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Dance and Drum Education in Afiadenyigba, Ghana

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this project is to study the status of dancing and drumming education in an Anlo-Ewe rural community. The research conducted includes both traditional and formal methods of education in these areas. There is a wealth of dancing and drumming in a Ghanaian community and this project attempts to uncover how that resource is cultivated. As a supplement to this study, I learned drum rhythms and dances of this area. This study is not meant to judge the quality of the education, but rather to learn more about the Ghanaian people and society through drumming and dancing.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Upon arriving in Ghana, I was immediately amazed by the drumming and dancing which surrounds every aspect of life here. "African music making and dance is, in the truest sense, a living practical activity for every African." (Kofie, pg 32). I was fortunate enough to witness several cultural troops and displays in the Ashanti, Northern, Central, Greater Accra, and Volta Regions of the country. Each performance seemed to heighten my interest. I recall being in Tamale watching the Mbamba group give one of the most energetic and motivating performances that I have ever seen. Feeling the drum beat and watching the dancers, I realized that I had to be a part of it.

Aside from the performances that I was able to see, I began noticing everyday displays of dancing and drumming. On any given day I would spot a two year old banging a beat on a tin can, or a market woman dancing Gabu style down the street. It was becoming clear to me how central dancing and drumming are in the everyday life of a Ghanaian-. "All of the (Ghanaian) tribes value music making and dance highly and use it- as an integral part of all facets life." (Aduonum, pg 8). I was intrigued. Everyone had rhythm, everyone could dance!

In a western society, which I am accustomed to, this is not the case. There are those who choose to study dance or music and are therefore educated respectively. From what I have observed in Ghana, it seems as though everyone has a music and dance background that begins at ~ the very beginning stages of life. "The Ghanaian child | is full of singing and dancing." (cultural Studies Book 1, pg 35). Despite all of the different places that I visited and the different people that I have become accustomed to here in Ghana, one consistent sight is a group of children dancing and making music. "The Ghanaian begins to learn how to dance at an early age. When children are able to walk they are encouraged to dance to simple tunes and rhythms. They either dance with 5 adults or imitate them." (Cultural Studies Book 2, pg 87) This type of music and dance based play is as central in a Ghanaian child's life as television is to a child in western societies.

I have also become aware of how much influence West African drumming and dance has had on the world as a whole. As I listened to various drum rhythms I was often reminded of jazz, blues, Motown, and even today's rap and hip-hop. Many Ghanaian dances have seen performed also resemble a lot of today's popular "western" dance movements. The rest of the world has labeled Ghana a developing country. However, Ghana and other West African countries influence a large portion popular;

music and dance in western "developed" societies. Because of this influence Ghana has on the world, in my opinion, drumming and dancing is Ghana's greatest resource.

I began to look into the music and dance education in schools. I was surprised to find that there was little to no practical dancing and drumming education. "Music education in a western sense is not very well developed in Ghana." ;Aduonum, pg 8). This made me wonder how all of these incredible dancers and drummers had learned what they knew. I began to learn that dancing and drumming education is simply developed in other ways than the average westerner is accustomed to. There are both traditional and more modern styles of dancing and drumming education in Ghana. Some of the traditional forms of education are mother to baby, rites of passage, and sometimes even compulsory song lessons. The more modern forms of education include a cultural studies class in school, and various cultural groups within a community. These forms of education are highly effective regardless of their un-western approach.

**Methodology:**

This project was primarily a case study of the past ~ and present approach and importance of drum and dance education in an Anlo-Ewe community. My research for this project began three weeks before the ISP period when I met with the Academic Directors and expressed my interest in the topic. The Academic- Directors led me to a few professors at Legon and also told me to speak with Seth Gati, master drummer and instructor at Legon.

From this initial information, I began taking drum lessons with Seth Gati regularly. During my three week stay in Accra I also visited the library often in order to research my topic. The University Book Store on E camp was also helpful in finding books for research. These endeavors prepared me with background information and skills that would later assist me in my fieldwork.

It was at this time that Academic Director Dr. Olayemi Tinonye suggested that I speak with Professor Owusu Brempong. Dr. Brempong is a Senior lecturer at Legon. In addition, he attended school at Indiana University. These credentials give him a very unique view on Ghanaian culture, both from the inside and out. Soon after our first meeting I asked him to be my advisor. He assisted me greatly in these initial stages

especially with narrowing my topic and giving me suggestions for research, as well as for my fieldwork.

In one of my many meetings with AD Dr Olayemi Tinouye, he suggested that I do my fieldwork in Anlo-Afiadenyigba. Anlo-Afiadenyigba is town in the Volta Region of Ghana found on the Keta Lagoon. Dr. Brempong also felt that Anlo-Afiadenyigba would be a good choice for my ISP. Drum instructor Set Gati reinforced this suggestion. Gati was particularly familiar with the town, as it is the place of his birth. He immediately told me of one particular cultural troop, the Gadzo group, who I could easily study with during my fieldwork. Due to the helpful connection as well as the Anlo-Ewe origin of the town, we all decided that Anlo-Afiadenyigba would be the perfect place for my ISP.

One week before the ISP period began I traveled with Seth Gati to Anlo-Afiadenyigba to inform them that I would be staying there for three weeks. Gati already knew of a place where I could stay, so we stopped there to see the accommodations. Seth also took me to meet Mr. Daniel Dake, headmaster of the Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School. This meeting turned out to be especially vital to my fieldwork in that Mr. Dake quickly became my research assistant and interpreter extraordinaire. I also met with the present leader of the Gadzo group, Mr. Stephen Kila, to ensure that I would be able to take lessons with them daily during my ISP

In addition, I met informally with a group of the elders in the community, many who are members of the Gadzo group. With Seth Gati's help I informed them of my mission and they were extremely welcoming.

On November 10 I arrived in Anlo-Afiadenyigba. I went directly to the landlord of the house that had been allocated to me. Together we worked out the final details of my stay. I then returned to my house to unload my things. I spent the rest of my day getting acquainted with my housemates and the community as well as shopping at the market for food.

This project is the product of both formal academic work as well as more informal research that I gained from living in the village. In order to learn and research my topic I had to have a good understanding of the community itself. In order to attain this immersion, I lived in a typical compound with a few members of the community of various ages. This gave me a good view of the community from a few different angles.

My research methods included interview, non-participant observation, as well as participant observation. The bulk of the information that I gathered for this project came from talking with groups and individuals in various settings. Some of the time I arranged for formal interviews, and other times I collected information through informal discussion. My informants varied greatly. My main informants were the

members of the Gadzo group. Everyday except Sundays while I was in the field I had a drum lesson with numerous members of the group. Through these lessons I was able to experience firsthand the process of earning various Anlo-Ewe rhythms and dances. I also did some formal interviews with members of the Gadzo group. However, the bulk of my information from the group was collected through informal discussions either during my lessons or leisure time. I interviewed teachers at the Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School. I conducted several informal interviews and discussions with students of all ages. Many of the elders of the community were also active members of the Gadzo group, so I could easily access them through my lessons for interview as well.

In addition to interviews with direct members of the community, I received a lot of information and guidance from my Academic Directors Dr. Olayomi Tinouye and Dr. Meredith Kennedy, my Project Advisor Dr. Owusu Brempong, and drum instructor Seth Gati.

My participant observations were synonymous with my lesson time. I was a full participant in the learning, playing, and dancing of the Agbadza. I learned the rhythms for the gakague (bell), rattle, kagan (first supporting drum), and a few patterns for the kidi (second supporting drum) and sogo (master drum).

I was also able to conduct some non-participant observations. I attended a funeral in the Anlo

Afiadenyigba division of Nyravase. The Gadzo group was asked to perform there so I was able to see them in full action. I was also able to see the whole community taking part in the dancing and music. This non-participant observation was partially participant because everyone at a funeral is expected to dance at least "vire vire" (small small). I also observed a few rehearsal sessions for Junior Secondary School students who were to perform Gadzo at DEFIA, an upcoming development fair at Keta. I also attended one of the days of DEFIA. Various cultural groups from the district performed and I was able to witness many of the traditional Anlo-Ewe dances and rhythms firsthand.

About half of my interviews were conducted with an interpreter, and the other half were done in English. Luckily, a few members of the Gadzo group did speak English. This enabled informative discussion throughout lesson and leisure time, as well as more efficient lessons. Whenever I had a question on the fly, I could usually just ask, without the need for an interpreter. These opportunities for casual exchange often proved more informative than my scheduled interviews. However, when an interpreter was needed, usually with elders, Mr. Daniel Dake and Mr. Yoga Clemence Amegashie were always ready to help. Their unfailing assistance to me was indispensable. Whenever an elder would begin to chuckle over my questions of how they learned to drum or dance,

Clemence always knew how to ask it in Ewe so that I could get a concrete response.

One of the problems with my study had to do with E learning practical drumming in Anlo-Afiadenyigba. (I will discuss this obstacle in greater detail later) However, I pre-planned two trips to Accra during my ISP time in order to have some formal lessons with Seth Gati at Legon. These plans turned out to be the perfect E supplement to my fieldwork. During these two trips, I had lessons with Seth Gati, met with my advisor, and did research in the library.

In order to keep a record of information during my fieldwork, I kept an ISP journal. After everyday in the field I would take a few minutes to jot down what I did that day. This journal made it easy to look back and see what work I had accomplished, as well as my thoughts on what I was researching.

In addition, prior to the ISP period, I had an outline I mapped out of the general findings that I was hoping to gather. After I conducted an interview, or had either a participant or non-participant observation, I would take notes of information that I had collected. This made it easy for me identify the areas where I still needed to do more research. I organized my library research in its own notebook, keeping track of bibliographic information for every book I used.

## **Anlo-Ewe History**

The Ewe people inhabit southeastern Ghana as well as areas of Togo. They originally migrated from present day Benin and settled for some time in Notsie (area in Togo). The people as a whole consider Notsie to be their traditional home. All shrines and royal lineages are traced back to Notsie for validity. The Ewe migrated from Notsie in three waves during the seventeenth century. These three waves of migration were called "Anyiehe", "Titina", and "Dziehe". Within these three waves were further divisions amongst the people due to warfare, strife, and ecological problems. One of these subdivisions was that of the Anlo-Ewe people. During migration one leader, Togbisri, fell tired between the Keta Lagoon and the coast. He was so tired that he stopped and assumed the fetal position, translated to "Anlo" in Ewe. All of the migrating Ewe's who stayed with Togbisri were from then on called Anlo-Ewe.

The Volta Region of Ghana, where the Ewe people now live, was originally a part of Togo. This area was then a German colony in the 1800s. In 1922 it was then divided between Britain and France by a League of Nations mandate. After World War II the British portion was put under trusteeship of the United Nations and administered as part of the Gold Coast. The Ewe people of Ghana inhabit the area stretching from the shores of the Guinea Coast to Akpafu.

Anlo-Afiadenyigba, where this study was conducted, is found on the Keta Lagoon (see Appendix for map). Its population is approximately 5,000 people. There are eight divisions within Anlo-Afiadenyigba, namely Dziehé, Ablorme, Alagbati, Kpornuga, Agbonuga, Nyravase, Tengekorpé, and Afiadenyigbaga. The latter being the largest.

The people of Anlo-Afiadenyigba are, for the most part, subsistence fishermen and kente weavers. Due to the still vast natural resources available in the lagoon, this is still the main livelihood. Kente weavers often bring their cloth to the well known kente market in the next town of Agbozume. (Amoaku, W.K., pgs 5-10)

## **The Gadzo Group of Anlo-Afiadenyigha**

The Gadzo cultural group of Anlo-Afiadenyigba was founded in 1939 by the late Mortoo Agbovor. The group was named after the traditional Anlo-Ewe dance and drum rhythm. Gadzo was originally a war dance and drum rhythm performed by the community's forefathers as they migrated into Southeastern Ghana. The members of the Gadzo group believe that their forefathers learned this particular dance/drum rhythm in present day Benin. (Dake, D. Interview, 15 November, 1999).

At that time Gadzo was performed only by men, since they were the warriors. As the Ewe people migrated through areas of Ghana and Togo, they had to fight various other tribes of people. Gadzo was performed after victory. The drum rhythm is very fast and the dance movements are intricate. Most of the dance movements are meant to display a man's courage and bravery in war. They use a long knife as a prop to signify the acts of war.

Since there have not been any wars for the Anlo-Ewe people to fight for many years, Gadzo is not performed as it was traditionally. However, the 5adzo group is often asked to perform at various cultural events and displays. Although they are best known for their exhibition of Gadzo, they also perform any number of Anlo-Ewe dances/drum rhythms including Agbadza, and Kenke. Additionally, although there are a number of other cultural groups in

Anlo-Afiadenyigba, the Gadzo group is the only group that performs Gadzo.

Some of the eldest members of the group today were among the original members in 1939. As Aletsa Agbogbo (interview, 18 Nov) remembers, Mortoo Agbovor got the group together in order to continue the tradition of Gadzo. As he saw it, the lack of necessity for performing Gadzo was in turn leading to the end of its tradition. He wanted to uphold the tradition through creating a cultural group before the custom was gone altogether.

Today, there are approximately forty members, of all ages in the Gadzo group. Most of the members are the children and family of the original members. However, anyone from the community over the age of twelve is eligible for membership. The only necessary credential is some ability in terms of dance, drum, or singing. Stephen Kila is currently leading the group. His father was one of the original members, and a friend of Mortoo Agbovor. Stephen Kila is particularly talented in singing and dancing. He is in charge of making arrangements for the group to perform at functions. At these performances he rallies the group together and directs them.

The future of the Gadzo group is promising. Young members are continually joining and ensuring the continuation of this amazing tradition.

## **Traditional Education of Dancing and Drumming**

In Anlo-Afiadenyigba, as well as other areas of Ghana, before there was formal education, there was the tradition of drum and dance. Dancing and drumming have always surrounded a child from the very beginning stages of life. In addition, the appropriate drum rhythm and dance define every traditional rite of passage. Also, traditionally there were compulsory song lessons for all members of the community. Historically, everyone in a community received a considerable dancing and drumming education just by being a member of the community. It is virtually unavoidable.

### Mother to Baby

Any given day in a baby's life is spent, for the most part, tied to its mother's back by a piece of cloth. The baby virtually experiences every movement that its mother produces. In Anlo-Afiadenyigba, wherever there are people, there are babies. This means that at the earliest stages of life, through a child's development, a baby is part of all the dancing and drumming that its mother experiences. It is from its mother's back that a baby first experiences the world.

At a funeral in Anlo-Afiadenyigba one Saturday afternoon I was watching various mothers dancing with their babies strapped to their backs. It occurred to me that such an ordinary experience in any Ghanaian child's

life in turn shapes such an extraordinary sense of rhythm. The rhythm of the drum and dance is literally inescapable for the baby.

These everyday exposures to dancing and drumming are the roots of a child's traditional education in this area. The tradition of carrying babies on their backs does not seem to be changing for Ghanaians anytime soon. Therefore, these traditional roots of dancing and drumming education are still strong. Drumming and dancing are a normal aspect of the Ghanaian acculturation process.

### Rites of Passage

All of the traditional rites of passage in an Ewe person's life are marked with drumming and dancing. One week after birth a baby is accepted into their community and named in their "outdooring" ceremony. Family and friends gather to announce and recognize the new life. Drumming and dancing are integral parts of this ceremony.

Secondly, at the age of puberty, boys and girls alike traditionally undergo a ceremony marking them as adults in the community. Although the actual ceremony may only last twenty minutes, the dancing, drumming and celebrating will last all day and into the night (Dake, D., Interview 12 November, 1999). The next rite of passage is the rite of marriage, also defined by dancing and drumming. Finally, the last rite is one's funeral.

Unlike western societies, the traditional Ghanaian funeral is quite an elaborate celebration. "If you didn't dance, sing, and play, you didn't go to a funeral." (Dr. Ownsu Brempong)

Through all of these traditional ceremonies, a Ghanaian cannot avoid being exposed to the dancing and drumming of their culture. Through these accomplishments in life, each Ghanaian receives an ample dose of dancing and drumming education.

Due to the close nature of the community in Anlo-Afiadenyigba, almost everyone will take part in the celebration of everyone else's rites of passage. There is always a ceremony of some kind to go to. With their own ceremonies, as well as those of their community, the traditional Ewe is constantly surrounded by dancing and drumming.

### Compulsory Song Lessons

During my interviews with some of the elders of Anlo-Afiadenyigba, I was told about the compulsory song lessons of their youth. Apparently, one of the chiefs made a Law stating that when anyone, male or female, turned sixteen years of age they must attend compulsory song training. Anyone who did not attend these lessons would be found out and would have to pay a penalty of money to the chief.

This law still stands in Anlo-Afiadenyigba, however, anyone who is in school does not have to attend. Due to the intensity of their schoolwork, most students, in turn, choose not to take part.

When discussing this point while conducting interviews, many, especially elders, expressed frustration with the current system. Aletsa Agbogbo states "If the music is important enough to still have the song lessons, why isn't it important enough to be taught in school? If it was taught in school, the students would also be able to learn and carry on the tradition." (Agbogbo, A., Interview, 19 November, 1999). I fully agree with this statement. In order for the original Anlo-Ewe songs to be remembered, they must be taught in schools.

## **Modern Education of Dancing and Drumming**

There are a few modern ways in which dance and drum are being taught in Anlo-Afiadenyigba. For the most part these methods include the Cultural Studies class available to Junior Secondary School students, and the cultural groups of the community. However, in addition almost all of the traditional methods are still in practice.

It is also important to note that every drummer whom I interviewed during my fieldwork reported that drumming is his or her natural talent. "Drumming is a talent from God." (Gapenya, D. Interview, 15 November, 1999). Master drummer and instructor Seth Gati recalls hearing the drum while he was young and being able to play the rhythms right away. This was the story with almost all of the drummers interviewed. In addition, the drummers interviewed expressed a pride in being a good drummer. "In Ghana here people know their talents. When someone has a talent, they do it straight, for others to see, that is success." (Amegashie, C. Interview, 14 November, 1999).

Many of the dancers and drummers who I interviewed laughed at my questions of how they learned their skill. They thought it strange to think so in-depth of such a natural action and talent. I found that this observation

in itself truly exemplifies how dancing and drumming is embedded in a Ghanaian's culture.

I conducted a few interviews with people, usually elders, who had received no formal education. In many cases, the interviewee spoke no English, and I therefore used an interpreter. Before the beginning of the interview, without fail, my interpreter would make sure to inform me that the person was "uneducated". I would then conduct my interview and the person would usually perform their talent for me, be it dance or drum. In every instance I was incredibly impressed by the persons knowledge and skill. Although many of these people were considered "uneducated" in a formal/western sense, they were incredibly educated in drumming and or dancing.

### Cultural Studies Class

Cultural Studies is a class available to Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary students in most areas of Ghana. However, the cultural studies class in Anlo-Afiadenyigha is available only to Junior Secondary School students. At the Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School Mr. Yaw Seth Mensah teaches the class. The class meets for one hundred and forty minutes a week.

The class mainly focuses on the social life of many different people of Ghana. The curriculum is based on a set of books entitled "Cultural Studies for Junior

Secondary School Students" written by Ghana's Ministry of Education. In these books there are very brief sections on what types of drums and dances which people of Ghana do, as well as some small overview of skills in music.

At the Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School, the cultural studies students do cultural performances of drum and dance in the third term. However, when I asked Mr. Yaw Seth Mensah how he taught the children he simply replied "the children know our traditional dances and drum rhythms before they get to my class." In my opinion, this can be attributed to the traditional methods of dancing and drumming education.

When I asked how he chooses which person should drum and which person should dance he went on to tell me that the best drummers and dancers, in a given class, have usually been previously identified by their peers. This shows that, even before it is done formally at school, children are conscious of their drumming and dancing abilities. This, again, points to how drumming and dancing are an integral part in the life of a Ghanaian.

### Cultural Troops

The Gadzo group, in conjunction with other cultural troops of Anlo-Afiadenyigba, are probably the most active, educators of dancing and drumming today.

The cultural troops, such as the Gadzo group, play a huge role in modern dance and drum education. The Gadzo group has some rehearsal time where they teach new members songs or dances that they need to know in order to perform. In addition, members of the Gadzo group took the time to teach students Gadzo so that they were able to perform it at DEFIA, a development fair at Keta.

The members of the Gadzo group are committed to keeping the traditional drumming and dancing alive. However, many expressed concern over the fact that these traditional dances and drumming are not practically taught in schools. "Traditional dance and drum must be taught in the schools. In this modern world, everything is changing, it must be taught in the schools so that we are sure it will be preserved." (Amegashie, C. Interview, 14 November, 1999).

The members of the Gadzo who I interviewed informed me that they are making sure that the tradition is passed on to their children. In order for it to be passed on from generation to generation in the future they often have their children come to their performances and drum or dance so that they can eventually take over the job of continuing the tradition.

## **My Own Experiences Learning Drumming and Dancing**

As stated before, I took lessons daily with the Gadzo group. Through these lessons I learned various information about some of the Anlo-Ewe dances and drumming rhythms. In addition I experienced firsthand the obstacles and rewards of being a western educated student attempting to learn, for the first time, traditional dances and drumming of the Anlo-Ewe people. Dance

Learning the dances in Anlo-Afiadenyigba came mostly through observation. When I expressed interest in having a lesson, people did not understand my request. They would look at me for a moment, then do one or two dance movements and then point to me to follow. I quickly learned that people do not go around teaching dancing, and even more, no one asks to be taught. Everyone knows the dances by heart. I decided to take another approach and learn by observation whenever possible.

I got this opportunity at a funeral one Saturday afternoon. Everyone was dancing the Agbadza. After watching for a while a woman pulled me onto the dance floor' making me follow her lead. Sooner that later I was doing it myself.

I was also able to observe the JSS students who were rehearsing Gadzo for DEFIA. From watching their

rehearsal, and having Mr. Stephen Kila go over some of the finer points, I got most of it down as well.

I also learned, through discussion, and the Cultural Studies Books, some movement's meanings in dance. I was shocked by the intricacy of the meanings behind certain movements. For example, "if, at the height of a dance a dancer suddenly falls with his back into the arms or on the laps of a prominent member of the community, then he means, 'you are my backbone, and with you behind me, I shall not fall.'" (Cultural Studies Book 2, pg 85). Or "if a dancer clenches either of his hands, moves it round in a circle, makes a sharp cut, or movement down with the same hand and stamps then ground, he is saying 'I have conquered you all'. Only members of the royal family can do this." (Cultural Studies Book 2, pg 85).

### Drumming

My daily drumming lessons were spent learning all of the parts to the Anlo-Ewe drum rhythm Agbadza. It is a rhythm that was originally used to inform members of a community of a death among their people. However, in recent times it has been performed at all Anlo-Ewe functions, and is the "most popular" (Mr. Stephen Kila)

In an Agbadza ensemble there are five instruments, four of which are drums. The first instrument that I learned was the gakogue, or bell. It is a crucial aspect of the ensemble because it keeps the time with the rattle

for all of the drums. The rattle was the second instrument that I learned. It is hit on the same beats as the gakogue. Next was the Kagan, or first supporting drum. It holds a continuous beat throughout the duration of the performance. Then the Kidi, or second supporting drum. The Kidi has a more intricate role. It answers the call of the master drummer. As the master drummer changes his pattern at will, the Kidi also must change. There is a corresponding Kidi rhythm for every master drum rhythm, so the Kidi drummer must be on their toes and ready for anything the master drummer may play. The Sogo drum is the master drum. There are hundreds of master drum patterns that can be played throughout a performance of Agbadza. As long as the master drummer keeps time with the gakogue and rattle, he/she can play whatever they like. I learned the rhythms for the gakogue, rattle, kagan, and a few rhythms for both the kidi and sogo.

One of my main obstacles in learning practical drumming in Anlo-Afiadenyigba was that the Gadzo group had never taught an outsider. Initially they sat me down with an ensemble playing the Agbadza, and would hand me one of the instruments expecting me to jump right in. They were often confused when I explained that I was unfamiliar with the music, and it would be easier for me to learn one piece at a time. This concept was

completely foreign to them. They were very uncomfortable with playing only one instrument without the others in the ensemble. As Serwadda and Pantaleoni state, "The African learns the whole simultaneously with the parts, which is why he has never depended on stress for one instrument. He is not thrown off by hearing misaccentuation, but by the failure of some other part of the ensemble to occur at the right time." (Serwadda and Pantaleoni, pg 52). I experienced this firsthand. This made it difficult for me to learn the various parts, but eventually we came to a compromise, and I was able to take it one instrument at a time.

Another similar difficulty that I had was keeping the beat of the instrument I was playing while the other parts of the ensemble were all playing different rhythms too. There is a philosophy in African drumming that "One drum played alone gives an impression of a rhythm tripping along clumsily or senselessly accentuated. One rhythm defines another." (Chernoff, pg108). Going into these lessons the only musical background I had was playing the piano when I was growing up. The difference between the intricacy of multiple overlapping drum rhythms, and the solidarity of playing the piano is immense. I found it difficult at first to get used to keeping my own time amongst the many beats. "When you begin to learn drumming, you only mind your beat lest you

lose it; nevertheless you will hear the other ones. When your own playing gets stronger...then you can listen to the whole music." (Chernoff, pg 106). I am still working on hearing the whole music!

## **Discussion/Conclusion**

Drumming and Dancing is Ghana's greatest resource. Due to the influence that it has on the rest of the world, it is easy to see the wealth of this tradition.

It is true that dancing and drumming education in Ghana is not very developed in a western sense. However, I have found that a western development of drumming and dancing education is completely unnecessary. By solely growing up in a Ghanaian community a person receives a greater education in these areas than most westerners. If anything, the western development of education in Ghana has taken away from the traditional education system that includes dancing and drumming.

In my experiences in Anlo-Afiadenyigba I realized that being talented in drumming and dancing is not considered, by the community, as being educated. I could not disagree more wholly. With drumming and dancing as Ghana's greatest resources, its drummers and dancers are the cultivators of this resource. Their education is vital to the tradition of culture that is such an asset to its people.

A drummer in a community such as Anlo-Afiadenyigba serves as an instrument of social cohesion as well as an entertainer. Without drumming at a function the

traditional activities could not be performed and eventually, the culture as a whole would whither.

When I saw a few of the "uneducated" elders perform for me I was overcome by their wisdom and skill. Their knowledge of dancing and drumming is something that I have come to respect and value higher than a lot of formal educations.

Drumming and dancing is an integral part of a Ghanaian's culture. As Dr. Olayemi Tinouye states "Ghana is a culturally advanced country." I couldn't agree more. It is my hope that the people of Ghana realize the wealth that they do possess in their culture, and cultivate it to its fullest.

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