

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE VOCAL MUSIC COMPOSITIONS: ITS PHILOSOPHICAL, SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMICAL IMPLICATIONS TO THE BUILDING OF THE WHOLE MAN**

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**ABSTRACT:** *‘If music be the food for the soul let it Play on’. Music as a sound matrix is part of human existence, from birth to death; music is evidence in one form of activities engaged by man. Whether instrumental music, vocal and both vocal/instrumental music messages are communicated and response elicited from intended listeners positive or negative depending on type of message such music communicates. Though instrumental music communicates messages, vocal music messages are more explicit as a result of texts involved in vocal music. Hence focus here is on vocal music composition. Participant observation and related materials including the use of three vocal music compositions were used to form the bulk of the paper. The paper advocates that Vocal music has the capacity to elicit positive response and as a result build the whole man psychologically.*

**KEY WORDS:** comparative analysis, vocal music composition, philosophical, socio-cultural, economical

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**INTRODUCTION**

Vocal music is music composed with song-texts intended to be sung and whose texts are meant to address various themes and subjects to an anticipated/projected audience. Apart from the sound matrix, texts are an important feature of vocal music whose performance medium is the voice. Idolor (2020) observes that ‘the vocal medium is characterized with textual and structural features which create thematic developments in performance situations’ (p. 55). There are various performance medium for vocal music - which includes vocal music accompanied by various instruments or with a particular instrument and vocal music without instrumental accompaniments, Solo, Duet, Trio, Octet, Quartet, Solo and Chorus, Chorus, female Chorus, male Chorus, Children Chorus or a mixture of the aforementioned to mention a few. Also, different types of vocal music exist in terms of genre, style, and type.

Music whether instrumental or vocal are normally composed for listening and eliciting of response either positive and or negative from the listeners who reside in a particular society. Agu (2011) states that, ‘the power of music lies in its ability to evoke experiences and state of consciousness in people raging from exaltation to despair’ (p. 16). One salient reason why vocal music is composed is to affect the behavior of the receiver (most especially man), to elucidate the inner psychic of man in order to exude his ability to create and recreate. According to Udoh (2006) ‘A

song can often touch people in a way that a sermon cannot and that music can bypass intellectual barriers and take the message straight to the heart' (p. 285). Also Idamoyibo (2011) states that 'the more meaning and understanding human beings derive from musical communications, the more useful and progressive the nations of the world will be' (p. 5). Hence proper decoding of vocal song-texts by intended audience is of utmost importance. If intended coding is well decoded by the receiver (intended audience), the aim and or objective of sending such message by the vocal music composer would have been achieved. Vocal music composers the world over recognize that music/song-texts can influence man's behavioral pattern and decision-making ability to the extent of making life-changing decisions or life-destroying/destructive decisions. Vocal music song-texts is capable of sculpting man's action of being patriotic and unpatriotic, stimulating love and hate, eliciting depression and hope, inspiring fear and courage and also boosting indolence and hard work. Another salient reason why vocal music is composed is that vocal music composers are like the mirror and or eye of the society and also part of the society. Hence Udoh (2006) tagged vocal music composers as 'social prophet' (p.276). Since there can be no society without the human species dwelling in the space called society, man therefore make up that society because man cannot live in a vacuum; this concept of man and society is one fact that the vocal music composer is aware of, the vocal music composer is also aware that every action of man positive or negative dwelling in a society reflect a society's image which to a larger extent further portray that society to other clime good or bad. Udoh (2006) also posits that 'For music to be antidote to disunity, it must be educative' (p.284); though the author's claim is based on vocal music being an antidote to disunity which must be educative, the writer is of the view that all music type whether instrumental, vocal and instrumental and or vocal possesses a form of message which it passes/communicates to the intended receiver. Although such messages is much more distinct and clearer in vocal music since it deals with both text and sound. Therefore, for any vocal music to be relevant to man and society such vocal music must possess the quality, purpose and power not only to communicate messages of hope, self-reliance, and or courage to the intended audience but must also be educative, a building-block, a solid foundation to building a strong economy and a strong man. A strong man in character is equivalent to a strong economy and a strong nation. Though, the paper's focus is not on the genre, styles and or types of vocal music rather the focus is limited to three vocal music whose song texts is of great import to man and society These song-texts revolve round the building of the whole man and the society.

### **Vocal Music Composer and the Society**

Every music composition composed by a composer whether instrumental, vocal and instrumental or vocal irrespective of its genre, style and or type is usually packaged and intended to fulfill specific purpose. The purpose may be aesthetic, political, economical, social, cultural, moral, patriotic, religious, entertainment, philosophical and therapeutic. Composers of various creed in Nigeria and around the globe have lend their voices through various music composed by them especially vocal music to draw attention to individuals in the society, government policies that are unfavourable to the people, decays in the society and also to applaud good government policy, individuals and or groups of people contributing positively to the society. These vocal music compositions may also draw the attention of individuals, a group of people living in a

community/society or the society at large, to address certain issue pertaining and relating to man's welfare, moral obligation to the society, social obligation to the society, economic obligation to the society, religious obligation to the society as citizens of such society and obligations to one another living together in the society. There are vocal music compositions that specifically revolve round the building of the whole man and the society; reasons being that composers of such vocal music compositions believe that if the 'man' is sound the society would be sound, if man is morally deficient, the society would be morally deficient, if man is morally sound, the society would be morally sound; if man is economically viable, the society would be economically viable and productive, if man is lazy and self-indulging it would also have its effect on the society, therefore, man is a product of the society and society a product of man. It is like 'garbage in garbage out', 'what you give, is what you get', what man gives to society, society gives back to man; quality time well exploited and utilized would yield quality result.

### **Textual Analysis of the Vocal Music titled *Wian (Work), As You Make Your Bed so You Lie on It and Persevere.***

Below are song texts of the following vocal music title *Wian (Work), As You Make Your Bed so You Lie on It and Persevere.*

#### **Song Title 1 – *Wian (Work)* by Enoch J. O**

##### **Urhobo Dialect**

Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre're  
 Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre're  
 Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre're  
 Emu e ru vwo ko' vwiere re-e  
 Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre're  
 Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre're  
 Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre're  
 Emu e ru vwo ko' vwiere re-e  
 Wian, omo me ku wo mre 're,  
 Wian, oniovo ku wo mre're  
 Emu erho ko'vwiere re  
 Emu erho vwo ko'wie're re  
 Emu erho vwo ko'vwiere re  
 Emu erho vwo ko'vwiere re,  
 Wian, wian, wian, wian,  
 Ku wo mremu re,  
 Emu erho vwo ko'wie're re  
 Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre're  
 Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre're  
 Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre're  
 Emu e ru vwo ko' vwiere re-e

##### **English Equivalent**

Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat  
 Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat  
 Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat  
 There is no food for a lazy man  
 Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat  
 Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat  
 Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat  
 There is no food for a lazy man  
 Work, my child and you'll have to eat,  
 Work, my brother you'll have to eat,  
 There's no food for a lazy man  
 There is no food for a lazy man,  
 There is no food for a lazy man  
 There is no food for a lazy man  
 Work, work, work, work,  
 You will have to eat,  
 There is no food for a lazy man  
 Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat  
 Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat  
 Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat  
 There is no food for a lazy man

**Song Title 2 – As You Make your Bed so you lie on it by Orikri O**

As you make your bed so you will lie on it  
As you make your bed so you will lie on it  
You will lie on the bed that you make yourself  
As you make your bed so you will lie on it  
You can lie on the bed made of pure gold  
You can lie on the bed that is made with the mat  
You can lie anywhere by the road side (you can lie anywhere by the road side)  
You can lie anywhere by the market (you can lie anywhere by the market)  
You can lie anywhere (you can lie anywhere) made of pure gold (made of pure gold)  
You can lie anywhere (you can lie anywhere) that is made with the mat (made with the mat)  
You can lie on the bed that you make yourself  
As you make your bed\so you will lie on it  
Listen to this advice my dear friends  
Serious with what you are doing, to achieve your goal  
Work hard in life, victry's sure  
Keep on working, success is yours.  
As you make your bed\so you will lie on it  
As you make your bed so you will lie on it  
You will lie on the bed that you make yourself  
As you make your bed so you will lie on it

**Song Title 3 – Persevere by Enoh J. O**

What you sow, is what you reap  
What you give, is what you get  
Just be focused and be brave and strong.  
What you sow, is what you will reap  
Life is like a two sided coin  
For the down fall of a man, is not the end of his life  
Rise and be brave, be tough and strong  
What you sow is, what you will reap  
What you give, is what you get  
Don't be lazy, learn from the ant, learn from the ant,  
Don't be lazy, learn from the ant, learn from the ant,  
Don't be lazy, work while it is day and you will be glad  
For what you sow is what you reap  
What you give, is what you get  
Just be focused and be brave and strong  
Don't be afraid to take a chance  
Keep on trying and never quit  
Just be focused and be brave and strong.

**Note:** See musical excerpts of the above vocal music in Appendix I - III

Though the three song texts are related to one another in terms of conceptualization of meaning and intents, each song texts are different metrically and symmetrically. Textual repetition is characteristics of each song texts. Each song texts also implicate an advice and encouragement to man to reach out to higher ground instead of remaining on lower ground. Also each song texts validate the universal rule of action and consequence, sowing and reaping, work and reward. Each song texts strongly frown and or grimace at the attitude of being lazy and applaud hard work. The three song texts acknowledges the theory of effort and determination equals to achieving success in life; because having the thought and dreaming the dream is not enough; starting and putting in of effort is the rolling stone, the ladder to becoming great, successful in life and removing self-infliction and self-destruction out of the way. The Bible supports ‘effort’ this pictorial description may be found from the scripture from the book of Exodus; according to the book of Exodus chapter 16 verse 4a, ‘Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day...’ (Source: The Bible ‘King James Version’). Here Moses instructed the people to go and collect ‘manna’ at a specific spot for specific days and also gave them other specific instructions on the preparation of the manna. ‘If’ they did not adhere to such instructions there is a consequence, it means they would go hungry out of laziness to make an effort their own part. This scenario applies to man of all ages; effort must be put in no matter how small in order to achieve a specific goal in life.

### **Comparative Analysis of the Vocal Music titled ‘Wian (Work)’, ‘As You Make Your Bed’ and ‘Persevere’.**

For the purpose of analysis the three vocal songs shall be tagged as composition **A**, **B** and **C** where ‘**A**’ stands for song title ‘Wian (Work)’, ‘**B**’ for song title “As You Make Your Bed” and ‘**C**’ for song title “Persevere”. Also the analysis shall be based on the structural and stylistic differences and these shall be presented in tabular form as illustrated below;

Title	<b>A: (WIAN)</b>	<b>B: As You Make Your Bed</b>	<b>C: Persevere</b>
COMPOSER	Enoh J. O	Orikri O	Enoh J. O
Key	G major	G major	E flat Minor
Medium	Vocal/Instrumental	Instrumental/Vocal	Instrumental /Vocal
Style	Homophonic	Homophonic	Air
Time Signature	4 4	6 8	2 4
Length	15+8+8+8	4+17+24+8+12	13+16+9+55+1+17
Tonality	Major	Major	Minor/Major
Form	Binary	Extended Ternary	Cantata

Generally, each vocal music composition are different structurally, melodically, harmonically and rhythmically but features the techniques of repetition and a combination of long and short notes. In terms of mood and texture, each vocal music composition parades its unique mood and texture. Each vocal music composition also has its own stylistic approach. While vocal music **A (Wian)** is more strophic in nature, vocal music **B (As You Make Your Bed)** is characterize by instrumental introduction, chorus, and solo sections including the use of call and response techniques. On the other hand, vocal music **C (Persevere)** is practically a solo presentation with the voice playing the dominant role while the instrument plays the subsidiary role.

### **Philosophical, Socio-Cultural and Economical Implications**

Idamoyibo (2021) observes that ‘music does not only seek to identify the people’s culture, it further upholds and checks the socio-moral values that identify the society and the people. The themes centre on issues of socio-cultural practices and events that manifest in the society’ (p. 20). Idamoyibo’s assertions corroborates with the theme and song texts of the three vocal music composition being x-ray. The philosophical context of the three song texts under consideration is so wide that it covered a broad spectrum of man’s attitude to self, work, outlook to life and obligations to society. There is an axiom in local palace in Nigeria said in Pidgin English thus; ‘No food for lazy man’. This axiom is true in any society round the world. ‘Man’ in this context refers to both male and female homo-sapiens specie living in any society round the globe. An indolent man (person) is frowned upon in the society. In cultures where an individual is perceived to be lazy or indolent these are normally looked down upon and they are seen as nuisances who cannot make any meaningful contribution to themselves, family and the society at large.

On a broader spectrum the axiom is applicable to the social, economic, and cultural aspect of man. Thus in any society, citizens are expected to give back to the society through meaningful engagement and quota contributions for proper development of the society and to a wider extent the nation. This meaningful engagement can only be achieved through self-reliance. In connection to the axiom ‘No food for lazy man’, is another axiom which says that ‘An idle mind is the devil’s workshop’. It is believed in local palace that when the hand is not engaged the mind is an open access and or a door to engage in various unprofitable and negative vices that are endemic to the individual, family, environment and the society at large. The mind is the door to the soul, the mind is a light to the body - a mind that is not positively motivated and engaged will breed ills, moral decadence, social decadence, economic decadence, and cultural decadence. This is where vocal music composers who are advocators of ‘hard work pays’, and of a ‘better man and nation’ raise their voice through vocal music composition to advice, encourage and upbraid man in the society.

Corroborating the posits so far, the Bible according to the book of Proverbs chapters 6 verses 6 – 11 strongly frowns at laziness and encourages hard work. This is validated in the following verse(s) below;

- Verse 6 - Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:  
 Verse 7 - Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

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- Verse 8 - Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.
- Verse 9 - How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When will thou arise out of thy sleep?
- Verse 10 - Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:
- Verse 11 - So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man (Source: The Bible - King James Version)

In conjunction with the above, Proverbs chapter 25 verses 30-34 affirms Proverbs chapter 6 verses 6-11 as seen from the following passages below, this passage paints a vivid picture of the life of a lazy man and an hard working man.

- Verse 30 - I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the void of understanding;
- Verse 31 - And lo, it was all grown over with thorns and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.
- Verse 32 - Then, I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.
- Verse 33 - Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of hands to sleep:
- Verse 34 - So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth: and thy want as an armed man (Source: KJV).

In addition, Proverbs chapter 28 verse 19 says ‘He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough (Source: KJV) and in Proverbs chapter 12 verse 24 states that ‘The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothfull shall be under tribute’ (Source: KJV). While Proverbs chapter 13 verse 11b states that ‘He that gathereth by labour shall increase’ (Source: KJV). The three song text addresses the issue of self-reliance, bravery and indolence which was pointed out in the book of Proverbs chapter 6: Proverbs chapter 28; Proverbs chapter 12; Proverbs chapter 13 and chapter 30. Idamoyibo (2021) also succinctly observes that ‘when values shifted from the dignity of sound education and labour to quick routes of massive wealth acquisition and abusive use of power, humanness became eroded in our society’ (p. 33). It is a fact that when values shift from dignity of labour and sound education individuals in a society and or the society in its entirety leads to devastating effects and results which may also lead to various chain reactions like ‘ripples’ affecting the individual, the economy and a nation in a nutshell. Where citizens are indolent and lazy vices such as stealing, kidnapping, banditry, (419 and yahoo that is trickstering) and terrorizing to make quick living becomes the order of the day. Hence there is need for egalitarian and self-reliant individuals for a strong economy and a strong nation which the three vocal music compositions seek to evoke through the song texts.

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## CONCLUSION

From the various viewpoints highlighted it has been established that the three vocal music compositions through its song texts strove to develop a whole man who in turn would make a better society. It brought the fact that individuals who know that ‘Rome was not built in a day’ would be a patient individual. Individual who know that ‘the journey of a thousand mile start in a day’ would make early preparation in life’s endeavours. Individual who know that ‘there is no food for a lazy man’ would be spurred to become hardworking and make a legitimate livelihood. Individual who know that ‘as you make your bed so you lie on it’ would make sure to earn a good reputation in life to shun all evil vices and the individual who know that ‘life is a two-sided coin’ would not give up in life no matter-what. Finally, individuals make up a society, a nation - ‘when the head is sick, the body would be sick’ and ‘when the head is whole, the body would be whole’, it is therefore imperative that the head be whole so that the body may be whole also. There is also need for governments to make good policies that would bring about development as well as individuals to play their parts too. Succinctly put in the words of Idamoyibo (2021) thus: ‘The essence of music composition and performance is not just to entertain, but to develop humans and make them better people in the society. Human development is central to nation building. When we build infrastructure and develop policies and programmes for the development of our nation, we need to consider the development of the human beings who will manage and use them appropriately’ (Idamoyibo (2021:33).

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Appendix I

Excerpt of Musical example of Vocal Music A: 'Wian (Work)'

**WIAN (WORK)**

E.J.O Enoh J. Okafor

Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre 're,  
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat,

Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre 're,  
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat,

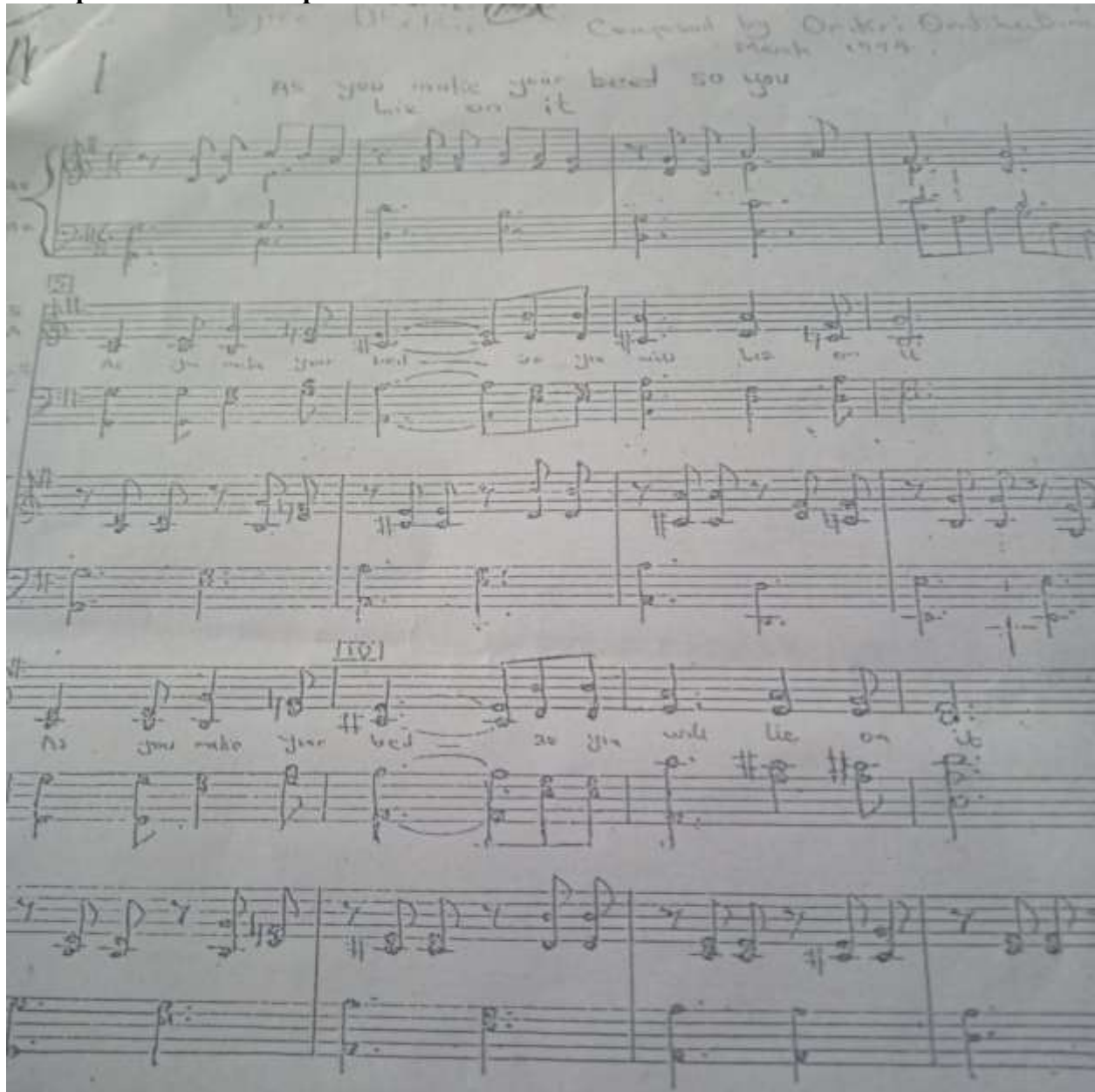
Wian, wian, wian, wian, ku wo mre 're,  
Work, work, work, work, you'll have to eat,

e - mu e - rho vwo ko'-vwie-re rhe wian, wian, wian, wian  
there is no food for a la - zy man work, work, work, work,

ku wo mre 're you'll have to eat, wian, wian, wian, wian,  
work, work, work, work,

**Appendix II**

**Excerpt of Musical example of Vocal Music B: ‘As You make Your Bed So You Lie’**



Handwritten musical score on a page with three systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics: "you can be / that you make / you sit". A box containing the number "15" is above the staff. The second system includes a vocal line with lyrics: "so you / will lie on / Fine". A box containing the number "20" is above the staff. The third system includes a vocal line with lyrics: "You can lie on the bed / made of pure gold / Fine". A box containing the number "25" is above the staff. The score includes piano accompaniment for the first two systems and a bass line for the third system. The handwriting is in black ink on aged paper.

Appendix III

Excerpt of Musical example of Vocal Music C: 'Persevere'

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Persevere' by Enah J. Okafor. The score is written for Soprano (S) and Piano (Pno.). The tempo is marked 'Con Affection' with a quarter note equal to 100 (♩ = 100). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score consists of four systems of music. The first system shows the Soprano part with a whole rest and the Piano accompaniment. The second system shows the Soprano part with the lyrics 'What you' and the Piano accompaniment. The third system shows the Soprano part with the lyrics 'sow is what you reap what you give' and the Piano accompaniment. The fourth system shows the Soprano part with the lyrics 'is what you get Just he foc - cused and' and the Piano accompaniment. The Soprano part is written in a soprano clef, and the Piano part is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

Persevere

S  
22 be brave and strong

Pno.

S  
28

Pno.

S  
34 What you sow is what you will reap

Pno.

S  
40 Life is like a two sided coin for the

Pno.

2