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# Analysis of “Go Tell it to the Mountain” as a Model for Acculturation in Art Music Composition

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## Abstract

*Composition as an area of specialization is quite vast regarding the divergent genres it covers be it art, sacred, traditional, secular or popular forms. Regardless of a composers interest in the aforementioned, there are basic parameters expected to be met by the composer be it textual or musical criterion. These cover a lot of areas with the former taking care of the textual/literal while the later suitable allocation of pitches to convey understandable meanings. The objectives of the paper are to identify suitable prospects to harness using tonal inflections in the music that conveys aesthetics to approaching acculturation through African rhythmic techniques like hemiola rhythm, hocket technique/rhythm (canonic devices as equivalent nomenclature in the western clime), call and responses (contrapuntal techniques as the western equivalent idiom) arpeggios', sequences and repetitions (an African music characteristics) amongst other sonic materials. The qualitative design was the research method used while literary materials were been employed as well integrating the participant observation approach and analysis to evaluate the validity of the selected data that were used. Additionally, recommendations were made to contribute to knowledge.*

**Keywords:** Analysis, Model, Art music, Composition and acculturation.

## Introduction

Composers in their compositions have helped in a great measure to preserve our many rich and dynamic cultures through oral sources in anthologies of folk music and original inspiring pieces. But sadly, most music end up as nationalist music alone without cultivating the many rich cultures of the global community. To this end, dearth of versatility and acculturation abounds even more in the academic community, causing a challenge instead of a synergy of cross fertilization between the African and Western idioms in composition. On the term – composition, the following entries are stated in Achinivu (1979).

Nowadays composition in music is generally an elaborate, notated piece of work, the successful outcome of which pre-supposes creative musical aptitude and extensive training and which reckons with live performance... for the study of composition (harmony, counterpoint, tone technique; rhythm, meter, form and orchestration/instrumentation) is of use; nevertheless, the composer begins, above all, with the works of those masters whom he chooses (in certain details and fundamentally) as his models. The composition itself must in order to be valid, satisfy the requirements of newness, of originality... (p115).

According to Wali (2002), a problem is a perplexing and undesirable state of conflict with an individual or group, for which the appropriate course of action is yet unknown. When such a conflicting and undesirable state of affairs exists in education, then it is said to be an educational problem worthy of research (p.27).

In light of the above, a society is said to be incomplete considering that the major factors in cultural identification, expression and education in most traditional society are incongruent and not properly conglomerated. Human intent as the case may be is most often informed or influenced by some generic ideologies and philosophies of a traditional society and their practices. Culture on the other hand deals with the totality or way of life of a people, however, cultural dynamism could accommodate exchange or adoption of certain elements. Therefore, for documentation and preservation of treasured compositions, the western music notational styles and compositional idioms especially the standard staff notation signs/symbols, have continued to be models to adopt by African art music composers. Whilst borrowing certain aspects of culture is not bad, it could impede and stagnate creativity or even cause extinction if not checked and controlled. However, fusion,

acculturation and interculturalism are prospects to adopt as vistas to promote cultural dynamism. The aim of this paper is to investigate a balance in comparative and flexible usage of music idioms to accommodate diverse cultural climes yet maintain sense of identity and originality.

### Theoretical Partway

The theoretical frame work for this study is derived from the functionalist and diffusionist theories. Functionalism is a school of thought in anthropology that describes the different parts of a society and their relationship through the organic analogy. Porth, et al in Jarvie (1973:132) hold that society, like a biological organism, is able to maintain its essential processes through the way the different parts interact. In this social organism, institutions such as religion, kinship and the economy are the organs and individuals are the cells. Through the organized system of its several parts and organs, the organism is able to live, reproduce and function.

Functionalist analyses examine the social significance of phenomena, that is, the function they serve in a particular society in maintaining the whole. Functionalist theorists believe that the different parts of a society have their own roles to play as they work together smoothly in order to form a harmonious whole. The metaphor often used to describe functionalism is that it views society as a body, with the different parts of society such as government, media, religion, family and schools, like the different organs in a body; each contributing in a different way to keeping the entire body healthy.

Diffusionism is another anthropological school of thought. According to King and Wright (2009:205,348-594), diffusionism is an attempt to understand the nature of culture in terms of the origin of culture traits and their spread from one society to another'. There are different versions of diffusionist thought, which include the conviction that all cultures originated from one culture centre (heliocentric diffusion). A more reasonable view was that cultures originated from a limited number of culture centres (culture circles). A third and final notion is that each society is influenced by others, but that the process of diffusionist both contingent and arbitrary (Winthrop, 1991:83-84).

'Diffusion may be simply defined as the spread of a cultural item from its place of origin to other places' (Titiev, 1959:446). 'A more expanded definition depicts diffusion as the process by which discrete culture traits are transferred from one society to another, through migration, trade, war, or other contact' (Winthrop, 1991:82). Diffusion, therefore, refers to the spread of a trait or innovation outward from a source or from one culture to another. It is the theory that cultural and technological innovation, in general, has spread outward from a small number of sources (or in extreme versions, from one source). There are different cultural idioms, materials and sonic resources employed in the composition of this piece of music which were in parts and pieces to now make a whole sung from the small collection of parts to form this standard work, these make the theory used relevant and appropriate to this research. Below is an analysis of the music which style incorporated both macro and micro approaches to discuss general and specific elements and techniques as used by the composer in the work evaluated?

Go tell it to the Mountain

Composer	Music: (Unknown)
Composer	Text: James Baldwin (stanzas one only)
Arranger	Alfred Gelles Albert (the researcher)


Brief Introduction of the piece

This composition, a negro-spiritual anthem is to be performed by a standard Choir with an appreciable numerical strength and dexterity. The simple chorus usually sung for excitement during the yellow tide in the faith-based Christian religion amongst orthodox churches is now arranged as alternative Anthem especially on Christmas day and within the season. However, its classified scale has now been modified to include all the diatonic notes different from the original pentatonic/slave scale it was statutorily composed in. There are also much more complex yet exciting dialoguing polyphonic rhythms and additional text and well suiting structural form that now characterized the music as newer creativity all intended to ameliorate the work for the new desire during performance practice realizations.

Pre-compositional considerations

Key	F major
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Time	4 and
Metronome	 = 120
Interpretable terminologies	Spiritoso, moderator, allegro and ritartando
Length	98 (25) + (9) + (40) + (4) + (9) + (11)
Musical Forms	
Compositional Forms	Strophic and Through-composed
Structural Form	Large Tenary (western) and mixed structural forms (African)
Textual Forms	Syllabic and Mellismatic
Textural Forms	Monophony, Polyphony and Homophony
Rhythmic Forms	Polyrhythm, Hemiola, hocket and Speech rhythm
Stylistic forms	Negro Spirituals and Anthems
Performative Forms	Choral, Art and Sacred
Media	Voice and Piano
Scale	Diatonic (formerly in pentatonic or slave scale)
Modulation	C major
Dynamics	None
Mode	Tonal
Mood	Happy and Joyous
Language/Text	English
Audience	Church/Concert hall
Performance interpretation	

**GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.**  
AFRICAN AMERICAN NEGRO SPIRITUAL  
FOR S.A.T.B. CHORUS.

Composer unknown  
Stanza One Lyrics by James Baldwin  
Other Stanzas Lyrics by Alfred Gelles Albert  
Arr. Alfred Gelles Albert

Spiritoso ♩ 120



The beginning of this piece is been introduced by the bass part as prelude, it introduced an African rhythmic pattern that suggest either scherzo or Jokario meaning jokes as interpretations during performance. It is necessary for vocalist to know this and observe is consciously and holistically. View score below for reference

A few ties were introduced at certain areas in the music, some of them appeared on the weak beat and continued to the strong. In some cases the intention is so clear that the composer used syncopations to create and maintain the African's aspect of composition; it should therefore be observed during performance.

The pianist has been written for in both secco and strauento types of recitative accompaniments, it is necessary that he/she should play complimentary rhythms to make complementary phrase and sentence when necessary.

The whole music is based on African-American rhythms, and recipients must execute this with a chiefly aim of interpreting the concept clearly for aural listening.

The middle section of the music with moderato expression has been carefully written in Alla-breve that is cut time (cutting) four-four time into two to become two-two, from bar (34) therefore performers should handle this section with the required speed and observe it very consciously. View score below for reference.

GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

33 ending for stanzas 1,2 and 3 ending for stz 4 only **Moderato**

born born born The King of kings is born

born born born kings is born

born born born kings is born The Lord of

born go tell the val-leys and lakes born kings is born

born go tell the to-rest and bush

born go tell the o-cceans and seas

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

A  
G

This arrangement added stanzas 2,3 and 4 at the beginning of the music; where the main theme was stated at the entry of sopranos from bars 30.

It repeated the theme modulating to key C after section B, introducing stanzas 5, 6, 7 and 8, all these call for repetition as captured from bar 79 to 86, therefore recipients should take note. View scores below for reference

33 ending for stanzas 1,2 and 3 ending for stz 4 only **Moderato**

S born born born The King of kings is born

A born born born kings is born

T born born born kings is born The Lord of

B born go tell the val-leys and lakes born kings is born

born go tell the to-rest and bush

born go tell the o-cceans and seas

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

**Moderato**

A  
G

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30

S  
go tell it - to the mount - - - ains that Je - sus christ is  
go tell it to the val - - - leys that Je - sus christ is  
go tell it to the fo - - - rest that Je - sus christ is -  
go tell it to the o - - - ceans that Je - sus christ is

A  
go and tell them go and tell them that Je - sus christ is

T  
8  
go and tell them go and tell them that Je - sus christ is

B  
go and tell them tell them that Je - sus christ is

30

81

S  
and to the streams and ev' - ry where - go tell it to the riv - ers that  
in - to the air and ev' - ry where go tell it to the breez - es that  
and to the earth and ev' - ry where go tell it to the na - tions that  
o - ver the hills and ev' - ry where go tell it to the mount - ains that

A  
in - to the riv - ers streams and ev' ry where go and tell them go and tell them that  
in - to the breez - es air and ev' - ry where  
and to the na - tions earth and ev' - ry where  
o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev' - ry where

T  
8  
in - to the riv - ers streams and ev' ry where go and tell them go and tell them that  
in - to the breez - es air and ev' - ry where  
and to the na - tions earth and ev' - ry where  
o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev' - ry where

B  
in - to the riv - ers streams and ev' ry where go and tell them tell them that  
in - to the breez - es air and ev' - ry where  
and to the na - tions earth and ev' - ry where  
81  
o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev' - ry where

Ac

Analysis of "Go Tell it to the Mountain" as a Model for Acculturation in Art Music Composition

76

S go tell it to the riv - ers  
 go tell it to the breez - es  
 go tell it to the na - tions  
 go tell it to the mount - ains

A go and tell them go and tell them

T go and tell them go and tell them

B tell them that Je - sus christ is born go tell the ri - vers and streams go and tell them go and tell them

76

1 85

ENDING FOR STANZAS 5,6 and 7. I...STANZAS 8...I

S Je - sus christ is born born  
 Je - sus christ is born born  
 Je - sus christ is born born  
 Je - sus christ is born born

A Je - sus christ is born born

T Je - sus christ is born born

B Je - sus christ is born go tell the breez - es and air born  
 born go tell the na - tions and earth  
 born go tell the mount - ains and hills

85

The section B ended with a modulation to the dominant after the introduction of a pivot chord leading to the reinstatement of the theme by the call of the Basses, this portion should be treated smoothly by the bass singers to allow the other parts waiting to cue in with their correct pitches. View score below for reference.

Analysis of "Go Tell it to the Mountain" as a Model for Acculturation in Art Music Composition

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system, measures 66-70, is marked 'Allegro'. It features four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'e - ver last - ing God He'll be called prince of peace His name is Je - sus'. The second system, measures 71-75, is marked 'rit.' and features the same vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus'. The piano accompaniment includes rhythmic patterns and melodic lines that support the vocal parts.

The melismatic notes by sopranos at the conclusive end of the music must as a matter of fact be done very smoothly in one breath, since it makes do with only one syllabic word. And the divided notes for the sopranos should be shared amongst solo sopranos for soprano one and chorus sopranos for soprano two respectively. View score below for reference.

10 GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

The musical score shows two systems of vocal parts. The first system, measures 89-93, is marked 'Allegro' and includes lyrics: 'world that christ is born - - - - - go spread to the world that'. The second system, measures 94-98, is marked 'rit.' and includes lyrics: 'christ is born'. The vocal parts are shown in a single staff, likely representing a solo soprano part.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Go Tell it to the Mountain". It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B), along with a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked as "Moderato". The score includes lyrics for each part. There are two endings for stanzas 1, 2, and 3, and a second ending for stanza 4 only. The piano part has a rhythmic pattern in the left hand and a more melodic line in the right hand.

The section B carries lots of syncopation at the beginning of some of the Bars with the application of hoquet techniques between the soprano and tenor interspersed with harmony, this time it was exemplified using musical rest sign, therefore performers should note it with care and execute it very smoothly and clearly. View score below for reference.

All the interpretation/instruction of speed like *spiritoso* or *moderato*, *Allegro* and *Ritartando* are at the mercy of the conductor for practical execution.

Tenors and sopranos have options to swab their parts at the reinstatement of the theme for stanzas 5, 6, 7 and 8 respectively, if preferred performers should please take note of this directive.

#### Compositional Techniques

Homophony, strophic, counterpoint, hoquet technique, call and response, two and three part writing, repetition, sequence, and augmentations.

#### Structural Analysis

Form Large Tenary (ABA) bridge and Mixed structural form (MSF)

No of Bars 98 (25) + (25) + (9) + (40) + (4) + (9) + (11)

Bars 1 to 25 Carried an expositive introduction of the theme of the various rhythmic patterns of the accompaniment parts beginning with the bass, followed by tenor and altos with slight modification of bass at entries of Alto part before the real theme is sung by the sopranos.

Bars 26-34 The main theme A is stated in key F and the accompaniment, been alto and tenor has slight modification of the bass part and continuous in the rhythms already established earlier with different endings for stanzas 1, 2, 3 as first time and stanzas 4 second time alone with decorated alto and tenor notes.

Bars 35 to 74 Theme B is stated with syncopations at beginnings of some of the bars, and introducing contrapuntal sections in Bars 70 to 72 and latter terminated to meet a pivot chord V to commence the modulation.

Bars 75 to 78 Bass part called the other parts for the reinstatement of theme A again for stanzas 5, 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

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Bars 79 to 87 Themes A reinstated modulated to key C major, this time with stanzas 5, 6 and 7 ending first time and stanzas 8 alone ending second time with decorated alto and tenor notes.

N.B. The soprano and tenor parts may swap parts for stanzas 5, 6 and 7 only if preferred.

Bars 88 to 98 is the conclusory section with extended theme of reinstated theme A to reach a climatic end of the music, introducing melismatic passages for soprano and divisi notes still for sopranos at the last two bars of the music. View score below for reference

Harmony (Chord progressions and successions)

The harmony used the usual conventional chords like I, V, IV, II, VI and III including sevenths with their inversions ranging from 1st to 4th when applicable.

Summary

The text of the music is in English language with no idiomatic expressions, rather carried simplified and very understandable text of every day usage especially during (Christmas) yellow tide.

Recommendations

Recent music practices have shown that both Western and African musical materials/idioms can be used simultaneously during composition. Yanni, the jazz master exemplified this in his music though in an instrumental performance by fusing together African and western instruments in his contemporary orchestra. Even the combination of both English text and mother tongue (macronic textual application) is a long known practice in composition, therefore conscious separation of the two is not necessary but only achievable in text and instrumentation amidst several other areas that may be considered. a conglomeration and fusion of musical genres, is one of the twenty first century contributions added to sacred Art music compositions with African/Western compositional ideology intended to satisfy a mixed musical audience. It is an Art in line with the foundational studies of music, especially that of renaissance period and is still in existence till modern day.

See Appendix pages of the full music after the references pages.

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# GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

AFRICAN AMERICAN NEGRO SPIRITUAL  
FOR S.A.T.B. CHORUS.

Composer unknown  
Stanza One Lyrics by James Baldwin  
Other Stanzas Lyrics by Alfred Gelles Albert  
Arr: Alfred Gelles Albert

Spiritoso ♩ = 120

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

6

S

A

T

B

6

ALFAL MUSIC

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2 GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

Soprano (S):  
Alto (A):  
Tenor (T):  
Bass (B):

Lyrics:  
go and tell them o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev' - ry where go and tell them  
tell them o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev' - ry where go and  
Go and tell them  
go and tell them that Je - sus christ is born go and tell them  
tell them that Je - sus christ is born go tell the mount - ains and hills go and tell them

15

GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

19

S

A go and tell them o-ver the mount-ains hills and ev'-ry where go and tell them

T go and tell them o-ver the mount-ains hills and ev'-ry where go and tell them

B go and tell them o-ver the mount-ains hills and ev'-ry where go and tell them

19

23

S

A go and tell them that Je-sus christ is born

T go and tell them that Je-sus christ is born

B tell them that Je-sus christ is born go tell the mount-ains and hills

23

Analysis of "Go Tell it to the Mountain" as a Model for Acculturation in Art Music Composition

4

GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

26

S  
 Go tell it to the mount - ains o - ver the hills and ev' - ry where  
 Go tell it to the val - leys in - to the lake and ev' - ry where  
 Go tell it to the fo - rest in - to the bush and ev' - ry where  
 Go tell it to the o - ceans in - to the seas and ev' - ry where

A  
 go - and tell them go and tell them o - ver the mount - ains hills - and ev' - ry where  
 in - to the val - leys lakes and ev' - ry where  
 in - to the fo - rest bush - es and ev' - ry where  
 in - to the o - ceans seas and ev' - ry where

T  
 go and tell them go and tell them o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev' - ry where  
 in - to the val - leys lakes and ev' - ry where  
 in - to the fo - rest bush and ev' - ry where  
 in - to the o - ceans seas and ev' - ry where

B  
 go and tell them go and tell them o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev' - ry where  
 in - to the val - ley lakes and ev' - ry where  
 in - to the fo - rest bush and ev' - ry where  
 in - to the o - ceans seas and ev' - ry where

30

S  
 go tell it - to the mount - - - ains that Je - sus christ is  
 go tell it to the val - - - leys that Je - sus christ is  
 go tell it to the fo - - - rest that Je - sus christ is  
 go tell it to the o - - - ceans that Je - sus christ is

A  
 go and tell them go and tell them that Je - sus christ is

T  
 go and tell them go and tell them that Je - sus christ is

B  
 go and tell them tell them that Je - sus christ is

GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

33 ending for stanzas 1,2 and 3 ending for stz 4 only **Moderato**

S born born born The King of kings is born

A born born born kings is born

T born born kings is born The Lord of

B born go tell the val-leys and lakes born kings is born  
born go tell the fo- rest and bush  
born go tell the o- ceans and seas

**Moderato**

38

S lords is born sav-iour of the world is born re-joice and be glad Em-ma-nuel is his

A lords is born re-joice and be glad is his

T lords is born re-joice and be glad is his

B lords is born re-joice and be glad is his

39

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6

GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

45

S name God is with us God the son is born to us re-joice and be glad

A name God is with us re-joice and be glad

T name it means that God is with us re-joice and be glad

B name God is with us re-joice and be glad

52

S Em - ma - nu - el God with us E - ma - nu - el God is with

A Em - ma - nu - el God with us E - ma - nu - el God is with

T Em - ma - nu - el God with us E - ma - nu - el God is with

B Em - ma - nu - el God with us E - ma - nu - el God is with

GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

59

S us he'll be called won - der - ful coun - sel - lor might - y God the

A us won - der - ful coun - sel - lor might - y God the

T us won - der - ful coun - sel - lor might - y God the

B us won - der - ful coun - sel - lor might - y God the

Allegro

66

S e - ver last - ing God He'll be called prince of peace His name is Je - sus **Allegro**

A e - ver last - ing God prince of peace **Allegro** Je - sus

T e - ver last - ing God prince of peace **Allegro** Je - sus

B e - ver last - ing God prince of peace **Allegro** Je - sus

Allegro

Analysis of "Go Tell it to the Mountain" as a Model for Acculturation in Art Music Composition

8

GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

71 *rit.*

S Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus

A Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus

T Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus

B Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Je - sus Go and tell them

76

S go tell it to the riv - ers  
go tell it to the breez - es  
go tell it to the na - tions  
go tell it to the mount - ains

A go and tell them go and tell them

T go and tell them go and tell them

B tell them that Je - sus christ is born go tell the ri - vers and streams go and tell them go and tell them

GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

81

S  
and to the streams and ev' - ry where - go tell it to the riv - ers that  
in - to the air and ev' - ry where tell it to the breez - es that  
and to the earth and ev' - ry where go tell it to the na - tions that  
o - ver the hills and ev' - ry where tell it to the mount - ains that

A  
in - to the riv - ers streams and ev' ry where go and tell them go and tell them that  
in - to the breez - es air and ev - ry where  
and to the na - tions earth and ev - ry where  
o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev - ry where

T  
in - to the riv - ers streams and ev' ry where go and tell them go and tell them that  
in - to the breez - es air and ev - ry where  
and to the na - tions earth and ev - ry where  
o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev - ry where

B  
in - to the riv - ers streams and ev' ry where go and tell them tell them that  
in - to the breez - es air and ev - ry where  
and to the na - tions earth and ev - ry where  
o - ver the mount - ains hills and ev - ry where

I ...

85

1 ENDING FOR STANZAS 5,6 and 7 . I ... STANZAS 8 ... I

S  
Je - sus christ is born born go spread to the  
Je - sus christ is born born  
Je - sus christ is born born  
Je - sus christ is born born

A  
Je - sus christ is born born go spread to the

T  
Je - sus christ is born born go spread to the

B  
Je - sus christ is born go tell the breez - es and air born go spread to the  
born go tell the na - tions and earth  
born go tell the mount - ains and hills

GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

59

S world that christ is born - - - - - go spread to the world that

A world that christ is born christ is born christ is born go spread to the world that

T world that christ is born christ is born christ is born go spread to the world that

B world that christ is born christ is born christ is born go spread to the world that

95

S christ is born rit. christ is born

A christ is born that rit. christ is born

T christ is born that rit. christ is born

B christ is born that rit. christ is born

N.B. The soprano and tenor parts may swab parts for stanzas 5,6 and 7 only if preferred.