarters at Abalti Barracks had, at different periods of time, trained many personnel of the Nigerian Airforce band. The set of bandsmen that joined the Air Force in 1971 was trained in NABC headquarters while the subsequent sets of 1979/90 and 1999 were each trained at the NASM, Ojo. However, none of these sets had gone beyond the elementary or beginners course of the Nigerian Army. This has contributed, in no small measure, to the inconsequential nature of the NAF bandsmen’s contribution, as far as professional proficiency is concerned.

The NASM has also trained many of its personnel – both officers and men – who have now become proficient military music arrangers. Prominent among these are Lt. Cols. B. A. Popoola, Elegebeleye; Majors F.A. Idoko, T. Oladipo (rtd); Capt. T.O. Onyeogu, to mention just a few. Therefore, considering the musical endeavours of the above arrangers, we can conveniently posit that the School of Music has contributed to the indigenization of military music in Nigeria by giving them the required musical training.8

However, a deep observation of the curricula of this military school of music reveals that it lays more emphasis on the European/Western music cultural education. That is, only a few courses have something in relation to African music. For example, apart from the Young Officer’s and Orchestration (Dance band) courses of the NASM and NNSM respectively, where there is a little discussion of the History of Nigerian Music, almost every other course is European music-biased. Emphasis is laid, in most cases, on several aspects of European music such as theory, harmony, composition, orchestration, instrument playing and repairs and, worse still, its history, form and analysis. Nigerian military music composers and scholars are yet to come up with materials on Nigerian idioms in these areas.

It is very disappointing that, hitherto, instrumentalists-in-training at both the NASM and NNSM still depend exclusively on imported tutors and study materials such as *Otto Langey, Band Primer*, and *Toast Tunes of all Times (TTT)*. A closer examination of these books reveals that most tunes used as studies and exercises are derived from European folk and war songs. Obviously, much emphasis is laid on European/Western musical cultural values and aesthetics. It is an ironical situation that whatever nationalistic endeavours being propagated in the compositions and arrangements of the Nigerian military music practitioners are not reflected or indoctrinated in the curricula of their training institutions.

**c) The Formation of the Nigerian Army Steel Band.**

The Pan or Steel Drum instruments were introduced to the Nigerian Army during the Festac ’77, in which a contingent from Trinidad and Tobago, known as The Starlet Steel Orchestra, performed. After the Festival, the latter presented a complete set of tuned steel drums to Lt. Gen. T. Y. Danjuma, the then Chief of the Army Staff, in appreciation of the special security arrangement accorded the group by the Nigerian Army. However, this can also be ‘seen’ as a veritable venture in promoting Trinidad and Tobago’s musical instrumental culture in Nigeria, the Nigerian Army Band being considered a force to reckon with in this regard.9 This assumption was confirmed when the Army headquarters approved that some of its personnel be sent for a training programme on the steel drum instrumental music in Trinidad and Tobago. The Nigerian Army trainee contingent was led by Warrant Officer (later Major) L A Jolaosho.

In 1991, the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. A.N.R. Robinson, visited Nigeria. During this visit, he brought members of one of the best Steel Bands of his country to perform at a

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8 Interview with Lt. Col. L.O. Amaechi, the incumbent DOMA.
9 Interview with Olubobokun.
concert organized by the Nigerian government. The performance of the group was captivating, to the extent that a request was made for some bandsmen of the Nigerian Army to be trained in the area of Steel Band technology in Trinidad and Tobago. Some months after the visit of Mr. Robinson, another set of four bandsmen of the Nigerian Army departed to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for a six-month training programme in Pan Technology. This was necessary because since 1977, when the first set of Nigerian soldiers went for a Beginners’ Course on the instruments, the area of construction and repairs had not been effective.

The second set of trainees were taught the technical know-how of the Pan instruments and were advised to use their experience to train others and also to construct much better instruments when they returned to Nigeria. In the area of Pan Construction, tuning and maintenance, this team of Nigerian Army bandsmen was able to hold its head above water to the extent that it was highly commended by the Trinidad and Tobago Government.

The Steel Band plays both the military marches and concert music. Today, it combines well with the military concert band to add some special colour to the latter. Sometimes at concerts, it creates a contrast to the military concert band instruments’ colour when the Steel Band is called to perform all alone. Because of its melo-rhythmic nature, its performance of folk tunes and Nigerian popular music (such as highlife and juju) and Calypso style arrangements is very interesting.

Compositions and Arrangements

It is very important to mention that despite receiving the greater percentage of his musical education from outside Nigeria, Olubobokun does not have any musical composition or arrangement in any of the foreign languages. Instead, he sticks tenaciously to the Yoruba language and in some cases, he chooses the Ekiti dialect in order to reflect his roots. His compositions are classified under two major categories namely,

a) Military band Parade music, and
b) Military band vocal concert music.

Military Band Parade Music, which is essentially military marches arranged in the instrumental medium can be further classified into two sub-categories namely, (i) Quick marches, and (ii) Slow marches. Olubobokun has two arrangements in each of the above subcategories as follows:

**Quick Marches**

i. Ba mi jo (Dance with Me) - a re-arrangement of Fela Sowande’s arrangement of Fielding Kirk’s *Wedding Song*

ii. Sports March

**Slow Marches**

i. Gborgunghoro (the alias of Ogendengbe, an Ijesha warrior)

ii. Moremi (the name of a goddess at Ile-Ife)

Military Band Vocal Concert Music

These are twelve vocal music arrangements compiled by Olubobokun and published under the title, Folk Song Suite for Military Band. The twelve songs are as follows:

i. Ki le n se? (What are you celebrating?)

ii. Omo mi (My Child)

iii. Ibi omi ti i sun (The water source)

iv. Olori Egbe (The Band Director)

v. Ibaratiele (Folk tale)

vi. Ki le n foba pe? (What do you take the King for?)

vii. Aragbamiyaya (Folk tale)
According to the author, the concept behind the collection is premised on the African moonlight tales experience. However, the thematic sources of the songs are of two types. These are folk tale music and the ethnic ritual songs of the Yoruba people of the south-west geo-political zone of Nigeria.

### Conclusion

Col. Josef Adeboyje Olubobokun (rtd.) is discussed in this paper as a pioneer of Nigerian military music, a nationalist arranger, a prolific teacher and mentor, and a founding father of the Nigerian Army School of Music (NASM).

It is therefore suggested that biographies of more of such African military musicians be written and documented systematically. This will enhance a proper appreciation of the European style military music genre. Moreover, it will form an essential part in the music curricula in our secondary and tertiary institutions.

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