

# **The Relevance of Creativity, Empathy and Expression Theories to a Musical Composer**

**By**

**Giama, B. Evangeline PhD**

**Department of Music**

**Ajuru University of Education,**

**Rumuolumeni Port Harcourt, Rivers State**

## **Abstract**

Theories are significant in research in several ways. It helps the researcher to have a base and philosophy when writing. This paper focuses on the relevance of creativity, empathy and expression theories in musical composition. The problem is to examine the relevance of these theories to a composer in musical composition. The aim is to outline the various areas in the above theories that reveal the virtues of a composer. The research method used in this paper is qualitative through the use of related literature review. The paper discusses the person of a composer as spontaneous, a divergent thinker, open to new experiences, persistent, and a hard worker. It shows three stages of a composer as the creative person, the creative process and the creative product. Expression and empathy are virtues of a composer. The paper concluded that these theories are the core description of the activities of a composer. The paper recommends more creative compositions that express our African endeavors

## **Introduction**

Music is created with different sounds of musical notes. These musical sounds are created by a composer in a simple or complex way. According to William (2009)

Music is a succession of sounds, simple or complex. The ear hears the first note and links it to the second. The first is still in the memory as the second is followed by the third. This process continues like the cinematography of sound and there

is an illusion of onward movement. Memory enables the sounds to be compared, and it is possible for most people to remember a series of sounds that form a pattern lasting a few seconds. If one is accustomed to listening, one often knows what to expect; and while the ear is listening to the present, the mind is anticipating the future and remembering the past.

(p. 2)

Speaking about compositions, the journey of music started from the antiquity period to the present day. Composers of music of various ages have created musical compositions according to the trend of each period. Musical compositions serve different purposes in society. It serves religious, social, emotional, political, therapeutic, educational and entertainment purposes. Each of these musical compositions could be in Western, African, or other forms but are geared towards achieving these purposes.

**The Problem:** The problem is to examine the relevance of these theories to a composer in musical composition

**The Aim:** The aim is to outline the various areas in the above theories that reveal the virtues of a composer.

**The Methodology:** The research method used in this paper is qualitative through the use of related literature review

### **The Creativity Theory**

The creativity theory was propounded by Kanematsu and Barry (2006). Kanematsu and Barry in Kozbelt, Beghetto, and Runcorn (2010) say:

Creativity can be defined as the ability to produce original ideas and new items. It also includes the combining of existing works, objects, and ideas in different ways for new purposes. Three important components of creativity are the

creative person, the creative product, and the creative process. (p. 15)

Existing works in Kanematus and Barrys' context refer to existing theories of music, already composed music and songs. Theories help the composer of music to observe conventions, rules and regulations of thought in the process of creativity. Hence, theory becomes a quality assurance mechanism that ensures that the creative process produces quality products. Kozbelt, Beghetto, and Runcorn further discuss the three components of creativity in the following ways.

**Creative Person:** A creative person is usually energetic and full of ideas. This individual is also characterized by having a desire to grow and a capability to be puzzled, spontaneous, a divergent thinker, open to new experiences, persistent, and a hard worker. **Creative Product:** The creative product is one that never existed before, like a new book, song, or invention. It could be a child's creative game to play with friends or a housewife's innovative recipe for cookies. **Creative Process:** The creative process starts with the creative person and results in a creative product. It includes the thinking and the acts that take place to produce an original item. (p. 15)

**Creative Person:** This is the composer and Idamoyibo (2007) viewed as: A composer is a very resourceful music educator. He is a creative source through whom instructional materials like music scores are made available. His creative impulse leads him into the world of the unknown, to delve deeply in search of new knowledge or idioms, elements or styles, structures or forms, texture or counterpoint that may be simple or complex, implicit or explicit, impressive or expressive. He/she, through experiment, evolve first-hand materials and resources that become useful, both to performance and teaching-learning situations. (p. 112)

He/she is full of creativity. Every fragment of words in the hands of a composer could make music. Feel with new ideas, always ready to learn new things and energetic.

**Creative Process:** The form, melody, harmony, and rhythm, the scoring of the song, etc. every activity that a composer goes through to bring out a piece of music is creative. Process

**Creative Product:** The piece of music for performance. Example.

**4.17 NYETOROFI**  
**( I WILL PRAISE YOU)** *Giami, B. Evangeline*

The musical score is written for Soprano and Alto (S/A) and Tenor and Bass (T/B). It consists of five systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are in Igbo and English. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics. The lyrics include: 'A-mi nyi fi o fri u sen kor a to di an di fak Nye to ro fi nye to ro', 'fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro', 'nye t'ro nye oh', 'ke nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro', 'nye t'ro nye', 'nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro', 'nye t'ro nye', 'fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro', 'nye t'ro oh - GIAMI t'ro'.

S  
A

fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro fi nye to ro

T  
B

t'ro t'ro nye

## TEXT TRANSLATION

*Ami yetoro fiofri usen, kor'afor di an di fak*

I will praise you everyday, for you are my redeemer

*Nyetero fi kensinki, yetoro fi an di yanga*

I will praise you forever, i will praise you my deliverer

The Encarta (2009) defines 'creativity' as the ability to use the imagination to develop new original ideas or things, especially in an artistic context. Idolor (2002), opines that

... creativity is fanned by exposure to adequate information mixed with skill and imagination. that the creative function of music practitioners entails the ability to reorganize musical experiences skilfully and imaginatively to produce a new or spectacular kind of music in the form of songs, pieces for various instruments, ensembles, bands, orchestras, opera, dance, etc. (p. 56)

He further declares that "creative activity involves exposure to a wide spectrum of meaningful musical experience, with sensitivity, fluency, flexibility, analysis, synthesis and coherent organization of musical ideas". (p. 57). It is pertinent to say that every aspect of music practice requires creativity. The composition of music is creativity. A composer must be creative enough to drive home his/her inspirations or musical ideas. Connecting the above theory of creativity to this research implies that a composer must be creative, open to new ideas and ready to work with those ideas in musical composition.

### **The Empathy Theory**

This theory was propounded by Leo Tolstoy in the year 1897. In this theory, Popova (2013) states Tolstoy while defining art given empathy theory as:

A form of consciousness that frames the essential role of art as a vehicle of communication and empathy. The activity of art is based on the fact that a man, receiving, through his sense of hearing or sight another man's expression of feelings, is capable of experiencing the emotion which moved the man who expressed it. It is upon this capacity of man to receive another man's expression of feelings and experience those feelings himself that the activity of art is based. (p. 1)

Popova (2013) added that Tolstoy calls this core quality of art as 'infectiousness' and upon the artist to 'infect' others depend on the very recognition of something as art. (p. 1). Relating this empathy theory to music composition, a composer should be empathetic in his compositions. He/she must put his/her self into the scene or situation that he/she is composing about. This will serve as a guide to the type(s) of chord, melody, harmony, rhythm, and text the composer will use. Also, empathy theory captures entertainment and worship which are the culmination of musical composition in this study.

### **The Expression Theory**

This theory was propounded by Jenefer Robinson in the year 2005. The theory states that:

Artistic expression is an activity of an artist that consists roughly speaking in the manifestation and elucidation of an emotional state of a person in the expressive character of a poem, a painting, a piece of music, etc., such that the work provides evidence for the emotional state of the persona and the persona's emotional state is communicated to other

people (and also the artist himself) through the character of the work.

Khachadourian in Giami (2019) says “expression theory shows the work of art as an expression of the artist feelings or emotions embodied in the artist work, in a way that it conveys the sense and transmit to the listener, spectator or viewers. The piece of music is an expression of the persona of the composer. His /her compositions represent his /her emotions which are also transmitted to his/her listeners (audience) through the works.

### Summary

Theories help the composer of music to observe conventions, rules and regulations of thought in the process of creativity. Hence, theory becomes a quality assurance mechanism that ensures that the creative process produces quality products. The creativity, empathy and expression theories represent the various activities of a composer and his/her emotional state.

### Reference

- Encarta student's dictionary. (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.goole.org>
- Giami, B. E. (2018). *Leela: contemporary vocal and instrumental composition for religious and entertainment purposes*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka.
- Jenefer, R. (2005). *The new romantic theory of expression*. London: Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <Http://www.google.org>
- Johnson, C. C. E. (2017). *Instrumental compositions and arrangement for big band*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
- Idamoyibo, O. I. (2007). A composer: A resourceful, creative and effective music educator in Nigeria. *Awka Journal of Research in Music and the Arts (AJRMA)*. 4, 111-120.
- Idolor, E. (2002). The theorist and the performer in African musical practice. (pp. 52-63). In Idolor, E. (Ed.). *Music in Africa: Facts and Illusions*. Ibadan: Stirling- Horden Publishers.

- Kanematsu, H. and Barry, D. M. (2006). The chemist. International Programme to Promote Creativity Thinking in Chemistry and Sciences. 83(2), 10-14. Retrieved from [http:// www.wikipedea.org](http://www.wikipedea.org)
- Kozbelt, A., Beghetto, R. A., and Runco, M. A. (2010). The theory of creativity. In J. C. Kaufman, and K. R. Sternberg. (Eds.), The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity. New York: The Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <http://link.Springer.com>
- Popova, M. (2013). Empathy theory. Retrieved from <Http://www.google.org>
- Williams, C. (2009). The form of music. New York: Thetford