

“PROCLAIMING THE KINGSHIP/SUPREMACY OF GOD” IN SELECTED CHORAL COMPOSITIONS OF KRAS KOFI ARTHUR

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***Abstract:** Kras Arthur, a fourth-generation choral music composer, has many choral music compositions to his credit. His choice of text harps on the kingship/supremacy of God. This paper analyzes selected pieces of Kras Arthur and suggests that he writes to uphold the kingship of God. The paper identifies the composer’s pieces that address the kingship of God and seeks to unravel how his melodic constructs are achieved using texts that adapt to God’s kingship and His supremacy. Through purposive sampling of Kras Arthur’s choral pieces and further analysis, using textual and melodic parameters, and subsequently an interaction with the composer, the paper addresses the lack of suitable material for the study of choral music composition, especially from the African perspective.*

Key Words: Choral Composition; Kingship of God; Kras Arthur; Textual sources.

Introduction

Ghanaian societies, and indeed all African societies, believe in the existence of one Supreme Deity whom they regard as greater than any other being. Different ethnic groups have their names for the deity, but the qualities attributed to Him are everywhere almost identical. We may quite safely call Him God.¹

Kras Arthur, a fourth-generation Ghanaian choral music composer, places a premium on the Kingship of God and therefore crafts his text in that perspective. This paper examines and discusses six selected choral compositions of Kras Arthur in the Akan language that focus on the Kingship or supremacy of God. His central theme in these compositions, therefore, dwells on God’s Kingship or Supremacy. That has been a niche he has carved for himself, to write to uphold God’s Kingship and Supremacy, though he writes for other events on the Christian calendar.

¹ Peter Sarpong, *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture* (Accra: Ghana Publishing House, 1974), 1.

The paper aims to address the lack of suitable material in the study of analysis of choral music from the African perspective, as well as to encourage the younger generation of composers to write either on a single or on varied themes in their compositional practices.

Arthur recognizes the fact that God is that deity who supersedes all as proclaimed by Sarpong. Gbolonyo confirms this as he indicates:

In indigenous Ewe belief *Mawu* (God) literary meaning “that who supersedes all else” is a supreme being, the creator of the universe and all things in it, having such characteristic attributes as omnipotence, omnipresent, omniscience, and being a force only for good. As the architect of the universe *Mawu* is the greatest power, an unfailing source of refuge and help to all people when everything fails, and a personal and moral being who judges human beings. *Mawu* is conceptualised as the source of life and everything in the universe.²

The various names by which God is known in different languages portray Him as Great, King, Bright and Shinning, Unique, Unsurpassable or Powerful.³ Kras Arthur works does not only proclaim the supremacy and kingship of God, but also portray his identity.

Acquah et al. contend that when the performers understand the meaning of the text of a song, they are gratified and impacted.⁴ Nketia on another dimension avers that song texts are avenues for verbal communication, and mediums for creative verbal expression, which can reflect both personal and social experiences.⁵ This explains why most current composers in Ghana write their choral music mostly in languages they are comfortable with, in order not to lose the semantic considerations of the text used. It is worth stating that some Akan choral compositions have texts characterised by patriotism, nationalism, praise, thanksgiving, and farewell; they also contain philosophical, metaphorical, and proverbial themes.

² J.S.K. Gbolonyo, “Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Values in Ewe Musical Practice: Their Traditional Roles and Place in Modern Society” (Ph.D Dissertation, University of Pittsburg 2009), 72.

³ Sarpong, *Ghana in Retrospect*, 1.

⁴ E.O. Acquah, J.A. Amuah, J.F. Annan and Arthur Tsemafo, “A Synchronic Study of Semantics in Selected Akan Choral Compositions in Ghana,” *Journal of Music and Dance* 5, no. 4 (2015): 161-123.

⁵ J.H.K. Nketia, *MUSIC OF AFRICA* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974).

Among the first generation of Ghanaian choral music composers,⁶ we realised that Ephraim Amu’s pieces such as *Yen ara yen asaase ni* (This is our own land) and *Yaanom Abibrimma* (*Comrades! Africans*) harp on patriotism and nationalism of Ghana. Isaac Daniel Riverson’s works, such as *Pete, pete* (Vulture, vulture) and *Bankye, bankye* (*Cassava, cassava*) focus on nationalism in Ghana. A second-generation composer, such as Michael Kofi Amissah, writes on the doctrines of the Catholic Church and for the events on the liturgical calendar: Christmas, the Passion, and Mass of SS. Martha and Jude.

Walter Blege uses traditional elements and blends them with western harmonic principles, for example, *Opera Kristo*. George Warlasi Kwasi Dor uses bell patterns of instrumental ensembles, proverbs, philosophical and metaphorical ideas matching them with biblical passages as in his *Dokuibɔbɔ nyo* (Humility is good) and *Gbɔgbɔmenuwo* (Spiritual Things). Fourth generation composers, Sam Asare Bediako and Newlove Annan operate diverse themes including funerals, praise, and thanksgiving. Kras Arthur of the fourth generation, on the other hand, focus mostly on the kingship of God. His works to be discussed include: *Nyame yɛ Ɔsahen* (God is a warrior King) *Awurade W’ahennie yi so* (Lord, your Kingship is great), *Ahenfo Hen* (King of Kings), *Hen Wura Messiah* (Our Lord Messiah), *Ahendzi fata No* (Kingship befits Him) and *Mo ma Ne so* (Lift Him High).

Linguistic Pragmatic Theory

This study hinges on linguistic pragmatic theory as advocated by several authors. Mey, for example, recognizes pragmatics as a subfield of linguistics which studies the ways in which context contributes to meaning.⁷ Pragmatics incorporates speech act theory, conversational implicature, talk in-interaction and other approaches to language behaviour in philosophy, sociology, linguistics, and anthropology. Dae-jin explains pragmatics to include studies on how the transmission of meaning depends not only on the structural and linguistic knowledge

⁶ See Amuah’s Generational Map in J. A. Amuah, “The Use of Traditional Elements in Contemporary Ghanaian Choral Music: Perspectives from Selected Works of Geroge Worlasi Kwasi Dor, Nicodemus Kofi Badu and Newlove Annan” (Ph.D. Thesis; University of Ghana, Legon, 2012), 207.

⁷ J.L. Mey, *Pragmatics: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001²).

(e.g., grammar, lexicon, etc.) of the speaker and listener, but also on the context of the utterance, and any pre-existing knowledge about those involved.⁸

Grimshaw⁹ and Williams¹⁰ are, however, of the view that recent work in linguistic theory has stressed the important role that structured lexical representations can play in natural language while Bresnan¹¹ examines the importance of semantic representations. The significance of lexical conceptual structure (LCS) has also been expounded by Jackendoff,¹² and Jackendoff and Levin.¹³ Acquah et al, aver that their ideas apply to the text of choral music because the inferred intent of the composer and the context involved in the composition are very crucial.¹⁴ Text juxtaposing the notes of choral music composition should, therefore, be meaningful and address a specific issue or several issues depending on the length of the piece of music.

The Subject of Context and Text

Agyekum indicates that:

the text refers to language, the structure, phraseology and cohesive links between the words used in communicating the message. The text is the ever-evolving process that links the writer or oral artist with his readers or audience. In communication, language is used in real life and in particular contexts. The language of literature, when carefully analyzed, under context can be related to pragmatics and discourse analysis. The context will help us appreciate and understand the language better.¹⁵

⁸ K. Daejin, "The Role of an Interactive Book Reading Programme in the Development of Second Language Pragmatic Competence," *Modern Language Journal* 86, no. 3 (2002): 332-348.

⁹ J. Grimshaw, *Argument Structure* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

¹⁰ E. Williams, "Argument Structure and Morphology," *The Linguistic Review* 1 (1981): 81-114.

¹¹ Joan Bresnan, "Lexical-Functional Grammar: A Formal System for Grammatical Representation," in *The Mental Representation of Grammatical Relations*, eds. Ronald M. Kaplan and Joan Bresnan (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 173-231.

¹² R. Jackendoff, *Semantics and Cognition* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983).

¹³ R. Jackendoff and B. Levin, "What to Do with Theta-roles," in *Thematic Relations*, ed. W. Wilkens (New York: Academic Press, 1988), 7- 36.

¹⁴ Acquah, Amuah, Annan and Tsemafo, "A Synchronic Study of Semantics," 161-123.

¹⁵ Kofi Agyekum, "An Akan Oral Artist: The Use of Proverbs in the Lyrics of the Kwabena Konadu," *Research Review NS* 21 (2005): 1-17.

This brings to light the composer’s intention to use text in his choral compositions to show the greatness of God.

Methodology

All lyrics for this study were provided by the composer, except for one, which he could not find. The song was transcribed and translated from soft copies. This was supported with materials on the composition from the libraries at the University of Ghana (Legon) and the internet to aid in musical and textual analysis. Six compositions whose text speak of the greatness of God were selected and analyzed. Before the analysis, the text in the Akan language was translated into English. The main purpose was to examine how the text relates to the kingship and supremacy of God.

Interviews were conducted with the composer, Kras Arthur on December 18, 2019 and on January 20, 2020 in his residence about his use of God’s kingship and supremacy. He indicated that he personally holds God in high esteem in the same way as expressed by others. All the universe belongs to Him and therefore He deserves to be always praised. Other composers such as Hilarius Wuaku, Obed Acquah, James Armaah, Emmanuel Esson and directors of music in the Presbyterian Church, Ghana were also interviewed about their perception of the textual sources of the composer. These composers were chosen because of their association with choral music composition and performances.

Audiences and choristers were equally contacted to learn of how they perceive the textual themes of Kras Arthur’s choral pieces. Most of them indicated that they had not taken great pains to examine the textual sources of most composers and their works. Some of these responses came as a surprise, but it is the reality that some audiences do not pay particular attention to a composer’s source of texts that are employed in his works. As Acquah et al. point out, “It is worth noting that interpretation of text used in choral music composition has not caught the attention of scholars in the field of theory and composition.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Acquah, Amuah, Annan and Tsemafo, “A Synchronic Study of Semantics,” 161-123.

Brief Biography of Kras Arthur

Kras Arthur hails from Apam in the Central Region of Ghana and was born on July 19, 1957 at Shama in the Western Region of Ghana, where his father, Mr. Charles Wellington Arthur (Jnr.), and Madam Comfort Ndzeba lived. He had his basic education at the Methodist Primary schools of Axim and Bibiani respectively, and then at Nana Katabra Memorial Middle ‘B’ School at Kojokrom, near Sekondi-Takoradi from 1962 to 1972. He had his secondary education at Foso School of Business until 1978. He started teaching himself to play the harmonium, using the tonic solfa edition of the Methodist Hymn Book until he met E.B. Ellison, a music teacher at the Foso Training College (now Foso College of Education) and the Choirmaster/Organist of the Wesley Methodist Church at Assin Foso, who taught him some rudiments of music and how to use the Smallwood’s pianoforte tutor.

Arthur entered the erstwhile National Academy of Music, currently the Department of Music of Education of the University of Education at Winneba, to take a four-year Diploma course in Music from 1981 to 1985. He progressed further in academia to obtain a Master of Philosophy degree from University of Cape Coast. He is currently a lecturer in the Department of Music and Theatre at Methodist University College (Dansoman) in Accra.

Arthur has been a choral director for many years, managing church and school choirs. As a member of the Association of Methodist Church Choirs of Ghana, he rose through the ranks to become the National Director of Music.¹⁷ Not only has he written about God’s kingship or supremacy but has also composed several songs for various occasions on the Christian calendar such as *Agyedifoɔ* (Believers) and *Ɔsahen Jesus* (The Commander in Chief Jesus) particularly for the Methodist church. He has been an exponent in the writing of picnic and theme or anniversary songs such as the one-hundred-and-seventieth (170th) anniversary song, and the theme song for the year 2020 for the Methodist church.

¹⁷ E.D.K. Esson, “The Development and Contributions of Youth Choirs in Ghana” (M.Phil Thesis; University of Ghana, Legon, 2016).

Other general anthems of Kras Arthur include *Akyedze yi so* (This gift is huge), *Ye aboa ano* (We have congregated), *Abɔfo rikyin hen ho* (Angels are hovering around us) and so on.

Textual Analysis of Selected Songs

This section examines six commonly performed songs of Kras Arthur, which speak to the Kingship of Jesus and God. They are all in Akan (Twi or Fante). These are the transcriptions of the songs in Akan and their translations in English. We have indicated on the extreme right column on the table where Arthur’s songs speak to the Kingship of God for easy referencing. The multiplicity of the use of the word or phrase about the Kingship of God indicates how Arthur reveres Jesus/God.

Ahemfo Hen (King of Kings)

S/No	Text in Akan	English Translation	Evidence of Kingship
1	<i>Ahemfo hen nye hen wura Jesus Christ</i>	The King of Kings is our Lord Jesus Christ	<i>Ahemfo hen</i> King of Kings
2	<i>N’ahendzi fata No</i>	His Kingship befits Him	<i>N’ahendzi</i> His Kingship
3	<i>Ɔye hen kokroko abɔdze nyina koto wo</i>	He is a Mighty God all creation worships Him	<i>Ɔye Ɔhen</i> He is King
4	<i>Hen Wura Jesus Ɔye Ɔhen ampa</i>	Our Lord Jesus, He is a King indeed	<i>Ɔye Ɔhen</i> He is King
5	<i>Ɔye Ɔhen kokroko abɔdze nyina koto No</i>	He is a Mighty God all creation worships Him	<i>Ɔhene Kokuroko</i> He is a mighty God
6	<i>Hen Wura Jesus Ɔye Ɔhen ampa</i>	Our Lord Jesus, He is a King indeed	<i>Ɔye Ɔhen</i> He is a King
7	<i>N’ahendzi so, amansoun nyina hye no tum ase</i>	His Kingdom is great all nations are under His authority.	<i>N’ahendzi so</i> His kingship is great
8	<i>N’ahendzi so amansoun nyina hye no tum ase</i>	His Kingdom is great, all nations are under His powers	<i>N’ahendzi so</i> His kingdom is Great
9	<i>Mbɔsom no meyi N’ayew mɔbɔ N’edzin daa</i>	I worship Him, I will praise Him and always call on His name	

10	<i>Jesus ahenfo hen na mbɔsom No</i>	Jesus King of Kings; He is the one I will worship.	<i>Ahenfo hen</i> King of Kings
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The title of the song is revealing: *Ahemfo Hen* (King of Kings). The lyrics portray God as the King of all Kings in the world. Kras Arthur shows this attribute as an undeniable fact about God in his compositions. The song starts with *Ahemfo Hen Nye Hen Wura* Jesus Christ *N’ahendzi Fata No* (King of Kings is our Lord Jesus Christ whose kingship befits Him). He portrays the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in each of the lines. In line 1, he indicates, *Ahenfo hen nye hen wura* Jesus Christ (King of Kings is our Lord Jesus Christ); in the second line, *N’ahendzi fata No* (His kingship befits Him); in the third line, *Ɔye ŋhen kokroko* (He is a mighty king); and in the fourth line, *Hen wura* Jesus *Ɔye ŋhen ampa* (Our Lord Jesus is truly a King). He repeats the third line for the fifth.

In the sixth line *Hen Wura* Jesus *Ɔye Ɔhen Ampa* (Our Lord Jesus, He is a King indeed), in the seventh line, *N’ahendzi so amansoun nyina hye no tum ase* (His Kingdom is great, all nations are under His authority). The eighth line repeats the seventh. Though the ninth line does not mention *kingdom* directly he indicates that he will worship Him, thus portraying Jesus Christ as a King, because humanity does not worship arbitrarily. In the last line *Jesus, Ahenfo hen na mbɔsom No* (Jesus I will worship the King of Kings) he reiterates the statement that Jesus is the King of Kings.

Nyame Ye Ɔsahen (God is a Warrior)

S/No	Text in Akan	English Translation	Evidence of Kingship
1	<i>Nyame ye Ɔsahen; aman nyina kotow No</i>	God is a Warrior King; all bow down before Him	<i>Ɔsahen</i> The warrior king
2	<i>Moso mobɔkotow no bi na ma bɔ N’edzin daa</i>	I will also bow to Him, and always proclaim His name	<i>Mobɔkotow</i> I will bow
3	<i>Nyame N’edzin ye me dew ntsi mɔbɔ mɔbɔ mɔbɔ</i>	God, His name fascinates me (is sweet to me), so I will proclaim, proclaim, proclaim.	

4	<i>Ne dzin akyere amansoun</i>	His name to the world	
5	<i>Nyame ye osahen; aman nyina kotow no</i>	God is a warrior king; all nations worship Him	<i>Osahen</i> The warrior king
6	<i>Moso mobɔkotow no bi na ma bɔ N'edzin daa</i>	I will also worship and always praise Him	<i>Mobɔkotow</i> I will worship

In line one, the composer opens the song with the text *Nyame ye Osahen; aman nyina kotow no* (God is a warrior King; all nations bow before Him). He refers to God as not only a King, but also a warrior, and confirms that all nations bow before Him, so he will join in the worship of the King who doubles as a warrior. He further states that *Nyame Nedzin ye me dew ntsi mɔbɔ mɔbɔ mɔbɔ* (God, His name, to me is “sweet” so I will continually mention the name to all nations) in lines two and three. He repeats lines one and two in lines five and six.

In this song, the composer does not mention Jesus as the King. He rather mentions God as the King, which reveals God the son, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit as one in the Trinity.¹⁸

Arthur presents God (Jesus) as a King who should be worshipped by all nations. In this song, Arthur uses *dew* (sweetness) to describe God’s name and how he feels anytime he hears it. *Dew* is usually used to describe the sweetness of food and how pleasing we are when food is satisfying by all standards. Such has been the name of God to him, anytime he hears it. He is always satisfied and feels he has eaten the best-prepared food. He indicates that when he hears the name of God he forgets about his predicament.

He also describes God by using the appellation *Osahen* (Commander-in-chief). *Osahen* is equated to Commander-in-Chief of an army. He

¹⁸ Trinity, in Christian doctrine, is the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three persons in one Godhead. The doctrine of the Trinity is considered to be one of the central Christian affirmations about God. It is rooted in the fact that God came to meet Christians in a threefold figure: (1) as Creator, Lord of the history of salvation, Father, and Judge, as revealed in the Old Testament; (2) as the Lord who, in the incarnated figure of Jesus Christ, lived among human beings and was present in their midst as the “Resurrected One”; and (3) as the Holy Spirit, whom they experienced as the helper or intercessor in the power of the new life. Melissa Petruzzello 2018 (www. Britannica.com).

is the overall boss, and all army personnel take instructions from him. Arthur uses *Osahen* to imply that every creature on the earth is God’s handiwork so must live under God’s authority.

There are also biblical sources for the expression *aman nyina kotow wo* (“all nations will bow down before you”). For example, Rev. 15:4 states, “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and bow down before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.” There is an allusion to Psalm 22:27: “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD. All the families of the nations will bow down before Him”. Then Isa. 66:23 proclaims that “from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come to worship before Me, says the LORD.”

Awurade W’ahennie so (Lord, Your Kingship is Great)

S/No	Fante Text	English Translation	Evidence of Kingship
1	<i>Awurade W’ahennie so</i>	Lord Your kinship is great	<i>W’ahennie so</i> Your Kingship is Great
2	<i>Awurade Wo tumi so</i>	Lord your power is great	<i>Wo tumi so</i> Your Power is Great
3	<i>Yesu e hwan na one wo se</i>	O Jesus who is like you?	
4	<i>Obiara nni ho bio</i>	There is no other	
5	<i>Wiase nyina ye wo de a</i>	All the world belongs to you	
6	<i>Yesu e yema wo so o</i>	O Jesus we exalt you	Jesus we exalt you
7	<i>Dhene Yesu ee ye-hyira wo o</i>	O King Jesus we bless you	<i>Dhene Yesu</i> King Jesus
8	<i>Yen Wura Yesu ye kotow wo</i>	Our Lord Jesus we bow before you	<i>Yen Wura</i> Our Lord
9	<i>Yesu e hwan na one wo se</i>	O Jesus, who is like you?	
10	<i>Obiara nni ho bio</i>	There is no other	There is no one like you
11	<i>Wiase nyina ye wo de a</i>	All the world belongs to you	

This song proclaims how excellent the Kingship of God is. Arthur opens the song asserting the grateness of God’s Kingship, and therefore His might and power. He continues to portray the fact that God is incomparable to anyone: *Yesu e hwan n’o ɔne wo se* (“O Jesus, who is like you?”). In line five, he says, *ye hyira Wo o* (“We bless you”), and continues in line six to add *Dhene Yesu ee Yehyira wo o* (“King Jesus we bless you”) because of how admirable God’s kingship is. In line seven, he indicates that we should prostrate before Him because he is the Supreme Being. The last three lines are a repeat of lines three to five, which dwell on how we should recognize Him for His greatness.

In the usual Ghanaian life-situation, it is only a figure who is recognized a supreme and beyond all who is revered and always prostrated to or exalted. Examples are the Asantehene of the Asante Kingdom, Torgbe Adja Tekpor VI (the Paramount Chief of Osie Avatime in the Volta Region, who was the fifth president of the National House of Chiefs) and other chiefs of analogous capacity in the country. Arthur has chosen to use words as *kotow* (to bow) *ma so* (exalt) to mean that God is very much revered and must be exalted.

Ahendzi Fata No (Kingship Befits Him)

S/No	Fante Text	English Translation	Evidence of Kingship
1	<i>Ahendzi fata No Woana na ɔnye no se?</i>	Kingship befits Him Who is like Him?	Ahendzi Kingship
2	<i>Ahendzi fata No Woana na ɔnye No se?</i>	Kingship befits Him Who is like Him.	Ahendzi Kingship
3	<i>Obiara nnyi sor anaa ase ha ɔnye No se</i>	There is no one above (in heaven) or on the earth who is like Him	
4	<i>Hen wura Jesus, N’ahendzi fata No daa</i>	Our Lord Jesus, His kingship always befits Him	N’ahendzi His Kingship
5	<i>Obiara nnyi sor anaa ase ha ɔnye No se</i>	There is no one above (in heaven) or on the earth who is like Him	

6	<i>Hen wura Jesus, N'ahendzi fata No daa</i>	Our Lord Jesus, His kingship always befits Him	<i>N'ahendzi</i> His Kingship
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In this song, Arthur mentions that kingship befits Him (Jesus/God) and He is incomparable to any King, but expresses the concept in an interrogative manner. He repeats a number of times the phrase about the unparalleled kingship of Jesus/God.

***Dhen* Messiah (The Messiah King)**

S/No	Fante Text	English Translation	Evidence of Kingship
1	<i>Dhen Messiah ɔse ntonton oo daa</i>	The Messiah King deserves endless praise	<i>Dhen</i> King
2	<i>Hen Hen Messiah Abɔdzin se No daa</i>	Our Messiah King deserves endless appellations	<i>Hen Hen</i> Our King
3	<i>Menya ngyirama apem meyi Mo Pomfo ayew</i>	I wish I have thousand tongues to praise my Redeemer	<i>Mo Pomfo</i> My Redeemer
4	<i>Dno a ɔbɔ sor na asaase ndzembra nyina</i>	He, the creator of all that is in the Universe	
5	<i>M'ehyira N'edzin krɔnkrɔn No</i>	I will bless His Holy name	
6	<i>Hen Hen Messiah Abɔdzin se No daa</i>	Our Messiah King deserves endless glory	<i>Hen Hen</i> Our King

In *Dhen* Messiah, Kras Arthur continually proclaims the Kingship of God and admonishes all to glorify and to give Him all the deserving appellations. He indicates that he wishes he had multiple tongues and use all in giving endless appellations to God who deserves praise and thanksgiving.

Moma Ne so (Lift Him High)

S/No	Text in Akan	English Translation	Evidence of Kingship
1	<i>Mo ma ne so Mo ma Ne so Yesuei ɔye Ɖhene</i>	Lift Him High Lift Him High, Jesus is a King	<i>Yesuei ɔye Ɖhene</i> Jesus is a King
2	<i>Mo ma ne so Mo ma Ne so Yesuei ɔye Ɖhene</i>	Lift Him Lift Him, Jesus is a King	<i>Yesuei ɔye Ɖhene</i> Jesus is a King
3	<i>Mo ma ne so Mo ma Ne so Yesuei ɔye Ɖhene</i>	Lift Him Lift Him, Jesus is a King	<i>Yesuei ɔye Ɖhene</i> Jesus is a King
4	<i>Yesu ekyiri deƉ Ɖhene bi nni ho bio</i>	Behind Jesus, there is no other King	<i>Ɖhene bi nni ho bio</i> There is no other King
5	<i>Ɖye ahenfo hene Ɖhen Kokroko</i>	He is the King of Kings A mighty King	<i>Ɖye ahenfo hene Ɖhen Kokroko</i> He is the King of Kings. A mighty King
6	<i>Wiase nyinaa beyi na aye Aman nyina beda N'ase daa</i>	All the world will praise Him All nations will show gratitude to Him	
7	<i>Ɖye ahenfo hene Ɖhen Kokroko</i>	He is the King of Kings A mighty King	<i>Ɖye ahenfo hene Ɖhen Kokroko</i> He is the King of Kings. A mighty King

In this piece, the composer portrays Christ as a King, our King who deserves appellations and glory, and the topmost titles that should be accorded the highest and most recognised personality in the world.

Melodic Analysis of Selected Songs

This section provides an analysis of the melodic development of the selected songs whose texts confirm God as the Supreme Being as proclaimed by Arthur. The themes in three of the songs - *Ahemfo hen*, *Nyame ye Ɖsahen* and *W'ahennieso* - will be subjected to critical text

and tune (tone) analysis to ascertain the meaning in the performance of the pieces. The analysis has been confined to three pieces because the three will provide a holistic idea for the selected pieces.

The issue of text-tone relationship has already been over-flogged in African music scholarship. Authors who have dwelt at length on this include Fromkin, Nketia, Ansre, Jones, Esson and Terpenning.¹⁹

The first song *Ahemfo Hen Nye Hen Wura Jesus Christ Na'hendzi Fata No.*



Figure 1

The transcription in Figure 1 contains a simplified reduction of speech tones of the text: “A consideration of some of the structural features of the song will provide some premise for determining the relationship between speech tone and patterns of the melody.”²⁰

The melody starts on its lowest note, E flat, and ascends in a stepwise motion to the highest in the phrase, B flat and descends in scaly fashion to “A” flat, G, F and to E flat. It ascends by a leap to A flat and G and finally descends in stepwise manner to E flat. It is within this basic structural contour that we may continue to study the illustration of speech tones.

¹⁹ V. Fromkin, *Speech Errors as Linguistic Evidence* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973); J.H.K. Nketia, *Music of Africa* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974); Id., “Introduction: The Historical and Stylistic Background of the Music of Ephraim Amu,” in *Amu Choral Works*: Vol. I (Accra: Waterville Publishing House and Presbyterian Press, 1993), 7-23; G. Ansre, *The Tonal Structure of Ewe* (Hartford: Conn, 1961); A.M. Jones, *Studies in African Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959); E.D.K. Esson, *The Development and Contributions of Youth Choirs in Ghana* (M.Phil Thesis; University of Ghana, Legon, 2016); S.S. Terpenning, “African Musical Hybridity in the Colonial Context: An Analysis of Ephraim Amu’s *Yen ara Asase Ni*,” *Ethnomusicology* 60, no. 3 (2016): 459-483.

²⁰ Kofi Agawu, “The Impact of Language on Musical Composition in Ghana: An Introduction to the Musical Style,” *Ethnomusicology* 28, no. 1 (1984): 41.

The text of *Ahemfo Hen* “may be segmented on at least three different levels: the word, the phrase, or the entire line.”²¹ For the purposes of this analysis, the phrase level is the most vital relationship between speech tones and melody. In the phrase, *Ahemfo Hen Nye Hen W’ra Jesus Christ N’ahendzi Fata No* in figure 1, it could be realized that two pitch levels are indicated on the three-line staff; low, mid and low, which indicates that melody ascends and descends mirroring the contour of the speech tones. The melody therefore may be viewed as a “transplant” into pitch of the contour of the language.



Figure 2

In *Nyame ye Osahen*, figure 2, as in *Ahemfo Hen*, the melody starts on the third line. Commencing on the third line, the melody descends a step and ascends in stepwise scaly motion. In all these movements, Arthur tries to paint a picture of a text and tone relationship of the melody so that the melody reflects the tonal inflections of the Akan language he employed in writing the melody. In the last beat of the third bar, and the first beat of the fourth bar, the melody descends in a wide leap of a minor sixth all to reflect the spoken version of the language.

²¹ Agawu, “The impact of Language,” 43.

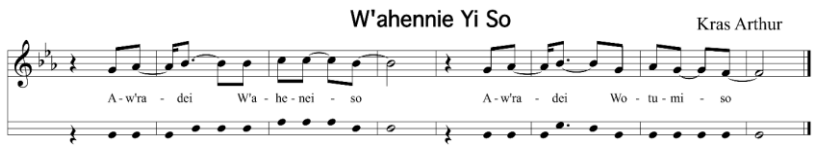


Figure 3

In *Wahennie so* (Figure 3) the melody hovers around the middle line. Starting from the third line the melody ascends in stepwise motion to the fourth space and descends a step. In the third bar, the second phrase starts on the third line and travels in stepwise motion with a leap in the fifth bar. It continues in stepwise movement until the end of the cadence. The confinement of the melody around the third is dependent on the fact that the composer wants to achieve a perfect text and tone on the melodies he writes.

Conclusion

It has been enlightening analysing some selected choral compositions of Kras Arthur, a fourth-generation choral music composer. In the textual analysis of his compositions, discovered that he writes with rapt attention to the kingship and supremacy of God, though he has pieces that can be performed for other occasions on the Christian Calendar. He places premium on the kingship/supremacy of God, and that has been his hallmark. Anytime he writes, he considers God as supreme by the choice of his text. His melodic constructs have been created with emphasis on his knowledge of text- and-tone relationship. He develops his text accurately without displacing their meanings.

In this presentation, the textual and the melodic analyses tie up to advance the central argument. Thus, the younger generational choral music composers who may fall into a category of writing for a single or multiple theme(s) would have to consider the fact that their melodies fall in line with the right tonal inflections of the language to provide meaning, even while singing.

It is envisaged that a study of his choral works will offer an understanding of the appropriate use of text to place one's compositions under a specific theme or may desire to write on multiple

“Proclaiming the Kingship/Supremacy of God”

themes to be considered for performance for other events. Younger generation composers may consider emulating the style of writing with specific themes as their hallmark yet write for other events on both Christian and the fiscal calendars.

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