



# Composition of Anthems: Lessons from Kabarak University Anthem Creation and Experience

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## Abstract

Anthems play a major role in upholding the motto, mission and vision of institutions, organisations, and countries all over the world pride in their national anthems. Principles and conscious or unconscious conventions are observed in the creation and interpretation processes of the performance of anthems across many cultures. Therefore, with time, anthems have become not just national emblems but rather very special patriotic music compositions that have demanded deep thought processes, reflection and careful consideration of specific procedures and techniques in composing them. This study set out to illuminate historical contexts, philosophies and ideologies that informed the creation of the Kabarak University (KABU) anthem; examine the role played by key stakeholders and players; articulate institutional and academic dynamics, shared experiences, team spirit, negotiations and consensus that dictated and guided the creative process of KABU-anthem project. The authors analyse compositional techniques and textual organisation to establish various musical intersections crucial in shaping the nature, form, style, and textual themes of KABU-anthem. The article discusses the processes of approvals, rehearsals, awareness, commissioning and premiere performances of the KABU anthem; and, finally assesses the level of perception and reception of the KABU anthem by the community of KABU. Besides drawing on crucial information from authors' experiences as composers and musical arts education practitioners, the discussions in the paper were guided by thoughts from related literature and Google survey structured interviews. The paper aims to provoke further discourse and interest in the music composition and songwriting creative processes.



## Introduction

Encyclopedia of National Anthems by Hang (2003), only two countries, East Timor, Montenegro and Serbia, do not have a national anthem. The oldest Anthem is recorded in historical sources as being that of Japan. The Anthem is called 'His Majesty's Reign' and was composed by an unknown author approximately between 794 and 1185 AD. Meriam Webster (n.d. Online) defines an anthem as a song that praises a particular country and that which is officially accepted as the country's song. Oxford Languages (n.d. Online) defines the concept of an anthem as a solemn patriotic song officially adopted by a country as an expression of national identity. A National Anthem, for that matter, represents a country's philosophical ideologies. In this regard, Macdonald (2019) also confirms the pertinency of identity to Anthems.

Along with other emblems of a government, anthems could be regarded as libraries of a people's past, present and future experiences and aspirations. They serve as symbols of unity and nationhood. Inherent in these songs are a people's aspirations, struggles and tribulations; victories and triumphs, failures, and successes; challenges and prospects; rights and entitlements; values and moral codes, declarations and proclamations, decrees, and canon laws; socio-economic and government systems.

Anthems are composed for great and mighty, peasants and lowly. In many cases, the creative process is usually a collaborative initiative. A few existing anthems can be described as commissioned individual undertakings. The music origin is either derivative of existing folk or popular melodic themes enjoyed by a larger segment of society. Other anthems have been coined or developed from an existing religious (church) hymn or could entail a person's novelty.

Musical ideas that inform anthems range from complex material to single lines melodies of ten or so bars. Complimenting the anthems' sonic ideas are textual themes that appear in varied forms. The variety of textual ideas could be classified but not limited to:

- (i) Naturalistic and touristic
- (ii) Ideological and theological
- (iii) Protest and revolutionary
- (iv) Patriotic and nationalistic
- (v) Fanfares and commemorative

Most anthems appear as vocal lines that instrumental accompaniment enhances or enriches. A few documented world national anthems were composed as pure vocal, instrumental, or both. Equally noteworthy is that besides the anthems composed before the dawn of the 19th Century, most of the world's anthems were conceptualised around the countries' independence. Others came into being during great commemorations or anniversaries of countries' iconic figures. Since their conceptualisations, some of the anthems have undergone modifications or adjustments reflecting countries' new policies, changes of regimes hence ideologies, or demands of modern life.

Anthems, as it were, are not simply countries' treasures or national products objectified and revered by a people. There are also other conceptions of an anthem other than the national anthems. These include church anthems or anthems related to certain religious movement(s) and institutional or school anthems, to name a few. Kabarak University Anthem (abbreviated herein as KABU Anthem) is a classic example of an institutional anthem. In this article, the following discourses will delve into various processes that begot the KABU Anthem, besides discussing various aspects of the Anthem that will help draw parallels with elements of other anthems. Some of these elements have been illuminated in the preceding paragraphs.



### **KABU Anthem**

KABU Anthem captures the historical, philosophical, and ideological contexts of Kabarak University, highlighting the growth and developmental journey that it has witnessed since its inception. It also invokes the university philosophy and motto, which inherently capture the ideology of the University as a Christian-based University that embraces learning and teaching from a Biblical Christian perspective. Verse one captures thanksgiving to God for enabling the progress and thriving of Kabarak University as exemplified in the phrase, '[by] God's blessing we've come this far'. Verse two expresses gratitude to President Moi, the founder of the institution, in the following words: '[we] thank God for President Moi for sacrificing for the success of all' and finally, the refrain reiterates the moral code of the University in the line that reads: 'We proclaim Jesus as the Lord' and then expresses the University's hope and confidence by affirming that indeed this is " the University of now and the future."

### **Formative Phases of KABU Anthem Development**

In September 2017, as we approached the graduation ceremony, the Vice Chancellor of Kabarak University, Prof. Henry Kiplangat, asked one of the authors of this paper (Prof. Mellitus Wanyama) the following question; "Why don't we have an institutional anthem and yet we have the School of Music and Performing Arts that can compose so that it can be one of the items to be performed in our upcoming graduation ceremony?" Prof. Wanyama, in his capacity as the founding Dean of the School of Music and Performing Arts (now the School of Music and Media) at Kabarak University, immediately resolved to take up the challenge and started conceptualising how the anthem could be composed within the shortest time possible. He took the initiative to share the Vice Chancellor's wishes with his co-author (Dr. Wilson Shitandi), who was the associate Dean of the School by then. From preliminary discussions, he (Prof. Wanyama) agreed that he could suggest a melody and lyrics and share the ideas with other stakeholders in the University. Prof. Wanyama was able to accomplish the task of generating the Anthem's lyrics in less than two days. He then shared the ideas with the Director of Music Performance at the University and who also couples as the Director of the University and Chapel Choir, Prof. Fredrick Ngala. Prof. Ngala came up with various melodic and textual suggestions. By considering an all-inclusive approach, Prof. Wanyama constituted a committee that steered the composition of the lyrics, melody, harmony and structure of the current Kabarak University Anthem. The Committee included eight people with specific roles, namely: Prof. Henry Kiplangat – the University Vice Chancellor (as the commissioning authority), Prof. Mellitus Wanyama (charged with the responsibility of melodic composition), Prof. Wanyama and Prof. Fredrick Ngala (charged with the task of revising and refining the melodic and textual themes), Dr. Wilson Shitandi (worked on the harmony and typesetting), Rev. Justus Mutuku and Prof. Rev. Jacob Kibor (offered insights and advice on theological content), and lastly Mrs Dorothy Zalo (dealt with score proofreading).

After composing the melody, lyrics and harmony, the Anthem was presented to the university Management and the University Council for approval before a public performance. Presentations involved live performances, video-recorded performances, written reports, and music scores.

### **Creative Processes**

KABU Anthem is a product of creative processes than sprung out of synergies and collaborative efforts of various key infrastructures and players of Kabarak University. The crafting of the KABU Anthem encompassed inventing, experimenting, growing from one level of the creative process to another, and discovering new forms, symbols, and patterns.



The creative process of crafting the KABU Anthem did not only entail inventing and experimenting with different musical and innovative ideas, but it involved taking risks, breaking the rules, and making mistakes. Amid all the adventures, one thing that stood out as the greatest source of inspiration constantly propelling the process forward was the fun derived from engaging and participating. The fun began with the challenge placed squarely at the steps of the School of Music and Performing Arts Community. The challenge was simple. The University Management was clear in its resolve that since Kabarak University has a fully-fledged School of Music and Performing Arts with an ultra-modern state of the Art facility; there needed to be more to offer as an excuse for not having an official Anthem for the institution. The key players immediately took up the challenge and embarked on this all-important exercise. The preliminary meetings agreed that the first step would be analysing the key University infrastructure. The idea was to establish key information available in the University's programmes, official documents and statutes that would inform the content and structure of the Anthem.

### **A Snippet of University History and Programmes**

Kabarak University is a chartered institution of higher learning that provides a holistic quality education from a Biblical Christian worldview. The University was awarded the charter on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2008 by the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the Republic of Kenya, Hon Mwai Kibaki. In November 2017, Kabarak acquired ISO 9001:2015 Certification. All her academic programmes aim to produce graduates fully equipped for serving God and humanity. The University was established in October 2002 by the 2<sup>nd</sup> President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Hon Daniel T. Arap Moi. His Excellency Hon Daniel Arap Moi had been the Chancellor until early 2020 when he left to be with his heavenly King. The establishment of the University resulted from the Chancellor's visionary idea of setting up a Christian University that would meet the demand from higher education in Kenya by offering quality education based on strong Biblical Moral principles (Kabarak University Prospectus 2019/2020).

Analysis of official University documents further established the following information:

- Vision: To become a centre of Academic Excellence founded on Biblical Christian Values
- Mission: To provide a holistic quality education based on research, practical skills and Christian values
- Core values were listed as:
  - Integrity
  - Excellence and professionalism
  - Patriotism and being mindful of others
  - Innovativeness and creativity
- Moral code: As members of the Kabarak University family, we purpose at all times. and in all places to set apart in one's heart Jesus Christ as Lord (1 Peter 3:15)
- University motto: Education in Biblical Perspective.

The preceding information was considered critical in the creative process that informed the composition of the Anthem. This information and the shared experiences of the key players shaped the trajectory of the music composition process of the Anthem.

### **Shared experiences**

Tata (the Witty Blog, n.d.), an Indian industrialist and businessman, once said that if you want to walk fast, walk alone. But if you want to go far, walk together. Ratan's philosophy informed the premise upon which the sharing of suggestions, opinions, ideas and proposals was founded. A team of individuals consisting of Prof. Fredrick Ngala from the School of Education, Prof. Jacob Kibor and



Rev. Justus Mutuku from University Chaplaincy, Mrs Dorothy Zalo from the Moi High School Kabarak and the authors of this study concertedly began sharing ideas from their various points of expertise. With sanctioning the process by the University Senate, the University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Henry Kiplangat, mandated the team to hammer out ideas to engender a suitable anthem. The team obliged, moved the process forward through wide consultations, and was frequently guided by the Vice Chancellor's insights.

### Composition of the original material

The various members of the team were assigned distinct responsibilities. Prof. Wanyama pioneered the original thematic idea. He composed a melodic theme and crafted textual material that accompanied the melodic composition. The ideas underwent various re-organisation processes in a working partnership with Prof. Fredrick Ngala. The purpose was to ensure that the melodic themes exhibited acceptable musical idioms. In addition, critical issues such as the accurate placement of the textual ideas to music were observed.

#### Plate 1: KABU Anthem melodic theme

Melody by M. N. Wanyama

Ka-ba-rak Ka-ba-rak Ka - ba-rak, We pro-claim Je - sus as the Lord, Ka-ba-rak Ka-ba-rak Ka - ba-rak, the U-ni-

- ver-si - ty of now and the fu - ture. Ka-ba-rak Ka-ba-rak Ka - ba-rak, the U-ni - ver-si - ty of now and the fu - ture.

Approx... (♩=120)

1.By God's grace we've come this far, We strive for ex - cel-lence in e - du - ca - tion, For in - no-

- va - tion and re - search. We pro - vide ho - li - stic e - du - ca - tion, learn-ing from bi - bli - cal

Chri - stian pers - pec - tive, We aim to de - ve - lop crea - tive minds. Ka-ba-rak Ka-ba-rak Ka - ba-rak,

The creative process of crafting the textual ideas in the musical excerpts above involved subjecting the themes to scrutiny by experts from the University Chaplaincy, including Rev Prof. Jacob Kibor (the University Provost) and Rev Justus Mutuku (University Chaplaincy). The University Chaplaincy's role was to ensure that the University's moral code and core values were succinctly captured. Additionally, they reviewed the content to ensure that it aligned with correct Biblical teachings and





accurate historical facts. The compositional techniques and textual organisation sections will capture more information on this process.

Subjecting the material to an independent proofreader and editor was also considered an important creative process. Mrs. Dorothy Zalo, the Kabarak High School music teacher, proofread and edited the ideas that Prof. Wanyama and Prof. Ngala put together. The editing culminated in another creative process of organising harmonic ideas and brushing out the typesetting issues.

Developing harmonic ideas for a song that would be sung congregationally and communally requires a well-thought-out process. One must begin with an analysis of pitch configuration and ascertain which pitches would work as chord notes and which would suffice as embellishment pitches. Another reason for a carefully thought process is that harmonic rhythms for congregational singing must be moderately paced yet have well-varied chord positions. Equally crucial is the need to ensure that the harmonic ideas employed do not adversely alter the general meaning of the text by incorrectly inflecting syllabic placement, thus distorting the speech contour.

The crafted harmonic ideas considered the Soprano, Alto Tenor and Bass (SATB) format that had been proposed. It is worth noting that no consideration was given to what would be suitable harmonies for instrumental accompaniment. With the SATB format in mind, the harmonies allowed singers of various vocal strands to articulate and execute their vocal lines easily. In other words, various vocal ranges, as recommended by various music theorists, were considered. Alongside this process was the need to consider crafting harmonies that largely employ primary chord structures. The details of how the harmonic structures were designed and organised are discussed in the section on composition techniques.

**Plate 2:** *A passage of harmonic ideas of the Anthem*

S  
Ka-ba-rak Ka-ba-rak Ka - ba-rak, We pro-claim Je - sus as the Lord,  
A  
Ka - ba-rak, we pro-claim Je - sus as the Lord for e-ver,  
T  
Ka-ba-rak, Ka-ba-rak, as the Lord  
B  
Ka-ba-rak Ka-ba-rak, as the Lord for e-ver,

It is fair to reiterate that the harmonic treatment of the anthem above was deliberate and purposeful. It was, or it is possible to consider other approaches to the treatment of the harmonies, but for the case of KABU Anthem, many factors had to come into play. This being an institutional anthem that singers from different musical backgrounds would render, critical issues had to be considered to create sufficient convergent areas. These issues are discussed in the succeeding sections.

### Compositional Techniques

Music composer's world over, employ various tools and or techniques to realise their composition objectives. In many, the complexity and kinds of techniques employed will vary depending on the



nature music composition project being undertaken. In other words, the composition techniques employed in realising the goals outlined in the KABU-Anthem project were fundamental tools commonly used to compose Anthems, German chorales, or hymn-like compositions.

### **Analysis of the melodic ideas**

Cerulo (1989) contends that every musical work consists of several musical codes: melodic codes, phrase codes, harmonic codes, form codes, dynamic codes, rhythmic codes, and orchestration codes. Cerulo (1989) defines a melody as a succession of single musical tones -a series of pitches arranged horizontally on a musical staff. These tones are organised in mathematical relation to one another and, in general, display a logical and discernible sequence of musical sound. This sequence determines the structure of the melodic code. To analyse this structure, Cerulo (1989) argues that one must attend to the four primary dimensions of melody: frequency of melodic movement, the magnitude of melodic movement; method of constructing movement, that is, conjunct versus disjunct; and melodic ornamentation -thus the decoration of central melody notes.

In characterising basic melodic codes, Cerulo (1989) records that its structure will exhibit a low frequency of motion, a low magnitude of motion, and conjunct. In other words, basic music codes are characterised as highly stable, constant, and fixed. Composers achieve stability by limiting the available range of musical motion. In moving from one point to another, the composer chooses the most direct route. In addition, to creating constancy, the composer uses repetition to enhance predictability, refraining from variation and ornamentation of simple musical patterns. In so doing, the musical structure is fixed in that number of musical combinations is necessarily limited, and the range of musical sounds is restricted.

Conversely, in embellished musical codes, one finds erratic wandering movement of pitches—the present decorations and distortions of basic concepts. Instead of allowing predictability, the composers employ variation and ornamentation. Often, the composer creates a disruption or deviates from basic movements rather than repeating them. They are decorations and distortions of basic codes. Embellished codes present erratic, wandering motion. In them, the composer broadens the alternatives for movement. Rather than predictability, composers utilise variation and ornamentation. The composer develops disruptions or deviates from basic patterns rather than repeating them. Embellished musical codes will be flexible and appeal to various musical sounds and combinations.

Using Cerulo's analytical tool (basic-embellished continuum), the study analysed the melodic themes of the KABU Anthem below.

**Plate 3:** An excerpt of KABU Anthem melodic theme



Regarding the melodic themes above, one realises the following:

- (i) Pitch configuration employed is largely conjunct motion (see stepwise motion in most measures (m)). Conjunct motion is a pitch movement that is stepwise in nature. One realises that in m1, the movement is C5 to B<sup>b</sup>4 to A4, which is a stepwise motion descending and immediately followed by a retrograde ascending. The same pattern is replicated in m3, m5, m6, et cetera.
- (ii) The composer uses repetition to enhance predictability (for instance, measures 5 and 6 are a replica of 1 and 2). Repetition is a technique in music composition that entails revisiting a music episode, ideas or passage in an exact version or form. The m5-m8 is a replica of the m8-m12.
- (iii) Complex variations and melodic ornamentation are avoided. Examining the melodic ideas in the musical excerpt above, one realises that the composer has yet to utilise grace notes or ornaments in any of the passages. In addition, a close look at the melodic themes reveals that the composer uses a simple, straightforward structure. One notices an antecedent (a question-like episode in the m1 followed by a consequent (answer-like episode) in m2. This pattern is replicated in m3 and 4m; m5 and 6m but with measure m6 having an extended consequent that covers m7 and m8.
- (iv) The structure is fixed, stable and with limited musical combinations. This is exemplified in how the song begins with a refrain (which could be labelled as section A) constituting 12 measures. The refrain is followed by a stanza (a section that could be labelled as B). The stanzas are built on a melodic idea that is also 12 measures long. This kind of refrain-stanza arrangement built on a 12m episode for each section allows the Anthem to assume a symmetrical ABA structure. The ABA structure aligns itself with the concept of ternary form, traditionally associated with most hymn-like songs or German chorales.
- (v) No evidence of decoration and distortion of the basic music codes. KABU Anthem has embraced simplicity in all its dimensions. No attempts have been made to include in the music any kind or form of tonal shifts, altered or muted chord (chromatic alteration), eleventh or thirteenth chords, polytonality, atonality or serial harmony. Every idea is kept simple for easy execution, an identity marker of most hymns or anthems.





We can infer from attributes of the thematic ideas discussed above that the KABU Anthem exhibits principles of melodic composition that give it a character typical of an anthem and endeavours to avoid embellished music codes.

### Analysis of the harmonic ideas

As alluded to in the preceding paragraphs, KABU Anthem employs largely primary chord structures. The primary chord structures were deliberately and purposefully employed in the Anthem because they are easy to execute in a congregational singing context.

Regarding Plate 3b, which appears in the preceding section, one realises that the song begins with an unharmonised section of one bar in the soprano line. A harmonised tutti entry follows this. The entry is a one-bar response. The entire response is harmonised using an **F major** or **tonic chord**. This chord is structured in root position for the first three beats of the bar, and then it is followed by the **F major chord** in the first inversion built on the last beat of the bar.

A two-part harmony is evident in the third measure. Soprano and Alto's entry is designed to vary and contrast the music texture. At this point, the harmonic idea is simply the intervallic motion of thirds. The tutti entry is observed in the fourth measure. The harmonic ideas in this bar constitute **B<sup>b</sup> major** chord (subdominant chord of F major) in root position, with the Tenor creating a **B<sup>b</sup>7 chord** in passing. This progression leads to the **C major chord (dominant chord of F major) in root position, built on the bar's third beat**. The harmonic ideas at this point are embellished by active lines of passing notes in Alto and Bass.

**Plate 4:** A Continuation of harmonic ideas in the song's refrain.

Harmonic ideas in the song's refrain continue developing, as shown in Plate 4 above. Again, there is a recap of the opening melodic idea followed by a three-bar harmonised tutti response. In this three-bar response, a faster harmonic rhythm is employed. The harmonic progression is such that the response begins with **F major chord**, followed by **C major chord**, **E minor chord**, and **C major chord** in the first inversion, then a return to **F major chord** in the root position; all these shifts experienced in one measure giving a sense of a fast-moving harmonic rhythm. The succeeding measure seven constitutes yet another fast-moving harmonic rhythm. The chords progress from an **E minor chord** in the second inversion to **B<sup>b</sup> major chord** in the second inversion, to **C major chord** in the root position with the tenor executing a passing note which changes the chord structure to a **G minor chord** in the



second inversion and lastly with **C major chord** appearing in two forms -as **C chord** and a **C9 major chords**. The harmonic material in the eighth bar constitutes the **F major chord** built on two dotted quarter notes consisting of two main beats each. This treatment creates a more comfortable and settling cadential pause after intense activities of fast harmonic rhythms that create a sense of climax. The song resumes with a duet entry of the Soprano and Tenor in parallel thirds. The music activity after m9 replicates the harmonic organisation appearing in **m5, m6, m7** and **8**. The only slight variation is in the harmony of bar eight, which is punctuated with an **Amen chord** to wrap up the refrain and create a sense of finality.

**Plate 5:** *Harmonic organisation in verses*

Approx... (♩=120)

Ka - ba-rak, the U - ni - ver - si - ty of now and the fu - ture. 1. By God's grace we've come this

Ka - ba-rak, the U - ni - ver - si - ty of now and the fu - ture. 1. By God's grace we've come this

Ka - ba-rak, the U - ni - ver - si - ty of now and the fu - ture. 1. By God's grace we've come this

Ka - ba-rak, the U - ni - ver - si - ty of now and the fu - ture. 1. By God's grace we've come this

far, We strive for ex - cel - lence in e - du - ca - tion, For in - no - va - tion

far, We strive for ex - cel - lence in e - du - ca - tion, For in - no - va - tion

far, We strive for ex - cel - lence in e - du - ca - tion, For in - no - va - tion

far, We strive for ex - cel - lence in e - du - ca - tion, For in - no - va - tion



23

and re - search. We pro - vide ho - li - stic e - du - ca - tion, learn - ing from

and re - search. We pro - vide ho - li - stic e - du - ca - tion, learn - ing from

8 and re - search. We pro - vide ho - li - stic e - du - ca - tion, learn - ing from

iib V7 I I Vb Vb IVc IVc IVc IV IV I iii7 V/iib

and re - search. We pro - vide ho - li - stic e - du - ca - tion, learn - ing from

30

bi - bli - cal Chri - stian pers - pec - tive, We aim to de - ve - lop crea - tive minds.

bi - bli - cal Chri - stian pers - pec - tive, We aim to de - ve - lop crea - tive minds.

8 bi - bli - cal Chri - stian pers - pec - tive, We aim to de - ve - lop crea - tive minds.

i i V7 Ic Ic Ic V iiii7 Ic I I iib V7 I

bi - bli - cal Chri - stian pers - pec - tive, We aim to de - ve - lop crea - tive minds.

With augmented rhythmic ideas in simple triple time, the harmonic organisation in the verses were structured in a solid and easily retrievable. This explains why the harmonic ideas in the verses employed slow harmonic rhythm, and almost all the harmonic repertoire is characterised by primary chords. It is evident from the passage in Plate 5 that the harmonic material of the verses begins with an **F major chord** in the opening bar of the verse (m13). The second bar has a **G7 chord** in the first inversion, which resolves to a **C major chord** in the second inversion but is immediately followed by an **E minor chord** to create a feeling of suspense and unfinished business. Despite this section exhibiting a feeling of a minor mode which results in suspense of some sort, this suspense is resolved by the bassline spelling out primary chord structures, with the bass movement essentially giving the listener a feel of a firm and solid progression of primary chord structures with VIIc sandwiched between two subdominant chords. This technique echoes the rationale that informed the organisation of the harmonic material of the Anthem, which involved creating harmonies suitable for congregational and communal singing.

### Textual Organisation

For analytical purposes, the textual ideas and role of the KABU Anthem are discussed about the content of the refrain and the two verses. Below are the Anthem's lyrics:



Refrain

*Kabarak, Kabarak, Kabarak  
We proclaim Jesus as the Lord  
Kabarak, Kabarak, Kabarak  
The university of now and the future.*

Verse One

*By God's blessings we've come this far  
We strive for excellence in education  
For innovation and research  
We provide holistic education  
Learning from Biblical Christian perspective  
We aim to develop creative minds.*

Verse Two

*We thank God for President Moi  
Sacrificing for the success of all  
Happy and grateful ever we are  
Conquering and standing out  
Jesus our saviour, our strength and protector  
Forward we are matching  
We are the best.*

By repeating the noun, Kabarak, the refrain amplifies the identity of Kabarak University by using few words but with the aim of emphasis. Anyone listening to the Anthem leaves with no doubt that the song is about Kabarak University and, more so, what it stands for in the education sector in Kenya and beyond. Coupled with the repetition feature, the refrain encapsulates the motto of the University as a Christian-based University that proclaims Jesus as Lord. It also sends a message of hope, development, relevance and continuity in the last phrase – ‘the University of now and the future.’

The first verse acknowledges God's hand and blessings in the growth and development of Kabarak University. Hard work, excellence, and innovation are hallmarks of success and quality in education for which Kabarak University stands for. Verse two, on the other hand, acknowledges the founder of Kabarak University, President Moi, for his selfless spirit of sacrificing his wealth for the success of many. As a result, many people from all walks of life have had the opportunity to learn and work at Kabarak University. Overall, the main thematic ideas in the anthem resonate with all the institution's players (students, faculty and staff, and university managers) by reminding them of the University's history, philosophical underpinnings, culture, optimism and futuristic hopes.

**Commissioning and Premier Performances**

After systematic approvals by the Deans and Research Committee, the Senate, the University Management and the University Council, the KABU anthem was ready for public performance. The Anthem was premiered during the graduation ceremony of December 2019. As part of preparations for the performance during the ceremony, the final score was shared with one of the music directors of the Kenya Administration Police Band, who scored it for the military band performance. This initiative resulted in a successful first joint performance between the Kabarak University Chapel Choir, the School of Music and Performing Arts (SMPA) Choir and the Kenya Administration Police Band. After the joint performance during the 2019 graduation ceremony, the scores were shared with SMPA students, who continued to rehearse it in readiness for performances during other University



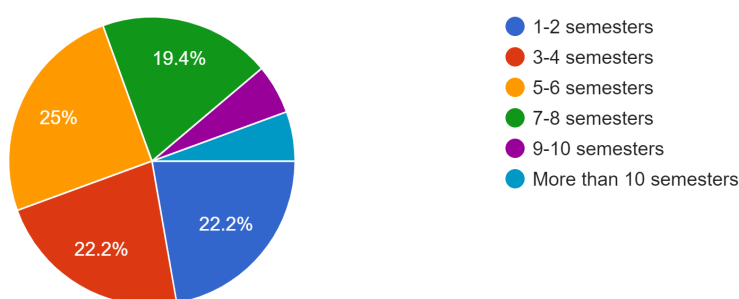
functions. To popularise the Anthem, SMPA Choir has several times performed the Anthem during Wednesday Chapel worship services, where the entire Kabarak Community joins the Choir in reverberating the song.

## Perception and Reception

**Figure 1:** *Duration of respondents' study at Kabarak University*

1. How long have you worked and studied at Kabarak University?

36 responses

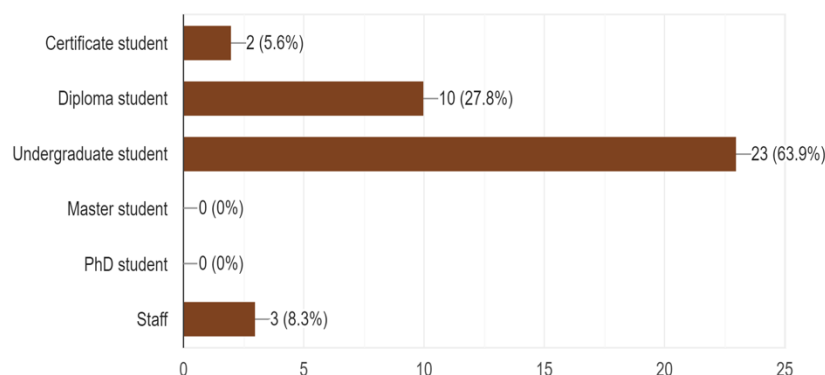


It is statistically evident that 22% represents the respondents who studied in Kabarak for one to two semesters. These are largely first years. It means that this segment of the student population either heard and performed the anthem, has only heard and not performed it, or has not heard it at all. It may follow that they contribute to the error margin in the responses.

**Figure 2:** *Respondents status in Kabarak University*

2. Which of the following best describes your status in Kabarak?

36 responses



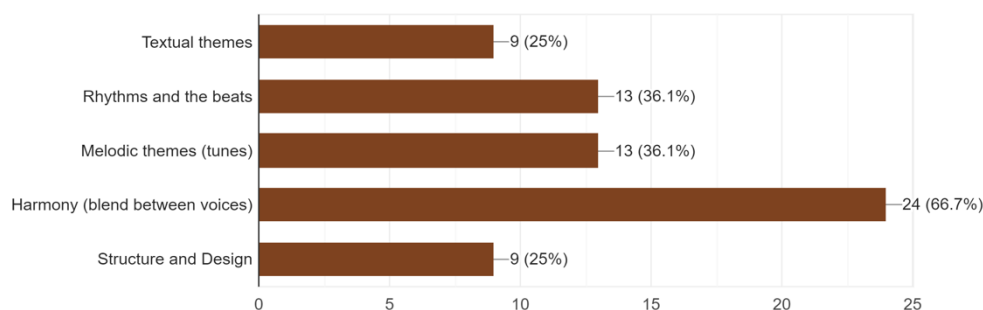




The undergraduate students constituted the bulk of the respondents. It is the largest segment of the student population. Their responses could be trusted because they are involved in various University activities and, therefore, the possibility that they have heard and performed the music.

**Figure 3:** *Exciting Elements in the Anthem*

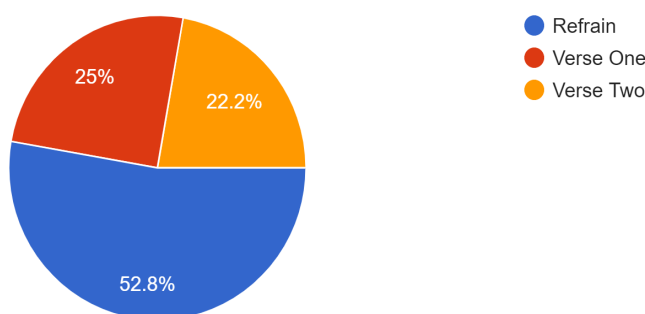
3. Which of the following aspects of KABU Anthem do you find exciting  
36 responses



Most of the respondents found the aspect of harmony to be the most interesting. This could support the argument that the harmonies were crafted and thought out to aid in the easy execution of the music. It could also be argued that the respondents' sensibility is questionable if the musicologists find the harmonic organisation of the anthem wanting.

**Figure 4:** *The most inspirational aspects of the Anthem*

4. Which section of the text inspires you most  
36 responses



Most respondents (52%) think that the refrain section of the anthem is the most inspiring.

A question was posed to the respondents to explain why they found the section inspiring. The 25 responses elicited by this question were summarised as follows:

- It has incorporated the school's Christian nature and perspective.

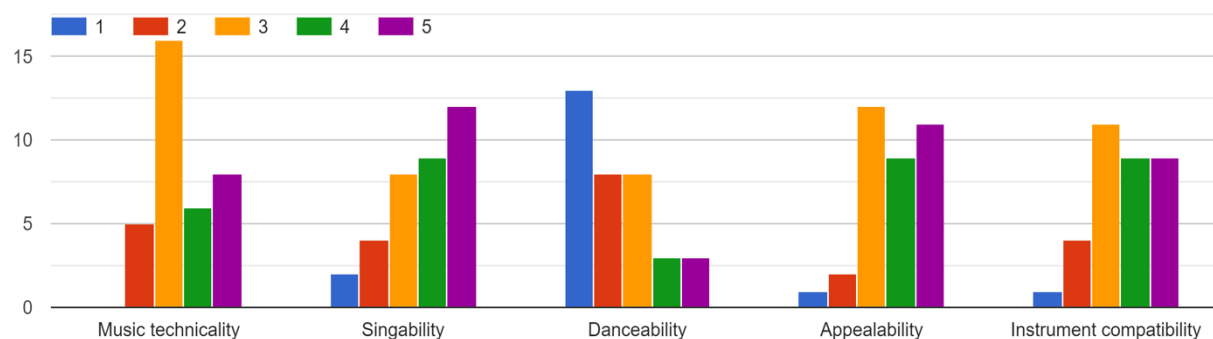


- It brings out the pride the university has in God
- It is a catchy tune
- Blending much on God.
- Though I checked out of Kabarak, I still find it so prayerful.
- It talked about our Chancellor.
- The lyrics
- It brings a whole new meaning to how the school is described.
- It has inspirational features in the texts. and it mentions our founder, who is also good.

Most respondents pointed out that the spiritual meaning and Christian values embodied in the refrain make it inspiring.

**Figure 5:** *Levels of musicality*

6. On the scale of 1 to 5 rate the level of the following



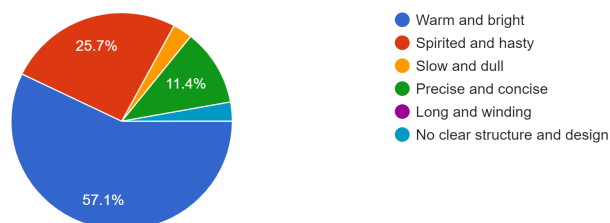
The music technicality of the Anthem is rated highly, attracting over 15 participants.



**Figure 6: General Impression of the Anthem**

7. How would you best describe the general impression of the Anthem

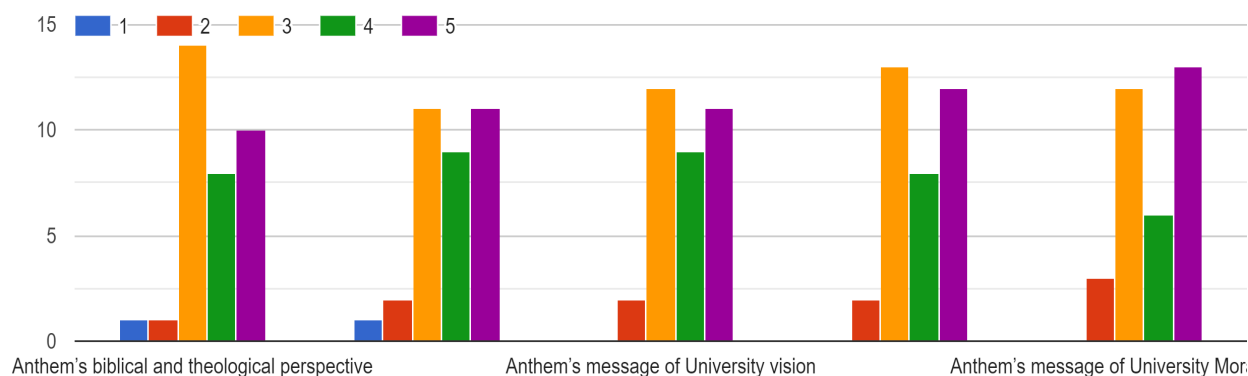
35 responses



57% of respondents think that the Anthem lacks a clear structure. This response probably stems from the tempo variance and metric modulation giving the music a sense of unpredictable structure.

**Figure 7: Level of satisfaction**

8. Indicate the level of your satisfaction with the following

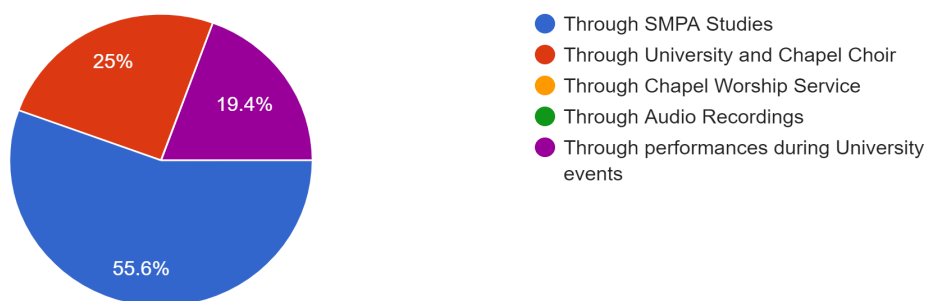


According to the responses in Figure 7 above, approximately 15 respondents are satisfied that the Anthem adequately capture textual themes on Institution's moto - Education from a Biblical perspective.



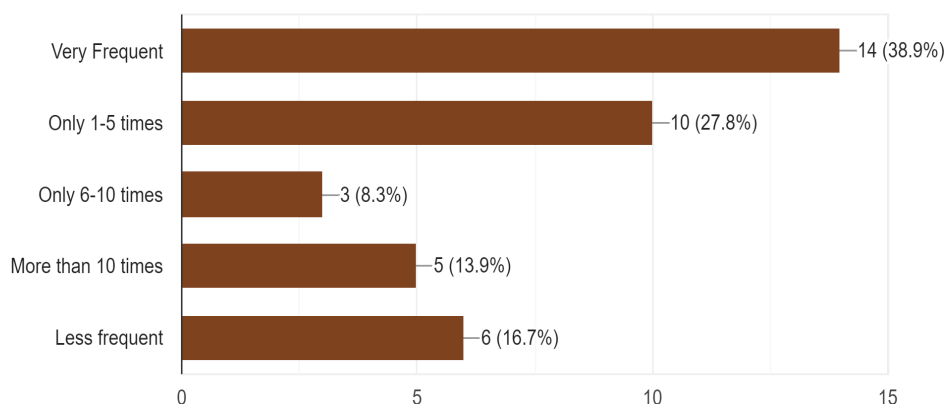
**Figure 8: Sensitization and Learning of the Anthem**

9. Which of the following best describe how you got to know and or learnt most of the Anthem  
36 responses



**Figure 9: Frequency of the respondents' performance of the Anthem**

10. Which of the following best describe the number of times you have heard or performed the Anthem  
36 responses



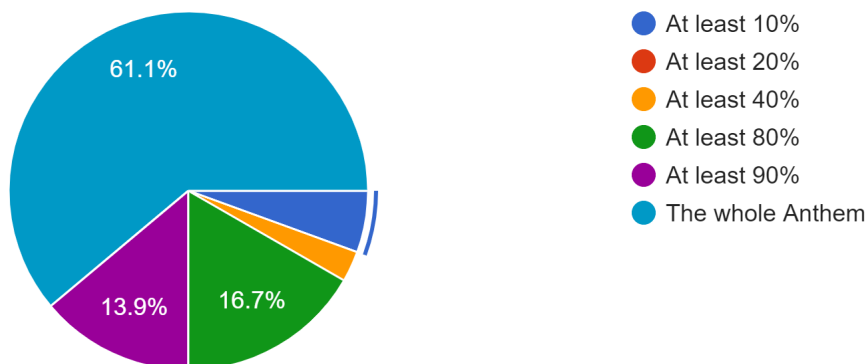
Less than 50% of respondents confirmed they had heard the anthem frequently. It means that there's a need to intensify awareness and sensitisation campaigns.



**Figure 10:** *Level of mastery of Anthem's contents by the respondents*

11. Indicate how well you have mastered or can remember the Anthem

36 responses

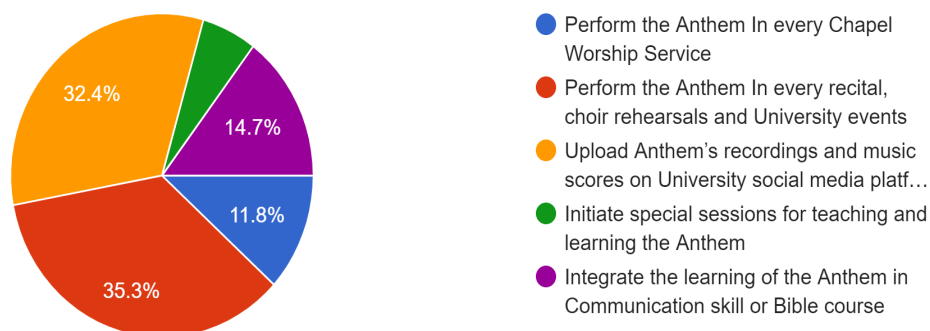


Slightly over 60% of respondents have mastered the song. This is a trend that should be encouraged for the purposes of entrenching ownership of the KABU anthem.

**Figure 11:** *Most effective approaches for popularising the Anthem*

12. Indicate the most effective approaches/strategies for popularizing the Anthem

34 responses



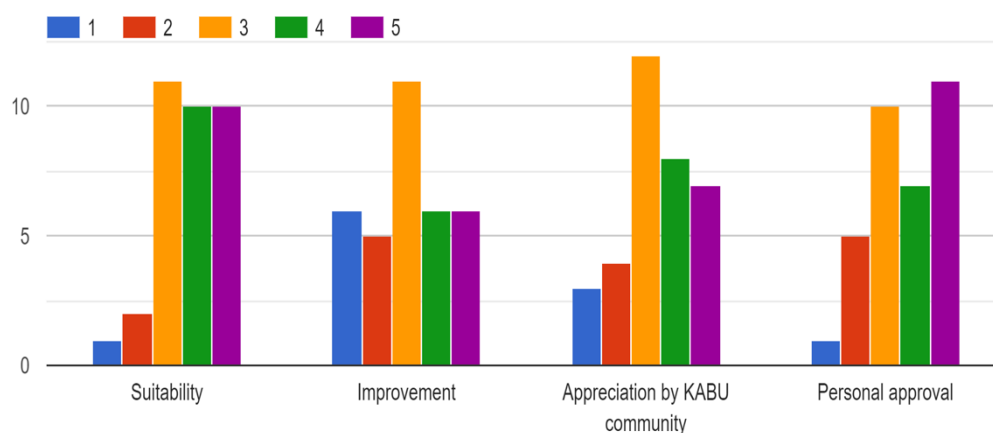
Most of the respondents agree that performing the Anthem in every recital, choir rehearsal, and University event is the best approach or strategy that could be employed for popularising the Anthem.





**Figure 12:** *General Assessment of the Anthem*

13. Indicate the level of your overall assessment of the Anthem



Most respondents think that although the Anthem can be sustained (live test of time), it still has room for improvement regarding publicity and its appropriation by the wider Kabarak University.

## Conclusion

KABU Anthem creation followed a systematic process. It involved commissioning by the Vice Chancellor of Kabarak University, forming an all-inclusive committee that represented varied community interests and professional music specialities. This participatory approach added value to the anthem by selecting words and terms that reflect the history and aspirations of the Kabarak University community. Furthermore, involving the students, deans, senate, management, and council in the approval process gave credibility to the KABU anthem. The university should enhance its performance in all official functions for the anthem to be institutionalised, mastered, and owned. Its lyrics and performed versions should be intentionally present on all online university platforms.

In essence, the institution will confer legitimacy on the anthem by using the anthem in all official university occasions, ceremonies, and celebrations. Such legitimacy is intended to enhance the power and effectiveness of the anthem as one of the institution's patriotic symbols that reaffirms the University's identity, goals, and desires.

## Acknowledgements

In this anthem, we acknowledge President Moi for establishing the institution. Special acknowledgement to the Kabarak University fraternity at large, including the Vice Chancellor for coming up with the initiative of a university anthem, colleagues from the Department of Music and Performing Arts and all other faculty in other departments for their support. We also acknowledge all section heads of Kabarak University and well-wishers, remembering the students who constitute the main stakeholders.



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