



Bode Omojola

**Nigerian Art Music**  
With an Introduction Study of Ghanaian Art Music

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## Preface

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# Preface

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- 1 My interest in Nigerian Art Music dates back to the late 70s when, as a composer-in-training at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, I was interested in how a Nigerian composer of classical music can make himself relevant to his native audience without necessarily compromising artistic qualities expected in a work conceived within the idiom of Art Music. Such an interest ultimately becomes imperative for any African composer who aspires to work within an art idiom like classical music, which is essentially a cosmopolitan, elite tradition and which has derived much of its universal appeal and esteem from the compositional activities of such great masters of European classical music as J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Bartok.
- 2 In my search for an authentic and personal compositional style and tradition, I realised the need to study the Works of Nigerian composers who in their formative years have also pondered similar questions. Needless to say that this involved many years of active research in the area of Nigerian Art Music, an enterprise which involved a close study of musical scores, interviews with composers and experts, and performances of Works in the idiom. Nigerian composers have done so much work, both in terms of quantity and quality. Their compositional experiments are strikingly varied and eclectic, especially with regards to musical conception and style. This book is a summary of the results of my research into Nigerian Art Music ; it focuses on the extra-musical factors that have led to the emergence of the tradition as well as the stylistic features that define the genre. Since my research work on Nigerian Art Music began in the 1980s when I was studying for my Ph.D. in England, I have included in this book some ideas and materials already presented in my thesis. The publication of this book is the first stage of a two-pronged research schedule. The second stage will focus on publishing the scores of works by Nigerian composers with a view to making them available to performers and scholars in and outside the West African sub-region.
- 3 Ilorin, Nigeria