

An African Music and Dance Curriculum Model

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
AFRICAN WORLD SERIES
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An African Music and Dance Curriculum Model

Performing Arts in Education

Modesto Amegago

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
Durham, North Carolina

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Amegago, Modesto Mawulolo Kwaku.

An African music and dance curriculum model : performing arts in education / Modesto Amegago.

p. cm. -- (Carolina Academic Press African world series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-61163-004-6 (alk. paper)

1. Performing arts--Curricula--Ghana. 2. Performing arts--Curricula--Africa. 3. Music--Instruction and study--Ghana. 4. Music--Instruction and study--Africa. 5. Dance--Instruction and study--Ghana. 6. Dance--Instruction and study--Africa. 7. Ewe (African people)--Social life and customs. I. Title. II. Series.

PN1578.A57A64 2011

791.071'0667--dc22

2011011868

CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS
700 Kent Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701
Telephone (919) 489-7486
Fax (919) 493-5668
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

*Dedicated to my father Atifose Amegago and my mother Esiga Lodonu,
my family members, predecessor composers, musicians, dancers, arts educators
and all my teachers, mentors, and all my students*

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Series Editor's Preface

The *Carolina Academic Press African World Series*, inaugurated in 2010, offers significant new works in the field of African and Black World studies. The series provides scholarly and educational texts that can serve both as reference works and as readers in college classes.

Studies in the series are anchored in the existing humanistic and the social scientific traditions. Their goal, however, is the identification and elaboration of the strategic place of Africa and its Diaspora in a shifting global world. More specifically, the studies will address gaps and larger needs in the developing scholarship on Africa and the Black World.

The series intends to fill gaps in areas such as African politics, history, law, religion, culture, sociology, literature, philosophy, visual arts, art history, geography, language, health, and social welfare. Given the complex nature of Africa and its Diaspora, and the constantly shifting perspectives prompted by globalization, the series also meets a vital need for scholarship connecting knowledge with events and practices. Reflecting the fact that life in Africa continues to change, especially in the political arena, the series explores issues emanating from racial and ethnic identities, particularly those connected with the ongoing mobilization of ethnic minorities for inclusion and representation.

Toyin Falola
University of Texas at Austin

Introduction

Situational Analysis

In this contemporary era, the accelerated global cultural interaction due to Western exploration, colonization, technology, capitalism, education, and the media has contributed to the formation of nation states and intra-states through the regrouping of former communities/nations, leading to the emergence of multiple domains of knowledge within the global system. These phenomena have had a considerable impact on African cultures and the African educational system.

Pre-colonial African societies were characterized by unique but related educational systems. The knowledge of these societies reflected mainstream and contextual experiences, based on age, sex, profession, politics, religion, ceremony, and individuality. These contextual experiences constituted the traditional African curriculum. The arts were integral to this curriculum, and were transmitted through practice involving social interaction and a holistic integration of physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual values. Education in African traditional societies was a lifelong and cultural process and the social ethics regulated individual and group learning and behavior. Evaluation of traditional African knowledge was mainly informal and generally took the form of positive comments, praises, reinforcement, counselling, and reprimands expressed by peer groups, parents, and traditional leaders within the entire learning process, on the basis of social ethics.

The impact of colonization, industrialization, and printed and electronic media culminated in the superimposition of the Western educational system on the African educational system and the relegation of African traditional knowledge to the status of primitivism and paganism, and hence its marginalization in the Western education curriculum. Western education began with a teacher-centered method, which placed African students at the receiving end of information as opposed to being co-mediators in the learning process. This was due to the foreign nature of the Western knowledge and European ignorance of African cultures. In consequence, students lacked understanding, as

well as creative and critical skills. Industrialization and the rural-urban drift further contributed to the gradual decline of the traditional educational system and the art making process.

There was a series of educational reforms during the colonial era, particularly in Ghana, from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, the most notable of which were based on the Phelps-Stokes Commission's recommendations in 1922, which was in turn indebted to John Dewey's progressivist notion of adaptation and learning by doing. In line with the Phelps-Stokes Commission's recommendations, attempts were made to Africanize the curriculum through an emphasis on agriculture and the inclusion of other African cultural components such as botany, literature, folklore, music, and dance. The proposal for the Africanization of the curriculum was met with criticism from the African Europeanized elites as part of the colonialists' attempt to perpetuate the suppression of the Africans. This reaction was due to the elites' ambition to keep abreast with modernization in the Western societies. Nevertheless, the initial implementation and success of the Africanized curriculum at institutions such as the Achimota College of Ghana in 1925 led other institutions to emulate its principles.

After political independence, various African countries undertook initiatives to revive African cultures. In Ghana, under the leadership of Prime Minister Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, this led to the establishment of the Institute of African Studies in 1958, and the Ghana Dance Ensemble and School of Performing Arts, both in 1962, all aimed at preserving, promoting, and developing African arts through research, performance, and education.

The Postcolonial Ghana-African Performing Arts Curriculum

The endeavor of preservation, promotion, development and implementation of the African music and dance curriculum in Ghanaian art institutions necessarily entailed research in integrated African performing arts and cultures and adapting them through restructuring and recategorizing them. The core curriculum includes practical and theoretical subjects such as African performing arts; African music, music history, composition, drumming, and singing; traditional African dance forms, history, and choreography; African drama, theater studies, acting techniques, costume and stagecraft; African Diaspora music and dance; and Western music and dance. African performing arts were also introduced in the Ghanaian First- and Second-Cycle institutions as extracurricular activities.

In view of the Western influence on African cultures, the diversity of African cultural groups with their distinct languages, and the urban-oriented nature of formal African performing arts education, attempts were made to hybridize African and Western teaching methods. This involved the adoption of the English language as the medium of instruction in Ghana, still in use today. The teaching methods vary in relation to instructor, subject, and topic, but theoretical courses are usually taught in the teacher-centered or lecture mode while practical courses such as drumming, singing, and dancing combine traditional participatory and Western methods. Attempts were made to involve traditional artists in the teaching process, but occurs rarely, due to the lack of funding which continues to hamper research into African arts and cultures. Innovation, however, continues to take place in the curriculum and teaching methods.

Recent curriculum reforms involved the introduction of the Bachelor of Arts in Dance and Drama, and a Master's Program in Drama and Theater Studies, the change from trimester to semester system, the use of audio-visual recordings in teaching, the intensification of field trips and foreign exchange programs, and the introduction of the continuing assessment method of evaluation. This was to conform to some of the Western institutional arrangements and to encourage students' full participation in the educational process. Evaluation of students' progress in Ghanaian arts institutions still combined the Western norm reference and the criteria-based evaluation reflected by letter grades of A, B+, B, C, D, and F.

Some Consequences of Postcolonial African Performing Arts Education

The current institutionalization of African performing arts and cross-cultural interaction has resulted in the constant training of professional artists, along with traditional composers and performers, who now operate as art educators, researchers, and creators. Many of these professional artists continue to create a fusion of traditional and Western performance types. This leads to the continual emergence of new artistic categories in local and foreign institutions, such as neo-traditional music, African drumming, neo-traditional dance, contemporary African music, contemporary African dance, popular, and church music. Foreign imports, such as Western art music, Latin American music, African-American music, and Western dance have also emerged in Ghana. In addition, Western teaching methods continue to dominate in the higher Performing Arts educational institutions in Ghana.

Statement of the Problems

The constant emergence of new generations of African artists and scholars, new artistic styles and categories, and the open-ended creative process require a corresponding review of the performing arts education curriculum. However, research in the arts is lacking due to insufficient funding and their lower relative status in contemporary African educational institutions. In addition, the separation of integrated African music and dance into distinct departments, and the emerging emphasis on individuality, affect the traditional art-making process and the psychology of African students. Today, as African music and dance is gaining its place in the cross-cultural arts education curriculum, the African youth who were originally oriented toward integrated performance find it difficult to understand the new concept of music, dance, drama, or theater. Despite the presence of semi-specialists, individual performers, and the emphasis on certain artistic elements in the African traditional artmaking process, there is much empirical evidence that African societies emphasize integrated performance and learning, as opposed to the Western tendency to separate into distinct and independent artistic forms.

The separation of African music and dance further affects students' acquisition of the social skills needed for future teamwork. Despite the promotion of collaborative and interdisciplinary studies in the University of Ghana's School of Performing Arts, this institutional separation of African music and dance and emphasis on specialization create a tendency for most students to focus on their own areas of specialization, and to regard other components of this integrated art form as distinct subjects or areas. As a consequence, many graduates from the contemporary Ghanaian performing arts institutions often find it difficult to effectively engage in integrated African creativity and performance.

Since language is the bedrock of African performing arts, the use of English language as a medium of African arts education in Ghana inhibits students' understanding of the philosophical concepts and values underlying these artistic creations and their creative potential. Students find it difficult to translate the traditional artistic concepts from the local languages into English or *vice versa*. Although such ambiguities are inevitable in intercultural education, much seems to be sacrificed on the part of the African cultures. Also, the dominance of Western teaching methods affects the development of some of the traditional teaching methods which could enhance the creative and learning processes.

In addition, many Christian groups who continue to appropriate and modify traditional African arts to enrich their ceremonies and activities persistently

discourage the youth from participating in such performances outside the Christian context. Such an attitude threatens the future of African arts, and creates a problem for African arts educators since the youth who would perpetuate these art forms are discouraged from doing so. Furthermore, the current socioeconomic and political order generates new perspectives on society, the nation state, ethnicity, identity, sex, and professionalism. Education is now assuming a global dimension in this era, characterized by fragmentation, eclecticism of cultures and knowledge, and intensified cross-cultural interaction; hence many nations continue to reflect critically on their formation and the process of human migration. Many sovereign African states are undertaking the modernizing project without due consideration of traditional cultures and knowledge, thus intensifying their alienation and cultural imperialism. Above all, early representations of African cultures and the performing arts were fraught with ambiguities about their nature, origin, and criteria for their evaluation. All these issues necessitate revisiting African music and dance in order to re-represent and re-adapt it for a cross-cultural education.

This book, therefore, aims at revisiting the cultural context of African music and dance in order to restructure, reorder, and re-adapt it for cross-cultural arts education and for the sake of social harmony. In doing so, I will focus on the traditional Ewe who occupy the southern part of Benin and Togo and the south-eastern part of Ghana. My focus on Ewe music and dance is due to the fact that the Ewe as a nation of West Africa have made an immense contribution to African and world cultures, and this contribution could be shared among various cultures. This approach will enable me to adequately represent the essential contributions of the West African Ewe nation as complementary to the contributions of other nations and to serve as a basis for African music and dance curriculum. My focus on the Ewe culture accords with the emerging social consciousness and regrouping of the original centers or nations in various parts of the world in the face of our multiple identities. I will also draw from other Ghanaian, African, and Western cultures and music and dance forms as a basis for the African music and dance curriculum. I occupy an intermediate position on the spectrum of Western and African cultures due to my traditional and Western educational backgrounds as well as my interest in integrated music and dance performance and creativity. I further view integrated African music and dance as a unique art form, which deserves consideration for contemporary arts education and creativity. With the emphasis on specialization by some contemporary arts institutions, many institutions, social groups and individuals cherish integrated compositions, performances and education. My usage of the term integration refers to the interweaving of vocal and instrumental sounds with human movements, other visual imagery,

and multisensory modalities in the artmaking and learning processes. My holistic approach to curriculum development implies the location of African music and dance curriculum in its sociocultural framework and its adaptation to various educational and cultural environments.

Aims of This Study

1. To revisit the creative, performative, and educational contexts and processes of African music and dance;
2. To develop a conceptual framework for an African music and dance curriculum which emphasizes the integration of vocal sounds, instrumental sounds, and human movements in multisensory modes in a way that complements the prevailing curricula;
3. To provide a complete African music and dance curriculum model for the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Arts Education which is adaptable to other African and Western educational institutions and communities.

Objectives or Learning Outcomes of the African Music and Dance Program

1. Students will gain skills in integrated African music and dance performance and creativity through a broad and holistic learning experience.
2. Students will learn the fundamental characteristics of African music and dance forms.
3. Students will acquire analytical, interpretative, evaluative, appreciative, and critical skills relating to African music and dance.
4. Students will gain knowledge of African music and dance curriculum development and implementation procedures.
5. Students will develop collaborative skills needed for teamwork and social harmony.

Literature Review

Until the introduction of Western literary, audio-visual, and electronic modes of documentation, the significant African historical and cultural experiences were documented through oral, practical, artistic, symbolic, and unique

literary modes. The emphasis on somatically oriented documentation may be related to the tropical nature of the African environment which favors physical activities; Africans' desire to satisfy their biological, physical, and social needs (through engaging in practical and performative activities); the values attached to practical modes of documentation; the quantity of experiences or knowledge they desired to document; their movement from one location to the other, leading to the abandonment of certain modes of documentation in their former locations; and their dominant conception of time and events as cyclical and recurrent (albeit not without change). Hence, the unique Western or Arabic type of documentation was absent in pre-colonial sub-Saharan African societies. From the fifteenth century onward, European travellers, explorers, missionaries, anthropologists, and government officials began to theorize on African cultures. Some of these works are fraught with ethnocentric biases while others provide an insight into African cultures. These works were subsequently followed by the work of the early African elite (who adopted a cultural relativist approach, using the dominant Western knowledge system as a frame of reference), and by postcolonial theories. I will briefly review some of this literature before proceeding to my main topic.

One of the earliest studies of African music is that conducted by Eric Von Hornbostel (1928), who elucidates the early European approach to studying African music through the use of phonographs. Von Hornbostel presents an outsider's perspective on the characteristics of African music: melodic scales and harmonic devices, polyphony and rhythm, the interaction of language and melody, some notations of African songs, and the sociocultural functions of African music. He further compares African, Islamic, North American, Indonesian and European music and remarks on the differences between African and Western musical characteristics and their impact on musical fusion, particularly in African churches.

An article by Seth Dzagbe Cudjoe (1953) offers an introduction to the location and demography of the Ewe, their instrumental ensembles, musical genres, construction of musical instruments, and Ewe games involving rhythm. Cudjoe discusses the techniques of Ewe drumming, rhythmic structure, sociocultural functions of Ewe music, and the traditional method of teaching drumming. He pinpoints the Western influence on the traditional modes of musical composition and performance and suggests the need for perpetuating the Ewe's art making process through maintaining a balance between the old and new technologies. Cudjoe relies mostly on Western musical terms in his analysis of Ewe drumming, which leads to some inaccuracies; for example, his use of "sogo" as a musical type is inaccurate since the sogo is an instrument used in Ewe drumming or performance and not a musical style or genre.

Another important and pioneering contributor to the study of African music is A. M. Jones's two-volume study (1954 and 1959), which discusses the contextual framework of African music and dance, as well as fishing songs, game songs, club music and dance, funeral music and dance. Also included in these books are descriptions of the construction and manipulation of musical instruments, performance processes, language concepts, the African conception of time, some photographs of Ewe musical instruments, a comparison of Ewe/West African and Lala/East African music, and an overview of contemporary African music. Volume two of Jones's book contains transcriptions of some African melodies and rhythms. Jones has been criticized for relying on second-hand information and scanty materials; nevertheless, his work is a significant contribution to African music and provides a basis for further research.

An article by David Locke and Godwin Agbeli (1980) provides a discussion of the characteristics of *adzogbo* music and dance and its sociocultural functions, the linguistic basis of Ewe drumming, and a transcription of selected *adzogbo* drum texts. This article provides a good insight to the linguistic basis of Ewe drumming. David Locke (1987) discusses the gahu music and dance of the Aŋlo-Ewe, its sociocultural contexts, performance structure, musical instruments, instrumental playing techniques, timing, and performance process, and includes some notation of gahu musical/rhythmic patterns.

An outstanding contribution to African music is the work produced by J. H. K. Nketia in 1963 and 1974. One of Nketia's 1963 books (1963b) elucidates the cultural context of Akan drumming, as well as its socioeconomic and political basis, orchestration, timbre, performance techniques, and the communicative functions; it includes a discussion of the linguistic basis of Akan drumming, and some illustrations of musical instruments. His other book in that year (1963a) surveys the cultural context of Ghanaian music: age, sex, religion, kinship, initiation, economy, politics, judiciary, socialization, and individuality. The book further contains descriptions or categories of African music, such as spontaneous groups, organized groups, folk groups, popular bands, occasional music, recreational music, social music, and Western art music.

Nketia's third book (1974) surveys sub-Saharan African music. It addresses the sociohistorical and cultural contexts of African music, attributes of musicians, traditional African music education, musicians' remuneration, and social relations. Also included is the geographical distribution of musical resources, a description of the form and structure of African music and dance, performance techniques, tuning, interrelations between African music and dance and other art forms, an introduction to aesthetics and problems of aesthetic evaluation, and the process of adaptation of African music to contemporary phenomena.

Alfred Ladzekpo and Kwabla Ladzekpo (1980) offer an introduction to Aṅlɔ-Ewe history and culture, and an overview of the social, religious, political and economic activities of the Aṅlɔ-Ewe of Anyako. They also discuss the formation of dance clubs among the Aṅlɔ-Ewe, Aṅlɔ-Ewe musical styles and performance procedures, and include some pictures of Ewe musical instruments. Their work focuses on music but draws from dance and other cultural elements.

John Miller Chernoff (1979) makes an important contribution to African music, particularly in the area of aesthetics and performance. He adopts a participatory approach in studying Ghanaian music in its social and ceremonial contexts, and its functions and aesthetic values. Also included in his work are some notations of Ewe and Dagomba drum rhythms and photographs of performers. Chernoff's work focuses on music but refers to dance performances in their cultural context.

Kofi Agawu's work (2003), which provides a critical perspective on the discourse of representing Africa, treats ethical considerations, assumptions, and prejudices that influence the presentation of ethnographic data, and theorizes about the definition of African music. His earlier work (1995) provides a detailed discussion of the integration of African rhythms with life, the characteristics of northern Ewe music and dance, their cultural functions, and the relationship between language and rhythm. Agawu here provides a useful example of an integrated approach to theorizing on African music and dance, although he focuses on rhythmic aspect.

Nissio Fiagbedzi (2005) elucidates the nature of the aesthetics in African musical arts, drawing from Ewe philosophical concepts, worldview, and performance process. Also included in his work are questions and suggestions on the relationship between aesthetics and morality and examples of aesthetic concepts from the Ewe, Akan, and Ga cultures. In an earlier work (1996/97), Fiagbedzi re-integrates music, dance, and drama, and reviews the Ewes' creative process, language concepts, and the sociocultural functions of Ewe performing arts. Included in this work is a speculation as to the possible roles Ghanaian artists might play, in the next ten to twenty years, with respect to the traditional, contemporary creative, and educational processes. Finally, Fiagbedzi recommends bi-musical (African and Western musical) education and the development of the social, artistic, and economic potential of the succeeding generations of Ghanaian artists. However, the African performing arts education in this contemporary era may require multi-musical and integrated approaches.

S. Friedson (2009) adopts a participatory and observatory approach in discussing some Ewe rituals and their associated music and dance practices. He traces the migration of some northern Ghanaian gods to southern Eweland; their

roles in the daily lives of the worshippers, with particular reference to major gods (such as Kunde, Ablewa/Tseriya, Sanya Kompo Ketetsi, Sara Konde and Wango), and minor gods (such as Tsenge, Gediya and Surugu). Also included in his book is a discussion on the relationship between the Gods, priests and priestesses, the significance of rituals and music and dance in such religious observances, and their impacts on the followers, participants, and observers.

A recent book by William Ofotsu. Adinku (1994) discusses the development of African dance education. A proposed Bachelor in Dance in Society curriculum model is included. In the first section, on dance as a cultural activity, Adinku provides an insight into the sociohistorical and cultural context of African dance, its movement qualities and spatial organization, and its visual imagery such as costumes, properties, and make-up. In the second section, on dance as an art form, he regards the new compositions as a continuation of the older ones and stresses the need for contemporary Ghanaian artists to base their creative works on the older patterns. Adinku reexamines the Western notion of art for art's sake and describes the work of the contemporary Ghanaian choreographer Mawere Opoku as both a reflection of the notion of art for its own sake and art that reflects Ghanaian cultural values. In the third section, on dance as an aesthetic activity, Adinku further reviews the Western concepts of objectivity and aesthetic experience and affirms the historical and cultural basis of various dance forms. Adinku's Bachelor of Arts in Dance curriculum model draws from Susan Walther's model of dance description, interpretation and evaluation (Walther, 1979). Its objectives are to familiarize students with the functions of dance within the traditional African cultures and to provide them with the basis for participation in, and appreciation and understanding of the cultural context of dance and to utilize cultural dance forms as a tool for their own creativity, evaluation, and criticism of dance. Adinku stresses the need for students of African dance to undertake field trips to traditional areas in order to interact with the local people, and the need to involve the local people in performance and teaching. Although Adinku refers to music, he treats dance as a separate subject. Further, his distinctions between dance as cultural activity, art form, and aesthetic activity may lead to distinctions between dance which is art and dance which is not art, and dance which is an aesthetic activity and dance which is not.

Kariamuwelsh-Asante (1985) discusses the common elements that underlie African dance aesthetics, such as polyrhythm, polycentrism, curvilinear forms, shapes and structures. She also discusses the holistic and multisensory modes of African dance performance, the use of memory, documentary and critical roles of African performers, open-ended creativity, repetition which reinforces contextual values, and stylistic devices.

Welsh-Asante's other work (1994) critiques the Western view of the African dancer's body as an erotic, exotic, and sensual object, thereby elucidating the sociocultural values that shape the African female body and its dances. She elucidates the influence of the Western individualized body on the African woman's body in this contemporary era and suggests the need for a reconsideration of African cultural values that shape their concept of the body.

An anthology edited by Welsh-Asante (1996) provides an insightful discussion of the cultural framework of African dances, drawing from some African and African-American cultures, individual dancers and choreographers. Also included in her work are the changing conceptions of African dance creativity and aesthetics. Her works also focus on the dance component of African music and dance.

Patience Kwakwa (1994) addresses the sociocultural values, beliefs, ideas, gender roles, and environmental factors that shape African female dances. She pinpoints the essential female qualities in Akan dances with reference to neighboring groups, such as the Ewe, Dagomba and Ga. Kwakwa elucidates the crucial role of African women in dance education and perpetuation. Kwakwa's work focuses on dance as a unique discipline.

Mawere Opoku (1987) reveals the nature of Asante court dances, courtly manners, and etiquette as reflected in the Asante court dances, in comparison with the Western court dances during the reign of Louis XIV. Opoku discusses the qualities of Akan dances, the impact of the physical and social environment on Akan dances, and the use of Akan dances as a form of historical documentation and as an instrument for establishing connections between the Africans at home and in the Diaspora. Also included in Opoku's work are the semiotic functions of costume, props, and other paraphernalia, and a brief discussion of the training of Akan dancers. Opoku emphasizes dance elements but refers to music and visual elements of the integrated Ghanaian music and dance.

Blum Odette (1973) provides an insightful introduction to Ghanaian history and social organization, a discussion of the formation of dance groups, an analysis of Ghanaian dance movements and modes of presentation, photographs, and notation for some Ghanaian dance movements. Blum's work refers to the relationship between dance and music but focuses on dance.

Omofolabo Ajayi (1998) examines Yoruba dance within the context of religious communication, the role of Yoruba divinities in the physical and metaphysical universe and creative process, and the Yoruba conception of creativity, dance, and aesthetics.

Alphonse Tierou (1992) makes another contribution to African dance. The introduction reviews the Western ethnocentric view of African cultures and

art forms, and the influence of African arts on Western artists such as Picasso, Vladminck, Derain, Juan Gris, Braque and L'Hote. A discussion of the nature of African dances, their creative genesis, and the environmental and cultural factors that shape them is also provided. Tierou further provides a guide to African dance pedagogy, including the mainstream participatory method, the structural analytical approach, and the contextual learning approach. Finally, Tierou includes some photographs of sculptures, a mask, and a dancer. Tierou's study also treats dance as a separate discipline. Some of the sculptural figures in Tierou's work may require revisiting.

A recent work by Francesca Castaldi (2006) focuses on Senegalese ballet. After reviewing the discourse of representation of African cultures, Castaldi treats African choreography, reexamines the heterogeneity of the membership of the Senegalese Ballet, and suggests an alternative mode of categorizing ethnic dances.

Another helpful scholar, focusing on the ritual and visual dimensions of African dance, is Michel Huet. His work (1978, 1996) offers an introduction to the historical and social context of sub-Saharan African dances (with a focus on French West Africa), their ritual and social functions, and provides photographs of elaborate masks and masquerades dances. The focus on the visual dimension of African music and dance reflects Huet's experience as a photographer.

Sharon Friedler (1997) provides a useful guide for cross-cultural art researchers and educators. She discusses the nature of the academic program in Ghanaian arts institutions (particularly the School of Performing Arts), educational leadership, and the role of Ghanaian artists as perpetuators of traditional art forms and creators of new art forms. Also included in her discussion are the current projects of Ghanaian arts educators and practitioners, and the potential for arts research in the country.

Robert Manford (1996) discusses the general purpose of education and music education in particular. He discusses the sociocultural functions of music and stresses the significance of music performance in bringing self-confidence and feelings of self-achievement. He views the current Ghanaian music curriculum as falling short of modern aims and objectives of education by its emphasis on singing and theory at the expense of the aesthetic education. Manford suggests the need to provide opportunities for children to develop their aesthetic potential through performance of local instruments, songs, and movements, and through listening to, composing, and improvising music relevant to their developmental levels at home and in schools, as a basis for learning foreign music.

Kitty Fadlu-Deen (1988) surveys the pedagogical approaches to teaching music to Ghanaian elementary school children and reveals that some of the

teaching materials are irrelevant to modern music education. Fadlu-Deen suggests the need for Ghanaian music educators to draw from local materials, such as percussion, songs, movements, and games, and adopt integrated and interactive approaches to teaching music.

Mensah Aggrey (1984) surveys the opinion of Ghanaian secondary school students about their music education programs in selected schools in the Central Region of Ghana. Her research, which focuses on teaching style, teaching materials and the curriculum content, reveals the unattractive nature of the music program in Ghanaian secondary schools, due to the low regard students have for the subject, teaching styles, and lack of teaching aids.

A review of the Ghanaian schools' music curriculum is provided by E. A. Akrofi (1982), who discusses the curriculum reform process followed by the Ghanaian Ministry of Education aimed at relating the curriculum to Ghanaian cultural values. Such a reform led to the teaching of Ghanaian languages, traditional music, and dance and cultural studies in the tertiary institutions and as extracurricular activities in the elementary and secondary schools.

Akosua Addo (1990, 1995) surveys the strategies for teaching music and children's singing games in Ghanaian elementary schools. Her work includes an investigation of children's musical cultures of singing games, dance, drama, and language in some schools in the Central Region of Ghana. She further examines the level of acculturation among Ghanaian children, and the use of multimedia devices, such as video, audio, and computer technologies in the documentation and teaching of Ghanaian children's singing games. Addo reviews the music syllabi of the Ghanaian elementary and secondary schools and training colleges, and pinpoints some of the deficiencies, which include an emphasis on theory and singing at the expense of integrated learning, and inadequate representation of children's values in the curriculum. Addo further reviews the relevance of Carl Orff and Kodaly's music teaching methods to Ghanaian music education.

Alexander Agordoh (1994) provides a survey of the history, characteristics, and contextual framework of African music, including social, religious, and political music, and discussion of individual musical performances. Also included in his work are transcriptions of selected songs and multiple-choice questions for students. However, his statement that "African music is improvised" in his comparison of Western and African music may create a false impression that the entirety of African music is improvised.

E. Y. Eglewogbe (1977) provides a sociocultural framework of Ewe personal names, including their typology, syntax, morphology and semantics, and reveals the philosophical and educational values that underlie these names. Eglewogbe's 1995 publication examines the role of games in African children's

education. He discusses the Ewe virtues that are transmitted to children and the reflection of these virtues and other social experiences in children's games and songs at various developmental stages. Egblewogbe also provides a contextual framework of Ewe children's games.

G. K. Nukunya (1969) offers a comprehensive study of the traditional and the contemporary sociopolitical and economic life of the Aŋlo-Ewe, including their history, location, occupation, religious practices, and kinship or lineage system, and the effects of contemporary changes on their social, economic, and political systems.

An concise ethnographic work conducted by Madeline Manoukian (1972) treats the Ewe-speaking people, their location, history, language, and socio-economic and political organization (kinship terminology, marriage, divorce, inheritance, and succession). There are minor inaccuracies in Manoukian's terminology due to cultural and geographical barriers.

Recent works by V. Y. Mudimbe (1988, 1994) offer philosophical reflections on African historical and cultural experiences. These include early Greco-Roman representations of Africa and its people; the partitioning of Africa by Spain and Portugal in 1493 (by papal bull); European exploration, colonization, and representations of Africa; Pan-Africanism; the effects of Marxism on African political systems; the ambiguities of ideological choices; the rise of the second generation of African intellectuals and the emergence of an African epistemological foundation; problems of cultural relativism; and the contemporary African reality. These works are very illuminating and thought-provoking.

A number of graduate theses have also been dedicated to the Ewe music and culture. An astounding dissertation by Nissio Fiagbedzi (1977) integrates musicology, anthropology, and history in its analysis of Ewe music. Fiagbedzi provides a detailed discussion of the historical and cultural background of the Aŋlo-Ewe, their musical organization, creative process, song structure, the interaction between their language and melodies, song genres, Ewe terminology and transcriptions of some Ewe songs. This, his initial work, treats the musical component of African music and dance as a unique subject.

Daniel Avorgbedor's dissertation (1986) includes an ethnographic study of the Aŋlo-Ewe's geographical location, economy, and social system; of the effects of social mobility on their musical organization; and of their manner of composition, innovation, and performance.

Willie Anku's work (1986), focusing on the drumming aspect of Ghanaian music and dance, involves a comparative study of the Akan and Ewe instrumental music performance processes. He discusses the construction of Ghanaian musical instruments, the environmental factors that influence the selection of

constructional materials, tuning of the musical instruments, performance techniques, instrumental rhythmic organization and structure. He further provides a comparison of African drumming in both Ghana and Pittsburgh. Also included in his work are some transcriptions of drum music. His more recent work (1996) provides a holistic approach to African drumming, integrating songs and movements.

William Kɔmla Amoaku's dissertation (1975) discusses the sociohistorical and cultural frameworks of Ewe music. The introduction addresses the effects of colonization on African cultures, early Western representations of African cultures, and contemporary problems of representing Ghanaian cultures through Western theoretical methods. He suggests the need to emphasize the culture's perspective in the cross-cultural theorizing process. Amoaku's work is holistic in its integration of music and dance, costume, visual imagery, and symbolism of the Ewe.

The above literature review has indicated that the various scholars focused on specific areas of African performing arts and cultures, which may reflect their interests, specialities, and specific aims and objectives. Some focused on drumming; others focused on dance, singing, and music while some adopted an interdisciplinary approach to theorizing on African performing arts in specific contexts. My integrated approach to theorizing on the African performing arts will complement the previous approaches.

Methodology

This book extends my ongoing investigation into African music and dance, which began in my infancy through my participation in and observation of Aɲlɔ-Ewe music and dance in the social, religious, ceremonial, economic, and political contexts. Formal field research for this curriculum development project was conducted intermittently between September 1997 and August 1999. This took place mainly in Ghana, particularly in the Volta region (Aɲlɔga, Tegbui, Woe, and Keta) in the Aɲlɔ-Ewe traditional settings, and at junior and secondary schools in Aɲlɔga, Dɔnɔgbɔ and Keta. Archival research was conducted at the Ghanaian School of Performing Arts and was supplemented through participation in and observation of music and dance classes and performances. I gathered information at Sekondi-Takoradi during the Ghanaian Second Cycle's National Music and Cultural Festival (11–16 December 1997) as well as in Canadian libraries, on the Internet, and at African music and dance performances and conferences in Canada and the USA.

The research involved observation, participation, demonstration, and teaching some traditional Ewe and Ghanaian music and dance forms, such as *ag-*

badza, *adzida*, *ageshe*, *agbeko*, *adzogbo*, *gadzo*, *nyayito*, *gohu*, *misego*, *afavu*, *atrikpui*, *zizihawo*, and *gota* of the Ewe; *fontomfrom*, *adowa*, and *kete* of the Akan; and *kpanlongo* and *fumefume*, in both the local and institutional settings. I have documented some of these performances in the local areas on social, ceremonial, and festive occasions with audio-visual devices.

I also interviewed traditional artists, parents, elementary and secondary school students and performers, instructors, some members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble, and affiliates of the School of Performing Arts, the Institute of African Studies, and the International Centre for African Music and Dance. My interviews were mainly informal and involved an investigation of students' age, their preferred music and dance forms, and their perspectives on the prevailing music and dance curriculum, the separation of African music and dance, linguistic concepts, the creative process, and the aesthetic values of these art forms.

I have interacted with renowned musicians and composers such as Emmanuel Logodzo Ahiabor and Atifose Amegago regarding the historical developments of Ewe music and dance and the creative/performative and instrument-making processes, linguistic concepts, and the ethical and aesthetic values of performances. I also interviewed master percussionists, dancers, composers, and senior members of the Ghana Dance Ensemble, such as Foli Adade, Salomon Amankwando, and William Diku on the origin, development, performance processes, functions, and meanings of some Ghanaian/West African music and dance forms and elements. Renowned professors such as J. H. K. Nketia, Mawere Opoku, Nissio Fiagbedzi, Willie Anku, and Nii Sowah were interviewed on issues regarding curriculum content and cultural representation.

I have reviewed relevant books and audio-visual materials in the Ghanaian School of Performing Arts, the International Centre for African Music and Dance, the Institute of African Studies, libraries of the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, York University, and the University of Calgary. Lack of funding, equipment, and time prevented me from collecting more data for the project.

In the process of analyzing this data and theorizing on the subject, I would like to state that 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. This is not to imply any absolute understanding of the culture and art forms, but I will endeavor to provide a comprehensive analysis of this data to facilitate cross-cultural arts education.

Note

The letter ɔ which is inserted from the font of Lucida san Unicode sounds like “or”.

The letter ʋ which is inserted from Lucida san Unicode stands for a bilabial fricative letter, pronounced as if one is blowing air over the lower lip.

The letter ƒ which is inserted from Lucida san Unicode is also pronounced as if one is blowing air over the lower lip.

The letter ŋ which is inserted from Lucida san Unicode is pronounced by exerting some tension in an area of the throat closer to the soft palate’ and sounds like the suffix “ng” of “going”.

The letter ɣ which is inserted from Lucida san Unicode is pronounced with some release of air out of the stomach or throat.

The ɖ which is inserted from Lucida san Unicode is pronounced which the tongue slightly touching the hard palate, and sounds close to “re”, or “ra”.

The letters, L and C placed at the beginning of some of the sentences of the songs refer to the lead and the chorus parts of the songs respectively.