

## MUSIC AWARDS 2001 PAPER

### MAKING GHANAIAN MUSIC EXPORTABLE

by John Collins

(presented at National Theatre Accra Ghana in 2001)

On the question of the exportability of Ghanaian popular music it should first be noted that currently there are two quite distinct markets for it. Firstly there is an internal market made up of mainly 'burgher' highlife, hiplife and sacred gospel music that is recorded for the local Ghanaian market with the aid of drum-machines, midi-computers systems and synthesisers and which generates in cassette and CD sales the cedi equivalent of 25 million dollars/year<sup>1</sup>.

Secondly there is a the new so-called international 'World Music'<sup>2</sup> market (of which about one quarter is African music) which I obtained figures for when I prepared and presented a paper on the African music industry for a World Bank meeting in Washington DC on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2000 (SEE APPENDIX A).

For the last five years 'World Music' has been the fastest growing sector of the American music industry and now represents about 14 percent (5 billion dollars) of the annual global record/CD sales. 1.25 billion dollars per year of this (one quarter) is for African music and if this is added to the African component of 'World Music' royalties (220 million dollar per year) it means almost 1.5 billion dollars is being grossed internationally from African music.

Furthermore as Ghana represents 3.6 of the population of Africa it should potentially be getting 3.6 percent of this 1.5 billion dollar figure - which is almost 53 million dollars a year (SEE APPENDIX B FOR FULL DETAILS OF THESE FIGURES).

However, Ghana is hardly tapping any of this foreign exchange as African music lovers in Europe, America and Japan are precisely those looking for an alternative to techno-pop and therefore prefer a more rootsy, live format, 'unplugged' and non-synthetic African popular music - rather than the computerised and 'canned' varieties currently fashionable in Ghana. This explains why Ghanaian CD's are practically absent from the shelves of American, European and Japanese music shops that deal with 'World Music'<sup>3</sup> and for comments on the disinterest in current high-tech Ghanaian popular music by various

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<sup>1</sup> 1999 figures of Ghana by the IFPI: International Federation of Phonogram Industries.

<sup>2</sup> 'World Music' is a record marketing term coined in 1987 and includes African, Latin, Afro-Caribbean, folk and ethnic music (and in the US it also reggae)..

<sup>3</sup> One may see CD's of old recording by the Ramblers, E.T. Mensah and Osibisa or traditional ones by Koo Nimo and Obo Tettey Addy but never an example of burgher highlife or hiplife. In the July 2000 issue of Tower Records World Music Guide there were 45 artists from sub-saharan Africa listed, but none at all from Ghana.

foreign and local journalists SEE APPENDIX C. Indeed in the 15 years or so since the 'World Music' label appeared, Ghana has had only one significant cross-over to this lucrative international.<sup>4</sup> Music fans abroad prefer the more authentic African sounds of Senegal's Youssou N'Dour<sup>5</sup>, Mali's Salif Keita and Ali Faka Toure, Benin's Angelique Kidjo, Nigeria's Fela Kuti and Congo's Papa Wemba and Kanda Bongo Man<sup>6</sup> - to name a few.

All these above musicians have evolved as artists by utilising/modernising traditional African musical resources and by operating in a milieu of live bands and live performances. In Ghana today the popular music sector hardly has any live bands or live performance venues therefore it is impossible to generate the type of music needed for export. Before examining ways of turning this situation around for Ghana let us first look at the problems that have throttled the live popular music and entertainment industry in the last 20 years or so.

As is well known Ghana created the first distinct form of African popular music (the brass-band Adaha highlife) way back in the 1880's and British-made records of Ghanaian highlife began to be made for the West African market as early as 1927/8. When Ghana obtained independence in 1957 Kwame Nkrumah endorsed highlife and other local popular entertainment, encouraged the establishment of two performance unions and set up government sponsored highlife dance bands, guitar bands and concert parties. Ghana was also the location of West Africa's first permanent recording studio (Decca 1948) and by the mid-1970's the country had four recording studios and two record pressing plants<sup>7</sup>. By then Ghanaian highlife had spread to many African countries and a variant known as Afro-rock, created by the London-based Ghanaian group Osibisa had a string of hits in Europe long before the 'World Music' explosion. Indeed they made so much money for the British taxman that they were awarded a medal by the British Queen.

So everything seemed set for the Ghanaian music business to progress. There were scores of night-clubs and dance venues in Accra alone, twenty or more top highlife dance-bands, dozens of Ga 'cultural groups' seventy or so highlife guitar bands and concert parties, dozens of Afro-rock fusion bands (like Hedzolleh, Basa-Basa, Boombaya, Big Beats and Ogyataana) and hundreds of school student pop-bands competing at so-called 'pop-chains'.

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<sup>4</sup> This was the 1988 hit produced by Peter Gabriel of the traditionally oriented Pan African Orchestra of Nana Danso Abiam.

<sup>5</sup> Youssou N'Dour recognises this double market in that he makes two different mixes of the same songs—using real drummers and horn players for the international market and drum-machines and synthesisers for the local West African one. In short he recognises the psychology of World Music fans who like the Romantics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are turning away from over refined music to more rootsy forms.

<sup>6</sup> Even the Ghanaian may be getting fed up with over-computerised music as evidenced by the huge success of Ivory Coast's Magic System band whose songs like Premier Gao combine drum-machine with live percussion

<sup>7</sup> One of them, the jointly Ghanaian /Polygram Record Manufacturers of Ghana, was between 1969 and 1975 producing half a million singles and 100,000 albums per year.

However, by the time the international commercial interest in ‘World Music’ began from the early 1980’s<sup>8</sup> a number of set-backs had occurred and have continued to occur that has prevented and are preventing Ghana from cashing in on this potential area of foreign exchange earnings. These will be more fully examined later – but in brief they include the general economic decline of the country in late seventies, political upheavals, several years of night curfew, no private business tax waivers for music sponsorship, over-taxation of live bands and the music industry and a general governmental blind-spot for the commercial potential of local music as a foreign exchange earner (i.e. from tourism and the world market).

It must also be noted here that since independence and unlike in neighbouring Nigeria and the Cote d’Ivoire,<sup>9</sup> no Ghanaian musician has ever been able to become wealthy enough from monies generated from music purely inside the country to build a night-club or recording studio. Those few who have made it financially (like Osibisa, Amekye Dede, Kwadwo Antwi, Daddy Lumba) have done so through going abroad.<sup>10</sup> The fact the no musician in Ghana has made it financially has in turn discouraged local businessmen from investing in the countries music business. Indeed, in terms of music production Ghana has gone backwards thirty years, as up until the mid-seventies it was able to record and press its own records and today it has only three studios for live recording<sup>11</sup> and has to press CD’s abroad<sup>12</sup>.

If things continue like this Ghana will end up with just cheaply-made canned computerised music that is un-exportable, is unattractive to foreign tourists, will lead to more unemployed musicians and will further alienate the youth from their traditional roots.

Let us now look at these problems in more detail.

#### 1) THE ECONOMIC DECLINE OF THE LATE 1970’S

Due to military government mismanagement and corruption (‘kalabule’) during the later part of the 1970’s the country went into economic decline and record production dropped to a quarter of its previous output. Consequently many<sup>13</sup> performing popular artists left

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<sup>8</sup> The international recording interest in African popular music really began in 1982 with Island Records release of Sounds Afrique and then Sunny Ade. The term ‘World Music’ was coined later in London in 1987 as a marketing ploy. I was incidentally at one of these London meetings and voted against the new term, preferring the original expression ‘Afro-pop’

<sup>9</sup> Alpha Blondy of Cote D’Ivoire has a palatial residence in Abidjan. Nigeria’s Sunny Ade has his own night-club in Lagos - as does Lagbaja, the late Haruna Ishola had a pressing plant in Ibadan and Victor Uwaifo set up the country’s first private television studio in Benin city.

<sup>10</sup> Osibisa made it’s money in the 1970’s in England, the other three current Ghanaian reggae and burgher-highlife stars make their money by playing for Ghanaian audiences in Germany, Toronto, New York and Washington. Amekye Dede for instance used this money to build his own Abrantie Spot in Accra, the only night-club in Ghana ever built and owned by a musician. Most new Ghanaian recording studios were established by Ghanaian returning from abroad.

<sup>11</sup> Only ARC studios in Tema, Gama Films and Faisal Helwani’s newly opened Bibini Studio in Accra can do live recording – the other studios in Ghana are digital, multi-tracking over-dub ones.

<sup>12</sup> There are just three CD burning facilities in Ghana; namely Top Sounds, Ghana Sounds and Serengeti-City Rock.

<sup>13</sup> About one quarter of registered members of the Musicians Union of Ghana had left Ghana by 1979.

the country in a musical “brain drain” and settled in London, Germany and Nigeria (then at the peak of its oil-boom). Many of those that stayed in Ghana began to move into the many independent spiritual and Pentecostal churches<sup>14</sup> that were beginning to mushroom on the country<sup>15</sup> and which were beginning to use popular dance-music in worship and for outreach purposes. This trend has become so strong that local gospel now comprises maybe half of the output of Ghanaian popular music<sup>16</sup>.

It should be noted that despite the economic decline traditional and neo-traditional (e.g. kpanlogo and borbobor) drum-dance music that are acoustic and use locally made instruments continued to thrive. Indeed, so much so that since the late 1980’s about ten private music drumming schools have been established that cater for young foreign musically-inclined tourists. Moreover, it is this local acoustic or unplugged music and not the recent wave of local Ghanaian techno-pop that represents the bulk of the small Ghanaian segment of the World Music market<sup>17</sup>.

## 2) THE CURFEW AND DEMISE OF THE LIVE POPULAR MUSIC SCENE

In spite of some positive cultural policies of the PNDC military government such as decentralising the Arts Council, recognizing the Musicians Union and preparing the ground for new copyright legislation, between 1982 and 1984 there was two-and-a-half years of night curfew which drastically curtailed the activities of commercial night-clubs and local pop, highlife and concert bands. In retrospect this can be seen as a watershed for Ghanaian popular entertainment. Prior to the curfew popular music it was mainly performed and recorded by live bands and concert parties, afterwards it became more the computerised, ‘canned’ and video variety.

## 3) THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY ON LIVE POP MUSIC

After the curfew was lifted in 1984 the open-air night clubs were invaded by dozens of mobile discos or ‘spinners’ who had previously operated in small discotheques. With their low entrance charges they soon took over the dance venues from live bands in the cities and later even the villages, as their ‘spinning;’ equipment was cheaper to buy and operate than those of the larger highlife and concert bands. At the same time as the spinners, Ghanaian highlife with a drum-machine and keyboard synthesiser became the rage with the youth, created by Ghanaian musicians based in Germany, particularly Hamburg. Thus the name ‘burgher highlife’. New digital studios sprang up to cater for this music and the more recent vernacular rap variant known as hip-life (i.e. hip-hop plus

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<sup>14</sup> I saw this with my own Bokoore Recording Studio in Accra whose clientele between 1982/3 and the late 1980’s moved from mainly the secular to mainly sacred music

<sup>15</sup> In 1955 there were 17 separatist Christian denominations in Accra. By 1991 there were 800 (mainly non-orthodox) Christian religious organisations in Ghana registered with the National Commission on Culture’s Religious Affairs Department.

<sup>16</sup> 60% of local airplay was gospel according to the Christian Messenger newspaper of 1990 (Vol. 15). The top twenty banderole sales of 1994 included eight gospel songs (information supplied by COSGA). In the last couple of years vernacular rap or hip-life (chanting over a programmed beat ) has been on the ascendancy but has not replaced gospel as the dominant local popular music form.

<sup>17</sup> In a student research paper by American Nat Keefe in 1999 he audited four record shops in California and discovered they had just 16 Ghanaian CD’s. However 12 of these were in the traditional/neo-traditional vein whilst the other were old time highlife and Afro-rock. No current Ghanaian techno-pop was found.

highlife). These use drum programs, midi<sup>18</sup> systems and synthesizers and have largely done away with live drummers and horn players who are made unemployed. Therefore for music videos and even live performance on stage the current generation of Ghanaian techno-pop musicians have to mime or lip-synch.<sup>19</sup>

Simultaneously during the late eighties the local video market started to boom and although this created an avenue for some concert party actors and actresses it helped kill off the live concert party performances of groups that had been touring the remote villages – as mobile video began to follow the same route.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4) THE LACK OF LOCAL ROLE MODEL MUSICIANS THAT WILL ENCOURAGE GHANAIAN YOUTH TO UTILISE INDIGENOUS RESOURCES

Because of the two million Ghanaians living abroad many top burgher highlife and hip-life musicians are able to go abroad to play for them, make music-videos abroad and return with Dollars and Deutschmarks in their pockets. The impression is thus given to Ghanaian youth at home that these touring artists have become international super-stars with their Ghanaian techno-pop music. However, in actual fact the music of these artists hardly crosses over to the international ‘World Music’ market at all, as their shows are mainly patronised by Ghanaians abroad.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with what they are doing except that in Ghana they are inadvertently sending a message to the young aspiring artists that they too can make it internationally with computerised Ghanaian music. This creates a negative feed-back loop in Ghana that encourages a further move away by young artists and music fans from using traditional musical resources, and towards the computer artificiality that is so fashionable in music making here at the moment. It therefore in no way opens up the possibility to the youth here that money and success can also be made by producing indigenous based live format music for the ‘World Music’ market.

What we also need here therefore is a positive role model for the youth (such as Senegal has with Youssou N’dour or Mali with Salif Keita) whose modern use of traditional African musical and rhythmic resources makes them both commercially successful abroad and puts African music into the world limelight.

We had one such positive role model once way back in the 1970’s, in the form of Osibisa, that triggered off numerous other local Afro-rock bands: but the ‘World Music’

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<sup>18</sup> According to the recording engineer Panji Anoff the midi systems used in Ghana are not very sophisticated and create inherent time delays and fluctuations that prevent accurate timing so necessary in rhythmically oriented music.

<sup>19</sup> Of course there are many advantages to computerised music. They are cheaper to produce and give the musically illiterate a chance to enter the music profession. And although hiplife has little African rhythmical content, from a purely linguistic point of view it is a positive development as it provides a vernacular voice for the youth.

<sup>20</sup> There were 70 touring guitar-band-cum-concert parties in the mid-seventies. Now there are maybe ten and the last three that regularly ‘trekked’ into the rural areas (City Boys, Kumapim Royals and Santo) stopped in 1999 due to competition from mobile local videos that charge a lower entrance fee than a twenty strong concert party

commercial sector did not then exist. Now that 'World Music' is firmly on the international map, it is ironically not Ghana but other African countries that are producing globally successful bands equivalent to Osibisa; i.e. that utilise traditional African resources.

As will be discussed immediately below a critical factor preventing the re-emergence of large live bands such as Osibisa in Ghana is the heavy taxation on the Ghanaian live music industry – which rather encourages the emergence of cheaper to run/produce computer bands and techno-pop.

#### 5) THE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL MUSIC BUSINESS OF NUMEROUS MINISTRY OF INTERNAL REVENUE TAXES

After the economic problems of the late 1970's, political instability and curfew, the post 1986 IMF/World Bank inspired 'structural adjustment policy' helped the Ghanaian economy pick up. However this boom did not effect music business – especially live bands – due to numerous taxes by Internal Revenue and the Customs and Excise prevention Service of the Ministry of Internal Revenue. These currently include the following<sup>21</sup>:

1. A super import duty of 160% on band instruments that are classed as luxury items even though for a musician they are the tools-of-the-trade.
2. A pre-paid entertainment tax (now replaced by a pre-paid 12.5% VAT tax on the value of the tickets) on gate-proceeds for not only music promoters but also bands that promote their own shows.
3. Income tax on musicians and creative artists.
4. The Internal Revenue Service allows no income tax waiver on companies that are prepared to sponsor cultural/artistic events. (I believe such a waiver is allowed for sporting sponsorship).
5. Internal Revenue collects 15% of the banderol (now hologram) money as a pre-paid income tax on musicians and producers
6. 4% of the 40% levy on blank cassettes introduced in 1988 goes Customs and Excise.

The fact that the churches, as charitable organisations, do not pay these taxes helps explain why local gospel highlife music has boomed in Ghana since the mid 1980's. They do not pay import duties, income tax or entertainment taxes and so live music bands thrive amidst them. Indeed, many commercial musicians have had to go under the patronage of the church to survive. On the other hand the commercial live music sector has been almost taxed to death and it is now just too expensive to run a large format band with live horns and percussion players.

#### 6) GOVERNMENT BLIND SPOTS REGARDIING MUSIC AND THE LOCAL MUSIC INDUSTRY

1. In the late 1980's the school syllabus was restructured so as to make it more technical and related to the practical needs of the country. Unfortunately in the process music as an

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<sup>21</sup> Newspaper complaints concerning some of this over-taxation has been made by various Ghanaians. Michael Crabbe, (Mirror March 8<sup>th</sup> 1997), the well known music producer Faisal Helwani (Spectator April 15<sup>th</sup> 2000) and David Dontor of the National Theatre/Concert Party Union (Graphic Showbizz, June 1-7 2000).

Also the recent recommendation by the NDC initiated probe into the music industry talks of tax holidays and investment incentives (Mirror, 10th Feb, 20001).

independent subject was dropped in Junior Secondary Schools and can only be taught alongside dance, drama and cultural studies (which is often not possible). And for the Senior Secondary Schools music was demoted from a core subject to an optional one and as a result music in many S.S. Schools has been dropped altogether<sup>22</sup>.

2. In the 1970' and 1980's Culture was part of the Ministry of Tourism and then the Ministry of Education. When finally it was given a separate status in the late-eighties it was demoted from a full Ministry to a National Commission on Culture. From 1992 when PNDC member Dr. Mohammed Ben Abdullah left the directorship of the NCC<sup>23</sup> culture has never had cabinet representation.

3. The performing arts did not feature at all in the NDC's government's Vision 2020 policy that they hoped would raise Ghana to a middle income level nation in the future.<sup>24</sup>

4. A leading Ghanaian music producer complained in 1999 that the local music industry did not feature at all at African/African-American Summit in Accra that attracted Jesse Jackson and many black American businessmen who came to explore joint projects with Ghanaians<sup>25</sup>. That the music and entertainment industry was not officially discussed is surprising taking into account that this industry is one of the biggest in the United States and that the US is currently going through a World Music/Afro-pop boom.

5. As previously mentioned, I attended a World Bank meeting on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2000 to discuss the possibility of the World Bank diverting some of its annual 300 million dollars money for culture to the music industry of six African countries. This got the go-ahead a few months later from the World Bank head James Wolfensohn and I was assured by one of the organisers of the meeting that Ghana would be the first recipient. However when the World Bank representative here, Mr. Peter Harrolds, studied the fine print of the current agreement between the World Bank and Ghana he noticed that that was no clause in it for aid/loans to culture and entertainment. So World Bank monies could not be sent to Ghana and instead Senegal got the first instalment in November last year.<sup>26</sup> I am sure that this omission in the Ghanaian agreement with the World Bank is a result of culture not being represented at ministerial level.

## SOME CONCRETE PROPOSAL FOR GHANA TO BOOST ITS LIVE COMMERCIAL MUSIC/ENTERTAINMENT SECTOR

### 1) TAX HOLIDAY AND INCENTIVES

As has been discussed in connection with the 'World Music' market, live format and indigenous oriented African dance-music is now an exportable commodity and I would therefore suggest that the government institutes a minimum five (preferably ten) year tax holiday for the Ghanaian music and entertainment industry – equivalent to the tax/duty concessions given to anyone starting up a commercial agriculture business in the country

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<sup>22</sup> At Achimota Secondary School for instance the number of music teachers dropped from eleven to three.

<sup>23</sup> Dr. Abdullah was both head of the NCC and a PNDC Secretary and so was automatically a cabinet member. The Directors of the NCC that followed him were not cabinet members.

<sup>24</sup> This observation was made by David Dontor in the Ghana Showbizz of June 1-7, 2000.

<sup>25</sup> This observation was made by the local music producer Faisal Helwani in the Spectator of May 29<sup>th</sup> 1999

<sup>26</sup> The money is being used to help develop its tourist oriented Jazz Centre at Saint Louis.

that is oriented to non-traditional exports.<sup>27</sup> This would encourage the re-surfacing of live popular bands, night-clubs that cater for them and the sponsoring/investment of private businesses into the artistic sector.<sup>28</sup> Money lost to the Ministry of Internal Revenue (the cedi equivalent of 5 million dollars/year<sup>29</sup>) would ultimately be re-covered in foreign exchange from the export of live (cf. computerised and canned) Ghanaian popular music on the 'World Music' market, which as mentioned earlier is potentially as much as 53 million dollars a year.

Furthermore there is also an invisible musical import of foreign exchange through tourism. Everyone has heard of eco-tourism – but in Ghana culture also pulls in tourists who spend an estimated ten percent of their foreign exchange on entertainment and recreation<sup>30</sup>. Indeed many foreign tourists who come here complain about the lack of live music and live music venues and it is likely that some tourists (and film crews) prefer go to countries that have a high 'World Music' profile and have a strong live popular music nightlife scene, such as Senegal, Mali and so on.

The positive effect of this tax holiday/incentives suggestion would not be immediate but would definitely occur as evidenced from other countries that have given similar tax waivers/reductions to the arts, such as Ireland, Australia, Brazil and New Zealand.<sup>31</sup> Ten years or so ago the Irish government removed income taxes for creative artists which has helped in the recent world-wide boom of Celtic music and dance. The Australian government gave tax incentives to its fledgling film industry which facilitated its growth and export. About 15 years ago Brazil introduced a law that record companies that produced local music could claim 70% back on their VAT at the end of the year – as a result the output of Brazilian (cf. imported) music rose from 30 to 70 percent of the internal market.<sup>32</sup> In 1999 the New Zealand government began pumping money into the music industry, including international marketing, which led to local music commercial air-play multiplying five times above its 1995 level.<sup>33</sup>

## 2) GHANAIAN CHURCH GOSPEL MUSIC

Any taxation of the local church should not include its music sector as for the last fifteen or twenty years the churches have kept musicians and highlife and other live music going – as well as introducing a new generation of women to the music field. Rather, with the 5 or 10 year tax holiday mentioned earlier, church bands and their numerous musicians<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> I believe there is already a five year tax holiday for those investing in the Ghanaian agricultural sector.

<sup>28</sup> I first suggested this 5 year tax-holiday proposal on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 1993 when I was invited by Kojo Yankah the Minister Information as a consultant for The Technical Committee On Organisations to Promote Ghana Overseas (that also included the Ministry of Tourism and the National Investment Board).

<sup>29</sup> Although I have not been able to get exact figures for this, a rough estimate would be 20% of the cedi equivalent of the 25 million dollar a year internal Ghanaian music sales market.

<sup>30</sup> These are 1998 figures (see Jacob Oti-Awere article in *Graphic Showbizz* Dec 7-13 20001).

<sup>31</sup> It should be emphasised that the benefits of these the tax holiday/incentive policies are not immediate but take time (even up to ten years) to mature.

<sup>32</sup> According to Robert Urbanus, director of *Sterns African Music*, London, New York and Sao Paulo.

<sup>33</sup> See *Billboard* August 19, 2000 article by David McNickel (page 71).

<sup>34</sup> It is difficult to estimate the number of musicians and singers in the choirs, dance-bands and brass bands of the spiritual, charismatic and Pentecostal churches of Ghana which numbered about 800 in 1990. Many of these churches have scores of branches and since 1990's Pentecostal churches in particular have

should be encouraged to also find regular employment in the commercial sector. Hopefully this will trigger off a precedent established in the United States when, during the fifties and sixties, 'hot' gospel music of the African-American churches went secular and helped create money generating commercial doo-wop music and soul that in turn laid the foundation for funk, disco, hip-hop and rap music.

### 3) MUSIC SHOULD BE UPGRADED IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SYLLABUS

Since the mid-1980's we have created a generation of urban youth who mainly listen/watch computerised techno-pop, music-videos and lip-synched performances. They are therefore unfamiliar with live popular band instruments and live performances; which are an absolute pre-requisite for the sort of music that is exportable to the 'World Music' market. One way to reverse this trend away from live popular performance could be stopped is to reverse the late 1980's JSS and SSS<sup>35</sup> school reform policy in respect to music. Music should be re-instated as a separate subject in Junior Secondary Schools and re-made a core subject in Senior Secondary Schools. Besides helping establish the personal for the 'World Music' export sector, research in many countries has shown that music as a part of one's education not only enhances musical creativity but also enhances verbal and mathematical skills, physical coordination and is a general intellectual toner. Although the JSS/SSS re-organisation did demote music as a school<sup>36</sup> subject it did at the same time broaden the scope of music to include popular music. The introduction of sets of instrumental/recording equipment would be invaluable in teaching children to produce their own popular dance-music, sound engineering, mixing and multi-track recording techniques. It might also be possible to bring in unemployed veteran musicians and concert performers<sup>37</sup> to help teach in areas such as improvisation, composition and general live performance stagecraft.

### 5) NCC SHOULD BECOME A FULL MINISTRY POSSIBLY ATTACHED TO THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

As previously mentioned, the fact that there is no representation of Culture (including music and entertainment) at Ministerial/Cabinet level has led to some missed opportunities – and this should be rectified as quickly as possible even if it means that the

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mushroomed. A rough working figure for competent male and female church musicians who could enter the commercial field (some have already ) could easily be in the region of 10 to 20,000. Just the Ghanaian E.P. church alone has its own gospel union of musicians and MUSIGA has a special section devoted to gospel music.

<sup>35</sup> This was part of the formation of the Junior and Secondary Schools that were established to create a more technical and practical oriented education. This was part of the rationalisation program for education that Ghana undertook after the IMF/World Bank inspired Structural Adjustment Policy begun when Kwesi Botchway was Minister of Finance.

<sup>36</sup> In the Junior Secondary School music lost its independent status and became incorporated into cultural studies. In Senior Secondary Schools it became no longer a core subject

<sup>37</sup> I suggested such use of concert performers in a paper I presented at Ghana's National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFAC) held in Kumasi in August 1992. The paper entitled 'The Concert Party, Popular Entertainment and the Ghanaian School Syllabus' was later published by the Center for the Study of Education in Developing Countries (CESO), the Hague, 1992, No.176, pp. 171-177.

National Commission on Culture would be attached to an already existing Ministry, such as Education or Tourism.

I would suggest the NCC should be attached to Tourism for various reasons. One is, as already mentioned, local music and live entertainment are an important part of the tourist industry. Indeed there are even tourists coming to Ghana specifically for cultural reasons, with music and dance being the cornerstone<sup>38</sup>. It is these visitors who mainly complain about too much foreign music in Ghana and the lack of night-clubs that provide genuine African music. So putting Ghanaian music prominently on the 'World Music' market and creating a vibrant live music scene back home helps boost foreign exchange earnings from these cultural tourists. In short, tourism and culture are natural partners. Secondly because of the foreign exchange potential of Ghanaian dance-music I think it should be put with a money-making Ministry rather than Education which needs an input of governmental money. This brings me to the third point. That is if Culture (and therefore music and entertainment) are put with Education then when the division of scarce resources is sent to the Ministry of Education and Culture the priority will always be for the money to go to Education. In short Culture will be Education's poor brother, whereas with the Ministry Tourism, Culture can be an equal money-making partner.

#### 6) WORLD BANK ASSISTANCE

As already mentioned the World Bank project to give grants and loans to six African countries has already started with Senegal. And if in the next round of Ghana/World Bank negotiations (which I believe are this month) arts and culture can be added then monies can be routed to Ghana's music industry. This, incidentally, comes from a separate World Bank cultural fund and so in no way can interfere with other World Bank projects. At the June 20th World Bank meeting several possible areas were discussed in connection with the African music industry; including assisting copyright collecting organisations, free legal aid for outstanding cases of royalty infringements of veteran artists, the use of computer technology (MP3, Napster, etc, systems) in disseminating and collecting royalties from African music. Two others forms of assistance which are relevant to this paper on the exportability of Ghanaian music are listed below.

##### a) Micro-Loans for Commercial Live Bands and their Venues

There are numerous live performance bands and concert parties in Ghana that have folded up through lack of equipment and spare parts. If Ghana can ratify the Arts and Culture section of its World Bank agreement so as to be able to tap this new fund to assessment the African music industry it might be a good idea to extend the idea of World Bank micro-loans to farmers and small processing plants in the agricultural sector to the music sector, particularly established bands and entertainment names that can pull crowds but need to get back on their commercial feet. The income from music is highly capricious and erratic and touring concert party bands often have to loan money and 'bond' themselves to wealthy patrons to play during the lucrative cocoa-season. The bands cannot get the profits from the peak season and so get caught in a spiral of debt.

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<sup>38</sup> One only has to think of the hundreds of foreign students learning African music and dance at the School of Performing Arts at Legon or the numerous private drum and dance schools that have mushroomed in the last ten years or so that mainly cater for foreigners.

Several bands I have known personally have gone to extraordinary lengths to stay together through hard time, for instance, by going into farming. Soft loans would be a much better alternative in all these cases. These micro-loans could also be extended to small clubs and recording studios that cater for live performances.

b) Sets of Band/Recording Equipment for Educational/Cultural Organisations

Due to the demise of live popular music I would suggest to the World Bank that a grant is made available to Ghana for say 54 sets of popular band equipment and supporting recording equipment<sup>39</sup> to jump-start live performance and recording in Ghana. Sets of these combined performing/recording equipment would go to the following. The ten Regional National Centres for Culture, the National Theatre, The Music Departments of three universities (Legon, Winneba and Cape Coast), the four branches of MUSIGA, the Ghana Old Musicians Welfare Associations, the Ghana Concert Party Union, the John Tei School in Accra (that specializes in mathematics and music), the AGORO Informal Education through Music Project at Cape Coast, Professor Nketia's International Center for African Music and Dance, the W.E.B. DuBois Center and thirty sets of equipment to three selected secondary schools from each of the country's ten Regions.

CONCLUSION

I would therefore appeal to the government to come to the aid of live highlife bands, concert groups and local creative artists to enable them to meet the challenge of this millennium, put highlife on the international map and let this country reap the financial rewards from making local Ghanaian popular dance-music an ever renewable export.

Although I have discussed various ways of doing this, the single most important one would be treat the Ghanaian entertainment industry as a potential non-traditional export sector and therefore provide a five (or ten) year tax-holiday and other investments incentives for it. In short the government would not have to be spend scarce financial resources on the industry but rather give temporary tax waivers and concessions to it to allow the industry blossom. This would allow the re-emergence of a vibrant live entertainment sector that is a not only beneficial for Ghana's internal creative cultural development, but is a vital pre-requisite for creating the sort of music that would generate foreign exchange - by being exportable abroad and drawing to Ghana more foreign tourists.

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<sup>39</sup> This would include 2 electric guitars, bass, keyboard, 4 combo amps, drum-set, 12/8 mixer, 8 microphones and stands, three horns and P.A. system plus compatible analogue/digital recording equipment that would include an 8 channel recorder, effects, cassette deck and mini-disc for mastering.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **WORLD BANK MEETING PRESS REVIEW**

(July 2000)

In Washington DC on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June this year a one day workshop was held by the World Bank and the Yale based Science Policy Center (Director Frank Penna) to discuss the commercial growth potential of the music industry in Africa – focusing at first on in six African countries (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Mali). The World Bank spends between 265 and 300 million dollars a year on loans and aid to aspects of culture. But so far none on the African music industry – in spite of the World Music sector (that includes African music) having expanded 40% a year for the last five years in the United States and now comprises 14% (5 billion dollars) of global record sales.

At the meeting the World Bank was represented by Ms. Kreszentia Duer of its Social Development Section and Michael Finger the leading economist of its Poverty Reduction and Economic Network (PREN) department. Others involved included the following.: Gerald Seligman of EMI, Coenrad Visser who is the WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) representative for South Africa, Jerome Reichman of the Vanderbilt University in Nashville and an expert on folkloric copyright, Phillip Hardy the founding editor of the UK Music and Copyright Magazine, the musician and musicologist John Collins who teaches at the University of Ghana, Scott Burnett the Marketing Executive for Global Media of IBM, and the economist Keith Maskus of the University of Colorado at Boulder. Others were the Nigerian WIPO representative Ms. Funkasi Koroye-Crooks, Jayashree Watal of the Institute for International Economics and the economist and Nobel prize-winner Amartya Sen of Trinity College of Cambridge University, UK.

Areas discussed were micro-credit loans for the musicians, bands, clubs and recording studios in the six African countries; the setting up of digital studio-cum- websites in Africa for distributing locally produced music (by MP3, Napster, etc) and the modalities for collecting royalties from them; technical assistance for African royalty collecting organisations.

The main point that Professor John Collins made at the meeting concerning Ghana was that even though it produced Africa's first distinctive genre of popular music (highlife that goes back to the 1880's) and had a pioneering African music industry at independence - highlife music is almost completely absent in the lucrative World Music market that has emerged since the early 1980's. Reasons for this include political upheavals and economic problems in Ghana, a musical brain-drain and super-taxes on the music industry. As a result local gospel music (of the untaxed churches) has filled the vacuum, or cheap to run/produce local techno-pop styles have emerged: such as disco-like 'Burgher Highlife' or the current wave of 'Hip-Life' (i.e. Hip-Hop Highlife). Unfortunately local gospel is internationally non-commercial and local techno-pop does away with live musicians (drummers, horns, etc) is so is not appreciated by World Music fans, who prefer a more live and rootsy sound. Ghana therefore needs inputs from the

World Bank that will enhance the live music industry by providing band equipment to schools, give grants to local musical NGO's and micro-credit loans to bands, night-clubs and live-format recording studios (of which there are practically none in Ghana). This will help Ghanaians create an exportable form of highlife that can tap the present World Music market and gain Ghana precious foreign exchange. The World Bank has yet to endorse this initiative but an indication of its interest is that the Bank's Director, James Wolfensohn, attended the pre-workshop lunch.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **FIGURES RELEVANT TO THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERING A TAX HOLIDAY FOR THE LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY**

(Prepared for MUSIGA , by Professor John Collins, August 2000)

#### **A) POTENTIAL WORLD MUSIC INCOME FOR GHANA PER ANNUM**

##### **1) MUSIC SALES**

Total global music sales = 36,000,000,000 (thirty-six billion dollars)

Total global 'World Music' sales 1999 = 5,000,000,000 (five billion dollars)<sup>40</sup>

African component of above (1/4<sup>th</sup>)<sup>41</sup> = 1,250,000,000 (one and a quarter billion)

Ghana proportion - take 3.6% of this 1.25

billion African figure (This equals the

Ghanaian population (22 million) proportion of the

total African population (600 million) = 45,000,000 (45 million dollars)

##### **2) ROYALTIES**

Total Global royalties in 1997<sup>42</sup> = 6,300,000,000 (six point three billion)

World Music royalties (14% of above ) = 880,000,000 (approx.)

African component of this (1/4<sup>th</sup>) = 220,000,000

Ghanaian proportion (3.6% as before) = 7,900,000 (approx.)

##### **3) CULTURAL TOURISM**

Although this figure is impossible to estimate, foreign exchange comes to Ghana via tourists attracted to local music that includes live performance highlife. They do not usually enjoy local computerised techno-pop and so Ghana is losing some tourists to Mali, Senegal and Guinea where there is a vibrant live popular music scene.

**THEREFORE TOTAL POTENTIAL GHANAIAN FOREIGN INCOME FROM WORLD MUSIC SALES PER YEAR = 45 MILLION DOLLARS (SALES) PLUS SEVEN POINT NINE MILLION DOLLARS (FOREIGN ROYALTIES).**

**GRAND TOTAL PER ANNUM = 52, 900,000 (APPROX. FIFTY-THREE MILLION DOLLARS )**

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<sup>40</sup> See New York Herald Tribune Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> 2000 that says the 'World Music' market is 14% of the current annual 36 billion global music sales. According to Gerald Seligman, head of EMI's World Music Section, in a paper presented at the World Bank workshop on 'Developing the Music Industry of Africa' on June 20<sup>th</sup> 2000, the United States has seen a continuous growth of the World Music sales of 40% a year for the last 5 years.

<sup>41</sup> One quarter of the US Tower Records 'World Music' catalogue of July 2000 were of black sub-Saharan African music releases. Not a single Ghanaian artist was represented.

<sup>42</sup> This figure is from Philip Hardy the editor of the UK Music and Copyright Magazine.

**B) INTERNAL GHANAIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY AND INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE TAX PER YEAR**

1999 Internal music sales Ghana (IFPI<sup>43</sup> figures) = 25,000,000 dollars  
Estimated IRS tax on this is 20% (from import = 5,000,000 dollars  
duties, VAT, income tax, entertainment tax, and portion of  
blank cassette levy and hologram tax, etc)

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<sup>43</sup> The International Federation of Phonogram Industries based in London.

## APPENDIX C

### SOME EXAMPLES OF INTERNATIONAL/WORLD MUSIC DISINTEREST IN CURRENT HIGH-TECH GHANAIAN POPULAR MUSIC

The following are some journalistic examples of both foreign and Ghanaian disdain for current hi-tech Ghanaian popular music. The Sterns African Record Centre **Tradewinds** magazine (Vol. 5, No. 5 September/October 1994, London) praised the Ghanaian highlife musician Jewel Ackah for not featuring "that horrible cheap drum machine that seems to be everywhere (in Ghana) recently." Baba Abdullahi, writing about the Danish 'Image of Africa '96 Festival' in an article entitled "Why Highlife Wasn't There," (**Ghana Weekly Spectator**, July 13, 1996, p.4 ) suggests the reason that the festival organizers picked Senegalese and Malian musicians and not Ghanaian ones was that the former "rely heavily on percussion (whereas) our highlife is weak on percussion and heavy on digital sound." Dave Yowell of the Sultan recording-studio in London which often records Ghanaian artists, complained (in a **Ghanaian Statesman** article called "Let's Hear It Live" May 21, 1995, p.10) that "in West Africa now, it seems there is too much emphasis on the use of computers... when you only have a singer and a computer you have the personality of the singer and zero personality of the computer." An article in the **West African Journal** (December 18, 1996, p. 1286), called "Singing the Blues," K. Krante bemoaned modern Ghanaian Highlife, saying that "reeling off a string of wise sayings over a computer generated sound-track should not automatically confer hit status on the song or singer... it seems that mediocrity has been elevated almost to an art. Technology has contributed more than its fair share to the situation. Twenty years ago real live musicians would have been needed to cut an album." Enimil Ashon of the **Ghana Mirror** (June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2000) talking on Nat Brew's attempt to break into World Music market by following Ghana's Pan African Orchestra's 1988 success of utilising local rhythms compares this to other Ghanaian pop which "either mightily attempts to copy (e.g. reggae).....or is a fusion that is 70 percent foreign and only 30 percent Ghanaian..... there is very little Ghanaian-ness in current Ghanaian music." And according to the **Tower Guide to World** (2000/1, page 8) "Ghana has seen its legendary highlife musical bass fall away over recent decades....and samplers and drum machines have replaced musicians and shoddy dance music has become the norm".

## **APPENDIX D**

### **MUSIC/ENTERTAINMENT SEGMENT OF THE ANNUAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE INCOME FROM TOURISM**

Tourism is currently (after gold and timber) Ghana's third largest foreign exchange earner – which in 2000 grossed about 350 million dollars. Ten percent of the foreign exchange that tourists actually spends was estimated in 1998<sup>44</sup> to come from what foreign visitors spend on recreation and entertainment – of which dance music play a major role. Thus the dance and music area of tourism is helping generate about 35 million dollars a year for the country. An increase in the live performance component of local Ghanaian dance-music would attract more tourists to the country, such as those interested in 'World Music', and thus boost the tourist trade in general.

### **CONCLUSION: THE TOTAL POTENTIAL MONIES TO BE MADE FROM THE GHANAIAN DANCE-MUSIC AREA**

Taking the three already discussed areas of the music industry's annual money generation we can add them in the following way.

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| 1) Potential 'World Music' foreign exchange earnings          | 53 million \$ |
| 2) Internal Ghanaian music sales (minimum) Cedi equivalent of | 25 million \$ |
| 3) Recreation/Entertainment segment of Tourism                | 35 million \$ |

### **TOTAL 113 MILLION\$ PER YEAR**

IN SHORT: WITH A FEW STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE INDUSTRY (PARTICULARLY TAX CONCESSIONS, ) THE GHANAIAN MUSIC SECTOR COULD EASILY GENERATE THE EQUIVALENT OF (April 2000 figures)

### **800 BILLION CEDIS A YEAR**

- THIS WOULD IN TURN PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT FOR ARTISTS,
- ATTRACT MORE TOURISTS,
- ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITIONAL RESOURCES BY THE YOUTH
- PUT GHANAIAN MUSIC ONTO THE WORLD MUSIC MAP

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<sup>44</sup> For these 1998 figures see Jacob Oti-Awere's article in Graphic Showbiz Dec 7-13 20001.