

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INNOVATIONS IN *BɔBɔBɔ* OF THE *EUE* OF GHANA

EYRAM ERIC KWASI FIAGBEDZI

2019

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University of Cape Coast

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INNOVATIONS IN *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* OF THE *EUE* OF GHANA

BY

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Music and Dance of the Faculty of Arts, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Ethnomusicology

JULY 2019

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature.....Date.....

Name: Eyram Eric Kwasi Fiagbedzi

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature.....Date.....

Name: Prof. Florian Carl

Co- Supervisor's Signature.....Date.....

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ABSTRACT

In the 1950s, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, a pan-ethnic dance-music genre emerged in Ghana and performed predominantly among the northern Ewe in Ghana. Its development has been characterized by socio-political and religious nuances that influenced its stylistic essence. Over the years, cultural transformations and individuals acting as agents of change continue to influence the performance tradition of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* thereby making it one of the most popular indigenous dance-music genres in the country. This study examines innovations in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances since its emergence by focusing on ensembles drawn from across the Volta and Greater Accra regions of Ghana, as well as three famous exponents of the tradition. It offers insight into the practices as characterised in the general transformation that reflects the performance tradition today. The study also examines the socio-cultural and religious significance of themes and drum text of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* thus providing a context to explore key factors that continue to enhance and or threaten its sustenance. It adopts qualitative mode of enquiry that embraces ethnographic fieldwork to examine the socio-historical, political, religious and cultural dimensions of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances. It also explores the use of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* song texts as a medium and repository for cultural knowledge and history of the people. The research is framed within the theoretical lenses of social “reconstructionism”, interpretative innovation and the “five-domain framework” for music sustainability. It concludes that within the current socio-cultural environment, the dance-music tradition continues to experience innovations as performance dynamics are reframed to suit contemporary essence. The study contributes to literature in ethnomusicology within the context of innovation and sustainability of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance.

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DEDICATION

To my dear wife, Irene, and children, Melike, Selikem and Setutsi

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ARS	Apostles Revelation Society
CNC	Center for National Culture
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
CYB	Christian Youth Builders
CYO	Christian Youth Organisation
E.P.	Evangelical Presbyterian
EPL	English Premier League
EPSU	Evangelical Presbyterian Students Union
GBC	Ghana Broadcasting Cooperation
GTP	Ghana Textile Print
ICAMD	Center for African Music and Dance
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPP	New Patriotic Party
OMSU	Old Mawuli Students Union
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNP	Peoples National Party
TVT	Trans- Volta Togoland
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UN	United Nations

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Cultural forms in Africa are seen as a significant part of people's lives. In the process of ensuring continuity in the safeguarding and preservation of these unique traditional cultures within time and space, transformations are bound to occur. These may be as a result of human migration, adaptation, and cultural change, among other reasons. Such observations have been acknowledged by scholars such as Avorgbedor (2001), Barnett (1953), Gbolonyo (2009) and Nketia (1974). This thesis traces the transformations and innovations in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, a recreational music and dance culture of the Ewe people in Ghana, with reference to the people and language. In this thesis, the group of people whose music tradition is being investigated is referred to as the Ewe/s.

Kuada and Chacha in their historical account of the Ewe at the tail end of the 20th Century, identified settlement of the Ewe in Ghana as 'the area south-east of the Volta Lake' (Kuada & Chacha, 1999). The term 'Northern-Ewe' signifies the Ewe-speaking people that are found north of the Southern Ewes (Agbodeka, 1997) in Ghana. Here, there are two groups, based on their language and origin. One group is made up of the majority of the people who are generally referred to by the other Ewe-speaking people as *Uedometɔwo*. These *Uedometɔwo* are part of the three main groups of Ewe that migrated from Notsie during the reign of Togbe Agorkorli I in the 17th Century (Amenumey, 1999; 1986). The second group in Ghana, the Northern Ewes, claim different origins but speak shades of Guan and Akan dialects as their first language, and Ewe as a second language.

Collectively, all these Northern Eve groups share similar socio-political and economic experiences. The occupations of the people include crop farming, animal farming and hunting. Crops that are farmed include cereals (sorghum, rice and maize), legumes (Bambara groundnut, kersting's groundnut, melegueta pepper, cowpea), tubers (yam, cocoyam, cassava) and tree crops (oil palm, akee apple, shea butter tree and Kola species). Other crops include banana and plantains. They also cultivate cash crops such as coffee and cocoa for export. With regard to animal farming, people keep poultry, pigs, goats and sheep for local consumption and sometimes for commercial purposes. Hunting of mammals, rodents and birds with guns and traps, is done by boys and men. Fishing is another occupation that is popular and lucrative along the rivers and the Volta Lake. Apart from agriculture-related activities, the Northern Eves also undertake indigenous economic activities such as basketry, palm-wine tapping, smithing, wood working, pottery and weaving of traditional cloth known as *Eve-kete* (*Eve-kente*) in Agotime area.

In terms of religion, traditionally all Northern Eves believe in *Mawuga* (a Supreme Being), but there are others who also believe in various spirits, including ancestral spirits. The introduction of Christianity among the Northern Eve communities by the North German Mission Society (Norddeutsche Mission, Bremen, now the Evangelical Presbyterian Church) in early 19th century (Gavua, 2000), has resulted in majority of the people subscribing to the Christian faith. Major Christian churches include the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Roman Catholic Church. A small portion (about 5.7%) of the population in the Volta region also subscribe to the Islamic faith (Ghana

Statistical Service, May 2012), leading to the creation of places for Muslim worship and Islamic schools within the area.



Bɔbɔbɔ (pronounced *Ba-baa - ba*) as a dance music tradition is an intercultural genre of the Eves of Ghana which gained popularity in the 1950s as a secular pro-youth recreational music and dance type. It combines folk songs, drumming practices and dance movements with borrowed characteristics from Western regimental music. It later spread country-wide through Eve labour migrants living in major towns and cities in Ghana. *Bɔbɔbɔ* performance has over the decades gone through transformations and has become quite sophisticated in contemporary times, making it arguably the most popular indigenous dance music genre in contemporary Ghana. It has also become a pan-Eve and pan-ethnic genre. This feat may be attributed to the innovations in the performance of the genre since its inception. In keeping tradition within the Eve culture, the emphasis has always been on ensuring a certain level of authenticity succinctly demonstrated in the following Eve proverb: *Ka xoxo ηue wogbea yeyea do* (An old rope is a model for the new one).

The context within which this age-long *Eve* proverb was birthed is the unpleasant experiences and hardships the Eve people suffered under the rule of King Agokorli in Nortsie. Oral history has it that when he asked them to use their hands to weave a rope or thread out of wet clay, Amega Wenya, one of the leaders of the Eves, requested the king to make a sample for them to see in order to serve as a model based on which they would be able to accomplish the task he had set for them. This event is captured in the lyrics of this Eve agbadza (*misego*) song:

Ooo ne nyeanyi woagbi ka

Eee ne nyeanyi woagbi kaa.

'Gokorlia nto nenyanyi woagbi kaa.

Torgbui Wenya kplɔviawo dzo lo

English translation

Ooo he should weave rope out of the clay

Yes, he should weave rope out of the clay

Agorkoli himself should weave rope out of the clay

Torgbui Wenya has taken his children away

Although the context within which the proverb was birthed was that of cruelty, oppression and despotism, it could be conceived in a broader sense as the adaptation of old practices and conventions which are necessary conditions for the expression of both new and personal concepts, values or insights. Almost on a regular basis, our societies in Ghana continue to experience transformations (changes and developments) in many aspects of our daily lives, including the performance of our music and dance forms. How these innovations occur, and the mechanisms and agents which serve as catalysts to them, remain questions begging for answers. However, an intense reflection will perhaps provide human creativity as the major and most important response to these questions. In all the activities we undertake, be they cultural, social, political or religious, innovation and creativity form the core aspect.

This study on innovation is a result of my personal interest in the performance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. It is a recreational music of the Eve people which emerged as a cross-cultural recreational dance music genre started by the youth in the late 1940s and became very popular in the 1950s. It is currently still associated with both young people and adults. Over the years, social, political

and religious factors have led to the genre going through dynamic processes of change as result of reinterpretations and innovations by musicians and performing groups.

Bɔbɔɔbɔ is one of the indigenous dance music traditions that has spread country-wide, particularly in communities with a sizeable Ewe population. Moreover, Christian churches such as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (former Bremen Mission), and the Apostles Revelation Society, (all Ewe-dominated churches), have incorporated *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* into their liturgy since the 1980s. This dance-music has therefore found new locations in contemporary times, making it, in my view, the most widespread indigenous dance music genre in Ghana today. Although originally created among the Northern Ewes, it has also currently become a pan-Ewe genre. This development may be attributed to the innovations in the performance of the genre since its inception.

Indeed, much has been done in terms of research on Ewe music, so much so that Green (2012) observes that among all the ethnic groupings in Africa, the music of the Ewe of Ghana has caught the attention of most research scholars, hence the assertion that it provided the foundation on which the field of ethnomusicology was fashioned. But more specifically, Otchere (2016) notes without a doubt, that the Music of the Anlo-Ewe is included in the most researched and published music traditions in Ghana. Diverse aspects of Anlo Ewe music for example its dance-drumming traditions (Ladzekpo, 1971; Younge 2011), structural organization of drumming (Anku, 2009; Locke, 1987; Pantaleoni 1972), history (Agbodeka, 1997; Gbolonyo, 2005), singing styles and expressive forms (Agawu, 2016; Avorgbedor, 2001), communal organization and performance practice (Amoaku, 1975; Dor 2004), critique of

form and structure (Agawu, 2003; Fiagbedzi, 2009) and so on, have much received scholarly attention over the years. Unfortunately, same cannot be said about the music of of northern Ewe origin.

Problem Statement

The Volta region is the traditional home for Ewes and Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀ music. Suburbs of Accra also resonates with a sizeable number of Ewes living there (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). Both areas with Ewe populations are dotted with several performing groups, amongst are Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀ groups which represents cultural significance of the Ewe. For most Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀ musicians, and for many as socially and politically conscious individuals, Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀ gives them a tool with which to express a sense of self, a philosophy, and an ideology. For most interviewees in this research, Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀ music performance communicate and reinforce pride in Ewe selfhood. According to Xornam Atta Owusu, a Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀ practitioner, "There's a sense of pride when people hear Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀. They say 'that's our music.' It gives people a sense of pride in their Ewe-ness (Personal interview. April 25, 2018). Therefore, Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀ is a pan-ethnic genre. In this context, "ethnicity is an organizing mechanism and music a symbol system, certain elements therein possess the compelling power to draw people together in their struggle for identity and self-determination. "Ethnic symbol systems, or 'ethnicities,'... create collective conscience... Ethnicity is an ideology . . . for pursuing major values deemed not shared by others in the [cultural, social and political] arena" (Aronson, 1976:13-15).

Royce (1982) also notes that contemporary ethnicity, "can be a weapon, a tool for improving one's status." Moreover, the use of traditional symbols and representations renders the past important "not for its own sake, but for the sense

of tradition that it confers on contemporary groups, which may, in turn, be used to gain both material and spiritual advantages" (220- 221). I agree with the views expressed by Aronson and Royce for the reason that, in recent times, it is common to see Eves (both performers and enthusiasts) take pride in the performance of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* and holding it in very high esteem thereby reinforcing their pride and collective realities as Eves. Members of other ethnic groups in Ghana see *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* as a pan-ethnic and pan-Eve genre because it has become synonymous to not only the northern Eves among whom it started but the generality of Eves in Ghana and Togo who have accepted and integrated it into many aspects of their socio-cultural and religious realities. It also continues to enjoy popularity among non-Eves in Ghana.

Beyond that, since its inception, *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* has been performed for the last seven and a half decades. During those periods its performance has navigated political, social-cultural and religious (Christianity) dimensions. Undoubtedly, such political, socio-cultural and religious (Christianity) and presently, technological influences have triggered changes in the performance organisations and use of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* by performing groups and institutions respectively. Individually and collectively, practitioners through their creativities and improvisations have incorporated new items which have resulted in transformations and modifications in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances thereby making it more stylish.

Furthermore, Sustainability which is a hard concept to ignore in contemporary times (Titon, 2015), because of the urgent need to ardently maintain and preserve the environment and culture. Cultural sustainability deals with the preservation of the culture of a given group of people such that future

generations can access cultural resources and meet their cultural needs, and the current generation can access cultural products, participate and enjoy them without inequity (Throsby, 2008). On the other hand, music sustainability according to Grant (2013:1) is the ability of a music genre to endure, without implications of either a static tradition or a preservationist bearing". To the extent that *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* has remained vibrant and popular amount the people over the years it will be very interesting to understand the circumstances or strategies that have contributed to *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* evolution and survival.

Although, a number of scholars such as Agawu (1985, 1988, 2016), Avorgbedor (1986), Gbolonyo (2009), Amegago (2011), Younge (2012) and Dor (2012), have written on several aspects of Ewe music traditions little attention have been paid to the ways musical forms are being modified in contemporary contexts of performance. Scholars such as Lareau (2002), Witty (2009) and Gallo (2015) and have also made researched on aspects of the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* music tradition, they all approached their studies from entirely music analysis perspectives. In addition, discourses on music cultures sometimes create the impression that performances have always been there and will continue to exist for future generations, portraying such music traditions as unaltered by the religious, social, economic and political influences that are transforming the lives of the people who perform them and the entire performance. In addition, the issue of innovation in musical forms is very important and needs to be examined because it raises several interesting questions about the nature of culture, the agents and mechanisms of change, and the processes through which innovative elements in the musical forms gain approval and validity among people.

Therefore, this thesis explores *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* holistically, touching on its music, its dance and its nature as an identity of a people. It is delivered through ethnographic fieldwork where interrogation of its process of change and innovation is done and its sustainability in both rural and the urban communities, all of which is documented as a contribution to scholarship in ethnomusicology. In spite of the fact that scholars have researched extensively the music and dance traditions of the *Eve* and *Eve* dance drumming, with a few mentioning some aspects of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, more could be said about the innovations this dance music tradition has brought to the Ghanaian music landscape since its emergence. In the light of the above, the goal of this study is to contribute to research on music of the *Eve* in Ghana by investigating how *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles have maintained performance conventions and introduced new ones over the years

Objectives of the Study

The study

- i. Explores the history and development of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* dance music;
- ii. Examines the innovations in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances in both Christian and non-Christian contexts;
- iii. Explores the themes around which *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* song texts revolve and their significance to the people, and
- iv. Examines sustainability of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance.

Research Questions

Questions that will guide my study are as follows:

- What are the precursors of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*?
- What are the innovations that occurred in course of its development?

- How do *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians create their songs, drum rhythms and dance movements?
- How have *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* artists contributed to the innovations and promotion of the genre?
- Which themes are *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs texts founded on?
- How have *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances been sustained?

Significance of the Study

The study offers insight into *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances through the lenses of innovative practices that have contributed to the transformation in general and the sophistication being experienced and reflected in this genre presently. It details the themes of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* song and drum texts and provides reflections on their significance in the socio-cultural and religious lives of the people. The study also explores the key factors that have sustained the dance music form over the years, highlighting the potential threats to the sustainable future of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. Finally, it contributes to the growing scholarship in ethnomusicology in general and Ewe music traditions in particular.

Literature Review

Prior to my fieldwork, I searched for written scholarship at libraries and for audio-visual materials. I made visits to the International Center for African Music and Dance (ICAMD), the J.H. Kwabena Nketia Audio-visual Archive, the digital audio library of Ghana Broadcasting Cooperation (GBC) and the Volta Star Radio, a GBC regional FM station the Ho in the Volta region of Ghana. The aim for exploring the Audio-visual archives was to assess the number of old original *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* recordings to ascertain which groups performed

where and when it was done. It also afforded me the opportunity to listen to old *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* recordings and to watch recorded performances in order to structure germane questions for field investigation. This experience also formed my initial basis to conceptualise creativity and innovations in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performance.

At the J. H. Kwabena Nketia Audio-visual archive housed at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, I found two related materials. One was a field recording that was done on 3rd December 1972, which featured the Accra New Town Nɔ̀visi Akpese Group. This recording, labelled AWG-E-42a, has seven songs in track 1 and six songs in track 2, all performed in a medley. The second audio recording which was done on 22nd November 1971 at Have Etoe, was labelled AWG-E-37. It has a total of eighteen songs performed in medley. At the GBC, however, I was quite disappointed because although I had the opportunity to listen to some old recordings, there was no information on them. One could not tell the name of the group, the genre, where and when the recordings were done. The case was somewhat different at their regional FM station, in that although there appear to be no written records on the music files, the resource person was able to give me the names of the performing groups and where they were located. From these field recordings in the archives I gained a sense of how it was performed in the past and the nature of rhythmic accompaniments and songs that went with the performances.

Inquiry was made into both published and unpublished research works on general themes such as creativity, innovation, history, ethnography and geography of the Eve covered in my study. I found four related research works within the last two decades. These include Lareau's (2002) unpublished M.Phil. theses, entitled *The Borborbor of the Northern Eve: Functional and Technical*

Aspects; Witty's (2005) procedure of northern Ewe *borborbor* master drumming: A case study of the Dzogbefeme-Avetime Borborbor group; Younge's (2011) *Music and Dance Traditions of Ghana* and Gallo's (2015) MA thesis, *Norvinyo Borborbor: A Study of Evedome Dance-Drumming from Kpando, Ghana*.

Lareau (2002) investigates the functionality of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* and discusses how the melodies and rhythms have been influenced by western melodies such as hymns. He analyses *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* songs using Western analytical tools (form, pitch, scale) and Nketia's method of analysing African song form which are call and response, solo and chorused refrain, mixed sectional form and declamation. He noted that most of the western melodies came directly from the Christian denominational churches that were established by the Bremen and Basel missions.

Witty (2005) discusses the series of steps and techniques in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* master drumming in Dzogbefeme-Avetime Borborbor ensemble. He employs Structural Set Theory (see Anku, 1992) to understand the procedures used by the master drummers in the ensemble. He summarises and analyses the variable rhythms of the master drums in relation to the bell pattern. He demonstrates how the master drummers creatively shift their rhythmic motifs to conform with the rhythmic motifs of the supporting drums and the bells. Although the work examines how the master drummer reorganises the rhythmic patterns available for borborbor performances in the ensemble, it fails to mention the new ideas the drummer may have incorporated into the performance. Witty's approach is more technical. Besides, it lacks discussion on the aspects of innovation.

Younge (2011) provides basic information about the socio-historical backgrounds of selected ethnic groups in Ghana and their music and dance traditions, in which *Bɔbɔbɔ* is featured. He provides pictures and illustrations of the instrumental resources and demonstrations of how they are manipulated. The work also provides activities which serve as guidelines to educators on how to provide instruction on *Bɔbɔbɔ* dance-drumming.

Gallo (2015) in his MA thesis redresses the corpus of research devoted to Ewe musics in a ternary metric framework. He examines the technical and compositional aspects of *Bɔbɔbɔ* music, using a blend of the Burns' Archetypes and Locke's Principles of the theory of Quaternary Rhythm, and suggests that it is possible for the melodic and rhythmic materials of *Bɔbɔbɔ* to be theoretically rendered in a quaternary metric framework.

Fiagbedzi (1997) presents a comprehensive overview of the musical tradition of the Anlo Ewe, focusing on historical development, social, political and religious aspects in terms of usage. He explains how the musical tradition has been influenced as a result of cultural contacts, and further discusses the musical styles, the meanings and their importance in the everyday lives of the people. Based on song texts, historical dates, and general musical practice, the study provides a classification of musical types as reconstruction of the historical development of Ewe music.

Avorgbedor (2001) investigates *halo* 'songs of insult' as literary creation and how they mediate and neutralise violence in the community. In this work, he engages in a thorough analysis of *halo*, indicating the wide range of literary devices Ewe composers employ in their songs. The work shows how powerful and relevant song texts are in the social and political lives of the Ewe. The

conception, description and explanation it provides about the poetic artistry of the Eve composers and the degree to which they engage songs and song texts in information dissemination make them germane to my research, especially the chapter on themes of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* song texts.

Dor (2004) discusses how music compositions are realised through collaborative efforts of singers, dancers, drummers and others among the Anlo Eve. He provides the processes through which creativity and innovations are employed both at the individual and communal levels. He further observes the *havolu* session as providing an avenue for creating and concretising songs in Anlo Eve genres, and acknowledges the place of individuality as the interpretative framework for emphasising collective creativity in Eve cultural community. He also employed African philosophical thoughts to support the importance of communal co-existence and personhood.

Avorgbedor's (1986) research on *Modes of musical continuity among the Anlo Eve of Accra*, focuses on the 'symbiotic' relationship between music and society, as revealed in the Anlo voluntary associations in urban Accra, and explains the influences of secular familiarisation on the various forms in which music is performed and organised. He also discusses the framework within which musical innovation is defined among the Anlo living in urban Accra. The relevance of this study to my work lies in the focus on voluntary associations, performing groups and their parameters for determining musical innovation within their context. Although Avorgbedor's work focuses on musical innovation to the detriment of the non-musical, my study encompasses innovations in all aspects of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. In addition, the methodological approach of the work also provided helpful insights for my study.

These works were very helpful as they provided information on what aspects of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* of the Eve have been researched. However, as I have indicated earlier, it is apparent that issues of creativity in performances and innovations, which in my opinion are critical in view of the current phenomena in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances, have not received much attention by most researchers. The musicians and members of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* bands travel for performances to and from Eve-land and parts of the Greater Accra Region, hence aspects of the research were conducted through ethnographic participant observation.

The Concept of Innovation

A number of literatures I have examined on the issue of innovation are of the same opinion that “change” is a common occurrence in all societies. To put it differently, human beings by nature have the propensity to create ‘new’ things as result of desire that happens based on different proportions and motivational factors. Navigating through the literature, it was obvious that there seem not to be straightforward assertion of the concept of innovation.

Barnett’s (1953) describes innovation as

“ an Innovation is here defined as any thought behaviour or thing that is new because it is qualitatively different from existing forms. Strictly speaking every innovation is an idea or a constellation of ideas; but some innovations per their nature remains organisations only whereas others may be given overt and tangible expression” (1953:7)

All innovations have antecedents. All are therefore derived from others. In defining an innovation as something that is qualitatively new, emphasis is placed upon re-organisation rather than upon quantitative variations as the criterion of a novelty. Innovation does not result from the addition or subtraction of parts. It takes place only when there is a recombination of them (1953:9).

This suggests that innovation entails not just the collection or assemblage of ideas, sounds, musical instruments and other, but the reorganisation or recombination of such ideas and items, and transforming them into something that has a quality that is different from prevailing forms. Barnett maintains that innovation does not come out of consciously making attempts to plan it, but rather, they are mostly unintended or accidental with others coming across as both unexpected and unwanted (Barnett, 1959). Perullo (2012) notes that Innovation occurs as artists modify the sounds, uses, and interpretations of music. It is a means of slightly transforming words and sounds in ways that make them appear new within a specific context.

Barnett also provides details on a variety of factors that are potentially conducive or disruptive to innovation. Some of which are individualism and competition, deprivation or wants, and sudden catastrophic events. On the importance of sociocultural climate, while Rogers (1962) notes that “as individual’s innovativeness varies directly with the norms of the social system on innovation” (1962:71), Barnett (1953) agrees observing that

“The conflict between socially approved behaviour of any sort and individual desires has produced a great many innovations. The desire to act in accordance with legal or other socially sanctioned norms and the private urge to ignore or by-pass them have already been a prolific source of cultural change (1953:131).

Theoretical Framework

In order to fully discuss the innovations in *Bɔbɔbɔ*, I employed the Ewe concept of *adɔnu*, which is an overarching concept that embodies creativity. Other concepts that would be used are *hakpakpa* (song composition), *vugbe*

kpakpa (drum language composition) and *astiaawɔwɔ* or *adodede* (choreographic style), which are all elements under the concept of *aɔaɔ* in Ewe indigenous culture. From an epistemological perspective, *aɔaɔ* encompasses creative art of all forms. As translated by Westerman (1928; 1973) cited in Fiagbedzi (2005), the verb *dze aɔaɔ* or *wɔ aɔaɔ* is ‘to be clever’, able, skilful.’ This implies that *aɔaɔ* is not only associated with (a) skill or ability, the Ewe word for which is *nutete*, but also with (b) cleverness or *zaza* (i.e in the sense of being mentally quick, resourceful, ingenuous). *Aɔaɔdzedze* or *aɔaɔwɔwɔ*, the noun forms of verbal expressions, would therefore not denote just the attributes and the act or process of using skills acquired for doing something, but also dexterity or adroitness.

Aɔaɔ has both practical and theoretical (philosophical) dimensions. For one to gain *aɔaɔ* requires action and individual efforts. Thus, the practical dimension of Ewe philosophy is already embedded in the original meaning of the word. According to Gbolonyo (2009), *aɔaɔ* is a mental faculty that is largely inborn. However, where *aɔaɔ* means skill, skilfulness or practical knowledge, it still has to be learned and developed. With *aɔaɔ*, the individual artist or musician assumes a specific character and through a series of negotiations with their environment and community, makes decisions to reconstruct culture (in this case, music). This means that regardless of how one views *aɔaɔ*, it is a concept that provides the foundations for creative processes artists or musicians utilize to bring about innovation in their performances.

The Interpretative Innovation Theory

According to Meyer’s (1989) interpretative innovation theory, what should determine innovation is centred on the distinction between *devising* and

replication. Any performance of a piece of music in a way that shows an attempt at originality to an earlier one is not a replication of another one. Thus, implying that the composition is the result of a creative work of art. To him, the performers in this grouping are those qualified to be considered as creative artists. Within the constraints of the performance tradition of a musical culture such performers devise “novel realisations (interpretations)” and choose among the possibilities devised. Meyer’s theory posits that, because individual culture nurtures and promotes the development of its own peculiar skills and behaviours, both the environment, in addition to the innate feature, plays a significant part in the individual differences. In other words, it suggests that the creative abilities of an individual are rooted on the nature and background of individual difference or uniqueness.

Beeko (2005) asserts that individual difference is a factor that contributes to the creative abilities of individuals who come from the same cultural environment. Considering the fact that each culture intends to strive for and develop a set of standardized aptitudes, aesthetics and personality characteristics; the environment, besides the inborn qualities, is crucial in shaping individual difference. Beeko notes that the environment accelerates an individual’s aptitude to bring change. However how an individual manipulates their creative abilities within the confines of the cultural environment towards its development, is essential to determining why, in the very cultural environment, some individual creators are inclined towards innovation while others, are disposed to elaboration. Individual innovators create new ideas while individual elaborators ‘replicate’ already existing materials (2005:22).

The interpretative innovation theory suggests that individual creators, in a given cultural context, play a key role to bring progress, innovation and change through their introduction of new creative ideas into the culture. The marked effect of their works on the society makes such creative individuals become role models and agents of cultural change within their own context. Owing to this theory, creators come across as individuals who are discontent and question the status quo in their environment. In terms of music, they use their skills and abilities to transform creative concepts in terms of music performance practices, redefining the uses and roles of music thereby reviving behaviours and practices. With the interpretative innovation theory, this study attempts to investigate how *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* artists employ their creativity towards innovation within their performances.

The Theoretical Model of Social Reconstructionism

Also useful to this research is the theoretical model of social reconstructionism which is proposed in Emielu (2013). This theory is employed to analyse the development and sustenance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* in Ghana. Social reconstructionism is a theoretical model that is grounded on the social construction theory. The social reconstructionism model is a three-phase cyclical and progressive model which process starts with the construction stage through the social process, moves on to a stage of deconstruction which then creates or develops a reconstruction process.

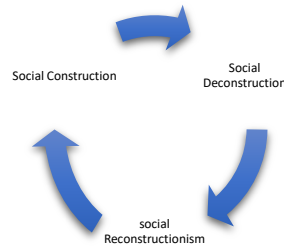


Figure 1: Social Reconstructionism Model

Scholars such as Berger and Luckman (1966), Searle (1995), Hacking (1999), and Boghossian (2001) have written and theorized extensively on social construction. It interrogates the manner in which social occurrences and experiences develop in specific social contexts. Social constructionism or ‘social constructivism’, as it is also known, focuses on unearthing the processes by which social phenomena are created, established, and transformed into traditions that are alive in society (Emielu, 2013).

Social construction was first theorised by the French social philosopher called Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) in his anthropological writings on collective behaviour. Durkheim was of the strong view that the complicated nature of social forces which determine social actions, interactions and social negotiations contribute to the makeup of individuals in a society. He also argued that the individual should at all times be considered in the society where he lives. As a sociological theory, social constructionism was made popular in America by the publication of Berger and Luckman (1966), in which they posited that when individuals or groups interact in a social system for a period of time, they develop concepts or material representations of each other’s actions. These actions subsequently become recurrent and translate into mutual roles played by the actors in relation to each other. The continual performance of these roles results in mutual interactions that become customary.

Emielu's (2013) social reconstructionism model is cyclical and progressive one which comprises the social construction stage, social deconstruction stage and the social reconstruction stage. At the stage of social construction, he notes that there should be some necessary conditions for a musical style to occur. Such conditions include

- a) The availability of musical resources – existing musical sounds, musical instruments and relevant knowledge and expertise that contribute to musical creativity;
- b) Obtainability of competent musicians to create the new musical sound; industries that market and promote the music and the target audience or social group the music is made for, and
- c) A conducive socio-cultural and economic environment which anchors the development of the music under consideration.

Features of the social construction stage are:

- a. The manner in which the available musical resources are combined into a coherent and recognizable musical core which attributes musical essence into the product. The music creator or originator's ideologies and intentions are also imprinted on the style to give it meaning and musical symbolism.
- b. Social action, interaction and mediation between social groups such as artistes, listeners, producers, marketers, promoters and other social groups who are indirectly involved in the musical stream will add new meanings that may go beyond what was intended by the creators. Through this social process, the nature and content of the music is shaped.
- c. The musical style has essential essence.

The Stage of Social Deconstruction

Deconstruction as it relates to stages in genre development passes through four stages of existence, according to Hansen, Cottle, Megrine and Newbold's (1998:17) cited in (Emielu, 2013). They are the experimental stage, the classical stage, parody stage and the stage of deconstruction. The experimental stage features a collection of principal elements that define its essence and symbolism. The classical stage represents point of maximum and clearest identification of the principal elements of the genre. The parody and the stage of deconstruction are stages where the generic elements and conventions call attention to themselves by being placed outside of their original contexts.

Emielu (2013) explains the term 'social deconstruction' to mean the disruption of the principal elements, encrypted meanings, conventions and iconography instilled in a social construct. Hence, social deconstruction represents a process where the engrafted meaning, conventions, symbolism and iconography in a social construct to lose their absolute advantages as emergent social and historical forces act upon them. The stage of social deconstruction is characterised by features such as gradual deviation from the musical style's core essence and definitive framework, gradual loss of the original meaning of its creators, and introduction of new stylistic innovations into the musical product.

The Stage of Social Reconstruction

A musical style that is socially constructed should have a meaningful fundamental principle that can be identified. It should also have peripheral aspects in levels of intensity which represent progressions towards deconstruction and reconstruction. This stage constitutes remarkable efforts regarding re-defining the social construct in stylistic and social terms, that are

novel. At this stage the “old” and “new” are combined in dimensions that ascribe new musical and social meanings to the product. It is a process that is in continuity because it responds to the changing social world of the genre and the larger society. It has features such as diverse styles of expression which may be at variance with the original core essence, efforts at creating a new direction and a new core essence for the product, attempts at placing the musical stream within a new socio-economic, artistic and cultural space which lead to defining the audience and the domain of the product. It also includes search for new meaning through forms of ideological transformation to reflect the shifting socio-musical structure, interactions and social negotiations. The social reconstructionism model will be used to assess the development and sustenance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a very relevant term in contemporary times. According to Jeff Titon, “sustainability is directed today, at resources thought to be endangered, or on the road to extinction.”(2009:120). Sustainability is related to other terms such as safeguarding, preservation and salvaging. Beddoe, et al. (2009), states that culture exerts influence on sustainability because it is values, norms and practices of society that will either cooperate with or disregard sustainable goals.

Cultural sustainability as mentioned earlier is concern with deals with the preservation of the culture such that both current and future generations can have the opportunity to access their cultural resources and to meet their cultural needs without discriminatory. (Throsby, 2008). Cultural sustainability as a concept has not been without dissenting views. While the concept is seen by some as idealistic and unattainable because culture, by its nature is dynamic and

subject to changes (Antrop, 2006), others believe there are not well-defined foundations for the study of cultural sustainability (Auclair & Fairclough, 2015).

However, since music is part of culture, and also the subject of this study, a key interest has to be taken in its sustainability. A handful of Ethnomusicologist who have written on music and sustainability (see Allen & Libin, 2016; Challe, 2015; Schippers & Grant, 2016 and Titon, 2015).

Titon (2009) writing on music and sustainability, notes that music is inclusive of the "... resources thought to be endangered, or on the road to extinction ... additionally, university ethnomusicologists and folklorists, independent scholars, music industry workers, and community scholars and activists intervene to help music cultures maintain and promote their music, whether considered endangered or not" (2009:120). This suggests that the music sustainability should only focus on dying music traditions but also vibrant ones. Therefore, in this study I use music sustainability not in reference to a waning music culture, but a vibrant one which is *borborbor*. I also embrace music sustainability to mean "the condition under which music genres can thrive, evolve and survive" (Schippers & Grant, 2016:7).

I use the five-domain framework as an ecological approach to sustainability (Schippers, 2016), to understand how it influences sustainability of *Borborbor*. These domains are: systems of learning music, musicians and communities, contexts and constructs, regulations and infrastructure, and media and the music industry.

Methodology

I applied the qualitative research approach employing ethnographic participant observation and interviews in gathering primary data. Through that, I studied the activities of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles and their members extensively. The field in this study context was *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances in Accra and the Volta region. I explored their organisation and performance practices. My choice of several *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups in Accra and Volta region was informed by Two main considerations. Firstly, Volta region is the home of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music and it is the geographical location where a lot of Eves and *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles are found. Secondly, Accra is a cosmopolitan area with numerous *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles organised by Ewe migrants in suburbs with a substantial population of Ewe speakers. Their presence in a cosmopolitan society with cultural, ethnic and artistic diversity provides a socio-cultural dimension which is useful for my study on innovations in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*.

Sampling

Since my research on *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music includes ensembles, composers, performers (drummers, dancers, singers), in the research field, I employed snowballing to get contacts with ensemble owners, and *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* practitioners. Since *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances take place in many towns and communities in the Volta region and suburbs of Accra regularly on weekends, there was no difficulty in observing performances and making appointments with groups and members. Through selective sampling method I had the liberty to choose any interviewee or participants within the groups, as patterns emerged during the collection of data. I used the purposive sampling technique in this study to purposefully select veteran *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* practitioners, opinion leaders, culture

bearers, famous Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ artists, older people who have lived memories of the performance, and who are knowledgeable in aspects of the tradition. Simple random sampling and snowballing were used to get Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ enthusiasts for interviews. I also used saturation and dens sampling in the selection of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs.

Apart from the people I knew who connected me to the leaders of the ensembles, building rapport with members of the ensembles for the first time did not pose any challenge for me. Most often, my entry strategy was to first of all join them in performance by singing the chorus of the songs and engaging in hand-clapping. In cases where I was not familiar with the songs, humming and following the melody of the songs provided a better option. Then, after a while, I offered to play the *axatse* (enmeshed rattle) or *akaye* (gourd rattle). In a number of instances, the percussionists, especially the bell player(s), were very reluctant to relinquish their instruments or roles when they could not guarantee my competence at playing the bell, since it served as the lifeline of the performance. After the performances I tried to informally interact briefly with some of the performers as a way of further consolidating the rapport.

I sought the consent of group leaders and some event organisers to observe the performances, so that their members would be in the known that they were being observed. This was in the right direction as proper, and it opened the way for me to approach them later on for interactions when the need arose. I made them aware of my presence, whilst being as inconspicuous as possible. In my note book, I kept careful notes on all events, and interactions between the sampled participants. I also made video recordings of performances

at all research sites, to assist me achieve the accurate recall of the sequence of event, and also in analysing the data I collected.

Subsequent to enhancing the relationships with members of the selected groups, I scheduled appointments of groups and individual musicians based on their convenience. By means of interviews, observation and participation in their performances.

Interviews

I employed Interviews to enable me follow through my lines of inquiry, and to also allow me to ask questions devoid of bias, in order to satisfy my research objectives (Yin 2003, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2001). In order for my ethnographic interviews to have the character of everyday conversations, I made use of unstructured, semi-structured and open-ended interview questions. Unstructured interviews gave the opportunity for the interviewees to share their views and opinions without any interruptions from me. The semi-structured form of interview was suitable because of it makes it flexible to have guiding questions with the freedom of asking follow-up questions when necessary for further clarifications. I also relied on the semi-structured interview to validate certain claims and research findings. These steps were meticulously taken in view of Madison's (2005) argument that, the ethnographer must use the resources, skills and privileges at his/her disposal to access information by penetrating borders and confines in order to make known the voiceless voices and experiences of subjects whose stories are not known.

I conducted two kinds of interviews: individual interviews and focused group interviews. The individual interviews were done with veterans and current practitioners of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀*. They include individual drum makers, drummers,

dancers, composers, singers and enthusiasts for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. Apart from the face-to-face interviews, I had telephone interviews with some individuals. The focused group interviews were held with groups of drummers, singers and dancers of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups to get their views and opinions specific aspects of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance. I also used the focused group interviews for data triangulations. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data in order to create a more complete picture and to cross-check some of the information (Creswell, 2000).

The nature of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* as a pan-Eve genre necessitated that most of the interviews held with the participants and all the song texts be conducted in the Eve language. Although some words and expressions were very difficult to translate verbatim into English because of the relationship between how the language is represented and conceptualised, my knowledge of the Eve language with the assistance of the Eve-English dictionary gave me the leverage to bring to light the verbalisations and notions embedded in the translations to their closest interpretations in English. This was for the convenience and helpfulness of both non-literate Eve speakers on the one hand, and non-Eve speakers and readers on the other.

Audio and Visual Materials

Qualitative audio and visual materials are described as information in the form of photographs, art objects, videotapes, website main pages, e-mails, text messages, social media text, or any forms of sound (Crewel, 2014) which a researcher may make use of.

Audio and Video recording - With the use of a Sony Handheld HD Camcorder, a Zoom H4N Portable Digital audio recorder, and a smart-phone, I

was able to cover interviews, Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ performances of groups including rehearsal sessions in their various natural contexts, over a sustained period of time (Schaeffer, 1995). It was helpful in that it assisted me to put observations into their right perspectives prior to analysis.

Digital Archives

I also made use of video and audio documentaries. These include those that are online and offline. The online archives consist of songs, performance videos, films, interviews and pictures that provide factual report on aspects of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ which I retrieved YouTube, WhatsApp and others using the internet. The offline digital audio-visual archives consist of audio files I listened to at the J.H. Kwabena Nketia Audio-visual Archives, performances stored on Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ CDs and DVDs which I purchased from vendors on the commercial markets in Ashaiman and Tudu in Accra, and Ho in the Volta region. Some were also given to me by the artists. These materials served as tools for transcription and allowed me to select, register, encode, and manipulate features to support my major analytical goals.

Data Processing and Analysis

In all one hundred and fifteen songs were textually transcribed using EXMARaLDA Partitur Editor version 1.6 software. After the songs were transcribed, I held discussions with the *hadzenɔ̀wo*, and in some cases singers in the group, to double-check the right texts of the songs. To ensure its effectiveness, I read the texts of the songs aloud to them while they listened attentively and drew my attention to errors they noticed in the transcriptions. I also gave them the opportunity to give their opinions about the song texts and

the contexts within which they were composed or sung and the inferences they could draw from them regarding meanings and significance. The songs were later translated into the English language.

The recorded field interviews were all thus transcribed in Ewe and later translated into English. I organised a post-transcription discussion with some key informants who granted me extensive interviews to confirm the accuracy or otherwise of my transcriptions. While all the songs were also translated into the English language, a selected few were transcribed musically using Finale Software. After transcription of the songs, they were carefully analysed and some themes were deduced from them. Overall, one hundred and twelve songs were transcribed out of the total of the two hundred and forty-six songs collected. These songs include but not limited to folk tunes and original compositions, the orthodox Christian hymns. In order to assess the socio-cultural, political and religious significance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* texts, I employed the qualitative content analysis to interpret the song and drum texts.

Scope of Study

The study largely focuses on selected *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles and individual musicians and events in the Ewe communities in parts of the Volta Region, and the Greater Accra Region. These geographical locations were chosen because they are hub where I found most *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance groups. The study is limited to the innovations in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances and the question of sustainability of the genre.

The Researcher and the Field

Born and nurtured in Adabraka in the heart of Accra by parents who were both *Anlovi akuakuawo* (full blooded Anlo), I grew up participating in children's games, funeral activities, outdoor activities, story-telling sittings and traditional dances within the community. When school was on long vacation, my siblings and I were sent to spend the three-month long vacation with our maternal grandmother at Woe in the Keta district of the Volta Region. The reason for this, I believe, was to give our parents some respite from the headache of wondering what their children may be doing in a compound-house while they were away at work. My first experience of living in a rural community without electricity, especially in the evenings, was that it was boring, at the beginning. But I soon realised, after a few days of settling into the community and making new friends and acquaintances, that it could be fun staying in the community. Since my grandmother was a member of a *habɔbɔ* (voluntary association), which also serves a music ensemble. I accompanied her and other elderly relatives to *hakpa* (singing rehearsal), *vufofe* (dance-drumming performance venue), and funeral celebrations. We also spent time during evenings when our grandmother told us tales and myths about clans and totems. After each long vacation spent in Woe, I came back to Accra with new folk songs, dance movements, tales and children's games, some of which I taught to my peers when the opportunity presented itself.

Back in Adabraka, I had the privilege of following my parents on Sundays to worship at the Evangelical Presbyterian (E.P) Church, located at the Nima estate. There I experienced *Eve* traditional dance drumming accompanied by the congregational singing of Western hymns translated into *Eve*, and hymns

composed by Ewe musicians trained in Western harmony. At the children's service, usually referred to as Sunday school, we learnt Bible stories and scriptural verses in the *Ewe* language. Due to the Ewe adage *exegbe ye exe dona* (literally, it is the bird's language that it speaks, or the bird speaks the language of birds), the Sunday school sessions were held in the *Ewe* language. There, I learned to read *Ewe*. We were also introduced to other aspects of the *Ewe* culture. For example, we were taught how to play Ewe drums and dances such as *Agbadza*, *Gota* and *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, which we always showcased to the members of the adult congregation on special days held annually for children, referred to as 'children's day celebration'.

In later years, I also witnessed and participated in a number of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances in Christian and non-Christian contexts. One such performance I witnessed was during the final funeral rites of a friend's late father at Have, a town in the Volta region of Ghana in February 2014. This *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance was accompanied with a heavy brass band section and dancers. Perhaps the most memorable of all the performances I have witnessed, is a *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* competition dubbed 'Borborfest 2010' held in Accra.

Those aforementioned social and religious involvements gave me a wealth of knowledge on the cultural values, behaviour, and norms of the Ga on the one hand, and that of the Ewe, on the other. My familiarity with the musical tradition was one reason that generated my interest in opting for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musical culture as a research area. The second reason had to do with the new ideas that *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians continue to introduce into their performances as a way of redefining the genre. Thirdly, there is the popularity it currently enjoys

across the length and breadth of the country among both *Eve* and non-*Eve* speakers.

Being an Anlo-*Eve*, I was well aware that the Anlo dialect I speak is quite different from those of the *Evedomeawo*. Nonetheless, my association with some *Evedomeawo* for over two decades has given me some knowledge of the differences in dialect intonations and how to use the appropriate words in context.

Through my networks I contacted some *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* ensembles and I visited a number of groups within *Eve* communities in Ashiama, Nima, Accra Newtown and Banana Inn (Togbikorpe), all suburbs of Accra, to observe their performances and start gathering data.

My membership of the Evangelical Presbyterian (E.P) church, and my position as a former National General Secretary of the E.P. Students' Union (EPSU), and as a chorister, gave me a broad network of *Eve* people who have ties with their families in their home towns in Eveland, and who in turn linked me with contacts who helped me to conduct this study. To help me get a broader picture of the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* culture, I accompanied some of my *Evedome* friends and acquaintances to funerals, festivals and other ceremonies in their home towns, just to get a feel of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances in different contexts in rural *Eve* communities. They also introduced me to people in the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* fraternity and obtain the contacts of potential informants. I used these opportunities to interact with some members of the ensemble regarding their individual roles and the activities of the ensembles in the community.

During one such funeral occasion, in Ho Dome, on 10 September 2016, I observed that while the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performance was still in progress, the trumpet

player came in with his usual interlude, after which he introduced a new song. Suddenly, some spectators engaged in unconstrained conversations among themselves, saying *ha la ge* (literally, *the song has fallen*). At another time during the same performance, I overheard some members of the audience again gossiping among themselves, saying *vua mele totom o la* (literally, *the drum is not lively*). Then, after the performance, I heard *nu yeye aḍeke medze le vufofoa me o* (literally, *there is nothing new in the performance*), *atsia ḍeke nenḍ eme o* (literally, *there was no style in it*), and *Wo ne nḍ 'Fo Senyo fe Bḍbḍbḍ sem* (literally, *they should be listening to Efo Senyo's Bḍbḍbḍ*). I had established acquaintances with a section of the spectators earlier so I intermittently cracked jokes and made funny comments, a strategy that got all those around me laughing while the performance was ongoing. They then started making references to how the same group had performed abysmally at another funeral occasion the previous week.

Although I observed mourners, some of whom were non-Ewe speaking friends from Accra dancing and enjoying the performance, the locals (at least those I heard murmuring and grumbling) were not impressed with the performance, hence they did not participate in the performance as one would have expected of them. In my conversations with some of the people who expressed disdain to the group's performance, it came to light that the ensemble was a community ensemble, but they were hardly able to meet for rehearsals due to leadership problems, in-fighting within the group and factionalism in the larger community. While some attributed the lack of rehearsals and disunity in the group as the cause for the ensemble's appalling performance, some ensemble members blamed the exodus of their best drummers, singers and trumpeter to

urban centres either to seek greener pastures or to embark on skills training programmes. I also learnt that other members have had to further their education in institutions located very far away from the community. Some of the group members admitted they only come together to perform when invited, because as a community ensemble they have an obligation to respond positively when called upon to perform during community occasions.

Whatever the case, through that performance it became evident first of all that some of the informed audience or spectators have in their mind certain standards, skills and conventions they expect from performers of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀*. Secondly, the emphasis on the need for rehearsals and group solidarity is very significant in contributing to a successful performance. Third, the comparisons can be made between the performance we witnessed and Efo Senyo's *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances that have been commercially recorded and disseminated through Compact Discs (CD), Digital Video Discs (DVD), MP3 files from both electronic and social media outlets. Fourth, the expectation or anticipation of spectators to see 'something new' in the performances put more demand on the players to bring their skilfulness and creativity to bear in order to satisfy those expectations.

The experience I had on the field, and the initial secondary data I assessed from the archive and libraries gave me enough reason to adjust the focus of my work, which was initially entitled '*Performance Practices of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ Ensembles in Ashiaman*' to the broader questions of changes in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* through the lenses of creativity and innovations. This made me prepare additional questions to elicit individuals' creative abilities and the process through which they are realised.

Having experienced performances in both Christian and non-Christian contexts by numerous ensembles in parts of the Volta and the Greater Accra regions of Ghana, I can attest to the fact that *Bɔbɔbɔ* bands are mixed groups with mostly men playing the drums, composing the songs and serving as cantors in performances. The standard performance structure is a circular anti-clockwise movement, as Lareau (2002), Younge (2011), Gbolonyo (2009) and Gallo (2015) have documented. Contrary to the performance structure as generalised and documented by the authors referenced, my field experiences revealed a varying performance structure which is dependent on the context of performance and the available space. Besides, new performance elements have been incorporated into the *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances, a reason that makes the study of innovations in *Bɔbɔbɔ* of the Eve a plausible one in Eveland, Accra, and beyond.

Challenges in the Field

During data collection or fieldwork, I was eager to meet at least one veteran musician to discuss the history and political dimensions of the genre. At last, one Wisdom Ziiziga, a drumming instructor at the Dance Studies Department in the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, mentioned in a conversation a Torgbi Geoffrey Kwashie Amugui, whom I later got to know as a veteran composer of *Bɔbɔbɔ* songs in the 1960s and 70s, and also as the first person to form a *Bɔbɔbɔ* band in Ho. Because I was eager to speak to this veteran *Bɔbɔbɔ* musician, I traced his whereabouts to Golokuate in the Volta region for two days using his nickname ‘*Agbanɔɔɔ*’ (literally, perforated plate/bowl), until I finally located his residence in Ho -Dome. After introducing myself and mission, I soon found out from his son that due to health reasons and

other issues related to old age, the over 80-year old musician was not in a good state to grant me an interview. I was redirected to other elderly people in the community such as Koku Korkor, a veteran carpenter, ensemble leader and opinion leader for an interaction. As I anticipated, in a few cases there were disappointments as interviewees did not show up for scheduled interviews. Thus, the challenges in the field were practical, concrete and at times, unfortunate.

Ethical Issues

For this research, it was highly important to employ a high-level of ethics in the areas of confidentiality, trust and anonymity. Hence, I ensured partial and total anonymity and confidentiality of my interviewees and participants. Although a good number of them gave their consent to be mentioned, a few wished to be anonymous. For those participants who pleaded for anonymity, I depended on the requirement of informed consent as set out in McFee, (2005) and Welsh, (1999). The consent of individuals and groups was sought before audio and video recordings of interviews and performances were made.

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

Reflexivity

It is important that researchers reflect about their own biases and backgrounds because these dynamics shape their interpretations formed in the course of the study (Creswell, 2014). Since I have had my own experiences with *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* in the past, some of which will be seen later in this chapter, it is natural that a number of prejudices and notions may have unintentionally got into my data interpretation. As a consequence, I may have had a bit of bias and subjectivity that is beyond my control.

Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into seven 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. Chapter Two offers a socio-cultural history of the Eve people of Ghana, tracing their migration, socio-political and religious structure. It also deals with the geographical locations and music and dance traditions, exploring the context for the emergence of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. Chapter Three discusses the origin and development of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, focusing on its precursors: *Konkoma*, *Tuidzi* and *Akpese*. It also presents historical accounts of the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* genre, drawing connections to its nationalist, socio-political and religious aspects.

Chapter Four explores the performance practices in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, highlighting the creativity in the musical and choreographic dimensions. The focus is on three exponents of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* whose works have become the standards for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups in Ghana. Chapter Five focuses on changing themes in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs and their relevance to the socio-cultural, political and religious

lives of the people. Chapter Six discusses issues of sustainability in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performance, with a focus on factors that have contributed to its sustenance over the years. Chapter Seven reflects on the findings, and provides a summary and conclusion. It also offers recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE EVE OF GHANA

Introduction

This chapter introduces the Eve generally, with a special focus on the Eve-speaking people in Ghana. The aim of this chapter is to establish who the Eve in Ghana are, by tracing the trajectory of their migration, and discussing their socio-political and religious structure. It also deals with aspects of their language, occupations, and music and dance traditions. Information in this chapter is heavily dependent on works of authors such as Amenumey, (1997); Bourret (1960), Gavua, (2000), and Gbolonyo (2009).

Origins and Migrations

Currently, the Eve-speaking people of West Africa inhabit the areas from the River Volta through south-eastern Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast and British Togoland), across Togo to the River Mono on the western borders of the Ancient Kingdom of Dahomey (present-day Benin) (Nukunya,1997:8). As a larger linguistic group whose smaller groups are defined by variations in dialect and custom, the Eves have a common historical lineage (Agawu, 1995).

As is the case with most ethnic groups in present-day Ghana, the Eve settled in their present homes a few centuries ago. The expansion of the Yoruba people in Ketu compelled the Eve to be pushed westward. Their migration from Ketu resulted in the Eve splitting into two major groups, with one moving southward. This group was further divided into two with one sub-group settling near the river Mono and calling it Tado. The second sub-group also settled

between the Haho and Mono rivers, which they called Notsie (Amenumey, 1997:14).

The second group proceeded to the Adele region in present-day Togo. This group, which comprises the people who came to be known as the Anlo, Be, and Fon (together known as Dogboawo), later joined their relations in Notsie. There came a time in Notsie when they were ruled by King Agokoli who was said to be very wicked and harsh to his subjects. Various sections of the population decided to escape because they could not bear the tyranny of the king; hence they dispersed to inhabit the territory between the river Mono and Volta. The migration from Notsie saw the people split further into three broad groups. One of these went to settle in the northern part of their new home. The second group settled in the middle part of their new home, while the third group moved together southwards along the coast.

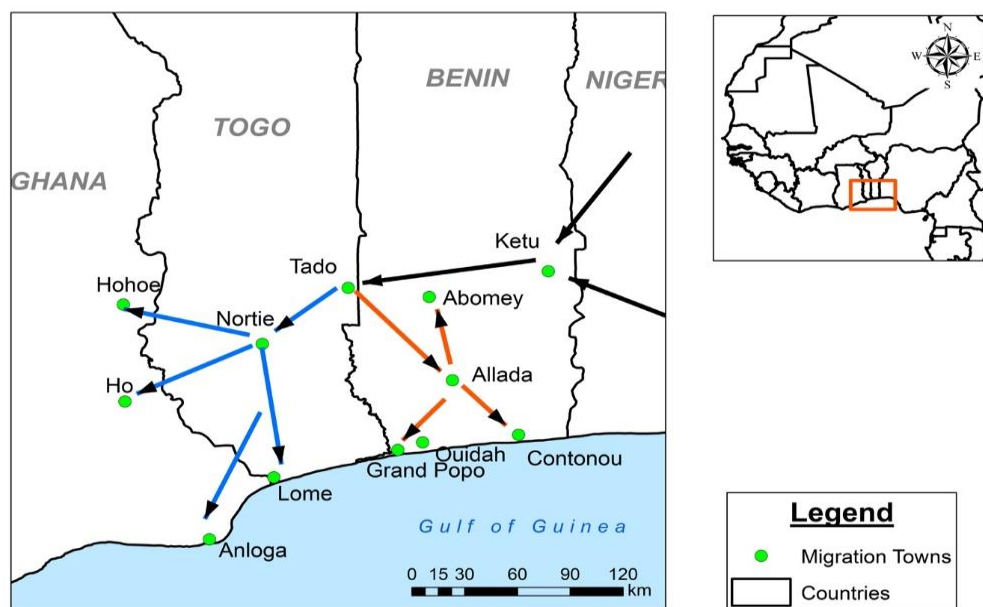


Figure 2: Map showing the historical migration of the Ewe

Source: Cartography, Remote Sensing and GIS unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, UCC (2019).

The German protectorate of Togoland, which was established in 1884, enabled the Germans to control a large portion of Eueland which was then referred to as Togoland. The Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty of 1890 facilitated the exchange of some African territories among Britain and Germany. It also agreed on border demarcations among the newly annexed German Togoland and British Gold Coast.

The German colonial authorities were concerned with reducing reliance on imported American produce such as cotton. Therefore, they aimed to capitalize on the agricultural resources of northern part of Togoland, without due regard for the implications those actions may have on the ethnic unity of the region. It was only after two decades that the German authorities came to admit the magnitude of political and ethnic divisions imposed by the Anglo-German boundaries. It was not until 1908 that the German colonial authorities gave limited control with no genuine purpose of eventual sovereignty, to native chiefs and institutions (Bourret, 1960). The United Nations granted Great Britain and France trusteeships over their respective territories in order to facilitate and promote the eventual autonomy of the territories.

During World War I (1914-1918), forces from allied colonies of British Gold Coast and French Dahomey invaded German Togoland and defeated the German Army, after which the colony was fully surrendered to the allied conquerors. In 1916, Togoland was again temporarily divided, granting territorial mandates to both Great Britain and France (Bourret, 1960), although there was uncertainty in the long-term plan for the territory's governance (Gallo, 2015).

In response to the request from chiefs from northern Togoland, steps were taken on behalf of the French to demarcate their Togolese boundary for the purpose of the reunification of northern kingdoms such as Dagomba, Nanumba, and Mamprusi, which were separated by the Anglo-German boundary. The process of reuniting some of the northern groups resulted in the French receiving the larger portion of eastern Togoland. The new boundary which was hitherto meant to improve and sustain cohesion among ethnic groups in the north, instead created division among the Ewe who were under British rule as part of the Gold Coast Colony in the south (Bourret, 1960). While Togoland experienced some amount of economic development during World War II, it also saw the Ewe leaders intensifying the Ewe unification agenda. The Vichy Government shut down the border between French and British Togoland. This boundary provoked anger against the colonial administration. In February 1946, the Ewe Unification Movement held a convention in Accra where French Ewe organisations were well represented. This led to a meeting of an All-Ewe Conference in June the same year, where permanent working committees were set up to unite the Ewes of French-Anglo Togoland in an independent administrative unit. In a monthly newspaper *The Ewes News*, was published by Daniel Ahmling Chapman, an Ewe of British Togoland, he encouraged his Ewe comrades to work together across inter-tribal boundaries towards unification and self-government. The issue, which initially took the character of geopolitics, was later expanded into a matter of pan-Ewe solidarity (Bourret, 1960).

After a decade of campaigning which resulted in the presentation of 800 petitions to the United Nations, a 25-member delegation was sent to represent the Ewe in New York. After numerous hearings, the United Nations Trusteeship

Council was established based on its 1945 Charter. In January 1946, Britain and France placed their mandates under the trusteeship system, which resulted in the establishment of a number of political parties, with differing ideologies regarding unification. These ideologies were influenced by historical and cultural factors. The Trusteeship Council Mission which was to ensure that colonial mandates would become trust territories, was sent to investigate matters in 1949 and 1952. The Trusteeship Council Mission made their first visit to Togoland in 1949 during which they discovered that unification would give rise to social and economic challenges, and remarked as follows:

Any appraisal of the political development of Togoland under British administration must depend to a considerable degree on the solution of the problems raised by the demands for unification of the two Togolands. The Territory under British administration is small in size and population... and it is difficult to contemplate its future political and economic development except in association either with Togoland under French administration or with the neighbouring Gold Coast Colony and protectorate or possibly both {U.N. Trusteeship Council, Report of the First Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of Togoland under British Administration, U.N. Doc. T/465 (February 1950), 19 (as cited in Bourret, Ghana: The Road to Independence, 112–3)}.

The Joint Council that was established in 1951 to help mediate the transfer of people and goods across British and French Togoland, was resented by many of the Ewe groups fighting for unification. They accused the Council of ineffectiveness, inefficiency and purposeless and hence refused to cooperate with it. They later formed the Togoland Congress in the same year to continue

the campaign for the unification of the Ewe people in the two colonial territories (Mwakikagile, 2017).

Eventually, British Togoland became an administrative district of the Gold Coast in 1952 and was known as Trans-Volta-Togoland. Prior to the independence of the Gold Coast, the constitutional mandate required a significant increase in native representation and reduction in British administration. Based on that, it was the intention of the British government to separate itself from the Togoland trusteeship once the Gold Coast had become independent. In December 1955, a decision was taken to the effect that a plebiscite would be held to resolve the thorny issue of whether or not Trans-Volta-Togoland would become integrated with the Gold Coast or remain as a politically independent territory. Bourret (1960) notes that it was Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's "dynamic programme" under the auspices of his Convention People's Party (CPP) that spurred Ewe support for the integration of Togoland with Gold Coast. On the contrary, "the rallying cry for the Ewe who wanted unification was *ablode, ablode gbadzaa* (freedom, real freedom) and they became known in the rest of the Gold Coast as *ablodefuo*" (Amenyo, 2008).

The plebiscite was to be held on 9th May 1956 under the supervision of the UN. It was such a chaotic affair, as it did not consider the wishes of the Ewe Unification Movement, which had reached fever pitch in southern Eweland from Anlo to Peki, already part of the Gold Coast, and which was prevented from taking part in the plebiscite. At the end of the plebiscite, a majority made up of 93,365 people representing 58 percent in British Togoland voted for unification with the Gold Coast while a significant minority of 67,422 people representing 42 percent voted against such unification. They were not successful with the

plebiscite because of the presence of members of other ethnic groups living in the region. The non-Eve including some Eve voted to be a part of the Gold Coast (Ghana) (Mwakikagile, 2017). Had those in southern Eveland been given the opportunity to partake in the plebiscite, votes would have been enough to secede from the Gold Coast, as a majority voted in the Eve areas of the TVT to secede (Kwawukume, 2013).

The advocacy continued with incipient Eve revolts on the eve of Ghana's independence, as the Eve Unification Movement launched an armed insurrection with the use of locally made shotguns and employed guerrilla tactics in readiness to fight for their cause (Mwakikagile, 2017). But these movements were suppressed by the use of troops (Botwe-Asamoah, 2005).

Currently, in Ghana, Eveland is bounded in the south by the Atlantic Coast, in the north by the Buem-Krachi districts of the Volta Region and in the west by the Volta river and lake (see Agbodeka, 2000). The *Eveawo* (Eve) in Ghana can be categorised into two broad groups, namely, the *Anlo* (Southern Eves) and *Evedome* (Northern Eves). The Southern Eve reside at the southeastern part in the Anlo, Ketu and Akatsi districts and in the North and South Tongu districts (Amenumey, 1997). The Northern Eve reside at the northern parts of the Southern Eve in the Ho, Hohoe and Kpando districts (Gavua, 2000). They occupy a total of 4900.4 square kilometres land, representing 20% of the region's total land size (Gockel, 2000). While the 2010 National Population and Housing Census Report estimates that the Eve is the third largest ethnic group in Ghana comprising 13.9% of the entire population of Ghana (Ghana statistical service 2013), the *Evedomeawo* are the second largest ethnic group of the Eve in Ghana, after the Anlo in the south.

Previously the Anlo established communities along the uniform, white, sandy shores of the Atlantic coast. The Evedome also built communities inland, north of Anlo, spreading from current Togo and Ghana, and directly westwards to the eastern shores of the Volta River and Akwapem range. The Eve settlements had names, some of which reflect the nature and splendour of the scenery that eventually became their home: Keta (literally, the head of the sand); Denu (literally, the beginning of palm trees); Kedzi (literally, top of the sand); Kpeve (literally, rock/stone forest); Kpedze (literally, red stone/rock); Nyive (literally, cow forest); Tsito (literally, rain mountain); Have (literally, pig forest); Todome (literally, between hills/mountain), and Adidome (literally, in/among baobab trees). Other names, such as Dzodze (literally, flew and landed) and Agboghome (literally, in the spirit world), reflect the essence of Eve spiritual power (Fiagbedzi, 1977; Locke, 1978). Still others, that mirror the length of their migration and their ability to endure the hardships that came with it, include Penyi/Feyi (literally, many years past), Blamezado (literally, deceived till night falls), Dzita and Dzido (literally, top of the heart and ability to endure) (Akyeampong, 2001; Nukunya, 1997).

Natural Resources and Economic Activities

Eveland happens to be the only region that covers all climatic and vegetational belts from the coastal part to the northern part of Ghana. The southern part (coastal area) is generally low lying and undulating. The area has natural water bodies such as lagoons which include Ano (Angaw), Avu, and Keta, which are the largest of them all; marshes and salt flats, creeks, sandbars, and floodplains of the Volta river. The three lagoons are interconnected and are linked with the Volta River. It is instructive to note that a substantial part of the

coastal Evedland in Ghana experiences erratic sea erosion which is a result of the coastline around Keta resting on a land that is below sea level. Some, however, suggest the sea erosion may be caused by a mixture of factors which include the geomorphology, hydrography, coastal subsidence, and angle of incident waves (Kufogbe, 1997). Nonetheless, the coastal area is a heavily populated area of Evedland (Mwakikagile, 2017; Agbodeka, 1997; Akyeampong, 2001; Armah & Amlalo, 1997).

Major towns and communities located in the coastal area include Anyanyui, Anloga, Tegbi, Keta, Horvi, Denu and Aflao. The natural resources of the area such as sea, lagoons and sparse plots of sandy land around them provide the essential conditions for rather complex money-making activities such as fishing, salt mining, and trading (Gbolonyo, 2006). Nukunya (1997) succinctly states that in the coastal area “land is not only scarce but the soil is poor and climatic conditions hazardous. Thus, it is for fishing and non-agricultural pursuits that the area is primarily suited.” (p.10). Therefore, fishing is the major occupation for the majority of the people. Apart from fishing, vegetable farming is practiced. The most common vegetable crop farmed in this area is *sabala* (shallot) and during specific seasons, *fetri* (okro) and tomatoes. Irrigation is done on these vegetable farms either manually or by mechanised sprinkler irrigation with water from dugout wells.

The southern-central area is made up of savanna vegetation with lush grasses that are tall, short trees that are widely spaced, all kinds of palm trees, baobab and borassus trees that are scattered and interspersed with small groves. The greenery and atmospheric conditions of this area present very fertile location for crop and animal production. The major crops grown in this area are

cassava and maize. Compared to the coastal south, this area has a low population. Significant Towns such as Adidome, Sogakope, Tadzewu, Akatsi, Dzodze-Penyi, Kpetoe and Tsevie are located in this geographical area (Gbolonyo, 2009).

The northern part of Evedland has an impressive blend and series of mountain ranges and plains. The natives refer to the ranges generally as *Evetowo* (Eve Mountains). From the Volta River in the west, they stretch into central Togo eastward. From the southern plains moving inland (away from the coast) the undulating topography changes into the higher grounds of the southern foothills. This is where the secluded *Adakluto* (Mt. Adaklu), one of the highest mountains in Ghana, lies. Further north, is the Abutia-Taviafe-Dodome and Peki-Avatime ranges, which run parallel from southwest to northeast. At Kpoeta, these two ranges join into what the indigenous people call Kpoeta-Agome towo (Kpoeta-Agome Mountains). This range continues into the Republic of Togo where it merges with the Dayi, Akposso, and Atakpame Mountains (Agbodeka, 2000; Gockel, 2000). Parts of this range culminate into Gemito (Mt. Gemi) and Afadzato (Mt. Afadza), which are the third and first highest points in Ghana respectively. The Santrokofi-Akpafo and Buem ranges lie at the northern tip of Evedland. From Santrokofi, they run parallel to Dayi ranges, eastwards to Adele and Atakpame in the Republic of Togo. Generally, the heights of these ranges fall between 500-1000 metres (Gavua, 2000).

In-between these mountain ranges and highlands are plains. These plains carry savanna vegetation, first continuing with the low savanna from the coastal plains with isolated baobab, borassus trees, and groves, and then gradually changing into high savanna vegetation with tall grassland. Thick, dense, tropical

rain forests with grand evergreen trees are found along the fertile riverbanks and on the mountains.

The plains lying between these highlands serve as passages for some of the noted rivers in Evedland. These include Amu (Volta Lake), Dayi, Tɔdzi, Tsawoe, and Kalakpa rivers. Some of the famous waterfalls found in Ghana are located in Evedland. They include Amedzofe Falls, Tagbo Falls (Liati Wote), and Wli Falls. Farming is the predominant occupation of the inhabitants of this area. This is largely due to the fertile forestland on both the mountains and in the plains and valleys (Gbolonyo, 2009). Grain crops (maize, rice, sorghum), staple starches (yams, sweet potatoes, plantain, cocoyam), fruits (mangoes, cashew nuts, avocado pear) and vegetables (tomatoes, pepper, other leafy vegetables) constitute their main food crops. Cash crops such as cocoa and coffee are also grown for foreign exchange (Gockel, 2000). The rivers along the Volta Lake and River Mono provide lucrative fishing occupations for the people. Some major towns and cities in this area include Ho, Kpando, and Hohoe.

Religious Practices

The Eve knew and worshipped God before the missionaries brought Christianity to West Africa in the nineteenth century. They referred to a Supreme God *as Se, Segbo-Lisa, or Mawuga* who is a spirit, universal, all-powerful and all-knowing. To invoke His presence, His name is elaborated upon as follows: *O Mawuga, Segbo-Lisa, Kitikata aɔaŋu wɔ tɔ amesi wɔ asi wɔ aɔ* (literally, The Great God, artistic creator of hand and foot). *Mawuga* or simply *Mawu*, is worshipped through their traditional intermediary deities or smaller ‘gods’ like *Yeve, Mamiwota, Afa*, etc. *Yeve* and *Afa* are the major gods through which the ‘Supreme Being’ is reached. The traditional healers believe *Mawu*

created the universe and all things therein including water and herbs, which are potent for healing the infirmities of their patients. Therefore, they give so much worth and recognition to the Supremacy of God. All credit is given to God when patients survive.

Yeve, which is a West African god of thunder and lightning, is revered among the Fon of Benin and the Eve of Togo and Ghana. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, it is called Shango. After new members are initiated into Yeve, they take up Yeve names which are publicly announced at the initiate's graduation performance. This is done to get the community informed and also to prevent the public from calling the member by his or her old name. Any member of the society who calls the member by his or her 'forbidden' name after the official introduction is summoned and tried before a jury of priests and Yeve elders based on the laws of the religion. This is because he or she is deemed to have committed an offense against the member and the deity. If the jury finds the wrongdoer guilty, he or she is made to pay a heavy fine.

Afa, on the other hand, is the younger brother of Yeve. It is the West African astral god of divination which originated in IIfè-Ife in Nigeria among the Yoruba, who call it Ifa. The Fon of Benin refer to it as *Fa* and the Eve of Togo and Ghana call it *Afa*. As a visionary deity, *Afa* is said to have the ability to see the past and also the future and then communicates that through Agumaga to a diviner. Agumaga is a divining chain with four concaves on each side of the chain and looks like a horseshoe when held by the loop. The diviner holds the loop-like head and throws it on a mat to communicate with *Afa* in the spirit world to answer questions. When the divining chain lands on the mat, the concaves are guided by both the spirits of *Afa* and the client to turn in an

unpredicted manner to reveal the sign that would answer the client's question. The first *kpɔli* or sign that reveals itself would answer the question.

The client also may ask questions for clarification. When the process is over, the diviner will analyse the literature of the *kpɔli* that answers the question and what the client needs to do or not to do to experience his or her good wishes. The supremacy of Mawuga is also recognized among Afa members. After invoking the names of the major *kpɔliwo* (signs), the officiating priest will call another sign, *Kpɔli Gudafluwogbe*, to deliver the congregation's requests to Mawuga, to leave the bad omens there, and to bring His benediction to the members. When the Agumaga is thrown on the mat, the pattern it makes determines the *Kpɔliwo*. Like other societies in Africa, the Eve society has experienced influences from external forces such as the Europeans, Akans and other ethnic groups.

The arrival of the early Europeans at the Gold Coast (now Ghana), along the shores of West Africa brought about certain developments which include the establishment of several Christian religious groups. These were largely the Roman Catholic mission, Basel Mission (now Presbyterian Church) and Bremen mission (now Evangelical Presbyterian Church). The Bremen and Catholic missions made in-roads into communities and established churches and schools in many towns and villages, including Keta, Dzelukorpe, Adina, Anyako, Peki, and Amedzofe, which resulted in the proliferation of Christianity among the people of Eveland. Before new types of churches emerged, most towns were split between Catholics and Bremen Presbyterians, leading to frequent discord in social relations between members of the two churches (Gavua, 2000; Akyeampong, 2001; Agbodeka, 1997; Greene, 2002).

The presence of these Christian missions and European merchants had dual effects on the traditional culture and musical practices. The introduction of a Western educational system and allopathic medicine though in competition with 'ethnomedicine' and traditional system of education could be credited as having helpful effects on the Ewe. On the other hand, slavery, colonisation and total disregard for traditional beliefs, indigenous music, and cultural practice, all of which constitute the embodiment of Ewe culture, could be seen as having a negative impact on the Ewe, in my opinion. Reference can be drawn from the manner in which the indigenous Ewe were compelled under the forces of missionary activities and colonisation to adopt European practices, to the detriment of their traditional practices (Ibid). Many young people abhor identification with the indigenous religion, though it is fashionable for older followers of the indigenous religion to convert to Christianity upon realizing their death is imminent.

Although some aspects of the Ewe culture may have been influenced by the adverse effects on the invasion of Western norms, there are still aspects of traditional musical resources within the religious and political areas that are still intact. Notable examples include *yeve*, *afa*, *agbosu*, *kɔku*, *atsiagbekɔ*, *atrikpui*, and *adzogbo* (Gbolonyo, 2009:64). Again, although it could be argued that the perceived effectiveness of Christianity in re-shaping social relations among the contemporary Ewe through mental colonisation cannot be overemphasised, the people still have an attachment to their indigenous belief systems to a certain extent. For, as suggested by Gavua "even the most devout Christians and church elders still believe in the power and potency of the gods and other spirits associated with the indigenous religion" (2000:85).

Language

The southern Ewe speak Tongu and Anlo dialects which are referred to as the Southern dialects. The kind of Ewe spoken by the Northern Ewe is *Evedomegbe* (inland dialect). Although these broad categorizations of Ewe dialects exist, there are dialectal variants within these groups. The southern Ewe speak the Anlo, Some, Avenor, Tongu and Dzodze dialects (Atakpa 1997:28) For the inland dialect, Ansre (2000:24) presents them in tentative dialect clusters and a block as follows:

- Kpando - Ve cluster: Akpini, Ve, Leklebi, Liati
- Gbi – Awudome cluster: Gbi Dzigbe (hohoe), Gbi Nyigbe (Peki), Awudome, Kpalime, Tsate, Bame
- Anfoega - Have Cluster: Anfoega, Alavanyo, Sovie, Botoku, Wusuta, Have, Goviefe
- Kpedze – Anfoega cluster: Kpedze, Dodome, Akome, Nyive, Kpoeta, Saviefe, Anfoega, Dzolo
- Ho - Matse, Lume, Takla, Ziave, Taviefe, Akoefe, Ho
- Akrofu-Abutia cluster: Akrofu, Sokode, Abutia
- Ave- Agotime cluster: Dakpa, Dzalele, Ziope, Batume Junction, Kpoeta, Agotime
- Adaklu block

Currently, the Ewe can be found in most communities across Ghana. There are suburbs in other regions that have Ewe names due to the high number of Ewe settlers in those communities and towns. Notable examples are Anloga in Kumasi in the Ashanti region, and Glefe, Ayigbe town in the Greater Accra region. It is estimated that one-fifth of the population of Greater Accra was Ewe

(Ghana Statistical service, 2013). The one thing that has kept and continues to deepen the solidarity between the *Anlo* Eve and the *Evedomeawo* in Ghana and beyond, is their musical traditions, particularly *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performance.

Eve Music

Musical traditions abound among ethnic groups all over Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Corpus of research works by several scholars (Jones, 1959; Amoaku, 1975; Fiagbedzi, 1977; 2005; Avorgbedor, 1986; 2001; Dor, 2000; Agawu, 2001; 2003; Gbolonyo, 2009) note that the Eve are well recognized for their copious musical traditions which include drumming and dance types, songs, games and sophisticated rhythmic organisations.

The issue of many African ethnic languages not having a single word for ‘music’ has been reiterated by a number of African scholars, example (Fiagbedzi, 2005). Among the Eve of Ghana, the idea of music is conceptualised or understood as a holistic art form which has its socio-cultural, philosophical, aesthetics and artistic dimensions (Gbolonyo, 2009). A child is introduced to music performance right from infancy. The child hears /listens to the cradle songs, lullabies and hand claps that are rendered by their mother or older siblings and relations in the home. They also feel the gentle rhythmic patterns that are produced while patting their backs on their mother’s laps or back. Because these activities are daily routines, the child becomes familiar with it and learns to play, dance, sing and develop his own way of interpreting music even before learning to walk, talk and essentially absorb the cultural knowledge of his kinsmen and also acquiring the traditions, socio-cultural, moral and aesthetic values of his/her people (Flolu, 1999).

Music and dance performances are found within Ewe communities and indeed the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. Mothers and older siblings are heard singing cradle songs to infants, men are heard singing occupational songs while engaging in jobs such as fishing, farming, wood carving, and sharpening their cutlasses. Children singing songs to tease or insult a relative or friend who has, for instance, wet his/her bed, young men or women compose songs, drum rhythms and singing love songs to entice the opposite sex. When people lose their loved ones, relatives or friends, mournful songs are sung. Children drum and imitate older siblings during communal performances at funerals and festivals. All these activities enable the Ewe child to consciously or unconsciously absorb the performance traditions (Gbolonyo, 2009).

Expressions for Ewe music and dance performances

The Ewe have varied expressions which are used to indicate different activities which are at the same time constitutive parts of musical practice. Terms such as *ha* (song), *dzi* (sing or to procreate or give birth [to a song]), and *hadzidzi* (singing or the act of singing, procreating or giving birth [to a song]) are in general reference to creating vocal music. *Hakpakpa* (the art of carving or creating a song or composing a song) is a term also used in relation to the practice of vocal music. The Ewe also use terminologies such as *fo* (play/beat/hit/strike), *vu* (drum), and *vufofu* (the act of drumming or playing a drum); *ku* (blow [air/wind]), *kpe* or *dze* (wind instrument), and *kpekuku* or *dzekuku* (the act of blowing a wind instrument) (Fiagbedzi, 1997: 154; Dor, 2004). Other aspects of Ewe musical concepts are precisely designated in their expressions. Three categories of this concept are identified as follows; *hadzigbe*, *nyagbe*, and *vugbe*. *Hadzigbe* (the voice for singing) emphasises on the timbre

or quality of voice that is acceptable for singing. There is also *hagbe* (lit. song voice/language, language/sound of song, or sound/language recognized as song) which is derived from the term *hadzigbe*. *Hagbe* may also imply poetic text. Since poem is usually referred to as *hakpanya* (lit. song carving word or song composition word) in Ewe literature, *hagbe* may be considered as the combination of musical tone and lexical tone (Gbolonyo 2009). *Nyagbe* (literally, word sound or speech utterance or a sentence) and *vugbe* (literally, drum sound, voice, text, or pattern) all establish these (sonic) aspects of Ewe concept of music (Fiagbedzi, 1977; 1997).

Therefore, during the compositional process, *nyagbe* offers guidance to the composer in carefully choosing appropriate texts and melodic phrasing—thereby ensuring text-tone relationship, and the listener in making meaning out of what the composer creates or sings in the song. This implies that if *nyagbe* (literally, speech utterance) is used in a song, it transforms into *hagbe* (lit. sound of song or word of song). In a similar vein, when *nyagbe* is used as a drum language or drum pattern it becomes *vugbe* (drum language or drum text). This goes to emphasize the fact that specific linguistic items form the basis for many drum patterns. The three categories discussed above in addition to serving as texts also act as frameworks for determining melody, rhythm, meaning, and even dance movements and patterns.

Related to the above are Ewe expressions such as *ye* (dance) and *yedudu* (dancing or act of dancing) and *fefe* or *kɔɔɔɔ* (play or drama). Gbolonyo (2009) notes that *fefe*, *kɔ*, or *kɔɔɔɔ* can in some instances be stretched to also encompass meanings or references to the concept of a complete performing arts which includes “a combination of music, dance, drama, and other verbal, kinesthetics,

creative, and expressive art forms” (2009:100). It is uncommon for instrumental and vocal music to be isolated because they together serve as accompaniment for Eve dances.

The concept of the drum (*vu*) is a musical term that embodies many other activities, which include singing, which are essential parts of an Eve musical performance. The following Eve expressions: (a) *meyina vugbo* (I am going to the drum); (b) *meyina vu foge/wɔfe* (I am going to make the drum), or (c) *meyina vu fo ge/fe* (I am going to play the drum), do not suggest that the speaker is: (a) walking to the musical instrument—drum; (b) going to make the musical instrument—drum, or (c) going to play/beat only the musical instrument—drum. Rather, what the speaker really means in all the three expressions is that she/he is going to *make music*, i.e. engage in musical performance. The use of *making music* here is generically in reference, to a single action or sequences of actions that include playing of instruments, singing, dancing, and drama with the appropriate visual and kinaesthetic representations.

Classification of Eve music

Various ethnic groupings in Africa have their specific ways of classifying their musical cultures and forms which are mostly based on their social organizations. While Nketia (1974) observes that classification of musical instruments and musicians among the Hausa and Wolof of the Sene-Gambia are based on positions and political status of the kings and chiefs who patronize them, he also admits that the function and status of royal musicians in traditional Akan courts are a unique grouping that distinguishes both the musicians and the musical genres from others (Nketia, 1963; 1969). Although the descriptions may

apply to all cultures, it is important to articulate the fact that they may not be used by all.

Among the Ewe, musicians and researchers have established several but similar systems within which Ewe music may be categorized. There are those that are classified based on their function (Fiagbedzi, 1977; 1997). Examples are *modzakaɖevuwo* (literally, leisure/boredom ‘killing’ music or socio-recreational music); *subɔsubɔvuwo* or *trɔvuwo* (literally, worship music or music for divinities/religious music); *avavuwo* or *avadevuwo* (music for war, warriors, or military activities), and *fiavuwo* (music for royalty and politics). However, one could also look at *Modzakaɖevuwo* independently because of the association with any activity that is not musical, any physical object or art forms in Ewe thinking.

Kafui (2000:126) refers to *kuvuwo* (literally, music for death or music for funeral), *dɔwɔvuwo* (occupational music), and *glihawo/glimeɖehawo* (incidental music or story songs) as additional categories. Gbolonyo (2009), however, points out that *kuvuwo*, *dɔwɔvuwo*, and *glihawo/glimeɖehawo* fall under earlier classifications. He notes further, that several *modzakaɖevuwo* (socio-recreational music) are not context-based as far as socio-cultural function is concerned; therefore, they are performed for pleasure to entertain guests during funerals and work occasions and such songs find expression during story telling as incidental songs.

Beyond the above classification, Fiagbedzi (1977) identifies three categories: *blemavuwo/tsavuwo* (ancient/pre-historic musical traditions), *amegaxoxovuwo/ametsitsivuwo* (older generation musical types), and *sɔhevuwo/egbevuwo* (youth/modern musical traditions). *Blema* refers to the

period before and during the Eve's migration to their present land around the late 16th to early 17th centuries (Mamattah, 1978; Asamoah, 1986; Amenumey, 1986; Agbodeka, 1997; Gavua, 2000). Music and dance types that fall within this group include *yeve*, *afa*, *misego*, *amesivu*, and *atamga*, and *agbomasikui*. *Amegaxoxo/ametsitsivuwo* expands over the period of settlement at their present locations, their contacts and encounters with their neighbours and the colonial era. Examples of *Amegaxoxo/ametsitsivuwo* include *avadevuwo* (war dance-music), *fiavuwo* (royal, mystical, political music), some *modzakaɖevuwo* (socio-recreational dances) such as *zigi* and *agbadza*, as well as some *subɔsubɔvuwo/trɔvuwo* (religious music) such as *agbosu*, and *atsigeli*.

In relation to *amegaxoxovuwo*, Dor (2004) refers to *nyagavu* (music of the elderly women), another category prompted by sex (female) and age (the aged). *Nygavuwo* are mainly performed by women with a handful of men supporting with drumming. The final category, *dekakpui/egbevuwo* (literally, youthful/present-day) refers to the period of Ghana's independence and beyond. The genres in this category include *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, *akpese*, *kinka*, *gahu*, *gbolo*, *tuidzi* and some new forms of the older styles (Fiagbedzi, 1977:158-160).

Instrumental Resources

The large corpus of dances that the Eve perform is not reflected in the array of musical instruments they can boast of. This is because one set of musical instruments may be employed in the performance of more than five music and dance types. Since it is beyond the scope of this research to provide a complete detailed description of the instrumental resources of the Eve, I will briefly give a general overview and provide information on the instruments used in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance in the ensuing chapters.

Hornbostel-Sachs' classification of musical instruments, though seen by some as colonial and western imposed classification, can accommodate the prevalent indigenous musical instruments of the Eve. These are membranophones, idiophones, chordophones and aerophones (Sachs, 1940; Nketia, 1974; Kartomi, 1990). Drumming among the *Eve* finds its highest expression in the use of drum whose heads are made of dried animal skin (Rechberger, 2018). The skins may be from animals as such *ale* (sheep), *Avugbe* (antelope), *lakle* (leopard) and *enyi* (cattle). Sources of names for most Eve indigenous musical instruments include the playing position, performance technique, timbre, performer's location and function of the musical instrument. Among the Eve, the root word, *vu* is a general term for drum which in this context refers to membranophones. The term *vu* is the umbrella under which various types, different sizes, and makes of drums are seen. Examples are *Uuga* (*vu* = drum, *ga* = big/master), *Agblɔvu* (*agblɔ* = curved or stick or flexible tone, *vu* = drum), *Laklevu* (*la* = animal, *kle* = wild, and *vu* = drum). *Laklevu* (*la* = animal, *kle* = wild, and *vu* = drum), (*vu* = drum, *kpo* = short) and *Atsimevu* (*atsi* = tree, *me* = in or inside, *vu* = drum) which could be arranged *vu* on *atidzi*. Others are *sogo*, *kaganu*, *boba*, *adavatram*, and *Atompani/atumpani* (see Gbolonyo, 2009, Kafui, 2000; Fiagbedzi, 1977 for details).

Among the Eve, *Uwo* (drums) appear in different sizes and ranges. They come from simple pot-shaped drums to those that have been designed with decorative features (only presently) for purely aesthetic purposes. They may be played using techniques that involves sticks, fingers, palms or a combination of sticks and hands. There is also a friction drum *laklevu* (leopard drum), on which

sound is produced by rubbing the drumhead with a stick or cord across the centre of the membrane (leopard skin).

Uwo may also be grouped into types inferences to their usage. Those that are played as solo instruments (talking drums) and those that are employed in ensemble performance. Considering that the Ewe language reflects a tonal idiom which enables one to establish the essence of what is being said based on the pitch level (Kuwor, 2016), drums are used to reproduce the sounds of intonation patterns and rhythms of utterance that serve as a medium of message transmission to the members of the community. Such drums are mostly played as solo instruments. Drums that fall within this category include *Agblɔvu*, *vukpo*, *vuga*, *laklevu*, and *atompani/atumpani*. For ensemble performances, all other Ewe drums can be employed for that purpose. These are played together with other drums and musical instruments.

The availability of material resources for constructing the drums are indigenous to specific geographical locations. For instance, the geographical location of the Southern Ewe is made up of savanna vegetation, therefore their drums are constructed out of strips of wood which are joined to each other with the use of iron rings. Examples include *atsimevu*, *gboba*, *sogo*, *kidi*, *kagan*, *kloboto*, *totodzi*, and *alagavu*. On the other hand, the Northern Ewe's thick and dense tropical rain forests with tall and huge evergreen trees, mean that their drums are carved out of available wood, and there are those that are carved out of a single block of wood. Examples are *vuga*, *asivui*, and *vuvi*. This does not mean that the drums mentioned above are exclusively used by the two groups (Kafui, 2000; Gbolonyo, 2009; Rechberger, 2018).

Idiophones that are indigenous to the Ewe are made of strong, hard magnetic silvery-grey metal, beads and natural resources such as gourds, seeds, and woods. Those made of metal iron are briefly described as follows:

Gankogui (also called *gakogui*) - an iron twin bell played with a stick which produces high and low pitches.



Figure 3: Gankogui

Source: Author's collection, 2019

Ekpo/kpodoga - a single bell held in one hand and played with a stick which is held in the other hand.

Toke (atoke) - a two-piece metal made up of a boat-shaped slit gong which is the main piece held in the palm of one hand and struck with an iron rod held in the other hand. It is also known as the slit bell. Due to its shape some people refer to it as a banana bell.



Figure 4: Toke

Source: Author's collection, 2019

Eke - a form of animal's horn, used in place of a real bell during a performance of the *adevu* [hunters' dance] ensemble.

Akoge (also called *Krinstiwa/frikyiwa/frintsiwa*) - is a two-piece Eve finger metal instrument, worn on the thumb and middle finger, and struck together to produce sound. It is also known as castanet.



Figure 5: Akoge

Source: Author's collection, 2019

Adodo - a type of shaken idiophone that has double-ended two clusters of small iron bells cast onto the two ends of a robust iron rod.



Figure 6: Adodo

Source: Author's collection, 2019

Axatse/asogoi and *akaye* also referred to as rattle or shakers, are other Eve instruments which fall in the category of idiophones. These are made from

hollowed and dried skin of a *go* (gourd). The *axatse* is the enmeshed rattle with beads and dry seeds carefully woven around a relatively big gourd. The *akaye*, on the other hand, is also made from the same type of gourd relatively smaller in size but with beads or seeds sealed inside the gourd. Although the Southern Ewe use the *axatse* while the Northern Ewe use the *akaye*, in many instances *axatse* and *akaye* may be used synonymously.



Figure 7: Axatse (Enmeshed Rattle)

Source: Author's collection, 2019



Figure 8: Akaye (Container Rattle)

Source: Author's collection, 2019

Kitikpo – is a pair of small natural wooden balls filled with either beads or dry seeds and coupled by a twine. One of the balls is held in the palm and the other is swung from side-to-side around the hand, creating a sharp sound upon impact. Consistent playing of the *kitikpo* helps to improve one’s sense of rhythm, and eye-hand coordination.



Figure 9: Kitikpo

Source: Author’s collection, 2019

Atsi – a pair of rectangular or square shaped piece of wood, board or stick held in both hands of the player and struck together in ensemble performance. This is normally used in place of *akpe*, *asikpe* or *asikpoli* (hand clap) in *Eve* musical practice. Aerophones among the *Eve* are commonly called *ekpe/kpe*. They comprise *ladzo* (animal horn) and *dze* or *edze/adze* (whistle). Notable examples of whistles include *asito/ashito* (hand whistle), *neto* (coconut/palm nut shell whistle), *pamploto* (bamboo whistle), and *atsito/atsikuto* (wood/seed whistle) (Gbolonyo, 2009).

In order to make way for musical instruments which may not be accounted for above, Fiagbedzi (1977) classifies *Eve* musical instruments as those: (a) deemed to be specifically *Eve*; (b) borrowed from other Ghanaian or

West African cultures, and (c) those assumed as through contact with Western European civilisation. Examples of group (a) instruments are all those with the prefix and suffix 'vu' and all the self-sounding instruments mentioned above. Examples of group (b) are the *dondo* and *brekete*, *pati*, *tamalin/tamale* (frame drum). Western instruments that were borrowed include *sanku* or *kasanku* as used by churches and their choral ensembles, and the *bugle/biglo* as used by *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles.

Chapter Summary

The Ewe in Ghana were part of a larger group of Ewe in West Africa, but territorial wars and invasions compelled them to migrate. They are believed to have gone through varied experiences and circumstances during their migration from the walled towns of Ketu and Nortsie. They currently reside in one of the sixteen administration regions of Ghana known as the Volta Region. Geographical locations and linguistic differences have necessitated their categorisation into two – Northern Ewe and Southern Ewe. Their geographical location abounds with natural resources such as rivers, lagoons, sea, mountains, fertile forests and savanna lands. All these natural resources provide the people with primary economic activities such as fishing, salt mining, crop and animal farming, and hunting. Before the introduction of Christianity by foreign missionaries in the 1840s, the Ewe knew and worshiped God through the practice of traditional religion. They refer to God with names such as *Se*, *Mawu* and *Mawuga*, who is worshiped through smaller 'gods' such as *Yeve*, *Mamiwota* and *Afa*.

The introduction of Christianity has resulted in the majority of Ewes professing to be Christians with very few still holding on to the practice of

traditional religion. The contacts the *Eve* had with the Europeans, Akans and other ethnic groups in the past, influenced aspects of their traditional culture and music practices, leading to some acculturation. The concept of music among the Eve is an all-inclusive art form which includes expressions in dance/dancing, songs/singing, drumming, the scope of which includes socio-cultural, political, philosophical, aesthetics and artistry. It finds expression in every aspect of their lives, be it occupational, religious, leisure, and rites of passage. Musical instruments used by the people are largely membranophones and idiophones, with very few aerophones. Given this context, Chapter Three offers an historical exploration of the origin and development of *Bɔbɔbɔ* in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL EXPLORATION OF THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* IN GHANA

Introduction

This chapter discusses the origin and development of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* as a music and dance culture of the Eve in Ghana. The chapter begins with the history of the genre, highlighting the music and dance traditions that were forerunners to its eventual emergence. The argument in the chapter presents *Tuidzi*, *Konkoma* and *Akpese* as significant precursors whose existence provided the foundation on which *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* was created.

Precursors of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀*

It is intriguing that a number of scholars (Agawu, 1995; 2015; Agodoh, 1994; Amegago, 2011; Gallo 2015; Younge, 1992) refer to *Akpese* and *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* as the same music genre without offering explanations. These scholars also failed to identify *Akpese* as a precursor to *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀*. Collins (1996; 2018) and Lareau (2002), however, indicate that *Akpese* is one of the music traditions that preceded *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀*. The Eve as a cultural group are often identified by their music and dance traditions. Significantly, Eve life as conceptualised in Kuwor (2013), is a concentrated journey with its political, spiritual and socio-cultural segments governed by music and dance.

It is therefore prudent to say here that to understand and appreciate the life and culture of the Eve, one must endeavour to explore their music and dance traditions. Before the 1940s, the Eve performed their indigenous musical traditions, which included *Egbanegba*, *Zigi*, *Agbadza*, *Atsiagbekor*, *Akpese* and *Tuidzi*. They also performed other popular music types which were indigenous

to other parts of the then Gold Coast but had diffused from those communities to other distant communities in parts of Ghana and beyond. Such music and dance types included, but are not limited to, Ashiko and *Konkoma*. Although there were a number of such musical traditions, for the purpose of this study I will concentrate on only the ones whose traces are found in the genre under discussion in this thesis. These are *Konkoma*, *Tuidzi*, and *Akpese* dance music. Dance music in this study, is used in reference to music that is created or composed specifically to facilitate or accompany dancing.

Konkoma Marching Bands

Konkonma, according to Collins (2018), is a marching and dance music which was developed in southern Ghana during the 1930s as a variant of highlife music. Highlife itself was one of the numerous popular dance-music types that combine African elements with Western (European and American) influences in the nineteenth century Anglophone West African countries of Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ghana (Collins, 1989). Manifesting itself in three unique ways, each of the variants shows the specific Western musical influence that was assimilated and deployed by the African musicians who contextualised it by fusing it with their own tradition. The first stream is the introduced influences of foreign sailors that became ‘palm-wine’ highlife; the second is that of the colonial military brass-bands that became *Adaha* highlife, and the third is that of the Christianised black elite which became dance-band highlife.

The Brass band stream of highlife emerged from the brass and fife band traditions of regimental bands which were connected to forts and castles built by the Europeans along the coasts of Ghana and West Africa at large. About

7000 West Indian soldiers were positioned in Elmina, Winneba and Cape Coast to assist the British fight the Ashanti wars of 1873 to 1901. The presence of these troops marked the introduction of early forms of calypso in Ghana because their regimental brass bands played their local Caribbean mentos and calypsos during their leisure time. The Ghanaian military brass band musicians were playing in strict European ‘oompa oompa’ time but later had to change to Caribbean marching music with its syncopated Afro-Caribbean time (Crooijmans, 2013).

The Ghanaian brass-band musicians’ ability to develop innovative ways of playing Caribbean rhythms and songs resulted in an indigenous form of danceable brass-band music which they called *adaha* around the 1880s, which Collins (2018) suggests is the earliest example of highlife music. Although the Europeans and missionaries were opposed to the use of *adaha* music for street parades, it caught up well with Ghanaians in urban and rural communities in southern Ghana, making brass bands the principal popular music bands in Ghana from the early 1890s until 1930s (Amissah, 2014). Since the local folks did not have much financial muscle to procure the very expensive brass-band instruments, they improvised and created what Collins (1989; 1994; 1996) calls a ‘poor man’s’ type of *adaha* which is in reference to *Konkoma*. *Konkoma* was a marching band and danceable music played without Western drums and brass instruments.

In doing this, the local musicians replicated the idea of constructing the western snare drum using indigenous material resources. According to Collins (1996), an interview with Kwaa Mensah revealed that *konkoma* groups borrowed an instrument from western brass bands resulting in the small double

head drum called *pati*, a local version of the European side drum. This was meant as a suitable alternative to the European snare drum which was very expensive and unavailable to purchase. The *pati* is a circular drum usually made of cedar shell and calfskin or antelope skin. It is hanged locally on the neck and played with two sticks. It is normally used as supporting drum when in an ensemble.

It should be noted, however, that prior to the era of *Adaha and Konkoma*, it was a common practice for groups and individuals to borrow musical instruments or ideas from others. Folks also made use of indigenous materials for play and musical practices. For instance, the 1953 issue of *The Mirror* cited in Amissah (2014) reveals that local materials were used as local brass band instruments. The materials consisted of paw-paw stalks which were used as wind instruments, while empty tins such as sardine tins and Geisha tinned fish (locally called *tinapa*), were used as percussion instruments. The use of such materials resonates with the local Paw-paw Stalk Orchestra which was brought into use for the first time in Cape Coast in 1899. This Paw-paw Stalk Orchestra was a local all-boys' percussion group directed by Kofi Ostabah (Amissah, 2014).

Cobbina (1972) in his research in Senya Bereku, notes that *Konkoma* was performed by mine workers within mining communities such as Tarkwa, Nsuta, Obuasi, Biabiani and Kononngo in Ghana. The young miners were seen as people of wealth, a conception that enhanced their chances of succeeding in wooing ladies in their home communities. The stress that comes with the job of mining made them seek solace in the drinking of alcoholic beverages at liquor bars and palm wine pubs after a hard day's work.

While on holiday, these young men would go back to their home communities where they would show off. They would at late afternoon embark on palm wine drinking, smoking and making music repeatedly, while strolling on the streets of Senya Bereku. After getting tipsy and in some cases intoxicated, they then performed their drunk walking with unsteady steps and staggered body movements. These unsteady movements were referred to in the local parlance as *Ikonikoma* (exceptional walking) (Cobbina, 1972). On some occasions, there was a clown popularly called a ‘play man’ who lead such bands in a procession and displays acrobatic skills to entertain spectators. “This music performance which was called “*Ikonikoma*”, meaning “something which has not existed before”, became corrupted by foreigners who pronounced it as *Konkoma*” (Connina, 1972: 26).

Konkoma dance, according to Cobbina (1972), is performed in a circular fashion surrounded by both performers (members of the band) and spectators (non-members of the band), with everyone getting the opportunity to dance. Although skilful combinations of intricate footwork and bodily movements, which includes swinging of the arms, tilting and swaying of the torso are required in the dance, it can be danced any how (by non-band members) depending on the dancers’ own concepts of creativity and improvisational ability. What is important is that the dance movements should conform or be in harmony with the rhythm of the instrumental accompaniments. The performance is also held in counter clockwise motion with intricate movements of the feet. Everybody is allowed in the performance circle, but as Nketia (1968) notes, “the fewer the people in the dancing ring at a time, the better it is, for it

allows attention to be focused on the actions of the individual which must be aesthetically satisfying as well as expressive” (p.157).

Based on a dancer’s skill and flexibility, he may improvise movements that require twirling of the waist, to lure spectators and members into the performance circle to join the dance. Cobbina (1972) presents a description of the dance below.

With this another member who also observes a new style in the hip movement comes directly in front of another dancer and they both dance while one circles to the left, doing the hip movement. The other also circles to the left also doing the hip movement until both of them come in close contact with each other, and with the last beat of the frame drum they retreat. They dance with their bodies inclined backwards with the legs bent forward and the left and right arms flexed 3rd or 4th degrees placed high and forward middle respectively (p. 43).

Generally, the musical type used maracas/rattle, local hand drums including a rectangular or square frame-drums called tamalin, *pati* drums, a bugle, a bell called *dawuru/gakogui and rattle (axatse)*. *Konkoma* was performed in a 4/4 fundamental time. At one point in the history of the then Gold Coast, *Konkoma* served as the source of recruiting young men who played the bugle, into the army. This is because those short melodic and rhythmic phrases that were used as a form of examination or test to enlist young men into the army were already being played by the musicians in *konkoma* highlife (Personal interview, John Collins, 2018). The *pati*, which is a principal instrument in *Konkoma* highlife, is presently used in various community and school brass band ensembles, social and recreational music and dance types such as *Gome*, *Kpanlogo* and *Kolomashie*. Most public and private school basic educational institutions use the *pati* to accompany marching songs and national

and local anthems. Churches also make use of the *pati* to accompany music during worship and praise sessions of their religious services.

Konkoma highlife gained much popularity as a local musical type and spread from the Fante and other Akan communities towards the east in the 1930s to other territories including the Volta region of Ghana, where it became popular among the Northern Eves. It also spread to other parts of West Africa including western Nigeria, where it was incorporated into local Yoruba palm-wine music known as juju (Collins, 1996) and the *Odide or Ujie* genre of the Esan of Edo state in Nigeria (Aluede and Omone, 2014). Aig-Imoukhuede (1975) also confirms that *konkoma* music was the fashionable music in Lagos in the 1940s and early 1950s and further suggests that it was introduced to Lagos by Ewe and Fanti migrants from Ghana. This process of diffusion caused the name ‘*Konkoma*’ to have local variations, but still maintaining the *Konkoma* style, technique and in some cases, the musical instruments. However, in the case of the Ewe, it resulted in variants such as *Tuidzi* and *Akpese*.

Tuidzi Dance Music

Agordoh (1994) observes that *Tuidzi*, which was a recreational band for the youth, was submerged at the appearance and development of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. His work did not give further details about *Tuidzi*. Togbi Mateo Broni, an opinion leader and culturalist, confirmed in an interview that *Tuidzi* was in existence before he was born, but admitted that he could not tell in which period it emerged. He further suggested that *Tuidzi* was an appellation or a byname for *Akpese* (Personal communication, May 21, 2018). Doe Mensah (Personal communication, July 14, 2018) indicated that in parts of Eweiland, *Tuidzi* was performed as a variant of *Konkoma* in the early 1940s, but he was unable to state

the period when it started. Justice Sronipah, cultural officer with the Ghana Education Service confirms that he witnessed a number of *Tuidzi* performances in Hohoe in the late 1970s, suggesting that the dance was communally performed by both male and female youths in the community for entertainment purposes and also during funerals and other social activities (personal communication July 12, 2018). He explained the meaning of *Tuidzi* as, literally, “stamp it”, “hit on it”, but its sentence form may be *Tu afɔ vua dzi* (stamp your feet on the drum [rhythm]), implying that the leg movements should be based on the rhythm played by the drummers.

Recounting the history about *Tuidzi* as told him by his late grandfather, Kofi Ansah recounted that *Tuidzi* originated from Tsito near Ho in the Volta Region (Personal communication, April 10, 2018). According to the narrative, three young men from Tsito travelled to work on a lumber field in Topease, a community in the Eastern Region of Ghana. There they found a musical type called *Konkoma*. On return to Tsito, they decided to introduce the *Konkoma* by forming an ensemble. Though they succeeded, the product became an adulterated or variant form of *Konkoma* as they could not replicate the authentic one they experienced. They then decided to call their musical type *Tuidzi*. The pro-youth nature of the dance made it very popular within communities and towns in the *Evedome* area. Consequently, *Tuidzi* spread to other towns including Ho, Hohoe, Kpedze and Kpando. After several years of *Tuidzi* performances, members of the society, especially the older generation, started raising concerns about the sensual nature of *Tuidzi* dance movements and gestures. Hence, there were attempts to disband the ensembles or to control the

‘excesses’ in terms of the sexually suggestive movements (Personal communication, July 12, 2018).

Tuidzi performances were organised in a circular manner with the dancers moving in anti-clockwise fashion. The dance movements are centred around the waist or hips with the hands performing gesticulations, most of which were sexually suggestive (Senyo Adzei, Personal interview, July 15, 2018). The sexually suggestive nature of *Tuidzi* is confirmed by the expression “*Tuidzi mana gawoa*” (literally, hit it/stamp it, I will give you money). Torgbi Mateo Broni suggests that it was a coded expression which has sexual connotations (Personal communication, May 21, 2018). Juliana Gbegbeawu, who was a member of the first *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group in Ghana, and also happens to be the wife of the initiator of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* explains in *Joy hotline news* that *Tuidzi* was characterised by amorous dance gesticulations:

But they dance it [*Tuidzi*] anyhow, just to attract. I don’t know [whether] to provoke men or whatever it is. Sometimes they will be using their hands showing their [private parts]. I don’t want to say this...excuse me... so that men should come and play (have sex) ... or something. You see what I mean... *Tuidzi managawoa* is not decent language. It means something relating to sex (interview in Awuni, 2014).

The traditions and customs of the Ewe frowned on the youth making such gestures or speeches about sexuality or sex in their daily conversations, hence *Tuidzi* served as the avenue for these youth who are sexually active to express their desires in a bid to release and express their pent-up emotions and sexual desires. The adults in most communities in Ewe states raised concerns about the contents of *Tuidzi* performances to the effect that it was gradually

eroding the moral of the youth in the communities. Opinion leaders in some communities made conscious attempts to disband these ensembles, but without success, in many cases (Mateo Broni, personal communication: May 21, 2018).

Vivian Affram, an elderly woman confirms that her late father, who was a Catechist of the E. P Church, Anfoega, stopped her siblings and her from watching and participating in *Tuidzi* performances in the community. Although they sneaked out on a few occasions to watch such performances, they returned home to face a punishment of twelve lashes each from their father (Personal interview, April 10, 2017). This confirms the assertion that the elderly had negative notions about the performance of *Tuidzi*. According to Kofi Ansah, musician and lecturer, the name of the musical type was later changed to *Akpese* (Personal communication, April 10, 2018).

***Akpese* Dance Music**

Akpese refers to a musical genre and a dance style which Younge (2011) refers to as “music of joy”, possibly because of the excitement generated when it is being performed. My investigation into the etymology of the *Akpese* points to two directions. The first is a claim that it came from two Ewe words, “*Akpe sia*” or “*Akpe se*” (thank you or thanks), depicting gratitude to God for granting life and good health to the living (Elisa Konu, Personal communication, July 12, 2018). The claim is confirmed by Mensah Ekuadzi (Personal communication, August 5, 2018) arguing that all participants in *Akpese* performance are expected to be full of joy irrespective of the context of the performance.

The second is from the Ewe word *ekpe*, which literally connotes the waist, hips and buttocks. Therefore, in this context, *ekpe* is a wholistic component of a woman’s body which contributes immensely to the

conceptualisation of beauty among the Ewe, hence the expression *ekpe nese nawo* (literally, your hips/waist should be strong). Confirming the latter claim, Mamavi Abra, a veteran *Akpese* dancer, suggested to me that the word was supposedly coined to remind the dancers, especially the females, that the beauty and accuracy of the dance resides in how well and vigorously a dancer can twirl her waist/hips and buttocks (Personal communication, July 10, 2018).

The origin of *akpese* dance music is not clear from my investigations. While some interviewees claim it originated from Kpalime in the Republic of Togo (Elisa Konu, personal communication: July 12, 2018; Amega Sodji, Personal communication: April 17, 2017), others claim it started among the Ewes in Ghana before diffusing to Togo (Prosper Ziizigah: Personal communication, November 13, 2018; Togbe Mateo Broni: Personal communication, May 21, 2018). Efo suggests that it is an older form of *borborbor* music (Personal communication: April 23, 2018). They however agreed that *akpese* is faster than. However, these interviewees were not in the position to provide proofs or narratives to substantiate their claims, except to state, that is what they were told. Unfortunately, scholarly literature available on the origin of *Akpese* is very limited.

Adzei (2008), while discussing the origin of *Akpese* music in his MPhil thesis, presented a similar narrative as Kofi Ansah, but suggests that the ensembles the three men established was *Akpese*. He notes that in Tisto Awudome, *Akpese* performance had three sessions which were determined by mode of dancing, and the type of songs that are sung. These are *tsatsa*, *tuidzi*, and *sokpoti*.

Tsatsa (literally, roaming, moving about) was usually the first part of the performance in which members of the Akpese band undertake a procession through the popular routes in the community or village. This is in consonance with the concepts *Eve vulɔɔ* among the Southern Eve (Fiagbedzi, 1977). Adzei (2008) notes that in towns such as Tsito, Anyerawase, Avenui and Bame, where there appears to be well structured clans, the Akpese bands undertook processions and made brief stops at these clans before proceeding to their final destination, the performance grounds. This is confirmed by Amega Sodji, who recounts that “when Keta was Keta, we (*Akpese* band members) went on procession through the town and ended at the Catholic Church which was our usual performance grounds” (Personal Communication, April 17, 2017). Adzei (2008) notes that *tsatsa* was done to create awareness of the *akpese* performance, to get the youth who belong to these clans to join in the procession. It so happens that the *Akpese* band may start a procession with ten people but by the time they got to the main performance grounds, the number increases to between fifty and one hundred, depending on the population of the community.

Tuidzi and *Sokpoti* can be performed alternatively. The song text or mode of dancing are functions of the particular structure being played. The dance mode with *Tuidzi* is in free style gestures and revolves around the whole body. *Sokpoti – Sokpoti (sokpo ti) ati* in this context refers to stick. *Sokpoti* is therefore used figuratively in reference to the penis. The dance movements for this session involved twists and turns with quick writhing, all of which are centred on the waist. The songs that are rendered during *sokpoti* are songs with love themes. The texts were sexually explicit and dancers would normally perform gestures that further reflected the meanings in the text. Men are always

on the look-out for the best dancers (those able to wriggle their waist). While this performance context served as a space for exuberant youths to find candidates to satisfy their amorous desires, it provided others (especially men who were nervous to strike acquaintance with the opposite sex) the opportunity to find potential love for long lasting relationships. In some cases, interactions that were held during *Sokpoti* have in the long run resulted in marriage. Adzei (2008) notes an admission by a woman to the effect that the love relationships with the father of all her children were ignited during an *Akpese* performances. This admission confirms an assertion by an aged opinion leader and culturalist at Peki-Adzokoe, Torgbi Mateo Broni that *Tuidzi* and *Akpese* performance occasions served as recreation:

This genre [akpese] became popular as many ensembles were established in various towns and communities within the Volta region and communities such as Kpalime in neighbouring Togo. It was performed as recreational music by the youth at festivals, funerals, sports competitions and other community activities (Personal communication, May 21, 2018).

Adzei (2008) notes that *Akpese* performances usually begin with the cantor singing a recitative without instrumental accompaniment. Melodic resources of *Akpese* music are limited to the heptatonic scale with a flattened seventh, a consequence of the peoples' interaction with the Akan. The voice separation in *Akpese* song performance are in parallel thirds with the penultimate notes to the final cadence, in some cases employing the use of parallel fourth in the voice separation. *Akpese* music employs two meters - $\frac{2}{4}$ time and $\frac{6}{8}$ time. The bell plays one phrase in the form of ostinato. The supporting drums which are mainly barrel drums - *vuvi*, *asivui* and in some cases

djembe, also in ostinato. The *vuga*, master drum, employs various techniques to introduce rhythmic variations.

However, Galoeta (1985) writing on drum making among the southern Ewes of Ghana and Togo devotes a paragraph to akpese. He notes that *Akpese* musical instruments consists of two Congas and the “patange” (*pati*) drum (a small two-sided drum play with a thin stick), in addition to bells and rattles. He further mentioned the inclusion of a double-headed Tom Tom which serves as the Master Drum employed to emphasize syncopated rhythms that highlight the action. He described the dance as circular one with drummers in the center.

The descriptions given by the two authors is presents differences in the performance and use of musical intruments. The differences in the Akpese performnaces may be due to the geographical locations of their study. While Adzei (2008) studied northern Ewe community, Galoeta (1985) referred to the Southern *Eve*. It may well be also that the various groups have added or subtracted some musical instruments to suite their tastes.

Considering the fact that *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* is a holistic art form with multiple dimensions which include the historical, political, socio-cultural and musical, I will now proceed to present the historical accounts of its origin and performance. Subsequent sections will indicate the time periods and the major social, political and religious connections of the genre, which have all contributed to its dynamic processes of change in contemporary Ghanaian society.

Origin of *Bɔbɔbɔ*

As established in the previous sections, the roots of *Bɔbɔbɔ* lie in the syncretic social dance music such as *Konkoma*, *Tuidzi*, and *Akpese*. It is not clear exactly when and where *Bɔbɔbɔ* started. One account by Modestos Amegago, a dances scholar and Kofi Amenyo, a culturalist and columnist place its origins around the late 1940s in Wusuta, a remote community along the Volta Lake situated within the Kpando district of the Volta region, before later spreading to Kpando, Hohoe and later to Ho before becoming popular (GNA, November 7, 2011; Amenyo, 2011). Another account situates its origins in the 1950s in Kpando, the Volta region of Ghana (Agordoh, 1994; Collins, 1996; 2005; 2018; Lareau, 2002). Younge (2009), however, dates its beginnings to the period between 1947 and 1957 in Kpando.

The early 1950s were a period of a new awakening, when the independence ethos and the nationalist agitations for self-rule engulfed the whole of colonial West Africa, because the people became discontented with the continued colonial dominance in the socio-political and cultural domains of life. This situation ignited the spirit of Pan-Africanism, which had the form of political and cultural campaigns. In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, who was the first prime minister when Ghana attained self-rule in 1952, stoked up a blaze of nationalism after receiving motivation through the Pan-Africanist ideologies of black activists such as Marcus Garvey of the West Indies, Edward Wilmot Blyden of Sierra Leon and W.E.B Dubois of USA (Shepperson, 1962; Geiss, 1969; Geiss & Keep, 1974; Andrews, 2017). Pan-Africanism ideology in Ghana heightened the agitation for a cultural rebirth in Ghana, with creative artists

being called upon to rise up in protection of their cultural heritage (Nii-Dortey, 2015).

Kwame Nkrumah's Afrocentric ideas led to the creation of a facilitating environment for the study and practice of Ghanaian indigenous music in order to advance the 'African Personality' agenda and in effect a conscious move towards the revival of African music. Musicians created musical hybrids of both Western and Ghanaian musical values and idioms, but consciously ensuring that the Ghanaian identity was not lost. The period saw many creative artists such as Saka Acquaye, who came up with the Folk Opera (*The Lost Fisherman*) and Nii Tei Ashithey, who formed the Wulomei Folk Group which fused Western acoustic guitar with an array of local instruments that formed the ensemble. The group also incorporated West African highlife two-finger cross plucking style on the guitar (Collins 2007, Graham 1988).

The visibility of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* as an indigenous dance music genre in Ghana is linked to the Trans-Volta Togoland (TVT) Plebiscite, which was to decide whether the TVT will merge with the then Gold Coast or stay as an independent territory. It was as part of the processes leading to the plebiscite, that Dr. Kwame Nkrumah made an official trip to the district capital of Kpando, located in the centre of the Trans Volta Togoland to campaign in support of support the merger. This is where Nkrumah first came into contact with the performance of the musical type which later came to be known as *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. Francis Cudjo Nuatro is said to have formed the first *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* band (Agordoh, 1994) and also coined the name of the art form as evidenced in a tribute to Nuatro by Ambrose Badasu that featured in the *Ghanaian Times June 3, 1988: 4*):

(Francis Nuatro) ... joined the Kpando Konkoma Band which was later renamed borborbor. During the early 1950s, borborbor was hit by leadership crisis so [Francis] and a few friends formed their own borborbor band...but we take consolation in the fact that he laid a solid foundation for borborbor which has come to stay.

Francis Cudjo Nuatro, popularly called FC, hailed from Kpando but worked as a teacher in a public school in Wusuta for many years (Xornam Owusu, Personal communication, April 25, 2018). While at Wusuta in the Kpando district, he joined a *konkoma* band but after some disputes regarding leadership and organisation of the band, he broke ties with the band and later formed a new band (Collins, 2018), with which he started experimenting with musical instruments and dances of Tuidzi to create something unique. After leaving his job as a teacher, he went back to his hometown Kpando to secure a job as a community police officer (Xornam Owusu, Personal communication, April 25, 2018). Daavi Abra, an elderly woman who was privileged to see performances of FC's band in the 50s, indicated that the band moved from Wusuta to perform at Kpando (Personal communication, July 14, 2018).

Judging from the accounts presented, I tend to agree with the scholars who trace the beginnings of *Bɔbɔbɔ* to Wusuta, a village by the Volta lake close to Kpando, instead of Kpando town. It is a norm in Ghana for people to refer to big towns or district capitals that are popular and nearer to a particular village they may be referring to. People do this for easy identification. This may well account for the reason people credit the origin of *Bɔbɔbɔ* to *Kpando*, instead of Wusuta. Innocent Nuatro, who is a brother of FC and patron of the Mawuli Borborbor group in Kpando, describes FC as a man of many parts: a traditionalist, (and) at the same time, a strong Christian; a wonderful and great

personality which we may never find in Akpini traditional area. He happened to be a very prolific composer. He composed political songs, traditional songs and religious songs (Awuni, 2014). In an interview in Asamany (2015), M. K. Agbeteti, who was secretary to the first *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group refers to FC as a man with passion for music composition and performance, and known to have composed all the songs that accompanied *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances in his days (Awuni, 2014). Amenyó (2011) describes him as the maestro who was always extending the frontiers of the musical form he popularised by choreographing *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* dance into an enchanting spectacle to behold. His cheerfulness, energy and dexterity during performance made some school boys give him the nickname “Oxygen”.

While a number of music researchers (Agawu, 1995; Gallo, 2015; Lareau, 2002; and Younge, 1991) credit Nuatro with the coining of the genre ‘*Bɔbɔɔbɔ*’ and for laying a solid foundation for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, the etymology of the word and the context in which it was created appears not to have been fully explained by researchers. My investigations reveal that there are three schools of thought which seem to suggest how the name of the genre name came about.

The first school of thought believes that the name ‘*Bɔbɔɔbɔ*’ was coined as a result of some movements in the dance which require the dancers to drop their handkerchiefs at a particular point in time and bend down to pick them up. They believe this movement inspired the name. Daa Amavi who witnessed the performance of FC’s band in Kpando in the 1950s, indicated that during the performance to welcome Kwame Nkrumah in Kpando, F.C exclaimed to the dancers, “*mibɔbɔ de dzi*” (bend down on it), “*alimee wole*” (it is in the waist), suggesting that the beauty and accuracy of the dance rests on the movement and

wriggling of the buttocks (Personal communication: October 12, 2016). In the Ewe language, “*bɔbɔ*” means to “bend down” or to “stoop”; “*bɔ*”, on the other hand, means “to bend something”. Therefore “*Bɔbɔ bɔ*” literally translates to “Bend down bend”. This thought is held by Lareau (2002), Gallo (2015) and Younge (1991).

According to Gallo (2015), the bending down movement of the dance at the waist is a gesture of subservience which resonates with the Ewe verb *bɔbɔ*, meaning humility (*ɔokuibɔbɔ*). The act may also signify reverence for their guest (Nkrumah). This dance movement was a unique spectacle that fascinated the audience, including Nkrumah, who was the special guest at the durbar. Nkrumah could not resist the urge hence he joined in the dance. From then the phrase “*mibɔbɔ de ‘dzi*” became common and synonymous with this unique musical type. Eventually, Nuatro’s band was referred to as the *Bɔbɔbɔ* band. Others called it FC’s *Bɔbɔbɔ* band. Daa Amavi further notes that the submission and respect the ‘*Bɔbɔ*’ gesture also extends to the act of seeking permission to proceed on an activity, as was the case during the performance to welcome Nkrumah at the durbar (Personal communication: October 12, 2016). This is illustrated in the following *Bɔbɔbɔ* song;

Hafi nayi Fiafeme la, Agoo!

Agoo nami, agoo nami

Fia femetɔwo Agoo

English translation

Before you go to the chief’s palace, Knock!

Seeking permission

People of the King’s palace, seeking permission.

The second school of thought believes the name came out of both the rhythm of the drum and the resultant accompanying dance movements. Agbeteti, who was secretary to the first *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* band which he referred to as the ‘Kpando Borborbor Band Original’ (Asamany, 2015:04.46-50) recalls in a documentary: “The music type assumed the name *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* when Nkrumah visited Kpando as part of his campaign trail to garner support for the Eve to join Ghana. During the performance, the drum rhythm sounded ‘*Bɔbɔɔ - bɔ*’ ‘*Bɔbɔɔ-bɔ*’ ... bend down to the music” (Interview in Asamany, 2015:08.53).

John Kuma, a master drummer, agreed with the above school explaining that his late father who was also a master drummer for *Akpese*, told him that they had to change their bands name from *Akpese* band to *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* band in the late 1960s in Sorkode near Ho in the Volta region. He explained further to me that his father told him the rhythm they played on the big drum around the 1960s sounded ‘*Bɔbɔɔ-bɔ*’ (Personal communication, April 15, 2017).

Yet there is a third school of thought who suggests that the genre name *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* came into being as a result of one of Nuatro’s early song compositions. In a *Joy News* documentary, Juliana Gbegbeawu, a member of the first *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* band and the wife of Nuatro (founder), validates this assertion by presenting the song text below as evidence:

Bɔbɔɔbɔ vua leɖiɖi, mibɔbɔ ɖedzi
Ametsitsi kple deviwo sia wole me
Evua nedi, ha nedi, evua nedi eha nedi
Bɔbɔɔbɔ vua le ɖiɖi, mi bɔbɔ ɖedzi, mibɔbɔ ɖedzi
Bɔbɔ bɔ. Mibɔbɔ ɖedzi

English translation

The *Bɔbɔbɔ* drum is sounding, bend down on it

Both Adults and children are involved

The drum should sound, song should sound, (2x)

The *Bɔbɔbɔ* drum is sounding, bend down on it, bend down on it

Bend down, bend. Bend down on it (Interview in Awuni, 2014).

Although the various schools of thought point to different elements as the basis for the name '*Bɔbɔbɔ*', the central theme revolves around the concept of the bending gesture in the dance. Since it is not clear whether it was the dance movement that informed the song or *vice versa*, or whether it was the drum rhythm that informed the dance movement and the song, further interrogation would be required in order to clarify those assertions.

Prior to the historic visit of Nkrumah to Kpando, this unique dance-drumming band performed musical types such as *Konkoma* and *Akpese*, introducing elements of innovation in dance movements, instrumentation and performance structure. Like other performing bands such as *Konkoma* and *Akpese* bands, Nuatro's band was purely recreational, performing at funerals, festivals and other social gatherings in the community. Nuatro took up the task of composing the sequence of steps and movements for their dance performances. One could say that this new dance music had a cultural feel, in that it was accepted as a recreational music by community members. The songs that accompanied the performances then were folk songs, popular choruses and songs composed by F. C. Each of the songs is adapted to Ewe text (Agawu, 1995:100) and reflected themes such as social relations, joy, sorrow, love, death and topical issues in the community. The maiden *Bɔbɔbɔ* group usually referred to as the "1st original *Bɔbɔbɔ* group", had a conventional set-up they employed

for performances. The Drummers sit in front, with the dancers standing at the right side of the drummers. The singers or chorus stand at the left side of the drummers, and the lead cantor stands in front of the chorus as illustrated in the figure below.

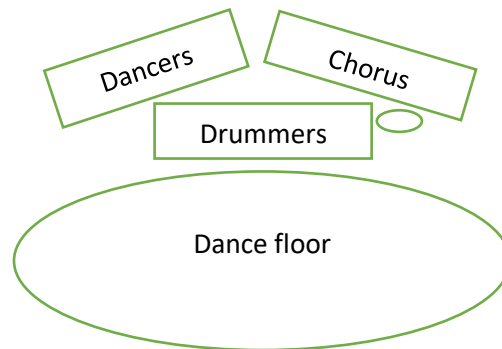


Figure 10: Performance set-up of Nuatro's band

Nuatro's band at some points in time used musical instruments such as the *pati*, *Uuga (Boba/kloboto)*, bongos (a pair of *kagan*), *vuvi*, *dondo*, *axatse*, *gakogui* (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Nuatro's Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ group with Nuatro (from bottom left) holding a stick and a hat

Source: Asamany, 2015

In the figure above, you see that the pair of bongos and the *gakogui* are mounted on a metal stand. Significant also is that the pair of bongos and *vuga* have semblance with the *kagan* and *boba* drums used in the southern Ewe area, indicating the extent to which Nuatro went with his experimentations on the new music trying to find out what will work and what will not work among the music resources at his disposal. He was creative enough to add the *pati* and the *dondo* to bring more life into the performance (Innocent Nuatro interview in Awuni 2014). He also ensured that certain traces from the *Tuidzi* which in his opinion were affront to the cultural norms of the people were modified. The following account by Juliana Gbegbeawu provides support the claim.

In our dancing eventhough you will be shaking your buttocks but [we do it] in a decent way. But they danced it anyhow. Sometimes they will be using their hands showing their, I don't want to say it [private parts] excuse me. That is why we use the handkerchiefs to dance it so that you don't get the chance to be doing all sorts of things ... You see what I mean? That is why we hold the handkerchiefs (interview in Awuni, 2014).

This creative idea to use the handkerchiefs in the group's performances certainly added beauty and elegance to the spectacle. But more importantly, it was done as innovative way of blurring the amorous hand gestures and their connotations that were associated with *Tuidzi* and to some extent *Akpese* dance music. Coincidentally, the adoption of white hankerchiefs by the group appears to have something to do with Kwame Nkrumah. Juliana notes that Nkrumah always displays hankerchief at public events.

At this point the new musical type is at the stage of social construction because it meets the criterion proposed in Emielu (2013) thus musical resources are available, talented musicians create new sounds, and congenial socio-

cultural and economic environment that nurtures the music's development. The group receiving invitations to perform at social occasions in the community, suggest that the music was accepted by the people.

The performance of Nutaro's band during Nkrumah's visit was the beginning of the band's transformation from a cultural entity to a partisan political entity. In the *Joy News* Documentary produced by Mannaseh Awuni Azure, Juliana Gbegbeawu gave the following account:

This drumming group was going on and one day, Kwame Nkrumah came to Kpando. There was a place we call Kpando Todzi. So, we sent the Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ drumming group there. Then we were drumming, dancing. When Nkrumah came, he heard the beat of the drum. He jumped from where he was and he started dancing with all of us. He was so happy with the drumming. And then after when he was going, he said "no, this Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ should be called Nkrumah's own Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ band" (interview in Awuni, 2014).

This is confirmed by Ambrose Badasu, when he states that the genre was performed at political rallies throughout the country.

First of its kind in Kpando and the entire Volta region, it was therefore no wonder when it became identified with the CPP playing at almost all its rallies throughout the Volta region. This fascinated the late Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah who could not resist its rhythms and tempo so much so that he christened it his own Borborbor. Since then, the band became synonymous with CPP and dubbed 'Osagyefo's Own Borborbor. (Ghanaian Times, June 3, 1988).

Nkrumah and his CPP were people-oriented and populist in action and ideology. At the international level, his interpretation of African Personality implies that the quintessence of a nation is its unique culture, a notion which stems from the Herderian idea that "humanity is endowed with a creative force

which endows all things with individuality – nations are organic beings, living personalities” (Hutchinson, 1987:12 as cited in Schauert, 2015:43). He was of the firm believe that in order to productively consolidate and gulvanize African populations to create a unique and viable African nationalism, the indeginouse cultural forms must be harnessed. Realising that the arts play important role in building a strong unified nation, he instituted the Arts Council of Ghana which saw to the establishment of a lot of new performing arts groups all over the country. This means, Nkrumah gave open support to popular entertainment by encouraging the promotion of traditional music and dance performances, and supporting the establishment of highlife bands, concert parties and as well as providing performance venues (Collins, 2018; Botwe-Asamoah, 2005).

The association of Nkrumah’s Convention People’s Party (CPP) to *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* added both nationalist and political themes to the repertoire of the band and also made it very popular. Nkrumah used it to further his political ambitions among the Eves in the Volta region (Younge 2011). F.C.s band became political and partisan with their costumes and drums having Nkrumah’s name embossed on them. F.C.’s group then became known as “Osagyefo’s *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* Group” from 1957 to 1966. The platforms Nkrumah gave to them by way of performing at local political, national and international functions, made the group became a household name in Ghana during that period. Florence Asempapa, a pioneer member of FC’s band recounts that:

The group became very popular so we travelled to several places – Togo, Bolgatanga, Kpalime, Accra, Benin, Lome, (and) Kumasi. These events also earned the group the name ‘International Borborbor Band’. Nkrumah appropriated the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* to win support, hence it became nationalized (Interview in Asamany, 2015).

Although Nkrumah harnessed *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* to champion his nationalist agenda, it also made the genre very popular in parts of Ghana, resulting in a number of similar groups being formed in Hohoe, Anfoega, Peki, Ho and surrounding communities. The newness of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* during the period of the new awakening in the late 1950s gave the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* dance music the nickname “*agbeyeye*” (New life). *Agbeyeye* was also a mantra the CPP used to rally political support for the plebiscite and independence in the Ewe territory of the TWT. To this end, various political songs about Nkrumah, the CPP and the *agbeyeye* were composed. Some come with direct meanings while others were implied. For example, the song titled “Kokolotsu (cockerel)” speaks about the rooster crowing at dawn asking people to wake up because they have new life. Nkrumah’s CPP has a red cockerel heralding the dawn, as its symbol. Hence, the song has political meaning.

Koklotsu

Koklotsu legbedem be
Enuke mifɔ lo
Ao agbe yeye, ye
Ao agbeyeye agbeyeye

Gbɔgbɔla dze dzinye
Be Manɔ agbe yeye
Gbɔgbɔla dze dzinye
Be manɔ agbe yeye
Ao agbe yeye, ye
Ao agbeyeye agbeyeye

Cockerel

the cokerel is crowing
dawn is here, get up!
O, it’s a new life
O, new life, new life

The Holy spirit possess me
to keep having new life
The Holy spirit possess me
to keep having new life
O, it’s a new life
O, new life, new life

After the first *coup d’état* in Ghana which was engineered by opponents of the CPP to overthrow Kwame Nkrumah in 1966, the military government

made several moves to destroy all things that were symbolic of Nkrumah. The *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* genre and its founder were also not spared as they were targets of victimisation. Unsuccessful attempts were made to disband Nuatro's group because of its affiliation to Nkrumah's CPP. Juliana Gbegbeawu recalls in a documentary interview that "When the coup came, they arrested the leader, Nuatro to Ursher Fort Prison and then collected all the drums and sent them to the [Christianborg] Castle" (Awuni, 2014). Similarly, Nkrumah's name, which was inscribed on the drums, had to be wiped off for the fear of victimization and harassment from political opponents (Adzei, 2008). It is instructive to note that this harassment did not happen only to Nuatro's group but a number of other groups modelled after Nuatro's band in the region.

The orchestrated efforts to kill *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* because of its association with the CPP, however, were not successful as it became more popular with prototypes being established in the Volta region and beyond. Innocent Nuatro notes that "although opponents of Nkrumah after the 1966 coup, refused to see *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* as part of their musical art, the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* brand spread all over the country and dominated the Volta region landscape" (Asamany, 2015:16.30-34). However, subsequent governments made attempts to show likeness to the performance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* by featuring it in their public activities.

Ambrose Badasu, in a state newspaper wrote;

During the Acheampong era [13 January 1972 to 5 June 1978], *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* was once again alive and played at the various Unigov rallies throughout the country. It was later identified with the PNP and featured predominantly during the PNP regime (Ghanaian Times June 3, 1988).

Innocent Nuatro also confirmed the politicization of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* in the following words.

The late Dr. Abrefa Busia was also interested in the music such that on one of his state visits to Kpando, he ordered that if he ever paid a visit to Kpando and would not listen to *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* music, he would cause the arrest of many people in Kpando (Asamany, 2015:14.32-40).

Although it appeared, *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* had assumed political connotations because of political actors appropriating it as a tool to achieve their parochial gains, it was still prominent in the social lives of the Ghanaian especially the Ewe. Nuatro, in a smart move quickly reorganised his group and started performing at funerals, marriage ceremonies, private parties, festivals, and educational institutions. The erotic nature of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* dance generated terms or slogans such as *alimevue* (it is waist dance), *alimekese* (the monkey in the waist), *exɔ̀namesrɔ̀* (it snatches the spouse), and *mibɔ̀bɔ̀* (all should bend down) in some communities within and outside of the Kpando district.

David Burns notes in an interview in Greenstreet (2016) that Nuatro's band originally played a kind of snare marching style of drumming accompanied with musical instruments such as *pati*, bells and rattles, small frame drums known as *tamalin* and one large drum. In the 70s when the Ga Folkloric group 'Wulomei' was making an impression with its unique musical style that fused the acoustic lead guitar with local percussions, Nuatro experimented the use of electric bass guitar in his performances, but that innovation never caught on. According to Amenyo (2011), "that experiment was a failure". Around the same period, the instrumental resources of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀*, which hitherto were *pati* drums, *tamalin*, *asivu*, castanet and the bugle, were reviewed. According to Efo Kojo, a veteran *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* drummer in Ho, a bigger drum known as *vuga* was added to

enrich the deep sound required. This was done by employing a technique of holding the drum in the middle of both thighs of the drummer and raising the drum intermittently to produce the desired *vugbe* (drum tone variations) during performance. This drum and drumming technique were carried over from *Akpese* dance and incorporated into *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances by prototype groups within and outside of Kpando (Personal communication, December 3, 2016).

This shows that *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles have incorporated Akpese drums and called it *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. On the other hand, akpese ensembles also adopted performance techniques of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* and in some cases named the bands *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* band because that is what was in vogue. This reflects the social deconstruction stage of music as the meanings, coventions and symbolism are gradually vanishing as a result of the artistic re-creations and reinterpretations brought into the original style which reflect individual, group, generation and economic demands. At this point, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* as a deconstructed dance music form contain a blend of the old and new style that portrays the socio-musical climate of the period.

Bɔbɔɔbɔ* in the Church/Christianisation of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ

The use of drums and other indigenous musical instruments as part of worship in the mainline churches in Ghana was almost sacreligious. It was belived that the spirit of the African, community and gods were in the drums or instruments, hence they were thought to be channels of idol worship. The western missionary's notion of worship as a solemn occassion with hymns accompanied with organ was upheld. Rev. S. K. Amoako confirmed that when he joined the church choir in 1962, there was no way drums could be played in the church. (Welcome address: BorborborFest 2010). But when the indeginouse

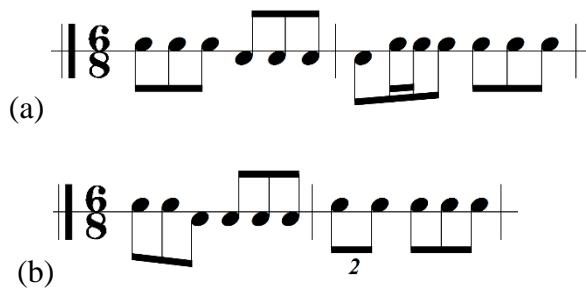
people who had trained as pastors, catechists and church leaders took over the church they made efforts to incorporate traditional cultural elements into the liturgy in order to make Christianity more attractive and relevant to their members. To that end, Ewe cultural rites such as naming ceremony, puberty rites and widowhood rites were Christianised. Robert Baeta was instrumental in initiating singing with dancing and hand clapping into the liturgy (Atakro, 2014) of the Bremen mission (now Evangelical Presbyterian Church). By the early 1980s the Pentecostal churches were attractive to the youth, a situation that increased their membership enrollment to the disadvantage of the mainline churches.

In his quest to make Christian worship appealing to the youth and to draw them into the church, Rev. R.Y. Videka employed an innovative strategy. Then, as District pastor of the Bremen mission, now Evangelical Presbyterian Church, at Sokode near Ho, he sanctioned the performance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* during worship in his congregation in 1985, despite disagreements among the church leadership. During that time, traditional *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensemble consisted of a pair of castanets, container rattles (*akaye*), hour-glass drum (*dondo*), two supporting drums (*vuvi* and *asivu*), and a master drum (*vuga*). Depending on the community, the *pati* and in some cases the *tamalin* featured. These musical instruments are played in accompaniment to the congregational singing of hymns in the *Ewe Nyanyui Hadzibale* (E.P. hymnal). Musical groups in the church such as the Church Choir, *Hadzihaga* (Great Choir) and Christian Youth Builders (CYB) also use the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* instruments to accompany the performance of choral music compositions. Further, the CYB uses tunes from

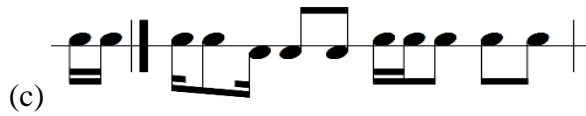
bobobob ensembleS and sacred texts to substitute. A picture of a choir using some *Bobobob* instruments in procession is illustrated in appendix C.

During congregational hymn singing, the *dondo* becomes a very important musical instrument because it provides a cue by playing a rhythmic call that indicates the style to which the hymn is to be sung. This rhythmic cue, which is widely referred to as ‘alarm’ by drummers in the congregations, comes immediately after the church organ or electronic keyboard introduction or towards the end of the introduction by the keyboard. In the situation where a keyboard or its player is not available, it is common to expect that either a trumpeter, a female chorister (normally a soprano singer) or the choir master will provide a vocal introductory melody of the hymn or song before the cue is given by the *dondo*. The rhythmic call is also played repeatedly to signal the beginning of the various stanzas of the hymns.

Generally, performances of rhythmic styles that are played in accompaniment to congregational hymn singing are *Agbadza* and *Bobobob* (highlife) rhythms. For hymns and choral compositions that fall within the *Agbadza* rhythm (6/8 meter) category, the following variations of rhythmic calls are provided by the *dondo*.



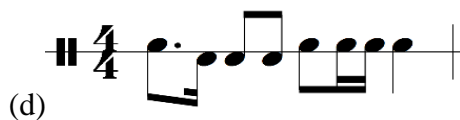
For hymns and songs that are composed in simple duple (2/4) time, the rhythmic call by the *dondo* is illustrated in example (c) below:



Other variants played by the *dondo* are transcribed below:

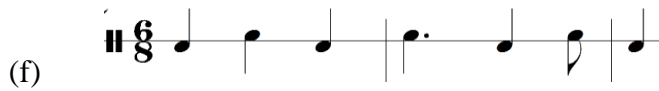


Those composed in quadruple ($\frac{4}{4}$) times are illustrated in the rhythmic call illustrated in example (d) below. The rhythmic call in the simple duple time stretches over two bars while the simple quadruple time has one bar.



In the situation where all the stanzas of a hymn will not be sung, a signal rhythm is played on the *dondo* to alert the choir and the entire congregation on the cut-off point – indicating that the singing will be ending or has ended. These rhythmic signals come in different variations depending on the skilfulness and experiences of the drummer. Common examples in highlife style ($\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{2}{4}$) time

and *agbadza* style (in $\frac{6}{8}$ time) are illustrated in examples (e) and (f) respectively below:



In congregations where the *dondo* or its player is not available, the *vuga* (*Havanna*), which is the lead drum in *Bɔbɔbɔ* ensemble, is used as substitute to perform the role of the *dondo*. The *vuga* is able to replicate all the rhythmic variations for the signals for the calls and cut-offs during performance. In addition to the *agbadza* and *highlife* styles, choral groups in the church also employ these *Bɔbɔbɔ* set of drums in accompaniment to choral music composed in musical styles such as *zigi*, *gabada*, *adevu* and *akpi*.

Since then, conscious attempts were made to incorporate *Bɔbɔbɔ* drumming into the liturgy of all congregations of the E. P. Church and those churches that have association with the Eves. Of all the choral groups in the church, the Christian Youth Builders (CYB) is noted to be the youth group that takes absolute charge of *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances during Church-related events such as offertory, funerals, marriage rites, naming ceremonies, and thanksgiving services. When a deceased member of the church is laid in state, vigils (commonly referred to as wake-keeping) were held, with the CYB performing *Bɔbɔbɔ* to entertain and keep mourners awake. This phenomenon contributed to the popularization of *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances with church hymns, and songs with biblical texts. The increasing number of churches with high Ewe membership such as the E.P. Church and ARS, coupled with their popularity in

the Volta region, have also generated more interest in the youth and community, with *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* bands singing more Christian than secular songs.

Currently, there are *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups established in many churches, as will be seen in subsequent chapters. Their responsibilities among others, are to provide music during the time of praises and offertory. Outside worship in the church, they are called upon to perform at occasions such as marriage, the outdooring of a new-born baby, birthday parties, funerals and other celebrations. In the church context, it is imperative that the songs that are sung are Ewe hymns or popular choruses that have biblical bases and philosophical songs.

In the early 1990s, most *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups performed more Christian-based songs than the secular ones. Mansa Dumevi, one-time leader of *Lɔlɔnyo Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group in Ashaiman (now defunct) in the late 1980s, explained that it was difficult for members to attend rehearsal sessions to learn new songs; the E.P hymns and other choruses come in handy since most of the members belonged to the E.P. church and are familiar with the hymns (Personal communication: August 12, 2016). This was due to the fact that most of the members of these groups belong to churches that sang the popular *Eve* hymns.

It is instructive to note that in most cases the hymns are not sung based on the exact rhythm in the Ewe hymnal. For *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances the rhythmns are innovatively varied to conform with the 4/4 time required for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance. The first example illustrates the rhythm of E.P. Hymn 505. The hymn is composed in a $\frac{3}{4}$ time.



Wo Ye - su ko nɔ nye dzi me la gbe kple ku me ke
 Du - ti - kɔ-koe ka - ta na nye nye ɔe - la Ye - su tɔ

Nu - vɔ̃ gbe si me dze si la na - ga nɔ me - nye o; E -
 la - be e - wua Gbɔ - gbɔ, si Ma - wu tso de me - nye.

The second example below illustrates how the same E.P. Hymn 505 is being performed by *Bɔbɔbɔ* groups.



Wo Ye - su ko nɔnye dzime la gbe kpleku me ke
 Du-ti - kɔkoe ka-ta nanye nye ɔe - la Ye - su tɔ

Nu-vɔ̃ gbe si medze si la na-ga nɔ me - nye o;
 E-la - be e - wua Gbɔ - gbɔ, si Mawu tso de me-nye.

By the mid-90s, a number of *Bɔbɔbɔ* groups had sprung up in communities with large numbers of Eve migrants. This situation required the need for more instrumentalists, especially buglers. Some of the buglers also had challenges with manipulating the instrument because the bugle has no other mechanism for controlling pitch apart from the lips of the player. This make it difficult to play. Also, it is limited to notes within the harmonic series and cannot play normal scales. It is best used to play songs with arpeggios. Apart from the inadequacy of skilled buglers, there was scarcity of the bugle on the market, a

situation that necessitated the replacement of the bugle with a trumpet which was more available and relatively easy to play (Efo Kojo, Personal communication, December 3, 2016; Ben Atta, Personal communication August 12, 2017). The trumpet, on the other hand, is more flexible because it has mechanisms for controlling pitch, playing normal scales and has no limitation in playing notes within harmonic series. Besides, it was more available because some churches and mission schools had brass bands.

At these times, most of the groups used two *vuga* (big drums), which they referred to as tenor drum and bass drums. By the turn of the century, there was the crave for heavy or deep sounds. In response to that, the instrumental resources were expanded to two trumpets, three *vuga* in accompaniment with the other idiophones. Currently, depending on the financial strength, number of drummers and drummers available in a group, one can see as many as five *vuga*, and two to three trumpets in addition to the other instruments during a performance.

The addition of trumpets and expansion in the number of drums in ensembles enhanced the creativity of the musicians. Unlike of the bugle that only played brief and simple interludes to fan and heighten performance, trumpets. It is used to perform the *tsoboi* chants. The two variants of the *tsoboi* calls by the trumpet and the chorus responses are illustrated in the two examples below.

Tr Call

Tso - boi!

Vc Response

Yee!

Tr Call

tso - boi!

Vc Response

Yee!

In spite of its popularity, the performance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* dance in the church has not been without a section of church members expressing their disapproval on the basis of perceived faults. It was accepted into the church hook, line and sinker with probably the only censorship being on the profane songs and song texts. Rev. S. K. Amoako then District Pastor of the E.P. Church at Nima in his welcome address during *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* contest organised by the church noted that since it was brought from the secular world into the church, there are some aspects that have to be dealt with and removed – some dance movements. In his opinion since *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* was an “immoral youth music”, that has been brought into the church, it is a challenge for Christians to find out what they actually want from it (S.K. Amoaku, Welcome address: Borborfest 2010). He noted, as youth groups they should be weary of what they bring into the church and how they perform in the church.

If you continue even in the house of God to shake your buttocks in the church, what are you telling the young boys? ... that you are selling profanity in the house of God? There are complains that we are allowing you to do what is not pleasing in the house of God (S.K. Amoaku, Welcome address: Borborfest 2010).

***Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* brass bands**

The popularity of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances as a result of the proliferation of community, school and church brass bands throughout the entire Evedland, have given rise to a phenomenon of playing *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* drums in accompaniment to what is known as brass band music. In the local parlance, it is referred to as *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* brass band. This ensemble comprises of brass instruments such as trumpets, cornets, euphoniums, trombone and tuba, with a percussion section made of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* drums, which are *asivui*, *vuvi*, *vuga* and the other ideophones discussed earlier. Although in such performances the circular performance formation and the unique *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* dance movements are missing, the rhythmic patterns from the drums are the same. What the voices would have sung in a normal *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performance is played by the brass instruments. The performers usually play at sitting positions. Although this phenomenon represents aspects of the innovations in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances, it does not fall within the scope of my study, hence I will not focus much attention on this development.

However, from my interactions with key practitioners, it came to light that *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* exists in diverse forms which are reflective of the diverse backgrounds and transformations of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* music. In terms of style, the practitioners agree that there are two types, the one close to “the original” which they call the “Kpando style” or “Wusuta style” which is usually employed during processions. The other type is the one that evolved due to its fusion with the

Akpese dance music (Efo Senyo, Personal interview: April 28, 2018). Efo Senyo indicated that the style of play in Wusuta and Kpando differs from what he plays, adding that the rhythms of the Wusuta and Kpando styles are monotonous. Mawuli Nuatro further notes three types of the Kpando style of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, which he spells out as processional, slow movement, and fast movement (Interview in Awuni, 2014). These has some semblance with the structure described into Adzei's (2008) when he notes that Akpese has three performance segments – tsatsa, tuidzi, sokpoti. He also opines that the genre is one that is evolving. This opinion is shared by Emmanuel Kwesi Deh, founder of the 'God is Good Borborbor Group', when he was inviting people to their album launch. He said:

People tend to assume that Borborbor and other traditional rhythms are stuck in time and there's nothing new happening to them. That's not true. The rhythms and the dances keep evolving and we invite everyone over to the Goethe-Institut to catch what I mean (Graphic Showbiz, February 25, 2016).

This statement supports the point that boundaries between such musical types may be blurred due to innovations that creators have introduced in the performances overtime. Therefore, it may be out of place for one to attempt to draw distinctions in order to say which type is 'authentic' or original in this contemporary context.

In terms of instrumentation in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* dance music, I observed the existence of three forms as listed below:

- a. Folk/traditional *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, which refers to the employment of indigenous percussion instruments, the bugle or trumpet as the only western musical instrument.

- b. *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* Brass Band, which consists of essentially brass instruments which are accompanied with *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* percussions.
- c. Contemporary *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, which refers to a wide range of new developments in relation to creativity and innovation to reflect life in contemporary Ghanaian society. It provides a hybrid that combines historical styles with new innovations in contemporary music. Kofi Sarpong's *African Bɔbɔɔbɔ 2* album is a typical example. In this style, the human voices are accompanied by *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* brass band, fused with electric bass guitar and keyboard. This is probably an advanced form of what Nuatro sought to do in the 1970s. Kofi Sarpong's album comprises of Akan Presbyterian hymns and original compositions of his. Although this innovative style is admired and enjoyed by the listening public it has not caught on with other musicians.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have traced the origin and development of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* through its precursors, which are *Konkoma*, *Tuidzi* and *Akpese* dance music. Nuatro, the founder of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, experimented with ideas from the precursors and came up with a unique dance music which later gained prominence in Kpando. This dance music has slight traces of military marching band type of music with very unique dance movements that require the dancers to *bɔbɔ* (bend down), which is the source of the name '*Bɔbɔɔbɔ*'. The *bɔbɔ* was captured in the drum rhythms, dance movement and songs of the first *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group.

The infectious nature of the dance movement and the drumming made the then Prime Minister, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, join in the dancing during one of his state visits to Kpando. The group then became known as *Osagyefo's Borborbor Band*, thereby assuming a partisan character, and performing at the

rallies of Nkrumah's CPP. These exposures extended the frontiers of the dance music, making it very popular nation-wide. The end of Nkrumah's reign as President of Ghana spelled doom for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* dance music, as Nuatro and his group were victimised due to their association with Nkrumah. Nuatro endured the persecution by opponents of Nkrumah and later re-organised his group to perform at funerals, and other community events. At this point, Nuatro put in great effort to depoliticize the group. His efforts yielded dividends as it found space in the cultural landscape with the prototype groups also performing during social and cultural events.

The musical instruments which hitherto were *dondo*, *pati*, smaller frame drum, *Uuga*, the bugle and some ideophones, later merged with Akpese drumming which was also popular in and outside of Kpando. Eventually, the Akpese drumming style was played in accompaniment to *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs. With time, the Original *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* style of playing which had the *pati* playing in a marching style, became unpopular with performers. Some groups in Kpando also adopted the Akpese drumming and yet referred to their performance as *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* because *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* was a 'brand' to which they were very attached.

In the 1980s, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance was ushered into another phase with the incorporation of drumming into the liturgy of the E.P church, marking the beginning of the use of Eve hymns and compositions of gospel songs in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances. *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drumming is used to accompany the congregational hymns and choir processions and recessions during church service. Various categories of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups are found in churches, rural communities and urban centres. The genre, which started as a recreational or cultural ensemble, became partisan, and suffering the consequences, returned to the cultural space,

and currently is fully fledged in both the Christian and cultural space in Ghana. With the influences from *Konkomba*, *Tuidzi* and *Akpese* as precursors of *Bɔbɔbɔ* coupled with the phases of development over the last six decades, one can conclude that *Bɔbɔbɔ* is a dance music which is evolving.

CHAPTER FOUR

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE OF *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* ENSEMBLES

Introduction

This chapter explores the performance practices of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* ensembles and three *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* artistes namely, Francis Anku, popularly called Efo Senyo, Xornam Owusu (Wofa Atta) and Israel Nanevi Maweta, all of whose works may have influenced and become the standard or model for a number of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* ensembles in Ghana. A number of scholars have described performance practices of performing groups without providing working definitions for the concept. I employ Omojola's (2012) concept of performance practices which states that this

...is a multifocal term which covers the context and ambience 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 explanation of performance practices appears holistic because it includes all the processes, methods and procedures of music renditions and the media through which they are disseminated. These consist of both the non-musical and musical activities. The non-musical activities refer to such as recruitments routines, group composition, administration (leadership roles and responsibilities) and general welfare regimes of individuals and or members of performing groups. The musical activities include the very acts of composing songs (*hakpakpa*), drum languages (*vugbewo kpakpa*), and choreographing dance movements on the one hand, and the rehearsals sessions, pre-performance and actual performances on the other.

Organisation and functions of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* ensembles

Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ ensembles are organised as mixed group bands with young adults forming the majority of membership (Agodoh, 1994; Lareau, 2002). Apart from their core mandate of music and dance performance, these groups also double as welfare associations, what Avorgbedor (1986) refers to as *habɔ̀bɔ̀*, which provide support services for their members. Generally, membership is open to individuals who are interested in drumming, dancing or singing, and prepared to attend rehearsal sessions regularly. Members of such groups have the responsibility to attend performances and also benefit from the monetary contributions by the members of the group, in addition to the group performing at the funeral of one of their members or departed relatives.

However, there are instances where people enrol in these groups, not in order to perform with them, but because of the welfare benefits they will get from the *habɔ̀bɔ̀*. Such people ensure that they do not default in the payment of their monthly dues and other levies. This is confirmed by Selorm Addo, the secretary to one of the groups in Nima:

Some members, before they came to join the group, they told us that they don't know how to dance, play drums or sing. But they want to be members of our group because they like how we perform. Some of them even give us (the group) money and buy things for us (Personal communication, March 19, 2017).

As noted in this statement, although the primary aim of such ensembles is to perform, not all members are enthusiastic about taking part in performances, and hence are reluctant to attend rehearsal sessions and performances. Where they present themselves for performances at funerals and other social events, they are passive participants rather than active ones. They

prefer to offer their support and contributions behind the scenes. They would rather perform their financial obligations to the group. In addition, they also support the groups financially and in the areas of acquisition and transportation of musical instruments, transportation of members to and from performance venues, and the acquisition of costumes and uniforms etc.

Based on my fieldwork, the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles I found can be put into two broad categories which are well organized groups and spontaneous groups. The well organised groups consist of community-based groups, hometown associations, privately owned groups, and church-based groups. The adhoc or momentary groups are those organized spontaneously for particular purposes as necessary. It should be noted however, that while some groups are organised purely for welfare, religious and entertainment purposes, others are also organised for economic gains. These groups are described next.

Community-based groups

The community based *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups are those groups that are established based on collective agreements by the opinion leaders and members of the community. This means that members of the community come together to “*do vu*” (literally to plant the drum/ensemble or dance club). The individuals in the community pull their financial and material resources together in order to establish the dance club. Ownership and maintenance of these groups rest on the community members (especially elders and opinion leaders). Such groups have obligations to perform at all occasions and functions organised or sanctioned by the community. Sometimes, performances of such groups attract relatively small financial charges meant for maintenance of the group’s musical instruments and costumes. Examples of such groups include the Ackem-kpoeta *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group,

Kpoeta Ashianti Dumenyo *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group, Dzolo Gbogame Unity *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group, Saviefe Ele Agbe *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group, Taviefe Deme *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* Group, Asogli Unity and Love Group at Ho, Have Number 2, and Dumenyo *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* Groups.

Hometown Associations

The *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups established along the lines of hometown associations are mostly made up of citizens of towns in the Volta region who have migrated to communities in urban and peri-urban areas, in cities such as Accra, Tema, Kasoa, Kumasi and Cape Coast. There are two categories of these groups. The first comprises those that are made up of members who hail from specific towns in the Volta region, while the second is made up of those who are Eves, regardless of which part for the Volta region they come from. Notable examples of the first category are Tsito Youth *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* and Kpeve *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups all in Accra. Norvisi *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group and *Lɔlɔnyo Habɔbɔ* in Kumasi and Cape Coast respectively, are examples of the second category. As noted earlier, these hometown associations are typically welfare associations, hence their concerns are more about the payment of monthly dues, and funeral levies by individual members. Since some of the groups also contribute to development projects in their home towns, members are task to pay development levies for those purposes.

Although such groups are not formed for commercial purposes, they often accept performance engagements where they charge a few Ghana *cedis*, which are deposited in the coffers of the association. They sometimes also embark on activities that will generate revenue for the association. Wofa Atta presents an example of such activities the *Lɔlɔnyo Habɔbɔ* in the Cape Coast plans to embark on in the future: “I will engage the members of *Lɔlɔnyo Habɔbɔ*

to record my next album with them, so that we can share the proceeds from the sales of the album. This will help the group to improve its finances” (Personal interview, 5th July 2018). Apart from the recording project boosting the financial strength of the group, it also serves as a way of making the *Lɔlɔnyo Habɔbɔ* more widely known and attractive within the Central Region and beyond.

Privately Owned Groups

The privately-owned groups are those groups established by individuals or a group of individuals with the sole aim of offering performance services for profit. Such groups may either be amateur or professional groups but are run as business entities. Hence, compared to the community-based groups and hometown associations, privately-owned groups charge high amounts of money for their services. Such groups usually have a maximum of a three-member management team whose responsibility is not only to ensure that the group remains functional, but to also look out for performance engagements and negotiate good financial deals for the groups. The use of fliers, posters and social media outlets are avenues through which they advertise their groups and services. For example, Sasa Gbormita, who is a founding member of the Edzordzinam Fafali *Bɔbɔbɔ* band, based at Abeka-Lapaz in Accra, confirmed to me that the group’s organiser always uploads videos of their performances onto their Facebook pages and YouTube as way of advertising the group (Personal communication, February 20, 2018).

Groups with the financial means also embark on recording activities and produce commercial albums on CDs for distribution. Among the permanent groups are Tsonakle *Bɔbɔbɔ* and Cultural group at La, Mawumenɔnɔnyo *Bɔbɔbɔ* group at Accra New Town, New Vision *Bɔbɔbɔ* Group at Mamprobi

and Milenɔvisi *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* Group at Pig Farm, all in Accra. Others are *Nɔvinyɔ Bɔbɔɔbɔ group at Dzalele Glime*. There are also dance clubs and what is known as ‘cultural troupes’ found in some rural, urban and peri-urban communities, which perform *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* and other indigenous dances such as *Agbadza*, *Gahu*, *Kpanlogo*, and *Adowa* as part of their repertoire. Notable examples are the Adagana Dance Company from Wusuta, and Tsonakle Cultural Group at La in Accra.

Ad hoc or momentary groups

Groups within this category are usually ephemeral in terms of their life-span. They are groups that are formed in order to meet specific needs or to perform at a specific occasion. For example, some groups are formed with the sole aim of participating in a competition, festivals, sporting activities, political activities, recording activities or any other social activity. Hence, when such activities are in the offing, people quickly come together to organise such performing groups solely for the purpose of participating, for example, a competition. After the activity is done with, the group is disbanded. Such groups comprise very skilful performers (dancers, singers, drummers and trumpeters), who bring their expertise together in order to achieve laurels. Organisation of such groups could be at the community level, church level, school or friendship level or family level.

A typical example is what happens during the home-coming events of prominent Senior High Schools in the northern part of the Volta region. Old Students Associations such as the OSUA (Old Students Association of Awudome Secondary School), OMSU (Old Mawuli Students Union), and Bishop Herman College Old Boys Union (Bhobu), during their respective

home-coming and year group events, organise members of their associations to perform *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀*. In these performances, members voluntarily take up roles of drumming, singing and dancing. On November 18, 2018 when Kekeli Radio, a private radio station in Ho in the Volta region organised the Kekeli Eve Music Festival to showcase the rich culture of the Eve people through drumming and dancing, a *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* group known as Asogli Unity *Borborbor* was constituted by some young men in Ho-Bankoe. Another group was also formed by young men in Ho-Axoe to compete in the music festival which was organised in the form of a competition. The Asogli Unity *Borborbor* won the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* category of the festival (Kpodo, 2018).

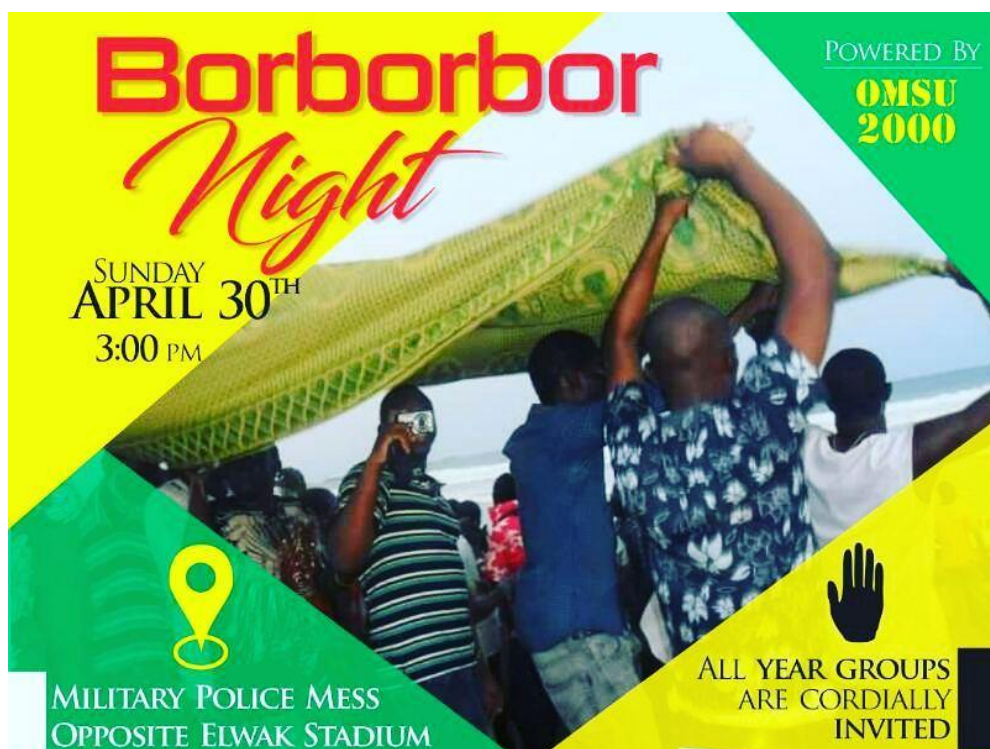


Figure 12: Poster of OMSU 2000-year group advertising their *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* event

Source: OMSU 2000

Church-Based Groups

With the acceptance of the performance of the genre as part of Christian worship, performing groups within that Christian context ensure that it is sustained. The church-based groups are found mostly in the Eve-dominated Christian churches in Ghana. Notable churches with these kinds of groups are the Evangelical Presbyterian (E.P.) Church, Apostles Revelation Society (ARS), and some Roman Catholic churches. Groups such as the Christian Youth Builders (CYB) in the E.P. Church, Eve societies in the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana, the St. Michael Eve Society Youth at Madina, and the Tutudo groups in the ARS, perform *Bɔbɔbɔ*.

In addition to the CYB, specific *Bɔbɔbɔ* groups have been established in some congregations of the E.P. Churches. These include the *Konumakpor* Musical Group at Nima, and *Agbeyeye Bɔbɔbɔ* Groups at Adenta and Kisseman congregations. Others are the *Jeanette Bɔbɔbɔ* Group at Amakom-Kumasi and *Lɔlɔnyo Bɔbɔbɔ* at Koforidua. A number of E.P. Churches, especially, those established within the last decade, have also established what is known as Youth Bands. These bands are the rallying point for mobilising the youth. They are also called upon to perform *Bɔbɔbɔ* during church offerings and other occasions such as funerals, weddings, get-togethers and other happy celebrations.

Notable congregations with Youth Bands are E. P. Church congregations in New Legon, Dododwa, Seduase, and South La. Like the other groups, these church-based groups, apart from their core mandate of performing during church services, also double as welfare associations. For instance, the *Agbeyeye*

Group in Adenta E.P Church has the following clause in their Constitution (Agbeyeye Group Constitution 2009:3):

The aim of the group is to promote Unity and Love among members of E. P. Church through drumming and dancing. Some major objectives of the group are 1. to improve upon musical standards and to Africanize hymns and songs of the E. P. Church; 2. to project Christianity through singing, drumming and dancing; and 3. to [celebrate and] assist every member in times of joy and difficulties [respectively].

Bɔbɔɔbɔ groups, like many performing groups that double as welfare associations, have a committee of men and women who are either appointed or elected by members of the group to see to the proper administrative functions of the group and to ensure the group achieves its main objectives. The interactions I had with *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles revealed that they have similar leadership or committee positions and functions, with slight modifications in a few cases. Because such groups double as welfare associations, their leadership positions usually consist of more formalised structures with the following positions: a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, secretary, assistant secretary, organizer, assistant organizer, financial secretary, treasurer, women leader/mother, assistant women leader/mother, porter and band leader/major. This leadership has the mandate to steer the affairs of the group by taking decisions for and on behalf of the group. Each member of the leadership committee has specific duties.

The chairman is the head of the group or association, and hence has the responsibility to ensure the general upkeep and care of the needs of the group. In the event that the group's drum(s) needs to be repaired or replaced, he will discuss it with the committee, and where the group lacks the financial resources

to cover the cost, the chairman will ensure that the money is raised to cover the cost. While the chairman is not expected to settle such expenses from his personal resources, he is usually relatively a well-to-do person who is in a position to solve most financial problems when they arise. He also directs policy subject to the approval of the committee and sees to it that officers discharge their duties on policy.

The chairman also resolves and manages conflicts that may arise between members of the group. He also provides counselling services for individual members who may be going through one personal challenge or the other. The vice-chairperson assists the chairperson in the performance of his duties by taking charge of some day-to-day issues that do not require the chairman's direct attention. The secretary of the group is responsible all correspondence and taking records of significant events of the group i.e. records of funeral contributions, meetings of committees, invitations, engagements and other group matters. In most of the groups, the secretary position is occupied by members who are literate in the English language and possess the necessary qualifications to perform the required duties. The assistant secretary helps the secretary with the duties described above.

The finance secretary and the treasurer work in close association as the group's accountants. They have the responsibility to keep proper financial records and ensure that the group has proper funding for transportation, maintenance of musical instruments, funeral donations and other activities of the group. Because they are also responsible for the safe keeping of the groups' funds, people who occupy such positions are normally perceived to be

prosperous people who can be trusted not to misuse the funds entrusted into their care.

The organizer and assistant organizer are responsible for ensuring that everything is in order. Their duties include purchasing and transportation of new equipment, musical instruments, costumes, water and food (in some cases) and making transportation arrangements for the group to travel to and from performance venues. They also ensure that rehearsal spaces and performance spaces are in good shape for the group's use. The bandleader or band major is in charge of the drummers, dancers and singers. He takes responsibility for the group's rehearsals and performances, ensuring that the drumming, dancing and singing are synchronising very well musically, and that the group is learning new materials (dance movements/choreographies, drum rhythms, songs and trumpet interludes and improvisations). The bandleader is also responsible for keeping the musical equipment in good condition. Some of the groups have lead dancers, lead singers and master drummers who assist the bandleaders in their duties.

The porter is responsible for informing committee members of meetings and summoning the whole group for performances. The women leader or *Hadada* (group mother) is usually an older woman who takes care of the welfare (especially issues related to food and drinks) of the members. She provides counsel for the young women and also resolves conflicts between members of the group. She sees to it that costumes are in good shape and that the women dancers and singers are well groomed in their costumes.

Rehearsal and Performance Spaces Organisation

The rehearsal spaces for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups differ depending on the type of group, calibre of leadership, institutional affiliation and geographical location. For example, groups who are affiliated to the church make use of the spaces within the church premise for rehearsals. The *Konumakpor* group at Nima uses the open space between the main gate and the church building, while the *Agbeyeye* group at Kisseman hold their rehearsal sessions in one of the classrooms in the church premises. Both groups also have rooms in which their musical instruments are kept.

The Privately-owned groups have varied spaces for rehearsals. While those in the rural areas usually make use of convenient spaces for rehearsals, those in urban centres hold rehearsals at either the home of the leader or owner, in opens spaces such as school parks, at the frontage of shops, at lorry stations or spaces around pubs and amusement centres; this is because of limited performance spaces. For example, the New generation *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group (which I will discuss subsequently), holds their rehearsals on the premises of the Celestial International School - a private basic school in Ashaiman. The group pays monthly rates to the manager of the school for the use of the space. Two owners of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups I spoke to explained that they do not want to be distracted during rehearsal sessions and meetings, hence their preference to pay for the use of a secluded space instead of using an open space for no charge.

Performance

The performance arrangement or structure is largely dependent on the performance space and context. The common performance arrangement used by ensembles during funerals, festivals and other social contexts, is the

traditional spatial arrangement. This arrangement has the drummers and other percussionists positioning themselves at the centre, with the *hadzeno*, and the *hadziliwo* (chorus) standing directly behind the drummers. The *yedulawo* (dancers) perform their dance movements around them in a circular counter-clockwise direction. For this performance arrangement, both members and non-members of the ensemble have the freedom to join in the performance (singing, dancing and to some extent playing of musical instruments).

In the event that the a *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group is performing on a stage for an audience during a formal/official or semi-formal function, the theatrical arrangement is employed. In this arrangement, the drummers sit on chairs or benches in either a straight line or horseshoe formation, with the chorus and other percussion players standing behind them. The dancers emerge from either behind the chorus or from a designated room (in the case of a performance hall) and perform in front of the drummers.

Bɔbɔɔbɔ ensembles in the churches I visited during my fieldwork generally have a unique performance arrangement. Because they are recognised groups in the church, they have their seating position in the chapel. They adopt a sitting position similar to other groups in the church. The women who normally sing soprano and alto sit in front. Behind them are the drummers and other male percussionists. Then, behind the drummers are the male chorus. The *hadzeno* either stands with the drummers or with the women, depending on the size of the group.

Instrumentation

Musical instruments that are used in *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances may be placed into three groups, based on the function they have musically (Locke, 1978:10,11; Ekuweme, 19:27-25, cited in Lareau, 2002). These are background instruments, middle-ground instruments, and foreground instruments. ‘Light instruments’ such as the *axatse/akaye*, *atoke*, *frikyiwa*, *gankogui*, *pati*, *vuvi*, and *asivui* constitute the background instruments because they are the base that provides the timeline upon which the other instruments play their rhythms and human voices render their songs. The *vuga* constitutes the middle-ground because it provides appropriate rhythmic responses to the songs that are being sung. It is an indispensable part of *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances because of the variations and improvisations it is allowed to play. This foreground arrangement style is usually employed by well-organised groups that have composed the sequence of dance steps and movements for performance. This arrangement requires singers, dancers and drummers to work in close collaboration so as to have unified drum and dance variants. The songs, *dondo*, bugle or trumpet, make up the foreground in *Bɔbɔbɔ* performance because they command the performance, in terms of calling new songs and rhythmic melodies and patterns, and also providing signals for dancers, drummers and chorus. They contribute to heightening the potency and thrilling sensation experienced in *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances.

Uuga in *Bɔbɔbɔ* is the master/lead drum. It is also called *Havana* in some parts of the *Evedome* area. Of all the drums in a *Bɔbɔbɔ* ensemble, it is the biggest, and it plays the master or lead role in the ensemble. The shape of the *vuga* has some resemblance to the *sogo* (a closed-bottom drum of the

southern *Eve*), but it is an open-bottom drum though much larger in size. Drummers in some of the ensembles classify the big and bigger *vuga* as tenor and bass drums respectively. While a tenor drum may have the diameter of its membrane ranging from nine and a half inches to eleven inches, with an approximate height of twenty-four to twenty-five inches, the bass drum may have the diameter of its membrane fixed at nearly ten-and-a-half inches wide, with an estimated height of twenty-six inches.

The bass drum is played with both hands and serves as the master or lead drum in the ensemble. In recent times, many groups use two to four of this type of drum in one ensemble where they complement each other in producing massive sounds with heavy and complex master rhythmic patterns (Lareau, 2002; Gbolonyo, 2009). *Asivui* (*asi* = hand, *vui* = drum) meaning ‘hand drum’, is the hand-played medium-sized, single-headed drum that plays a supporting role when used in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* ensembles. These drums are of similar shape as the Akan *atumpan* drums, but considerably smaller in size (Nketia, 1963). The membrane of the *asivui* has a diameter ranging from approximately seven-and-a-half inches to eight inches, with a height of approximately nineteen inches to twenty-one inches (see Adanua, 1990; Gbolonyo, 2009).

Uuvi (*vu* = drum, *vi* = small), meaning ‘small drum’, is the tinniest single-headed drum played with the hand among the Northern Eves. It has similar features as *asivui*, except that it is considerably smaller in size. Both the *asivui* and *vuvi* are held between the player’s legs, which are either tilting the drum slightly and setting it on the ground, or placing it in a stand. The *asivui* and *vuvi* play a similar constant, interlocking pattern in alternation throughout a performance. The *vuvi* is usually the highest in pitch, while the *asivui* is tuned

lower than the *vuvi*. Both drums are held firmly between the players' legs and somewhat tilted to set them on the floor or put them in a metal stand.



Figure 13: A four-set Bɔbɔbɔ drum

Source: Author's collections, 2019



Figure 14: Members of Nutifafa Bɔbɔbɔ group playing the seven-set drums during a funeral thanksgiving at Dzolo-Kpuita in the Volta region

Source: Author's collection, 2019

The *dondo*, also called hour-glass drum, is a double-headed drum in the form of an hour-glass which is laced, and hung across the shoulder with a thong. It is an adjustable tension drum, which gives the player the room to vary the tension and the ensuing pitch of the drum heads while playing. The player holds the drum under his arm at the shoulder and the side of the body and strikes the drum head with a hooked beater. Pitch can be altered by manipulating through a technique of squeezing the lacing, thus tightening the membranes to tune it to the desired pitches (Locke, 1990:29-38).

Although the hour-glass instruments are used as a speech surrogate by some cultures in Nigeria and Northern Ghana, the *dondo* in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances for choral groups provide the call for the chorus to respond to a new song introduced by the lead cantor and to fill in textural background of the music. The basic rhythmic pattern played by the *dondo* uses only two pitches with approximately a third apart. However, the *dondo* may play two or more pitches when it is improvising in a performance context (Lareau, 2002).



Figure 15: Dondo or hourglass drum

Source: Author's collection, 2019

Tuning of the Drums

For the drummers to attain their desired sound quality on the drums, water is sprinkled, or in some cases poured, on the drums, in order to moisten the membrane on the drum. They also strike around the edge of each drum with either a piece of wood, stone, *gankogu/kpodoga* or *atoke/toke* (the slit bell). When this is done, tension is increased in the twine that fastens the pegs to the membrane on top of the drum, thereby stretching it. This action results in the achievement of higher tones on the drums. To get lower tones, the drummer reduces the tension on the twine used to fasten the membrane on the drum by using his fist to strike a blow at the mid-point of the membrane. Both actions are done repeatedly until the required tone differences are obtained on the drums. At other times, water is poured into the drums which are upturned and allowed to stay for between one and two minutes for the water to douse into the membrane. The drums are then turned the right way up and appropriately tuned to the required pitch. Some bands also put the drums under the sun for twenty and forty minutes, depending on how scorching the sun is. Dela Kwao, a master drummer, intimated to me that they do that to get the moist and soft membranes on the drums desiccated far in advance before they use them for performances (Personal communication, April 14, 2018).

Dances incorporated into present day *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances

As noted in Chapter Two, the major dance movement in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance is the wriggling of the waist/hips/buttocks with its attendant footwork. However, the influence of popular culture has resulted in new dance choreographies which have allowed the use of popular dances such as *azonto*, *awukye*, *korgon* and others into *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance (Efo Senyo personal

communication April 23, 2018). For instance, the Edzordzinam Fafali *Borborbor* Group which was formed in late 2016, has incorporated the imported Mapouka dance (also called Macouka) into its dance movements. Mapouka is a century old traditional dance which served as a means for young people in south east of Ivory Coast to find partners, and it is also considered to be the basis of strong bonding relationships between Africans. This dance was popularized by Ivorian popular musician, Freddie Meiwai, in his music videos. Upon watching a performance by the Fafali *Borborbor* Group on the YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkaL7xpVR8c&feature=youtu.be>), Mawuli Hayford, a doctoral student at Alberta University, sent me a text message saying, “It is no longer *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀*. It is *mapuka/Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀*. So, we can say *mapuborbor*” (Personal communication. May 15, 2017). This is in reference to the fusion of Mapouka into *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* performance. One of the founding members of the Edzordzinam Fafali *Borborbor* Group explained to me that the reason for fusing the Mapouka dance into their performances is part of the new trend of adding to the already-large dance choreographies in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀*. He believes it will also give their group a competitive advantage over other *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* groups.



Figure 16: Nutifafa Borborbor Group from Kpando in performance

Source: Author's collection, 2019

Apart from foreign and local popular dances, traditional dances are also incorporated into *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances. This confirms Innocent Nuatro's earlier indication that "*Bɔbɔbɔ* has evolved, and (it) will continue to evolve. Hence any innovation that is brought onboard is acceptable" (Asamany, 2015).

Presentation of Songs

Eve songs are presented in different forms. George Dor (2000) identifies five ways in which Eve songs are presented. These are: (1) lyrical songs: songs characterized by lyricism with much emphasis on the texts during their presentation; (2) interjection of spoken text into songs during performance; (3) alternation of songs and speech mode (continuum between song and speech mode); (4) declamatory songs; and (5) "imagined texts" or "songs without word". Songs rendered by *Bɔbɔbɔ* bands fall within the category of lyrical songs: songs characterized by lyricism with much emphasis on the texts during their

presentation. *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances usually begin with song presentations as an introduction or prelude in which the cantor sings a call, mostly declamatory in nature and sometimes in a melodious form, without instrumental accompaniment. Common examples of preludes I witnessed during my fieldwork are:

Eve text

Hafi miadze nane gome la
Gbedododa yae dze nua gome lo
Hafi nanyi fia feme la
Agoo!
Agoo na mi
Fiafemetowo, agoo!

English Translation

Before we start something
It is prayer that starts the thing
Before you enter the King's house
Knock! Seek permission
Knocking! Permission from you
Occupants of the palace,
I seek permission

It is also instructive to note that specific groups have their unique preludes which some groups refer to also as signature tunes. The singing of such tunes helps the chorus to clear and prepare their voices to ensure they are singing in the right pitch. This is referred to as *gbemekoko* or *gbemefofo*. It also puts them in the right frame of mind and mood for the main performance. It is usually done either *a cappella* or with either *frikyiwa* or slit bell or both in accompaniment. The songs are presented antiphonally with the lead singer, usually a man, performing the 'call' part by singing different materials from the

chorus part. The chorus responds to the call. It is a common practice for ensembles to end their performances with specific songs whose endings are strident and abrupt. Usually, songs like *Dayi kple Amu (sobo dzi)*, *Kule kule* and, until recently, *Vovome*, are used to do this. (see appendix G for example of *sobo dzi*).

Costume

A well organised *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensemble will have performers appear in some uniform costumes. These costumes are mostly textiles which are sewn in similar designs for style for the ladies. There are also different designs for dancers and chorus. For the sake of identity, other groups may appear in uniformed polo/golf shirts with the name of the group printed on either the back or front of the shirts. The ladies wear either long or short slit black skirts to match, while the men wear black trousers. Some groups have the women appear in a one-yard cloth which is uniquely tied around the waist.

On very rare occasions, some *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* bands also present the dancers in Ewe traditional wear. With this costume the dancers, usually women, wrap their cloths around their chest and fasten it around their chest with either a rope or mufflers tied together. Another set of mufflers is used to tie the cloth at their waist level. The use of the mufflers at both the chest and waist levels is done to prevent the cloth from falling off during the performance. On their heads are headscarves beautifully tied. Beads are worn around their necks, wrists and legs. With other groups, the percussionists and singers appear in polo shirts while the dancers appear in outfits such as slit and kaba or straight dresses that will make them perform the dance movements comfortably.



Figure 17: Bobobbo dancers in Ewe traditional costume flaunting white handkerchiefs

Source: Citi FM, 2018



Figure 18: Dancers of Edzordzinam Fafali Borborbor Group wearing a pair of socks during a performance at a wedding reception

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkaL7xpVR8c>

Dancers in some groups, instead performing barefoot, wear socks which serve, according to one dancer, to protect their feet against the heat on the performance grounds. It also prevents their feet and legs from getting dirty.



Figure 19: Dancers and percussionists of Fafali Edzordzinam Borborbor Group in different costumes during a wedding reception

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkaL7xpVR8c>

In highly organised groups, white handkerchiefs are used during performances at occasions such as festivals, marriage ceremonies, private parties and anniversaries, which are regarded as joyous, while the colours red and black or a combination of red and black are used during sad occasions such as the funerals. However, it is not out of place to see other dancers holding handkerchiefs of varied colours during a performance. The dancers hold two handkerchiefs, one in each hand, twirl them to add beauty and colour to the performance. Lareau (2002) observes that the use of the handkerchief adds visual effect to the performance. In addition to the esthetics the dancers wipe their own faces and those of the drummers with the handkerchiefs when they are sweating during performances.

Use of alcohol or liquor

Most of the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* bands receive at least one bottle of local dry gin “akpeteshie” as a donation from clients who invite them to perform at one event or another. This is a common practice for performing groups in Evedland. The practice is referred to as *adzawɔ̀wɔ̀* (donation). Kwashie Kuwor (Personal communication, October 28, 2018) notes that during his fieldwork, the moment the drink was donated to an *agbadza* group, the *azagunɔ̀* (master drummer) called or burst into song, as follows:

Eve text

Nane le atukpa me, soqabi

Makpe tsi ne tago

Tago nawɔ̀ belebele na mafo agbadza

English Translation

There is something in the bottle, *soqabi* (local gin)

I will give liquid to the head

For the head to loosen up, for me to play *agbadza*

The song text above confirms the assertion that taking liquor enhances the performance duration of dance drumming groups. During some *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances that I witnessed in Achem Kpoeta and Ashiante Kpoeta, the *akpeteshi* (local gin) and *deha* (palm wine) featured prominently. These were kept (in most cases, *hidden*) close to the drummers. Where the drummers are seated in a circular form or facing each other, the drinks are kept in the centre or in-between them. Occasionally, the person whose duty it is to serve the performers with the gin will assist the drummers to take a sip of the gin or *deha* while the performance is going on. The singers and dancers are not left out. Clandestinely, they sip the gin either at the centre of the drummers or the chorus.

A few moments after a round of sipping the gin, I observed an internal exertion among the performers. Some members, especially dancers and drummers, are of the view that drinking the gin enhances the mood of the performers, thereby heightening the duration and overall quality and durability of the performance. According to two master drummers, Bright Zigah and John Gollo, a long period of exciting *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance cannot happen without them (master drummers), dancers, lead singer and indeed the chorus, drinking a little alcohol (Personal communication, May 14, 2017). It should, however, be noted that not all members of the bands or performers make use of alcoholic beverages to enhance performance. A number of them explained to me that they do not take hard liquor before or during performances because they do not believe that it enhances performance. Others attributed their non-use of alcoholic drinks to health reasons, religious faith, and social reasons. For example, Alice Mensah and Vinyo Klu indicated to me that it is against their church doctrine for them to drink alcoholic beverages, so they try to avoid taking alcohol before or during a performance (Personal communication, May 14, 2017).

Although it has been established that not all performers in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups take alcohol to aid their performances, it appears the connection of alcohol to *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances is further confirmed if not being strengthened, with the production of an alcoholic beverage blended with natural herbs on the Ghanaian market and branded ‘*Bɔbɔɔbɔ Bitters*’. It may as well be the case that the company that produced this product has recognised the popularity of the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* brand in the country and has therefore decided to ride on that bandwagon (pun intended), to get their products to consumers. The company has

been involved in sponsoring events that create opportunities for *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* Performances.



Figure 20: Image of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* bitters

Source: <https://www.youtube.com>

***Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* competitions**

Competitions are events that give performing groups the opportunity to assess themselves against others. They are good and healthy when done in a spirit of friendship because they enable groups to work the extra mile to improve on their performance skills. They also learn from sister groups. Competitions among *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* groups happen both formally and informally. Informal competitions occur when a group is performing at a social event, be it festival, funeral, or church and the group members are aware of the presence of other performing groups. Whether they are performing simultaneously or one after the other, the concept of competition is evoked between the groups, with

members of each performing group trying to outclass the other. Although there have been a number of formally organised *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* competitions held in several areas over the years, I have witnessed only two of such. The first was dubbed “BorborFest 2010”. It was held on the 1st of July 2010 at the Reverend Paul Wiegrabe E.P. Church chapel at Nima Estate. The competing *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups were the Konumakpor musical group, and the New Vision *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group.

The second is the Ho West District First Ever Traditional Areas *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* competition organised under the distinguished auspices of the Honourable Member of Parliament for Ho West constituency, Emmanuel Kwasi Bedzra, on Saturday March 31, 2018, at the Hlefi Junior High School Park, in the Volta region. The competition, according to Emmanuel Bedzra, was to rally the youth in the district together for entertainment and development purposes. It was also intended to help forge unity and brotherliness among the youth in the district (Welcome address, March 31, 2018). The competing groups were deliberately seeded because they have registered and regularised their activities with the District Cultural Office.

Emmanuel Bedzra anticipated that seeding these groups for the maiden competition would encourage the other groups to endeavour to register with the appropriate offices so that they can participate in subsequent competitions (Personal communication 27th April, 2018). Out of a total of eight (8) groups that were expected to compete (see the figure below), only five (5) showed up for the competition. The participating groups were the Desiadenyo *Borborbor* Group and Dunenyo *Borborbor* Group from Hlefi, with the Kekeli *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* Group and Dunenyo *Borborbor* Group from Kpoeta-Achem and Kpoeta-Ashianti respectively. Dodome Aveha Unity *Borborbor* Band from Dodome

Aveha was the fifth group that participated. At the end of the contest, Dodome Unity *Borborbor* Band emerged as winners, with Kekeli *Borborbor* Group as the first runner-up. The two performing groups from Hlefi Desiadenyo *Borborbor* Group and Dunenyo *Borborbor* Band engaged in a tie for the third position, with Dunenyo *Borborbor* Group from Kpoeta-Ashanti taking the fifth position.

Some leaders of the groups I interacted with wished that the competition could be held every month because according to them, they have learnt many new dance movements and choreographies and composed new *wugbewo* (drum languages). They admitted that the pre-competition activities compelled them to be creative in bringing out innovations in order to outperform the other competing groups.

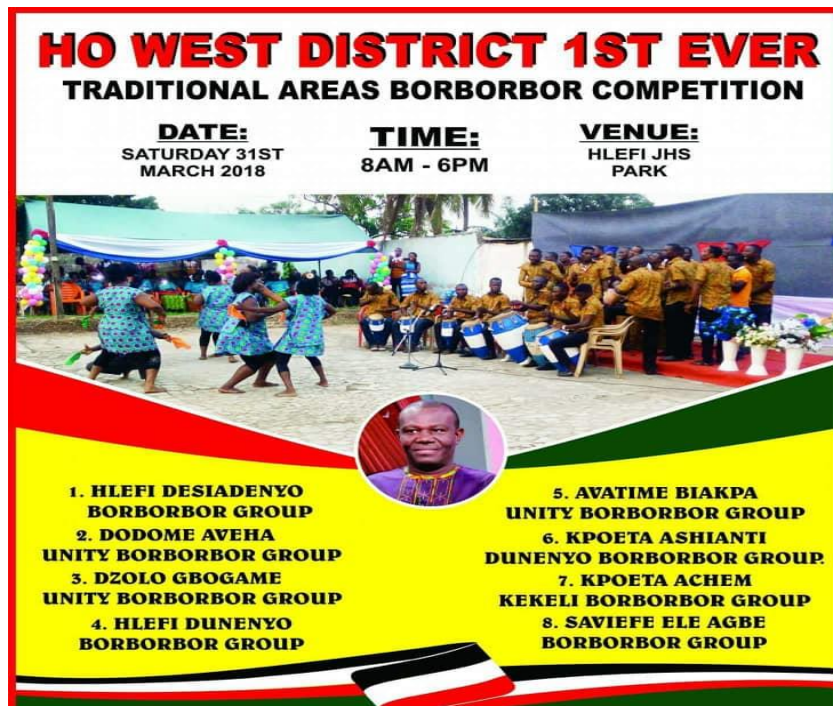


Figure 21: Poster of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ competition

Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/T9RCiFTAQNhAivk59>

Some famous exponents of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* music

Scholars have indicated that individual musicians have a role as agents in the sustenance and transformation of musical traditions. Emphasising this, Shelemey (1997: 201) observes that “as ethnomusicologists we do not study a disembodied concept called ‘culture’ or ‘place’ but rather a stream of individuals”. Turino (2008) states that to shape a society implies a continuous dialectical interaction between individuals and their social and physical surroundings. In view of this, I will discuss three *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* musicians and their personal efforts and contributions to promote, preserve and innovate/transform music culture (*Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performance) in contemporary times.

As explained above, *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances involve singers, drummers, dancers and a participating audience. Considering that *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances are collaborative pursuits, exploring the contributions made by members from all the components to transforming the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* culture in contemporary times will be very challenging. There is also an array of musicians who have either established, led and are still leading *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* bands and making progress with them. While some of the musicians are not well known, others are very well known. Notable among the well-known ones are Mawunyo Kpesese, Wisdom Kudiabor, Victor Kissiedu, Kofi Prince and Wofa Atta. The others are Joseph Akpaloo, Efo Senyo (Francis Anku), and Israel Maweta. Among the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* musicians, there are those who originally compose *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* songs, and those who re-arrange Christian hymns, other people’s compositions and folk songs. Out of the large pool of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* musicians, I have chosen to discuss three: Francis Anku, Israel Maweta and Xornam Atta Owusu because from my interactions with members of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* bands, it was obvious that the works of

the three artists embodies esteemed innovative styles and elements that have made them popular. They also have had a lot influence on the performance organisation of such *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* bands and others.

Francis Anku (aka Efo Senyo) and the New Generation *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group

Efo Senyo is an Ewe who hails from Tsrupke in the Volta region of Ghana. His father is from Trupke while his mother is from Vakpo, all in the Volta region. He describes his mother as a very skilful *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* lead dancer. At age seven, he was brought to live with his father at Tema in the Greater Accra Region, where he has since been living. He was unable to speak the Ewe language until 1977, when he had to take lessons in catechism in order to be confirmed into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Tema - Community 1. Although the medium of instruction for the catechism was in Ewe, he was allowed to go through the studies using the English language due his deficiency in the Ewe language. His father, then a staff of Ghana Textile Printing Company (GTPC) and member of the E.P. Church, became an object of ridicule from his colleagues because he failed to make frequent visits to his hometown for his children to learn to speak the Ewe language. To prove his colleagues wrong, his father consequently engaged the services of the catechist for intensive extra classes in Ewe two weeks prior to the confirmation service to master the Ewe responses to the catechism questions.

During the confirmation rites, Efo Senyo succeeded in providing responses to the questions in Ewe, much to the admiration of all. He was encouraged to join the Christian Youth Builders (CYB), a youth group which performed cantata and choral music in the church. Although he had a good voice

for singing, he admitted that his membership of the CYB marked the beginning of his musical training.

I can say that my real encounter with music performance was during my membership of the CYB at E.P. Church, Community 1. We played cantata, sung choral compositions and other cultural performances. So, I learned and took part in all these performances. Because I was a good dancer and also had a good voice, I was made to lead during some performances. (Personal interview, Francis Anku, April 23, 2018).

Efo Senyo's unquenchable love for music made him join the Norvisi *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* group as their *hadzenɔ* (cantor or lead singer) in the Tema township in 1977. This group was originally established as a hometown association or welfare group for the natives of Peki, but due to the apathy of the target group towards the course of the organisation, the leaders were compelled to open it up to include Ewe-speaking people who hail from different parts of the Volta region but live and work in Tema and its environs.

As a young boy, Efo Senyo also spent a lot of time watching and listening to the rehearsal sessions of the then Tema Food Complex Institute band, popularly called 'Complex Sounds', which was then led by a renowned Ghanaian highlife musician, Gyedu Blay Ambulley. He admitted that his time with the band and especially his interaction with Gyedu further ignited his interest to take up a career in music. He noted that Gyedu became fond of him and gave him a few lessons in music, hence he regards Gyedu as his foremost mentor in the study of music:

My mentor was Gyedu Blay Ambulley. I was a young boy so I ran errands for members of the band. Though I have the [musical] talent, I conceived the idea to become a musician during my interaction with

Ambulley and the Complex Sounds Band. (Personal interview, Francis Anku, April 23, 2018).

Around 1979, he joined the exodus of Ghanaians to Nigeria in search of greener pastures. There he served at the Kalakuta shrine for two years, where he worked as a house boy for the famous Fela Anikulakpo Kuti, whom he described as ‘Fela the Great’. He also took some music lessons informally. On his return to Ghana in 1981, he got a job as factory hand at GTP in Tema. The company had two ensembles, *agbadza* group and Dumas singers, a choral ensemble. He was of the view that the *agbadza* was for the Anlo (Southern Eve) but the *Evedomeawo* (Northern Eve) had no representation in terms of an ensemble. In collaboration with a few allies they planned to establish a Dumas *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* ensemble. During one of the annual celebrations of the company held in 1983, he liaised with a *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* group known as *Venɔ̀nɔ̀nyo* group within the Tema Community 7 to perform.

The performance was very well admired by many, a situation which made the then General Manager to propose the establishment of a *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* group in the company (Personal interview, Francis Anku, April 23, 2018). According to Efo Senyo, the then manager referred to the mid-1970s, where a *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* group was brought from Wusuta in the Volta region to cheer the GTP football club known as the ‘Dumas Boys of GTP’ (Dumas Boys) during their matches in Tema. The football club’s success at winning the Ghanaian FA Cup in 1976 was partly due to the musical support provided by the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* group.

Efo Senyo eventually championed the establishment of a *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* group for the company in 1990. It was open to all GTP workers to join, but getting drummers and the ladies to do the dancing was a challenge, so he was tasked to

bring dancers and drummers from the *venɔnɔnyo* group to complement the Dumas *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group, with a promise to regularise them as permanent employees whenever vacancies were declared. By 1991, the group was well established and very popular within Tema and Accra. GTP donated some of their textiles which were developed into costumes. The male costumes were made of cloth sewn as jumpers with shorts to match, while the female costumes consisted of dresses sewn in a Ghanaian style of kaba and slit (Lareau, 2002). The group performed at a number of formal and informal occasions. For example, during trade fair events such as Industrial and Technology (Indotech), Ghana International Furniture Exhibition (GIFEX) and Inter-Tourism fairs which were held at the International Trade Fair Center at Labadi in Accra, the Dumas *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group performed at the GTPC exhibition stand to draw customers to patronize their products.

Around the early 1990s, musicians such as Abebe, Joseph Akpalu and groups such as the Tanyinigbe *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* and Taviepe *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* Groups had produced *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* recordings on cassettes for commercial purposes. In order to make the Dumas group more popular and financially viable, Efo Senyo in 1994 requested the management of GTP to assist the Dumas *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group financially to produce a music album, but this proposal was turned down. To show his displeasure at management's rejection of his proposal, he resigned from GTP to follow his long-cherished dream and vision of taking up a career in music. He formed his own group, 'New Generation *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* Group', the same year, and drafted over seventy percent of the members of the Dumas *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group who were not employees of GTP into his new group.

The New Generation *Bɔbɔbɔ* Group was purposely established to function as a professional group for commercial purposes. Like many other *Bɔbɔbɔ* groups, the New Generation *Bɔbɔbɔ* Group is a mixed group made up of thirty-two females and thirty males. It has rented a rehearsal space at the Celestial school in Ashaiman, where they hold weekly meetings on Thursdays. However, if they have serious engagements ahead of them, they add Tuesdays to their meeting days. Unlike a number of *Bɔbɔbɔ* groups which hire the services of master drummers and trumpeters, the group has its own trained instrumentalists (master drummers and trumpeters), dancers and singers. New members are made to go through a probation period during which they are given the required training by either the lead dancer, lead singer, master drummers or any “senior” member appointed by such leaders.

Efo Senyo has had six music albums produced. He is credited with the expansion of the five set *Bɔbɔbɔ* drums to the seven and nine sets, and also introducing as many as three trumpets into *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances. His style of trumpet interludes and the interpolations between the trumpets and the master drums, has become a standard for *Bɔbɔbɔ* ensembles in Ghana. Commercial recordings produced prior to his recordings were done in tracks, but he introduced the idea of medley recordings of *Bɔbɔbɔ*, because according to him, he wanted to provide a true representation of how it is done in live performances. Besides, this also provides listeners the opportunity to enjoy the renditions without interruptions.

For live performances, he incorporates contemporary popular dance styles such as *Azonto*, *Awukye*, *Korgon*, and *Gbeohe* (see Ofosu & Dei, 2013 for description of the dances) into the dance choreography of his group. He

incorporates *akpi* (warrior) drum rhythms in his *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* recordings. This is evident in his Stage Six album titled *Amenuvela*, in which he introduces *akpi* rhythms in accompaniment to the last two songs. He did not use only the *akpi* rhythm; one *akpi* song was also sung to end the medley. This new idea of appropriating traditional rhythms as we will soon notice was initiated by Wofa Atta when he introduced briefly towards the end of his album titled “*Awoenam*”. Efo Senyo expanded the idea with the incorporation of *akpi* song in his recording. Interestingly, a number of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* troupes have copied and incorporated this rhythm into their drum repertoire, thinking that it is Efo Senyo’s creation. A *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* master drummer David Sosu admitted he had learned that particular *vugbe* while listening to one of Efo Senyo’s *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* CDs (Personal communication, April 28, 2018). Another characteristic of Efo Senyo’s creativity and innovation in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances that has contributed to the transformation of the genre is his use of trendy portions of Akan highlife, hiplife, and gospel music melodies to the trumpet interludes during *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances. These are evident in all his albums. For example, he used melodic phrases from Kontihene’s hiplife hit song titled ‘*Aketesia*’ (Young Lady) as trumpet interludes in a *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* medley that is gospel or Christian in character. His reason for adopting such melodic elements is to appeal to non-Ewe speaking people to also enjoy the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music. He notes that in the music business, it is always important to ensure that your music attracts a wide range of people. This innovation has caught on well with practitioners of the music to the extent that people employ traditional tunes such as the *Akli do gokame* war song of the Anlo people.

He has six record albums to his credit. He believes that as humans, we go through various stages on life, hence his albums are named or categorised into stages, as indicated below:

Stage One - *Etsɔmemanya* (unknown future) is a fifteen-song album comprising a mixture of secular and Christian songs mostly from the E.P church hymnal. The title of the songs includes *Afika Mato?* (Where would I pass?), *Afrika dukɔwo* (African nations), *Dukplɔlawo* (Nation Leaders), *Ghana Denyigba* (Ghana motherland), *Ghana Anyigba Xo Asi* (Ghana, Precious land), *Naklɔ nye diwo* (Wash my sins) and *Yi ηgɔ ko* (Just forge ahead). Stage Two - *Ametɔ woyɔna*. (What one has, is his). This album has 16 songs. It comprises song track such as *Yesu be* (Jesus says), *Manɔ nye Mawu yo me* (I will follow my Lord), *Lɔlɔtɔwo dzole gbɔnye* (Loved ones have left me), *Ewɔnadɔ kple ηuse* (He works with might), *Dua dewo susu be meku loo* (Some nations think I am dead), *Esusɔ vie* (It won't be long), *Dee mayi asi fuflu* (Would I go empty handed?) and *Aseye matso* (I will praise).

Stage Three - *Gbetɔ nye tɔgoglo* (humans are like deep water). This is a nine-track album which comprises songs from the E.P. church hymnal, popular Christian choruses and his personal compositions. The repertoire includes *De luvɔ si wo bu* (Rescue the perishing), *Mega tsi dzi o* (Do not be in haste), *Dodzi ko* (Endure), *Maakɔ nye gbe dzi* (I will lift my voice), *Nɔvinyewo Mitso* (Brothers arise!) and *Meyi to la dzi* (I went to the mountain). Stage Four - *Dzudzɔ* (Rest). This album (CD cover in the figure below) consists of sixteen tracks, with all speaking about the supposed rest one is expected to have after death. Some of the song titles in this album are *Mia Nɔvi* (Our friend/Brother), *Afisi luvɔ* (Where the soul), *Yɔdo fafe* (Peaceful tomb), *Du mame* (In that city) and

Hede nyuie (Fare thee well). Others are *Wokuya* (Your death), *Dzefe* (Dwelling place), *Aba kpui* (Short bed/Coffin) and *Futɔ* (Enemy). Songs from this album are usually among the repertoires of ensembles and spinners at funerals.

Stage Five - *Amenuvela* (gracious), comprises seventeen songs which are a mixture of Christian, and secular songs. It includes titles such as *Madzi akpedaha* (I will sing a thanksgiving song), *Israel Mawu* (God of Israel), *Mɔzɔlawo* (Travellers), *Sudui bɔbɔe* (*Soft pillow*), *Tɔ kple nɔ* (*Father and mother*) and *Fimi adela* (*Where the hunter*). Stage Six - *Avafia* (War Lord). This album has a total of fifteen songs. They include *Afetɔ Mele Yɔwom* (Lord, I'm calling you), *Afetɔla le Miayɔ be* (The Lord is Calling us), *Wo Mawu sike dɔm da*, (You God who sent me), *Wɔm Alesi Nelɔ* (Make me as you please), *Nu Nyuie la Ke* (The dawn of a good day), *Kristo fe Asrafo wo* (Onward, Christian soldiers) and *Mewu Enu* (I have finished). His contribution to the development and promotion of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* was recognised in 2003 during the first *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* competition/festival held in Kpando. Later on, he received the a national award (Ghana Music Awards) as the best traditional group of the year 2016.

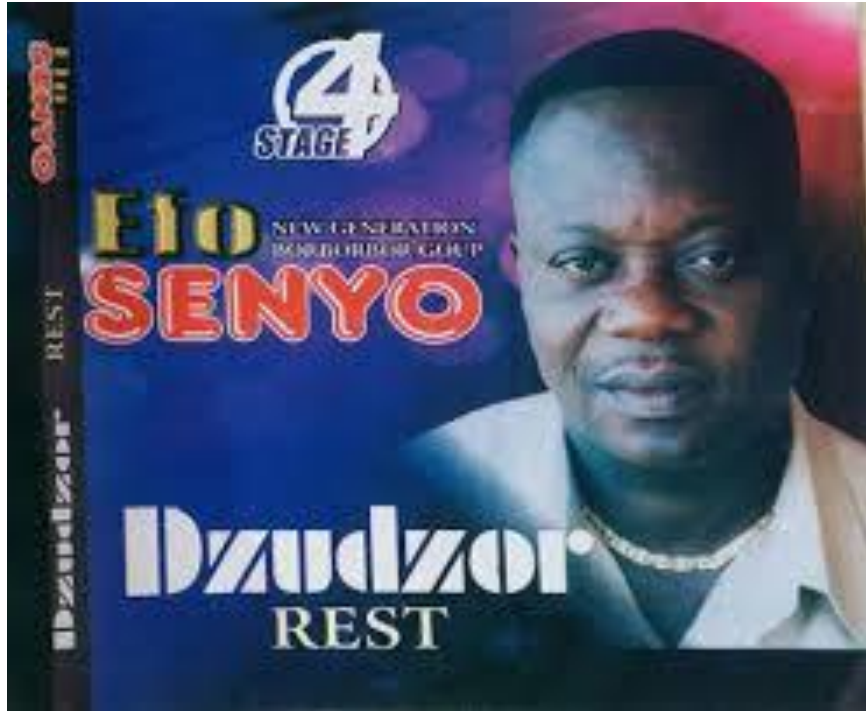


Figure 22: CD cover bearing the image of Efo Senyo

Source: Author's collection,

Currently, Efo Senyo is the producer of a *Bɔbɔbɔ* program on Agoo TV, a private television station in Accra. The concept of this program is to provide the platform for *Bɔbɔbɔ* groups to showcase their performance skills and creativity to the world. *Bɔbɔbɔ* groups are given a maximum of sixty minutes television studio airtime to advertise their groups through performances and brief interview segments. Over forty-six of such groups within the greater Accra region and the Volta region have had their turn on this programme. Since the objective of this programme is to bring unknown *Bɔbɔbɔ* troupes into the limelight, it has elicited a spirit of competition, with groups working hard to out-perform those that have gone ahead of them, leading to innovative concepts of dance choreography by some troupes, which eventually contributes to the transformation of the music tradition.

Israel Yao Dzidefo Nanevi (aka Maweta)

Born on 29th January, 1976 at Ho, Israel Yao Dzidefo Nanevi Maweta hails from Tegbi and Atiavi in the southern part of the Volta region. Though his parents named him Israel Yao Nanevi at birth, he adopted the name Maweta (*God is Great*), after Nambi Maweta, the great South African musician who he saw as a role model in his adult life. Thus, the name Israel Maweta has become his showbiz name. He had his elementary education at Ho and his secondary school education at Awudome Secondary School at Tsito in the Volta region of Ghana. He is a member of the Apostles Revelation Society (A.R.S.), where he works as a presbyter of the church, choirmaster, leader of other musical ensembles in the church such as Men Fellowship (*Bɔbɔɔbɔ*), founder and mentor of Corinthians Choir and Soldiers of Christ. He also functions as master of ceremonies for major programs within and outside the church. He is the first President of the Apostles Revelation Society Church Choirs Association (ARSCCA) and the first ever ordained Evangelist of the church in 2011. Maweta, a music aficionado, started his musical career in his early years when he used to accompany his mother to choir practices. He was a member of the choirs of all the schools he attended, playing *vuga*, *ouvi*, and *dondo*. His enthusiasm for music was evident in his ability to compose songs, organise, conduct and lead the youth of his church and other sister churches to music events.

At the beginning of his career, he formed a music group in 1999 that was initially called the *Supreme Singers of the Lord*, but his desire to promote his cultural values and make use of musical idioms from his cultural environments necessitated the renaming of the group to *Senam Group*. *Senam* is an Eve

expression which literally means “Nature-given talent” or “God-given talent”. The name of the group is indicative of his acknowledgement and gratitude to *Se* (God), for endowing him with musical talent. The Senam Group is pro-Christian music group which specialises in Ghanaian Gospel Music using *Agbadza*, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, *Zigi and Zulu* rhythmic backgrounds and singing styles. Other cross-cultural musical forms that he uses are highlife and reggae. His group has honoured a number of engagements including funerals, festivals, weddings, house warming and religious events, where they gave renditions of traditional music and dances.

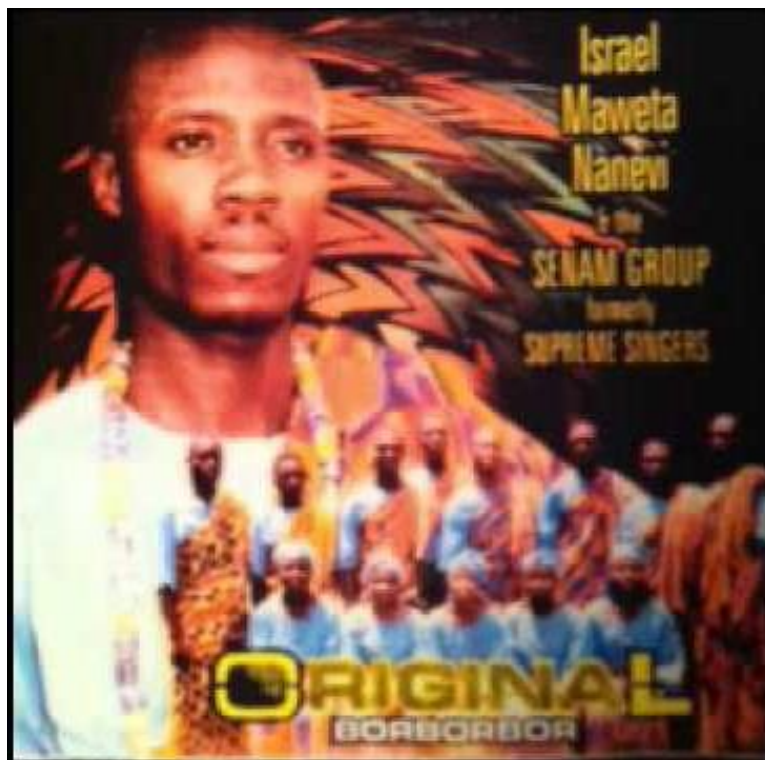


Figure 23: CD cover bearing the image of Israel Maweta

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCQq6gKY9mg>

Maweta and his group have more than sixteen music albums to their credit. They won the Ghana Music Awards for best traditional song for the year 2002, after which they released a *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music album entitled *Original*

Bɔbɔɔbɔ, in 2004 (CD cover in the figure above). This particular album is the fifth of the group as it was establishing itself as an enterprising group in the local music industry. The album, which was released in the form of CDs and cassettes, is made up of a total of eighteen Eve songs, all of which are written, composed and arranged by Israel Maweta. The titles of the songs include from Side A, *Le Mawu fe nkɔme* (In God's name), *Ne tuwo Ði hã* (When gunshots are heard) *Ne Mawu Ðegbe la* (When God declares), *Metsɔ Susu*, (I use the mind), *Nye Ketɔwo* (my adversaries) *Mega Zikpui* (Do not be quiet), *Nye Menya Bena*, (I never knew that). On Side B, are *Manɔamesi* (The have-nots), *Yatse Gazu Nukpɔkpɔ* (It has also become a spectacle), *Ne Agbeme Fuwo* (When difficulties) *Medi be mayi de dzinyelawo gbɔ* (I want to go to my parents), *Ewu Enu Azɔ̃* (It is finished at last), *Tefe Ma* (That place) *Fafa Mewɔ Nuvɔ̃*, (Mourning for your sin), *Ne Wodo Vlom Ha* (Even if they render me worthless) and *Mawu Xɔasi Aɔde* (A precious God).

The songs in the album are enriched with proverbs and adages that resonate with daily issues with which human beings are confronted. Maweta is considered one of the most prolific *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* composers in the Volta region, and his songs are very well known and enjoyed in parts of Ghana and in the neighbouring Republic of Togo, due to the Eve language (Agordoh, 2011). The themes of his songs cover a gamut of issues relating to mankind, society and general life situations. He currently plies his trade at Lome in the Republic of Togo, where his music appears to be well accepted and more patronised than in Ghana.

Atta Xornam Owusu (aka Wofa Atta)

Born in a family of musicians, including his late grandfather, Owusu Yao, who he is now named after, Atta Xornam Owusu was a great guitarist and a good singer (soloist) in Peki. While his mother was a good alto singer, his maternal grandmother was also said to be a very good singer and dancer. At age five he had contact with the ‘gods’, and his grandparents being staunch Christians, whisked him away from the village to a white man (Reverend Minister) at the E.P. Church seminary in Peki-Blengo, where in his own words, “I was given a White man’s name – Williams Love” (Personal interview, April 25, 2018). He bore that name until the story of his life was revealed to him by his father after the latter had observed that Wofa Atta was re-living his grandfather’s occupation due to the impression he was making in the performing arts. His kinsmen concluded that he was his grandfather’s incarnate. This made him request a name change in order to reflect what he refers to as his “true identity”. Wofa Atta recounts:

I was then studying at the School of Performing Arts, and...the kind of things I was doing with the performing arts, my old man (father) told me, “You are following the footsteps of your grandfather”. That was when he revealed that entire story of life to me...I asked him if I could change my name and he said they have no problem if I wanted to change my name (Personal communication, April 25, 2018).

Wofa Atta’s musical career started while studying music, drama and dance at the School of Performing Arts (SPA), University of Ghana, Legon. He had the opportunity to represent the students of SPA at the 13th International Youth Festival (for youth and students) which was held in North Korea in 1989, where he met and interacted with a number of young artists, an experience that

gave him the inspiration to explore and expand his knowledge of the music traditions of his people. On his return from the festival, he nursed the idea of going back to his home town to learn more about the folk music there. Wofa Atta notes: "... so just after my Diploma [in Theatre Studies] programme, I decided to go back to my roots in order to regain what I had lost in the past" (Personal Interview, April 25, 2018).

He had extensive interactions with his mother and grandmother at this time, during which he received several lessons on local musical ideas and resources on *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀*. While studying for his Bachelor's degree at the same university in 1997, he released his first album entitled *Asiko Praise*. The album did very well on the market. He admitted that some of the songs were folk songs of old given to him by his grandmother. "She (maternal grandmother) sang the songs to me and I wrote them down... At times she will sing them and I will record" (Personal interview, April, 25, 2018). He collected a large corpus of songs from his grandmother, many of which were folksongs with anonymous composers. This large corpus spurred him on to continue with the recordings, especially with the first album receiving much patronage.

At the early stages of his musical career, his mother had a strong influence on him. Since it was general knowledge in the community that she and her entire family were Christians, she succeeded in directing Wofa Atta to record his next album using Christian songs.

At a point my old lady (mother) asked me, "coming from a Christian home in Peki- Blengo 1911 park, that area is a Christian community...why won't you sing Christian songs". I realised that they are moving me away from secular music to Christian music. (Personal interview. April 25, 2018).

His mother's influence resulted in his second and third albums comprising solely of Christian songs. The titles of the second and third albums are *Asiwome* (In Thy hands) and *Nukuwula* (Parable of the sower) respectively. While *Asiwome* literally encourages Christians to surrender their lives and all their situations and predicaments to God Almighty, *Nukuwula* revolves around the parable of the sower as told by Jesus Christ in the Bible.

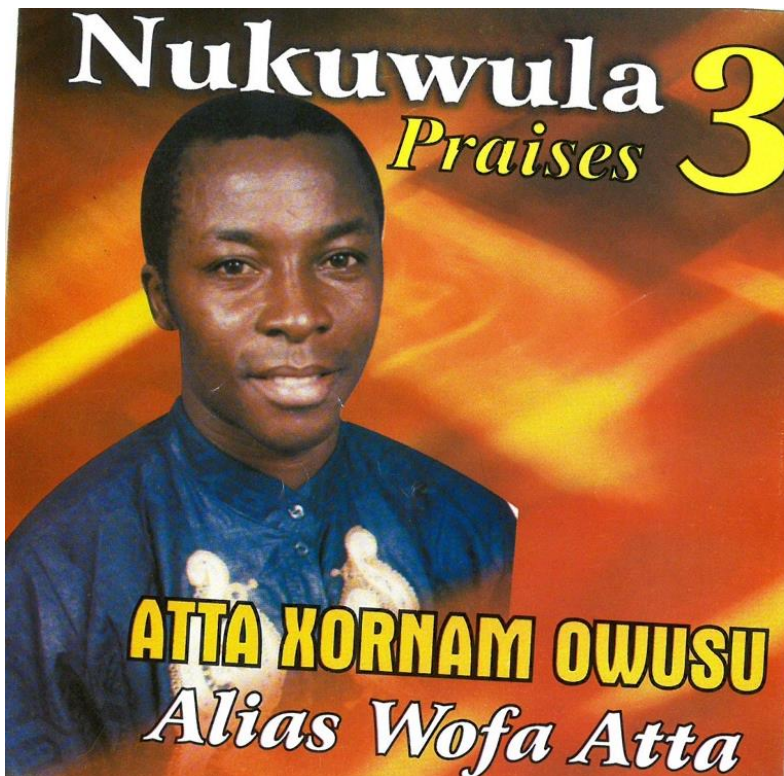


Figure 24: CD cover bearing the image of Wofa Atta

Source: Wofa Atta's collection

After the second and third albums, which as discussed above, were created to satisfy his mother, Wofa Atta was inclined to accept his initial view that it was important to be in touch with his roots and represent the true identity of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* as performed by folks in his hometown.

...It occurred to me again that it was important to go back to my roots, otherwise I will be lost. If you don't know where you are coming from,

you will not know where you are going (Personal interview, April 25, 2018).

In order to take the middle ground as to which direction to take with his music, he deliberately entitled his fourth album *Awoenam* (He will do it for me), a blend of both secular and Christian songs. This, according to him, was meant to satisfy his parents' needs and his own needs. Unique to that album is the introduction of *adevu* (a traditional hunter's dance) rhythm at the final forty seconds of the last song. I observed that he was the first to introduce this new idea in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* recording before the like of Efo Senyo adopted the idea and provided an extended version of the akpi (warrior dance) rhythm in his album. The fifth album is *Aseye hawo* (Praise songs). The sixth album is *Akofahawo* (Songs of comfort). His seventh album, entitled *Azɔlilengɔ* (There's a journey ahead) is unique in a number of respects. He employed the authentic drum rhythms and used siblings from the Dza family, who are a musical family from Kpeve, for the voice recording of the songs. One distinctive characteristic of Wofa Atta's involvement with *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* is his modus operandi for recording album projects. Because he does not have a *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* band of his own, he enters into contracts with groups and owners of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* bands for his recording projects. He has used church based performing groups such as CYB, community groups, and musically talented families such as the Dzah family from Kpeve in the Volta Region.

Wofa Atta has made substantial contributions to the promotion of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* in Ghana. For thirteen years (1997 - 2010), he worked as a producer and host of Asiko programme at University of Ghana campus Radio Universe (105.7FM). The programme which was aired from 2pm to 3pm on Mondays

was aimed at promoting *Eve* music in general. *Eve* music artists were interviewed on their created works, challenges faced and the way forward. As expected, his inclination to *Bɔbɔbɔ* made him play a lot more *Bɔbɔbɔ* songs and interview more *Bɔbɔbɔ* artists than other *Eve* musical forms and artists. Some of the musicians he hosted on the programme are David Mawutor, Efo Senyo, Isreal Nanevi Maweta, and Abebe and the Bantu's (Jonathan Abrebrese). The number of listeners who called-in to contribute to issues under discussion or to request songs for their loved ones and relations suggests that the *asiko* programme was the toast of *Eves* in Accra (Wofa Atta: Personal interview April 25, 2018). For thirteen years the programme served as an eye opener and springboard for most young and upcoming musicians. He has provided free consultancy services to a number of *Bɔbɔbɔ* artists including Efo Senyo. Prior to the recording of Efo Senyo's first album, Wofa Atta had extensive discussions with him about how best to venture into those activities. At the first *Bɔbɔbɔ* festival held at Kpando in the Volta region in 2003 Wofa Atta's contribution to the development and promotion of *Bɔbɔbɔ* was duly acknowledged by the organisers (one Prof. Gavua and foreign partners from the Republic of South Africa).

From the biographical sketches of the three musicians, we see differences in their involvement in *Bɔbɔbɔ performances*. Efo Senyo composes and rearranges songs and rhythmic patterns for drums, and he does not see himself as a singer or drummer. He creates the works and his group performs them. He runs his group as a business entity and produces all his albums by himself. Israel Maweta is a composer, arranger and performer. His music album usually contains his original compositions. Although he has a music group, he

does not run it like a business because he is more focused on evangelisation. Wofa Atta does not make new compositions, but rather focuses on reviving old folk tunes and *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs for the present generation to learn and appreciate. He does not own a music group. All his albums were recorded in collaboration with already established groups.

Chapter Summary

Bɔbɔɔbɔ ensembles are organised as mixed bands for music and dance performances. Apart from their core mandate, they also serve as voluntary welfare associations for their members. The ensembles could be put into categories such as community-based groups, hometown associations, privately-owned groups, momentary groups, and church-based groups. The groups generally have committees that see to the smooth running of the groups. While the church-based groups and community-based groups use the spaces within the church premises and community performance squares respectively for rehearsals, other groups make use of any available space that is conducive for that activity. These include leaders' homes, school parks, and the frontage of shops. Performance structure could be the traditional spatial arrangement, theatrical arrangement or auditorium seating arrangement, depending on the performance space and the context.

Over the years, a number of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances have seen innovations in several aspects. Traditional and popular dance movements coupled with choreographed ones, have been featured in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances, rendering them more sophisticated and pleasurable. In addition, the dancers sometimes render drum texts played on the master drum. The *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums have not only been expanded by *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups from between the four-set and

seven-set depending on the financial strength of the group, but the dynamics of playing the drums in performance have also seen transformation. Master drummers play rhythmic melodies with many improvisations, usually in the call and response fashion, thereby culminating in rhythmic complexities. The replacement of the bugle with trumpet in B-flat is common with many ensembles. Apart from the conventional role of playing interludes and cuing dancers to intensify their dancing, the bugle/trumpet introduces new songs and rhythmic passages in tandem with the master drummer(s). It is also sometimes used to perform the *tsoboe* chant.

The use of uniformed costumes adds to the beauty of the performance spectacles; therefore, *Bɔbɔbɔ* ensembles employ costumes made of textile prints, polo shirts, with skirts and trousers to match. During cultural occasions, dancers wear traditional outfits for performances. To minimize the effects of the heat during the performance on the feet and to prevent them from getting dusty, some groups get their dancers to wear socks with colours that blend with that of their uniforms. With *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances being an integral part of festivals, celebrations, and other activities among the Ewe, innovative ways are used to ensure that *Bɔbɔbɔ* ensembles sharpen their creatives abilities and make the genre more visible. In this light, *Bɔbɔbɔ* festivals are specifically organised in the form of competitions, where awards and prizes are given to deserving groups for their outstanding performance. Such festivals are organised by institutions such as churches, Regional Centres for National Culture, private radio and televisions stations. Private individuals and organisations also organise such events.

The three *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* artists profiled in this chapter are a representative sample of the larger group of famous *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians in terms of their abilities. Although they all acquired their skill informally, Efo Senyo composes songs and rhythmic patterns for master drums, Israel Maweta is a prolific composer and rearranges songs and drum patterns and Wofa Atta, though he has no compositional ability, has a flair for rearranging master drum patterns. All these musicians typify the *style and popularity of Bɔbɔɔbɔ music*.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* MUSIC

TEXTS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present samples of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* song texts and drum texts, and discuss their meanings and how relevant they are in the socio-cultural and religious lives of the people. Texts were randomly chosen from both commercial recordings and live recordings. The interpretations of the meanings and significance of the selected texts, are as intended by the creators, and as understood by the receivers of the text.

Music Texts

The concept of music text, as used in this chapter refers to all *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* music and dance creations that have both verbalized and non-verbalized texts which may be meaningful to informed performers and audience within and outside of the *Eve* culture. Such music texts include song texts, drum language and other instrumental motifs and dance movements based on verbal utterances or meaningful expressions. The use of musical instruments as speech surrogates in African cultures has been widely discussed by scholars (Kuwor, 2017; Burns, 2005; Nketia, 1963; Agawu, 2001). Dances are also seen as a form of music and mode of expression. Dancers may enact episodes about social relations or may imitate what the song or *vugbe* (drum language) says in a performance (Younge, 2011).

Among the *Eve*, musical texts are articulated in direct statements and indirect statements. While the direct expressions are rendered in simple and straightforward vocabularies, the indirect statements may be shrouded in

secrecy and vague language (Finnegan, 1970). In order to decode the intended message in indirect statements, one requires construction of deeper signification from names of individuals and groups associated with specific historical and other events, including heroic acts, rites, actions, and concepts within their societies (Gbolonyo, 2009). George Dor further indicates that, among the Ewe “The correct use of proverbs and other philosophical dicta is considered a sign of maturity and as evidence of command over the Ewe language” (2000:205). In order to discuss the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* music texts, I employ qualitative content analysis to interpret of selected song texts and drum texts.

Qualitative Content analysis according to Shannon (2005) is “a research method for the subjectivist interpretation of text and data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (p. 12). It provides opportunity for researchers to understand socio-cultural reality in a subjective, hitherto scientific manner; explore the meanings fundamental to physical messages; and is inductive, grounding the study of topics and themes, as well as conclusions derived from them, in data (Kaid, 1989; Patton, 2002; Sarantakos, 2005; Zhang & Wildenmuth, 2009).

Analysis of selected *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* songs texts

Folk songs generally revolve around the activities, lifestyles, beliefs, and thought processes of people’s daily encounters and undertakings. Nketia (1974) notes that while songs can be treated as a form of speech utterance, they should also be treated as a vehicle that narrates and examines the experiences of the people. Song text is an integral part of Ewe music and this is very visible in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances, where songs as will be seen later, reflect socio-political, cultural and religious themes.

The themes in the corpus of songs ranges wide in scope, a number of them reflected the socio-political theme. Gallo (2015) and Lareau (2009) suggest that the most frequent themes in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* song texts may be classified under the domain of love, death, disappointment, poverty, hard luck, etc. These notwithstanding, there were a number of these songs that reflect the Ghanaian political scene.

Out of the large body of songs collected, transcribed and analysed, I observed that *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs encompass very broad themes; hence, it will be very burdensome to attempt to classify them based on all available subjects and issues in the songs. I have nonetheless found it convenient to categorise *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* themes into secular and religious (Christian) groupings. The secular grouping comprises themes that have socio-cultural, political, and patriotic orientations. The religious grouping puts the spotlight on Christian themes such as love, death, disappointment, poverty, hard luck etc.

Songs with Political Themes

This category includes songs that refer to political events that occurred in some periods of the political history of Ghana. The texts of the songs are usually based on the ideologies and the perceptions of the composers regarding the event in question. Political songs may take the nature of propaganda which is aimed at promoting a political point of view or the form of protest (songs of praise and criticism).

Song: *Nkrumah show boy*

Nkrumah show boy 3x

Nɔviwo mi dze eyome

Yae nye mɔfiala

Akplɔmi yi ablɔde me
Ablɔde vavato le Nkrumah sime
Nkrumah show boy 3x

English Translation

Nkrumah show boy 3x
Friends, let us follow him
He will show us the way
He will lead us to liberation
True liberation is in the hands of Nkrumah
Nkrumah show boy 3x

This song was one of the songs composed by Nuatro as a propaganda tool in support of Kwame Nkrumah's agenda for rallying support for the plebiscite to be held on 9th May 1965. It was based on E.T Mensah's highlife song "Nkrumah Show Boy." Since Nuatro was opposed to the Eve Unification Movement, this song presents Nkrumah as the 'Saviour' who has the keys to liberate them, thereby encouraging those in the northern territory to vote to join Ghana (Anlo and Peki were already in the Gold Coast and thus did not take part in the vote).

Song: Afrika dukɔwo me

Afrika dukɔwo me
Ditsa nayi Ghana nakpo nɔvilɔlɔ
Nkrumah xɔ dua na mi
Ehe dɔwɔna xɔasi vovoawo
Tsɔva Ghana mia denyigba la me
Afrika dukɔwo me
Ditsa nayi Ghana nakpo nɔvilɔlɔ

English Translation

Among African countries

Pay a visit to Ghana and see brotherliness
Nkrumah has regained the country for us
He has brought many lucrative jobs
To Ghana our homeland
In the African countries
Pay a visit to Ghana and see brotherliness

As presented above, there were also songs that were intended for propaganda to present a positive image of the Nkrumah and his CPP government. This is an example of the songs that appreciated the efforts of Nkrumah's CPP at ensuring the atmosphere of peace and unity in Ghana. It suggests the existence of the spirit of brotherly/sisterly love among the countrymen and countrywomen, a virtue that has up till today, given Ghana the label of the home of proverbial Ghanaian hospitality to foreign nationals from Africa and beyond. The song also recognizes Nkrumah who was at the forefront of Ghana's fight for independence. Through his CPP's motto, *Self-Government Now*, as against the United Gold Coast Convention's (UGCC) *Self-government within the shortest possible time*, Ghana became the first black African nation to attain independence.

Another important issue captured in the song is Nkrumah's efforts at job creation. He embarked on several infrastructural projects, examples of which are the construction of the Akosombo dam, the Tema motorway and planning of the Tema Township, all of which provided jobs for both skilled and unskilled youths in Ghana. Also, the colonial administration further gendered the society through discriminatory jobs and preferential treatment, introduced to traditional occupations such as cocoa farming. But Nkrumah's regime implemented social

justice policies such as job diversification for women in the public sector and politics, all of which advantaged women.

Song: Kwame Nkrumah *gawɔ susu nyui aɔɛ*

Kwame Nkrumah gawɔ susu nyui aɔɛ

Be yea fofu Afrika duawo

Edze Gɔme le Ghana

Tso Ghana eyi de Nigeria

Nigeria, Eyidɛ Ethiopia

Ethiopia ye woyi ɔɛ Mali

Tso Mali ye woyi ɔɛ Gambia

Tso Gambia ye woyinaɔɛ Guinea.

Tso Guinea eyidɛ du bubuawo me

Wo kata wɔ susu ne woawɔ ɔɛka

Asi le asime, nutifafa neva

Africa duawo me.

English translation

Kwame Nkrumah has made a good plan/idea

To bring together African countries

He started in Ghana

From Ghana he went to Nigeria

Nigeria, he went to Ethiopia

Ethiopia, he went to Mali

From Mali, he went to Gambia

From Gambia, he went to Guinea

From Guinea he went to other countries

They all made their mind to be one

Hand in hand, let there be peace

In the African counties

The *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* song text above is one example of songs composed to suggest Nkrumah's efforts in assisting other African nations under colonial rule

in their struggle to attain political independence as a prelude to achieving his larger vision of African unity. In his first independence speech on 6th March 1957 at the old polo grounds in Accra, President Kwame Nkrumah declared to hundreds of participants including representatives from the British monarch that the independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is aligned with the total liberation of the African continent. Based on this vision, he sought to offer support to other African sister countries who were still under colonial rule to work towards the self-rule which for Nkrumah, was a prerequisite for his vision of a United Africa.

Song: *Ghana elavanyo godoo*

Ghana, elavanyo godoo
Ne miedzudzɔ vɔ wɔwɔ
Ye miedze Rawlings yome
Mɔkpɔkpɔ li na mi be
Avanyo, godoo

English translation

Ghana will surely be well
If we stop nefarious activities
And follow Rawlings
We are hopeful that
It will surely be well

This song was composed in 1983 when the Nigerian government, led by President Alhaji Shehu Shagari, ordered all illegal immigrants to leave the country within a week. This included Ghanaians who had travelled there to seek greener pastures. Ghana was in a deep economic crisis. A long period of drought led to food shortages, wide spread hunger, retailers hoarding food to create

artificial shortages known as *kalabule* and many more economic and financial challenges. In the midst of these difficulties, the song was reassuring to citizens that all would be well with Ghana. It was also admonishing Ghanaians to eschew evil and corrupt practices, and follow the lead of Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings (then military head of state of Ghana), for then Ghana will be back on her feet. Most Ghanaians in the 1980s referred to his initials J.J to mean “Junior Jesus”, because they saw him as the “Saviour” who was going to lead Ghana out of its predicaments. He proved himself by being part of communal activities such as clearing the gutters, carrying sacks load of cocoa beans, repairing railway lines etc.) These are the virtues in the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* songtext that Ghanaians were encouraged to develop.

Critical analysis of this song underlines the various Ghanaian values it reinforces. First of all, it is important to highlight concepts embedded in the song. *Ghana, elavanyo godoo* contains the concept of optimism. It rings the bell louder in everyone’s ear that life indeed is full of challenges and therefore every living being must prepare for these challenges. It calls for a positive attitude in dealing with human challenges rather than running away from them. The concept of regeneration is found in the line *Ne miedzudzɔ vɔ wɔwɔ*. This, to a large extent, deals with the effective domain of humankind. Specifically, it deals with change of heart. It is this change in heart that enables people to stop nefarious activities and mend their unruly ways.

The concept of obedience is introduced in the line *Ye miedze Rawlings yome*. Specifically, it appeals to all the people not only to follow their leader J.J. Rawlings, but also to support his vision in a spirit of humility and obedience simply to achieve a common goal. *Mɔ̀kpɔ̀kpɔ̀ li na mi be* features the concept of

perseverance and optimism motivated by hope. Of course, if people should keep working hard without any form of reproach, there must be some form of motivation. The motivator in this song is the hope generated by self-belief and the African sense of communality or team spirit that places the whole above the individual. *Avanyo, godoo* further builds on the concept of optimism in *Ghana, elavanyo godoo*, and combines that with all others to produce a sense of resilience in the end. Therefore, it is clear that although this song is a documented historical event of Ghana's political life, it is also a repository of politico-history and socio-cultural knowledge.

Songs with patriotic or nationalist themes

These are songs with nationalist ideas that espouse and celebrate nationhood, national identity, and love for one's nation and ethnicity. The songs also recognise and celebrate good leadership.

Song: *Afrika dukɔwo wodze Ghana yome*

Afrika dukɔwo wodze Ghana yome

Le miafe tɔtrɔ yeyewo la ta

Liberia, Burkina Faso, Liberia kple bubuawo (Cote d'Ivoire)

Dzidzɔ gaɖe, wonye nami

Be dukɔwo woto Ghanafe afɔtofe

English Translation

African nations are emulating Ghana

Because of our new transformations

Liberia, Burkina Faso, and others (Cote d'Ivoire)

It is a great joy for us

That the countries are following Ghana's footsteps

This song was composed by Francis Anku (Efo Senyo) in the year 2001, after Ghanaians had successfully gone to the polls to elect a new president in the person of John Agyekum Kuffour, who contested the ticket of the then opposing New Patriotic Party (NPP). It was a significant era in the history of Ghana as it was the very first time a sitting President had successfully completed his constitutionally mandated maximum of two four-year terms and had handed rule over peacefully to a democratically elected President. This ended the over two decades of military and civilian rule of Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings and his Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) and NDC rule. The song highlights Ghana as a shining example of democracy which other African countries are emulating. The success of the peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections held from 1996 to 2016 provides Ghana with the accolade of being one of the countries in Africa with enviable democratic credentials. For example, the successful 2008 general elections that resulted in a smooth transition of political power from the NPP government to the NDC, which was in opposition, prompted the following remark from a Ghanaian journalist, Kweku Tsen; “Ghana’s democratic culture has been hailed by the US President Barack Obama as a model for other African countries to emulate, and one for which the US is prepared to offer its fullest support” (News report, July 10, 2009).

Fiifi Mensah also noted “Ghana had now undergone a couple of successful elections in which power was transferred peacefully, even in a close election” as reason for Barack Obama’s two-day visit to Ghana in 2009 (News report: July 13, 2009). Specifically, the song mentions Liberia and Burkina Faso because these two nations have experienced civil wars, uprisings and

military dictatorships over the years. Liberia for instance, was plunged into two bouts of bloody civil war in 1989 to 1996 and 1999 to 2003, but has emerged from those turbulent periods to the path of democratic governance with Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as President since 2005.

Burkina Faso is mentioned because in the late 1980s, the Captain Thomas Sankara and Flt. Lieut. Jerry John Rawlings, both young military Heads of State of Burkina Faso and Ghana respectively, both of neighbouring countries, had very good ties. Currently, the two countries (Liberia and Burkina Faso) are experiencing democratic governance and the composer suggests that the people of Ghana are happy to see other African countries practising democratic governance.

The song below reaffirms the theme of the previous song text. It represents an example of songs that seek to put Ghana on a high pedestal among other African countries.

Song: *Ghana, anyigba xɔasi*

Ghana, anyigba xɔasi aɖe wonye (Nɔviwo)

(Ghana) Ghana, anyigba xɔasi aɖe wonye

Ghana dzrewɔwɔ meli o, avawɔwɔ meli o (nɔviwo)

Ghana, nyigba xɔasi aɖe wonye

Ghana dziɖeɖi ye li, Avawɔwɔ meli o

Ghana, 'nyigba xɔasi aɖe wonye

English translation

Ghana is such a priceless land/country (Friends)

(Ghana) Ghana is such a priceless land

In Ghana, there is no quarrelling, there is no war (Ghana)

Ghana is such a priceless land

In Ghana, there is tranquillity, there is no war

Ghana is such a priceless land

The patriotic song above is also one of the original compositions by Efo Senyo. The song touts the nation Ghana as a precious and priceless destination. The composer suggests that the absence of war and conflicts makes Ghana a priceless land. However, the use of ‘*anyigba*’ in the song by the composer suggests that he is referring to the land’s natural resources. Ghana is a country endowed with mineral resources such as gold, bauxite, timber and until recently, crude oil. The country also has fertile land that supports the cultivation of cash crops such as cocoa, coffee, shea butter, cashew, pepper etc. With respect to tourism, the array of mountains, water bodies and varied horizons of sight-seeing makes it a perfect destination for tourists. Above all, Ghanaians are naturally known to be nice and hospitable to foreigners. The song therefore captures the essence of what contemporary Ghana has to offer to the world.

Song: *Ghana, nye nye denyigba lɔlɔ*

Ghana, nye nye denyigba lɔlɔ

Sidzi wo dzim do la

Nye madovloe akpɔ o

Ke boŋ ma lɛ tegbee

Ghana nye nye denyigba lɔlɔ

Nyigba nyui sidzi wodzim dɔ la

‘Yata makafui

Maakpɔ dzidzɔ ‘gblɔ bena

Ghana nye denyigba nyui

English translation

Ghana is my beloved homeland

Where I was born

I will never despise her

Instead I will love her continually

Ghana is my beloved homeland

The good land on which I was born
Therefore, I will praise her
I will be happy to say
Ghana is my beloved homeland

In the song above, the composer Efo Senyo is full of praise for the nation Ghana which is his cherished homeland. He promises never to speak ill or do any negative thing to her, but he will rather love and praise. He would be happy to declare that Ghana is his beloved place of birth. This song admonishes all and sundry, specifically Ghanaians not to be discouraged or lose hope in their home country. To ask Ghanaians not to despise their home country implies that they should not engage in any unlawful acts that will tarnish the image of Ghana and put her in a bad light in the eyes of the world. Negative practices such as indiscriminate disposal of refuse, open defecation, bribery and corruption, armed robbery etc constitutes derision and disrespect for Ghana. We cannot claim to love our homeland Ghana when we engage in the practices mentioned above. The song encourages Ghanaians to do good and be happy and full of praise about their motherland because, as the Ewe say, *Ame metsɔna efe mia si fiana etɔ fe afeme o*, meaning “one does not use his/her left hand to point at their fathers’ house”.

Song: *Aɔaɔɔdola le dzifo*

Voltatowo, miga xa nu o lo
Aɔaɔɔdola le dzifo le aɔaɔɔa ɔo
Bokɔwo wonu ava yi
Agama gbalê
Voduwo wonu ava yi
Agama gbalê
Xaxawo wonu ava yi
Agama gbalê

Aɔaɔɔɔɔɔɔ le dzifo le aɔaɔɔɔɔɔ ɔo

English translation

People of Volta do not worry

The Counsellor is above providing counsel.

The era of chief priests/diviners will pass away

It is a Chameleon skin.

The era of voodoo will fade away

Difficult situations will come to pass

It is a Chameleon skin

The Counsellor is above providing counsel

This song was originally recorded by the Taviefe Deme Reggae *Bɔbɔɔɔɔ* Group, but it features regularly in the repertoire of the groups I met during my fieldwork. It recognises that the people of the Volta region (also referred to as Voltarians), have socio-economic and developmental challenges. The region has not seen many developments projects from successive governments since independence. Major roads, especially those in the mid to northern Volta are in deplorable conditions despite successive governments' promises to fix them. Daily, people of Volta become apprehensive about the rate of under development of the region. Some people have suggested that the underdevelopment of the region was deliberately planned, by successive governments because there was the possibility that another referendum will be held in 2016 (fifty years after the 1956 plebiscite), in which the people of the region may vote to secede from Ghana. When this happens, the investments that the government of Ghana would have made in the region would not be to the advantage of Ghana. This frustration led to a group, calling itself the Homeland Study Group, to continually agitate for an autonomous state for the Volta region.

During one of their meetings, which was to serve as a prelude to their plans to declare independence for the region, the police moved in and arrested eight of the key members, including their 85-year old leader, Charlse K. Kudzordzi (Mensah, 2019; Noretta, 2019). The song encourages the people of Volta not to worry about their present predicaments because the Counsellor (God) is still in the business of proffering solutions that will deliver them from their quagmires. The composer, who is obviously of the Christian faith and might have subscribed to the notions that African traditional religious practices are fetishes, is predicting in the song that the era of traditional priests and voodoos will pass away just as the chameleon is able to change the colour of its skin. By implication, he is assuring the people of Volta that no condition is permanent; hence as long as the Counsellor is in the high Heavens providing counsel, they should be hopeful that there will be a new dawn.

This song is listed among the popular songs in the repertory of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* troupes in communities in the Volta region and Accra. A few *hadzenɔwo* (cantors) prefer to use *Nɔviwo* (Friends/Brothers/Sisters) in place of *Voltatɔwo* (People of Volta). Although some church based *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups also sing *Nɔviwo and Voltatɔwo*, a good number of them sing with expressions such as *Xosetɔwo* (Believers), *Kristotɔwo* (Christians), or E.P *tɔwo* (Evangelical Presbyterians) in place of *Voltatɔwo*, obviously because of their context. This shows, on the one hand, how performing groups adopt songs and alter aspects of the song text to suit their purpose and their context. On the other hand, it reveals the influence of Christianity on *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music.

Song: Dunyuiwo (lass and lasses)

Dunyuiwo miga yɔ o, nuake tumi vɔ 4x

Eveawoe le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o

Eveawoe le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Egbidukɔ le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o.
Gbidukɔ le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Eveawoe le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Agadeviwo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Agadeviwo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Akpiniawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Akpiniawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Asɔgliawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Asɔgliawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Avuzɔliawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Avuzɔliwo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Sasaduawoe le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Sasaduawowoe le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba
Elukusiawo, le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Elukusiawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Agbonkuawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Agbonkuawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Hogbeawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Hogbeawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Zendoawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Zendoawoe le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Kpaliawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Kpaliawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Kumawuawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Kumawuawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Gadekumawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o
Gadekumawo le ati aɖe me, atia fe dzo maaka 'nyigba o

English translation

Lass and lasses do not be in haste

For your time has come

The Eves are in a tree, the tree trunk cannot fall.

This song touts the strength and tenacity of the Eve in general. It gives recognition to the various Eve traditional states or groupings in Ghana for their perceived roles in the migration of their forefathers from Notsie. *Gbidukɔ* (Gbi state) comprises the people of Peki, Hohoe and the Kpeve enclave. The *Agadeviwo* (people of Agade) comprise Have and other towns with that enclave. *Akpiniawo* (the people of Akpini) are the *Kpandoawo* (Kpando people). They are perceived to have migrated from Notsie in droves and companies. *Asogliawo* (the people of Asogli) comprise Ho and its surrounding areas. *Sasaduawo* (“Sasa” states) is made up of three different states. “Sasa” is an acronym for Sovie, Alavanyo, Saviefe, and Akrofu. They are believed to have moved through a wall in a hot afternoon. The *Elukusiawo* (the people of Elukusi) comprise the people of Ve, Golokuati areas. They are believed to have dug a trench through which they escaped from the Notsie. *Agboŋkuawo* are the people of *Leklebi* and its environs. They are said to be those who passed through the *agbo ga la nu* (the main gate) in Notsie during the escape. The *Hogbeawo* are the *Anlowo* (people of Anlo) and its surrounding areas. They are said to have used the *husago/misego* dance during their escape from Notsie. *Zendoawo* comprises Kpeve, Tsoxo and Agbozume: they carried the ze (pots) in which the gods were during their escape. *Kpaliawo* comprises Kalime, Anum, Boss and Gemeni. These people were said to have special powers that made them change their identity as soon as they touched a tree. *Kumawuawo*, also known as *Avateawo* comprises areas such as Tsrukpe and others. The *Gadekumawo* (people of *Gadekuma*) comprises Anfoega, Anfoeta and others. They are said to move in droves.

According to Wofa Atta, the moral in this song is when the Ewe occupy any territory, no one can unseat them. The song admonishes the young men and women not to be in haste and spend their time on frivolous activities, but to take up responsibilities because they are the future leaders. The elderly have done their part and acquired the needed experience. It is therefore the turn of the present generation to take up the challenge and through bravery, do more to defend and develop the Ewe states (Personal communication, April 4, 2019).

Included in this category of songs with patriotic themes, are song texts that promote the Ewe ethnic identity. An example is the song entitled *Evedukɔwo, mile-Xegbe ye xedona*, recorded by the Emmanuel Dance Ensemble.

Song: *Evedukɔwo*

Evedukɔwo, mile nɔvisi lo

Mido vegbe na mianɔewo

Le afe kple gbe siaa

(Elabe) xegbe ye xedona lo

Uegbe le Ghana, ele Togo

Dahomey, Liberia kpakple Germany

Kokloxɔ me kpea ŋu na koklo o

Xegbe ye xedona lo

Xegbe ye xedona lo

English translation

Ewe nations, be united

Speak Ewe to each other

Both at home and abroad

(Because) birds speak language of birds

Ewe is spoken in Ghana, in Togo

Dahomey, Liberia and Germany

The hen is never ashamed of its coop

Birds speak the language of birds

Birds speak the language of birds

This text is reminding Eves of the need to cherish their rich identity by upholding communicating in the Eve language wherever they find themselves. The search for better opportunities and greener pastures have caused many Eves to migrate to other locations locally, regionally and globally. In their new environments, they are compelled to conform by learning to speak the dominant language of the area to the detriment of the Eve language. Some are also shy about speaking their language, hence they resort to speaking English to their children. This results in a situation where you have young men and women bearing Eve names and yet who cannot speak or understand the language. This unfortunate situation can be embarrassing to these young Eves. The composer is calling for brotherliness among Eve-speaking people, and together to ensure that their children are taught and encouraged to speak the Eve language. He employs Eve proverbs *Kokloxɔ me kpea ɲu na koklo o* (The hen is never ashamed of its coop) and *Xegbe ye xedona lo* (Birds speak the language of birds) to explain the need for Eves to take pride in their language and identity. The inclusion of such proverbs that the Eves use in their everyday conversations enriches the text and adds more potency to the request being made by the composer.

Songs with Socio-Cultural Themes

These group of songs are normally performed by *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups during recreational activities, weddings, festivals, anniversaries and sometimes funerals. These songs talk about topical issues that affect or relate to the socio-cultural lives of the people. They also provide social commentaries on

happenings in society. Such songs include folk songs, and those composed by individual musicians in the communities.

Love and Relationships

Love songs are very popular with Bòbòbò performances. Song texts that speak about love and relationships, transcend performance contexts. They are performed during festivals, anniversaries, marriage ceremonies and even funerary activities. Love is presented in various forms. In the song *Nyedzi lóló*, the composer presents an experience of love as unrequited. He suggests that the measure of love he gives to his partner is not commensurate with the love he receives in return. This song text is significant because although it is usually expected that people will show love and get it in equal measure in return, the opposite is the case. The song text reflects the fact that human beings are not equal, and hence, it is important to proceed with care in terms of our expectations of other people.

Song: *Nyedzi lóló*

Nyedzi lóló

Nukae xoasi wu lóló?

Gble mase

Metsó nye dzi nawo

Ekaya wo netso nam, lóló

English Translation

My loved one

What is more precious than love?

Tell me

I gave you my heart

Which did you give me in return, my love?

Songs may raise questions about the nature of relationships with others. In the example below, the composer is seeking to understand the basis for his brethren to stand against his person and anything he does. The writer suggests that he is under trial in the court of public opinion. With no forthcoming answers, the composer concludes that such is the nature and tendency of human beings. Although the contexts of such song texts may be that of sorrow and deep pain in terms of how one relates to another, the concluding statement serves as a remedy for others who may be going through similar experiences to recognise that it is part of human nature so they can develop tolerance for such tendencies. Once people understand this, they learn to come to terms with it and ensure that it does not lead to conflict situations.

Song: *Miwɔe nam le agbeme*

Miwɔe nam le agbeme lo

Menye le nye ku megbe o, (miwɔe nam lo)

Simele dɔ badzi la 'tike si ma no hã nyeme kpɔe oo

Anye ne mahaya hafi

Atike si ma no hã, nyeme kpɔe oo

Gake 'sime ku la wotsɔ brass band wo, spinners wo

Bɔbɔɔbɔ wo, nunonowo, nuɖuɖuwo

Wo wu nyi hã, gake

'Simele dɔbadzi la atike si ma no hã nyeme kpɔe oo

(Miwɔe nam lo) Miwɔe nam le agbeme lo

Menye le nye ku megbe o, (miwɔe nam lo)

Dzalelelelele, dzalelelelele, dzalelelelele

Menye le nye ku megbe oo

English translation

Do it for me while I'm alive

Not after I am dead

When I was on the sick bed I couldn't get the medicine I needed to take
I would have been well
(But) even the medicine to take, I did not get
But when I'm dead they bring brass bands, spinners/disc jockeys
Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ bands, drinkables, eatables
They also slaughtered a cow, but
When I was on sick bed I couldn't get the medicine, I needed to take
Do it for me while I'm alive
Not after my death
Dzalelelelele, dzalelelelele, dzalelelelele (wailing)

This song, *Mmiwɔe nam le agbeme*, speaks to the personal life experience the composer Victor Kissiedu Kofi Prince had in the year 2003, when he was sick in hospital (Gallo, 2015). The song questions not only the Eve attitude but an African attitude, where family or community members who need assistance are neglected. Yet when they die, suddenly the people who refused to provide the financial assistance to the departed are capable of raising and spending huge sums of money on the funeral rites. Expensive caskets are bought, the services of performing groups are sought, lot of drinks and food are served, and a cow is killed. The best of tributes will be written - money is spent lavishly on the funeral rites, in the name of giving the dead a befitting burial. The composer is admonishing the populace to have a change of attitude that will show more respect to the living rather than the dead.

Song: *Kpoo*

Kpoo, kpoo, kpoo
Na nye manɔ anyiyne kpoo
'Fovi ɔto nase ɔa
Nyeme di be maɔo atsusi o
Mava nɔ tomevenyawo se
Nenye be srɔ le asiwo la

Na nye manɔ anyi nye kpoo

English translation

Quietly, quietly, quietly
Allow me to stay quietly by myself
Young man, be quiet and listen
I don't want to get a rival
I will be hearing irritating words
If you have a wife
Allow me to stay quietly by myself

This song, which was performed by Nutifafa Bɔbɔɔbɔ Cultural Group from Kpando, depicts a maiden or an unmarried woman responding to a love proposal from a strange man. In the song, the lady is heard telling the man to save her the trouble of having to enter into confrontation with any rival with its attendant rumours and gossip she is not ready to bear. She requests of her suitor to give her a break so she can have her peace. This song mirrors the thinking of people in contemporary Ewe society, who have accepted western values as a result of Western education and Christianity. Although the Ewe culture endorses polygamy, Christian doctrines are against it. Hence, unmarried women will not accept any marriage proposal from already married men, something their parents and grandparents have gladly and peacefully lived with over the years.

Song: Akpeteshi

*Kaka makpɔ ga vi aɔe ko
kpeteshi dzralawo xɔe fio
Kaka makpɔ ga vi aɔe ko
'Kpeteshi dzralawo xɔe fio
Nye Mawue, venunye ne matasi
Nye Mawue, venunye ne matasi*

English translation

Just when I gather little money

Akpeteshie sellers take all

Just when I gather little money

Akpeteshie sellers take all

My God, grant me the grace to stop

My God, grant me the grace to stop

The song above was composed by David Mensah and recorded with the *Abutia Kpota Milenorvisi Akpese* group, and is a lamentation of an addicted person who spends all his earnings on liquor. The unfriendly economic conditions and the high rate of youth unemployment, coupled with the relatively high cost of beer and other imported alcoholic beverages, have made most members of the society, especially the youth, resort to drinking a locally distilled dry gin known as *akpeteshi*. Some have also become addicted to the taking of hard liquor as a habit or out of frustration with life. Although there are a number of alcoholic beverages available, most middle to lower class people prefer to drink this locally distilled dry gin because it is relatively cheaper and more widely available. Among the Eve, *akpeteshi* has other side names, which include *sodabi*, *afevia*, *afla*, *dekele/dekel* (made from palm) and *fofonu/fokel* (made from sugarcane). With the least amount of money that one gets, one would like to drink *akpeteshi*. Since the Eve do things communally, one is expected not to go and drink alone, even if one goes alone and meets friends or known people at the drinking spot or bar, one is likely to buy them a drink, a situation that also eats into one's finances. The tendency of giving all one's financial earnings to sellers of *akpeteshi* in exchange for liquor, has also become a barrier to developing the habit of saving money for the future. This is what the author of

the song is suggesting as a negative attitude, and hence asking his God for grace and will power to change.

Me di be mayi is a song composed by Israel Maweta. The song text brings to light the importance of caring for our parents. It also captures the essence of parenthood and the strong bond that exists between parents and their children. Parents (*adzinɔwo/dzilawo*) among the Ewe are expected to be respected and honoured both in life and death by their children. The composer is expressing his desire to visit his parents in order to know how they are faring. Presently, many people leave their parents (usually in the rural centres) to migrate to urban centres for either greener pastures or marital reasons. The pressures of work and other social activities in these centres make some forget about their parents back at home. But the writer encourages everyone to be genuinely interested in the welfare of their parents and by extension, the aged in the society.

Song: *Me di be mayi*

Me di be mayi de dzinyelawo gbɔ

Ne mayi aɖa kpɔ wo ɖa

Nye me nya aleke tutuee wole agbe nam o

Migblɔe nawo be, megbɔna!

English translation

I want to go to my parents

To go and visit them

I don't know how well they are living

Tell them that I am coming

Dzɔgbese ɖoame ɖa is one of the songs recorded by Wofa Atta on his third album entitled *Nukuwula*. *Dzɔgbese* (Fate/destiny), simply called *Se*, is the

“god” in humans and the “impersonal law” that provides guidance to human beings, according to the Ewe ontological conception (Lawrence, 2005; Fiagbedzi, 1977). *Se* is also used in reference to *Mawu* (Supreme God), who is the source of our destiny and talent. The song admonishes members of the society to be content with what they have no matter how little it is. It reminds them that each individual has been destined for a specific mission and accomplishment. Therefore, there is no need to be envious of other people’s achievements. Rather it will do mankind much good if every individual makes frantic efforts to identify his/her talents and makes conscious efforts to develop them. Wofa Atta explains the meaning of this song text using the analogy of the five fingers. He says that just as nature has created the five fingers with unequal lengths, so has each individual in the world been destined with specific talents and gifts in different measures for the benefit of mankind and the world. The beauty is that each of the fingers complement the others in order to achieve something great. Hence, whether one is more talented than the other in a specific or different field, or one has more opportunities than the other, we should be content with the talents we have been destined with and harness them for the good of society.

Song: *Dzɔgbese ɔoame ɔa*

Dzɔgbese ɔoame ɔa, ‘metɔ, ‘metɔ

Esi wonawò koenye tɔwò

(Eyanyetɔwò) Dzɔgbese ɔo ame ɔa, ‘metɔ, ‘metɔ

Esi wo na wò koe nye tɔwò

Nɔvi, tɔwòvia nedze ηuwò 3x

‘Siwo nawò koe nye tɔwò

Nɔvi, tɔwòvia nedze ηuwò 3x

‘Siwo nawò koenye tɔwò

English translation

Everyone has been destined differently
Only what you have been given is yours
Everyone has been destined differently
Only what you have been given is yours
Brethren, be content with the little you have
Brethren, be content will the little you have

Philosophical songs

Some philosophical song texts are sourced from Ewe proverbs and maxims that are used in daily conversations. *Avu melea kpɔ̃ o*, for example, is from the full proverb *Avulenu melea kpɔ̃ o* (literally, A hunting dog cannot hunt down a leopard). Another version of this proverb is *Avulenu melea dzata o* (literally, A hunting dog cannot hunt down a lion). The significance of this proverb is to caution people not to attempt things which are far beyond their means. That is not to suggest that people cannot aim high. It better to deal with things one after the other than to have a vaulting ambition of trying to get at things that are very far from one's reach.

Song: *Avu melea kpɔ̃ o*

Avu melea kpɔ̃ o
Avu melea kpɔ̃ o
Avu melea kpɔ̃ o
Avu melea kpɔ̃ o
Kpɔ̃ dzeɲe

English translation

A dog cannot hunt down a leopard
A dog cannot hunt down a leopard

A dog cannot hunt down a leopard
A dog cannot hunt down a leopard
The leopard reclines

The next song, *Dayi kple Amu*, though philosophical in nature, speaks about power relations using the metaphors of the river Dayi which runs through the middle part of the Volta region and a lake. There are two versions of this song text. Some *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* bands in some communities sing the first version, which has *tofe di ee*, while other groups sing the second version with *sobo dzi*. During my fieldwork I discovered that the second version is very popular among many bands. The river flows but the lake is stagnant. The song suggests that it is not possible for these two water bodies to engage in a contention because the river by its nature will surely find a path to ‘escape’.

Song: *Dayi kple Amu* – Version one

Dayi kple Amu me kea di o,
Dayi le tofe di ee
Dayi le tofe di ee
Dayi le tofe di ee
Dayi le tofe di, tofe di, tofe di

English translation

Dayi (river) and Amu (lake) does not contend
Dayi (river) is looking for a passage
Dayi (river) is looking for a passage
Dayi (river) is looking for a passage
Dayi (river) is looking for a passage, a passage, a passage

Song: *Dayi kple Amu* - Version two

Dayi kple Amu mekea di o
Dayi le sobo dzi ee
Dayi le sobo dzi ee

Dayi le sobo dzi ee

Dayi le sobo dzi, sobo dzi, sobo dzi

English translation

Dayi and Amu cannot contend

Dayi is on the calf level

Dayi is on the calf level

Dayi is on the calf level

Dayi is on the calf level, on the calf, on the calf

A presbyter in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, explaining the meaning and relevance of the Dayi kple Amu song text, alluded to the organisation of the Presbyterian church where the presbyters who form the leadership of the congregations are permanently placed with the local congregations. The pastors, on the other hand, are posted to one congregation and after a period of time, they are transferred to other congregations while the presbyters remain in their positions in the same congregation. In this context, the pastor is likened to the river Dayi, while the presbyters are likened to Amu (lake). In most instances, the pastors, though they are the head of the congregations, have difficulties in bringing innovations because they face resistance from the presbyters. When this happens, the pastor will be left with no other option than to give up and move to the dictates of the presbyters who see themselves as custodians of the church.

On the other hand, those who sing the second version of the song suggest that in terms of depth, the river Dayi is shallow while the Amu is deep. It literally suggests that when one stands in the Dayi and another in the Amu, the level of the Dayi will be at the calf level of the person while the Amu is likely to be at the waist level of the person. Wisdom Ziizigah (Personal communication,

November 13, 2018) explained that the *Amu* represents deep thinkers and knowledgeable people, while *Dayi* represents shallow thinkers and ignorant people in society, stressing that there is no way shallow thinkers can engage in fruitful discourse with shallow thinkers. I also observed in most instances, that when a *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group is performing in the presence of another rival group, they always sing this song to end their performances. The song simply speaks to power relations.

Death, Grief and Lamentations

Of the themes in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs, those that relate to death and bereavement are mostly performed at funeral occasions. The Ewe word for death is *ku*. Hence, the song *Ku mekla 'megbetɔ o* is sung at funeral events. When the song is performed at funerals, it is not necessarily meant to mourn the departed or the bereaved family. It presents the truth about death to the mourners gathered at the funeral. The song is rather a clarion call for the living to always be in readiness for death because death does not notify its victims in advance before laying its icy hands on them. It also reminds all that, all the wealth, the good and bad times in this world will end at one point, implying that it is important for man to do the best he can when the opportunity comes.

Song: *Ku mekla 'megbetɔ o*

Ku mekla 'megbetɔ o

Be woanɔ dzadzra do me o

Agbeme nunanawo

Desiadenu avayi

English translation

Death does not notify mankind

In order to be in readiness

The gifts of this life

Will all pass away

The song text *Kue dia 'menu lo* below reflects the destructive nature of death. Although everyone is aware that death is an inevitable phenomenon, it makes individuals and families become disoriented. An instance is when individuals who are regarded as the “eye” of their families die, or a young person dies: the living perceive these deaths as unfair and unjustified. Hence, composers express their grief by lamenting, ascribing negative descriptions to death, as in the following song text. The composer sympathises with those who have passed on and describes death as not sensible.

Song: *Kue dia 'menu lo*

Kue dia 'menu lo

Yɔmeyilawo babaa nami lo

O nɔviwoe ku menyaa nu o lo (Nyatefe)

English translation

Death is so heart rending

Sympathies to the dead

O brethren death is unwise (honestly)

In *Dɔagbe*, the song text captures a passionate expression of grief or sorrow arising as a result of the loss of a loved one. The texts reflect how people depend on each other for survival and wellbeing. The demise of a loved one creates a vacuum which the living always wonders how it could be filled. The singer after wondering why the loved one decided not to give him prior notice of her journey to the world of timelessness, becomes optimistic of a pleasant welcome by the heavenly angels. He then wishes his loved one a peaceful sleep.

Song: *Dɔ agbe (Sleep well)*

Nɔvi lɔlɔtɔ afika ne gblem di heyi?
Nɔvi lɔlɔtɔ afika ne gblem di heyi?
Woe meƷna zã kple keli
Ɖe nɔvinye wo maga kra mu
Nyatefe wo nye bena
Ɖemagbɔnugbe ye wome kra me o
Mawudɔla woa do dza nawo
Dɔ 'gbe, dɔ 'gbe, dɔagbe, lɔlɔ dɔagbe

English translation

My lovely friend, where did you abandon me to?
My lovely friend, where did you abandon me to?
It is you I call night and day
So, my friend, you did not tell me.
Is it true that
You are going to a place of no return
God's angels will welcome you
Sleep well, rest well
Sleep well, dear one, rest well

In *Amenyewogbɔ*, the song text captures the hope of the composer who is embarking on a journey to his final resting place (eternity). According to the *Eve* worldview, the stages of existence are *amedzɔfe/bome* (human origin), *kodzogbe* (life on earth), *tsiefe* (eternity) and *dzifo* (the firmament) (Gbolonyo, 2009; Fiagbedzi, 2005). While *amedzɔfe* and *tsiefe* signify a commencement and an end point respectively in the life cycle, *kodzogbe* signifies life on earth where people come to eke out a living. Then *dzifo* is the high realm of the Supreme Being which is physically not available to man except through man's Ideas of Being. This song text may be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it portrays a deceased person who is embarking on a journey to his final resting

place (*tsiefe*) where his parents and other relations who have gone ahead of him reside. He is expressing the hope that when he arrives at *tsiefe* he would be duly welcomed and accepted by his ancestors. On the other hand, since life *kodzogbe* is the most cumbersome according to the three stages of existence in *Eve* thought, it also represents life here on earth, where people find themselves in a strange or foreign land or are used as collateral. In such unfamiliar environments, there are no family relations who they can fall on for support. Such people usually go through persecutions, tribulations and, in some instances, without proper shelter. The composer is therefore hopeful that should he return to his people (family, relations, and friends), his needs would be provided and he would live comfortably, thereby confirming the *Eve* proverb, *Dumenyo mesoa afe o* (literally, A good foreign place cannot be like your own home), meaning that one's final destination or priority must be his/her home.

Song: *Amenyewogbo*

Amenyewogbo,

Nye mable o

Makpo dzefe

//: Ne meɔo amenyewogbo

Nye mable o,

Nye mabu o

Makpo mlɔfe://

English translation

In my people's abode

In my people's abode

I would not be forsaken

I would be accommodated (a place to settle)

When I get to my people's abode

I would not be forsaken
I would not be lost
I would get a place to sleep

The text in *Gbesigbe maku la* suggest a loved one fantasising about his day of burial. He makes the promise to his partner (Rosiana) that on the day of his burial day, he would proceed with her to the grave side, and bid her farewell. The other partner then responds asking why he has left her behind. He then urges her not to be worried. The moral in this song is no matter how deeply people love each other, and would wish to stay together always, death will mark the end of that relationship.

Song: *Gbesigbe maku la*

Gbesigbe maku la nye kpli woe ayi
Ava do yodo nu la to
Afima lolõ he de nyuie
Lolõtõ va dom da
Nuka nutie negblem di
Lolõtõ va dom da aye aye aye
Rosiana, mega tsi dzi o

English Translation

The day I will die, I will go with you
To the grave side
There I'll say, love fare thee well
Love one, come and see me off
Why have you left me behind
Love one, come and see me off
Rosiana, do not be in haste/worry

Themes on the nature of man

These songs reflect the character of man focusing on the feeling of being discontented or resentful, with longing aroused by someone else's possessions or qualities. They also provide admonitions on the need to be cautious of fellow humans. They encompass issues such as envy, regret, resentment, guilt, betrayal, self-pity, greed, false pride, lies and abuse. *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs rarely espouse the positive sides of human nature, which include kindness, humility, generosity, truthfulness and love.

The *Gbetɔ menyɔ o* song text reinforces the perceived reality of human nature as embodying evil, wickedness, intending to cause harm. Human beings are symbolised as unfathomable creatures because no one is able to fully explore or understand his complicated nature. People will hate you and pretend they love you. They will smile and laugh with you but their minds and hearts are not in accordance with their actions. The very people who pretend they love you, are same ones who will seek your downfall and literally kill you.

Song: *Gbetɔ menyɔ o*

Gbetɔ, gbetɔ menyɔ o
Gbetɔ fe dɔme tu me ye
Aɔukonu dɔme tɔ le vo
Lɔwolawo enye wuwola

English translation

Man, man is evil
Man's stomach is a gun
The tooth laughs but the stomach is dissent
Your lovers are your killers

The composer of the *Nye menya o* song text laments his innocence and open-mindedness in relating to his close friend. He suggests that his friend has taken advantage of his innocence and had requested sorcerers to kill him as a result of sheer envy. The composer suggests to his friend that this would not bring any benefit to him. He therefore entreats him to endeavour to emulate him by working hard rather than resorting to spiritual and magical means to cut short the lives of achievers because of jealousy. This song text frowns on laziness, jealousy and envy, and encourages the virtues of hard work, studiousness and industriousness, which are prerequisites for young people to become achievers in life.

Song: *Nye menya o*

Nye menya o 3x

Nye menya o 3x

Nye kp̄li w̄d̄ miele z̄z̄z̄

Nyemew̄z̄ v̄z̄ d̄e nuwo o

//: *Gake w̄d̄ya, w̄d̄ts̄m̄ na dzot̄z̄wo*

Ne mekula viq̄eka wao kp̄z̄://

Anyowu be nayi dzot̄z̄wo gb̄z̄ lo

(Ao) Ne n̄z̄viwo w̄z̄ nane

(Mebe) Woha nadze agbagba

Be yaw̄z̄ numa

Aanyowu be nayi dzot̄z̄wo gb̄z̄ lo

English Translation

I never knew

I never knew

I have been walking with you

I have not done you any evil

But you, you have given me to sorcerers

If I die, what benefit will you get?

It would be better than going to the sorcerer
Oh, if your brother achieves something
You too should strive
To achieve that
It would be better than going to see the sorcerer

The composer of the *Adzee adzee* song text presents human nature as perceived and, in some instances experienced, by members of the society. It uses the *tagbatsutsu* (housefly) as a metaphor for close relations such as friends and siblings, and *abime* (sore) to represent his life or business. It is common knowledge that people closer to you in most cases know about your strengths and weakness, and also about your dealings and how successful or otherwise you are. He alleges in the song text that his close relations are retarding his progress.

Song: *Adzee*

Adzee, adzee, adzee adzee, adzee, adzee

Nɔvinyewo zu tagbatsutsu

Le abime d̄um nam lo

Adzee, adzee, adzee adzee, adzee, adzee

English translation

Adzee, adzee (expression of pain)

My brethren have become houseflies

Feeding on my wounds

Adzee, adzee, adzee adzee, adzee, adzee

In the *Wɔnum ee* song text, the composer advises people to be wary of their fellow human beings with the justification that the person who stabs you at the back, will turn around and in the midst of your loved ones pretend to be comforting you on the very evil the person committed against you. He implores

members of the society not to put their trust in anyone. Indeed, he suggests that people should be apprehensive about even their close relatives such as siblings and spouses, because the person with whom you eat every day, is the only one who can betray you.

Song: *Wɔnum ee*

Amesi wɔnum ye gale lɔnyelawo dome

Gale baba dom nam a

(Eyata nɔvi) nya zɔzɔ le agbeme

Megakaɖe ameaɖeke dzi o

Vɔ na 'megbetɔ, nenyɛ nɔviwo hã

Vɔ na 'megbetɔ, nenyɛ srɔ̀wò ha

Mikple amesi nɔ nuɖum resiarɛ

Eyako atɛɲu aɖe wò asi

Mikple amesi nɔ nuɖum yesiayi

Eyako atɛɲu ade wo asi

English translation

The one who hurt me is still among my loved ones

Still sympathising with me?

(So, friend), be careful in life

Do not trust anyone

Fear man, even if it is your sibling

Fear man, even if it is your spouse

The person with whom you dine always

Is the only one who can betray you

The person with whom you dine always

Is the only one who can betray you

With this perception or reality of the nature of man and the various suggestions about what to do in order not fall prey to such negative tendencies of fellow human beings who in most instances are faceless people, composers

also use song texts to express their sentiments about their desire to be able to identify who such ‘evil’ people are. *Futɔwo nedze, madzesiwo ko* is an example of a song text that suggests how critical it is for the enemy to be known. The composer seeks to know who his enemies are, not for the sake of vengeance but in order for him to take the appropriate steps not to fall into their traps. In the second stanza, the composer seeks to know the witches. Among the Ewe, witchcraft is regarded a menace to community life and is hence categorised among society’s evils and enemies.

Song: *Futɔwo nedze*

Futɔwo nedze, madzesiwo ko

Menye mabia hlɔwo o

Be ne manya zɔzɔ na wo

Menye mabia hlɔ wo o

Futɔwo nedze, madzesiwo ko

Menye mabia hlɔwo o

Adzetɔwo nedze, madzesiwo ko

Menye mabia hlɔwo o

Bene manya zɔzɔ nawo

Menye mabia hlɔ wo o

Adzetɔ nedze, madzesiwo ko

Menye mabia hlɔwo o

English translation

Enemies should show up, just so I identify them

Not that I would take revenge

So that I would be careful/wary of them

Not that I would take revenge

Enemies should show up, just so I identify them

Not for me to take revenge

The Witches should be exposed so I can identify them

Not that I would take revenge

So, I would know how to walk with them
Not that I would take revenge
Witches should be made known, so I identify them
Not that I would take revenge

Gossip is another aspect of human nature that is captured in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* song texts. People engage in unconstrained conversation and hearsay about other people which in most cases involves details which are not substantiated. In *Mikpɔ nyeyunya ta, wo ga kpe*, the composer suggests that he cannot depend on or trust his own people because they probably gossip about his predicaments and also seek his downfall. He then introduces Jesus as the only friend he can lean and depend on, thereby confirming the influence of Christianity in the socio-cultural lives of the people. Wofa Atta suggests that this song was composed during the advent of Christianity, when the Ewe in Ghana were between and betwixt. The second part of the song text *Amenyewo zu aɔadzo medo*, is an expression that signifies the composer's lament. He refers to his people with the expression *aɔadzo*, and wishes they were *dzoka*. *Aɔadzo* is an expression for fire set with straw, while *dzoka* refers to the small pieces of burning or glowing coal in a dying fire. Contextually, when women want to set fire for cooking, they either use the coal or firewood because they are strong enough to sustain the fire. Neighbours can also benefit from the embers or glowing embers they use coal scuttle to collect them to set their fire for domestic use, instead of going through the entire process of starting the fire with kerosene, matchsticks and others. However, when straw is used to set fire, it will blaze initially but quickly extinguish, and no one can use it to set another fire for cooking. The composer may have lost his children at very young ages, implying

that he does not have any children to serve him. He wishes that other people's children should grow so he could benefit from their services. Another scenario may be that the composer has children who have grown into adults but are not responsible. Therefore, *ameto nexɔ, maɖe do* (let someone's fire burn so I can get some glowing embers to start mine) may mean he wishes that someone's children grow and prosper so he can benefit from them. Generally, the song text reflects the worthlessness of his people. No matter how much investment is put into them, it will not result in positive outcomes. It is therefore better to invest in other people who will bring positive returns for the benefit of himself and the society.

Song: *Mikpɔ nyehunya ta*

Mikpɔ nyehunya ta, wo ga kpe

Ameke ŋu manɔ agbe do?

Ameaɖeke meli nam o

Mikpɔ xexeame fenya wo da

Matsɔ Yesu awɔ nɔvi

Amenyewo zu aɖadzo medo

Dzoka mele 'me maɖe do o

Ameto nexɔ, maɖe do

English translation

You have gathered again because of a report about me

Who should I live my life for?

There is no one to stand with me

Look at the issues of this world

I will take Jesus to be my friend

My people have become straw-fire I have set

There is no ember I can use to set mine

Someone's should blaze, so I can set mine

Song lyrics also talk about how gossips operate and further lampoons them. The song text in *Amejunya gblawo* is publicly criticising gossips in the society for disseminating stories and reports about people that cannot be substantiated by them. They are always hungry and nosing around for stories and hearsay. If they succeed in getting stories about people, they exaggerate them by giving them new twists. In situations where they are not successful with news, they make them up and propagate them. Another characteristic that gossips have is the tendency to forcibly take possession of other peoples' property without a feeling of shame or malice. The text implies that the activities of a single gossip can end up disintegrating homes, families, friendships and relationships in general. In the final analysis, those who engage in gossip bring shame and disgrace upon themselves when they are found out.

Song: *Amejunya gblawo*

Amejunya gblawoe

Tɔwosefe metso lo

‘Dekape lo

Nusi mese o,

eya yebe yese

Nusi mekpɔ o,

eya yebe ye kpɔ

Nusi menye tɔwo o,

eya nexɔ kple akpasese

Afe ‘ma gba le tawo,

Dekape lo

English translation

Gossips

I have gone to listen to yours

You alone

That which you have not heard,

Is what you claim you have seen
That which you have not seen
Is what you claim you have seen
That which is not yours
Is what you claim forcefully
Homes have been destroyed because of
You alone

Although the morals in song texts about human nature are clearly meant to protect people who may be vulnerable in society, they also have the tendency to make people suspicious of others, a situation which may lead to lack of trust, fellow feeling and cohesion among close and distant family, clan and community members.

Christian-Themed Songs

Songs within this category are based on the values and beliefs in Christianity. While some of the song texts are sourced directly from Biblical stories and parables, others are reflective of the composers' understanding and interpretation of Christian ethics and principles. The songs collected include hymns from the *Eve Nyanyui Hame Hadzibale* (Eve hymnal) of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana and Togo because almost all the groups most the groups visited performed at least two songs from the hymnal.

Godly love and Neighbourly love

Bɔbɔɔbɔ song texts capture themes around the love of God and the love for fellowmen. The text of *Mawu fe lɔlɔ* reveals the depth of love God has for mankind which the composer describes as amazing and unfathomable.

Song: *Mawu fe lɔlɔ*

Mawu fe lɔlɔ enye nuku

Dela fe lɔlɔ enye nuku

Xɔla fe lɔlɔ enye nuku

Nuku lɔlɔ

//: Ekəkɔ, asi matui o

Ekeke asi matui o

Egoglo asi matui o

Nuku lɔlɔ://

English translation

God's love is so wonderful

The Saviour's love is wonderful

The Deliverer's love is so wonderful

Wonderful love

So high, it cannot be touched

So wide, it cannot be wholly embraced

So deep, it cannot be reached

Wonderful love

The song text *Amesike be yelɔ Mawu* concerns itself with people who profess they love God, and yet do not extend that same love to their neighbours. It is a common practice for people to make public statements about how well they love God the Creator by going to church, donating monies to support church projects and engaging in all the worship rituals. Then on the flipside, they show wickedness, hatred sowing seeds of discord, rancour and bitterness among families and members of society. They are reluctant to share their resources with the needy and to show compassion to the weak and vulnerable in the society. The song text suggests that the efforts of such people at pleasing God will amount to nothing. The composer is encouraging members of the

society to be genuinely interested in the welfare of their neighbour and provide and support to them when needed.

Song: *Amesi ke be yelɔ Mawu*

Amesi ke be yelɔ Mawu

Gake me lɔ ehavi o

Efe agbagbadzedzewo kata

Enye dzodzro le Mawu nkume

English translation

He who says he loves God

But does not love his neighbour

All his efforts

Are vain in the eyes of God

Song texts also speak about the sinful nature of man and his desire to still stay connected and have a better relationship with his Saviour Jesus Christ. Christian teachings encourage followers of Christ to endeavour to request God to create a clean heart and renew the right spirit within them. The song text below exemplifies that.

Song: *Nɔ nye dzime*

Nɔ nye dzime

Nye Dela, nɔ nye dzi me

Vɔwɔla menye

Gake medi be manɔ gbɔwo

Nɔ nye dzime

Nye Dela nɔ nye dzime

English translation

Stay in in my heart

My Saviour, stay within my heart.

I am a sinner

But I want to stay with you
Stay within my heart
My Saviour, stay in my heart

Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ composers also recognise the abundance of God's grace upon the lives of Christians. In the following song text *Mateɔ̀a o*, the composer has the assurance that there was no way the abundant grace of God will elude him if he holds on to the commandments of God. The text indicates that if one is obedient to God's commandments, challenges, hard times, and difficult times will come and go but the grace of God will always abound.

Song: *Mateɔ̀a o*

Mateɔ̀a o
Efe amenuveve mateɔ̀a o
Me mewɔ̀ ɔ̀e seawo dzi
Togbewo wo a teɔ̀a
Efe amenuveve mateɔ̀a kpɔ̀ o

English translation

It will not depart
His grace will not depart
If I obey the commandments
The mountains will depart
His grace will not depart

Song texts also express the Christian's faith and confidence in the power of God. The following two song texts exemplify that. While *Manɔ̀ nye Mawu yome* reflects the loyalty of the Christian towards God, with the understanding that He is the source and giver of life, *ne tuwoɔ̀i ha* shows the absolute confidence in God. It likens the journey of life to a battlefield, where God who is the Warlord, will fight the cause of His people at all times.

Song: *Manɔ nye Mawu yome*

Manɔ nye Mawu yome

Manɔ nye Dela yome

Eya sime ko agbe le

Manɔ nye Mawu yome

English translation

I will follow my God

I will follow my Saviour

In him only, Is life

I will follow my God

Song: *Ne tuwoɖi ha*

Ne tuwoɖi ha

Ne ahom letutum ha la

Dzika matso miafo o

Avamee miele

Nenye be Yehowa Mawu li la

Aɖe Eɖokui afia

English translation

If guns sound

If tempests are raging

Our hearts will not be startled

We are in a battle

If only Jehovah God exists

He will reveal Himself

Some of the songs texts in this category reflect stories that are found in the Bible. In *Nukuwula*, the composer employed Biblical texts about the parable of the sower as told by Jesus Christ in Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, and Luke 8:4-15. The texts at the end of the song seek answers to the question “*To which*

of them do you belong?” It reflects the different ways in which Christians assimilate homily after it has been delivered by the priest. It explains the differences in how Christians are able to make the seed which represents the Word of God, grow into full maturity and realise its best fruit-bearing potential. Depending on the ability of the individual which represents the type of soil, there will be three outcomes: the seeds that are not able to bear fruits – wasted seeds; those that produce more yields – productive seeds, and those that produce an average yield. The final outcome is dependent on the soil type and the potential for growth. The significance of this song text to the life of the Ewe Christian, is to recognise what type of soil they are – rock-strewn, thorny, or fertile - so as to endeavour to transform the infertile soil into fertile one. By so doing, the capacity to allow the Word of God to grow and bear fruits in them is enhanced. More significant is the question posed by the composer, “Which of them do you belong to”?

Song: *Nukuwula*

Nukuwula yi nukuwuge, nukuwuge 2x

Dewo gedɛ mɔwoto

Dewo gedɛ ɲuwo wo me

Dewo gedɛ kpegbadzawo dzi

Dewo gedɛ anyigba nyuiwodzi

Kamee nele, kamee nele?

Kamee nele nɔvi, kamee nele?

Nukuwula yi nukuwuge, nukuwuge 2x

English translation

The sower has gone to sow seeds

Some fell along the path

Some fell on thorns

Some fell on rocky places

Some fell on fertile land/soil
Which of them do you belong to?
Which of them do you belong to?
The sower has gone to sow his seeds

Mose is another song sourced from Biblical stories. Moses was given the arduous task of leading the Israelites from bondage in Egypt to the promised land God swore to give to his chosen people, the descendants of Abraham. The land was situated in ancient Canaan, eastwards of the Mediterranean Sea (Number 34:1-12). Literally, the song text is referring to the fact that when the Israelites arrive in Canaan, they will be full of gladness such that they will drop their loads and embrace one another. The significance of this text to the Ewe Christian lies in the understanding that the Christian journey is ridden with trials and tribulations that must be overcome through commitment, endurance and upholding of Christian principles. When one is able to surmount all the adversities, then there is cause to celebrate because victory is won.

Song: *Mose*

Mose, Mose, Mose, Mose
Kplɔ Israel dukɔ nyuila yi de Caanan
Ne mieɔo Caanan, miadro agba di
Atutu aɔtsi na mianɔewo
O, Mose kplɔ Israelviwo yi Caanan
Ne mieɔo Caanan, miadro agba di
Awɔ atuu na mia nɔewo

English translation

Moses, Moses, Moses, Moses
Lead the good nation of Israel to Caanan
When we reach Caanan, we will drop our loads

And wipe away each other's tears
O Moses, lead the Israelites to Caanan
When we reach Canaan, we will drop our loads
(And) Embrace one another

Some dance movements are also created out of song text, drum texts and in some instances, verbal cheer. These are replicated by the dancers during performance. *Mibɔbɔ lo* is an example of such a song text. The text requires the lady dancers to literally bend down in the course of their dance performance and usually wriggle their waist and buttocks for the viewing pleasure of the male performers and audience, thereby adding to the visual of the performance. Beyond the performance context, the text is a call on women to be humble and subservient to men in the society. This text reinforces women's subservience which is a high expectation in patriarchal societies such as that of the Eve.

Song: *Mibɔbɔ lo*

Mibɔbɔ lo, nyɔnuviwo mibɔbɔ lo
halleluiah, mibɔbɔ lo
Mibɔbɔ, nyɔnuviwo mibɔbɔ
Mibɔbɔ, nyɔnuviwo mibɔbɔ
Mibɔbɔ lo, nyɔnuviwo mibɔbɔ lo
Halleluiah, mibɔbɔ lo

English translation

Bend down, women bend down
Hallelujah, bend down
Bend down, women bend down
Bend down, women bend down
Bend down, women bend down
Hallelujah, bend down

In the same vein, the song text of *Togbi Agokoli fe ηutasese* captures the historical narratives of the migration of the *Eve* from Notsie. Apart from this song serving as a repository of the history of the people, it is sometimes accompanied with unique dance movements in which the dancers perform with backward steps as a display and reenactment of how their forebears fled the kingdom of Notsie. These song text and dance text provides very important cultural knowledge and history for the young *Eve* about the migration story.

Song: *Togbi Agokoli Fe Nutasese*

//: *Togbi Agokoli fe ηutasese ya ta la*

Viawo kata wodzo le egbɔ://

Esi wodze mɔ, wozɔ megbemegbe

Wode dzesi ati wo

//: *Bena ame mamleawo magabu o://*

English translation

Due to King Agokoli's cruelty

All his children (subjects) deserted him

During their escaped, they walked backwards

They marked the trees on the way

So that those behind them may not miss their way

Drum texts

Drum language or drum text are rhythmic patterns which are called *vugbe* (literally drum voice: plural, *vugbewo*). Among the *Eve*, these texts are understood and interpreted as a musical language. Conversations with Efo Senyo and other master drummers revealed that the texts are sourced from topical social issues and people's life experiences and are centred on wide range of subjects including profanity, proverbs, morality and sacred. Gbolonyo (2009)

rightly observes that *vugbewo* have complex meanings which may be in the forms of vulgarism, insults, teasing, jokes and indifference. He further notes that there may also be historical and philosophical dimensions to meanings of *vugbewo*. These musical texts are therefore introduced by the indigenes who then accept them and perform them as part of the cultural repertoire of the people. It also serves as a code for the ‘informed’ performers and the ‘informed’ audience. Although Kamisnki (2015) argues that, surrogate speech is not the correct imitation of language because it employs selected tonal-rhythmic elements from spoken text, my experience on the field proves contrary. Wofa Atta, in a documentary verbalises such *vugbewo* as follows (see music transcription in Appendix F) *agbelidzedze le dzodzi, gake zini kpikpi nikpi kpi kpi. It is like, there is cassava on the fire [cooking] but just ignore it and come let’s dance. Bɔbɔ, bɔbɔ kodzoe natɔ dɛdɛzi na fɔ. What is bɔbɔ kodzoe nafɔ? Bend on it slowly, finish it and wake up* [Asamany, 2015:10.40-43, 10.55-11.08]. With examples above, obviously ‘uninformed’ participants or audience may find some of the meanings of the *vugbewo* embarrassing and intolerable when explained to them.

Uugbe 1. Zekpe

Zekpe doɖa, na bɔbɔ viɖe

English translation

Bring your buttocks, and bend a little

This *vugbe* is an example of the frivolous ones with vulgar connotations. In the context of the dance, it is a message to the dancers to imitate the texts in their dance movements. But outside of the performance context, it connotes lovers engaged in a sexual act with the man asking the woman for a particular sex position which requires the woman to bring her backside closer to him and

to bend a little. Most youth understand this code hence you hear them reciting this *vugbe* when it is being played.

Uugbe 2. Nyedzi lo

Nye dzilo, nye kpe! nyefe dzilo, nyefe kpe!

English translation

My heart, my waist/buttocks/hips (lady)

Nyedzilo

The image shows musical notation for 'Nyedzilo'. It consists of two staves: 'Gakogui' and 'Drums'. Both are in 4/4 time. The Gakogui staff has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Drums staff has a more complex pattern with some notes beamed together. Below the Drums staff, the lyrics are written: 'nye-dziHo nyekpe nye-dziHo nyekpe nye-dzi-lo nyekpe nyefe dzi-lo nyefekpe'.

These *vugbewo* are among the most prevalent ones among drummers. At the surface level, they are intended to describe two parts of the body (heart and waist). Hence, in performances, dancers would normally point their hands to the positions of those parts of the body at the sound of these *vugbewo*. However, the interpretations provided by master drummers vary. Some master drummers interpret it to mean an expression of praise or admiration for one's lover. In most local Ewe communities, the youth use the expression the *nyedzi* in reference to their lovers (usually those they have sexual relations with). The expression *Nye kpe* is used by young men in reference to ladies with whom they have a love relationship. They also refer to any young lady as *ekpe*, based on my earlier explanation of the word in the Chapter Three. This shows the *vugbewo* meaning and interpretation.

Uugbe 3: Mieva do za

Mieva do za, za, za, mieva do!

English translation

We have arrived in our numbers, we have arrived!

The above *vugbewo* is usually played before the beginning of a performance. As I have explained earlier in Chapter Four, *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* groups consider each performance they undertake as a form of competition; hence, they often find a way of conveying messages of superiority and pride usually to intimidate potential rival groups or musicians whenever they arrive at the performance grounds. This *vugbewo* is meant to signal to members of rival groups that may be present at the performance venue.

Uugbe 4: Bend down, and shake your body

Bend down

The musical notation shows two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Gakogui' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Drums'. Both are in 4/4 time. The Gakogui part has a steady eighth-note melody. The Drums part has a pattern of eighth notes with accents on the first and third beats. Below the drum staff, the lyrics 'bend down andshakeyour bo-dy' are written, with 'andshakeyour bo-dy' appearing twice.

This *vugbe* is an adaptation of Leston Paul’s reggae calypso song entitled *Bend down and roll your belly*, which was released in 1986. The popularity of the song made *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* master drummers imitate the rhythm of the section ‘Bend down and roll your belly’. The texts, however, vary from group to group. While drummers in some ensembles changed the text to ‘Bend down and shake your body’, other ensembles use the text ‘Bend down and hold your belly/body’. Hence, when this *vugbe* is being played, dancers mimic the text in their dance movements.

Uugbe 5: Thomas Sankara, Burkina Faso

Gakogui

Uuga

Tho-mas San - ka-ra Bur-ki - na Fa - so

This *Bɔbɔɔbɔ vugbe* was created in the late 1980s during the period that Captain Thomas Isidore Noel Sankara was the Head of State of Burkina Faso. As noted, he was a close friend to Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, both being young military Heads of States around that period. He was unfortunately assassinated in 1987 and the *vugbe* was created possibly for him to be remembered. This denotes the importance of *vugbe* as a repository of history.

Uugbe 6. Gbagba gbogbofe

Gbagba gbogbo fe

Gakogui

Drums

gba-gba gbo-gbo fe gba-gba gbo-gbo fe me zi ge de me me zi ge de te

Gbagba gbogbofe mezi gedē me, mezigedē te

Gbagba gbogbofe

English translation

I will strike it in, I will strike it under

This *vugbe* is among the types that peers employ in either teasing each other or in joking about their relationships. My interaction with drummers revealed that this *vugbe* may have two possible connotations. The first is that it constitutes an insinuation against adult males who prefer to have sexual relations with young teenage girls who are considered virgins. This act is a shameful one, which the Ewe culture frowns upon. Therefore, as a social control measure, *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* drummers play with these concepts in order to discourage the recurrence of such activities in society. The second connotes the act of having sexual intercourse. *Mezige ɖe me, mezi ge ɖete* is suggestive of the manner in which the sexual act will be conducted. Hence, the male youth often use this *vugbe* to make fun of the of the opposite sex.

Uugbe 7: Something Le ve

Something le ve, *Agbelikaklo le ve, eba*

English translation

Something has choked the throat *Agbelikaklo* has choked me, eba

Something leve

some-thing le-ve, a-gbe - li-ka-klo le-ve, e-ba! some-thing le-ve, a-gbe - li-ka-klo le ve, e-ba!

This *vugbe* is another example of the frivolous commentaries produced on the drums. The uniqueness of this creativity lies in the blending of both English and Ewe words (something, and *le* [catch / choke], *ve* [throat]) to make

meaning. Literally, it alludes to someone being choked of *agbelikaklo*. *Agbelikaklo* comes from two words. *Agbeli* (cassava) and *kaklo* (pastry) is a small fried local pastry made out of slightly damp cassava dough and comes in the shape of a ball.

The nature of this local pastry is such that it has the ability to choke anyone eating it in haste and/or without drinking water. Explanations offered by some drummers regarding this *vugbe* is contextual. While some interpret it to mean an issue that is obvious, nobody is willing to speak out for the fear of either victimisation or public ridicule; others interpret it to mean an insinuation against a young person (of either gender), who engaged in sexual act and subsequently became pregnant (in the case of ladies). In the first context, *agbeli kaklo* is used to represent any problematic or contentious subject matter. In the second context, *agbelikaklo* is metaphorically used for sex and pregnancy. Generally, it is difficult for anybody to understand what exactly the import of this *vugbe* is, unless they are given a hint of the context.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have presented samples of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* texts and explained their relevance in the social, economic and religious lives of the people. *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* texts, which include song lyrics, drum texts and dance movements, are created by individuals or groups of musicians for the use of ensembles. Themes in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* Song texts can be placed into two main categories: secular and Christian themes. The secular songs are based on social commentary and events that occur at specific periods. The songs present issues of human relations, love-life, the hardships of life, death, bereavement, political, social, historical and issues of patriotism. The Christian themes centre on the Love of God and of

fellow man, the omnipotence and goodness of God and Christian virtues such as forgiveness, honesty purity, and the need to focus on eternal life. They also include stories and parables from the Bible. Of all the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs performed by *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles, those with Christian themes out-number those with secular themes.

The *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* texts are very useful because apart from being sources of entertainment, merriment and joking about relationships, they provide education on the cultural, social and political history of the people and the nation. They also provide education on moral values to the young in the society. For those who subscribe to the Christian religion, the song texts offer encouragement and hope to them in times of difficulties, trials and tribulations. Song texts also teach them about the nature of God and inspire them to deepen their relationship with God by trusting in His word and adhering to Christian moral standards. People who hitherto may not have been able to read the Bible, use *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs as vehicles through which they learn about some Biblical stories and understand the message of Christianity. The *vugbe* texts comprise adages, jovial phrases and other issues that are of interest to the creators. More importantly it serves as repository for drummers to easily draw on to remember rhythms during performances.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀*

Introduction

This chapter deals with issues of sustainability in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* performances, highlighting possible elements that have contributed to the continuous existence and expansion of the genre in Ghana over the years. It also discusses issues that constitute a threat to the sustenance of the genre. It uses the five-domain framework as an ecological approach to sustainability (Schippers, 2016), to understand the sustainability of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀*. These domains are: systems of learning music, musicians and communities, contexts and constructs, regulations and infrastructure, and media and the music industry.

Systems of Learning Music

Among the Ewe, drum carvers are known as *Uukpalawo* (singular: *Uukpala*). Manufacturers of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* drums abound in and outside of the Volta region. Three major locations where *Bɔ̀bɔ̀ɔ̀bɔ̀* drums are made and sold in the Volta region are Peki, Tsito and Akatsi. Some drum makers in the Volta region also buy already carved drum shells from locations outside the region and work on them. Such drum shells are usually obtained from parts of Kyebi in the Eastern Region and Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana. *Uukpalawo* describe their occupation as family-centred and a lifelong trade that sometimes brings them recognition. While some *Uukpalawo* explain that their craft was passed down to them from previous generations as a form of family gift, talent, or community custom, others admit they learnt the trade out of interest and possibly due to their roles as drummers in the various communities they either live or grew up in. Yet others attribute their drum making skills to a gift received

from their ancestors through divine means. For instance, Kwame Anagli believes that his craft is a special talent (*adanu*), which was bequeathed on him by *Mawu* (God) through inheritance from his ancestors. He further notes that although he saw a number of people making drums while growing up, he never bothered to learn the craft until it dawned on him in a dream. He notes:

In the dream, I heard a [voice] calling my name three times. Later, I saw someone handing over a drum shell, pegs, twine, animal skin and a chisel to me. He smiled without saying anything to me. In the second dream, I was carving drums together with that same man. The following morning, I discussed it with my uncle and he explained to me that the *togbewo* (ancestors) has given me the gift and responsibility to carve drums. I owe it as a duty to accept [that] responsibility. He asked me to buy the twine, chisel, machete, mallet and hammer. With a bottle of drink, he took me through some rites and offered prayers to *Mawu*, the ancestors, for gifting me with the craft. (Personal interview, July 14, 2018).

His narration points to a case where his call to the craft was revealed in a dream. An obvious case of his ancestors handing over the tradition of drum making is evident without necessarily going through the process of apprenticeship. He intimated to me that before he carves any new drum, he offers prayers to the ancestors and *Mawu* for their support and guidance. It brings to the fore the reality of supernatural backing to the art of drum-making in general in the region, as many *vukpalawo* are guided in their art.

There are also those who consciously learn the craft purely for economic reasons. Many of those who fall in this category manufacture the drums predominantly for tourists and other markets. They can be found at the Centre for National Culture (Arts Centre) and other craft markets dotted around Accra

and Kumasi. Apart from the use of traditional markets they also make use of the internet to market their drums.

Kojo Nfodjo and his family from Tsito have dedicated their lives to constructing drums. Describing the importance of a *Uukpala* in the Eve society, Kojo said:

The *Uukpala* is the source from which drums are got and used by performing groups in the community. When the animal skin (drum head) or any part of the drums need repair or replacement, he is the first point of call. He teaches the techniques of carving drums, and mentors apprentices to become experts in drum-making (Personal interview, July 15, 2018).

Francis Ametepe, also a drum-maker at the University of Ghana advised that, in order to produce a durable drum that gives good sound, it is essential that you acquire the appropriate wood, animal skin and other materials that aid in constructing them (Personal interview, May 14, 2017). Because *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums are carved, their production requires a soft wood that can easily be penetrated with an axe, and a hand drill. It should also be ductile in order to be shaved with chisel and machete (Eldridge, 2005). The time required for constructing one *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drum is dependent on the duration the cut logs take to dry as during the rainy seasons, they take longer time to dry out. It is possible to construct a drum within a day the moment a log is ready to be carved. After drums are successfully carved, they are kept indoors to prevent any adverse effects from the sun or rain. Most of the *Uukpalawo* I interacted with revealed that apart from *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums, they also make other kinds of drums which include *donno*, *djembe*, and Anlo-Eve drum sets. They explained that although different types of wood may be used for carving drums, the most suitable wood

for *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* drums is *tweneboa* (Kwame Anagli, Personal interview, July 14, 2018; Kojo Nfodjo, Personal interview, July 15, 2018). This is also confirmed by Eldridge (2005). Kojo Nfodjo further explained that other wood types may cause the drum to either crack or be susceptible to termite infestation, which often shortens the lifespan of the drum (Personal interview, July 15, 2018).

The key point that came up in my interactions with the makers of these drums is their revelation that the proliferation of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* groups, and choral groups in the E.P. Church and ARS have resulted in high demand for *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* drums. Francis Ametepe acknowledges that the demands of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* drums continue to increase by the day, hence they are compelled to work tirelessly in order to meet the requests of their clients (Personal interview, May 14, 2017). This demand places a huge responsibility on drum builders to step up production. Often times they are compelled to call for extra hands in order to meet their clients' requests. This implies that more drums are made available on the market for interested groups to buy, thereby bringing in more revenue to boost the financials of the drum builders.

While a number of *Uukpalawo* I spoke to double as *azagunɔ̀wo* (master drummers), and in some cases lead drummers, it is important to indicate that not all of them are master or lead drummers. In a number of cases, those of them who went through apprenticeship for economic reasons may not necessarily be good drummers or master drummers.

Apart from the exceptional instances where people receive knowledge through divine means as mentioned earlier, knowledge and skills in *Uukpakpa* (drum carving) are also considered a family heritage which the young ones are expected to learn through great care and thoroughness in the duties of

apprenticeship (Galeota, 1985). Those who do not envisage *Uukpakpa* (drum-carving) as a family heritage generally acquire the skills through apprenticeship. The concept of apprenticeship requires a period of understudying an experienced *Uukpala* (Master drum carver) to acquire the knowledge and skills required for the craft in order to ensure continuous supply of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums for performing groups in local communities and churches. However, a very important virtue that an apprentice must possess is humility. Francis Ametepe notes that it is required of apprentices to respect their *Uukpala* and his family as well as clientele, before they will be qualified to receive drum-making lessons (Personal communication, May 14, 2007), a point reiterated by Galeota (1985) and Eldridge (2005).

Writing on *Eve* drum-making, Galeota (1985) notes that in order to successfully embark on apprenticeship, one must go through three-stage rites, which are the intention of introduction stage, the signing of the contract, and the freeing ceremony stage. The first stage is when the apprentice makes his intention to learn known to the *Uukpala* who in turn introduces him to his work. At this stage, the apprentice or his parents are required to offer some bottles of liquor to the *Uukpala*, after which the candidate will be required to serve a probationary period of three months. During this period, the *Uukpala* will devote time and attention to observe the behaviour and attitude of the apprentice towards the study of the craft. When the *Uukpala* is certain that the apprentice has the potential of learning the trade, a formal agreement or contract is entered into with the parents offering an amount of money and local gin. This ushers in the commencement of the actual learning process, where the apprentice learns the various arts and procedures of *Uukpakpa* for a period of three years. When

the third-year elapses, a ceremony known as the ‘freeing ceremony’ is held for the *Uukpala* to literally give the apprentice the freedom to enter into entrepreneurship. The *Uukpala* hands over important tools (mallet, hammer, a meter, and plane) to the apprentice with a charge to be thorough, honest and truthful in his craftsmanship.

Presently, with the issue of migration and rapid urbanization of towns, a lot of younger people are compelled to acquire the skill of drum carving without going through the regular traditional apprenticeship model. A number of drum builders at the arts and craft market at the Center for National Culture in Accra confirmed that they had learned the art of drum building by observing their friends do it. Since they have to make ends meet while in Accra, they also resorted to drum making. A few of them acknowledged they started by repairing faulty drums.

These approaches of knowledge transmission that lead to the theoretical and practical understanding of drum building and repairs are pivotal to the sustainability of the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* genre. This is because they provide assurance of the continuous availability of the musical instruments for people to purchase and use for their performances thereby contributing immensely to the sustenance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*.

Drumming, Singing and Dancing

Traditionally, like other Ewe musical types, learning *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music and its related arts (drumming, singing and dancing) follows informal processes that happens through progressive immersion into performances by attending festivals funerals and other occasions of performance from infancy through adulthood (Burns, 2016). This continuous contact with experienced artists and

performers within these settings provides an avenue where, unconsciously, they are exposed to the music tradition. Learning to play drums, songs and dances usually occurs in performances, through constant repetition and imitation at the initial stages. Because *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances have been popular with the *Eve* during the past seven decades, most of the dancers, singers and percussionists I spoke to indicated that they did not receive any formal lessons on the art. They simply acquired the knowledge and skills through constant observation, listening and participation in performances within their home communities, lending credence to Timothy Rice's (1985) concept of music "that is learned but not taught".

An interview I conducted with Dzidzor Owusu, a veteran dancer and singer of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, indicates how some performers (singers and dancers) learn and acquire their craft and how they are passed on from one generation to the next. She spent her childhood days with her uncle in Peki-Adzokoe. While she admits learning to sing most of the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs during community performances, her dancing skills were acquired through her peers in Peki and her mother's younger sister (Daa Aku), who she referred to as a very good *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* dancer in Ho-Anlokordzi in the 1980s (Personal interview, April 16, 2017).

The transmission process shown above is also reinforced by Wofa Atta's testimony and experience in learning a number of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* and folk songs from his grandmother. He explained:

With my mother being a good alto singer and grandmother being a good dancer and singer, I had a lot of interactions with them and learned songs and musical ideas from them. So, some of my songs admittedly were given to me by my grandmother (mother's mother). She sung the

songs to me and I wrote them down. But I indicated that she left footprints of the sounds of time that I should thread on. She pushed me a little up the musical ladder. And that is what I have come to be (Personal interview, April 25, 2018).

The modes of teaching and learning described above resonate with the responses from most adult members and veteran members of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* groups I interviewed during my fieldwork. Again, for most people, their first step in acquiring skill in singing and dancing *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* was to join in the hand-clapping during performances.

With the proliferation of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* ensembles and their roles in the Ghanaian society in contemporary times, continuous efforts are being made at teaching and learning *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* songs, dance and drumming in order to ensure that the music is alive and sustained. In addition to the traditional system discussed earlier, new approaches are being explored for transmitting the knowledge. For those who cannot interpret music notations, they are encouraged to learn with the use of technology.

Sasa Gbormittah, one of the founding members of the Edzordzinam Fafali *Borborbor* group, informed me that in order to make the most use of their rehearsal sessions, members of the group are given tasks to learn specific *bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances on commercially recorded CDs before their rehearsal session (Personal interview, July 20, 2018). With this assignment, the dancers and singers learn the songs, the drummers listen to the songs but concentrate on the *vugbewo* (rhythms) of the *vugawo* (master drums) to note how they are laced with the performance. The group's trumpeter also listens to the trumpet session noting how it is combined with the *vugbewo* of the *vugawo*. During some of their rehearsal sessions, they play the cover versions for a while. When they get

to the point of attaining perfection with the cover version, the group then modifies it by adding its own creative ideas to enrich the performance.

Members of *Bɔbɔbɔ* ensembles have *Bɔbɔbɔ* songs mostly on mp3 music files stored on CDs or downloaded on their flash drives, iPod and mobile phones. Some also listen directly on the internet through YouTube, iTunes and others. Audio-visual recordings of performances are also being used in contemporary times in addition to the traditional ways. While most of the dancers I interviewed pointed to the traditional system of a long period of immersion into the dance through attending occasions of *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances such as funerals, festivals, church services and other events in their hometowns in the Volta region. I confirmed that most of the band members, who were born and bred in the urban centres such as Accra, Ashaiman and Tema, learn songs and dances through the use of technology, church services and *Bɔbɔbɔ* rehearsal sessions. The use of music notations in teaching is, however, rare. Text books that contain the teaching of basic rhythm and dance movements of *Bɔbɔbɔ* have been produced by individuals such as Pascal Younge and are used mostly to teach foreign students on academic exchange from other universities.

Musicians and Communities

Bɔbɔbɔ performances in communities are not complete and effective without collaboration of the three key players. These are the drummers, singers, dancers, and buglers/trumpeters. In many instances, composers create new songs and recreate old ones, dancers choreograph new dance sequences and drummers and trumpeters create new rhythmic passages, usually in line with the songs and dance movements. Although individual composers, drummers, dancers and singers do not receive the required respect from members of the

society, their ensembles are invited to stage performances during funerals, festivals and other special occasions in the communities. Beyond these categories of people are the composers, music arrangers and dance choreographers. Although these groups of people do not engage in *Bɔbɔɔ* performances to make a living as musicians, they have paved the way in modern *Bɔbɔɔ* history with their immense contribution to its repertory. Members of *Bɔbɔɔ* ensembles have their individual full-time professions and occupations they engage in. These include teaching, nursing, trading, accounting and marketing, driving, masonry, carpentry, tailoring, and hairdressing. A good number of the members are also students in the pre-tertiary and tertiary institutions in Ghana. For members who belong to community *Bɔbɔɔ* ensembles, they are obliged to honour invitations to perform at events sanctioned by the community leaders.

The erotic nature of *Bɔbɔɔ* dance has made sections of the Ghanaian public form negative perceptions about members of *Bɔbɔɔ* groups, especially the female dancers who are perceived to be promiscuous, and singers and instrumentalists are also generally regarded as drunks (Prosper Agbeko, Personal communication, March 30, 2019). These stereotypes are gradually being eroded with the proliferation of church-based *Bɔbɔɔ* groups and their involvement in evangelisation, coupled with the many Christian *Bɔbɔɔ* songs that have inundated the airwaves and commercial CD outlets.

The services of master/lead drummers and trumpeters/bugle players are in high demand, perhaps because there are a lot more *Bɔbɔɔ* groups and engagements than there are *Bɔbɔɔ* master drummers and trumpeters or bugle players. From the groups I interacted with, I observed that a good number of

them often struggle to get master drummer(s) whenever they have engagements. I witnessed one incident at Madina Estate on Sunday March 19, 2017 after a funeral thanksgiving service. The bereaved family and sympathisers had converged at the deceased's residence for the final funeral rites. The services of a *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group from Abelemkpe were engaged to provide entertainment to liven up the place. Instead of reporting at the agreed time of 2pm, they arrived at the venue an hour-and-a-half late. After their arrival, it took the group another one hour to begin the performance. When I enquired to know what the problem was, the leader who was visibly embarrassed and disappointed confided in me that their two master drummers were the cause of the delay. Apparently, it turned out that they had honoured another invitation from a different *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group which was likely to pay them more money than their parent group would, even if at all there would be any remuneration. The leader insisted it was not the first time the lead drummers had put up that behaviour. This brings to the fore the sustainability of other performers such as dancers, trumpeters and singers and the creators

Also, during a funeral at Kpoeta-Ashianti, in the Volta region, I observed that one trumpeter, Wisdom Dei, featured in three *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups at three separate venues in the span of four hours within the community. He told me that he is a professional *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* trumpeter, and he travels every weekend to play the trumpet for groups on weekends, for a fee. He explains:

I receive invitations to play for groups in Accra, Tema, Ashaiman, Ho and other places in the Volta region... I am a professional player (trumpeter). I charge them (*Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups) whenever I play for them. I am not a member of any *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group. So, I do not play for free. I know I am a very good player (Personal interview, October, 7, 2017).

The above phenomenon, though positive in terms of innovative entrepreneurship on the part of individual musicians, is a worrying trend to owners and leaders of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* groups. Efo Senyo observed that the phenomenon of master drummers and skilled trumpeters wanting to be independent, instead of affiliating or becoming members of performing groups, is a serious problem that is affecting the proper functioning of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* groups in recent times. He was of the opinion that the phenomenon is ‘killing’ the groups. Therefore, if the issue is not properly addressed, groups may have the burden to be paying every performer including the dancers and the singers in the future (Personal interview, April 28, 2018). Leaders of other groups also expressed similar frustrations about this phenomenon of skilled lead drummers and trumpeters requesting to receive financial remuneration for performing for groups. They revealed that sometimes they are compelled to go in for half-baked drummers and unskilled trumpeters who will not charge much money just to honour an invitation from clients. Although a number of groups have such challenges, Efo Senyo and his New Generation *Borborbor* group does not experience such problems because most of the performers were trained by the group; hence they have an obligation to respond positively to a performance call when the group needs them. He also noted that his group always have back-up drummers and trumpeters who will fill in when some of them become exhausted during performances or are absent (Personal communication, April 28, 2018).

Although I am inclined to agree with the lead drummers and trumpeters who insist on receiving financial remuneration for providing services for professional groups because such groups’ main preoccupation is to generate income, the same cannot be said for playing for groups that fall within the

church-based, community-based and to some extent, momentary group categories. This is because while the professional groups charge standard rates for their appearances at programs, the church-based and community-based groups perform for the common good of all for free. In a few instances where they charge a token for transportation of the group to the performance venue and maintenance of the musical instruments, surplus from the token is added to the groups' coffers for welfare purposes. Members of such not-for-profit performing groups who demand payment for performances may be seeking the collapse of the such groups because the moment money becomes the motivation for joining and performing for such groups, the core objectives and principles upon which the groups were established become misplaced. These developments, if not well managed, will in the long run have negative consequences for the sustainability of *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances.

For the groups to be well maintained and remain functional, they charge a few *cedis* for their performances depending on the group, the nature of the event and proximity to the performance venue. The church and community groups receive financial support from the institution and patrons which is used to purchase musical instruments, costumes and address other pressing needs of the groups.

The nexus between *Bɔbɔbɔ* performance and the Eve communities both in Ghana and the diaspora, is very solid because it has been an essential medium of articulating the peoples' musical, cultural and national identity. Performers travel from their communities to neighbouring towns and cities to honour invitations. Everywhere they migrate, they ensure that they form an ensemble through which they articulate aspects of their identity (Efo Senyo, Personal

communication, April 28, 2018). The large numbers of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles in Accra and Tema which are tied to churches, hometown associations and individuals, lend credence to this fact. The Ghanaian Eve in the diaspora also usually have members who can perform *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, hence they are able to organise themselves and perform for their enjoyment. For example, soldiers of the Ghana Armed Forces during their UN peacekeeping in Lebanon and other war-stricken countries, celebrate Ghana Day during which they dress in native costume and perform traditional music (Slater Davordzi, Personal communication 2019 March, 22).

A *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance was organised by the Ghana battalion, and video footage on YouTube indicates that the performance was infectious, and led to troops from other Western countries participating in the dance (see Xah Dzidzienyo, May 6, 2018). For most Eves who reside in Eve communities outside the Eveland, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* is a pan-Eve genre that must be cherished, made visible and guarded jealously at all times.

Regulations and Infrastructure

Without any official regulations in terms of policy and provision of infrastructure or funding for its development and sustenance by the Central government, the Eve consider *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* as one of the music genres that symbolize the pride of Eveland. Individuals and groups through perseverance and hard work ensure that performances are kept alive. The nature of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances does not require special performance spaces or venues. *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* can be performed in any space as long as the it is conducive for drumming, dancing and singing. Open spaces such as public or village squares, school parks, under trees, in front of buildings or stores, are acceptable. It is also

performed in auditoriums, classrooms and churches. Ensembles use such spaces for their rehearsal sessions.

Realising that the genre has transformed and was fast changing even more, the Volta Regional Centre for National Culture (CNC) instituted an annual *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* festival. Its maiden event was held in 2010. At the second annual festival, Emmanuel Quao, then Regional Director of the CNC, revealed that the festival was instituted to fight the adulteration of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music and dance forms (GNA, November 7, 2011). Unfortunately, the festival could not be sustained perhaps due to funding challenges, a situation that raises sustainability issues. It could be argued that the centre that was set up by law to among other things implement and monitor government policies relating to the development, promotion, preservation and appreciation of culture and the arts in the region (National Commission on Culture, 2004) always receive less budgetary allocation. This makes it difficult for the Center to fulfill its mandate.

Contexts and Constructs

***Bɔbɔɔbɔ* as part of Christian Liturgy**

The acceptance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums into the liturgy of the Christian church has contributed to the sustainability and popularity of the genre in the Christian religious circles. The use of Eve drums and *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drumming in particular is a major feature of Eve-dominated churches such as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Apostles Revelation Society (ARS). Since it was introduced into the E.P. Church in 1986, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drumming has been an integral part of the liturgy. When the Church Choir is undertaking a procession for the church service to begin, the drummers in the choir hang the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums around their necks and play them in accompaniment to the processional hymn. The use of

the drums to accompany congregational hymn singing and choral group singing in the late 1980s resulted in the production of many *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* cassettes and later, CD recordings of Eve hymns in the early 2000s. There were growing concerns from some members of the church regarding the ways in which the Eve hymns were sung on the recordings.

The leadership of the E.P. Church became increasingly worried and took the matter up. Rev. S. K. Amoako who is currently a member of the legal team of the E.P. Church stated in his opening speech at *BorborFest 2010*, that although the church acknowledges that the use of the Eve hymns has contributed to the development of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music and has also made the hymns very popular, the manner in which the hymns are sung does not sit well with the leaders and musicians in the church. He explained that the hymns recorded on the cassettes and CDs are sung differently from how they have been notated in the hymnal, a situation which affects the congregational hymns singing in the church. He therefore urged *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians to desist from recording hymns and compose their original Christian songs that will contribute to broadening the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* repertoires (Welcome address: Konumakpor, 2010).

Rev. Amoako's concern was reiterated during the second *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* festival held on November 5, 2011 under the support of the Volta Regional Directorate of the Centre for National Culture (CNC), where the guest speakers were concerned about *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* being adulterated by the hymns. Therefore, Walter Blege urged contemporary *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians and social commentators to learn from the examples of the early *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians who created *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs in the past, a feat that in his opinion made Volta region "the musical basket of Ghana" (GNA, November 7, 2011).

Competitions Organized for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* Ensembles

The concept of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* competitions which are usually organised as *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* festivals, is a key issue that has contributed to boosting *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. In Chapter Five I referred to two such events held in Accra and the Ho West District of the Volta region. On the 3rd of December 2016, the first ever *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* Competition in the Asuogyaman District of the Eastern Region was held at Atimpoku. The contest, dubbed the ‘Best *Borborbor* Competition’, was opened to Ten *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* bands from Asuogyaman and North Tongu Districts. According to the event coordinator Yazid Muhammad, the programme targeted the traditional side of the Farmers Day celebration in Ghana and also discovered great talent in the Districts. The adjudication of the competitions was based on four components: Dress, Stage performance, Creativity and Crowd participation. According to the organisers, the Dress component deals with the visual appeal the group presents due to the beauty of the Costume worn by the performers. It also includes how convenient the costumes are for the performance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* on stage. Stage performance considers the singing, dancing, drumming and the use of trumpet(s) by the various groups. The Creativity component looks out for original ideas by way of choreography and stage appearance and organisation.

The component of Crowd participation has to do with how involved the audience will be in their performances. This component is quite controversial in that groups can arrange or rent crowds to participate in their performance to create a placebo effect on their performance. Perhaps this component was added to encourage the competing groups to rally their supporters to the venue. Such programs help existing *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups to practise constantly in order to keep a

particular performance standard. Notice of such competitions also encourage people to quickly organise similar groups to compete after which they disband. But in cases where such groups emerge winners, they try to keep them together for a period of time. These competitions also give musicians the opportunity to perform and watch other groups perform. Through this, groups learn new things from each other. It also provides an opportunity for networking among the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* groups.

***Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* as an Integral Part of the Socio-Cultural life of the Eve**

Apart from *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* music being performed in Christian religious worship, it has also become an integral part of the socio-cultural life of the Eve. Events in the various contexts have become recurring performance opportunities. These include the social context; ritual contexts (weddings and funerals, installation of chiefs); traditional festive contexts (*Gbidukɔ̀za*, *teza*), and other festive contexts (anniversaries, get-togethers, picnics).

There are hardly any funeral rites, marriage rites or installation of chief of the Eve, especially the Northern Eve, that goes without live or recorded *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances. The performances run through all three days of the funeral rites. Traditional festive contexts such as *Gbidukɔ̀Za*, of the Gbi of Hohoe, *Te za*, *Agbemevor Za* (Kente festival), *Agotime Kpetoe*, and others, all have either '*Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* Night' or '*Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀Fest*' as part of the official program line up. Catherine Grant notes that for "indigenous people, festivals represent strategic spaces to recognize, celebrate and renew their cultural traditions" (2016:23). This holds true for the Eve with respect to *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performance. During festivals and other occasions, there is a conscious effort to integrate *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performance. Anniversaries, get-togethers, picnics, and Old Students

Associations programs are not held without the performance of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀*. Such associations include those from Bishop Herman College – Kpando, Mawuli School - Ho, Awudome Secondary School – Tsito, and OLA Girls Secondary School- Ho all in the Volta region. Performances of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* are not limited only to activities organised in Evedland. Non-Eve speaking Ghanaians also request live *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* performances during funerals and other occasions of celebration. This confirms by Efo Senyo’s claim that his group honours invitations by Akans to perform in parts of Kumasi in the Ashanti region, Central and Western regions of Ghana. He further explains that in order to make *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* relevant to these non-Eve speakers in the areas mentioned above, his group tries to incorporate familiar songs mostly in the Akan language to which they can sing along.

Perhaps another context where the services of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* ensembles are employed is taverns, pubs and eateries. On Easter Sunday of April 16, 2017, a buffet lunch was organised by the management of Deenamz Bar and Restaurant, located at Teshie Nungua in Accra at the cost of Fifty Ghana *cedis* (Ghs50). People from all walks of life attended. On that same afternoon was a live broadcast of an English Premiere League (EPL) match between Manchester United and Chelsea showing on a giant screen at the Bar. It was a very well attended lunch session. The side attraction was the Mawumenornorny *Borborbor* group from Abavana, near Accra Newtown. The group gave a non-stop performance from 2:45pm to about 5:30pm with supporters of Manchester United joining the dance intermittently and spraying the drummers and skilful dancers with *cedi* notes. Patrons of the bar did not only enjoy the menu served but also joined in the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* dance performance which was the icing on the

cake. Even when the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group ended their performance at 5:30pm, the patrons requested another round of performance.

Some patrons admitted that they decided to come to Denamz bar that day because they learned there would be a performance of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. Charles Atiogbe, a retired civil servant who came with a family of four, intimated to me that he came with his family to have lunch, but more importantly, to experience the songs and drum rhythms of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* (Personal communication, April 16, 2017). Kwame Agyengo, a Manchester United fan, confessed that he and his friends were compelled to watch the football match at the bar by the inviting sounds that came from the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums. ‘We were going to our regular place to watch the match when we heard the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* being played. As you can see, I am really having fun in the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* circle. I am happy because ManU, my team won. This is a *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* victory over Chelsea’ (Personal communication, April 16, 2017).

Given all the contexts mentioned above, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* has become the magnetic force that draws potential patrons and clients to the events. For these reasons, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups are in high demand and people hire them to perform at private and public celebrations and events such as illustrated in Figures 25 and 26 below.



Figure 25: A poster of Gbi Festival with Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ listed as part of the festival activities

Source: Gbi citizens association

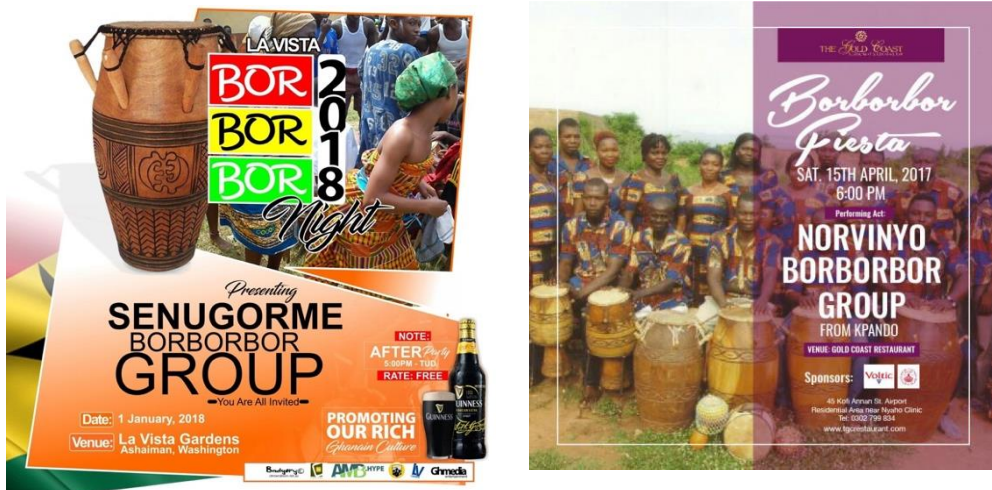


Figure 26: Samples of fliers advertising special programs for Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ as side attraction

Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/614459942882842027/>

Media and Music Industry

Since John Collins made the first recording of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* music in the early 1980s, which came in the form of cassettes recordings, those from several popular *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* groups were widespread via sales at local cassette markets

throughout Evedand (Burns, 2016). There are currently many recordings of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music available in Ghana. These are in the form of documentary field recordings and studio recordings which emerge on commercial albums. Since the advent and easy accessibility to computers and digital studio recording equipment, it has become convenient for performers to produce their own audio and audio-visual recordings (Wettermark & Lundström, 2016); individual *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians and groups have thus produced several albums which are currently accessible. These albums are put on commercial CDs and distributed through outlets in the urban and peri-urban centres. These CDs are bought by all those in the upper, middle and lower classes in Ghanaian society who love to listen to *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music.

The recordings are often played in beer bars, pubs and as interludes during funerals and other social gatherings (Burns, 2016), where organising live *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances may cost a great deal. Young men provide *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances services using mobile discos popularly referred to in Ghana as ‘spinners’. They render such services to clients from a collection of a pre-recorded *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music using CDs and USB flash drives on either desktop or laptop computers. Taxi and *trotro* drivers who are *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* enthusiasts are usually heard playing such CDs in their vehicles. Although the CDs contribute to getting their productions to the consumers and making the groups and artists known beyond their immediate surroundings, it provides little incentive to the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians and groups. Burns notes that;

Occasionally, a local music promoter will approach a group to sponsor a recording, offering to pay them a small recording fee, after which the promoter can market and sell the recordings on his or her own, paying little or no royalties to the group on the sales of the product.

Understandably, many groups refuse to record under these arrangements (2016:67).

Apart from promoters double-crossing the musicians and not giving them their due, a major problem bedevilling them is the unauthorised copying of CDs. For, as noted by Efo Senyo, a renowned musician, composer and producer of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music, “illegal reproduction of our CDs is very rampant and the sad aspect is, the authorities responsible for checking these copyright activities are ineffective and, in most cases, helpless, leaving us alone in this distressing situation” (Personal interview, April 23, 2018). He lamented to me that, any time his relatives and friends in America and Europe hear his name, they say, “that guy is swimming in money” (Personal communication, April 23, 2018). Yet that is far from the reality. This is because unidentified people pirate his recordings and market them in parts of America and Europe without his knowledge. Therefore, he does not benefit anything from those CDs sold in the western world. The situations in which musicians and performing groups labour to put in their best, but end up not reaping from their labour is a worrying trend that has the potential to threaten the sustainability of the genre.

Media Engagement

Bɔbɔɔbɔ activities and activities in which *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* forms an integral part of, are reported in both local and national radio, televisions and newspapers. Some *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups and musicians have become very active on social media platforms. They upload mp3 files and audio-visual files to services such as YouTube and other online media like Facebook. Notable among them are the Edzordzinam Fafali *Borborbor* group (<https://youtu.be/wkaL7xpVR8c>), Efo

Senyo and his New Generation *Borborbor* group, and Israel Maweta. Through these media they advertise and promote their individual works and popularise the *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* culture. A few groups also employ the services of the internet to attract both potential and visiting domestic and foreign tourists about their activities in order to attract them to their performances. These they do through an online travel review and discussion site called TripAdvisor.com. WhatsApp platforms are also used by groups to advertise their products and services for potential clients.

Electronic media like radio and television stations also run advertisements and announcements to promote upcoming events associated with *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances. Leaders and representatives of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups are given airtime to tell the listening and viewing public about their activities such as an album launch, anniversaries and festivals. Apart from local radio stations just playing *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music, a number of them have dedicated between two to six hours of airtime every week during which only *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music is played for the listening pleasure of lovers of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. During these special programs, listeners are given the opportunity to phone into the studio and request songs for the relations and loved ones. Some also use the period to educate listeners on social and national issues that are of concern to listeners. Other radio stations with airtimes dedicated specifically to the airing of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music include those based in higher educational institutions, national radio stations and privately-owned radio stations.

The stations that belong to educational institutions include Valley View Radio 97.7, and Radio Universe 105.7, all in Accra, and Volta Premiere 98.1, based in Ho. The privately-owned stations include Radio Gold 90.5 FM, Top

FM 103.1, Kasapa 102.5 FM. Rainbow FM 87.5, and Onua FM 95.1, also in Accra. In the Volta region, all the radio stations play *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music and host special programmes during which only *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music is aired. The rest include Jubilee Radio 106.9 Keta; Lorlornyo 93.3 FM, Hohoe; Volta Star Radio 91.3, Ho; Kekeli Radio 102.9; Holy FM 98.5, Aflao; Kaleawo 107.3, Akatsi; Radio Tongu 92.1, Sogakope, and Pink 96.9 F.M at Kasoa. Such special *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music programs have become very competitive among the radio stations, with presenters bringing in innovations in order to outdo sister stations within their catchment areas.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed issues of sustainability of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances using the five-domain framework in Schippers (2016). Transmission of knowledge and skill of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums and general performance from one individual or ensemble to another, has followed the traditional system of learning which includes gradual acquisition through prolonged periods of observation, listening, participation and in some instances formal learning. Due to social, religious, technological and attitudinal change of humans, aspects of the traditional transmission systems have been disrupted. Transmission processes currently include the use of pre-recordings of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* files on CDs, DVDs, mp3 and mp4 players, ipods, electronic and social media outlets. The present generation prefer these system of learning *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* because it is convenient and not time-consuming.

In many instances, composers create new songs and recreate old ones, dancers choreograph new dance sequences and drummers and trumpeters new rhythmic passages usually in line with the songs and dance movements.

Although individual composers, drummers, dancers and singers are not held in high esteem in the society, their performing groups are invited to stage performances during funerals, festivals and other special occasions in the communities. Although there is a phenomenal rise in the number of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles and demand for their services, there are not enough skilful master/lead drummers and trumpeters/buglers to play for some of the groups when they have gigs. Some of the trumpeters and drummers also demand payment for their services, a phenomenon that has the tendency to threaten the sustainability of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances in the future.

The Christian church has influenced *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* to the extent that Christian songs form the largest corpus of the songs in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances. *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* festivals and competitions that are organised by individuals and institutions have contributed to the growing levels of creativity and innovation in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. The incorporation of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances into funeral activities, traditional festivals and Christian festivities, and other events in the community, helps provide a sustainable future for the genre.

Regulations and infrastructure at the governmental level are almost non-existent. However, the Ewe community, churches and individuals through their programmes, festivals, and competitions, constitute a viable infrastructure that has sustained *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances over the years. The creation of new performance spaces such as pubs, and restaurants for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, which also use *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* as side attraction for events in order to get people to attend, is a good initiative that will enhance the sustainability of the genre.

The presence of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* in the Ghanaian music industry is seen in the degree to which it has attracted general attention. Technology has made it more

convenient for individual musicians and ensembles to continue to record and produce CDs and DVDs albums that are distributed through outlets in towns and cities throughout Ghana and beyond. Such *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* CDs are played in public spaces such as beer bars, local drinking spots and chop bars. Private and commercial drivers who are *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* enthusiasts also play the CDs for their listening pleasure in their vehicles. Local artisans download mp3 versions of their favourite *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* playlists on their mobile phones and play them while going about their occupational activities. At occasions where *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles cannot be engaged for live performances, the services of “spinners” are hired to play *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* tracks at such occasions. Ensembles and individual musicians make use of both the print and electronic media to advertise their works. Local radio stations in Ghana have specific programmes during which only *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* tracks are played for the pleasure of their listeners.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Throughout the preceding chapters I have discussed issues regarding the modifications *Bɔbɔbɔ* has witnessed over the years. This chapter presents the summary of the whole study. The summary entails a restatement of main sections such as the purpose of the study, the research questions addressed, the highlight of the available literature reviewed, an overview of the methodology employed, and a statement of the main findings. Following the summary, will be conclusions as well as recommendations based on the findings of the study. I then close the chapter with suggestions for further studies.

Summary

I set out to investigate the innovations and transformations in *Bɔbɔbɔ* of the Ghanaian Ewe. Music and dance traditions evolve over time and *Bɔbɔbɔ* is no exception. Research on *Bɔbɔbɔ* is deficient on how creators employ their ingenuity to introduce new elements into the dance music tradition. Besides, the aspect of sustainability is missing scholarly literature. Investigating how these phenomena will add to the body of knowledge in ethnomusicology.

Based on the purpose of study, the objectives of the research were to (a) explore the history and development of *Bɔbɔbɔ* dance music, (b) examine the innovations in *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances in both Christian and non-Christian contexts; (c) explore themes in *Bɔbɔbɔ* texts and their significance to the people, and (d) examine sustainability issues in *Bɔbɔbɔ*.

In order to realise the above stated objectives, the following research questions were set.

- What are the precursors of *Bɔbɔbɔ*?
- What are the innovations that occurred in course of its development?
- How do *Bɔbɔbɔ* musicians create their songs, drum rhythms and dance movements?
- How have *Bɔbɔbɔ* artists contributed to the innovations and promotion of the dance music?
- Which themes are *Bɔbɔbɔ* songs texts founded on?
- How have *Bɔbɔbɔ* performances been sustained

To that end, related literature on Ewe music in general, and *Bɔbɔbɔ* in particular as well as innovation as a concept was reviewed.

The study adopted a qualitative research approach employing ethnographic participant observation and interviews in gathering primary data. I employed snowballing to get into contacts with ensemble owners, and *Bɔbɔbɔ* practitioners. Through purposive and convenient sampling. I selected veteran *Bɔbɔbɔ* practitioners, famous *Bɔbɔbɔ* artists and others. Simple random sampling and snowballing were used to get *Bɔbɔbɔ* enthusiasts for interviews. I also used saturation and dense sampling in the selection of *Bɔbɔbɔ* songs.

Individual and focused group interviews were held with people relevant to the study. Apart from the face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews were held for individuals who were difficult to reach in person. I made use of unstructured, semi-structured and open-ended interview questions. Unstructured interviews gave the opportunity for the interviewees to share their views and opinions without any interruptions from me.

Digital archives consisting of video and audio documentaries on the subject was used. These include songs, performance videos, films, interviews and pictures both online and offline that provide factual report on aspects of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀.

One hundred and fifteen songs were textually transcribed using EXMARaLDA Partitur Editor version 1.6 software. In some cases discussions were held with *hadzenɔ̀wo* (cantors), to double-check the right texts of the songs. The songs were later translated into the English language. The recorded field interviews were all thus transcribed in Ewe and later translated into English. A few were transcribed musically using Finale Software. After transcription of the songs, they were carefully analysed and some themes were deduced from them. Overall, one hundred and twelve songs were transcribed out of the total of the two hundred and forty-six songs collected. Data including songs were analysed by identifying themes, patterns, structures, classifications that run through the study.

Findings

Precursors of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* dance music as being practiced today are konkoma marching bands, tuidzi and akpese dance music. Due to the amorous nature of the Tuidzi dance music its performance was prohibited by the leaders of some communities. Tuidzi metamorphosed into a variant called dance music called akpese. The creativity of Nuatro led to the fusion of elements from Tuidzi and konkoma music to produce what later became *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀*. The individual innovator of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* Francis Cudjo Nuatro.

The study reveals that at the inception *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* was characterised by monotonous rhythmic structure. However, it has seen a number of innovations over the years. Groups and individuals have employed structural innovations,

and contextual innovations. Structural innovations include the adoption of barrel drums and their subsequent expansion and complex the rhythmic variations played by the master drummer(s).

The replacement of the bugle with trumpet in B-flat is an innovation common with many ensembles. Apart from the conventional role of playing interludes and cuing dancers to intensify their dancing, the bugle/trumpet introduces new songs and rhythmic passages in tandem with the master drummer(s). It is also sometimes used to call the *tsoboe* chant for the voices to respond. Well-organised ensembles present performances in which the drummers, dancers and trumpeter(s) engage in well-laced pieces with interlocking rhythms. The surrogacy of the trumpets and master drums is more pronounced in performances. Melodic passages from popular highlife music are played as interlude by the trumpet. In many cases, creators (re)create old and new dance sequences, drum rhythms and trumpet passages in line with the song(texts). In terms of rhythmic innovations in songs, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles engage in rhythmic elongations of Ewe hymns originally composed in 3/4 time to conform to the 4/4 time structure demanded in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*. Newly choreographed dances based on movements from traditional and popular dances have also been incorporated into *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*.

In terms of contextual innovations, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* is performed in both Christian and non-Christian spaces. These include Churches, pubs, funerals, marriage ceremonies and anniversaries and cultural festivals. Its association with Christianity has resulted in the establishment of a number of church-based groups, and the creation and recording of many Christian *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* songs. The

commercialisation of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups and production of CDs constitute innovative ways to sustain the ensembles and their membership.

While most *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians source their songs from the body of existing folk tunes and Christian hymns a few of the (re)create their own songs. Some employ known melodies and fit in their created text. Drummers use both verbal texts and non-verbal texts

Generally, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* artists (both creators and elaborators) have in their own diverse ways made substantial contributions to the innovation and promotion of the dance music. Efo Senyo championed the establishment of a *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* group while he was staff of Ghana Textile Printing Company (GTPC), Tema in 1990. He has six albums to his credit. He is also credited with the expansion of the five set *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums to the seven and nine sets, and also introducing as many as three trumpets into *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances. His style of trumpet interludes and the interpolations between the trumpets and the master drums, has become a standard for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* ensembles in Ghana. He has a standing performing group. He is among the first to introduce popular dance styles such as azonto into *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performance. Senyo's creative use of trendy portions of Akan highlife, hiplife, and gospel music melodies for trumpet interludes during *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances is novel. Through his program on Agoo TV, in Accra amateur *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups are given the platform to showcase their skills to the public.

Wofa Atta relies on age-long folk songs (some of which have been forgotten) and reinterprets them for the present generation to appreciate. He led the introduction of traditional drum rhythm (*adevu*) into *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drumming. Release of seven *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* albums is further demonstration of his contribution.

Although he does not have a group of his own, he used his popularity to promote the groups he made recordings with. The platform he had as radio show host was used to promote the works of his colleague musicians, and other upcoming *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* musicians for thirteen years.

Themes in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* Song texts can be placed into two main categories: secular and Christian themes. The secular songs are based on social commentary and events that occur at specific periods. The songs present issues of human relations, love-life, the hardships of life, death, bereavement, political, social, historical and issues of patriotism. The Christian themes centre on the Love of God and of fellow man, the omnipotence and goodness of God and Christian virtues such as forgiveness, honesty purity, and the need to focus on eternal life. They also include stories and parables from the Bible. Of all the *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* songs performed by *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* ensembles, those with Christian themes out-number those with secular themes. On the other hand. The *vugbe* texts comprise adages, jovial phrases and other issues that are of interest to the creators. More importantly it serves as repository for drummers to easily draw on to remember rhythms during performances.

The indigenous systems of learning music and dance is being observed. In addition to that *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* singers, dancers, drummers and trumpeters learn their parts by listening and watching recordings on CDs mobile phones, YouTube and other digital and internet platforms before rehearsal sessions. Generally, members of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* ensembles have their individual full-time professions and occupations they engage in. Some of them perform *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* as a part time activity (for monetary gains) while others perform it as leisure activity. The sexually exciting nature of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* dance has made sections of the

Ghanaian public especially Christians form negative perceptions about members of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups. Female dancers who are perceived to be promiscuous, and singers and instrumentalists are also generally regarded as drunks. Services of master/lead drummers and trumpeters/bugle players are in high demand, because their numbers are not directly proportionate to the ever-increasing numbers of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups and engagements.

The Church especially the Evangelical Presbyterian Church has been a home *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music since it was introduced into in 1986. *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums accompany church choir processions and singing of congregational hymns and other choruses. The ARS and a few charismatic/Pentecostal churches also use *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* drums. Competitions in the form of festivals are organized for groups as a way of sustaining the public's interest in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances. It also helps performers sharpen their skills and intensify their creativity. *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* performances have also been an integral part of socio-cultural activities such as funerals, festivals especially among the northern Ewes. All these are made possible by private individuals and groups. Regulations and infrastructure at the state level are almost non-existent.

In the area of media and music industry, the study found out that *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* has a strong presence in the music industry. A number of private and government radio stations have programmes dedicated to solely playing *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* on their airwaves. Individual *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* musicians and groups have also taken advantage of technology to produce several commercial recordings which are accessible on CDs, DVDs, mp3 and a host of online platforms. However, the issue of piracy that prevents musicians from getting the right

financial benefits from their recording projects is a potential threat to the sustainability of the music tradition.

Conclusions

This thesis uses *Bɔbɔbɔ* music within a multidisciplinary framework dominated by Ethnomusicology and history to create an ethnography that presents the life and culture of the Ewe people of Ghana. It uses this unique genre as a complex cultural phenomenon to tell so much about the people including their historical antecedents, their political life, linguistic concepts, occupation, food and socio-cultural organisation. The thesis explores the all-encompassing Ewe phenomenon with its different dimensions including music, dance, language, dramatic enactment and visual forms to discuss the origin and development of *Bɔbɔbɔ*, focusing on its precursors such as *Konkoma*, *Tuidzi* and *Akpese*. It also presents historical accounts of the *Bɔbɔbɔ* genre, drawing connections to its nationalist, socio-political and religious aspects.

The journey of investigating a cultural form is not an easy one. A significant challenge is the issue of cultural representation. In this challenging endeavour, one needs to be very careful when dealing with the custodians of the phenomenon. In my case, the conflict between emic and etic perspectives surfaced in the field where I found myself as a researcher of a culture I belong to. During my initial fieldwork, I found one side of myself trying to challenge some pieces of information being given to me while another side of me kept reminding me of my role as a researcher and not a knowledge body. Like other scholars such as Amegago (2000), Avorgbedor (1986) Kotsuoba (2001) and Kuwor (2013) who did ethnography at home and found themselves in similar situation, I eventually put on my research hood and became a curious student in

the field. I was fascinated at the amount of knowledge Ewe tradition keepers possess and I consider them as archives of Ewe knowledge.

The central theme of the thesis critically deals with some very important issues concerning the entire life and culture of the Ewe. These issues include, migration and settlement of the people, the origin and development of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, performance practices in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, the impact of the advent of Christianity on *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, its processes of development and the issue of sustainability. Through *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* music the study opens a window for the reader to see the Ewe in Ghana a part of a larger group of Ewe in West Africa. It also reveals territorial wars and invasions that compelled them to migrate through varied experiences and circumstances during their journey to find a dwelling place.

Tracing the origin and development of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, the study reveals the political moves of the then Prime Minister, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who maintained that development of Ghana and the continent of Africa has so much to do with the arts. The study underscores the largely participatory nature of African music and dance which saw the Prime Minister join in the dancing during one of his state visits to Kpando. It is also evident in this study that the etymology of the name, *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* is linked to the elements of humility and submission the performers accorded the Prime Minister.

Significantly, the study has identified, selected and presented samples of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* texts and explained their meaning and relevance in the social, economic and religious lives of the people. This obviously suggests that music in Africa does not serve only entertainment purpose but also, it becomes a repository of cultural knowledge, values and virtues. Scholarly works on Ewe material including Modesto Amegago (2011), Daniel Avorgbedor (1986, 2001), James

Burns (2009), Nisio Fiagbedzi (2005; 2009), Kathryn Lin Guerts (2002) and Sylvanus Kuwor (2013) endorse the point that music and dance practices stand as a repository of Ewe knowledge system. Drawing on these works took me on a journey of complexity of emerging patterns that validate the notion that music in Africa is also a documented history of a people. Although its creation was credited to an individual called Nuatro, the study makes it clear that *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* and its texts, which include song lyrics, drum texts and dance movements, are created not only by individuals but also through collaborative efforts by groups of musicians for the use of ensembles. Another highlight of this study is its discovery of themes in *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* Song texts which it placed into two main categories namely, secular and Christian themes.

While I consider this study as a very important source of reference for future music students, educators, scholars and other social science researchers due to the enormous material gathered in the field, it is important to add here that I have only scratched the surface. As a member of the Ewe culture, being born and raised within the Ewe and Ghanaian traditions and educated in their local and institutional settings has given me an added advantage in gaining much insight into the culture. But this does not to imply any absolute understanding of all Ewe cultural knowledge. I have tried in this study to provide a comprehensive analysis of the data to facilitate effective representation of the Ewe through exploration of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* genre. Therefore, in my view, more research is needed to explore ethnomusicological relevance of the Ewe.

Based on the bulk of Ewe material that I have gathered in the field for this study and the complex layers of patterns that emerged during the process of analysis, I argue in conclusion that music is a pivot around which African life revolves.

Recommendation

- As part of innovation, practitioners should explore Kofi Sarpong's African Borborbor concept and extend the frontiers.
- In order to solve some of the challenges faced by the groups, it is recommended that all *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups should consider constituting themselves into an umbrella Union and register with the District and Regional Centres of National Culture (CNC). This will make it easier for them to be recognised and possibly benefit from central government support.
- Individual performers should join any of the recognised performing arts unions in the Ghana
- As part of sustainability of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, it will be important to establish children's or Juvenile's *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups in communities
- In addition, organisation of reality shows for *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups or practitioners will further the sustainability of the genre.

Suggestions for Further Research

Emanating from this study of innovations in *Bɔbɔɔbɔ*, which provides rich material for research, the following suggestions are made:

- It will be interesting to embark on a study Sustainability of *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* groups in order to understand how they are able to keep together for a

long period of time in spite of the challenges that come with group dynamics.

- Sustainability of professional musicians is grey area also. Therefore, it will be interesting to explore how such individual *Bɔbɔbɔ* performers (dancer, cantor, trumpeter, master drummer) are able to sustain themselves, and ensure that they are always relevant.
- Performance practices focusing on individual ensembles could be considered for future research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A	List of people interviewed and groups mentioned
Appendix B	Interview guides
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APPENDIX A:

LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED AND GROUPS

Interviews

Alice Mensah, Personal communication, May 14, 2017, Ashaiman.
Dzidzor Owusu, Personal communication, April 16, 2017), Accra New Town
Slater Davordzi, Personal communication 2019 March, 22), Nima
Amega Sodji. – Personal communication (April 17, 2017), Banana Inn, Accra
Ben Atta. Personal communication, August 12, 2017
Bright Zigah, personal interview, May 14, 2017, Legon
Charles Atiogbe (personal communication, April 16, 2017) Teshie
Daavi Owusu, personal interview, April 16, 2017, Nima
Dan Mensah, Personal communication, July 14, 2018, Nima
David Sosu, Personal Communication, April 28, 2018
Efo Kojo, Personal interview, December 3, 2016, Ho
Efo Senyo, Personal interview, April 28. 2018, Afienya
Elisa Konu, personal communication, July 12, 2018, Lome, Togo
Selorm Addo personal communication, 19th March 2017), Nima
Emmanuel Kwasi Bedzra, personal communication, April 27, 2018, Spintex
Road,
Francis Ametwepe, Personal interview, May 14, 2017, Legon
Francis Anku, personal interview, April 23, 2018, Afienya
John Gollo, Personal conversation, April 14, 2018, Ashiante Kpoeta
Justice Sronipah, telephone conversation July 12, 2018,
Kodjo Nfodjo, Personal Interview July 15, 2018, Tsito
Kofi Ansah - Personal communication, April 10, 2018), Cape Coast
Kwame Agyngo (personal communication, April 16, 2017) Teshie
Kwame Anagli, Personal interview. July 14, 2018, Ho
Kwashie Kuwor, Personal conversation, July 23, 2018, Legon
Mamavi Abra Personal communication July 10, 2018, Akatsi
Sasa Gbormitah – personal communication February 20, 2018).
Sasa Gbormitta, personal interview, July 20, 2018 Abeka Lapaz

Senyo Adzei, personal interview, July 15 2018, Cape Coast
Togbe Mateo Broni, Personal communication, May 21, 2018, Peki-Adzokoe
Vivian Affram personal interview, April 10, 2017), Nima
Wisdom Dei, personal interview, October 7, 2017 Ashiante Kpeota
Wisdom Ziizigah Personal communication, November 13, 2018, Legon
Vinyo Klu, Personal communication, May 14, 2017), Ashaiman
Wofa Attah, personal interview, April 25, 2018, Cape Coast
Xornam Atta Owusu, Personal interview, April 25. 2018, Cape
Coast

Groups mentioned

ABC Borborbor Group, Vakpo Gborxome
Achem-Kpoeta Borborbor Group,
Adagana Dance Company, Wusuta
Agbeyeye Borborbor Group, EPCG Kisseman
Agebyeye Group, EPCG Adenta
Amrahia CYB. EPCG, Amarahia
Asogli Unity and Love Borborbor, Ho
Cheers Borborbor Group, Banana Inn
Desiadenyo Borborbor Group, Hlefi
Dodome Aveha Unity Borborbor Band, Dodome Aveha
Dumas Borborbor Group
Dunenyο Borborbor Group
Dunenyο Borborbor Group, Hlefi
Dzolo-Gbogame Unity Borborbor Group
Edzordzinam Fafali Borborbor group, Abeka Lapaz Accra
Goodnews Borborbor Group
Goodnews Borborbor Group, Ashaiman

Have No. 2 Borborbor Group
Jeanette Borborbor Group, Amakom Kumasi
Kekeli Borborbor Group, Kpoeta-Achem
Konumakpor Musical Group, Nima
Kpoeta-Ashianti Dunenyo Borborbor
Lolonyo Habobo, Kumasi
Mawumenornorny Borborbor Group, Abavana, Accra
Milenorvisi Borborbor Group, Pigfarm
Milenovisi Akpese Group Abutia Kpota
New Generation Borborbor Group
New Vision Borborbor Group, Mamprobi
Norvinyo Borborbor Group, Dzalele Glime
Norvisi Borborbor Group
Nuitfafa Borborbor Group, Kpando
Saviefe Ele Agbe Borborbor Group
St. Micheal Ewe Society Youth, Madina
Taviefe Akpese Group
Taviefe Borborbor Group
Taviefe Deme Borborbor Group
Taviefe Deme Reggae Borborbor Band
Tsonakle Borborbor & Cultural Group, La
Youth Band, EPCG, Dodowa

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW GUIDES

a. Interview guide for key practitioners

Francis Anku (Efo Senyo)

Please tell me your name

Who is Efo Senyo?

Where do you came from?

Please tell me about your education

Tell me about your musical life and training

How did you get involved in Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ performance?

Please tell me about the history of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀

How was Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ performance like when you were younger?

Has there been any changes in Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ performance? If yes, please tell me about them.

Please tell me about the New Generation Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ band

How different is *akpese* from Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀?

Tell me about the albums you have released

What challenges do you face as a Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ practitioner?

How have you ensured the sustainability of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀?

How have you promoted or influenced the development of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀?

Xornam Attah Owusu (Wofa Attah)

Please tell me your name

Who is Wofa Attah?

Where do you came from?

Please tell me about your education

Tell me about your musical life and training

How did you get involved in Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ performance?

Please tell me about the history of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀

How was Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ performance like when you were younger?

Has there been any changes in Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ performance? If yes, please tell me about them.

How different is *akpese* from Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀?

Tell me about the albums you have released

What challenges do you face as a Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ practitioner?

How have you ensured the sustainability of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀?

How have you promoted or influenced the development of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀?

b. Interview guide for band leaders/owners

Leaders/owners of bands

Please tell me your name

What is the name of your group?

When and why was it formed?

What is the administrative structure the band?

Tell me about the activities of the group

How are performers (dancers, drummers etc) recruited?

How are rehearsal sessions organised?

Tell me about the challenges you have managing the band.

c. Interview guide for performers (Dancers/Drummers/Singers/Trumpeters)

How did you become a Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ performer (dancer, drummer, singer, trumpeter)?

How was Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ performed your days?

How do you learn/practice new dance movements, drum rhythms and songs?

What would you say are qualities of a good dancer/drummer/singer/trumpeter?

Could you share your performance experience(s) with me as a dancer/drummer/singer/trumpeter?

APPENDIX C:
IMAGES OF *Bɔbɔɔbɔ* PERFORMANCE STYLES



Bɔbɔɔbɔ instruments in choir procession



Performance organisation with cantor in the middle of the drummers



Performance organisation with drummers sitting in a straight line



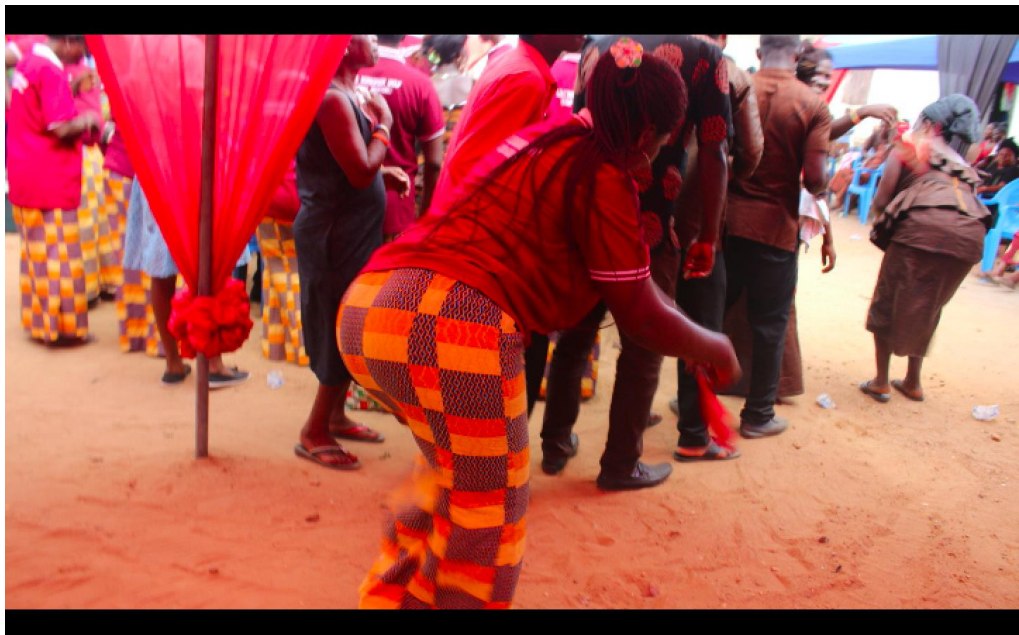
A woman employing one of the techniques in playing the rattle



A trumpeter in performance



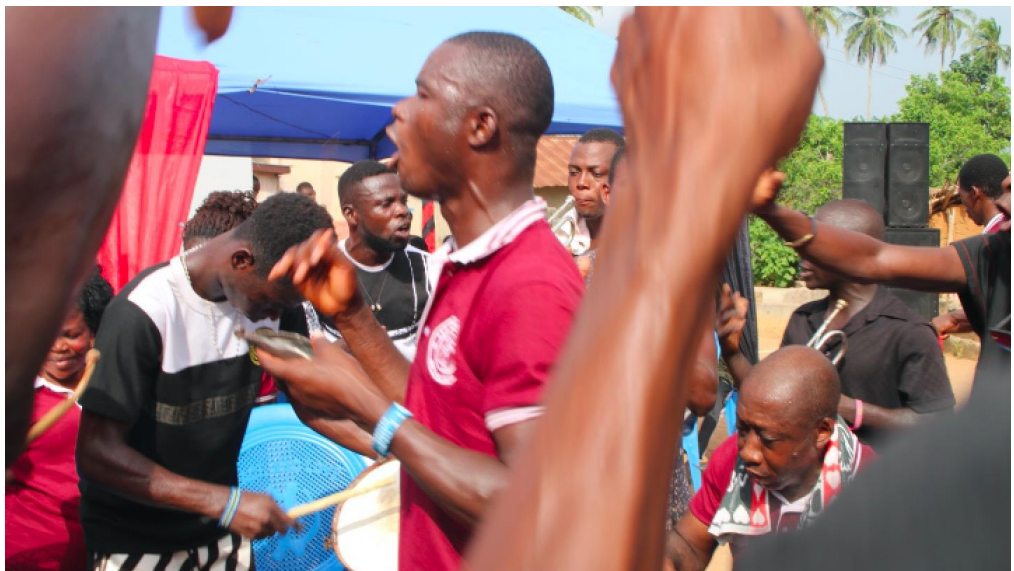
Dancers employing the “side ways” dance formation/movement



A lady dancer performing the “bend down” movement



A dancer displaying a dance movement (Nye dzi lo, nye kpe)



A cantor leading a call



Woman responsible for cleaning the sweat on the head and face of a drummer



Picture of Francis Cudjo Nuatro, creator of *Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀* dance music

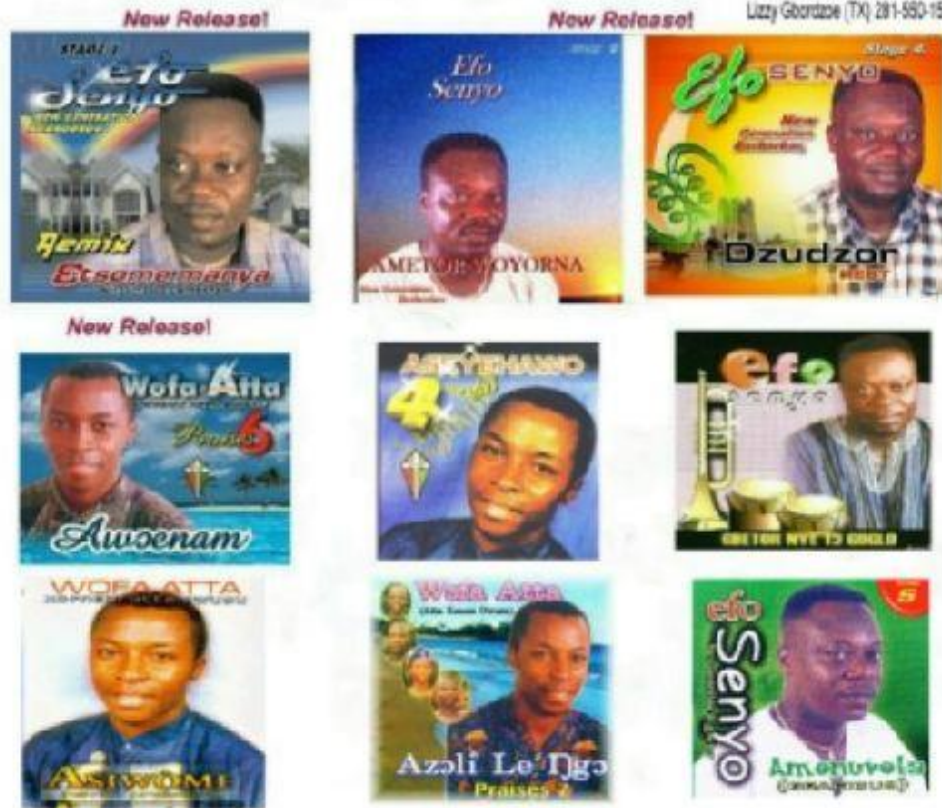
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Selected CD cover pages of Wofa Atta and Efo Senyo

APPENDIX D:

MUSICAL TRANSCRIPTION OF SELECTED *BỌBỌBỌ* SONGS

Dzudzor

Mia nọ - vi xε - dε nyuie xε - yi lo xε - yi na dzu-
 - dzo Mia nọ - vi xε - denyuie xε - yi lo xε - yi na dzu-
 - dzo Dzu-dzo lε wui - fa - fa - me
 Ma-wu na-nọ kpli wo Gba-dε - gbe mia ga va do - go wo dọ-wọ -
 - wọ wo a - dze'o yo me

Alehawo

A - lε - ha - wo wo lε gbe la dzi wo se wo kplọ - la - wo fε gbe
 A - lε - ha - wo wo lε gbe la dzi wo se wo kplọ - la - wo fε gbe
 A - lε - ha - wo wo lε gbe la dzi A - lε - ha - wo wo lε
 gbe la dzi A - lε - ha - wo wo lε gbe la dzi wo se wo kplọ - la - wo fε gbe

Ɛliya do gbɛɔa

Ɛ-li-ya do gbɛ ɔa, ɛ-dzo dji-dji-va Ɛ-li-ya do gbɛ ɔa, ɛ-dzo

⁵ dji-dji-va Ɛ-li-ya do gbɛ ɔa, ɛ-dzo dji-dji-va Ɛ-li-ya do gbɛ ɔa, ɛ-dzo

⁹ dji-dji-va Ɛ-li-ya do gbɛ ɔa, ɛ-dzo dji-dji-va Ɛ-li-ya do gbɛ ɔa, ɛ-dzo dji-dji-va

Gbesigbɛ

Yo-do fa-fe me mlo-ge na la na-no'a-fi-ma kpoo

⁵ gbɛ-si-gbɛ Ma-wu a-yo-wo la na-no dza-dzr-a ɔo me

⁹ na-no dza-dzra ɔo me na-no dza-dzra ɔo me

¹³ gbɛ-si-gbɛ Ma-wu a-yo-wo la na-no dza-dzr-a ɔo me

Luṣo gedε

A musical score for the song 'Luṣo gedε' in 4/4 time. The score consists of six staves of music with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: A - fi - si lu - ṣo ge - dε - wo le; A - fi - si lu - ṣo ge - dε - wo le A - fi - ma ma yi; A - fi - ma ma yi A - fi - ma ma yi; A - fi - ma ma yi; Ma - yi'a - fε Ma - yi'a - fε; Ma - yi'a - fε dzi - fo o ma yi.

εwu εnu azo

A musical score for the song 'εwu εnu azo' in 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves of music with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: ε-wu ε - nu a - zo ne ʏε - yi-yi'a - wo de be; ma - yi a - va na'a - kon - ta ne do siwo ka - ta me wo; ε - si me no a - gbε - me

Mawu fε asi

Ma-wu fε a-si ε - lo - lo nu-ku-nu fε'a-si yae wo nyε

5 Ma-wu fε a-si ε - lo - lo nu-ku-nu

9 fε'a - si yae wo nyε ε - wɔ a - wa - wa wo vɔ

13 ε - ɔ̄u - dzi na' me - ge - ɔ̄e - wo vɔ Ma-wu fε a-si ε - lo - lo

17 nu - ku - nu fε'a - si yae wo nyε

Mɔzɔla nublanuitɔ

Woe nyε Al - pha kplε O-me - ga gɔ-mε - dze - dze kplε nu-wu - wu

5 wo mɔ - zɔ - la nu - bla - nui - tɔ wo dɔwo - wo nu ma tsi o

9 mɔ - zɔ - la nu - bla - nui - tɔ mɔ - zɔ - la nu - bla - nui - tɔ

13 tsɔ wo nya - wo na Ma-wu e - ya - koe - nya wo ha - hia - wo.

Mozola siawo

Musical score for 'Mozola siawo' in 4/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a single line. The second staff starts at measure 5, the third at measure 9, the fourth at measure 13, and the fifth at measure 17. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fifth staff.

Nukunu dɔwɔla

Musical score for 'Nukunu dɔwɔla' in 4/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music with lyrics underneath. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: Nu-ku-nu dɔ-wɔ-la wo nye wo nye Nu-ku-nu dɔ-wɔ-la wonye. The second staff starts at measure 5, the third at measure 9, the fourth at measure 13, and the fifth at measure 17. The lyrics for the second staff are: Nu-ku-nu dɔ-wɔ-la wo nye wo nye Nu-ku-nu. The lyrics for the third staff are: dɔ-wɔ-la wo nye ɛ-dɛ Da-niel tso dza-ta. The lyrics for the fourth staff are: wo do mɛ ɛ-dɛ Yo-na tso bo-so wo dɔ-mɛ ɛ-dɛ nye ha tso fu-to-. The lyrics for the fifth staff are: - wo si mɛ Nu-ku-nu dɔ-wɔ-la wo nye. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fifth staff.

Duawo

Du-nyuie - wo mi ga yɔ nua - ke tu mi vɔ Dua - wo mi ga yɔ nua - ke tu mi vɔ

Du-nyuie - wo mi ga yɔ nua - ke tu mi vɔ Dua - wo mi ga yɔ nua - ke tu mi vɔ E -

vea - woe l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia - fe dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba vea - woe l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia - fe dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba E -

gbi - du - kɔ l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia - fe - dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba o gbi - du - kɔ l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia - fe - dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba A -

ga - dɛ - viwo l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia - fe dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba ga - dɛ - viwo l'a - tia dɛ me a - tia - fe - dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba A -

kpi - nia - wo l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia - fe dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba kpi - nia - woe l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia - fe - dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba A -

so - gliawo l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia - fe dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba so - gliawo l'a - tia dɛ - me a - tia - fe - dza ma - k'a - nyi - gba A -

va - zo - liawo l'a - tia dɛ - me a - tia fe dza ma k'a nyi - gba va - zo - liawo l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia fe dza ma k'a nyi gba

Sa - sa - duawo l'a - tia dɛ - me a - tia fe dza ma k'a - nyi - gba sa - sa - duawo l'a - tia - dɛ - me a - tia fe dza ma k'a nyi - gba

Miwɔ nɔvi

Mi wɔ nɔ - vi l'a - gbɛ - me me nyɛ ku gbɛ nɔ - vi wo wɔ - nao

Mi wɔ nɔ - vi l'a - gbɛ - me me nyɛ ku gbɛ nɔ - vi wo wɔ - nao

Mi wɔ nɔ - vi l'a - gbɛ - me me nyɛ ku gbɛ nɔ - vi wo wɔ - nao

wɔ nu nam lo o me nyɛ dɛ ma ku ha - fio

Gbesigbe

Maḡwole dzidzokpòm ḡa a - maḡwole ve-ve sem a - maḡwole dzidzokpòm

6 a - ma ḡwo le ve-ve sem Ma ḡwo le dzi-dzò kpòm ḡa a -

11 ma ḡwo le ve-ve sem a - ma ḡwo le dzi-dzò kpòm a - ma ḡwo le ve-ve sem

16 ε - gbe-si - gbe ma yi'a fε lo gbe-si - gbe ma yi'a fε

21 gbe-si-gbe ma yi'a fε a - ma-nie ma-nya bò o gbe-si-gbe ma yi'a fε

26 lo gbe-si - gbe ma yi'a fε ε - gbe-si - gbe ma yi'a fε a -

31 ma-nie ma nya bò o a - ma-nie ma nya bò o lo a - ma-nie ma nya bò o

36 a - ma-nie ma nya bò o lo a - ma-nie ma nya bò o

Novi loloto woe

Musical score for 'Novi loloto woe' in 4/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: Nɔ - vi lo - lo - to woe, mie va dɔ lo; Nɔ - vi lo - lo - to woe, mie va dɔ lo; Tɛ - fɛ si mie va la ne mie dz'a-go ha la; lo-lo e ne mi-tso ke mi dzro lo; lo-lo e ne mi-tso ke mi dzro lo.

Xede nyuie

Musical score for 'Xede nyuie' in 4/4 time. The score consists of five staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: Nɔ - vi nye xe - de nyuie Ma - wu na no - nyi kpli wo; Nɔ - vi nye xe - de nyuie Ma - wu na; no - nyi kpli wo Mia - ga kpe gba - de - gbe; le dzi - fo fia - du - fe la me Mia - ga kpe gba - de - gbe; le dzi - fo fia - du - fe la me.

Hafi nadze nane gome

Ha-fi na dza na-ne go-me la gbe-do-do-qa e ya dze na go-me lo a-yo

6
yo ma no gbedomdabe Mawuna kpe denunye manu gbedomdabe Yesu na kpe de nu-nye

11
a - a - a - men mi do gbe qa a - a - a - men.

Detailed description: This is a musical score for the hymn 'Hafi nadze nane gome'. It consists of three staves of music in a single system. The first staff begins with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff starts at measure 6, and the third staff starts at measure 11. The music is written in a treble clef with a common time signature (C).

Ghana elavanyo

Gha - na e - la - va - nyo go - doo Gha -

3
na e la - va - nyo go - doo ne me dzi - dzo

6
vo wo wo ye mie dze Raw - lings yo - me

9
mo - kpɔ - kpɔ li na mi be a va nyo go-doo

Detailed description: This is a musical score for the hymn 'Ghana elavanyo'. It consists of four staves of music in a single system. The first staff begins with a repeat sign. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff starts at measure 3, the third at measure 6, and the fourth at measure 9. The music is written in a treble clef with a common time signature (C).

Ghana Dukplɔlawo

Musical score for Ghana Dukplɔlawo, consisting of five staves of music in treble clef with a common time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Gha-na du-kplɔ-la-wo Ma-wu ne-ya - mi ɖaa du-kplɔ-la-wo Ma-wu ne ya - mi te-gbee

⁵ Gha-na du-kplɔ-la wo Ma-wu ne ya - mi te-gbee

⁹ du-kplɔ-la-wo Ma-wu ne ya - mi tegbee A - me-nu me nya nɔ na o

¹³ Du-kɔ me nya kplɔ na o Du-kplɔ-la-wo mia-woe le dzi lo A - me-nu me nya nɔ-na o

¹⁷ Du-kɔ me-nya kplɔ na o Du-kplɔ-la-wo Ma-wu ne-ya mi te - gbee

Me di be mayi

Musical score for Me di be mayi, consisting of two staves of music in treble clef with a common time signature. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Me di be ma-yi de dzi-nye - la-wo gbo ma-yi a-ɖa kpɔ wo ɖa Nye

⁵ me nya-le-ke tu-tu wo lea gbe nam o Mi gblɔe na wo be me-gbo na.

Mia Denyigba




Mia de-nyi-gba mie da 'kpe na wo De-nyi-gba lo-lo a-kpe na wo lo

5 A - ve - tsu o dɔa 'tsyɔ na wo

8 ye wo doa kɔ-kɔ wo ŋ-kɔ la to-si-si wo dɛa wo ga-nye-nye fia na

12 A - kpe lo De-nyi gba A - kpe na wo

Mibɔbɔ lo



mi-bɔ-bɔ loo nyɔ-nu-vio mi bɔ-bɔ loo ha-le-lu - ya mi bɔ-bɔ loo mi-bɔ-bɔ loo

5 loo mi-bɔ-bɔ nyɔ-nu-vio mi bɔ-bɔ mi-bɔ-bɔ nyɔ-nu-vio mi bɔ-bɔ mi-bɔ-bɔ loo

10 nyɔ-nu - vio mi bɔ - bɔ loo ha - le-lu - ya mi bɔ - bɔ loo

Nukuwula



Musical score for the song "Nukuwula". The score is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of six staves of music with corresponding lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "Nu - ku-wu - la yi nu - ku - wu - ge nu - ku - wu - ge", "Nu - ku-wu - la yi nu - ku - wu - ge nu - ku - wu - ge", "De-wo ge de ma - wo - to De-wo ge", "de gli wome De-wo ge de kpe-gba-dza-wo dzi De-wo ge", "de a - nyi-gba nyui-wo dzi ka-mee ne-le ka-mee ne-le ka-mee", and "ne - le no - vi ka - mee ne - le".

Nu - ku-wu - la yi nu - ku - wu - ge nu - ku - wu - ge

5 Nu - ku-wu - la yi nu - ku - wu - ge nu - ku - wu - ge


9 De-wo ge de ma - wo - to De-wo ge

13 de gli wome De-wo ge de kpe-gba-dza-wo dzi De-wo ge

17 de a - nyi-gba nyui-wo dzi ka-mee ne-le ka-mee ne-le ka-mee

21 ne - le no - vi ka - mee ne - le

Yonyemetilawo



Musical score for the song "Yonyemetilawo". The score is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of three staves of music with corresponding lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "Yo - nye-me - ti - la - wo a - kli nu a - dza nyi Ye - ho - wa ye nye nye ke - ke -", "- li Ye - ho - wa ye nye nye xɔ - na - me - to Nye fu - to - wo a - kli nu a - dze' nyi", and "Yo - nye-me - ti - la - wo a - kli - nu a - dze' nyi".

Yo - nye-me - ti - la - wo a - kli nu a - dza nyi Ye - ho - wa ye nye nye ke - ke -

5 - li Ye - ho - wa ye nye nye xɔ - na - me - to Nye fu - to - wo a - kli nu a - dze' nyi

9 Yo - nye-me - ti - la - wo a - kli - nu a - dze' nyi

Venɔnɔ nyo

Nye ɖe-kae lo nye ɖe-ka ko wo-dzi ɖewo do-meA - ɖa-nu-ɖo-la me lio A - ɖa-nu-ɖo-la me li o tɔ-viwo

5
do - me nɔ - nɔ se - se

9
Nye ɖe-kae lo nye ɖe-ka ko wo-dzi ɖewo do-meA - ɖa-nu-ɖo-la me lio A - ɖa-nu-ɖo-la me li o tɔ-viwo

13
do-me nɔ-nɔ se-se ve-nɔ-nɔ nyo nɔ-nye me -

17
- dzio ve-nɔ-nɔ nyo nɔ-nye me - dzio ve-nɔ-nɔ nyo lo nɔ-nye me -

21
- dzio ve-nɔ-nɔ nyo ka - ka - ka nɔ-nye me - dzioo

Dzɔgbese dɔ ame dɔ

Dzɔ-gbe se dɔa-me-dɔ me-tɔ me-tɔ si wo na wo koe nye tɔ-wo

5
Dzɔ-gbe se dɔa-me-dɔ me-tɔ me-tɔ si wo na wo koe nye

9
tɔwo Nɔ-vie tɔ-wo-via ne dze ɲu-wo

13
Nɔ-vie tɔ-wo-via ne dze ɲu-wo Nɔ-vie tɔ-wo-via ne dze ɲu-wo si-wo

17
na wo koe nye tɔ-wo

Afrika dukɔwo

A-fri-ka du-kɔ-wo wo-dze Gha-na yo-me Le mia-fe tɔ-trɔ ye yewo la ta

5
Li-be-ria Bur-ki-na Fa-so

9
Ni-ge-ria kple bu-bua-wo Dzi-dzɔ ga-dɛ wo-nye na-mi be

13
du-kɔ-wo wo to Gha-na fea-fɔ-to fe Dzi-dzɔ ga-dɛ wo-

17
nye na-mi be du-kɔ-wo wo to Gha-na fea-fɔ-to fe

Alēvinye

A - le - vi - nye wo va đe - ka me le wo do - meo me gbu gbo xle

6
wo kpɔ đe - ka me le wo do - meo đe - ka si bu la ye nye nye lo - lo

12
to a o a o ye fi - ka ma kpe le

The musical score for 'Alēvinye' is written in 2/4 time. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff contains the first six measures, the second staff contains measures 6 through 11, and the third staff contains measures 12 through 15. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Ametɔ woyɔna

A - me - tɔ wo yɔ - na A - me - tɔ wo yɔ na A - mea - đe

5
ke me - yɔa me - bu - bu fe nu be ye tɔ o E - ya - ta nɔ - vi nye

9
le - be na nu - si lea si wo na đon - ku nya sia

13
dzi be - na A - me - tɔ wo - yɔ na A - me - tɔ wo yɔ na

17
A - mea - đe ke me - yɔa me - bu - bu fe nu be ye tɔ o

The musical score for 'Ametɔ woyɔna' is written in common time (C). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff contains the first six measures, the second staff contains measures 5 through 8, the third staff contains measures 9 through 12, the fourth staff contains measures 13 through 16, and the fifth staff contains measures 17 through 20. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Dayi kple Amu

Da - yi kpl'-amu me kea - dj - o Da - yi le so - bo - dzie

Da - yi le so - bo - dzi e - e e - e Da yi le so - bo -

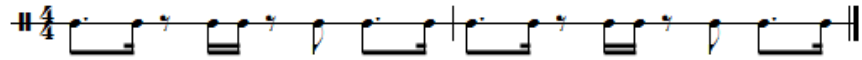
dzie Da - yi le so - bo - dzi so - bo - dzi so - bo - dzi

APPENDIX E:

RHYTHMS OF SELECTED *BOBOBO* INSTRUMENTS

Supporting Instrument Variations

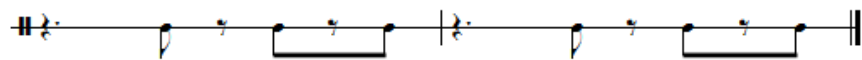
Bell Variation 1



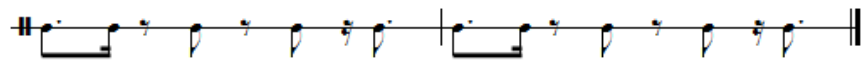
Bell Variation 2



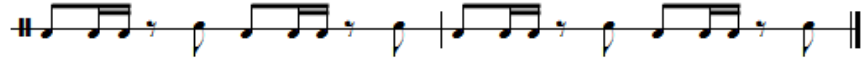
Bell Variation 3



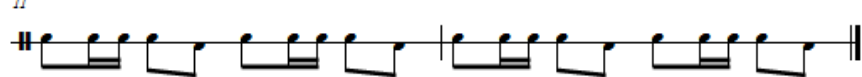
Bell Variation 4



Bell Variation 5



Bell Variation 6



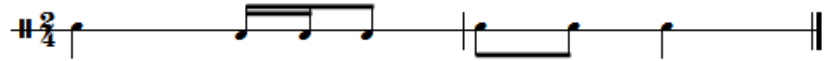
Bell Variation 7



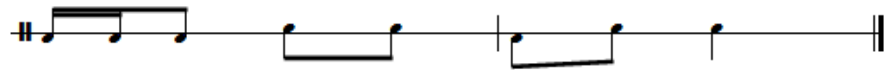
Bell Variation 8



Dondo Variation 1



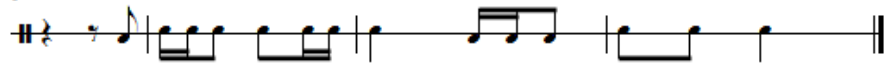
Dondo Variation 2



Dondo Variation 3



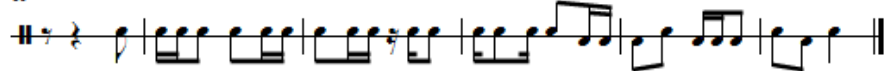
Dondo Variation 4



Dondo Variation 5



Dondo Variation 6



Dondo Variation 7



APPENDIX F:

TEXTUAL TRANSCRIPTION OF SELECTED BOBOJOB SONGS

Song: Amedewo le dzidzo kpom

Amedewo le dzidzo kpom

Amedewo le vevesem

Gbesigbe mayi afe 3x

Amanea manya bo o

Amanea manya bo o

English translation

Some people are rejoicing

Some people are sorrowing

The day I will go home

The narratives cannot be given

The narratives cannot be given

Song: Miwo navi le agbeme

Miwo navi le agbeme

Menye kugbe navi wo wana o

Wo nu nam lo

Menye de maku hafi o

English translation

Be friendly in life

Not in times of death

Provide assistance for me

Not when I am dead

Song: Gbo fozi

Gbo fozi e

Gbotwo vado gbome

Gbo fozi e

English language

The locale is vibrant

The locals have arrived in the locale

The locale is vibrant

Song: Nyenu menyoa 'menu o

Nyenu menyoa 'menu o

Dzugbe dom de atinu

Nye nufifo vea dome na amewo lo

Funyetwo kple lonyelawo

le babaad dom le nkume

Megblae nawo be

Nyemenya be da dewo dua 'me o

Mate kpɔ godoo

Madzo le wo dume

Duame nenanyi na woe

Meyi lo, medzo lo

2x Gbotɔfe gbome gbome nenanyi na woe

English translation

My actions do not please people

My utterances annoy people

My enemies and loved ones are

Consoling me in the face pretend to

love but enemies in disguise

I told them that

I never knew that snake bites

I will give it a try

And leave their midst

The town should be there for them

I'm going, I'm gone

The town should be there for its
owners

Gbɔtɔwo fe gbɔme, meyilo
Meyilo, medzo lo
Gbɔtɔwo fe gbɔmegbɔme ne nɔnyina woe

The owners of the town, I'm going
I'm going, I'm gone
The town should be there for its
owners

Song: Nɔvi lɔlɔtɔwoe

Nɔvi lɔlɔtɔwoe, mievado lo 2x.
Tefe si mieva la
Ne miedzeago ha la
Lɔlɔ ye, ne mitsɔ kemi dzro lo 2x

English translation

Dearest friends, we have arrived
Where we have come
Even if we should offend
It is love, kindly forgive us

Song: Venɔnɔ nyo

Venɔnɔ nyo, nɔnye medzi o 4x

Aɔanuɔdola meli o
Tɔviwo dome nɔnɔ sese

Devisue aɔe menye
Nye nuse hã le sue
Dela klɔ nɔtinye
Be manɔ dzadzɛ nawò

English translation

twoness is good, my mother did not
birth it
There is no counsellor/advisor
To stay among paternal siblings is
difficult
I am a little child
My strength too is little
Saviour, cleanse me
So that I remain pure for you

Song: Manɔ dzadzrado me

Manɔ dzadzrado me
Le nyagbe nkekea wo me
Manɔ yli dome daa be
Dzifo fe agbo navu nam
Nuxaxa le gbe
Magble wo de anyigbadzi
Mayi de nye xɔla gbɔ
Afisi ku megali o
Dzidzɔ, gbɔdeme le dzifo
'fisi dzudzɔmavɔ le
Dzidzɔ, gbɔdeme le dzifo
'fisi dzudzɔmavɔ le

English translation

I will be in readiness
During my life time
I will always shout that
Heaven's door should open for me
Prolonged disconcertment
I will leave you behind
I will go to my Maker
Where death no longer exists
Joy, rest are in heaven
Where eternal rest is
Joy, rest are in heaven
Where eternal rest is

Song: Nye agbemɔ medo tsiefe hade o

Nye agbemɔ medo tsiefe hade o

Dzoduametɔ mele asiwome lo

English translation

My life's journey has not yet reached
the ancestral world

The wicked one, I am in you hands

Song: Demenya,

Demenya, demenya, demenya

Demenya be anɔalea

Demenya ne megbugbo de megbe

English translation

Had I known, had I known, had I
known

Had I known it will be like this

Had I known, I would have returned

Song: Dumanya me

Dumanya me (nɔvinyewo)

Dumanya me, metsi dumanya me

Kue wɔ num lo, metsi dumanya me

(Mebe) Kue wɔ num lo metsi dumanya me

(Gatsri) kue wɔ num lo metsi dumanya me

Dumanya me, metsi dumanya me

English translation

In a strange land (my brothers)

In a strange land, I am stuck in a
strange land

Death has caused me to stuck in a
strange land

(I said) Death has caused me to stuck
in a ...

Death has caused me to stuck in a
strange land

In a strange land, I am stuck in a
strange land

Song: Ya wowui de alɔme

Ya wowui de alɔme 2x.

Devia medo ku o

Ya wowui de alɔme

Devia medo ku o

Ya wowui de alɔme

English translation

Then they killed him in sleep

The child was not to die

Then they killed him in sleep

The child was not to die

Then they killed him in sleep

Song: Ne Mawu degbe la

Ne Mawu degbe la

English translation

When God declares/speaks

Mee atenui
Ne nyebe Yehowah degbe de
Mee atenui anɔteɔe 'fe gbedede nu

Agblɔ be Yehowah tɔwo medzɔ o
Nusetɔ eya nye Yehowa
Awakaletɔ eya nye Yehowah
Ne eɔegbe la ameaɔeke meli o

Song: Ɖemenya afisi ɔɔyɔla ma le?

Ɖemenya afisi ɔɔyɔla ma le
Mayi aɔe gblɔ nye ɔɔlelea wo ne
Metsi mavomavo,
Nye menya aleke mawɔ o
Metsi yaa, wɔna vɔ le nunye
Megblɔ ne be va yɔdom
Ɖela Yesue! kpeɔe nunye

Song: Ewunu azɔ

Ewunu azɔ
Yeyiyiawo de be
Mayi aɔa na akɔnta
Le ɔsiwo kata mewɔ
Esi me nɔ agbe me
Meyi na ɔe mavɔ me
Gbɔɔeme fe, meyina
Meyina ɔe mavɔ me
Nyatefe ko nye dzi le (vide)

Song: Nɔnɔme vovo yae Mawu wɔ mi

Nɔnɔme vovo yae Mawu wɔ mi

Alesi mele ya ye nyona nyehã

Nyematsɔ tɔnye ava ɔɔli tɔwɔ o
Ne Mawu lɔ ko la, anyo na nye hã (3x)

Who can
Whenever Jehovah declares/speaks
Who can withstand his
declarations/pronouncements
And say Jehovah, you are at fault
Mighty is Jehovah
Warrior is Jehovah
When he declares, there is no one

English translation

If I knew where the that healer is
I will go and tell him my sickness
I am distressed
I don't know what to do
I am devastated, and clueless
I will tell him that, come and heal me
Saviour Jesus, help me!

English translation

It has finally ended
The time has come
For me to render account
of all the works I have done
When I was alive
I am going to eternity
A place of rest, I am going
I am going to eternity
My heart is with the truth.

English translation

It is with different attributes that God
made us
I am content with how I am (my
character)
I will not exchange mine with yours
If God permits, it will be well with me
as well

Song: *Devisue aḡe menyē*

Devisue aḡe menyē

Nye ḡuse hã le sue

Ḍela klɔ ḡutinye

Be manɔ dzadzɛ nawò

English translation

I am a little child

My strength too is little

Saviour, cleanse me

So that I remain pure for you

APPENDIX G.

UGBE: AGBELIDZEDZE

Gakogui  Uuga 
 A - gbe-li - dze - dze le dzo-dzi, ga-ke zi-ni-kpi - kpi-ni kpi

Gakogui  Uuga 
 Ka-te - kist la ga-va do, ha-me - da-da xo-na-mi

Sample master drum rhythmic endings

Gakogui  Uuga 

Gakogui  Uuga 

Gakogui

Uuga

So - bo-dzi so - bo - dzi so - bo-dzi