

Ethnomusicology and Music Education: Tradition, Transmission, Change and Innovation in West Africa and Europe

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This paper will address issues that arise between ethnomusicology and current practice in music education. I will use my research and experience in West Africa, specifically Ghana, and in Europe to compare and contrast the expectations of the diverse participants and to examine if there are any solutions or even realistic compromises.

In the north of Ghana, in the town of Nandom, forms of traditional music are changing and dying out. Some of them have lost their significance or function within society, and others may be challenged by new styles, or imported cultural or religious ideas. A society in which children were not taught music, but absorbed and learnt it as part of life, is now having to consider the options for its musical future. Even this is a considerable departure from tradition – in a traditional society, you do not conceive of possessing a ‘culture’ that could be managed or changed. So, in Nandom, what is the ‘tradition’? What are the influences? How have things changed? Who is able to make changes? Are ethnomusicology and education observers, participants, or agents? In order to answer these questions, I need to examine a number of different aspects of the musical traditions and history.

Written historical records¹ of music in West Africa generally only exist where a European or American ‘explorer’ travelled in a region and wrote a diary or similar

¹ There is a long traditional of oral history in the region that has yet to be fully explored, but has many interesting historical features recorded.

record. Typical is William Bosman, based in Elmina on the coast of present-day Ghana, but then called Guinea. He wrote:

Their second sort of Instruments are their Drums; of which there are about ten different sorts, but most of them are excavated Trees covered at one end with a Sheeps-skin, and left open at the other; which they set on the Ground like a Kettle-Drum, and when they remove it they hang it by a String about their Necks: They beat on these Drums with two long Sticks made Hammer-Fashion, and sometimes with a streight [sic] Stick or their bare Hands; all which ways they produce a dismal and horrid Noise: The Drums being generally in consort with the blowing of the Horns; which afford the most charming Asses Musick that can be imagined: to help out this they always set a little Boy to strike upon a hollow piece of Iron with a piece of Wood; which alone makes a Noise more detestable than the Drums and Horns together (Bosman 1967).

The description of the instruments here is absolutely recognisable and could apply to this modern ensemble from the same area:

Esempio Audio 1

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/78dbb09654473692d98718d8c3ae484f.mp4>

Mmensoun Ensemble from Cape Coast, Ghana.

Similar descriptions, and even some transcriptions, can be found for other areas, but until we come to the era of the field recording we have very little idea what this music actually sounded like, and therefore how it changed in the intervening period. We might surmise that changes in music are often attributable to changes in circumstances, particularly outside influences. Until the 20th century, there was little contact between ‘explorers’ and the African interior, so the musical styles might have stayed fairly stable, locked in by their traditional functions for rites of passage etc. There is evidence, for example, that traditional building styles, having evolved for a function, changed little until the introduction of new building materials.²

On the other hand, if we look at European classical music, this changed considerably between 1705 and the 20th century, although most of the instruments would still be recognisable. African musicians have always shown considerable ability to interact with new musical styles, sometimes creating a whole new African style from the synthesis. A small example is the traditional Ewe drum piece ‘Ageshe’, that now has a ‘reggae’ section, ‘so that the young people have something to dance to’,³ or at a larger scale, West African Highlife where a new genre emerged from the fusion of traditional songs and European dance music.

² See, for example, Bourdier and Trinh (1985).

³ A reason for the development and inclusion of this section offered by my master drum teacher, Johnson K.D. Kemeh.

Esempio Audio 2

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/5af5600f1dac02851b972d9e17913307.mp4>

Yaa Amponsah, by the Kumasi Trio, recorded in 1928. The first known recording of highlife music, subsequently much developed and copied.

Some aspects of Ghanaian life would suggest that there is no great sentimental or intellectual attachment to antiquity. Age in a person is highly valued, but an artefact or tool that is no longer useful will be discarded and a replacement found. Within traditional society, age is often measured in generations, thus a story might be prefaced ‘In the time of my fourth great-grandfather ...’, not usually the formulaic start of a fairy story, but an accurate indication of the generation in which this happened.

I have spent a number of years researching the recreational music of Nandom, a town in north-east Ghana. When I first visited Nandom in 1994, there was no mains electricity, telephone or water. These things have all now arrived in the town and affected every aspect of life. Electricity is probably the biggest change, providing access to television and more radio (not being reliant on battery operated sets as previously). In 1994, a walk round the town at night meant visiting a series of *pito*⁴ bars, where people sat talking and drinking by the light of home-made oil lamps. Now some bars still serve *pito* but many also offer chilled bottled beer and have a TV and a cassette player, both operating at full volume. The place with the biggest PA system and the most recent cassettes or CDs, a ‘storey’,⁵ building at least twice the height of local houses and constructed of concrete rather than mudbrick, is the one with most young people.

There are (or maybe this will soon be ‘were’) several types of recreational music here: *bewaa*, *kari*, *nuru* and *dalaari* to name a few. *Dalaari* is music made by children using small drums made from the necks of old pots. *Kari* and *nuru* are women’s songs and dances for recreation, gossip and social interaction. *Bewaa* (songs and dances usually accompanied by xylophone and drums) was developed some 50 years ago in response to the admiration of a similar style, *bawa*, from the town of Lawra, about 30 km to the south. A young man from the chief’s house, later to become the chief (Naa Polkuu), had been educated in the south of Ghana and was looking for a new style for the dance group he was developing with local young people. *Bewaa* took aspects of the Lawra style and integrated it with other local traditional dance and music styles. The *bewaa* style became established by a specially formed group of young dancers and musicians (the Nandom Sekpere group) who performed throughout Ghana – including for the British Queen

⁴ Local beer made from millet.

⁵ This word is used to describe any modern building that has more than one floor level.

Elizabeth II when she visited Ghana in 1961.

The group was used, promoted and directed by Polkuu through his role as chief. *Bewaa* dances took on an important social function, being recognised as a good way to meet other young people from the area and seek a marriage partner. Dances were often held on a Sunday afternoon towards the end of the weekly market, so that virtually the whole town and many people from the surrounding villages were present. As with other recreational music, the words to the songs were also important, joking, passing on gossip, warning about poor behaviour. An ethnomusicologist would have been convinced that this innovation was completely integrated into musical life and strongly supported by its social function within the community.

Esempio Video 1

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/42801c1670ef957c31f4af613fffd48d.mp4>

Bewaa performance. Children learn this music and dance by simply joining in.

By the 1990s, the situation had changed to some extent. Naa Polkuu died in 1984 and was succeeded, after bitter dispute, by the present Naa Puoure Puobe Chiir VII. Naa Puoure returned to Ghana from a career as a European economist (having completed his doctorate in Venice) and was a member of the Ghanaian Council of State for a number of years. His predecessor, Naa Polkuu, knew the local dance and music intimately and would instantly correct any errors of dance or music by practical demonstration. Naa Puoure is energetic in his efforts to support and promote the local arts but his involvement has a different emphasis. With the death of Naa Polkuu, it became evident that it was his force of personality which had held the Nandom Sekpere group together. Members of different clans within the group now supported opposing contenders for the chieftancy and the Nandom group temporarily disintegrated.

Nandom has its own cultural festival, called Kakube, which takes place in late November. There was a local custom of using the gleanings (*kakube*) from the fields at the end of harvest to brew beer that was drunk to celebrate a successful harvest. There was also dancing in the evenings when the moon was bright. The formalised modern version follows a standard Ghanaian pattern for 'cultural' events with a durbar of chiefs on the first day that also includes a large number of speeches and music and dance demonstrations by invited groups. On the second day the dance competition takes place with up to 45 groups from different villages and further afield in Ghana competing. In 1994, most of the competing groups danced *bewaa*, often with the addition of one or more other dances, and there were also a number of singing groups performing *kari* or *nuru* songs. By 1999, there was more variety

to the dancing, with groups presenting *gombe*, and funeral dances (*bine*), although less *bewaa*. *Kari* and *nuru* singing was still part of the event with a number of groups presenting this style. Spontaneous *bewaa* dancing in the villages seems to have died out – only the performance group meets to rehearse, but *kari*, *nuru*, and now the southern ‘invader’ *gombe* can still be heard in the villages at harvest time.

The musical style of *bewaa* has, of course, changed since its inception, with songs and ideas being imported and adapted from other areas of Ghana. The traditional older style songs fit across the dance pulse (indicated by the *kpagru* rhythm) with the equivalent of 2 bars in 12/8 time, fitting 3 bars of 4/4 dance pulse, like this:

Esempio Audio 3 (vedi Immagine 1)

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/f78412ac36137b43aac914b04f6afdf0.mp4>

Nandomme Naa Yela

Nandomme Naa yela

Kpagru

Sung tune

Gyi tune

Gyi accomp

Nan - dom - me Naa ye - la ye maa - li, maa - li, maa - li. Nan - dom - me Naa ye - la ye maa - li, maa - li, maa - li. Nan - dom - me Naa ye - la ye maa - li, maa - li, maa - li. Be maa - li a vis - li za be - lop kpan - kpa - re yang taa.

Immagine 1. *Nandomme Naa Yela*

Later songs, like ‘*Yaa Yaa Kole Zele*’, composed in Accra around 1986, have the tune fitting more obviously in with the dance step (*kpagru* rhythm).

Esempio Audio 4 (vedi Immagine 2)

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/856b5e220d1b63b624c33778932c7e8f.mp4>

Ya ya kole zele

Ya ya kole zele

The musical score for 'Ya ya kole zele' is presented in two systems. The first system includes the Kpagru rhythm (a series of eighth notes), the Sung tune (melody with lyrics 'Ya ya ko - le ze - le. Ya ya ko - le ze - le.'), the Gyi tune (melody with measure numbers 1, 2, 3, 4), and the Gyi accomp (accompaniment). The second system continues the Sung tune with lyrics 'Ya ya ko - le ze - le. Ya ya o puo wa pe - li o kob.', the Gyi tune (measures 5, 6, 7, 8), and the Gyi accomp.

Immagine 2. *Ya ya kole zele*

There are many agents of change here, but a principal one must be the attitude of young people, who are influenced by global pop music styles. The dance for *bewaa* involves heavy leg jingles, traditional costume with cowrie shells sewn into it, and a dance style that involves ‘bending your back’. In the solo sections the girls dance with their backs almost horizontal and there is a strongly sexual component to the style of the male and female partners.

Esempio Video 2

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/95871e7b277020d91cd6dc81e847bca9.mp4>

Bewaa dancing.

Young people now do not want to dance in this style. They don't want to 'bend their backs', but prefer to dance in more of a western disco style to more contemporary music. The present chief recognises this and now includes a 'disco' within Kakube, the music in 1999 being provided by the Ghana Police Band.

Esempio Audio 5

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/aa456cfda88394a5107bea120a850ae4.mp4>

Part of the performance by the Ghana Police Band. Reggae is very popular in Ghana.

From the early 1990s, the ethnographers and musicologists began to arrive in greater numbers. There is Prof. Carola Lentz studying the social anthropology and Volker Linz studying the funeral music of Nandom, in addition to my own work. We all have some effect on local people, if only because we pay people to play or answer our idiot questions, as in this typical exchange between a local musician and me:

'This is an old, old tune from Polkuu's time'.

'Can you tell the difference between old and new styles of *bewaa* from the music'?

'Yes, I can do that'.

'How can you tell the difference'?

'We have modernised *bewaa* now'.

'How have you modernised it'?

[looking at me as though I'm stupid] 'We have taken away all the old things'.

So now, many sorts of indigenous recreational music appear to be in terminal decline in Nandom, to be superseded by national and/or international pop music. This situation is not only true of recreational music either. Mary Seavoy has observed that 'Because the xylophone is associated with animism, the local rise of Islam in the late twentieth century has caused a decline in LoDagaa music making with xylophones'.⁶ I would not completely agree with this – in the areas I have visited, strict Moslems may bury a deceased person after simple prayers, without the 3-day traditional funeral that includes music, dancing and feasting to celebrate their life (in some areas there is another possible motivation for the traditional

⁶ Cf. DjeDje, (1998: 457), citing a personal communication from Mary Hermaine Seavoy.

ceremony to continue, as during the funeral you may ‘go outside’ with anyone of the opposite sex you please, without your partner being able to object). However, many Moslems seem to have a rather pragmatic approach (as do the Christians) and will observe appropriate ritual for both belief systems.

This changes in Nandom are repeated nationally, with local variations. I have argued previously that the concept of western education is a considerable factor here. Ghana has placed great emphasis on creating an educated population. Schools are often overcrowded and teachers in short supply due to levels of pay, but a high proportion of the population attend school, at least to the end of Primary school level (although the proportion of boys attending is notably higher than that for girls). Politicians would doubtless argue that to compete in a western dominated world, they need a population with an appropriate education, and the Ghanaian system of schooling was established by the British back in the colonial era. It is a long way removed from a ‘traditional’ form of Ghanaian education within an extended family group, where there is no boundary between the world of the adults and children and education is the process of induction into society. More than 25 years ago, Peter Sarpong (1977) observed the effect of formal schooling on the observation of rites of passage for young people in the Ashanti region:

Especially [...] in urban areas, where many girls attend school, attendance at school at once puts a severe limitation on the time that can be allotted to the ceremonies. A school-girl may not be able to spare a whole week from school for her [nubility] rites; nor can she be expected to devote her school hours to serving as a neophyte. She might not mind but her parents are likely to object, with good reason. [...] Many literate girls consider some of the rites to be a remnant of ‘savage superstition’, and are scornful of them (Sarpong 1977: 92-95).

Sarpong also observes the effect of different religious beliefs on traditional rites of passage. Some Christian churches ‘seem to have replaced the nubility rites with the Christian Confirmation’. Others will be more selective:

Catholics rely on their own judgement in deciding which parts of the rites are contrary to their persuasion. When a Catholic girl is being given a fairly full version of the rites, the morning libation [pouring alcohol on the ground for the spirit of the earth] is often left out. There is no singing, drumming or dancing, as the songs are thought to be *obscene* and the dancing *erotic* [my emphasis]. Muslim converts [...] also retain their fidelity to traditional customs, while avoiding going diametrically against their adopted religion by leaving out several parts of the rites. One forms the impression that individuals take it upon themselves to decide which parts of the rites to discard (Sarpong 1977: 92-95).

It can be seen that, throughout Ghana, many functional occasions for music

have or are changing. The principal occasion for the performance of most traditional music is the ‘cultural group’, often brought in, for example, to add a touch of either authenticity or exoticism to a funeral (for example, among the Fanti of Cape Coast in the south of Ghana, it is common to pay a group of Dagara musicians to perform the northern recreational dance *bewaa* at a funeral). The performers in the ‘cultural groups’ are young people (typically 10-25 years) who have been taught a number of dances, often from across Ghana rather than just the local area, by a professional drummer who is involved in education in some way.

So it would seem that many aspects and styles of Ghanaian music are already in a state of ‘preservation’ in some form, so if we and other ethnomusicologists (including a substantial number of Ghanaian researchers) have not already done our job, these forms will have changed or be lost. My concern here is for the documentation of African music – the music being created now may be better or worse, but will be different. Young Ghanaians have seized on many aspects of pop music from the rest of the world and used technology avidly, wanting to be seen as up-to-date and innovative, not part of some cultural museum. Here are a couple of examples of contemporary Ghanaian popular music:

Esempio Audio 6

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/1fa8fbab58f544229d0d71a49b7c0ec8.mp4>

Daddy Lumba, *Highlife*, 2000, MCCC 011, Track 5, *Hye Woho Den*. Strongly influenced by reggae and making maximum use of technology – in the most recent recordings even the voice is processed through a vocoder in Ghanaian pop music.

Esempio Audio 7

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/0e5d984f18cb0c38d93cbf9498ca042f.mp4>

Begyil Paul, *Wuo za wuo nu*, (from an un-numbered locally produced cassette).

This is a recording from the north of Ghana made around the early 1990s. It uses the ‘auto-chord’ accompaniment of an electronic keyboard. As far as the singers are concerned, it is an electric xylophone – a bit out of tune, but adequate for their purpose. The singers can be heard adhering to the traditional (not Western) pentatonic xylophone tuning as that is what they have grown up with, but for how much longer?

So what of Ghanaian schools and education? One indication might be my first visit to the University of Ghana as an exchange professor in 1989. Ghanaian students learnt both Western and African music. The Western music was taught by professors, who had all been educated in the UK or USA, had their own offices and were paid twice as much as the instructors who taught African music outside in the

sun. There is now an International Centre for African Music & Dance developed by Prof. Nketia located there, and there are more drums and instruments for the instructors to use, but most other aspects of inequality still remain, and can, of course, be justified by the relative educational qualifications of the professors and instructors.

Ghana finds it hard to fund its commitment to education. The cost of schooling and of Higher Education is considerable and a major investment for any family. In order for a family to take on this commitment, there need to be sufficient financial rewards. Teachers at all levels are highly respected, but not well paid. Typically, salaries would not exceed around \$40 per month for a classroom teacher, and most teachers feel they do not have enough money to bring up their own family. There are often accusations that a few teachers fail to teach some aspects of an exam syllabus well, hoping that parents with money will pay for additional tuition for their child, thereby boosting the teacher's income. This works best in urban areas where there are more parents with financial resources. In rural areas, the whole economy still has a base controlled almost by forms of barter and social position. For example, if local beer brewers try to put their prices up to make a little more money, local farmers (who are also the consumers) will increase the price of grain needed to make beer, so the status quo is maintained. Ghana has some 40-50 languages in everyday use,⁷ but from the end of Primary school, English is the language of instruction. When teachers have completed their training, as some measure of repayment for the training invested in them, they must work in the area to which they are directed for the first 3 years. This means that inexperienced teachers are sent to areas of greatest need, often more remote rural areas. The quality of life in these areas is perceived as far less good as there is generally little in the way of recreational facilities – life revolves around having enough to eat. After 3 years, teachers can apply for posts anywhere in Ghana, and will move according to the priorities familiar to all of us. As with any other country, the profile of students going on to higher education will generally match the economic status of the household, so most teachers will come from a relatively more affluent background. Priorities for teaching subjects are Maths, Sciences, Agriculture – products perceived as having more of an economic benefit than the arts. The result for schools in rural areas across the country is that their teachers will often not speak the local language (or not well), will have little or no knowledge of local culture, and will often be looking forward to moving somewhere else, perceiving the local traditions as at least backward, if not primitive.

Returning to the situation for traditional music, across nearly the entire world, where traditional music has not retained its functional place within the culture,

⁷ Cf. Dakubu (1996: 3).

school children are required to learn about it in school. We should note that this is not the same thing at all; experiencing and participating in the arts is not the same as learning about them, but learning that can be examined is often required to demonstrate success.

Learning about almost anything in school gives it a particularly ‘worthy’ slant – ‘this will be good for you but not much fun’, is not a recipe for success with the local youth culture. We don’t seem to have had much success in Europe either in creating a nation who are educated through the arts. I know that we all have conservatoires of high standing, preserving the great European Tradition, but most of our population are passive observers and consumers of popular styles that we might view as the musical equivalent of a ‘Big Mac Burger’. What do we say to our colleagues in Ghana – don’t do what we have done?

Returning to Nandom, the Paramount chief Naa Chiir has clear ideas about what he thinks should be done, involving schools.⁸ He is very committed to seeing local music actively preserved or developed through the young people. This leads me to a number of questions for myself, and for ethnomusicology and education:

Do we believe that the role of Ethnomusicology is as participant observer? Participant, in the sense that we cannot pretend that we are not there, but we do our best to stay neutral, documenting changes for posterity.

Is it the case that we have to admit that we would like to see traditional music preserved in as active a form as possible, and ask what we can do to support local people?

Might we be wasting our time in trying to support traditional music through education, and education through music? These things will change with teenage fashion and we can’t influence that.

Are there ways in which we can make materials available for use in schools? There are many examples of poor quality teaching materials (inaccurate, inappropriate for level etc.), and often, material collected by ethnomusicologists is NOT available in the places where it was collected.

Is this transmission best handled through a formal curriculum that involves the whole school population, or through ‘extra-curricular’ groups of interested students, as with the football team?

One of the problems with a number of these questions is that they quickly move into a wider context than music, questioning your world view. For example, if local people decide that economic development is a priority, therefore there is no place for the arts in school?

⁸ An interview with him is published in ‘Teaching Culture; Thoughts from northern Ghana’ in *British Journal of Music Education*, XV, 2, 1998: 201-209.

Ethnomusicology and education: transmission, tradition, change and innovation in Europe

The history of what was first called ‘comparative musicology’, then ‘ethnomusicology’ in Europe and the West has already been documented. but in this sense is principally a discipline that is redefined through academic use and practice. Its impact on music within society and culture in general was very limited, and it was primarily a ‘musicology’ in the sense that it was about the observation of music and musical behaviour rather than participation. From around the mid-1970s a number of factors seemed to coincide to change the level of interest in other musics: a small number of prominent pop musicians, such as John Lennon, began to take an interest in music from other places, there was a developing interest in the role of music as part of a strategy for ‘anti-racist’ education, and ethnomusicologists began both more commonly to include a practical engagement as part of their study of a music and the see the possible benefits of experience of other music for students in higher education. Music and Arts colleges and universities such as Dartington, York, CalArts (and others) began to acquire instruments and to teach mostly music from Indonesia and India, perhaps Japan, often as an adjunct to the general curriculum but sometimes as a specialist course with a native teacher. Located within academic institutions and frequently with an ethnomusicologist directing the programme, there was some concern for an ‘authentic’ approach, at least in terms of some cultural information and adherence to known repertoire.

In contrast, popular musicians were generally unashamed and direct in seeing their engagement with other music from a commercial view, however great their professed admiration of the music and musicians. Indian sitar was used primarily for its ‘ethnic’ sound or colour, but there was little engagement with the forms and styles of Indian music, let alone its cultural and historical position. In education, the engagement with other music was primarily motivated by the perceived educational and social benefits, especially in the UK where the integration of an immigrant population had become a highly political issue. Many music teachers were looking for materials from other countries to use in the classroom and there was a range of resources produced, highly variable in quality. This marked the real start of the debate that is still continuing between the aims and requirements of good practice in education, particularly music, and good practice in ethnography and ethnomusicology. Given a shortage of available music suitable for educational use from outside Europe, teachers made use of whatever they could find. Well-intentioned local educational authorities produced duplicated books of songs from around the world, notated with variable accuracy using western pitches and with the words often somewhat

muddled and only an approximate translation, if at all. The material was collected from any available source without any evaluation of the quality. Teachers using the materials had few facts and no knowledge of the musical style other than what could be conveyed by the notation, so used it in the best way they could for their educational purposes. Members of non-British communities resident in the UK sometimes found themselves expected to be musicians almost by virtue of the colour of their skin. Someone coming from India must know something about Indian music and be able to teach some songs. This sometimes resulted in people from non-British backgrounds who were amateur musicians (and not teachers) being employed to teach ‘their’ music in a professional capacity.

As with most situations, there were two views about this situation according to your viewpoint. Academics believed that what teachers were doing was appalling. It misrepresented other cultures and their music, passed on adulterated material and was completely token in its approach. There was no sense of the meaning of the music within the culture and it was deeply insulting to other cultures, rather like reducing European music to the learning of ‘Twinkle, twinkle little star/Ah, vous dirai je, maman’. Teachers, on the other hand, would argue that any attempt to engage with another culture, to develop in children a sense of ‘other’, that people’s lives and music were different all over the world was valuable. If there was more authentic material available they would be happy to use it, provided it was not a dusty ethnomusicological approach that took no account of the learning needs of children and overloaded an essentially practical approach to music in school with so much additional information that children became completely uninterested. These two viewpoints were irreconcilable. However, not everything was quite like this. There were several organisations that set out to produce high quality material for education. One was the WOMAD (World of Music And Dance) foundation, which from around 1984 began to produce a series of ‘Talking Books’ – recordings covering the music of an area of the world, plus a booklet containing information about the musical styles and the artists written by known practitioners and/or researchers. WOMAD was also different in two other aspects of its productions: it included both traditional and current popular styles from a region, and fairly early on in the series it included Europe as an area of the world. The line was essentially to look at the music of the people; what sort of music would people use or come into contact with in their everyday lives? So the music of Europe did not include the classical tradition that was already well represented elsewhere, but it did shed a new light on the traditional folk music that had been maintained by a relatively small but dedicated group of enthusiasts.

Folk music was not something of immediate interest to most children in a

school context. In the UK, folk songs, (collected mostly by upper-class musicians and scholars until the early part of the 20th century), had formed the staple diet for singing and school music-making until well into the 1970s. These traditional songs, mediated through the editing practices of collectors, with piano accompaniments added later, were probably as much of a misrepresentation of the true traditions as any of the other material. The material that WOMAD drew on was not these preserved collections, but the new creations of musicians drawing on traditional roots and styles. Some of these groups, such as Steeleye Span, became almost ‘pop’ musicians, updating traditional music with elements that appealed to young people, although this was still not mainstream pop. The other element of WOMAD’s work was the organising of festivals, the first of which was in 1982. The reviewer for the *New Musical Express* (24 July 1982) wrote of this, ‘I passed some time roaming around with my colleagues discussing the validity of showing these assorted ‘ethnic’ musics out of context, arbitrarily selected (unlike most multi-national arts fests) by a rock sensibility.’ – clearly the same debate outside education as within.

The ‘ethnic’ musics were absolutely ‘out of context’ with all the implications for their meaning, but how could they be other in any performance outside their traditional community? The logical implication is that we should develop musical tourism – a parallel of the fact that the only place to see Venice is Venice. But, of course, many people enjoy seeing Venice on TV and travel programmes have become one of the fastest growth areas in the media of recent years.

From 1985-6, this genre of ‘ethnic’ music in recordings, festivals and the like, was named and promoted as ‘world music’ and the rush to produce recordings gathered pace. By 1987, WOMAD and Folk Roots (the leading UK magazine for traditional folk music) had joined forces to plan marketing around the concept of ‘world music’. Not surprisingly, this alienated quite a few people who felt themselves to be the guardians of English traditional music, felt disenfranchised by losing their focused magazine and could not see themselves as a ‘world music’. The needs of schools and education for recordings of music from all over the world (well – quite a lot of it that appealed to western tastes) was soon amply provided for, but the problem was the provenance of the recordings. Commercial world music producers and consumers were not interested in detailed worthy notes about the music, they were buying and selling escapism and novelty. Evidence of this is well known, for example, this recording:

Esempio Audio 8

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/363ce19e8b02826e8f91e2f64f47fc66.mp4>

Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares – Erghen Diado (CAD603) – no real mystery, but arrangements of traditional Bulgarian songs performed by the choir of Radio Sofia.

Following this commercial rush, fickle public taste moved on and by 1990-1991 world music sales (at least in the UK) had slumped. Around the same time, ethnomusicology began to come out of the closet where it was seen as a marginal area of musicology. It began to challenge the accepted pre-eminence of western music, pointing out that it too was an ethnic music. Many more ethnomusicologists engaged in performing the music they were studying, arguing that there are some aspects of the musical construction that can only be understood through performance. Some aspects of world music – mostly those that were considered most appropriate or possible in the classroom – became part of the curriculum in the training of many music teachers. It was argued by music educators that the best way to challenge the accepted pre-eminence of western music inculcated by traditional musical training was practical experience of other musics – even if the results were at quite a basic level, limited in scope and knowledge. The other reason for the presence of non-western music was the continuation of the anti-racist education argument, although this was now more expressed in terms of valuing the traditions of other people who had settled in Europe. John Blacking argued against this, possibly taking an ethnomusicological view over an educational aspiration, pointing out that:

The presence of [for example] African and Asian musics has value in the context of the European Great Tradition because they are novel and technically different systems. If, however, they are promoted for social reasons, simply because there are persons of African and Asian origin living in the country, their value is immediately debased. In effect, they would be reclassified as a Little Tradition of Europe, and the opportunity of fruitful dialogue with the Great Traditions of Africa and Asia would thereby be lost.⁹

Ethnomusicologists and music educators also tried to address the question of who would teach world music, and in what context. Given the limited time afforded to music outside the European Tradition, was it best to have other music taught:

- by a music educator who had some sense of the use of the music in the classroom but whose knowledge of the music was limited?
- by an ethnomusicologist who would have a good, but not indigenous, knowledge of the music and some understanding of European education?
- by an indigenous musician teaching ‘their’ music but whose teaching system may be very different and whose knowledge of European education might be limited?

Each of these approaches has different benefits and implications for the student and what is taught, and arguments can be made for the importance of each.

⁹ for example, see. Blacking 1992.

These issues are also not clear cut. What, for example, can we conclude from this recording?

Esempio Audio 9

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/45eef110e7873b138820e8d67515bb6f.mp4>

Mitsuko Uchida performing the Rondo from Mozart's Sonata K331 'Alla Turca' (Phillips 412 123-2).

Her knowledge of European music is not 'indigenous' and some might disagree with the interpretation, but it would be foolish to challenge her expertise.

The argument has been made that the method of learning a music is integral to understanding, so that, for example, North Indian classical music is learnt through a long apprenticeship with a highly directive teacher who takes responsibility for the learning of the student by virtue of his experience. On the other hand, the xylophone players of the north of Ghana will deny that anyone taught them; each of them has learnt through hearing other performers, then evolving and developing their own version of the music. This may be appropriate for someone who is devoting time to learning a different music, but how can it possibly be useful in the situation for most western school teachers who have just a few weeks to acquire what they need? A number of European institutions have and are trying different approaches to address this, for example, recognising that part of learning another music is the way in which your belief systems and way of life is challenged, they have organised and encouraged their students to spend a few weeks learning music in its country or region of origin. Another approach is to provide education for musicians from other countries to be able to teach in the western education system with some understanding of the expectations of students, making informed decisions about the extent to which a traditional or western learning style is adopted. There are also a number of projects, set up in the countries where westerners commonly visit, specifically to teach western students. These often evolve their teaching methods to adapt to some extent to the expectations of the incoming students who arrive with cameras, video and an array of sound recording equipment. What is taught in these situations is often a distilled version of the music genre or something simplified and adapted, but then all learning has to start somewhere.

Of course, no musical style stays constant and unchanging, unless it's in a state of preservation (it might be interesting to debate the extent to which this applies to the European classical tradition). The Asian music that came to the UK with the immigrant population has been developed by young musicians, fusing elements of the tradition with aspects of European pop music resulting in *bhangra*, which has now become established as a new tradition.

Esempio Audio 10

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/094c819971e9e65a55e0f7299e220d9a.mp4>

Dil Da Patra Kora Kora, performed by Alaap (Diamond Disc DDP0101).

Similarly, the ethnomusicologist's dilemma of the effect that the process of observation and collection has on the informants has been magnified by the tourists' video camera. Much traditional music and dance in West Africa is now performed by 'cultural groups' who can offer a range of styles from the region for the tourist.

These have all the attributes that the tourist expects and pays for: loud, fast, energetic, happy etc., such as this performance given on the occasion of the international boss of Unilever visiting Ghana and being made a 'chief' of the local Fanti people. The tourist has established a new patronage of the arts, with overtones of colonialism for good measure.

Esempio Video 3

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/a7bc1d558ad8f270e16f787236f8c2a8.mp4>

A performance by the Agoro Theatre company, Cape Coast 1999.

More recently in Europe, the latter part of the 1990s has seen more of a concern for styles termed acoustic/roots/unplugged. Consumers again want to feel that they are getting a 'real' experience, not one of specially prepared hyper-reality relayed through mass speakers and giant video screens. Commercialism has catered for this, producing recordings that make a point of delivering the 'authentic' sound through minimising technological intervention, whilst in reality continuing to deliver the sort of sound and style that the listener has become accustomed to through world music festivals and concerts.

Esempio Audio 11

<http://dl.cini.it/files/original/33dd0e838709cc79cfda9c7b61215c01.mp4>

Bi Lamban, from *New Ancient Strings* by Toumani Diabate with Ballake Sissoko (Rykodisc HNCD 1428).

We, as ethnomusicologists, are concerned to document and record as accurately as possible the ephemeral phenomenon that is music. We are concerned that we disclose our backgrounds and assumptions so that others can form judgements for themselves. At the same time, we cannot avoid the role of mediator between the producers of the music and the consumers in sound or print. Even then, we

are aware of the limits of what we can achieve – see for example James Clifford's critique of ethnography, where he suggests that the outcome of such research is best viewed as 'true fiction' (Clifford 1986).

So, in the middle of this giant political and musical football, what is the role of music education in Europe passing on a tradition or heritage, in parallel with the issues for Ghana? Is the traditional music of England folk music, classical music, or the variety of styles that have arrived, emerged and blended to contribute to the current patchwork? How is it to be passed on? As with Ghana, there is a danger that anything taught through school has limited appeal because of the educational context. Should we suggest that there is a core tradition to be transmitted, whatever the abilities and interests of students and teacher? These issues are frequently debated educationally and politically, with a powerful lobby for the compulsory presence of Mozart, Shakespeare and many other 'great' artists. What is important for the training of teachers, for the education of musicians? What is an ethnomusicologist's view?

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