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RECONTEXTUALISATION OF OSOODE MUSIC PERFORMANCE IN GHANA

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DECLARATION

I, Michael Ohene Okantah Junior of the Department of Music, University of Ghana, Legon, hereby declare that this thesis is my original work produced from research undertaken under supervision and it has never been reproduced or presented for another degree elsewhere. All sources quoted or used have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how the *Osoode* music tradition has been recontextualised and thereby contributing to its sustenance. Recent studies in ethnomusicology have focused on understanding the factors contributing to the decline or survival of musical traditions. The ability of indigenous music to thrive in changing contexts is crucial, as some traditions have faded due to unsuitable performance environments, while others require support to adapt and flourish (Schippers, 2016). In Ghana, one such tradition is *Osoode*, a recreational Akan music that continues to be recontextualised due to the changing contexts of its ecosystem. *Osoode* is an indigenous musical tradition that started in Cape Coast in the central region of Ghana and has, since its inception, spread to other Akan communities. From a musical tradition performed mainly for recreation under moonlights to entertain community members when the men went to war, it has developed, making it relevant in different contexts in contemporary society. Through the theoretical lens of recontextualisation and sustainability, this thesis examined the *Osoode* music tradition, exploring the factors that influenced its recontextualisation. The work also examines the different ways in which the *Osoode* music tradition has been recontextualised. Key to these is its highlife version, pioneered by C.K. Mann, one of Ghana's highlife music legends. The project analyses the structure of *Osoode* Highlife and shows the common features and discrepancies between *Osoode* Highlife and the indigenous *Osoode* music tradition. Finally, the work employs the five-domain framework advanced by Schippers and Grant to Examine the factors that contribute to the sustenance or otherwise of the *Osoode* music tradition.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Yvette and Family

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

In November 2013, I was part of a research team that travelled to Cape Coast, about 150km from Accra, Ghana's capital, to collect data on an indigenous musical tradition. The performance was scheduled at the residence of one of the famous exponents of traditional music in Cape Coast, *Okyerema* Pra. It was an organised performance, which also made room for interviews and focused-group discussions. As a research assistant, I was in charge of taking pictures and monitoring the audio recorder.

Upon reaching the performance grounds, I realised some group members were already there while others arrived individually or in small groups. Some of them made some dance gestures with their hands as they approached the performance space. As they set up the performance space, I noticed they brought some Western musical instruments like drums, keyboards, and guitars. I was surprised to see these Western musical instruments because we were briefed on the kind of performance we were to document. To better understand the cultural group's engagement with these musical instruments, which got me curious, I inquired whether they would be incorporated into the performance. During our conversation, the leader revealed that while the Western instruments wouldn't be used in the current performance, they planned a rehearsal session to explore their integration into an *Osoode* performance. *Osoode*!! I exclaimed. I was intrigued to observe the incorporation of Western instruments within the traditional musical arrangement, which presented an unexpected yet fascinating blend of cultural influences or a refreshing blend of new and old. I had just completed my MPhil thesis on *Osoode* music in Larteh in the Eastern region of Ghana. This was an indigenous ensemble

that used 'traditional' musical instruments. During my fieldwork for that research, performers and community members stated emphatically that no other instruments can be used in *Osoode* performances. Though I had read that *Osoode* originated from Cape Coast, I had not had any contact with the *Osoode* in Cape Coast because it was not within the scope of my study at the time. I was eager to expand my knowledge on the genre's evolving forms. It was interesting to discover and explore how Western musical instruments are integrated into *Osoode*. During a scheduled performance, I requested that the group perform their unique adaptation of *Osoode*, incorporating Western instruments, in a private session. The leader kindly consented. I then shared my initial findings and enthusiasm with our team lead, seeking approval to further investigate this innovative blend of traditional and contemporary elements. It was interesting to learn that other groups in Cape Coast also performed *Osoode* in their unique ways. After the performance, I established contact with him and began to think about a project on the 'new *Osoode* I had experienced. This study stems from that experience and explores different ways ensembles in Cape Coast perform *Osoode*, which probably contributes to its sustenance.

Sustainability is a term that has become the focus of ethnomusicological research in the past two decades as scholars engage with factors that affect the sustenance or otherwise of musical traditions. Cultural and musical sustainability concepts appeared a few years after the 2003 UNESCO Safeguarding Conventions (Titon 2022). It gained prominence with scholars and replaced the earlier concept of cultural conservation. Since then, it has appeared as the theme for symposia and edited volumes. These include the American Folklore Society, whose 2013 Annual Conference was themed Cultural Sustainability. Schippers and Grant (2016) also dedicate their entire volume to the sustainable futures for music cultures, where scholars present nine case studies on musical traditions that are either thriving or declining. In the introduction of the book, Schippers (2016) notes that the project deliberately chose not to focus only on endangered music practices but also on successful ones as well. This suggests that

studies in music sustainability are not only about dying musical traditions that need to be sustained but also about insight from thriving music, which can reveal possible pathways to remove obstacles endangered music faces (ibid).

In another volume, Schippers and Seeger (2022) bring together fifteen authors from three continents to examine the successes and challenges faced by UNESCO and other cultural institutions in safeguarding the future of musical traditions, focusing on music-making communities, cultural policy, and sustainability. One approach central to music sustainability is the ecological perspective proposed by Titon (2009, 2015, 2021), Schippers and Bendrups (2015), Schippers and Grant (2016), and Cooley (2019). In his seminal work, Titon (2009) proposes that cultural policy regarding music should be informed by four principles from the new conservation ecology, which are: diversity, limits to growth, connectedness, and stewardship.

The Fante people, who are the focus of this study, form part of the larger Akan ethnic group people in Ghana. They can be located on the Southern Coast of Ghana, where they had several interactions with Europeans because of trade and missionary activities. These interactions influenced the emergence of many hybrid music styles, attributed to the constant exchanges with European traders along the coast (Sunu Doe, 2020). These took the form of new musical traditions developed by blending local and Western elements or existing musical traditions incorporating foreign elements due to contact or in response to modernity (Avorgbedor, 2001; Gbolonyo, 2009; Collins, 2018; Sunu Doe, 2020; Fiagbedzi, 2019). Sunu Doe, for example, focused on revitalising Palmwine music, which had declined, while Fiagbedzi examined innovations in *Borborbor* music that contributed to its sustenance. Key to the sustenance of these musical cultures is the context for performance. Some musical traditions decline because the context of performance is no longer relevant to the contemporary community. And as Grant

(2012) notes, it is not possible to reenact the original contexts of musical performances once they fade off. Recontextualisation then becomes one of the ways that help to sustain the musical culture, thus presenting the music in a different context (Mundundu 2005). This project examined the different ways *Osoode* music has been presented to suit contemporary contexts. I focus on three private ensembles, all resident in Cape Coast, to trace the development of the musical tradition.

The etymology of *Osoode* was derived from how people got engrossed during its performances, so they coined the phrase, *asɔ wo dɛw mu*[1], a Fante expression which reflects how people get engrossed with the performance of *Osoode* anywhere it was performed. During my fieldwork experience, I learned that it started as an offshoot of the *asafo* (warrior) dance. For that purpose, *Osoode* needed to play its role by making people forget the risks and anxieties on the battleground. Over time, it evolved into a form of recreational music frequently performed in community centres across various social contexts. What sets it apart from other musical traditions in the region is the level of audience engagement it inspires. As a result, it became a highly anticipated feature of ceremonies and communal gatherings where musical performances were held.

Osoode music holds profound cultural, social, and spiritual significance, functioning as a vital medium through which communal values, histories, and identities are expressed, transmitted, and reinforced. Rooted in the daily lives of the people, it operates as more than an aesthetic art form; it is a living archive of collective memory and a means of sustaining culture. It further served as a social instrument that organises and animates community life. As preferred by

[1] Personal communication with Okyerama Pra at Cape Coast, 19th January 2023

community members, *Osoode* accompanied virtually every aspect of social life, from birth, marriage, and funerals to agricultural work, festivals, and political events.

In response to the growing recognition of *Osoode* as an important cultural and recreational practice, indigenous ensembles were established within the communities to foster its performance and ensure its continuity. These groups not only provided a platform for collective musical expression but also served as custodians of tradition, transmitting the repertoire and performance practices to younger generations. Over time, however, many of these ensembles began to weaken and eventually collapsed. A major contributing factor was the ageing of their core members, which created gaps in leadership and performance capacity. Additional challenges, including shifts in community priorities, socio-economic changes, and the absence of effective structures for succession, further accelerated their decline.

Currently, *Osoode* performances in Cape Coast are mostly by private cultural groups established by people whose parents or grandparents were part of *Osoode* ensembles. However, to remain relevant in contemporary contexts, each of them presents the *Osoode* music tradition in ways that appeal to their target audience. The study thus explores new performance spaces that have become the context for *Osoode* performance. It also examines innovations that different groups have incorporated into the *Osoode* music tradition, aiding its sustenance.

1.1 Research Problem

Music sustainability has become one of the central issues to ethnomusicologists, with researchers finding ways musical traditions can be maintained in the advent of technological advancement and modernity in contemporary societies. Grant (2012) acknowledges the massive global change that recent decades have witnessed. These changes continue to have deep socioeconomic transformation at both the local and global levels (ibid). While these are good on several fronts, researchers are faced with the issue of music endangerment, continuity,

sustainability, preservation, safeguarding, and conservation, among others. Schippers (2016) notes that though the past hundred years have illustrated music's extraordinary capacity to transform and thrive in the face of major technological, economic, religious, and artistic change, thousands of music practices struggle with the magnitude and rate of change. These, he notes, call for an in-depth study on the ecology of music cultures to better understand music sustainability and its mechanics (ibid). Most studies in this regard, however, have focused on endangered music to either revitalise or document it. A few have focused on thriving music, possibly to show how such musical practices have been resilient and sustained. However, in their Volume on the sustainable futures of music cultures, Schippers (2016) asserts

> The project made a deliberate choice to focus not only on "endangered" music practices (as has largely been the practice in other efforts) but also, equally, on "successful" ones. The rationale for this was that while the former may provide profound insight into the main obstacles encountered by living music cultures in need of safeguarding, vibrant practices can reveal possible pathways to removing such obstacles (Schippers 2016).

Osoode musical tradition continues to thrive in Cape Coast, performed by various cultural groups and influencing contemporary hybrid genres such as *Osoode Highlife*, which has gained recognition within Ghana's highlife music community. Despite its apparent vitality and cultural relevance, scholarly attention to the *Osoode* tradition has remained limited. Existing studies on Ghanaian traditional music and Highlife have largely focused on stylistic analysis, historical evolution, and sociocultural functions of well-documented genres such as Adaha, Palmwine, and Dance Band Highlife, and Burger Highlife, among others, while the *Osoode* tradition has received little systematic study.

Specifically, there is a notable gap in understanding the factors that contribute to the sustained vitality of *Osoode* within a rapidly changing musical and sociocultural landscape. Equally underexplored are the processes of transmission through which this indigenous tradition is

maintained and adapted by younger generations, particularly in the context of globalisation and the increasing dominance of digital and Western musical forms. Furthermore, the mechanisms by which *Osoode* has been recontextualised, both as a traditional performance practice and as a creative resource in hybrid genres such as *Osoode Highlife,* remain largely unexamined.

This study, therefore fills this gap by exploring the developmental trajectory of the *Osoode* musical tradition. It further examines the sociocultural, artistic, and institutional factors that contributes to its sustenance; explores how *Osoode* has been reinterpreted within new performance contexts; and analyses the modes of knowledge transmission that ensure its intergenerational survival. By addressing these issues, the study contributes to broader discourses on music sustainability, recontextulaisation, and the dynamics of traditional music in contemporary Ghana.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the historical roots of *Osoode* music repertoire and performance practices?
2. What stylistic features characterise *Osoode* music tradition?
3. How has its communities reimagined the *Osoode* music tradition in the contemporary context, and what informs their choice of musical tradition?
4. How has the *Osoode* music tradition been sustained across generations and changing social environments.

1.3 Research Objectives:

1. To document the history of *Osoode* music tradition to add to Ghanaian music histories.
2. To examine the stylistic features of *Osoode* music to understand what characterises the *Osoode* music.

3. To investigate how private cultural groups have reimagined the Osoode music traditions to make it relevant to the contemporary context.
4. To explore ways in which *Osoode* music has been sustained across generations and changing social environments.

1.4 Significance of the Study

My study contributes to scholarship on the sustainability and recontextualisation of Ghanaian indigenous music. It investigates how *Osoode* music, once limited to cultural and ceremonial contexts, is being revitalised and integrated into modern social, political, and cultural spaces. This process of recontextualization is significant for understanding how such music can remain relevant and culturally important in a rapidly changing, globalised society. It further highlights how performers, cultural organisations, and communities in the Fante region sustain musical traditions. These include exploring the role of education, media and technology in facilitating the transmission of indigenous musical knowledge to younger generations and expanding its reach beyond local boundaries. By addressing the challenges of maintaining authenticity while embracing innovation, the research highlights the dynamic processes through which indigenous Ghanaian music can thrive, both in its traditional form and in contemporary adaptations, ensuring its continued vitality in the global music spaces. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of indigenous music in fostering cultural identity and community cohesion, providing a framework for understanding how music can serve as a tool for cultural expression, social change and economic development. By investigating the intersection of music, culture, and sustainability, this study contributes to the broader discourse on how indigenous art forms has evolved and preserved, offering insights that could be applied to other cultural practices worldwide.

1.5 Theoretical Orientation

This thesis is situated within the broader notions of music sustainability in order to show how *Osoode* music has been sustained. As I mentioned earlier, it is a concept that was developed after the 2003 UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, among other conventions, to replace cultural conservation and preservation. Cultural conservation was critiqued by several scholars, because it is biased toward the past and was ill-equipped to analyse correctly the contemporary forces propelling cultures forward (Cooley 2019). The 2003 convention came as a result of a meeting that was held in June 1999, where experts in music from all over the world gathered at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, to discuss efforts to ensure the vitality and diversity of music on the planet (Titon 2022). Several scholars have contested the term 'safeguarding' as used by UNESCO as taking a preservationist or conservationist idea, which mostly looks at preserving the musical tradition the way it is performed as objects are preserved in the museum. Titon (2015) acknowledges efforts by UNESCO but contends that their conservation rhetoric remains wedded to older concepts involving preservation and safeguarding heritage, while for other scholars, sustainability operates in the realm of economic development, not musical and cultural continuity. Sustainability, which is a better term, recognise that change is natural and inevitable and seek to manage change to guarantee continuity, integrity, and resource availability for the future.

The notion of music sustainability stems from its application in contemporary public discourse, particularly regarding economic development and energy conservation (Titon 2009). Titon (2019) mentions elsewhere that sustainability first gained attention in the Brundtland Report of 1987, where sustainable development was defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This notion is also expressed by Bendrups et al. (2013), who assert that sustainability is expressed differently depending on scholarly and musical contexts but is generally positioned in relation

to broader environmental, social, economic, and cultural issues. It confirms a long-standing link between music and nature, which also informs strategies that have been developed in relation to sustainability. Sustainability resonates across many disciplines as there are global concerns of sustainability, especially regarding limited natural resources.

Applying sustainability to music research, Titon (2009) conceptualizes music as a biocultural resource, a product of human life, and adds that it is a renewable resource as all humans are born with the ability to make music. In this way, musical traditions are threatened when the people who make the music are no longer interested in doing so. This further suggests that sustaining the music means sustaining the people who make the music (ibid). Since the inception of music sustainability, ecology has been a central part of its approaches. Jeff Todd Titon, who developed this notion, first conceptualised a musical ecosystem by transposing to musical contexts; Arthur Tansley's idea from early twentieth century ecology of the ecosystem, which consists of a community (formed of organisms and populations) interacting with a habitat to form an ecosystem. In its application to music, Titon provides a list of factors that affect the sustainability of music, which include:

> Cultural and musical rights and ownership, the circulation and conservation of music, the internal vitality of music cultures and the social organization of their music-making, music education, and transmission, the roles of community scholars and practitioners, intangible cultural heritage, tourism, and the creative economy, preservation versus revitalization, partnerships among cultural workers and community leaders and good stewardship of musical resources (Titon 2009a)

These act as the ecosystem that interacts with the musical traditions in ways that determine whether the music will be sustained. Schippers and Bendrups (2015) concur that these factors create room for a dynamic take on issues of sustainability in music, beyond preservationist agendas. They add that by focusing on the soil rather than the product, the inevitable processes of change in "living traditions," which is usually an indicator of vitality, are effortlessly

incorporated, as are drastic shifts and reinventions (ibid). It suggests that research in music sustainability should focus on the factors that act on music that either help it thrive or decline. This study further embraces Titon's idea of resilience, which is central to his series of publications on ecology and sustainability. According to Titon (2015), resilience refers to a system's capacity to recover its integrity, identity, and continuity when subjected to disturbance forces. He notes that like sustainability, resilience thinking has been taken up by economists, including business economists, and by psychologists and social workers, who recommend resilience to their clients as a response to disruptive change in their lives. He cites Gunderson, et al Allen, (2009) who note that:

> A resilient system need not bounce back entirely to its previous state; in the face of disturbance, it may—indeed probably will—change; but a resilient system recovers to the point where it is able to retain sufficient integrity to keep performing its core functions (Gunderson, et al 2009 : xiv–xvi.).

It follows that resilience here does not mean restoring the previous state but retaining aspects of the system that make it recognisable or help it perform its core functions. Titon (2015) adds that resilience thinking is implemented through adaptive management, showing a link between resilience and adaptive management. He further mentions that adaptive management attempts to increase an ecosystem's resilience and tip it back to a more desirable state (ibid). It is the recovering to the point where a musical system is able to retain sufficient integrity to keep performing its core functions that this study explores.

It is worthy of note that some of the musical traditions in Cape Coast, the focus area of the study, which were also vibrant have now declined and is no longer performed. However, in the midst of cultural exchanges, technological advancement and cultural globalisation, *Osoode* is still being performed. As such, in framing this work, I examine the historical and developmental trajectories of *Osoode* music tradition from its inception, and the changes that have occurred to provide a deeper understanding on some of the factors that may have caused the decline of this

musical tradition. Further, I employ the lens of resilience to understand how *Osoode* music tradition has adapted to change over the years. I do not introduce interventions that would help its resilience but discuss how it has been resilient over the years. Perhaps, this can help to understand some of the factors that may challenge the musical tradition in the future which may be addressed in future research.

In sync with the earlier scholars mentioned above, Schippers and Grant (2016), on the other hand, provide a five-domain framework that acts as an eco-system to help with the sustainability of music. As mentioned earlier, ecology, a term that had its beginnings in biology has been translated to the study of contemporary music. On its application to music, it is premised on the notion that music genres and styles demonstrably heavily depend for their survival on interaction with individuals, communities, governments, policies, buildings, funding, education, press, goodwill, reputation, and many other factors (ibid). They add that each music practice has several animate and inanimate forces working on it. Based on this idea, they developed a five-domain framework that helps to study the factors that affect the sustainability of musical traditions. These are (1) systems of learning music, (2) musicians and communities, (3) contexts and constructs, (4) regulations and infrastructure, (5) media, and (6) the music industry. Perhaps Schippers and Grant (2016) did not know how far-reaching these domains would go to address issues of resilience and sustainability in Ghanaian indigenous music. Exploring Fante *Osoode* music across these domains present a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing change, resilience, and sustanace that have shaped this genre over time.

This research adopts these domains to examine the formal and informal ways of learning *Osoode* music, from the level of community initiatives through music education to the level of institutionalized professional training. For example, notation, aural, and apprenticeship. It also

focuses on the musicians and communities to understand the positions, roles, and interactions of musicians within their communities, and the social basis of their traditions in that context. It is also necessary to recognise the everyday realities of creative musicians in the Cape Coast region, to identify issues of remuneration through performances, teaching, portfolio careers, community support, tenured employment, freelancing, non-musical activities, technology, media, travel, etcetra. This domain obviously include western influences and technology mediated communication.

The third domain, which applies to contexts and constructs assesses the social and cultural contexts of *Osoode* musical tradition, paying particular attention to the underlying values and attitudes (constructs) that continues to steer the musical direction of *Osoode*. These include musical tastes, aesthetics, cosmologies, socially and individually constructed identities, gender issues, and (perceived) prestige, which is often underestimated as a key factor in musical survival. It examines the underlying values and attitudes (constructs) steering musical directions. These include musical tastes, aesthetics, cosmologies, socially and individually constructed identities, gender issues, and (perceived) prestige, which is often underestimated as a key factor in musical survival. It also looks at the realities of and the attitudes to recontextualisation, authenticity and context, and explicit and implicit approaches to cultural diversity resulting from travel, migration, or media, as well as obstacles such as prejudice, racism, stigma, restrictive religious attitudes, and issues of appropriation.

The fourth domain investigates the regulations and infrastructure primarily related to the "hardware" of music. For instance, places to perform, compose, practice, and learn, all of which are essential for music to survive, as well as virtual spaces for creation, collaboration, learning, and dissemination (Schippers and Grant 2016). This domain also explores policies, laws and

regulations that are helpful for *Osoode* musical traditions or otherwise as well as grants, artists' rights, copyright laws, and sound restrictions the ensemble and members have negotiated.

The fifth domain, which focuses on media and the industry, address large-scale dissemination and commercial aspects of *Osoode* music, exploring how the media space helps the sustainability or decline of *Osoode* musical tradition in Cape Coast.

However, when examining the third domain, it is essential to incorporate the concept of recontextualisation in order to adequately account for the complexities of contextual dynamics. In his work on the recontextualisation of African music in America, Mundundu (2005) defines recontextualisation as the process of presenting music in a new context. He goes on to cite Nketia's definition of context as any setting or environment, be it physical, ecological, social, cultural or intellectual in which an entity or a unit of experience is viewed to define its identity or characteristics as well as its relation in comparison with other entities or units of experience. Recontextualisation in music is, therefore, the process of transferring musical traditions from its original context into a new context or giving it a new form of meaning in a different context.

Osoode started as an offshoot a warrior dance at Cape Coast. It later developed into recreational music that is performed at the community centers under moonlight. Since the 1970s, *Osoode* has undergone several developments, including changes in the context in response to modernity. Traditional *Osoode* ensembles no longer exist, and, in its place, individuals who were part of the indigenous ensembles formed cultural groups to perform *Osoode* music. As Nketia (2016) observes, performers make judicious modifications in the conventions of traditional practice concerning the format, content, and duration of performances in contemporary contexts. The theory of recontextualisation aids in the analysis and interpretation of the different ways that *Osoode* ensembles have responded to changing contexts.

1.6 Literature Review

The literature review for this proposed study covers *Osoode* music, genre discourse, music hybridity and recontextualisation.

1.6.1 *Osoode* music.

Osoode is a musical tradition that has its origins in Cape Coast. However, *Osoode* music moved to the Akuapim ridge in the eastern region of Ghana by Lorry drivers who plied that route (Brokensha 1979). As they travelled between the Central and Eastern regions, they spread or disseminated musical traditions. Some musical traditions are common between these two regions due to the spread of the drivers plying these routes.

Osafo (1988) undertook one of the earliest comparative studies of *Osoode*, *Fontomfrom*, and *Mpintin* musical traditions, offering valuable insight into their structural and contextual interrelations. His analysis revealed that the basic characteristics of *Osoode* songs and instrumental arrangements, much like those of *Fontomfrom* and *Mpintin,* are shaped significantly by the social contexts in which the music is performed. Conducted during the Mampong-Akuapim Ohum festival, Osafo's research underscored the inseparability of musical form and function in indigenous Ghanaian performance traditions, demonstrating that musical structure often reflects the communal, ceremonial, and performative environments from which it emerges. A key finding of Osafo's study is that *Osoode* songs typically employ a call-and-response structure, an interactive vocal form characterised by dialogue between a lead singer and the chorus. This antiphonal exchange not only enhances audience participation but also contributes to the sectional organisation of performances, reinforcing the collective participation central to indigenous Ghanaian music-making.

Building upon Osafo's foundational work, Yirenkyi (1990) examined *Osoode* as performed by the people of Apirede, corroborating the earlier observation that the vocal

component constitutes the core of the *Osoode* ensemble. Yirenkyi further elaborates on the distinct vocal techniques employed by performers, noting their resemblance to the broader Akan vocal practice, which is marked by a nasal timbre and a gradual reduction in breath intensity toward the conclusion of extended musical phrases. In addition to vocal analysis, Yirenkyi's research explores the dance movements and expressive gestures that accompany *Osoode* performances, situating them as integral to the communicative and symbolic dimensions of the music. By documenting the interplay between music and dance, his study highlights the holistic nature of *Osoode* as a performance tradition that unites sonic, kinetic, and social expressions

While the works of Osafo (1988) and Yirenkyi (1990) provide valuable foundational insights into the musical, performance practice, and some characteristics of *Osoode*, their analyses are largely confined to traditional contexts and do not extend to contemporary transformations of the music tradition. In the decades following their studies, Ghanaian musical culture has undergone significant shifts driven by globalisation, urbanisation, and technological change, leading to the recontextualisation of many indigenous performance traditions. Within this changing landscape, *Osoode* has evolved beyond its original ceremonial and communal functions to intersect with popular music idioms, most notably *Highlife*. This intersection marks a critical moment in the history of *Osoode*, wherein indigenous performance practices engage with new sonic, social, and ideological forces to produce forms such as *Osoode Highlife, Osoode Jazz and Osoode Jama, among others*. Such developments invite broader theoretical reflection on processes of recontextualisation, sustainability, and identity negotiation within Ghanaian music. In this regard, the present study moves beyond the descriptive ethnographic focus of earlier works to examine *Osoode* as a dynamic and evolving tradition. It interrogates how elements of the indigenous form are adapted, reinterpreted, and

sustained in modern musical contexts, thereby contributing to ongoing scholarly debates on music recontextualisation and cultural sustainability.

My study examined the recontextualisation of African music in Africa as suggested by Mundundu and also investigates how *Osoode* music is being sustained beyond traditional notions of music preservation. The study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the recontextualisation of traditional music in contemporary contexts as discussed by Klein (2008), Nketia (2016), and Schauert (2016). Most of these studies are focused on Accra, which is the capital city of Ghana, to the neglect of some other regions which also need scholarly attention.

1.6.2 Preservation and Change in Ethnomusicology

To discuss how *Osoode* music has been recontextualised and sustained, I position my work within the broader context of the discussion on musical and cultural change in Ethnomusicology. From its beginnings in the late 19th century until the mid-20th century, the discipline of ethnomusicology placed key importance on capturing the sounds of 'dying' cultures before they disappeared. The focus was mainly on 'traditional music' and searching for the "authentic" and perhaps ancient musical expressions of premodern culture and society (Rice 2013). Thus, the idea of change in a musical tradition was not considered worthy of scholarship and was somewhat avoided. New interpretations and innovations of musical traditions were not considered 'authentic' because the idea was to preserve musical traditions devoid of changes. Their aim beyond preserving the music was not just to understand the music but also the role of the communities that perform it and the functions it performs in the community. Titon (2009) notes that there was what might be called a preservation impulse, or preservation-and-display, to create not merely archives but musical museums and demonstration collections of world music. He adds that along with the impulse to preserve was their longstanding belief that the disappearance of the endangered music of the world was

inevitable, given the course of economic development, modernization, and change(ibid). That notwithstanding, interest in studying change was approached reluctantly. Nettl (2005) captures this in his work on a short Thirty-One issues and concepts in ethnomusicology where he notes that:

> Ethnomusicologists were slow to take an interest in the study of musical change, starting out as the students of "peoples without history," moving to theories of how music may change and why and accepting only slowly the view that in following a synchronic approach to music one comes face to face with the issue of change (Nettl 2005).

This interest in the study of change was motivated by the fact that change cannot be stopped, and the search for the 'authentic' is not realistic. Change as an object of concern for ethnomusicologists was also fuelled by a group of events of worldwide magnitude and distribution, which were subsumed under terms such as nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and globalisation (ibid).

Nketia (1959:31) observed three phases of change in indigenous African music and dance. First, he mentions the change that results from the cumulative effect of the creative efforts of individuals (largely anonymous) or groups of individuals within a given society of a fairly homogenous character. This kind of change as he clearly mentions, are a result of individual group creativities to musical traditions. This aligns with what Blacking (1986) identifies with musical change which they are the results of decisions made by individuals about music-making and music or about social and cultural practice, based on their experiences of music and social life and their attitudes to them in different social contexts.

Nettl (2005) also notes that most societies expect a minimum of innovation for their artists, and some demand a great deal. The second change results from the interaction of such homogenous African societies through geographical contiguity facilitating economic or other pursuits through religion or, in the past, war (ibid). For instance, my experience during fieldwork

revealed that *Osoode* musical tradition spread to other communities due to trade. Community members beyond their exchange of goods and services, also exchange and borrow musical traditions among themselves causing changes in musical traditions. The *Osoode* musical traditions are performed differently in the different communities depending on the changes that it has gone through over time. The third type of change Nketia identifies is change due to the impact of alien culture, mostly in the form of Western influences to a musical tradition which come in the form of musical idiom of instruments. As will be seen in the preceding discussions, the *Osoode* musical tradition has other variants, such as the *Osoode* Jazz and *Osoode* highlife, which is a blend of local and Western musical ideas.

Blacking (1977) sought to draw attention to the need for a comprehensive theory of music and music-making and also to distinguish musical change analytically from other changes. He further differentiates radical change from variation and innovation flexible systems. He advocates that musical change be given a special status in social and cultural change studies because music's role as a mediator between nature and culture in man combines cognitive and affective elements uniquely (ibid). Adding that Studies of musical change should focus on specifically musical change and change that really is change. Here, he notes that musical change should be a change in the musical system but not change in the musical consequences of social, political, economic, or other changes. Thus, according to Blacking, variations in musical style do not constitute change. He contends that though musical activities overlap non-musical activities, they are not wholly interchangeable, and as such, what is strictly musical about musical change cannot be treated the same way as other kinds of social change. This is because he observes that Many analyses of so-called musical change are really about social change and minor variations in musical style if viewed in terms of the system affected. Musical change, for example, is not "caused" by "contact among people and cultures" or the "movement of populations" (Nettl 1964:232): it is brought about by decisions made by individuals about

music-making and music based on their experiences of music and attitudes to it in different social contexts.

As the idea of change became one of the central issues in ethnomusicological research, scholars focused on different aspects of the change. One concept that was very common during the mid-twentieth century was change and continuity which was used by most authors in their work on changes that musical traditions encountered. Nettl (2005) contends that the concept of 'change' and 'continuity' could not be separated as used by other authors explaining that it is change that is really continuous. He suggests the use of continuity of change which implies that change is constant and continues. Nettl Adds that:

> An absolutely static musical culture is actually inconceivable, and so it seems safe to hypothesize that every musical system has inherent in it a certain amount of constant change as one of its core elements, required simply to hold the system intact and to keep it from becoming an artificially preserved museum (Nettl 2005).

He identifies four kinds of changes that a music tradition can encounter. First, for the case of the most complete kind of change, a population that shares and maintains one musical system abandons it for another. Second, radical change in a system of music whose new form can definitively still be traced in some way to the old is more easily illustrated. For instance, regarding *Osoode* music, although there have been other variants and developments, some aspects of the musical tradition can still be linked to its roots. Though there are changes, it retains aspects of the *Osoode* music tradition. Third, he notes that any musical system is likely to contain or require a certain amount of change as part of its essential character (ibid). This kind of change is present in most musical traditions, and it is that which helps the music to thrive and adapt to contemporary contexts. For instance, during my fieldwork, I observed that there was one of the *Osoode* ensembles known as the *Obrempong* folklorists, which resisted any kind of change and sought to perform the music the way the elders performed it, in a bid to prevent the music from being destroyed. It was interesting to know that this group does not

exist anymore as members joined other groups who embraced some changes to be able to adapt to contemporary audiences.

1.6.3 Genre

To engage with how *Osoode* highlife combines indigenous *Osoode* and Ghanaian highlife, I situate my study within the broader discourse on genre. Genres have been a subject of longstanding debates as scholars emphasise their complex, socially constructed, and often fluid nature. Genre functions as a symbolic and organisational tool used by artists, audiences, and industry stakeholders to negotiate meaning, identity, and place. Yet, its categorisation remains fraught with ambiguity and contestation. Klement and Strambach (2019) argue that music genres exist within a network of "symbolic knowledge" that interacts with regional socio-economic conditions, technological trends, and existing knowledge systems. Premised on cases from North America and Europe, they contend that regions tend to reproduce musical genres aligned with their established portfolio of activities (p. 1447). This perspective echoes earlier work by Neffke et al. (2011) and Boschma (2017), who describe the diffusion of new activities (such as musical styles) in terms of regional relatedness and knowledge spillovers. However, Klement and Strambach (2019) also note exceptions to this model, particularly where genre innovation originates in marginalised or misunderstood localities, such as specific neighbourhoods, and only later gains recognition within broader cultural circuits. The implication here is that genre formation is both relational and place-specific, deeply embedded in local histories, practices, and symbolic systems. This aligns with what Lena (2012) earlier advanced that the success of genres (and by extension, artists) hinges on their ability to respond to audience tastes that are shaped by local social conventions, dress codes, language, and performance styles. Thus, genre is not merely a sonic category but a sociocultural artefact.

An increasing body of scholarship frames genre as a socially constructed category, influenced by cultural norms, gender dynamics, and historical contexts. Brisson (2023) critically explores the assumption that genre labels presuppose shared listener knowledge, arguing that this assumption is deeply problematic due to the vague and unstable nature of genre boundaries. He suggests that social class, age, musical background, and gender play significant roles in shaping how individuals interpret and assign genre labels. Moreover, what is often termed a "genre" may, in fact, be more accurately understood as a subgenre or stylistic subtype. This social construction of genre is particularly evident in gendered spatial practices. Koren (2022) illustrates how, in Amsterdam, musical genres such as niche-EDM and eclectic styles are gender-coded, with the former associated with masculine-coded spaces and the latter with more inclusive, "trouble-free" dancefloors for women. These local understandings reflect how genre boundaries are "temporarily stabilised in spatial dimensions," shaped by audience expectations, promoters' practices, and broader gender ideologies. Consequently, genre functions as a means through which social structures and cultural meanings are both expressed and contested.

My study examined a musical tradition that emerged through the interaction of several of the dynamics discussed above. Specifically, *Osoode Highlife* developed as a response to shifting audience preferences within the community. Over time, listeners began to lose interest in the traditional *Osoode* genre, which had long been performed using exclusively indigenous instruments and techniques inherited from earlier generations. As musical tastes evolved, community members increasingly sought performances that reflected both their indigenous cultural heritage and the broader transformations occurring in their sociocultural environment. As Klement and Strambach (2019) observe that such cultural adaptations are often driven by audiences who desire artistic expressions that retain local authenticity while simultaneously incorporating elements of modernity and technological innovation. In this context, *Osoode Highlife* represents a creative negotiation between the indigenous *Osoode* music and Ghanaian

highlife, a synthesis of traditional Fante musical aesthetics and contemporary stylistic influences that mirrors the community's engagement with global cultural trends.

Genre boundaries are increasingly porous, leading to the emergence of hybridised musical forms. Lionnet (2018) introduces the notion of hybridised genres as a recognition of multiplicity, diversity, and evolving cultural dynamics. These hybrid forms both challenge and expand traditional genre frameworks, representing an intersection of global cultural flows and localised expressions. Lionnet argues that one of the paradoxes of globalisation is its simultaneous promotion of cultural circulation and imposition of categorical boundaries, a tension that is especially salient in genre discourse. Vivanco (2018), writing within the context of fiction but offering relevant insights, contends that genres transcend time and social structures, and must be understood through evolving subgenres rather than rigid hybrid forms. The continual negotiation of genre boundaries illustrates how they are embedded in and responsive to changing sociocultural contexts. Genre also has an affective dimension, influencing and reflecting listeners' emotional states. Brodsky et al. (2017) suggest that genres often evoke specific emotions through both sonic properties and lyrical content. However, these emotional responses are not universally consistent, which complicates the idea of genre as a predictive emotional category. Chen and Wu (2022) similarly propose that genres can be partially identified by their emotive effects, but emphasise that such classifications are mediated by individual and cultural factors. From a technical standpoint, there is no strict calibration for differentiating musical works across genres based on rhythm or expression alone. Nonetheless, works within the same genre often share sonic patterns that can be captured through data analysis (Chen & Wu, 2022). While traditional genre classification relies heavily on expert knowledge and social annotation, newer approaches leverage pattern recognition across larger datasets to identify genre-specific features.

Ultimately, genre serves as a powerful marker of cultural identity. Jacobsen-Bia (2014), writing on Navajo music, illustrates how genre informs not only musical style but also the physical and social spaces of performance. Musical genres determine the venues (e.g., reservation chapter houses versus urban bars), performance styles, and even social expectations tied to Navajo identity. In such contexts, genre is not just a musical category but a performance of cultural identity. When these expectations are disrupted when voices or genres do not align with assumed cultural markers, they challenge listeners to reconsider their understandings of identity and representation. Genre, therefore, emerges as a key site for the inscription of sociocultural identity, race, class, and gender. It is a dynamic construct shaped by place, perception, emotion, and power, constantly negotiated among artists, audiences, and institutions. The discourse on genre reveals its inherently multifaceted and contested nature. Rather than a fixed attribute, genre operates as a symbolic system, shaped by socio-cultural, spatial, emotional, and technological dimensions. As contemporary scholarship demonstrates, genre is better understood as a fluid and performative construct—one that reflects the complexities of identity, place, and cultural production in an increasingly interconnected world.

My study explored *Osoode Highlife* as a distinctive musical form that evolved from the broader Ghanaian highlife tradition, yet functions as a significant cultural and identity marker for the people of Cape Coast. While *Osoode Highlife* integrates Western musical instruments, such as guitars, keyboards, and brass, and assimilates compositional ideas drawn from global musical practices, it simultaneously preserves the core rhythmic, melodic, and performative structures of indigenous *Osoode* music. This synthesis allows for a dual resonance: it enables community members to maintain a sense of cultural continuity with ancestral traditions while also appealing to broader audiences attuned to highlife's modern stylistic sensibilities. As Brodsky et al. (2017) observe, *Osoode Highlife* extends beyond its sonic hybridity. Its lyrical narratives evoke deep emotional and cultural responses among the Fante people, resonating with

collective memory and identity through references to moral values, communal history, and ancestral heritage.

1.6.4 Hybridity

This study aligns with the broader discourse on hybridity, engaging with the dynamic intersection of indigenous *Osoode* music and Ghanaian Highlife, which in itself is a product of hybridity. Highlife, as discussed earlier, emerged along the Ghanaian coast through sustained intercultural contact with European traders and colonial agents, reflecting how hybrid forms often crystallise out of historical encounters, trade relations, and socio-cultural exchanges. The evolution of *Osoode Highlife* thus extends this lineage of hybridity, recontextualising inherited musical idioms within new cultural and technological environments.

The concept of hybridity originated in biological discourse, where it denoted the offspring or crossbreed of distinct species or varieties (Kapchan & Strong, 1999). However, contemporary scholarship has appropriated the term to describe sociocultural processes of borrowing, adaptation, and transformation. Within postcolonial theory, Homi K. Bhabha (1994) offers one of the most influential formulations of hybridity. He conceptualises it as arising in the *"third space of enunciation,"* an interstitial cultural zone where the coloniser and the colonised encounter each other and negotiate meaning. This "in-between" space disrupts binary notions of dominance and subordination, allowing for the emergence of new, hybrid cultural forms that subvert colonial authority and affirm indigenous agency. In this expanded sense, hybridity captures the formation of new cultural identities and expressive forms that emerge from the contact, negotiation, and synthesis of previously distinct traditions, belief systems, and epistemologies (Ilesanmi, 2021). Alcalde (2022) further notes that hybridity, though sometimes ideologically contested, has evolved from its nineteenth-century racialist roots into a

productive analytical framework for understanding cultural intermixture and the fluidity of identity in postcolonial and globalised contexts.

In music, hybridity signifies the creative recombination of diverse sonic traditions into new aesthetic configurations that transcend territorial, linguistic, and political boundaries. As Rai (2020) observes, musical hybridity resists fixed categorisation; it thrives in spaces of exchange where rhythms, instruments, and performance practices from different cultures intersect to produce emergent sounds. Similarly, Ilesanmi (2021) emphasises that hybridity manifests not only through ethnic or racial blending but whenever historically distinct realms, be they musical, linguistic, or ideological, converge in ways that challenge established boundaries and hierarchies. In Ghanaian music, hybridity manifests prominently in both choral art music and popular music traditions. Within choral practice, Ephraim Amu, often celebrated as the father of Ghanaian art music, pioneered a compositional style that integrated European harmonic structures with indigenous melodic, rhythmic, and linguistic materials. This synthesis not only localised Western choral idioms but also laid the foundation for subsequent Ghanaian composers who have continued to explore similar intercultural fusions. Such creative negotiations illustrate how hybridity, as a cultural and musical process, operates as both an aesthetic strategy and a mode of identity construction. In a similar vein, this study examined *Osoode Highlife*, a hybrid musical form that fuses the indigenous *Osoode* tradition of Cape Coast with elements of Ghanaian *Highlife* music. Notably, *Highlife* itself emerged as a hybrid genre through historical encounters between local coastal communities and European musical influences during the colonial period. Thus, *Osoode Highlife* represents what might be described as a "hybridisation of the hybrid", a secondary layer of musical fusion that both extends and reinterprets earlier process. This recursive hybridity underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of Ghanaian musical identities, where tradition and innovation coexist in a dialogic relationship.

My study goes beyond the descriptive labelling of *Osoode Highlife* as a hybrid form to interrogate the processes through which this musical transition, from *Osoode* to *Osoode Highlife*, takes place. In this regard, the analytical framework draws on Alcalde's (2022) process-oriented approach to musical hybridity. Alcalde critiques the tendency to classify musical forms merely through categorical labels, instead advocating for a focus on *mixture strategies*, the perceptible processes by which disparate musical identities are combined, transformed, and experienced (ibid). His emphasis on process foregrounds the listener's perspective, suggesting that the recognition of hybridity is not fixed but contingent upon individual background, cultural familiarity, and interpretive context (ibid). Nevertheless, as Alcalde observes, shared communal knowledge, mediated through styles, genres, and socio-musical discourse- enables certain hybrid forms to be collectively recognised and culturally codified. In this context, *Osoode Highlife* can be understood not simply as a product of fusion but as an ongoing process of negotiation between social meanings, and listener perceptions. Its hybrid identity is continuously redefined through performance practice and community reception. In doing so, it exemplifies how musical hybridity functions as both a creative method and a social discourse, articulating local identity within the broader narrative.

Sanga (2010) begins her discussion by departing from Weiss's (2008) conceptual distinction between intentional *and* natural hybridity, arguing that most popular music genres that are later regarded as "natural hybrids" often originate as intentional hybrids, deliberate acts of fusion where performers and composers consciously engage in stylistic blending. She advances this argument by proposing three *key* frontiers of musical hybridisation: temporal, spatial, and genre-defined. The temporal frontier describes situations in which musicians from a contemporary cultural milieu draw on musical resources from an earlier tradition, recontextualising them within new stylistic frameworks. The spatial frontier refers to the interaction and negotiation between geographically or culturally distinct musical systems

(Sanga, 2010). The genre frontier involves the transference or adaptation of materials from one musical genre to another, producing novel hybrid forms that blur established stylistic boundaries (ibid). Building on similar lines of inquiry, Alcalde (2022) proposes a framework that treats musical hybridity as the combination and negotiation of multiple musical identities. His framework focuses on what he terms mixture strategies**,** which he defines as perceptible processes through which disparate styles, genres, or identity markers interact and are manipulated within hybrid musical contexts (ibid). These mixture strategies not only illuminate the materials being combined but also reveal the underlying aesthetic, cultural, and structural logic that governs their integration. Alcalde identifies four primary mixture strategies: clash**,** coexistence**,** distortion**,** and trajectory**.**

According to Alcalde (2022), *clash* denotes an abrupt juxtaposition or superimposition of contrasting musical idioms, creating intentional dissonance or tension. *Coexistence* represents more integrative combinations that emphasise harmonic unity or complementarity between styles. *Distortion* involves the transformation of a recognisable musical style through the influence of incongruent sonic or rhythmic elements, while *trajectory* describes the gradual progression or transition from one stylistic identity to another within a musical performance (ibid). Each of these strategies, according to Alcalde, embodies both aesthetic and sociocultural meanings that mirror the dynamics of identity formation and negotiation within broader contexts of cultural interaction.

These ideas are particularly relevant to understanding the development of *Osoode Highlife* in Cape Coast. It exemplifies Weiss's notion of intentional hybridity, as its creation reflects a conscious effort by musicians to bridge indigenous *Osoode* traditions with the evolving popular sound of Ghanaian Highlife. This process engages all three of Sanga's frontiers: temporally, *Osoode* Highlife recontextualises ancestral musical practices within modern

performance settings; spatially, it negotiates between indigenous Fante cosmology and globalised musical influences; and generically, it combines indigenous drumming and vocal idioms with Western harmonic and instrumental structures. This suggests that there are possibilities these frontiers could be blurred or overlap. Viewed through Alcalde's mixture strategies, *Osoode* Highlife employs multiple mixture strategies simultaneously. The incorporation of electric guitars and Western harmonic progressions alongside traditional Fante percussion rhythms exemplifies coexistence, where distinct musical systems are combined into a cohesive performance aesthetic. At moments, *clash* becomes audible through the deliberate contrast between indigenous call-and-response vocal patterns and Western instrumental arrangements, highlighting cultural tension as a productive creative force. Furthermore, a trajectory can be observed in the genre's gradual evolution from purely indigenous *Osoode* performances to contemporary Highlife-influenced interpretations that resonate with changing community sensibilities and audience tastes in performances.

1.6.5 Recontextualisation

To understand how different renditions of *Osoode* have emerged and contribute to its sustainability, I situate my work within the context of recontextualisation. Performance context is an important aspect of musical cultures without which they cease to exist. Grant (2012) notes that an appropriate performance context seems a crucial requirement for the sustainability of music genres. Citing examples, she mentions the threats posed to the viability of ca tru` by the government decision in the 1950s to close the few remaining (and by then disreputable) 'singing houses' that served as a primary performance location for the genre. Without the primary performance location, the music began to decline. She cites Harnish (2005), who also noted that Lombok Balinese court music disappeared due to the dismantling of the court system after 1894. There is also the loss of cultural and ritual contexts concomitant with a shift from nomadic life to urban settlement of Mongolian herding communities, which was a key reason

for the demise of the string fiddle culture morin khurr (UNESCO 2009). Many other examples exist of musical traditions becoming endangered or dying out altogether due to the disappearance of the socio-cultural contexts in which they once thrived: a corollary noted by Charles Seeger decades ago (1977: 330ff.).

The context where music is performed or thrives cannot be overlooked in sustainability issues. Pioneer and seminal researchers in the field of music/music education, Nketia (1962), Blacking (1973, 1995), and Elliot (1995) pointed out that music is dependent upon the social and cultural context. Nketia (1962) notes that the varying demands of this context often give rise to musical differentiations embodied in individual items or in a group of such items, constituting a single musical type. He seems to argue that one of the main factors distinguishing musical traditions is the context of performance. Elliot on the other hand mentions how context helps to give a fuller meaning to musical performances. Recontextualisation, then, is when music is performed in a different context either because its original context is no more relevant to contemporary society or because there are demands that require that the music is reimagined in a way that appeals to the contemporary audience.

Grant (2012) acknowledges that whether of music or language, approaches to sustenance not only aim to preserve the past but to allow for adaptation to the changing environment in ways consistent with the naturally dynamic expression of cultural traditions over time. Schippers (2005) defines recontextualisation as any contemporary performance of Bach's St. Matthew's Passion in a modern concert hall for a non-Lutheran audience. Key to the definition of Schippers is the 'contemporary performance', which suggests ways in which the performance itself has been reworked. He also mentions a modern concert hall which also suggests that apart from the change in the performance, there is also a change in the performance space. His use of a 'non-Lutheran audience further suggests that the performance is also for a new audience

with new demands. As Grant (2012) notes, any notion of attempting to recreate the conditions in which a culture originally flourished is arguably a prohibitively difficult task (even if it were desirable). This suggests that the focus is not trying to recreate the same context or conditions in which the music thrived but rather adapt to the changing trends.

Aspects of this work also resonate with the recontextualisation of text as it occurs in sociology and linguistics. This work does not intend to do a detailed discourse analysis of *Osoode* song texts. But to use references as used in these disciplines to illustrate how the text of *Osoode* songs have also undergone recontextualisation. Van Leeuwen and Wodak (1999: 96) note that recontextualisation always involves transformation, and what exactly gets transformed depends on the interests, goals and values of the context into which the practice is recontextualised. In their work on discourse analysis, they mention four ways recontextualisation can occur in text. These are deletion, rearrangement, substitution and addition. Richardson (2015) examines four ways recontextualisation occurs in fascist songs and music: textual appropriation, interpolation, cover version, and ideologically realigned recording. In this work, I explore his idea of textual appropriation and interpolation. Interpolation is a form of musical recontextualisation in which an element of a song or recording typically a melody or refrain or (musical or lyrical) phrase is incorporated into a new song (ibid). *Osoode* highlife musicians borrow many of their melodies and harmonies from existing melodies in the Indigenous *Osoode* songs. Thus beyond changing the social context of performance, there is also this aspect of recontextualisation that occurs in *Osoode* highlife music. Textual appropriation is when a whole song is taken and incorporated into the fascist cultural project, either through material reproduction or through performance.

My study mainly focuses on how *Osoode* music has been sustained through recontextualisation, which involves performing in different contexts. This also comes with other demands from the audience, leading performers to develop creative ways of presenting

the musical tradition to its audience. It is worthy of note that each group that participated in this project serves a different audience and though the musical tradition is the same, one cannot be made to perform for the audience made for another. This is because of specific audience demands. This research looks at the different ways the musical tradition has been recontextualised, looking at musical instruments, song texts, performance contexts, and performance practice.

1.7 Data Collection Methods

1.7.1 Secondary Sources

This research employed qualitative methods of inquiry, encompassing the collection of both primary and secondary data. Key elements of my work align with existing literature on musical ethnographies, sustainability, and recontextualization. Prior to initiating data collection, I conducted thorough consultations with libraries and audiovisual archives to investigate foundational works in these areas, examine the origins of the discourse, and assess its current progression. This approach aimed to prevent duplication and ensure a meaningful contribution to the ongoing scholarly conversation. My exploration of audiovisual archives specifically focused on identifying pre-existing *Osoode* songs, which provided insight into the developmental trajectory of *Osoode* music.

I visited the Kwabena Nketia Archive at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana. While there, I was able to locate one recording of an *Osoode* performance, although it was presented as part of a medley with other performances. Unfortunately, *Osoode* was barely audible, despite being labelled as such. In addition, I reached out to the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation to obtain video and audio recordings of the *Osoode* musical performances, but I was unable to find any. Furthermore, during a PhD workshop in June 2022, I had the opportunity to visit the Centre for World Music in Germany, where I met with the head of the

archive. I was excited to discover their extensive collection of music from around the world, including *Osoode*. They digitised the recordings for me, which I have since incorporated into my collection.

1.7.2 Interviews

The initial phase of the research focused on gathering data about the history of *Osoode* music in Cape Coast. I conducted interviews with several individuals who provided contacts for further information. The first recommendation was the head of performance at the Centre for National Culture (CNC) in Cape Coast. After discussing my research with him, he expressed enthusiasm about the project, particularly its focus on the sustenance of indigenous musical traditions. As an academic, he conversed with me about the research objectives and questions. He also gave me the names and contact details of individuals knowledgeable about *Osoode's* history. Since I did not personally know these individuals, he kindly offered to introduce the research topic to them before I reached out. After phone conversations with some of the contacts, I arranged a visit to Cape Coast for in-person interviews. Given his role as the director of the resident cultural ensemble at CNC, I decided to begin my exploration with their group before expanding to others.

The day before our scheduled visit to Cape Coast, I coordinated with my research assistants, David Dickson and Joseph Paul Ashittey, instructing them to prepare everything necessary for the trip. I ensured that I had my camera, voice recorder, and Apple MacBook, while they supplemented our equipment with an additional camera and an iPhone. This allowed us to have three video recording devices to capture footage from multiple angles and take photographs simultaneously. To avoid traffic delays, we planned to depart from Accra at 5:00 AM. In preparation, I finalised my interview guide and packed all essential items for the trip. When we began our journey, I contacted the Centre for National Culture director to remind him of our

trip and to inform him that we had started our journey. This was crucial due to past experience as research assistance where we travelled to research sites when performers were not ready and we had to reschedule. I also asked him to contact all other persons who will be needed. He confirmed that arrangements had been made for us to meet *Obrempong* folklorists as well. Our plan was to gather data from these two groups on this trip and schedule another visit to collect data from the remaining groups.

We arrived in Cape Coast at approximately 8:30 AM, and I contacted Jason, the Centre for National Culture (CNC) director, to inform him of our arrival and readiness to begin data collection. He expressed his pleasure at our arrival and asked us to wait at the center until all members of the group had assembled. During this waiting period, I used the time to discuss the day's agenda with him. The primary focus of our engagement was to explore the history and development of *Osoode* music tradition, followed by a performance by the ensemble. Subsequently, we planned to conduct a focus group discussion covering the history of the music tradition, the role of the CNC ensemble, individual member experiences, their duration of involvement with the group, and any additional relevant topics that emerged during the conversation. These discussions were crucial, as the sustainability of musical traditions is significantly influenced by the musicians, who serve as the custodians of the music. This aligns with the five-domain framework proposed by Schippers and Grant (2016), highlighting musicians' role and sustainability in musical traditions.

As the group began to assemble, I observed them whispering among themselves, which could be attributed to the fact that some members were familiar with me from my previous involvement as a research assistant on a project at the center from 2011 to 2016. When I was eventually introduced to the group and noted their familiarity, several members exclaimed, "Yeah!! It's him!! I knew it was him!" Jason briefed the members on the purpose of my visit,

clarifying that it was for research rather than commercial purposes, and emphasised the goal of supporting the sustainability of the *Osoode* music tradition. I then provided an overview of the project and the objectives of my visit before initiating the discussions. The conversation began with a focus on the history of the *Osoode* music tradition. However, some members started to dispute the accuracy of the information shared by others. I intervened, explaining that for the project's success, it was crucial to capture all perspectives. I assured them that all viewpoints were valuable and that I would reconcile the information collected. This intervention helped refocus the discussion, leading to a productive dialogue about the *Osoode* and the participants' personal experiences with it. Following the discussion, the group proceeded to set up and commence their performance.

During the performance, I revised my interview guide to include additional questions regarding specific elements of the performance that required further clarification. For instance, there were specific dance gestures during the performances that I sought to understand. Further, there was an interplay between the musical instruments and the voices before the singing began which I also noted for clarification. Following the performance, we took a brief break to allow the participants to relax before the discussion session. During this time, I reviewed portions of the video footage to formulate questions pertinent to the project. The post-performance discussion commenced with an examination of the rhythmic patterns played on the *Osoode box*, which the participants responded to. This confirmed my thinking that the rhythmic patterns served as textual cues that the performers could interpret and respond to. The participants demonstrated how different patterns were used to convey textual meanings. I asked for the specific phrases which I transcribed and also asked for interpretations and the historical facts behind it. The *Osoode* box functioned as a cueing mechanism for the performers, a detail that will be explored further in subsequent chapters of this work.

A key focus of the discussion was to gain insight into *Osoode* performance practices and to understand the themes of the songs performed. Beginning with the first song, the participants provided the texts of all the songs they performed. After one member recited the text, they sang the song again to illustrate how the text was integrated into the music. This process was crucial for musical transcription, as well as for transcribing the song texts. At times, obtaining the song texts without the accompanying performance proved challenging for the participants, leading to occasional disagreements about the accuracy of the information. Despite these disagreements, which were managed by encouraging open sharing of perspectives, the session was productive and engaging. The diverse viewpoints contributed valuable insights into the performance context. After compiling the song texts, the discussion shifted to exploring the context of the performance.

We also explored the dances associated with the songs, recognizing that the songs and dances are intrinsically linked. The participants explained the various dance gestures and, in some cases, demonstrated these movements without music, providing detailed explanations of the choreography. Once I had addressed all the questions in my interview guide, I invited the participants to contribute any additional insights they might have. During this open discussion, participants shared their personal experiences from past performances and highlighted other individuals who could provide valuable information on the history and development of *Osoode* music in Cape Coast. As the discussion concluded, I requested that they inform me of any upcoming performances. This would allow me to observe the performance in context and conduct interviews with the audience and other attendees to gather their perceptions and additional information about the *Osoode* musical tradition.

Following the session, I was introduced to the head of research at the Centre. Unfortunately, this department had no substantial information on *Osoode besides* a few photographs of

performances. The head explained that they were experiencing issues with the library and were in the process of reorganizing their resources. Similarly, the archive did not contain relevant information on *Osoode* music. I was also introduced to the center's administrator, who provided an overview of the organisational structure and operations of the center. I was given a tour of the center, including its rehearsal spaces and other facilities. To maintain communication, I obtained contact information for several members, which would facilitate correspondence in my absence. Additionally, some members committed to connecting me with individuals who possessed knowledge about *Osoode* music and promised to arrange future meetings.

The meeting concluded, and we prepared to meet with the *Obrempong* Folklorist. However, upon calling, he requested to reschedule the meeting. I informed him that I was already in Cape Coast as planned and suggested a brief meeting if possible. He indicated that the group members had dispersed and that coordinating a meeting was challenging since they had not convened for some time. Furthermore, he mentioned that he was unavailable, thus suggesting we reschedule. The research assistants expressed frustration, questioning if our trip to Cape Coast had been in vain, given that our objective appeared unmet. I reassured them that such setbacks are part of the research process, where data collection often depends on the participants' availability and schedules. We returned to Accra and planned another trip to Cape Coast. In the interim, I visited the University of Cape Coast Library to gather additional information relevant to the project before returning to Accra.

On another visit to Cape Coast, I focused on meeting with Twerampong traditional and 'the point' group to record their performances and interview them. The meeting was scheduled. We meet Twerampong traditional in the morning and then the point group late afternoon. We arrived at the performance space at about 8 am, and as was expected, members of the group were gathered in anticipation of the performance for the day. I greeted the leader and the

members of the group, and we exchanged pleasantries after which we began our setup. Here, I decided to begin the session by discussing what everyone knew about *Osoode*. This particular group had three different *Osoode* renditions they performed: *Osoode* jazz and *Osoode* highlife, aside from the Indigenous *Osoode*. I interviewed the leader to understand how these developments came by and what motivated him to create them. The discussion also included individual experiences with *Osoode* and their years of experience in the group. After the discussion, we started the performance of the day with the indigenous *Osoode*. In the course of the performance, I could observe some similarities and differences between the first group we encountered and this group. I noted these and asked questions on them after the performance. During the break, I took the time to ask questions regarding the performance and confirm the song's texts. After this, they performed the other renditions, followed up with discussions and individual interviews at some points.

Next on schedule for the day was the point group. Their meeting place is a drinking spot, which the owner operates. When we got to the place, some members were there while some were also arriving. I met the leader of the group, who mentioned that they were having an executive meeting before the scheduled performance. He introduced me to the executive, and we had some discussion about the group and performances, which were mostly during football matches as the group was primarily formed as a fun bass for Cape Coast Ebusua Dwarfs. After the meeting, they started their setup and began to play some rhythms on the drums. Once people heard the drums, they started converging at the place. After the performance, we met up with some group members for discussions and confirmed the song's words. This group also had some different rhythms: speech rhythms played on their instrument. These explanations are detailed in the sections of this work.

We visited each ensemble at least twice to collect data, replicating a similar procedure. While in Accra, I continued to interview participants by phone for several purposes, including clarifying information that was obtained from the field. I also continue to engage participants as I transcribe and write aspects of the project.

1.7.3 Data Analysis

Data collected from the field had been transcribed and analyzed. Transcription started with the interviews. Transcription was a bit challenging because it involved transcribing hours of interviews which were mostly done in Akan into English. Several expressions in Akan did not have direct translations in English. As I played back the recordings to transcribe, sometimes it was difficult to hear what the participants were saying. Other times I had to resort to my field notes and compare them with what I heard in the playback. I had to call some of the participants to clarify some of the issues for me at a point. The texts of the songs were categorized into themes to allow for both thematic and textual analysis.

1.7.4 Location and Research Population

Data for this project was collected in two locations: Cape Coast, the capital city of the central region. This location was chosen because it is the home and origin of *Osoode* music and has had *Osoode* performances over the years. Thus, it offers the best opportunity to trace the developmental trajectory of the music tradition. Cape Coast is about 150km from Accra, the capital city of Ghana. My fieldwork showed that Cape Coast has three cultural groups that still perform *Osoode*. This is because of the advent of cultural groups that have taken over traditional performances as part of modernity in the central region.

1.7.5 Research Participants

Research participants for this work were made up of four cultural groups from the Cape Coast namely, *Obrempong* Folklorist, *Twerampong* traditionals, the Point jama group and the resident cultural group of the Center for National Culture Cape Coast.

1.7.5.1 Resident Group at the Center for National

The Center for National Culture in Cape Coast is part of centers created in Ghana's regional capitals by the National Commission on Culture (NCC) Acts, 1990 (PNDC Law 238). They operate under the NCC and were commissioned to replace the then Art Centers (Coe, 2005; Schauert, 2015) cited by Richardson (2015). Their main aim is to develop, promote, preserve, and appreciate culture and the arts in the region. As part of this, a resident ensemble is charged with promoting and preserving musical traditions in the region. This study focuses on the Cape Coast ensemble and how they sustain the *Osoode* musical tradition.

1.7.5.2 Obrempong Folklorists

Obrempong folklorists is a cultural group formed in Cape Coast in 1988 by Kofi Badu, popularly known as Uncle O4. He was the master drummer of the first cultural group that was formed in Cape Coast. He has followed indigenous musical traditions in Cape Coast and has been trained by the elders who started these musical performances. Though his group is not very active, members of the group were interviewed to understand the factors that led to the collapse of the group.

17.5.3 *Twerampong* Traditionals

Twerampong traditionals is also a private cultural group that resides at Cape Coast. It was formed by *Okyerama* Pra with the aim of helping to sustain Indigenous musical traditions in Cape Coast and beyond, including *Osoode.* This group was formed because the indigenous group he belonged to was gradually collapsing due to some members traveling out of Cape Coast because of work and related activities. Because of the absence of procedures to recruit new members, Pra formed a group

that would continue with the performance of indigenous musical traditions to prevent them from going extinct.

1.7.5.4 'The Point' Jama Group

'The Point' Jama group was formed primarily as a support base for a Cape Coast Ebusua Dwarfs football club. Their main aim was to accompany the football team whenever they had a match to perform to cheer them up. Later, they began to incorporate indigenous music traditions in their performances.

These groups are discussed in detail in sections of this work.

1.7.6 Challenges in the field.

During fieldwork, I encountered several challenges, including disappointments related to participant availability and financial expectations. Some participants failed to attend scheduled interviews and requested monetary compensation before agreeing to interviews or performances. Initially, I approached this work with the assumption that participants typically performed without upfront payments, based on my previous experience as a research assistant in 2011. However, over the past twelve years, there has been a noticeable shift in the attitudes of participants, particularly cultural groups, who now exhibit a heightened focus on financial compensation. In contrast to the earlier practice, where payment was generally discussed after a performance and was often left to the discretion of the researcher, contemporary participants and cultural groups have increasingly demanded payment upfront. During phone conversations to arrange performances, some participants explicitly stated that their services were not free, promptly quoting the amounts they expected and insisting on payment before they would provide any information.

Moreover, there were multiple instances where, after collecting data, I faced difficulties reaching participants for follow-up clarifications. Often, calls went unanswered, or participants

appeared unavailable, but once I sent a small payment via mobile money, they would promptly respond and be willing to engage. This pattern occurred frequently, indicating that it was not merely coincidental. Additionally, there were occasions when participants directly requested financial assistance, stating they were in need. Notably, such financial expectations and transactional dynamics are inherent to fieldwork and are often unavoidable when engaging with participants and gathering data.

As previously mentioned, there were instances where participants failed to attend scheduled interviews and performances, often providing unclear or unspecific reasons for their absence. Despite the considerable distance I travelled—approximately 150 kilometres—to reach them, they would typically suggest rescheduling without acknowledging the inconvenience caused. On other occasions, although we were able to meet, participants could not proceed with the interviews due to health issues, which left us with no viable alternative under those circumstances.

1.7.7 Ethical Issues

It was important to employ a high level of ethics in the areas of confidentiality, trust, and anonymity for this research, which involved human participants and video and audio recordings.

Relevant information concerning the research work was provided to the interviewees and leaders of the groups and participants I interacted with. I explained the purpose and intentions behind the research to them, giving them the opportunity to ask questions for further clarification. I assured them that there was no risk whatsoever in being interviewed for this research, the results of which will be used for academic publications, conference presentations, and teaching purposes.

I ensured the partial and total anonymity and confidentiality of my interviewees and participants. Although many consented to being mentioned, a few wished to remain anonymous. For those participants who pleaded for anonymity, I relied on the requirement of informed consent as set out in McFee (2005). The consent of individuals and groups was sought before audio and video recordings of interviews and performances were made.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The study is organized into six chapters. Chapter One deals with the general introduction to the study. It includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, and the significance of the study, theoretical framework, methodology, and literature review. The second Chapter examines the historical development of *Osoode* music from Cape Coast and how it spread to other Akan communities. It looks at the origin of *Osoode* music and some of its precursors' music traditions. The third chapter focuses on the performance practices of *Osoode* music, *Osoode* repertoire and performance contexts. It offers a thematic and textual analysis of indigenous *Osoode* songs. The fourth chapter is dedicated to *Osoode* Highlife. It explores how *Osoode* was incorporated into Ghanaian highlife music and looks at some exponents who performed *Osoode* highlife. It examines their biographies, musical life, and analysis of selected songs. The fifth chapter discusses the ecology of *Osoode* and issues of sustainability. It employs the five-domain framework that Schippers and Grant (2016) advanced and how each domain reflects either how *Osoode* is being sustained or how it's being threatened. Chapter six reflects on the findings and provides a summary and conclusion. It also offers recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF *OSOODE* MUSIC

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the developmental trajectories of *Osoode* music tradition, starting from its origins among the Fante people and spread to other Akan communities in Ghana. In order to provide an understanding of how the musical tradition evolved, the chapter further explores both the sociocultural and historical contexts within which *Osoode* has transformed. It also presents some other major factors that contributed to the development of *Osoode* into various variants.

2.1 The beginnings of *Osoode*

Fieldwork revealed that two narratives explain the beginnings and development of *Osoode* music. First, *Osoode* started as an indigenous musical tradition that has developed to include elements of popular music styles. Secondly, *Osoode* started as a neo-traditional musical tradition essential to Ghanaian highlife music's development. The aspects of its beginnings as part of Ghanaian highlife music are seen in the literature on Ghanaian highlife (Collins, 2018; Sunu Doe, 2020). However, cultural bearers and practitioners see it the other way round. While they mentioned that *Osoode* was an indigenous musical style that gradually became one of the precursors of highlife music, scholars consider it neo-traditional music that started as one of the precursors of Ghanaian highlife. Most people interviewed during fieldwork in Cape Coast attest that *Osoode* is an indigenous musical tradition that developed during the times of war as one of the ways of dealing with the anxieties that came with the wars.

Kofi Badu[2], one of the exponents of this musical tradition, confirmed that *Osoode* started as one of the musical traditions that were developed during the time that there were internal wars in the Fante land. These wars were fought by the *asafo,* who were the warriors in their communities. *Asa* means war, and *fo* means people. Asafo, therefore, denotes the indigenous Akan political and military organizations responsible for the protection and defence of their respective societies (Nti, 2011). The *asafo* is a system of military bands that are organised in villages, towns, and traditional states, the membership of which is automatic and generally based on patrilineal succession (Datta & Porter, 1971). They protect life and property, expand territories, and prosecute war captives. The settling and conflicts during the pre-colonial and colonial periods were spearheaded and executed by the *Asafo* regiments. They lived as territorial units in the adjoining Cape Coast area from very early in their history. Coupled with their warring qualities, *asafo* members were mostly fishermen, known to be "aggressive, fractious, daring and not easily overcome" (Nti, 2011, p. 144). The *asafo* remains one of the essential institutions in the development of Fante Culture (Shumway 2011). Those who couldn't go to war were charged with the responsibility of caring for the community, especially families whose members were part of the warriors. *Osoode* was one such music that could perform this function well, as people got engrossed in the performance and forgot about anything else. Gradually, *Osoode* became a recreational music in the communities, even when there were no wars.

One of the main revelations of both the oral and written literature on the origin of *Osoode* music was that it developed out of *Adakam* music. *Osoode* started as *Ogua kɔtɔ yer*[3], literally meaning Cape Coast crab box performance. Cape Coast is a Fante town also known as *Ogua* (marketplace). It is the anglicised version of the Portuguese name Carbo Corso (Ward, 1967, p.

[2] Personal interview at Cape Coast 16th March 2023
[3] Personal interview with Kofi Badu and Okyerema Pra in Cape Coast, 19yh January 2023

57). The town began as a small marketplace that traded in crabs and fish obtained from a stream linking the Atlantic Ocean. The crab has since then become an essential symbol in the community, and it is heard in some of their recitatives and songs. Their central market is called *Kɔtɔkoraba,* named after the crab. An example of recitatives that revolve around the concept of the crab is the Oguaa appellation:

Oguaa's Appellation

Oguaa Akoto.	*Oguaa Crabs*
Akoto dweredwereba a woda hon etu ano	*Tiny nimble crabs guarding its whole*
Eduasa a wonye apem koe a,	*The thirty that triumphed*
Apem nntum hon	*Over the thousands*
Eyee Oguaa den?	*What would you do to Oguaa*
na Oguaa annye wo bi	*that Oguaa would not do to you?*

They conceptualise themselves as crabs not just because they traded it but because of some advantages that the crab brings to them. This is common among some Ghanaian communities, especially the Akan people, who have animals as their totem, and they mostly display them in front of family houses or on flags. In the recitative above, the second line describes the crab as small but guides its hole. The Fante people explain that the size of the crab does not matter, but its ability to guard its entirety very well. This means that though they may be small, they can protect what belongs to them well. They ask what you did to us that we did not retaliate, which is also an essential aspect of the crab. Other aspects of the crab will be seen in some of the song texts analysed in the preceding chapters.

In the expression, *Ogua kɔtɔ adaka yer,* which means Ogua/Cape Coast crab box performance/drum, as mentioned earlier,' the box was the main drum for the *Osoode* performance. It was a wooden box with a hole in it that made it possible for it to resonate and

play different tones. Playing different notes is significant because it imitates the Fante language, which is tonal. This makes it possible for the box to communicate with performers and audiences during performances.

Figure 1 Osoode Box. Picture by the Author in Cape Coast, 2019

The *adaka* (box) is the main instrument that characterises *Osoode* performance in all communities where this musical tradition exists. Subsequently, most performers believe having an *Osoode* ensemble without the box is not culturally acceptable. Moreover, the sound of the music the *adaka* plays comes from inside the box. Hence, the Fante people describe the performative action of the *adaka* sound-producing technique as *adakam*. Thus, the earlier version of the *adaka* music was called *adakam* after the name of the main instrument, *adaka*.

2.2 Adakam Music

As mentioned earlier, the name is derived from the box that serves as the main accompaniment for the performance. Meanwhile, in an ensemble, it combined the box, bells, a drum and sticks, which are all indigenous Ghanaian instruments. It began around the same time with musical types such as *Bosoe* and *Konkoma* in the Fante communities. Gyapong (1972) reveals that these two *and perhaps adakam* were popular bands that people enjoyed very much during the 1930s to 1950s. Particularly, in the central region, specifically Cape Coast and began to spread to other Akan communities.

According to John Collins[4], *Adakam* started with fisherfolk experimenting with the simple instruments to accompany themselves as they took breaks out of their schedules to perform. The initial material that was used for the box was the tea chests. Later, local carpenters began to replicate the Tea chests to produce desired sounds. *Adakam* music was lively and entertaining; therefore, it soon became the main accompaniment for recreational ceremonies in the community.

Gyapong (1972) further indicates that *Adakam* music began to spread to other Akan communities through people who travelled from Cape Coast to other places. He gives a specific account of Kofi Donkoh, a man who was one of the exponents of *Adakam* music on Cape Coast. For example, he travelled to Juaben in the Ashanti region with the *Adakam* drum and introduced *Adakam* music to the people of Juabeng. After *Adakam* moved out of Cape Coast, the musical tradition developed independently in different locations. Although the genre underwent some changes, it was still referred to as *Adakam.* However, the *Adaka* (box drum), the main instrument, was adopted into other musical types, expanding its scope and repertory. For instance, it became the main drum for Palmwine music, which developed around the 1950s and later became a precursor of Highlife music. By the mid-1900s, many Palmwine groups had emerged that maintained the guitar as their primary instrument but used the adakam as the main drum (Sunu Doe, 2020). Though the music was not *Adakam* music, the *Adakam* instrument was incorporated.

The *Adakam* instrument was later replaced with the *preprensiwa* a bass lamellaphone with three or sometimes four metal prongs (Kaye, 1992: 304, Edmonds, 2016: 73). The instrument's sound is produced by plucking three metal lamellae, which are attached in a row in the middle of a sound hole of a small rectangular wooden box made of plywood (Kaye, ibid). Thus, the *adaka*

[4] Personal communication with John Collins, 20th April 2023

was incorporated into other musical types among other Akan communities. In Cape Coast, *Osoode* became a trendy term for the musical tradition that uses the *adakam* as its main instrument. Though the *adaka* (box drum), like other Akan communities, was incorporated into other musical traditions like *Apatampa*, it was well known for the *Osoode.*

2.3 Development in *Osoode*

Osoode continued to enjoy patronage by Cape Coast and other Akan communities such as those in the Akuapim ridge, including Larteh, Apirede and Adukurom. Among the communities in the Akuapim Ridge, they maintained the traditional instruments. *Osoode* box as the master drum, the bell, and handclaps and almost the same performance contexts. Brokensha (1970) confirms that *Osoode* music developed from the Fante Area and was introduced to the Akuapim ridge through the same driver's dissemination practice among other communities on the ridge. However, there are different schools of thought regarding the first community in the ridge to have experienced *Osoode* and established an ensemble. While the people of Adukurom pride themselves on being the first to perform *Osoode* in the ridge, their counterparts in Apirede claim the same. While it is still unclear which community first performed *Osoode* in the ridge, they all agree that it originated from the Fanteland, specifically Cape Coast.

Osoode soon became very popular in Apirede, and every event or ceremony became a context for performance. Among the Akuapim people, *Osoode* was connected to the court of the chiefs and in most cases, either the chief or the queen was a patron to the ensemble. Beyond the musical performance, the groups also performed some welfare duties for their members. Avorgbedor (1986) also mentioned that musical ensembles sometimes perform other roles apart from the music performance. In his work, he mentions how ensembles in the cities are concerned about each other's welfare, and most start as voluntary groups because they are in a new environment and, as such, need to identify with people from their ethnic group. This

usually refers to people who have moved from rural settings to urban centres. However, in the case of Apirede, they are in their original homeland, yet they see the need to come together to care for members' needs apart from the music they perform. This suggests that though they have not moved from their location, they have been affected by things in the cities, partly because other members move to the cities and return. The ensembles at the Akuapim ridge usually employ Indigenous *Osoode* musical instruments. However, there are times when they use sticks to beat the rhythms. Changes in this musical type became more obvious after independence, when Ghana decided to go back to its roots after colonial rule. *Osoode* was caught up in Ghana's nationalistic revival movement (Nkrumah 1970: 64).

2.3.1 State Cultural Groups and *Osoode* Music

Culture remains central in studies on nationalism as is evident in the work of Turino (2000). As such, the importance of music in performing the nation within and outside Africa is a common theme in literature, as exemplified by the works of (Apter 2005; Coe 2005; Moorman 2008; Turino 2000; White 2008). Among these, state-funded cultural groups occupy an important place (Schaurt 2015; Edmonson 2007; Hagedorn 2001; Hirt-Manheimer 2004; Kaschl 2003; Nicholls 1996; Shay 2002; Turino 2000; Williams 1997).

In Ghana, for instance, after Kwame Nkrumah had led the country to freedom in 1957, as president, he launched a host of cultural programs that intended to strengthen the bonds between Ghanaians and Africans in general (Botwe-Asamoah 2005; July 1987). One such program was the establishment of the Ghana Dance Ensemble.[5] Another initiative was the establishment of centres of national culture in the previous regional capitals of the ten regions in Ghana to help promote the rich cultures of the respective regions. It was also to help sustain

[5] For detail discussion on the Ghana Dance ensemble, See Shauert (2015), Hirt Manheimer (2004)

musical traditions in the regions. This work focuses on the center at Cape Coast and how they have contributed to the promotion, development, and sustenance of *Osoode*.

According to Fio (2017), the Cape Coast Centre was opened in the early 1960s. Though there are many activities the centre engages in, most of them are outside the scope of this work as has been discussed elsewhere.[6] I focus only on the resident ensemble at the center and their activities and performance spaces with emphasis on *Osoode* music. Members of the group are drawn generally from community members who have had some association with elders who were involved with traditional music performances. Thus, before joining the ensemble, they were already knowledgeable of most musical traditions they performed, such as *apatampa, adzewa* and *Osoode*. In effect, recruitment is mainly from people who know how to perform rather than those who are joining without prior knowledge.

In a focus group discussion, most of them mentioned that their parents or grandparents were part of the indigenous community ensembles, which were extinct. As a state-owned ensemble, their structures, organisation, activities, and ideals were similar to those of their counterparts in the regions. They have an artistic director and a choreographer who showcase their creativity in performances. Meanwhile, the songs are the same old ones they learnt from their forefathers, which go through variation and improvisation. So, in effect, the composition of new songs is outside the scope of the artistic director. They explained that what identifies *Osoode* is the music itself, so if the dance is altered, the songs can easily be identified.

2.3.2 Private Cultural Groups and development of *Osoode* music

At Cape Coast, where *Osoode* originated, it started as purely recreational, where Indigenous ensembles performed in the community centres. These ensembles performed for entertainment

[6] See Fio (2017)

and sometimes during ceremonial events such as the life cycle. However, in the late 1960s, *Osoode* began to decline as the indigenous ensembles lost their members due to work, migration, and aging. While members were aging, the younger generation also needed something new in *Osoode.* This led to the formation of private musical ensembles as far back as the late 1960s. The first cultural group formed was the *Wasamba* Cultural Group[7] by Nana Kwame. The group's name was derived from the name of the deity of one of the Asafo companies in Cape Coast. The group was formed in 1968, and the main purpose for its formation was to help sustain interest in declining musical traditions because the indigenous ensembles were collapsing.

The group provided traditional music for events at a fee. Soon, they became popular in Cape Coast and attended almost all events to perform various types of traditional music, including *Osoode*. Okyerema Pra[8], a group member, mentioned that the government invited them to perform traditional music during national events like the celebration of Independence Day on the 6th of March. He recounts sitting at the same table with heads of state like General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong after performances during Independence Day celebrations. This shows how the government of the day was interested in indigenous music traditions. Some members of the *wasamba* group were tasked with training some schools in performing indigenous musical traditions so they could perform during national events. This was in response to the government's interest in indigenous cultural traditions, which resulted in the Ministry of Education's establishment of cultural studies. Elementary and secondary schools were urged to pursue cultural studies in theory and practice by establishing cultural groups for students. The *Wasamba* group thrived in the 1970s until some members established private cultural groups.

[7] Personal interview with Kofi Badu at Cape Coast, 16th March 2023
[8] Personal Interview at Cape Coast, 20th July 2023

2.3.2.1 Obrempong Folklorists -The Way the Elders Performed It.

Obrempong folklorist was a private cultural group established by Kofi Badu, popularly known as Uncle O4. This group also aimed to help perform and preserve indigenous musical traditions, including *Osoode* music. Uncle O4 was the master drummer for the Wasamba group. His Obrempong group performed at several events, including weddings and funerals. However, he decided to maintain *Osoode* music tradition as he saw and heard his predecessors perform it. Adding that a quest to respond to modernity will spoil the '*Osoode* he came to meet'.

In an interview, he mentioned that he aims to continue his ancestor's legacy. Thus, 'what he came to meet', so since he did not find his fathers and grandfathers adding Western musical instruments to the ensemble, he will not add them. He wanted to perform what he referred to as the 'correct *Osoode*'. This bothers on issues of authenticity, which used to be central in ethnomusicological studies but is currently not central to discussions. In the beginnings of ethnomusicological studies, researchers were interested in collecting 'authentic music' in order to preserve it. They neglected musical traditions that incorporate elements from different cultures, especially due to urbanisation. To some extent, these researchers believed that when music is affected by a change in any way, it is no longer authentic and, as such, not worthy of research.

Contrary to the concept of the 'authentic', the music affected by the change could not be considered inauthentic because attention was no longer on authenticity. Nettle (2005) advocates for the study of types or levels of change: radical change and complete change. Thus, a researcher should be able to study and understand the level of change and the possible causes. In the third type of change, Nettl mentions that any musical system will likely contain or require a certain amount of change as part of its essential character. He continues that most societies expect some level of innovation from their artists, varying from minimal to higher levels of innovation. Artists respond to these by developing innovations that appeal to community

members to remain relevant. Furthermore, this leads us to the concept of sustainability, which is also a shift from authenticity and, as such, a move from the conservationist and preservationist positions.

Unlike the conservationist approach, which focuses on preserving current conditions or restoring past ones, sustainability emphasizes managing change as an inherent and inevitable process. This approach aims to ensure continuity, maintain integrity, and secure resources for future generations. (Titon, 2009). This follows that conservationist and preservationist ideas are fuelled by keeping the 'authentic' the way it is without interruptions. Sustainability is in line with Nettl's belief that change is constant, so it is essential to study the music with the changes it goes through. Email (2018) presents a way to explore the continuous modernisation of indigenous African music and the continuous indigenisation of imported foreign music and musical resources. Here, cultural interactions with outside forces are deployed to progressively enrich, not destroy, inside resources. He continues that using "outside forces" is not limited to exogenous cultural forces but includes internal borrowings and cultural exchanges from within. His work shows how traditional musical styles have evolved progressively into contemporary modes of musical expression (Emielu, 2018). A recurring theme in his work is the concept of modernity which shows how the scope of ethnomusicological studies has moved beyond the concept of the authentic. This follows that changes occur as a response to modernity, which should not be seen as destroying the music but rather enriching it. This helps the musical tradition be relevant in the contemporary context and fosters sustainability.

Obrempong folklorists seemed to be holding on to the issue of authenticity to keep the elders' tradition. Currently, Obrempong Folklorist is no longer active, which can be attributed to several reasons. One is that the leader is ageing and needs help seeing the group's day-to-day activities. Some group members also travelled out of Cape Coast because of work and other

engagements. However, it is worth noting that some members joined other cultural groups in Cape Coast, allowing creativity and innovation in their performance styles. This raises questions about why they moved from one cultural group to another. Some members who have left other cultural groups mention that he needs to be more innovative and wants things done the same way. Though people enjoy music that way, sometimes it is essential to know the demands of the contemporary generation. Because the performance is meant for the audience, so if they do not enjoy it and they get a better option, they will likely go in for that.

2.4 From Traditional to the Neo-Traditional

Collins (2014) mentions that when Ghanaian popular music first appeared in the coastal towns and subsequently spread inland, popular and traditional music co-existed. He adds that as a result, both have influenced one another, with popular music drawing on traditional resources and traditional music absorbing influences from local popular music, such as Highlife.

> Neo-traditional music styles are modern forms of traditional recreational music and drum dances influenced by African and other popular music and dance but draw strongly on traditional resources and primarily utilise local instruments. Moreover, traditional neo-music has evolved within the social context of ethnic music and music-making - although sometimes, it is featured at regional and national festivals and on the commercial stage of hotels and clubs. (Collins, 2014)

Twerampong traditionals, one of the groups to come out of the *wasamba* cultural group was established by Odomankoma Okyerama Pra. Okyerema Pra has followed indigenous music traditions in Cape Coast since he was 9. He learned how to play the drums, sing songs, and dance by following the Indigenous ensembles in Cape Coast before establishing the private ones. He recounts how he practices the rhythms he hears on empty cans with his brothers whenever he returns home after witnessing a performance. After some time, he was noticed and began to get opportunities to perform with the elders when he was ten years old. In an interview, he mentioned that the first time he played a big drum in public, he stood on a chair

because he was small. Since then, he has taken a keen interest in indigenous music traditions. He established Twerampong traditions because the wasamba group alone could not serve the whole Cape Coast . Moreover, the leader had other engagements, which made him lose focus on the amba group.

Twerampong Traditionals was formed in 1982 to help sustain indigenous musical traditions in Cape Coast. Osoode was one of the main musical traditions that they performed. In starting it, the leader spoke to people interested in performing in the group and decided to train them based on his experience with the indigenous ensemble he belonged to as a child. Once the group was constituted, they started rehearsals, and people began to gather around their rehearsal grounds. Okyerema Pra took this act of the people as a sign that they were very interested in their indigenous songs, which motivated him to continue with the group. Through these rehearsal sessions, people got to know the group and began recommending them whenever there was an event. Rehearsals were done practically daily because the group was new, and members had much to learn. With this, they started getting invitations to perform at weddings, funerals, and other life cycle events. They performed at a fee, but sometimes people who patronized them could not afford it. They became people's favourites and will attend events when they know that Twerampong traditions are performing, even if they are unrelated to the event.

2.4.1 Osoode Jazz

Osoode Jazz is a term Okyerema Pra gives to his *Osoode* he performs incorporating western musical elements and instruments. After some time, he decided to add Western musical instruments like the guitar and keyboards to the performance of *Osoode* music. This was because he realised that people were beginning to like live bands, and as a result, some of the programs they performed, which lasted long, also employed the services of live bands. With this, he decided to incorporate the live band style into the performance of *Osoode* music, so

they serve both purposes. Once he introduced this, it caught on with people, and they began to engage them for either the traditional performance, the live band performance or both. This constitutes what is termed neo-traditional music.

Currently, Twerampong traditions have two meeting places: the residence of Okyerema Pra and a space they rent at the Cape Coast Castle. He has implemented a system to ensure the group is sustained even when some leave because of work or relocation. Usually, people hardly leave because they are no more interested in the group, but they go because work takes some of them outside Cape Coast. Another primary reason is marriage and childbearing. Most of the time, when the ladies marry and start having children, they cannot come for rehearsals. They must attend to domestic duties. The group's longest-serving member has been with him for about twenty years. Moreover, he is one of the people he believes will be able to take over the group when he is very old and weak. Some of the members work full-time, while others do other jobs and do this part-time. He mentioned that the work could be affected by the rainy season, as most of the performances are outdoors or in the open air. Thus, they only get invitations to perform for rainy reasons if it is an event in an enclosed space.

2.4.2 *Osoode* Jama

'The Point' is also a musical ensemble that performs *Osoode* music in Cape Coast. It started primarily as a *jama* group for Cape Coast Ebusua Dwarfs, a football team based in Cape Coast. According to Hooper[9], a long-standing group member, the group started around the late 1970s. He joined the group while he was still in basic school. At the time, there were several football teams in Cape Coast, each with their *jama* groups who performed solely to cheer the team up whenever they were playing. Some groups got their names from the location where it was established. For instance, the Jackson Five was established at Jackson Street in Cape Coast.

[9] Personal interview at Cape Coast, 20th July 2023

The point was named after the place where the group was established, where the group rehearses.

Jama is a musical style prevalent among Ga in Accra and characterized by a fast tempo meant to facilitate dancing (Gbagbo, 2022; Botchway Sunu, 2020). Although there is vocal accompaniment, they are often sung in either a union or a third or fifth apart. It is mainly made of vocals, a few drums, and intense hand clasping. Among the Ga, it can be used for entertainment, education, socialization, and motivation. The text and rhythm of jàmá encapsulate the beautiful tapestry of Ga culture, which the community exhibits through music, language, traditions, and rituals (Gbagbo, 2022). Though it started among Ga, jama has become a musical tradition used in most parts of the country for different contexts, irrespective of religious or ethnic affiliations. These involve sports, protests, and religious contexts.

At some point, members performed in *Wasamba*, the first private cultural group on Cape Coast. A couple of them moved from *Wasamba* to the *Odomankoma Boaadze* Cultural group, which also came out of the *Wasamba* cultural group, after which other cultural groups sprang up. Starting as a *jama* group, people began to like that style of music and began to attend their rehearsals to watch and enjoy it. Later, people began to engage them in community events without any charges. They performed in events as a community service because people enjoyed their performances. After some time, people who joined 'the point' jama group from other cultural groups like odomankoma boadze, and Obrempong folklorists, among others, suggested that they incorporate traditional styles like *Osoode* into their performances. For instance, Hooper, who joined the Point *Jama* group around 1980, was a member of the Wasamba group when he was in class four. As a child, he began to learn the performance styles and repertoire. Later, he joined the Odomankoma Boadze cultural group when it was formed and finally to the Point *Jama* group, where he has remained till today. He works as a cultural instructor in several

senior high schools in Cape Coast. In an interview, Kwabena remarks *ahɛn culture fo no na yɛ dze culture bɛ hyɛɛ the point ne mu* which translates as we the 'culture people' (referring to cultural performers from indigenous groups) incorporated the culture (which relates to the performances which include the songs, rhythms, and dances) into 'the point'.

'The Point' Cultural group members believe they have a vibrant musical tradition because most of their members have been drawn from the old indigenous musical groups that existed before the private cultural groups began. One of the members said during an interview, *Yɛ wɔ Tight squad paa*—this statement he used to describe the quality of performers at the point jama group. From that point, the members who had joined from cultural groups began teaching the old members traditional styles like *Osoode*. They taught them the rhythms and repertoire of *Osoode* incorporated and performed it in the *jama* style. In football, *jama's* performance is meant to give their team the home support they need to score against their opponent. In the same way, to some extent, it is intended to frustrate the opponents, especially when they have the ball, and it looks like they will score, so they get confused somehow and lose the ball.

The point was well known for the *jama* performance and their ability to cheer their teams to an extent; other teams were afraid to play their team not because the team was strong but the strength of their *jama* group. Later, some football teams began to engage them for performances when they had matches that did not include the group's team. Their popularity in football grew to the extent that they were employed as the first support team for the Ghana black stars.

Mensah[10] mentions; that we were the first musical group to support the Ghana black stars before all the associations later formed in Accra as a support base for the teams. Old members of the group recount traveling with the national team for matches outside the country with the sole aim of performing to support the team. Currently, they are the *jama* group for the Cape

[10] Personal communication at Cape Coast, 20th July 2023

Coast Ebusua Dwarfs. However, as mentioned earlier, because they incorporate some traditional musical styles like the *Osoode*, they are engaged in other events outside the funeral context.

2.4.2.1 *Osoode* Jama Instrumentation

Though group members agree that indigenous musical traditions like *Osoode* have specific instruments used, like the *Osoode* box, which characterises its performance, they do not usually use the *Osoode* box in their performances, depending on the context. This is mainly because, in football, the performances are heated, fast, and loud. They mention that the *Osoode* box may not be able to play that loud, and apart from that, the box's nature is unsuitable for fast music. Moreso, during the *jama* performance in the football context, the tempo and volume of the music are dependent on the nature of the game and the needed motivation and as such the box may not suit the performance. Jama is a musical tradition that is not confined to particular musical instruments. Gbagbo (2022) affirms that the *jama* songs fundamentally run on hand clapping but can also be accompanied by certain membranophones and idiophones when available. In some contexts, especially during the protest, cans and anything that can produce sounds has been incorporated into its performance. In that case, it will not be possible to switch musical instruments when a lot depends on them to satisfy the instrumental requirements of a musical style. So, they have particular drums that can produce the loudness they require, mainly used to accompany their performances. That notwithstanding, they have the *Osoode* box, which they use when performing *Osoode* in other contexts. This information deviates from what I information I gathered from the field, which suggests that performance can never be *Osoode* if it does not involve the *Osoode* box, which is its main instrument. Across Akan communities, most performers agree that if it is *Osoode,* the box must be present. So the question then is, is the *jama* context still *Osoode*? What makes *Osoode Osoode*? Is it just the box? If the box is

used to accompany any other musical style, does that make it *Osoode* just because of the presence of the box?

Fieldwork revealed that there are songs that are classified as *Osoode*. Moreover, apart from *Osoode* Highlife by highlife musicians like C.K Mann and his contemporaries, nobody composes new *Osoode* songs apart from those they received from their forefathers. This means that all the *Osoode* songs performed by these ensembles are the old ones with variations and improvisations but only partially new compositions. If the *Osoode* songs can be identified as *Osoode* songs when they are heard, then why is it, not *Osoode* because the box is absent? During fieldwork, recordings of the *Osoode jama* were played to some groups or people who believed there could only be *Osoode* by using the box. Most of the songs were familiar because I had collected several songs from several groups, and others were sung by some older adults who played with the indigenous *Osoode* ensembles who no longer perform again because of their age. As the performances were played on the personal computer, they could shake their heads in disagreement with the performance. After playing for some time, they were asked if this was an *Osoode*. Mostly their first answer is *eyi ɔnnyɛ Osoode*. which translates as this is not *Osoode*. I then s proceeded to ask, I have heard these songs performed by other groups as *Osoode* songs, so how are they not *Osoode* in this context? There were two main issues: the performance was too fast, and the *Osoode* box was missing. However, the songs could be identified as *Osoode* songs. The general impression was that; *wɔresɛɛ Osoode na hɛn nananon dze gyaa hɛn no*.. which translates as… they are spoiling the *Osoode* our forefathers left with us.

Nevertheless, as has been stated in aspects of this work and is central to sustainability is a shift from preservationist and conservationist approaches which focuses on preserving musical

cultures the way they are and preventing any influences thought of ass destroying the musical traditions.

It is worthy of note that members of 'the point' *jama* group understand that the box is a central aspect of *Osoode* music and its performance but cannot and should not be the main thing that identifies a musical tradition or performance as *Osoode*. Kwabena[11] remarks that we know the *Osoode* rhythms very well, and that is what we play, just that it is fast because it is in the *jama* style, and we do not use the box, especially when it is a football context. As stated earlier, most of the *Osoode* songs used in these contexts are the same old songs that have been recontextualized and reinvented. So, it should be possible to perform *Osoode* in other ways that help sustain the musical tradition instead of trying to stick to how it was performed to preserve it .

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the emergence and development of the *Osoode* music tradition. It has shown how the music moved from a purely traditional context to a neo-traditional one, incorporating Western musical instruments and another style like the *Osoode Jama*. One of the concluding thoughts of the discussion in this chapter is that it is possible to recognise *Osoode* songs even without the box, which is the main drum for the ensemble. The chapter has also shown that change and innovations in musical traditions do not destroy them, but they help them to be relevant in contemporary contexts.

[11] Personal Communication at Cape Coast 16th March 2023

CHAPTER THREE

Performance Practice and Repertoire of *Osoode*

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses *Osoode* performance practice and also examines the features that characterise *Osoode* music. Discussions include the organisation of *Osoode* ensembles, musical instruments and issues of professionalism as conceptualised by *Osoode* performers. This chapter also emphasises the innovative approaches of private cultural groups in interpreting *Osoode*.

As mentioned earlier, my fieldwork revealed that there are four distinct renditions of the *Osoode* music tradition by private cultural groups in Cape Coast: these are the 'traditional' *Osoode*, *Osoode jama* by 'the point' group, and *Osoode* jazz by *Twerammpɔn* Traditionals and *Osoode* highlife. These variations represent the evolutionary trajectories of *Osoode* music over time. Although *Osoode* performances exist in other Akan communities, this chapter specifically addresses three styles of *Osoode* music as performed by ensembles in Cape Coast. In examining the performance practice of *Osoode* in this chapter, I adopt Omojola's (2012) concept of performance practices, which states that:

> Performance practice is a multifocal term which covers the context and ambiance of performance, the ways in which an ensemble is organised, the role of the participants, the form and structure of the music, and how the music is communicated and mediated (Omojola, 2012:9).

Omojola's notion of performance offers a comprehensive framework encompassing the multifaceted nature of performance practice, which I explore within the context of *Osoode* music tradition. It implies that performance practice entails a nuanced comprehension of the

diverse elements that collectively shape the dynamics of the music performance, spanning from its contextual backdrop to the methods employed in its communication. I aim to provide a comprehensive insight into the *Osoode* performance drawing on Omojola's concept of performance.

3.1 Organisation of Osoode Ensembles

Nketia (1974), in his seminal work on the Music of Africa, notes that in African societies, participation in music may be a voluntary activity or an obligation imposed by one's membership in a social group. He adds that such a group may be of descent or may be a group based on the broader societal classification of age, sex, or occupation. This suggests that every society in Africa has its own principles that guide membership or participation in musical traditions. Agawu (2016) also notes that ensembles can be homogenous or heterogeneous depending on the conventions of particular communities. *Osoode* is a mixed group ensemble, with the age range of members varying among different ensembles. While *Osoode* typically involves a mixed ensemble, with both men and women participating, there's a noticeable division of roles: men primarily play the musical instruments, while women lead in singing and dancing. Koskoff (2014) confirms this in her work on music and gender, noting that in many societies, musical roles are divided along gender lines: women sing, and men play. Though men also sing, and women sometimes play; yet, unlike men, women who play often do so in contexts of sexual and social marginality (ibid). These mostly occur in the ritual contexts and the court of the chiefs. Though recreational contexts sometimes relax this rule, women playing instruments become the exception rather than the norm. Women are not allowed to play drums

in Cape Coast because the drums are considered sacred instruments that mediate between the living and the ancestors[12].

Traditionally, *Osoode* falls under the category of *"mpanyin goro,"* which implies a performance primarily intended for older individuals. In many Akan communities, such musical traditions are predominantly performed by elderly individuals ranging from approximately 50 to 80 years old or older, depending on their physical stamina and vitality. However, in Cape Coast, where traditional *Osoode* ensembles no longer exist, private ensembles often recruit members based on their interest in performing the musical tradition rather than their age. *ɔkyerɛma* Pra[13] recalls his childhood experiences of witnessing *Osoode* performances, noting that the performers were typically older individuals, while the youth observed and admired from the sidelines. Occasionally, younger individuals with exceptional talent were permitted to perform alongside the elders, but such instances were rare, as membership was primarily reserved for older individuals. This restrictive approach to membership may have contributed to the challenges faced by traditional *Osoode* ensembles in sustaining themselves over time, as the ageing of elder members and the lack of inclusion of younger generations posed obstacles to their continuity.

The *Twerampɔn* Traditionals, among the private groups involved in this study, had a relatively youthful composition. Its members fell within the age range of 25 to 40 years old. Despite the ensemble's four-decade existence, the longest-serving member has been part of the group for 25 years, while others joined more recently. Unlike some other private groups where members contribute dues and receive benefits[14], in this ensemble, the group's founder takes full responsibility for its members. Pra emphasised during his conversation that his primary focus

[12] see also Doubleday (2008) and Olumpemi (2016) for a detailed discussion on musical instruments and Gender
[13] He is the leader and founder of Twerampon Traditionals, one of the private cultural groups in Cape Coast
[14]Fiagbedzie (2019) and Avorgbedor (1986)

was sustaining the musical tradition rather than solely pursuing commercial interests. Consequently, he makes dedicated efforts toward this goal. Although the ensemble's members express interest in sustaining the musical heritage they perform, financial limitations often restrict their involvement, leading to greater reliance on the leader's support. For instance, when members are not able to show up for rehearsals the reasons are mostly lack of funds for transport.

3.2.1 We are Professionals.

"The 'Point' *Osoode* group had the most diverse age range among its members, spanning from 26 to approximately 70 years old. Many of its members either belonged to or were descendants of the original traditional ensemble known as *Wasamba,* established around the 1970s. This group boasted the highest number of participants among those involved in the project, with around 35 consistent members attending performances regularly. The 'Point' ensemble prides itself on being 'professionals,'. with professionalism measured not merely by training but by extensive experience gained performing together as a group. This sparked my interest in understanding how they conceptualise professionalism.

Professionalism is a term that has been used in many fields as each has its standards or attributes that qualify someone as a professional. Generally, professions have historically been described as specialist occupations where practitioners perform their work based on specialist knowledge and expertise achieved through specific educational routes (Carr, 2014). This suggests that before someone can be considered a professional in a field, such persons might have gone through specific educational routes that they apply to perform their work. From a sociological perspective, Freidson (2001) describes professionalism as a third logic of organising work, which is distinct from both the market logic and the bureaucracy logic. Thus, professions have traditionally been theorised as closed groups of practitioners, who provide relatively stable

services to society by applying specialized and agreed-upon knowledge to particular cases (Freidson, 2001).

In the context of music, Baily (1979) in his work on professional and amateur musicians in Afghanistan notes that the difference between professional and amateur musicians in their context principally emanates from one's family line. Professionalism in music is mainly hereditary, which suggests that there is a family of professional musicians, and their descendants are all seen as professional musicians. That notwithstanding, these people are trained and raised as musicians so they can live to fit the role of a professional musician. He observes that professionalism in music isn't inherently tied to a specific family lineage or innate talent. Instead, being born into a particular social category places pressure on individuals to fully develop their musical abilities to meet the expectations associated with their role in society. He adds that in some situations, some musicians who were not born into those families have been able to develop their musical abilities for economic gains but not to the level of the professional musician because the lack of early training acts as a barrier to the full realization of the musical abilities.

Buchanan (1995) notes that in the Bulgarian context, classical and other types of Western music were used as measuring sticks of professionalism because their music was modified to meet Western standards. Musicians had to be able to read Western notation and also get market value for the music they performed. This places economic gain as one of the main determinants of professionalism in that context.

Cottrell (2004) aligns with Finegan's (1989) assertion that amateur/professional distinction turns out to be a complex continuum with different possible variations. Adding that, the same people could be placed at different sides of the continuum in different contexts or stages of their lives. Cottrell observes that the description professional is a flexible, negotiable term

whose meaning inheres through use rather than an ambiguous definition. In a later work, Finnegan (2007) notes that:

> complications in the professional amateur dichotomy lie in the ambiguities in the concept of earning one's living in 'music', and others in different interpretations about what is meant by working in music. And others again perhaps the most powerful of all-the emotive overtones of the term professionals used by the participants themselves. my discussion focuses on the last category who use the term for themselves as the performers.

Aspects of my work resonate with the third group of professionals as noted by Finnegan where the participants refer to themselves as professionals. Though she qualifies those in this category as emotive, I explored my observations with the group who see themselves as professionals and the attributes that can be seen in this group to understand how they conceptualise professionalism in their context.

Bath (2016) aligns her thoughts with Taylor's twofold view of professionalisation as set out in The Sounds of Capitalism (2012). Taylor first maps out professionalisation in terms of expertise (highly qualified composers and expert advisers) and secondly, in terms of economic investment (large salaries and money spent on creating highly specialised adverts). She observes that within the context of Hungarian folk musicians, the line between professionals and amateurs becomes blurred. This is because folk musicians typically do not earn a living from their music. Furthermore, those who perform in high-profile contexts and consider themselves professionals often regard folk music performance as more of a hobby than a primary source of income (Bath, 2016). To some extent, my work aligns with the first aspect of Taylor's notion of professionalism regarding expert knowledge or experience. Nevertheless, the second section, which deals with economic investment, is irrelevant in that context. This is so because none of the group's performers use it as their primary source of revenue.

In the context of *Osoode* musicians in Cape Coast like the point group, their concept of professional musicians differs from the Western context. It is not related to earning from performing music as advanced by Bath (2016) or training but the experience that has been gathered as a group performing over time. It is worth noting that as a group, they may not see the individuals as a professional musician because professionalism here is seen in how creative abilities come to bear in group performances. Though individual creativity are important, professionalism is seen as a group, not as individuals. Agawu concurs with this as he notes that during a performance, a shared point of temporal reference guarantees the coherence of the whole without discouraging the exercise of individual creativity Agawu (2016). The issue of professionalism came up when I asked about where they rehearse and how many times they rehearse. The first response was; we have a venue where we hold our meetings and rehearsals where necessary but we hardly rehearse[15]. That notwithstanding, we are called on to perform, we can deliver because we are professionals. This went against popular perceptions of professionalism to some extent. For instance, Hunt (2016) provides some qualities of professional music in the Western context where hours of rehearsal feature prominently.

One of the distinguishing features of the point group was that they had performed together for more than 20 years. And Hence the cohesion any time they perform. It is worth noting that though some of their members join other ensembles, those ensembles are not considered professionals. The primary explanation for this is that, even though members of those other ensembles have individual years of performing experience, with different groups, they don't have years of performing together in one group. I explore this group's professionalism with the intensity factor by Nketia (1988) and a moment of correctness in African music performance by Tracy and Uzoigwe (2003). Nketia (1988) describes the intensity factor as the impact and

[15] Personal communication with the point group in Cape Coast (January 2023)

coordination in singing and drumming that is needed for priests to act out their role in ritual contexts. He suggests beyond the music that is performed, there is some energy and coordination that has to be sustained to create an intense environment where the priest can perform their duties, which is solely reliant on the impact of the music. He adds that though this is particularly important in the ritual context, it is a general prerequisite for a good performance. it is so important is that in performance that in some societies, provision for generating or sustaining the required levels is made in the distribution of performance roles (ibid). Though it might be a difficult concept for some, performers and community members are always aware of this fact in musical performances. Nketia notes that the intensity factor can make all the difference between what is judged to be a dull performance and a bright, spirited, or exciting performance of the same music (ibid).

In my interaction with the 'professional group' when I asked about some of the characteristics of a professional group, their general impression showed that they knew what they were calling 'professional' but could not put it in words. Some resorted to phrases like *ahɛn professionals no sɛ yɛre dzi agor na, ehu dɛ* morale *wɔ* mu. This translates as when we, the professionals, are performing, you can see there is morale or enthusiasm in the performance. Some also shouted vim![16] vim! as others tried to describe the professional performance. Some also explained that because of the years of experience, everyone knows what to do to keep the performance going. Nketia notes that the intensity can fluctuate, and in the context of the ongoing discussion, professionalism can be seen as the ability to keep the intensity from the beginning to the end of the performance. These moments in the performance also resonate with Tracy and Uzoigwe who state that:

> In African ensemble performances, there are moments when members of the group experience a thrill of 'rightness', at one-ness and

[16] Vim is a word that is usually used to refer to morale or enthusiasm, usually in the performance of Jama. See Gbagbo (2022)

> 'perfection'. When this happens, people often look at one another and laugh with pleasure. These moments of heightened enjoyment could perhaps be a clue to larger issues of aesthetics in African music, and although the moment is hard to grasp, the search for it will inevitably reflect larger relationship of music with life (Tacey and Uzoigwe 2003)

The segment of the performance that is being described alludes to a cohesive and intense time in the performance that happens at a specific moment, particularly when the performance has peaked. In the context of professionalism in *Osoode* performance, it can be inferred from interaction with performers that it is the norm rather than the exception or a moment in the performance. This follows that because of their years of experience performing together, they can sustain the intensity of the performance because of coordination between performers.

Thus, the notion of professionalism among *Osoode* performers, as revealed through my interactions with the point group, extends beyond formal definitions or technical proficiency; it embodies a collective sensibility rooted in experience, coordination, and sustained expressive intensity. While the performers themselves may not articulate professionalism in abstract terms, their descriptions—emphasising *morale*, *vim*, and seamless group coordination, reflect a lived understanding of artistic discipline and aesthetic coherence. In the context of *Osoode* performance, however, this "moment of rightness" is not a transient peak but an enduring state maintained through long-term collaboration, mutual responsiveness, and shared musical intuition. Professionalism, therefore, manifests not only in technical mastery but also in the performers' ability to sustain the emotional and rhythmic vitality of the performance from beginning to end. It reflects an embodied aesthetic that fuses skill, affect, and communal synergy, qualities that ensure the continuity and vibrancy of the *Osoode* tradition within the broader landscape of Ghanaian performance.

3.2.2 Rehearsal and Performance Spaces

Rehearsal spaces hold significant importance for these groups as they are privately owned, serving as creative sanctuaries where musicians can refine their skills and explore new ideas. For instance, Moshugu Kgomotso et al (2022) note that the rehearsal room with the ensemble was another space where creativity continued. Dedication to rehearsals is paramount for these groups, not only for maintaining performance quality, but also for staying attuned to their audience's evolving tastes and expectations to ensure continued relevance to the community. Even though all the groups perform *Osoode*, understanding the diverse audience demands across different contexts is crucial for private groups. By recognising and addressing these variations, groups can better connect with their audience and deliver performances that resonate with each unique setting they encounter. It is worth noting that rehearsal practices for the three private groups differ because of their different demands and performance contexts. The members of the resident ensemble at the Center for National Culture enjoy the convenience of being housed at the center. Their affiliation with the center constitutes full-time employment, entitling them to monthly remuneration and requiring their presence daily, regardless of rehearsal schedules. Consequently, they have ample time for rehearsals, given their daily commitment to their craft. The center boasts a main performance hall, which serves as the primary rehearsal space for the ensemble. Additionally, if the main hall is unavailable due to external bookings, alternative spaces within the center are utilised for rehearsals. Rehearsal sessions are usually used in practice choreographic dance pieces that are composed by the head of performance at the center. *Twerampon* traditionals also use a similar rehearsal structure, and they usually rehearse at the residence of the leader. This is common practice in most performing groups. For instance, Miller (2018) mentions that heavy metal musicians rehearse in private and play in public.

The rehearsal space for the point group is a branded drinking spot owned by the group's leader. This venue is their home base, providing a space mostly for meetings and occasionally for rehearsals when needed. The ensemble's musical instruments are adorned with yellow and green, which have become synonymous with their brand identity. Primarily, this group exists as the fan base for Cape Cost Ebusua dwafs which football team. Thus, they use the colors of the football team. That notwithstanding, I observed that colors are of utmost importance to the Fante people as they hold significance in community life. For instance, the *asafo* through which some of their recreational music traditions evolved all have specific colors and symbols that identify them (Adler and Barnard, 1993; Aidoo, 2011). These are displayed on the flags of each *asafo* company. The two colors mentioned form the primary colors for the *asafo* number 5 company. The yellow represents the gold discovered in Cape Coast, the green represents the fertility of the soil. These two colors are common in some Akan communities as these two natural resources are common in most parts of the Country. It also features in the official colors of the Ashanti Kingdom in Ghana. The point group's rehearsal sessions are more public than those of the other two groups that were previously addressed because they are not held in an enclosed space. The musical performances during rehearsals attract people to the spot, serving as an effective marketing tactic for the leader. Meetings typically occur once a week, specifically on Wednesdays. It takes the form of performances which are held in their performance contexts. As discussed earlier, the point group considers themselves professionals and thus, require fewer rehearsals. Wednesday meetings primarily serve as executive sessions to discuss upcoming events and logistical preparations. Sometimes, only executives convene to address member welfare concerns and strategise methods to sustain the group.

3.3 Performance Structure

This section discusses the sequence of events that takes place in a typical *Osoode* performance.

While each group maintained its distinct performance structure, there were some shared elements evident across all ensembles. One such commonality was the use of drum patterns, which served as vocables exclusively played by the drums or exchanged between the singers and drummers before the commencement of the performance. I observed this pattern consistently across all groups, regardless of the specific context or musical instruments employed. For instance, the *Osoode adaka*, a traditional drum, played this pattern in ensembles such as Twerampɔn Traditionals and the ensemble at the Center for National Culture.

Below are the vocables that are played by the *Osoode adaka* as well as responses from singers at the beginning of *Osoode* performance.

***Osoode* Adaka.**	**Response by Performers**
Agor mba.	*Yɛ wɔ ha*
ɛdɔm bi botum yɛn a?	*ɛdɔm biara rentum yɜn*
Ebaasa.	*Yɛti wɔndo*

English translation

***Osoode* Adaka.**	**Response by performers**
Players/performers.	We are here
Can a host overcome us?	No host can overcome us
Three.	We are sitting on them.

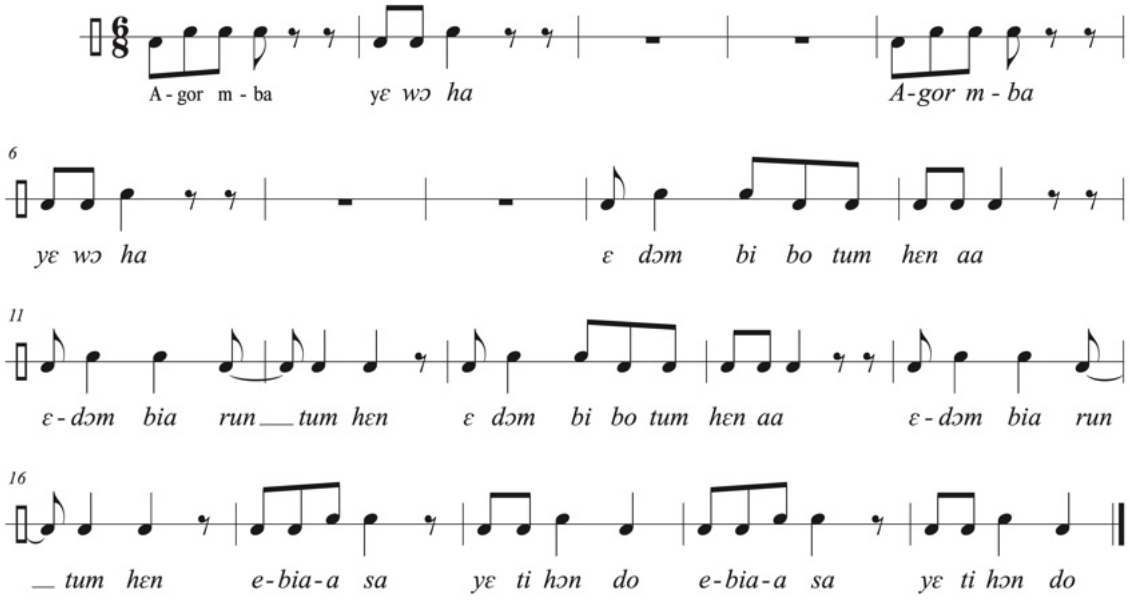

Figure 2

In the beginning of the *Osoode adaka* pattern, it calls; *agor mba.* The tonal inflection of *agor* is a-low and *gor*-high, so it can be seen that the transcription has the first note low and the next note high. And the same principle is repeated for the phrase that the *Osoode adaka* plays. Ensemble members are always aware when the *Osoode adaka* is "speaking," allowing them to interpret and react appropriately. Similarly, 'The Point' group showcased a drum pattern using the four drums typically featured in their performances. In this setup, all four drum players synchronised their rhythm while the singers eagerly awaited the commencement of the *Osoode* performance. These vocables from the *Osoode adaka* and the response from the performers serve as an introduction to most *Osoode* performances and reveal how *Osoode* performance is conceptualised among the Fantes in Cape Coast. During an interaction with performers from *Twerampon* traditionals and the CNC, it was mentioned that the *Osoode adaka* serves various purposes, including ensuring that the performers are prepared. It begins with the *Osoode adaka* calling the performers *agor mba. Agor* means ‘play’ which does not translate into playing musical instruments, but children's play or children's games. This confirms the play concept in

musical performances among the Akan as has been discussed elsewhere[17]. Can we be defeated by a host or group of people?; the second line asks. And then there is a response; no one can overcome us.

The performance is also conceptualised as a competition or war scene. The first reason is that *Osoode* developed out of *asafo* a warrior group as discussed in the second chapter, and as such they needed to motivate themselves as occurs in a war scene so that they will not be defeated anytime they begin their performance. Another aspect of the competitive nature of the performance is a message to other people who perform other musical traditions in the same community. *Osoode* is one of the performances that stood out in the community because people enjoyed the music and danced along. Consequently, when the question is asked if any host can defeat us, they are also referring to other groups who perform other music traditions. In Such instances, the performance is seen as a competition between the groups present and the different musical traditions to be performed.

Another vocable that is played by 'the point' *Osoode* ensemble is as follows:

	English Translation
abɛn nsu na bobaa wɔ mu?	Which 'water body' has stones?
Bosom po na bobaa wɔ mu	The Sea god has stones
ɔma nsu	It provides water
ɔbɔ awia	It provides sunshine
ɔma nam	Provides fish
Sɛ ofir tsitsi ama nsu aa	If it has provided water from the time of old
Na ɔyɛ asem papa	Then it's good

[17] See Arhine (2016), Nketia (1984)

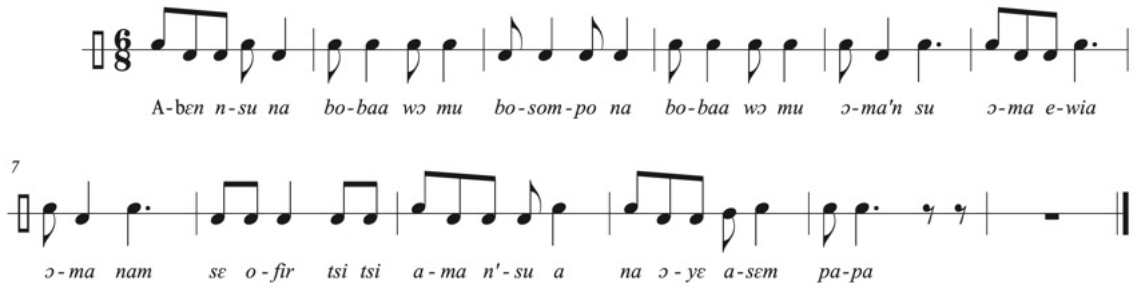

Figure 3

a prelude to *Osoode* performances. By interpretation, it starts with a question: which water body contains stones? And the answer in the Fante parlance, the sea is referred to as *bosom po*. *'Po'* means sea, and *bosom* is the Akan word for traditional deities. In effect, the sea is regarded as a deity for several reasons. Some of these are inferred from the preceding lines. It gives water, sunshine, and fish. This means the fish in the sea are seen as the sea deity's provision for them. It also follows that they believe sunshine and the sustenance of the sea are all by the sea god.

In a typical *Osoode* performance, the drummers are seated on a bench while the singers stand behind them, singing and clapping in rhythm. Dancers take turns performing in front of the group before returning to the singers' circle. Unlike other traditional dance forms, where dancers move together in synchronised patterns, *Osoode* performances mostly feature dancers dancing in pairs, taking turns to showcase their movements, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Twerammpon Traditionals in Osoode performance at Cape Coast. Picture by Author

However, 'The Point' group adopts a slightly different approach to their performances, particularly due to their primary objective of providing musical support to the Cape Coast *Ebusua* Dwarfs football team. In this context, the emphasis is on creating a supportive atmosphere for the team, rather than intricate choreography. While occasional dances may be incorporated, especially during moments of victory or to taunt opponents, the primary focus remains on uplifting the team through music. In addition, other contexts, such as national and regional festivals held in parks, demand some innovation. These venues offer expansive performance spaces, prompting dancers to explore creative ways to captivate the audience. As a result, they extend beyond the confines of the drummers' area and engage with spectators throughout various locations, occasionally inviting them to participate in the performance. The picture below is the venue for the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFAC) celebration. As shown in the picture in figure 5, the performance space is big as such some innovations from performers.

Figure 5 National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFAC) at Cape Coast December 2022. The canopies are mounted at the four sides of the park leaving a big space in the middle for performances. By Picutre by Jason at Cape Coast, December 2022.

3.3.1 Rhythm in *Osoode*

Rhythm is an aspect of African music that has been explored by scholars who have studied music on the continent. Agawu (2016) presents three ways in which rhythm is imagined in Africa. The first consists of using bell patterns or timelines as points of temporal reference in ensemble playing, the second is an unfolding of several rhythmic patterns in a performance, and the third is the lead drummer who draws on a stock of materials to spin extended rhythmic narratives. As can be seen in Agawu's presentation, the bell patterns form an important aspect of African rhythm. *Osoode* bell pattern forms part of a broader category of musical traditions with similar bell patterns known as *kununku* within the Fante culture. This rhythmic pattern encompasses various musical traditions such as *adzewa, ompe, apatampa*, among others. Unique elements including songs, musical instruments, ensemble composition, dance styles, and performance practices characterise each of these traditions. Despite these variations, there are common features shared among *kununku* traditions, with the main bell pattern serving as a unifying element. However, this pattern may also undergo alterations in terms of pitch, tone, or usage of different bell types.

Below is the basic *Kununku* bell pattern.

Figure 6

These are other variations that can be played with the *kununku* bell pattern depending on the musical tradition that is being performed. Most of the ensembles also use a second bell which plays interlocking rhythms with the main bell. An example is as used in *Osoode* music is as follows:

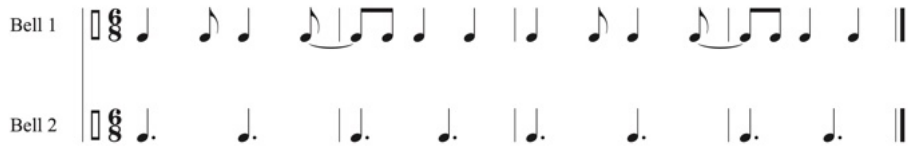

Figure 7

3.4 Osoode Musical Instruments

The choice of musical instruments in *Osoode* performances varies depending on the ensemble and the specific context of the performance. Private groups typically involved in 'traditional' *Osoode* often utilise a diverse range of indigenous musical instruments. Additionally, some ensembles incorporate Western musical instruments into their performances, a topic I explore further in this work. Across all ensembles, certain instruments are commonly used, including bells, drums of various shapes and sizes, and the *Osoode adaka*. Bells are crucial in maintaining the performance's overall rhythm and timing. While some groups use multiple bells of different sizes (see fig 8), there is typically a primary bell responsible for keeping the main timeline, complemented by additional supporting bells as needed for the ensemble's preferences. The bell pattern is a fundamental aspect of *Osoode* performances, with the primary bell responsible for maintaining this pattern referred to as the "*ndawa*." Other bell-like instruments utilized in *Osoode* performances include the *ododompo* and the *frikyiwa as shown in fig 9*. The *frikyiwa* consists of two metal components worn on the thumb and index finger of the player, struck together to produce sound, as illustrated in fig. 9 below.

Figure 8 Ndawa. Picture by author in Cape Coast, October 2023

Figure 10 Ododompo (left) and frikyiwa (right).

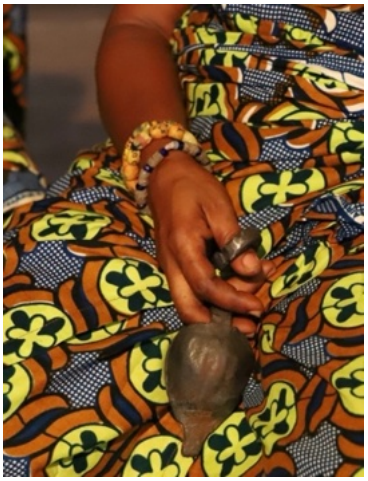

Figure 9

I discovered during fieldwork that the bell employed in most performances within the Fante community originated from basic everyday implements capable of producing the desired sound during performances. Over time, metal pieces were crafted specifically for this purpose. For instance, the "*aso ano*"[18] (the metal component of a hoe) was frequently repurposed to produce bell patterns. This resource was easily accessible, particularly as performances often occurred in agricultural settings, offering a leisurely backdrop.

3.4.1 Scholarship on African Drums

Scholars in the field of African music, including Agawu (1995), Chernoff (1979), Euba (1990), Nketia (1963), Locke and Agbeli (1980), and Amegago (2014), have extensively examined drums as vital musical instruments in the African communities. Amegago's work offers a comprehensive discussion among these scholars on African drumming. Drums are typically categorised as membranophones in the Sachs-Hornbostel classification system, which has historically been influential in classifying African instruments. However, this classification system has faced criticism from scholars for its failure to consider African perspectives.

[18] Personal Communication with Prah at Cape Coast, 19th January 2023. See also Arhine (2018)

Consequently, musical instruments have since been redefined to better suit these alternative classification approaches. Amegago quoted the following definition of a drum:

> A drum is usually defined as a musical percussion, made of a hollowed out (usually cylindrical) body, covered at one or both ends with tightly stretched membrane(s) or head(s) with tuning devices or pegs which tighten or loosen the membrane to achieve different tones, which produces a booming, tapping or hollow sound when played (The random House College Dictionary Revised Edition, 1988, p. 406 quoted in Amegago 2014:1)

Amegago rightfully challenges this definition, asserting that "the concept of a drum in the African context may encompass more than membranophones, extending to percussion logs, xylophones, and other instruments categorized as idiophones." Kunnuji supports this notion by adding that the Ogu tradition includes several instruments classified as drums that do not fit the conventional definition. Examples include *sinhun* (water drum) and *akonhun* (human chest drum). Similarly, Djenda observes that Central African ethnic groups do not adhere to the criteria developed by Sachs and Hornbostel in categorising their musical instruments. Given these insights, I sought to understand the situation regarding the Fantes and their *Osoode* musical instruments. Agawu (2016) argues that the system was developed without specific regard to Africa's musical traditions and instead aimed for global applicability. He suggests that it is time for African musicologists to adopt classification schemes that better align with African realities.

In the Fante language, there are two commonly used words for drum: "*kyin*" and "*Ayer.*" As mentioned earlier, the primary instrument used in *Osoode* performances is the *Osoode adaka* or *Osoode* box. During fieldwork, I inquired whether the *Osoode adaka* could be classified as a *kyin.* I asked because this instrument did not seem to fit into any category within the Sachs and Hornbostel classification system. Pra responded; *kyin* is a membranophone, whereas the *Osoode adaka* is not, so it cannot be considered a *kyin*. This response piqued my curiosity

further and indicated Pra's familiarity with the Sachs and Hornbostel classification system. However, it also appeared that he was attempting to align Fante musical instruments with these classifications. My approach to the research differed somewhat. Rather than seeking to confirm existing scholarly frameworks, I aimed to understand concepts from the cultural practitioners' perspective—the true custodians of these traditions[19]. I intended to explore whether their perspectives aligned with or challenged established knowledge. While acknowledging that the *Osoode adaka* did not fit the membranophone category, the respondent struggled to identify an appropriate classification within the Sachs and Hornbostel system. This highlighted the complexity of categorising indigenous musical instruments, especially when attempting to reconcile traditional practices with Western classification schemes.

According to the Fante system, the term "*kyin*" typically refers to musical instruments that produce sound through a stretched membrane (*homa*), often derived from animal skin. Conversely, "Ayer" encompasses a broader range of musical instruments, including drums referred to as "*kyin*." This term primarily denotes the process of production rather than the object itself. In Fante language, "*yer*" signifies the construction, weaving, or tuning process, particularly concerning musical instruments. Data collected from the field suggests that "*Ayer*" specifically pertains to the construction process of certain musical instruments, encompassing tuning as well. Notably, "*Ayer"* is exclusive to musical instrument construction and does not extend to other types of construction, such as building houses or boats. Therefore, it includes the entire process of crafting musical instruments. "*Ayer"* applies to musical instruments that may fall under the category of drums and others that produce sounds without a stretched membrane. This observation underscores the importance of delving into specific African communities' perspectives on their musical instruments rather than solely relying on

classifications such as those developed by Sachs and Hornblstel. The *Osoode adaka*, the primary musical instrument in the performance, does not neatly fit into any of these categories. While further research could delve deeper into the Fante people's perceptions of their musical instruments, such a discussion lies beyond the scope of this study.

3.4.2 *Osoode* Drums

Osoode ensemble employ various drums into their performances, depending on the ensemble's preferences. *Twerampong* Traditionals, for instance, utilise *Atumpan mba* drums, which translates as "*Atumpan's* children." These drums, derived from the common *Atumpan* drum found in Akan communities serve as speech surrogates for various occasions. The smaller versions used by *Twerampong* Traditionals play supporting roles within the ensemble, capable of mimicking speech and providing cues to performers. They are typically used in pairs, offering low and high tones, and occasionally they play patterns in unison with the *Osoode* box and singers during performances. Additionally, the ensemble employs the *donno* or hourglass drum, another prevalent instrument in African music. The hourglass drum's versatility in producing a wide range of tones makes it suitable for imitating speech. It features a double-headed structure shaped like an hourglass, with lacing that allows for tension adjustment to vary the pitch of the drumheads while playing. Typically worn across the shoulder with a thong, the player manipulates the tension by squeezing the lacing, altering the pitch as needed during performances (Locke, 1990:29-38). In the ensemble, it is used to give cues to singers and performers depending on the arrangements of the performance. The Centre for National Culture ensemble also has various drums they use for *Osoode* performances.

3.4.3 The Osoode Adaka

One of the musical instruments that is almost indispensable in the *Osoode* ensemble is the *Osoode adaka* or the *Osoode* box.

Figure 11 Osoode Adaka. Picture by author

It serves as the main drum for the *Osoode* ensembles. I noticed that some individuals emphasised the indispensable role of the *Osoode* adaka in any *Osoode* performance. For instance, Kwesi, a member of the *Twerampon* traditional mentioned that 'there cannot be any *Osoode* performance without the *Osoode adaka*. This statement however was contested by other groups who sometimes performed *Osoode* without the *adaka*. As shown in fig. 11, the box has a hole at one side which acts as the resonator. Makers of the box put the hole in a place they deem fit. With different tones on the box, the box acts as a speech surrogate and the main instrument that gives cues to performers. At the beginning all the performances recorded on the field which included the *Osoode adaka*, there was a call-and-response session between the *Osoode adaka* and the performers. The Adaka calls and the performers respond. Though the patterns played on the *adaka* can be heard as rhythms, they are vocables that are being played on the box. The *adaka* is played using both the fist and the palm, producing diverse tones necessary for speech imitation, as illustrated in the image below. Typically, the fist generates a deep, resonant tone, while the palm is used to create a higher pitch, as shown in fig. 12.

Figure 12 Okyerema Pra playing the Osoode adaka in a performance at Cape Coast. Picture by Author, October 2023

3.5 Costume

Ensembles in Cape Coast who participated in this project all had their costumes or uniforms, depending on their preferences. These are usually designed by members of the ensemble who are fashion designers, or they contract people to do so for them. Groups have different costumes depending on the program they are attending. For instance, funerals are events that usually require dark colors or mostly red and black so in that instance, performers avoid wearing colors that will traditionally not fit the event. Uniforms usually take the form of the men putting on the cloth the Akan traditional way which is ten (10) or six (6) yards of fabric to wrap around the body and hang on one shoulder, particularly the left arm (Danso et al, 2019) or using the fabric to sow shirts. Women usually wear slit and *kaba* or in some instances may be seen adorned in kente cloth in ways that compliments their dance moves. The *Abosoo* or Slit is a wrapped or sewn skirt and *Kaba* is a an European-inspired sewn blouse (ibid) as seen in fig. 13.

Figure 13 Osoode performance by Center for national culture in Cape Coast. Picture by Author

3.6 Presentation of Songs

Osoode performances usually begin with songs in speech rhythm, meaning the initial songs are played without drums. These songs are meant to prepare the performers and also invite people to join the performance. The songs are mostly declamatory and sometimes in a melodious form, without instrumental accompaniment. Common examples of preludes I witnessed during my fieldwork are:

	English Translation
Onyina ee	Silk Cotton tree
Benta ehur	Cotton
Onyina wusuu ara saana benta ehur oo ayee	The big silk cotton tree only produces cotten
Onyina ee	Silk Cotton tree
Benta ehur ooo	cotton
Onyina wusuu	The big silk cotton tree
Benta ehur oooo	Cotton

Interpretation.

"This song serves as a metaphorical lesson in humility, using the silk cotton tree, known as *'Onyina'* in the Fante language, as its central symbol. Though the tree, with its impressive size and numerous branches, occupies a significant space, it produces only cotton, a lightweight material. Interpreting the song reveals a message: appearances can be deceiving. Just as the silk cotton tree may appear impressive, the lightness of its fruit reminds us that not everything that glitters is gold. Through this analogy, the song imparts wisdom about the value of humility and the importance of looking beyond outward appearances.

3.7 Osoode 'Jazz'

There is yet another rendition of *Osoode* which is referred to as *Osoode* jazz by *Kyerema* pra who is the leader of Twerampong traditionals. This is one way Pra interpretation and recontextualisation of *Osoode*. When I approached *Kyerama* Pra during my fieldwork to discuss this project and inquire about his group's performances, he asked: "Which kind of *Osoode* do you want?" This question hinted at the existence of various renditions of *Osoode*. I inquired further if there were variations beyond the traditional form. Pra's response revealed that his ensemble also specialises in *Osoode* highlife and *Osoode* jazz. These adaptations were developed partly through his musical training and interactions with other musicians along his musical journey. Pra's musical journey traces back to his time as a member of *Wasamba*, the first private cultural group in Cape Coast during the 1970s. It was during this period that he crossed paths with Kwaa Mensah[20], renowned as the "grand old man of palmwine guitar" (Collins, 2018, p. 83). Pra mentioned that Kwaa Mensah taught him *kwaw,*[21] a guitar-playing style developed by Kwaa Mensah. He sought to integrate the guitar into the *Osoode*

[20] Born in 1920 and, up until he died in 1991, he was recognised as the master of the palmwine type of highlife.
[21] See Sunu Doe 2020

performances of the *wasamba*, but the group's leaders were not receptive to this idea. They preferred to perform the *Osoode* 'the way their elders performed it. In the early 1980s when he started the *Twerampong* traditionals, he introduced the guitar as part of their *Osoode* performances. However, as will be expected, this was faced with some opposition as community members felt that he was 'destroying' *Osoode* music. After some time, it caught on with the youth who were interested in his introduction of the guitar, then he added the bass guitar. In this performance, they maintain the old *Osoode* songs but only add the guitars to it. Apart from the guitars, they incorporate other musical instruments in their performance. As Omojola (2012) notes, individual musicians constantly revise their musical styles, while musical traditions change over a period of time. Depending on the contexts other instruments like the *gome* and the keyboard are incorporated.

Osoode Jazz is the name given to *Osoode* performance which involves full dance band instruments, especially with the inclusion of the western drums. This he developed to give his audience a feel of a live band which patrons requested during some of their performances. In the beginning, he realised that when they go to perform at events, a dance band is also invited to perform after their performances. Recognising the evolving musical landscape and the diverse preferences of audiences, *Kyerama* Pra, the leader of the *Twerampon* Traditionals, made a decision to integrate full dance band instruments, predominantly of Western origin, into their performances. However, amidst this modernisation, he remained steadfast in preserving the essence of indigenous music. During an interview, Pra emphasised his commitment to maintaining the integrity of *Osoode* music while embracing new instrumental resources. The introduction of *Osoode* jazz by the *Twerampon* Traditionals signifies a departure from traditional *Osoode* music in terms of instrumental accompaniment and musical composition. Unlike the traditional *Osoode* repertoire, which comprises age-old songs passed down through generations, *Osoode* jazz introduces fresh compositions with entirely new texts and melodies.

While traditional *Osoode* allows for improvisation and minor variations, the realm of *Osoode* jazz expands to incorporate innovative musical expressions within the framework of the *Osoode* tradition.

As previously mentioned, the *Osoode* jazz repertoire includes compositions by Pra, allowing for the incorporation of various themes tailored to the context of the performance and the preferences of the audience. In the following example, Pra addresses themes such as the importance of expressing gratitude to God, particularly during the year-end festivities, such as Christmas, which are celebrated globally. Pra's perspective underscores the contrast between Western-centric Christmas themes and the realities of Ghanaian life. He observes that many Western Christmas songs are rooted in wintry imagery, which does not resonate with the Ghanaian experience, where snow and cold weather are absent.

	English Translation
Hom mma yɛnkɛ da Onyame ase	Let's go and thank God
Na afe pa ato hɛn oo	He has given us a good year
Hom mma yɛnkɛ da Onyame ase	Let's go and thank God
Na afe pa ato hɛn oo	He has given us a good year
Nyame yɛ kɛse	God is great
Nyame yɛ kɛse	God is Great
Ne dzin so ooo ɔbor adze nyinaa	His name is above all
Aaa yooo	Aa yoo
Aa yoo	Aa yoo

Translation

This song though composed with the end-of-year festivities in mind, it's a song that can be used to mark any celebration of the year like festivals and birthdays.

The next song is a song that teaches lessons about hard work. It involves some non-lexical vocables that cannot be translated. These non-lexical vocables also feature in *Osoode*.

Zaminama na oye	Hard work is good
wɔ yaayee ee wɔ yaayee	*wɔ yaayee ee wɔ yaayee*
Zaminama na oye	Hard work is good
wɔ yaayee ee wɔ yaayee	*wɔ yaayee ee wɔ yaayee*
eee maaawo	Eee maaawo
mawo maw mawo mawo	Mawo maw mawo mawo
eee meewo	Eee meewo
meewo meewo meewo.	Meewo Meewo meewo

The import of the song is that *zaminama* is good. *Zaminama* is a term usually used to refer to people who have come from the northern part of Ghana to seek greener pastures in the south. Because these people come down with the main aim of making money, they are prepared to do any hard work that will earn them the money they need. Most people in the southern part of Ghana request the services of these people for work that requires a lot of strength. In Accra, they work as porters and can be seen carrying very heavy loads. The song teaches that hard work pays and that the resilience of the *zaminama* people should be emulated.

In this last example of *Osoode* jazz by twerampon traditionals they make use of code-switching by singing in both the English and Fante languages.

	English Translation
Adasa mba,	Community members
Obiara na ne haw	Everyone has their struggles
Obiara na ne su	Everyone has something they cry about
obirara na ne memkye wɔ wiase mu	

Obiara na n'atowerɛnkyem	Everyone faces tragedies
Obiara na ne musu	Everyone stuff they are dealing with
Onyame ambɔ hɛn dem	Tjats not how God created us
Onyame onndzi fɔ	God is never to be blame
Its man's wickedness	
Man's power drunkenness	
Man's greediness	

In the above *Osoode* jazz song, Pra incorporates the English language in response to modernity and also to widen his audience base. There are a couple of songs where he incorporates the English language. He mentioned in conversation that he is always trying to find new ways of making the music attract more people, so it doesn't fade away. It can also be a way to help identify with the elite and some of the foreigners who engage him for research purposes. The song teaches about lessons in life which is typical of *Osoode* songs. It calls on community members to change their bad habits because a lot of the tragedies in this life are as a result of the wickedness of man.

3.8 The Musical and textual structure of Osoode

This section provides the musical and textual structure of *Osoode* music as performed by the ensembles who participated in this project. The analysis aims to reveal the core features that characterize *Osoode* music, which will form the basis for examining some of the changes and retentions that have occurred in *Osoode* in its process of recontextualisation as evident in Osoode highlife music. Central to the musical analysis is the melodic and harmonic structures of *Osoode* music. I also look at the music's form and some ideas about improvisation as it occurs in *Osoode* music. I also explore some creative process features that are incorporated in *Osoode* song text.

3.8.1 Melody and Form

As simple and common as the call and response form may seem because of its commonality in African music scholarship, it's important to highlight how specific communities deal with the issue of call and response. Agawu (2016) encourages his readers to interrogate each usage freshly rather than rely on a presumed transcultural meaning in his discussion of call and response. The leader or the soloist usually does the call while the rest of the people respond. My interlocutors describe the work of the call as *tu* which literally means to dig. *Tu ndwom* in the Fante means lead the song or start the song. This idea of digging helps to understand how the work of the leader or the 'caller' is conceptualised. Firstly, it gives an idea of an active search for the song to be sung and secondly, it relates to a difficult aspect of the singing left for the leader to do. This includes singing the highest part of the song and also being tasked with the work of improvisation. The leader mostly sings the highest note in each song which is mostly the highest pitch of the song.

Generally, three main forms of call and response can be identified in *Osoode* songs. In the first category, the chorus sings exactly what the leader or the cantor sings, one of the most common forms of response. There is the second category of call and response where what the response sings is an elaboration or gives more meaning to what the leader or Cantor sings. In such circumstances sometimes the leader joins in the chorus but their part is improvisatory both in melody and in the text. In the third form of call and response, there is the call, the chorus or response, and then the last part of the song, where the leader improvises both the melody and the text and the chorus responds.

In discussing the first dimension of the call-and-response pattern, I draw on the *Osoode* song *Onyina*. This is one of the common songs that all ensembles that participated in the work performed. As mentioned earlier, it is usually performed as a prelude to the *Osoode*

performances and as such its performed both in the proclamatory form that is without strict meter and also performed in strict meter after the call and response pattern between the *Osoode* adaka (box) and the performers. The song begins with the leader starting the song in a high pitch and gradually descending to the lower pitches as the song progresses towards the end of the song, which is also a common feature in indigenous music in African communities, as mentioned by Agawu (2016). It is worthy of note that though the chorus repeats or in a way mirrors what the cantor sings, there are a few differences between what the cantor sings and what the chorus sings. The first aspect is that the chorus may sing the same words as sing by the leader but their part begins on a note lower that what the cantor sings. This in reflects that aspect of the leader digging the song as is conceptualized by the Fante. Thus, more effort is needed in the part the leader sings than the part of the chorus.

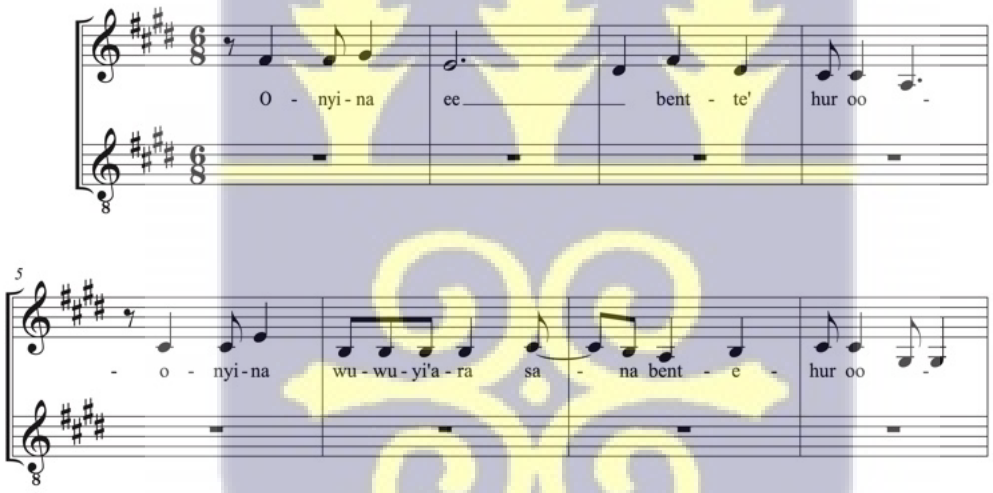

Figure 14

In the excerpt in figure 14 above, the cantor starts her part from F4. Though it's not the highest note of the song, it is very close to the highest note in the song, that is, G4, which appears two notes after the first note. The chorus starts on B3 and follows a melodic contour similar to the cantor. As Shown in Fig.15 below

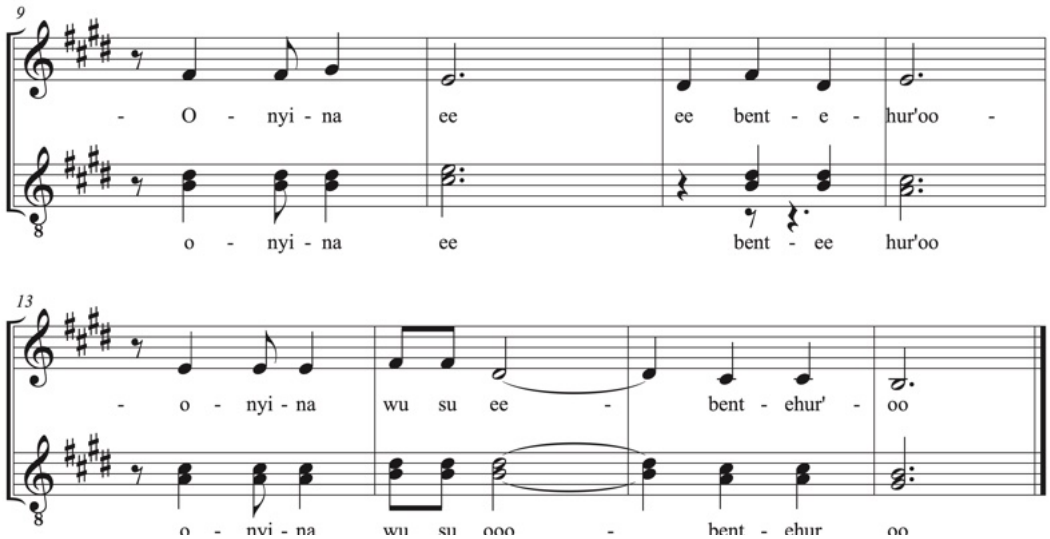

Figure 15

I observed that as the chorus sings, the cantor sings a part similar to the part sung at the beginning with a few variations. In the first four bars of the chorus, the leader repeats what was sung in the beginning but in the fifth bar, some variations are introduced in order introduced to 'agree' with the chorus. This is when the leader is singing alone as part of the call, they are at liberty to improvise, but when they join the chorus, they try to minimise improvisations because there should be some agreement between what the two parts sings. It is worth noting that whenever the cantor sings their part, they try to vary it slightly, which shows the creative abilities of the one who leads the songs.

The second category of call and response found in *Osoode* songs will be illustrated with the song titled *sɛ wɔregye nso yɛnfa mma hɔn* which means they want to take it but we wont give it to them. A little background to the song is that hospitality was an important part of community life in the past, so strangers became part of some homes because they were welcomed and treated well. This made them stay long, blend into the family system, and become like family members. However, over time, because of their long stay, some of them tried to fight for rights and privileges that are the preserve of the family members. For instance, some of them wanted chieftaincy positions among other important positions in the community. This song is a song of resistance family people sing to show strangers who have stayed with them for long that

some positions can not occupy no matter how long they have stayed with them. The song begins with the call from the soloist, starting from the highest note or point in the song. The chorus then responds in the same way as can be seen in the first category of *Osoode* call and response mentioned earlier. As can be seen in figure 16, though the chorus seems to be repeating what the soloist sang, they start from a lower pitch in terms of pitch register. Since this aspect of the song communicates the main theme, it is repeated for some time. The number of times that part is repeated is usually at the discretion of the soloist. During the performance, each time that part is repeated, the performers sound louder and increase their energy in performing as if to signal to the strangers that there is no way they will be allowed to occupy positions reserved for family members. Sometimes, other group members take up the role of the soloist during the performance of songs of this nature to introduce some kind of variety and enthusiasm in the performance.

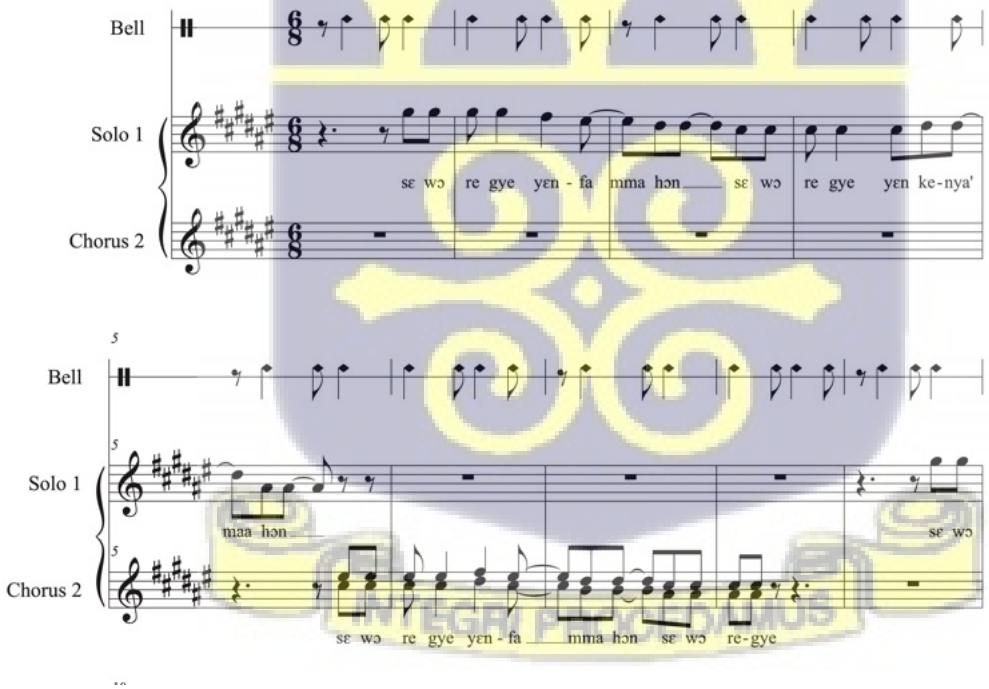

Figure 16

The second aspect of the song presents more information that serves as the basis for which the strangers should be prevented, as seen in figure 16.

From bar 21, they begin to call on *Agyaawa,* which my interlocutors describe as the name usually given to the first woman to settle in a place from which all other people proceed. They call on this person as a witness to what is happening. It can be seen that the name is repeated for emphasis. In terms of the melodic pattern, a lower pitch is used the first time the name is mentioned. Then in the second instance, a higher pitch was used. The repetition is for emphasis as they call on this person desperately as a witness that people who have been helped as strangers now want to take over family positions. The melody is shaped by the use of 'ee', which is common among the Fantes in their language and music. In everyday community life, if someone wants to get another person's attention and wants to do that with a sense of urgency, they shout the name, ending with a prolonged 'ee'[22]. This tells community members that the person is needed urgently; in most circumstances, other people may do the same. sometimes, if someone knows where they can be found, they rush there to call the person or send someone to call them. As is common in everyday life, when the person is called once, a higher pitch is used in the second instance, and the 'ee' is prolonged more than the first as this serves to so the level of urgency. The melodic shape of that aspect of the song mirrors what happens in the community as can be seen in bar 16, the name starts on the C4 note and moves to D4. In the second instance, it starts from D4 in bar 21. Then in the next section, the name is personalized in a way to help them to drive home the point. *hɛn ara hɛn Akua Agyaawa* means our own *Akua Agyawaa*, which helps emphasize that the strangers fighting for the position are not part of them.

[22] Focused group discussion with the Center for National Culture at Cape Coast, 19 January 2023

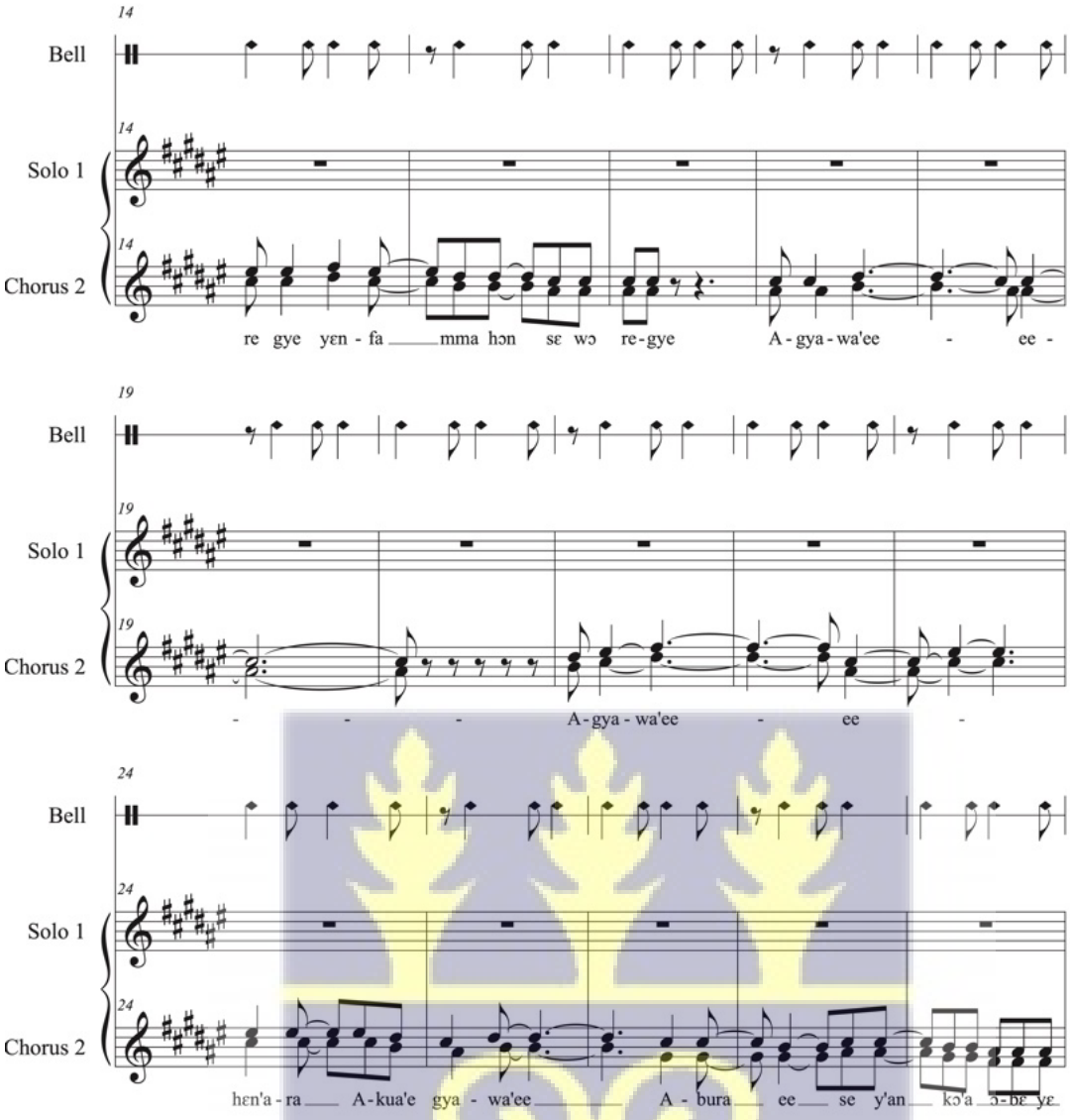

Figure 17

The final part of the song asks a rhetorical question: *Abura sɛ yanko a ɔbɛ yɛ* dɛn which literally could be interpreted as Abura, what will happen when we do not fight? Among the Fante, the statement implies that the fight is unnecessary. Abura is a community in Cape Coast, the site for this research. It is a call to appeal on the conscience of the strangers that the fight is not necessary so it should be avoided.

The last category of call and response form I observed in the performance of *Osoode* songs comes in three sections. In the part of the song, the leader sings a part to which the chorus responds. As was discussed with the second category, this aspect of the song could stand alone

with a repetition of the leader's part and the chorus with some sense of completion. Then there is a second section, which is sung by the chorus with the leader joining in at their discretion. The final part is also a call-and-response form, which is repeated for some time as desired, with some variations and improvisations from the leader. I illustrate this form with *Akokɔ Atwa nsu* which means the fowl has crossed the river. This song is meant to speak against envy, jealousy and hatred. The theme creates a scenario of giving help to someone who doesn't deserve it. It starts with the leader singing their part by repeating the phrase *yɛ'ama akokɔ etwa nsu oo* (we allowed the fowl to cross the river). This aspect of the song is repeated for some time to set the theme for the rest of the song. As long as the leader repeats this aspect of the song, it is not time for the chorus to join in. Maame Budua, a song leader with *Twerampon* traditionals, mentioned that this repetition also helps the leader to wait till the other performers are ready to sing the chorus before inviting them to join the singing. This is shown through their facial expressions and general performance involvement. As can be seen in 18 the part the leader sings alone without calling on the chorus to join maintains a high note at the ending. The first part starts from E4, moves up to G4, descends stepwise to D4, and ends on E4 in the first 5 bars.

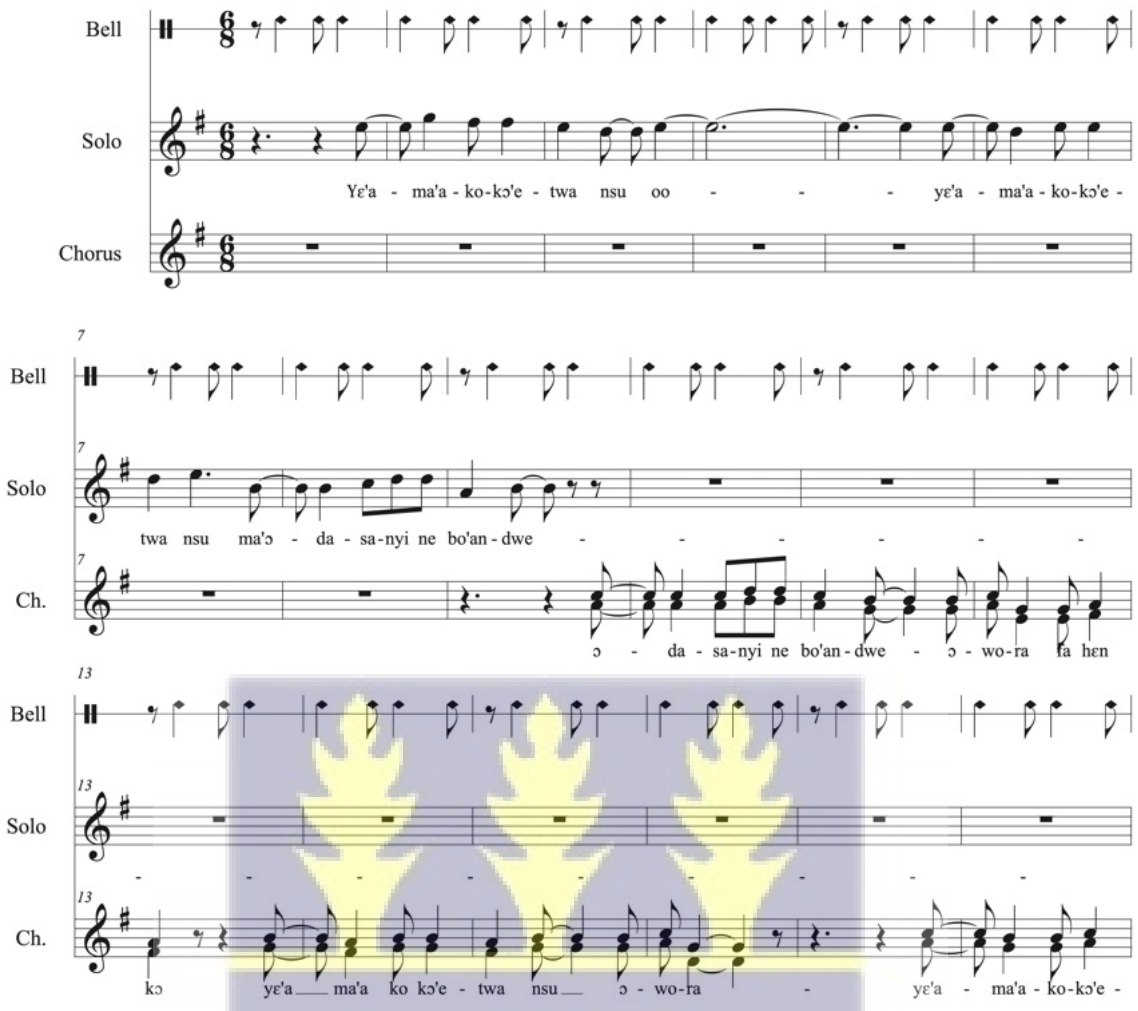

Figure 18

There could be some variations in the singing of the first part but it still ends on a high pitch (E4). As a signal for the chorus to join in the singing, the leader adds another phrase to the beginning part, which finally brings the pitch of the melody down to the level where the chorus can join in the singing. The text in that part also elaborates on the part. *ɔdasanyi ne bo andwe ɔwora fa hɛn kɔ* implies people are not happy ɔwora drown us. ɔwora is the name given to one of the water bodies in Cape Coast which also serves as a diety to the people. In the song they appeal to the diety and says that if what they did was wrong, they should be drowned in the river when they attempt to cross it. This is a common practice in Cape Coast and among other Akan communities and broadly across Africa where people are made to take an oath asking a

diety in a water body[23] to drown them if they are not speaking the truth. The second part ends on B4 in bar 9 which then sets the tone for the chorus to join in starting their parts in A4 and C4. The chorus part have text woven around the same with slight variations. The chorus ends with *ee m'asɛm ara nyi,* which by implication means this is the scenario or this is the case, presenting it to people who should judge whether or not the person is at fault. It is phrase that is usually used when people know they are being accused wrongly. They present the full story and leave it to people to judge for themselves. In the melodic structure of the song, this is the lowest part of the song when the scenario has been fully presented.

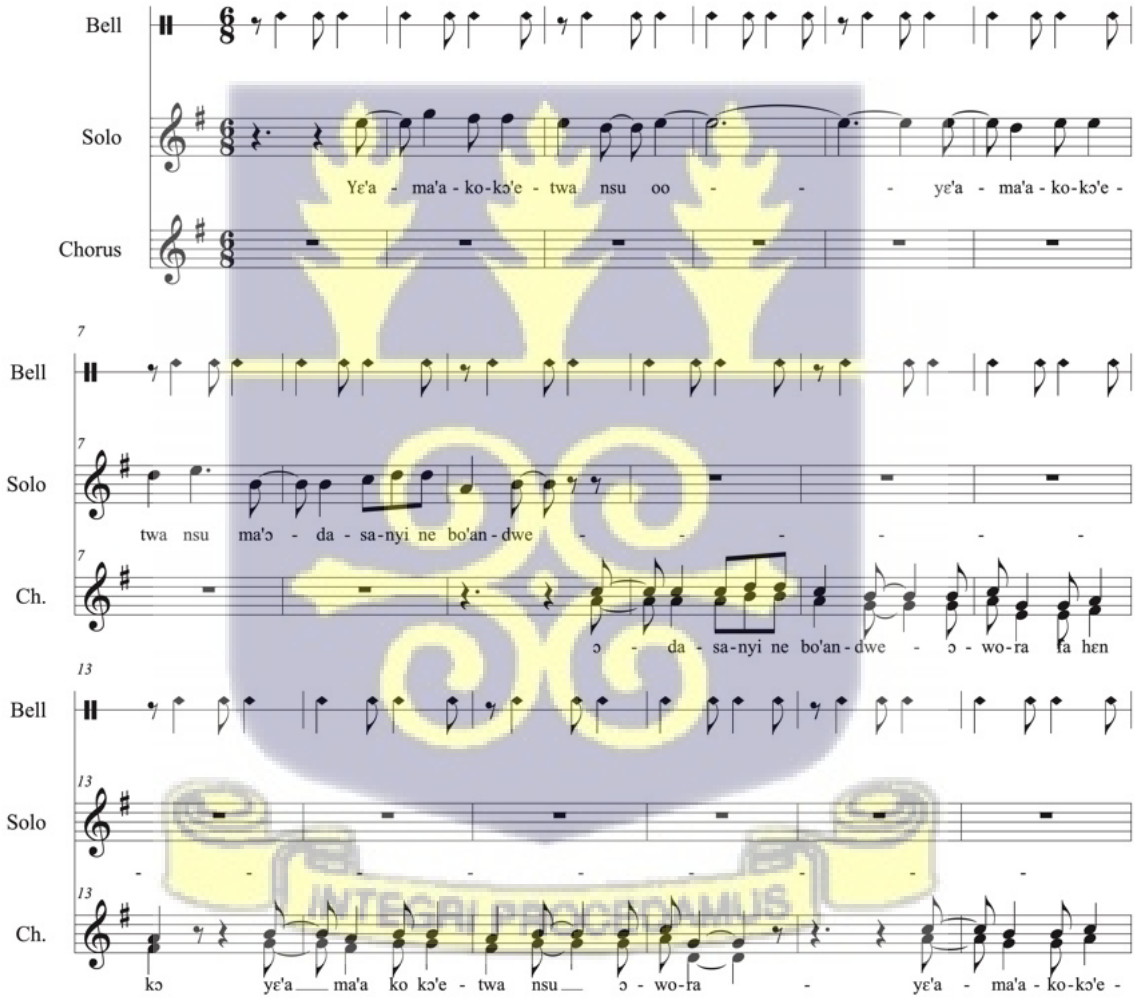

Figure 19

[23]See also Drewal (2008, 2012), Akpoduado and Enuwusa (2024)

The Song ends with the cycle of call and response centered around the last phrase that was sung. In this section, the chorus repeats their response while the leader improvises both the text and the melody. The text is meant to complement the constant response that is being sung by the performers. In the final part, the leader can use words like *agor mbaa ee* which means performers, *ɔman mbaa* ee meaning community member *or ebusua fo ee* which means family members. The leader is free to vary that aspect as they deem fit. Sometimes depending on the performance context, the leader could mention names of dignitaries or elders who are present there to involve their audience in the performance.

The harmonic structure of *Osoode* songs are usually shaped in parallel thirds or fourths as is common with most indegenous music traditions in Ghana and broadly some parts of Africa. However, it is worthy of note that these parts are not consciously distributed among performers, and is also not a strict rule. In some cases, the chorus sings in unison while the leader sings other melodies alongside. For instance, in figure 19, the leader sings her part, which, though different from what the chorus sings, agrees with it harmonically. Members of the the ensemble also have a change to improvise in the singing of the chorus but within a limited range as Agawu (2016) notes. The most important aspect of the song how every, is a clear call by the leader which can call the chorus to join in the singing. Then in the singing of the chorus, the main melody is of utmost importance.

3.8.2 *Osoode* Songtext

This section discusses some of the issues *Osoode* performers express through their performances. It also helps to present a background of the song text in the Indigenous *Osoode* songs that will help to show to what extent the recontextualised *Osoode* borrows from the indigenous. Some of the song texts presented here are plain and could be understood by any Akan-speaking person. Others, too, are cultural and context-specific, requiring deeper

explanation by members of the community who understand their cultural systems[24]. As Agordoh puts it, song texts reflect the culture they belong to. According to Ampene (2005) and Nketia (2005), song texts can communicate a society's values. Song texts are translated or interpreted in ways that best convey the meanings expressed in the Fante language. As a word-for-word translation, in most cases, they distort the original meaning or intent in the Fante language.[25]

Song

	Translation
Cantor :*Eee eee Akwesi eee bra oo.*	Ee Akwesi Come
Eee eee eeeee Akwesi ee bra oo	ee Akwesi Come
Eee ee eee	Eee eee
Chorus: *Eee eee Akwesi eee bra oo*	ee Akwesi Come
Eee eee eeeee Akwesi ee bra oo	ee Akwesi Come
Eee ee eee	

Interpretation

This song is one of the songs that is sung about the heroes who fought or led important battles to defend the people from enemies or some major calamities. The song functions both as a cry for help and a song of praise for people considered heroes. Community. The only word heard in the song is Akwesi which is the day name of a male Sunday born. In the performance of this song, depending on the context, the name there can be replaced with any name of a person present who is considered a hero.

	Translation
Abora bora ee	Abora abora
mereyɛ maa kɔ ee	I am leaving
Abora bor	Abora bor
me wo fie wɔre yaw me	They insult me when I am home
Me kɛda nsu mu a	When I am in the river
na wɔresaw mo ho nsu wɔ nom	they drink from me

[24] Finnegan (1977)
[25] Finnegan (2007)

Interpretation

This song warns against hypocrisy, advising that people can change their perceptions about you in your absence. *Aborabor* is a river deity in the Cape Coast. The river serves several purposes, and as such, no one can do anything without it. The song advises though the river is very useful to the people, they only say nice things about the river when they come to fetch or when they require it, but in their homes, they insult it. The import of the message is to be careful with the praises of men because it may only be because of what they need from you.

	Translation
Cantor: *Amookua eee due.*	Sorry Squirrel
Amookua eee due	Sorry Squirrel
Osian mo dua ntsi nkrɔɔfo kyir me	People hate you because of your tail
Na wɔse maayɛ dɛn	What are they saying I have done?
Chorus : *Hhhmm hhhmm hhhmmm.*	hhhhhmmmm
Osian mo dua ntsi nkrɔɔfo kyir me	people hate me because of my tail
Na wɔse maayɛ dɛn	what are they saying I have done?
Matar ntsi nkrɔɔfo kyir me oo	People hate me because of my dress
wɔse maayɛ dɛn	what are they saying I have done?
Me kasɛe intsir nkrɔɔfo kyir me oo	People hate me because of how I speak
wɔse maayɛ dɛn	

Interpretation

This song communicates the lesson that people will have something to do about whatever you do. It also implies that you cannot stop people from hating you or saying bad things about you. The song begins with sympathizing with the squirrel using the Akan word *due. Due* in the Akan language means you have my sympathy. It is usually used when someone is going through a difficult situation, like losing a dear one. The song's next line explains why the squirrel needs sympathy, which is that people hate it because of its tail. The squirrel has a 'bushy tail' different from most animals'. While it is natural and didn't come as a result of any effort of the animal, the song communicates that you can be hated just because of the way you look when you don't have any control over it. The song proceeds by mentioning other trivial things that can make people hate someone like the way a person speaks and the way a person dresses. Depending on

the context and creativity of the leader, other issues can be used in the song as trivial issues that can cause people to hate someone.

	Translation
Cantor : *Nkyɛkyɛr no ho andwe na.* *Na ofir akerantse.*	If the palm press fiber doesn't have peace Then it's because of the grass cutter
Chorus :*Nkyɛkyɛr no ho andwe na* *Na ofi akerantse* *ɛtse hɔ yi wo ho andwe wo a* *nna ofir ofie nyimpa* *Me nua benyin eee.* *ɛtse hɔ yi wo ho andwe wo aa* *na ofir ofie nyimpa*	If the palm press fibre doesn't have peace then it's because of the grass cutter if you don't have peace in this life it caused by a human being My brother if you don have peace in this life Then it's caused by a human being.

Interpretation

This song uses proverbs composed out of everyday happenings in the community. The grass cutter, or the greater cane rat, is a well-known rodent in most parts of Ghana and well sought after for food. Sometimes, they are known to hide in holes, and the best way to capture them is to burn palm press fiber or anything that is very dry and can produce smoke when burnt. If the hole where the animal is hiding is known to have two exit points, the fiber is burnt at one exit of the whole while a trap is set at the other side. The rationale is when the animal is uncomfortable because of the smoke; it will want to run out to save its life through one of the exits, which is likely to be the other side since the smoke seems to be coming from one side. In this way, the animal is trapped. The lesson in the song is that though the palm fiber is being burnt, that is not the target; it is being used to get the animal out of its hole. Yet, by so doing, the fiber is burnt. By implication, the song teaches that people are always troubling the palm fiber because of the grass cutter. The next line then mentions that if you don't have peace in this life, it's because of a human being. The song teaches people to be careful with friends and family because they could cause trouble if they stand in the way of something they want. Though they may not be the targets like in the case of fiber, they may be used to get what they want and won't care if they hurt you in the process.

	Translation
Aboa Akerantse morehwɛ me ho yie	Squirrel; I am being careful
Na medze atsena ɔman yi mu	So I can live in the community
Chorus :*Mo rehwɛ me ho yie*	I am being careful
Na medze atsena ɔman yi mu.	So I can live in the community
Me fa ha..wɔ itur ka mo do	I am being chased with a gun everywhere
Me fa haa, wɔdze adar ka mo do	I am being chased with a cutlass everywhere
Me fa haa, wɔdze adar ka mo do	I am being careful so I can stay in the
community	

Interpretation

This song communicates the lesson of being careful, especially if one is aware of the dangers in one's environment. It uses the grass cutter scenario from the preceding song. Since the grass cutter is well sought after for its meat, it has to avoid people because they will want to kill it.

3.9 Exponents in Osoode music

Ethnomusicology, though a discipline whose root includes the Greek word for nation, race, and tribe (ethnos) suggests that the study focus will be on groups, the individual musicians have become important. Scholars have churned out ethnomusicological studies that have focused on the musical experience of the individual musician. Stock (2010) notes that the focus on individual musicians is due to the reconceptualization of "culture" as a mosaic of individual decisions, evaluations, actions, and interactions; consequently, a desire to draw attention to individual cultural agency. Ruskin and Rice (2012) outlining reasons for the focus on the individual in ethnomusicological studies mention that fieldwork relies on individual musicians who are exceptional in the musical communities. They further add that interventions in theory and method have led ethnomusicologists to highlight individual agency and difference and acknowledge their roles in the musical communities they study (ibid). Given this background, I discuss Two individual musicians whose creativities and innovation have been exceptional and influential in promoting and sustaining the *Osoode* music tradition.

3.9.1 '*ɔdomankoma Kyerɛma'* (Divine Drummer)

ɔdomankoma Kyerɛma is a title given or attained by Fante drummers and it translates as a divine drummer. *ɔdomankoma* is one of the attributes of the God used by many Akan communities. *ɔkyereɛma* is the name that is given to drummers among the Fantes. *Kyerɛ* in the Fante language means to teach. A teacher in the Fante language is referred to as *kyerɛ kyerɛnyi*. Fieldwork revealed two meanings of *ɔkyereɛma*. The first is *ɔkyereɛ* ma, which means he teaches for, which means that the drummer is an intermediary who interprets rhythms on the drum on behalf of someone. The second is *ɔkyereɛ man* which means he teaches the people or community. Both meanings have a central idea which shows that the drummer teaches. However, when the two words ('*ɔdomankoma Kyerɛma'*) are used together, the first syllable of the *ɔkyerɛma* is omitted which is a common practice in most Akan languages when a name that ends with a vowel is followed by another name that starts with a vowel.

ɔdomankoma Kyerɛma means a drummer who has attained the status of communicating with the ancestors and, in a way, serves as a medium of communication between the physical world and the world of the spirits. During fieldwork, I encountered two drummers in Cape Coast who have attained this rank. The information gathered suggests that these are the only two people who have attained this status or rank and are still alive. The first person to be discussed is *ɔdomankoma Kyerɛma* Pra.

In an interview, he mentioned that he started following traditional music at a very young age, about 8 years. He was very interested in indigenous music traditions and intended to establish a group one day and help sustain indigenous music traditions. This made him take a keen interest in traditional performances, follow them keenly, and interact with experienced performers and drummers at a very young age. Growing up, he realised that there were some rhythms he saw his elders play, which he could not play no matter how hard he tried to rehearse.

Later he learned that some of the drummers were divine drummers, and as they attained that rank, they became a medium of communication between the physical world and the world of the spirits. This takes more than just musical abilities; one has to be selected or chosen by the ancestors and given the special ability to be able to do this.

The rank of the divine drummer is assessed by a body of senior drummers and traditional priests who can tell when someone has become a divine drummer. A ceremony is then held to officially usher the person in as a divine drummer and also outdoors the person to the community. Community members need to know the divine drummers who the senior drummers have approved because they add up to people who can be consulted to enquire of the gods for them. *Okyerema* pra was noticed in one of his performances where he played some rhythms that he realized he hadn't rehearsed, he was approached by the body of senior drummers that he had attained the rank of a divine drummer and as such he should prepare to be ordained and outdoor for the community. He was very happy because he as achieved his dream of being a divine drummer. He established a place he called the divine drummer's palace where people came to enquire of him and also served as a place where he trained drummers. Apart from members of his group that is *thereupon* traditional, some people come there to train as drummers who may not be members.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a case study on how *Osoode* music has been recontextualised by private cultural groups such as twerampon traditionals and the Point group. While twerampon traditionals have modernised *Osoode* into *Osoode* highlife and *Osoode* jazz, the point group also performs *Osoode jama*. Both groups responded to the demands of their audience and their performance contexts. I also discussed how *Osoode* ensembles are organised and instrumental resources employed in performing the recontextualized *Osoode* music. I observed that *Osoode*

drums are speech surrogates that are used to communicate with performers. Key to the discussion in this chapter was the idea of professionalism as conceptualized by the point group. Professionalism in this context does not refer to individual professionals but experience gathered as a group, performing together for over 20 years. The chapter also touched on the performance structure of *Osoode*, how rehearsal spaces are used, and some song texts of the recontextualised *Osoode.*

CHAPTER FOUR: *OSOODE* HIGHLIFE

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the development of *Osoode* Highlife, which was spearheaded by C.K. Mann, a Ghanaian Highlife musician. It focuses on how highlife musicians, specifically C.K. Mann and his contemporaries, have integrated *Osoode* elements into their compositions. The chapter aims to analyse *Osoode* highlife songs to understand how *Osoode* highlife aligns with or diverges from traditional *Osoode* music performed by indigenous performers in the communities. The analysis encompasses various aspects such as instrumentation, style, melody, rhythm, and lyrical content. The chapter analyses *Osoode* songs in two periods, mainly its formative and developmental stages. While the chapter does not offer an exhaustive musical analysis of *Osoode* highlife, it provides a foundational understanding of its core elements to illustrate the connection between the Indigenous music tradition and its reinterpreted form in highlife music. I argue that the concept of *Osoode* highlife could be foregrounded in how *Osoode* music has been sustained through a recontextualised highlife version.

Highlife is Ghana's is modern homegrown dance music that has its roots in traditional music infused with outside influences coming from Europe and the Americas Collins (2018). From its development through the palm wine highlife, guitar bands, brass bands and dance bands, Ghanaian highlife continued to be reimagined and reinterpreted in different forms. Since its inception, Ghanaian highlife music has experienced numerous offshoots, diverse developments, and reinterpretations, all of which have attracted the attention of various scholars. Highlife musicians have also uniquely interpreted and personalised the genre to reflect their styles and influences. Collins (2018), in his seminal work on Ghanaian highlife chronicles the different musical influences that became part of the creative processes of highlife musicians. These include the introduction of Congo jazz and Afro fusions, which to some

extent became a new idea some highlife musicians began to explore. Musicians began to incorporate elements of Congo jazz into highlife. Highlife also saw the introduction of Afro soul or Afro beat, and the Afro Hilli, which musicians like Nana Ampadu and his African Brothers explored (Collins 2018). Jamaican reggae also influenced Ghanaian highlife as musicians began experimenting with what can be termed highlife reggae music. There is also Burger Highlife which is a 'techno-pop' form of highlife that uses a drum machine and synthesiser horns, and so does away with the need for large numbers of musicians and instrumentalists. It was created by expatriate Ghanaian musicians who left Ghana in the 1970s and settled in Hamburg, Germany, and thus, the name Burger[26]. Highlife music also moved from the secular space to the church, called Gospel highlife and yet another church variant, the choral highlife.

Some Studies in highlife have focused on individual musicians and their specific styles or innovations. Coffie (2012) sought to bring out peculiarities in the musical styles of Ebo Taylor, Stan Plange, and Kwadwo Donkoh, who are all highlife musicians. Sunu Doe (2011), focusing on Burger Highlife, provided the history and the social context within which Burger Highlife was birthed. He further provided a musical analysis highlighting the musical structures and elements that typify burger highlife music. Collins (1996), in his work, also focused on E.T. Mensah, Chronicling the musical and personal life of the highlife musician and his band. Such works help to understand the contributions of individual musicians to highlife Music. Adum-Attah (1997) focused his work on Nana Ampadu, referring to him as the master of Highlife. Such accolades or titles are earned by highlife musicians, usually because of their innovations to the music tradition or unique ways in which they performed.

[26] See Sunu Doe (2011) For detailed information on Burger Highlife.

4.1 The Development of Osoode highlife

Osoode Highlife is a contemporary popular music that developed out of *Osoode,* an indigenous recreational music among the Fante people. As Collins (2002) notes, recreational music and dance styles are continually open to generational modifications. Adding that it's from these rather than the more conservative and slow-changing ritual and court performance that so much of Ghana's acculturated and transcultural popular dance arose. This generational modification could either be internal, that is, from African sources, or it could also be external, where it is borrowed from Western sources. In the case of *Osoode* highlife as is analysed in this chapter, it incorporates elements from the indigenous *Osoode* tradition which is internal as well as aspects of highlife music which is in itself a syncretic form which European influences. In the precolonial era, recreational music in Africa thrived on innovation, drawing from within the continent itself Collins, 2002). This was characterized by a dynamic process of reinterpretation, blending older styles with new elements acquired from neighboring ethnic groups through interactions like trade, migration, and conflict. This changed in the 19th and 20th centuries as new elements borrowed from Europe and America became the new direction for recreational music. Collins (2007) in is discussion of popular performance in Ghana over the past 50 years mentions that there exists a close relationship between recreational music and popular music. This he adds is a result of the informal nature of recreational music and hence more open to novelty than the more conservative performances that are mostly linked to rituals and ceremonies. As a result of continuous modifications by the youth, he discovers that it is from local recreational performances that so much of African contemporary transcultural popular dance music has arisen.

4.2 CK Mann's and His Osoode Highlife

Charles Kofi Amankwaa Mann, popularly known as C.K. Mann, the originator of *Osoode* highlife, was born in Cape Coast, the origin of *Osoode* music, in 1936. By 1965, he had firmly

established himself in the music industry, but his 1969 hit song "Edina Benya" catapulted him to prominence[27]. Over the span of more than 40 years, Mann not only performed but also produced numerous highlife hits. His musical influence extended beyond Ghana, as he graced stages in the United States and other locations worldwide. C.K. Mann reflects on the origins of his musical journey, which began with his introduction to the guitar[28]. His passion for the instrument ignited when he learned to play it. Spending countless afternoons practising, Mann's devotion to the guitar deepened, prompting him to purchase his instrument. His pivotal encounter at a music shop in Accra, where he was moved to tears by a song performed by Kobina Onyia, known as King Onyina, further fueled his musical aspirations. Frequent visits to the Broadway band, where a friend played, enhanced Mann's musical immersion. Recognising his skill and dedication, Mann was recommended to join Kakaiku's[29] bands as a guitarist, a move that propelled his interest in highlife music and also into the spotlight and broadened his exposure to audiences. During his first rehearsal with the band, Mann's talent shone, earning him immediate acceptance into the group in the mid-1950s. Kaikaiku's repertoire significantly influenced Mann, particularly in solo guitar techniques, which he harnessed by listening to Congolese music. This proficiency distinguished Mann's performances, drawing crowds to venues like Tarkwa and Aborso, where he became synonymous with electrifying guitar solos during dance performances.

C.K. Mann's musical journey seemed to have been cut short when Kaikaiku no longer needed his services again because he got another lead guitarist. Mann left the band and returned to Takoradi, abandoning his musical career. On the contrary, this move would begin his exposure to a wider audience. Mann was approached by some Navy officers who had musical instruments and needed someone to manage them. He was recommended and excited about

[27] Collins (2018)
[28] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mwwuluKngs&t=1299s
[29] Kakaiku was one of the early Guitar band musicians in the 1940's.See Collins (2018)

this and started the Carousel Seven[30]. With the experience Mann had gathered over the years, he looked for musicians who would play for his newly formed band. The Carousel 7 soon became the new sensation in town and started touring both Ghana and beyond, performing highlife music[31]. Together with Papa Yankson as backing vocalist, the Carousel Seven Band gained popularity in the shortest possible time. They released songs like Party Time and Araba Lucy.

C.K Mann was referred to as the king of *Osoode*[32] for pioneering *Osoode* Highlife, a unique style of highlife music that draws inspiration from Ghana's indigenous polyrhythms and vibrant choral traditions, prominently featuring the call and response format. It was a blend of *Osoode* music tradition, which he had been exposed to, and highlife music, which he was introduced to with his connection with Kaikaiku's band and his love for Kobina Onyina's songs. Mann and his *Osoode* highlife gained sudden popularity and acceptance among the communities around the coast because of its resemblance to their Indigenous *Osoode* music. He started by introducing just the guitar, which he was known for. This brought him to prominence with the release of his single, *Edina benya in 1969*[33]. After some time, he introduced other Western instruments to his compositions to appeal to a wider audience. He, however, did this without losing the core elements of Osoode, such as hand claps and the call-and-response style of singing that made "*Osoode*" popular. In doing so, he propelled *Osoode* music into the forefront of mainstream highlife, winning the hearts of millions of highlife enthusiasts worldwide.

[30] The Carousel 7 was the resident band at the Princess Cinema in Takoradi Secondi in Ghana. See Collins (2018)
[31] See the Mirror new paper Saturday January 2nd 1988
[32] See, the Mirror new paper Friday, August 29 1980. Pp 8
[33] Colliins (2018)

4.3 Features of Osoode Highlife

Figure 20 C.K Mann and his Carousel 7. Photo Crdit: www.fundation-lanlois.org

The picture above sums up the core elements of *Osoode* highlife music in its formative stages. This was the album cover for the debut album released by C.K. Mann and his Carousel 7 in 1971. Mann and another band member can be seen holding guitars that played major roles in *Osoode* highlife music. On the left side, another band member can be seen with an indigenous drum usually used for performing indigenous musical traditions. Another person can be seen holding the rattle, which is a common instrument used in the performance of Indigenous code music. A western snare drum can also be seen in the picture above. A blend of both Western and local instruments, as seen in the picture, indicates how *Osoode* Highlife incorporates these musical ideas in their performances. Significantly, one person doesn't seem to be holding any instrument which speaks to the importance of hand claps in *Osoode* highlife performances.

One of the features that made *Osoode* popular as will be discussed is the use of everyday language or phrases that are popular in the community. This always made their audience expectant anytime there was a performance. The audience was always looking forward to the new ideas. Discussions in this section draw examples from CK's first *Osoode* highlife song,

Edina Benya, the *Asafo Beeson* medley, dance time medley, Adwoa Yankey and Paapa Yankson's Abam Kofi, among others—similarities in the *Osoode* highlife rendition help to point out major characteristics that stand out. Guiding parameters for the discussion will be the short and repetitive nature of the songs, Instrumentation, harmony, song texts that are predominantly borrowed from traditional material, the nature of call and response strategies employed, and their special focus on rhythms.

4.3.1 *Osoode* highlife medley songs

Osoode highlife, in its essence, is often presented in medleys, a characteristic deeply rooted in indigenous *Osoode*. Traditionally, *Osoode* performances extend over hours, adapting to the context of the occasion. Throughout my fieldwork, I encountered a consistent pattern: *Osoode* songs were rarely performed individually; instead, they were seamlessly woven into extended performances lasting 30 minutes or more. This practice in *Osoode* highlife mirrors its Indigenous counterpart. While this format is not unique to *Osoode* Highlife, it reflects a common approach in live music settings. In the examples used in this project, C.K. Mann presents 16 songs in his *Osoode* highlife medley titled Party Time.

I show the features of *Osoode* Highlife using *Edina Benya*, the first *Osoode* Highlife song to be released by CK Mann, and the songs on his Party Time album, which is an *Osoode* Medley.

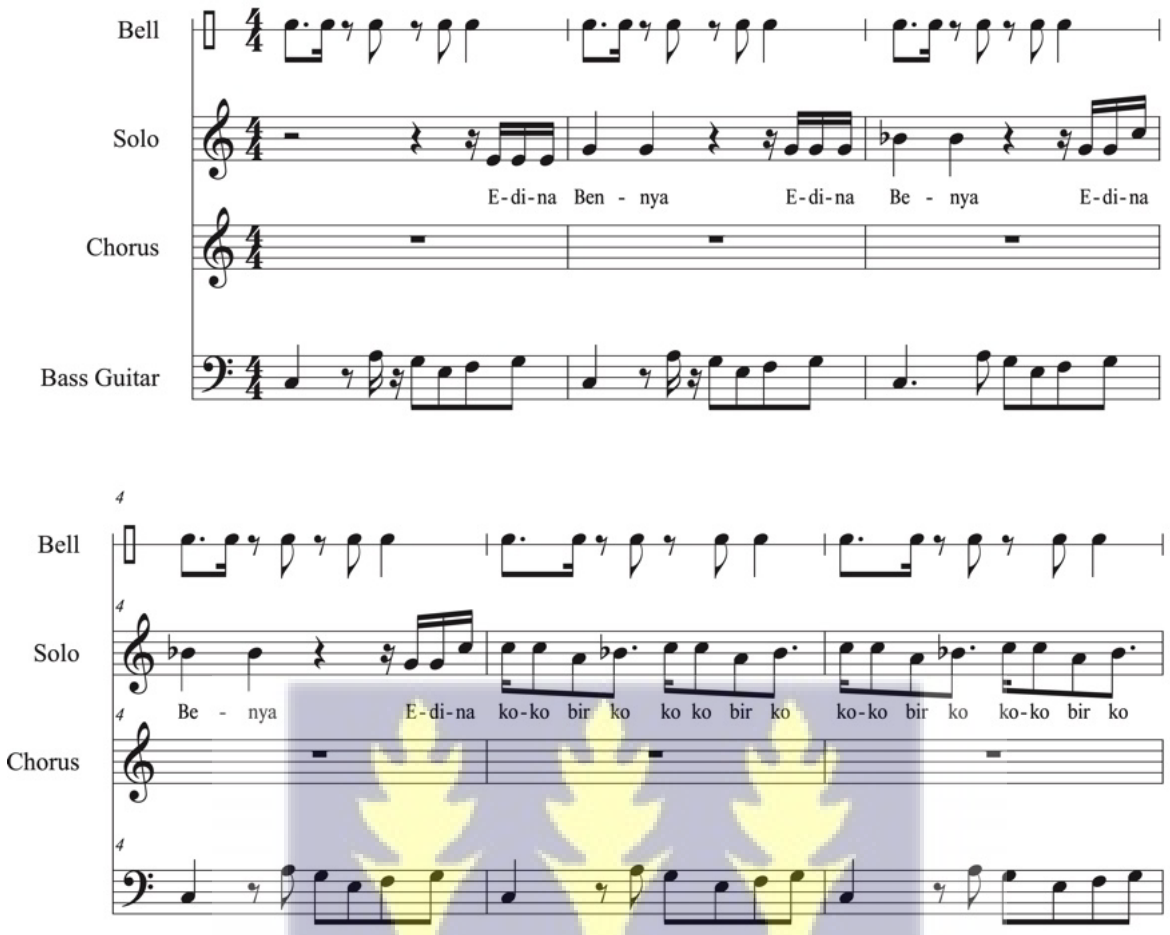

Figure 21

One of the main differences between the indigenous *Osoode* and *Osoode* highlife is the bell pattern. Indegenous *Osoode* from data gathered from the field in this project and earlier projects is presented in 6/8. As discussed earlier in this chapter, all ensembles maintained that mail steady bell pattern. Though there were differences in the number of bells some ensembles used, a constant bell pattern kept the main time in *Osoode*. In the recontextualization of Indigenous *Osoode* to *Osoode* highlife, the timeline or bell pattern was changed to conform to the basic timeline that characterizes highlife music. Agawu (2003), in describing the structure of highlife music, mentions that The beat is expressed as a quadruple (never triple) and is enlivened in the foreground by distinct rhythmic topoi, the commonest of which is the familiar offbeat pattern said to derive from the Akan dance Sikyi. He presents the basic rhythmic structure of Ghanaian highlife in Figure 22 below.

Figure 22 Credit, Agawu 2003

This agrees with Plageman's (2013) description of the highlife beat as a triple offbeat Rhythm.

4.3.2 Call, Response, and improvisation.

Call and response form, a hallmark of African traditional music, plays a central role in *Osoode* highlife performances. In this discussion, I explore its various manifestations within *Osoode* highlife, drawing examples from the aforementioned musical instances. Primarily, call and response is in interaction between the lead vocalist and the chorus and between the lead vocalist and accompanying musical instruments. Additionally, interplay occurs between different instruments. Notably, call and response in *Osoode* highlife extend beyond vocal exchanges to include recitative passages, where the leader delivers a statement prompting a group response devoid of melodic accompaniment. This dynamic structure fosters improvisation, particularly evident in the leader's embellishments upon the initial call. While some songs will receive detailed analysis, others will be excerpted to illustrate key characteristics.

The example in Figure 22 begins with the leader's call, repeated thrice. Each time the call is made, there is some kind of variation to the melodic structure. The first time, the notes used are E3 and G3, which is an interval of a third. The second time, the notes used are E3 and B4, increasing the interval to a 5th. The third time, the melody employs the use of G3 and moves to C4 and finally resolves at B4. This kind of structure is deeply rooted in indigenous music traditions and specifically *Osoode* music as has been discussed earlier. The repetition of the text is for emphasis which is further foregrounded by the increase in pitch. The number of times that part is repeated depends on the leader. Though it is sung three times in the transcription, there are other contexts where this song is performed, and that part was repeated several times

as the leader deems fit. It can also be seen that the lowered 7th is also a feature predominantly in Akan indigenous music traditions. The leader calls the chorus to join in the singing by singing another part of the song by gradually lowering the pitch of the melody.

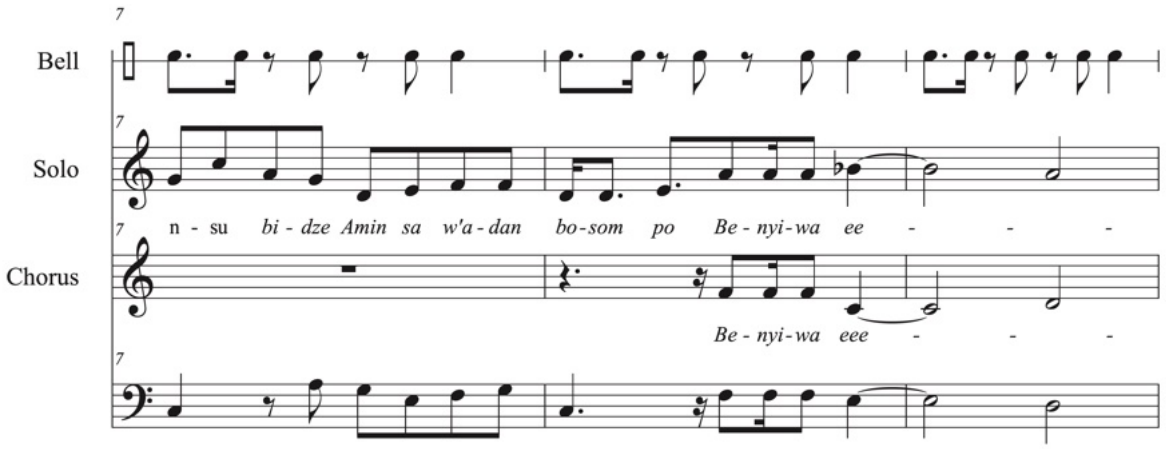

Figure 23

The next section of the song begins from the 7th bar on G3, moves up to the highest point in C4 and gradually descends to D3 then the chorus joins in. This is also a structure at was borrowed from the indigenous *Osoode* music tradition. At this point in the song, it seems to have some sense of completion, and as such this cycle is repeated several times from bar 1 to bar 9. There is the final part of the song where the chorus joins in the singing to end the song as shown in figure 23.

One feature that is also common and forms part of the structure of *Osoode* Highlife is the part played by the bass guitar. Though the bass guitar is a Western instrument and not part of the Indigenous *Osoode* musical instrument, its function has been indigenized in a way that fits into Indigenous music traditions. It can be seen in the transcription that the bass guitar plays a steady pattern all through the song except aspects of the chorus which is also a common feature of *Osoode* highlife. The bass maintains C A G E F G D in a particular manner that conforms with the song's rhythm and melody. However, when the chorus joins in, the bass guitar most mirrors the melodic and rhythmic motif of the chorus. In bar 8 (fig 23) when the chorus joins in the singing the bass guitar follows the melodic line a third below, which is the same part the chorus

sings. This harmonic structure of parallel thirds is also a feature, though common in African Indigenous music, and was borrowed from the *Osoode* song tradition. The feature of the bass guitar mirroring the melody also has its roots in indigenous music traditions like *Osoode* and sikyi.[34] In *Osoode* performances during the singing of the chorus, the *Osoode* adaka, which is the main drum for the music tradition, imitates the rhythmic and tonal pattern that is sung by the voices. Since the *adaka* is limited in terms of notes, its only plays highs and lows without playing the actual melody. This is also a common practice in *Sikyi,* where the *preprensiwa* also imitates the melodic and rhythmic motifs used in the chorus of the songs performed.

Figure 24

[34] See Okyere (2024) for a detailed discussion on *Sikyi* Rhythm

Edina Benya song text

	Translation
Edina benya.	Edina benya
Nsu'a ɔtae fom	the water on the ground
W'adan bosompo	has become a water diety
Benya ee aa ee	Benya ee
Obi ankɔ oo	no one can go
Obi amba oo	no one can come
Edina benya ee aa ee	Edina benya ee aa ee

Interpretation

Edina is a community on Cape Coast and *benya* is a lagoon in Cape Coast. The lagoon holds great significance for the local people, serving not only as their sole water source for domestic needs but also as a hub for essential activities. They rely on the lagoon for fishing, mining salt by damming specific areas, and using its waters to irrigate their farms[35]. Because of the Lagoon's many uses for them, it is seen as a deity that is their source of life and livelihood. By implication, they believe that without the lagoon, no one can go out no come in. Beyond moving out physically, this phrase also refers to working, where a person goes to their workplace and returns with money or foodstuff to feed the family. One of the reasons this song became popular when it was released was because of the text, which speaks about an issue that community members could easily identify with. Since every member of the community, to some extent, has some affinity with the Lagoon, people get excited anytime the song is performed, and they sing, praising the Lagoon for what it does for them. Apart from the fact that people can identify with *Edina Benya, it* is a common theme in other indigenous musical traditions in Cape Coast.

[35] Vowotor, Sackey and Dumenya (2020) for a detailed discussion on the Benya Lagoon

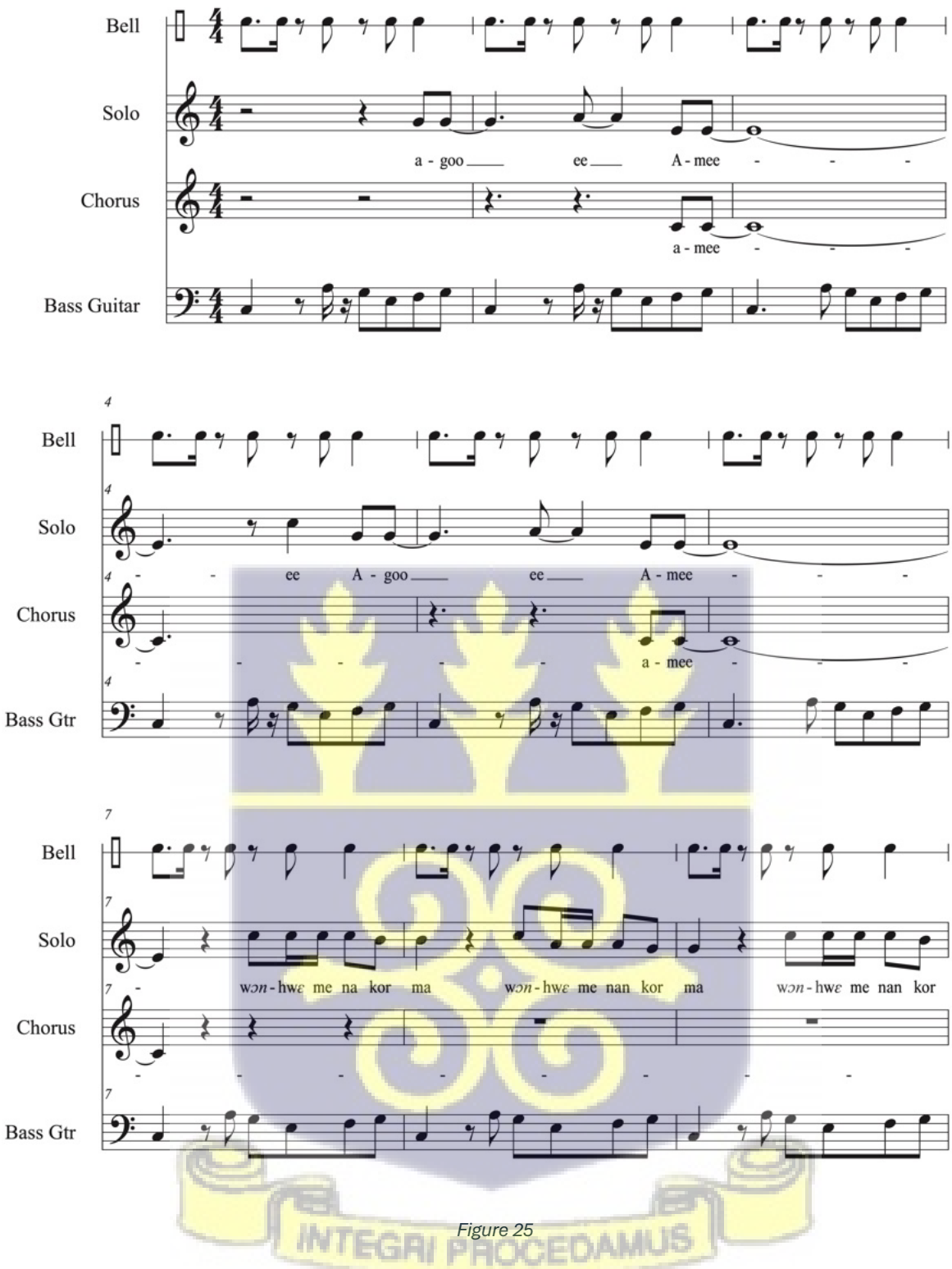

Figure 25

The song in Figure 25 is also by C.K. Mann. It begins with a prelude that is common to both *Osoode* highlife songs and the Indigenous *Osoode* music tradition. It's in a call and response form, and it starts with the leader calling *Agoo* then the chorus responds *amee.* These are words that are used in different contexts but have similar connotations. In its primary meaning, agoo

is used to announce one's presence, mostly as a visitor or a way of knocking. The person then waits for a response *ameee,* which shows that the people in the house have acknowledged that there is someone at the door and that they are also willing to come and open the door for the person to enter. This expression is not specific to only the Akan in Ghana but is widely present in other languages spoken in Ghana[36]. Beyond its primary use, it is also used to ask for permission to do a specific thing, depending on the context. For instance, in a gathering, it can be used to ask for permission to speak. In that context, *agoo* means listen or give me your attention and *amee* means you have our attention[37]. Sometimes, during family meetings or community meetings, when there are misunderstandings or disagreements, one person who the people respect gathered can shout *agoo* to help calm the place or have some quiet so he or she can help to settle the issue[38]. In that case, sometimes it has to be said several times as each time increases the number of people who respond. This will be said until most people gathered there respond *amee,* as a sign that they are ready to listen to what the person has to say.

In the song's context, Agoo gets the audience's attention during a live performance. And since it is used by a wide range of people in Ghana, people can easily relate to it and respond accordingly. In the transcription, it appears twice. After the first one, the second one starts with *ee,* which is used for emphasis. In normal discourse, when someone uses agoo in any context, once they don't get the needed response, they say it again in a higher tone and louder, ending with *ee.* The *ee* is usually prolonged to show how serious or desperate a person is to get the needed attention. It can be seen that the *ee* part in the song, as it appears in the fourth bar, uses a high note (C4), which helps to emphasise the attention being sought. Whenever *agoo* appears in the song, it also ends with *ee, which moves the melody* up. Thus, in the melody agoo is on (G4) while the *ee* moves to A4. This has become part of the salient features of *Osoode* highlife

[36] See Rombalski (2020)
[37] Ludwig, Marklein, and Song (2016)
[38] Personal interviews with Kofi Badu at Cape Coast, 2023.

music. Most medlies by C.K. Mann and his contemporaries are mostly interspersed with this phrase. For instance, in a medley with ten songs, this can appear twice or thrice between songs, catching the audience's attention and allowing them to join in the performance. In the context of the discussion, *agoo* may not be considered as a full song but rather something that helps to establish a sense of unity, consciousness, and enthusiasm during performances. It can precede any song at the discretion of the leader.

After *agoo,* the next song is then introduced. The song begins with a repetition of *wɔnhɛ me nan korma* (look at my knee). This part of the song is the call and it appears three times as is common with Indigenous *Osoode* music and *Osoode* highlife. The second part is a resolution of the first part. This part can be repeated as often as required, but the chorus is invited to join in the singing when the leader sings the third part. The entire first part of the song revolves around chord one, so the constant cycle played by the bass guitar fits in perfectly. This is also a common feature in *Osoode* highlife in its formative stages. Though in contemporary trends this has been altered to some extent, most *Osoode* highlife musicians try to maintain this cyclic repetition of the bass until the part where the chorus joins in the singing.

The next part of the song also features a call and response where the leader improvises on his call while the response remains the same. Sometimes the leader joins in the chorus or response and at other times he joins in hald way. From Bar 7, the leader begins the part that calls on the chorus to respond. In the 10th bar, the leaders part hits the highest note (E4) and then begins to descend stepwise till it gets to B4 in bar 11 where the chorus can join. The chorus starts from A4 which is one step below where the leader's part ends.

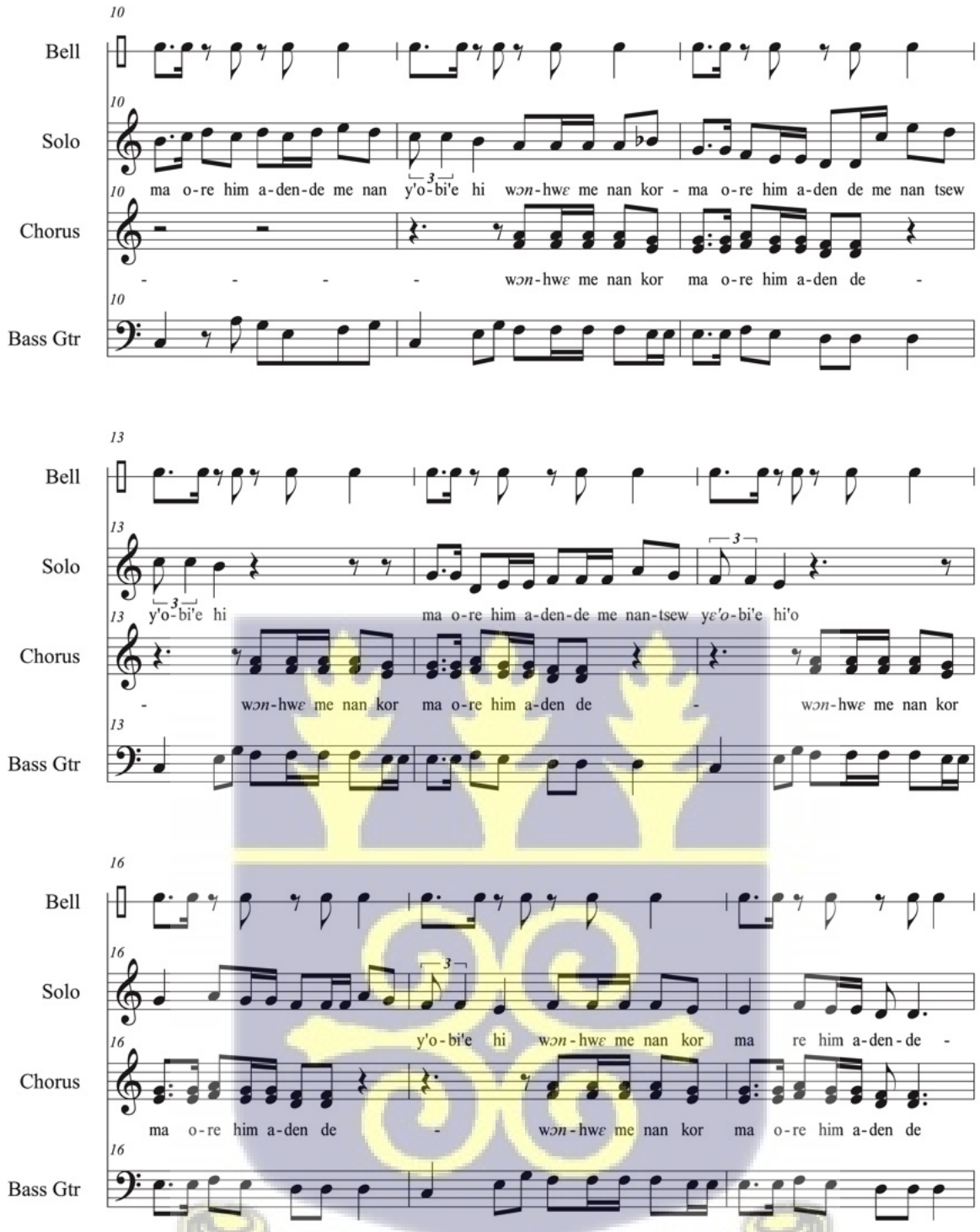

Figure 26

The first time the chorus joins in the singing in bar 11, the leader improvises on the melody by introducing the lower 7th while the chorus sings a third apart. In bar 12, the leader calls the calls again using a high note and descending to receive the chorus. In bar 13, the leader joins the chorus halfway and introduces a variation that ascends from D3 while the chorus descends stepwise. The leader calls again but with a variation that uses notes that are lower than what

was used the first and second times. This is sometimes used a way to signal the end of the song. The bass guitar imitates the melodic and rhythmic motives used during the chorus as was seen in the first song. This can be seen from bar 11.

Song Text

	Translation
W*ɔnhwɛ me nan korma.*	Look at me knee
ɔrehim adende	Its jerking
Me nantstew yɛ obi ehi	People are angry at my walking without cause

Interpretation

This song addresses issues of trying to please people because they will always have something to say about what you do whether good or bad. By implication, the text says look at my knee, it's not strong so when I walk, I limb, but people feel it's intentional so they still talk about me. The text of the song is familiar to community members because it appears in some indigenous musical traditions among the Fante.

4.3.3 Creative Processes in *Osoode* Highlife Text

The lyrical content of *Osoode* highlife songs predominantly draws from everyday life events or common phrases prevalent in the community. These compositions can be classified into three main categories from the data collected. Firstly, songs often directly incorporate well-known phrases from community activities such as children's games, recreational songs, or proverbs. Secondly, these elements are extended, where existing material is augmented with additional layers. Lastly, there are entirely new compositions, although rooted in familiar themes and experiences from everyday life. Notably, even seemingly new compositions retain a sense of familiarity as they tackle issues relevant to the community's daily existence. This connection with familiar themes likely contributed to the widespread appeal of *Osoode* highlife among the masses in their respective regions, as the songs often struck a chord of recognition despite their novelty.

Asafo Beeson
Yee
Yee
Yee
M'asafo beeson
Asafo beeson mba
Asafo beeson wo nya oko aa wo beko ampaa
Response: ayee
Aaaaaa
M'asafo beeson eee
Asafo beeson wo nwom aa wo betow ampaa
Response : ayee
Wonya ayer aa wo be saw ampa
Response ayee
Wonya agor aa wobedzi ampa
Response :ayee
All Agor nyi oooo
Ayeeee
Agor nyi oooo
Ayeee
Wonya agor aa wobedzi ampa
Response : ayee

M'asafo beeson eee
Asafo beeson wo nwom aa wo betow ampaa
Response : ayee
Wonya ayer aa wo be saw ampa
Response ayee
Wonya agor aa wobedzi ampa
Response :ayee
All: Ayer Nyi oooo
Ayeeee
Ayer nyooo
Ayeeee
Wo nya ayer aa wo be saw anaaaa
Ayeeee
Asafo beeson womma yenko eh
Asafo beeson yenko eh

Translation
My seven asafo Companies
Members of the Seven Asafo companies
Seven Asafo Companies will you fight if you get the chance?
Response: Yes
Aaaaaah
My seven Asafo Companies eee
Seven Asafo Companies will you sing if you get the chance?
Response: Yes
Will you dance if you get music ?
Response: yes

Will you play if you get the chance?
Response : Yes
All : this is the Game/play
Ayeee
Will you play when you get the Chance
Response : Yes

The song mentioned above, titled *'asafo beeson*,' pays homage to the seven *asafo* companies, emblematic of the warrior groups from which *Osoode* music originated. These groups, present in all towns and large villages in Fanteland, hold historical significance and are still cherished by community members despite their diminished military roles in modern times. References to the *asafo* institution in songs evoke a profound sense of belonging and pride among the Fante people. Moreover, the song's use of 'Asafo Beeson' illustrates the conceptualization of traditional *Osoode* music. It commences by summoning the *asafo* members in the manner they would be called during times of impending conflict. The initial inquiry, 'are you ready to fight?' or 'will you fight if there's a battle?' sets the tone, portraying *Osoode* performances as akin to warfare due to their close association with the Asafo warrior group. Subsequently, the song poses questions about readiness to sing and dance, to which the chorus responds affirmatively.

My fieldwork corroborates that before Indigenous *Osoode* performances, vocables are played in the code box, asking similar questions that performers respond to. This demonstrates how *Osoode* Highlife remains deeply rooted in the foundational principles of indigenous *Osoode*. Consistency in this thematic approach is evident across various *Osoode* highlife songs composed by different artists or bands."

	Translation
ɔkwan tsin tsin awar ee menk oo	I wont marry to a place that is far
ɔkwan tsin tsin awar ee menk oo	
Se menya me ko na asem bi si mekyir aa meyɛ dɛn	What will I do if there is an issue at home
ɔkwan tsintsin aware menko oo.	I wont marry to a far place
Na meya me ko na asem bi si mekyir aa mɛyɛ dɛn.	What will I do if there is an issue at home
ɔkwan tsintsin aware me oo	I wont marry from to a far place
Na asem bi si mekira mɛyɛ dɛn	

The song mentioned above is a familiar tune in Akan folklore, embraced by various Akan communities within different indigenous musical traditions. Its essence cautions against marrying someone from a distant community, posing the question of how one would handle familial issues if separated from their own community. Originally sung in an era devoid of mobile phones, it underscores communication challenges across distances. However, its relevance persists in contemporary contexts, advocating for the benefits of marrying within one's community or close vicinity. By drawing directly from Akan folklore, *Osoode* highlife songs facilitate easy identification and resonance among listeners.

Osoode Highlife music also integrates specific 'shouts' into its performances, a characteristic borrowed from Indigenous *Osoode* practices. Such shouts are prevalent across various Ghanaian communities in their indigenous music traditions. Typically, when the leader initiates the shout, it elicits an enthusiastic response from the audience, often accompanied by raised hands. This dynamic interaction heightens the intensity of the performance, injecting a surge of energy into the overall atmosphere.

Song 2

	Translation
ahɛn ne yɛrekɔ no ooo	we are going
chale Mann na ne nkrɔɔfo	Mann and his people are going
na hom ada ntɛm aaa	you have slept too early
ahɛn aa yɛre kɔ ooo	we are going
yɛ kɔ oo	we are gone
na hom adeda	you are sleeping

Interpretation

The song stems from a theme in *asafo* songs through which the *Osoode* music tradition emerged and can be used in several contexts. In the original context, at the time, men were supposed to be part of the *asafo* or the warrior group and were expected to be ready to defend the community whenever there was war. Some of the men, however, could not exhibit this kind of bravery and would be sleeping when their colleagues were gone to war. Songs of this nature

were used to mock men who could stand up to the occasion when there was war. In another context, it also refers to men who are lazy and would not go to the farm to work in order to feed their families. This brings poverty and puts those men in a position where they are not able to cater to their family's needs. In the song, the first line is repeated several times to tell the others that they are going or preparing to move. In the second line, the leader (C.K. Mann) mentions his name and tells them that he and his people are going, but it looks like some people have slept too early. In the final line, they come back to meet the people who didn't heed the caution that it was time to move and tell them that they left already, and at the time they were leaving, the rest of them were asleep. This is a song that people who have achieved in society can use to mock others that they have not been able to achieve much because they love to sleep. In the performance of the song, apart from Mann's name, Pat Thomas, who was also a singer in the band's name, was also mentioned. Depending on the context, individuals' names, Clan names, or names of towns can be used to teach the lesson that loving sleep will prevent one from achieving.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the origin and development of *Osoode* highlife which was pioneered by C.K. Mann, a Ghanaian highlife musician. He blended highlife Rhythms with Indigenous *Osoode* elements to produce a musical tradition that retains Indigenous *Osoode* features. This chapter analysed some selected songs to show how *Osoode* Highlife borrows immensely from its Indigenous counterpart. Key to this is the call-and-response singing form, which forms the basic structure for *Osoode* music. Other features include the melodic shape, improvisation, and song text. The song text analysed in this chapter gives insight into how C.K. Mann *Osoode* Highlife gained popularity among the Fante by using text that community members could easily relate to.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ECOLOGY OF *OSOODE*

5.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the sustainability of *Osoode* music by exploring various factors that contribute to its continuity, as well as potential threats.

Using the comprehensive five-domain framework developed by Schippers and Grant (2016), this chapter explores the nuanced interplay between each domain and its implications on the sustainability of *Osoode.* The domains, as discussed in the first chapter, are systems of learning, musicians and communities, contexts and constructs, laws, regulations and funding, infrastructure, media, and the music industry. I examine the operational dynamics of individual ensembles, highlighting their unique approaches to sustaining *Osoode* music. Specifically, I examine prominent ensembles such as the resident ensemble at the Centre for National Culture in Cape Coast, *Twerampong* Traditionals, *Obrempong* Traditionals, and 'The Point' Jama Group, all from Cape Coast. Additionally, the current traditional from Larteh provides a context for the discussion. By examining these ensembles within the context of the aforementioned domains, I aim to explore the strategies that have been employed to sustain *Osoode* music across diverse cultural landscapes.

5.1 System of learning *Osoode*

Transmission is central to any culture as it is the means through which cultures pass on from one generation to the other. Modes of transmission, however, differ depending on the community under study. System of learning, particularly the transmission of cultural and musical traditions, has been a focal point in anthropological and ethnomusicological studies, as evidenced by scholarly works such as those by Nketia (1964), Gbolonyo (2005), Kuwor

(2013). An important aspect of transmission is the features that qualify people to be part of groups. For instance, if a group is established based on sex, age, and heredity, the people who qualify to be in the group are mostly the targets for the transmission. (Nketia, 1974). Nketia notes that the duties of a drummer are passed on from father to son, for it is believed that if a person's father is a drummer, he inherits his father's skill, and he can learn the art with ease[39] (Nketia, 1964). This means that the target for transmission of the drum is usually the son.

Though training systems differ, one common thing is that they are mostly learned through observation and participation. Smith (1962) notes that traditional instruction in tribal West Africa was not on an institutional basis. It was rather based on slow absorption of musical experience and active participation rather than formal teaching. This is not only limited to music but also to every aspect of the culture of a people. The first school is usually the home where the teachers are the family's parents and elders. Kuvor (2013) recounts how other family members disciplined him with the kind of authority his parents would have because of the training system in the traditional setting where he grew up. It was the duty of all the elders in a family to train their young members to bring honour and not disgrace to the whole group. This involves all aspects of the culture of the people. It is a disgrace if a boy cannot take up the father role in an ensemble, and as such, all family members help to ensure that children can get the needed training to fit properly in their respective communities.

Music training in African communities begins immediately after a child is born, and they progress through different aspects of the training until they are ready for public performances. Immediately after birth, the child is placed on his mother's back while she does her daily tasks. Accompanied by the child, she washed clothes along the river, pounded cassava in rhythmic style, danced, and sang. In this way, the child from birth is introduced to the music of his

[39] see also Hale (2007) and Bruinders (2015)

culture. Gborlonyo (2006) notes that the musical life of Anlo Ewe begins in infancy when he/she learns to listen and move to music while being carried on his mother's back. While the mother sings, claps and dances, the child is perched on high amid this musical performance, literally learning to sing, dance, and interpret music in his/her own way, even before learning to walk, but most of all virtually learning about her/his people, their history, tradition, culture, social, moral and aesthetic values. Lebeka (2013), in his work on the transmission of music among traditional healers, observes that it can be seen as taking place primarily through an aural-oral form of musical literacy. The Pedi musicians begin early to learn formulas that they will imitate, vary, expand and rearrange for the rest of their lives. The Pedi people are regularly exposed to musical experiences, thus learning through enculturation.

From the above discussion, systems of learning refer to the process through which musical cultures are passed down from one generation to another. It encompasses various methods such as oral traditions, formal education, mentorship, and experiential learning within communities. In the context of *Osoode* music, understanding how this musical tradition is transmitted is crucial for assessing its sustainability over time.

5.1.1 *Metsi Ayer* (I understand performance): Understanding *Osoode* Music

One Saturday I met with Uncle 04, one of the exponents of *Osoode* music at Cape Coast, before a performance and observed how he communicated with the drummers. I already knew he was one of only two drummers in Cape Coast who had achieved the status of a divine drummer, so I started thinking about how this knowledge was transmitted. I asked him if he still played the drums, and he replied that while he could still play, he was now more focused on helping young people understand the playing techniques of the drum. This made me curious about the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next and, in particular, how he became recognised as a divine drummer. So, I asked him how he interprets drum rhythms. He described

his learning process with the phrase "*metsi ayer*," which translates to "I understand drum (i.e performance)." This expression captures his deep comprehension and mastery of the nuances involved in *Osoode* drumming.

In Fante, the term "*ayer*" carries dual meanings, referring to both a musical instrument and a performance. For example, the *Osoode* music tradition is known as "*mpanyin yer,"* underscoring its significance as a performance for elders. While Uncle O4's statement primarily suggests his understanding of the drum as a form of communication, the interpretation of the phrase "*metsi ayer*" can vary depending on the context and tonal inflexion. When the syllables "*me*" and "*tsi*" are pronounced with a low-low tone, the phrase may signify "I live at," "I can speak," or "I understand," relating to language and communication. Consider the various interpretations of "*me tsi*" in Fante, tonal inflexions are crucial in conveying meaning. Alternatively, with high-low tones, "*me tsi*" translates as "I can hear." In the ongoing discussion, Uncle O4's usage of "*me tsi ayer*" means the understanding of performance or drum language. This suggests his approach to learning the *Osoode* music tradition requires language acquisition. It highlights the significance of fluently "speaking the music," much like mastering a language, as essential for effective performance and learning within the tradition.

5.1.2 learning to speak *Osoode*?

In the context of *Osoode* music, literacy takes on a unique interpretation. While it is traditionally associated with reading and writing skills, literacy in *Osoode* aligns more closely with the process of learning to understand the 'language' of *Osoode* through listening, interpreting, and imitation. This informal learning approach mirrors how language is acquired, emphasising hands-on experience and direct engagement with the music rather than formal instruction.

When asked how they learned to perform, Uncle O4 stated:

> My father was a drummer, and my grandfather was also a drummer, so I used to accompany them any time they are performing, and through that, I learnt to play the drums not only for *Osoode* but other musical traditions in Cape Coast (Personal Interview at Cape Coast, 2023).

The narrative described above was how my respondents were trained in music. It resonates with music training advanced by Burns (2016). There was no deliberate instruction aimed at teaching him to play; rather, much like the natural acquisition of language, he absorbed the nuances of performance by immersing himself in the musical environment. Similar to how infants effortlessly acquire their native languages through exposure, he grasped the intricacies of *Osoode* music performance. This resonates with several other performers who, likewise, learned to perform through familial connections, with parents or relatives who were members of the ensembles serving as their guides. Araba, a Centre for National Culture singer, corroborated that her introduction to singing stemmed from familial ties[40]. Her mother and aunt, who were both members of the ensemble during her youth, served as her primary mentors. By frequently accompanying them to performances, Araba absorbed a diverse repertoire without the need for formal instruction.

There were also instances where respondents received some training or inspiration through supernatural means. This notion of acquiring musical abilities directly from supernatural entities is not unique to Fante *Osoode* musicians but observed across various societies, both simple and complex (Nettl, 2005: 28). Burns (2016) notes that Ewe musicians' musical ability derives from a special talent (*aɖaŋu*) bestowed on them by God/Destiny (*Mawu/ Se*) and from artistic gifts they inherited from their ancestors (*amedzɔdzɔ*). This Spiritual endowment can take different forms, like performers having some supernatural encounters during which they are taught how the play the musical instrument or how to sing.

[40] Focused group discussion in Cape Coast,19th January 2023

Akua, a lead singer, recounts:

> Sometimes I have dreams where I see people singing songs I have not heard before. In some instances, I am invited to join the performance. In some cases, I can remember the songs that were being performed in the dream, and at other times, I am not able to remember them immediately, but during performances when our ancestors are present, they bring back those songs to memory, and I can sing them. (Personal interview at Cape Coast)

Kwame Dadzie[41] shares an experience of hearing drum rhythms in his dreams, which he incorporates into his performances. Additionally, he describes moments during performances, especially when ancestral spirits are believed to be present, where he displays exceptional skill in playing certain drum rhythms that elude him on ordinary days. During these instances, Kwame believes that the ancestral spirits of *Osoode* take control, guiding his hands as they play the drums through him.

5.1.3 Improvisation

While the ensemble members do not compose entirely new songs, they employ improvisational techniques and introduce variations to existing songs. In African music, improvisation is composition at the moment of performance. It involves acts of spontaneous creation, unique and impermanent, but it is not completely free (Lock, 1980). This allows them to infuse freshness and relevance into their performances, particularly in response to contemporary issues or specific events. By incorporating improvisation and variation, they maintain a dynamic and adaptable approach to their repertoire, ensuring that their music remains engaging and resonant with evolving audience tastes. In addition to improvisation and variation, the ensemble also adapts its songs to reflect contemporary contexts. This could involve updating lyrics, melodies, or arrangements to address current social, political, or cultural themes. By keeping their music relevant to contemporary audiences, the ensemble helps their cultural

[41] Personal Interview at Cape Coast,16th March 2023

tradition to remain vibrant and meaningful in evolving contexts. It also demonstrates their responsiveness and versatility as performers. Whether it's a community celebration, cultural festival, or commemorative event, the ensemble tailors their performances to suit the unique requirements and significance of each occasion. This adaptability enables them to contribute meaningfully to a wide range of cultural events and ceremonies. Also, although *Osoode* songs are bequeathed by Fante musical ancestors, it result from what Nettl describes in improvisation as "the manipulation and rearrangement of the units of a given vocabulary" to suit the context of existing situations. As such, it involves a learning process that requires "hard work and concentration" (Nettl 2005).

Twerampong Traditional, *Obrempong* Folklorists, and the Point Jama Group are cultural ensembles dedicated to performing *Osoode* music, each with a unique learning and transmission approach. The directors or founders of these groups, having been members of traditional ensembles and hailing from the same family, came together to establish their cultural groups. They recognised the dwindling presence of indigenous groups and perceived a need for their performances to resonate more with contemporary audiences. As a response, they formed these cultural groups, aiming to infuse their performances with relevance to modern contexts while still honouring the essence of the musical traditions they uphold.

Twerampong Traditional has expanded its repertoire by incorporating non-traditional musical instruments, such as guitars, to meet the specific requirements of certain events. This adaptation necessitates a proactive approach to teaching and learning, albeit informal, which differs somewhat from the traditional context. The inclusion of these instruments adds a layer of complexity to the learning process, reflecting the ensemble's commitment to versatility and responsiveness to diverse performance settings.

At the Centre for National Culture, a significant emphasis is placed on teaching and learning, evident through the scheduling of five rehearsals per week. These sessions typically span four to five hours each. Activities during rehearsals include learning vocal and dance techniques, as well as engaging in discussions regarding performance practices relevant to the various musical traditions performed by the ensemble. Notably, Wednesdays are reserved exclusively for vocal rehearsals, as Fante customs in Cape Coast prohibit the playing of drums on this day. This cultural practice underscores the importance of respecting traditions, allowing instruments to rest on Wednesdays to be fully utilised on other days.

A typical rehearsal commences with warm-up exercises aimed at loosening the body and preparing the mind for the day's activities. These warm-ups often incorporate movements that foreshadow the dance sequences to be learned later. Following the warm-up, the musical tradition slated for the day is introduced, encompassing both vocal and dance elements. The head of Performing Arts at the centre mentioned in an interview that he employs a follow-the-leader teaching approach to teach new *Osoode* dances. Initially, participants imitate the instructor's body, hand, and foot movements, gradually refining their technique through observation and correction. As common mistakes arise, the instructor provides demonstrations to clarify specific aspects of the dance, facilitating the learning process and ensuring accuracy. He plays the role of a choreographer for the ensemble.

As the choreographer, he plays a pivotal role in the creation and teaching of new dance pieces within the *Osoode* ensemble. As the creative force behind the choreography, he is tasked with conceptualising and crafting movements that embody the essence of the music and evoke the desired emotions or narratives. His creative process involves composing original dance pieces specifically tailored to the repertoire of *Osoode* music. These compositions are carefully crafted to complement the music's rhythms, melodies, and themes, enhancing the performance's

overall aesthetic experience. These dance compositions are not created in isolation but are intricately linked to the context of specific events or performances. The choreographer adapts their creative vision to suit the demands and expectations of each occasion, ensuring that the dance aligns with the overarching theme or purpose of the event. This process aligns with what Schauert (2015) describes as "sensational staging," referring to cosmopolitan aesthetic practices that aim to produce culturally spectacular forms tailored to resonate with both domestic and international audiences. While rooted in traditional Ghanaian culture, his approach to dance composition reflects a dynamic fusion of local traditions and global influences. By embracing cosmopolitan aesthetic practices, the ensemble seeks to create performances that resonate with audiences beyond their immediate cultural context, thereby fostering an appreciation of a wide range of audiences.

Drumming sessions are overseen by esteemed grand drummers, who are occasionally called upon to ensure the ensemble maintains affinity to traditional *Osoode* rhythms. This oversight aims to prevent drastic transformations of the drumming sessions that may result in losing the essence of the *Osoode* tradition while attempting to cater to modern audiences. While improvisations are permitted, they are executed within established conventions to preserve the essence of the music.

5.2 Musicians and Communities of Osoode

A crucial aspect of music sustainability lies in the active engagement and commitment of musicians and their communities toward the future of the genre in question. This domain delves into the positions, roles, and interactions of musicians within their communities, exploring the social foundations of their traditions in this context. Additionally, it addresses issues such as remuneration and strategies for sustaining musicians' careers. Essentially, the sustainability of the music hinges greatly on the musician's sustenance and career trajectory. The careers of

Osoode musicians in Cape Coast and its extension Larteh exhibit distinct characteristics. In the *Akuapim* ridge, participation in *Osoode* performances often functions as a community service, undertaken as a collective responsibility. Conversely, *Osoode* musicians often pursue it as a full-time occupation in Cape Coast.

In Larteh, the ensemble initially comprised specific families endowed with inherent abilities for *Osoode* performance. For these individuals, participation is not viewed as a job but rather as a duty, as they perceive themselves to have been chosen for this role, just like traditional priests who respond to a divine call. Over time, as individuals migrated to urban centres for better employment opportunities, the ensemble opened its doors to other interested community members. For those outside the originally chosen families, joining the ensemble is regarded as an honour and a service to the community rather than a source of income. Thus, while the careers of *Osoode* musicians in Cape Coast revolve around full-time employment, those in Larteh approach participation as a sense of duty and communal responsibility. Some members have full-time jobs they do as teachers or artisans, which they make their living. Burns (2016) in his discussion of this issue among the Ewe, acknowledges that although musicians enjoy a respectable stature in their communities, they maintain regular jobs to earn a consistent source of income.

Their performances primarily occur within the contexts of funerals, outdooring ceremonies, weddings, and their annual festival. Many of these events are directly linked to members of the ensemble, and as a result, the group typically does not charge for their services. For example, if an ensemble member experiences a loss and requests a performance, no monetary compensation is sought beforehand. Instead, following the performance, the group receives gifts in the form of food or monetary contributions, sometimes shared among its members.

Additionally, as alcohol is integral to their performances, it is often provided to them by event organisers.

The scenario in Cape Coast differs significantly, where all performers are 'professional artists' who rely on performances for their livelihood. Within the Centre for National Culture, these performers are formally employed under the Ministry of Arts and Tourism, receiving regular monthly payments for their artistic contributions. Before joining the ensemble, individuals express interest, submit applications, and undergo auditions to ensure their proficiency in performance before being appointed. Employment at the Centre constitutes a full-time commitment, reflected in their rigorous rehearsal schedule of approximately five times a week. As a government-funded institution, performances held within the centre for educational purposes typically do not necessitate additional fees, as performers are compensated through their employment. However, for engagements outside the centre, requests are processed through the administrative structure of the institution, with the fee determined accordingly.

The dynamic shifts with private cultural groups like *Twerampong* Traditional, whose primary income stems from their performances. Consequently, they have established specific fees depending on the requirements and location of each performance. During my initial interaction with the group's leader, *Okyerema* Pra, when I discussed my research and requested a performance and focus group session, he quickly mentioned the fee. I clarified that this project was part of my Ph.D. research and would not be utilised commercially, emphasising its contribution to sustaining the *Osoode* musical tradition. His smile widened as he acknowledged my intent, yet he also highlighted the financial obligations he must fulfil, including paying employees from the proceeds of performances. Hence, while he appreciates the importance of my research to academia, he also underscores the necessity of managing the group's finances derived primarily from performance earnings.

Notably, members of his ensemble are also involved in other ensembles, often driven by financial considerations. Since various groups receive engagements at different times, individuals may join multiple groups to ensure a steady income to support themselves. While his performers are essentially full-time performers in the sense that they rely on performances for their livelihood, they are not exclusively committed to his ensemble or group. Instead, they engage in performances across various groups to sustain themselves financially.

5.3 "wɔre be saw culture,"(they are coming to dance Culture) Osoode Musicians and Community Relationship

The commonly used phrase *"wɔre be saw culture"*, literally meaning *"they are coming to dance culture"*, illustrates the relationship between artistic expression and cultural identity within the community. On the surface, it serves as an announcement of an impending performance, but its deeper significance lies in how it frames traditional dance and music as living embodiments of culture itself. To "dance culture" is not simply to provide entertainment; it is to enact and affirm the community's shared values, histories, and collective memory. This expression reveals how the people understand performance as artistic, entertainment and a cultural duty**.** Equally important is the way this phrase positions the performers. They are regarded not merely as entertainers but as custodians of heritage, figures entrusted with the responsibility of preserving, interpreting, and transmitting cultural knowledge through music and dance. The performance thus becomes a dynamic site where art and culture intersect: an artistic-cultural relation that simultaneously celebrates creativity and safeguards tradition. In this context, traditional music and dance are more than art forms; they are cultural institutions that bind the community together, ensuring continuity between past and present while reinforcing a collective sense of identity.

Osoode musicians are therefore highly respected within all the communities examined, revered for their unique contributions that recorded music during modern events cannot replicate. In Larteh, despite the prevalent use of PA systems for music at funerals, the presence of the *Osoode* ensemble is considered indispensable. Their absence would render the funeral incomplete, with recorded music typically preceding their performance. The transition to live *Osoode* music is met with enthusiastic cheers from the crowd, reflecting the enduring connection between the community and this ancestral tradition. This preference for live *Osoode* music stems from various factors. Firstly, the deep-rooted heritage associated with *Osoode* music, passed down through generations, imbues it with cultural significance unmatched by recorded music. Also, the live nature of *Osoode* performances allows for a more immediate and authentic experience, fostering a stronger connection between the audience and their cultural heritage. Moreover, *Osoode* ensemble's ability to incorporate current events and emotions into their performances creates a meaningful experience for attendees, facilitating both mourning and cultural reconnection.

I witnessed the *Twerampon* Traditionals in Cape Coast, unexpectedly arriving at a seaside location for a performance. This location was bustling with activity, as local fishermen were hauling nets and women were preparing to sell the catch. Despite the ongoing work, the community members greeted the musicians with enthusiasm and excitement. This warm reception is significant as it highlights the community's deep appreciation and value for its indigenous culture. Despite being engaged in their daily livelihood activities, the community members welcomed the musicians, demonstrating their eagerness to participate in and celebrate their culture. By eagerly embracing the musicians and their performance, the community reaffirms the significance of traditional music as a vital aspect of their cultural heritage. This incident exemplifies how traditional music and dance are deeply ingrained in the fabric of community life on Cape Coast.

In Cape Coast, certain performance contexts mirror those found in the ensembles of the Akuapim ridge, particularly in ceremonies such as funerals, outdoorings, and weddings. Despite the prevalence of PA systems and DJs at such events, there remains a strong preference for traditional ensembles to provide music. However, these ensembles adapt their repertoire based on the ethnic backgrounds of the individuals involved. For instance, musicians may incorporate indigenous music from both ethnicities at weddings where the groom is a Fante from southern Ghana and the bride is from the Northern part of Ghana. This cultural flexibility underscores the respect accorded to musicians within the Cape Coast community, recognising their ability to bridge cultural divides and enhance the richness of celebratory occasions.

5.3.1 We Work as Soldiers: Being an *Osoode* Musician

Being an *Osoode* musician in the community demands dedication and creativity, as performers are expected to enliven events and transform dull atmospheres. This entails rigorous rehearsals and tapping into one's creative reservoir. For many times, time is primarily divided between rehearsals and event performances, creating a cycle dictated by ensemble commitments. In communities like Larteh and Apirede, where ensemble members are not full-time workers, rehearsals are less frequent, typically occurring on weekends. However, the success of a performance ultimately rests on the shoulders of the group leader (*Agorɔhene*) and the cantor, as they play pivotal roles in orchestrating a captivating performance. Group leaders or directors typically ensure performance variety and audience enjoyment across all ensembles.

At Cape Coast, where most of the performers interviewed were working full-time, their whole life is spent either performing or rehearsing because they can be called anytime to perform with very little or no time to prepare for the performance. This demands that they create and prepare to perform at every point in time. In a conversation with one of the female performers, she

remarked: We work as soldiers, and as a soldier, you can't give excuses, so you are always ready to perform just as the soldiers do in battle.

Rehearsals at the Centre for National Culture are conducted throughout the week, Monday to Friday. These weekdays are dedicated to refining performances and fostering creativity, while weekends primarily entail participating in various events. As full-time workers, ensemble members also have the flexibility to attend weekday events as required.

A similar situation occurs for private cultural groups such as the *Twerampong* Traditionals. Operating from a designated space within Cape Coast Castle, the group's leader creates performances for tourists visiting the castle. In addition to overseeing rehearsals, the leader invests time in choreographing dances not only for their ensemble but also for others within the community. For instance, he has been frequently invited by the Centre for National Culture to serve as a resource person, conducting workshops for performers on various music traditions. He is regarded as a key figure in Cape Coast's indigenous music traditions, earning the title of one of the "grandfathers" of music traditions in the region. This recognition stems from his extensive experience performing with traditional *Osoode* ensembles before establishing his own cultural group. As one of the pioneers of private cultural groups in Cape Coast, he possesses a wealth of knowledge from which other performers can greatly benefit. His schedule predominantly revolves around performing, teaching, and creative endeavours.

5.4 Context and Constructs of Osoode Music

This domain assesses the social and cultural contexts of musical traditions as indicated by Shippers and Grants in the first chapter. It examines the underlying values and attitudes (constructs) that steer musical directions. These include musical tastes, aesthetics, cosmologies, socially and individually constructed identities, gender issues, and (perceived) prestige, often underestimated as a key factor in musical survival.

Osoode music originated from the ceremonial performances of warrior groups in traditional settings, as previously mentioned. Initially, *Osoode* performances were primarily recreational, often occurring during communal gatherings under the moonlight for enjoyment as mentioned in the previous chapter. Over time, the performance contexts evolved to include various events, like outdoor ceremonies, weddings, and funerals, among others. While funerals and festivals predominantly serve as the performance context in the Akuapim ridge, ensembles in Cape Coast have expanded their repertoire to include a broader range of events beyond their traditional scope.

The Larteh ensemble mostly performs at the funerals of its members or their relatives. Additionally, they receive invitations from other Akwapim communities to perform, particularly for royal funerals, where they are compensated for their participation. Due to their popularity, the Larteh *Osoode* ensemble has garnered widespread recognition among Akwapim communities, particularly since many of these communities lack their own *Osoode* ensembles. In Cape Coast, performers are actively involved in various events of the life cycle, such as weddings and funerals. Sometimes, they are hired for these occasions, while other times, they participate to show support for members of their group. Beyond these, there are regional festivals which also provide context for their performance.

5.4.1 Festivals

5.4.1.1 National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFAC)

The National Festival of Arts and Culture is one of the events that provide context for the performance of *Osoode* music. Its main purpose is to bring together all artists to perform and exhibit their works for the enjoyment, delight, and education of the public once every year (NAFAC Brochure, 2010, p. 12, cited by Fio 2012). Performing arts-related activities usually occurring during NAFAC include the Choral Festival, Contemporary Music and Dance Night, Drama and

Theatre Night, and indigenous music from the regions. NAFAC served as a context for all kinds of Ghanaian music performances, including *Osoode,* which the CNCs mostly performed.

5.4.1.2 Pan African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST)

The Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival is a biennial cultural event in Ghana, which also provides a context for the performance of *Osoode* music. It was first launched in 1992 and has since been organised every two years. Panafest aims to promote and celebrate African cultural heritage and unity through various forms of artistic expression such as music, dance, theatre, and academic forums. The festival attracts participants from across Africa and the diaspora, fostering connections and dialogue among people of African descent worldwide. Panafest also includes events like workshops, symposiums, and exhibitions, highlighting Africans' historical and contemporary contributions to global culture and civilisation. During such performances, *Osoode* themes centre around slave trade, emancipation, and the need for unity across the world.

5.4.1.3 Cultural festivals for junior and senior high schools

The National Cultural Festival event is a flagship Ghana Education Service Cultural Unit annual program. This festival brings together first and second-cycle schools nationwide. Preceding the national gathering, similar festivals occur at the zonal, district, and regional levels, culminating in selecting top-performing schools and students to represent their regions at the national festival (Aguri, 2009). This festival encompasses various performances, including Ghanaian arts and traditional music. Reflecting on my own experience as a second-cycle school student in 2001, I recall the presence of traditional drummers who were invited to instruct us on drumming techniques for the competitions. Additionally, traditional groups are invited to teach students the art of singing and dancing. Private ensembles are also featured, providing opportunities to showcase their unique skills and talents. This festival also presents a context for the performance of osoode music both by private groups and students who have been trained to perform.

5.4.2 Cosmologies in Osoode

African music is more than sound and rhythm; it is a living expression of the continent's diverse cosmologies. It reflects African peoples' understanding of the universe, the divine, and the interconnectedness of life. Music in African societies does not exist as an isolated art form but as a vital component of spiritual, social, and cosmological systems that shape identity, ritual, and community life. In many African traditions, the universe is perceived as an interwoven web of relationships between humans, ancestors, nature, and spiritual beings. Music acts as a bridge between these realms. The creation and performance of music are often viewed as acts of communication with both visible and invisible worlds. Drumming, chanting, dancing, and the playing of traditional instruments are not merely aesthetic acts; they are sacred gestures that sustain harmony between cosmic forces. Omojola (2010) notes that Yoruba religious ritual performances are characterised by the constant interplay of elements of play and spirituality, controlled by the performer's agency. He adds that the constant engagement between the elements of play and spirituality in Yoruba performance provides the setting for understanding the role of the Yoruba performer as a mediator between temporal and spiritual domains of existence. Gamedze (2018), discussing the cosmological context of South African jazz, notes that malombo jazz emerged from the spiritual drums and beats of the *sangoma.* Adding that South African jazz is not just music, it's something which really transcends and go deep inside. That it exceeds the music, spilling over its sonic and aesthetic boundaries, moving in a metaphysical field. Friedson (2009) also mentions that the combination of sound and movement evokes history and culture. Through these mediums, the gods communicate what to do, in terms of healing or addressing calamities on behalf of individuals and the community at large.

The Fante, a subgroup of the Akan people in Ghana, adhere to a cosmological system that distinguishes between the Supreme Spirit (or Supreme God) and a hierarchy of lesser spirits or deities. Asare (2019), drawing on Nkansah Kyerematen (1999), notes that while the Akan acknowledge the existence of the Supreme God, direct worship is rarely offered to Him. Instead, veneration is mediated through the lesser spirits or deities, who are believed to inhabit natural elements such as rivers, trees, and rocks. These entities function as intermediaries between humanity and the Supreme Being. In support of this view, Mbiti (1969) observes that although acts of worship may be directed toward spirits and ancestors, these figures ultimately serve as conduits, ensuring that the Supreme Being remains the final recipient of devotion, "so that he (i.e., the Supreme Being) is the ultimate recipient whether or not the worshippers are aware of that."

Music occupies a central position within *Oguaa* cosmology as a mediating force that articulates the relationship between the human community and the metaphysical world. It serves as what Turner (1969) describes as a liminal medium, a performative conduit through which the sacred and the profane converge during ritual practice. Within this cosmological framework, Oguaa traditional religious practitioners recognise seventy-seven deities[42], regarded as children of the Supreme Being. Each of these spiritual entities possesses a distinct personality and is believed to inhabit elements of the natural environment, stones, rocks, trees, and sacred groves. As agents of divine authority, these deities function as custodians of cosmic order and as protectors of the Oguaa community. Discussions with performers in Cape Coast indicate that local cosmological understandings construct the deities as fundamentally benevolent entities whose primary orientation is toward communal well-being. However, this benevolence is perceived as conditional, as the deities may be ritually invoked or manipulated to enact harm. Apart from

[42] Personal communication with Pra at Cape Coast. See also Korsah and Kuwornu-Adjaottor (2019)

the dieties, there is also the ancestral category, which is reserved for individuals who exemplified moral integrity, fulfilled their social obligations, and experienced natural, peaceful deaths—criteria that reinforce the community's ethical framework. Those who die through violent or untimely means are excluded from this lineage, highlighting the association between moral order, death, and spiritual legitimacy. As Asare-Danso (2019) notes, ancestors are understood as members of the lineage who have completed their terrestrial journey and transitioned into the metaphysical realm, where they continue to act as moral arbiters and custodians of the land.

Agordoh (2010) posits that drumming, singing, and dancing charge the atmosphere and help manifest the gods and spirits during indigenous worship. Within the performative contexts of Cape Coast, musical performance operates as a primary medium through which communicative exchange between humans, ancestors, and deities is enacted. Field observations revealed that the participation of spiritual entities during performances assumes multiple forms. The gods may perform through human intermediaries, manifesting in acts of singing, dancing, or drumming, or may intervene by inspiring performers, particularly ensemble leaders, to recall forgotten songs or appropriate repertoire suited to the moment. Additionally, such manifestations may function as forms of divinatory revelation, announcing impending misfortunes and prescribing remedial measures to avert them. According to *Okyerema* Pra, divine presence is most notable when the deities express pleasure with the rhythmic structure of the drumming. In such instances, they may 'enter' or possess the drummer, enabling the playing of complex rhythmic patterns that transcend the performer's learned skill set. The resulting performance is marked by heightened energy, virtuosity, and a perceptible departure from ordinary human capability. Similarly, spirit possession during dance is perceived as a visible sign of divine manifestation. A possessed dancer exhibits extraordinary agility, stamina, and expressiveness that defy natural human limitations. One observed instance involved an

elderly woman who entered the performance arena and, as the drumming intensified, transitioned into increasingly vigorous and dynamic movement. The escalation of her energy elicited responses from the audience, who interpreted the moment as an affirmation of the gods' presence within the performance space. Such instances underscore the performative intersection of the sacred and the aesthetic, where music and movement mediate the embodiment of spiritual power and community life.

Within the cosmological framework underpinning *Osoode* performance, the act of invoking deities to influence or harm rival performers constitutes a manifestation of performative spirituality and ritual agency. This practice emerges most in competitive contexts where multiple performance groups coexist, transforming artistic rivalry into a metaphysical contestation of power, legitimacy, and a collective desire to surpass one another. Performers are keenly aware of these competitive dynamics during events involving multiple ensembles. Burns (2016) corroborates this observation, highlighting the prevalent competition among musicians and groups within local communities. He notes that inter-district rivalries, particularly among *Habɔbɔ* groups or musicians at local funerals, often fuel tensions. Conflict may erupt over the distribution of meagre rewards among funeral musicians, with disputes arising over who should receive gestures like a bottle of alcohol. In Cape Coast, for example, ensembles navigate similar competitive pressures, albeit with higher stakes and more serious conflicts, especially when inherent competition emerges during events not explicitly intended as competitions. This competition is taken so seriously that all performers know its existence. Often, it arises from the level of audience response, with ensembles striving to outshine each other to gain favor and recognition. This intense rivalry sometimes leads to the use of spells or curses against rival performers, resulting in potentially serious injuries. These curses are often spiritual in nature and imperceptible to the naked eye.

Among the Fante of Ghana, there exists a metaphysical belief in a spiritual pit known as *abeyimuna*, which performers can "dig" during performance. If this pit is not ritually "sealed" by the subsequent performer prior to their own act, it is believed that the latter may inadvertently "fall" into it, an occurrence that can manifest physically, often interpreted as resulting in bodily harm such as a leg fracture. Linguistically, the term *abeyimuna* derives from the Fante words *beyi* (witchcraft) and *amona* (pit or hole). The omission of the initial vowel in *amona* when combined with *beyi* reflects a common morphological feature of the Akan language, in which vowel-ending and vowel-beginning words are merged. The concept of *abeyimuna* reflects broader Fante and Akan cosmologies that attribute misfortune and bodily affliction to metaphysical causation, particularly witchcraft. As Mendonsa (2002) observes, within Akan thought, adversities such as crop failure, child mortality, and illness are frequently interpreted as the result of malevolent spiritual manipulation—often orchestrated by an adversary through witchcraft. Practitioners of witchcraft (*beyi*) are perceived as agents of malice, and individuals seeking protection customarily turn to the lesser deities (*abosom*) through ritual mediation at shrines. This cosmological logic underscores the dual role of the deities as both protectors and potential instruments of punishment. The Fante conceptualise the gods as fundamentally benevolent forces whose harmful interventions are typically precipitated by human transgression or by ritual invocation directed against others. Within this worldview, witchcraft and its manifestations, including the *abeyimuna* phenomenon, function as symbolic representations of social tension, moral transgression, and the negotiation between human agency and spiritual causality.

Pra recounts an incident that occurred during a performance in a community that hosted another well-known performer. During the event, an elderly man entered the performance space and began to dance. According to Prah, during his performance, this individual symbolically "dug" a spiritual pit (*abeyimona*) through specific dance gestures, movements intelligible only to

those trained in the spiritual dimensions of the performance tradition. This act, though physically imperceptible, was immediately recognised by him. In such instances, communication among performers is mediated through the drum language, which serves as a code for conveying ritual messages during performance. A particular rhythmic signal alerts the ensemble to the spiritual pit (*abeyimona*) while instructing them to maintain composure and await further cues. This protocol is critical, as any abrupt interruption of the performance might betray fear or incompetence, thereby suggesting the absence of a spiritually adept member capable of neutralising the threat. Skilled performers are expected to manage such situations seamlessly, ensuring that neither the audience nor casual onlookers perceives the unfolding spiritual conflict. To counteract the effects of the *abeyimona*, an experienced ritual specialist or spiritually attuned performer must enter the performance arena to "seal" the pit or neutralise the trap. In this case, Pra himself, identified as a *divine drummer* (see Chapter Three), intervened ritually through music and movement to salvage the situation. Instances like this require an individual of equivalent or superior spiritual capacity to the instigator to successfully mitigate the effects of the act. The resolution, aslo executed through stylised dance gestures and drum rhythms, is integrated organically into the performance sequence, often accompanied by subtle displays of authority to signal control over the situation. This performative act of spiritual negotiation exemplifies the fusion of aesthetic expression and ritual agency that characterises indigenous performance in Oguaa.

5.5 Infrastructure and Regulations of Osoode

This domain primarily concerns the "hardware" of music (Schippers and Grant, 2016). That is, places to perform, compose, practice, and learn are all essential for music to survive. It also includes virtual spaces for creation, collaboration, learning, and dissemination. Other aspects included in this domain are the availability and/or manufacturing of instruments and other tangible resources. For instance, in Larteh, *Osoode* performances typically occur in open spaces

near the event. During organised programs, they may occasionally entertain people at the chief's palace.

In Cape Coast, the ensemble affiliated with the CNC has rehearsals at the center's spaces. Additionally, the centre has a performance hall which serves as a venue for public concerts. However, the choice of performance space varies based on the event, with the ensemble often relocating to different venues unless the event is specifically hosted at the centre's performance hall. I watched some of their performances at the Cape Coast Castle during Emancipation Day celebrations and at various community centers in 2020.

The *Osoode* musical instruments are purchased from professional carvers in town. Some of the members can repair some of them, such as the drums, but they have no knowledge of how to carve new drums. Some performers also have dress-making skills, which allow them to plan and design costumes for the ensemble. However, Twerampong traditions have established a Divine Drums Palace, which serves as their main hub for gatherings and performances. This space has designated rooms for rehearsals or demonstrations. Occasionally, they host programs at this venue, inviting people to experience their performances firsthand. Additionally, they have a designated area within the Cape Coast Castle, where they entertain tourists visiting the site. However, their performance venues are largely determined by the event's nature and their hosts' preferences.

5.6 Laws and Regulations.

In Cape Coast, the CNC folkloric troupe is a government entity receiving funding for its activities. Hence, it is subject to regulations established by the government. All the Centre's for National Culture (CNCs) across Ghana were established under the National Commission on Culture (NCC) Acts of 1990 (PNDC Law 238). These centres, including the one in Cape Coast, operate under the supervision of the NCC. However, in Larteh and its surroundings, no

specific regulations or financial support mechanisms exist for the cultural groups. These groups operate based on indigenous principles, handling all activities independently without formal laws governing their operations.

Findings from the study indicate that private performing groups in Cape Coast exhibit limited knowledge of copyright laws and the legal mechanisms that safeguard the rights of artists in Ghana. These groups tend to perceive their musical activities primarily as cultural obligations, efforts to preserve and promote the *Osoode* musical heritage, rather than as forms of intellectual and creative labour deserving of formal protection or financial reward. As such, their work is often undertaken within a communal ethos of service rather than within a framework of artistic entrepreneurship or rights-based practice.

This orientation contrasts sharply with community perceptions. While performers view themselves as cultural custodians who should be appreciated and supported for sustaining regional heritage, community members often assume that these groups are financially compensated for their activities. This misunderstanding generates tensions surrounding value attribution, ownership, and recognition. It also exposes performers to various forms of exploitation, as their creative outputs are sometimes reproduced, commercialised, or circulated without their consent or adequate acknowledgement.

These challenges underscore critical issues of moral rights preservation, which extend beyond material compensation to include the rights of artists to be identified as the authors of their works and to object to their distortion or misuse. The absence of effective awareness and enforcement mechanisms undermines both the ethical and economic dimensions of artistic practice, thereby threatening the long-term sustainability of indigenous musical traditions such as *Osoode*.

During discussions with *Okyerema* Pra, he mentioned that he has reached out to the authorities at the Castle, requesting to waive his rent, given that his primary goal is to utilise the space for showcasing the rich musical heritage of Cape Coast to visitors. However, these appeals have been unsuccessful, as the authorities insist on rent payment to maintain the space. As his main source of income comes from invitations to events, he sometimes struggles to support the group financially. There have been instances where he has fallen behind on rent payments and had to personally cover the expenses. Additionally, group members turn to him for financial support with rent and medical bills when they fall ill, adding to his financial burden. Nonetheless, due to his deep passion and commitment to preserving musical traditions, he remains determined to do whatever it takes to sustain the group.

To address these concerns, several mechanisms for ensuring fair compensation and protection are essential. First, targeted capacity-building and legal literacy programs should be introduced to educate local performers about intellectual property rights, moral rights, and collective management systems. Such training could be facilitated through collaborations between cultural organisations, local government, and copyright agencies. Second, the establishment of community-based cooperative associations or unions can strengthen the bargaining power of performers, enabling them to negotiate equitable terms for performances, recordings, and reproductions of their work. Third, integrating copyright registration support and advisory services within regional arts councils or cultural centres can simplify the process of legal protection for grassroots artists who often lack the resources or expertise to navigate formal legal systems.

5.7 The Media and the Music Industry

Some ensembles in Cape Coast maintained a presence on social and traditional media platforms, while others thought it unnecessary. Recently, social media has become an

indispensable tool for marketing any product, including music. It allows individuals and groups to reach audiences beyond their immediate surroundings and even across the globe. Dewan and Ramaprasad (2012) highlight the growing influence of new media, driven by user-generated content, which is gradually replacing traditional media channels in how consumers discover and engage with products and services. This trend is particularly evident in the music industry, where social media platforms are increasingly utilized to share information about songs and facilitate song-sharing.

The CNC ensemble engages with its audience through social media platforms. These platforms update followers on upcoming events and share highlights of their performances. Additionally, they participate in traditional media outlets, such as local radio stations in Cape Coast, to showcase the region's vibrant musical traditions. During these appearances, they perform live and often encourage listeners to call in, sharing their feedback and ideas on preserving these traditions for future generations.

Twerampong Traditional maintains an active presence across various media platforms. Its YouTube channel showcases its vibrant performances, giving audiences a visual insight into its cultural richness. Additionally, it regularly appears on local radio stations, offering live performances to engage with its community. Its robust Facebook presence serves as a promotional hub, where upcoming events are advertised and captivating snippets of its performances are shared, further amplifying its reach and impact. For example, Fig. 27 is a snippet advertising Art exhibition in schools where the *Twerammpon* Traditionals performed.

Figure 27. An example of a screenshot of the social media handle of Twerampon Traditionals

At times, they use their social media platforms to impart knowledge about the rich cultural heritage of the Fante people. This involves posing questions about musical traditions or musical instruments aimed at stimulating engagement and education. When these questions are posed on their social media pages, people participate by providing answers in the comment section, thus fostering public engagement in traditional instruments and music. The image in figure 28 is a Facebook post they made as one of their efforts to help sustain indigenous music traditions in the region. In the post, there is a picture of a traditional drum, and they engage the public by asking what the name of the drum is and the musical tradition it is used to perform.

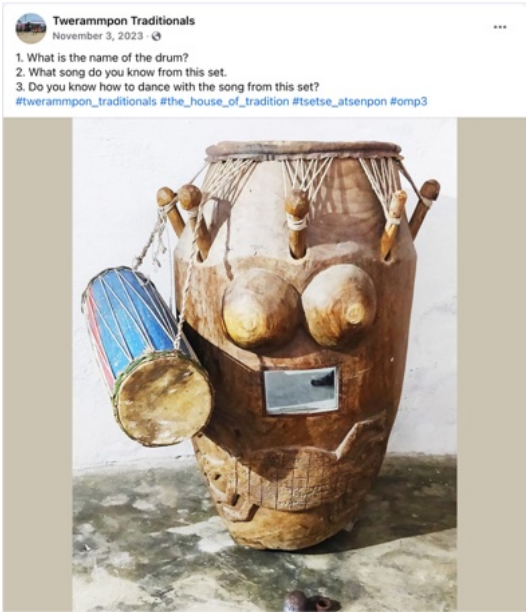

Figure 28. An example of a picture posted on Twerampon traditionals social media

Foreign individuals have reached out to them via their YouTube channel, expressing interest in inviting them to perform. Moreso, they receive inquiries from people curious about their musical traditions and performances, often arranging meetings at the castle for further discussions. In my conversations with Prah, he mentioned that he has granted a lot of interviews to people he never met before who contacted him through their social media handles regarding a post they made of their performances. Some of these are students' researchers as well as other authors. He explained that in one of the scenarios, he received a call from Germany from someone who was writing a book about the Cajon and contacted him because he saw their performance of *Osoode* employing the use of the *Osoode adaka* which looked like a variant of the cajon.

Figure 29 shows his engagements with foreign nationals who have come to learn about indigenous musical traditions in Cape Coast. These engagements help him to reach out to people beyond Cape Coast and abroad.

Figure 29. An Example of Twerampon traditionals engaging their international guests.

Pra mentioned that they receive inquiries and interview requests from individuals outside the country who discover their group through their social media content. These interviews provide opportunities to share insights into their cultural traditions and musical performances with a. global audience. Further, they actively participate in radio programs within their local community, aiming to educate listeners about the rich musical heritage of Cape Coast and its significance in preserving cultural identity. Through these various platforms, they engage with diverse audiences locally and internationally, fostering appreciation and understanding of their musical performances.

Figure 30 Pra, the leader of twerampon traditional performing at asaase radio with a section of the group members

The image in Figure 30 above shows one of his media engagements at Asaase Radio in Cape Coast. It features Germans who were on a funded project focused on Indigenous musical traditions in Ghana. They made their first

stop in Cape Coast because of a post they had seen about the tampon tradition and how their leader is interested in the sustainability of Indigenous musical traditions. As part of the program, they give a project background and introduce Prah as one of the key persons they will be working with.

In the Akuapim ridge, the ensembles prioritize their role as community servers over seeking visibility on social media or traditional media platforms. During a focus group discussion, many members expressed that their primary performances occur within Larteh and its surrounding areas. They believe that within their community, their reputation precedes them, and those in need of their services can easily reach out. Establishing a group social media presence hasn't been their priority; individuals occasionally share performances on their personal social media accounts. Their main focus remains on entertaining and serving their local community, although they do accept invitations to perform at events outside their hometown, particularly funerals held in neighboring areas.

5.8 Implications for Sustainability

One of the primary challenges facing the sustainability of *Osoode* music in Cape Coast is funding. Private ensembles often struggle due to their reliance on engagements for income, making it difficult to manage the groups effectively. Each performance comes with an expectation of payment for members, adding pressure on leaders. During one of the organized performances, I noticed that members of the ensembles were waiting even after the performance had ended. When I inquired why they were waiting, the leaders explained that they needed to see how much money they received to distribute it among the members before everyone left. This immediate sharing of earnings poses a challenge in accumulating funds for the group's expenses, as it appears that every amount received must be distributed on the spot. *Okyerama* Pra, highlighted the demanding nature of their work, emphasizing the need for

regular rehearsals to introduce new elements to their performances. However, daily rehearsals entail covering transportation costs for members and sometimes providing food during prolonged sessions. Moreover, financial constraints delay the implementation of new ideas, as funding must first be secured. Pra also faces the cost of rent at the Castle, actively seeking avenues to alleviate this expense through negotiations with relevant parties.

Private groups highlighted that during the rainy seasons, events become scarce as most gatherings occur in open spaces. This presents a challenge in managing the groups during inclement weather. Even members of the CNC, who are formally employed full-time, express dissatisfaction with their salaries, finding them insufficient. Consequently, they often seek additional income through other means or by joining supplementary groups.

The issue of funding also impacts training initiatives to some degree. While there is interest in receiving training in musical traditions, individuals and parents are hesitant to commit financially. For instance, Pra is in the process of developing a space for training, particularly for children in indigenous musical traditions. However, despite the enthusiasm of many children to learn, their parents cannot make financial commitments. Additionally, some departing students expect financial compensation, further complicating operations at the training center.

The challenges surrounding sustainability also revolve around the transmission of musical traditions. Many private cultural groups have ceased to exist due to the passing or aging of their leaders, who were often the primary custodians of these traditions. With no successor to carry on the legacy, these groups have disbanded or lost their momentum. The observation emerged during my fieldwork at Cape Coast where I engaged with leaders of private cultural groups, particularly those involved in *Osoode* music performances. Despite the vitality and longevity of these groups, with some having operated for over four decades, there was a concerning gap

in succession planning. The leaders, typically individuals in their late sixties, acknowledged that they had not identified or trained individuals within their groups to take over leadership roles in their absence. This poses a significant risk to the continuity and sustainability of these cultural traditions. Without a clear succession plan in place, there is a looming threat of these groups disbanding or losing their vibrancy over time, as leadership transitions become increasingly uncertain. For instance, the Obrempong Folklorists have become inactive as their elderly leader is no longer able to participate actively, now running a drinking spot in front of his house instead. To address this issue, there is a pressing need for structured training programs to ensure the proper transmission of indigenous musical traditions to younger generations.

The lack of national performance opportunities for private cultural groups means that they miss out on important platforms to showcase their talents and traditions to a wider audience. Despite their significant contributions to preserving and promoting cultural heritage, these groups often struggle to secure invitations to national or regional events where they could perform.

This situation becomes particularly challenging when leaders of these private groups are called upon to serve as resource persons for such events, highlighting their expertise and knowledge within the cultural community. However, despite their involvement, their own groups are not allowed to perform, leading to a sense of frustration and missed potential.

By providing these private groups with opportunities to perform at national or regional events, they would not only feel recognized and appreciated for their efforts but also gain exposure to a broader audience. This exposure could lead to further performance engagements and opportunities for collaboration, ultimately helping to sustain their cultural traditions and ensure their continued vitality.

Researchers who engage with traditional music groups like *Osoode* ensembles in Cape Coast could play a significant role in its sustenance. They often interact with these groups to collect

data for academic purposes. However, a concern has been raised about the depth of their involvement. While researchers may express empathy and concern for the challenges faced by these musical groups during data collection, their support often ends once the research is complete. Promises of financial aid or other forms of assistance to sustain the groups are frequently left unfulfilled. This pattern suggests that researchers may view these musical traditions primarily as subjects of academic study, rather than actively contributing to their preservation and continuation within the community. This confirms the work of Mapaya (2014), who also indicates that ethnomusicologists stand accused of prying on African heritage while cultural practitioners receive very little benefit from the encounter. He continues that they can be seen as careerists whose involvement with studying indigenous African music cannot be divorced from their insatiable quest for individual professional advancement. Additionally, some researchers may exploit the content obtained from these groups for their publications without adequately compensating or acknowledging them. This calls for researchers to go beyond mere data collection and academic pursuits, urging them to genuinely engage with and support these musical traditions for their long-term sustainability.

On the contrary, the ensemble in Larteh doesn't really have issues with funding since members don't engage in performance as their main source of livelihood. They mostly engage in their work as a source of funding and perform with the group mostly as a sense of duty and as such, gifts they receive during performances are enough for them. Performance contexts are mostly life cycle events, usually of members or friends, festivals and durbars or community gatherings. On a few occasions, they have had to travel outside the community, but it was still for similar events like the funerals of members or affiliates. However, one of their main challenges is transmission. Since it's not a formalized group who are actively engaging people and recruiting, people join at their will and as such sometimes it's difficult to gather people for performances. Thus, there is no conscious effort to teach the younger generation. The main group in Larteh

almost got dissolved in 2020 due to the death of the *Agorohene* (the king of the performance). Since this person was the one who was helping with mobilization and the literally played all lead roles in the group, members lost the urge and excitement to be part of the group. Members however, decided that it would not be good that there is no *Osoode* performance at his funeral considering the sacrifices he has made for the group of the years. Adding that will be ungrateful on their part not to do for him what he has always done for them. I observed that the motivation was not so much about sustaining the musical tradition but returning kindness they had received from the *agorohene* when he was alive. The funeral, however, helped to establish renewed interest in *Osoode* performances as a tribute to him. Whenever there is an event, especially of members or close relatives of members, people will usually encourage each other with the mindset that if he were here, he would have done it, so let's do it for him. Though this is helping to some extent, there is the need for a renewed interest in the musical tradition and not as a tribute to someone.

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed issues of sustainability of performances using the five-domain framework in Schippers (2016). I examined how each of the domains relate to *Osoode* music performances. I delved into various issues that directly or indirectly affect the sustenance of *Osoode* music ensembles in Ghana's Akuapim ridge and Cape Coast regions. I also explored the rich cultural significance of these ensembles and their roles in performing at various events such as funerals, weddings, and festivals. From financial challenges to the lack of succession planning, it became evident that many of these groups struggle to maintain their operations and pass on their traditions to future generations.

Additionally, I discussed the impact of modernization and technology on traditional music ensembles. While social media platforms and digital channels offer new opportunities for

visibility and outreach, they also bring about new challenges and dilemmas, particularly regarding copyright issues.

Furthermore, I highlighted the importance of national performance opportunities for private cultural groups. Despite their significant contributions to sustaining cultural heritage, these groups often face obstacles in securing invitations to national or regional events, limiting their exposure and hindering their efforts to sustain their traditions.

Finally, researchers also bear responsibility for preserving musical traditions, ensuring they are not solely utilized as stepping stones for academic advancement but valued for their cultural significance and richness.

Chapter Six

Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations.

6.0 Summary

I embarked on an investigation into how *Osoode* music has been recontextualised, contributing to its sustenance. My interest in this topic began during an initial study in Larteh, where I examined their musical traditions and performance contexts. Although different communities among the Akuapim claim to be the first to perform *Osoode*, they all acknowledge that they are not its originators. Research indicates that *Osoode* originated in Cape Coast and spread to the Akuapim Ridge through bus drivers who travelled that route. As these drivers moved, they helped disseminate musical traditions among the communities where they worked. Since my previous research focused on aesthetics, I chose not to delve into the origins of *Osoode* music in detail. Two years later, I had the opportunity to work as a research assistant on a project centred on *Adzewa*, a female music tradition in Cape Coast. I used this opportunity to conduct preliminary research on the origin of *Osoode* music, preparing for a more extensive project. During my free time, I conversed with performers and others about the *Osoode* music tradition. These discussions provided insightful discoveries that fueled my interest in studying the recontextualisation of the *Osoode* music tradition.

This study examined how private ensembles in Cape Coast have reinterpreted *Osoode* music through various renditions that cater to audience preferences. Additionally, it explored how highlife musicians have integrated *Osoode* elements into highlife music, transforming it from an indigenous musical tradition to a genre enjoyed by a broader audience. As a result, *Osoode* has expanded beyond Cape Coast to other regions of Ghana, including the Akwapim region. The highlife adaptation of *Osoode* has even crossed Ghanaian borders, notably through CK

Mann, the pioneer of *Osoode* Highlife, who toured multiple countries performing this genre. Other highlife musicians also followed his example, incorporating *Osoode* elements and additional musical features and instruments. This helped further popularise *Osoode* and set the stage for subsequent reinterpretations, contributing to its sustainability. Building on initial research on music sustainability and the recontextualisation of music, the study employed the five-domain framework proposed by Schippers and Grant (2016) to investigate the sustainability of musical cultures. By applying this framework, the study analysed *Osoode* music to understand the systems that function as an ecosystem, supporting its continuity and the factors that threaten its sustainability. Three private ensembles in Cape Coast participated in this study: *Twerampon* Traditional, The Point, and the resident ensemble at the Centre for National Culture. Each of these groups presents unique performance practices and renditions of *Osoode*, which were thoroughly explored in this project.

The second chapter delves into the origins and early developments of the *Osoode* musical tradition, revealing two primary narratives that characterise *Osoode*. The first narrative posits that *Osoode* originated as an *asafo* warrior dance. This chapter examines the factors that contributed to *Osoode*'s evolution into other musical traditions and its sustained presence over the years. It also explores how *Osoode* has been reinvented and recontextualised in contemporary settings. The chapter integrates narratives from individuals who have either long-standing experience with the musical tradition or have had contact with those who witnessed its inception. These sources include both scholars and cultural custodians. Additionally, I discuss the ensembles that participated in the project and the diverse ways they have reimagined the *Osoode* musical tradition.

The third chapter focuses on the performance practices and repertoire of *Osoode*. It also investigates the different musical instruments used in *Osoode* performances. The chapter

reveals that *Osoode*'s instrumentation has evolved from traditional instruments to include Western instruments, which was introduced in response to audience preferences and the demands of specific contexts. I discussed the organisation of *Osoode* ensembles and the concept of professionalism among *Osoode* musicians. The findings suggest that professionalism in *Osoode* performance is not defined by individual performers but by the collective experience accumulated over many years, enhancing cohesion during performances. The chapter further provides a musical and textual analysis of indigenous *Osoode* songs. This helps to provide insight into the features of *Osoode* music, which helps identify similarities in *Osoode* highlife in the fourth chapter.

The fourth chapter concentrates on *Osoode* highlife, which integrates *Osoode* music with Ghanaian highlife music. This chapter traces the development of *Osoode* highlife and highlights its key exponents. It observes that *Osoode* highlife played a significant role in popularizing *Osoode* music, contributing to its longevity. This fusion introduced *Osoode* music to a broader audience beyond Cape Coast, reaching across Ghana and Africa. C.K. Mann, was often referred to as the "*Osoode* King," pioneered this genre. He extensively toured with his band, initiating *Osoode* Highlife by incorporating the guitar, his principal instrument, into *Osoode* music and later adding other Western instruments as he saw fit. C.K. Mann was mindful of preserving essential features of *Osoode* music, such as handclaps, indigenous musical instruments, and core musical elements like melodies and harmonies. The fourth chapter also provides some musical and textual analysis of *Osoode* highlife. This showed how C.K. Mann and his contemporaries borrowed extensively from the indigenous *Osoode* in creating their *Osoode* highlife. Familiar elements in *Osoode* highlife, both in the text and music, helped his audience to identify with the music, thereby contributing to its popularity and sustainability.

As stated earlier, in the fifth chapter, the sustainability of the *Osoode* music tradition is analysed using the five-domain framework proposed by Schippers and Grant (2016). This chapter examines how each domain reflects the sustainability of *Osoode* music, focusing on private cultural groups in Cape Coast, namely *Twerampon* Traditionals, the resident group at the Centre for National Culture, and The Point group. The activities of these groups are explored to understand how they contribute to the sustenance of the *Osoode* music tradition, with particular emphasis on the transmission processes and the systems of learning *Osoode* music.

Drawing upon the creativity of *Osoode* music performers in Cape Coast, this study has shown the diverse ways in which *Osoode* has been reimagined and adapted to sustain its relevance in contemporary contexts, both within the Cape Coast community and beyond. The findings underscore that *Osoode* is not a static Fante musical heritage but a living, dynamic art form that continues to evolve in response to changing social, cultural, and technological environments.

A significant aspect of this recontextualisation is evident in the development of the highlife adaptation of *Osoode*, which demonstrates a sophisticated fusion of indigenous rhythmic patterns, melodic structures, and lyrics with modern popular music idioms. This highlife version extends *Osoode* influence beyond local performance spaces, traversing national boundaries and engaging audiences across the West African region and the diaspora. In doing so, it reflects a broader trend in African music, where traditional forms are reinterpreted to articulate modern identities and experiences while retaining their historical foundations.There is a growing digital presence of *Osoode* music, as evidenced by its dissemination across online streaming platforms and social media networks. This digital circulation marks a new phase in the life of *Osoode*, enabling wider accessibility. Additionally, the emergence of *Osoode jazz* presents another compelling site for critical exploration. Though aspects have been

incorporated in this work, there still exists a need for a critical study into its harmonic structures and improvisation techniques.

6.1 Conclusions

The study reveals that *Osoode* is one of the musical traditions that evolved in the context of *asafo* warriors and continues to have strong connections to Asafo performances. The name of the musical tradition stems from how people get engrossed in its performance. This musical tradition continues evolving, and patronage is enjoyed owing to the many renditions developed from the indigenous *Osoode* music tradition. This study identified four renditions of *Osoode* which are:

1. The Indigenous *Osoode*
2. *Osoode* Jama
3. *Osoode* Jazz
4. *Osoode* Highlife.

These variants evolved from an ensemble's quest to please the audience changing tastes. *Osoode* Jama maintains the *Osoode* repertoire and a greater part of the instrumentation. It is performed in the Jama style because it requires a musical accompaniment for a football team. A significant difference in that performance context is the replacement of the *Osoode adaka,* the main indigenous instrument for *Osoode* performance, and the use of traditional drums that can produce the kind of sound volume required for that performance context.

This work is a comprehensive study of a regional musical genre that has contributed to developing Ghanaian highlife music. Highlife music has continued to evolve since its inception and has been subject to several interpretations, including *Osoode* highlife music. *Osoode* Highlife is a recontextualisation of Ghanaian highlife from the Fante people located along the coastal south of Ghana. The study discovered a blend of Ghanaian highlife rhythms with

indigenous *Osoode* music elements. This work also provides both the musical and textual structure of the indigenous *Osoode* music tradition and *Osoode* highlife music to give readers insight into the extent to which *Osoode* highlife musicians borrow from traditional sources. These show creative ways of manipulating indigenous resources for a wider audience. First, the study shows a rhythmic innovation in *Osoode* highlife music by replacing the 6/8 time used for the indigenous *Osoode* with 4/4 time, constituting the rhythmic structure of Ghanaian highlife music. Through this change, CK Mann transformed *Osoode* music into a highlife musical style. This rhythmic innovation further led to other textual and contextual innovations. In terms of the context, *Osoode* Highlife moved the performance context of *Osoode,* which was mostly for recreation and events centred around the life cycle in the community, to national and international audiences. This has attracted *Osoode* enthusiasts across the globe, which has led to other musicians composing *Osoode* music. The recontextualisation of *Osoode* music has also transcended religious boundaries. Some Gospel musicians like Kofi Owusu Dua Anto, popularly known as KODA, are currently exploring the *Osoode* style in some of their gospel music compositions.

This work shows how *Osoode* musicians borrow extensively from traditional materials. It revealed that some songs were lifted directly from indigenous music traditions without altering them. Since these songs were already familiar to community members, this helped them renew their interest in *Osoode* music in its recontextualised version. The text also involved themes that are part of everyday life, which also helped people relate to it easily.

6.2 Recommendations

As the discussions on the sustainability of private cultural groups in Cape Coast have revealed, though some people like Prah and Kofi Badu are contributing to the sustenance of indigenous musical traditions in the Fante region through the activities of their groups, they lack the necessary support from the government. There should be a conscious effort to support and

motivate such artists to continue doing it. For instance, their groups can be incorporated into the activities of the castle, where they can earn some income and support their group financially.

The study also revealed some gaps in the transmission of the *Osoode* musical culture. The leaders of the two major private groups in Cape Coast are well advanced in age, and as of now, no one is being trained to take up their position. It would be good if they could be made to teach as instructors in schools to help train people who may be interested.

6.3 Future Research

There will be a need for an in-depth study of individual musicians in Cape Coast, especially Prah and Kofi Badu, who are considered to have a great wealth of knowledge regarding indigenous music traditions in Cape Coast. Since they are all advanced in age, such work can help unearth specific ways they have sustained their interests in indigenous musical traditions.

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APPENDIX

A: Interviews

Okyerema Prah (2022) Master Drummer and leader of Twerampong Traditionals, Phone Conversation 22nd September 2022

Jason (2022) Head of Performance, Center for National Culture, Cape Coast 25th September 2022

Kofi Badu (2022) Master drummer and leader of Obrempong Folklorist and The Point Jama Group, Phone Conversation

Kwame Dadzie Master Drummer and member of the Resident Ensemble, Center for National Culture, Cape Coast.

Yaw Opare Master Drummer and member of *Osoode* group at Larteh

John Collins, Professor of Music at the University of Ghana. Phone Conversation 20th April 2023

The ensemble at the Center for National Culture, Cape Coast, 19th January 2023

Obrempong Folklorist at Cape Coast 16th March 2023

Kofi Badu, personal communication 16th March 2023

Jason (2023) personal communication 16th March 2023

Mr Hooper, member of the Point Jama group, personal communication 16th March 2023

Kwame Daadzie, member of the point group and resident ensemble at the Center for National Culture, Cape Coast, 16th March 2023

The point group, Cape Coast, 20th July 2023

Maame Araba, member of the point group, Cape Coast 20th July 2023

Mr Hooper, member of the point group, Cape Coast 20th July 2023

Okyerema Prah, master drummer and leader of Twerampong traditional 20th July 2023

Maame Araba, Member of the point group, Cape Coast, 20th July 2023

Okyerama Pra, personal communication 20th July 2023

B: Pictures of Performances

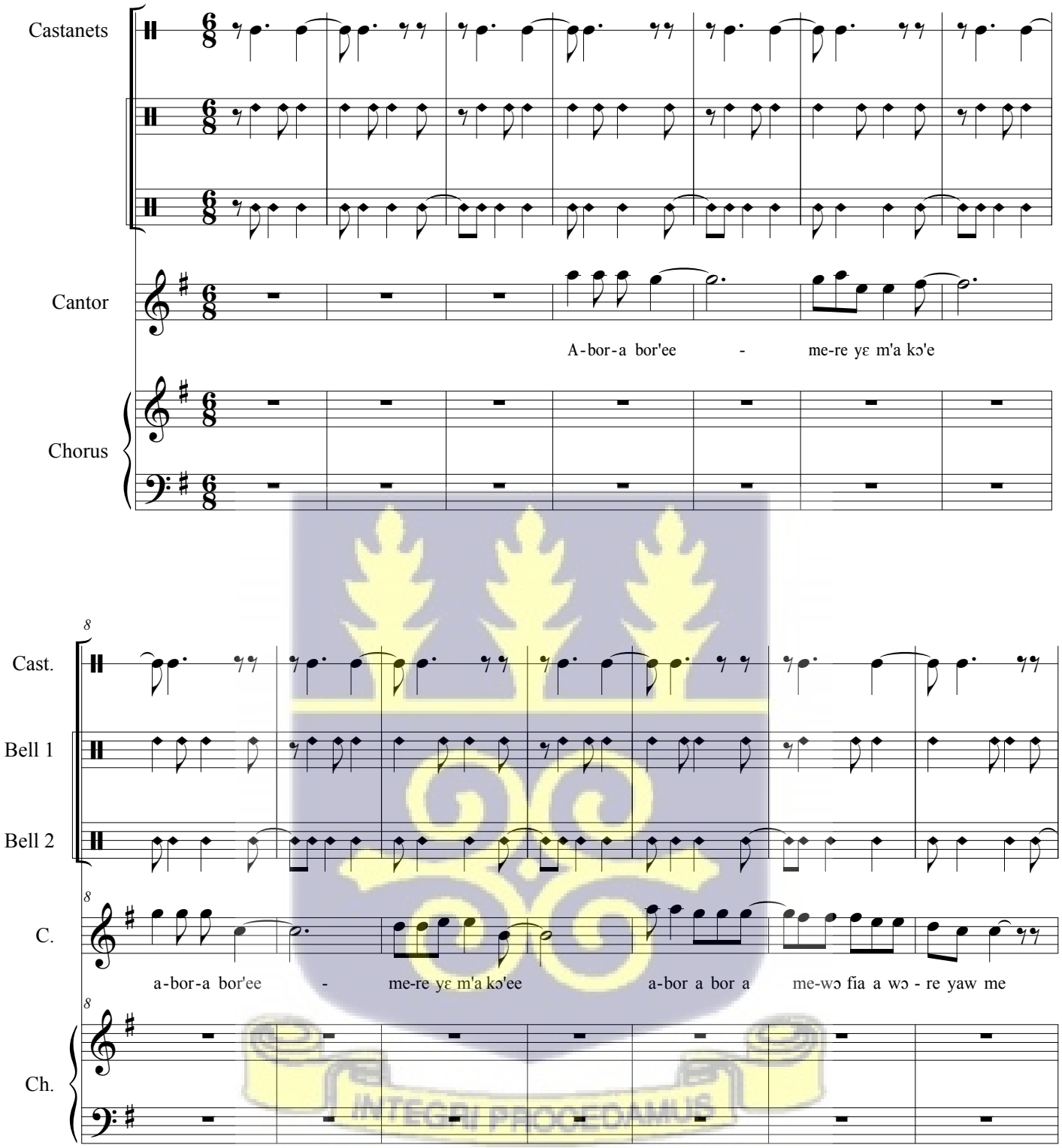
Picture of the drinking spot of the the leader of The point Group which they also use as their rehearsal space

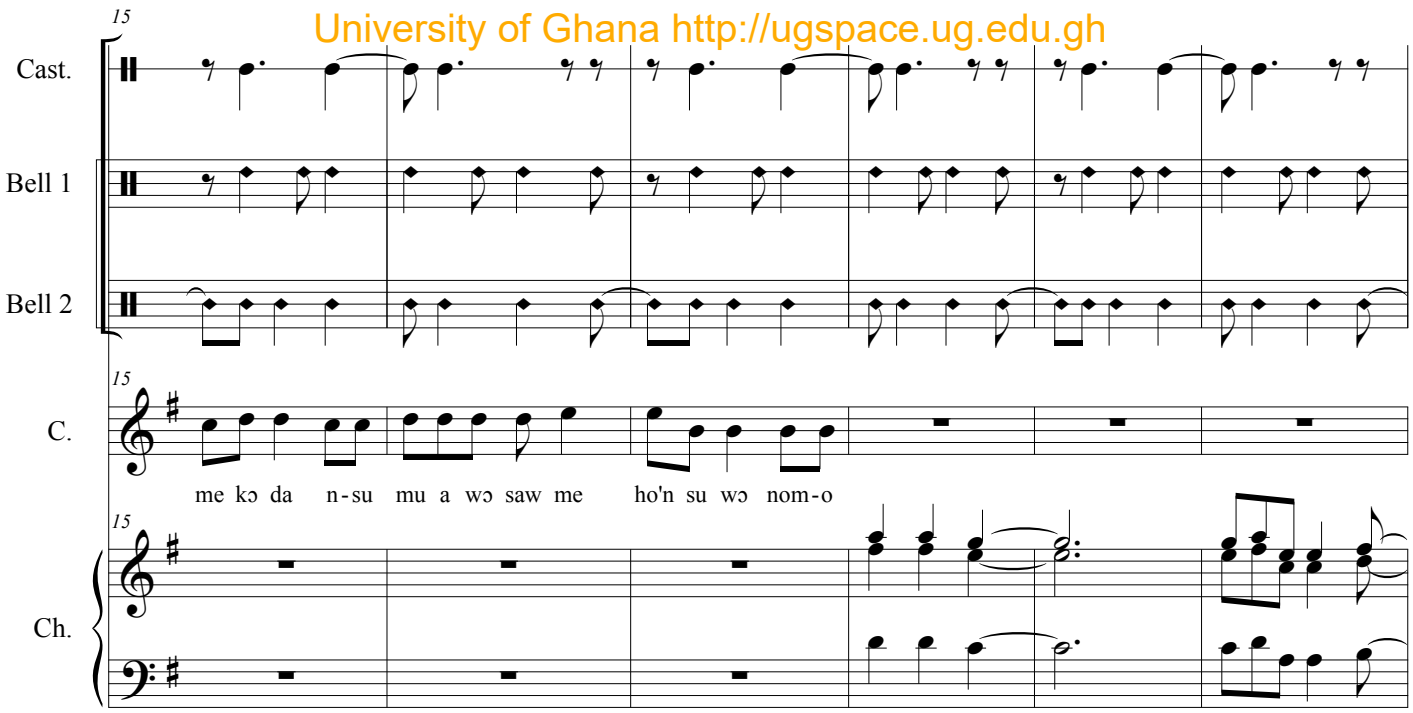
The Point group in Performance

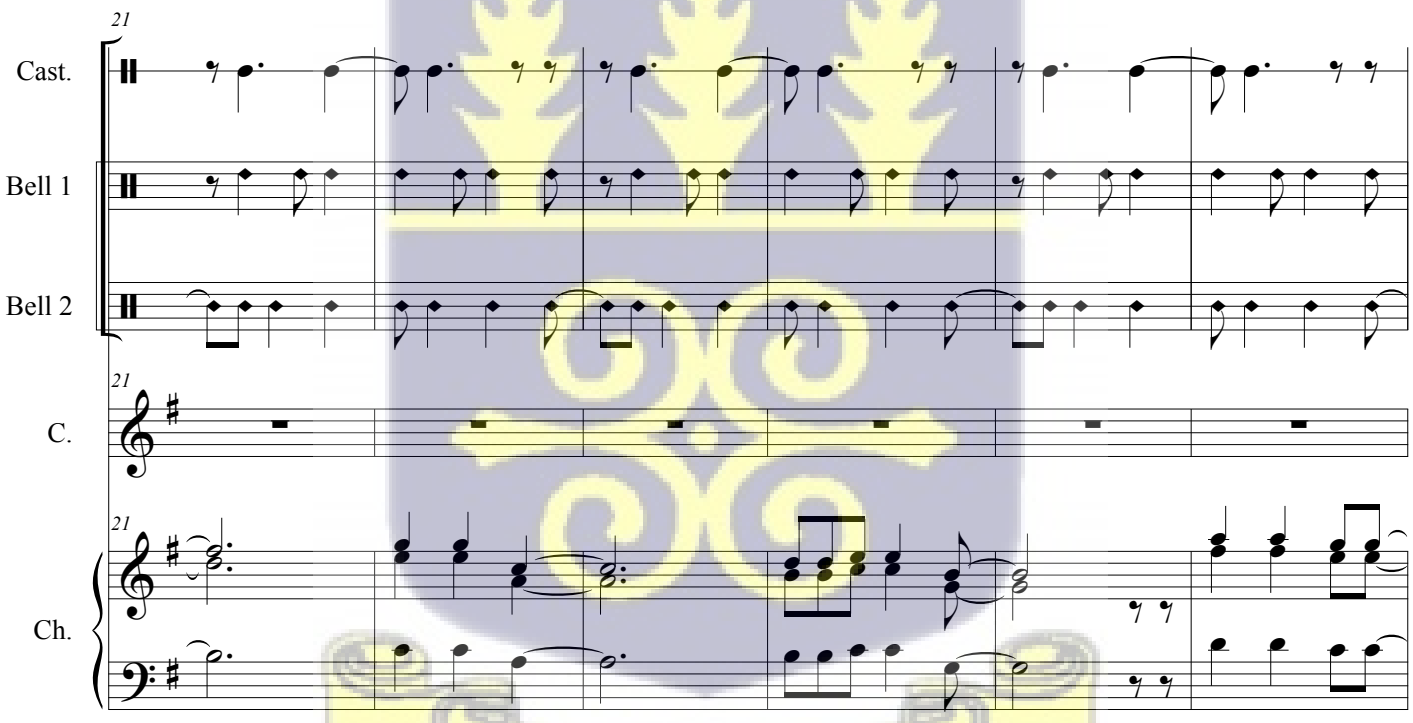
Passers by joining in the performance of The Point Group

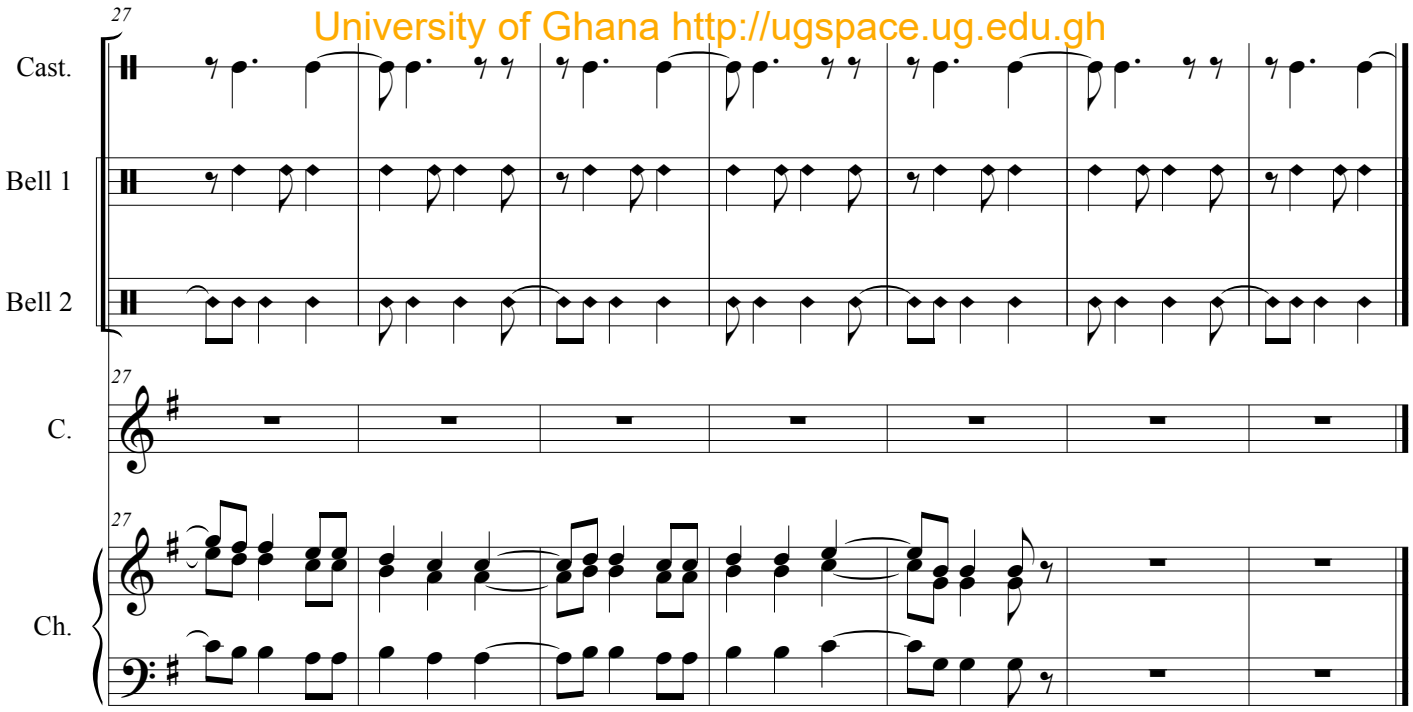
Musical instruments for Twerampon Traditionals.

Aborabor

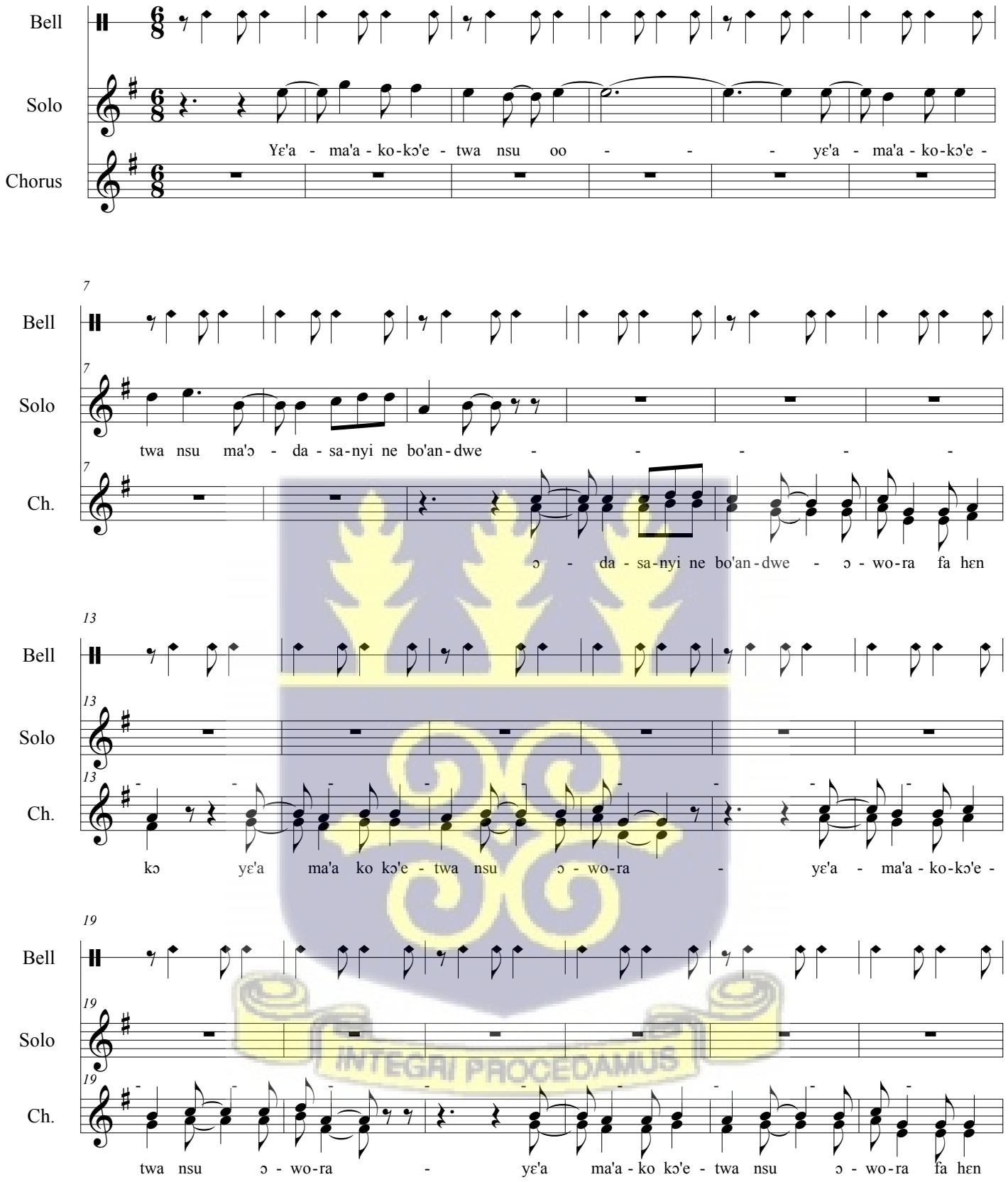


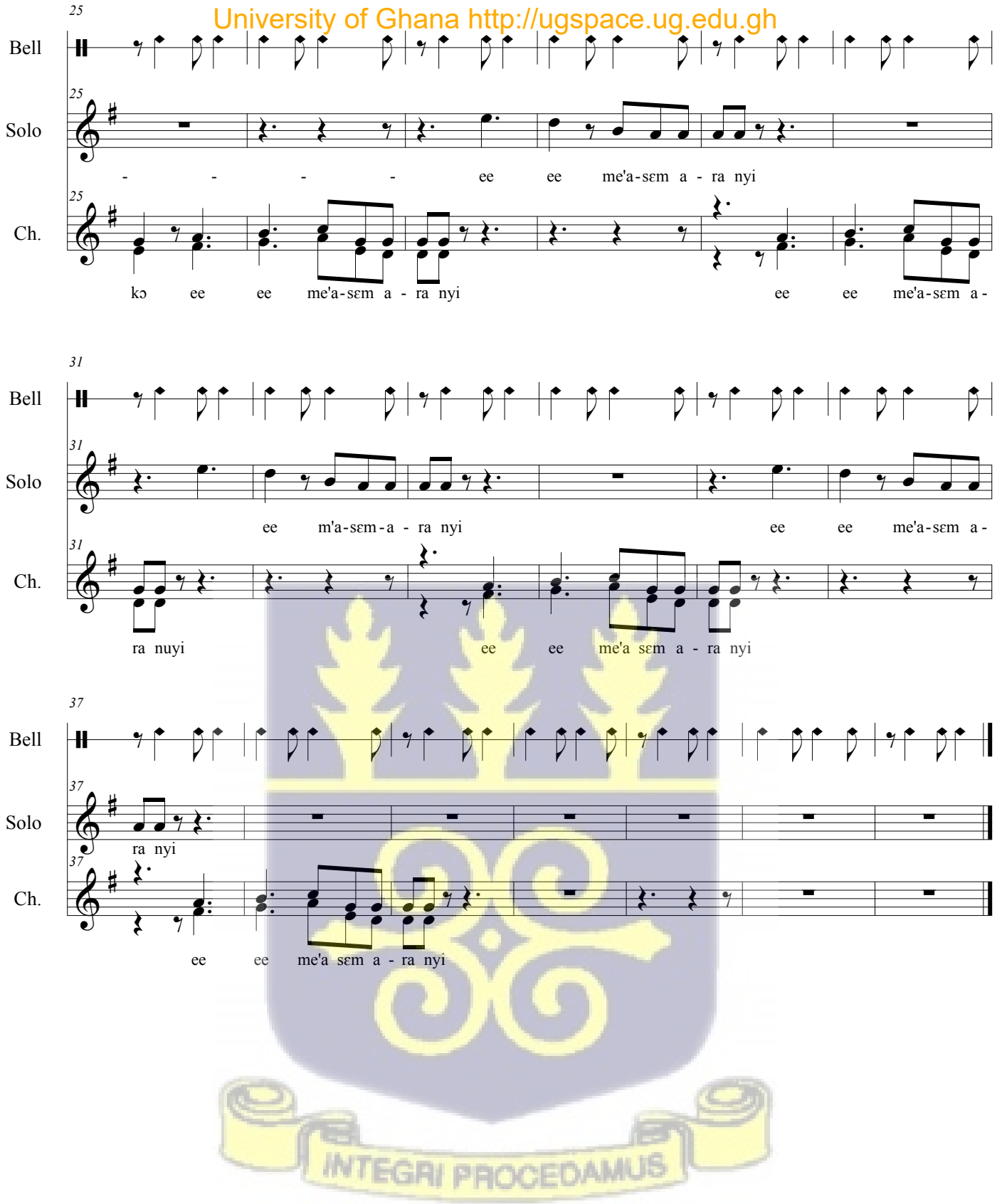






Akɔkɔ Etwa Nsu





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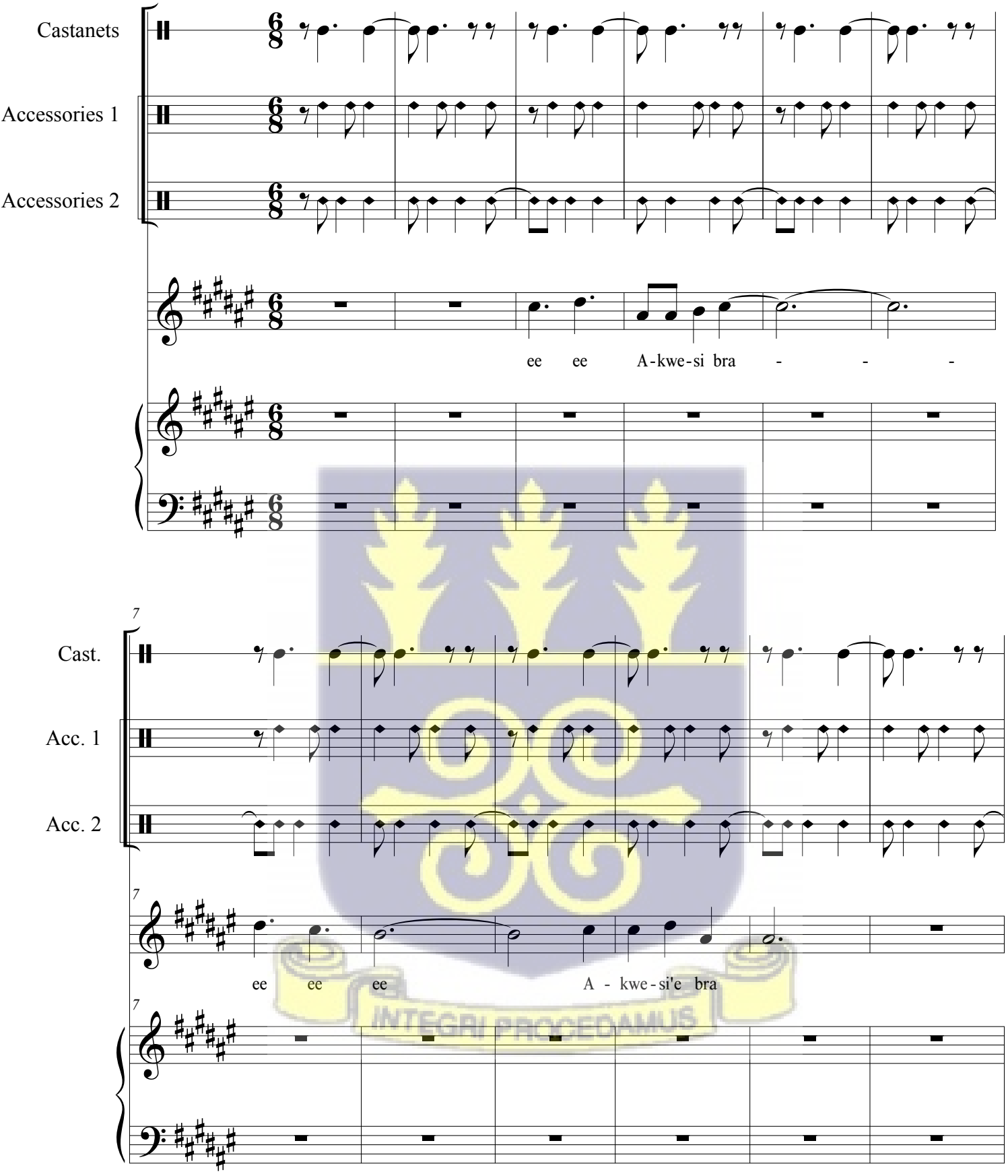

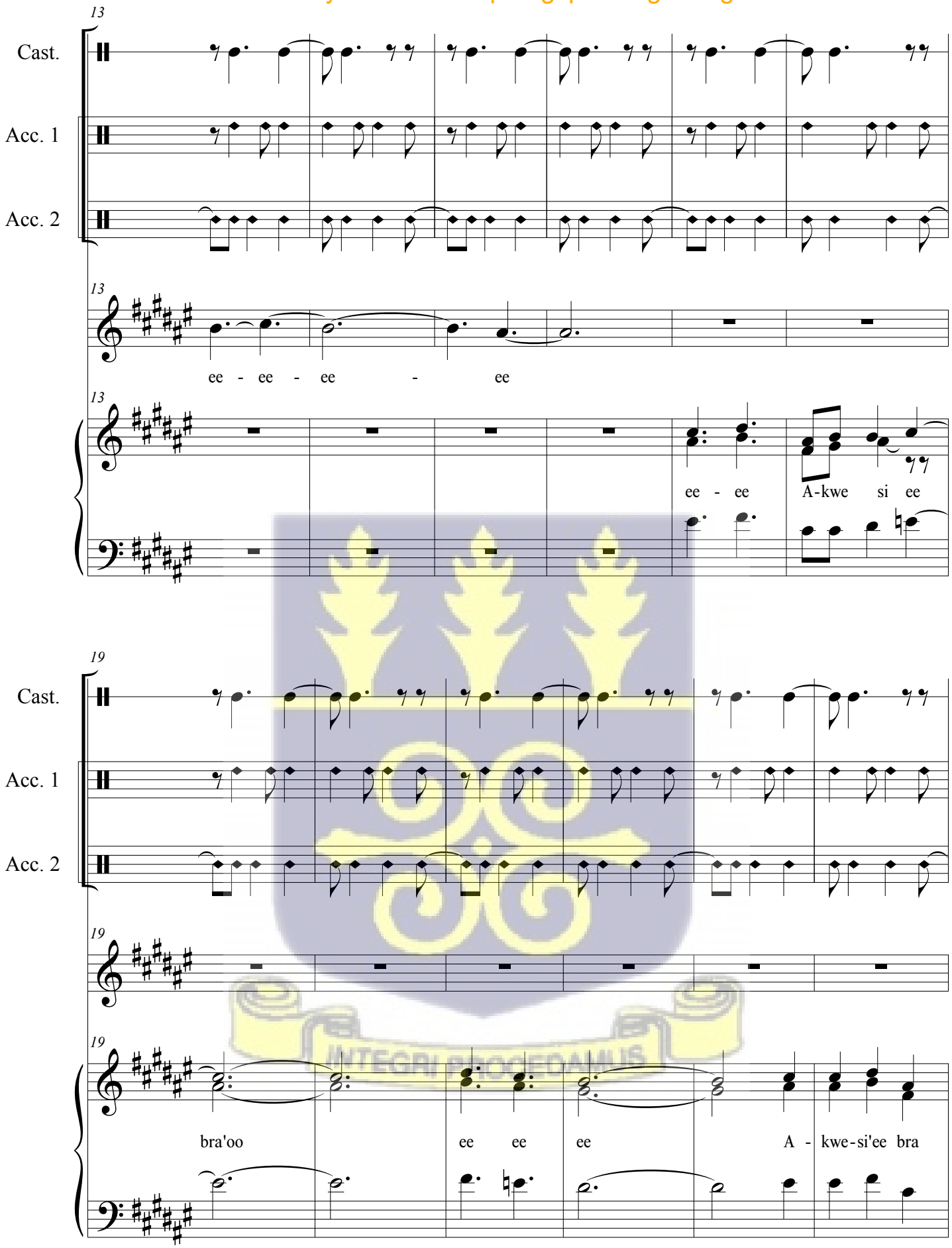

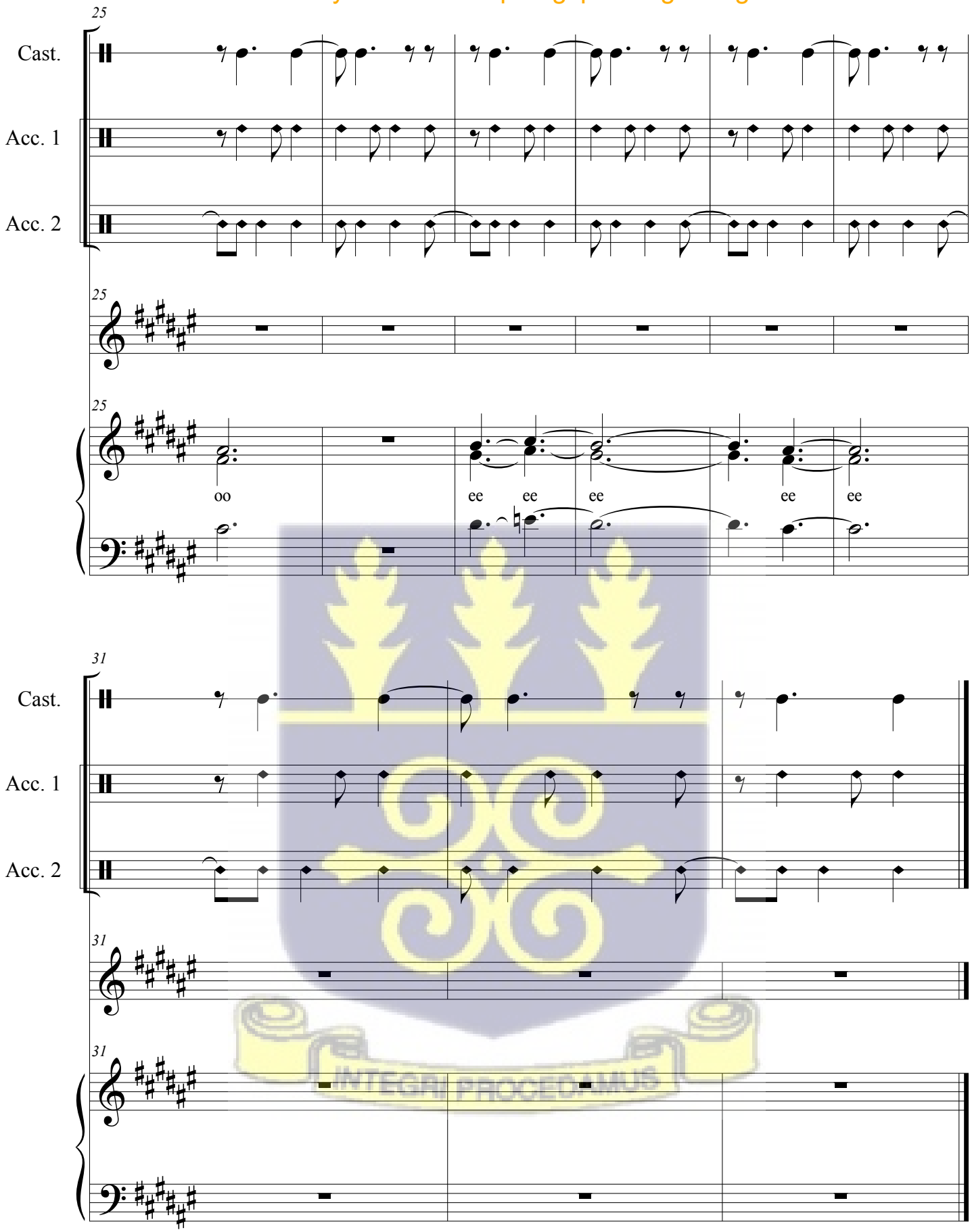

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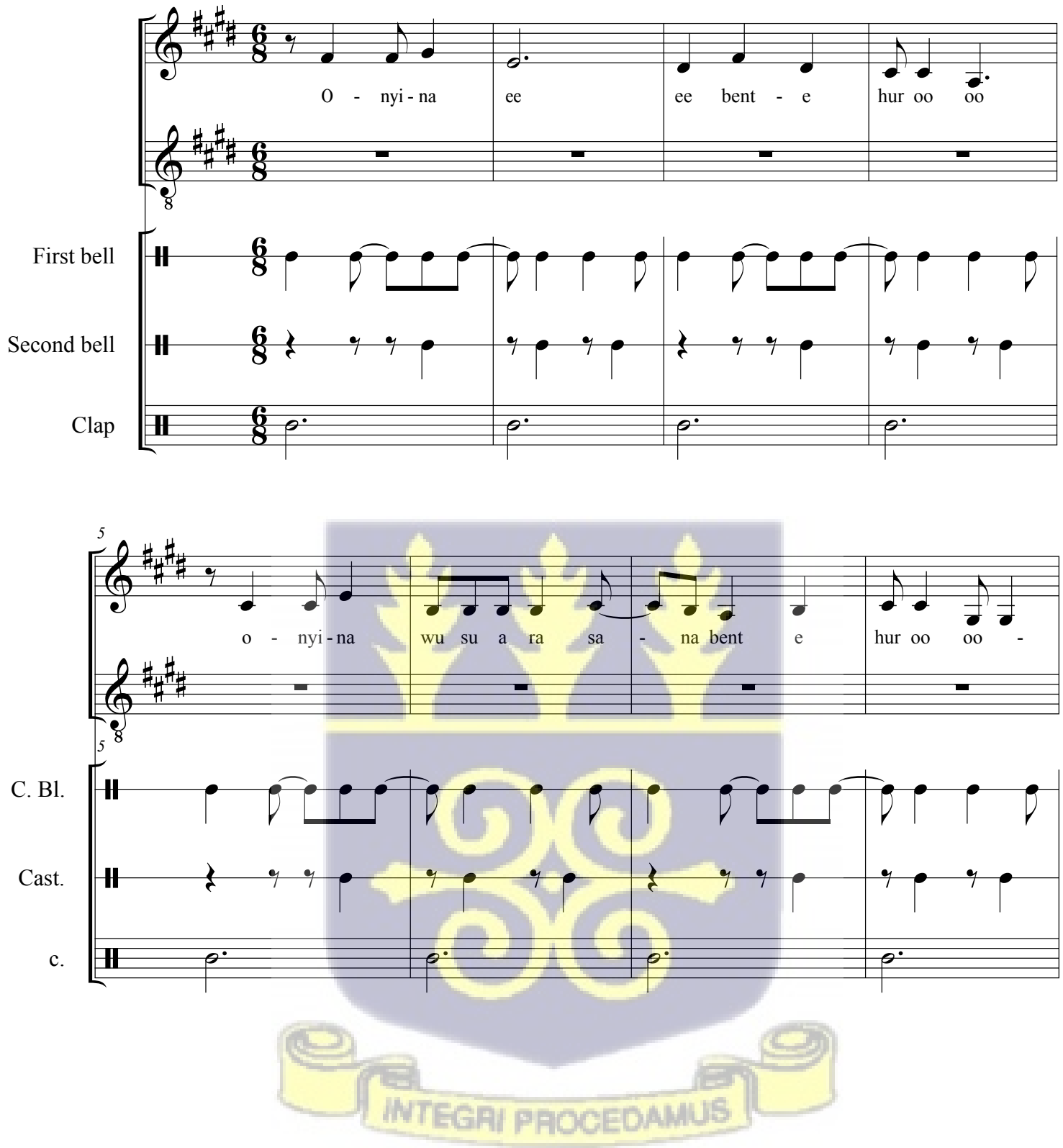

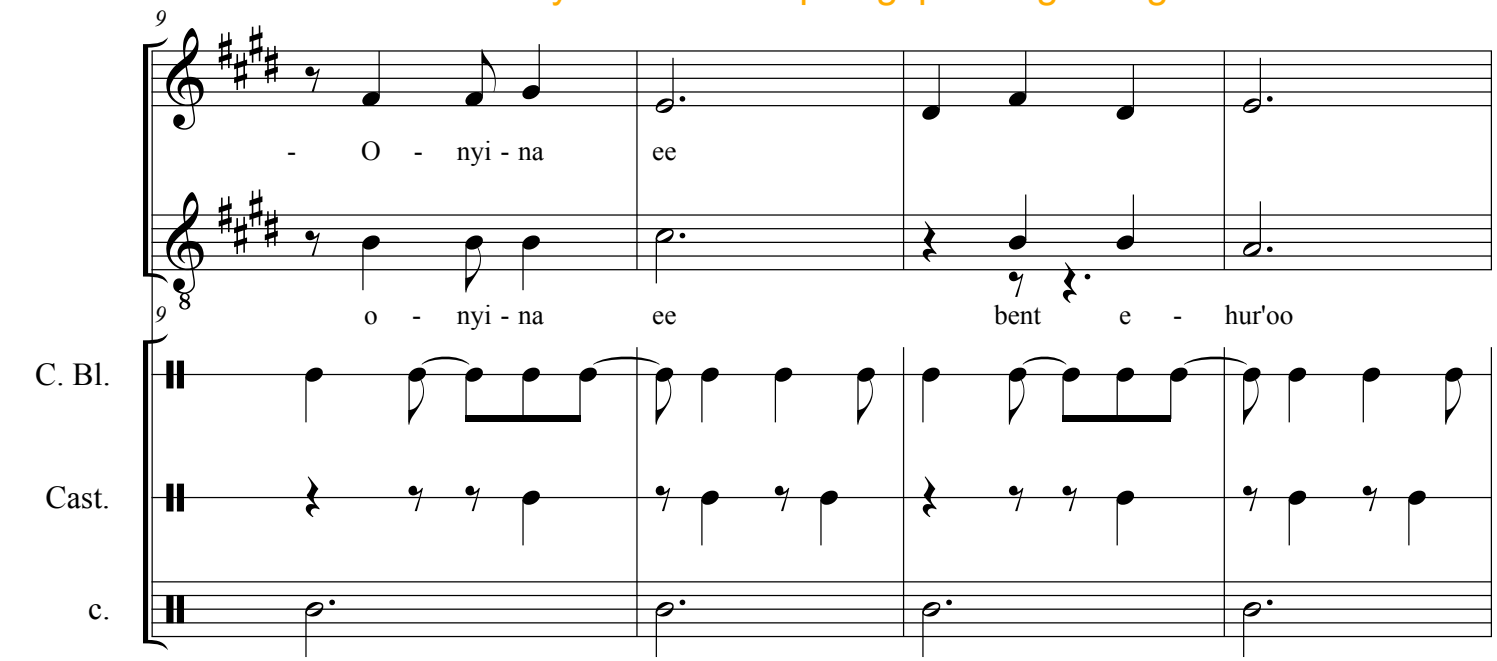

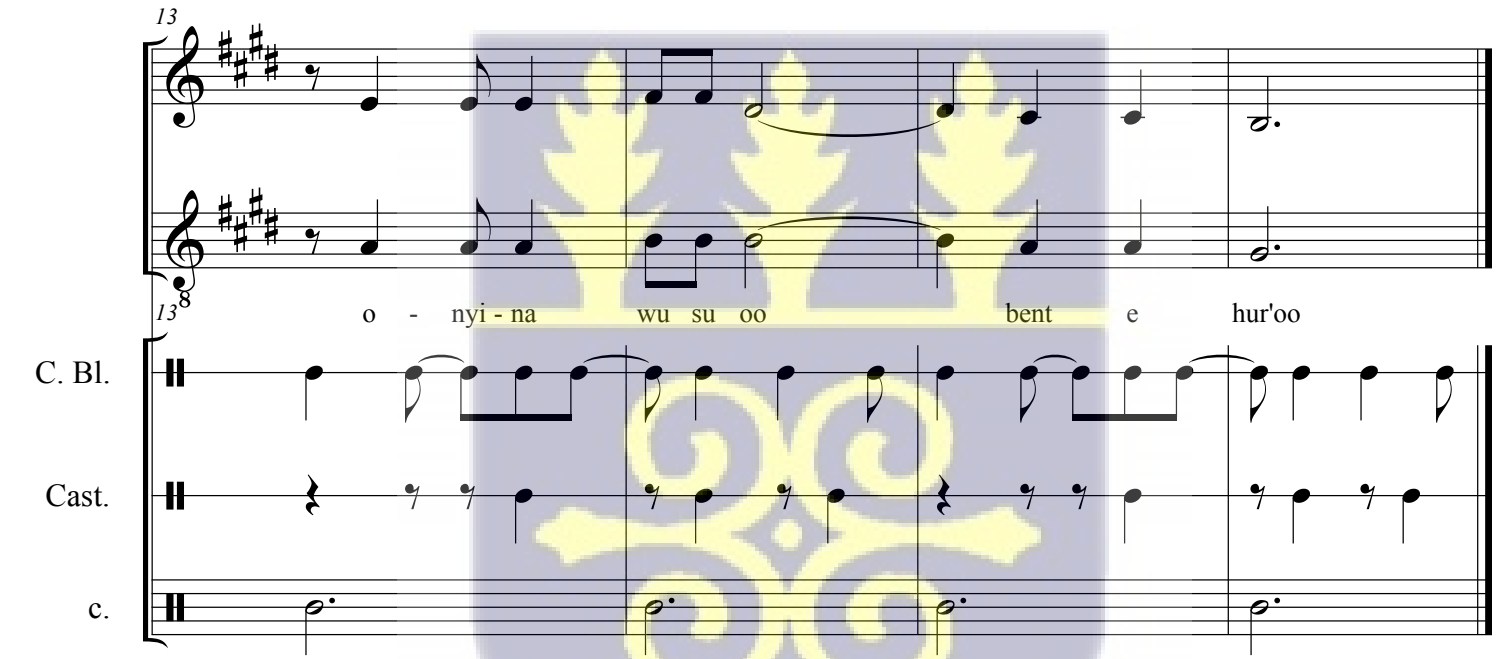

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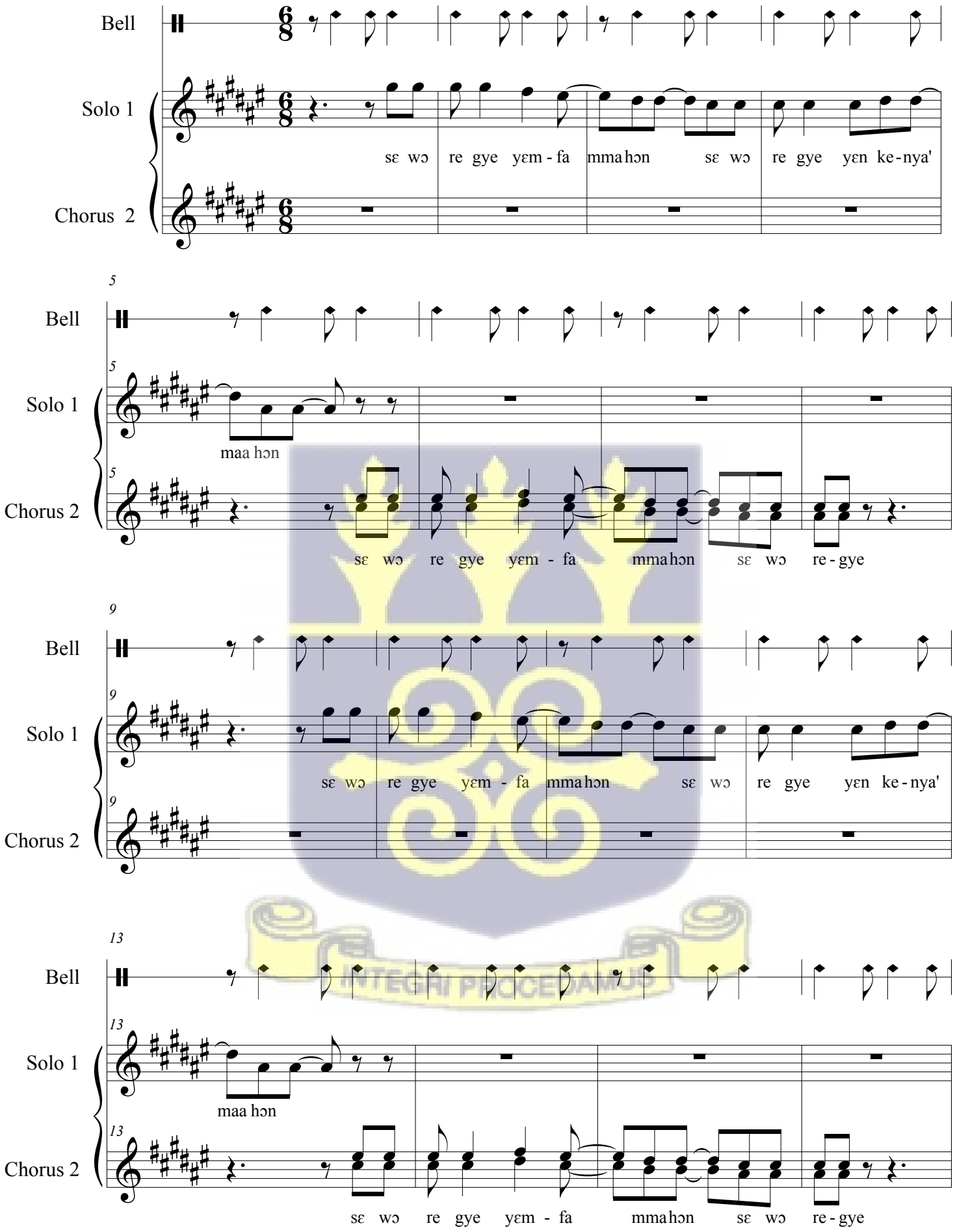
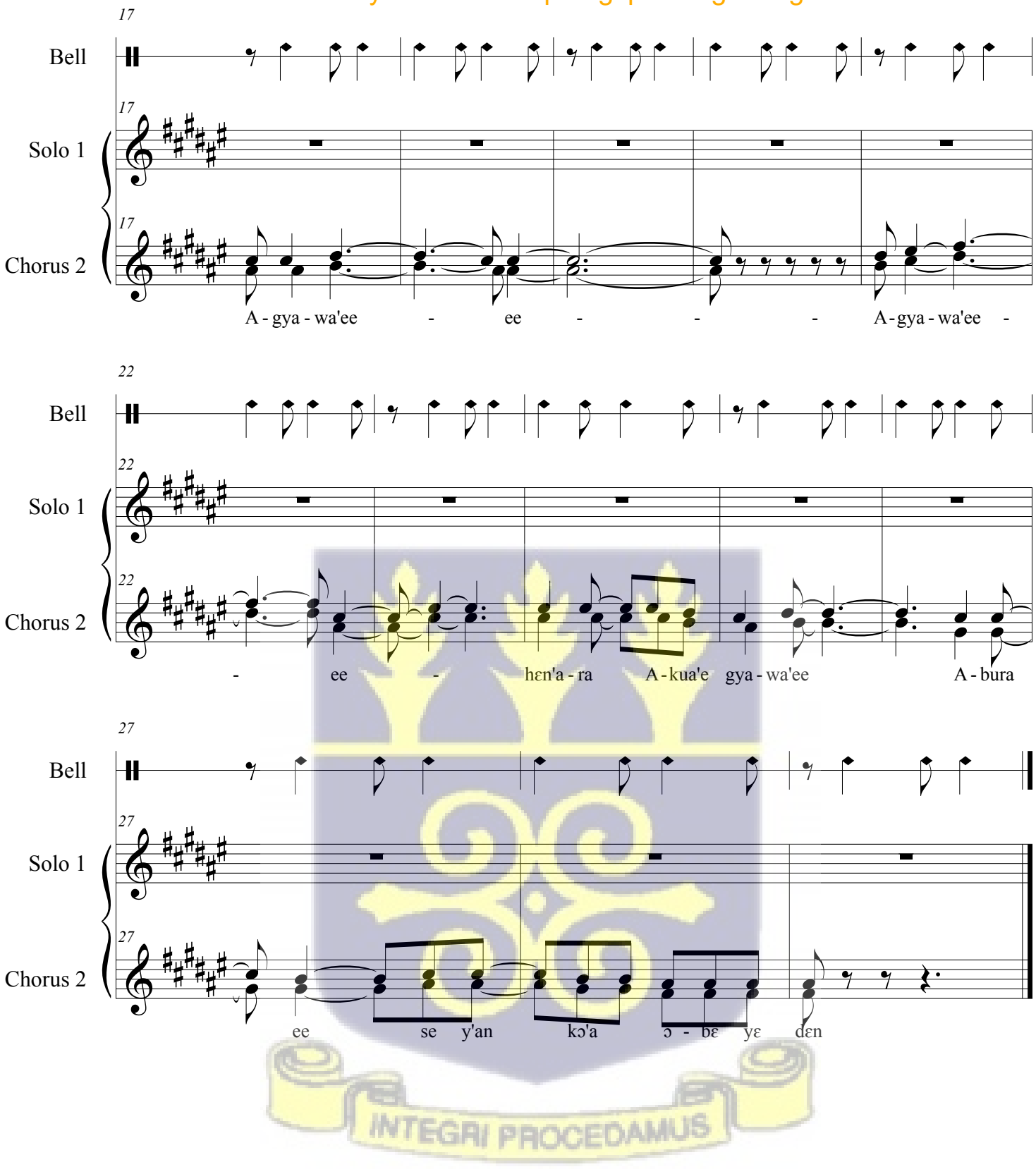
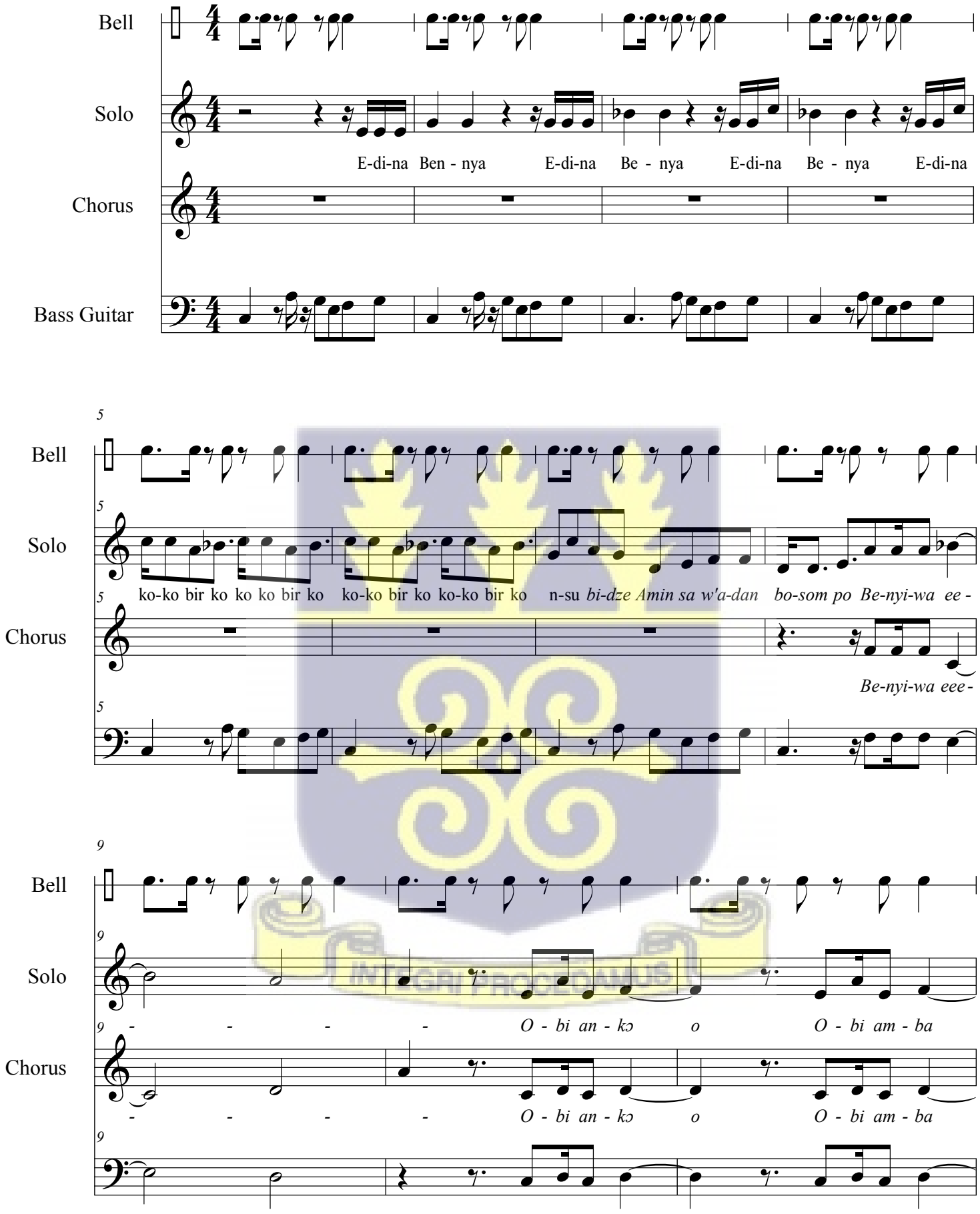
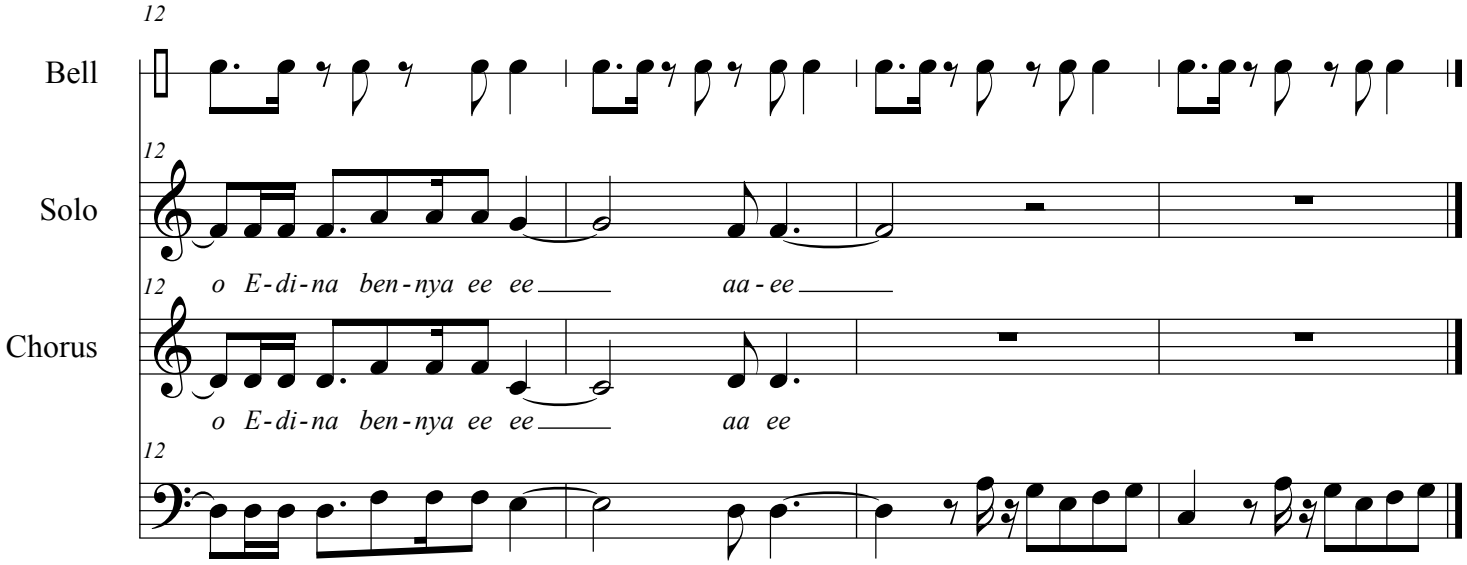




Edina Benya





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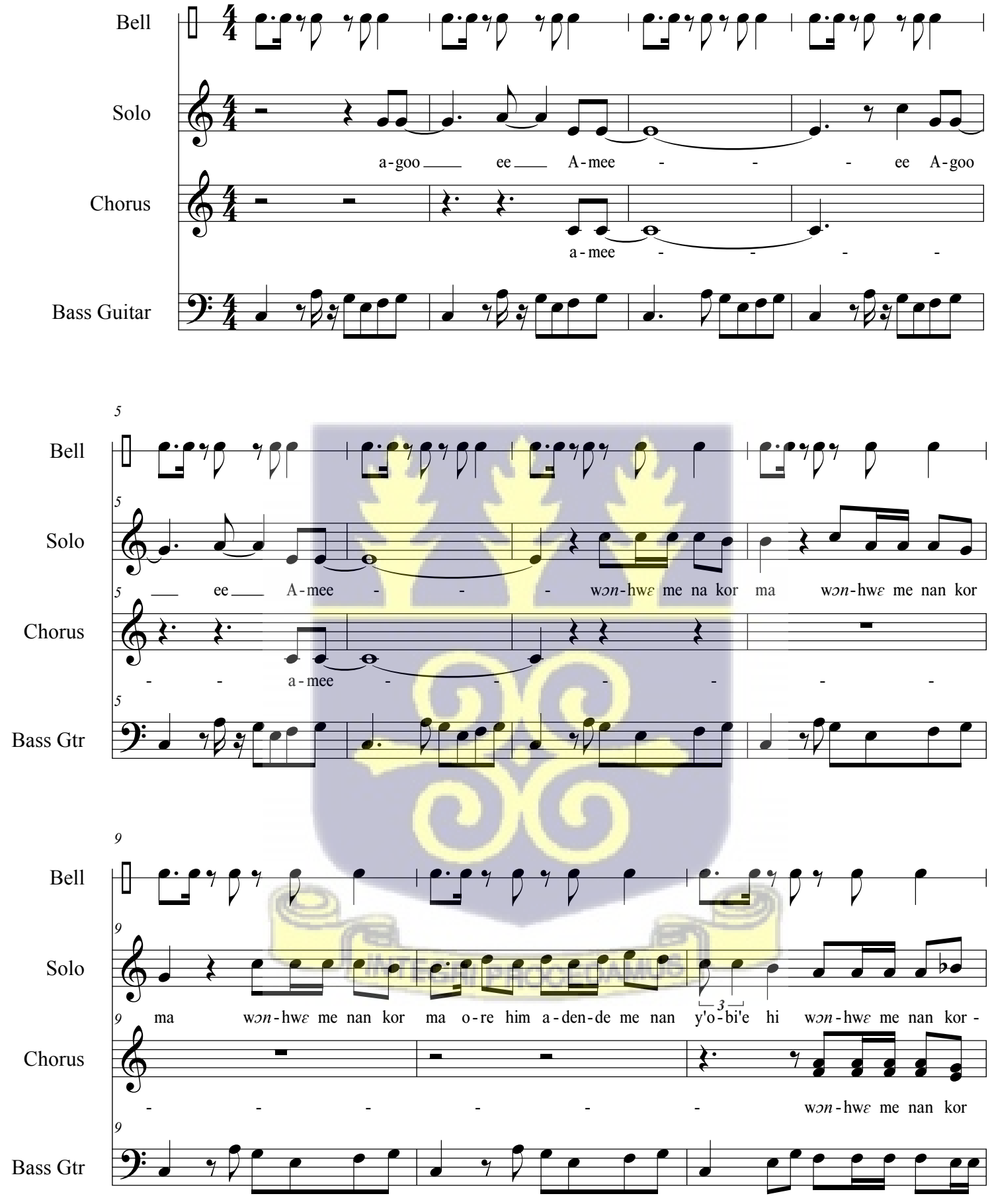

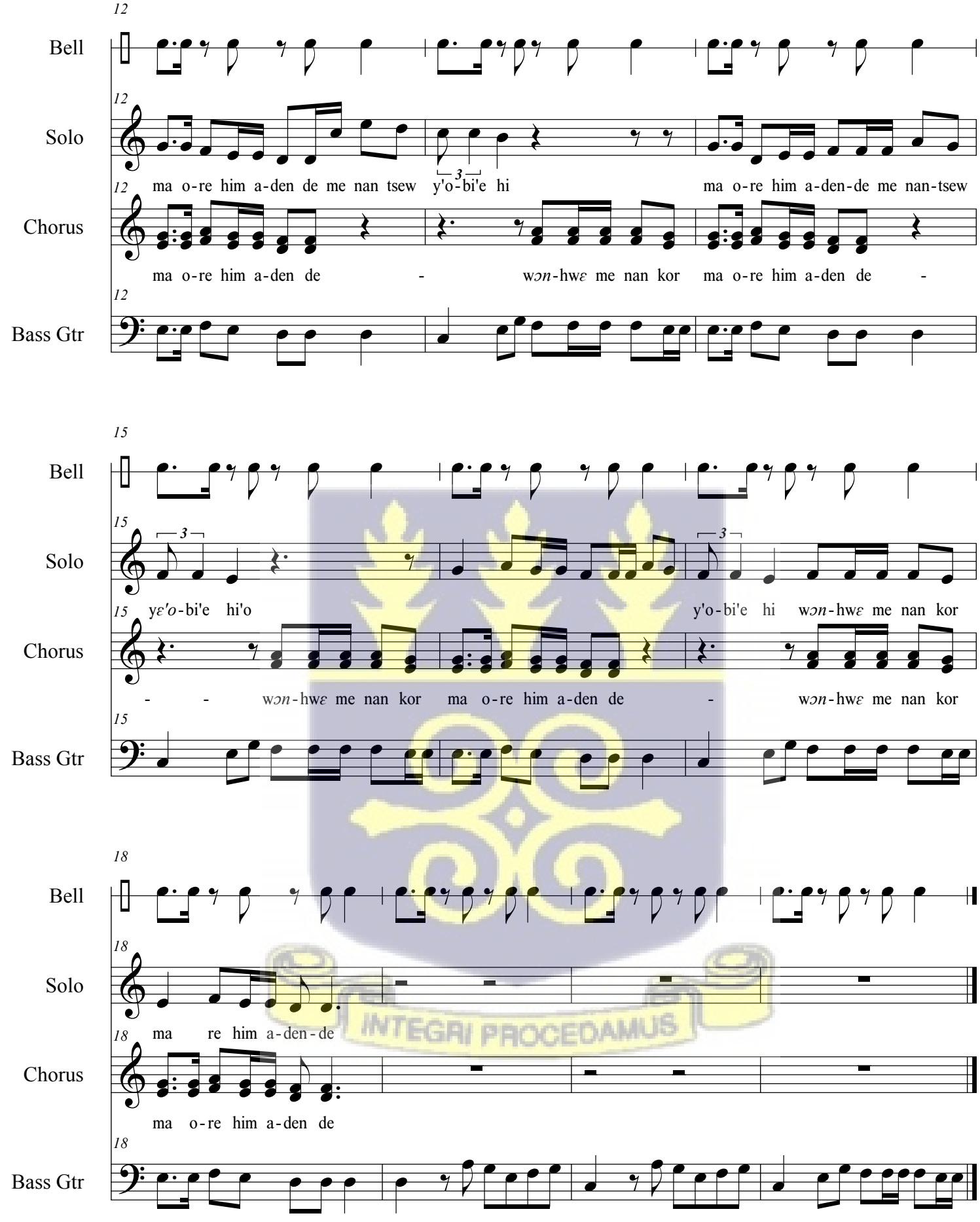

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