

Understanding African Dance in Context: Perspectives from Ghana

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Introduction

Dance in African societies is a holistic art form that serves as a pivot around which collective community life revolves. Dance with its music as an art form has significantly become involved in the process of self-reflection and identity construction in Africa. However, this unique art form has never been free from colonial and Western influence. Colonizers of Africa, through the lens of their early anthropologists, significantly misunderstood African dance and often used foreign tools to measure it leading to the ignorance of its intrinsic elements. This paper presents a comprehensive discussion of what constitutes dance within the African tradition, using Ghanaian and Anlo-Ewe material to demonstrate the more encompassing nature of the phenomenon. My aim is to create a window through which Westerners and non-African scholars can explore, understand and appreciate dance and other cultural forms of Africa in order to address issues of identity and cultural representation.

Africa is endowed with many natural resources but sadly, the knowledge required for using these natural resources to develop the continent is yet to be discovered. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who tried to open developmental doors of Africa through the arts believed dance and its related arts contain the knowledge of developing Africa. In a speech Nkrumah delivered to open the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana in 1963, he stated 'One essential function of this institute must surely be to study the history, culture and institutions, languages and arts of Ghana and of Africa in new African centred ways'¹. The military overthrow of Nkrumah's government, his life in exile and subsequent demise gave way to the reinvigoration and use by Africans the imported knowledge left by colonisers to build Africa. The result is socio-economic under-development and political stagnation, leaving Africa in a labyrinth. Gradually, scholarly activities on the continent are beginning to discover that the knowledge required for developing Africa may only be found in African cultural forms notably, music and dance. Studies of scholars including Amegago (2011), Avorgbedor (1986), Burns (2009), Fiagbedzi (2005), Guerts (2002) and Kuwor (2013) endorse Nkrumah's belief and suggest that dance as a holistic art form with its music stands as a repository of African knowledge foundation.

These scholars also agree that dance in African societies is more encompassing than Western forms of movement systems. To understand and appreciate the uniqueness and holistic nature of dance in Africa, one needs to do an in-depth study of this art form in its native soil in order to capture it from the emic perspective. Dancer and scholar Anthony Shay asserts, “An artistic director or choreographer can learn dances by using a number of methods. By far the most satisfying is field work in which the individual goes to the place where the dance is natively performed” Shay (2002, 43). While Shay’s idea may be lauded massively, what seems to be the challenge in articulating the name African dance points to postmodern ideologies that sought to question the term African dance with the argument that it is a massive generalisation full of high level of ambiguity. Many of these notions raise genuine concerns including the point that reducing art forms of the whole continent to a single genre amounts to an open display of disrespect for the various ethnic groups that constitute the continent of Africa. I appreciate the aforementioned views but what is important is the notion by African scholars including Asante (2004), Golonyo (2009) and Kuwor (2013) that, once there is a European culture, Asian culture and American culture, there is African culture too. My point is simple. Africa is not a country, it is a continent full of fifty-eight countries whose cultures differ in many ways and at the same time produce commonalities that provide some sense of belongingness and identity that could be shared by the generality of the continent. Ghana, for instance, has more than seventy local cultures but as long as this West African country continues to be part of the continent Africa, any Ghanaian culture is an African culture. It is within this context that I am using the term African dance with a high level of awareness that this may constitute generalisation if not situated in the proper context. I will now proceed to introduce dance in the Ghanaian context.

Albert Mawere Opoku, the founder of institutionalization of dance in Ghana defined dance as “a language or mode of expression springing from the heart, using movements and gestures which have their counterparts in our everyday activities, to express both special and ordinary experiences” (Opoku 1965, 19). Comparing Opoku’s definition to the views of other dance scholars including Doris Green (1998), Spencer (1985) and Adrienne Kaeppler (1978), one begins to see the reality that dance does not happen without people and therefore, to understand African dance inevitably requires an in-depth studying, understanding and appreciating the entire culture of the African people.

The holistic nature of dance in Africa, particularly in Ghana, is located at its four major components namely, movement, music, multisensory modalities and visual forms. In the first component, the human body employs movement and gestures to produce just a fraction of what is termed as African dance. The second component uses both vocal and instrumental sound to produce a fraction known as the musical segment of dance. While the third component captures kinesthetic senses including balance and internal feelings all of which constitute multi-sensory modalities that operate within the dancer’s body, the fourth component is characterised with visual forms including costume, shapes, designs, special objects, patterns and colours. I will go ahead and provide examples from the Anlo-Ewe tradition in Ghana.

Agbadza Dance as Anlo-Ewe Tradition

According to the Ewe historians including Philips Kwabla Megabuio Ameenor (1994), the Anlo-Ewe people who currently live in the south-eastern corner of the Republic of Ghana settled in their present home around the later part of the 15th century (1474) after a dramatic escape from Nortsie² in Togo. The escape and subsequent resettlement are commemorated in an annual festival known as *Hogbetsotso Za* (Migrating from Hogbe). Their journey from Nortsie to their present home was full of many challenges and experiences that needed to be documented and stored for their younger generations. At a time when Western style documentation had not started in Africa, they were compelled to store these experiences in dance, which includes movements, gestures, songs, stories, re-enactments/festivals, rituals, religious and political ceremonies, philosophical concepts, and names; and these were passed down generations. There are thirty-six communities that constitute Anlo-Ewe State and all these communities hold onto Agbadza dance as their collective identity. Therefore, Agbadza is considered as a symbol of Anlo-Ewe culture.

According to African music scholars including Kofi Agawu (1995), Nissio Fiagbedzi (1977), Steven Friedson (2009), AM Jones (1959) and Kuwor (2013), Agbadza is a music and dance culture of the Anlo-Ewe that evolved from the last part of the seventeenth century. Anlo-Ewe tradition keepers with whom I worked recently in Anlo-Eweland including Dartey Kumodzie trace the etymology of the name *Agbadza* to a combination of two Ewe words: *agbe* (life) and *dza* (fresh or pure). This therefore means fresh life or pure life. To really understand how Agbadza becomes a fresh life in the lives of the people, it is important to highlight the features of its main movement component.

Movement Component of Agbadza

Agbadza movement component has three segments namely, preparation, main motion and climax. All these three segments have their meaning and significance. The preparation consists of soft movement which sees the feet perform a side step each at a time with the arms opening and closing to compliment the movement of the feet in a unique time keeping style. Although this preparation contains elements of repetition, the energy involved is less intensive as the dancer uses it to relax and also conserve energy for the main motion. The preparatory movement, according to Anlo-Ewe tradition keepers, is a constant reminder to all Anlo-Ewe people that, to make any significant move towards progression in life, one must first engage in careful preparations including proper planning as well as resource mobilization. It is a common belief in Anlo-Eweland that life begins in the spine and this common theme is reflected in Agbadza as the dance also begins in the spine and builds up into what can be described as a contraction and release of the torso.

In the main motion, the hands are positioned at the sides a little above the waist level with the palms facing the dancing floor. At both sides of the body, the joint between the lower arm and the upper arm is flexed -forming an angle of about ninety degrees directly opposite the elbow; and the full arms together with the hands in these right-angular positions, rotate with up and down shoulder movement collaboration as a response to the music according to the tempo of the pulse. There is also sharp pelvic movement which triggers a strong response from the buttocks and the head gives a great deal of help in facial expression. This segment, which is dominated by strong torso movement and movement of the shoulder blades is widely regarded by the Anlo-Ewe members as an exhibition of the pace at which one is progressing in life. Although the main motion of Agbadza could visually be seen as located at the torso, other body parts play various roles and these roles cannot be left out in any attempt to analyse Agbadza movement style. The role of body parts such as the hands, arms, shoulders, feet, waist, buttocks and the head are very vital in this segment. Whether this role is purely semantic or simply a collaborative one, it is a perfect replica of the African aesthetic sense Kariamu Welsh (1985) termed as polycentricism. The feet maintain time keeping steps one at a time basically tapping on the regular beat or what is widely known as the pulse. Doris Green, in discussing the cultural significance of African dance forms, confirms this role of the feet. She writes: "In dances such as Agbadza, Atsiagbekor, Gahu and Kadodo, the feet acting as timekeepers is clearly evident" (1998, 19).

The climax movement is very simple but considered as the most important segment of the movement quality. In fact, those who do Agbadza without the climax are considered as not knowing the dance. In its description, the dancer sways his waist and arms to the right side and does the same to the left side before moving forward to do a unique movement that looks like a sharp bow involving the head and arms. The tradition keepers explained with passion how this climax movement represents an employment of kinesthesia as an effective tool in resolving disputes in the society. The movement signifies how important it is for chiefs and elders who are the judges of the traditional courts to ensure fairness by serving each party in the case they adjudicate equally without taking sides. It therefore sends a signal to all the traditional judges that fairness and neutrality is one of the values capable of ensuring a verdict that may be accepted by both parties as a true reflection of Anlo-Ewe justice system. It also came to light that performance of Agbadza is one of the basic criteria for selecting and installing a person as a chief.

Musical Component of Agbadza

The relationship between music and dance in Africa is so close that one cannot be separated from the other. The marriage between Agbadza music and its dance is so strong that the Ewe word, *wu* which means dance also refers to music and the same word refers to drum, the dominant instrument in the musical ensemble. This also signifies that all Anlo-Ewe dances have their own music types that must move together with them; and therefore, one can confidently say without Agbadza music there is no Agbadza dance. Let us now examine elements that constitute Agbadza music.

First, there is the instrumental ensemble called *Agbadzawu* (Agbadza drum set) which consists of *Gankogui* (double bell), *Axatse* (Rattle), *Kagan* (the first supporting drum), *Kidi or Ashiwui or Kpetsi* (the second supporting drum), *Sogo* (Another supporting drum as well as a master drum. Sometimes, there are two sogos) and *Atimevu* (the overall master drum). Second, there is what is called *Agbadzawugbe* (Agbadza drum text or Agbadza drum language) and finally, there exist what is known as *Agbadza hawo* (Agbadza songs) in the entire musical ensemble. I will now proceed with description and playing technique of Agbadza musical instruments.



14. Agbadza Ensemble: *Atimevu, sogo, kidi, kagan, gagogui, axatse and toke.*

Gankogui

The first instrument to think about in Agbadza ensemble is Gankogui, a vibrating iron double bell manufactured by blacksmiths. Many Ewe musicians including C.K. Ladzekpo referred to it as *gakpevi* (the forged iron carrying a child) due to its structure consisting of a larger low pitch forged iron and a smaller high pitch one permanently stacked together. The larger forged iron bell is considered as the mother and smaller high pitch one is considered the child in the protective bosom of the parent. Therefore, Gagogui which means a controller of rhythms also signifies the usual practice of African mothers carrying their baby at the back as opposed to the usual practice of pushing buggies in the Western world.

Gakogui constitutes the basic foundation of the entire ensemble upon which all other instruments must run smoothly in a harmonious style. It also provides two different tones revealing the tonal nature of Ewe language. It is played with a stick technique while held in one hand of the performer who sits on a bench with a firm relaxed body. The stick, held by the stronger hand is swung as the hands go into motion supported from the elbows. The actual swing of the hand is done from the wrist. The stick is struck on the full rounded portion of the bell to achieve the best resonance. **Tom** is the sound produced by striking the mother bell and **kan** is the sound produced by striking the baby bell. The standard Agbadza bell pattern sounds, **Tom, kan- kaka, nkankanka-tom**, (a vocalization with eight syllables sounding in verbal term as *Agoo mayi makpo tefe mava*. (Allow me to go and witness it.). The bolded sounds are silent and represent pauses.



Gakogui

Axatse

Axatse (the rattle) is a vibrating gourd hollowed out by removing the seeds, and covered with a network of beads or seeds. The sound of *Axatse* is produced by striking it lightly on the thigh and the palm. When struck to rebound off the thigh a dry rattling sound is produced and described in the vocal syllable as "Pa". Struck in a clap-like manner by the palm produces a rattling sound combined with a tonal component from the vibration of the air inside the gourd sounding "Ti" in vocal syllable. The vocalisation of *Axatse* pattern in Agbadza is, ***Pa- Pati Papa, Tipa Tipa Ti Papa*** and this is verbalised as *Tsa mayi makpo tefe mava kaba* (Let me go hurriedly, and witness it.) Obviously the bell and rattles are witnesses to all the rhythms or messages played by the drums.



Axatse

Kagan

Kagan is the smallest drum among the indigenous instrumental resources of the Anlo-Ewe. It is a cylindrical drum of about twenty inches tall with a drum head of about six inches in diameter, an expansion in the middle section of about eight inches in diameter and an opening of about six inches in diameter at the bottom to let the vibrations out. *Kagan* is held diagonally between the legs of the drummer seated on a bench for a convenient playing angle. A technique of slapping the membrane with slightly flexible sticks is the most appropriate but most importantly, the sticks must lie flat across the membrane. *Kagan* with the highest pitch therefore serves as the first supporting drum and keeps the same rhythm throughout the whole music without changing.



Kagan

Kidi

The second supporting drum, *Kidi* is designed in a similar but bigger shape and produces slightly lower pitch than *Kagan*. It is roughly about twenty-three inches tall with a drum head of about eight inches in diameter and expansion in the middle section of about fourteen inches in diameter. Its playing technique requires the end of the sticks in contact with exactly the centre of the membrane forming an angle of about forty-five degrees between the stick and the membrane.



Kidi

Sogo

The next to *Kidi* is *Sogo* which plays a dual traditional role as lead drum in some musical structures and a supporting drum in others depending on the particular ensemble. It is roughly about twenty-six inches tall with a drum head of about nine inches in diameter and an expansion in the middle section of about fifteen inches in diameter.

The name *Sogo* was derived from a description of the shape of the drum that looks somewhat similar to the shape of a large gourd calabash commonly used in sacrificial offerings to 'So', an *Ewe* divinity associated with thunder. In performance, the player sits on a bench with a firm relaxed body as the hands go into motion supported in position from the elbows while the actual swing of the hand is done from the wrist.



Sogo

Atsimewu

Atsimewu is the largest and tallest drum among the instrumental resource of Agbadza. It has a cylindrical body of about five feet tall with an expansion in the middle section of about fifteen inches in diameter and a drum head of about nine inches in diameter. The drum head or membrane is usually made out of a skin of a deer or antelope. The cylindrical body has an opening of about eight inches in diameter at the bottom to let the vibrations out. The name *Atsimewu* was derived from the description of the manner in which the drum is tilted in a convenient playing position by the help of a functional stand called *wudetsi*.



Atimewu



Agbadza drummers at Genui (master sogo drummer in white)

Wugbe (Drum Language)

The term *wugbe*- *wu* (drum) and *gbe* (sound) literally means drum sound. It refers to sounds produced by drums as special language. It is also known as drum text. There are different drum languages that operate in Anlo-Eweland but in the context of this paper, the discussion will focus on *Agbadzawugbe* (Agbadza drum language), its relevance in the performance of Agbadza dance as well as its position in the entire Anlo-Eweland. It is important to note here that only the drums and percussive instruments discussed above are designated to produce or speak Agbadza language. They are made and tuned in a special way to engage in dialogue of call and response rhythms of Agbadza.

The rhythms they play are at times simple and at times complex but the significance of such rhythms is the most important thing. Sometimes the singers vocalise the rhythms as the drummers play them. The master drummer is the key player. He introduces the rhythm and *Kidi*, the second supporting drum, responds to it immediately. The support drummer, especially the *Kidi* player, is also considered as a very experienced and skillful player. This player must be able to respond to all rhythms introduced by the master drummer.

The master drummer, who is the overall head and the highest authority in the instrumental ensemble can introduce the rhythm on *Atimewu* or on *Sogo* depending on which of these two drums he uses as the master drum. In the traditional Anlo-Ewe setting, there are two master drummers at the same time: one uses *Atimewu* and the other uses *Sogo*. The two master drummers work in antagonistic pairs: when one is playing, the other relaxes.

The following rhythm was captured during Agbadza performance at a funeral in Anloga:

Atimewu: *Awlimewue yi Awlimewue yi* (This is the dance for the dead)
Kidi: *Woyi kedege nku ne* (They are covering his eyes with sand).

Anloga is a sandy area where digging of graves does not need heavy machinery but a simple shovel and it is the same tool that is used in covering the tomb which is often seen as throwing sand into the eyes of the dead person. The Anlo-Ewe, when doing Agbadza during funerals, believe they are performing for the dead person. They also believe that the dead person enjoys the dance in *Awlime* (the land of the dead).

During an annual festival in Whuti called *Totrɔyeye Za* (New Development Festival)³ the following drum text dominated the Agbadza performance.

Atimewu: *Nadzedzi gbla, nadzedzi gbla* (To fall in love and die in love)
Kidi: *Kolo gbogbo dewo doafe ne ame* (Loving too many women leads to bankruptcy)

Here, the master drum describes the fashion of womanising which according to tradition keepers was very prevalent in Anlo-Eweland during the last quarter of the 20th century. Some men spoke about their immediate family as consisting of four wives and as many as thirty-six children. Long before the advent of Christianity the system of polygyny among the Anlo-Ewe was considered as a fashionable way of increasing family size. Kidi, the supporting drum says ‘womanising is an invitation to poverty.’ It is wonderful that drums speak not merely words but also they speak wisdom to the people. The Anlo-Ewe consider dance as one of the best ways to educate men about womanising, which has the potential of bringing about polygyny leading to poverty and death. The question of whether or not polygamy is legal could not receive a straight answer from Anlo-Ewe tradition keepers. Instead, it is considered as a cultural practice which cannot be stopped by legislation. However, Western cultures including Christianity appear to be leading the crusade against polygamy through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by use of music, dance and the related arts and these features characterised this local festival. Performing in a festival context where the theme of the celebration is impressively expressed in dance as captured in the drum language above is an integral part of Anlo-Ewe musical culture and can be counted as one of the best legacies left by their ancestors.

The drum language below describes the Agbadza dancing body.

Ze kpe do da (Shoot your buttocks backwards)
Borbor vide. (Bend slightly)

Leaning forward with the buttocks shot backwards and slightly bent knees constitute the perfect posture of agbadza dancer. Not only does the above rhythm emphasise the correct posture of the Agbadza dance but also it stresses the correct level. In Agbadza dance, the body is expected to be in a low position to provide the dancer the flexibility to explore the dynamics of the movement without feeling pains. In fact, my experience of dancing Agbadza for over three decades suggests that wrong positioning of the body may cause serious pain after doing the dance.

It is also fascinating how dance is used to educate the Anlo-Ewe youth about how to work hard and become financially independent. The following drum language has it all.

Gbe asi nagbe agble (No farming and no trading)
Agodui vuvu nado klayi (Torn and unwanted clothes will be your property)

This simply means a lazy person does not enjoy the luxuries of the world. The key elements to pick from this drum text are: *Asi* (Trading), *Agble* (Farming) and *Agoduivuvu* (Used clothes that are torn into pieces). The main theme of this drum language is centered on Agriculture, the occupation of the Anlo-Ewe in those days under which people who failed to cultivate and sell crops were most likely to live in poverty often relying on used items from other hardworking members. The Anlo-Ewes today have more choices including civil and public services in addition to the already exhausted field of Agriculture.

***Agbadzahawo* (Agbadza songs)**

Song text is an integral part of Anlo-Ewe music and this is led by specially ordained musicians known as *henorwo* (song leaders) who receive their inspiration from *hesu* (a creative energy that generates music). Agbadza songs educate the members as well as the whole community about the need to stick to social ethics and join hands together in a collective effort to build a better and safer community.

Some of their songs address social issues in the communities. For example, during Agbadza performance at a local festival in Anloga, the following song pulled the crowd into the arena where various stylised movements were employed to reaffirm the lyrics.

<i>Mebe made suku</i>	(I decided to go to school
<i>Manya agbale viade</i>	To learn and be knowledgeable
<i>Teacher do fum de</i>	Teacher impregnated me
<i>Danye made fua</i>	My mother, I will abort it.)

This is an early 20th century song telling a sad story of a young woman who had a vision of pursuing education to the highest level. All of a sudden her teacher (through an immoral/evil act of rape) impregnated her. Because of the vision she has, she threatens to abort the foetus to enable her fulfil her dream. One of the questions that comes to mind is whether or not Anlo society has any space to tolerate this sexual abuse especially when one considers the philosophy of the traditional state which places emphasis on upholding moral values. Although Anlo-Ewe tradition keepers were not able to establish whether the teacher in question was a native or a foreigner, they made it emphatically clear that Anlo-Ewe principles frown on such social vices and therefore the culprit would have been severely punished if not put to death. Now, this song points to teachers who engage in such promiscuous activities, to the extent of making their own students pregnant, as evil forces responsible for a high level of female school dropouts.

Multisensory Modalities.

As a dancer and performer of Agbadza, I can say with confidence that only external features of the dancer's body is visible to the audience. For example, the Agbadza movement description is limited to what happens outside the dancing body and does not include a picture of how *seselelame* (the various Ewe sensory modalities) work internally as a coordinating force between the music and the dancer. Anlo-Ewe tradition keepers reveal that as the movement begins in the spine, it progresses and energy from the spine is distributed to the rest of the inner organs such as the heart, the lungs, and the digestive system right down to the reproductive organs. They also argue that the multisensory modalities which touches on the various internal feelings the dancer experience during the performance also include spirituality. My experience of practicing this dance in the Diaspora reveals that the spiritual aspect of African dance is able to provide cultural freedom and reunion for Africans in the African Diaspora.

The holistic nature of African dance as we have seen through the Anlo-Ewe example undoubtedly challenges efforts to document these movements as even Labanotation, the widest used movement notation tool can only pick a partial picture of the Agbadza movement description. Laban analysis could do well in capturing the body and its external parts but sadly may not be able to capture the internal feelings and the layers of spirituality that occur in the body during the process of executing Agbadza movement. Also, the Agbadza dancing body carries certain qualities that may not be present in all other dancing bodies. For example the size of the buttocks must be proportional to the body with the waist as the center. Formation of this body type does not materialize without the concerted efforts of mothers who use warm water, shear butter, towel and other materials to gently press and rub their babies to achieve what is considered the Anlo human figure. Ethnomusicologists who studied the music of Agbadza could not conclude their work without touching on the uniqueness of its movement. Steven Friedson writes,

What makes this dance beautiful, according to Ewes, is how the back moves, particularly how the shoulder blades come together. This movement is not initiated by the arms as novices try to perform this dance, but the arms move as a result of bringing the shoulder blades together. This is a subtle difference but crucial to the correct feeling and look, for it leaves the arms free and loose (Friedson 2009, 205).

Considering the aforementioned four elements, it is clear that dance in Africa goes beyond somatic expression, extending to music, movement, language, dramatic enactment, visual arts, symbolism, philosophy, religion, cosmology, cosmogony, science, spirituality, technology customs and institutions.

African Dance and Greenotation

The attributes of dance as discussed comprehensively in this article constitute what could best be explained as the knowledge foundation of the people. These knowledge bodies, values and virtues of the African people still remain in oral tradition, a situation that needs urgent attention if African knowledge is to be preserved and used to develop the continent.

Greenotation, developed by Doris Green, an African American music and dance practitioner and scholar is the only tool that is closer to the documentation of African music and dance. It is worth acknowledging in this article that many of the drum and percussive patterns I discussed in the musical component of Agbadza have been documented by the use of Greenotation. Perhaps, the ability of the inventor, Doris Green to conduct quality fieldwork in many African countries, working with many African traditional music and dance authorities for many years enabled her to design a tool that is compatible with African cultures. This tool can be used to transform oral tradition into a written documentation of African indigenous knowledge bodies, values and virtues to be used as educational materials. In 2002, when Doris Green was sent to Ghana by the U.S. State Department as a Cultural Specialist, she worked on Tokoe, a puberty dance created by the Dangbes in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. I was among the university students who witnessed the notation of Tokoe with a high level of enthusiasm and hoped for the institutionalization of Greenotation at the University of Ghana. Sadly, the documents and computers that contain Greenotation and its working tools are nowhere to be found at the University of Ghana even in this 21st century of technological development.

The death of Professor Mawere Opoku, the father of institutionalization of dance in Ghana should not mean the death of Ghanaian dance development and its digitization and safeguarding. I therefore challenge Africanists both on the African continent and in the Diaspora to join hands together to work towards bringing Greenotation back to Ghana. It appears to be the only tool capable for saving our music and dance forms from going into extinction.

Conclusion

In this article, I have discussed the holistic nature of dance in Africa from a Ghanaian perspective. I have explained the four main components of dance in Africa namely, movement, music, visual forms and multisensory modalities using Agbadza dance from Ghana as an example. I have also established the point that dance in Africa functions not only as an avenue for entertainment, but also it serves as a repository of African indigenous knowledge. Having acknowledged the fact that African dance with all the knowledge bodies it carries still remains in oral tradition, I raised the issue of the appropriate tool for its documentation. The paper identifies Greenotation as an effective tool capable of documenting and digitizing African music and dance for posterity.

In conclusion I would like to reiterate Nkrumah's call to Ghanaians and other Africans that, our work must also include a study of the origins and culture of people of African descent in the Americas and the Caribbean, and we should seek to maintain close relations with their scholars so that there may be cross fertilisation between Africa and those who have their roots in the African past.

Notes

¹ The African Genius speech, delivered by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah at the opening of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana in Accra on 25th October, 1963.

² An ancestral federated region currently within the borders of the modern state of Togo. The move from Notsie is said to be more of an escape than migration from a regime change in the city. Upon first arrival in Notsie, the current king, Adela Atogble, received them well, but after his death the successor, Agorkorli, ruled oppressively upon the Ewe. He ordered all elders killed. The city of Notsie was circumscribed by a large defensive wall which became a barrier to the Ewe devising escape. Upon consultation of the hidden elder, Tegli, the Ewe came up with an extravagant plan of escape which worked for them. (See Amenumey, 1968).

³A community festival organised and sponsored by the youths of Whuti. It is an annual festival through which the youths including those who live in urban centres return home to contribute financially towards the development of their hometown.

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