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# ETHNOMUSICOLOGY IN GHANA



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*Professor and Director, Institute of African Studies  
University of Ghana, Legon.*

*An Inaugural Lecture delivered on 20th November 1969 at the  
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# ETHNOMUSICOLOGY IN GHANA

AN Inaugural Lecture such as this one should properly be an exposition of one's vision of the development of one's subject or of a particular theoretical viewpoint that inspires one's work. After seventeen years in this University in which I have had to lay the foundations for a programme of Ethnomusicology in Ghana from scratch, it is difficult for me not to look back rather than forward in order to demonstrate the position from which I have been working all these years. I hope, therefore, that those of you who have followed my writings will forgive me if I seem to be recapitulating points of view that I have expressed in other contexts.

The general area in ethnomusicology which has been our concern in Ghana is non-western music and the music of Africa has been our field of specialisation within this area. It is appropriate, therefore, that we should begin our discussion of 'Ethnomusicology in Ghana' with a general review of the position of non-western music in academic studies, in order to provide a perspective against which our particular problems in Ghana can be viewed. Ethnomusicology in Ghana is indeed not an isolated phenomenon but part of an international world of music and musical scholarship which is fast developing and in which some of us have been involved both at home and abroad.

Although the study of non-western music in academic institutions is not as widespread as one would wish, the need for it is no longer questioned by musicologists, for such studies are now believed to be valuable not only from the point of view of comparative musicology and related disciplines, but also from the point of view of the musician interested in understanding non-western music or in making creative use of its resources.

The history and development of Ethnomusicology—the discipline which is directly concerned with this—shows that the pursuit of

these objectives has not followed an even course. Nor have they been realised on any extensive scale.

The scholars who specialised in this area in the early days regarded their work as complementary to those of their colleagues concerned with the historical aspects of western musicology. Some of them looked at non-western music from a limited historical point of view—for data on man's early music, or for parallels that may enhance their understanding of the musical precursors of western art music. Their comparative aims were, until recently, directed largely towards filling in gaps in music history. Otto Kinkeldy, at one time President of the American Musicological Society, expressed the hope that comparative musicology would provide 'a basis for surmise and conjecture as to what western musical development may have been before the time when men began to write down musical compositions or to write about music.'<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, scholars who branched out from western musicology into the field of non-western music believed, in the words of Marius Schneider who toed this line, that it was their task 'to rediscover the bridges between European and non-European music which certainly once existed and to reconstruct them theoretically at least, by means of comparative musicology.'<sup>2</sup>

The predominance of this historical orientation did not, however, prevent some of them from taking interest in other problems—in structural problems or in ethnographic questions. A lot of information about the music of non-western peoples was required—information about musical instruments, musical types, scales, tuning systems and so forth. While this information could be used for historical reconstruction, the classification of such data within some conceptual framework which allowed for comparisons to be made readily became necessary, and the tools and techniques of investigation became more sharpened.

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1. KINKELDY, Otto: 'Musicology' *Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians* 1949

2. SCHNEIDER, Marius: 'Primitive Music' *Primitive and Oriental Music* (ed. Egon Wellesz) p.1-82 Oxford University Press, 1957.

It was inevitable that the early limited historical viewpoint of comparative musicology should give way to a broader view of music as interest in the music of the non-western world widened and deepened, and as larger and larger samples of the recordings of this music became available. It was inevitable that scholars should start questioning the basis of the discipline and the ethnocentricism that characterised its endeavours. For, if the whole purpose of comparative musicology was to provide a basis for 'conjecture and surmise' as Kinkeldy asserted, if it was only a field for speculation, then one had every right to question not only its methods and findings but even its claim to scholarship.

It was considerations such as these that paved the way for the emergence of ethnomusicology as a new approach to the study of music and as a field limited to the study of music practised and perpetuated by oral tradition or by partly oral and partly written tradition. Ethnomusicology now lays emphasis on the study of 'music in culture' as well as the study of the music of every culture 'in terms of itself' and 'in terms of its cultural context.'

Another very important development that has taken place is the realisation that ethnomusicological study of non-western music must be related to studies in this music in much the same way as training in the musicology of western fine art music presupposes a thorough discipline in certain areas of that music. Musicianship is a necessary pre-requisite for the scholarly study of any music and it is preposterous of any musician to think that training in western music is by itself adequate preparation for scholarship in any branch of non-western music, since each musical culture has a wide range of very different techniques and materials as well as critical standards that are applied.

This problem is slowly being met in some institutions by providing opportunities for students of ethnomusicology to acquire some practical experience of a non-western musical culture in order to give them an additional dimension that might help them in their approach to problems of the study of non-western music.

It is not only University Institutions that are paying some attention to non-western music. Indeed, in a way the study of non-western music in Universities has been a slow response to the cultural climate of this epoch—the climax of a long process of expansion of musical frontiers. This process has been going on ever since the great period of interest in geography and commerce which led to the exploration of various parts of the globe and later to expansionist policies inspired by economic and political considerations.

If you look at the bibliographies of non-western music, I am sure you will be impressed by the very large number of people in all walks of life who have written something about their impressions of it. They include explorers, tourists, missionaries, traders, farmers, government officials and soldiers.

There has always been in the western world the sort of person who loves the exotic—exotic costumes, exotic art and exotic food. Today, the love of the exotic has encouraged the formation of societies for non-western music outside university circles. One hears of the Asian Music Circle, the Society for Asian Music and the African Music Society—all of them with international membership. The business of promoting concerts and festivals of non-western music is being done largely outside University Departments by individuals, societies, Government and non-University Institutes such as the International Institute of Comparative Music Studies and Documentation located in Berlin which has made it one of its avowed aims.

Visiting performers from non-western countries have become a feature of the European theatre and Trade Fairs. National music and dance companies are being formed in many places in the non-western world for cultural exchanges, and are an important feature of international politics of this age. Some of these, like the dance company of the Philipines and some Indian and African groups (such as Guinea Ballet and the Ghana Dance Ensemble) have made a name for themselves.

It is noteworthy also that following these trends as well as the break up of colonialism and the emergence of new nations, international music organisations which were formerly Europe centred and which concentrated on the promotion of western music have begun to look at the whole world of music and to admit Asian and African countries. The International Music Council, the International Folk Music Council, the International Society for Music Education, the International Music Centre, etc. have members from Asian and African countries.

It is this liberalisation of attitude which prompted Domingo Santa Cruz to state in 1953 that for the first time in history, people in the west have realised that the "west does not epitomise all music" and that western people "without overlooking the distinctive contribution of European music" are now "sincerely interested in the productions of other continents."<sup>3</sup>

This trend towards a new approach to non-western music has been encouraged by Gramophone Companies, some of whom have willingly published materials presented to them by tourists and other field collectors, and in some cases by research workers in linguistics, anthropology and ethnomusicology.

There have been attempts to bring not only the musical practice of individual countries or peoples to the notice of the musical public but also to provide anthologies which present a new emphasis on 'The World of Music.' Ethnic Folkways, for example, has a series of records devoted to 'Music of the World's People.' It is noteworthy of the new outlook that this series should have been compiled and edited by Henry Cowell, an eminent composer of the twentieth century, who delighted not only in new sounds that the western mind could create out of its own imagination as evidenced in his book on *New Musical Resources*<sup>4</sup> but also the unexplored world of sounds offered by non-western cultures.

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3. CRUZ, Domingo Santa: 'Music and International Understanding' *Music in education* p.38, Unesco, 1953

4. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1930

In an effort to bridge the gap in communication between East and West, UNESCO has supported several conferences at which musicians from different traditions have had the opportunity of sharing their knowledge, ideas and experiences. Unesco's anthologies of music of the Orient and the Music of Africa published by Barrenreiter aim at extending this confrontation of East and West in Music, for there can be no better way of fostering international understanding and mutual respect than by providing opportunities for people to get to know one another better through the appreciation of their musical cultures.

It will be evident from this review that there is a great deal that is happening in the field of non-western music in the western world. It appears that more attention is being paid to the study of African music for example in University Institutions abroad than it seems to be the case in Africa itself. For the past six years, there has always been a resident master drummer from Ghana at the University of California, Los Angeles, whose job is to assist in the training programme of the Institute of Ethnomusicology for students interested in Africa as a musical area. Wesleyan University at Connecticut has similarly started a programme in African music and dance and a master drummer and a dance teacher from the Institute of African Studies are assisting in the running of this programme.

Such appointments may seem difficult for African Universities to make, for I suppose they would like to wait for competent drummers with Ph.D. degrees to emerge from the blue. Although we have got round this problem in Ghana, I am sure that not every one in Legon has adjusted his mind to the fact that the best exponents of the arts of Africa belong to pre-literate Africa.

When we look at the attitudes of University communities to African music, again we find a lot of enthusiasm abroad for African music and there are quite a few students abroad who are willing and eager to study it on extra-curricular basis. I am not sure that I can say the same thing for African students in African Universities that I know of.

Further, there are more private agencies and societies abroad for promoting African music or for bringing it to the notice of the general public than one finds in Africa itself, for there is a tendency to leave everything to Governments. In some places, governmental cultural agencies tend to be very suspicious and sometimes even frightened of those who take some initiative in this field. Furthermore, when one looks at current bibliographies of African music, one cannot but be struck by the paucity of worthwhile African contribution to our knowledge of this subject. It is true, of course, that a great deal of what has been written leaves much to be desired. But this is all the more reason why Africans should take upon themselves the task of studying, transcribing and writing about their own music.

There is thus a lot that offers a challenge to us in Africa, a lot that should make us re-assess our attitudes, as well as our aims and objectives, and our approach to African musical studies.

It was fortunate for us in Ghana that when the University College of Ghana was established, there was a Ghanaian Head of the Department of Sociology who was interested in developing cultural studies on the campus. Although the Principal of the University College admitted that he did not quite understand the programme that was envisaged, he had enough respect for the wisdom and vision of that Head of Department to allow him to go ahead. In 1952, ethnomusicology finally came to the University, as it were, by the back door—through the Department of Sociology.

The immediate need was for the collection and study of music and oral literature in their social context. Extensive field collections were therefore made over a period of nine years. These formed the nucleus of a library which was later augmented with available commercial recordings, including the early highlife records which we thought would be useful historical material some day. This library which was eventually transferred to the Institute of African Studies has been greatly expanded and holds not only tape recordings covering almost all regions of Ghana but also recordings of

Musee de L'Homme, the recordings of Ocora which cover Franco-phone Africa, recordings of the International Library of African Music which cover East, Central and South Africa, recordings of Ethnic Folkways and discs produced by the Ghana Broadcasting and Television Corporation. There is thus material for studying the music of Africa as a whole on a comparative basis.

The establishment of a programme of ethnomusicology in the Department of Sociology in 1952 was by no means a strange procedure, for at that time ethnomusicology was similarly nurtured in Departments of Anthropology in universities in the United States of America. They were the only departments that could protect ethnomusicology from the hostile attitude of Music Departments who resented the idea of introducing non-western music into their regular curriculum. In Britain, ethnomusicology did not even enjoy this hospitality at that time, nor has the situation changed to any great extent.

Although the programme in Sociology Department went on well, in 1959 the new Head of Department, a non-Ghanaian who found it somewhat embarrassing to have to look after ethnomusicology in his Department, conveniently arranged for it to be housed in the Department of Archaeology, ostensibly for lack of space in Sociology Department. It was the first move to separate cultural studies from sociology in Ghana.

When the Institute of African Studies was established in 1961, ethnomusicology was again rehabilitated and subsequently strengthened as a major programme of the Institute. A grant from the Rockefeller Foundation enabled us to expand the programme and to augment its library holdings.

A School of Music and Drama was established the following year (in 1962) as part of the Institute of African Studies in order to provide an outlet for the use of research materials accumulated over the years and to stimulate new areas of research, creative work and teaching in African music and related arts.

Because we were able to make a start in 1952, the development of ethnomusicology in Ghana has gone on side by side with the development of the subject in academic institutions abroad, with consequent cross-fertilisation of ideas which have enhanced our programme. But there are differences in our conception of the role of ethnomusicology in our institution and the part that it should play in the development of music in Ghana and that of our western colleagues who have to respond to pressures and challenges of a different sort from their own environment.

Apart from being an interesting academic discipline, ethnomusicology has an important task, indeed an important mission in Ghana—that of providing a body of musical knowledge that can be drawn on as much by artists—composers, performers, dancers, producers—as by scholars and educators who have to plan educational programmes and collect and arrange curricula materials for the teaching of African music. It is to ethnomusicology that we have to look for a systematic theory of African music that will reflect the basic principles that underline traditional musical practice

Accordingly there are four levels of interest that concern us. There is the scholarly level of interest which we share with our colleagues in this field and which we have maintained as far as possible through intensive field research. It has been necessary to lay considerable emphasis on field work, not only because the bibliographical material on the music of Ghana that we found in 1952 was hopelessly inadequate but also because much of what had gone on before had been done by western observers who had musical interests but who had had no preparation for this kind of study. They worked without the aid of field recordings and without understanding the values in terms of which music was practised. They were, in fact, not students of African music. Moreover, like most western people who write on African subjects, they were concerned with their western audience and had no intention of sharing their impressions with Ghanaians, for at that time Ghanaians really did not count. Not even Ward who was so much involved in music education in Ghana in the 1930's addressed his major essay on

'Music in the Gold Coast' to Ghanaian audiences even though it was published in the *Gold Coast Review*.<sup>5</sup> He was completely ethnocentric and saw African music through the eyes of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms.

Apart from the inaccuracies in their observations, some of the early observers, and even Ward, were not always gracious in their remarks.

Writing a report on the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast for the Colonial Government in 1899, Lieutenant Colonel Northcott went out of his way to include a brief account of the music and dance of the people, and concluded it as follows:

'Iteration and reiteration of the same airs never seem to weary the West African. His chief musical treat, however, is the tomtom. In season and out of season, all day and all night, he is prepared to abandon himself to the delight of a noisy demonstration on this instrument of torture, and it is more often exhaustion on the part of the performers than boredom by the audience that puts a period to the deafening and monotonous noise.'<sup>6</sup>

Other writers before Northcott had made similar remarks which they no doubt thought would appeal to the sense of humour of their English readers. Bosman writing in 1706 described the combination of drums and horns as 'the most charming Asse's Musick that can be imagined.'<sup>7</sup>

In his *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee* published in 1819, Bowdich begins his rather interesting observations with the statement that 'The *wild* music of the people is scarcely to be brought

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5. Vol. 3 No. 2 1927 p.199-223

6. NORTHCOTT, Lieut.-Colonel H. P.: *Report on the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast* p.39 London: War Office, Intelligence Division 1899

7. BOSMAN, William: *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea* p.118, London, 1705

within the regular rules of harmony.’<sup>8</sup> After describing the one stringed fiddle, he says of the performers that ‘their grimace equals that of the Italian Buffo.’ As for rattles, in his view ‘the grimaces with which these are played make them more entertaining to sight than to hearing.’

Bowdich was very critical not only of the music and the performance but also of the musical abilities of the performers. Commenting on the technique of the *seperewa* harp-lute, he notes that ‘the strings are tuned in diatonic succession but too frequently the intermediate strings are drawn up at random producing flats and sharps in every chromatic variety, though they are not skilful enough to take advantage of it.’

He criticised Ashanti musicians for their inconsistency and inability to fix the notes of the pieces they played on this instrument. He observed that ‘sometimes between each beginning they introduce a few chords, sometimes they leave out a bar, sometimes they only return to the middle, so entirely is it left to the fancy of the performer. He tried to convince the players that they ‘did not play the same tune that he heard the day before.’ But the answer he always got was ‘I pull the same string, it must be the same tune.’ Bowdich was convinced that some of the strings, particularly the intermediate strings were often ‘drawn up at random.’

Freeman<sup>9</sup> similarly complained of ‘the incoherent rambling airs chanted by many of the coast tribes’ and contrasted them with the songs which were sung by those of the interior to the accompaniment of xylophones which he found to be ‘distinct and pleasing though irregular in rhythm.’ Nevertheless, he found their singing too boisterous. In one passage, he describes the singers as ‘bellowing like bulls of Bashan.’

In spite of the unfavourable comments which some of these writers made, they provide useful data where their accounts are

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8. BOWDICH Thomas E. *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee* p.278-281, London, J. Murray 1819

9. FREEMAN, Richard A.: *Travels and life in Ashanti and Jaman* p.257-261, London, Constable 1898

factual and purely descriptive, data which can be used in historical studies. For example, when Barbot and Bosman point out that in their drum ensembles Ghanaians 'set a little boy to strike upon a hollow piece of iron with a stick,' we can at least infer that this practice which is a vital element in ensembles has a history of about three centuries at least behind it.

Similarly, descriptions of musical instruments in the accounts of Bowdich, Ellis, Beecham and Freeman are useful in studies of musical change and patterns of distribution. Paradoxically some of them like Freeman and Ellis anticipated some of the observations that are now commonplace in African musical studies—the association between drums and language, the organisation of solo and chorus, the incidence of thirds and the use of polyrhythm. Thus Freeman who, unlike Northcott, seemed to appreciate drum music anticipated the theory of cross rhythm, multiple main beats, etc. frequently emphasised by Jones and which Jones illustrates very copiously in his *Studies in African Music*<sup>10</sup> devoted almost entirely to analytical descriptions of Ewe drumming. Freeman was convinced that Ghanaians 'have a much clearer perception of rhythm than of melody' and that 'most of them, even children, appear to have very clear ideas respecting the intricate performances on the drums with which most festivities are accompanied.' He makes some effort to interpret African drumming to his readers. He writes: "The drum music of West Africa, like some other native institutions, is somewhat misunderstood by the majority of people, being commonly represented as similar in character to that which accompanies the histrionic exploits of Punch and Judy or that which indicates to the rural sight-seer the whereabouts of the fat lady. This is far from being the case, for many drum performances are extremely complex and evince not only considerable technical skill but also remarkably correct sense of rhythm . . . ."

He continues: "The West African drum concert is quite different in principle from other instrumental performances with which I am

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10. A. M. JONES: *Studies in African Music* London, Oxford University Press 1959

acquainted, with the exception of that practised by bell-ringers. In most performances in which a number of instrumentalists take part, the whole or the greater part of the instruments are sounded simultaneously but in these drum concerts, each instrument is sounded separately and every player has his appointed part and has to strike his drum at certain definite intervals, just as change ringers have to pull their ropes in a certain order in succession. A performance of this kind would be extremely difficult to represent on paper, for not only is each drum tuned to a separate pitch, but each variety has its own peculiar quality of sound . . . . The effect produced by a number of these instruments played in concert, the notes following one another with such rapidity as to produce an almost continuous sound is extremely complex and curious and when the ear becomes accustomed to the sound and recognises the perfection of the rhythm and the extreme precision of the performance, is not displeasing."<sup>11</sup>

It was the same sort of fascination that made Ward comment on African rhythm as follows:

"In rhythm African music is far ahead of us; we make childish effort to copy it at second hand from America, and find our result displeasing . . . . If European music is specially marked by the rich variety of its forms and the splendour of its harmonies, African music is similarly marked by the fascination of its rhythms. The rhythm of an ordinary African song is as much better than that of any European music, as its form is ruder than that of a Bach fugue or a Beethoven symphony. African rhythm is so complicated that it is exceedingly difficult for a European to analyse it."<sup>12</sup>

Using what is valuable in the work of Ward, and some of the earlier observers, we have carried out survey type of research throughout Ghana in order to get a good picture of the problems

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11. FREEMAN, Richard A.: Op cit. p.281-2

12. WARD, W. E. F.: 'Music in the Gold Coast' *The Gold Coast Review* Vol 3 No. 2 1927 p.211, 213-224

that need to be studied in depth. We have studied particular subjects of interest in detail, and have involved not only our Research Fellows but also our students in some of these. A number of student theses on limited topics on music and dance studied in detail have been accumulated. They include a biographical study of Akpalu, a traditional musician, song interludes in folk tales, songs of Fante fishermen, the music of festivals such as Kundum, mourning songs of the Ewe, puberty rite music of the Adangme and the Ashanti, studies of female bands and sogbadzi songs of Yewe cult, to name just a few. Problems of music history have been tackled as well as studies in acculturation.

The analytical model which has been developed as a result of these studies seeks to provide both analysis and synthesis of the musical material so that it can be more readily related to experience of this music in its social and cultural setting. It considers musical expressions on three distinct but mutually related levels: the levels of sound, structure and context.

Investigations into the sound material deal with all the variety of vocal and instrumental sounds used in a given society or in a particular corpus of material being considered. They deal with the attributes of sounds including features of pitch, timbre, amplitude and duration. The study of tuning and scale systems related to these and the correlations between the phonetic features of speech and the sound attributes of vocal style are dealt with on this level, for here we are concerned with the examination of the raw material, with the range of sounds that are used rather than with their organisation.

Analysis of sound is then related to **STRUCTURE**. Here we distinguish between:

- (a) Types of structures, e.g. linear structures and multi-linear structures in overlapping or interlocking relations;
- (b) Units of structure which can be identified and the way in which they are combined, giving rise to different musical forms;

- (c) Categories of structure, in particular rhythm, and tonal structures which may be examined in relation to the types and units of structure; and
- (d) Elements of structure, the sound material re-examined in the context of structure, i.e. in terms of their relations in categories of structure.

It is on this level that correlations between metrical structure of song texts and tonal organisations are dealt with.

CONTEXT, the third level of analysis, is extremely important in African music and must go hand in hand with the analysis of sound and structure. Contextual analysis relates sounds, structure, song texts, musical items and musical types to the context of society or the general context of culture viewed synchronically or diachronically. It is on this level that we seek to understand the body of traditions in terms of which music is practised and perpetuated. It is here that we look at the complex of values associated with the music and the cultural and historical dimensions which are needed for the understanding of these traditions and values.

Contextual analysis must go hand in hand with the study of sound and structure, for the three levels are interrelated and not discreet levels. In the study of sound, it may be necessary to establish correlations between pitch features and tessitura with categories of performers, or to consider culturally defined qualities and those that have specific functions such as purposeful use of nasality, yodelling and sound symbolism.

Similarly musical structure must be related to performers and performance organisations, especially to the apportioning of roles such as those of solo and chorus, master drummer, secondary drummer etc., or to dance and drama, while the piece must be related to the occasion, the setting, social or cultural function. The contextual approach thus links ethnomusicology very closely

to the disciplines of linguistics, history and anthropology. Ethnomusicological studies need the perspectives and insight of these disciplines.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to descriptive studies, we are also interested in comparative studies on a territorial, regional and continental basis and several projects have been initiated in this area.

Although the scholarly study of music is the primary concern of ethnomusicology, we believe that our research must be related to problems of immediate interest to us in Ghana and that our research should contribute first and foremost to the development of music and the performing arts in Ghana. That is to say, we must link Ethnomusicology—a research discipline—to music studies. The second level of interest which is linked to our programme therefore, is 'artistic' and it is here that we have tried to build on the pioneering efforts of Amu. Dr. Amu's approach to African musical studies has been creative. When he awakened to the need for compositions in a new African idiom over forty years ago, he had to train himself in African music by learning traditional songs, *atenteben* and *odurugya* flute music and the music of the Akan *seperewa* harp-lute in order to discover the essential character of the music of his own people and the resources that he could use creatively. Like Dr. Amu, we are interested in the creative use of our material in composition as well as in performance programmes. The best way of preserving the arts of Ghana is not only by studying them in a scholarly fashion and writing about them but also by keeping them alive in performance programmes.

Hence the Research Fellows of the Institute of African Studies include not only scholars interested in academic research but also composers and choreographers who can demonstrate their research in practical terms. The Ghana Dance Ensemble which was inaugurated in November, 1967 after five years of training is the

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13. See NKETIA, J. H.: 'The dimensions of Musical Studies' Artistic Values in Traditional Music p.34-48. Berlin International Inst. for Comparative Music Studies & Documentation.

outcome of this conception of our programme. African music and dance are inseparable and no African ethnomusicological programme can afford to neglect the visual dimension of this music which influences its conception as well as its interpretation and function. Descriptions of dances studied in the field make interesting reading but they are not a complete substitute for the visual and auditory experience of this art. But, of course, this is not the only reason for training a Dance Ensemble. The Ensemble also plays an important part in the training programmes of the Institute of African Studies, in workshops organised from time to time and the Institute's extension programme in the arts geared to the community.

It is our hope to develop parallel ensembles of traditional instrumental and vocal music which will provide opportunities for studying a number of problems posed by the diversity of traditions prevalent in Ghana and other African countries.

The third level of interest which is linked to our programme of ethnomusicology is the field of music education. We are concerned with research in music education as well as with the development of African materials in music courses. The resources that we now have for this are much greater and much more diversified than what Dr. Amu had when he embarked on a similar programme many years ago. The School of Music and Drama, an experiment in training in bimusicality, builds on the foundations laid by Dr. Amu and provides new opportunities for an integrated approach to the study of the performing arts. We are anxious that it should provide an outlet for the application of the results of the research of the Fellows of the Institute of African Studies and that it should enable us to work towards the eventual attainment of the levels of proficiency and the critical standards already set up in traditional musical practice by generations of competent musicians.

This is not an easy goal, for in traditional African societies, there are three senses in which one may claim to know the music of one's society. First one can claim acquaintance with individual

items or pieces, and more especially with those items which constitute the standard repertoire used on important occasions for music-making (such as those concerned with ritual, ceremony, story telling or other forms of entertainment).

A musician at the court of an African king may take three years or so to qualify as a master drummer, a flute player, a harpist or xylophonist. The Asantehene's present *atumpan* drummer took three years to graduate at the *atumpan* school attached to the royal court of Kokofu in the 1920s. The Asantehene's *odurugya* flute player took three years and three months to complete his training at Berekum. This length of time taken by an instrumentalist is not due only to the level of competence he must reach in performance, but also because he needs to know the full range of the repertoire of his instrument and its traditions, just as a Javanese gamellan player who masters the different instruments must build up a store of fixed melodies which provide a basis for music-making.

This knowledge is not always the exclusive property of the performer—those who listen to him may also build up a listener's repertoire which in fact becomes both a check-list and a common basis for the renewal and sharing of musical experience.

The second sense in which a person can claim to know the music of a given African society is when he has acquired mastery of the materials of this music and can handle them creatively. In other words, when his musicianship has been fully developed in terms of the norms of the musical culture to enable him to speak and express himself fully and intelligibly in the language and idioms of the music of that society. This means that he should have the knowledge and ability to handle the procedures which music-making involves—the procedures followed in organising sounds linearly or multilinearly, in introducing or leading a chorus, in joining a chorus, in joining a first or second player, the procedures of improvisation which Bowdich failed to grasp.

In music practised by oral tradition and performed from memory, performance involves at once a process of "interpretation" and a

creative process. The good performer is a creative performer, and creative ability forms as much a part of the acquired attributes of the musician as knowledge of repertoire.

The third sense in which a person can claim to know the music of an African society is when he has acquired a good knowledge of the performance techniques of this society, in particular those of vocal music or those of either the basic instruments of the culture or of a class of instruments that are constantly combined in ensembles. Just as a well trained Javanese or Balinese musician first learns to play the fixed melodies, the techniques of hand drumming and the standard patterns associated with the fixed melodies, and lastly the improvising instruments, so is the master drummer similarly expected to know not only his own instrument and what it has to play, but also the parts of the other instruments of the ensemble. A good knowledge of the songs which are combined with the drums is also essential.

Contrary to the common notion that African drumming is a kind of haphazard assembly in which each drummer improvises, it is becoming more and more evident that a lot of drumming follows basic "scores" which are memorised by the players and that these scores vary in certain respects from one piece to another.

Technique cannot, of course, be separated from repertoire or from the creative process. A person described as a good performer, therefore, combines the first two attributes already mentioned.

The three areas of knowledge which are acquired actively in practice by the performer or passively by the listener are linked to a fourth area of knowledge which concerns the PERSPECTIVES from which music is conceived, and the critical standards which are applied (*a*) by the performer in the selection of his materials and forms of organisation, and (*b*) by the listener in responding to what he hears. It is our hope that our research programme will enable us to provide this kind of knowledge that can be fed into the music education programme at appropriate levels, in order to ensure continuity of our musical traditions.

To enable us to fulfil this aim, basic research projects in music education are being carried out. Preliminary investigations into the musical background of the school child and the music of his community have been conducted in one area and it is hoped to extend this to other areas of the country in collaboration with the Music Department of the Specialist Training College at Winneba.

The fourth level which we have kept in view is the popular level of interest, the interest of academic communities in Ghana and abroad, school children and adult communities interested in knowing about our traditional music, in listening to performances or in watching a programme of music and dance arising out of our work in African music and related arts. We believe that dissemination of information acquired through ethnomusicological research on a more popular level should not be excluded from our programme. That is why in 1958 we formed the Ghana Music Society in order that we can share our experiences with all music lovers and stimulate general interest in the development of music in Ghana. It is our aim to continue to do this, and to share the fruits of our work with other members of the community through publications, performances of the Ghana Dance Ensemble and other groups in the Institute of African Studies connected with our research and teaching programmes. It is, of course, not our job to promote the arts of Ghana here or abroad. The Institute of African Studies is not a promotions agency and has no machinery for this. However, as an Institute concerned with cultural studies, we owe a duty to the country to share what we discover or study in practical terms with interested communities at home and abroad.

I have not said anything about our plans for cross-cultural studies that will link our work with those of the Americas and the Carribeans in the field of African and African-derived music, for this is something that is now being developed. There is certainly no lack of interest on our part, or lack of enthusiasm in the Americas, for there are many who are tantalised by the random references to the African origins of Afro-American music and who are looking for opportunities to make fieldtrips to Africa to study African music on the spot.

In June 1968, a group of thirty American students and teachers from the Extension Division of the University of California, Berkeley, made a long trip to Ghana to do an intensive course in African music and related arts in the Institute of African Studies. In July 1969, a similar group of people came as part of a larger group of more than two hundred Americans from Queens College, City University of New York, the University of Southern California, and the American Forum for African Study for courses in African Studies which included a course of three lectures a day on music and related arts, workshops and field observation.

With the growing interest in African Studies all over the world, the time has come for those of us in Africa to give a lead in area and comparative studies. Certainly in the field of ethnomusicology, there is much that we can contribute from our African experience. It is my hope, therefore, that Ghana will act as a spearhead in the development of African studies.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen, when I was thinking of a suitable title for this lecture, I was almost tempted to choose the title *Dondology defined*, for 'dondology' is the nickname that students and others overwhelmed by the sudden appearance of African drums on the hallowed precincts of the University of Ghana derisively gave to studies in music and drama and by implication, to the discipline of ethnomusicology most directly concerned with these studies. For them, it was not only a strange field but a big joke, for they could not by any stretch of imagination believe that there is more to ethnomusicology than the aural manifestation of it.

I am happy, therefore, to have had this first public opportunity to speak about Ethnomusicology in Ghana, not because any apology is needed for introducing ethnomusicology here in Ghana or for making you painfully aware of its presence, but because it is my hope that I have been able to share with you my conception of this field of study and its practical implications in the context of present day Ghana and the new 20th century world of music.

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