

**Choral conducting in contemporary Ibadan: a study on select  
conductors in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

This research explores the practice of choral conducting in contemporary Ibadan, focusing specifically on select choral directors within the Ibadan metropolis. Through qualitative analysis, the study investigates the pedagogical approaches, stylistic variations, and cultural influences that shape choral music in this region. Data were collected through interviews and observations with prominent choral directors and their ensembles, providing insights into the uniqueness of individuals' challenges and successes in the context of Nigeria's diverse musical landscape. The findings reveal a rich tapestry of traditional and modern influences, which highlight the role of choral music as a vehicle for cultural expression and community cohesion. This study contributes to the understanding of choral conducting in Nigeria by documenting the practices of choral directors, enhancing the appreciation of their individual approaches, and suggesting pathways for future research and development in the field. The implications of this research extend beyond local contexts, offering valuable perspectives for choral practitioners and scholars who are interested in the intersection of music, culture, and education in a global context.

**Key words:** choral conducting, choral practitioner, conducting, Ibadan metropolis, music director

## **Introduction**

Choral music has a profound impact on cultural and social life across various societies, serving as a medium of expression, communication, and community bonding. In Nigeria, choral conducting has gained prominence not only as an art form but also as a vital component that contributes to the nation's rich music tapestry in diverse ethnic and cultural milieus. The significance of choral conducting in contemporary Ibadan, Nigeria, cannot be overstated, particularly within the vibrant Ibadan metropolis. As one of the country's largest cities, Ibadan serves as a cultural hub, rich in musical traditions in its diverse communities. Choral music plays a vital role in Nigerian society, providing a means for artistic expression, community cohesion, and cultural identity. This study begins with a historical overview of choral music in Nigeria, tracing its evolution from traditional vocal practices to the incorporation of Western choral forms that were introduced during colonial times. It examines how choral music has adapted over the years, reflecting local cultural nuances alongside global influences. With the emergence of various churches, schools, community organisations, and the media, choral music has gained widespread recognition, thus enhancing its educational and social dimensions.

Through greater emphasis on the role of choral conductors, this study highlights how choral conductors are instrumental in shaping the artistic quality of choral performances while fostering musical education among participants. Choral conductors guide technical proficiency and serve as cultural ambassadors, endeavouring to preserve and promote Nigeria's rich musical heritage. Thus, the practice of choral conducting emerges as a multifaceted field, intersecting with issues of pedagogy, community engagement, and cultural preservation.

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the practices and methodologies of select choral conductors (directors) in Ibadan metropolis. By focusing on their unique approaches and challenges, this research aims to uncover the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in choral conducting. Additionally, it seeks to underscore the broader implications of choral music conducting as a powerful tool for community building and cultural expression in a nation renowned for its diversity. The significance of this research extends beyond academic discourse; it holds practical implications for educators, practitioners, and community leaders. By documenting the experiences of choral conductors, this study aims to foster a greater appreciation of choral music while providing insights that can inform future educational initiatives and performances.

## **Research objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. document the profile, techniques, styles and practices employed by select choral conductors in Ibadan metropolis;
- ii. identify the challenges and opportunities faced by choral conductors in contemporary Nigerian society, particularly within Ibadan metropolis; and
- iii. examine the impact of choral conductors on the development and sustainability of choral music in Ibadan metropolis.

### **Literature review**

The roots of choral music in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial period when Western missionaries introduced the singing of hymns and formal choral training to local communities Ossaiga (2024). This introduction led to the establishment of church choirs, which became the incubators for early choral practices in the country. The blending of indigenous rhythms, languages, and musical styles with Western choral traditions subsequently gave rise to a distinctly Nigerian form of choral music. From 1960, the growth of choral music in Nigeria experienced significant momentum. The establishment of various secular and religious choral groups and organisations provided platforms for many music enthusiasts to hone their conducting skills. Prominent singers like the Nigerian singer-songwriter and musicologist, Christopher Oyesiku, illustrated how choral music could convey national identity and pride through performance (Nnamani, 2018). An examination of select conductors in Ibadan reveals a rich interplay of influences, styles, and methodologies that define contemporary choral conducting in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Choral conducting in contemporary Nigeria exhibits a blend of Western classical precision and local cultural innovation. Nnamani (2018) details conductors in Lagos churches and professional venues who adhere to European models, using disciplined gestures and nonverbal cues. In Southern Nigeria, Ossaiga (2024a) documents conductors who rely on structured beat patterns in formal settings, while Ossaiga (2024b) describes conductors (among them are those in Ibadan), who adopt movement-based techniques such as finger snapping, clapping, and dancing in gospel choir settings. A study in Delta State, Nigeria, notes examples of unconventional practices that raise ethical concerns in church-based ensembles, and Van Weelden (2002) underscores the importance of posture and facial expression in collegiate choral competitions in the United States. These studies collectively illustrate that conductors negotiate a dual tradition - retaining technical accuracy in institutional contexts while integrating expressive, culturally resonant methods in church and gospel music conducting practices.

Ossaiga (2024a) describes the continuing influence of Western classical traditions in shaping choral conducting in Nigeria, with a focus on strict, formalised ('stringent') conducting practices; these are those that adhere to classical beat patterns, posture, and emotional restraint, especially in Western art music contexts. Nnamani (2018) traces the historical development of conducting in Nigeria, highlighting the influence of European models and the importance of interpretative skills and bodily expression. Both his and Ossaiga's studies note that these traditions are adapted to local contexts, with conductors responding to the social structures and expectations of Nigerian ensembles and audiences. Ossaiga (2024b) provides evidence of gospel music conductors in Southern Nigeria using movement-based, and expressive techniques (such as finger snapping, clapping, feet stamping, and dance), which depart from classical norms and reflect the integration of African and popular music cultures. The *Study of Music Conducting Practices* (2023) abstract notes the spread of unconventional and sometimes ethically questionable practices among church

conductors, recommending caution to avoid undermining the ethical foundations of the art.

Those studies suggest a dynamic and pluralistic landscape, where conductors negotiate between inherited traditions and contemporary innovations. However, Nnamani (2018) and Ossaiga (2024a) highlight the importance of conductor training and evolving standards of performance, emphasising the need for technical proficiency, interpretative ability, and communicative skills, especially for engaging critical audiences. Ossaiga (2024b) advocates for the formal recognition ('canonisation') of gospel conducting practices in training curricula, arguing for a broader taxonomy of conducting education. Van Weelden (2002), in a United States context, finds that posture and facial expression are important for perceptions of conducting effectiveness, suggesting these elements should be emphasised in undergraduate training.

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### **Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative approach to investigate the multifaceted dimensions of choral conducting in contemporary Ibadan, Nigeria, specifically focusing on four select conductors within the Ibadan metropolis. The research design integrated qualitative data collection and analysis techniques to provide a holistic understanding of the conductors' profiles, training backgrounds, rehearsal techniques, performance practices, challenges, and contributions to the Nigerian choral music scene. The rationale for selecting Ibadan as the study area stemmed from its rich choral music tradition, characterised by a diverse array of church choirs, university choirs, and community-based choral groups. The city provides a fertile ground for examining the dynamics of choral conducting in a vibrant cultural context (Obijiaku, 2023).

The selection of the four conductors was based on purposive sampling technique, which ensured representation from various choral genres, organisational structures, and levels of experience. Data gathering occurred through in-depth interviews,

observations of rehearsals and performances, and analysis of choral scores and recordings, allowing for triangulation of findings and enhanced validity. In-depth interviews were held with the four select conductors in order to gain detailed insights into their personal backgrounds, musical training, conducting philosophies, rehearsal strategies, and experiences in working with Nigerian choirs. The interview protocol consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit rich narratives and perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of choral conducting in the contemporary Nigerian context (Obijiaku, 2023).

## **Findings and discussion**

### **The role of choral conductors**

Choral conductors serve as the linchpin of any choral group; they provide artistic direction, emotional leadership, and pedagogical guidance. Their responsibilities encompass more than merely waving a baton; effective conductors are visionaries who establish the musical aesthetic of their groups. They are tasked with the selection of repertoire, vocal coaching, and the overall artistic conception of performances Van Weelden (2002).

In Ibadan, choral conductors employ a variety of techniques to engage their singers. For instance, the conducting techniques range from traditional baton techniques to more modern methods, including body language and visual cues. Such non-verbal communication is particularly crucial in the context of Nigerian choirs where the diverse socio-linguistic backgrounds of members demand a conductor who can adeptly adapt their approaches to accommodate a wide range of musical interpretations.

### **Select conductors in Ibadan metropolis**

To gain deeper insights into contemporary choral conducting practices in Ibadan, it is essential to highlight the contributions of the four select conductors who have influenced the choral music conducting landscape. These conductors are Dr Tolulope Olusola Owoaje, Dr David Ubong, Mr Babatunde Brainard Olapade, and Mr Kayode Odejimi.

#### **Dr Tolulope Olusola Owoaje**

Dr Tolulope Olusola Owoaje is a veteran choral conductor, music educator, and scholar based in Ibadan, Nigeria. His career, pedagogical practices, and cultural impact are demonstrable by his significant contributions to choral music education and performance in the city, in the midst of the challenges and opportunities that define the choral music landscape in Ibadan.

Owoaje, who is over sixty years of age, holds a PhD in African Musicology and has more than thirty years of experience as a choral conductor. He is the pioneer and current Head of the Department of Music at the University of Ibadan, where he successfully integrates academic scholarship with practical musicianship. Before the department's formal establishment, he directed the renowned University of Ibadan Music Circle, laying a foundation for structured music education in the university.

Presently, he serves as principal conductor of the University Choir, and directs the Ibadan City Choral (ICC) - a volunteer-based ensemble comprising professional and semi-professional singers from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds.

The defining characteristics of Owoaje's approach to choral conducting, which combines a traditional interpretive ethos with a collaborative rehearsal dynamic are underscored in this study. His communication with choir members is both verbal and gestural, fostering clarity and expressivity in performance. He emphasises three core dimensions of effective choral conducting: technical accuracy, musical expression, and communicative engagement with singers. His pedagogical approach accommodates varying skill levels within his choirs while introducing singers to professional-level expectations and a repertoire that includes both Western classical works and African art music. This fusion of stylistic traditions broadens the artistic horizons of his singers, enhancing their versatility, and grounding their practice in culturally relevant contexts.

The foregoing notwithstanding, Owoaje's work also illuminates the structural challenges confronting choral music in Ibadan. Chief among these are limited financial resources, inadequate access to modern equipment, and the unavailability of skilled and regular accompanists - a gap that has given rise to the entrenched practice of hiring accompanists exclusively for concert performances. These constraints are symptomatic of wider systemic issues in the Nigerian performing arts sector, where funding and institutional support remain limited (Ayokunmi, 2015).

Nonetheless, Dr. Owoaje's sustained output of high-quality performances and educational initiatives reflects an adaptive resilience and a capacity to effectively mobilise community-based resources. Opportunities for innovation and growth within this context are also evident. Dr. Owoaje actively leverages collaborations with other choirs and musicians, interdisciplinary partnerships with dancers and theater artists, commissioning of new works by Nigerian composers, and participation in local and regional festivals and competitions. These strategies not only enrich the artistic output of his ensembles but also strengthen the social and cultural relevance of choral music in Ibadan. Owoaje's work is situated within broader debates on the role of music education and performance in postcolonial African societies. His career exemplifies how conductors can balance fidelity to Western classical traditions with advocacy for African art music, thereby contributing to the decolonisation of music curricula and validating indigenous creativity alongside imported forms (Ekwueme, 1995). His collaborative and culturally grounded approach resonates with contemporary pedagogical paradigms that prioritise inclusivity, cultural relevance, and community engagement in music education (Garnett, 2009).

Owoaje emerges as a compelling case study of leadership and innovation in Nigerian choral music. His practice demonstrates how conductors in resource-constrained environments can foster high standards of artistry while maintaining cultural authenticity and inclusivity. His work highlights the enduring role of choral music as



an educational, social, and cultural force in urban Nigeria, offering a model for sustainable artistic development that is both locally rooted and globally informed.



**Plate 1:** Hand gesture in choral conducting, featuring Dr Tolulope Olusola Owoaje conducting Ibadan City Choral during a concert.  
Source: Authors

### **Dr David Ubong**

Dr David Ubong's professional experience, conducting philosophy, challenges, and opportunities as a choral conductor are examined in this section. Ubong holds a doctoral degree, and has accumulated 11–20 years of experience conducting choirs. His high level of academic and practical expertise positions him among the more accomplished music conducting practitioners in the region, which lends support to the view that advanced training and education are correlated with leadership longevity and artistic impact in African choral music (Ayokunmi, 2015).

Ubong has worked with both church and professional choirs, demonstrating versatility across sacred and secular musical contexts. Such dual engagements align with patterns observed by Ekwueme (1995), who noted that African conductors often straddle liturgical and formal concert domains. His preferred genre is classical choral music, placing his practice firmly within the Western art music tradition rather than indigenous or popular forms. Unlike church-based choirs that rehearse and perform weekly, his ensembles perform quarterly - a rhythm that likely reflects his prioritisation of preparation and quality alongside the resource and logistical constraints he identified elsewhere.

An important aspect of Ubong's contribution to choral music in Ibadan is his role as conductor of The Ibadan Philharmonic Society (TIPS). Founded in 2015 to restore Ibadan's place as a leading musical hub in Nigeria, TIPS is the only choral outfit in Oyo State that performs complete works by the great masters of the art. Since 2016, under Dr. Ubong's baton, the TIPS chorus has staged 11 successful concerts featuring 13 major choral works. These include *The Creation* (performed twice) and *Mass No. 11* by J. F. Haydn; *Glorias* by A. Vivaldi; *Requiem* by G. Verdi; *Judas Maccabeus*, *Messiah*, *Chandos Anthems 9 and 11*, and *Solomon* by G. F. Handel; *Missa Solemnis* and *Ode to Joy* (performed twice) by L. V. Beethoven; *Hymn of*

Praise by F. Mendelssohn; and *Mágbàgbéllé* by Adedayo Dedeké. This remarkable performance history illustrates his capacity to curate and deliver highly demanding choral repertoires, strengthening classical music's presence in a region traditionally known for folk and popular genres. It also substantiates his stated mission of reviving a 'dead (classical music) culture' in Ibadan, underscoring both the cultural marginalisation of Western art music and his personal commitment to its restoration. Regarding his conducting philosophy, Ubong described his interpretive approach as a blend of traditional, innovative, and expressive elements. This hybrid philosophy suggests his openness to creative and evolving practices while maintaining respect for established traditions - a balance consistent with global trends in choral pedagogy (Bartolome, 2019). He emphasised verbal communication during rehearsals and identified effective communication with choir members as the most important aspect of conducting. This focus aligns with relational leadership models in music education, which prioritise clarity, connection, and responsiveness to singers' needs (Herbst et al., 2003).

Ubong also identified significant challenges in his work. He cited limited financial resources, inadequate equipment, and a shortage of trained singers as major constraints. In particular, he noted that audiences, singers, and accompanists often struggle to appreciate and sustain classical music traditions, given Ibadan's stronger association with traditional and folk music. His observation reflects broader cultural tensions between indigenous traditions and Western-derived art forms in Nigerian urban music scenes (Obijiaku, 2023). Nevertheless, Ubong articulated a clear vision for the cultural and social role of choral music in Ibadan. He argued that choral music provides quality entertainment and helps to restore "a culture of healthy music," as opposed to popular genres he perceives as lacking moral value. This perspective underscores the normative view of music as a medium for social and ethical education, reinforcing the conductor's role as an advocate for higher artistic and moral standards in society (Okafor, 2005).

At the same time, he identified several opportunities for innovation and collaboration, such as partnerships with dancers and theatre groups, and commissioning new works from Nigerian composers. These approaches reflect a pragmatic and culturally grounded strategy for sustaining and enriching the choral tradition, in line with calls for locally relevant and collaborative practices in African art music (Herbst et al., 2003; Agawu, 2016). In his concluding remarks, Ubong emphasised the urgent need for systematic investment in the training of choral singers, suggesting that half of the challenges currently faced by conductors in Ibadan could be alleviated through targeted capacity-building efforts. This insight highlights the central role of education and human capital development in revitalising choral music and aligns with broader scholarship on strengthening African performing arts infrastructures (Nnamani, 2018).

Taken together, these findings portray the classical choral conductor in Ibadan as both a custodian of Western musical traditions and a cultural innovator who is constantly navigating a complex socio-cultural environment. Ubong's hybrid



interpretive approach, moral vision for music, and commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration exemplify adaptive strategies that enable conductors to sustain their practice despite significant constraints. His experience, particularly as demonstrated through the achievements of The Ibadan Philharmonic Society, offers valuable insights into how Nigerian conductors negotiate cultural authenticity, pedagogical responsibility, and artistic innovation, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of choral music as a socially engaging and culturally transformative practice.



**Plate 2:** Use of the right hand in beating patterns featuring Dr Davis Ubong conducting live at Trenchard Hall, University of Ibadan  
Source: Authors

### **Mr Babatunde Brainard Olapade**

Mr. Babatunde Brainard Olapade is a seasoned choral conductor and music director in Ibadan, with a wealth of experience, stylistic depth, and an insightful perspective on the state of choral music in the city. Demographically, Olapade belongs to the 51 and above age group, and he holds a Master's degree. With more than 20 years of conducting experience, his longevity and dedication to the craft are evident in his accomplishments and leadership in numerous choirs.

Olapade (popularly known as Babs), is not only a vocal and choral trainer but also a highly respected figure in Nigeria's choral music scene. His journey began at Rantan School of Music under the mentorship of the late Lekan Olaitan, who recognised his potential, and guided him towards a career in choral conducting. Olapade had his first major experience of choral training at The Love of God Church International, where his outstanding performances brought him into the limelight, and established his reputation across the South West of Nigeria. His professional development continued internationally, earning a professional certificate in vocal academy under Professor Martin Steidler in Germany (2007), an Artistic Director qualification from the University of Music and Performing Arts, Munich, and a diploma in church music under Professor Christian Schmidt Timmermann. Over the years, he has performed in several high-profile concerts both within and outside Nigeria. He currently trains several prominent choral groups, including Melukah Choral Ensemble, Emmanuel Voices, The Love Voices, Angel Voices, Emerald De Chorale, and The Bois Voices, among others; these demonstrate his wide influence and

commitment to nurturing talent. He is also a registered member of the Guild of Organists/Choirmasters Nigeria.

Olapade has conducted a variety of choirs - church, school, community, and professional – and this highlights his versatility across different settings. His preferred genre is gospel, which aligns with his early beginnings and the strong religious roots of choral music in Ibadan. He conducts performances on a weekly basis, underscoring his consistent involvement in musical activities.

On his conducting style and philosophy, Olapade embraces a mix of traditional, innovative, collaborative, and expressive approaches. This reflects a balance between honouring established techniques and exploring creative and engaging interpretations of choral works. His communication style during rehearsals combines both verbal and non-verbal methods, which facilitates clear instruction and emotional connection with his singers. He considers musical expression to be the most critical aspect of conducting, showing his focus on delivering meaningful and moving performances that resonate with audiences.

Despite his accomplishments, Olapade identified the persistent challenges facing choral conductors in Ibadan. These include limited resources (such as inadequate funding and equipment) and lack of trained singers. These challenges highlight the structural and educational gaps in the choral ecosystem that need to be addressed. Nevertheless, he underscored the positive role of choral music in promoting cultural heritage, fostering community engagement, and supporting education, which affirms its value in the social and cultural fabric of Ibadan.

Finally, Olapade pointed to several opportunities for collaboration, including joint performances with other choirs or musicians, partnerships with dancers and theatre groups, commissioning works from Nigerian composers, and participating in festivals and competitions. These opportunities would not only enhance artistic exchange but also help elevate the profile of choral music in the region. He emphasised the importance of sustained support from stakeholders, as well as mentorship and training for the next generation of conductors and singers to secure the future of choral music in Ibadan.

Olapade's biography and responses reveal the portrait of a highly skilled, passionate, and impactful conductor. His career exemplifies both the rich potential of choral music as an art form and the continuing need to address the challenges limiting its full expression in Ibadan. His story and insights offer valuable lessons for the growth and sustainability of choral music in Nigeria.



**Plate 3:** Use of hand gesture and singing, featuring Babatunde Olapade conducting Melukah Choral during a concert  
Source: Authors

#### **4. Mr Kayode Odejimi**

The responses from Mr. Kayode Odejimi, Director and Conductor of the Premier Symphony Orchestra and Choral Group, Ibadan, provide valuable insights into the practice, challenges, and opportunities of choral music in the city. Demographically, Odejimi falls within the 31–40 age range and holds a Bachelor’s degree. With 11–20 years of experience as a choral conductor, he brings a significant level of expertise and leadership in the field. In terms of his choral music experience, Odejimi has conducted a variety of choirs, including church choirs, school choirs, and professional choirs. This diversity demonstrates his ability to adapt to different musical and organisational contexts while maintaining high standards. His preferred genre is classical choral music, reflecting a deep appreciation for the formal traditions of the art. Regarding the frequency of performances, he indicated that it varies, which suggests flexibility and responsiveness to opportunities and the demands of his multiple engagements.

Odejimi’s conducting style and philosophy combine traditional and expressive approaches, while also demonstrating innovation by interpreting music to suit particular events or convey specific narratives. He noted that he often adapts musical interpretation to paint an insight or align with particular incidents. This creative and thoughtful approach underscores his belief that music can tell powerful stories and evoke meaningful connections. He primarily communicates with his choir members verbally during rehearsals, emphasising clarity and direct engagement. When asked about the most important aspects of conducting, he identified both musical expression and technical accuracy, and further stressed the importance of a conductor having a deep connection with singers and being an outstanding leader. This reflects his holistic perspective on the role of a conductor as both an artist and a mentor.

On the challenges facing choral music in Ibadan, Odejimi identified several pressing issues, including limited resources, lack of trained singers, and limited audience engagement. He also observed that choral music is not as appreciated and celebrated as other music genres, indicating cultural attitudes that may undervalue the art form.

Despite these challenges, he expressed optimism about the potential of choral music to contribute to the city's cultural and social development. He proposed organising festivals that promote Ibadan's cultural heritage by commissioning composers to arrange traditional folk songs and create new works that document and celebrate the city's history, particularly the lives and times of its renowned Yoruba warriors. Such initiatives, he noted, would both preserve heritage and engage contemporary audiences.

Regarding opportunities for collaboration, Odejimi highlighted the benefits of participating in music festivals and competitions, which he sees as avenues to raise the profile of Ibadan's choral music and connect its practitioners with wider audiences and networks. In his additional comments, he lamented that choral music in Ibadan has not yet reached the standard it ought to achieve. He pointed out two major issues: the lack of synergy among conductors and directors, and the absence of organised choral music festivals or competitions. He recommended establishing a formidable registered association for choral music directors in Ibadan, with government backing, to address critical issues collectivity and advocacy for the development of the field. He also stressed the need for regular festivals to bring recognition to Ibadan, foster community, and sustain public interest in choral music. Odejimi's responses paint a picture of a passionate and visionary conductor who is deeply invested in advancing choral music in Ibadan. As the Director and Conductor of the Premier Symphony Orchestra and Choral Group, he exemplifies leadership and commitment to excellence. His insights highlight both the challenges, such as insufficient resources, lack of coordination, and cultural undervaluation, and the great potential of choral music as a cultural, educational, and social force. His recommendations provide a clear and actionable roadmap for revitalising choral music in the city, and positioning it as an integral part of Ibadan's cultural identity.



**Plate 4:** Combination of hand gesture and facial expression in choral conducting, featuring Kayode Odejimi conducting PSO/CG during Belcanto 3.0  
Source: Authors

### **Challenges confronting choral conductors in Nigeria**

Despite the successes of these conductors, several challenges impede the growth and sustainability of choral music in Nigeria. Funding remains a significant hurdle, with many choirs relying on limited resources from local churches or donations. Consequently, the inability to access quality sheet music, rehearsal spaces, and

performance venues often hinders the development of these ensembles. Furthermore, there is an acute shortage of trained musicians and conductors equipped to lead choirs professionally. The music education system in Nigeria struggles with insufficient curricular focus on choral conducting; as a result, many aspiring conductors lack access to formal training (Jansson & Balsnes, 2020). This creates a reliance on self-taught skills and traditional practices, which may not always align with contemporary music demands.

Moreover, cultural perceptions often undervalue choral music in favour of popular music genres. Many communities perceive choral music as elitist, limiting broader participation and engagement. Conductors continue to work towards changing these perceptions, crafting performances that reach wider audiences and underscore the significance of choral singing as an essential aspect of Nigerian identity.

### **The future of choral conducting in Nigeria**

The future of choral conducting in Nigeria is promising, primarily due to the tireless efforts of passionate conductors like Owoaje, Ebong, Olapade and Odejimi. Their commitment to developing vocal talent, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering inclusivity lays the groundwork for a vibrant choral culture that can thrive beyond the confines of traditional settings.

Educational institutions can play a pivotal role in sustaining this momentum. By integrating contemporary choral techniques and practices into their music curriculum, universities can cultivate the next generation of conductors. Collaborations between local choirs and international music organisations will further enhance exposure to varied conducting methodologies and repertoire (Igbi, 2023).

### **Conclusion**

Research on choral conducting in Nigeria reveals a dynamic interplay between Western classical traditions and local innovations. In art music and institutional settings, professional conductors draw on classical models while emphasising technical precision, interpretive depth, and non-verbal communication. This approach reflects the enduring influence of Western classical music on Nigerian choral conducting.

In contrast, church and gospel contexts showcase significant innovation, with conductors adopting movement-based, participatory, and culturally resonant techniques. These approaches not only reflect Ibadan, Nigeria's vibrant cultural heritage but also highlight the adaptability and creativity of choral conductors in the country. The blending of Western, African, and popular idioms in gospel music, in particular, demonstrates the evolving nature of choral conducting in Ibadan, Nigeria. Emerging trends in choral conducting highlight the decolonisation and diversification of practices. There is a growing recognition of the need to acknowledge diverse practices in training and certification, potentially shifting the canon of conducting education. However, conductors also face challenges in balancing creative

innovation with ethical standards and engaging broader audiences in choral performance. As choral conducting continues to evolve in Nigeria, it is likely to have implications for music education, performance, and cultural identity in the country. The landscape of choral conducting in contemporary Nigeria, particularly in the Ibadan metropolis, is complex and richly diverse. Through the lens of select conductors, this study captures an ongoing narrative of resilience, creativity, and dedication amidst various challenges. The fusion of tradition and innovation is essential to the evolution of choral music in Nigeria, reflecting the nation's identity while paving the way for a vibrant musical future.

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