MUSIC OF GHANA AND TANZANIA:
A BRIEF COMPARISON AND DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS AFRICAN MUSIC SCHOOLS

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF MUSIC
December 2011
Committee:
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ABSTRACT

David Harnish, Advisor

This thesis is based on my engagement and observations of various music schools in Ghana, West Africa, and Tanzania, East Africa. I spent the last three summers learning traditional dance-drumming in Ghana, West Africa. I focus primarily on two schools that I have significant recent experience with: the Dagbe Arts Centre in Kopeyia and the Dagara Music and Arts Center in Medie. While at Dagbe, I studied the music and dance of the Anlo-Ewe ethnic group, a people who live primarily in the Volta region of South-eastern Ghana, but who also inhabit neighboring countries as far as Togo and Benin. I took classes and lessons with the staff as well as with the director of Dagbe, Emmanuel Agbeli, a teacher and performer of Ewe dance-drumming. His father, Godwin Agbeli, founded the Dagbe Arts Centre in order to teach others, including foreigners, the musical styles, dances, and diverse artistic cultures of the Ewe people. The Dagara Music and Arts Center was founded by Bernard Woma, a master drummer and gyil (xylophone) player. The DMC or Dagara Music Center is situated in the town of Medie just outside of Accra. Mr. Woma hosts primarily international students at his compound, focusing on various musical styles, including his own culture, the Dagara, in addition music and dance of the Dagbamba, Ewe, and Ga ethnic groups. The DMC recently celebrated its 10th anniversary in the summer of 2010.

This thesis is also a comparison of the above music schools with those that I have observed in Tanzania, East Africa, primarily situated along the Swahili coast. I spent a month teaching music to primary and secondary school children in various private and government schools in Arusha, Bagamoyo, Tanga, and Zanzibar. This opportunity allowed me to witness the methods of musical education in public schools as well as in arts-centered specialty schools or after-school community groups. Two such schools that I focus on include programs that teach primarily Tanzanian musical
styles to native Tanzanians: the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center (BYAC) and the Dhow Countries Music Academy (DCMA). I spent a few days at the Dhow Countries Musical Arts School in Zanzibar, an NGO founded and sponsored primarily by the Norwegian government. The Dhow Countries Music Academy, or DCMA, teaches traditional dance-drumming, called ngoma in the native language of Kiswahili, and also taarab, a popular song genre with Arab instruments and other musical influences. The Bagamoyo Young Artist Center is an afterschool program for children in Bagamoyo where they learn and perform traditional ngoma as well. I briefly discuss the traditional music of each of the schools’ curriculum and discuss the methods used in transmitting their respective musical cultures.

I compare and contrast the schools from various positions: their missions, audiences, as well as their histories and visions for the future. I also investigate the status of music in the national educational systems in Ghana and Tanzania. In addition, I explore issues of commodification, cultural tourism, authenticity, and appropriation. Through research, interviews, and observations, I provide a picture, if only partial, of the state of teaching traditional African musics in Ghana and Tanzania.
Dedicated to all my music teachers, in Ghana, Tanzania, and the U.S. *Asante sana!*
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

"Pambo la ngoma vifijo. A dance is decorated by cheering. (Kiswahili kanga saying)"

"Asante sana kwa wema ulionitendea. Thank you for your good deeds to me. (Kiswahili kanga saying)"

“In the field, our friends and research collaborators have unselfishly given us gifts we know we cannot repay; we know that whatever fees or presents or help we offered in exchange were nothing compared to the worlds revealed to us.”


I would like to thank especially my advisors Dr. David Harnish and Dr. Kara Attrep. I would also like to give my most heartfelt thanks to my teachers and informants, without whose time and effort this would not have been possible: Bernard Woma, Emmanuel Agbeli, Odartey, Mary, and my friend at the DCMA. I would also like to thank personally my friends Dr. Michael Vercelli and Anither Karugila. In addition I want to thank all those people who made this thesis possible and those who helped and contributed to my education along the way: Dr. Steven Cornelius, Martin Nagy, Shari Densel, Wendy Murphy, Dr. Amanda Villepastour, Olman Piedra, Dr. Marilyn Shrude, Dr. Katherine Meizel, Dr. Roger Schupp, Dr. Jesse Johnston, Dr. Kelly Askew, Dr. Mary Natvig, Dr. Josh Duchan, and Asia as well as my home family in Zanzibar. Last but not least, I give my thanks to my parents and to ProMusica for their unending support in my travels and education. Thanks to my sister Amy for all her support!

All mistakes are my own.

2 Ibid, 52.
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INTRODUCTION

“‘A traveler in even a very limited area of Africa may meet so many different kinds of marvelous musical situations and performers that he might feel his awareness is actually superficial.’”¹


I first became interested in Ghanaian dance-drumming as an undergraduate through the course “Afro-Caribbean Ensemble” offered by Dr. Steven Cornelius. The ensemble was, and still is, primarily a performance class focusing on traditional musical repertoires from African, mainly Ghanaian, and Latin American cultures. As a percussionist, I have always been intrigued by non-Western percussion genres, and especially with African music. I have been continuously involved in the ensemble since my undergraduate years, beginning with the fall of 2005 and extending into my graduate studies. In addition to Dr. Cornelius, who left for a position at Boston University in 2008, I have learned new Ghanaian musical pieces with Dr. Amanda Villepastour and Olman Piedra at BGSU. I was also lucky enough to study abroad three times with student groups in Ghana. When I was in Ghana, the student groups usually spent a considerable amount of time at two different music schools—the Dagbe Arts Centre in Kopeyia in the Volta Region and the Dagara Music and Arts Center in Medie in the Greater Accra Region—in order to learn differing traditional Ghanaian dance-drumming. I first went to Ghana in the summer of 2008 through a workshop offered through the University of Arizona led by Dr. Michael Vercelli. The following summer I participated in the trip led by West Virginia University, again with Dr. Vercelli who had taken a position there, and my most recent trip to Ghana was the summer of 2010, also tagging along with WVU. At the end of my Ghana trip in 2010, I then took a flight to Tanzania in East Africa.

Figure 1. Map of African Continent. 2010. Courtesy of University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin. http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/map_sites/map_sites.html. (Arrows my addition).
When I landed in Tanzania, I joined three art teachers from the Bowling Green and Toledo, Ohio areas to participate in an Arts Education Program, sponsored and coordinated by the Arts Council Lake Erie West and the Great Lakes Consortium for International Training and Development. In Tanzania, I had the opportunity to volunteer my skills, and I taught general classroom music (singing and recorders) at several government and private schools, including Burhani Primary School (Tanga, TZ), Toledo Secondary School (Tanga, TZ), and Salei Primary School (Arusha, TZ). The trip was short, only about a month, and we all agreed that in the future the program would have to be expanded in order to make a more significant impact and to allow the teachers to gain more experience. We spent usually a week, sometimes days, at a school only to then leave to go to another city. My experience, however, gave me the opportunity to view music education in the classroom in various settings and sights around Tanzania.

I encountered a huge dichotomy of classroom situations, from government schools with very poor funding to better off private religious schools with some funding and support. I also was able to observe some after-school programs, NGOs, and other organizations whose mission is to teach music to native Tanzanians. This was a marked difference from what I was used to in Ghana, where most of the students were Westerners who came during their summer vacation to learn traditional dance-drumming from various master drummers, dancers, and instructors. It really made me think about the issue of music education, and even musical transmission more broadly, as it exists in various African countries. How do these organizations, who share the desire to promote and teach traditional African music, pass on musical knowledge? How do their students’ differing demographics change how they teach? What are their goals and how are they different? In this paper, I will address several of these issues, including those both disconcerting and promising, such as issues of appropriation and the transmission of “indigenous
knowledge” in case studies of two African nations, Ghana and Tanzania. But, these are just case studies, and very limited ones, into the experiences at these schools. While there is some research available related to appropriation and transmission of African musics, there still needs to be much more work done in these areas, particularly for contemporary Africa. Through my comparative approach, I just reach the tip of the iceberg.

This thesis is based on my engagement with and observations of various music schools in Ghana, West Africa, and Tanzania, East Africa. However, I primarily focus on the two Ghanaian music schools, the Dagbe Arts Centre in Kopeyia and the Dagara Music and Arts Center in Medie. I conclude this thesis by briefly mentioning my observations of music schools in Tanzania. These schools—the Dhow Countries Music Academy in Zanzibar and the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center in Bagamoyo—resemble the schools in Ghana because they emphasize traditional and local music. The schools’ programs, as mentioned later, raise various issues and possible avenues for further investigation in the following areas: the commodification and packaging of culture, cultural tourism, applied ethnomusicology, advocacy, and education.

**Self-Reflexivity: Or Why I Chose This Topic**

Another reason why I chose to focus on music schools in general is due to my background in music education. I first attended Bowling Green State University in the fall of 2005 as a music education student. Eventually, I became involved in the world music ensembles and added a dual degree in world music. My volunteer experience in Tanzania gave me more experience with non-Western, African music schools. East African music, especially *ngoma* and *taarab*, was completely new to me. But, what continued was the common experience with music schools teaching traditional African music.
This thesis may seem at times much divided in its goals and intentions, but really this is a product of my life and my interests. As scholar Kofi Agawu mentions, ethnomusicologists wear many hats.² We have to be performers, ethnomusicologists, musicians, music educators, writers, scholars, advocates, and the list goes on. So, if this thesis seems like an amalgam of various issues, geographic areas, schools, thoughts, etc., it is because it is. I do not pretend to go into great depth in any one particular school or genre of music of a particular ethnic group. I think that there are already other theses out there, and those in progress, that do just that—look into depth into the methods and ethnographies of each particular school—and I will mention these in the literature review. My chapters are short case studies reflecting my work and studies during my years as an undergraduate and graduate student at Bowling Green State University.

Ghanaian traditional dance-drums has become one of the most proliferate world music ensembles in the university setting. This ubiquity is due primarily to the work of visits and residencies of Ghanaian master drummers and musicians in the United States, beginning in the 1970s. Godwin Agbeli, Abraham Adzinyah, Freeman Donkor, Alfred and Kobla Ladzepko, Gideon Midawo Alorwoyie, among others, have all been teachers in university settings in the U.S. According to Dr. Steven Cornelius, “the Ewe [a Ghanaian ethnic group] tradition is presently the best represented of all sub-Saharan musics within the academy.”³ Ethnomusicologist David Locke explains that the proliferation of Ewe music, and Ghanaian music in general, is probably due to the fact that Ghana was colonized by the British and so

many people can speak English. All of Ghana’s surrounding neighbors were French colonies and are therefore Francophone countries. Today, American students can become familiar with traditional Ghanaian music styles in their own hometowns or through numerous study abroad programs sponsored across the nation. Hundreds of students travel to study abroad in Ghana, and, when studying music, student groups usually spend a considerable amount of time at one or two music schools in order to learn traditional Ghanaian dance-drumming. According to *The Rough Guide to World Music*, there has been an explosion of interest in studying traditional music:

Alongside the 1990s shift to hi-tech hiplife music, there has also been a resurgence of new forms of traditional Ghanaian music. This has been partly triggered by the boom in international World Music sales, a massive expansion of the Ghanaian tourist industry (650,000 visitors in 2004) and the increasing number of musicians and students who come to Ghana to study music and dance. Some come to Ghana’s universities: hundreds of foreigners now come each year to the School of Performing Arts of the University of Ghana to learn old traditional drum dances and neotraditional ones that have emerged since the 1950s, such as the Ga *kpanlogo* and Ewe *boro boro*. Others come to the dozens of private drum centres, music archives and traditional-music schools that have proliferated since the late 1980s. These include Mustapha Tettey Addy’s African Academy of Music and Arts (AAMA) at Kokrobite, the Dagbe Drum School in the Volta Region, the Kasapaa and Aklowa beach resort schools, the Gramophone Museum and the AGORO music NGO at Cape Coast, the BAPMAF Popular Music Archives at Ofankor, Ghanaba’s African Heritage Library at Medie and Kwese Asare’s African Cultural Centre in Larteh. This foreign interest in local Ghanaian music has led to a blossoming of folkloric and neotraditional ensembles, some of which double up as teaching outfits […]

In previous years, Bowling Green State University sponsored a student study abroad trip to Ghana led by Dr. Rebecca Green (Art History), Dr. Steven Cornelius (Ethnomusicology), and Gordon Ricketts (Arts Village). Students would have an opportunity to learn at both the Dagara

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and Dagbe schools. For over a decade, BGSU sent students to these schools, and many other universities as well as individuals have traveled to study at them. Additionally, the numbers of schools of music in Africa expands every year. Although I might be following a path that is already well-trodden by numerous scholars and students, I hope to bring up some thought-provoking questions about the situation of African music schools today.

My biggest question was: What do I do that is new? How am I contributing something that hasn’t been done before? In fact, early on in my education I was even confronted with the question of why I even bother to study traditional Ghanaian dance-drumming when there are so many students traveling there to study and learn, not to mention dozens of ethnomusicologists in the field and in academia who have focused on Ghana. However, this thesis will bring together my ideas and experiences in the field. Being a participant-observer over the last several years has allowed me to bring together my own unique perspectives and insights that can provide a valuable contribution. Post-colonial studies in ethnomusicology have gradually provided new credence to the importance of the individual and the reflections of the ethnographer. Mark Slobin mentions that there was “no self-reflective statements on ethical issues in ethnomusicology until the 1970s.”

Methodology

The methodology that I chose for the ethnography was primarily participant observation, interviews, other forms of traditional fieldwork. Since I had visited all of these schools, and at length at the Ghanaian schools, I was particularly familiar with the schedule, the students and

6 Quoted in Agawu (2003), 201.
teachers, and what was expected of the students. I attended lessons in both dance and music; I also took private lessons and was able to converse freely with most of the staff. But, one of the few difficulties in my fieldwork was the interview process. Since I began to formulate my thesis ideas fairly late in fieldwork, I was unable to get proper HSRB proposal for those times I was in the field. Most of my interviews had to take place after I had returned to the United States. Thank goodness that in these modern times one can easily access and communicate across the world. Through emails and websites, I was able to discover more about some of the schools than perhaps I could in person. I will discuss “virtual fieldwork” further in Chapter V: “Issues in Ethnomusicology.”

**Thesis Overview**

In Chapter I, I provide a brief overview of the traditional forms of education in Ghana and Tanzania. I also explore issues of music education and schools in Ghana. I then give a brief country profile and an overview of education generally and of music education in Ghana, both historically and today. The remainder of the thesis is broken into respective sections for Ghana and for Tanzania. Chapters II and III explore Ghana. Chapter II discusses the Dagara Music and Arts Center. The chapter investigates the Center’s history, music and repertoire, the director Bernard Woma, the teaching and learning methods, and the recent 10th Anniversary Celebration that occurred in the summer of 2010. Chapter III explores the Dagbe Arts Centre, also discussing that Center’s history, music and repertoire, the director Emmanuel Agbeli, and the teaching and learning methods. Chapter IV turns to music schools in Tanzania. It begins with a brief country profile and an overview of education generally and music education in Tanzania. I then introduce the Dhow Countries Music Academy. This section discusses the Academy’s
history, outreach, and its goals. I then briefly mention another Tanzanian music school, the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center. Chapter V addresses theoretical and ethical issues of ethnography, including the areas of “virtual” fieldwork, education’s role in ethnomusicology, issues of authenticity and appropriation, and the ethical questions of who benefits from our research. Chapter VI then finishes with my conclusions, especially focusing on future research and goals in ethnomusicology.

**Literature Review**

Although many people have visited the music schools discussed in this thesis, there is surprisingly very little published about them. Few publications are easily accessible to the public for personal research. But, as I have mentioned, there have been numerous expert scholars studying traditional Ghanaian dance-drumming. Ethnomusicology-related research has been in diverse fields, including work inside and outside of the musical field. Work is also produced by various authors of different ethnic backgrounds, including both Ghanaians and non-Ghanaians.

First and foremost, I cannot write about Ghanaian music without mentioning the most important ethnomusicologists and authors in the field, especially J. H. Kwabena Nketia, John Miller Chernoff, and David Locke. J. H. Kwabena Nketia is a legendary ethnomusicologist, musicologist, composer, and prolific writer, not only in Ghanaian music, but also in African music in general, including, interestingly, Tanzanian music. J. H. Kwabena Nketia is one of the most respected experts of Ghanaian traditional music. Nketia was a Professor of Ethnomusicology and African Studies in the United States, in such locations at University of California at Los Angeles and University of Pittsburgh, and later Professor of Music and Head of the School of Music and Drama at the University of Ghana, Legon. He is also a well-known
composer. J. H. Kwabena Nketia has also been hugely influential in establishing the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon-Accra. His works range from the 1950s to present day, and include such diversity as his well-known book *The Music of Africa* (1963/1974) and one of his most recent publications, *Ethnomusicology and African Music* (2005). Nketia has spent many years since 1952 conducting fieldwork on Ghana music, folklore and dancing. He has also been a long-time advocate of music education and has been a great resource on the subject of promoting music education to Ghanaian children.

One of the most important books about Ghanaian music is John Miller Chernoff’s 1979 book, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*. This book, an early ethnography of Ghanaian drumming, is now considered to be a classic in the field. It provides an in-depth account of John Chernoff’s experiences in Tamale. He mainly studied the Dagomba tradition, but Chernoff also gives a general overview of African music and aesthetics. His philosophies and general observations are framed by his own anecdotes and considered in the context of his experiences as a student and apprentice drummer. It has been one of the most valuable books to me personally and, in fact, was the first book I read prior to my first fieldwork in Ghana. Chernoff makes many valuable points about African aesthetics, in particular about his participant-observational research in Ghana in the 1970s with the Ewe and Dagbamba peoples. Although criticized by some, he writes about his experiences in the transmission of traditional music and reflects and expresses his personal participant-observation experiences in the field.

David Locke, Associate Professor of Music at Tufts University, is an ethnomusicologist, performer, researcher, and expert in West African drum and dance, with specific interest in the Ewe traditions of Ghana. His publications over the past twenty years are indispensable in the field of ethnomusicology and for university African performance ensembles throughout the
world, specifically in the area of Ewe and Dagomba traditional drumming. His publication *Drum Gahu: An Introduction to African Rhythm* (1987) is a classic. His Ph.D. dissertation (1978) at Wesleyan University was entitled “The Music of Agbekō.” David Locke has been performing and teaching Agbekor and Gahu for years and it can arguably be said he is the foremost Western scholar on these standard dance-drumming pieces and on Ewe music in general.

Besides these behemoths of Ghanaian music, there are also other schools who publish work written specifically about these schools. Dr. Steven Cornelius is also an ethnomusicologist who does research on Ghanaian traditional music and works with the two Ghanaian music schools. One of the most important of Cornelius’ works is the article “They Just Need Money: Goods and Gods, Power and Truth in a West African Village,” published in *The African Diaspora: A Musical Perspective* (2003), edited by Ingrid Monson. The article is very helpful in providing details about the Dagbe Cultural Institute Arts Center, its history and origin, and the village of its residence, Kopeyia. Other scholars that have written about the Center include James Matthew McClung in his dissertation “Five Percussion Pieces of the Ewe Tribe: Analysis and Performance Guidelines” (2004) and Sara Rachel McCall in her thesis “A Case Study of Music-Making in a Ghanaian Village: Applications for Elementary Music Teaching and Learning” (2010). McClung talks about the Ewe pieces Gahu, Kinka, Tokoe, Bawa, and Adzogbo that he learned at the Dagbe School. McCall also did fieldwork at Dagbe and discusses issues of world music education, methods of teaching and learning, and strategies for implementing Ewe music into elementary classrooms in the United States. Philip K Washington, a percussion performance graduate student at Bowling Green State University, wrote his thesis, “A Study of Adzogbo: A War Dance of the Ewe of Ghana (1999),” on the performance of
Adzogbo, a dance-drumming piece taught to him at Dagbe. He includes a brief history of the Ewe people, a discussion of Ewe music and instruments, drum language, and a history, description, and transcription of the dance-drumming piece itself. Several other scholars have written about Dagbe, but some of this research I was unable to acquire. For instance, I was told that Jeremy Cohen wrote a work directly related to his long-term residency at Dagbe, but I could not find it. Cohen is director of the ThisWorldMusic project and teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He is an ethnomusicologist, educator, and percussionist in the Boston area and has been studying Ghanaian music for many years. Ethnomusicologist Michelle Kisliuk, at the University of Virginia, has also worked with Emmanuel Agbeli. She recently presented a paper with Ama Oforiwaaduonum, from Illinois State University, at the 2010 Society of Ethnomusicology Conference in Los Angeles on “Tourism and Its Double: Participation as Potential Emancipation from Tropes of Colonialism and Primitivism in West Africa.” Their abstract states that they focused on cultural tourism in study abroad trips for studying music in Ghana. They write: “Following Bruner (2005), MacCannell (1973), Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) and other ethnographers of tourist productions, this paper addresses among its examples study abroad initiatives for U.S. college students traveling to Ghana to study music and dance, including a planned program to be researched during summer 2010 by this author.”

Bernard Woma, director of the Dagara Music Center (DMC), has stated that there has been at least one doctoral dissertation and several Master’s theses written about the Center. Many students, especially those at Bowling Green State University, have written about the DMC.

Sidra Lawrence, who is currently finishing her doctorate at the University of Texas at Austin, wrote a master’s thesis in 2006 titled “Killing My Own Snake.” Corinna Campbell, now completing her doctorate at Harvard University, wrote her thesis in 2005, titled “Gyil Music of the Dagarti People: Learning, Performing, and Representing a Musical Culture.” In Chapter 3 she has a section relevant to this thesis on Bernard Woma’s teaching methods and the DMC, with many more relevant details. Allison Eckardt’s 2008 thesis, titled “Kpatsa: An Examination of a Ghanaian Dance in the United States,” also discusses Bernard Woma as a teacher and culture bearer. Other ethnomusicology and music students who I have encountered in the field have also written, or are in the process of writing, about the DMC, including Julie Beauregard, from the Eastman School of Music; Mitch Greco, Kent State University; Terresa Tauzin, The University of Arizona; and U.S. tour director for Bernard’s troupe, Griffin Brady, founder, teacher, and performer at Slyboots Studios & School of Music and Art who recently finished at Goddard College. Dr. Michael Vercelli, who received his doctorate from the University of Arizona, wrote his dissertation in 2006, titled “Performance Practice of the Dagara-Birifor Gyil Tradition through the Analysis of the Bewaa and Daarkpen Repertoire.” Dr. Vercelli’s work is one of the most seminal pieces about the repertoire of gyil available. His topics include the construction and tuning of gyil, funeral music, history of Dagara of Northwest Ghana, and many transcriptions of gyil pieces, including funeral repertoire and also Bewaa recreational music and other pieces that Bernard Woma teaches at his compound. Vercelli goes into great details about performance, history, myth, and instrument construction. His primary teachers were, and still are, Bernard Woma and Tijan Dorwana, who are both located at the Dagara Music Center.

Many scholars are involved in research with the gyil in Northwest Ghana. One of the earliest works is Larry Dennis Godsey’s dissertation from UCLA in 1980, titled “The Use of the
Xylophone in the Funeral Ceremony of the Birifor of Northwest Ghana.” Ethnomusicologist Trevor Wiggins has also written a book on the gyil as well as many articles on the instrument. In addition, Atta Annan Mensah has written about the gyil, including his article in the Journal of African Studies, “Gyil: The Dagara-Lobi Xylophone” (1982). Many scholars are involved in research on Ewe music, most recently James Burns’ 2009 book, Female Voices from an Ewe Dance-drumming Community in Ghana: Our Music Has Become a Divine Spirit. David Locke’s dissertation is also important, as I mentioned earlier.

There are also a number of books about Tanzanian music. Frank Gunderson of Florida State University researches music of Sukumaland, in Northwest Tanzania. He explores the ngoma traditional dance-drumming as used by farmers and musical labor associations. Gregory Barz writes about kwaya, a Swahili genre of choirs in Tanzania. Barz and Gunderson co-edited a volume of work called Mashindano!: Competitive Music Performance in East Africa (2000). It includes many important contributions from many Swahili music scholars in a variety of genres focusing on the form of the musical competition. There also is a corpus of research written about taarab music, a popular song genre with African, Indian, and Arab influences, including by ethnomusicologist Kelly Askew and historian Laura Fair. Fair studied with famed taarab musician and scholar Mwalim Idd Abdulla Farahan.8 She is a scholar of African history and has written about 20th century Zanzibar, and her works include the book, Pastimes and Politics (2001). Through her fieldwork, she “collected and analyzed nearly three hundred taarab and ngoma songs.”9 Werner Graebner is another scholar who researches taarab in Zanzibar. His article “Between Mainland and Sea: The Taarab Music of Zanzibar” (2004) discusses the

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9 Ibid, 60.
historical context and background of *taarab* music, analyzes lyrics, discusses how the song genre has changed, and talks about its underlying structures and practices. He also has another recent article, “Wape Vidonge Vyao: Taarab as a Vital Language in Urban East Africa” (2004), that focuses more on *taarab*’s contemporary changes in the last decade. He discusses the song “Vidonge,” one of the most popular modern *taarab* songs in the 1990s, and he also discusses the creation of modern *taarab* groups. Kelly Askew’s book, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (2002), is one of the most important books on Tanzanian music today, especially in both *ngoma* and *taarab*, and was an important source on cultural music troupes and the performance, presentation, and nationalism of ethnic diversity. Mohamed El-Mohammady Rizk wrote a book based on his fieldwork in Zanzibar that analyses *taarab* song lyrics: *Women in Taarab: The Performing Art in East Africa* (2007). Another book that I found useful was compiled and written by G.W. Lewis and E.G. Makala, titled *The Traditional Musical Instruments of Tanzania* (1990); it is, however, difficult to find because it was published in Dar es Salaam by the Music Conservatoire of Tanzania.

Surprisingly, there are not many books published that specifically focus on music education, transmission, or music schools in Africa. The few that include content on music education are the following: “Indigenous Music Education in Africa” by Clemente K. Abrowaa in *What is Indigenous Knowledge? Voices from the Academy* (1999); W. Ofotsu Adinku’s “Cultural Education in Ghana: A Case Study of Dance Development in the University System” (2005); Modesto Mawulolo Kwaku Amegago’s dissertation “An Holistic Approach to African Performing Arts: Music and Dance Curriculum Development and Implementation” (2000); “Music Education in Ghana: The Way Forward” by James Flolu in *World Musics in Education* (1996); Robert Kwami’s “Music Education in Ghana and Nigeria: A Brief Survey” (1994); Mos
Únmólá Omíbiyí’s “Folk Music and Dance in African Education” (1972); and Gustav Oware Twerefoo’s “Traditional Music in Lifelong Education: The Situation in Ghana” (1975).

J. H. Kwabena Nketia has also written about music education in Ghana, such as his presentation “Music Education in African Schools” (1966) for the International Seminar on Teacher Education in Music in Ann Arbor, and his articles for the *Music Educators Journal*, “The Place of Authentic Folk Music in Education” (1967) and “Music Education in Africa and the West: We Can Learn from Each Other” (1970). Cati Coe also has an amazing book called *Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools: Youth, Nationalism, and the Transformation of Knowledge* (2005). With extensive fieldwork experience, Coe deliberates about national Ghanaian dance-drumming competitions and how they represent national culture in the general school system.

Instead of focusing on music education or transmission in the field, many scholars and educators now remove the music from its context and bring it into the classroom, generally a Western-style classroom. Multicultural music education is a growing and thriving field, but often the musical cultures are only presented to a more privileged, American or European audience and not to the students in the original culture. Nevertheless, one of the most important books that I discovered was the newly published *Centering on African Practice in Musical Arts Education* (2006), edited by Minette Mans. The book even includes a chapter on one of the Tanzanian schools that I discuss, the Dhow Countries Music Academy; Hildegard Kiel and Tormod W. Anundsen co-wrote an insightful chapter, “Is there a Swahili way of teaching music? Describing a series of teachers’ workshops on teaching music to children in Tanzania.” This chapter discusses a rural outreach program sponsored by the DCMA for local children. The
volume is really unique because a lot of sources on world music education are usually focused on western audiences, either in the university or elementary school setting.

I was also astonished to see in May 2010, after I returned from Tanzania, the Master’s thesis by Jørn Erik Ahlsen titled “Dhow Countries Music Academy: Mediating Cultural Trade in the 21st Century.” It covers most everything about the DCMA and includes interviews with musicians, history of the school, introduction to *taarab*, the island of Zanzibar, and other musical genres taught at the academy. Although I was at first saddened to find that one of my own field research sites had been so thoroughly documented already, and during the summer of my work no less, this work is still a welcomed and well-needed jewel of fieldwork on contemporary music of Zanzibar.

Research on multicultural music education is commonly written for a western audience, for example the edited volume by William M. Anderson and Patricia Shehan Campbell, *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education*. The book *World Musics in Education* (1996), edited by Malcolm Floyd, also discusses the teaching of world music genres and styles in a variety of schools and other countries. Both books emphasize the importance of teaching world music and multicultural curricula in the classroom. Ethnomusicologists today are often still expected to have some sort of proficiency in teaching a world music ensemble. A source I found very useful on this topic was *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* (2004), edited by Ted Solís. It provided chapters from leading directors of world music ensembles around the world in the university context, with a heavy proliferation of ensembles in the United States. David Locke’s chapter, “The African Ensembles in America: Contradictions and Possibilities,” was very helpful in providing an inside view on American
African ensembles; the chapter resonated with me because I began my learning and introduction in African music through Bowling Green State University’s own Afro-Caribbean Ensemble.

Going beyond a review of the literature, I hope to present my own case of participant-observation, education, and interpretations from my fieldwork at these schools in the main body of this thesis. This project will provide a personal perspective and ethnography on these schools, while comparing, analyzing, and evaluating different variations, musical styles, and conceptualizing my own position in both learning and teaching.
Mtoto umleavyo ndivyonyo akuvaavyo. A child will grow up the way he was raised. (Kiswahili kanga saying)1

One of the difficulties of writing on the transmission of music in Africa is that it is commonly seen as a simple system of oral and aural transmission. The idea of enculturation is where a young child learns the musical tradition through gradual and lifelong absorption, observation, and participation in the musical culture throughout his or her lifetime. Francis Bebey explains this theory in Africa: “At this early stage in life, it is evident that the child is merely a listener, but as he begins to grow up, he very soon takes an active role in music. The average African child reveals a natural aptitude for music at a very early age.”2 In learning African music, a child usually develops his or her sense of music and dance through watching. It is even said that a child first learn to dance on the bouncing back of their mother (see Figure 2). Locke confirms that a child will often learn music and dance from “repeated exposure” from the mother’s back.3 Even if it often has been highly romanticized, young children might grow up in an environment surrounded by music. In Ghana, you might see a young child playing drums on an empty Milo can. Professor J. H. Kwabena Nketia eloquently explains:

The capacity for response to drum music is not confined to drummers. It is widespread and is developed at a very early age. Mothers swing their little ones rhythmically to music and encourage them to dance as soon as they are able to walk, at first to spoken rhythms and simple songs accompanied by handclapping, and later to the drums of the dancing ring. The dancing ring is, therefore, an important part of musical education. Very often the interested audience includes children of all ages who not only watch the steps and movements of older dancers but imitate them along the fringes of the ring and behind it.4

1 Hadi, 93.
Through imitation children can learn to become musicians. As Nketia writes, children rely on imitation to learn music: “The young have to rely largely on their imitative ability, and on correction by others when this is volunteered. They must rely on their own eyes, ears, and memory, and acquire their own technique of learning.”5 In the Dagara ethnic group of Northwest Ghana, a child learns through imitation by playing music at funerals. Ethnomusicologist Larry Dennis Godsey mentions that children occupy surplus instruments a little ways away from the main funeral group and learn by imitating the adult group.6 By gradually absorbing the music, a musician might learn all the intricacies involved in the music, whether consciously or not. Nketia writes, “The organization of traditional music in social life enables the individual to acquire his musical knowledge in slow stages and to widen his experience of the music of his culture through the social groups into which he is gradually absorbed and through the activities in which he takes part.”7 Children in Ghana and Tanzania, and in Africa in general, may learn music from an early age. If they are lucky enough to grow up around it every day, this enculturation can provide them with a solid music and dance education that might not be afforded elsewhere. These experiences are invaluable and cannot necessarily be replicated with such a degree in a school setting.

7 Nketia 1974, 59-60.
There is an often-romanticized version of the African child learning music from the very beginning of their life, continuity through lifelong commitment, engagement, and immersion in a rich musical life. Today, however, it seems that such a musical education is becoming less common. Due to growing urbanization and globalization, the youth today might not have the same chances to learn music in this way. According to scholars Kuada and Chachah, the increased movement of people from rural to urban areas have made it so that “[c]ities such as Kumasi and Accra are no longer inhabited only by the original ethnic communities of the areas.”

For instance, Bernard Woma’s school and compound is located just outside of Accra, in the town of Medie. This location is extremely far away from his hometown village of Hiineteng.

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in Northwest Ghana. Although this takes the music outside of its original “village” and rural context, the cultural movement is typical of the migration patterns of modern Ghanaians and it results in musics from various areas being thrown into the same city and overall less access to traditional music for children. Bernard’s school allows those outside of his hometown to experience the music of the Dagara people. It also brings the Dagara culture to both westerners and the local children of Medie. B. A. Aning mentions the problems in teaching traditional Ghanaian folk music to youth today:

It should be pointed out that a comparatively small proportion of Ghanaian youth is fortunate enough to be given formal instructions in traditional music. The few are usually born into a family with a long musical tradition. The problem we are now facing is that many more children are spending the better part of the day in school and are being attracted by other activities. There is therefore less and less opportunity of exposure to their traditional music.

Perhaps the traditional music education systems of oral transmission are waning, but, through their efforts and innovations, teachers and expert musicians find ways to promote and preserve their various musical traditions. There is a continued need to find new situations and contexts in order to preserve and continue musical traditions that might otherwise disappear.

Although compulsory by government standards, often music’s role in education is simply ignored or seen as superfluous because it may occur in daily life. Traditional music plays a role in educating the youth, and young children learn music through daily immersion in it.

Ethnomusicologist Trevor Wiggins writes:

People who live in rural communities tend to get up at sunrise, and return home for the evening meal when it gets dark. After they have eaten they may sit and talk, or sometimes they may play instruments and sing. Young children often copy music they have heard others play. Sometimes a parent will sit a child on their knee guiding their hands to play

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an instrument. Groups of very young drummers practise, on drums made out of old cans or something similar. It would be unusual to find someone who goes to a music teacher for regular formal lessons.\textsuperscript{11}

In the traditional Ghanaian setting, children learn the music through listening and absorbing what they hear around them. They grow up with music and learn by watching others and eventually join in. Children learn physical and social skills; for example, “[a]mong the \textit{Aŋlɔ} \textsuperscript{Ewe}, physical strength and skill are trained from birth, and are instilled largely through the dance-drumming traditions.”\textsuperscript{12} As mentioned in earlier, children are exposed to music most of their lives and internalize the dancing and rhythms. Mothers often comfort their babies by bouncing them up and down, either tied on their backs during work or with the mother’s hands under the babies’ arms. It is said that children first learn the basic traditional dance moves with the flapping of the arms. Children often participate in dancing and playing at events. At every village or city, I was shocked to find small African children joining, dancing, singing and playing drum parts to the music we were learning. I was amazed to see them perform at such a high skill level. I laughed and told them they could dance better than I would ever be able to. One particularly memorable time was late at night at the Dagbe Center, when most of the students had gone out for the evening. A few of us stayed behind and relaxed under the pavilion in the center of the compound. The children would come and talk and play with us, often hoping to get some candy or a pencil. Two small girls wearing simple fabric wraps asked me if I wanted to dance with them and they proceeded to sing the drum parts and dance along. They were such energetic and amazing dancers. If I sat down, they would come and beg me to come back and

dance, pulling me from my seat. It was one of the most memorable and enjoyable parts of my fieldwork in Ghana.

In most African societies musicians play an important role. In some musical traditions anyone may learn who is interested. Usually, however, those who become truly proficient in music are those who are either apprenticed or grow up in lineages or families of musicians. Still, many people can participate in music no matter how minimal. Nevertheless, often musical experts are given a particular status. Nketia explains that “the art of drumming requires knowledge, skill and perfection which only a few attain.” Musicians either learn to drum by growing up in drumming families or inheriting the position, or they learn by their own free will in voluntary associations. Nketia mentions that less proficient and support drummers simply learn to play through watching and can pick up rhythms during performances; however, some people are born into music. He clarifies that “[t]here is also a common belief about drum prodigies. It is believed that a person may be born a drummer. Soon after birth, it is stated, such a person shows his inherited trait, for when he is being carried he drums with his fingers on the back of the person carrying him.” Except not all people that are born into a musical family necessarily learn to become musicians. While describing musical transmission among the Akan in Ghana, Nketia notes that, “[i]n the past the training of the master drummer of the state started early in life, though fathers did not always show a willingness to teach their children. They feared that they might be hastening their own departure from this life by training their successors, and so delayed personal instruction or else got someone else to teach their

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13 Nketia 1963, 152.
15 Ibid, 156.
children.”\textsuperscript{16} Children who grow up in a family of drummers may or may not learn how to drum. For instance, sometimes the musical tradition is passed from an uncle to a son. Gender is also an issue to consider in the society in question. Depending on how one is related in the family, one may have the privilege and opportunity to learn music or dance.

Scholars have addressed the teaching styles of Ghanaian musicians. Sometimes teachers are harsh to their students. Traditionally, it was not uncommon to hit students as a method of training and Nketia confirms that “drumming instructors were not always patient with their pupils.”\textsuperscript{17} This method of discipline and negative reinforcement might explain the reluctance for researchers to further investigate modes of teaching and learning. Punishment as teaching does bring up other issues, however. For instance, teachers express cultural differences and modifications for different student audiences. Many African music teachers, for example, use different methods for teaching western students and teaching indigenous or local students.

African children can also learn music through games. Most societies have specific games and songs primarily just for children, such as games or folk tales that teach them about life and their surroundings. Bebey writes: “The musical games played by children are never gratuitous; they are a form of musical training which prepares them to participate in all areas of adult activity—fishing, hunting, farming, grinding maize, attending weddings, funerals, dances, and by necessity, even fleeing from wild animals.”\textsuperscript{18} Besides games, songs, and informal and enculturation patterns in everyday life, there have been formal ways for children to learn music. During colonial times, children were introduced to Western education practices. African schools often adapted institutional practices from colonists, missionaries, and even slave traders, even
though these institutional practices were often ethnocentric and focused only on European musical practices. Mos Únmólá A. Omíbíyí-Obidike, a proponent and scholar of African indigenous content, outlines the ethnocentrism in teaching in African schools:

According to the proceedings of an International Conference on Music Education in Africa, in most African countries music in elementary schools was still mainly singing of songs—European and African. In secondary schools, music was still an extracurricular activity and at the tertiary level, that is, teacher training and university where music has been introduced, with a few notable exceptions the content is still heavily Western in orientation.\(^{19}\)

Today, however, teaching ideas are changing and educators often introduce African music in the classroom. Omíbíyí continues and explains the renewed interest in African studies after independence and the problems of incorporating it into the curriculum in many countries:

At independence, there was an overwhelming support for the inclusion of African music in the educational programs of African schools and this led to the review of the existing curricula in order to incorporate African-oriented subject matters. However, in spite of the post-independence reorganization, African music has still not been incorporated into the curricula of most African schools. As a matter of fact, the position of music in schools today is not much different from what it was during the pre-independence period.\(^{20}\)

In fact, there was a conference held in Lusaka, Zambia, from June 15-22, 1971, that focused on teaching African music in Africa.\(^{21}\) Many educators and scholars proposed that both Western and African music be taught in the African classroom perhaps to help develop students with some competence in multiple musics. Mantle Hood, who created the Institute of Ethnomusicology at UCLA, first introduced the idea of bi-musicality in the 1960s. He believed that students studying to be ethnomusicologists should become proficient in more than one musical culture. An ethnomusicologist should have a basic study and training of, first, Western

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\(^{20}\) Ibid.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 42.
music, and then at least one type of non-Western music, and attempt to become as proficient and fluent as a native musician. By learning the music of another culture, one can understand the music and the culture more thoroughly. African musical education should include the concept of bi-musicality as well.

Omíbíyí himself advocates for a type of bi-musicality, or polymusicality. In any African country, for example, students should first study the music of their own ethnic group, then that of other ethnic groups, and then music from other African countries. Omíbíyí explains that “professional education in music […] should be rooted in the learners’ own environment and based on African musical repertory.”

African students should learn the music of their own country. In the field of ethnomusicology most of the people who benefit from research in African music are foreigners. Ethnomusicology shouldn’t just be focused on teaching the privileged western students the music of the “other.” We need to look beyond academia and reach out to African students themselves. Due to the devastation and break down of cultural values brought about by colonial hegemony, globalization, and urbanization, the traditional African education system is slowly disappearing. Students within the culture are no longer taught their own music, and African students should be awarded the opportunity to learn their own musical cultures.

Besides the struggles of including African music education in the classroom, music in general is often excluded entirely from school curricula. It is apparent that music education is not always valued as highly as other academic disciplines; this is true in both Africa and the United States. Teachers and students struggle to defend their position to teach music, and music is often simply seen as an extracurricular activity. During my stay in Tanzania, it became clear

\[22\text{ Ibid.}\]
to me that often “teaching to the tests” and examinations can get in the way and music can be sidelined as a club activity. Music, however, especially music that is culturally relevant to the students, can help give meaning and identity to the students. Learning music and dance styles can allow students to explore their own culture, their values, socially acceptable behavior, and aesthetics and morals.

Ghanaian Music Education, Overview

*Elimu ni bahari.* Education is an ocean (that is, it has no end). (Kiswahili *kanga* saying)²³

Ghana: Brief Country Profile

Ghana is a sub-Saharan African country in West Africa. Ghana shares its borders with Burkina Faso to the north, Cote d’Ivoire to the west, and Togo to the east. To the south is a vast coastline along the Atlantic Ocean. Ghana has a wet and dry season, and is usually very humid and hot, being both in the tropics and having numerous lush rainforests and vegetation. Ghana also has two primary climate regions, the “drier savannah flatlands of the north and a dense vegetation zone of the south.”²⁴ There are over sixty ethnic groups, and at least as many languages. The northern regions are primarily Islamic. Ghana was a major trade center during the colonial period. The Portuguese arrived in 1471, and French, Dutch, British and Danes arrived in the 16th century.²⁵ The British were the last to leave when Ghana gained independence in 1957. During colonial times, around the 17th century, Ghana was famous for its trade in gold and slaves. West Africa has been an object of study for many scholars because of its link to North America through the Mid-Atlantic slave trade. Many stylistic characteristics of American

²⁴ Kuada and Chachah, 11.
²⁵ Ibid, 19.
music, such as the rock-and-roll drum set, can find their origins in polyrhythmic drum ensembles of West Africa. The percussion-dominated genres of the Akan, Dagbamba, and Ewe have been the subject of numerous ethnographies over the last several decades; however, other musical forms, such as vocal music and stringed-fiddles, have also been covered by prominent scholars.

Figure 3. Map of Ghana. 2007. Courtesy of University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin. http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/map_sites/map_sites.html. (circles my addition, indicating area of schools).
Ghana’s capital is Accra, located along the coast. Ghana, formerly called the Gold Coast for its rich gold deposits attracting colonial exploitation, gained its independence from the British in 1957, earning the distinction of being the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain independence from its colonizers. Ghana became a republic on July 1, 1960, and the first president at time of independence was Kwami Nkrumah. Today, Ghana has a booming tourist industry, enticing both volunteers and foreigners to visit the numerous slave castles and forts, as well as other famous tourist spots, such as the Kakum Canopy walk in the rainforest, Kintampo Falls, Mole National Park, and the largest market in West Africa located in Kumasi. Music has also become an area of interest for tourists; two music schools that welcome tourists and foreign students and have been around for a decade or longer are the Dagara Music and Arts Center and the Dagbe Arts Center.

**Ghana’s Education System**

Ghana’s education system includes a 6-3-3 system for pre-university and three-year or four-year university. This means that primary school consists of six years with three years of junior high school and three years of senior high school. The government provides nine years of basic education that is free and mandatory. Fees and other needs, for instance the purchase of school uniform and school supplies such as paper and pencils, can hinder some students from attending. Due to some difficulties in the education system, music is sometimes neglected. Despite this, music education in Ghana has recently been viewed with renewed interest. Prior to independence, music education was largely regulated to teaching only Western and colonial musical values. In fact, most education for Ghanaian children had little or no link to Ghanaian

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teaching practices or to the lives of Ghanaian students. Early formal education emphasized western practices. According to Anyidoho and Dakubu, the history of modern education began with Christian missionaries in the 19th century.\textsuperscript{27} Sources state that colonial or “formal education” began as early as 1752 with Reverend Thomas Thompson, a missionary from the United States. There were also many different missionaries from Britain, Switzerland, and Germany that brought western-style education to Ghana.\textsuperscript{28} During the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, their teaching might have assisted the colonial government’s efforts to “civilize” and control the different Ghanaian ethnic groups. In the colonial period, formal education was introduced during a time of slave trading, racism, arrogance, and hegemonic dominance toward the people of Ghana. Missionaries and Western educators likely felt that they were doing the right thing by imposing their educational system onto African peoples.

Despite these good intentions, the Western educational system gradually took over and obliterated the traditional schooling system; before colonial education, there was a well-established traditional or informal “home-school” education. This style of education did, however, vary from location to location, but it contributed to a better matched curriculum depending on local needs and values. As more and more Ghanaian schools began to adopt the British educational system, students became less involved with traditional educational systems.

In her book \textit{Dilemmas of Culture in African Schools: Youth, Nationalism, and the Transformation of Knowledge}, scholar Cati Coe explains this predicament: “With the expansion of mass education, children spend more time in school. As a result, they generally have less opportunity to learn local knowledges, closely tied to complex local social relations and


\textsuperscript{28} Omatseye, 57.
ecologies.” According to Omatseye, traditional Ghanaian education was focused around the family. He explains that the home and family were most important in educating children and socializing. He writes, “Elders in the family, indeed, the whole family lineage and the whole community, were responsible for instructing the child in proper values.” Teachers were family members and important elders and chiefs. Education was also dependent on lineage and ancestry. In discussing traditional education in Ghana, Omatseye writes:

Education, though informal, was aimed at producing persons who would be useful members of society. To achieve this, children at a very young age were trained to be good citizens, endowed with character training, and taught to acquire skills that would make them productive members of society. Parents, elders, older siblings, and the community were custodians of knowledge.

Morals and life lessons would be transmitted through legends, fables, stories, songs, and other artistic mediums and genres. Omatseye continues: “They would play their roles as teachers to the younger generation, transmitting knowledge through a variety of instructional mediums—orally, with songs, proverbs, riddles, folklore, myths, and legends as appropriate ways of teaching. Body language and other forms of communication enhanced teaching and learning.”

Stories and legends, as well as those inter-textual ideas expressed through music, dance, and song, gave children the knowledge, literature, and behavioral expectations that they should learn. Through stories one can learn not only the difference between right and wrong, but also culturally specific aesthetics and values. For example, the popular Akan stories of Ananse the spider teach children morals and conflict resolution. One of the most fascinating events that I experienced in Ghana was of Tijan Dorwana, a Dagara master instrument maker and musician.

30 Omatseye, 55.
31 Ibid, 54-55.
32 Ibid, 55.
performing traditional stories on the *gyil*, a West African xylophone. It was late in the evening after dinner in the summer of 2010, and, with his daughter at his side, he sang a fable about Ananse the spider, who rode on an elephant. He accompanied the song with *gyil* and had the audience participate by producing sound effects. His young daughter, along with his western friends in the audience, including me, would be instructed to clap along or make sound effects to accompany the story. I wish I could go into more details, but further analyzing the performance is outside of the scope of this thesis. In short, storytelling, dance, and music can all be intertwined in educational roles.

Omatseye explains that in Ghanaian society and within various ethnic groups, stories, proverbs, and idioms all teach and promote to children “conformity to societal expectations.” Other values that were taught in a traditional, home education were not necessarily taught in the Western colonial classroom setting. Omatseye comments on how appreciation and respect for the people, land, and history is taught to young children: “With respect to Ghanaian oral traditions, conversation, discussions, and storytelling on moonlight nights on farms and in family gatherings provide children with knowledge of the geography of the country’s terrain, the history of their people, and appreciation for the value of leaves, trees, herbs, and shrubs all around them.” From an early age, “[c]hildren are also informed of the origin of their ancestors and their culture.” Initiation is another way that African children can learn relevant skills to their age set. In both initiation and other forms of traditional education, music and dance was, and still is for many cultures, a living source of schooling and instruction. Music and dance creates a

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33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
stage in order to transmit values and knowledge to the next generation. As these traditional education settings disappear, these values and skills are not taught in formal education today.

Due in part to the past hegemonic and rigid enforcement of colonial education practices, there remain several problems today in African educational systems, including language issues, funding problems, and lack of teacher training and sufficient numbers of teachers. One of the most debated issues has been the choice of language of instruction in Ghanaian classrooms. In Ghana, there are over 44 different languages. Most Ghanaians grow up being proficient in three to six, mostly Ghanaian languages. Agawu states that, “[m]ost schooled Ghanaians are at least bilingual, some trilingual, and a few quadrolingual. The languages they speak occupy different social registers, of course. English is used in school, the civil service, and political life […]. Twi, Fante, Ga, or Ewe may be associated with church, market, domestic situations, entertainment, and significant segments of social life.”

Most educated Ghanaians—those who have studied in high school, for example—can speak and read English well. But, with such a diversity of mother tongues, it has been difficult for the government to standardize the language of school instruction. In 1967, the military government with the National Liberation Council, the group that ousted Nkrumah, advocated and mandated that the local language be the medium of instruction for primary and middle schools. Prior to that, the Educational Review Committee of 1966-67 mandated that years 1-3 of primary school be taught in a Ghanaian language and year 4 in English language with the Ghanaian language as a subject. Having English as the language of instruction was acceptable for urban centers, where contact with English speakers is common, but this policy posed a problem in more rural areas. Even as recently as 2004,

36 Agawu, 39.
37 Anyidoho and Dakubu, 148-9.
38 Omatseye, 62.
educators still continue to debate whether English or a local language should be the language of instruction.\textsuperscript{39}

Schools in Africa do face the challenges of poor resources and funding. Many schools, especially government public schools, are in dire need of improving the education delivered to students. The inequalities of education in African countries are seen as largely based on economics and class. Educated and affluent parents are able to provide their children with a better education than those parents who cannot afford it. Educator Omatseye states most clearly that “[p]oor children end up in poorly funded government schools whereas children of the affluent parents find themselves in schools that can only be rivaled in Europe and the United States.”\textsuperscript{40} Due to poor funding and training of education as compared to the so-called Western world, Ghana, as well as many other African countries, suffers from huge teacher shortages and inadequate facilities and supplies. As more and more educated African scholars travel overseas to go the universities or get a job, Africa faces the continuing problem of the “brain drain” of the most educated citizens. Furthermore, within countries like Ghana there are huge disparities between urban and rural schools as well as government and private schools.

\textbf{Music’s Role in Education}

Teacher training in Ghana began in 1909 when the government established the Teacher Training College and Technical College in Accra.\textsuperscript{41} Most African teacher training colleges do not include training on the arts and music, though there are some exceptions, such as the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, and Specialist Training College, Winneba.\textsuperscript{42} For

\textsuperscript{39} Anyidoho and Dakubu, 150.
\textsuperscript{40} Omatseye, viii.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 58.
\textsuperscript{42} Omibiyi, 42.
example, the Achimota School, founded in 1925, is “one of the premier schools in West Africa” for the study of music, although it primarily focuses on European music or Europeanized music. As I mentioned before, most schools do not enforce the music curricula even though today it is considered a compulsory subject. Things are changing, however. For instance, one scholar writes, “It is only recently that the West African Examinations Council—the body that administers the West African School Certificate Examinations—approved a new syllabus which combined both African and Western musical contents for secondary schools.” Since Ghana’s independence in 1957, the Ghanaian government has looked to their culture for sources of pride, especially in the music and the arts, and has tried to incorporate them in their educational system. As early as 1975, the government formed an educational plan that included the “promotion of physical education, sports and games, cultural and youth programs.” The Educational Reform Programme in 1986 under the supervision of the World Bank established “cultural studies” as a compulsory subject under basic education. In 1996, a government reform project recognized three distinct subjects in cultural studies: Ghanaian languages (voluntary), religious and moral education, and music and dance. Today school subjects include mathematics, science, social studies, Ghanaian languages, English language, agricultural science, life skills, and physical education. There are also three optional subjects to choose from the following five possibilities: agricultural science, business studies, technical education, vocational education (home economics and visual arts), general (arts and science education). According to Catie Coe, teaching culture would automatically have been seen as synonymous with teaching dance-

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43 Agawu, 13.
44 Omibiyi, 42.
45 Omatseye, 66.
46 Coe, 9.
48 Omatseye, 73.
drumming. Coe writes that “drumming and dancing” was often used generally as a term in place of culture, including other art forms. Coe writes that “drumming and dancing” was often used generally as a term in place of culture, including other art forms. Coe writes that “drumming and dancing” was often used generally as a term in place of culture, including other art forms. Coe writes that “drumming and dancing” was often used generally as a term in place of culture, including other art forms.49 Music, dance, art, and other cultural studies can all contribute positively to the educational system. Education scholar Omatseye also notes that one of Ghana’s primary education objectives has been to develop “sound moral attitudes and a healthy appreciation of Ghana’s culture and identity.”50 There are many different cultures and ethnic groups shaping identity in Ghana, however, posing a challenge to the education system.

After independence, the government tried to form a curriculum to teach traditional music and culture. The Ghanaian government began to sponsor school competitions in music, in both traditional dance-drumming and choirs. President Kwami Nkrumah established the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana and also the Arts Council (now the National Commission of Culture).51 According to Coe, schools began to create their own music groups dating from the 1950s, and the Arts Council encouraged schools to form their own school dance-drumming groups in the 1970s. The Arts Council would send specialists to tour and conduct workshops at secondary schools and teacher training colleges.52 Coe reasons, however, that teachers would often “see the cultural studies syllabus, in particular, as a top-down reform, imposed from above by government bureaucrats.”53 With such diversity in traditional music and yet limited training, teachers would often see the government’s intervention as almost excessive and uncooperative. The government was telling the schools what to teach, but often it was left to the select few elders and chiefs of local villages to teach it. The government managed the production of a national culture in schools through dance-drumming troupes. Similar to the

49 Coe, 54.
50 Omatseye, 71.
51 Coe, 9.
52 Ibid, 71-3.
53 Ibid, 55-6.
actions taken by the government in Tanzania, culture became a symbol of the nation. Coe remarks: “Nkrumah, in seeking to appropriate cultural traditions and symbols in ways that were not divisive to the nation, used the approach, also used in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, of combining a variety of different ethnic artistic traditions in a single public display: a state-sponsored buffet of culture.”

Even though music is compulsory, the subject usually works as an extra or optional curriculum. Because the subject is not tested in exams, it is often seen as extracurricular, and then only taught if it is in the interest of the teacher. Coe clarifies: “Since neither music and dance nor cultural studies are tested in national examinations, unlike most other subjects, the absence of cultural studies within the school day can be left to slip by unnoticed.” Nonetheless the use of traditional music and dance in the Ghanaian classroom has contributed to a sense of ethnic and national identity, social pride, and the spread of historical and local knowledge. In the cultural studies syllabus, the government laid out a plan of study for traditional music. Teachers, however, were responsible for getting their own training in most cases. Coe explains that, “[b]ecause many teachers do not have expertise in cultural traditions, local elders and chiefs are ironically re-legitimated as the keepers of the most respected cultural knowledge.” Although teachers were responsible for teaching culture, many didn’t have any training. Even though the government was pushing for a national culture, local culture bearers were often solicited for their knowledge. Music is culture, educating the youth and providing them with traditions, history, and knowledge of their own culture, simultaneously local and national.

54 Ibid, 60.
55 Ibid, 79.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid, 25.
In order to transmit and present cultural knowledge, many Ghanaians formed dance-drumming groups called cultural dance troupes. Since independence, President Nkrumah and the government established many organizations in order to showcase national pride and identity of the new nation of Ghana. Nkrumah and the government created the National Theatre Movement “to develop new styles of music, dance and drama in modern contexts, based on traditional forms.” Nkrumah also established the Arts Council and the Institute of African Studies (IAS) at the University of Ghana in 1961. In the 1960s and the early 1970s the government sponsored and created the Arts Council and many dance troupes. The administration also founded the National Dance Company, later renamed “Ghana Dance Ensemble.” Many amateur dance companies called cultural troupes were formed based on the design of the national dance troupe. Even public schools began creating their own cultural groups and now they compete regionally and nationally at competitions sponsored by the government. Locke states that “[t]he Ministry of Education and Culture sponsors a network of drumming and dancing teachers throughout the country. Cultural groups from schools eagerly compete in district, regional and national competitions, much like athletic competitions.” Locke explains that even though westernization and colonialism has cut off traditional education such as transmission and enculturation, schools and culture groups now foster it.

Traditional music plays a role in crucial education, and through the study of a few music schools of traditional music in Ghana and Tanzania, I hope to express the importance of musical

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59 Coe, 63.
60 Coe, 70.
61 Tsukada, 268.
62 Locke 1978, 66.
63 Ibid, 67.
transmission and the formation and perpetuation of traditional music. In the following chapters, I will be exploring the use of traditional music in various case study settings in Ghana, specifically in the town of Medie in Ghana with the Dagara Music and Arts Center, in the town of Kopeyia in Ghana with the Dagbe Arts Centre. I will also briefly mention the music schools that I encountered in Tanzania. I will discuss the various teaching styles used, the goals and purposes of the music schools or troupes, and the importance of sustaining traditional music cultures.
CHAPTER II. DAGARA MUSIC AND ARTS CENTER

“In the Dagara tribe, we know we cannot have community without children, we cannot have children without community, and neither would exist without spirit. It is one complete circle, each element completing the whole. We welcome our children and in so doing we welcome spirit.”


The first school I will explore is the Dagara Music and Arts Center, or the DMC, located in Medie, in the Ga West District. The DMC was founded in 1999 by Bernard Woma, a master drummer, musician, and gyil player. The gyil is a xylophone of the Lobi/Dagaare people of Northern Ghana and Burkina Faso. The Dagara Music and Arts Center is a music school that focuses on teaching the traditional music, drumming, dancing, and song of various ethnic groups in Ghana. The DMC is run and directed by Bernard Woma. He founded the compound in order to invite students to come and stay and study Ghanaian music and dance. Mr. Woma hosts primarily international students at his compound, focusing on various musical styles. Many of the repertoires that he teaches are from his own ethnic group, the Dagara people of northwest Ghana. But, he is also familiar with and teaches music from the Ga, Ewe, and Dagbamba. The Ga ethnic group is from the Greater Accra region, the Ewe are from the Volta region, and the Dagbamba are from the Northern region. Lessons are offered in traditional Ghanaian drumming, xylophone, dancing, singing, and other Ghanaian cultural traditions such as batik, tie-dying, kente weaving, and blacksmithing. The DMC is also home to the Saakumu dance troupe. The Saakumu dance troupe is based in Medie and was founded by Bernard. The troupe performs traditional and contemporary Ghanaian dance-drumming repertoire. They perform across Ghana and the United States and each year they tour across the United States performing at universities.

1 Somé, 86.
History

Bernard Woma began his musical career also with the National Dance Troupe and the University of Ghana in the 1980s. He was the principal xylophonist and a master drummer for the Ghana National Dance Ensemble. When he was born in the northwest of Ghana, his parents knew that he would become a musician. He was born with his hands clenched, so that they knew he was destined to be a musician. According to ethnomusicologist Trevor Wiggins, in Northern Ghana “people believe that children are visited by a ‘spirit’ which may be the reincarnation of an ancestor. The spirit will give them a particular ‘gift’ perhaps for seeing into the future, healing sick people or playing music.”

In Trevor Wiggin’s book, he also accounts a similar story with his informant Joseph Kobom. Joseph was destined to become a xylophone player just like Bernard, for he was born with clenched fists. Tangentially, “The Dagara believe that what happens to us at birth and while in the womb actually molds the rest of our lives.”

Dagara writer Sobonfu E. Somé states that “children in our village know their identity and their life

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2 Wiggins, 18.
3 Somé, 58.
purpose before their birth.”4 The following is one of my field notes from June 23, 2008, describing a lecture that Bernard gave at the DMC:

Bernard explained how he started out as a musician. The Dagara people don’t have separate families or lineages of dancers or drummer families, but anyone can, and certainly there are families of all xylophonists, etc., but music is for all, and anyone can grow up with it. Bernard was born with his thumb between his first and second fingers. His father consulted a soothsayer and they told him don’t undo his hands, he is a natural xylophonist and that they should buy him two gyile (male and female). After three days he undid his hands. Also Jerome and Bernard did not have anyone teach them how to play, but they picked it up from being around [it].

Children often use a pit xylophone for practice before receiving a real gyil, called the kpan kpul.5

Bernard explains that most gifted gyil players are referred to as “lefties” or left-handed players, called guba. They are perceived born with the gift. He states that, “there are some gyil players who are born to be professional gyil players and they always start playing at a young age. That is when they are noticed.” 6 When the guba are born they are born with their fingers clenched and women are not supposed to open their hands. The guba will open their hands themselves. Bernard said that “if the guba father is a xylophonist, the guba father will go and find a small gyil stick and put it in the hands of the guba, the little young baby. They will make an imitative instrument […] and put it in the house so that when the guba grows up he will start playing the instrument.”7 Both Jerome Balsab, Bernard Woma’s primary gyil teacher besides himself, and Bernard are lefties. Some children are born into the tradition while others may not be. For instance, Jerome was born into the tradition just like Bernard. But, he learned to

4 Ibid, 86.
6 Bernard Woma, personal communication/lecture to WVU students, 2009.
7 Ibid.
perform later in life, not in childhood, because his family was Christian and they shied away from the traditional music and its religious connotations.

The DMC first received foreign students in the summer of 2000, when, as Mr. Woma explains, “23 students and professors from Bowling Green State University in Ohio were the inaugural class.” According to Bernard Woma’s records, “The Center has hosted and trained over 5,000 students and professionals from Europe, Japan, Mexico, U.S.A. and many Ghanaians in Music, Dance, Drumming, Drum Making, Ceramics, Blacksmithing, Kente Weaving and Tie-dye Making.” In a recent interview Mr. Woma told me about his background in teaching:

I started teaching in [the] early 1980s, and when I worked at the University of Ghana, my teaching abilities attracted a lot of students from Ghana and abroad, and this resulted in the founding of the DMC where I can have a much [more] organized teaching and learning environment. Teaching is my passion and that is the only way I can spread my traditional music.8

The Music

The gyil is a West African xylophone from Northwestern Ghana, Cote d’Ivoire, and Burkina Faso. The plural for gyil is gyile. Two groups in Ghana play the gyil: the Dagara/Dagaare and Sisaala/Lobi people. Bernard Woma explained that there are over ten different ethnic groups in Burkina Faso that play the gyil.9 The gyil is also called an African xylophone or balafon. Trevor Wiggins notes that the people of Ghana, Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire use the balafon xylophone for funerals.10 He claims that the gyil is “played mainly in the Upper West region of the country by people speaking the Dagaare and Sisaala languages, whose territory also extends into Burkina Faso.”11 The land of the Dagara, from north to south is

8 Bernard Woma, interview by e-mail message to author, March 1, 2011.
10 Wiggins, 38.
11 Wiggins and Kobom, 1.
Bernard Woma told the West Virginia University study abroad group I attended that the gyil means a lot of things to the Dagara people. The word itself means “gather.” He explained that the gyil “was used as a means of communicating messages to people. It is the central focus of Dagara musical function, both in religion, rituals, funerals, recreational, weddings—anything that you can think of, the gyil plays a very central role. That is why the name gyil is referred to as ‘gather.’” In Dagara mythology the gyil was given to the people by a fairy or dwarf. The folklore recounts that a hunter went to the bush and heard the fairies playing the gyil. The fairies refused to teach the hunter how to play, but the hunter captured and threatened the fairy until he gave the people the wisdom and power to play and make the instrument. In the end the hunter killed the fairy and brought the instrument home. The instrument was seen as mystical and magical to the people. Gyile (plural of gyil) or xylophones of the Dagara and Sisaala people of Ghana have instruments with 14, 17, 18, or 20 keys. The gyile that Bernard uses at the school are 14-key instruments called a logyil. Some gyile have a neck strap to carry the instruments and play. These xylophones feature tonality based on a pentatonic scale, but not all gyile are tuned the same. The gyile are constructed from hardwood that has been properly aged by fire and heat in a kiln. Gyil maker and master player, Tijan Dorwana, makes the gyile used by the DMC at his own compound right behind the DMC (see Figures 3, 4, 5, & 6).

12 Somé, 36.
14 Ibid.
15 Vercelli, 22.
Under the keys are gourd resonators that allow the *gyil* to be louder and also create a characteristic buzzing quality to the notes. The buzzing sound is normally caused by spider egg casings that are placed to cover tiny holes within the hard calabash gourd resonators. Bernard Woma, however, uses and places paper from inside mailing envelopes instead of spider egg casings because they are easier to acquire and last longer. *Gyile* are played with rubber beaters, made from either sap or rubber from car tire that are held between first and second fingers.\(^{16}\)

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\(^{16}\) Wiggins, 38.
Figure 6. Gyil maker and master player, Tijan Dorwana. Summer 2010.

Figure 7. Field of young gourds used for gyile. Summer 2010.
The *gyil* is played as a solo instrument, or in small groups or pairs, for recreation or mainly for funerals, the most important Dagara rite. *Gyil* music can continue for hours, and, when one player drops out, another takes his place to make sure the sacred music continues for a ceremony, taking turns in “shifts.” A funeral ceremony normally takes three days, but for an elder a ceremony could require a week and for a chief even a month or longer; the more important the deceased, the longer the ceremony.\(^\text{17}\) The *gyil* is “the voice of the people” because the songs usually tell stories or parables through the melodies.\(^\text{18}\)

*Gyil* music is traditionally passed down from father to son in a family of musicians; it is not taught with written music, but rather from the memory of each musician to the next, note by

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\(^{18}\) Valerie Naranjo, “My Introduction to the Gyil,” *Percussive Notes* 36, no. 6 (December 1998), 32.
Almost all Ghanaian Dagara males can play a few songs on the *gyil*. Apprenticeship is the most common way to learn the instrument as a trade, however. Growing up in Ghana or Burkina Faso, if you want to learn to play the *gyil*, you would first have to convince your parents to buy an instrument and ask the teacher to consider you.\(^\text{19}\) Then, the village and the teacher make sure you are “of high character” and then you are allowed to take lessons to be taught the craft. The *gyil* is considered sacred in some areas; its role is to provide a “gate to the spirit world” and to “bond the community.” It is said that the *gyil* music in a funeral “not only announces the death of a person, but provides with its sound vibration the medium for the spirit of the deceased to pass from this world to the next.”\(^\text{20}\) Wiggins states that the *gyil* is used to announce that someone has died: “The tune played tells people whether the person is male or female, young or old.”\(^\text{21}\) For instance, a piece that I learned at the DMC called “Ga Da Yina” is used to announce that a big man of the house has died. In some places the *gyil* can be found in the church and in schools used as marching music for students to arrange for an assembly.

Most of the Dagara music that Bernard teaches on *gyil* to beginners at the DMC is from the Bewaa repertoire. Bewaa is a recreational genre. Vercelli explains that Bewaa is associated with harvest, but it can be anything recreational, like a festival, a wedding, for entertainment, or for the chief.\(^\text{22}\) Bernard told us that Bewaa is usually mistaken as harvest music because it is often played during the harvest season, simply because that is when the people have the time, when there is no work.\(^\text{23}\) In one lesson, Bernard spoke about the Bewaa musical genre in Dagara music:

\(^{20}\) Valerie Dee Naranjo, Liner Notes, 2000.
\(^{21}\) Wiggins, 38.
\(^{22}\) Vercelli, 87.
\(^{23}\) Bernard Woma, personal communication during group lesson, 2010.
It is a recreational music. “Ni waa Sɛ b” is just what I would call a social song. […] It is a song you sing that you can’t really associate it as, you know, blues or jazz or reggae or funk. But they are just songs that we sing. So “Ni waa Sɛ b” is one of them.24

During one of our lessons, Bernard also talked about the other genres of repertoire in Dagara music:

Bewaa has so many, many songs just like you have so many tunes in jazz. You have so many tunes in blues. So Bewaa is a genre of music that has thousands of songs. Bine is funeral music that has thousands of songs. Bagr-Bine is religious music that has thousands of songs. So we have three big genres of music in Dagara: Bewaa, Bine, and then Bagr-Bine.25

Some of the Bewaa music that Bernard teaches is part of his own compositions. In the gyil repertoire a good performer is also supposed to be a good composer. Although some of Bernard’s pieces are his own compositions arranged within a traditional style, his other tunes are very traditional and have been in the repertoire for a long time, passed down through the generations. Bernard mentions that there are both old and new pieces in Bewaa:

Now [in] Bewaa, we have two versions. We have the older version and the newer version. […] This “Yaa Yaa Kole” is considered a new version. The old version started probably 2,000 years ago. This new style or version started like probably 50 years ago when we started playing this style of music. And they all have different bass lines or melody.26

Bernard explains that the Bewaa piece “Yaa Yaa Kole” means “begging.” Trevor Wiggins claims that it means “Keep on begging!” and that “Yaa Yaa Kole” is a “recreational piece addressed to a lover to encourage them to keep up their attentions in the hope that you might finally weaken.”27

25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Wiggins and Kobom, 24.
Gyil pieces are usually performed using three instruments: a lead gyil, a supporting gyil, and the drum called kuor. The lead player will play the song, and the supporting player will usually perform the bass line, which Bernard calls the “melody.” Dr. Vercelli noted that Bernard Woma’s pieces are usually comprised of a time line, bass line (melody), solo, and the song. The Birifor tend to arrange these [musical roles] into an informal hierarchy according to their relative status within a musical ensemble and their technical demands. The better musicians would get the harder parts, such as the solo or the song, and the supporting musician would play the easier time line or bass line. Ethnomusicologist Larry Dennis Godsey writes about this traditional hierarchy of the performers in his dissertation “The Use of the Xylophone in the Funeral Ceremony of the Birifor of Northwest Ghana”:

The Birifor tend to arrange these [musical roles] into an informal hierarchy according to their relative status within a musical ensemble and their technical demands. The

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28 Vercelli, 92.
hierarchy is informal in the sense that there are no explicit sanctions to ensure the mastery of one role before moving on to the next. Nevertheless it is precisely such step-by-step progression through these musical roles which is observed to be normal practice.29

Each player has a specific role they play, such as the lead player, the supporting player, or the kuor drummer. Teachers may first give a student a simpler or easier part and then gradually introduce other musical ideas piece by piece.

The lead player will usually play the more difficult part while the supporting part is easier. Godsey confirms this progression of teaching, starting with easier pieces before moving on to more difficult pieces. Bernard uses this approach in his teaching. Students are expected to master the beginning pieces before moving on to new things. Some days are used as review days in order to ensure that students are really retaining what they have learned before moving on. Bernard has a specific set of pieces that he teaches in order. For instance, a student usually learns the following pieces in the order: “Ni waa Sê b,” “Tome Na,” “Saabe Waa Na,” “Yaa Yaa Kole,” “Yiila/Guola,” or some similar combination. Only after we had learned these pieces could we start to study any pieces from the Bine (funeral) genre, such as “Ga Da Yina.” Some of the pieces that Bernard teaches at his school are traditional, and were perhaps very old, but other pieces were Bernard’s own compositions. This mixture of pieces is part of the tradition because a performer is expected to be a composer as well. Dr. Vercelli states that the compositions “To Me Na” and “Saa Be Waa Na” were newly created by Bernard, “designed specifically to teach non-Ghanaians.”30 The pieces still follow the formula of a traditional Dagara song and should be considered as such, despite of their recent date of origin. Not all traditional music is centuries old.

29 Godsey, 124.
30 Vercelli, 90, 92.
Through the teaching of Bewaa repertoire, students learn not only songs that are decades or possibly centuries old, but also modern pieces that are being constantly created. Dagara gyil tradition is not dead or dying; the traditional Dagara repertoire is not just frozen in time, but is constantly being reinterpreted, rearranged, and put into different concepts. By transmitting the music to both Ghanaian, Dagara, and Western students, Bernard Woma is alive in the tradition. He respects the older traditions and maintains the authenticity of the older pieces, but he also continues and preserves the musical traditions. In the book *Welcoming Spirit Home: Ancient African Teachings to Celebrate Children and Community*, Sobonfu E. Somé, a Dagara, states that “In Africa it is understood that children hold the knowledge and gifts that ensure the survival of the village and the tribe.”

The DMC also teaches dancing and drumming. The main drum teacher is Edward Green, who is a member of the Ga ethnic group from Accra. Sometimes Eddie’s friend Maney also comes to accompany the drum lessons on the bell in order to give a reference timeline. Usually a student has the choice of beginning in either a gyil group class or a drum group class. The drum classes use *djembes*, a common drum in West Africa, even if the genre or dance style is traditionally or usually performed on a different or ethnically specific drum. For instance, when a student learns to drum *kpanlogo*, a Ga recreational dance, they learn to play on *djembes* and not on the *kpanlogo* drum.

Mr. Woma also teaches several Dagbamba dances from northern Ghana, including *Bamaya* and *Tora*. The Dagbamba drums are the *lunga* and *gungon*. The Dagbamba people play the small *lunga* drum by squeezing the side strings of the drum while striking it. In this way, a language can develop and different messages and dance commands can be conveyed.

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31 Somé, 85.
32 Spellings and names may vary.
The *lunga* is also accompanied by other supporting *lunga* and the *gungon*, the big drum; however, the initiation of music and calls primarily originate from the lead *lunga* player.

**Teaching and Learning**

Classes generally rotate group lessons, alternating between half of the time spent with Jerome Balsab or Bernard learning *gyil* and half of the time spent with Eddie Green learning *djembe* drumming. Classes are held outside, usually under the hut or mango tree.

![Figure 10. DMC drum lesson with Eddie Green. Summer 2008.](image)

Halfway through a session, the groups usually switch, so that each group has a chance to play the different instruments. Students can also pay to have individual private lessons during their free time, usually in the afternoon. Morning lessons are generally reserved for playing instruments and usually last for several hours, from 8am to 11am before lunch. After lunch there is a break, and anyone is welcome to bring out the instruments to practice, or they can spend
their time taking notes, writing in journals, or walking into town. Usually around 4 pm, before the sunset and when it is cooler, dance class is held on the concrete dance floor. The class lasts a few hours up until dinner is ready, around 7pm. The dance teachers are almost all relatives of Bernard, and most are women. The main teachers are Evelyn Yaa Bekyore, Evelyn Beyuon, Joyce Bekyore, Hellen Dery, and George Kuubetesuuru (Kuubet George).

When first teaching the *gyil*, Bernard uses a relationship pattern in order to teach the intervals between the keys on the xylophone. He explains that notes next to each other are called friends, one note in-between is niece/nephew, two notes in-between are uncles, and four notes in-between are called brothers/sisters. Mr. Woma may also use a chalkboard to write down the names of the pieces and also to show the cyclical relationship of a piece. For instance, Fig. 11 shows the diagram he uses when he teaches the beginning piece, “Yaa Yaa Kole.”

Professor Kay Stonefelt once told me that Bernard Woma did not always use these terms to explain the music when teaching. She said that when she first came to Ghana on a Fulbright grant, it took her a while to understand some of the terms that Bernard was using to describe the music. She explained that Bernard would refer to the low notes as the notes that were closer or lower to the ground, even if to the Western ear they are higher pitched. Bernard has since

![Figure 11. Diagram for “Yaa Yaa Kole” for *gyil*.](image)
adapted the Western terms of high and low when talking about pitch. But, this idea illustrates an important point that musical terms are not always universal in societies. What one group may call “high” may not have any or similar meaning in another culture. We must avoid ethnocentric thought that the Western way is the correct and only way.

When teaching *gyil* pieces, Bernard uses a system of breaking down the pieces into its separate parts and teaching each part individually, usually in the order that would occur in performance or in the sequence of increasing levels of difficulty. For example, in the piece “Ni waa Sɛ b,” the first piece he usually teaches, he breaks the piece into several parts. The parts are labeled with numbers. Then, a part might have different variations, creating variations A and B. For example, part 3 has two variations: 3A and 3B. First, Bernard would teach the students part 1, part 2, then part 3 with variations A and B, part 4 with variations A and B, etc. With the A and B variations, he has the students play both back to back first, repeating A twice then B twice. Then, if he wants a different cycle (for instance AABA, BBAB) he has the students play that. Mr. Woma also has students learn bits at a time and increases the amount of repetitions. For instance, he first has the students play one cycle, then two cycles, then two and a half cycles, until they can play the entire complete song of two and a half cycles. He might explain more details as he goes on. For instance, he might explain that the first beat is what Westerners call a “pick-up.”

By adopting western musical terms, Bernard aids his students in learning and picking up on ideas faster. According to ethnomusicologist Ricardo D. Trimillos, “[a] theoretical explanation can serve as a shortcut to traditional rote repetition.”33 Speed, however, can come at

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the expense of accuracy and retention. Trimillos explains his concerns that, “the student may successfully master the gestalt of a musical style in a shorter period of time, albeit at the expense of the loss of other details of the tradition.”

During one of my fieldwork stays at the DMC, a student from a Ghanaian university wanted to interview me as a student of the DMC. He asked about what and how we were learning. He explained that at the university, a student might spend an entire semester on a single xylophone piece. At the DMC it was possible, depending on how fast the student learned or how fast the group learned, for one to learn a piece in a day. There must have been a reason for such a discrepancy between teaching styles. My hypothesis is that the Ghanaian university setting followed a method closer to a traditional teaching method. Sacrificing speed, one could intimately learn the intricacies of a single piece, allowing for improvisation and almost perfect recollection of the song. The Western method, however, might seem faster but it might not stick as well. Mr. Woma’s style mixes both traditional and Western teaching methods in order to satisfy his students while still remaining true to the culture.

Bernard would also use Western teaching methods and styles that would fit American and other foreign students. For instance, there would be no hitting a student for making mistakes, although perhaps in a traditional setting this was a former strategy for teaching. Trimillos writes that “[i]ndigenous teaching practices are necessarily reframed within and subjected to established Western norms of teaching, learning, and teacher-student relationships.” Since money is also an issue, the teacher would more than likely want to keep the students as they are an important source of income. Beating students would result in a loss of income.

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34 Ibid.
Bernard Woma uses different phrases of speech during teaching, especially analogy and metaphor. For instance, in one lesson our hands started to wander off of the interval formed by two keys. Humorously, he told us that this key is the border between America and Mexico, and this note is the border between Canada and Mexico and that we should not cross. Mr. Woma also uses humor in giving a punishment for mistakes. He says that he would charge anyone “5,000” if they made a mistake (referring to the currency value before 2007, cedis, where 10,000 cedis equaled today’s Ghana Cedi, valued at about 0.33 USD today). Another teaching strategy that Bernard would use was scraping his mallet across the keys in order to signal us to stop.

Most of the time at the DMC teaching occurred through demonstration and repetition. One of the teachers would play a part and the students would try to emulate it. Sometimes, if there were a lot of students in a class, the teacher would work individually with a student on his or her xylophone while the other students would try to figure out their pattern by watching, listening, and observing.

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Figure 12. Gyil lessons. DMC. Summer 2010.

Figure 13. Drum lesson at the DMC. Summer 2010.
10th Anniversary Celebration

The summer of 2010 was an especially memorable time for the DMC because the school was celebrating its 10th anniversary. Mr. Woma prepared a week of activities, celebrations, and events in order to commemorate the occasion. Visitors came from across the globe to celebrate this historic event. The heading created by Bernard for the anniversary was “A Decade of Cultural Education, Cultural Tourism, Community Service, Youth Empowerment, and Poverty Alleviation.” Mr. Woma explains the importance of this event in his appeal to sponsors:

As the theme of the celebration “Harnessing Culture for Socio-Economic Development” clearly states, we look forward to working together to preserve traditional forms of education through the teaching of music, dance and visual arts. With your continued support, we can all help promote not only Ghanaian culture but also that of the whole of Africa in the rest of the world and for many generations to come.37

The celebrations included ten days of activities for the 10th anniversary, from June 3rd to June 12th. The variety of events to celebrate the anniversary of the school included performances by many traditional dance-drumming groups, and even a Miss DMC pageant. At the Miss DMC pageant, contestants performed traditional dances (see Figure 17). Bernard’s own dance troupe, Saakumu, performed, as well as other groups from places as close as Accra and from as far away as Burkina Faso. There were even fromtomfrom drums, Ashanti royal drums that communicate royal messages, to start the celebrations. Some of the days celebrating the anniversary had particular themes to them; for instance, June 6th included a cleanup exercise in the town of Medie, June 7th was Children’s Activity Day, and June 11th was America Day. The following is an excerpt from my field notes on America Day:

Today the program started at the new land [the site of the DMC expansion project]. A man from the U.S. Embassy was there. He and Dr. Kay [Stonefelt] and Dr. Cornelius made a speech. We performed Kpanlogo and the Berkelee group Agbekor. The chief of

Medie was there [...] Bernard spoke. The Burkina group performed and many others, including Accra Africana Dance Troupe, a school group, and a school bamboo flute orchestra.

One honored guest was Dr. Kay Stonefelt, percussion professor at SUNY Fredonia. Dr. Stonefelt has been integral in fostering the Bernard Woma-U.S. connection. She met him back in 1993 while on a Fulbright scholarship to Ghana. Dr. Stonefelt is a professor at SUNY Fredonia, a college that has been a second home for Bernard. Bernard was an adjunct professor and artist in residence at Fredonia and taught an ensemble there while he was getting a degree. When Dr. Stonefelt visited Ghana for the anniversary celebrations in 2010, it had been 12 years since she was last in Ghana.

Bernard Woma acknowledges that the DMC also does outreach programs in local schools. In a speech on Children’s Activity Day, he spoke on the importance and the need to serve and teach local children:

[...] the Dagara Music Center wants to promote cultural education in the Ghanaian mainstream educational system. When we talk about cultural education, when we talk about music class, our public schools don’t teach dancing anymore because we assume that our children know how to dance. Well, knowing how to dance does not mean they understand where the dancing came from [...] so the idea is to bring cultural education to our young children and the Dagara Music Center have been working with so many schools.38

On Children’s Activity Day, school children arrived from all over Ghana to present what they had learned from Bernard Woma’s dance troupe. The following is an excerpt from my field notes for that day, June 7th:

In the afternoon the children arrived from different schools, including from Medie (green uniforms), Pokuase, Acropolis (blue stripe with patch), Islamic School (blue checkers) and Primary Presbyterian B. They danced for us while we had lunch. They also had artwork on display.

38 Bernard Woma, speech at Children’s Activity Day, June 7, 2010.
The DMC trains children in various schools, such as Sowers Academy from Medie, Maya Preparatory School from Medie, Medie Presbyterian School, and Acropolis Maranatha Academy from Pokuase. These schools came on Children’s Activity Day in order to perform music and dance and also exhibited art and handicrafts. The performances on Children’s Activity Day featured a variety of different ethnic groups around Ghana performing various dances: Ga *kpanlogo*, *fume fume*, and *kpatsa*, and the royal Asante dance *kete*, among others. In an interview, Bernard Woma talked about how he and his Saakumu dance troupe would go to teach at these schools:

> The DMC make arrangements with these schools during the school year for the study of these disciplines. The schools sometimes have cultural activities days and they come to the DMC to learn materials that they want to perform at these functions. Sometimes teachers of the DMC go to these schools and work with the students on the materials they want to learn. The DMC [has] trained students of these schools for the Schools Inter-cultural competitions and many of the schools [have] won at the district, regional and national levels. One of such schools is the Nsawam Government Junior High School.39

He also explained the difficulties of going to those schools to teach:

> The difficulty we encounter is logistics, transportation to and from. Some of these schools don't have their own instruments and DMC has to supply them. The above school that won the competition in 2008, the DMC supplied the drums, and [brought] the students with our own bus to the competition.40

The 10th anniversary celebrations were held at Bernard’s compound and also at the location of the new land area where Bernard plans to expand the DMC (See Figure 14). Bernard’s work is vital in continuing his and other various musical cultures of Ghana. Through his musical dissemination, he educates both Western and Ghanaian students. Hopefully, he will continue to market his school and teach students the importance of traditional culture and, perhaps in nine years, the Dagara Music and Arts Center will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a new school

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40 Ibid.
building in order to reach more students. As Bernard states, “Music education in Ghana [is] very limited and is still in its infancy, so the teaching curriculum at the DMC may serve as a springboard for music education in Ghana.”

According to Vercelli:

There is a growing concern among elder gyil players in Ghana that the local youth are becoming increasingly disinterested in their own traditions. Many of Ghana’s younger generation are abandoning their traditional music and dance in favor of popular Western styles. Contemporary organized religions are encouraging followers to renounce their customary ‘pagan’ rituals. Both master gyil players Bernard Woma and Tijan Dorwana have responded to this concern by assisting the music education of their surrounding communities, but also through raising the awareness of gyil performance outside of Ghana.

Bernard’s work and the work of the DMC have been vital in teaching the next generation about its potentially threatened and disappearing traditional culture.

Figure 14. Field site of the 10th Anniversary celebrations & the future site of DMC expansions. Summer 2010.

41 Ibid.
42 Vercelli, 12.
Figure 15. Stage at the 10th Anniversary celebrations and the future site of DMC expansions. Summer 2010.

Figure 16. Chief of Medie at DMC 10th Anniversary Celebrations. Summer 2010.
Figure 17. Crowned Miss DMC. Summer 2010.
The second school to discuss, the Dagbe Arts Centre, is located about four hours from Accra, the capital city of Ghana. The Dagbe Arts Centre, situated in the heart of Ewe (or Eve/Eυe) country, focuses on teaching Ewe dance-drumming pieces. The Dagbe Arts Centre teaches the music, dance, and cultural arts of the Ewe people. The small village of Kopeyia in Ghana hosts this school where foreigners come every year from around the globe, primarily in the summer, to study Ewe music and dance. The Dagbe Arts Centre is a music school focusing primarily on teaching traditional Ghanaian dance-drumming pieces, especially of their region and home music of the Southern Ewe (Eυe) ethnic group. The closest market is in Denu, just a few miles from the Togo border. Dagbe offers individual lessons and group classes in dancing, drumming, song, and various traditional handicrafts, such as kente weaving, Adinkra stamp and printing, wood and drum carving, and basket weaving. More recently, however, I discovered that the Dagbe School is so popular globally that it was even mentioned in the 2006 The Rough Guide to World Music as a prime spot to learn traditional music and to become immersed in traditional Ghanaian culture. For over ten years it has been an oasis in this small Ewe village, where primarily outsiders can come to learn music and other Ewe cultural arts.

The Ewe are among several ethnic groups whose boundaries are beyond its borders. During colonialism, country borders were often created without regard to geographic location of different ethnic groups, as a part of colonialism’s “divide and conquer” strategy. The Ewe reside mostly in the coastal regions of southeastern Ghana and in Ghana’s eastern neighbor, southern

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1 Healey.
2 Broughton, 132.
Togo. The Anlo-Ewe ethnic group resides southeast of Lake Volta, in the Volta region of Southeastern Ghana, and also into neighboring countries as far as the southern parts of Togo and Benin. It is believed that the Ewe are originally from outside of Ghana and either migrated from areas such as Nigeria, Togo, or Benin, or from as far away as the Sudan, although the group’s origins are hard to trace.\(^3\) The Anlo-Ewe (often used interchangeably with the collective Ewe) are actually a smaller tribe within the Ewe, once considered the most war-like of all the Ewe, perhaps because they settled in an area heavy with slavery and trade.\(^4\) The Anlo-Ewe reside primarily in the Keta District of the Volta Region;\(^5\) they migrated to the area around 16\(^{th}\) century. According to Sandra Greene, in her book *Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast: A History of the Anlo-Ewe*, the “upper Slave Coast during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries brought a steady stream of men and women into the community as traders, conquerors, slaves, and/or refugees.” She states that the “current long-term resident population of Anlo, roughly 110,000 people, is organized into thirteen separate social groups known as *hlowo* or clans (sing. *hlo*).”\(^6\) She describes the Anlo-Ewe’s migration to their current homeland:

> It all began in 1679. In that year, an undetermined number of refugees flooded westward out of the lower Gold Coast in an effort to escape the advancing armies of the Akwamu state. Many traveled as far as the region that later became known as northwest Togo. Others sought and received permission to settle in Anlo, an area situated like their own former homelands on the Atlantic littoral but located just east of the Volta River.\(^7\)

\(^3\) Gorlin, 5; Cornelius, 244.
\(^4\) Gorlin, 5.
\(^5\) Cornelius, 244-5.
\(^7\) Ibid, 20.
History

The proprietor and director of the school is Emmanuel Agbeli, a teacher, master drummer, and performer of Ewe dance-drumming. His father, the master drummer Godwin Agbeli, founded Dagbe in 1982 in order to teach others, mostly foreigners, the musical styles, dances, and diverse artistic cultures of the Ewe people. Godwin Agbeli gained his reputation and authority to teach through work and involvement with the National Dance Troupe. As Dr. Steven Cornelius relates, Godwin served in “residencies at New York University, Brooklyn College, Tufts University, and North Texas University.” In Ghana, Godwin served as senior drum and dance coach for the National Folkloric Company of the Arts Council of Ghana and also served for years as chairman of the Regional Dance Association of Greater Accra.”

Ethnomusicologist David Locke explains that, due in part to his efforts and connections with Godwin, Agbeli was able to form the school. He explains: “Mr. Agbeli realized a long-standing

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8 Cornelius, 245.
dream: building his own arts center. The Dagbe Center for Arts and Culture, located near Aflao in his home village of Kopeyia, is both a family-fun cultural tourism business and an institution intended to nurture the continuity of traditional culture in a changing world.”

According to Cornelius, the Dagbe school was officially established in 1993 when it began “to provide housing and rehearsal space for foreigners wishing to study traditional Ghanaian music.” The first groups came in the summers of 1993 and 1995 with Dr. Steven Friedson from North Texas and in the summers of 1994 and 1996 with Dr. Steven Cornelius from Bowling Green State University. Emmanuel Agbeli began as a visual artist but later turned to continue his father’s work and gained his reputation as a skilled music and dance teacher.

Cornelius, a former professor at BGSU and one of the first ethnomusicologists to bring students to Dagbe, notes that “it has been the reconstitution and repackaging of traditional music itself that has been, both consciously and unconsciously, largely responsible for that village’s ever widening relationship with the West.” On the Dagbe website, the school is promoted as “[a] close-knit farming community in the Ewe-speaking Volta Region, Kopeyia is celebrated for enthusiastically perpetuating the traditions of Ewe culture. Many of its young craftsmen, artists and musicians have been able to dedicate their lives to the indigenous culture of their ancestors thanks to the Dagbe Arts Centre.” The center is sold and packaged as “an authentic, deeply enriching cultural experience” to a primarily Western audience. Cornelius writes, “[Emmanuel] promotes Kopeyia rather than Accra to his students, confirming their hopes for an ‘authentic’ experience by telling them that in Kopeyia they can experience life as it is traditionally lived.

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10 Cornelius, 245.
12 Ibid, 243.
within the village setting.\textsuperscript{14} The school promotes the idea of a more authentic experience because it is located in a fairly remote village (a four-hour drive from Accra), as compared to the Dagara Music Center (DMC), discussed in Chapter III which is located just outside of Accra. Indeed, after talking to some students at the DMC, I realized that some students never made it to visit Dagbe. Perhaps travelling to Dagbe could be more of a hassle because one would have to plan to ride the \textit{tro-tro} or local bus, in usually crowded quarters, or make other local arrangements to get to the village. But, the fact that the school is in a village is intentional advertised and gives the school more credibility, at least for business purposes; if one wants to learn traditional Ewe music, then one can learn it in a traditional Ewe village. Dagbe also extends its teaching to children of the Kopeyia-Bloomfield Primary and Junior Secondary Schools, where traditional Ewe music is transmitted to the next generation.

Although originally intended for a specific purpose or event, today most any dance can be performed out of context. For instance, since the Ewe are no longer at war, there should be no reason to continue to perform \textit{Agbekor}, a piece with an historic connection to warfare. However, it continues to be a popular dance performed today. Similarly, funeral dances are no longer just for funerals nowadays; neither are royalty dances exclusively reserved for the royalty. Although there are some customs and protocols about what arts can be performed and when still followed today, the prescription is not as strict as it used to be. Emmanuel Agbeli, in a recent interview with Mark Powers, explained modernization and its effect on dances:

They used [to use] a specific piece for a specific time. […] But in this modern system, it's not so. In the old days, Atsiagbekor can be played only when there is danger. Agbadza, which means 'gun belt,' can only be played when there is a funeral, when somebody died. Agbadza cannot be played in parties, in those days. Agbadza cannot be played at birth ceremonies. But in this modern system, you can play Agbadza in the church room. You

\textsuperscript{14} Cornelius, 260.
can play Agbadza at weddings or births. You can play Gahu in funerals. [...] We need our music. The music pushes us to feel zeal, to work also. [People say that there are] no wars, so we should forget about Atsiagbekor. We should forget about Agbadza and all those things. But we need those musics. They are lovely. We don't want to leave them, but we don't want those things. So we decided that we should keep them going, but we don't mean to play them because we want them to happen. That is why we have changed the traditional ways of the music.  

These historical and valuable cultural dances persist despite changing times and contexts.

The Music

Ewe dance-drumming pieces involve an elaborate percussion orchestra. The seven-piece Ewe ensemble includes the master drum *atsimevu*, the bell *gankogui*, the rattle *axatse*, and the supporting drums *kagan* and *kidi*, and the responding drums (also considered supporting drums because all drums support the master drum) *kroboto* and *totogi*. All drums are played with sticks, except for the occasional hand patterns on the *atsimevu*. Some pieces use the *sogo* drum or use the *boba* as the master drum in replacement of the *atsimevu*.

![Figure 19. Some drums and instruments at the Dagbe Cultural Center, Kopeyia. Dance and drum instructor Odartey Kwasi. Summer 2008. (photograph edited to include labels)](image)

16 There are multiple spellings and pronunciations and variations in drum names, but I will use the ones listed here. *Kroboto* and *totogi* are also spelled *kloboto* and *totodzi*.
The *gankogui* is a metal double-bell from Ghana, literally meaning “iron bell.” It is the heartbeat and the foundation of the ensemble. The musician can play the *gankogui* while standing up. More frequently, however, the performers sit, as students did in Kopeyia during practice. The obvious advantage to playing while sitting down is that the *gankogui* can also be played on the leg and lifted when the lower bell is used, in order to ease the weight if playing for a long time. A player can also get a sort of glissando or muted sound when playing the bell by immediately placing the bell on the leg after striking it. The bell is the most essential part of the ensemble; everyone must first learn the bell part and then learn where their part fits in with the “time keeper.” The bell establishes the timeline, and is often referred to as being metronomic. The bell player must have precise timing and consistent tempo, pushing the drummers if they are weary. The bell player always sets the tempo, and players must follow the bell; while the bell player is deemed always right, it is also argued that the master drummer controls the music and that the bell follows the master drummer. It is common practice for the bell player to play the pattern the first time on the low bell, and then eventually play only on the high bell. This was often used when teaching us in Dagbe in order to help us find the beginning of a bell cycle.

When first learning the names of the instruments, our teachers had us pronounce the names of the instruments by repeating the names after them. Teachers felt it was very important that we pronounce the names correctly. For example, we learned several names for the bell, such as *tingo* and *gankogui*, for example. We repeated the names after them several times until we got it right or close to correct.

The Dagbe staff showed us proper playing technique for all of the instruments. For example, Emmanuel Agbeli told us that the *kagan* needs to be slanted in order to have the proper sound come out. We also played with the drums in the correct seating arrangement, so that the
sogo and kidi were closest to the master drum to answer drum calls when they were played. In addition, our teachers explained to us that while there is usually one player for each drum, with the axatse there can be thousands. When learning the axatse, or rattle, we used the following mnemonic syllables: “pa” for striking the rattle on the thigh and “ti” for striking it in the palm of the hand.

The Ewe drum ensemble can at first sound confusing because of how the drums interlock in complex polyrhythms. The instruments may be easy to play when they are separate, but when combined the intricacies appear. One of the great wonders of Ewe drumming is how each small part joins together into a cohesive and complex whole. There are many cross-rhythms, when “different rhythmic patterns interweav[e] with each other.” Gilbert Rouget explains that “when reduced to a single instrument, the rhythmic pattern is always simple. But the combination of these patterns in an interwoven texture, whose principles remain to be discovered, produces a complicated rhythm that is apparently incomprehensible.”

Talking drums, found in numerous ethnic groups throughout the African continent, tell lessons and stories by imitating vocal speech. Chernoff explains that drums can speak because African languages are commonly “tonal,” so that the drums can imitate voice and pitch inflections. The Ewe master drum atsimevu is a talking drum. The basic sounds on the drum can translate roughly into inflections and pitch differences that correspond to speech. Although

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18 Ibid, 43.
19 Chernoff, 75.
similar sounding phrases could mean different things, a person who is familiar with the drum language and the speech can see interpretations clearly. Chernoff states that early ethnographer A.M. Jones discovered that there are nine different basic sounds on the *atsimevu*, all which fall comfortably in the male voice range. In fact, all of the drums in the Ewe drum ensemble are talking drums, in a sense. Emmanuel Agbeli mentions this fact in an interview with Mark Powers:

I always correct my students. I can’t educate everyone in the world to say the right thing concerning drums. Mostly when you ask people—not only the Americans, not only the students, not only the outside country people, but even in Ghana, even in this village, when you ask them what are talking drums, they will say *atumpam* and *dondo*. They will say those are the talking drums. But ALL drums are talking drums. All drums. Any instrument you call a drum, where our tradition is concerned, is a talking drum. Kroboto is a talking drum, *totodzi* is a talking drum, Kagan is a talking drum. Even *tingo*, the bell, is a talking drum. Even *axatse* [rattle] —pa, pa, ti, pa- pa, ti, pa—it is speaking. *Kidi* is a talking drum, because it says so many words. *Atsimevu* is talking. When you get into the notes, *atsimevu* has more notes than *atumpam*. More notes to talk, to pronounce words, than the drum they call the talking drum. So all drums are talking drums.  

People who are familiar with the drum language, and the local language for that matter, can understand the proverbs, praises, and names called forth by the drums. Certain phrases on the drum can represent metaphors, spiritual meanings, and moral lessons. The phrases speak about relationships, life, and advice. Conversations go on simultaneously and other familiar tunes and allusions may be being recited; if you focus on different parts and you know the language, you can hear them. The drummer has the right to say anything and can tell a person the history of their family. Praise drummers, for example, attend funerals and ceremonies and recite histories to people. In fact, a couple years ago drumming was banned in a Ghanaian city because of the power the drums had to spread messages. The drum music speaks and sends out messages to the dancers. However, Nketia mentions that not all people can understand the drum

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20 Chernoff, 77.  
21 Powers.
language, and that the “ability to translate drum sounds into language texts is, in contemporary life, not as common, even amongst drummers, as it might have been seventy years ago.” The drum language and the syllables associated with the drumming do give the dancers a clue about what to dance.

Figure 20. A performance at the Dagbe Cultural Center, Kopeyia. Summer 2010.

Emmanuel Agbeli

Emmanuel Agbeli’s father, Godwin Agbeli (1942-1998), who founded the Dagbe School, was always involved with traditional music in Ghana and the nationalization of the music. According to David Locke, Godwin Agbeli was part of the Arts Council of Ghana Folkloric Company. Godwin was also “artistic director for many amateur and professional folkloric

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22 Nketia 1963, 49.
performing troupes in the Accra area.”  

Godwin has three sons, Emmanuel, Ruben, and Nani, and all three of them are involved with the transmission of traditional music.

One evening the WVU group wanted to know about the Center, and Emmanuel Agbeli explained the history of the school and how his father Godwin founded the school:

My father, the late Godwin Agbeli was born in a very strong traditional music family. And my forefathers [were] called Agbeli. Agbeli was a very great musician, at all levels. He was a composer, translating drum language,… so we are all born into the music which we inherited from our forefathers called Agbeli… In our culture, sometimes if you are born into something, you cannot escape it. 

Godwin Agbeli earned a Master’s degree in music at Legon and then moved to the National Art Center (now the Center of National Culture) in Accra. Godwin was teaching American students, and he finally decided that there were so many people studying that it would be better to establish a center so that people could study in his own hometown. Godwin first set up the cultural center at a different location, closer to Accra in Tema, at a place called Ashiaman.

Emmanuel continues:

So that was the area where my dad decided to build the land there. He decided to set up the cultural center there. So we tried it… but still we [didn’t like it there because] people complained about the disturbances [from the area] surrounding it and, you know, like students were hitting the drum, but people around there are not—it’s different tribes together, like in Accra. It’s not the Ewes. So they are not from the same community. So the people were not used to life like that. [My dad said it’s time to move] everything to Kopeyia and give it a try, so in 1992 Dagbe was established and then I complete my high school, my secondary school. I was using my artwork as a job. I [drew] signs on shops. I paint[ed]. I am a very creative person. So I used that [to earn money]. I also [taught] groups, [such as] churches, traditional music. I was in Accra [where I would teach] every week.

At first, Emmanuel did art and paintings for signs and for birthday cards. In fact, he painted the murals in the Center’s dining hall. Throughout his life he made “his own path.” But whatever

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24 The information from Emmanuel Agbeli presented here comes from his lecture to WVU students, June 21, 2010, unless otherwise noted.
he did he was a hard worker. A great teacher of his gave him the name “Orisu,” which means hard worker. He explained that eventually he grew up, matured, and finally went to work for his father. Godwin decided to employ Emmanuel, as a “future leader of this community,” and had him come and form a group at the school to teach music and art to the students. Emmanuel explained that when he first worked at Dagbe, after just six months he wanted to leave. He went back and forth for a little while, but eventually came back to stay. He explains that,

My dad now relied on me and another guy at that time. So we mostly stayed there for three months and [had students] so at that time we’d be working and I mostly spent time with my dad and traveled around for research and [taught] sometimes for kids’ groups traditional and special groups… At the center we would spend a week or two to train there. So I [became] one eye or one arm or one leg of my dad, before he died in 1998.

Before his father grew ill, Godwin was giving Emmanuel more and more responsibility and preparing Emmanuel to succeed him. Emmanuel gave Godwin money and Godwin bought a house on behalf of Emmanuel. Godwin bought the house because, in this culture, Emmanuel was too young to own a house, and, in order to be respectful, he should not own a house and thus not arouse jealousy from the people in the village. Emmanuel’s story recounted here explains how he got involved in traditional music with his father, and how he became the proprietor of the Dagbe School.

Emmanuel Agbeli also discussed the meaning of the word dagbe to the WVU group. He explained that “Dagbe has a meaning. It’s not just a word, though… it has a meaning. And dagbe means fortune. I promised to carry on and let that dream of his [Godwin’s] come to pass so that his name [would be carried on]. He toiled a lot. He suffered, I mean, to put us together here today.” According to a religious scholar Komi Hiagbe, dagbe means “save life,” salvation, or abundant, never-ending life. This could be what is implied by the term “fortune.” Komi Hiagbe writes:
Semantically, the term connotes peace, goodwill, prosperity, and total well-being. […] On a close examination of the culture and traditions of the Anlo, we come to the realization that the survival of both the individual Anlo and the community at large, hinges on *dagbe*. It is generally believed that by living according to the normative of God, the gods, the ancestors and the community, one is living in the divine presence and so has *dagbe*—the indicators of which are the blessing of children, material wealth, influence and a long life. The term, therefore as it occurs in this work, serves an important purpose in our understanding of the Anlo concept of salvation.25

The teachers at Dagbe would travel around Ghana in order to research the dances. To find the most “authentic” arrangement or version of a dance-drumming piece, the Dagbe staff traveled to remote villages around Ghana seeking to find the most undisturbed and pure renditions of the pieces. When asked what methods were used to go back and try to find more traditional variations, Emmanuel said, “You see, studying music, you need to know the generation of it, where it comes from. Which area, or who [continues it]. Who is the elder person around that is the chart which you draw… I am talking about *Tokoe*. *Tokoe* originated from [the] Volta region… You see those houses around the lake, that music originated from there.”26 Emmanuel explained that if they learned that one particular village performed a dance the best, or perhaps were seen as the originators of the dance, the Dagbe staff would travel to that village and learn from the people there. Locke cites such excursions to research dances: “Many are the stories of their arduous trips to remote villages to witness a rare performance or to interview a reclusive specialist in the meaning of drum language or archaic song text.”27 In a way, through their trips and research into the dances, the Dagbe staff members are still preserving traditional music in its most contextual form. They believe that the pieces are the best in the villages from which the dances came, and in conducting their own ethnographies they are

26 Emmanuel Agbeli, 2010.
27 Locke 1987, 3.
discovering the history, stories, movements, and the drum language of their own and other Ghanaian ethnic groups.

**Teaching and Learning**

Typically during study abroad workshops to Ghana, I spend one week at the Dagbe Cultural Institute Arts Center in the village of Kopeyia, a small Keta District Ewe village in southeast Ghana. As guests, we slept in beds with mosquito netting in either the common room or in small adjoining rooms down the hall for two people apiece. Before the start of the week of classes, the Dagbe staff generally begins with a ceremonial pouring of libations for the ancestors, usually with *akpetisie* (locally distilled alcohol) and Fanta, or any other drinks purchased by the visitors for the occasion. Afterwards, the staff drums the piece *Agbadza* and all of the students come and dance. The following is an account from my field notes of a typical welcome at Dagbe:

Monday, June 2: We started the day with a breakfast of bread, peanut butter, and bananas. Then they did a ceremony of libation pouring. They recited a long list of their ancestors. Then we shared in some of the libation pouring (to prove it is not poison), then we pour some to the ground for the ancestors. […] Afterwards we danced [*Agbadza*]. Then dance class, *Agbekor*. We had sashes with swords (wooden) and horsetails (heavy, giant ones). […] Dance class is from 9-11 and drum class 4-6. I got to play bell (*gankogui*), *axatse*, *kagan*, and *totogi*. Ruben was funny and said he would slap us if we made a mistake.

Just like at the DMC, the Dagbe School usually incorporates three parts of learning during the week: dancing, drumming, and singing. Our schedule usually began with the dance class in the morning from 9 to 11am, with the music portion of the pieces in the late afternoon, around 4 to 6pm (see Figure 21). The afternoons between the classes were reserved for outings, such as going to the beach, the market, or the internet café. Sometimes we went to a funeral.

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28 Cornelius, 243.
Emmanuel always said that, although visitors always wanted to go to a funeral because Ewe funerals are full of music and dance, people should not wish for a funeral since, of course, it means that a person died.

During the week, the leader of the study abroad group would learn an Ewe piece for the group to learn, for instance *Agbekor* or *Adzogbo*, and eventually we performed for a concert at the end of the week for the village. Dance class was rather rigorous, especially when we were first getting used to the African heat. Class was held under a thatched pavilion with concrete floors in the center of the compound. It was an uncommon surprise when the African rains came and cooled us off. Usually the afternoon classes first centered on learning the support drum parts, and then focused primarily on the master drum part. Our group was divided into a beginning and advanced group; this tended to separate students who had paid for earlier lessons on the master drum from those who had not. In my field notes, I wrote that “After lunch we split into groups: those who want to train, those who are beginners on the master drum part, and those who have already had lessons.”

I studied under the supervision of director, Emmanuel Agbeli. He always seemed to be there to teach us the dance, drumming, or song. Our primary dance instructor was Pea and our primary master drum teacher was James Ekui (who has since moved to another cultural center) or Odartey Kwasi. We also learned music and dance from several other Dagbe staff members,
most memorably with George Godzor, Eric Gedzah, and Mensah Ali. Although classes centered around one primary dance, such as Agbekor or Adzogbo, students were also able to take extra dance, drum, or singing lessons from any staff member; for instance, some students wanted to learn to dance and drum Gahu, an extremely popular Ewe recreational dance.

In many dance-drumming cultures in Ghana, or in Africa for that matter, dance and music are considered one and the same. Students are not just drummers or just dancers, but they are both; being proficient in both helps increase understanding between the two art forms. I have always strongly believed that if one only knows the drumming, that student has only half of the experience. For instance, if a drummer is having difficulties grasping where the rhythms fit in, they must learn the dance as well. If a drummer knows the dance moves, they will have a better understanding; the same is true if a dancer knows how the drum parts fit together. According to Dan Gorlin, a scholar and performer with significant research in Agbekor and Gahu, “It’s not to say that all drummers are great dancers or the other way around, but you can’t do one without knowing something about the other.”

Good drummers are good dancers, and good dancers are good drummers. During a lesson Emmanuel Agbeli even told us “it is so good to dance and drum,” so that it is important for one to dance and also to play.

The Dagbe School primarily teaches dances from the Ewe culture. Some of the most common dances taught are the most difficult ones and must be planned ahead of time to perform. For instance, during the times I visited Dagbe the most common dances were Agbekor (taught to the University of Arizona in the Summer of 2008 and to West Virginia University in the Summer of 2010) and Ley, the male Adzogbo dance (taught to West Virginia University in the Summer of 2009). It usually takes a week for a group to learn a dance. Some groups learn faster than others.

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29 Gorlin, 10.
30 Emmanuel Agbeli, personal communication during group lesson, 2009.
and some may learn more difficult variations depending on their level and how much material they can absorb in that time. For instance, in the piece *Agbekor*, some groups incorporated some of the movements from the fast section, called the *vutsotsoe* (*vutsɔtsɔe*), while some groups remained in the slower section called *vublewu*. Some Ewe dances have a prescribed order of movements while others do not. Some are arranged and some are not arranged; if not arranged, the dancers will follow the drummer. When I learned *Agbekor* with student groups at BGSU and at Dagbe, every move was choreographed and placed in an order. In Ghana, we formed lines under the summer hut and followed the Dagbe staff who were dancing in front. We learned in the same manner that a Ghanaian group would learn. David Locke explains:

> For example, when teaching the dance lines are formed with experienced persons in front and learners behind so that members in the front row can demonstrate an atsia [style or dance movement] for those in the back rows to imitate. After repeated attempts the novices learn the new material. When many atsiawo [plural of atsia/styles] are mastered they are executed one after another as they would be in performance. It should be emphasized that atsiawo are never divided analytically into their smaller constituent elements, nor are learners given specific instructions about individual parts of the body. In other words, an entire sequence is learned as an integrated whole in a performance context, not through mastery of constituent elements through exercises.  

We would follow the staff and repeat the variations after them. The movements were shown in their entirety, and they were only broken down into smaller units if we failed to follow successfully. For instance, during one lesson, Emmanuel told us “this is the first thing you need to think of, the first position, and then arms, and then the head, and then the face,” while adding each additional body part to the combined dance movement. Almost all dance movements were learned through modeling, demonstration, emulation, and imitation. Emmanuel explained in class the relation of the variations to the dancers and the master drummer in a lesson on *Adzogbo*:

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31 Locke 1978, 50-51.
32 Emmanuel Agbeli, personal communication during group lesson, 2009.
In *Adzogbo*, or in *ley*, we don’t arrange the variations. The variations are not arranged in order, in any order. It’s of what the master drummer thinks of, it’s what he plays. You don’t know. So, or when you are doing variation one, you don’t know variation two—Mostly, if we are trying to take it traditionally, according to order—we do the prayers in order. When you come first you do the shrine prayers, bow. Second, the Christian prayers. The third, the Muslim prayers. And then apart from that you don’t know what is coming. You don’t know. Do you understand me? You don’t know the next variation which he is going to play. But what he does is he plays the first phrase of the variation to give you, this is what I am about to play. So at the end of the variation he goes into *ga de ga de*, that is when he also thinks of a variation. And then by then you don’t know what he is trying to play. But when he realizes what he plays, he plays a short phrase of it, to give you a hint, like, ok, this is what I will be playing.\(^{33}\)

The first time the master drummer played through the drum part or variation was usually the signal for the dancers. The first time through was a warning; for the next repetition, the dancers would change to the accompanying movement.

The drum beats must line up with the dancing, and essentially the dancers have to follow whatever calls the drummer makes, contrary to other dances in which the dancer gets to pick the order of movements. The dancer makes the drum rhythms or the pulse of the music visible. The footsteps of the dancers are the drum beats or timekeeper. In Ghana, we often sang the drum part to remember a dance step, and recalled the dance movement to remember the drum part.

Emmanuel would quiz us on what move accompanied what drum part or on what drum part accompanied which move. He asked us questions such as, what does the master drum play when we dance this? What is next in the dance? What does the supporting drum play during this movement? He explained to us once during a lesson the importance of breaking down the dance movements and complementary drum parts:

\[\text{I just want us to understand how this fits with the dance. So once we know the dance then we know, okay, this is not just flat. If you are thinking its flat, then you get confused. You’re like, where am I now? When does this come? But when you know the breaks, okay, this comes, and the break this time is here. This is next and I repeat this}\]

\(^{33}\) Ibid.
two times and then you can focus. It is not just playing straight. And then where am I? How do I start again? So that is why we are trying to break it down to this level.  

During dance class we would dance in lines under the summer hut. We used a dance move to enter into a circle, and then to form lines. After we were in lines, the master drummer would make a call. After one time through, the warning, we would usually know what move was next and dance for the second time through. In order to get us prepared for either dancing or playing together, our teachers would say “ready, go” so that we all came in together. Generally we would first get a demonstration of just the basic movements. Then, they would have us say the words of the drum language. After a quick check—“ready?”—and side stick clicks from the atsimevu, we would get ready to start. In both dancing and drumming, Emmanuel made sure that we had the right energy in the performance. He would ask us what we thought we had to work on and then made sure that we had specific things to work on. For instance, we would stop dancing and go back in order to make sure that we heard the variations. When we were ready and we could hear the calls and recall what dance moves accompanied each calls, we would increase the tempo. He told us “we are no longer kids” and we would try it faster.

When Emmanuel Agbeli was describing to us the movements, he would use the terms “basic” and “variation” to distinguish between the different dance movements. Usually there would be a basic movement that would come back periodically. Then, we would learn some variations on that basic, maybe half a dozen or more variations. A variation is a different gesture or movement that is choreographed. Emmanuel explained that when the drummer changes, the movement changes. During a lesson, he explained to us the importance of the basics and the variations: “So this is a variation. When we say variation, don’t be scared. Basics are stronger

34 Agbeli, 2009.
and [more] difficult than variations... So it is better you learn the notes well and get used to them.\textsuperscript{35} Emmanuel and his staff strongly believe that one must learn a part well before moving on to a more difficult one. During group lessons, we would reinforce the basic support parts before going on to begin learning the master drum part. A dance or drum lesson might continue for several lessons in order to make sure that a person knew the material well. Locke also notes this commitment, stating that “African teachers would prefer students to become competent on one part before moving on.”\textsuperscript{36} Western students might be in a hurry to learn, but it was more important to the staff that students learn parts well. An inscription on Godwin Agbeli’s statue states that “what ever you do do it well!!!” (see Figure 18). Emmanuel Agbeli also commented during a group lesson that “[i]f you get the notes of the basics well, then you can do the variations well.” In order to do the variations, you must master the basics first. He gave us a saying: “Every traveler has to knock before you enter,” meaning that everyone has to do their work if it is new. We would also rehearse small sections and then reinforce what we had learned. Emmanuel would say, “So I think that memory is enough.”\textsuperscript{37}

One issue that came up during lessons was gender. In traditional society, master drummers are usually male, although there are a few female performers. The staff did seem to treat the Western female students differently than Ghanaian women. Although there were no spoken restrictions about women performing, our student group often received comments, such as the surprise that three small women (University of Arizona percussion majors) wanted to learn the master drum parts to \textit{Gahu}. I was surprised that even after some twenty years of working with Western university students, these feelings of gender limitations still persisted at Dagbe. It

\textsuperscript{35} Agbeli, 2009.
\textsuperscript{36} Locke, 174.
\textsuperscript{37} Agbeli, 2009.
is interesting to note that all of our teachers, both dancers and drummers, were male with the exception of one female drummer.

When learning a piece, a student would first learn the syllables for the drum sounds. These syllables used in individual drum parts are used as a mnemonic device and represent the drum language, which communicates a commentary, a proverb, or a historic incident. The basic tones/vocal syllables are de, te, ge, tsi, to, ka, dza, and dzi. When teaching us some drum patterns, Emmanuel Agbeli would have us say the master drum part and play the support drum response at the same time with the bell. This practice not only helped reinforce our knowledge of the master drum part, it also tested us to see whether or not we knew when to enter the cycle correctly. Vocalizing the drums patterns helped us learn and internalize them. This method follows the saying that, “If you can say it, you can play it.”
At Dagbe our dress included war paint, a wooden dagger or sword, and an adejo. An adejo is a horse-tail with spiritual power that dancers call upon for support. It is common for dancers to wear a protective amulet to ward off any unwanted bad magic that a jealous individual might try to inflict upon them. In older times dancers often used real weapons. These objects are usually held in the right hand, as the left hand, considered “lazy,” has negative connotations. It is considered impolite and rude to use your left hand with a Ghanaian, such as shaking hands because the hand is considered “dirty.”

Figure 23. Final performance at Dagbe, Kopeyia. Summer 2008. Students from the University of Arizona. Photograph by anonymous friend.

The dagger is kept tied around the waist until it is needed. In the absence of enough horse-tails, our teachers in Ghana ingeniously created new ones right as we entered the stage, tearing off palm leaves. We also wore a wrap with a piece of cloth, which could be considered
atsaka or special Southern Ewe dancing shorts. Our teachers also painted charcoal on our faces as a kind of “war paint.” On performance days at the end of the week, we usually got dressed up and performed for the community. As is typical for the “outdooring” of a new Ewe dance group, called a ɖɪɡo, you must start with a procession into town with bells and songs in order to call attention to the upcoming event. The procession is called a vulɔ الجو. The following passage was in my field notes on the day of a performance: “Saturday: Today was our performance day. They wrapped us up and gave us war paint. If we ran out of adejos we got a palm leaf. It was crowded on stage […] (I was in front of a tree) […] Then the girls performed, then Todzo, and Adzogbo […]. Then there was the all dance and little kids would come over and pick you to dance” (see Figure 23).

Figure 24. Dagbe. Emmanuel Agbeli, near center at “Dagbe” drum. Summer 2010.

Figure 25. Dagbe. Summer 2010.

Figure 26. Dagbe. Master drum lessons. Summer 2010.
To learn Ewe dance-drumming pieces in the traditional way, people will join a community dance club or mutual aid society. The groups specialize in a certain genre of music, mostly only one specific style. For example, a group might be an Agbekor dance group if that is what they specialize in. These music groups are called Habobowo (or Habɔbo). They are “formal institutions,” dance-drumming societies or dance clubs. Ethnomusicologist James Burns defines the dance group: “A Habɔbo is a community dance club, comprised of dues-paying members who engage primarily in music performance during funerals and special events.” The group might collect an entrance fee in order to make uniforms for performances or other group business, and anyone who pays can join, even foreigners. A Habobowo might be formed as a neighborhood group, and members are usually from the same district or village and are the same age. They might form a set of rules and appoint leaders, and they may meet weekly or monthly to rehearse or just show up at funerals or festivals or special events, such as their need.

Once these groups are formed, they must rehearse. Nketia writes that “[f]ormal systematic instruction is given only in very restricted cases demanding skills or knowledge that cannot be acquired informally.” Some children might watch the performances and try to emulate the dances and drumming, but specific choreography must be set in rehearsals. The repertoire that requires rehearsals tends to be difficult, such as the Ewe dance-drumming pieces Agbekor or Adzogbo, than other pieces that can be learned in the village context. David Locke explains that, “[u]nlike some types of southern Ewe music and dance which are learned as part of

40 Gorlin, 15.
41 James Burns, Female Voices from an Ewe Dance-drumming Community in Ghana: Our Music Has Become a Divine Spirit, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 71.
42 Gorlin, 15.
43 Nketia 1974, 60.
an individual’s general socialization process,” some pieces can only be learned in training sessions. Easier pieces, however, can simply be picked up during performance or learned gradually if played regularly, such as the dance *Aghadza*, at funerals.\(^{44}\)

As I mentioned earlier, a music group will stage a special outdooring. This is because certain pieces are rehearsed privately until they are ready to be performed in public. A group will have secretive night rehearsals called *hakpa* “before subjecting themselves to the scrutiny of chiefs, dignitaries and nearby communities.”\(^{45}\) David Locke notes that a group might rehearse in secluded location for the element of surprise at a festival.\(^{46}\) When the group is ready to perform, they process in the center of town with bells and shakers to let the town know they are performing.

Burns explains that “[a] *Habɔɔ* has regular rehearsals (E. *hakpakpa*) where the members meet in a closed rehearsal space, usually a large compound house, and practise the repertoire of songs, dance styles and drum rhythms.”\(^{47}\) He continues, “The closed nature of the ensemble and its performance space contrasts sharply with oft-held notions of communal participation in traditional African music.”\(^{48}\) When I was taught about Ghanaian traditional music in the U.S., I was told that young children learn it from a young age through listening, watching, and performing themselves. The idea was that enculturation allows musicians to learn gradually the details, subtleties, and intricate difficulties of the music. Except for specialized pieces, “the dance clubs put in a great deal of hard work in rehearsing and in building up a

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\(^{44}\) Locke 1978, 48.  
\(^{45}\) Gorlin, 16.  
\(^{46}\) Locke 1978, 50.  
\(^{47}\) Burns, 75.  
\(^{48}\) Ibid, 76.
repertoire.”  

For instance, in describing the teaching and learning process of *Agbekor*, Locke explains that the piece is taught directly: “At no point in all these processes do the adults gather the youngsters specifically to teach them music and dance. […] *Atsiagbeko*, on the other hand, is taught in special practices in which the experienced adults transmit their community’s heritage of music and dance to youngsters or uninitiated adults.” Generally the artistic director who leads rehearsals is the master drummer, or *azagun*. Although there are pieces that can be learned on sight, such as *Agbadza*, other pieces, such as *Agbekor* and *Adzogbo*, require training, commitment, and rehearsal.

Another myth in Ewe drumming, and also in Ghanaian music or African music for that matter, is that there is only one right way to perform a piece. We tend to view traditional music as old, ancient, and unchanging, but in fact it is a living force today and, because of the oral tradition, it is always changing even if we don’t realize it. Different groups will have different and individual versions and styles. Burns makes this notion clear: “Ephemeral in nature […] dance groups are in constant evolution, and therefore challenge our understanding of music traditions, which is predicated on the notion of a fixed repertoire that is passed down by recognized artistic authorities.”

While traditional dance-drumming may have roots in ancient, generations-old musical repertoire, dance troupes today are adding their own styles and variations to them. When learning dance movements at Dagbe, most dances like *Agbekor* and *Adzogbo*, for example, are made up of a series of separate movements. The Dagbe staff would call these different variations. In the Ewe language, each of these variations is called *atsiâ* or style. According to James Burns, *atsiâ* is an individual dance move or composition, or

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49 Jones, 129.
50 Locke 1978, 49.
51 Gorlin, 17.
52 Burns, 123.
individual style that comes from either improvisation or known dance choreography. Dancers will usually arrange a set order of movements and these movements can either be more traditionally based or newly composed. But, these new movements aren’t necessarily polluting the authenticity of traditional dance-drumming. Dan Gorlin says: “Although great care is taken to preserve the essential stylistic elements of the music and dance, it is also common practice to carefully add original material to the old—but to do so without spoiling the original style requires the best efforts of a master composer and choreographer.” New elements are added and created while still retaining the salient characteristics of the earlier style. Through these community dance-drumming troupes, or habobowo, dancers and musicians incorporate both the old and the new and therefore continue the tradition. Dan Gorlin eloquently states that “[i]t’s because of these clubs that ancient and modern traditions both survive and adapt to serve new generations.”

The Dagbe School gives importance to the tradition and history of the dance-drumming pieces. Students learn about the background of the particular piece. It was important in our workshops to understand and know where a dance comes from. For instance, Emmanuel would quiz a group on the details of the piece. During one lesson, Emmanuel reinforced the importance of origin while explaining and quizzing us about Adzogbo, a dance from the Fon tribe in Benin:

[...] you need to know where you are coming from. You need to know where the music is coming from. You need to know the real nature of it before, if you are putting it this way then you know you are putting your own choreography. That is how—so we here make sure we don’t imitate things. We don’t dilute, too. We don’t create new things from the old things. [...] so we give you straight how we came. And if there is a way you want to manage and dilute it, make it function, it’s up to you. We will advise you how to do it, but [there are] certain ways that you cannot change, which is the drum language—for that

53 Burns, 196.
54 Gorlin, 16.
55 Ibid, 15.
you will never change it for us. But the dance steps [...] and how you want to manage it.  

At the Dagbe School, authenticity is important and the staff tries to stay loyal to the Ewe dance and drumming origins. Through research and fieldwork of their own, they make sure that what they are passing on to their students is as accurate and authentic as possible. Retaining its historical roots, the school continues the dance-drumming tradition while also creating a fruitful business venture catered toward curious western musicians, tourists, and students. Incorporating repertoire, dress, history, music and dance, the Dagbe School teaches traditional Ewe dance-drumming through modeling and imitation. Cornelius aptly summarizes the relationship that has formed between Emmanuel Agbel (and the Dagbe School) and his Western students in recent decades:

Agbeli’s work in Kopeyia represents a curious twist on the forces of change, for he has made his career teaching traditional music outside of its traditional context [...]. Agbeli’s instruction of traditional music may presage a new era for Kopeyia in which music performance embraces both the older traditions and a newer folklorization of Ewe music that embodies ideals and mythologies of performance relevant to the West but not necessarily relevant to the peoples who created and have sustained that music.  

In his final words during the WVU interview, Emmanuel emphasized the importance of continuing the dream of his father and passing on the knowledge of traditional music to the next generation. He said, “I hope our children will also grow and continue this relationship with music, our children and your children.” He also pointed out meaning of the two new statues located outside of his house (see Figure 27). Emmanuel said that they are a reminder to continue the dreams of his father.

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56 Agbeli, 2009.
57 Cornelius, 259.
CHAPTER IV. TANZANIAN MUSIC SCHOOLS

*Mwacha mila ni mtumwa.* Whoever leaves his culture is a slave. (Kiswahili kanga saying)

*Piga ngoma siyo mtoto.* Beat a drum not a child. (Kiswahili kanga saying)¹

After studying in Ghana in summer, 2010, I went on to visit Tanzania (in East Africa) where I was able to observe some after-school programs, NGOs, and other organizations whose mission it is to teach music to native Tanzanians. These programs were markedly different from what I was used to in Ghana, where most music students were Westerners who came during their summer vacation. The experience really made me think about the issue of music education, and even about musical transmission and commodification more broadly. These schools share the desire to promote, transmit musical knowledge, and teach traditional music. Although their goals are similar, what I found most interesting was the different demographics of the student populations. The two music schools that I will briefly discuss—the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center (BYAC) and the Dhow Countries Music Academy (DCMA)—teach primarily Tanzanian musical styles to native Tanzanians.

**Tanzania: Brief Country Profile**

Tanzania is a sub-Saharan country in East Africa. It is the largest country in East Africa.² According to the 2002 census, there are about 35 million residents of Tanzania, with about a million residing on the island of Zanzibar.³ The coastal belt is hot and humid while the central plateau is hot and dry with short periods of rainfall. Ninety-eight percent of the population is African while the rest are of European or Asian descent. There are around 126 African ethnic

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² Omatseye, 161.
groups who are unified by the Swahili (properly called Kiswahili) language, the official and national language of Tanzania. The Germans colonized and ruled the country from 1884 to 1919, when the British took over in 1920 and ruled until the 1960s. Tanzania achieved its independence on 9 December 1961, ousting the Oman traders in Zanzibar and thereby uniting the mainland, called Tanganyika, and the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba. On December 10, 1963 Zanzibar (with Pemba) became an independent state, but in 1964 there was a revolution and a violent coup. The United Republic of Tanzania, uniting Tanganyika and Zanzibar, was created on 26 April 1964. Tanzania gained independence under the guidance and leadership of President Julius Nyerere and the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU).

Tanzania has a vast coastline in the east with the Indian Ocean. It shares its borders with Kenya and Uganda to the north, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the west, and Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique to the south. Tanzania also shares a diverse population, with many distinct languages and ethnic groups. The Swahili culture is a hybrid culture along the coast that shares its influences from both mainland African roots and Arab traders from the coast. The Swahili coast stretches for a thousand miles, from southern Somali to Northern Mozambique, including Lamu Island, Malindi, Mombasa, Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam, Bagamoyo, Kilwa, and Mafia Island. Arab settlers from Oman arrived in the eighth-

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7 Omatseye, 164; Askew, 47.
century along the coast. Arab influences and styles incorporate itself into the music, especially *taarab* and Zanzibari music. Islam is especially prevalent in Zanzibar, where the religion was revived under Omani rule. According to Mohamed El-Mohanmmady Rizk, “Over 97 per cent of the population of Zanzibar are Muslims.” Zanzibar has two main islands, Unguja, or the main island of Zanzibar, and the island of Pemba. The capital is Zanzibar Town, located only 73 kilometers from city of Dar es Salaam. Zanzibar Town is divided into two areas: Stone Town and *ng’ambo*, literally “the other side.”

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8 Mann; Rizk, 25.
10 Rizk, 24
11 Ibid, 23.
During its early history, Tanzania was well known for its international trade in the Indian Ocean and was part of a vast and rich trade route between Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Tanzania was a central hub that lay strategically in an ideal location for trade between India, the Persian Gulf, and Arabia. It was known for its spice, ivory, and slave trade. Trade was especially successful due to the Monsoon winds that blow from the North to East in July through September, and from the West and Southwest in November through March.\textsuperscript{12} Swahili is from the Arabic word \textit{sahil} meaning “coast,” so therefore the Arabic word \textit{sawahli} means “coast-dweller.”\textsuperscript{13}

Kiswahili is the national language of Tanzania.\textsuperscript{14} According to African and theatre studies Professor Jane Plastow, in the early days of German East Africa, Kiswahili was the language of administration, but after WWI British took over then English became the language of education.\textsuperscript{15} After Tanzania’s independence, however, the government did not want to have English as the national language because it was the language of the colonizer; Kiswahili, on the other hand, was a symbol of nationalism. Today, the official languages of Tanzania are Kiswahili and English, with over 120 other local languages.\textsuperscript{16} Kiswahili is the first language for 2 million people and the second language or \textit{lingua franca} for more than 60 million people.\textsuperscript{17} Kiswahili became a symbol of unity and national strength and was also a source of pride independent from any colonizers. According to education scholar Amy Stambach, “With more than 135 local dialects spoken within the borders of Tanzania, Kiswahili serves a practical and

\textsuperscript{12} Mann.
\textsuperscript{13} Rizk, 21; Askew, 33.
\textsuperscript{14} It is also called Swahili, although Kiswahili is the proper word in the language itself. “Ki-”designates the language (Kiswahili or KiSwahili), while “Wa-” designates the people, or the Swahili people (Waswahili or WaSwahili). I will use the term Kiswahili for the language and the Swahili for the people, as is common in many academic sources.
\textsuperscript{15} Plastow, 44-45.
\textsuperscript{16} Topan, 252.
\textsuperscript{17} Rizk, 21.
symbolic function of uniting the country under a single African language […] that reflects cultural peace and social stability.”\textsuperscript{18} Having Kiswahili as a national language also helped combat tribalism and it has been said that Kiswahili’s prominence may have contributed to Tanzania’s success as a nation, with little tribal fighting or separation.

\textbf{Tanzania’s Education System}

Similar to the actions following the independence of Ghana, Tanzania achieved a strong sense of nationalistic and pan-African pride and identity following its independence. President Julius Nyerere was especially concerned about the lingering impacts of colonialism on Tanzania’s education system. One of the most important documents after independence was the Arusha Declaration, issued in February of 1967. In this document, President Nyerere expressed the nation’s intention of socialism and self-reliance. Nyerere believed that a nation should be self-reliant, and in order to be so “[d]evelopment lay in the education of the masses.”\textsuperscript{19} In the Arusha Declaration, Nyerere especially spoke about education and the need to respond “to the neglect of education suffered by the country under colonialism.”\textsuperscript{20} Colonialism was hampering development and the key was education. In his publication \textit{Education for Self-Reliance} (March 1967), Nyerere explained that there were four basic problems in that current educational system. He explained that “Our present system encourages school pupils in the idea that all knowledge which is worthwhile is acquired from books or from ‘educated people’[…].” However, this education system “underestimates the value to our society of traditional knowledge.”\textsuperscript{21} He

\textsuperscript{19} Mpogolo, 133.
\textsuperscript{20} Omatseye, 161.
continued: “Education is such as to divorce its participants from the society it is supposed to be preparing them for […] The school is always separate; it is not part of society.”

He believed that education should come from the family and be important and meaningful to the local culture. He wrote, “Social values are formed by the family, school, and society—by the total environment in which a child develops.” Nyerere’s policy advocated for self-reliance for the nation, independence from colonial control, and an increased sensitivity to local and traditional needs. Under Nyerere’s policy of Ujamaa (familyhood or “African socialism”), Tanzania in effect became a nation run under African socialist ideology. The Ujamaa policy promoted “villagization” or living and working cooperatively.

According to education scholar Omatseye, this policy “recognized the African tradition of the extended family system where all work together cooperatively for the common good.” President Nyerere advocated so much for the improvement of Tanzania’s educational system that he was given the nickname of Mwalimu, or “teacher.” In 1962, Nyerere established the Ministry of Culture to help sponsor and strengthen the development of education in the national government. The following excerpt from his President’s Inaugural Address in November 1962 expresses his devotion and ideologies surrounding the importance of education:

The major change I have made is to get up an entirely new Ministry: the Ministry of National Culture and Youth. I have done this because I believe that its culture is the spirit and essence of any nation […] Of all the crimes of colonialism there is none worse than the attempt to make us believe we had no indigenous culture of our own; or that what we did have was worthless—something of which we should be ashamed, instead of a source of pride. […] When we were at school, we were taught to sing the songs of the Europeans. How many were

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22 Ibid, 256.
23 Ibid, 259.
24 Omatseye, 164; Topan, 258; Askew, 47.
25 Omatseye, 164.
26 Plastow, 127; Askew, 48.
taught the songs of the Wanyamwezi or the Wahehe? [...] Lots of us can play the guitar, the piano, or other European instruments. How many Africans in Tanganyika, particularly among the educated, can play the African drums?

Some of us, particularly those of us who acquired a European type of education, set ourselves out to prove to our colonial rulers that we had become “civilized”; and by that we meant that we had abandoned everything connected with our own past and learnt to imitate only European ways [...] I don’t want anybody to imagine that to revive our own culture means at the same time to reject that of any other country. A nation which refuses to learn from foreign cultures is nothing but a nation of idiots and lunatics [...] But to learn from other cultures does not mean we should abandon our own. 27

Nyerere undoubtedly advocated for the education of Tanzanian traditional music. Although the colonial education systems forced Tanzanians to study Western music, clearly traditional music was important for culture and the formation of the nation. These trends were started by President Nyerere at the dawn of the nation of Tanzania, and ever since that time there has been a concern for the promotion and preservation of traditional music.

Currently, Tanzanian schools have a 7-4-2-3 system, where there are two years of pre-primary school, seven years of primary school, four years of junior secondary school, two years of senior secondary school, and three or more years of tertiary education. Kiswahili remains the primary language of instruction. According to Stambach, “Kiswahili is the official language of instruction in government primary schools. It remains the primary language of communication throughout secondary and tertiary levels of education.” 28 Although Tanzania adopted the British educational system, objectives of the national government call for the promotion of Tanzanian culture. For instance, one of the goals listed for preprimary education include “developing in the

28 Stambach, 150.
child an appreciation for his cultural background, customs, and values.”29 Even in secondary education, the government lists the following objective: to “instill in students national consciousness, leadership qualities, and develop in them, national character.”30 Despite the objectives proposed by the government, musical education is still seen as a less important pursuit and schools usually promote only purely academic subjects. Problems in delivery of education, such as those discussed in chapter one, have obstructed the fulfillment of these goals. For example, Tanzania faces a huge teacher shortage and there is an “[e]xpected increase in pupil enrollment.”31 Teachers are being hired as quickly as they can, and sometimes they do not have adequate training beforehand. Government schools, or public schools, are in worse shape than private schools. Stambach explains that there is, on average, 350 students per government primary school with a student teacher ratio of 31:1. In high school the ratio is 54:1.32 Since Nyerere’s days of socialism to today’s dire teacher shortage, the Tanzanian government has changed its educational system in order to best serve its people. The school system has always had the goal of strengthening and continuing national pride and culture.

**Music’s Role in Education**

According to the general aims of Tanzanian education, education is important “to promote the acquisition and appreciation of culture, customs and traditions of the people of Tanzania.”33 Some schools followed these guidelines and created music education curricula. Most of the education for music, however, was based on colonial forms. Plastow writes, “Through their missionary cohorts, the government also promoted imitative European forms [of

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29 Omatseye, 167.
32 Stambach, 146.
music] in schools and churches.” A simplified form of bandi, an imitation of colonial military bands, became popular in schools, using tin whistles and traditional drums. In fact, during my stay in Tanzania I encountered a school band in Arusha (See figures 25 & 26). The school would have a general assembly and parade every morning before school started in order to call the students to school. Some schools promote traditional ngoma, traditional dance-drumming, however. Plastow explains that music and art are required: “After the Arusha Declaration secondary schools were required to set up drama, folklore and Kiswahili clubs.” She explains, however, that the arts “depended largely on individual teachers, few of whom had any arts training” and so “[s]uch activities remained extracurricular.” According to Plastow, the Butimba College of National Education is the “only centre in Tanzania which specialises in offering advanced teacher training for secondary-school teachers in the areas of art, music and drama.” Art and music education is still seen as a trivial skill and is usually absent from the curriculum. Plastow asserts that, “Nowhere in Tanzania does art appear to be more than peripheral to the education curriculum, and performance skills are certainly not generally used as a means of spreading knowledge.” Music curriculum seems to be more developed in Tanzania than in Ghana, however. In fact, in Tanzania in 1963 various syllabi were compiled for different subjects, including music, and “[p]hysical-education courses and forthcoming music syllabuses are reviving national songs and dances.” From early on music was an important subject for national development, but, just as in Ghana, often examinations get afforded prominence and the arts get cast aside.

34 Plastow, 68.
36 Ibid, 188.
37 Ibid, 189.
Figure 29. *Bandi* (Band) performance at a primary school. Arusha, Tanzania. Summer 2010.

Figure 30. *Bandi* (Band) performance at a primary school. Arusha, Tanzania. Summer 2010.
The Music

There are numerous musical genres in Tanzania, including Kwaya (choir), Ngonjera, Taarab, Ngoma, Bandi (bands), Beni (brass band tradition), Musiki wa Dansi (an elite dance form, dance music, “urban jazz” or “swahili jazz” that includes standard Western rock band instrumentation), and hip-hop (‘Bongo flava’). Similar to the taarab style, there is also taa-rap (rap music) and kidumbak. Taa-rap is the fusion of taarab music with hip-hop culture. It began in Nairobi in the mid-eighties, then spread to Dar-es-Salaam in the late-eighties, and then spread to Zanzibar in the mid-nineties. Kidumbak is seen as a derivative and more African version of taarab because it is more percussive and participatory. Janet Topp, in her dissertation “Women and Africanisation of taarab in Zanzibar,” explains that “Kidumbak is the Africanised version of taarab.” It uses fewer instruments: the two kidumbak (small drum, darabucca), the violin, and the locally made sanduku (“one-string tea chest bass,” meaning “box” in Kiswahili).

The Dhow Countries Music Academy teaches the style of kidumbak. According to taarab legend Bi Kidude, kidumbak is “ngoma, or drumming, that you play with only two instruments, the small dumbak drum and a traditional string instrument bezi.” She clarifies how this genre is related to taarab: “It was more identified with poor people who could not afford to hire a full Taarab orchestra for their entertainment.” There are also many different types of ngoma in Zanzibar, such as beni, bomu, kidumbak, msondo, and unyago.

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39 Nyoni, 242; Plastow, 69.
40 Rizk, 65.
Ngoma

Both schools that I visited, the DCMA and the Bagamoyo School, teach *ngoma* or traditional Tanzanian music. The term *ngoma* is Kiswahili for traditional dance-drumming. *Ngoma* also means “drum” in Kiswahili. It is the term for music and dance, and also the term for the event or occasion where such music would occur.\(^{44}\) Furthermore, according to Norwegian Jon-Roar Bjørkvold, *ngoma* is also a “musical practice, which always includes several musical expressions simultaneously, such as drumming, singing and dancing. In addition, it also reflects a social dimension of making music together, or music as a social happening.”\(^ {45}\) This idea of music as integrated social happening is almost identical to the idea within Ghanaian traditional music; at least, it matches that in the environments of the Dagara Music and Arts Center and the Dagbe Arts Centre. At both Ghanaian schools, they teach dance-drumming as a unit, including dancing, drumming, and singing. Traditionally, *ngoma* is taught and performed in a social setting, but things are changing, just as they are in many African musical education systems.

*Ngoma* is “considered to be the only indigenous form of musical expression currently prevailing” and it is the most popular of all music forms in Tanzania.\(^ {46}\) Nevertheless, according to scholar Siri Lange, “Dar Es Salaam, with its population of about three million people, is the only city in Tanzania large enough to support commercial, full-time cultural troupes.”\(^ {47}\) There are other cultural dance groups throughout Tanzania, however, and often schools have their own *ngoma* groups.

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\(^{44}\) Qtd. in Rizk, 63.


\(^{46}\) Nyoni, 242 & 245.

Since Tanzania’s independence, ngoma troupes have been used to promote the government. Parastatal groups are most commonly formed. According to Ronnie Graham in his guide to contemporary African music, ngoma troupes are used “in an effort to preserve the traditional cultural heritage” and are formed by “various government bodies and state organizations.” Ngoma songs “address issues of the day and praise political leaders, urging people to support the Government.”48 Some song texts are now changed in order to praise political parties.49 Most groups today perform for political reasons. Scholar Frowin Paul Nyoni states: “Ideologically motivated music groups were established to praise the political leadership and state policies, to celebrate the achievements of the nation as a whole, and help mobilize opinion for socio-political innovations.”50 In 1963, the Tanzanian government established the National Dance Troupe (NDT). This group performs ngoma styles from across Tanzania, but through combining and bringing together different ngoma, the group creates a sense of Tanzanian nationality. Scholar Siri Lange writes that “[a] National Dance Troupe was established in the 1960s, which performed nationalized ngoma with lyrics in KiSwahili praising the leaders and work.”51 Ngoma is used a lot in contemporary Tanzanian settings for political reasons, altered from its original social reasons.

Also contrary to general characteristics of African music, most ngoma groups perform in a Western concert setting. These Tanzanian ngoma troupes “perform a well-rehearsed set of material, reflecting the ethnic composition of the group, but to a seated rather than participatory audience.”52 This concert setting is in contrast to many settings of traditional African music;

48 Graham, 158.
49 Plastow, 132.
50 Nyoni, 247.
51 Lange, 68.
52 Graham, 158.
although much of the music performed at the Ghanaian schools were also used in a staged setting at those schools, they would sometimes be open to the general community. Most ngoma groups nowadays perform in a stricter concert setting, which is contrary to traditional performance practice where people would participate. Nyoni explains that there are two different kinds of ngoma, urban and rural. The rural style may be participatory and held in a location where villagers may participate. Nyoni explains that today, however, ngoma groups are usually “[d]etached from the realities of rural life.” Styles that were once performed for long periods of time and in dance circles in the village are now shortened and performed in lines in cities. Plastow further explains the difference between the purposes behind urban and rural ngoma styles: “Although research is patchy, it is evident that throughout rural Tanzania traditional ngoma continues to be used, not only in schools and for competitions but as part of the fabric of day-to-day living. Birth, marriage, death and similar rites of passage are still widely marked by communal dance and music, often interwoven with Christian or Muslim ceremonial.”

Ngoma reemerged after independence as a politicizing and nationalizing force for the nation. During colonial times, Western art music was often held in higher esteem than traditional music and was taught in British system schools. Following independence, Tanzania was celebrating its diversity and range of cultural differences through traditional dance-drumming or ngoma. The rebirth of these styles and the formation of many more cultural and school dance troupes were in direct response to nationalism and cultural pride. In fact, the University Department of Theatre was set up in 1967 to reinstate the importance of traditional theatre, dance, and music: “All were concerned to re-assert the supremacy of indigenous cultural

53 Nyoni, 247.
54 Plastow, 132.
55 Ibid, 197.
forms over what were viewed as the Western élitist dramatic styles then taught in Tanzanian schools.” As a result of Nyerere’s policies after independence, including socialism and the policy of Ujamaa, ngoma troupes flourished as multi-ethnic dance groups representative of traditional culture and the diverse yet peaceful country of Tanzania.

**Taarab**

It is not surprising that the Dhow Countries Music Academy, located in Stone Town of Zanzibar, teaches taarab music. **Taarab** music is one of its best represented musical forms. The school has an abundance of teachers and students of **taarab** music, comprising both singers and instrumentalists. **Taarab** is a popular music style along the Swahili coast with Indian, Arab, Shirazi (Persian), and western musical features. **Taarab** (also **Tarab, Tarabu, or Twarabu**) is a loan word from Arabic, as well as the name of the musical instruments. According to Rizk, **taarab** “denotes a whole genre of songs.” Taarab music prominently features Arab musical influences and musical instruments of Middle Eastern origin: the **nai** (oblique-blown flute), the **qanun** (Arab trapezoidal plucked board zither with 78 strings), the ‘**ud**’ (short-necked plucked lute/mandolin), the **tabla** (small goblet drum), **daf** (round frame drum), **riqq** (round frame drum with metal jingles), and **kamanja** (violin). The ideal **taarab** ensemble (a **taarab** style) uses this instrumentation from the Egyptian **takht** ensemble. Other **taarab** styles add the cello, double bass, and accordion, and more recently electric instruments like the keyboard and guitar to the

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56 Ibid, 131.
57 Rizk, 17 & 18.
58 A word on spellings for some of these instruments. The **nai** is also spelled **nay**, perhaps reflecting the Arabic spelling (**nay**); and Swahili spelling (**nai**) (Kiswahili words have profuse “i” ending sounds, such as in “muziki.”) The **ud** is also **udi**, and the **tabla** is sometimes called **doumbek/dumbak/darabucca**. Fair calls the frame drum **tari** (p. 171).
59 Rizk, 69; Fair, 171.
ensemble. The Egyptian style of taarab is found primarily in Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam and it is called ideal or classical taarab; the modern taarab style is more amplified and has various musical influences such as Indian, Cuban, and Western musical styles.

There are many different styles of taarab, including taarab ya wanawake (women’s taarab), modern taarab and ideal taarab. Unless specifically marked as taarab ya kiarabu, which is sung in Arabic, taarab is sung in Kiswahili. Women’s taarab is more percussive. Ideal taarab is also called Asilia or original or elitist taarab. As I mentioned earlier, the ideal taarab style uses the Egyptian instrumental takht ensemble. Another style is modern taarab, or mipasho in the Kiswahili language. Mipasho is a type of poetry and song that is “directed towards a specific rival group” in order to “ridicule, abuse and attack.” These groups are usually comprised exclusively of women. The modern taarab style ensemble incorporates electronic instruments. For instance, the group East African Melody Modern Taarab is a popular modern taarab group. Modern taarab mixes “traditional African beats with Arabic, Cuban rhythms or modern Western pop melodies.” According to one source, Tanzanian music styles were greatly influenced by different styles such as Cuban, European, Latin and other African music. The Latin and African popular musical influences came after the 1960s, when soldiers returning from World War II brought back the music of these cultures. Modern taarab is

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60 Fair, 171.
61 Askew, 69.
62 Ibid.
63 Ahlsen, 46.
64 Rizk, 68.
65 Ibid, 69.
66 Ibid, 75.
67 Tanzanian Music: Music of Tanzania, Muziki wa dansi, Taarab, BAMUTA, Tanzania Music Awards (Memphis: Books LCC, 2010), 5.
extremely popular, but, according to Ahlsen, it is not taught at the Dhow Countries Music Academy.\textsuperscript{68}

_Taarab_ was first brought to Zanzibar by Arabs who settled there from Oman in 1832. Originally, _taarab_ was performed with only Arab music, texts, and musical instruments and only performed in the courts. According to Nyoni, performers gradually “began to write lyrics in Kiswahili using Egyptian and Indian melodies copied from the records,” using such texts as Swahili poetry.\textsuperscript{69} Today, most contemporary songs are sung in Kiswahili. Despite its Arab origins, _taarab_ became considered a primarily Swahili musical genre. Swahili culture is a distinct culture along the coast that shares its influences from both mainland African roots and Arab traders from the coast, as well as Indian, Persian, Asian, and Western influences.

According to many scholars, _taarab_ began in Zanzibar and then was introduced to the mainland (or Tanganyika) in 1930. _Taarab_ gradually spread to the rest of Tanzania, from the coast to the center of the nation through railways.\textsuperscript{70} The story goes that the Sultan of Zanzibar, Sultan Seyyid Barghash (1870-1888), sent his palace poet Muhammad Ibrahim to Cairo to learn Arab music and Egyptian song.\textsuperscript{71} The sultan imported musical instruments from Egypt and a court group was established. The group performed at the famous Sultan palace of Beit-el-Ajaib (House of wonders). Ethnomusicologist Kelly Askew, however, thinks that this is an overly “Zanzibar-centric” view of the origin of _taarab_.\textsuperscript{72} Instead, she thinks that it started both on the island of Zanzibar and the coast, and that only this parallel development could explain the birth of a distinctive Tanga style of _taarab_. Nonetheless, in the late 1800s and early 1900s _taarab_
began to be played by the elite in Stone Town. Eventually, however, *taarab* became a reflection of its cosmopolitan origins and influences from the Indian Ocean and Arab trade routes. Despite its history with Egypt, seen as the “the center of Arab mass culture,” *taarab* became a specifically musical style associate with the Swahili coast.

According to Plastow, between World War I and World War II *taarab* became associated more with East Africa and the Swahili coast thanks to Siti Binti Said, a famous Zanzibari woman singer. Siti Binti Said remains the “the most widely praised and revered *taarab* performer in coastal history.” In 1928, Siti Binti Said traveled to Bombay with her *taarab* band and was the first East African to be recorded on the gramophone by the HMV (His Master’s Voice) record company. Siti Binti Said performed *taarab* in Arabic, even covers of Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum, but she also sang in Kiswahili. Due to the efforts of Siti Binti Said, *taarab* songs are now sung either in Kiwahili or Arabic. As Laura Fair explains, “the band’s decision to sing in Kiswahili also helped to transform *taarab* from an Arab cultural form into one that became quintessentially Zanzibari.” *Taarab* became a Swahili cultural icon, with Zanzibar at its center.

It is no wonder that Zanzibar is seen as the birthplace of Swahili *taarab* music, because *taarab* is everywhere there. The home of the Nadi Ikhwani Safaa musical club, the oldest and most famous *taarab* group in all of East Africa, is located in Zanzibar. Rizk claims that Zanzibar Town is “where most *taarab* musical clubs exist.” Wedding parties in Zanzibar are always

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73 Fair, 172.
74 Ibid, 171.
75 Plastow, 68; Askew, 109.
76 Fair, 1.
77 Ibid, 173.
78 Ibid, 174.
79 Rizk, 30.
accompanied by *taarab* music, either the traditional and performed kind or as cassette music pumped out of a huge speaker system (see Figure 31).

![Figure 31: Modern *taarab* music at a wedding celebration. Zanzibar, Summer 2010.](image)

*Taarab* is found on the radio, on television (mostly modern *taarab*), and is sold either as cassette tapes or CDs. Every major city has carts and stores that sell *taarab* music.

*Taarab*, like many other African musical genres, is primarily an aural and oral tradition. *Taarab* is usually not notated, but it typically requires practice and rehearsal before performances. Rizk explains that “*Taarab* lyrics are written, but they are always orally transmitted.” ⁸⁰ Even though the tradition is very African due to its oral tradition, it is also very Arab and Indian because it usually embodies a very high literary quality. Song lyrics are often from classical poetry, and song themes usually involve love and romance, politics, and/or

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⁸⁰ Ibid, 20.
religion. Taarab also is highly influenced by the teachings of Islam and of the reading of the Qur’an. In fact, Rizk mentions that “[i]magery utilized in depicting women in taarab songs reflects the Swahili culture in Zanzibar. This imagery can be classified in three categories: imagery stemming from the Swahili environment, imagery quoted from the Holy Quran, and imagery stemming from the Arabic culture.” Taarab is a highly oral tradition as well as a tradition rich in literature and textual meaning.

Taarab songs are usually sung by a soloist (the majority of singers are female) with refrains sung by a chorus. What is just as important as the text, however, is the meaning interpreted during the moment of performance by audience members. Taarab song texts can be extremely figurative, filled with metaphors, simile, personification and/or irony that can be interpreted differently depending on the audience. During a performance, the audience will dance (although many do not consider it as a form of dancing) and tip the singer with some money if the song is relevant to them. Rewarding the singer with money, or tipping, is called kutunza and it is a kind of ritualized dance to acknowledge the singer and the text sung. Waving the money in the air allows the audience member to participate and dance during their approach to the singer. Through this gesture, audience members can highlight a message in a song or let those people in attendance know their feelings. In a society where confrontation is not culturally acceptable, this allows participants to indirectly express their emotions. This indirect messaging is also similar to messages on kangas. Kangas are pieces of rectangle cloth worn by women that usually contain a printed message, saying, or proverb in Kiswahili. Women

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81 Ibid, 45.  
82 Ibid, 46.  
83 Ibid, 50.  
84 Ibid, 85; Askew, 126.  
85 Rizk, 75; Askew, 126 & 139.
will often wear a certain message for a reason in order to communicate with those around them. According to Laura Fair, taarab songs also reflect the importance of gossip (udaku) and rumor (uvumi) in society. Taarab songs can send messages depending on the context, giving audience members a voice. As Rizk states, “[T]aarab song is a powerful socializing engine, which can be utilized by women to have an active voice of their own.” Taarab is a true musical form representative of Swahili and Tanzanian culture. One Tanzanian school in particular, the Dhow Countries Music Academy, teaches taarab music extensively to its native students.

**Case Study #1: Dhow Countries Music Academy**

I spent a few days at the Dhow Countries Musical Arts School in Zanzibar, an island off the coast of mainland Tanzania. The Dhow Countries Music Academy, or DCMA, was founded in 2001 by Hildegard Kiel from Germany as a NGO (non-governmental organization) sponsored primarily by the Ford Foundation, the Norwegian Embassy, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and other organizations. The Dhow Countries Music Academy teaches taarab extensively to its native students.

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86 Fair, 24.
87 Rizk, 47.
Music Academy teaches traditional dance-drumming, called *ngoma*, and also *taarab*, a popular song genre found predominately along the Swahili coast of Tanzania and Kenya. The school specializes in teaching Zanzibari music forms.

The DCMA resides in the Old Customs House just on the edge of Stone Town, the main commercial center and capital of Zanzibar. What is so unique about this school is that 85% of DCMA students are locals from Zanzibar. Other performances of traditional and popular Zanzibari music on the island are usually reserved for tourists at particular settings, such as *ngoma* performances at Old Fort and *taarab* performances at the Monsoon Restaurant and the Serena Hotel. At all of these establishments, entry to these performances usually requires payments of some sort, which may prohibit many local people from attending. The DCMA, in addition to its regular professional classes, also offers a rural outreach program and a teaching and children’s program.

I was only able to stay at the school for about a week, and since it was the end of the semester, classes were not in session and only a few students remained practicing. I did sit in on rehearsals and I even got a short *ngoma* lesson from a friend that I met. At least once, maybe twice a day, I took the short walk from the middle of Stone Town, where I was staying, to the custom house located on the edge of the sea. After signing in to the custom house, probably for security reasons, I simply sat and watched musicians perform this music that was new to me. The rehearsals were mostly in preparation for the end-of-the-year concert that would be held free of charge later that week. I did notice, surprisingly, that many of the workers and teachers were obviously locals from Tanzania. I was also surprised to see even female musicians who played the violin in the *taarab* orchestra, and later I discovered at the concert, they were also singers well-versed in the *taarab* tradition. It was relaxing just to sit listening to such beautiful music,
with the breeze from the sea blowing gently in, realizing that traditional Zanzibari music was still being perpetuated strongly in the present day.

The DCMA school was founded in June 2002 as a “not-for-profit, non-governmental association.” The DCMA provides “music lessons and instruments to anyone interested in studying traditional Zanzibar music styles, such as taarab, beni or kidumbak, focusing mainly on teaching traditional music of the Swahili Coast and the Indian Ocean Region. The Academy provides music lessons as well as instruments at minimal cost to about 100 students each semester interested in studying music related to their cultural background.” According to the DCMA website, their mission is to “play a key role in strengthening the music industry of Zanzibar, by researching, training, promoting, preserving and developing the musical heritage of Zanzibar and the Dhow Countries locally, regionally and internationally.” The school “specialises in teaching the traditional music of their region and provides an opportunity to preserve and develop the intangible heritage by providing educational and vocational training as well as job opportunities.” All of the academy’s teachers are from Zanzibar. It is the “only school of its kind in East Africa.” Although the school is sponsored by outside sources, its students and teachers are primarily locals.

The DCMA also provides outreach to local musicians and school children by teaching music and hosting workshops in the area. The academy began teaching local school children and, eventually, with the support and help of over 500 registered members, the DCMA was able to open a branch school at the village of Mahonda to support rural outreach. The school teaches

89 Busara, 96.
90 Ibid, 110.
92 Busara, 96.
ngoma workshops and seminars to school children and also hosts concerts and receptions that are free and open to the public. For instance, during the internationally famous Sauti za Busara (Sounds of Wisdom) music festival, the DCMA hosted master classes for teachers and students of Zanzibar, including a Zanzibar hip-hop workshop in 2004.93 The school also held a workshop called “Swahili Encounters” three days before the festival in order to create two compositions to be performed publically at the festival.94 When I was there I was able to see one of their end-of-the-year concerts that included music such as taarab, classical piano, kidumbak, musiki wa dansi, solo ud and ngoma, and other traditional Zanzibari ngoma. A band from the academy also played an outreach concert in Michenzani, the German aid housing project with large ugly cement buildings and lots of trash blowing everywhere (see Figure 33).

Figure 33. Michenzani housing project. Zanzibar, Summer 2010.

93 Ibid, 90 & 91.
94 Ibid, 93.
It was clear that this concert was an attempt to reach out to the people in the further and less affluent areas of Zanzibar. Unlike *taarab* that is performed at rich hotels from Western patrons, this concert was performed for locals in the poorer side of town. The concerts produced by the DCMA are free for the public. It is interesting to note, however, that Jørn Erik Ahlsen states in his thesis on the DCMA that the school is “struggling for recognition in the local community.” He writes, “My informants mention that, in general the people of Zanzibar do not recognize musicianship as a respected job. Parents do not wish their children to become musicians, concerning the myth of the musician living a life of promiscuity.” This information raises some interesting questions about the school’s local recognition and raises some issues on the implications of a non-governmental organization from outside the local community creating a school directed towards benefiting the local community.

One interesting article about the DCMA was written by Hildegard Kiel and Tormod W. Anundsen and is published in the *Centering on African Practice in Musical Arts Education* (2006). It is titled “Is there a Swahili way of teaching music? Describing a series of teachers’ workshops on teaching music to children in Tanzania.” This article brings up some of the same issues and problems of NGOs; it seems that western administrators impose themselves and their goals on local Zanzibari educators. In the article, Kiel and Anundsen discuss a pilot training program that they established at the center for educators in Zanzibar. The aim of the workshop was to “qualify teachers to teach music to children in schools and elsewhere, and to find an approach to teaching music that may apply to local cultures.” They both admit that the workshops, held for only about 1-2 weeks with Norwegian educators visiting Zanzibar, were not

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95 Ahlsen, 10.
96 Ibid, 90.
97 Kiel and Anundsen, 61.
ideal and not enough to make a big educational impact. Most importantly, the authors recognized that a workshop for Zanzibari educators was problematic and imperialist in itself, but concluded that it was a starting point. It is important to note that the administrators of the DCMA are looking beyond the hegemony of western musical education systems and are searching for indigenous and local methods and content. I discuss these issues more in depth in the next chapter.

The Dhow Countries Music Academy provides other means of support to the community of local musicians. The DCMA houses a music library that allows students access to musical literature, sheet music, and research, featuring particularly Zanzibari and Tanzanian music. The library also collects published ethnomusicological information about Tanzanian music. The DCMA also promotes artists regionally and internationally. In 2007, Hildegard Kiel won a BBC World Music Award for the DCMA’s “enormous contribution to revitalizing the local music scene on the island.”98 The academy reaches out to the local community, influencing and affecting local musicians, businesses, and schools.

Unlike the Ghanaian schools that I have encountered, this school teaches primarily to native Zanzibari students. The school helps keep the music alive by providing music education to the next generation of Zanzibari musicians. The DCMA gives its students the education and knowledge needed as performers, especially in the highly tourist area of Stone Town. But, music is also a form of cultural tourism for Zanzibar. Busara Festival Director Yusuf Mahmoud states that “[f]estivals bring people together, help invigorate young people’s interest in local culture, help the artists themselves to meet and learn from each other, and promote a new kind of

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98 Busara, 110.
culturally conscious tourism for Tanzania.” Although taarab concerts in Stone Town today are usually presented to a privileged western tourist audience, the DCMA provides education to musicians for both economic development and cultural transmission and preservation. Seeing the importance of promoting and strengthening local Zanzibari music, the DCMA provides education to both native and foreign students.

**Case Study #2: The Bagamoyo Young Artist Center**

Another school that I encountered in Tanzania was the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center, an afterschool program for children in Bagamoyo, where they learn and perform traditional ngoma as well. The Bagamoyo Young Artist Center is associated with the famous Bagamoyo College of Arts, a neighboring institution. The school gives performances occasionally at that venue. The city of Bagamoyo is located north of Dar es Salaam, along the coast close to Zanzibar. It functioned as one of the most important port and trade cities. Bagamoyo is historically a city home to indigenous Africans from the mainland of Tanzania, not composed of Swahili people, but Swahili people migrated there later. The name Bagamoyo means “bury your heart.” Bagamoyo is home to the Bagamoyo College of Arts (“Chuo cha Sanaa”), an international known “stronghold of Tanzanian musical traditions.” It was established in 1975 at Dar es Salaam, but the college moved to Bagamoyo in 1981. According to Plastow, the “Bagamoyo College has attracted considerable interest as one of the few practical performance-arts training centres in Africa.” When I was at the center, they explained that they had just finished a performance a few days earlier at the college.

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99 Busara.
100 Mann.
101 Graham, 159.
102 Plastow, 187.
I happened upon the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center one day when visiting some local artists in town. We spent a few hours at the Center that provides afterschool activities for local students. Luckily, school has just ended for the day, and soon several children were singing, dancing, and drumming at the Center. The children performed ngoma, various styles of traditional music, and also sang more contemporary songs, including a popular love song and a song about the affect and danger of AIDS. According to a blog by Analahoe, a volunteer at the Center, the school was just recently opened: “Two brothers and two sisters who are musicians and artists opened the BYAC in March [of 2010] to support children who are interested in the arts, get them off the streets, and teach them how to avoid HIV. The children range in age from 4 - 18.”

Although I was not able to spend a lot of time at the center, Analahoe explains that the teachers are Irham, Taji, Anulira, and Massiga. She adds that the center teaches skills free of charge in English and mathematics, traditional dance and drama, drawing, painting, carving, to children under the age of 18.

Analahoe states that the school has the following goals:

- “To help reduce the number of children on the streets in Bagamoyo society.
- To give the opportunity to exchange views and cultural ideas with children and adults from different areas inside and outside of the country of Tanzania
- To give children the opportunity to represent their opinion, understand themselves and to know their own value in the society through art work.
- To give children knowledge and awareness about the killing effects of the HIV disease.”

The Bagamoyo Young Artist Center is another example of a school providing free music and art education to local Tanzanians, this time especially for children.

These two Tanzanian schools, the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center (BYAC) and the Dhow Countries Music Academy (DCMA), teach traditional Tanzanian music to different

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audiences, both to youth and adults. Most interestingly, however, they teach music to local residents. This is in contrast to the Ghanaian schools mentioned; although today both the Dagara Music and Arts Center and the Dagbe Arts Centre offer outreach and education to their local communities, they were established to teach music and dance to foreigners. Similar to the Ghanaian schools, the Tanzanian schools teach music, art, and culture that are apparently relevant to the local communities. Although today music is often seen as superfluous—and this is the case in much of Western music education in the United States as well—these schools provide education and indigenous musical knowledge to the next generation.
CHAPTER V. ISSUES IN ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

*Dunia ni maarifa. The world is knowledge. (Kiswahili kanga saying)*

In the following sections, I discuss pertinent issues in ethnomusicology that arose during my fieldwork. I explore the issues and problems in undertaking “virtual fieldwork” and the experiences that I had with it, as well as general issues of the role of music education in ethnomusicology. Next, I approach ethics and issues pertinent to this thesis that some people avoid due to their political or otherwise difficult nature. For example, the Ghanaian schools, in particular, are involved in a global capitalist market where traditional music is packaged and sold to a primarily Western market. In the Tanzanian schools, we find similar issues arise on both the authenticity of traditional versus popular music and the presentation and reformation of cultural forms for nationalism, tourism, preservation, and commodification. Finally, I talk about my experiences teaching and ask the following questions: As ethnomusicologists, who do we serve? Do we have any obligation to the culture in which we are researching to give back? Is this approach located in the subdiscipline of applied ethnomusicology? Why is it that our job is usually to teach westerners non-western music, and not teach non-westerners their traditional music? These are all tricky issues that I discuss as a conclusion.

**“Virtual” Fieldwork**

The process that I went through in order to get my interviews, technically after I “left the field,” became a part of my work in the “virtual field.” The field can be anywhere that one is learning, communicating, and enacting a dialogue with the so-called culture or informant. According to Agawu, for instance, “The field is an idea of place, not a specific or specifiable

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1 Hadi, 17.
space. [...] The field, in other words, is unstable and amorphous, an assembly of fragments, not a unified or unifiable whole.”2 I was able to contact my informants and interview them via the web, and through Facebook, I was able to email, chat, and connect with people involved in the organizations. Mobile and internet cafes around the world are making it easier for people to communicate. Of course, I did face the constraints that arise when one does not do an interview face-to-face, such as not being able to ask immediate follow-up questions and the briefer answers than one would receive in a natural conversation. But, despite these minor incongruities and shortcomings, Facebook, social networking sites, websites, and emails have made ethnomusicological fieldwork faster and easier than in previous decades, and such technological advances will increasingly become an important part of the training and implementation of fieldwork. Perhaps in a few years it will become acceptable and even expected that an ethnomusicologist navigate such internet terrain.

One issue—length of field experience—is related to that of “virtual fieldwork.” Although I was able to fully experience and have extended stays at the Ghanaian schools, my fieldwork in Tanzania was relatively short-lived. I came to the Dhow Countries Music Academy at the end of their school semester. While some students were still at the Academy to practice for their concert, classes were mostly over and many students and teachers were gone. However, I stayed about a week, had opportunities to talk to some people, and gained a sense of the Academy’s mission and accomplishments. At the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center, on the other hand, I was only able to observe students and classes for a matter of hours! Is this still considered fieldwork? Certainly it couldn’t be considered proper fieldwork. Could I really

2 Agawu, 46.
understand any “insider perspective” or the musical culture at the Center? Probably not, but nonetheless my experiences there stimulated some important questions in my mind.

Kofi Agawu writes, “Is the production of an ethnography on the basis of a short period of fieldwork ethically sound?”3 During my field research methods class, we are all taught that we are expected to spend an extended period of time, maybe six months to a year, in an exotic and faraway country, or at least this was the expectation in the beginning formation of our field. Today, however, more and more people conduct fieldwork in their own backyard or on popular music. But, the limited time at the schools in Tanzania does question my authority to include them in my thesis. I neither want this thesis to be a description of my summer vacation as a tourist, nor advance the colonist notion that I could understand these schools’ music cultures with such brief visits. I, instead, hope to raise issues about the inequalities of music education, especially in music education and ethnomusicology in Africa. My fieldwork is just a brief snapshot into the environments at various African schools. Also, my comparative methodology was almost implied from the beginning, since many of these schools, particularly those in Ghana, have already been extensively researched by several ethnomusicologists and attended by hundreds of visiting students. I hope to formulate by own ideas and bring together my personal experience to explore traditional and institutional musical transmission at these various African schools in Ghana and Tanzania.

Authenticity, Appropriation, Tourism and Commodification

Some of the biggest ethical issues that arose during my fieldwork concerned authenticity, appropriation, tourism and commodification. All of the schools must confront the issue of the

3 Ibid, 201.
authenticity of traditional music and the packaging and selling of traditional music for public consumption.

For the Ghanaian music schools, the DMC and Dagbe, both were founded as businesses for a primarily foreign audience consisting of either students or professors coming from abroad to study traditional Ghanaian dance-drumming. Is this necessarily a bad thing? While both schools were built to teach traditional music and dance to primarily Westerners, today they have reached out to local schools in order to teach local children. Some might criticize these schools as simply business ventures to make money off of traditional music and dance and that the local people themselves are not benefiting. But, these Ghanaian schools were created by local musicians. Are these schools merely a form of cultural tourism or are they “authentic” musical groups in the field? All of the schools discussed in this thesis are, in a way, connected to the world of cultural tourism and the perpetuation of “authentic” traditional African culture. They all stand to benefit from the notion of the “authentic.”

I experienced other anxieties during my research and fieldwork. Some of these issues, such as power inequalities between informant and researcher and the tensions of tourism and commodification, have been around for generations since colonial times. These anxieties are most apparent, however, during cultural performances where a primarily African dance group performs for a throng of white tourists who brandish and flash their cameras and camcorders. Is it fair for foreign visitors to take advantage of African performers, who if they were performing in West, might be afforded better pay and luxuries? Is cultural tourism a good thing, giving performers sponsorships, or is it another example of the West reaping benefits from third-world peoples? Although study abroad trips to Ghanaian schools allow students the chance to study
music and dance, are such excursions a detriment to the country’s own preservation of its cultural heritage?

These are all complicated questions that arise. Certainly the owners, staff, and surrounding towns of these schools are benefiting economically, but does this success come at the expense of selling their culture? In his thesis on the Dhow Countries Music Academy in Zanzibar, Ahlsen brings up some of these similar questions. He writes, “[h]as the tourist industry, with its need for economic stabilization, taken the tradition [taarab] from the people of Zanzibar, who in general cannot be a part of the performances at the high-end hotels and restaurants?”

He continues: “In the beginning of my fieldwork I had the feeling that taarab is only performed for tourists enjoying their sundowner drinks and eating dinner at one of the high-end hotels and restaurants. I was wondering, if taarab in Zanzibar is only exposed to foreigners, only exposed for the short time visiting tourists and not the local people, where will the next generation musicians [sic] come from?” Anxieties and concerns about tourism and the commodification of local culture are understandable. It is important for culture members themselves to be involved in the production, packaging, and selling of their culture, and in some cases, it is vital that they teach the culture to the next generation.

In Ghana, the schools were created by local musicians themselves. In Tanzania, however, the Dhow Countries Music Academy in Zanzibar (DCMA) began as an NGO, or non-governmental organization. According to scholar Sarah Michael, a NGO consists of “independent development actors existing apart from governments and corporations, operating on a non-profit or not-for-profit basis with an emphasis on voluntarism, and pursuing a mandate of providing development services, undertaking communal development work or advocating on

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4 Ahlsen, 5.
5 Ibid.
NGOs are usually created with a spirit of voluntarism and charity in order to help in a foreign country. Are NGOs simply organizations that impose their own agendas on the local people? Sarah Michael believes that NGOs can either originate from within or from the outside. They are either international NGOs or indigenous NGOs. There was a rise globally in indigenous NGOs in the 1970s. Indigenous NGOs are better because they are formed from the grassroots and “empower and strengthen local people.” They are locally based and represent the work and the needs of the people themselves, not changes imposed from an outside, usually Western source. According to Michael, these groups usually “have a level of local knowledge and experience that international counterparts can rarely match, whether in terms of speaking local languages, respecting social mores, or understanding local customs and traditions.”

Although I am not concerned about the background of the DCMA, it was a school that was created by outside forces. Foreigners created the school and serve as the primary administrators, but most of the teachers and students are locals and the school does intend to become more locally controlled. Does the fact that an organization comes from outside the culture suggest anything different than those that are formed from inside, such as the Ghanaian schools? Do the intentions of the schools, either for business or for charity, make a difference? Don’t they both, regardless of the means, still preserve musical cultures that might otherwise be neglected, and still, in a roundabout way, pass the music onto the next generation of local children? These are all questions and issues that I will mainly leave unanswered, for they are beyond the scope of this

7 Ibid, 4.
8 Ibid, 5.
9 Ibid, 6.
thesis. These questions do, however, resonate with relevant issues that endure in ethnomusicology.

To discuss issues of authenticity, scholars usually focus on the formation of cultural dance troupes. Ghana, as well as Tanzania, followed the trend of many other African countries in creating national dance troupes to perform nationally and internationally and showcase their talent and culture. These troupes were created in order “to experiment with traditional models to create new forms for staged performance.”¹¹ Many later cultural groups were created that were modeled on the national dance company; the dance troupes at Dagara Music Center and Dagbe are both examples. Ethnomusicologist David Locke calls these cultural troupes “second existence,” distinguished from “first existence troupes” that are rural dance groups, such as actual Ewe Habobowo (or Habɔbɔ) music groups.¹² But which of these is more authentic? Are first existence groups more authentic than second existence groups? Cultural troupes such as the staff ensemble at Dagbe do their homework, so to speak, and do research into traditional dances. Are these groups more or less authentic because they are primarily performing for a Western audience? Although some pieces are composed specifically for a Western audience, such as some of Bernard Woma’s gyil songs, does this preclude them from being meaningful in a traditional form? Just because a musical piece is commodified for a Western audience doesn’t mean that the packaged music is no less authentic. In a global world, this dilemma is an inevitable consequence of the shrinking of our musical world due to technology and transportation. Rural communities that were once believed to be removed and distant from Western life can no longer be seen by outsiders as pure and untainted. The proliferation of the

¹¹ Tsukada, 268.
¹² Locke 2004, 171.
internet and cell phone service has made our world smaller and music encounters each other more quickly than ever.

Another issue of authenticity lies in the mixing and blending of cultural dance styles and music. As I mentioned earlier, new dance moves and styles are being created in the traditional setting. Also, there are numerous versions of a traditional dance and it is almost impossible to say that one is more authentic than another. Locke also shares this belief: “It was becoming clear that there are multiple versions of repertory among Ghana’s professional and amateur performing arts troupes, and striking differences between the ways that these dances were done on stage and in their natural setting among the people.”

Beginning in the 1960s, musical tradition was invented in Ghana through the establishment of the Arts Council of Ghana, the creation of a National Dance Ensemble, and the formation across the country of many so-called cultural troupes. These associations brought together drummers, singers, and dancers from different ethnic groups to learn and perform their most popular or most prominent dances (including Kpanlogo, Adowa, Atsiagbekor, Bawa, and Damba-Takai). The result would be the establishment of a transethnic canon, a classic collection of cultural artifacts.

Agawu further explains that “[t]he idea was to preserve the authenticity of each dance by reifying certain dance steps, body movements, costumes, and styles of singing and drumming.” He calls this search for authentic traditional dances a “rebirth through a kind of Sankofa (‘go back and retrieve’) philosophy.” The modern culture is a fusion of the new and the old, both traditional movements and drumming, as well as new and fresh ideas to constitute the nation as a whole. Agawu calls this development one of the “paradoxes of postcolonial African life,” that “[o]n the other, traditional culture was interpreted as new, as the result of fresh initiatives that,

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13 Locke 2004, 171.
14 Agawu, 19.
although marked by a thematic relation to ‘old’ or rural Africa, nevertheless represented bold, new ventures.” Traditional “authentic” dance-drumming can neither be seen as something old, ancient, and unchanging, nor as something completely new; rather, it’s a fusion of both old and new, of continuity and change.

Two other problematic issues are exploitation and the use of music as commodities. Exploitation arises especially within research in African countries, a continent filled with generations of horror and brutality from centuries of colonialism, slavery, and both recent and distant history. Many Africans still feel that foreigners come, research, take and capture culture, and then bring it back to claim it as their own. These feelings are often justified. As scholar Hountondji claims, “[t]he field is dominated by foreigners who ultimate allegiances are to the metropolis, not to Africa” and “much of the scholarship originating from the continent is directed outward, […] oriented toward overseas markets.”

Nettl discusses some of these and other issues in his book, The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-one Issues and Concepts. He considers both sides of the argument, explaining that ethnomusicology can also be a form of “musical colonialism.” Foreign scholars or students, who are usually fairly inexperienced in the music culture, come to informants and demand that they hand over often precious musical material, sometimes with little given in return. He writes that researchers “may encourage the retention of old materials or segments of a repertory, and they take away music—at the same time leaving it behind, to be

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15 Hountondji (1992), 238, qtd. in Agawu, xii.
16 Nettl, 151.
sure, but perhaps polluted by having been removed, recorded, its secrecy violated—for their own benefit and that of their society.” He continues, exclaiming that ethnomusicologists “take advantage of their membership in a wealthier society, with economic and military power, to cause musical turmoil and dissent […]”

Most ethnomusicologists make a career out of the study of someone else’s music and may appropriate another’s musical culture, benefiting from this unequal power relationship. Agawu criticizes this tendency and writes that “[c]olonial domination served as an enabling condition for the cultivation of anthropology and later ethnomusicology.” He later exclaims that “[t]he asymmetrical relation between the ethnomusicologist and his or her subjects is not fortuitous; it is, in fact, the very condition of possibility for the production of ethnomusicological knowledge.”

All these issues arise when doing fieldwork.

After a short time in the field, ethnomusicologists are then expected to represent that musical culture in academia. Is this ethically right? As Nettl writes, “ethnomusicologists come as students, but they quickly pretend to become masters.” Through transcriptions and recordings, ethnographers “capture” the music and bring it home to their home country where they can make a living from it. Agawu also mentions this dilemma in specific reference to Ghanaian traditional music:

Paradoxically, texts carried by individuals like Desmond Tay, Alhaji Abdulai Ibrahim, and Godwin Agbeli—highly knowledgeable insiders (or “informants,” or, nowadays, “research associates,” among other euphemisms)—acquired value in the Euro-American academy precisely at the moment of transcription, the moment when they crossed over from the oral into the written realm, when they were reduced to writing and could be packaged and sold as commodities.

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17 Ibid.
18 Agawu, 155.
19 Nettl, 150.
20 Agawu, 25.
We should be aware how we affect the field around us, that we leave footprints and shadows in the field. Even though colonialism is long over, our actions can be colonial through treating music as a commodity. Taking, recording, and working from our musical research are problematic subjects. Is it acceptable for an insider to profit from the selling and packaging of their musical culture? Is it acceptable for researchers to do as well in academia? Certainly Bernard Woma and Emmanuel Agbeli have profited from their schools, but they have also greatly helped their family and community through the income provided by foreign students.

This subject came up during my research, especially due to the obvious economic disparity between some of my informants and I, simply because I am from the West. As I mentioned already, colonialism is already set against me. In one situation at the Dhow Countries Music Academy, I made a friend while observing and listening to musicians in the school. This was toward the end of the semester and classes were finished, so the building was fairly empty with just a few students practicing and rehearsing. This friend, who will remain unnamed, taught me some traditional *ngoma* drum rhythms. I kept asking him if I should pay him for the lesson, but he said no. I had a few drum lessons and followed him to watch a rehearsal as he accompanied a *qanun* player. Towards the end of our meeting, I asked if I could interview him about the school. I explained to him my background and that I was a student. The following is my response about that incident in my field notes: “I asked if I could interview him, and he asked a friend too, but they said later and he said his friend wanted a deal, because he says *mzungu* deal. [My informant] says he wants money, and is suspicious of being cheated.” *Mzungu* is the Kiswahili term for a white person or foreigner. I was surprised that they were not welcoming to the idea of being interviewed, and it reminded me that we as researchers all leave shadows in the field. Perhaps a previous encounter with someone else who was researching gave them a bad
impression about a “mzungu deal.” What we do has repercussions. But, my informant was also justified in asking what he would get in return for helping me. Nettl explains that “informants want to know what of real value they will receive in return.” I felt that I owed my informant for his time and his gracious sharing of ngoma knowledge, and I also decided to share some of my knowledge of Ghanaian ngoma. Instead of simply taking from a music culture, we should offer something in return. But, does teaching music from outside pollute the music culture? Traditionally, music—both performance and transmission—is being increasingly threatened by the hegemony of Western popular music, and, if we introduce other musics we might be contributing to the problem. But, music education shouldn’t just benefit foreigners. Cultural tourism provides traditional music education to foreigners mostly, but today education is also becoming accessible to the local population.

Based on my field research, it is difficult for me to decide if cultural tourism is a good or bad thing. On one hand, tourism puts culture on display, sometimes stereotypically, often with the belief that culture is unchanging, old, or primitive; on the other hand, where would the music culture be if left to its own devices to compete against the global Western hegemony of popular music? Cultural tourism may be preserving art forms that might otherwise be neglected or lost. According to Nettl, “[t]ourism has helped musicians, dancers, and artists to preserve older forms and also to develop syncretic styles and genres.” He writes, however, that “it was not until around 1990 that tourism began to be taken seriously as an ethnomusicological subject; before that, although we were aware of it, we tended to look at it with disdain and, seeing it perhaps as the result of undesirable intercultural relationships, tried to pretend that it didn’t exist.”

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21 Nettl, 155.
22 Ibid, 194.
23 Ibid, 195.
Cultural tourism perhaps was seen as putting culture on display like animals in a zoo, as a cheap imitation of the real thing created to make money from foreign visitors. In today’s global world, however, cultural tourism is a rising and dominating force that has to be acknowledged. Due to urbanization and the migration of diverse peoples, distinct regional musical cultures are now more accessible and are being performed for an audience as a form of cultural tourism. In some places, the music resides within the birthplace of its origin—such as the Dagbe School, which is located in the Ewe Volta region—but music cultures also migrate to urban areas. For example, Bernard Woma’s Dagara Music Center teaches music from the upper west region of Ghana and is now conveniently located outside of Accra. Cultural tourism will continue to be a driving force in the coming decades and has already been an active and vital catalyst in the preservation and revitalization of African traditional music in Ghanaian and Tanzanian music schools.

**Who Do We Serve?: My Experience Teaching**

Jeff Todd Titon once wrote, “[n]or do ethnomusicologists find much enthusiasm for public school music education; they think of themselves as scholars. (The late Alan Merriam used to dismiss the efforts of his world music colleagues in music education as ‘sandbox ethnomusicology’).”

What does this say about education’s role and value in the field of ethnomusicology? I believe that music education does, and should, play a vital role in ethnomusicology, and I think that it fits within the sphere of applied ethnomusicology. For a long time, however, and still today, music education is often looked down upon as an irrelevant pursuit in the field of ethnomusicology. I was surprised to hear some advice from a student at UCLA during the national conference, who stated that a music education degree does not look good on an application for graduate school in ethnomusicology. Why is education relegated to a

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24 Qtd. in Nettl 29.
second-class status in ethnomusicology? Is it not our job to teach? Although many ethnomusicologists are expected to teach world music ensembles, music education as a field of study is not held in high regard. Exploring music education should be just as important as our fieldwork. The classroom is another facet of our fieldwork. Music education is often put in the category of “applied ethnomusicology” since our work may benefit the local community. Some scholars, however, may argue that there is no reason to refer to such endeavors as applied ethnomusicology, because our work should benefit others and not be marginal to our job. Nonetheless, shouldn’t we attempt to give back to the culture from which we worked with? What about the children or relatives of our informants? Do we have an obligation to serve them? These were all tough issues during my fieldwork experiences. Who do we serve: academia or the people in our field?

These questions were especially pressing when I was volunteering in Tanzania to teach music to school children. I taught general music to both primary and secondary school students in government public schools and private schools: Burhani Primary School (Tanga, TZ), Toledo Secondary School (Tanga, TZ), and Salei Primary School (Arusha, TZ). I was coming as an outsider, from the United States, to teach music along with several other art teachers. I started teaching mostly western children’s songs and also tunes on the recorder, but I felt awkward. Why should I, a teacher from the United States, come and teach Western music to African students when their music is just as important and more culturally relevant? As an ethnomusicologist, I felt torn. Gregory Barz seemed to share these feelings during his research in Tanzania: “At some level the relativist in me took a break and allowed me to feel a loss for his [a Tanzanian] culture. I also felt anger at traditional expressive culture being relegated to a second-class status, while the music of the western penetration, colonization, and conversion
processes raised to near worship status.”

I was only partially familiar with Tanzanian music, and I was certainly not qualified to teach it. Through internet research, I did attempt to teach some music that might be more culturally relevant to the students. For example, I learned some Kiswahili children songs and had the students learn the tunes on the recorder or on the piano. We even played some of the Tanzanian national anthem, *Mungu Ibariki Africa* (God Bless Africa). I also taught some Ghanaian drum rhythms to the students. But, my fellow art teachers disapproved of my teaching any African materials. I was coming from the United States, and they said that the students wanted to learn western art music. I did have one Tanzanian teacher come to me with his keyboard and ask if I would teach him piano, and one American art teacher told me that the students didn’t care to learn Ghanaian drumming. But to me, what advantage did Western music or art have? Did the students really care to learn about the art of American artist, Georgia O’Keefe? In the end, I don’t think that it was my place or job to answer.

This problem is very similar to another experienced at the DCMA. Kiel and Anundsen decided to hold a workshop to teach traditional music to local Tanzanian school teachers. At first they “thought it was not a good idea.” They felt that they should not impose their beliefs upon the teachers: “We don’t know if our way is very relevant to you, so we don’t want to be the ones who know and you don’t.” Despite their anxieties, they went ahead with the program. Nonetheless, I agree with them; “Children should learn songs from their own culture(s), and use local instruments.” African music schools should include teaching music from their homeland and from other cultures in Africa.

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26 Kiel and Anundsen, 62.

27 Ibid, 63.
As I have already mentioned, colonialism and urbanization have already destroyed some of the traditional education systems for musical transmission. Where, then, should traditional music be taught? Should it only be at music schools that cater to a Western audience? What about the local public? While cultural tourism has created more and more dance troupes that teach and perform traditional music, these troupes are “more interested in adult artists than schoolchildren.” When teaching world music, I believe that the teaching method and style should come from within the culture, not from the outside necessarily. The administration and staff at the DCMA seem to concur: “When teaching music within a cultural context it should be borne in mind that the culture itself is probably the best guide to how we should teach. Although new impulses are essential to any culture, we should start by recognizing the existing educational system.” Similarly, the best applied ethnomusicological projects should come from the people, ones that run by grassroots educators and researchers, and should not be imposed upon them. Anthony Seeger asserts that the best project is “one that is presented by the members of the community as their own.” The Ghanaian music schools in this thesis are largely free from outside constrictions, and slowly the Tanzanian schools are controlling their own decisions and futures as well. For instance, Ahlsen explains that the Dhow Countries Music Academy is gradually trying to put its reins into the hands of local Zanzibaris:

Keeping the power balanced between musicians and the artistic administration is an important presupposition for the DCMA in its relevance in the Zanzibari community. Musicians are today a part of planning the curriculum and artistic activities. The DCMA’s future relies on making the artistic contents as relevant as possible for the local musicians and local audience. Former managing director Muecke Quinckhardt told me that there is a goal that the DCMA will be self-sufficient and run by a Zanzibari

28 Coe, 70.
29 Kiel and Anundsen, 62.
management in few years time, implying a hope that the government will take music
education seriously and see the importance of culture as a means to strengthen nation-
building.31

Ethnomusicology should also benefit those outside of academia. Anthony Seeger writes,
“I am still convinced of the importance of using the results of our research in places far beyond
university walls for the benefit of the communities whose music we study. I also believe that in
so doing we will improve the field of ethnomusicology itself and increase its impact on the future
of both music and community life.”32 We should consider who are the beneficiaries of our
ethnomusicological research. Often we over look the question, as Trimillos asks, “does it benefit
the culture from which the genre comes […]?”33 It is sad that “[o]ne stereotype of researchers
[…] is that our research is narrowly focused on issues of little significance to the current lives of
the communities that we study.”34 Researchers should consider these issues inherent in applied
ethnomusicology, such as ethics, reciprocity, preservation, mediation, and social responsibility.

31 Ahlsen, 100.
32 Seeger, 278.
33 Trimillos, 50.
34 Seeger, 283.
CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSION: “SEE YOU AT THE 20\textsuperscript{TH} ANNIVERSARY!”

This thesis looked at four schools that teach music and/or dance-drumming in sub-Saharan Africa: two in Ghana and two in Tanzania. The four schools have had different missions and strategies for teaching. In all cases, the histories of colonization, educational practices, and modern interactions with western countries have had an impact in the approach and level of success of the schools. This study also discussed the development of cultural tourism projects and the problematic issues of authenticity, globalization, virtual fieldwork, appropriation, commodification, and local vs. outside control of music education. I also believe that ethnomusicologists have sometimes been complicit in postcolonial actions: taking and owning music without giving or exchanging, earning a living from their research, and perpetuating the power inequalities inherent in the fieldwork situation in Africa. Although the schools in Tanzania have a mixed background and the situation there is evolving, in general I advocate for local empowerment in teaching content and method. Music schools should be formed from the ground up, from the culture itself in order to teach children and adults within that musical culture, before relying solely on Western business. By learning music of their own culture, children will grow up with a better understanding of their world and a greater pride of their culture. Those that benefit from ethnomusicology should be those from the culture itself, and our field has an obligation to educate not only Western university students but also local African students. These schools are revolutionary in a way because they all provide local outreach and education through traditional African music that might otherwise be fading in a global world. Although music itself is often dismissed as recreational in both Africa and the West, music is important and should be taught in the classrooms, especially local music that is relevant to the
community. I think traditional music should be protected and continued through local efforts and support, like those exemplified and demonstrated by these four schools.

The Dagbe Arts Centre, located in the Volta region of Southeastern Ghana, teaches the music and dance of the Anlo-Ewe ethnic group. Also located in Ghana, the Dagara Music Center founded by Bernard Woma teaches traditional Ghanaian dance-drumming in the comfort of his own compound. The DMC recently celebrated its 10th anniversary in the summer of 2010, and hopefully will continue to teach the community music for many more anniversaries to come.

The Dhow Countries Music Academy, an NGO in Zanzibar, Tanzania, teaches traditional ngoma dance-drumming and taarab music. I also encountered the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center, an afterschool program in Bagamoyo where children learn and perform traditional ngoma. The Tanzanian schools were primarily sponsored by the government, either through the work of a non-governmental organization, as is the case with the Dhow Countries Music Academy, or by association with a neighboring university institution, such as with the Bagamoyo Young Artist Center. The Ghanaian schools were created from the ground up through the efforts of musicians: Emmanuel Agbeli runs the Dagbe Arts Centre founded by his father Godwin Agbeli, and Bernard Woma founded and runs the Dagara Music and Arts Center. One major point of comparison between the Ghanaian and Tanzanian schools is that the Ghanaian schools have more say in the content. Coe explains: “The case of Ghana is thus different from that of Tanzania, where Askew (2002) concludes that the presentation of culture proved ineffectual in legitimizing the state precisely because it was a top-down project. Ghana presents a more complicated case; here teachers and students, for a brief historical moment, found that
government cultural programming allowed their own feelings and identities to find full expression.”¹ All of the schools, however, are reaching out to the community.

The natures of the schools differ. The Tanzanian schools have a relationship with government, while the Ghanaian schools are independent organizations for profit. The United States and other countries fund these latter two Ghanaian schools by sending students abroad, and thus the schools will likely continue to thrive. Emmanuel travels to, and Bernard currently lives in, the United States, where both musicians continue to interact with and invite students to their schools. While the Ghanaian schools work from almost exclusively traditional musical genres in order to attract a Western audience, the Tanzanian schools also incorporate popular music styles, such as taarab and hip-hop. In order to succeed, the Tanzanian schools are more sensitive with younger generations. Both schools are dependent on outside money sources, but the schools are still able to serve the local community and schools.

The state of music education in Ghana and Tanzania relies on music schools to transmit musical knowledge to the next generation. The schools provide an arena to shape issues of national, local, and cultural identities. These music schools preserve and pass on traditional musical knowledge that might otherwise disappear. Ahlsen writes that during his fieldwork at the DCMA “[n]o one was interested in old people playing taarab, and Western popular music dominated the scene.”² In this era of globalization, these schools persist and continue to teach traditional African music to both foreigners and local students. The schools provide advocacy and also economic development. Despite the Eurocentric view of music education and therefore the marginalization of indigenous music, these schools still value traditional music. Further

¹ Coe, 83.
² Ahlsen, 92.
study is needed in this area, but music schools will continue to be a vital force in the coming decades.

As these schools expand and invite more and more foreigners and locals to come study traditional African music, the issues outlined here will become more apparent and relevant in the field of ethnomusicology. These foreign students, however, will always leave their shadows in the field, affecting the music culture. Locke recalls his own involvement and shadow in the field: “By intervening in the local political economy of traditional music in Ghana, I have set forces in motion that affect people’s lives for better and for worse. The cultural tourists I encourage to visit Africa increase the exposure of local people to the very global culture that threatens to undermine traditional heritage.”

As our world grows smaller due to technology and globalization, the hegemony of Western classical and popular music continues, but these schools play a role in promoting, preserving, and reviving cultural traditions. They also act as a space for people to exchange and share musical knowledge. For instance, the Dhow Countries Music Academy brings together various musical genres, including popular and traditional music, Arab and African music. The DCMA plays the “role as a cultural meeting ground” where all these musical styles coexist without fear of annihilation by the presence of the other.

Moreover, local teachers, scholars, and musicians are becoming more involved in the transmission of their traditional and popular local musics.

These schools represent part of a rich spectrum of institutions that promote and educate students, from young children to experienced ethnomusicologists and musicians. These institutions benefit and impact both western audiences and local communities. Their goals and objectives can be categorized into the subfield of applied ethnomusicology. According to the

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3 Locke 2004, 183.
4 Ahlsen, 4.
SEM website, applied ethnomusicology “is devoted to work in ethnomusicology that puts music to use in a variety of contexts, academic and otherwise, including education, cultural policy, conflict resolution, medicine, arts programming, and community music.”5 Who benefits from these African music schools? Who are the beneficiaries? Although the Ghanaian musical schools were created originally for economic development as business ventures, they have also shared their cultural knowledge to the community and local population. The two Tanzanian schools, unlike the Ghanaian grassroots schools, were formed mostly from outside influences for inside or local residents and students. Musical advocacy, education, and applied ethnomusicology are all issues that are growing in our discipline. My chapters are limited case studies into the experiences at these schools, and certainly there has been, and still needs to be, more work done in these areas. These four case studies use a comparative approach to provide just a glimpse into different music education models in Ghana and Tanzania. Each institution could well justify their own focused and detailed research, and I hope that the schools will open doors for further research in the field of education, musical advocacy, applied ethnomusicology, and the continued preservation and continuation of traditional music for future generations.

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Lawrence, Sidra Meredith. “Killing My Own Snake.” M.M., Bowling Green State University, 2006.


Woma, Bernard. Interview by e-mail message to author, March 1, 2011.


January 10, 2011

TO: Heather Bergseth
    MUCT

FROM: Hillary Harms, Ph.D.
      HSRB Administrator

RE: HSRB Project No.: H11T103GE7

TITLE: Case Studies of Traditional Music in Ghana and Tanzania

You have met the conditions for approval for your project involving human subjects. As of January 6, 2011, your project has been granted final approval by the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). This approval expires on November 29, 2011. You may proceed with subject recruitment and data collection.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. Consistent with federal OHRP guidance to IRBs, the consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and you must use copies of the date-stamped document(s) in obtaining consent from research subjects.

You are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB and to use only approved forms. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures (including increases in the number of participants), please send a request for modifications immediately to the HSRB via this office. Please notify me, in writing (or email: hsrb@bgsu.edu) upon completion of your project.

Good luck with your work. Let me know if this office or the HSRB can be of assistance as your project proceeds.

Comments/Modifications:
Stamped consent document is coming to you via campus mail.

c: Dr. David Harnish

Research Category: EXPEDITED #7
Dear Participant:

You are invited to be in a research study on the music of Ghana and Tanzania. You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study. As part of my work on a Master of Music degree in Ethnomusicology, I am conducting a research study of musicians, teachers, and participants of various traditional music genres in case studies in Ghana and Tanzania. This study is being conducted for my Master’s thesis. The purpose of this research is to study various teaching styles used, the goals and purposes of the music schools or troupes, and the importance of sustaining traditional music cultures.

Participation in this project is voluntary. This study will ask/request you to answer questions and be interviewed. Recording of such interviews are voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Only researchers will have access to the data. Deciding whether to participate or not will not impact your relationship to the institution. I estimate that your initial participation will take approximately an hour. Your initial participation will involve being interviewed, with possible follow up questions. The estimated total amount of time for your participation depends on your level of consent and involvement. The anticipated risks to you are no greater than those normally encountered in daily life. This study may benefit those involved in world and/or traditional music, especially in a world of music facing globalization and other risks. Participants will be able to discuss their efforts in promoting musical cultures and allow others to learn about their efforts.

I will use real names unless you request to remain confidential. Only with your consent will you be quoted. Before I submit my thesis you will get an opportunity to read my paper and make any changes regarding your contribution. Confidentiality will be protected because electronic notes or emails are saved on my password protected computer. The use of video or audio recording will only be used if explicit consent is given. Materials will be retained indefinitely unless otherwise requested, and will also be securely stored on my password protected computer or other personal electronic equipment. You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time during the project. Participants have the right to have all questions concerning the study answered, may request a summary or copy of the results of the study, and will be provided with/should retain a copy of the consent document for their records.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, you can contact me at PH: 001-937-231-0868 (US)/E-mail: bergsch@bgsu.edu or Dr. David Harnish, my project advisor, at PH: 001-419-372-8487 (US)/E-mail: dharnis@bgsu.edu. By signing this form you are indicating your consent to participate in the study. Please note that e-mail is not 100% secure, so it is possible that someone intercepting your e-mail will gain knowledge of your interest in the study and have access to your responses. Any other questions or concerns about rights as a research participant may be answered by the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB), located at 309A University Hall (BGSU, Bowling Green, OH), PH: 001-419-372-7716 (US)/FAX: 001-419-372-6916/ E-mail: hsrb@bgsu.edu.

Sincerely,

Heather Bergseth

I, __________________________, give consent to Heather Bergseth to use this information. I have read the document, I have had any questions answered and I agree to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years old or older.

Signature: __________________________  Date: __________________________