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ORGANISATION OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN KNOWLEGE: A CASE OF SOME SELECTED INDIGENOUS AFRICAN MUSICAL PERFORMANCES IN EDINA BAKATUE FESTIVAL OF GHANA

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Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that Africans are music loving people. Music is part of the culture of the Africans and they always associate music with almost all their daily activities. From Nketia (1974), “The themes of the songs tend to centre on events and matters of common interest and concerns to the members of a community or the social group within. They may deal with everyday life or with traditions, beliefs and customs of the society.” A Ghanaian is a music loving person. He always engages in any activity accompanied by a song or dance. He spontaneously resorts to singing at any time; during work or games or on the battle-field. Music plays a vital role in the lives of the Africans, especially at the time of birth, puberty, marriage, death, during the installation of chiefs and festival celebration, etc. (Sarpong, 1974).

The celebration of the traditional festivals is of great significance to the African people who celebrate them. Festival periods are times that people look forward to with a lot of expectations. Festivals are occasions whereby people offer thanks to their ancestors and the spirits for their protection during the past years. Festivals are also occasions used to purify the whole state so that people can enter the New Year with confidence and hope. At all festival celebrations in

Ghana, a tourist, whether from Ghana or outside, will have his field of Ghana's varied culture, friendliness and warmth of the people. In Ghana, there are different types of festivals which differ from community to community. Among the Fantes in the southern part of Ghana, Bakatue festival is an annual festival celebrated by the chiefs and people of Elmina in the Central Region. Bakatue literally means opening up of the Benya lagoon into the sea after six-week ban of fishing in the Benya lagoon. The lagoon is regarded as a traditional god.

Literature review

Opoku (1978), writing general about Traditional African Religion which festival plays a prominent role quoted Mbiti (1975) to reiterate the importance of individual participation in social activities as a means of determining the individual being. He asserted that

*... to be human is to belong to the whole community and
to do so involves participation in the beliefs,
ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community.*

To add to the view of Opoku (1978), one cannot participate in any activity without leaving out the organization of music in the Bakatue celebration. Festival, among others, is held in high esteem as a uniting factor between the individuals, the departed spirits and members of the community. One of the functions of the music in festival celebration is to unite people through the individual participation in the musical performance. Participation in one's ethnic festival celebration is therefore a means of identifying oneself with the society from which one comes from. Bame (1991) states that various scenarios of festivals reveal not only political and cultural elements, but also developmental roles.

He adds that during festival celebrations, the citizens get the opportunity to think about developmental projects such as provision of good drinking water, health care centres, schools and places of convenience.

Dadson (1998) also states that durbar grounds of festivals in Ghana provide a political platform for politicians to explain government policies to the people. They also educate the people on social issues such as drug abuse, family planning programmes and teenage pregnancy on such occasions. The songs are composed to educate the public about that. For example, songs about HIV/AIDS and other pandemic diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis and hepatitis B.

Nketia (1975) says that a traditional festival, an institution, has shown a remarkable capacity for survival in spite of the social and cultural change that has taken place as a result of the impacts of western cultures, technologies and education. According to him, the community is still a cohesive group bound together not just by residence, but by common beliefs, common values, common aspirations, artistic expressions and music. To add to the view of Nketia about the sustenance of traditional festival, one of the things which have helped in its sustainability is the organization and the role of music.

Amlor (2008) stipulates that Africans sturdily believe that music and life are devoted. Barely would members, if not a traditional African society, consolidate any social event without music. A particular musical type with its inherent styles was often determined by the nature of the social event which the music is used. Hickens (1932) as cited in Amlor (2008) states, “The African is named, initiated into manhood, warrior, armed, housed, betrothed, and buried to music”

Nketia (1975) also examines music as an integral part of the social activities of an African and states that the African musical performance is said to sweeten his/her labours, comfort him/her when he/she is bereaved, keep up morale at the battle front and to assist in the worship of gods.

Arhinful (1996) states that music serves as social control, a means of expressing public opinion and imposes restrictions, which the individual would not otherwise accept from his elders.

Agordoh (1994) states that songs of insult and criticism sung during a festival may not be sung during any other time. He also added that people are allowed to sing obscene songs or say vulgar words “to purge the mind of all immoral imaginations.” According to him, you can publicly in songs what you cannot say to a man’s face and so this is one of the ways African society takes to maintain a spiritually healthy community. In addition to the views of Agordoh and Arhinful, festival celebrations in Africa are occasions which people get opportunity to criticize some of the bad practices in the society like incest, armed robbery and rape.

Many of the musical performances use in the festival celebrations serve as a direct social which sometimes are used through admonition, ridicule, and in some cases even more direct action to effect actual change in the behaviour of erring members of the society. During Bakatue festival celebration, the youth usually compose songs with the themes relating to some bad morals of the Elmina traditional area like stealing, armed robbery and rape. Some of the songs texts talk about the bad ruling system of some of the chiefs, especially their unfair judgment of cases.

Arhinful (1996) also states that music fosters cultural interaction and is very important in children’s education because it makes memorizing easier, brains individuals to be intelligent listeners of music. Since children do participate in the festival celebrations, their participation in the musical performance helps the children a lot.

History of Edina Bakatue

When Okofo Kwa Amankwa, the founder of Elmina, came and crossed the river Benya, their traditional god, to him and his people, if they would settle permanently, he would protect, guide and shower blessing on them. Besides, they would enjoy peace, prosperity and fame. Through the encounter, the god started addressing Okofo Kwa Amankwa that he was the overseer of that area and everything around it. The god instructed Okofo Kwa Amankwa to build a permanent shrine in the form of a bridge at a convenient spot on the Southern embankment of the river and perform rituals.

The god asked him to perform ritual for Nana Benya within and outside the shrine. The god told him to do that as a sign of uniting the people of Amankwakrom or Anomansa. The god told Okofo Kwa Amankwa to perform the sacred rites of the river to commemorate the discovery of the Benya River at the end of every sixth moon of the year which is July. Incidentally, the sixth knots coincided with the first Tuesday of July which therefore was established as Bakatue day.

Celebration of Edina Bakatue Festival

A week prior to the formal ban on fishing in the Benya lagoon, the public is notified through gong-gong to notify the general public about the formal ban on fishing in the Benya Lagoon and any social activities which call for noise making like funeral celebrations, pounding of fufu before six O'clock in the evening. This custom is known as *Bakamonkam* (notification of ban on fishing in the river). The ban lasts for six weeks and it is referred to as *Woafabaka* which consists of two words *baka* meaning lagoon or river and *woafa* meaning ban or prohibition. *Woafabaka* therefore literally means a ban on fishing in the lagoon.

The rationale behind the ban is to allow the fish in the river to multiply and become juicy so that there will be a large catch of Bakatue day. There is a belief that the outcome of the casting of the net by Omanhen's representative will determine whether there will be a large catch in the season or not. A heavy fine is imposed on anyone who breaks the ban. The fine imposed on the offender could either be physical cash or white sheep without blemish in addition to any drinks preferably local gin to pacify the gods. Sales of fresh fish from the lagoon in the market are strictly prohibited during the period of the ban. Newly harvested crops such as maize, yam, onion, groundnuts, and tiger nuts are neither sold nor eaten in public.

There is also a ban on fufu pounding after 6:00pm. Lying in-state-of the dead is strictly prohibited, wailing singing of dirges, funeral obsequies, drumming and social environment as well as noise making during the period are prescribed as acts of sacrilege. Failure to observe these injunctions attract severe penalties like paying off some amount or to buy bottles of local gin. All these are observed with the intention that the gods need absolute peace and tranquility hence nothing is done to disturb them.

The following activities during the week that precede the Bakatue celebration.

First week: Cleaning exercise

Cleanliness is said to be next to the godliness and in order that all widows can enter the ensuing year in the state of purity and sanctification. They are required by custom to undergo purification rites by terminating widowhood during the season which is known as *kunaye*. The religious significance of the purification ceremony by widows because they are spiritually considered unclean and in the light of this they are required to undergo purification rites in order to qualify them to participate in the festival. Furthermore, the entire people of Elmina prepare themselves

to enter a state of purity as to receive abundant blessings, long life, prosperity, wealth, fertility, peace and tranquility from Nyankopon (the Almighty God) and abosom (earthly gods).

Second week: Gyantisatu and Sosogya rituals

The second witnesses two rituals known as *Gyantsiatu and Sosogya*. *Gyantsiatu* literally means the bearing of flaming firewood. On Monday evening, the *Gyantsiatu* rite is performed by the youth, especially the fisher folks. They carry flaming firewood accompanied with profane and *Asafo* songs in irregular processions on the beach and through the principal streets, thereby disrupting trading activities in the night as they run riot after girls and young men. These young men and women compose songs using some of the bad practices in the society, especially armed robbery, rape and incest by using the names of the victims in order to deter others from committing the same offence.

On Tuesday afternoon, the young men, mostly the fisher folks carry either sticks or twigs pegged at the end with red pepper. This rite is referred to *Sosogya*. They parade the street with their usual rabid (expressing their opinions in a very strong way or behaving in an unreasonable way in order to make a change) and profane songs to look for young women and girls to ridicule them against their bad behaviours in the society. Any woman or girl who accidentally comes their way will have her ears smeared with pepper. The rites continue late in the evening. A week after *Sosogya* is the turning of the women folk with their *Mpapan* (twigs). The ritual which parallels that of the men folk is accompanied by profane songs and holding of twigs. The women folk like their men and young men also parade through the streets. They whip or flog and insult men and young men they happen to meet. They also happen to compose songs based on some of the deviant behaviours in the society. In spite of the

extremes which the celebration can go is abominable to ridicule any person who has a grave sickness such as blindness, leprosy or stroke. The performance of these rites is to activate interest in food production.

Third week:Korbatutuw ritual

The third week is the *Korbatutuw* ritual (over-turning of a wooden tray) which is performed by the Ankobea, the *Asafo* number one company. This *Asafo* in the afternoon of the third Monday carries a white sheep from the Akotobinsin area through the main street to the Dombo shrine in Edina. They assemble in front of the shrine to perform sacrifice to the gods. Before the animal is slaughtered, libation is made which is accompanied by prayers asking *Nyankopon* (Almighty God) and *abosom* (gods) for protection against any enemy attack and death.. They also ask for blessings, fertility, prosperity and peace. The sacrifice symbolizes the official proclamation of the observation of certain taboos, especially pounding of fufu at night and lying of a dead body.

After the rituals, the roof of the Dombo shrine is repaired or the shrine is rehabilitated. This is locally known as *abankyer*. In the evening of the same day, a gong-gong is beaten, enjoining all citizens to go to bed before 10:00pm because Nana Omanhene and his elders will be going to perform rituals during the period. At night, some of the *brefoyew* (the state courtiers) of Amanfo paddle canoe to Bakatsir (the north-west end of the Benya lagoon) the permanent abode of the tutelary deity called Benya to the Dombo shrine. On Tuesday morning, *mbaahemba* (queen mother) spreads food for the state gods which the people call it *apetse*.

Fourth week: First dombo dance performance

According to oral tradition, the playing of the first Dombo is done to mark the commencement of the festival celebration in the fourth week. The Omanhene sends a message through Benya Itu (a

deity) next to the Dombo shrine to Amanfo and Mbaahemba (queen mothers) to relay information in its fellow gods throughout the length and breadth of the country, inviting them to come and join them to celebrate the Edina Bakatue festival.

On Monday night, *Apaafu* (the state drummers) and singers assemble at the Benya Itu's shrine. Traditional priestesses and herbalists also assemble in their regalia to perform this important drumming and dancing. The Omanhene, Chiefs, stool-holders, courtiers and spectators from far and wide flock the Dombo shrine to watch and partake in the Dombo dance as well. The spirits are said to descend in quick or rapid succession and possess the Benya Komfo (chief priest) who performs the dancing at their command.

Fifth week: Second dombo dance performance

The second Dombo drumming and dancing takes place on the last Monday of June at the Dombo shrine. As usual, state functionaries namely Omanhene (paramount chief), chiefs, stool-holders, *supifo* (the leader of Asafo), priests and priestesses, Amanfo (state courtiers), native doctors as well as spectators gather and dance at the shrine till midnight. Again, the state gods and other gods from other parts of the country continue to descend in rapid succession, possess the chief priest. At this stage, the state may petition the gods through the chief priest that the coming fishing season be blessed with abundant fish.

On Tuesday morning, the mbaahemba (the queen mothers) performs *sareha* that is making *eto* (mashed yam without palm oil) and others mixed with palm oil and eggs and go round to sprinkle them to the state gods in their respective shrines.

Sixth week: Performance of *korbatae* ritual

On the eve of the Bakatue, the Akyemfo Asafo No. 2 Company, whose emblem is the eagle and *akasam* (megaphone) perform some rites known as *korbatae* (turning up the wooden tray). This ceremony signifies the lifting of the ban, which had been imposed on fishing in the river six weeks earlier. As in the case of *korbatutuw* (the turning down of wooden tray) a year old white sheep without blemish is slaughtered and offered to the gods and follow with the offering of libation and prayers.

The identity of each god is revealed to the chief priest by its name and appellation. The visiting gods together with the local deities discuss grave and serious matters looming high with the traditional priest. The Omanhene (State chief) and elders appeal to gods to use their good offices to find antidotes to avert the danger that may come to them during the year. The local gods in collaboration with the visiting gods prescribe remedy or antidotes in order to avert the calamity.

According to an oral narration by Egya Edu, an interviewee, people who have committed offenses at sacred places in secrecy for the past one year are exposed. After their exposure, fines are imposed on the culprits by the gods and this is done to deter others from committing similar offense. The Dombo dance performance continues until 10 o'clock in the morning. As soon as the Dombo dance performance is over, the Omanhene is borne in the palanquin to a sacred shrine called *Nkwadua*. The word consists of two nouns, *kwa*, life and *dua*, tree, so the word *Nkwadua* means the tree of life. Formerly, was a sacred pond under the tree where the Omanhene used to take his bath, but now, the pond is dried up. These days, water is made available for him to undertake his ceremonial bath. The religious significance is that the Omanhene should be ceremonially cleansed to qualify him to celebrate the Bakatue festival in a fitting manner.

Bakatue day

The *Bakatue* festival celebration reaches its climax on the first Tuesday of July. The principal streets as well as the ritual grounds are decorated with multi-coloured flags. The principal street lanes are teemed with motley crowd that is consisting of many different types of people or things that do not seem to belong together. By mid-day, visitors as well as the citizens from all walks of life with multi-coloured dresses stream to the lagoon embankment to watch the celebration.

At 1:00pm, a long royal procession with different paraphernalia starts from the Omanhene palace at Akotobinsin (a suburb of Elmina). The procession is led by the chief fisherman's linguist with staff of the emblem of a canoe followed by the chief fisherman, stool-holders and sub-chiefs with their attendants dressed in their gorgeous kente cloth. The custom requires that the Omanhene on the *Bakatue* is dressed in white cloth as prescribed by the Benya god, with *yenya* (hyssop) piled around the neck and the wrists and wears *brefokyew* (rush hat) covered with hyssop. Holding his staff or *bodua fufuw* (white horse tail) in the left hand and sword of office in his right hand is symbolic of his high office and authority. The Omanhene rides in a splendid palanquin with his "stool wife" also dresses in white cloth with *yenya* (hyssop) piled around her neck, wrists and head with a white handkerchief under two tied magnificent state umbrella signifying her power and dignity over all others.

As the procession continues, enthusiastic people, mainly women wave white handkerchiefs flap their cloths and spread them on the ground as a sign of respect for *Omanhene's* palanquin to pass over, while *Omanhene* dances cheerfully and enthusiastically to acknowledge wild and spontaneous cheers from the jubilant crowd who have lined up the streets to catch a glimpse of the Omanhene. At the local Wesleyan Methodist Church, the procession turns to the right

through the Dutch Cemetery Road., and then turns left into the Benya Road to the Dombo shrine. Here, the *Omannhene* and his *Amanfo* (courtiers) stop briefly for the final purification rites to be performed. The procession resumes with one of the *Amanfo* wearing a white cloth around his waist, carrying wooden tray filled with a concoction (sacred herbs, entrails and eggs) believed to contain among other things all ills and the curses of the traditional area in particular and Ghana as a whole.

Meanwhile, a variety of entertainment takes place on the lagoon as well as the northern bank of the lagoon. Among these is a regatta competition, which is keenly contested by the most active, agile virile young fisher folk. Besides, there is a colourful display by a group of fishermen on the river with decorated canoes performs singing and dancing. One group which usually attracts visitors most are a group of young girls in their *takua* (traditional headgear) and *kente* cloths sit in decorated canoes and entertain the teeming and enthusiastic crowd with singing and dancing on the river. There are also a variety of acrobatic displays. Apart from that *Osibir*, a traditional game peculiar to the coastal people, is played mainly by young men with agility, strength and vigour. Prizes are awarded to the deserving winners of those who take part in the canoe race at state Durbar on the following Saturday.

When the last batch of the procession reaches the ceremonial grounds, the *Omanhene's* palanquin is lowered. He gets down and takes his seat among the distinguished guests at the daises. Then, the climax of the celebration approaches. A few minutes before five o'clock (5:00pm), all kinds of entertainment on the river come to an end. At this stage, the *Amanfo* (chief courtier) on behalf of linguist pour libation to invoke the spirits of the ancestors and the gods of the state. Before pouring libation, he bares his chest and removes his footwear as a mark or sign of respect to the ancestors. *Agoo* is said to call for silence. He then raises the object containing

drink up for God to bless it and the people to see. Prayer is punctuated by the word *Ampa! Ampa!* (It is true, it is true).

After the libation, the carrier of the concoction wades into the lagoon deep enough and slowly submerges it in the lagoon. A member of *Amanfo* casts the traditional nets into the river three times on behalf of the chief priest. After the third casting of the net, the different species of fish caught are then sent to Nana Kondua V, *Omanhene* (paramount chief) of the Edina Traditional Area as tradition demands to signify that there will be plenty of fish or catch in the coming fishing season. This is followed immediately by the firing of musketry to signify the lifting of the sixth-week ban on fishing in the Benya Lagoon amid jubilation from the crowd. Fishing in the lagoon continues till day break. Drumming, which has been banned for six weeks, is now lifted amidst ceremonial firing of the musketry. The royal procession then proceeds to the *Omanhene's* palace amidst drumming and dancing. The music is provided by brass band as well as traditional musical groups like *frontomfrom*, *mbumba*, *adenkum*, *Moses*, *wuamba*, and *kokogyina*.

The *Omanhenne* as well as the chiefs dance gracefully and enthusiastically and acknowledge tremendous cheers from the jubilant crowd. The procession passes through the main principal streets of the town. At 9:00pmm, state dance takes place at Nana Kobina Gyan's Square. At the dance, Miss Bakatue is crowned. On Wednesday morning, market women display a variety of fresh and newly harvested crops such as corn, onion, groundnuts and vegetables in the market and along the streets.

On Friday, libation is poured at various shrines at Elmina and there are family meetings in the various houses. There is also a street carnival themed, "All Colours Day". They also prepare for the following day's activity that is the grand Durbar on Saturday.

Durbar of chiefs

A grand Durbar of chiefs is held on the Saturday to round off the activities of the Bakatue festival. The procession is led by a grand turnout of Asafo Companies with their motley dresses. It is followed by the *Apofohene* (chief fisherman), linguist staff, *Apofohene* and his elders, stool-holders, sub-chiefs, priests and priestesses, native doctors, divisional chiefs, *Mbaahemba* (queen mothers), *Amanfo* (state courtiers), *Supifo* (leaders of the Asafo) and Omanhene (the paramount chief) to the forecourt of Nana Kobina Gyan Square.

The centre of attraction is the august *Omanhene* who dresses in gorgeous kente attire and rides in a magnificent palanquin under two-tier state umbrellas while the rest of the chiefs in their traditional costume walk to the durbar grounds. When the *Omanhene* arrives at the durbar grounds, the seated guests rise and welcome him in order to greet them. He then sits in the state and the divisional chiefs, sub-chiefs, *Supifo*, stool-holders as well as the *Asafo* captains renew their oath of allegiance to him in turn. After the preliminary greeting with the guest of honour, there is the pouring of libation by the *Okyeame* (the state linguist) followed *Omanhene's* welcome address. He thanks the people for their continued and unflinching support; dedication and self- help spirit during the past year and reassures them of his commitment and determination to continue serving them in his capacity as the father of the area. He avails himself of the opportunity to issue a statement about the development of the areas and appeals to all and sundry, especially the government and non-resident citizens of Edina Traditional Area to contribute to the development of the area.

Finally, the Omanhene extends his seasonal and paternal greetings and wishes them all a prosperous and happy year. Spontaneously, the sonorous chorus replay, "May we live to see

another year.” The guest of honour then addresses the gathering, expressing his profound gratitude for the warm welcome accorded him by the chiefs and the people of Edina Traditional Area. In his address, he outlines or highlights the policy of the government, dwelling at length on the overall development, such as the building of schools, providing potable water for the town and helping to improve upon the education of the traditional area and the region as a whole.

Later on, an appeal for funds is launched and people and well-wishers donate generously to the fund. Prizes are distributed to those who excelled in the various *Bakatue* competitions. The curtain of the grand durbar is brought down by the colourful display of asafo companies and various traditional groups. The guest of honour together with the *Omanhene*, divisional chiefs, supifo, sub-chiefs, stool-holders, elders and asafo companies in that order leave the durbar grounds.

Sunday: Inter-denominational church service

On Sunday, the *Omanhene* and his people (town folks) round off the *Bakatue* festival with a thanksgiving service in one of the orthodox churches like the Methodist or Roman Catholic for joint service to thank to the Almighty God for blessing, guidance and helping them to successfully celebrate the festival. The service crowns the *Bakatue* festival celebration

Music types performed during *Bakatue* festival celebration

Apatampa

It is one of the musical types which are used in the Edina *Bakatue* festival. It is believed to have been created by the women of No.2 Asafo Company of Cape Coast for their recreational and entertainment needs. It is performed on the *Bakatue* day at Benya lagoon by a group of women

from Bantoma, a suburb of Elmina. *Apatampa* is mostly performed on the land, but these women perform this musical performance in a canoe on the lagoon.

Performance organization

The instrumentalists sit behind the women in a canoe. For easy movement on the lagoon, there is an outboard motor attached to the canoe. The women put on kente cloth and *takua* (the headgear). While the women sing, the men also play the instruments. The women stand in the moving canoe to perform the dance and sit when they are tired. The women also have clappers to provide a rhythmic pattern to the musical performance.

Instrumental resources

The ensemble of *Apatampa* includes castanet, *pati*, tamale and clappers.

Song texts

Themes of *Apatampa* songs, relate to several topics of interest. Texts of the songs reflect on the general behaviour or the social life of the Elmina people as well as their cultural values and practices. The following song text of songs talks about the social life of the people;

Text: Me yer, Aba Dende, Bra! Bra! Bra! O!

Bebirebe ne mubu. W'adan mbosabo'

Me yer Aba Dende, Bra! Bra! Bra! O!

Meaning : My wife, Aba Dende, Come! Come! Come!

All these wealth. Have into stones.

My wife Aba Dende, Come! Come! Come!

The above song communicates to the people that anything can happen in what we are toiling for in this world. One could see that the wealth that the couple had acquired had turned into stones. This communicates to the individuals that in this life, struggling over worldly things are vanity. One must not solely rely on the worldly things.

Kokogyina

From the oral tradition I gathered, *Kokogyina* originated from the Volta Region of Ghana. It is believed that when the Portuguese were coming to build St. George's Castle at Elmina, they had to go to many places to look for workers to help in putting up of the castle. One commander called Nazar went to the Volta Region to bring some labourers to help in the building, the castle. They came with their musical performance called *Kokogyina* which is performed to entertain them after the hard day's work. The performance of *Kokogyina* is limited to the Abrutuw area in Elmina. It can be performed outside that vicinity with permission from the Ebusuapanyin (clan head). *Kokogyina* has some of the musical features of Agbaza. The dancing style is just like that of Agbaza musical type.

In the olden days, it was only performed after work to entertain the Europeans. Presently, the music is performed at the burial and funeral rites of the clan members that is Abrutuw in Elmina and important elders of the community including chiefs and very old people. At the yearly traditional festival like Edina Bakatue, features as prelude to the celebration. This is also performed after the Bakatue day in the evening as part of the entertainment.

Mode of performance

The costume used in *Kokogyina* dance is the ordinary kaba for ladies and cloth tied around the waist of men. *Kokogyina* is a mixed dance. Dancing is done as solo performance or in twos or threes or more. The dance involves intricate footwork-arm movements. Performers are arranged, in a horse-shoe formation during any performance.

Instrumental resources

The instruments of *Kokogyina* dance include the following: donno, petia, apenbema, that is the master drum, atumpan and rattle.

Song texts

Themes of *Kokogyina* songs are topical and they relate to the social lives of human beings. Human feelings of loneliness, joy, sadness and sorrows are not excluded from the songs. Aside that *Kokogyina* songs also talk about family re-union and reconciliation, social control and entertainment. The songs are usually performed in cantor and chorus form. Sometimes, one or two soloists may introduce a song before the chorus comes in. The following song text shows below relate to the moral aspect of the people:

Text: Kwabonyi, wo sika bebirebe.

Kwabonyi, wo sika nyina asa yi.

Na iridzi nkanfona, Kwanbonyi.

Meaning: Kwabonyi, all your plenty money.

Kwabonyi, your money is finished.

You are now eating nkanfona fish.

The above mentioned song communicates to the individual that no condition is permanent. The rich man, Kwabonyi, was spending lavishly and before he realized, nothing was left for him. Instead of buying meat to prepare a meal which he used to do at first, he was using “nkanfona” which is a type of fish in the sea which is not enjoyed by many people.

Dombo

Dombo is a religious/cult dance performed by the Akans including the people of Elmina. History has it that when Okofo Amankwa founded Elmina, and with his encounter with Nana Benya, the music that was associated with the worship of Nana Benya was called *Dombo*. *Dombo* is only performed during the celebration of Edina Bakatue festival celebration. It is performed around the shrine of Nana Benya in the evening around 10:00pm till day break.

Mode of performance

The costume used in *Dombo* musical performance is cloth which is put around the breast of the women and the men also put on raffia skin. The cloth is white with *yenya* (hyssop) around the priests and priestess' necks. White clay is smeared around the upper part of the body. The performers are arranged in a horseshoe formation during the musical performance. The dance involves intricate foot works and turning with a small broom in the dancer's hands or horsetail. In this case, all the priests and priestess in charge of the 77 gods of Elmina Traditional Area also take part in the performance.

Instruments of *Dombo* include basically the following instruments: *nnawuta* (double bell), the master drum, *oketsewta* (the royal state drum) and two medium supporting drums.

Song texts

Singing during *Dombo* musical performance is very common. Many of the songs shower praises of the gods, appellations and the achievements of the gods. The song text relates to the praises of the god called Ayensa Amo, one of the 77 gods of Elmina. Through the interview conducted, the people contented that through musical performance, the people express their gratitude to the Almighty God for what he has done for them. They also ask for a blessing from God, renew their ties with the gods, ask God to ward off evil spirits, cure diseases as well as a good harvest.

Conclusion

It is a fact that research findings are at times incomplete and may contain some biases. However, it becomes prudent in a research of this nature to draw some significant conclusions to the findings. The possible conclusions that can be drawn from the data analysis are that music plays significant roles in the Edina Bakatue festival which according to the people, especially the youth, are more interested in music used during the celebration. However, it is a factual that people in Edina organize music as Apatampa, Kokogyina, Dombo and Fromtomfrom in the Bakatue festival celebration. Again, some people also see musical performance during Bakatue festival celebration as something which gives an opportunity to some people, especially the youth to misbehave.

Again, it can be concluded that despite a few people criticizing the importance of music in Bakatue festival celebration, many attest to the fact that music really plays a major role, especially accounting the achievements of prominent people in the history of Elmina, portrayal of Edina cultural values and as a means of entertaining the people.

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