

THE REASONS FOR TEACHING AFRICAN POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES AT UNIVERSITY

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Ladies, gentlemen and colleagues

In this presentation I will be talking about Ghanaian popular music with some reference to popular dance and drama as well. And by popular I mean commercial, staged and professional performance styles that arose initially in the urban and coastal areas of Ghana in the late 19th century as a trans-cultural fusion of local and imported artistic elements.

I will specifically look at the various reasons why local popular music studies are important in the colleges and universities of Ghana. This is despite the fact that both in western universities and African ones there was some initial resistance to popular music being taught as it was considered too ephemeral, too trivial and of too low status. This attitude was largely a result of imported elitist high-art notions concerning the low-brow, inconsequential and short-lived nature of popular music as compared to 'serious' and 'immortal works' of the great masters.

This was compounded by imported Marxist ideas - such as those of the German Frankfurt school (Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse) that saw popular music culture and mass entertainment as an frivolous past-time or opiate used by governments to exert hegemonic control over its populations by diverting the struggling masses from a full realization of their economic plight and exploitation.

During the 1960's this negative attitude to popular music and popular culture studies generally in the West gradually began to change through the works of Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall and the Centre for Contemporary Studies at Birmingham University who all recognized popular music, like earlier folk music, represented a genuine voice of the people and could therefore project anti-hegemonic ideals critical of governments.

Within the context of Ghanaian universities the first evidence of a growing university interest in popular performance studies was the pioneering work of university lecturers Efua Sutherland, Professor K.N. Bame and Professor Attana Mensah during the 1960's on highlife music and the associated concert party. And the teaching 'palmwine' highlife guitar by Kwaa Mensah from the late 1980's first at Cape Coast and then here at Legon. Then in 1995 I helped set up the first courses on African popular music for the music Department here and in 1997 these were made official thought the course re-structuring carried out by Dr Willie Anku. In 1995 I also began teaching highlife guitar and since then T.O. Jazz and now Ebo Taylor were employed to teach guitar. When I began teaching in 1995 I had just ten guitar students - now there are 200.

Before turning the positive benefits of popular music studies I will give you an anecdote told to me by my father, the late E. F. Collins of the Philosophy Department, about the negative attitude within this university in the 1950's to highlife artists - particularly itinerant guitar bands and concert parties performers who were considered to be footloose drunkards. As a result of the dislike of this rough 'bush' music, anytime the students organized an end of term dance they would employ more prestigious dance-bands such as the Tempos and Black Beats to entertain them. Fortunately a small group of lecturers that included Professor Nketia, Ephraim Amu, my late father and Robert Sprigge of the History Department appreciated guitar band music and formed the African Music Society that organized special evening at Achimota College for concert party groups like Onyina's, EK. Nyame's and Yamoah's. This in turn influenced some students: such as the philosopher Professor Kwasi Wiredu who became an adept palm-wine guitarist and Kojo Donkor who, despite becoming a diplomat, continues a highlife music career right up to today.

Today things are quite different from the 1950's and as will be discussed at some length in this presentation popular music and performance studies are now firmly part of the university curriculum and are relevant to academic areas as diverse as sociology, political sciences, history, mass communications, the developmental sciences, African and Black Diasporic studies and gender studies.

However, let me start this talk on the value of popular music studies at the university by first turning to how these are helping the Music Department of the School of Performing Arts.

THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

With the decline of formal music teaching in the secondary schools since the JSS/SSS system was introduced in the late 1980's and the growth of the commercial entertainment sector since the 1990's, there is a need to develop new areas of expertise by music students for work and employment. These new areas include work in related to popular music and relevant to job opportunities, FM radio stations, music unions and copyright bodies, digital recording studios, music management and promotion agencies, church gospel bands, film and video companies and music related to Ghana's booming tourist industry and to the lucrative international African and 'world music' market.

Secondly, the musical analysis that music department students have to carry out as part of their course-work has been mainly based on the study of western music scores - as well as transcriptions of Ghanaian traditional music and art-

music. Transcriptions of Ghanaian highlife songs can also be used for this purposes. As a highlife score-book has not been available to our students, last year I completed such a book with the assistance of the highlife composers Oscarmore Ofori, Art Benin and Ebo Taylor – and some financial assistance from the Public Affairs Section of the United States Embassy.

Thirdly, In 1997 and for the first time highlife band instruments were acquired by the Music Dept and a university highlife band has been formed to train students in performance, composition, and arrangement skills - and show-case quality highlife performances for local people and foreigners alike. Ebo Taylor is the current director. So just as the United States has its own national 'jazz' music played by college groups, our university now has a band playing Ghana's equally old national popular music, 'highlife'

As mentioned, popular music studies are not only relevant to university performing arts students but also to those studying other areas in the humanities. And the previous reference to Highlife as Ghana's 'national' music' brings us to the first academic area that can positively benefit from popular music studies ; namely political science - and in particular the role that popular performance had to Ghana's independence struggle and forging of a national identity,

THE POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT :STUDY OF INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE AND FORGING OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

The first generation of great African leaders, such as Julius Nyere of Tanzania, Sekou Toure of Guinea, President Keita of Mali and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana - all fully recognised the important role that popular performance music and mass entertainment played in the independence struggle. For instance, in Ghana during the late 1940's concert parties (that is popular theatrical groups) such as the Axim Trio staged plays in support of Nkrumah and his 'independence now' sentiments, such as 'Nkrumah Will Never Die', 'Nkrumah Is A Mighty Man' and 'Nkrumah Is Greater Than Before'. Likewise Bob Ansah's concert group staged 'We Shall Overcome', 'The Achievement of Independence' and 'The Creation of Ghana' - and on several occasions he was arrested by the British and questioned about his plays. This harassment is, incidentally, reminiscent to what happened around the same time to the father of Yoruba popular theatre, Hubert Ogunde, in colonial Nigeria in 1946 when he was fined and his theatre banned for his 'Strike And Hunger' production that supported the 1945 Nigerian General Strike.

Highlife composers such as E.K. Nyame, Kwaa Mensah and E.T. Mensah also wrote numerous pro Nkrumah songs or performed at pro Nkrumah functions. Like E.T Mensah's Tempos that played at CPP rallies and in 1957 released the celebratory independence song 'Ghana Freedom Highlife', followed by 'Ghana Guinea Mali' that commemorated the political union between these three newly independent socialist states.

The Tempos highlife band was particularly important as its brilliant fusion of Ghanaian dance-melodies and western jazz instrumentation became in the 1950's a symbol of independence optimism in both Ghana - and countries such as Nigeria, Guinea and Sierra Leone in which this Ghanaian band toured . In short the Tempos use of sophisticated imported instruments to play African songs became the zeitgeist or 'spirit of the age' for independence era when the Africanisation of the inherited European socio-political system took place .

So with all this support from popular performers it is no wonder that Nkrumah established many state popular bands and concert parties - as well as the music trade unions, national competitions and recording studios to sustain them.

Popular performance not only played a role in the early independence struggle, but helped and is still helping forge current national and Pan African identities. In Ghana Pan African highlife songs go back to Onyina's 'Destiny of Africa' - that celebrated the formation of the Organisation of African Unity in Accra in 1958. Furthermore, as a musical genre Highlife itself is partly Pan African, as the roots of the highlife guitar fingering techniques were worked out by the Kru mariners of Liberia who introduced it to Akan musicians about one 100 years ago.

Ghanaian concert parties also played a role in national identity as during the 1960's they were used for format began to be used for by Theatre-for-Development programs (such as disseminating family planning ideas) as well as for overtly political propaganda purposes (for instance Bob Cole's concert party) .

Finally on this question of national identity it should be noted that highlife music and the concert party are trans-ethnic products of the Akans, the Ga and to some extent the Ewe peoples of Ghana people - and are therefore especially suitable for projecting non-tribal national sentiments.

In the universities it is already a long accepted idea that African art-music, African symphonies, African chorals and African pianism help foster a national and Pan-African consciousness. Popular music and drama have also helped with creating and spreading these new national and African ideals.

THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT: SOCIAL COMMENTARY & HISTORY OF THE INARTICULATE

The text of popular songs and plays are a valuable source of information for students and staff in the university history department. Unlike the 'immortal' works of 'classical' art music, popular songs are generally short-lived and ephemeral. But this fleeting nature has a positive virtue: which is that popular music lyrics have an immediacy that

easily reflects and articulates the current events and sentiments of society. Immortal art-music on the other hand concerns the current world-view and aesthetics of an earlier epoch: and in that sense is stuck in a 'time-warp' of that epoch.

This difference between art and popular music on this question of longevity can be compared to the difference between newspapers and books. Newspapers comment on immediate events whilst books have a longer shelf-life and usually dwell on topics of a longer lasting or more abstract nature. Although different, both are important in disseminating information. This same division of labour applies to art-music and popular music. Both present different but equally important types of musical information and aesthetics.

The argument therefore that popular music studies are trivial and of less consequence than art-music studies is invalid – as popular music text can provide social scientists with the current commentaries of people of the urban street, the down-trodden, the marginalized, or what the Nigerian musician Fela Anikulapo-Kuti calls the 'suffer-heads'.

Indeed, the use of old popular performance text can even used as an actual source of information by historians who want to find out what the non-literate colonial masses were thinking in the past – people who never wrote their own history but still expressed it through performance and old recordings. This 'history of the inarticulate' approach, as it is called, has been used by western historians to obtain a glimpse of peasant thinking in old Europe, gleaned from the text that still survive from folk song, festivals, proverbs and games. This provides quite a different information from the 'histories of kings' written by the educated aristocrats of medieval Europe. In the African context the content of popular song lyrics and play texts can be used to discover the views and aspiration of the illiterate colonial masses of the past.

Yet another use of popular performance text by historians is their use as a mnemonic device when interviewing elderly informants. For instance a few years ago an American researcher (Stefan Meischer) who was looking at colonial court proceedings in Kwahu played old Akan highlifes of the 1930's to help trigger oral memories of the old men he was interviewing.

Finally a content analysis of popular performance text can be done over a number of years as to ascertain the changing views and moods of the public. For example I have done a content analysis of about 300 songs from the 1930's to 1970's from the record collection of the Bokoor African Popular Music Archives Foundation (BAPMAF) that I am involved with. Love songs represent around 15% of the songs, the rest being on topics such as moral advice, sickness and death, money problems, witchcraft, praise-songs, prostitution, drunkenness, bad marriage, patriotic songs, travelling and migration.

However, since the 1980's there has been a marked switch in popular song lyrics of 'Burgher Highlife' and or 'hip-life' that dwell largely on the themes of 'odo' romantic love and erotic love, reflecting a change attitude to the choice of marriage partner, moving from communal familial to individualistic considerations.

THE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT URBAN STUDIES: URBAN PULL, SOCIALISATION, LINGUA FRANCA AND GENERATIONAL IDENTITY

Another reason for popular music courses in the universities is that it can throw light on African urban studies. For instance sociologists talk of the process of 'urban pull' in which rural migrants are lured to the urban centres through new job opportunities and the general attractions and life-style of the big city. These new city ideas, norms and fashions are often disseminated into rural areas via popular performance genres. For instance, the Ghanaian concert parties, began touring the rural and provincial area in the 1930's, long before the introduction of radio and television.

By the 1950s and 60's there were dozens of concert parties introducing the latest fashions from Europe and America to their rustic audiences. In the 1950's the quintessence of modern life was the *sleek*, expensive and *stylish* 'Jaguar' car and this became an often used expression in popular music, drama and literature of the time to express the modern imported urban dream.

Concert parties also warn and socialise their audiences about urban dangers or what Owusu Brempong call the 'horrors' city - such prostitution, drunkenness and economic uncertainty. For instance the downfall of urban 'goodtime girls' and 'playboys' is a common feature of concert party plays. Another urban danger theme often depicted concerns the break-up of the traditional extended family as it moves towards the modern nuclear one. This is often expressed in concert party plays and highlife songs that dwell on broken homes and inheritance disputes or witchcraft accusations within the family - or the plight of the orphan and neglected child that is common product of urban migration.

As mentioned earlier in connection with national and Pan African identities African popular music is trans-ethnic and so it provides an artistic bridge, 'lingua franca' or common language that is so important for the new urban centres, with their mixed ethnic and linguistic populations. Non Ghanaian examples are Congo Jazz and Swahili Jazz are sung in Lingala and Swahili, the trade languages of Central and East Africa. Likewise some Ghanaian and Nigerian highlifes and Afro-beats are sung in the pan West African trade language of Pidgin English.

Ghanaian Highlife itself is largely a product of the Akan and Ga people and so is usually sung in the languages of these two ethnic groups – and this is why whenever King Bruce released the music of his Black Beats band in the fifties and sixties one side of the record would be sung in Fanti or Twi and the other side in Ga.

The plays and associated highlife music of concert parties are also trans-ethnic and depict Ghanaian and other African ethnic stereotypes in a humorous way, which the late Professor K.N. Bame believed help reduce ethnic tension through dramatic catharsis. Efua Sutherland, in her book on the pioneering concert party comedian Bob Johnson, gives an early example of this ethnic stereotyping in his 1930's 'Minnie the Moocher' play, in which this comic dress up to look like typical Liberian 'Kroo Boy' stevedores and carry oversize spoons and oversize bowls to eat rice, the favourite food of the Kru.

Yet another phenomenon dealt with by sociologists studying urbanisation is the growth of youth subcultures – which are often associated with distinct popular music genres. A good case in point is the Ga drum-dance known as Kpanlogo that was created by the area-boys of Bukom in Old Accra in the 1960's. These youth were also influenced by imported rock 'n' roll and so combined features of this with highlife and the kolomashie recreational music of the Ga's. Because of the exaggerated pelvic movements of the kpanlogo dance, borrowed from rock 'n' roll's 'Elvis the Pelvis' and the 'twist' of Chubby Checker, the older generation (including executives of the National Arts Council) initially opposed this new-fangled 'traditional' genre, claiming the dance was sexually suggestive. Some kpanlogo performers were even arrested by the police, had their drums seized and were caned and put in the cells for a few days. As a result of the ensuing quarrel between the Ga youth and some older members of the Accra public, a display was organised in 1965 for them by fifty kpanlogo groups. It was held at Black Star Square in Accra where members of Nkrumah's CPP government endorsed and legitimised kpanlogo as a genuine African 'cultural' music.

Since the days of Kpanlogo other local sub-cultures have emerged that are linked to distinct popular music styles and youth fashions. One is Burgher Highlife that combines drum machine 'disco' music and highlife and was created by Ghanaian living in the German town of Hamburg. The stars of this type of highlife, such as Daddy Lumba and Nana Acheampong, are typified by their 'jelly-curl' hairstyles, skin bleaching and ostentatious clothes. Then there are the local reggae artists such as Kwadwo Antwi, Felix Bell, Sons of Zion and Rocky Dawuni who sport 'dreadlock' hair-styles and many of whose followers profess the rasta faith and life style. And most recently we have the hiplife music Reggae Rockstone, Tic Tac, Obour, Lord Kenya, Obrafour and others who dress in the baggy suits and untied shoes of US rap artists and present in their Twi and Ga lyrics a 'macho-man' and even misogynous view of love.

UNIVERSITY GENDER STUDIES

Popular Music studies can be used to examine the changing attitudes to women in Ghanaian society. As already mentioned the up until fairly recent negative attitude to popular artists as being footloose and of loose morals made it especially difficult for women to enter into the commercial music sector. And a very early example is the case Yaa Amponsah. This highlife song is named after Yaa Amponsah who was the sister of one of the members of the Fanti musicians who comprised the Kumasi Trio and who from 1918 would often play for the provincial people of the cocoa rich in the Apedwua area of Ghana. Initially the dance that accompanied early highlife was the Osibisaaba that was a typical African ring dance in which men and women do not touch each other. However it was Yaa Amponsah who introduced the latest urban craze of to these rustic people of using dancing ball-room steps for the highlife. As to do this she had to physically hold the men she was teaching and receive some coins for her efforts she was considered at the time to be of low morals.

However things began to change from the 1950's when ET Tempos dance band that was influence by the swing music of American jazz big-bands that were also backing African American superstar singers such as Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan. As a result E.T.Mensah recruited singers on stage such as Julie Okine and Agnes Aryitey. Incidentally the great South African singer Miriam Makeba got onto stage around the same time and in the same way - as singer for the jazz influenced Manhattan Brothers band of Johannesburg.

In the 1960's when Nkrumah was establishing many state highlife bands and concert parties he also encouraged women to go into the acting and singing profession. Since the 1980's and with the rise of local Gospel dance music women have gained an access to commercial recordings. Indeed today they dominate gospel singing. And this has created an interesting gender split in the popular music scene : between feminised gospel and 'macho' and misogyny rap of hiplife (e.g. Tic Tac's 'Philomena' and Sidney's 'Abuskeleke').

THE POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT : PROTEST

Besides the previously discussed relevance of popular performance to the national independence struggle popular music sometimes provide a social and even political critique of the status quo - and is therefore relevant to the political sciences for a second reason . The protest songs of Thomas Mapfumo of Zimbabwe and Fela Kuti of Nigeria, against corrupt, inefficient or dictatorial African governments, are well known confrontational examples of this.

Over the years local highlife songs have also been directed against various Ghanaian regimes, although usually in disguised and indirect form: through the use of parables, proverbs and metaphor. One early example is the highlife song 'Agyimah Mansah' released by K. Gyasi in 1964 about a ghost mother lamenting the plight of her children. President Nkrumah questioned Gyasi about the lyrics, and although the composer claimed these were based on a dream and

were not a political reflection by 'Mother Ghana' on the sorry state of the nation, the song was banned from the radio. E.K. Nyame, recorded several songs of allusion that criticised Nkrumah in the latter period of his rule. One was 'Nsu Beto Mframa Dzi Kan' that includes the lines 'if the rain falls the wind will blow first... so I'm warning you like the wind'. This became the slogan of the anti-CPP National Liberation Movement that opposed Nkrumah's socialist policies. E. K. Nyame followed this up with 'Ponko Abo Dam A, Ne Wura No Dze Ommbuo Dam Bi' that is based on the Akan proverb that translates as 'if the horse is mad it does not mean the owner is mad'.

Then in the late 1960's same the African Brothers famous song Ebi Tie Ye' or 'Some Sit Well' that they also made into a concert play. This highlife song is about big animals pushing smaller ones away from the warmth of a camp-fire. although couched as an animal parable the song was interpreted by the public to be about the unequal distribution of wealth and power in post independent Ghana. In short a protest modern social stratification. So Ebi Tie Ye is a musical equivalent to George Orwell's famous book on totalitarianism called 'Animal Farm'.

AFRICAN AND BLACK DIASPORIC STUDIES: BLACK ATLANTIC LINKS

Another importance of university based popular music studies is that it helps in understanding the long-term relationship and trans-Atlantic linkages between Africa and the Black Diaspora in the Americas. African music was taken to the Americas during the days of slavery – but it was returned back to Africa in the 19th century. One way was through the regimental brass-band music of 6 to 7,000 West Indian colonial soldiers stationed at Cape Coast Castle who played Afro-Caribbean music in their spare time.

Indeed and according to the musicologist Professor Attana Mensah the old highlife song 'Everybody Likes Saturday Night' is based on a West Indian calypso. As a result the West Indians catalysed the emergence of the first form of 'proto' highlife in the 1880's, the syncopated and polyphonic 'adaha' music of local brass bands.

Later on through records, film and occasionally visits came the music of ragtime, jazz and soul, sambas and rumbas, calypsos and reggae and so on thus completing a trans-Atlantic cycle of music from Africa to the Americas and then back to Africa.

Incidentally, the very first documented case of this musical home-coming to Africa occurred when freed maroons from Jamaica settled by the British in Freetown Sierra Leone in October 1800. They brought with them their goombay frame-drum music which over the years spread into many West African countries. In Ghana it called Gome and was picked up by Ga carpenters and blacksmiths working alongside artisans from Freetown working in the Belgian Congo around 1900. This early date of October 1800 for the introduction of Jamaican Gumbay to West Africa puts the black trans-Atlantic artistic linkup well ahead of the black nationalist one, that is way before the impact on Africa of black American political thinkers such as Blyden, Cesaire, Garvey Padmore and Dubois.

MASS COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES : THE ROLE OF THE MASSES IN CREATING CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN CULTURE AND THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP OF POPULAR AND TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE

Popular performance studies questions Developmental Theories that suggest cultural and artistic creativity change and innovation are the prerogative of the educated elites. African popular music-research rather shows that its performers are largely drawn from the intermediate classes and urbanised masses that lie between the national elites one the one hand and the traditional subsistence farmers on the other. These intermediates include labourers and artisans, cash-crop farmers, domestic servants, new rural migrants, clerks and middle-grade white-collar workers, lorry drivers, messengers and so on. Despite of their supposedly lowly social status, it is from this layer of society that many of the great popular artists of Ghana have emerged. And being in the middle of things, so to speak, they are in the perfect situation to act as cultural and artistic bridges: between the high and the low, the urban and the rural, the old and the new, the local and the foreign.

Most Ghanaian concert party actors and highlife musicians come from this intermediate background. For instance the members of the Jaguar Jokers concert party with whom I worked between 1969 and 1973 had been tailors, cobblers, carpenters, electricians, steward boys, builders, timber yard workers, border policemen and auditors. Turning to some notable highlife musicians: Kakaiku was a miner, Yebuah a tailor, Onyina a shoe-maker, Kwaa Mensah a carpenter and watchmaker and CK Mann a seaman.

Indeed seamen have been particularly important for the development of African popular performing arts. For instance the previously mentioned Kru (or Kroo) people of coastal Liberia who developed early African guitar techniques on the high seas. For having a maritime tradition of long distance canoe fishing, they were employed on European ships as early as the late 18th century. In short they became hyper mobile and established many 'Kru Town' settlements in West Africa – which in turn not only influenced the early development of Ghanaian guitar band highlife but also the maringa music Sierra Leone and the juju music of western Nigeria.

In some instance Ghanaian popular artists have sometime hi-jacked the music of the local elites. For instance Bob Johnson and the Axim Trio hi-jacked the imported vaudeville and music-hall of the coastal African elite during the 1930's and spread this popular musical drama or concert party opera genre into the hinterland areas where it subsequently

become indigenised by the use of local languages and the incorporation of traditional Akan ananse motifs and features such as a high degree of audience participation .

Another concert party example of the 'hi-jacking' of elite art is their borrowing during the 1950's of musical ideas and instruments from the more prestigious dance bands.

Besides highlighting the creative role of the intermediates classes in creating new African culture, The is another way the study of African popular performance studies help in understanding developmental theories. This is in connection with complex relationship of trans-cultural popular music to traditional ethnic performances, such as drum-dances that occur within a communal rather than commercial context .

Because in Africa traditional and popular performance styles co-exist side by side, they constantly interact with one another. On the one hand popular African music draws on indigenous rhythms, melodies and dances, whilst on the other hand, popular music also influence traditional music making: leading to new or neo-traditional drum-music styles. A good example of a popular performance group being influenced by traditional is the so-called 'Ga Cultural Music" that was pioneered by Wulomei in the early 1970's by it leader Nii Ashitey. Ashtey had previously been a percussionist in several highlife dance bands but then decided for Wulomei to do away with most of the western instruments (except the highlife guitar) Using local Ga percussion instead of the jazz-drums, the giant gome drum instead of the bass guitar and the antenteben flutes instead of a dance band horn section.

An examples of such a new neo traditional genres that has been influenced by local popular music is the previously mentioned the Ga kpanlongo of the 1960's that utilises a highlife clave rhythm. Incidentally. the same applies to the borborbor recreational drum music of the Ewe people that emerged in the Kpandu area in the 1950's – as it also incorporates some highlife rhythms.

Earlier examples of neo-traditional music include the simpa music of the Dagbon area and the konkoma or konkomba music of the Akan that both evolved in the 1930's. Simpa music is a neo-traditional recreational music of Dagbon that evolved as a fusion of local music with southern Ghanaian highlife performance styles. Indeed the name 'simpa' gives a clue to this southern influence as it is the traditional name for the coastal town of Winneba or 'Windy Bay'.

Konkoma was a poorman's version of brass-band adaha highlife that did away with expensive imported instruments and made do with just voices and home-made drums. It was developed by Fanti youth whom Professor A.M Opoku told me were considered to be 'school drop-out', 'ruffians ' and 'no good boys. Nevertheless this highlife influenced recreational music became immensely popular and spread as far eastwards as Nigeria where it influenced early Yoruba juju-music.

The relationship of mutual influence between the popular and traditional in Ghana (and indeed elsewhere in Africa) is therefore circular. Traditional music influences popular music and conversely popular music influences traditional drum-dance music In other words there is a dynamic feed-back relationship between the old and new, the rural and the urban, the traditional and the popular. This throws doubt on simplistic 'Euro-centric' developmental theories of social and artistic change that see tradition and modernity as antagonistic, or believe that tradition is always a brake on modernity, or suppose that there is only a single straight-line path from tradition to modernity.

Lecture is illustrated with slides